



SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE

2017 Review



SMR MEMBER TEAM

Scottish Mountain Rescue is a community of 23 voluntary civilian Mountain Rescue Teams spread across Scotland.

Responding to requests from Police Scotland the teams provide a world class Search And Rescue (SAR) service that is free at the point of need and available whenever needed.

Any Hour, Any Day, Any Weather...



Scottish Government and St John Scotland are committed supporters of Scottish Mountain Rescue and we thank them for their financial assistance.



Tiso kindly supported the print costs of this annual review.



Cover photo credit: Jamie Grieg

Photo credit: Assynt MRT



**Safer
Scotland**
Scottish
Government



**St John
Scotland**



Geared up for the outdoors



Compiled by Andy Rockall and Yasmin Harrower

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Scottish Mountain Rescue is a registered Scottish Charity - No. SC045003

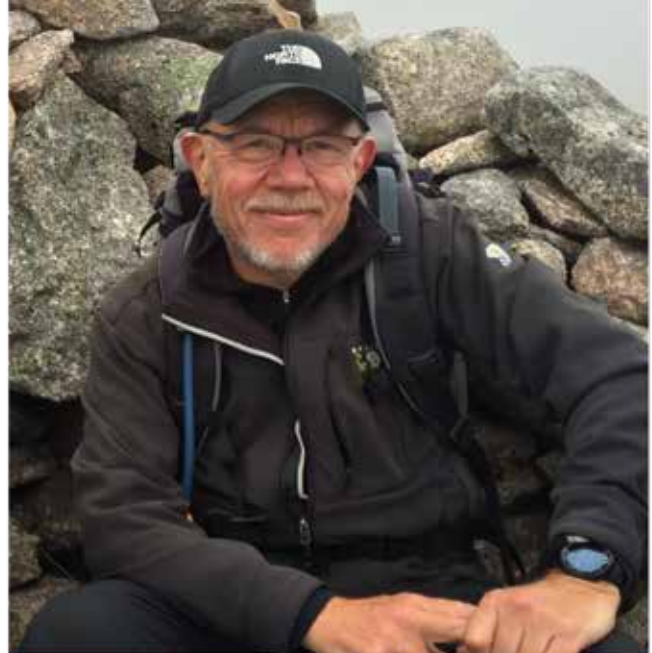
You can support SMR at:

www.scottishmountainrescue.org/donate



David Gibson

David was CEO of Mountaineering Scotland from 2006 until April 2018, when he retired from full-time employment.



“ There is no doubt in my mind that Mountain Rescue Teams personify teamwork ”

One of the underlying themes which this annual review demonstrates is the value of teamwork. I want to take a few minutes of your valuable time to explain why teamwork is a common theme, not only on the front line of mountain rescue, but through the efforts of many organisations and individuals who seek to promote mountain safety and the saving of lives in Scotland's mountains and elsewhere. I hope you find what follows to be of interest.

It was my privilege over 12 years to work for Mountaineering Scotland, which promotes self-reliance in the mountains and good practice amongst its members and the wider hill-going public. The organisation employs a team of staff, volunteers and qualified mountaineering instructors to coordinate and deliver a mountain safety and skills programme. The popularity of the programme, which is supported by **sportscotland**, is evidence of the hunger that both novices and the more experienced have for training and the acquisition of skills that equip them progressively for more adventurous activities in the mountains.

Mountaineering Scotland's work in the field of safety and skills, and the communication of key messages to the public and media, is informed by another team: an advisory group ably chaired in recent years by David (Monty) Montieth an elected director of Mountaineering Scotland. Group members represent Scottish Mountain Rescue, Glenmore Lodge - the National Outdoor Training Centre, Mountain Training Scotland, and the Scottish Avalanche Information Service, and information about the group and its discussions is disseminated more widely to interested organisations.

Yet another outstanding example of teamwork is the generous and enthusiastic support provided by St John Scotland, which has donated vehicles and facilities to mountain rescue teams, and which directly supports the training of university mountaineering clubs through the St John Scotland mountaineering instructor.

There is no doubt in my mind that Mountain Rescue Teams personify teamwork, involving rigorous training and mutual reliance, often in conditions in which there is no margin for error. Many teams and their members are in turn members of Mountaineering Scotland, which further demonstrates that there is a cohesive mountaineering community working both at the front line and in support.

A highlight of 2017 for me was the parliamentary reception at Holyrood, organised jointly by Scottish Mountain Rescue and Mountaineering Scotland. It was supported by all the organisations mentioned above, and many teams and their members participated in an event which attracted cabinet ministers and many MSPs.

At the event, I was struck by the support and respect that mountain rescue has amongst our elected representatives and the many other organisations such as mountaineering clubs and societies that have an affinity with the mountains. That the event attracted so much support is evidence of teamwork between these organisations, all of which closely collaborated to communicate widely with the invitees and media before and after the reception, with the aim of recognising the dedication and outstanding personal commitment made by members of every mountain rescue team.

What follows demonstrates that teamwork is central not only to the mountain rescue community but also to its many supporters.

David Gibson

**SMR member teams maintain a fleet of 60 vehicles.*
That's 300 roadworthy tyres on the road
(including the spare) at all times!**

*Approximate figures from 2016-17





Damon Powell

Chairman
Scottish Mountain Rescue

Photo credit: Michael Schofield

I would like to thank David Gibson for his kind forward to this year's annual review and pick up on his theme around teamwork. One of the most frequently asked questions to MRT members is, why? Why do you do it? Why give up time to train every month? Why spend time marshalling outdoor events or selling burgers at gatherings? Why be willing to drop everything at a moment's notice and spend the rest of the night in horrible weather to help a stranger?

For many the answer they will give is teamwork, working together with colleagues to rescue a casualty or locate someone lost and in need of assistance.

The physical aspect of teamwork in a rescue is often highlighted: working together to extract a casualty from an awkward and dangerous location safely and without adding further injuries; carrying someone for several hours off a mountain through rough and steep terrain; the continual rotation of people on a stretcher to avoid exhaustion if vehicles or helicopters are unable to get near.

What is often overlooked is the teamwork in arriving at a solution to any given rescue. For a casualty it is the years of knowledge in knowing how to move someone carefully and practising together to work as one. It is learning when to slide a stretcher or when to use a wheel or a rope, it is knowing the easiest routes off from any location on a mountain, routes that are rarely the way people would walk down.

For the lost or missing it is using the hundreds and hundreds of years of collective experience retained within a team to judge where on limited information the most likely places are to find someone lost or overdue. It never ceases to amaze me how good rescue teams are at finding people, deploying 15 maybe 20 team members into an area that is always tens of square miles and often hundreds of square miles and yet in many, though sadly not all, cases the missing person will be quickly located and helped to safety.

