



GCRG NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 21, MAY 2025

Cave rescue since 1965, covering the Forest of Dean,
Lower Wye Valley, The Cotswolds and Thames Valley.

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Registered Charity No.
900316

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Editorial

A big thankyou to everyone who has helped with the production of this newsletter by providing articles and photographs. Without this help there would be no newsletter. It is much appreciated.

If anyone has any ideas of changes to make or anything they'd like to see added then please contact the Editor.

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GCRG COMMITTEE

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Kevin Brockway	
Andrew Clark	
Ladi Broadman	
David Hardwick	
Colin Vickery	
Martin Holloway	
Greg Jones	
Paul Taylor	

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SARCALL & HOW TO USE IT

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.

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 answerphone.

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

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

message = relevant additional information, free text.

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

Once home from a callout or after a training exercise , please respond to SARCALL with SAR H to indicate you have got home safely.

TRAINING/EXERCISE EVENTS since May 2024

Since the last newsletter, GCRG personnel have been involved in the following events.

Reports for some/all of these can be found further on within this newsletter.

23rd June 2024 Old Ham

7th September 2024 Noxon Park

8th December 2024.... Sessions at the depot

9th March 2025 Bixhead stone mine

27th March 2025 New Venture Freemine

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

17 May 2025	GCRG AGM	Location - Depot
6-8 June 2025	RESCON 2025	Hosted by the Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO) as part of their 90th anniversary celebrations. Location, Settle.
22 June 2025	GCRG training	Location - Windrush stone mine; search and carry in & from the extensions.
13 Sept 2025	GCRG training & 60th anniversary event	Venue TBD
26-28 Sept 2025	Hidden Earth	Llangollen
14 Dec 2025	GCRG training	Location - Depot

CAVE RESCUE CALLOUTS since May 202426th August 2024**Symonds Yat**

11:22—Adult and 2 children described as stuck in a cave at Symonds Yat.

12:30—Stand down as GFRS dealing with incident in the entrance to C2.

30th September 2024**Wallsend Freemine (Forest of Dean)**

GCRG Mines Rescue Team & Freeminers Dig Out Team in callout to recover fatality from the site.

6 GCRG deployed & 8 on standby.

REPORTS OF LANDSEARCH CALLOUTS since May 202418th June 2024**Norton (nr Gloucester)**

Support to SARA for missing person search.

24th June 2024**Churcham (Forest of Dean)**

Support to SARA for missing person search.

17th August 2024**Drybrook (Forest of Dean)**

Support to SARA for missing person search.

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LANDSEARCH CALLOUTS since May 2024 [cont'd]

30th August 2024

Robinswood Hill (Gloucester)

Support to SARA for missing person search.

26th October 2024

Brockworth (Gloucester)

GCRG in support to SARA for missing person search.

27th October 2024

Brockworth (Gloucester)

GCRG in support to SARA for missing person search.

TREVOR PERKINS

In July 2024 GCRG sadly lost one of its stalwart supporters, Trevor Perkins.

Trevor had been a member of GCRG for many years and could often be found working either behind the scenes at the depot—often doing jobs on the landrover with Pete Turier— and general tasks as needed. The GCRG ropewasher [see photo] was a Trevor invention and has been used with much effect after training exercises.

At training events he could usually be found at surface control carrying out many of the so-important jobs that need to be done while people are underground. It was remarked that at the Bixhead training day when people were arriving cold and wet at surface control, Trevor would normally have been there with hot tea and coffee available. This was very much missed.



With his excellent sense of humour and wide expertise of surface-control skills, Trev could be relied upon to get things done and well.

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He had been one of those people who would often do those mundane jobs that don't attract the limelight of a rescue team but which without, the team cannot function effectively. He will be much missed by all.



TRAINING/EXERCISE EVENTS since May 2024

TRAINING: OLD HAM

23rd June 2024

Another productive training event held in the Old Ham iron mine and designed to cover stretcher loading & handling and getting hands-on expertise with the Slix 50, Main Slix, Basket Stretcher and Petzl Nest. The benign and dry environment of Old Ham provided plenty of space and opportunities to move the stretchers around a defined route. Also, incorporated into the stretcher handling was first aid and casualty care training.



