

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP



AUGUST 2012 NEWSLETTER

Following the AGM held on the 3rd May 2012 there have been some changes to the GCRG Committee. The members of the committee are shown under the appropriate heading.

Any newsletter can only be as good as the information printed within it and any articles for inclusion or general comments would be most welcome - contact the Chairman or Secretary.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

GCRG Depot – 01594 827999

SARCALL Response Number - 07537415551

NEXT TRAINING EXERCISE

**2nd September 2012 – Cotswold Mines exercise
(location = wait and see)**

It is the intention to make use of SARCALL & SARCALL Response during this training exercise as part of our on-going development of the system within GCRG.

Please respond accordingly.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<p>Chairman</p> <p>Paul W Taylor</p> <p>chairman@gcrg.org.uk</p> <p>01452 505673 (H) 07803 539945 (M)</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Peter Turier</p> <p>secretary@gcrg.org.uk</p> <p>01452 539199 (H) 07879 903921 (M)</p>	<p>Treasurer</p> <p>Liz Maisey</p> <p>treasurer@gcrg.org.uk</p> <p>01666 504647 (H)</p>
<p>Communications Officer</p> <p>Craig Cameron</p> <p>comms@gcrg.org.uk</p> <p>01594 834481 (H)</p>	<p>Information Officer</p> <p>Gareth Jones</p> <p>info@gcrg.org.uk</p> <p>01452 532014 (H) 07982 455650 (M)</p>	<p>Training Co-ordinator</p> <p>training@gcrg.org.uk</p>

Equipment Officer Nicky Bayley equipment@gcrg.org.uk 01594 840481 (H) 07790 664278 (M)	Medical Advisor Andy Harp andy@palmcons.co.uk 01594 840481 (H)	
Ordinary Member [Newsletter Editor] Jon Maisey jon.maisey@btinternet.com 01666 504647 (H)	Ordinary Member Dave Appleing Dappleing@aol.com 01242 581385 (H)	Ordinary Member [S&MWCRT liaison] Steve Tomalin smtspeleo@virginmedia.com 01452 883189 (H) 07867 772341 (M)
Ordinary Member Kevin Brockway ozonekev@tiscali.co.uk 0117 9098153 07970 033345 (M)	Ordinary Member Ian Healey ianandrachrtw@hotmail.com 01594 560583 (H) 07795 325831 (M)	

CALLOUT WARDENS

Cheltenham / Tewkesbury / North Cotswolds	Maurice Febry 01242 242160 (H)	Dave Appleing 01242 581385 (H) 07804 300598 (M) 01242 669413 (W) 01242 669348 (W)
Bristol / Chepstow	John Elliott 01594 543881 (H) 07714 108118 (M) Kevin Brockway 01179 098153 (H) 07970 033345 (M) 01454 382133 (W) 01454 382100 x2133 (W)	John Hutchinson 01291 626376 (H) 07854 688624 (M)
Forest of Dean	John Berry 01594 822823(H) 07979 791083 (M) Greg Jones 01594 827334 (H) 07974 008519 (M) Dave Tuffley 01594 824343 (H) 07799 617934 (M) 01452 711852 (W)	Cliff Seymour 01594 832717 (H) Andy Clark 01600 716970 (H) 07707 992510 (M) 07411 207149 (M) 01594 811370 (W)

Gloucester	Steve Tomalin 01452 883189 (H) 07867 772341 (M) Pete Turier 01452 539199 (H) 07789 903921 (M) 01452 515764 (W)	Paul Taylor 01452 505673 (H) 07803 539945 (M)
Out of County	George Price 01531 821743 (H) 07989 707585 (M)	

FORTHCOMING TRAINING

See also "Next Training Exercise"

2nd September 2012 – Underground practice to be held in a stone mine somewhere in the Cotswold area.

Details will be sent out closer to the date.

DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS & GCRG

GCRG INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

4th June 2012

Queen Elizabeth II is only the second monarch to reign long enough in the UK to celebrate a Diamond Jubilee, the other being Queen Victoria. Based on the succession that we have to follow on from her there is not another one on the horizon.