The reason for this incredible ability is highlighted by two recent retirements of two Skye MRT legends, Gerry Ackroyd, team leader for 46 years and over 1,500 rescues (yes really 46 years as team leader) and Eoghain MacKinnon, a team member for 48 years. That length and depth of knowledge of local hills and their history is invaluable and is replicated across teams throughout Scotland. Even in mountain rescue circles where many remain in teams for long periods of time that is an extraordinary level of service and unlikely to be seen again.

Outside of the immediate teams, teamwork continues to play a role, teamwork within families, friends and colleagues of members to free them to respond, teamwork within the local communities to assist in fundraising and support on rescues, teamwork between local MRTs to support each other, teamwork between the other MRTs, Police Scotland, Bristow Helicopters, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Scottish Ambulance Service and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.



**It never ceases to amaze me
how good rescue teams are at
finding people**



Teamwork between SMR and Mountaineering Scotland, Scottish Avalanche Information Service, Glenmore Lodge and Mountain Training Scotland is geared towards making Scotland's hills the most accessible and safest in the world.

Teamwork between SMR and its supporters St John Scotland, JD Sports, Tiso, GO Outdoors and many individual donors provides the funding necessary to support our rescue teams.

Throughout 2017, SMR worked hard to support member teams and their volunteers. One of our biggest challenges was to raise the money needed to replace the ageing radio infrastructure that teams has been using for the last 15 years and I'm delighted to say by the end of 2017 we had, with the support of St John Scotland, Police Scotland, Scottish Government, and HM Treasury raised the necessary £1 million needed to provide a modern communication service for all our member teams. The SMR radio group consisting of members from many teams have been conducting extensive testing over the winter and we hope to begin the process of upgrading our current stock in the autumn of 2018. Faced with an increasingly challenging fundraising environment, greater demands on time for call-outs and more complex equipment, teams took the momentous decision in 2017 to work more closely together on fundraising to employ a full time head of development/fundraiser in 2018. We are all looking forward to working with Elsie Riley who took up the post in July 2018.



National training courses have been going apace this year with courses run over 2017 including, avalanche, technical rigging, search management, medical, PPE, media, MR skills and others. The working groups that set the curriculum and manage these courses are drawn from all rescue teams and outside bodies to ensure teams have access to the most up to date best practice. Several people from these working groups attended the International Commission on Alpine Rescue (ICAR) to bring back and compare best practice in the rest of the world. This training work is supported financially by the UKSAR Training Fund and we are grateful for its ongoing engagement.

In September 2017, SMR and Mountaineering Scotland jointly hosted a parliamentary reception at Holyrood to explain to MSPs how we and the other organisations mentioned above work together to make Scotland's mountains a safer place to visit.

Another area of work that has developed over the last year along with Police Scotland is providing a greater amount of support for our volunteers and we are delighted that Police Scotland has provided access to all members of MR teams in Scotland and their families to the police Employee Assistance Programme: providing support at times of need. We intend to continue to work hard to provide a comprehensive structure to look after team members whenever it is needed. And central to this core aim is ensuring that we look after the health and wellbeing of our team members and families.

In 2018 will see members of SMR continue to give time to travel across the UK to represent views of our member teams with partner agencies to ensure we collectively provide the best environment possible for the rapid and efficient location, care and retrieval of people that unfortunately have an accident in Scotland's mountains and wild places. We will work hard to develop a broad range of funding streams to put mountain rescue on a sustainable footing. We will help teams acquire the very best training, and equipment to ensure they provide a world class rescue service in Scotland's mountains and to the rural communities within those areas.

Damon Powell

Chairman, Scottish Mountain Rescue



About SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Our community

Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR) represents 23-member Mountain Rescue Teams (MRTs) that provide a 24-hour rescue service in Scotland. In addition to representing 23-member MRTs, SMR also serves three Police Scotland MRTs and one RAF MRT. We are proud to have more than 850 dedicated volunteer team members who are always prepared and willing to drop everything they are doing to assist total strangers. These volunteers are the foundation of the Mountain Rescue community. Each MRT and team member saves lives in the Scottish outdoors.

Our charity

Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR) is a charity registered in Scotland. Founded in 1965 as The MRCofS. SMR is a representative and coordinating body for member Mountain Rescue Teams in Scotland.

SMR has an executive of nine volunteers who are appointed by Mountain Rescue Teams. Our executives bring a wide range of knowledge and experience to the organisation.

Our purpose

Mountain Rescue teams' purpose is Volunteering to Save Lives, Any Hour, Any Day, Any Weather. SMR is here to help MRTs carry this out so they can focus on saving lives.

Our business

We are a central point of contact for teams and external stakeholders, which involves—

- Fundraising
- National training programme
- Provision of insurance
- Provision of essential equipment
- Organisation and facilitation of meetings of member teams
- Representation to government, public agencies and other stakeholders at Scottish and UK level

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, CALL 999 ASK FOR POLICE THEN MOUNTAIN RESCUE



OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY 2017

JANUARY

SMR Chairman Damon Powell and others take part in a day filming for the Countryfile Winter Diaries [img 01].

FEBRUARY

Oban MRT (Mountain Rescue Team) is out all night on Stob Ghabar rescuing a hillwalker from near the summit [img 02 Oban MRT].

Borders Search And Rescue Unit and Tweed Valley MRT worked with Mountain Rescue England and Wales teams to rescue 10 casualties who were in difficulty in the Cheviot hills.

MARCH

Oban MRT spends all night out carrying out a rescue that involves multiple lowers.

Galloway MRT hosts a tri-nations MRT exercise with more than 60 rescuers from Scotland, England and Ireland: scenarios included a kayak rescue, a cragfast climber, a mountain bike incident and a stretcher carry. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency supported with an aircraft attending.

Galloway MRT hosted an SMR rigging training weekend with team members from Galloway MRT, Moffat MRT and Borders Search and Rescue Unit attending [img 04].

APRIL

Assynt MRT shut the A894 road by Quinag so that Coastguard Rescue Helicopter 948 could land and collect team members to go to the assistance of a walker with a broken ankle on the mountain. Hillwalkers, including someone who was on their final Corbett, abandoned their plans to assist with the stretcher carry.

MAY

Lomond MRT rescued someone from Finnich Glen.

JUNE

Assynt MRT had call-outs on three consecutive Mondays; to three fishermen, a walker on the Cape Wrath Trail and a missing elderly gent.