Photos taken by Nicky Bayley

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*Photos taken by
Nicky Bayley*

EXERCISE: GCRG/SWERA EVENT

NOXON PARK

7th September 2024

A large-scale joint search/rescue exercise involving a wide range of teams from across SWERA (South West Area Rescue Association). GCRG was responsible for providing the underground element, while SARA (Severn Area Rescue Association) and Wiltshire Lowland Rescue provide the search element. The role of surface control for this event was administered by SARA while GCRG controlled the underground element.

The scenario was that a number of people had gone missing in the Noxon Park area and it was not known if they had gone into the extensive underground workings of Noxon Park or not. It was the role of GCRG to check all available entrances to the mine complex and carry out associated underground searches. If casualties were located underground then they were to be extracted to safety using the skills and techniques learned at previous exercises and training sessions (see the photos).

The exercise gave those GCRG members unfamiliar with the Noxon Park area, the opportunity to understand better the complexities of having to carry out a search and casualty evacuation from a complicated system with multiple entrances and using live casualties.

Hot food for the event was provided by the RRT (Rapid Relief Team) and was certainly most welcome, making an excellent change from the norm.

96 people attended in total.

Photos supplied by Nicky Bayley



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TRAINING: GCRG DEPOT

8th December 2024

It was decided that rather than having 4 training sessions, two before lunch and two afterwards, instead there would be three sessions. Having one less session enabled the sessions to be longer at 90 minutes each and so allow everyone the change to get more “hands-on”. The three training sessions covering the following aspects of underground rescue training:

- *Basic stretcher handling & including familiarisation of the Slix 50, Main Slix, Basket stretcher and Petzl Nest. This also entailed a fully-laden stretcher being taken around parts of the depot area, including the first use of the new external tunnel system.*
- *Use of tyrolean rigging techniques to transfer a casualty horizontally across uneven ground/holes and subsequent change to vertical hauling/lowering.*
- *Setting up of the trailer/surface control.*
- *Use of SARCALL and the GCRG underground site database.*

A very well attended event with over 50 GCRG members taking part. It was decided again that, like last year, GCRG would provide hot bacon/egg rolls at lunchtime for all who attended. In addition, cakes on sale (provided by Rose Taylor and Liz Maisey) raised over £100 for the fundraising for the new trailer awning, so a massive thanks to everyone who bought the cakes and made donations.

As ever, a massive thankyou to everyone who provided the training sessions and worked behind the scenes to make the event the success that it was.



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Photos supplied by Nicky Bayley



It was also at this event that the members had their chance to vote on the proposals for a redesign of the GCRG badge, or to stay with the current logo. By a large majority, the design shown here (and at the heading of this publication) was voted and has now been adopted.

There will be in the near future chance to buy GCRG-branded clothing and mugs/badges etc with this new logo and the chance for the group to raise some funds.



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COAL MINES TRAINING EXERCISE

27th March 2025

NEW VENTURE FREEMINE

Within the Forest of Dean we still have a small number of active coal mines which are known as Free Mines and the history of these dates back many hundreds of years and I am not planning to cover this here.

These mines are either worked by people who are Freeminers in their own right (born within the Hundred of St Braivels and worked a year and a day in a coal mine) or in some instances, they are worked by individuals who are not Freeminers but work under the stewardship of a Freeminer.

Over the years GCRG has assisted with a number of training exercises within various coal mines by providing surface logistics, equipment and training to the miners who form the Coal Mines team. Where GCRG members wish to, they can also be part of this team but there is not an expectation to be a member it is an individual's choice (just as it is for the landsearches). The primary objective being to ensure that there is a suitable rescue provision in place should it be required. This was the case on September 30th 2024 when the team responded to the incident at the Wallsend Mine to undertake the recovery of a miner who had suffered a heart attack while underground and subsequently died. This recovery was difficult due to the location of the incident and also the fact that it was one of the Coal Mines team members. However, the training that had been undertaken by the team members ensured that it was handled extremely well and in a very dignified manner.

