

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP



Newsletter

Issue 15, April 2019



GCRG Depot, Littledean Hill, Cinderford, Glos, GL14 2TT

Phone – 01594 827999

SARCALL Response Number – 07537415551

Please ensure all SARCALL messages are responded to

Editors note:

Last issue was June 2018, No. 14

This newsletter (like any other newsletter) can only be as good as the information/articles contained within and consequently, if anyone has any photos or articles or anything else they'd like to see included then please forward/contact the Editor.

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2019 DATES FOR THE DIARY & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2nd May: GCRG AGM

23rd May: Wardens Training Evening

29th May: Lydney Park Funday

9th June: GCRG training @ Wetsink

22nd June: Woolaston Carnival

7th-8th September 2019: RESCON 2019, hosted by MCR (Mendip Cave Rescue) held at Priddy, Mendip

| | | |
|---|--|---|
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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am sure there can't have been a single caver or Cave Rescue Team member across the whole of the UK who was not watching the TV news or reading in the papers the reports on the rescue of the 12 young lads and their coach from the Tham Luang cave in Thailand.

I for one was figuratively sat on the edge of my seat as the rescue unfolded. Initially the location of the group, the agonising wait as plans were put in place to bring them out and then the news that four were out, then another four and finally that all were out. Back here in the UK we, to be honest, can't imagine what it was like for the divers and the pressures they were under. The end result was just fantastic and showed what a "Team Effort" can achieve.

As you will read, even GCRG had a small part to play, in responding to a request from the South & Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team to ensure that our Cave Link and France Phones were ready to be deployed to assist them as they had sent equipment off. GCRG in turn making a request to another team for support if our equipment was deployed. All dealt with in a professional way. Again that big Team Effort and a big thanks to all who made us very proud to be British.

Over the years the GCRG depot has received much attention on the construction front and it is fair to say had a considerable amount of money spent on it to transform it from what was without a doubt not a particularly nice place to visit. Cold, damp and somewhere that lacked even the comfort of running hot water.

Now, although work is still ongoing what a transformation has taken place. Not only hot running water, but showers, loos, a small kitchen, meeting rooms, control room, indoor training facility along with kit storage, washing and drying rooms. It is now a facility that we can all be very proud of. So it was to be honest quite something when the group was approached with the request to be able to use the depot and all of its facilities.

This was not of course the first time it was to be used but it was the first time by an outside person/group. It is fair to say that it was with a little trepidation that the committee agreed to the request. Any fears were figuratively thrown out of the window when the report came in of what a fantastic weekend they group had had. Yes the depot is primarily there for GCRG and its members but how nice it is to be able to see the facility used by others and knowledge and experience being passed on to others. Particularly as they were for the most part young people who are the Cave Rescuers of the future.

GCRG is very lucky on the "Fund Raising Front" the storage facility at the depot provides a very nice steady and almost effort free income for the group throughout the year and has done so for many years and long may it continue. However it is always nice when other things come along to supplement that income.

Nicky Bayley has done an excellent job with her Beer Tankards and Mugs (still a few left by the way if you have not got one) plus all of the smaller projects and donations. Taking part in the Easyfundraising Project has also generated nearly £1000.00 since it was started. Being part of this does not cost you anything (see the details later in the newsletter). All of this saves us having to go down the route of "Tin Rattling" outside Lidl every Saturday morning.

To be honest it is a situation that as a Chairman I like, as I am well aware of the spare time limitations that group members have. So it is great to report on the fantastic success of the GCRG 2019 Calendar Project.



Conceived in August 2017, pictures taken over the following months, off to the printers and delivered in May and all 253 copies sold by the middle of July 2018 and a very nice and sizeable income for the GCRG.

Thanks go out to all who took part, had a lot of fun along the way and put in all of the hard work to make it the success that it is. Please read the article about the Calendar and get those thinking caps on for 2020.

The delivery last year of the new trailer and its subsequent conversion into a mobile control room and equipment store was the culmination of many years work and has completely transformed the way that GCRG can respond to an incident.


We are well aware that we are inherently slow as when the shout goes out those responding all have to travel to the incident. Now with the trailer our response time from the depot has been reduced as many items of equipment are now already loaded. The work of determining what equipment is pre-packed is an ongoing project but each time we use the trailer another small piece of the jigsaw is added. The trailer has as you will read been out on its travels and the visual impact of the pictures on the sides has certainly generated a lot of interest. Fortunately for us we are not a busy rescue group and this is a good thing. Not that we are shying away from performing a rescue but more that people are going caving and down the mines without getting into trouble.

However we do need to be ready to respond both on the equipment and the personnel front. I would ask that you all make a point of attending the GCRG rescue practices throughout the year. We only hold four and they give the perfect opportunity to learn, work with other group members and keep yourself up to speed with the equipment and how the group uses it and the way we respond. At the last exercise at Westington stone mine a number of people took on roles that they had not done before and not only thoroughly enjoyed it but learnt a lot as well. So next time maybe you could do the same. Hopefully we will see you there and please encourage others to come along. Remember it is YOUR GROUP.

Paul W Taylor

(GCRG Chairman)

SARCALL INFORMATION



Gloucestershire

Cave Rescue Group

SARCALL Information for Team Members

When you receive a SARCALL SMS alert sent by a GCRG Warden reply to it to indicate your availability.

If you are unable to reply by SMS text message try using the GCRG specific SARCALL response web page.

Alternatively call the originating warden or the Depot where a message may be left on the answer phone.

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

SAR ▲ Axxx ▲ message if you are available

SAR ▲ Lxxx ▲ message if you have limited availability

SAR ▲ N ▲ message if you are unavailable

Where

▲ = a space

xxx = time in minutes until you will arrive at RV point

message = relevant additional information, free text.