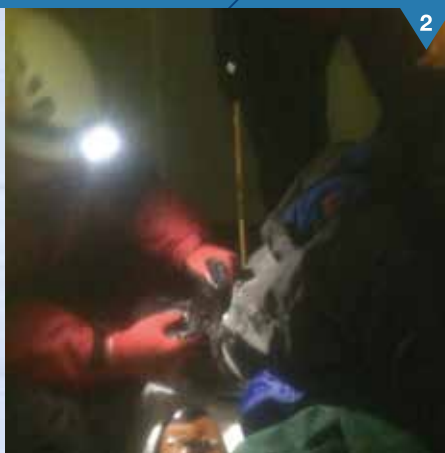
Braemar MRT cooperating with neighbouring team Cairngorm MRT is involved in a 100m lower and rescue of a fallen climber on the Shelter Stone crag overlooking the Loch Avon basin in the Cairngorms.

JULY

The AW189 aircraft comes into operational service out of Prestwick, serving the south of Scotland. Several teams have familiarisation training with the aircraft.

JULY - AUGUST

Tweed Valley MRT has three call-outs in three days.



OTHER ACTIVITY IN 2017

- Tweed Valley MRT and Poppy the SARDA Southern rescue dog do a school visit for 99 seven-year-olds at South Morningside Primary School.
- On its very first trip to Scotland the brand new AW189 aircraft calls in to the SMR general meeting in Birnam and gives MR people from across the country opportunity to look over the new aircraft [img 3: Yasmin Harrower].
- Killin MRT celebrates its 50th anniversary at its AGM with a presentation from Chief Superintendent McAllister of Police Scotland.
- Killin MRT commemorates the 30th anniversary of the death of its team leader, Harry Lawrie, who died when the helicopter he was in came down on Ben More, Crianlarich. Harry's son Gordon took part.
- Several teams including Lomond MRT and SARDA Southern Scotland attended the Skills for Hills event organised by Mountaineering Scotland in Glasgow. Lomond MRT leaves early to respond to a call-out.
- Moffat MRT supports the Criffel hill race.
- Galloway MRT installs a public access defibrillator on the external wall of its base.
- Niven Easter walks from Kirk Yetholm to Cape Wrath along the Scottish watershed to raise money for SMR, a 42-day walk covering 536 miles.
- Dundonnell MRT opens a new base in Dingwall, improving its capability in the east of a large operational area.
- Hazel Strachan walks 100 Munros in 30 days to raise money for SMR.
- Lomond MRT celebrates its 50th birthday, the evening is disrupted by a call-out.
- Charity Car chooses SMR to be its charity of the month.
- Aberdeen MRT holds its annual sponsored walk to raise funds for the team [img 05].
- Princess Anne, the Princess Royal, visits Dundonnell MRT's new base and meets team members.
- Jessica Scriven and Chris Wood walk the TGO challenge coast to coast and raise money for Scottish Mountain Rescue.
- Assynt MRT and SCRO hold joint training at the Bone Caves in Inchnadampf [img 06].
- Dundonnell MRT suffers a break-in at its west coast base and has a team radio, a computer and other items stolen.



OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY 2017 (CONTINUES)

AUGUST

Lomond MRT rescues someone from Finnich Glen.

SEPTEMBER

Dundonnell MRT is out overnight searching for five mountain bikers.

OCTOBER

Arrochar MRT, Killin MRT and Oban MRTs take part in a multi-day search for a cyclist who goes missing south of Rannoch Moor.

Dundonnell MRT coordinates and is involved in an overnight search for a missing walker along with Torridon MRT, Kintail Kintail MRT, RAF Lossiemouth and SARDA Scotland. The walker turns up around midday on the second day.

Moffat MRT hosts a joint training exercise with Galloway MRT.

Lomond MRT rescues someone from Finnich Glen.

Aberdeen MRT cooperating with Braemar and Tayside MRTs locates and rescues missing persons on Broad Cairn.

Simultaneously, three Aberdeen MRT members are first on scene at a road traffic accident and provide immediate assistance.



NOVEMBER

Galloway MRT is called out to assist a family of seven people missing in the hills.

DECEMBER

Ochils MRT assists a walker with an injured ankle.

Killin MRT assists three walkers who get in to difficulty descending Stob Binnean.

Galloway MRT is called out to assist people in a vehicle who were following sat nav and became stuck in mountainous terrain.



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OTHER ACTIVITY IN 2017 (CONTINUES)

- Working with Mountaineering Scotland and Liz Smith MSP, SMR holds a reception in the Scottish Parliament. The event is attended by two cabinet secretaries, several ministers and approximately 12 MSPs.
- Emily Woodroffe, who had an accident in Torridon in 2016 that resulted in a lower leg amputation, walks the Yorkshire Three Peaks to raise money for Torridon MRT.
- SMR holds its annual training conference at the National Outdoor Training Centre, Glenmore Lodge. Around 80 people take part in two days of training workshops.
- Dundonnell MRT is gifted two four-wheel drive vehicles by The Highland Cross.
- Phia Steyn swims the length of Loch Ness to raise money for SMR.
- SMR takes part in a Facebook live event hosted by Mountaineering Scotland involving a discussion on the theme of getting ready for winter with SMR, Glenmore Lodge, Scottish Avalanche Information Service and Mountaineering Scotland.
- Torridon MRT announces it has successfully raised all the money needed to build a new base.
- Skye MRT starts selling a Skye MRT supporter neck warmer to raise funds for the team.
- Aberdeen MRT has a base plaque stolen from the apex of the gable of its building at Derry Lodge. This would have required a ladder in a remote spot so some planning was likely. Mysteriously the plaque reappears in the same spot some weeks later.
- SMR organises a casualty care assessment in Crianlarich with more than 60 people present.
- Lomond, Ochils and Killin MRTs take part in a joint exercise with more than 70 MR and police personnel involved.



Taking the mountain to the meeting

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A parliamentary reception

In September, working with friends and partners Mountaineering Scotland and with the support of Liz Smith MSP who hosted the event, SMR organised a parliamentary reception at Holyrood.

In association with the event Liz Smith also lodged a motion in parliament recognising and praising the contribution of mountaineering activities and mountain rescue services to the nation's economy and well-being, which received the cross-party backing of 36 MSPs. And in addition SMR had two vehicles outside the parliament building all day and had the opportunity to discuss mountain rescue with a number of MSPs and members of the public who came along.

More than 100 people attended the evening reception, including MSPs from across the political spectrum, cabinet secretaries, and ministers, as well as representatives of many MRTs from across the country. Guests included representatives from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Scottish Government, St John Scotland, Glenmore Lodge, Mountain Training Scotland and many, many others.

Speakers included Liz Smith and cabinet secretary for justice Michael Matheson, a former mountain rescue team member. Representatives of both SMR and Mountaineering Scotland shared their perspectives on the vital work done by Scotland's voluntary mountain rescue teams, as well as the importance of raising awareness of mountain safety and improving the skills of the growing number of hillwalkers and climbers enjoying Scotland's mountains each year.

SMR is grateful to Liz Smith and Mountaineering Scotland for their part in making the event such a fantastic success.