Although all of the mines are coal mines each has its own individual things about it so it is essential that training takes place in the different locations. For March 27th the plan was in place to visit the New Venture mine which is actually located very close to the Wallsend mine near to Mallards Pike. Liaison between a couple of the group that work this mine and GCRG took place to establish the rescue scenario for the event but so as not to give too much away only the date of the exercise was circulated prior to the night. More detailed information was to be provided by the SARCALL message sent out on the day. However, even this only gave the RV point, exercise start time and the mine in question.

With only a limited amount of time available in an evening of course as with all training exercises there has to be some flexing of the rules so to speak so in this instance the GCRG landrover and trailer were taken to the site earlier than they would have been in reality on a real incident and the casualties were only put into their respective locations shortly before the exercise got underway. However, from this point in the exercise was run as near to real as was possible.

On the surface the GCRG people dealt with ensuring signing-in on the sheets was undertaken and in the control area CRIMS was up and running. Once there was a good number of people on site the first job was to go through the safety aspect of things. This was undertaken by Paul Baverstock who is one of the main members of the group who work this mine. He explained what the mine was like and where people could and could not go. Having provided GCRG with a mine plan this was displayed on the GCRG external monitor and made for easier explanations. Once this was all completed things then moved into the exercise itself almost on the word of action down the hill from the mine and into the assembled group came the person who had raised the alarm. Very excited, shouting that his mates were trapped in the mine, they had gone in some 2 hours ago and not come out, you need to go and find them he said to the team.

A couple of the team members comforted him and were able to establish in more detail what had happened. They were a group of Urban Explorers out walking in the forest when they came across the mine. They decided to explore the mine even though they were not equipped to do so. Originally all three had planned to go in but one decided that he would not. Actually, under the circumstances a good thing as he had been able to raise the alarm when the other two did not return. Once this information had been established a plan of action was put together by the team and conveyed to the GCRG surface control group who recorded it in the CRIMS log and also started the process of setting up the teams on the T Card board.

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Initially a small team would go into the mine lead by one of the group who work the mine to undertake a search and see who and what they could find. Radio comms was established from the mine entrance to the control and it was also confirmed that the mines underground comms system was all working. All of this information was recorded but also the locations of the comms points was added to the display on the monitor. This in fact is a very new development for the GCRG surface control but is going to be invaluable when for example deploying a comms team to be able to show them on a digital display where they are to go and then subsequently be able to show follow up teams where the comms points are located. Look out for this at future training exercises.

It was not long before the underground team were able to report back to the surface that they had located the two casualties underground. One would be a "walking casualty" but the second had been found beyond a collapse. Although they were in verbal contact with the person it was established that he was injured but extraction would require the removal of the collapse before full access could be undertaken. All of this information was relayed back to the surface control who then prepared another team of miners to go into the mine and work on the collapse.

Although, within GCRG we have many people who are used to digging, this experience for the majority will be limited to digs in caves where conditions are very different to what would be found in a coal mine. So, this is where the experience of the coal miners comes in to deal with, in particular the moving, handling and setting up of supportive timbers.

There was then a request for a medical person to go in and assess and deal with that aspect of things. Again, to help speed up the event a full medical top to toe examination was not undertaken as would normally be the case. However, it was made quite clear that the casualty did have a broken leg and this needed to be respected by all concerned with the extraction. While all of this was going on the "walking Casualty" was brought out of the mine and back down to the surface control area. In reality they would have been passed over to the paramedics for subsequent examination and a check over.

A request for a stretcher was made and it was decided that in this circumstance the Ferno basket stretcher would be suitable and this was despatched underground. On the surface there were a number of people running CRIMS in turn and dealing with note-taking, comms and the general running of the incident. This all worked very well and was good general training. The conditions underground were quite challenging but also very interesting for both the miners who attended and the GCRG members to see and deal with. It was not long before the surface control was notified that the second casualty was out of the mine and check made to ensure all those that had gone underground were accounted for and the mine closed and locked up.

