



# GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP



## NEWSLETTER

**JANUARY 2013**



### Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group

#### SARCALL Information for Team Members

When you receive a SARCALL message sent by a GCRG Warden, you should, ideally, respond by SMS text message to indicate your availability.

If you are unable to reply by SMS text message, please contact the originating warden directly, using the number given in the SARCALL message, or see overleaf.

Send your SMS text message to **07537 415551**

The SMS text message **MUST** take one of the 3 formats below:

SAR ▲ **Axx** ▲ message if you are available  
 SAR ▲ **Lxx** ▲ message if you have limited availability  
 SAR ▲ **N** ▲ message if you are unavailable

Where

▲ = a space

**xx** = time in minutes until you will arrive at meeting point  
**message** = relevant additional information, free text

Changes to your details? Email [info@gcrg.org.uk](mailto:info@gcrg.org.uk)

### **IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

**GCRG Depot – 01594 827999**

**SARCALL Response Number – 07537415551**

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***GCRG Depot Refurbishment******Training Events******Emergency Services Show******Recycling & GCRG*****NEXT TRAINING EXERCISE**

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013

Clearwell Caves

The plan is to do an underground Round Robin of 4 training sessions with 4 groups + one or two advanced first aid groups working independently. All sessions will be underground beyond the showcave.

**OTHER DATES FOR THE DIARY**

May 2013 – Official opening of the refurbished GCRG depot

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

<b>Chairman</b> Paul W Taylor chairman@gcrg.org.uk 01452 505673 (H) 07803 539945 (M)	<b>Secretary</b> Peter Turier secretary@gcrg.org.uk 01452 539199 (H) 07789 903921 (M)	<b>Treasurer</b> Liz Maisey treasurer@gcrg.org.uk 01666 504647 (H)
<b>Communications Officer</b> Craig Cameron comms@gcrg.org.uk 01594 834481 (H)	<b>Information Officer</b> Gareth Jones info@gcrg.org.uk 01452 532014 (H) 07982 455650 (M)	<b>Training Co-ordinator</b> training@gcrg.org.uk
<b>Equipment Officer</b> Nicky Bayley equipment@gcrg.org.uk 01594 840481 (H) 07790 664278 (M)	<b>Medical Advisor</b> Andy Harp andy@palmcons.co.uk 01594 840481 (H)	
<b>Ordinary Member [Newsletter Editor]</b> Jon Maisey jon.maisey@btinternet.com 01666 504647 (H)	<b>Ordinary Member</b> Dave Appleing Dappleing@aol.com 01242 581385 (H)	<b>Ordinary Member [S&amp;MWCRT liaison]</b> Steve Tomalin smtspeleo@virginmedia.com 01452 883189 (H) 07867 772341 (M)
<b>Ordinary Member</b> Kevin Brockway ozonekev@tiscali.co.uk 0117 9098153 07970 033345 (M)	<b>Ordinary Member</b> Ian Healey ianandrachrtw@hotmail.com 01594 560583 (H) 07795 325831 (M)	

**CALLOUT WARDENS**

<b>Cheltenham / Tewkesbury / North Cotswolds</b>	<b>Maurice Febry</b> 01242 242160 (H)	<b>Dave Appleing</b> 01242 581385 (H) 07804 300598 (M) 01242 669413 (W) 01242 669348 (W)
<b>Bristol / Chepstow</b>	<b>John Elliott</b> 01594 543881 (H) 07714 108118 (M)  <b>Kevin Brockway</b> 01179 098153 (H) 07970 033345 (M) 01454 382133 (W) 01454 382100 x2133 (W)	<b>John Hutchinson</b> 01291 626376 (H) 07854 688624 (M)

<b>Forest of Dean</b>	<p><b>John Berry</b> 01594 822823(H) 07979 791083 (M)</p> <p><b>Greg Jones</b> 01594 827334 (H) 07974 008519 (M)</p> <p><b>Dave Tuffley</b> 01594 824343 (H) 07799 617934 (M) 01452 711852 (W)</p>	<p><b>Cliff Seymour</b> 01594 832717 (H)</p> <p><b>Andy Clark</b> 01600 716970 (H) 07707 992510 (M) 07411 207149 (M) 01594 811370 (W)</p>
<b>Gloucester</b>	<p><b>Steve Tomalin</b> 01452 883189 (H) 07867 772341 (M)</p> <p><b>Pete Turier</b> 01452 539199 (H) 07789 903921 (M) 01452 515764 (W)</p>	<p><b>Paul Taylor</b> 01452 505673 (H) 07803 539945 (M)</p>

## **FORTHCOMING TRAINING**

**3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013**

### **CLEARWELL CAVES**

For the next GCRG Rescue Training we want to pick up on some aspects that came out of the last rescue practice at Wetsink and do further training. Jonathan Wright has kindly allowed us use of Clearwell Caves as a venue and we will be making use of the Ladder Churn and the area beyond it towards Old Ham.