Images (names follow left to right):

1. Liz Smith MSP and Tavish Scott MSP
2. Damon Powell with Liz Smith MSP
3. Andy Rockall, Damon Powell, Yasmin Harrower and Moira Weatherstone (SMR)
4. Scott Stevens (Aberdeen MRT)
5. David Monteith, DP, LS, SS, Damon Powell, Liz Smith MSP, Scott Stevens (Aberdeen MRT) and David Gibson





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What is it like to be in a Mountain Rescue Team?

One of the questions MRT members get asked repeatedly is what is it like to be in a team?

We are grateful to Scott Stevens of Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team who answered that question at the parliamentary reception with these words.

When I was talked into doing this, or I should say, asked to explain what it's like to be in a team, and then told I had five — then four — minutes to do so, I realised that I simply cannot do that.

I can't explain what it is like to sit in a helicopter flying deep into the Eastern Cairngorms on a winter night when only a few hours before you had been out for an evening walk with your youngest son and dog several miles from your house.

I can't explain the feeling of having to leave for a call-out with your heavily pregnant wife crying in the kitchen: you had promised her a much-needed break from an energetic toddler and broke the promise to go the aid of a stranger.

I can't explain the doubt or uncertainty when making decisions: we are our own harshest critics.

The feeling of "what ifs"...the frustrations when the radios won't work properly or the chopper can't make it.

I can't explain the relief we feel when there is a successful outcome to a call-out or the feeling when it doesn't go

well...we know that the missing person is out there, but they're beneath the snow somewhere. On other occasions; how do you explain to team members that however sad it may seem, some folk just don't want to be saved.

I can't explain the look of relief on a loved one's face when you come back safe through the front door.

I can't explain the annoyance when you realise your wife has pinched your 'hill chocolate' or the kids have been playing with your gear and you find Lego in your winter boots and Thomas the Tank Engine in your pocket: he's there for luck, apparently.

I can't explain that without a supportive and loving network that being in Mountain Rescue is almost impossible: it's not just the team members who make the sacrifices, and your family will swell and speak with pride when folks ask why you are on the hill...again.

How do I explain the camaraderie of being in a rescue team with guys and girls who give up so much with (usually) little complaint, who need to think on their feet and overcome when things don't go to plan or they lose communications with and sight of each other?

How can I explain their continued professionalism and aspiration to be the best at what they do? Or the in-house and team rivalry that promotes some robust and healthy competition?

Where do I begin to explain the bewilderment of confronting a flooded

village, knowing that we had friends among a community whose world is upside down and try as the team did to help, the feeling of futility in the face of such force.

I certainly can't explain the humour that entertains you in the bothy, but also gets you through the dark nights!

Team members don't do this for accolades or recognition: their reward is being able to help.

As a team leader, I not only have my home family to attend to but my team family too and I never cease to be amazed by their commitment. I'm not sure I always get the balance right but I try. I have spent seven out of eight wedding anniversaries with the team; I guess my wife understands.

I CAN tell you that it's a privilege to be in such a team and to be part of Scottish Mountain Rescue; and I can tell you that five minutes is simply not enough to explain what it is like to be on a rescue team.

Scott Stevens

Team leader, Aberdeen MRT



A special bond ...

Tiso and Scottish Mountain Rescue

North, south, east and west, Scotland is a land blessed with countless miles of wild country and mountainous terrain, hills, lochs and forests. Climber, walker, skier, cyclist or kayaker, this rugged landscape has an irresistible, magnetic pull on all with a passion for exploring the great outdoors.

However, even the most experienced and well prepared individual or group can encounter difficulties. For the past 53 years, countless outdoor enthusiasts have been thankful for the timely, skilled assistance of the highly trained, kind hearted and hardy volunteers (and RAF and police teams) who comprise Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR).

For over 50 years, the Tiso family and outdoor business have both enjoyed a very special bond with Scottish Mountain Rescue. A practical and collaborative relationship, it goes far beyond simply offering financial support. Indeed, the family's involvement started in 1969, when as a Scotland-based, prominent climber of his generation, the late Graham Tiso, co-founder of what is now Scotland's leading outdoor retail specialist, was working as a volunteer winter instructor at Glenmore Lodge. During his time at Glenmore, Graham was involved in some serious rescues in the Cairngorms, often undertaken in very challenging winter conditions.

His son, Chris, the current CEO of Tiso Group and a keen skier and mountaineer has also followed in his father's footsteps: when during the late 1980s and at school in Perthshire, he was a member and leader of the Rannoch Mountain Rescue Team.

This time spent as an active volunteer only further cemented Chris' huge respect for the dedication, courage and skills of Scotland's small army of selfless volunteers, who day or night and whatever the weather conditions, respond to calls for help.



The Tiso family's involvement with Scottish Mountain Rescue started in 1969, when the late Graham Tiso was working as a volunteer winter instructor at Glenmore Lodge.



Today, as ever increasing numbers of enthusiasts enjoy Scotland's mountains and wild places, Tiso is aware that such popularity can potentially lead to a greater number of incidents requiring the response of Scottish Mountain Rescue and its partners.

There can be no doubt that the role of Scottish Mountain Rescue remains as relevant today as ever. The Tiso family and the business are very proud to be part of the charity's history and its present work and looking forward, very much hope to see that special relationship further endure and prosper.



Chris Tiso is a Mountaineer, adventurer and the CEO of Tiso Group.



SKYE MRT... A fond farewell



Tributes were paid by team members at our AGM to Gerry Akroyd, who stepped down after 46 years as team leader. In that time he managed over 1,500 call-outs, usually leading from the front in extremely difficult conditions.

Countless walkers and climbers were brought down from the hills, mostly safe and well, many with severe injuries, and scores who had tragically lost their lives.

Gerry became team leader in 1972, and quickly began increasing the size and ability of the team. He often practised alone in the Cuillin Hills, with the RAF helicopter crews to establish approaches and winching sites, which led to many audacious rescues. He borrowed techniques and equipment from "rope access" to upgrade the team's rigging systems - this has now been widely accepted across Scottish Mountain Rescue.

On a national level, Gerry was a key figure in pushing for the radio networks and government funding which has made such a difference to every Scottish rescue team, and he always fought in the interest of Skye MRT, convinced that we had unique problems to deal with.

In 2010 Gerry was awarded an MBE for services to mountain rescue in the New Year Honours list. Gerry's wife Joan, and two sons Graham and Mark, have all been team members, and were also praised for their huge support and contributions over the years.

In memory

Skye MRT member dies on a hillwalk with mountain rescue colleagues en route to SMR general meeting.