Many events were planned for around the country and the Commonwealth to celebrate this occasion. London was going to be very much the hub of these activities with a significant river pageant on the Thames and also a concert to be held adjacent to Buckingham Palace. Both would be events not to be missed even if only to be watched on the TV. When however I received a phonecall while working at the GCRG depot from the Chairman of the BCRC, Bill Whitehouse, asking me what I was doing on 4th June and would I like to go to the concert, my initial reply was "not sure what I am doing and what concert?" his reply was "the concert, the one at Buckingham Palace to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee". At this point the penny dropped and I said yes I would very much like to go but I would have to speak to Rose first. Having recently had an operation on her back I was not sure how she would cope with all the likely walking and standing that was going to be involved. However when I spoke to her it took her about 5 seconds to say YES PLEASE, so a phone call back to Bill to confirm our acceptance.

A week later at the GCRG Noxon Park training exercise I mentioned to Emma Porter that I had received a call from Bill and she said that she also had received one about the same event, so we made plans to travel up together. Her partner, Mike Clayton, was also to go as well and he sorted out all of the accommodation for a hotel at Euston. This proved to be only 2 minutes from the station and gave

easy access to the underground and yet was just far enough out of the main area of London that was mainly affected by the celebrations.

Fast tracking to the Jubilee weekend, Emma took advantage of the extra day and booked us all in to visit the Scott exhibition that was being held at the Natural History museum (more of this later).

Emma and Mike came down to stay with us in Gloucester on the Saturday evening and although the weather was not perfect, Rose had cooked a nice bbq meal and this went down well with some bubbly that we were testing out for the GCRG Diamond Jubilee medal presentation event, a few bottles of wine and very nice malt whiskey that Rose had recently bought me. None of us took much rocking that night.

We were up and away by 07:58 the next morning, 2 minutes in front of our schedule and with Mike driving we were soon on our way to London. The weather was not good but we were geared up for this. With many London roads closed and parking likely to be very expensive and at a premium we decided to leave the car at Northolt and travel in on the tube. This proved not only to be free but certainly well worthwhile. Making use of a full-zone travel ticket we had the flexibility to go wherever we wanted and not have to keep buying tickets. Getting out at Euston, Mike soon located the Travel Lodge and we made contact with Pete Alright (BCRC Hon Secretary) and left our bags in his room for the afternoon and then returned to Euston and caught the tube down to Embankment. Many of the streets leading down to the river were deliberately blocked off so that people moved along routes and roads that could cope with the numbers and following the mass of people, we eventually worked our way down to the river very close to Waterloo Bridge and although there was still many hours to go before the flotilla would start it's journey there were many people already lining the river frontage and we were well back from the front. Many large TV screens had been set up along the route and three were located very near to us.

To be honest we saw very little of the actual live flotilla even when it came past our location but saw the vast amount of it on the TV screens. However it was great to be down there and to be part of the crowd and atmosphere. Rose and I were very lucky that although we did not have actual seats to sit in (we should have taken chairs) we were able to sit in some large plastic bollards which I presume are used to block the roads if required. This certainly helped with taking some of the weight of your feet. I have to say that my only complaint was that for some reason there was not any commentary on the screen so you had to work out for yourself what was happening. But apart from that it was most impressive. Once the flotilla had passed us we decided to head back to the hotel. A wise choice as the heavens opened and we walked as fast as we could back to the tube station.

Back at the hotel we all joined up in one room, shared a bottle of wine and watched the final section of the event. When the last barge came down with the orchestra and choir on, the rain was pouring down and I made the comment that the girls on top must have been soaked through to their knickers but they still sang fantastically and were certainly very much appreciated by everybody for their determination not to be beaten by the weather. I saw a couple of them the next day on the TV and they said apart from being wet they enjoyed it enormously.

Some of you will have met Firas Fayed who is a friend of Mike and Emma at either GCRG or MCRO training Events. He lives in London and had arranged for us all to meet at a Thai restaurant in Haymarket that was owned by his uncle. In

total there were 12 of us and we were treated to an excellent meal and with a 50% discount on the food costs it was made even better. London, despite the wet weather was electric that night as we made our way back to Euston.



"Cave Interiors"

Photo: Rose Taylor

The following morning Mike and Emma took the tube down to the embankment and took the opportunity to have a good run on either side of the river, crossing via two of the bridges. Returning to the hotel we all got together for breakfast before taking the tube up to Camden Town for a walk along the Regents canal up onto Primrose Hill for a wonderful view across the London skyline and in particular, view the new Shard building that when finished will be the tallest in Europe. Along the route we came across a shop that was called "Cave Interiors" and could not resist a photo opportunity!