Useful phone numbers

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| GCRG Depot | 01594 827999 | |
| GCRG Wardens | Mobile | Home |
| David Appleing | 07804 300598 | 01242 581385 |
| John Berry | 07979 791083 | 01594 822823 |
| Kevin Brockway | 07970 033345 | 01453 511100 |
| Andrew Clark | 07707 992510 07411 207149 | 01600 716970 |
| Maurice Febry | | 01242 242160 |

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| David Hardwick | 07780 676341 | 01454 299035 |
| Martin Holloway | | |
| Greg Jones | 07974 008519 | 01989 218763 |
| Paul Taylor | 07803 539945 | 01452 505673 |
| Peter Turier | 07462 181899 | 01452 539199 |
| Colin Vickery | 07548-240124 | 01684-293202 |

(Version 6. Jul 2017)

Changes to your details? Email info@gcrg.org.uk

SARCALL ALERTS

SARCALL is the primary tool used by GCRG when initiating a call out. Not only is it the way we notify members of the details of the call out, it is also how you, the members, let the Wardens know if you are available.

It is **EXPECTED THAT ALL MEMBERS WILL RESPOND TO ALL SARCALL ALERTS** - the team need to know both who is and is not available.

SARCALL alert messages are sent by SMS to mobile phones, automatic voice message to land lines and email.

Mobiles

The callout SMS text alert will give brief details of the incident and contact details for the originating Warden.

When replying to these texts YOU MUST use the phone on which the callout text was received. This phone number is recorded on the SARCALL system as belonging to a particular individual, sending texts from other phones will result in them being ignored.

Similarly, the correct format of message must be used. Incorrectly formatted messages will also be ignored. This system is fully automated and the wardens will only see "valid" messages. No feedback on the success or failure of a response text is sent to team members.

The GCRG SARCALL setup has now been configured to allow you to just REPLY to the received alert text (just as you would any other text message).

Home Phones

For land line numbers a text to voice translation is applied and a spoken version of the SMS message should be received on home phones. It is known that the voice translation is not perfect and there is the potential for such messages to be difficult to understand. If such a message is received, which you think may be from GCRG, but cannot be understood, please check your mobile phone and email.

Members should also check that there is no blackout period set for SMS texts to their home phone numbers. (During this period, messages are stored and delivered only when the period ends). There is a default blackout period of 10pm to 8am. To remove this from your home number call the BT SMS text control line, 0800 587 5252 and remove any curfew period - this service is generally controlled via BT irrespective of your home phone supplier. If by default your phone does not forward its own number when dialing (no caller line id) you will need to ensure this is sent when removing the curfew by entering the appropriate code before dialing the BT SMS text control.

Email

This will contain the basic information as sent in the SMS but may also contain important additional information on the incident, if the originating warden entered this when initiating the alert.

Members can have multiple email addresses for SARCALL alerts e.g. home, work and mobile. If you would like additional addresses added to your SARCALL profile then please let me know (they will only be used for alerts).

Replying to the Alert

The automated SMS response system is the preferred way for people to respond as it effectively frees up the wardens phone line and should also reduce the frustration of team members trying to get through to them, when there might be 40 people all calling the same number. SMS responses are also visible to all wardens giving them a dynamic picture of the total and individual team member's availability, as well as the actions that they are taking.

Remember the format of the text message must be one of the following:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| SAR Axxx <message> | if you are available |
| SAR Lxxx <message> | if you have limited availability e.g. morning, or evening. |
| SAR N <message> | if you are unavailable |

Where

xxx = time in minutes it will take you get to the meeting point

<message> = relevant additional information (no swearing, jokes or comments on the location or casualty).

Response texts are placed in the SARCALL incident log and this is visible to other organisations nationally.

Multiple text replies can be sent - only the most recent will be displayed - useful if your availability changes.

If people are picking up other members of the team or particular equipment en-route then mentioning this in the message area of the text is a good idea.

If you cannot reply by text message then there is a SARCALL response web page. For security reasons this web address is not reproduced here but was notified to all members prior to the last practice.

If neither of these methods are available to you then please call the originating warden or the Depot, where a message may be left on the answer phone.

Checking your SARCALL Setup

The ability to receive SMS texts on your home phone can be simply checked by sending an SMS text from any mobile phone to your home number (The message which comes through may give you an additional number to ring to change the blackout period depending upon your phone line supplier).

Confirm that there is no blackout period set for SMS texts to your home phone numbers

A response SMS can be sent at any time and will remain visible to GCRG wardens for 5 days. Email me and I will check it for you. The SARCALL number is 07537 415551 and is best stored in your contacts.

Keeping information up to date

Obviously it is vital that GCRG has up to date information for all members, so if anything changes please let me know. Additionally, if your availability to be called out changes for any reason please let me know - members can be marked as temporarily unavailable within SARCALL thus stopping alert texts being sent to them.

Gareth Jones (GCRG SARCALL Team Admin, info@gcrg.org.uk)

GCRG SUPPORT TO THAILAND CAVE RESCUE AND FRANCE PHONE DROUGHT

Although primarily belonging to two other cave rescue teams, two GCRG members took part in the Thailand rescue, Jonathan Valanthen and Mike Clayton. Our thanks go out to both of them and also the rest of the divers and surface support team that brought this massive rescue to the very successful conclusion. Back here in the UK in our own small way GCRG was involved.

SMWCRT were asked to support the rescue in Thailand by sending over 4 Cave Link units and 6 France Phones. This they did but in doing so this left their stock of equipment depleted. A request, as detailed below, was then made to GCRG to assist with the supply of equipment should SMWCRT have a local incident to deal with.

Paul.

As you may be aware. SMWCRT have today sent 4 cave links and 6 France phones to Thailand in support of the rescue efforts out there.

They should be on a flight this evening having been packaged and collected today.

The reason for this message is obviously with half our cave links out of the country we could find ourselves short in the event of a large callout. In this event would we be able to contact you and GCRG to borrow some of yours?