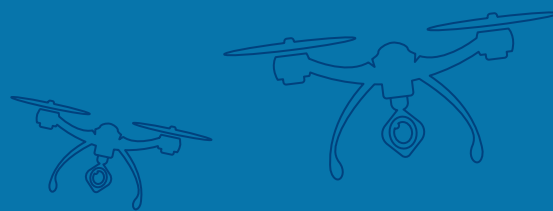
"Stuart Ashton lost his life in the pursuit of something he was most passionate about. Stuart touched the hearts of everyone he came into contact with. He was always smiling and always enthusiastic. His passing has left a void that will be very difficult to fill.

Stuart's commitment to Skye MRT, SARDA Scotland and Scottish Mountain Rescue was second to none."

— Skye MRT

Skye MRT would like to offer Stuart's family, and especially Tania, their support and dearest heartfelt condolences. Stand down buddy, we will miss you.

We would also like to thank Kintail MRT, Skye and Lochalsh Police and the Cluanie Inn for their understanding, help and support.



Use of small unmanned aircraft in Land Search & Rescue

Small unmanned aircraft, SUAs, or more commonly, drones, have rapidly been evolving over the last 10 years, and, as with all new technology, the curve of evolution is steep with increased functionality and falling prices enabling a wide market base to be established.

Hobbyists and commercial photographers have been using these off the shelf 'retail' aircraft for a number of years. In recent months, SUA use across the emergency services sector has increased with recognition that these aircraft provide a lower cost alternative to helicopter deployment. In the voluntary Land Search and Rescue community across the UK, Ireland and further afield, a number of initiatives are under way to develop and enhance SUA capability in the Land Search And Rescue space.

In 2017, Scottish Mountain Rescue was awarded funding from Adam Family Foundation to carry out its own feasibility study. The feasibility study is drawing to a close with the overriding conclusion that although SUAs aren't a fix all solution for every search, there are many advantages to having an SUA capability in a Land Search and Rescue context. Dave Wright, chair of the SUA Feasibility Study added



The SMR SUA Feasibility Study into the use of SUAs has allowed experienced SUA aviators and mountain rescue personnel to join together in a structured project to look at what SUA capability would be right to support Land Search and Rescue activity in Scotland. I genuinely think that the introduction of SUAs into the Search and Rescue toolbox will be the most significant enhancement of capability since the introduction of search dogs in the 1960s.



Scottish Mountain Rescue is incredibly grateful to Adam Family Foundation for its generous support of this project.

The most frequent tasking of MRTs is in response to a missing person enquiry. In 2017 SMR member teams responded to 50 reports of missing people.





The Story of a call-out

Donald MacRae, team leader of Dundonnell MRT reports on a call-out from his perspective.

21:30 hours

It's Friday night after a long week at work and I'm thinking about heading for bed. The phone rings. It's the duty sergeant at one of the local police stations. A call has been received by the police from a lady whose husband has not returned from a day's walk. A local police officer is with the lady gathering information. The chap had set off at 10am and was due back at 7pm after climbing a Corbett. The story so far... a man in his seventies; an experienced hillwalker having climbed all the Munros, set off on a six or seven-hour walk. He was well equipped and dressed in dark clothing. I call members of my family to say I won't make our planned get-together tomorrow.

22:30 hours

I study the maps of the area and familiarise myself with the route. I contact the keeper of the estate to see if the car of the missing person is still parked up: it is. I call the duty sergeant in Inverness to update and to request a forward planning chat with the Aeronautical Rescue Control Centre (ARCC) in Fareham. Ten minutes later, I take a call from one of the duty officers in the ARCC; thankfully the ringing doesn't wake the kids or my wife. We discuss options to engage an aircraft. I leave ARCC to speak to the aircrew.

23:30 hours

I call ARCC and agree that rescue helicopter 951 from Inverness is tasked to carry out an air search of possible routes the missing person could have taken. Conditions are good for a forward looking infra-red (FLIR) search. We further agree a rendezvous (RV) for tomorrow at 7.30am. I call the police to update them on my plan.

01:30 hours

My one-year-old daughter wakes up with a sickness bug. My wife and I help sort her out and get her back to sleep.

02:30 hours

The air search is completed and nothing is found. I speak to the air crew and agree to recommence the air search at 7.30am. I start to plan for a daylight search. Based on the information given I decide to commence a search at first light, 7am. The local police officer calls to say he is now finished his shift and is heading home. I call the police to request an Airwave handheld radio; this is agreed and I quietly leave the house and drive to Dingwall police station to collect it and then drive to the RV.

04:30 hours

The area is vast with few roads and no mobile phone connections. I call the Search & Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA) to request two dogs. I also call RAF Lossiemouth Mountain Rescue Team to attend. They are in Aberfeldy so it will take some time for them to reach the area. I brief their Team Leader on the search areas as we will have no direct contact with them once they are deployed. I then phone my call-out officers to call out our team to meet at 7am at the RV. Because we cover a large geographic area it can take team members over two-and-a-half hours just to drive to a RV.

07:00 hours

The first of our team arrive at the RV. I deploy them to walk the missing person's route, out and in. Rescue 951 arrives and begins an air search. The SARDA dogs and other members of our team arrive and are deployed in search areas.

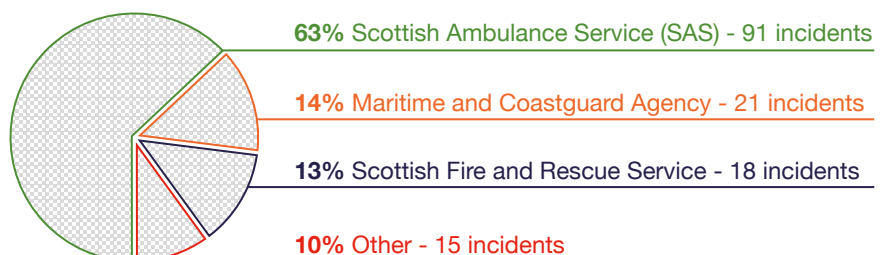
09:30 hours

By now all land crews are deployed. The helicopter has flown back to its base in Inverness to refuel and has returned to continue air searches.

Mountain Rescue Teams are called out by and work closely with Police Scotland to resolve every incident.

In addition, teams worked closely with a number of other partner agencies.

 **100% Police Scotland – all incidents**





The Story of a call-out

Donald MacRae continues...

11:00 hours

The land and air search continues. I walk to the keeper's house and call Torridon Mountain Rescue Team to assist in the developing search; I am very aware that we will lose daylight at about 7pm. I call the police and give them an update. I then phone our call-out officers to ask them to contact team members who may have missed the first call.

12:30 hours

Rescue 951 departs and flies back to its base for a refuel and crew change. Search teams complete sector searches and are deployed to other areas as the search widens.

14:00 hours

I call ARCC to request Rescue 951. I am told this will be their last sortie with us. I call the police and give them an update. We start discussions about extending the search and moving onto day two.