\* Lowering/providing slack with Petzl Rigs in a stretcher hauling exercise on the Ladder Churn Pitch. Possibly incorporating releasable slings and pulleys unless done in another session.

\* Stretcher loading and transportation in confined passage between ladder churn and usual access to semi deep trip.

\* Radios exercise. Focus and content to be determined. Possibly linked to a session on new Electronic T-card system with Keith Edwards.

\* One other underground practical session to be determined.

Lunch will be during a set time break after the second session and may need to be in one agreed location depending on arrangements with the cave owners.

As with recent training days, practice of SARCALL will be made on the morning – please respond even if you can't attend the training. NB After this we will be deleting members from the SARCALL list who have consistently not responded to SARCALL messages for real incidents or training. If you are not receiving SARCALL or need a reminder of how to respond please contact Gareth Jones - [info@gcrg.org.uk](mailto:info@gcrg.org.uk)

The training will take the form of a 'Round Robin' of workshops in small groups plus separate advanced casualty care/first aid scenarios. If you are an advanced first aider or would like to train to become one and would like to either observe or be involved with the first aid scenarios please contact me in advance so we can plan for numbers.

If you would like to be involved as a trainer/organiser for the event please also contact me – [training@gcrg.org.uk](mailto:training@gcrg.org.uk)

More details will follow nearer the time. For now, please put it in your diary. Looking forward to seeing you there.

*Ian Healey*  
(Joint GCRG Training Co-ordinator)

## **REVIEW OF 2012**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW**

For GCRG this has been another very productive year. The work on the refurbishment of the depot has continued and the transformation from what can only be described as a "Hell Hole" (although the general indication is that Hell is hot one can certainly say without any doubt that the depot was not hot!)

Many have helped with this work over the year and considering it has all primarily been completed without any drawings and mostly out of people's heads I don't think anybody can complain about the end result. It might not be to everyone's taste or quite what they would have done but the answer is the opportunity was there for anybody to have their input if they cared to come along. Progress was what was needed and progress is what has been achieved.

What a pleasure it is to now visit the depot and we now do not have to worry about who we take to the place for meetings. We can all be very proud of what we have. Also now with the new heating it does get hot.

Although only minor, the group has had a number of incidents to deal with throughout the year and the changeover to SARCALL as the group's primary method of initial callout by our calling authority and the subsequent use by the wardens as their tool for contacting the membership and passing on information, has been a major step forward.

This year's development of the SARCALL response, whereby those receiving a message can now send a response back into the system, has in my opinion transformed the system. When I first saw it demonstrated I thought it was good and when GCRG took it onboard I thought it was great. Fantastic is how I would describe it now and I have made a point of congratulating those who have developed the system. For GCRG, and I believe all of the cave & MRTs across the UK that are now making use of the system in one form or another, it has set them off along a new road of progress and is certainly one that I would not like to turn back from. I am not sure what it is that has caused it, the work on the Depot, the introduction of SARCALL or something else but whatever it is, the effect for GCRG has been excellent.

Training sessions have been so well supported that we have almost been struggling to find jobs for everybody. I'm not complaining so please keep coming along as it is so much more rewarding for those who put in a lot of time and effort to sort the events out when they have a great response. The general enthusiasm that we are seeing is great on all fronts. Two new wardens, Greg Jones and Kevin Brockway, have joined the team and this, alongside SARCALL is enhancing our response. I hope that during 2013 we can add a few more names to the wardens list.

First Aid training has played a great part in the last year and it is good to see the interest in this is growing. It is a very important part of the group's response and something that I would like to see continue. This year we have again been very lucky to be able to spend some of the government's money on new equipment for the group and this has come primarily in the form of radios and another Slix stretcher (this time, the full '100' version which will sit alongside the '50' version that we purchased last year).