Thanks

Dan Thorne

SMWCRT Chair

All of the GCRG Cave Link units were checked out and repacked in their respective tackle sacks. Fortunately our France Phones had just received a service and been fitted with new batteries so they only required moving from their normal storage location in the rear of the GCRG landrover and placing in the GCRG trailer along with the Cave Link units so that all of the equipment was together in one central location ready for easy collection.

SARCALL was used to advise all of the GCRG Wardens about where all of the equipment was located and the plans for its deployment should a request be received from SMWCRT. Checks were made with SMWCRT to ensure that they had GCRG on their SARCALL listing as this was the best method of contacting GCRG.

The next link in the chain was for GCRG to then contact Mendip Cave Rescue to put in place support from them for additional Cave Links should the GCRG units be despatched to Wales. Again this was sorted out and SARCALL would be used to make the request.

In addition to sorting out the cave link units I contacted the GCRG Comms Officer Craig Cameron to make him aware of the situation.

Craig takes over the story

As part of the team that were involved with the procurement of the France phone (FP) units, I knew there were some other units available for a restocking situation , I hold two of my own and John Wright of Clearwell Caves.

My units were working units so that meant two were available immediately.

As I was on nights this week, it meant once awake, I could contact Jon at Clearwell Caves (CC), luckily he was in, and was happy to loan the units if they were required, CC had one base unit and two hand-sets. As they were boxed up they would need servicing (battery checking / replacement and testing), as I don't live far away, I popped over to CC and carried out the necessary. All was good, so now if required, we had:

1 Base unit and 4 hand-sets, more than enough for a rescue situation... and hopefully not required...



It was great to be able to call in extra resources if ever needed, and proving that the people who frequent the underworld will help each other out when needed. This state of readiness is to remain in place until the SMWCRT equipment is returned from Thailand.

All of the teams have this reciprocal arrangement in place for both equipment and manpower but the events in Thailand gave the opportunity to just check everything out and make sure all of the correct channels were in place.

Paul Taylor (GCRG Chairman) & Craig Cameron (Communications Officer)

SUPPORT TO SARA FOR LAND SEARCHES

8 September 2018

Robinswood Hill Land Search

In the early hours of the 8th of September, a number of GCRG members were called upon to help out with a search around the area of Robinswood Hill, Gloucester. By early evening, all were stood down. The GCRG members were: Kevin Brockway, Rachel brown, Colin Vickery, Martin Sweeney, Paul Taylor, Martin Holloway, Emma Porter, Mike Clayton, Graham Smith and Pete Turier.

COMMUNICATIONS

GCRG Handheld and Base/Mobile Channel list

- 1. GCRG TWC**
- 2. SMWCRT**
- 3. MENDIP MRT**
- 4. BRECON MRT**
- 5. SARA**
- 6. WBSART + MCRO**
- 7. TWC 1**
- 8. RESERVE TWC 2**
- 9. DEVON CRO**
- 10. DARTMOOR**
- 11. A.S SAR**
- 12. NON SAR SUPPORT UK1**
- 13. NON SAR SUPPORT UK2**
- 14. NON SAR SUPPORT UK3**
- 15. INTERAGENCY GROUND – AIR**
- 16. COASTGUARD**
- 17. CRO**
- 18. OVMRT**
- 19. NON SAR SUPPORT UK 4**
- 20. NON SAR SUPPORT UK 5**
- 21. NON SAR SUPPORT UK 6**
- 22. NON SAR SUPPORT UK 7**

CHANNELS 12-14 AND 19-22 are for NON SAR use , e.g fundraising , training, other NON SAR use , they are open PMR, frequencies that SWERA hold licences for , comms on these frequencies can be heard by all.

Radios and changes

Over the past 12 months, there have been many changes in the communications field , one of those is the frequencies that the MRC and CR (amongst others) teams had been told we HAD to change to .

The result of all this was that all of the GCRG transceivers needed to be reprogrammed, this has to be complied with otherwise we would have had the Radio Communications Agency on our tails , and hefty fines for non-compliance.

As can be seen in the attached channel listing , the first 16 channels are set up for the Icom Handhelds.



The channels 17-22 are the extra channels which are for the Mobiles which have more memory so encompass all the channels allocated to the teams.

Many channels we won't use, but who knows, one day we may be called away to foreign counties!

Our **GCRG** Team Working Channel (TWC) is Channel 1, and this is where any of the radios will be when you pick one up.

The channels 12-14 and 19-22, are effectively 'public licenced' frequencies. These channels are under a SWERA licence, and are to be used for events where we might be fundraising, or, proving some sort of communications cover eg, fun run, scouting event etc....

Its fine to use these channels , although you might be surprised to hear the local supermarket security, or builders yard communications, on them, if that's the case, move channel/frequency ... Be aware though that although the range of the portable transceivers is limited (1-25+ miles!), "others" could hear what you say, so *professional communications etiquette is appreciated*, after all, I'm sure GCRG will be mentioned at some point.

I hope this helps answer a few questions.

Craig Cameron (GCRG Communications Officer)

GCRG SUPPORT DURING THE THAI CAVE RESCUE**British Cave Rescue Council**

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Paul W. Taylor - Chairman
Peter Turier - Secretary
Gloucester Cave Rescue Group
chairman@gcrg.org.uk; secretary@gcrg.org.uk

Dr Peter Dennis,
Chairman BCRC,
8 Maesyfelin,
Talybont,
Ceredigion,
SY24 5DZ

chair@caverescue.org.uk

Monday 30 July 2018

Dear Paul; Peter,

Re: Message of gratitude to BCRC cave and mine rescue teams

We are all so very happy and relieved that the bold and risky diving operation spearheaded by British, Irish and Australian cave divers successfully brought the 12 stranded boys and their assistant football coach out of Tham Luang cave and to safety. We celebrate the spirit of international co-operation that contributed to the successful operation, an inspiration, and this unique success story clearly captured the imagination of people across the world. Our colleagues worked closely with supporting cave divers and organisations of many nations who brought together the technical skills necessary to assist the Thai rescue services with the incident. The cave rescue diving part of the operation, Sunday 8 to Tuesday 10 July, was the culmination of careful assessment of the cave conditions and meticulous planning by the cave divers, with full support of the British Cave Rescue Council but was achieved only due to the tremendous support from individual cave rescue teams and the wider British caving community at home.