Before everyone departed a short Debrief was held on what was deemed to be a very successful exercise. Thanks were extended to everyone for supporting the event and especially to Nicky and her three casualties (Max Theyer on the surface, John Manning [walking casualty] & Dave Grosvenor [trapped casualty]) Paul Baverstock and the team from New Venture who had set up the underground scenarios and to all from both the mining community and the cave rescue who had supported the event.

Thanks go to Falkland Anderson and Simon Betts who came over to the GCRG Depot on the Friday Morning and washed the kit off. That coal Mine dirt just gets into everything.

These events are generally only held once a year and the more we can get the miners involved the better as it is essential that they are able to so to speak "Stand on their own two feet" as far as rescue provision is concerned.

GCRG can only respond if called out in the correct manner by making contact with the police and requesting assistance and then putting in place the training and support to undertake what is required.

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TRAINING: BIXHEAD STONE MINE

9th March 2025

Started off rather ominously by the training officer (Ian Healey) stating some while ago that his intention for the training this month was to get people wet and cold and mentioned having to wear a wetsuit! (at least this is how it came across :-)) . The training was also to try out some new gear for the team to use underground and on the surface.

Hello All, I would just like to say a massive thank you to everyone who took part in the GCRG training exercise on Sunday. There was in total 56 people who attended the Bixhead site on a pleasant and warm spring day and took part in the various surface and underground sessions. CRIMS ran exceptionally well once we caught up with the initial surge of arrivals. A practice is quite different to how a real incident would run at the start but with a team running the original T Card board for the planning of teams it all worked very well.

Thanks also to those who arrived on site early and helped with the setting up of the trailer and the new awning making use of the new instruction documents. Some good feedback on how these can be slightly updated and improved. That's just what we need. This was the first time the awning has been set up outside of the GCRG depot and it looked very good. Later in the day we were able to get some pictures with both Daniel Howell and Chris Perkins who represented their late fathers who had both made bequests to the awning fund. The awning doubles our undercover space and allowed the external monitor to be displayed outside with the Bixhead mine survey on it. In the future this will be a great addition to the planning process.

Underground there were sessions on First Aid making use for the first time for us of members of the Casualty Union. The pictures I saw of the injuries looked extremely realistic. Stretcher loading and handling as well as a session on underground shelters. After a break for lunch in the sunshine it was back into the mine for a stretcher carry around the mine including going through the water. Many thanks to Jan Karvik for being the casualty for this session. I know that efforts were made to get him as wet as possible but I understand that he was just too buoyant. It was a great start to our understanding of keeping our casualty warm in wet conditions. Afterwards and back on the surface there was the opportunity for a team photo around the new awning and a debrief on the day. Then it was the task of packing everything away and heading back to the GCRG depot for a kit washing session. A big thanks to everyone who came and helped with this. Those extra pairs of hands make a massive difference.

The overall response to SARCALL was extremely good. It really does make life so much easier when we have a good indication of who is and who is not attending. Please keep up the good work. There are still a few of you out there who are not responding and this will be investigated. It may well be that you no longer want to be on the GCRG list that's fine but please can you let Gareth Jones info@gcrg.org.uk and he can update the list.

It was a really good day which I hope you all enjoyed.

Regards

Paul Taylor (GCRG Chairman)

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*Photos from the training provided
by Ian Healey and Nicky Bayley*



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ONGOING WORK AT THE DEPOT

Often there is ongoing work being carried out at the depot, sometimes at the weekends and also during the week.

The final completion of the garage refurbishment is the last major building project that to be completed following the purchase of the depot in December 1993.

3 Bay Refurbishment at the GCRG Depot

When the GCRG purchased the old council depot at the top of Littledean Hill next to the ambulance station the buildings were not as they are now. One of the first of the major construction jobs was to convert Bay 1 of the 3- bay garage into an undercover storage area for the GCRG landrover and then later on to move the group's equipment out of the main building into the new garage. Subsequently the old manual wooden roller shutter door that had been installed when the garage area was constructed was replaced with a new electrically operated steel roller door.