15:00 hours

I look across the loch and see a sole walker. Having not seen anyone walk past us this morning I begin to wonder if this might be the missing person. A short time later he emerges at our RV and is confirmed as the missing person. He is cared for by a team member while I call the police and inform them of his safe return. As I cannot contact the aircrew directly, I call ARCC to allow them to make contact with them. The aircraft returns and lands at the RV. I brief the crew and request they 'fly high' and make radio contact with all hill parties to return to base. We have a great relationship with air rescue crew and they agree to fly all hill teams off the hill before they return to base, saving us several hours of walking.

17:00 hours

After thanking all search teams, Dundonnell MRT heads to a local hotel for a meal.

18:30 hours

I return home and start bath and bed time with my kids. At 8pm I head off to bed having been awake for 36 hours.

The next day I complete a write-up of the rescue for SMR statistical records. I then write a short press release and publish this to all our press contacts. A post of the incident is put on our Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Monday

I respond to emails and phone calls at work about the rescue as journalists prepare a story.

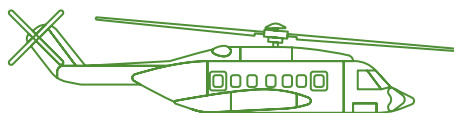
Following Sunday

I hold a short debrief around the call-out at our next exercise.

Donald MacRae

Team leader, Dundonnell MRT

MRTs work closely with helicopter services across the country.



In 2017 helicopters were used in—

140 INCIDENTS

More than one helicopter may attend an incident. Many aircraft had more than one role.





How not to become a statistic

Mark Leyland, SMR statistician offers some light hearted advice on some serious issues.

As I look out of my window, there is still snow on the hills, even though the month changed from March to April at midnight. That was the deadline for teams affiliated to Scottish Mountain Rescue to submit their statistics on the previous year.

For mountaineers there is some welcome news. Early indications are that the number of mountain rescue incidents has fallen in 2017 compared with previous years.

The patterns of incidents and call-outs is similar to those in past years, and there are no real surprises at the moment.

Scottish Mountain Rescue has been gathering statistics for a long time, and, thanks to this large quantity of information, we are now even more prepared than the best algorithms in predicting where accidents will happen and thus how to avoid them.

Based on the findings from 2017, here are some tips on avoiding the attentions of mountain rescue.

01



Choose when to go carefully

Across the country, MR members have learnt over the years to have an early tea on a Saturday. This has been based on intuition, but 2017 statistics confirm that Saturday is the busiest day for Mountain Rescue Teams.

By avoiding mountaineering on a Saturday, you will therefore reduce your risk of having to call out a team to help you. Sunday is slightly less prone to call-outs, but if you really want to reduce the chances, then Thursday is the day to go for with less than half Saturday's number.

Time of year is also important. From Easter onwards, the chance of having an MR contact increases towards a peak in July or perhaps August. November and December are almost always quieter times for teams and are therefore recommended.

02



Location, location, location

Scotland is vast and has a huge variety of mountains and landscapes.

The Highlands - from Dalwhinnie and Glencoe northwards - invariably have the largest number of incidents in any year, 71 recorded by the SMR Teams in 2017.

Other hot spots are the South East Highlands, Tayside and Argyll. You will be much safer heading to Arran or Galloway where there is less MR activity, or have you thought about Lanarkshire, where no mountain rescues took place last year?

03



How steep should I go?

Slightly counter-intuitive this one.

Every year, 70 to 75% of mountain call-outs are to assist summer hillwalkers. By contrast, hillwalking in the winter only occupies 20% of incidents whilst rock climbing, scrambling and snow/ice climbing at 5%, 4% and 1% respectively, are low.

Of course, if you only go out as a member of a Mountain Rescue Team then your chances of an accident are below 1%.

Top tip then, give up the hillwalking and stick to the steep stuff.



How not to become a statistic

continues...

04



Move house

The place that you call home can have a huge influence on your mountain rescue probabilities. Sixteen different nationalities, mainly European, were rescued.

Moving to Holland or France would reduce your odds, but you don't need to go that far. In the year 2017, 172 UK nationals were recorded as being rescued. Of these, 103 admitted to living in Scotland, 32 in England, and 37 didn't admit to anything.

Moving to Northern Ireland might be the nearest way to be a little safer.

05



Older and wiser

There isn't a lot we can do about our age, but it may be a relief to know that generally as we age, our chances of calling on that MRT, generally reduces. The 2017 data followed previous trends of a peak incident age of between 26 and 35-years-old.

Previous years have shown a second peak at retirement age, but this was absent this time so perhaps older *is* wiser (and safer).

06



Preparation

Now the serious stuff. What actually causes the incident.

There isn't anything we can do about the main cause of mountain accidents, which remains a simple slip or trip. This accounts for nearly 30% of incidents.

Being lost and navigational errors also consistently account for 30%, but having the skills to avoid these is something that all mountain-goers should acquire.

Not sticking with your partner, not having the right equipment, and not reading the weather runes correctly all catch people out and are of course avoidable.

More good news.

Despite all that can befall us on the mountains, over half of the incidents resolved in 2017 had no one hurt or injured.

Nearly a quarter of incidents did involve a fracture or sprain, and not surprisingly the majority of these were to the lower leg or ankle. It is worthwhile being prepared for this type of injury wherever possible.

On top of all the mountain-based activity, MRTs who are based in their communities also get called to a range of other incidents such as missing person searches, assisting the ambulance service and resilience work.

In 2017, volunteers gave up over 20,000 hours of their time for rescues and many more hours of training as well.

In all, SMR member teams responded to 423 incidents during the year.

And always remember, in the event of an emergency:

- CALL 999
- ASK FOR POLICE
- THEN MOUNTAIN RESCUE



TORRIDON



Project Torridon Rescue fundraising success

Torridon Mountain Rescue Team was delighted to hit its 2017 target to raise funds for its new search and rescue centre in the heart of Torridon village.

Unlike most of the other search and rescue teams in Scotland, TMRT has not, to date, had its own dedicated base. It has operated from a walk-in cupboard in Torridon Youth Hostel for a long time but, in recent years, the team decided that it was critical to establish its own rescue centre.

This new base is needed to facilitate the co-ordination and implementation of rescues, provide appropriate accommodation for looking after casualties, friends and families during incidents, create adequate and safe storage for the team's equipment and give the team indoor training and briefing areas.

The building project became possible due principally to the availability of a site in the heart of Torridon village and the generous decision by St John Scotland to allocate significant funding to the project.

There was still a funding shortfall though and so TMRT launched a fundraising campaign – “Project Torridon Rescue” – in March 2017 to raise the remaining money.