The BCRC executive wishes to express sincere thanks for the support that your team provided throughout the cave rescue operation in Thailand. Numerous such acts of support were crucial for the BCRC cave rescue divers to undertake their difficult and challenging task. Such acts contributed to the successful outcome of the rescue operation led by the Thai rescue services. BCRC member cave rescue teams across the UK contributed one, often more of the following to the successful cave rescue operation:

- Specialist cave divers, experienced in underwater rescue methods, who travelled to Thailand at short notice and who were directly involved in the rescue operation,
- Additional team members who put themselves in a state of readiness to travel across to Thailand at short notice, to assist in the rescue operation (we also appreciate the frustration such individuals will have experienced having not been 'invited' to do so by the Thai authorities),
- Individuals drove cave divers to Heathrow Airport in time to depart on hastily arranged flights, all at very short notice, during the build-up of cave rescue diver numbers prior to the 8 July start of the rescue operation.
- Similar help was received to urgently acquire and transport essential rescue equipment to Heathrow Airport for the flights arranged for the divers (e.g., Heyphones, CaveLink sets, children's sizes of full face diving masks and other essential rescue equipment),
- Some team members joined the substantial BCRC rescue co-ordination effort at home in the UK, when the range of tasks and demands on time outgrew the capacity of the original team,

- Officers of each team also endured intense pressure from the unprecedented number of global media enquiries received in waves from when Rick, John and Rob first departed to assist and advise the Thai rescue operation until the return of all BCRC rescue personnel on Friday 13 July. Many officers of teams spent considerable time fielding the enquiries or giving radio and television interviews. BCRC attempted to ease this pressure with regular media briefings that gave a central contact e-mail address and in the setting up of a BCRC Facebook page, again assisted by individuals of several cave rescue teams.

All these contributions are hugely appreciated and together the efforts of UK cave rescue teams, Cave Diving Group, technical administrative support from BCA and BCRA (CREG) have all played a part in the success of this rescue operation, tinged as it is with sadness, due to the loss of Saman Gunan, the retired Thai Navy diver.

Now that the divers have completed their task and returned to the UK, the media attention turned to them and has begun to ease, as other events become the focus of attention. This will hopefully allow your team to focus again on scheduled activities and local call-outs. I am aware that some TV channels have awoken to caving and cave rescue in the UK and have approached certain teams to produce short documentaries or current affairs pieces on more general aspects of cave rescue in the UK. This heightened public awareness is welcome and could yield additional goodwill and donations to improve our collective operational capability. Fortuitous, given the backdrop of reduced budgets within the traditional grant-awarding bodies.

The operation represented a less frequently experienced situation, possibly unfamiliar to some officers of member teams, when BCRC receives a request from a foreign government to assist an overseas cave rescue incident. In such circumstances the BCRC assembles an experienced and specialist team and adopts an operational role, as was the case witnessed for Thailand. This is of course in contrast to the usual role of BCRC, to represent the interests of member teams who normally carry out all operational activities. The rescue incident in Tham Luang cave was an extraordinary feat, one of the most audacious cave rescues ever seen and we thank you once more for your vital support.

Yours sincerely,



Dr P. Dennis,
Chairman, BCRC
On behalf of the whole BCRC Executive committee

Registered charity: 1137252

GCRG TRAINING

Lambsquay Iron Mine: 9 September 2018

25 members of GCRG assembled at the Clearwell Caves car park and took part in a search within the Lambsquay iron mine.

The exercise was designed as a search for 'casualties' within a specific area of the mine and teams were assigned areas to search.

The 'casualties' were laminated cards which, once found, were to be reported back to the surface. The surface controller would then direct the teams as necessary. Given the complexity of the iron mines in this area, all involved were either able to act as 'guides' for those members with less experience of the mine, or were able to brush up on previously rusty memories of the routes underground.

One lesson that was reinforced was the fact that because Lambsquay was so dry, the Cave Link (needing damp ground to 'earth') would not work and instead the France Phone (with its long reels of wire) was deployed from the entrance into the mine and one of the major chambers. This had the benefit of acting as a 'guide', to lead people in/out of the system.

A useful exercise and everyone who attended, as ever, got something out of it.

Bixslade Quarry and Mine: 9 December 2018

A good day was had by all, training covered the following (on the surface and underground): Larkin Frame, First Aid, Searching & Communications, Stretcher handling/hauling & pitch rigging.

See Ian's (Ian Healey, GCRG Training Coordinator) excellent video of the event at https://youtu.be/aMsxU_Jv4ss



PROMOTING GCRG

Earlier in the year (2018) GCRG was contacted by two organisations within the Forest of Dean who asked us to attend their events to put on a display. With the new trailer and the refurbished land-rover the committee felt that now we had something that would look good .

Lydney Community Display, Bathurst Park, May 30th 2018

With Paul away for almost the whole of May, preparations were left with the committee so that on the day all that was needed was to call in and collect.

Unfortunately the weather was not good on the morning of the display and driving down to the GCRG depot in the pouring rain did not help. However fortunately for the work of connecting up and driving down to Lydney it remained dry and everything was quickly set up in the corner of Bathurst Park alongside the GFRS , Police and a good number of other community organisations. However mother nature had other plans and decided that Lydney needed a good watering that morning and although it was a school holiday period attendance figures were very low. Nicky Bailey (GCRG Equipment Officer) did call in to spend an hour with Paul and then help him pack up. It was very unfortunate as the venue was good and with better weather attendance levels and subsequent visitors to our display would have been a lot greater. I am sure we will be invited to next year's event.