The arrival of this equipment has not only necessitated a lot of work for our Equipment Officer, to integrate this into our existing equipment, but has also prompted a redesign of the layout of the way the equipment is stored at the depot. Also it has produced some equipment that has for GCRG become redundant. However this has not been wasted and a couple of years back we were able to donate some equipment to the Lebanese Cave Rescue via the good relationships that we have through Emma Porter and Mike Clayton. This year we have directed our surplus resources to the Tunisian Cave Rescue Group again via a link established by Emma and Mike. In November I had the pleasure of hosting a visit by two members of the Tunisian Cave Rescue to the depot and then taking them on a short trip into the entrance series of Wet Sink where I explained what we as a group have undertaken is "pre-rescue preparation" by the installation of a number of rescue-rigging anchor Points. On the Sunday, further GCRG members came to the MCRO rescue practice at Clive Copper Mine where alongside the Tunisians and Poles we held a very successful training exercise. Afterwards the large pile of equipment that had been put together by Emma & Mike (including donations from the GCRG, MCRO, Derbyshire CRO and Total Access) was presented to the Tunisians. Quite how they got it all back on the plane I just don't know but it was nice to see how much they appreciated the support.

The year ended with the very successful raffle at the joint Christmas social. This is always well supported by those donating prizes and also those who buy the tickets. I appreciate that there is some degree of pressure applied by the ticket seller but all of the proceeds go to the GCRG and this year were used to purchase a power supply for the new radios. Fund raising is a very important part of the group and when the opportunity is presented for some extra funds this is not something that is turned down. Danny Copeland undertook a sponsored swim at the Cheltenham Lido on Christmas day and this raised almost £34 for the group. Thanks to Danny for this and if you like to join him next year I am sure he will be only too pleased to take you on a few trips in Woolaston Wood to get you used to the cold.

I will end by reiterating my opening line "For GCRG this has been another very productive year" and I hope that we can continue this into 2013 and beyond. Thanks to everybody in the group who has made the year so good for GCRG.

Happy New Year to you all

*Paul Taylor*  
(Chairman)

## **2012 RESCUE INCIDENTS INVOLVING GCRG**

### **6<sup>th</sup> September**

#### **OFD Standby**

Warden Paul Taylor received a late night call from Toby Dryden from the S&MWCRT to inform him that a caving party were overdue from a trip into OFD. An initial search had taken place but had failed to locate the party. A request to place GCRG on standby and prepare a team with experience of OFD was made. With Paul's main home computer out of action he fortunately had the GCRG laptop and made use of this to log into SARCALL and send out an initial message to the wardens to inform them what he was doing and then a message to all of the GCRG members. This produced a good response of available people.

Warden Steve Tomalin was tasked with liaising with Toby at the SWCC and during one call, notification was received over the radio that the party had exited the cave. A call was made back to Paul to inform him and then a further SARCALL message sent out to the group's members informing them to stand down.

### **24<sup>th</sup> October**

#### **Well Fall**

When a builder working on a property at Murrells End, Hartpury, just outside Gloucester, fell 6m down a disused well (when the covering over the top gave way) he had a very lucky escape and fortunately for him the well was empty of water (maybe not the case now following all of the recent rain).

Despite his wheel barrow and tools going down with him he did not sustain any major injuries at the time and was rather remarkably able to summon the assistance of the emergency services from the bottom of the well on his mobile phone. Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service responded to the incident but requested that GCRG attend in-case it proved to be more than had initially been reported.

Receiving the SARCALL activation in Reading, (where they were working at the Emmer Green chalk mine) Steve Tomalin and Paul Taylor were able to respond and undertake the initial GCRG response before handing things over to a local warden, Dave Appleing, who was able to use SARCALL and start the incident log.

Jo Clarke was despatched to the incident and liaised with GFRS who lowered a ladder down to the casualty and despite requesting that he remain at the bottom until he had been fully examined by a paramedic, he climbed out of the well and then complained of a back injury and was taken off to hospital. The GCRG incident controller was kept informed and sent out a further SARCALL message to let all of the rest of the wardens know that the situation had been dealt with. The nature of the incident did not necessitate a call to all of the GCRG membership.

### **8<sup>th</sup> November**

#### **Climber Falls at Symonds Yat**

While climbing at Symonds Yat on the cliffs below the log cabin, a climber fell and sustained some quite serious injuries. When the alarm was raised, the words

"sanctuary cave" were used when requesting the emergency services. This resulted in a call being made requesting that GCRG attend in case it was not what it was being portrayed as. Fortunately, warden Paul Taylor was working at the depot following a meeting held there earlier in the day (between GCRG representatives, the Deputy Gaveler and the Chief HSE Mines Inspector).