From here it was down around the edge of Regents Park, back onto the canal before making a return via Warwick Avenue. A very nice walk, and it is amazing what you can find to see just literally minutes from the centre of the city and also be so relatively quiet. Back over at Euston we found a suitable pub for lunch and then a final pop back to the hotel for bags before heading over to Victoria Station to start working our way to Buckingham Palace.

We had arranged to meet up with the rest of the Cave and Mountain Rescue people who were also attending the concert, in the bar of the Thistle Westminster hotel in Buckingham Palace road. Many were already there when we arrived and there were only a couple more to come. Rose and I had previously decided that we would not have a drink as to be honest the more you drink the more you have to process (if you get my drift) and although loos would be available the chances of getting to one and then back again once inside the venue would we felt be quite difficult. When we were told that small bottles of beer were £4.50 each, making it £9.00 a pint we were glad of our decision. Various photographs were taken in the bar and then at around 16:00 we set off to join the queue. To be

honest I thought we had left it a bit late as the line of waiting people was very long and we were certainly very near the end when we joined it. I had visions of us not getting in before the concert started or even if we got in, would be right at the back and watching everything on a screen.

Various people came down the line to check that we had the right tickets for the right line, our identification ready and assured us that we would all get in and would not miss anything. I was not 100% sure to say the least. The gates were due to open at 17:00 and this came and went and there was very little movement in the line. We moved about 20m and then it stopped at a point where a walkway for other people crossed through the line. However once we crossed this point a few minutes later, true to their word things did not stop and it was not long before our tickets and ID were being checked. It was then up to and through the body scanners, all manned by the police who were doing an excellent job, (putting airport checks to shame) and before we knew it we were through, presented with a programme, bottle of water, small flag and then found ourselves standing next to the Buckingham Palace railings. Well not exactly right next to them as there were additional crowd control barriers but close enough to get a great picture of almost all of the caving team with the palace in the background. Many of us had worn our red Cave Rescue jackets (not only patriotic but they stood out well amongst the crowd) and made it a lot easier to see and follow people around. Moving off, we soon found ourselves amongst the crowd but when we turned around we realised we were directly in front of the stage which had been built around the Queen Victoria memorial at the top of the Mall right outside Buckingham Palace. It is adorned with four very large lions and the stage was between the two that face the Mall and we were situated just right of the left-hand one approximately 25 people back from the stage edge. To be honest, it could not have been much better considering the time we had arrived. Although we had to stand for the whole of the event (around 5 hours) like the previous day, the crowd, location and atmosphere seemed to outweigh everything else. The stage area looked very impressive and various radio and TV programmes were broadcast to keep people occupied.



Outside Buckingham Palace

Photo: Rose Taylor

In the photo taken outside Buckingham Palace, the group consists of the following (from L to R):

Pete Allwright, Mike Clayton, Darny Bradshaw, Emma Porter, Paul Taylor, Anthony Rich and Jon Whiteley

Around 19:15 the warm-up act came on and then this was followed by an introduction and then Gareth Malone (of Military Wives fame) and Sir Andrew Lloyd Weber came on to practice with the crowd the section of the song "Sing" that we were all to take part in and then the main concert got underway with a rousing rendition by Robbie Williams.

I am sure many of you will have watched the event so I will not give you a blow-by-blow account of each act but suffice to say that it was excellent throughout. A great mix of music for all tastes and from a fantastic line-up of artists that you would normally have had to pay a fortune to go and see on one stage. All were excellent in their own right and it would be difficult to pick out one act and say that it was better than all of the rest but the Military Wives choir and all the others who made up this group to perform "Sing" were superb, it sounded great and it was a line-up that will never be repeated.

None of the acts had a long time on stage and I think it was limited to around 6 minutes so each gave a snap shot of their respective material. For sheer endurance Grace Jones should get a medal for hula-hooping for the entire duration of her song the Rhythm. She certainly must have some seriously strong stomach muscles. Paul McCartney's Live and Let Die certainly warmed the crowd up when the gas jets went off. All of the projections onto the front of Buckingham Palace were excellent and the fireworks were to die for. Then unfortunately it was all over.

What a fantastic event that both Rose and I felt very privileged to have been able to attend and to literally wave the flag for all of the Cave and Mountain Rescue team members. We wore our Cave Rescue jackets with pride and if you watch carefully you can see us.