When it was decided to upgrade the exterior of the main building with steel cladding for the sides and roof, a quantity of extra materials was purchased with the plan to use this on the 3-bay garage. It took a while for this work to be completed, but in 2016 as part of the work to build the kit washing and drying rooms and also the first stage expansion of the training area. Initially, double doors were constructed and fitted to bays 2 & 3 along with cladding all along the front.

Both sets of the double doors have subsequently been replaced with electric roller doors. One being supplied as a donation from SARA and the second one purchased. This has without a doubt made a massive difference to the front of the building. The old doors have not been wasted as they were used to form the ends of the storage shed that was subsequently constructed at the rear of Bay 1 once the area had been excavated and a retaining wall constructed.

Work in 2023 saw the further expansion of the training wall in the area of Bay 3. Building up from the dwarf walls that had been built in 2016. This was a major job but what a transformation it was. Thoughts then turned to both continuing the cladding of the 3 bay exterior walls and linked to this replacing the old corrugated steel sheeting roof. Estimates for the material requirements were made and once this had been established quotes sourced for the cladding and roofing from a number of suppliers.

Over the years Paul Taylor has undertaken a number of roofing and cladding jobs and for these had used a company called Thomas Panels and Profiles who are based in Leominster. Their prices had always been very competitive and it was little surprise that in this instance they came up trumps again and an order was placed for sufficient sheets to clad and reroof the whole of the 3 bays and to include the balance of the new storage area that the old double doors would not provide for.

Around this time Trevor Perkins spoke to Paul about a quantity of roofing sheets that he had at his house in Gloucester. He had taken delivery of these some years previously when Paul was undertaking a job for Clearwell Caves and a number of people had sheets added to the order. For reasons beyond Trevor's control the planned use of the sheets to recover his garage just did not happen and he asked Paul if the GCRG would like them as he could not see them wasted. They were duly transported back to the depot with some of them forming the roof of the new storage area at the rear of Bay 1, a new roof on the GSS kit store and Paul had and paid for one for a job at his house / workshop roof. With the bulk of the work completed on the new storage facility attention moved towards completing the cladding north end of the 3 bay and then the back along to the new storage facility.

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As had been done previously, timber frames were constructed and attached to the concrete pillars and block walls of the building. In many cases leaving the existing original corrugated steel sheeting in-situ and just cutting holes in it where fixing for timbers was required. This did save a lot of time and with just a team of two people a large amount of the cladding has been installed and certainly looks very good. The upper triangular area above the 4m height of the main panels on the north-end wall was left to be completed once the roof had been replaced.

Initial thoughts were to leave the existing steel corrugated sheets in-situ and clad over the top but following further investigation and the complications that this was going to cause, it was decided to remove the sheets and construct a similar timber frame to what had been used on the sides. This would then sit on the existing tubular steel frame that ran along the length of the roof supported by the roof trusses. Before any actual replacement of the existing sheets could get underway a lot of planning and preparation work was required.

With dimensions checked, the first timber frame was constructed on the roof at the rear and above, Bay 1. A series of safety ropes were installed both over the width of the roof and along the length, to provide locations for the people working on the roof to clip into to prevent a fall to the ground if someone slipped.

The roofing sheets were 5m long and 1m wide and would normally be lifted up via a crane or a telehandler but with neither of these available an inclined gantry was instead constructed so that the sheets could be hauled up a slope from ground level up to the roof level and then carried into position. At the rear of Bay 1 a scaffolding tower and additional scaffolding was constructed to provide an access route up onto the roof of the new storage facility and in turn the rear of the 3-bay roof. The existing roofing sheets are secured using J bolts and a large number of these holding the existing sheeting down were cut off both internally and externally and the scene was set for a roof replacement working session. However, this required two very important factors. People to undertake the work and also good weather. The cold is one thing, but wet weather is just a non-starter as the existing roofing becomes very slippery when its wet. A date was set for the weekend of March 1st and 2nd, people indicated their availability and one has to say that the weather could not have been better. Ok a little warmer first thing in the morning and less frosty would have been good but the main thing was that it was dry. People arrived, plans were outlined and work got underway but the big question was would everything work out ok ????