SARCALL was used to let all of the wardens know that Paul was attending the incident where he was later joined by Warden Cliff Seymour who had received the land-line calls and who lives quite nearby.

Following discussions at the incident control it was quite clear that the injured climber was not in a cave and the GFRS Rope Access team could deal with the incident. The wardens stayed on site until the casualty had been placed in an ambulance at the base of the cliffs.

Both incidents have highlighted the excellent working relationships that exist between GFRS and GCRG. Although in both cases the services of the group were not required, had they been needed then action could have been taken sooner rather than later.

## **24<sup>th</sup> November**

### **Wet Sink (Slaughter Stream Cave)**

While driving across the forest, Steve Tomalin decided to take the road past the Wet Sink parking location and found two vehicles that he did not recognise. Being aware from a phone call on Friday that a party of visiting cavers were planning to visit the cave but who he had advised not to do so, due to the continuing wet weather and the forecast of further severe rain on the Saturday.

Examination of the cave entrance revealed the cave gate open and a raging torrent of water entering the cave. This raised concerns for the safety of the party, especially as the rain continued. With an estimated 40mm plus having been advised to fall during the day, it was decided (following consultation with the GCRG Chairman) to place the GCRG members on standby should the party fail to exit the cave and it became necessary to send in a party once the water levels had abated. At this point it was not known by either Steve or Paul who the party were but it later transpired that it was a party of RFDCC members. Had they known who it was, this would not have changed the course of action that was taken.

Steve Tomalin co-ordinated things from the recently refurbished depot, making calls to GFRS to obtain an incident number and to advise them that at this stage, a response from them was not required. He would advise them accordingly as things progressed. The police despatched a car to the incident site.

Steve was joined at the depot by Greg Jones and Dave Tuffley who started to prepare the GCRG Land Rover with equipment and while keeping Paul Taylor (who was at SWCC attending a surveying course), fully informed of the situation. Paul made contact with Brian Jopling and requested that the S&MWCRT wardens were put on standby as a precaution should the situation change and warrant a larger response.

Fortunately the caving party were able to emerge from the cave under their own steam some while later and unharmed, if not a little shaken from their rather wet experience. A further SARCALL message was then sent out standing everybody down.

Thanks are extended to everybody who took part in all of these incidents and took the time and trouble to respond to the callouts.

It is worth reiterating the point that if you receive a SARCALL message it is important to respond even if you are not able to take part in the incident. By responding you are providing the incident controllers with a very useful picture of who is or who is not available and can then target their efforts towards those who are available. If your circumstances change just send in an updated message and the new information will become available to the controller.

SARCALL has dramatically changed the way the group is able to respond, deal with and control incidents as well as greatly enhancing how we are contacted and called out by GFRS. Its increasing use across the Cave and Mountain Rescue Teams within the UK is adding more weight to it eventually becoming the national standard for call out.

### **GCRG DEPOT REFURBISHMENT**

The refurbishment of the depot that was started in September 2011 has been continuing over the recent months and it is reported that the "light can certainly be seen at the end of the Tunnel" and it is now certainly on the home straight.

Thanks are extended to all who have helped out on this project. The transformation from what can only be described as a tip into something that we can all be very proud of has been well worthwhile and it is having a knock-on effect. It now entices people to come to the depot, be it for the working sessions, meetings or training sessions.

Emma Porter from the MCRO (who regularly, along with Mike Clayton and others from their team, attend our training events) has enabled GCRG to be the beneficiary of 570 carpet tiles after a change of office location by her employer and the tiles becoming surplus to requirements. Thanks go to her boss Barry who came out and opened up the offices so that it was possible to move the tiles into the Land Rover. These tiles should give the group plenty to complete a total recover of all of the floors in the Control Room, Meeting Room, Main Room and Library at the Depot.

If you visit the depot you will find that the Control Room is now almost completely back in action in its revamped form. Additional computer monitors and keyboards have been installed that allow the computer to be used at a number of positions both in the Control Room and the adjacent Meeting Room. Quite a lot of cabling has been put in to achieve this but it certainly gives a lot more flexible end result.

Due to the change in which the depot is now heated (from the portable gas heaters to electric panel heaters and of course all of the other electrical items for water heating etc) this has necessitated the installation of a new larger 3 phase distribution board to cope with the potential increased demand. We were very lucky to have one donated to the group and this has now been fitted and wired up.