Exiting was again in my mind going to be a long job with over 20,000 people at the concert, 70,000 people in the Mall and around 150,000 in Hyde Park alone. Again my fears were short-lived as once the people started moving we were off and like the previous day, a meandering route back to the Victoria Station thinned the people out. When we arrived it was straight down onto the platform, onto a tube and back over the hotel in less than an hour. Again we all met for a drink before retiring to our respective rooms for a well-earned sleep.

Tuesday morning seemed to come round very quickly and as previously we met up in Emma & Mike's room for breakfast and a quick pack of our bags. Transported these into Pete's room again and then it was onto the tube and over to the Natural History museum for our visit to the Scott exhibition.

The exhibition was all about Scott's last polar trip when he and three others lost their lives on the return trip from the South Pole. Many pictures and artefacts were included in the exhibition. Marked out on the floor were the inside dimensions of Scott's hut where everybody had their respective beds, stove, cooking area and the various science and photography sections. They certainly

did not have a lot of room to live in and conditions were very hard to say the least. My words can do little to explain it all, it is something that you need to see for yourself to fully appreciate. However what does come over is the total remoteness that they endured, not only during the 7 months that it took them to get down to Antarctica but also during their prolonged stay. Six men had become separated from the main hut and over winter were forced to spend around 6 months living in an ice cave before emerging and walking the 120 miles back to the main hut. Hard Men does not do them credit. We saw the famous picture taken on Scott's birthday when they were all sat round the table in the hut with champagne brought all the way from England. Much of what they did in those very early days is still the basis of the research that is being undertaken now, 100+ years later. If you are in London or need a reason to go then go and see this exhibition, (it runs through to September) you that you will not be disappointed.

With our visit over we made our way up to Maida Vale and again met up with Firas who took us to a Lebanese restaurant which again was excellent. Afterwards we collected the bags from the hotel and it was back on the tube and out to Northolt, loaded the car and then back to Gloucester. A weekend of many memories and one that it was very nice to be part of.

Paul Taylor

DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDAL PRESENTATIONS

Clearwell Caves, Thursday June 14th 2012

I have to say at the outset that I can't take the credit for the idea of holding a medal presentation underground. That must go to Jon Whiteley from Devon Cave Rescue Organisation who told me that they were planning theirs for Kent's Cavern and what were we doing in GCRG?

With a seed sown I thought that's a great idea and Clearwell Caves a tourist Iron Mine in the Forest of Dean instantly came to mind as a very suitable location. Being owned by cavers and with whom we have a good relationship. When contacted they immediately said yes and a date set for the evening of June 14th. A part of the mine known as Barbecue Churn, previously used to host many parties and events, would prove to be a very suitable location. During the weeks that followed invitations were sent out to all of the GCRG medal recipients and also four guests contacted to undertake the presentation.

For the night of the event, the chamber (BBQ Churn) was transformed with a static display of GCRG equipment and display boards, laptop, projector, screen, lectern, tables and chairs and also the all-important food & even more important drinks. In total 90 people attended including 48 recipients' family and friends, GCRG Guests and Distinguished guests.

An excellent mix of light hearted humour blended well with the more serious aspects of the evening dealing with the presentation of the medals and the heartfelt words of support that were given. How many events have you been to where one of your guests, the Assistant Chief Constable, was employed to move the table and lectern when a light failed? All joined in whole hearted with the proceedings and everybody was extremely complimentary of the location. It had

made the event. From a balcony looking down onto the lower section of the chamber the picture of all the recipients and guests was taken.

It is fair to say that there is only one word that describes the evening "Fantastic" and thanks are extended to all who took part and organised the event. It will go down in the history of the group and be remembered for a very long time.



All attendees of the presentation in Clearwell Caves

Photo: Chris Howes

Special thanks go to Mr Richard Berry, Assistant Chief Constable, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Mr Jon Hall Chief Fire Officer, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Mr Ceri Evans, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Gloucestershire & Mr Tony Forster, HSE Mines Inspector, who undertook the presentation of the Medals. Current Deputy Gaveler, Daniel Howell, and John Harvey (who held the same post for the previous years and was also a medal recipient) were also in attendance.

The support of all of the staff at Clearwell Caves contributed to the success of the evening and thanks also go to Jonathan and Ray Wright for making the caves available to us for this very special and unique event.

Thanks also go to Rose Taylor & Fiona Cameron for producing the fantastic selection of cakes that were consumed during the evening.