The first job was to complete the removal of the J bolts and the sheeting from the first 6m of the roof. This actually went a lot easier than expected and a crew on the ground collected up the sheets ready to go off to the scrapyards. In fact, some of the sheets have been taken away to be given a new life making compost bins, shed roofs and a wood store roof. As well as some are destined to go to the entrance of Coldwell Swallet to replace some very old sheets that cover the entrance. With the sheets removed there certainly was a pretty big hole in the roof and although it did look nice looking up to the blue sky it was not a situation that could be left. The timber frame now needed to be moved into place. Slightly easier said than done as it did weigh quite a bit and of course had to be moved over the open hole. Rope and slings were attached, people positioned around the frame and it was slowly and carefully moved into position. Much to Paul's relief it fitted perfectly and was lined up with the timber frame on the north end so that when the two lots of sheets cladding & roofing come together the flashing will fit perfectly. To secure the timber frame to the tubular frame 80mm stainless pipe clips had been purchased and a number of these were attached and this held the frame and the ropes could be removed. Further clips were added to make a fully secure fixing and they have proved to be a very simple and effective method. The next stage was to get the first of the roofing sheets up onto the roof. Would the gantry and hauling system work?

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Yes, it did and although it was found that the sheet was around the wrong way (the overlap part of the sheet was on the wrong side) but it was turned on the roof and all subsequent sheets sent up the right way. A few modifications were made to the gantry including the provision of a length of timber to lift the front edge of the sheet as it was hauled up over the various rollers.

Positioning of the first sheet in the correct place was essential as not only did it need to line up for the side sheets but also it determines the position of the subsequent sheets in relationship to the timber frame. However, once sorted fixing screw were added and 1/15th of the rear of the roof was covered. A second sheet was hauled up by the ground team, mastic applied down the length of the sheet join and then the second sheet put in place and fixed. It might not seem a lot but by the end of a pretty long and full day four roofing sheets were in place and the second of the timber frames that had been prepared in kit form had also been constructed up on the roof.



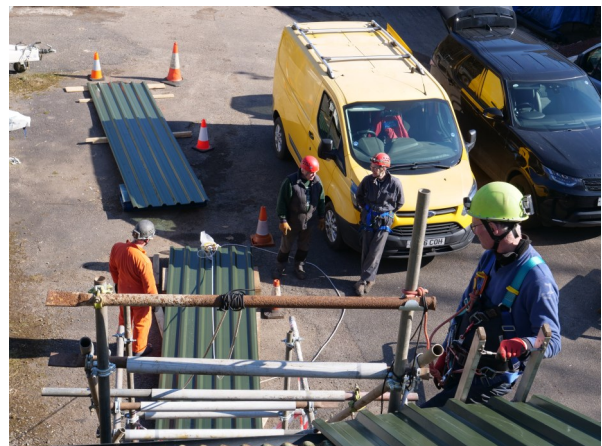
Sunday dawned bright sunny but frosty again but there was no time to be lost if the rest of the roof was to be completed. More of the old sheets were removed and the second frame put in place. This time a slightly different method as some of the old sheets were removed after the frame was in place. But this worked very well. It was necessary to fit the joining timbers between the two frames and of course more of the pipe clips. Although, now working off the roof of this job was a lot easier as step ladders could be used as well as a lightweight alloy tower. 5 more sheets were hauled up and put in place with a slight difference that to make the life easier for the fixing team the position for the fixing screws was marked on each end of the sheets prior to being brought up. This also improved the line of the fixings and saved a lot of measuring on the roof. While work on these sheets was going on a team put the third frame together this time on the front part of the roof so that all it would require would be to be pivoted over the apex of the roof and then slid down into place once the old sheets were removed. Removal of the last of the J bolts was completed from both inside and externally. The sheets removed and the frame put in place. Pipe clips and timbers added and the frame secured.