It is hoped that all the work can be completed ready for an official opening in May 2013.

## **TRAINING EVENTS**

Training events over the last 12 months have been very well attended with an average of 45 people taking part in at times, some pretty wet conditions.

Training has covered a variety of topics from surface searching and communications to underground pitch-rigging and some very realistic First Aid scenarios. All have proved to be very popular to both GCRG members and visitors from adjacent cave rescue teams.

Sites used have ranged from old abandoned surface iron mining areas, the depot, a Cotswold stone mine and the entrance series of Wet Sink (Slaughter Stream Cave). Thanks are extended to everybody who has supported the events and the group is looking forward to a continuing productive and active schedule of events in 2013.

Plans are also being drawn up to host the next BCRC Conference in the Forest of Dean in 2015 with both the GCRG and Midland Cave Rescue Organisation being involved. Further details to follow.

## **EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW**

**Stoneleigh Park, Coventry,**

**20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> November**

The name given to this show is in fact slightly misleading as it tends to suggest that it is a show predominately based around the 999 emergency services. Although these organisations form a very significant part of the show, there is a vast array of things on display (and for sale) other than the emergency services.

This year was my fourth at the show and the third as an exhibitor. I first attended with Pete Turier a number of years back and had a very enjoyable day walking round the site looking at all the various displays. However in 2010 I was approached by Bill Whitehouse who is the Chairman of the BCRC (British Cave Rescue Council) who asked if I could help out with manning the BCRC stand for the two days of the show as well as helping with putting the stand together on the set up day. I have reported previously on this and the show in 2011. Each year both the numbers of exhibitors and those attending have increased which is good for all concerned. Bill contacted me again earlier in the year and asked if I could assist with the display this year. I was only too pleased as it is a most enjoyable few days and this year we would again have the help of some others from with the Cave Rescue world tuning up on the stand to help out. This had proved very useful the previous year as it had given the opportunity to be able to have a good look around the show without leaving our stand empty or one person manning it on their own.

The BCRC stand was situated as in previous years in an area in Hall 3 of the show alongside similar groups or organisations such as Mountain Rescue, the Coastguard, RNLI, RAF Search & Rescue etc and so this always gives a good opportunity for chats with like-minded people.

The purpose of the BCRC stand is not a recruiting one but more to wave the flag and let people know who the cave rescue teams are and where they are around the country. It is made up of a set of pictures that show in one half general caving and mining shots and then in the other half rescue-related shots and depicts that those in the shots on the enjoying the caving are, figuratively speaking, the same people who make up the cave rescue teams. Although run in

a very professional way, team members are primarily "Cavers first & rescuers second".

On the first day we were joined by Emma Porter from the MCRO and on the second day by Heather Simpson and this gave the extra pairs of hands to allow for the all of us to have a good look around the rest of the exhibitors. The list of exhibitors is large and covers a wealth of different topics relating to the emergency services.

November 2013 has already been set for the next show and I will ensure that the dates are circulated and I would encourage any of you to take the opportunity of going and having a look around.

### **RECYCLING & GCRG**

For those of you who have visited the depot recently you will be aware of the changes that have taken place; not only within the building but also with the way we are now dealing with providing drinks for visitors.

While attending last year's Emergency Services show along with Bill Whitehouse (Chairman of the BCRC and a DCRO Controller), we visited the Drinkmaster stand as Bill told me that they used the drinks capsules supplied by them within the DCRO (not only on the surface but also underground).

As many of you will know I am not a tea & coffee person but I brought back some samples and at a subsequent training exercise these were tried out and went down a storm. A quantity of the different types were ordered and as there is the option of with or without milk and sugar within the various choices this makes for a very simple and convenient way of providing a drink. No more need to worry about getting fresh milk.

So if you are at the depot and need a drink, go into the kitchen (yes we now have a kitchen) and open up the wall cupboard and you will find a good selection of tea, coffee, soup and a blackberry drink. Just open them up and tip into a mug and add hot water. Now the very important thing that you do next

**PLACE THE EMPTY CONTAINER IN THE PLASTIC TRAY ON THE WORKTOP. DO NOT THROW IT IN THE BIN**

The reason for this is that the containers are recyclable and we can get some money back on them around 2p per unit which is well worth having. Also, you will notice that the container also has OLD PENS in it. These can also be recycled so before you throw any pens in the bin at home put them in a bag and bring them to the depot next time you visit and help us raise some money.