Guests and GCRG representatives - From Left to Right

Mr Tony Foster (HSE Mines Inspector)

Mr Richard Berry (Assistant Chief Constable for Gloucestershire Constabulary)

Paul Taylor (GCRG Chairman)

Nicky Bayley (GCRG Equipment Officer)

Pete Turier (GCRG Secretary)

Mr Ceri Evans (Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire)

Mr Jon Hall (Chief Fire Officer for Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service)

Photo: Chris Howes

Paul Taylor

MCRO DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDAL PRESENTATION & LONG SERVICE AWARD

Early in July I received an email from Emma Porter from the Midland Cave Rescue Organisation (MCRO) inviting Rose and I to attend their Diamond Jubilee medal presentation. This was planned for Wednesday July 25th and was to be held in the Dudley limestone mines and would involve a trip in via a canal boat. Not wishing to miss the opportunity of the trip and also to support the MCRO, I replied to say that yes we would very much like to attend. Subsequently Emma contacted me again and asked if I would take on the presentation of a Long Service award to John Smith who was one of the founder members of the Dudley Cave Rescue many years previously. I said I would be very honoured to do this.

I had known John for many years through our regular joint training exercises and so set about putting a few words together assisted by Emma who would help out with some facts and figures.

We arranged to get up to Emma and Mike's house for around 18:00 approximately as this is located only just up the road from the entrance to the limestone tunnel. At the house I had a quick read through of the notes that Emma had prepared and incorporated as much as time would allow into my own words. It was during this that Emma then dropped a bit of a bombshell by saying "Paul would you mind presenting the medals as well". Fortunately, as you all know, I am not usually one short of words and with her added notes and information I was quite sure that I could sort things out. We drove down to the meeting point where many people were already gathered. However at this stage there was one vital person missing, John Smith. Fortunately to everyone's relief he turned up a few minutes later. Most of the assembled group were not aware that the second part of the evening was going to involve John.

We made our way down on to the canal wharveside and into one of the waiting tour boats. Normally the tunnel is not open in the evening but the group that runs the trips had agreed to do this trip especially. There were 32 of us in total and we were given the full tour as we made our way up the tunnels. The boats are electric so not only very quiet but also there are not any fumes to worry about. Some of the turns are quite tight and it was very interesting to see all of the various features along the way (tunnels and mine entrances). If you have not undertaken this trip I can strongly recommend it.

Once we were in the final 'Singing Chamber' all the lights were turned off and the commentary run. This was excellent as the lights slowly came back on and then the music played. It certainly gave a great sense of atmosphere.

We all disembarked from the boat and made our way up to a small seating area and got ourselves ready for the presentation. The raised area next to the seating area provided the perfect vantage point from where Mike Clayton was able to welcome everybody and then introduce me. Thanking the group for the invitation and also the privilege to present the medals, each recipient was called forward presented with their medal and then waited for the rest so that a series of photos could be taken of everybody. Some members of the group had already received their medals as they were not able to attend the event.

Moving onto the long service award I had decided while preparing my notes that I would not reveal the recipient's name until very near the end. Although as I went through the various facts and figures I am sure the John became aware that it was him that I was talking about for those that did not know it extended the subterfuge.

In the early 1960's the tragic death of a young lad who fell down one of the Dudley limestone mineshafts and the subsequent discovery by John and a caving friend, of the watch that belonged to the lad, led to the formation in 1966 of the Dudley Fire Service Cave Rescue Team, later to become the Dudley Cave Rescue and then Dudley Caving Club. Along the way the MCRO was formed bringing together cavers from the Dudley and Shropshire areas and the organisation went from strength to strength.

Throughout all of this time John has played a very pivotal role within the MCRO and took part in the recent Snailbeach rescue. Although he is now standing down from the underground side of things, it is still his intention to remain active and support the MCRO.

The BCRC 50-Year Long Service award given to John was as recognition of all of the time, effort and hard work that he has put in over the years. It was an honour for me to make the presentation to him. Again a good few photos were taken and after John said a few words about how one simple factor of finding the watch had had a paramount effect on the rest of his life and had they not found it the whole story could have been so much different.

More photos of everybody getting back onto the boat and then it was along the tunnels backwards all the way and out into the warm summer's evening. The conclusion of a fantastic evening and one that I know that Rose and I are very proud to have been part of.