As the gantry for hauling the sheets up onto the roof was made from scaffolding it was not something that was easily moved around so it was decided that it would be left in-situ and the sheets for the third frame carried over the roof once they had been hauled up. This moving required four people. All of which needed to be secured to the safety lines and in turn required the swapping of attachment points from one rope to another. Within the front section of the roof there are three glass skylights and unfortunately during the movement of one of the sheets one of the team stepped on the glass. This shattered and he fell into the open space but not to the floor 5m below due to the safety system that was running. Very fortunately, apart from I guess some damaged ego NO INJURIES were sustained and once recovered from his predicament, work resumed and the final sheets were put in place. 15 sheets in total covering the vast proportion of the rear section of the roof.

GCRG NEWSLETTER

Where the join between the roof and the vertical wall at the south end is to be there will be the need to add some more sheeting but at this stage without the exterior cladding it can't be determined. It was without a doubt a fantastic job that would not have been achieved without all of the people who gave up their time to help out. Everyone will be listed at the end.

Since then, additional fixing down screws have been applied to the sheets with alignment set using a string line from one end to the other and all of the plastic caps fitted to the screws and work has started on the construction of the timber frames for the front of the roof. The project is without a doubt a significant one and also one that is costing quite a considerable amount of money. However, it is a one off and not something that will need to be repeated for a very long time.



When Paul and others attended the event held to celebrate the life of the late Trevor Perkins his son Christopher made it known to Paul that Trevor had left instructions that he would like to help the group purchase something.

In discussions with both Liz Maisey our Treasurer and with Christopher it was decided that whatever this amount was it would be used to go towards the roofing and cladding project. Although Trevor had not helped with this he had helped with many other aspects of the development of the buildings over the years. We had also used some money that had come to the group from the undertakers to go towards the awning (The awning project is covered in a separate article) .

We had invited Christopher to come to the GCRG training day on Sunday March 9th to see the awning and to get some pictures taken. During this process Liz and Paul had a discussion with Christopher who wished to sort out the donation. It is fair to say that both Liz and Paul were left in total shock when they were informed by Christopher that the figure that he would like to give to GCRG on behalf of his late father would be £8000 as this would then cover fully the cost of the project.



GCRG NEWSLETTER

This is without a doubt an extremely generous and significant donation and for any of you who were at the training day on Sunday when Paul announced the donation without mentioning the amount will know that he was pretty emotional.

We send our most sincere thanks to Christopher and his sister Becca and of course their father Trevor for this donation. Trevor will be looking down and be very pleased to see the work being done.

Look out for emails regarding the next working sessions to complete the second half of the roof and to get the ends finished.



Photo below shows the garage bays as they were in October 2011.



GCRG NEWSLETTER

AND NOW, SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Occasionally the group gets asked to help with a non-cave rescue problem and this time it was the recovery of some unknown (human?) bones from a mine site near Bream.

Taking part in a cave adventure in an area near Bream, two boys (roughly 15 years old) had filmed their exploits and posted it online. In the video the two boys had discovered lots of skeletal remains and due to the large number of bones portrayed in the video it was reported to the police.

Bone Recovery Lydney Park Estate

15 April 2025

Paul Taylor received a call from Matt Miles Glos Police requesting the assistance of GCRG to help with the recovery of some bones from a mine site (restricted area due to land access issues) near Bream. A video of the bones had surfaced and raised concerns. The video had been examined by the police but the results were not conclusive in ruling out that they were not human. Hence a further in-depth check was required. Following a discussion, it was established that there was no immediate requirement and the job could be undertaken the following day.

16 April 2025

Paul sent out an initial SARCALL message to the full team requesting assistance from a small number of Forest-based GCRG members. There was a good response from this and a team established comprising Kevin Brockway (GCRG Warden), Nicky Bayley (First Aid Officer), Craig Cameron (Comms Officer), Falkland Anderson and Simon Betts. SARCALL was used to convey the details of the RV point for the following day and the member of Glos Police who would be leading the job. A SARCALL log was started and on the Wednesday morning Paul contacted GFRS Control to obtain an Incident number. Once on site Kevin Brockway conveyed information to Paul Taylor who updated the SARCALL Log throughout the incident.