The team itself engaged in a number of initiatives. Particular credit should be given to our then 73 year old chairman, Gerry McPartlin, who completed the London Marathon - running it sufficiently quickly to qualify automatically for the 2018 event –

for sponsorship. The team ran and cycled the marathon leg of the Celtman Ironman race for sponsorship and Ryan Maclean went a step further by doing the Applecross Duathlon, the Loch Ness marathon and the Bealach Mor Sportive as well. Claire Ross and Orla Maclean raised around £5,000 from a silent auction.

Very special mention must be given to the kind people at Innogy, the developer of the Grudie hydropower scheme in TMRT's operational area, who donated a critical £50,000 to close the funding gap on the new base project.

As TMRT's current chair, Richard Cockburn, said at the time, “We thank Innogy wholeheartedly for providing this donation which is critical for the construction of our new base. Without the initial funding and support from St John Scotland, this dream would not have been realised and now the additional funding from Innogy will allow us to push the start button”.

A range of other donors were also extremely generous. There are too many donors to list in the space available (and some donors wish to remain anonymous) but just some of our donors were the Lochluichart Community Trust, the Robertson Trust, the Prince of Wales's Charitable Foundation, Emily Woodroffe and many, many others.

If you donated to TMRT's fundraising appeal then the team would like to take this opportunity to express its deep gratitude to all of you – without your kindness, TMRT would not be getting a new base!



New Torridon Mountain Rescue Team base

Following the successful fundraising appeal described on the previous page, work is well under way on Torridon Mountain Rescue Team's new search and rescue centre. What will it look like and what will we use it for?

TMRT engaged Reynolds Architecture (www.reynolds-architecture.com) to come up with designs for an operational base which would be multi-functional, primarily facilitating the co-ordination of rescues, accommodating casualties, friends and families during incidents, providing safe storage for equipment and giving the team indoor training and briefing areas.

A conceptual image of the finished base is shown above. Some of you will have seen this image already during our fundraising appeal, Project Torridon Rescue.

The new base will have a mess room, control room, medical/interview room, stores, drying room, sleeping area, WC/shower facilities and a large indoors assembly area for training, changing and preparing for, and ungearing after, call-outs.

The team is very grateful to its neighbours, not least the Loch Torridon Community Centre and the National Trust for Scotland, for working so hard with us to get the project off the ground.

On timing, we will be up and running in the new base later in 2018. At that point, the team will say a very big thank you to Hostelling Scotland (formerly the Scottish Youth Hostel Association) for hosting us for over 40 years in Torridon Youth Hostel. We will miss our walk-in cupboard and the warm and helpful hospitality of Mat, his fellow staff and all those who have preceded them over the years but we suspect that they won't miss our muddy boots...





Belinda DiQuinzio

Borders Search and Rescue Unit



From the outset it has exceeded my expectations in terms of the fulfilment I get from it on a personal level.



Why did you join a Mountain Rescue Team?

I'm happiest outdoors in the hills pushing myself physically and mentally, and am very passionate about Scotland's natural heritage, most especially its mountain landscapes. However, I am also very interested in people and am naturally inclined towards reaching out to those in need. I have done a lot of volunteer work throughout the years, mostly in nature conservation, but as a long-standing admirer of the volunteer mountain rescue effort in this country I thought it might be an ideal outlet for all of my key hobbies and interests. From the outset it has exceeded my expectations in terms of the fulfilment I get from it on a personal level. Obviously it's not all blue sky weather, drinking cups of tea in the sunshine against a backdrop of pristine, snow-capped peaks.... more often, it necessitates quite a bit of hard work, being prepared for late nights and interrupted weekends, trudging up tae yer oxters in bracken 'n' bog and getting very wet indeed. But it is nonetheless extremely stimulating and satisfying — and I love it!

What are the good and bad bits about mountain rescue?

There are so many rewarding aspects of being involved in mountain rescue. For instance, being part of a very close-knit team, where each individual brings their unique personality and experiences to the mix. Witnessing the dedication people demonstrate in attending training, sharing knowledge, and crucially, supporting each other. Learning new skills and improving on existing ones under the superb tutelage of more experienced team members, which you can also transfer to your own pursuits. Meeting like-minded people both within your own team and in others, and the links forged with complementary emergency services sharing a common endeavour and best practice. The appreciation felt by those that are assisted by our team members and their loved ones often in very distressing circumstances is very humbling and reinforces our determination to do the best job we can when we're called.

As a woman, I'm able to join a Mountain Rescue Team as an equal member. What was traditionally a male-dominated culture is now inclusive, without boundaries, where everybody is judged on their merits, i.e. their technical abilities, fitness and experience.

If the bad points were of enough significance to commit to paper, I wouldn't be a volunteer. I like to concentrate on the positives, of which there are many!

What is it like to be on a call-out? What's it like to be part of a team?

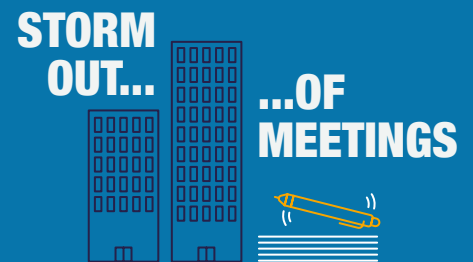
Being summoned for a call-out can trigger a vast array of emotional reactions, but for me the predominant ones are eagerness (to be put into action), and concern (for the casualty/ies). It's what we put the many hours of training in for, but being deployed for real can be both exhilarating and intimidating at the same time.

For all the anticipation, you want to be fully prepared and remain calm in order to make rational decisions in what can be a confusing, rapidly-evolving picture, often set against adverse and hazardous conditions. This starts as soon as you jump into the car, having to put the reins on the adrenaline rush in order to get to the rendezvous site in one piece! Regularly attending training and exercises provides a great foundation for when you really need the necessary skills to kick in automatically. Moreover, it helps to build relationships with your team colleagues and get a sense of what each others' individual strengths are, and how to best engage them. Being flexible and willing to fulfil any task that's required to get the casualties and each of your colleagues back to safety is absolutely vital; after all, it's not about "individualism" but about the larger picture.

I have met some of the most amazing, selfless, enthusiastic and funny people in my time with BSARU (Borders Search and Rescue Unit) that I have ever encountered. These wonderful people are my team colleagues, and their families, who play an important part of what we do by supporting us in countless ways. There exists a tremendous sense of bonhomie and inclusiveness that is very addictive and has made such a positive impact on my experience of volunteering for mountain rescue. With so much talent and skill amongst them, and such willingness to share their knowledge with other team members, I consider it an absolute privilege to be part of this team and the wider SMR community.

MRT MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS READY.

READY TO—



Volunteering to save lives

Any Day, Any Hour, Any Weather...

**SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE IS ALWAYS ON CALL.
IN 2017 THERE WERE...**



MRT MEMBERS



DAYS...