Woolaston Carnival Display, June 30th 2018

From a very wet day at Lydney the complete opposite was what was had at Woolaston. Clear Blue Sky and hot sun were the order of the day. Paul and Trevor collected the GCRG Landrover and Trailer from the Depot. Trevor making good use of the newly fitted reversing camera on the Landrover (see separate article) and then once hitched up off down to Woolaston. Locating the actual venue was a little tricky as the road sign that was being looked for was not visible from the direction of approach and resulted in missing it and a turnaround required. Fortunately Paul located a nice T Junction and executed an almost perfect turn around. Heading back the sign was seen but then this involved a drive up a narrow road with cars on either side. With fingers crossed the Vehicle was nosed into the rather narrow gap. Thoughts of trying to reverse back down was not an option that was being relished if it was the wrong way. Fortunately at the top the display area was located and we were duly directed to our allocated spot. Which someone else had taken over. However we were given their location and work soon got underway to set everything up.

The Landrover and trailer looked very good and were enhanced by a display of photographs. During the day a steady trickle of people came by and chatted. Many were quite surprised to find out that there was a cave rescue group and that there were significant caves and mines in the area. Ice creams and a pint were the order of the day. For a small village the attendance was very good and being at the event gave the opportunity to wave the flag. Good chats had with representatives from the Air Ambulance and GFRS and I am sure we will be back next year. Thanks to Trevor Perkins for assisting on the day.

Local History Group Presentation Clearwell Caves July 19th 2018

Di Standing, a long-time member of the GCRG contacted John Hine and Paul Taylor for assistance with a presentation she was giving on the underground world in the Forest of Dean to the Local History Group at Clearwell Caves.

Both responded accordingly providing pictures and input into the presentation. Di also said that she was going to use the evening to promote the cave rescue group. Assisted by Jill Brunsdon, the GCRG display boards were transported down into Barbeque Churn and set up so as to provide a visual display. A number of other group members attended and with their red Cave Rescue Jackets were easily identifiable and provided points of contact for questions to be directed and answered accordingly.

The event was extremely well attended and Di did an excellent job and even brought in some up to date information about the rescue from Thailand. Ending her presentation on a video of cave diving in the flooded levels of Noxon Park iron mine an insight into what it must have been like for the divers who undertook the rescue.

GCRG ON FACEBOOK

GCRG has its own FaceBook page and can be found quite easily by a web search for "Facebook" and "Gloucestershire-Cave-Rescue-Group"

GCRG SHOP

BADGES

The group has had a quantity of these enamel badges made up for sale to the members (and supporters) at a price of £3 each and with all profits going back to GCRG.

To show your support to the group & fly the flag these can be purchased at any GCRG training event or contact Jon Maisey or Paul Taylor and they can be delivered to club socials or posted out etc.



HEAD/NECK WEAR

Available in black or red and available at £10 each with the GCRG logo



MUGS

Like a unique hand-crafted mug to support GCRG?, of so, Nicky has made a batch of the excellent GCRG mugs & will make more if required at £10 each ... contact Nicky (via equipment@gcrg.org.uk) to place your order.



T SHIRTS

Plain T shirt with small GCRG team logo embroidered on front cost: £6 each

Please complete quantities required and email order to Nicky.

Payment will be required on collection.

nicolabayley@hotmail.com

| | GCRG T Shirts | | | | |
|------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | S | M | L | XL | 2XL |
| | 34-36" | 38-40" | 42-44" | 46-48" | 50-52" |
| RED | | | | | |
| NAVY | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

GCRG FUNDRAISING

January 2019 update

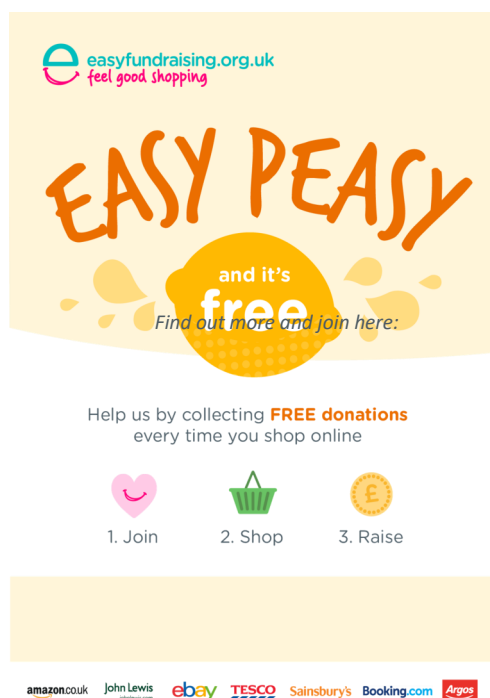
Thanks to the efforts of 31 GCRG members who have signed up to 'easyfundraising', in January a total of £21.87 had been raised for GCRG funds, and a grand total of £1000.99 has been raised for the group since its adoption a number of years ago.

"Easyfundraising" is a very simple way to raise income for GCRG by simply shopping online, something that we all do. There is no catch.

Donations are made by the retailer when an order is placed with them and with almost 3000 retailers registered including many of the well-known high street names ie Screwfix, Argos, Staples etc", there is plenty to choose from.

What do you have to do?

- 1 - Go to the website www.easyfundraising.org.uk
- 2 - Click on '**Find a cause**' and select the cause you wish to support (just search for "Cave Rescue" and you'll find GCRG).
- 3 - **Fill out** the quick form to register your details.
- 4 - Find the retailer you want to shop with.
- 5 - Click to visit the retailer, then shop as you normally would.
- 6 - Your donation will be shown in your easyfundraising account within 30 days.



Visit easyfundraising.org.uk/gcaverg to see how much has been raised for the group since easyfundraising was first identified by the Treasurer (Liz Maisey) as a source of funding back in 2014.

Since 2014 the use of easyfundraising has enabled GCRG to receive £1000.99p with little effort whatsoever.

A really big thankyou to the 31 members of GCRG who have signed up to this and raised all this money so far.