The GCRG members accompanied the police forensics team (two police officers) to the cave where the remains were found. The number of bones was estimated to be in the hundreds. These bones appeared to all be from animals. A mix of muntjac deer, sheep, cattle, birds, badgers and more. Two large bags of samples were collected and further sent for testing with the forensics team. Initial speculation is that 'no further action' will be taken as there is no suspicion of human remains. However, this will need to be confirmed.

*Photo Credits: Nicky Bayley
and Simon Betts*



*Report details provided by
Simon Betts and Paul Taylor*



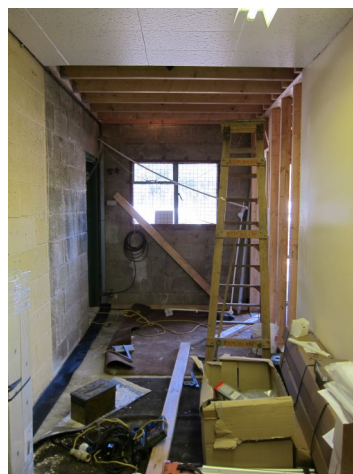
GCRG NEWSLETTER

FROM THE ARCHIVES

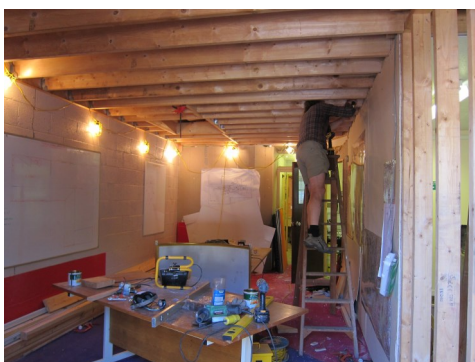
How quickly we forget how the depot used to be and the immense amount of hard work that has been put in by many members into creating the depot as we see it now in 2025.



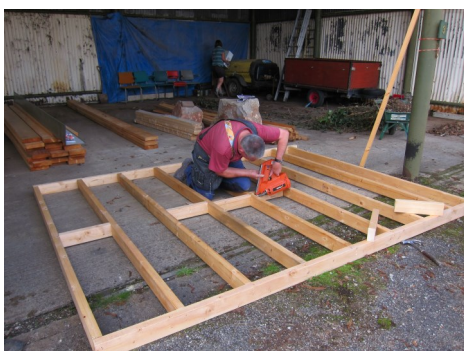
22 May 2004



2 October 2011



2 October 2011



12 April 2012

GCRG NEWSLETTER

2025, THE 60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMATION OF GCRG

The GCRG was officially formed on 24th of May 1965 at the first AGM of the Cave Rescue Team which had until this point existed as part of the GSS [*further historical info of the first 50 years of the group is available from the "50 Years of Cave Rescue" publication from the group's website*].

It would be fair to say that the group has changed very much over these last 60 years and who would have foreseen the developments in cave discovery & exploration since then within the Forest of Dean?

It has been decided that this year there needs to be some form of commemoration held to celebrate the group's 60th [Diamond] anniversary just as there had been in 2015 for the 50th anniversary but what form ought this to take? In 2015 the celebration was held in conjunction with the BCRC conference held at the Dean Field Study Centre & Clearwell Caves.



It is proposed that some form of event is held in the Forest and over the weekend of 13th/14th of September & which will also consist of the September training event as well. The training & event is planned to take part on Saturday the 13th of September with the option of staying over into the Sunday etc.

At the depot there will certainly be a BBQ organised but what else? How about any of the following:

- SRT competition in the garages
- Silly games
- Caving bring & buy stalls
- Cake/Food sales
- GCRG merchandise sales
- Caving/Cave Rescue talks/displays
- Training sessions/workshops
- Events held in the Forest & finishing at the depot (walking/caving/cycling/canoeing etc)

GCRG NEWSLETTER

SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK

GCRG has its own presence on FB

<https://www.facebook.com/Gloucestershire-Cave-Rescue-Group-1828966887343731/>



See GCRG's own channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbb3v4lcSbxSLyUF5Fqlqwa>

Twitter

GCRG now also has its own account on Twitter, follow the group at

https://twitter.com/GCRG_CaveRescue