DAYS ON CALL



We are proud to support our member teams



SUPPORTERS

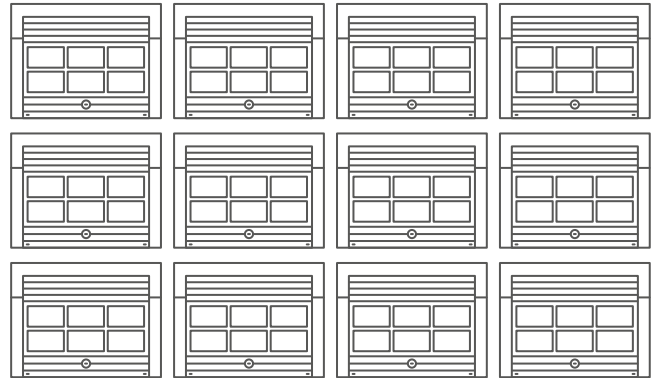


For many years St John Scotland has been the largest charitable donor to Mountain Rescue Teams in Scotland, by 2020 this will amount to over £3.2million in funding, mainly through the provision of bases and vehicles.

The support of St John Scotland continued throughout 2017, a year in which it transferred ownership of bases to the following SMR member teams — Aberdeen, Arran, Arrochar, Dundonnell (two bases), Galloway, Lomond, Moffat, Oban, Ochils and Skye (two bases).

The long-standing support of St John Scotland to mountain rescue is a significant part of the reason that teams have modern buildings and capable four wheel drive vehicles.

The support of St John Scotland is a massively positive contribution to mountain rescue in Scotland and thank the organisation for its continued commitment.



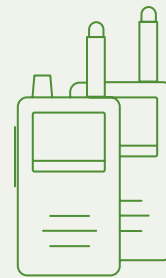
**UK SAR Volunteer
Training Fund**

The UKSAR Volunteer Training Fund administered by the Charities Aid Foundation generously support the national training programme offered by SMR.

We offer skills-based training specific to MRT members that is specific to mountain rescue. Topics include search management, technical rope work and avalanche rescue. In 2017 we were able to offer 311 places on 19 courses which took place across Scotland.

This fund also supports the annual training conference, which in 2017 took place at the National Outdoor Training Centre, Glenmore Lodge when up to 100 members of SMR came together for a weekend of workshops on mountain rescue related topics.

Our courses and the conference are delivered by approximately 40 people, expert in related skills. So as well as the funders we thank them for making our training so highly relevant to our purpose.



Clear, concise communication is of utmost importance to MRTs.

In 2017 SMR raised £1million to modernise the MRT radio equipment.

Of course radio equipment and training is just one small part of the bigger picture. Procurement, maintenance and testing of life-saving equipment is a never-ending challenge for MRTs.



JD Foundation, which chose Mountain Rescue as beneficiaries for the carrier bag charge generated through Blacks outdoor shops.



Go Outdoors and Tiso which, through the sale of supporter badges at their stores across Scotland continue to support Scottish Mountain Rescue

THE JD FOUNDATION AND SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE

The JD Foundation is a registered charity founded by JD Sports Fashion plc in December 2015. The mission of the Foundation is to support charities working with disadvantaged young people in the UK. There are currently thirteen charities supported by the JD Foundation, two of them are our environmental charities Scottish Mountain Rescue and Mountain Rescue England and Wales.

As an international multichannel retailer of sports fashion and outdoors brands, The JD Group also includes leading outdoor retailers Blacks, Millets, Tiso and Ultimate Outdoors. Therefore, the JD Foundation is delighted to support Scottish Mountain Rescue and Mountain Rescue England and Wales through monies raised on the sale of carrier bags across its stores in Scotland, England and Wales.

The JD Foundation receives 100% of the net proceeds from the sale of bags in Scotland; 50% of that money goes directly to Scottish Mountain Rescue with the remaining 50% distributed across the youth charities.

Since its launch The JD Foundation has donated £1.84million for the nominated charities, £140,553.00 going to Scottish Mountain Rescue to support the teams of volunteers and their invaluable work to save lives and promote safe mountaineering.

Volunteering to save lives



Volunteers are the heart of Scottish Mountain Rescue.

They couldn't do what they do without support from people like you.

In 2017, to raise money for Scottish Mountain Rescue people did some amazing and generous things—

- Left legacies, raised money or sent donations in memory of loved ones
- Walked the watershed of Scotland from the Scottish Borders to the North Coast
- Swam the length of Loch Ness
- Summited 100 mountains over 3,000 feet high in 30 days
- Organised a ceilidh

We thank everybody who supported SMR in 2017.

Member teams of Scottish Mountain Rescue could not continue without the generosity of supporters, in a real and practical way this support saves lives.

They give their all.
Please give all you can.

Donate online—

www.scottishmountainrescue.org/donate

or donate direct—

info@scottishmountainrescue.org
01479 861 373



Any Hour, Any Day, Any Weather...



INCIDENTS

An **incident** is defined as a single event that requires the services of an MRT. The resolution of this incident may need several **call-outs** of a team (or teams) for example during a prolonged search.

423 (2016 = 436)

Total number of incidents in 2017.

216 involved the sport of mountaineering



51%

207 were non-mountaineering incidents



49%



CALL-OUTS

642

activations of Teams were recorded during 2017.

Including giving advice, "stand-bys" and multi-day missions...

2016 = 733 2017 = 642

That's an average of **more than two every day!**



HOURS

Mountain rescue volunteers gave up

22,076

of their time during call-outs.

That's the equivalent of one person working **OVER 460** consecutive **48** hour weeks ...

Voluntarily



PEOPLE HELPED

During 2017

553

people were assisted



Also rescued were **four** dogs and **three** sheep!

**SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE IS ALWAYS ON CALL.
IN 2017 THERE WERE...**

850

MRT MEMBERS

365

DAYS...

7,446,000

HOURS ON CALL



We are proud to support our member teams

SMR represents these teams, their contact information can be found on scottishmountainrescue.org.

- Aberdeen MRT
- Arran MRT
- Arrochar MRT
- Assynt MRT
- Borders SAR Unit
- Braemar MRT
- Dundonnell MRT
- Galloway MRT
- Glenelg MRT
- Glenmore Lodge MRT

- Hebrides MRT
- Killin MRT
- Kintail MRT
- Lomond MRT
- Moffat MRT
- Oban MRT
- Ochils MRT
- SARDA (Scotland)
- SARDA (Southern Scotland)
- Scottish Cave Rescue Organisation

- Skye MRT
- Torridon MRT
- Tweed Valley MRT

-
- Police Scotland (Grampian) MRT
 - Police Scotland (Strathclyde) MRT
 - Police Scotland (Tayside) MRT
 - RAF Lossiemouth MRT

SMR works in partnerships with—

- The Scottish Government
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Bristow Helicopters Limited
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- British Oxygen Cylinders
- St John Scotland
- The Home Office



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