GCRG 2019 CALENDAR

There is not a lot one can say about the GCRG 2019 calendar other than what a FANTASTIC success it has been. All 253 copies from the initial print run have been sold by the middle of July. Just over 2 months since they were delivered.

This was helped by them being on sale in the visitors shop at Clearwell Caves, advertised within Descent and the Mountain Rescue summer issue of its magazine. I am just waiting for the order to come through from Prince William who is the patron of MREW and reads the magazine!

This is all without a doubt pretty amazing. With the support of all of who have purchased copies both cavers and non-cavers young and old alike, a significant sum of money has been raised for the GCRG in excess of £1380.00. Some extra funds have also been raised from those people who gave additional donations when paying for their calendars with a £10.00 note and then not taking their change. From the GCRG Committee, Nicky Richens, Liz Maisey, Jill Brunsdon and myself personally I would like to say a massive thanks to everyone who has supported the project. The word has, so to speak, has gone far and wide. GCRG, GSS and FoDCCAG has given calendars to companies, organisations and landowners who have supported GCRG and caving in general within the Forest of Dean and the wider area of the county and beyond. All of which who have received them have been very happy, pleased and enjoyed the FUN aspect of what the calendar was all about. I am also aware that copies of the calendar have also travelled to Australia, Canada and Namibia *(If you have sent one abroad please let us know)*.

However we must not also forget all of the very willing models and helpers who took part in the production of the 12 monthly pictures and the front cover along with all the backroom people who came along and moved lighting and camera equipment to the various locations as without all of their support we would not have had a calendar to sell.

If you have not got a copy and would like one or more then all is not completely lost as orders are being taken and if these reach a sufficient level then another print run is to be ordered. So please think about christmas and birthday presents for relations and friends and help us boost the figures even more.

Plans are underway for a follow up production for 2021 so as to give those involved with the 2019 version a break and also to keep the idea Fresh.

For the next one we would like more people to take up the up the challenge of producing one or more of the monthly pictures with the theme being Movie or TV scenes recreated using cavers in an underground location.

So if you have some ideas and would like to take this on then please speak to Paul and the team who will be more than happy to advise on what is required for the end picture. Plus they can also let you know if someone else has already bagged the idea. So the sooner you get in the better.

Pictures need to be Portrait and shot in Raw as well as just Jpeg and as high a quality as possible and produce a very good quality A4 end result.

Your picture does not have to be "month specific" but of course if you can then it would get that slot in the end result.

As with the 2019 version we want to keep the use of Photoshop down to "picture enhancement" and not use it as the main stay of producing the picture. The production team for this year's calendar felt that this approach is what made the pictures so real as none were created in a studio. Yes Photoshop was used for example as when the Green Moss Pot shot was taken a pair of scissors were accidentally left sitting in the top of the scaffold bar standing up in the picture. It was only afterwards that they were noticed and removed. So it is little things like that where it has been used. A degree of colour work, brightening or darkening can also be done. We also want the pictures to portray the FUN aspect of things.

So please get your thinking hats on and come up with some great ideas for pictures for 2021. If you can come up with the idea and the location and all of the contents but need someone to come and take your picture for you then please ask as the team will be more than happy to do this for you.

Remember we need 12 monthly photos and a cover photo and it is great that already we have some ideas coming in.

It might seem a long way off but in reality everything needs to be done and dusted and with the printers by May 2020.

Paul Taylor (GCRG Chairman)



GCRG SUPPORT TO EXPEDITION CAVING

Dachstein Expedition Training Weekend May 11th - 13th 2018

During the GCRG training event at the GCRG depot in March (2018), Joel Corrigan who was running one of the training sessions, asked Paul & Pete if it would be possible for him to use the depot and its facilities for a training weekend for those people planning to take part in this summer's caving expedition to the Dachstein in Austria. It was agreed and then confirmed by the committee with a few ground rules. Paul held a site meeting with Joel to sort out locations for the underground sessions and also at the depot to plan what would be required. The event was planned to take place in May while Paul was away in Namibia so he recruited Nicky Bailey and Craig Cameron to assist with moving the GCRG landrover etc on the day and generally being on hand should any problems occur. Joel and Matt Sinclair arrived early on the Friday and set up lots of ropes in the training area ready for the exercises on the Saturday. This was supplemented with a surveying workshop being held in Bixhead stone mine. On Sunday a rescue training exercise was held in Miss Grace's Lane cave. Around 30 people took part in what was described by Joel as an extremely enjoyable, productive, informative and successful weekend. This was the first time that we have had an event like this at the depot and it is nice to see the venue and its facilities being made use of. Joel made a video of the weekend's activities which you can see via the GCRG Facebook Page or alternatively via the GCRG Website. The video is also viewable on YouTube via the following link https://youtu.be/_WrOSvrhwJ0 . Please take the opportunity to have a look and see the GCRG Depot.

For the use of the depot Joel donated £350 to GCRG, so a big thankyou to Joel for this.

Dachstein Expedition Cave Link Training July 15th 2018

Joel Corrigan along with four other members of this year's Dachstein Expedition made a return visit to the depot for a training session on the use of Cave Link. Joel has organised the loan of 3 Cave Link units along with a GSM unit for the duration of the expedition for deployment both on the surface and in the cave. Although some had previous experience of the use of Cave Link they were looking for more detailed and in-depth instructions and were particularly interested in learning about the programming of the "Routing" of the units both prior to, and also remotely, by sending commands from one unit (normally the surface one) to the other units to instruct them what to do when they receive a message. All of this instruction and information was primarily given by Gareth Jones with Paul Taylor adding a very small percentage. All found the session very instructive and not only is it good for the expedition but it also expands the knowledge of the use of cave link for UK based rescue deployment. Eight of the UK cave rescue teams now have Cave Link.

For the expedition, the units are to be positioned with one and the GSM Unit on the surface probably near to the Cave Entrance and the other two units underground. One hopefully at their camp and the other further into the system. Information such as weather reports, personnel deployment both in and out of the cave system and equipment requirements

GCRG REPRESENTED AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The House of Commons 22 October 2018

It was an honour for me to be able to represent Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group at a celebration reception in October at the House of Commons. The event was held to enable the authorities to show their gratitude not only to those involved in the recent Thai rescue but also to acknowledge the valuable work that volunteers in Cave Rescue do nationally.



Having a presence at these events is not just a jolly trip out but it also does an important job of giving Cave Rescue a voice where it counts. Good publicity for Cave Rescue is pretty rare so this opportunity to raise awareness of the unique service we provide was too good to be missed.

The event began with a growing group of well dressed cavers assembling outside the Portcullis Gate at Westminster. After passing through security we headed up to the state rooms of the Speaker of the House, Mr John Bercow where we were greeted with a glass of wine and some bite size nibbles.

Approximately 70 guests from Cave Diving and Cave Rescue mingled with various ministers and Thai representatives before John Whittingdale MP welcomed everyone to the Reception and introduced the speakers:



The Minister for Sports and Civil Society, Tracy Crouch admitted that she had never been caving but being a volunteer herself, she praised the work done by all the volunteer services across the UK and highlighted the importance of the role of volunteers who dedicated their time and resources to helping others.

H.E. Mr. Pisanu Suvanajata, the Ambassador of Thailand, honoured the bravery of the divers and thanked the supporting members of the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) on the successful rescue mission to save the 12 boys and their coach trapped in the flooded cave in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

The Ambassador emphasised the cooperation that took place between all the parties involved in the rescue and reaffirmed the close and cordial ties between Thailand and the UK.

Mr Speaker also thanked everyone who had been involved in the rescue both the divers and those working hard behind the scenes in the UK. He commented that the entire world including his children were captivated by the media coverage of the rescue and the feeling of pride for the unique skills of British Cave Rescue was evident.

Peter Dennis, Chairman of BCRC outlined the origins of the British Cave Rescue Teams across the UK explaining that they are run by volunteer cavers to help fellow cavers in need with no outside funding for rescue equipment or other resources. He thanked the regional Cave Rescue and Cave Diving Organisations in the UK and Ireland for their unconditional support which all went towards making the rescue mission a success. He also expressed sadness for the unfortunate death of Samman the ex Thai navy seal who tragically lost his life while trying to help the boys.

Mr Martin Grass injected a little humour into affairs with an admonishment to Mr Speaker concerning the gift of a large carved stalagmite on display in the hallway. He also echoed the praise for the rescue divers and the pride that cavers had for those involved.

He finished with a challenge to drink the bar dry but unfortunately the end of the speeches also meant the end of the free drinks and we were ushered out.

Mark Garnier, the MP for the Wyre Forest offered people a quick tour around the Halls of Westminster and so it was that a group of us ended up sharing tales with Mark and Clare Pooley (Assistant to John Whittingdale) the lady behind the event on the Strangers Bar terrace on the bank of the Thames. Clare Pooley is herself a very experienced cave diver and it was her understanding of the enormity of the rescue and her influence which lead up to the Reception being held.

To finish up the day I joined the remaining hard core of attendees on a floating pub on the river for some food before catching the train back to Gloucestershire.

Photo Credit: Jason Brown - www.bardophotographic.com

Nicky Bayley

GCRG Equipment Officer



AND FINALLY**A BIT OF FUN BUT WITH A SERIOUS POINT****GCRG QUESTIONNAIRE*****1. There is a rescue call out to Wetsink and you have been asked to attend. Where should you go?***

- a. Head over to the depot to meet up with other people?
- b. Go straight to the cave and park in the field?
- c. Go to English Bicknor Social Club – the bar might even be open...
- d. Spend so long trying to find your SRT kit that you get stood down before you leave the house

2. Having found your SRT kit you look at it wondering if it's time to get a new harness, which of the below would be an absolute equipment check fail if it was a harness to be used by GCRG on a casualty?

- a. It's over 10 years old but only been used underground twice
- b. It's still covered in mud since the last time it was used
- c. The webbing is a little furry
- d. Some of the gear loops have broken

3. How do you call out Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group?

- a. Phone 112 and ask for Cave Rescue
- b. Phone 111 and ask for Gloucestershire Fire Service then Cave Rescue
- c. Phone a friend
- d. Phone 999 and ask for Gloucestershire police and then Cave Rescue

4. In the Phonetic alphabet what word stands for the letter P?

- a. Papua
- b. Peter
- c. Papa
- d. Pepper

5. What extra personal equipment would you take with you underground on a cave rescue?

- a. A balaclava and warm clothing
- b. Your mobile phone
- c. Spare light batteries
- d. A good book

6. You are planning a long trip into Ogof Draenen what's the most important thing to remember?

- a. Take a survey
- b. Leave a call out
- c. Read the guidebook before you go
- d. Tell someone which entrance you're going in

7. Which of the following is NOT in GCRG's Rigging Kits?

- a. Rope protector
- b. Pulley
- c. Hand jammer
- d. Hangers and mallions

8. What do you need to remember when using a France Phone?

- a. Take your gloves off
- b. Make sure you are standing in water
- c. Keep your hands dry you might get electrocuted
- d. Always wear wellies

9. Which of the following could you try in order to improve the signal when using Cave Link?

- a. Moving the antennas through 90 degrees
- b. Making sure the antennas are lined North/South
- c. Taking a leak on the antenna endplates
- d. Take the batteries out and give them a rub

10. Who is the Training Officer for GCRG?

- a. Pete Turier
- b. Paul Taylor
- c. Nicky Bayley
- d. Ian Healy

11. You are rigging a pitch, the casualty is waiting at the bottom and is in a bad way but you are short of a carabiner for one of the backup belays. Do you:

- a. Use one of your own, you know they are fine
- b. Insist that the haul waits until you can retrieve a GCRG marked krab from another pitch
- c. Use one of your own initially but send someone to fetch a GCRG one to replace it with asap
- d. Leave it out – it's only a backup

12. You are on a caving trip when someone in your party takes a nasty fall. From the choices below, pick the most important thing to do first

- a. Ask them for their next of kin details so you can make sure the details get passed to Rescue
- b. Ask them if they have any allergies (maybe they will lose consciousness soon and you won't have that information)
- c. Stop any bleeding
- d. Give them extra clothing and a cuddle

13. Which cave in the GCRG region is this a survey of?

- a. Otter Hole
- b. Ban-y-gor
- c. Bigsink
- d. Miss Graces Lane

14. Who is the Chair of the British Cave Rescue Council?

- a. Bill Whitehouse
- b. Paul Taylor
- c. Emma Porter
- d. Peter Dennis

15. It is 3pm and you receive a SARCALL message to provide assistance to a call out in Agen Allwedd. You want to help but can't leave work till 5pm and it will take 2 hours to get home, eat, collect gear and drive to Whitewalls. Which is the correct SARCALL response?

- a. SAR A420 unable to leave work
- b. SAR A120 will leave work at 5pm
- c. SAR N unable to leave work
- d. SAR L120 will leave work at 5pm

16. Which of the following sites is NOT within GCRG's responsibility

- a. Otter Hole (Cave in Wales)
- b. Hopewell Colliery (Forest Coal Mine)
- c. Emmer Green Chalk Mine (Berkshire)
- d. Whittington Stone Mine (Cheltenham)

17. For which application is this knot unsuitable?

- a. At the head of a pitch
- b. Tying an anchor directly around a tree
- c. At a re-belay
- d. On a traverse line

18. What is the appropriate action to the following when belaying a ladder pitch?

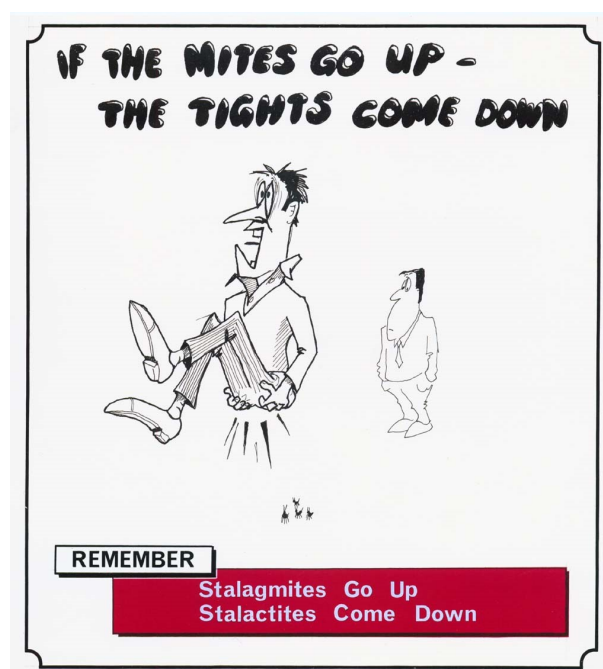
"Take In!" (belayer takes in the slack on safety line)

"That's Me!" (when safety line goes taut)

"Climb when you're ready!" (When belayer is in position and ready to belay)

.....?

- a. Start climbing the ladder slowly
- b. Wait until the belayer pulls on the safety line and then start climbing
- c. Shout "Climbing!" and then climb the ladder steadily
- d. Race to the top of the ladder leaving a spool of rope trailing below and then smugly berate the belayer for not being quick enough to keep up.



Scores: add up your scores for each question for the results.

- Question 1: a) 2 points b) 2 points c) 4 points d) 0 points
- Question 2: a) 4 points b) 0 points c) 0 points d) 0 points
- Question 3: a) 3 points b) 0 points c) 0 points d) 4 points
- Question 4: a) 0 points b) 0 points c) 4 points d) 0 points
- Question 5: a&c) 4 points a) 2 points b) 0 points c) 2 points d) 0 points
- Question 6: a) 0 points b) 0 points c) 0 points d) 4 points
- Question 7: a) 4 points b) 0 points c) 0 points d) 0 points
- Question 8: a) 4 points b) 0 points c) 3 points d) 0 points
- Question 9: a) 0 points b) 0 points c) 0 points d) 4 points
- Question 10: a) 1 points b) 1 points c) 4 points d) 0 points
- Question 11: a) 1 points b) 2 points c) 4 points d) 3 points
- Question 12: a) 2 points b) 4 points c) 2 points d) 1 points
- Question 13: a) 2 points b) 2 points c) 4 points d) 0 points
- Question 14: a) 0 points b) 0 points c) 0 points d) 4 points
- Question 15: a) 0 points b) 4 points c) 0 points d) 3 points
- Question 16: a) 0 points b) 0 points c) 4 points d) 0 points
- Question 17: a) 0 points b) 4 points c) 0 points d) 0 points
- Question 18: a) 1 points b) 2 points c) 4 points d) 0 points

Score 0 - 24

New to GCRG? You could do with learning a bit more. Why not attend some more training practices and brush up on your skills or join the Committee as an ordinary member and find out a lot more whilst helping to run the Rescue Team.

Score: 24 - 48

Well done! There is still a little room for improvement though, keep on attending the training sessions and why not think about joining the Committee to help run the Rescue Team and learn even more?

Score: 48 - 72

Wow! Have you considered putting your knowledge and experience to good use by coming on the Rescue Committee? We need people like you to help run the Team.

Nicky Bayley

GCRG Equipment Officer

FROM THE ARCHIVES

A couple of old photographs from the early days of GCRG Can you identify any of the faces or suggest a year?



RFDCC members (incl Roger Solari, Phil Schwartz & John Elliott) after a rescue practice, 1973 or 1974.



'999' EVENT GLOUCESTER COUNTRY CLUB.

Can anyone add any more identification to this one?