MCRO members at the presentation

Photo: Rose Taylor

In my speech underground I made the point that like GCRG, Devon Cave Rescue Organisation and now the MCRO, making use of an underground location for the

presentation of medals to the members of an underground rescue team was very apt. I know that having checked around some of the other cave and mountain rescue teams, their medals were just given out at committee meetings and general events. There are many who are very envious of what we have all done and with no pun intended, they have missed out on a "diamond opportunity" that will certainly not be repeated for a very long time.

My sincere thanks go to Emma & Mike and all in MCRO for inviting us and allowing us to take part in this very special event and also for the continuing support that the MCRO members give to the GCRG. It is and always will be appreciated.

Paul & Rose Taylor

TRAINING

GCRG Depot

Sunday 10th June 2012

Over the years we have found that having one of the GCRG training sessions in the year based at the depot and run as a round-robin event with a number of "workshops" has proved to be very popular. The only criticism from last year's event was that it was a bit on the cold side. This year we moved the programme around to hold the event in June. We are not sure whether it was this change or just general interest but with an attendance of nearly 50 people from not only GCRG but the MCRO and S&MWCRT it seems that we must be getting something right. It also gave the opportunity for those who have not seen the work that has been going on to refurbish the depot to take a look around and see how things have changed dramatically over the last 8 months. Not all of the work is completed but the light can be seen at the end of the tunnel and what has been done was enough to make a visit now a very enjoyable one. Fortunately the weather also stayed fine for the day allowing much to go on outside as well as two sessions inside the main building.

Five small workshops were set up and run by the following:

- SARCALL /SARCALL Response – Paul Taylor
- Floating Pulley Demo and Practical – Steve Tomalin
- Stretcher Loading and Casualty Care – Gareth Jones
- Use of VHF Radios/Communications Protocols – Mike Clayton
- Equipment Inspection and Bag Repacking – Nicky Bailey

Reports on each of the separate workshops are given.

Overall the day was very good and is certainly going to be on next year's programme. Please let any of the GCRG Committee members know if there is a specific topic that you would like to be covered.

SARCALL / SARCALL RESPONSE

GCRG has had the SARCALL bulk SMS text messaging system running now for nearly 12 months and although we have described it within the GCRG newsletter, the recent training session had been the first real opportunity to show it practically to the GCRG membership. In fact the delay in showing it has had a beneficial effect in that we have had the opportunity to test it out on a number of occasions to the members and received very good results. That to me is a very positive result because I feel that if we can get good results when people don't fully understand it then it must be a good system that is simple to understand. In addition to this, recently an SMS response tool has been added and this gave an ideal time to show the members how they fitted into this part of the system.

In order to have some "live information" in the system, a test message was triggered by Paul Taylor at approximately 08:00 on the Sunday morning asking those receiving it to respond to the advised number with their availability or not for attendance at the training session being held later that morning. As with the recent Test carried out for the Wardens Training Evening the overall response was very good. With this information in the can so to speak the principles of the SARCALL system were run through with each group.

Being a fully web-based system it is not restricted to specific computers and gives those who are using it the ability to view it any location that they have access to a computer or a smart phone.

Making use of a "test group" button each group was shown the very simple operations that a GCRG Warden would need to progress through in order to undertake an activation of the system. (The test group deliberately only contains a few names so that tests like this can be carried out without inconveniencing large numbers of people or costing the group a lot of money). Once the process had been shown then the button was pressed and Paul's phone went off a few seconds later to confirm it had received the message. This is exactly what happens when any of the group buttons are pressed.

From the information received back via the SARCALL response number, the GCRG Warden is able to see not only a numerical indication of who is going to attend an incident, those who have limited availability and also those who have indicated that for whatever reason they are not available. These come up in three different coloured boxes; Green, Yellow and Red respectively. This all comes about by those who have received the message taking the trouble to send a text back.

In addition to this, the information is recorded and shown as to who the message is from, which phone they used to send that message and the delay time before they are going to arrive. If any additional text is sent with the message (for example "I am just finishing work etc" is sent with the message that information is also made available for the Incident Controller or Warden to see. If while on route that person's status changes they could send a second message such as "on route but delay in traffic etc". As long as they use the same phone then this new message will be displayed and the original message removed. As with the numbered boxes, these messages are of the same colour depending on the availability code that is used with the message. Not only was the information from the morning's replies shown but also updates were made to show how people moved around depending on the messages that they sent in.

One could consider that those that reply to say they are not available are not valid. In fact they are just as valid as those that say people are coming because time is not wasted by phoning people later who have indicated they are not available.

Everybody who saw the system demonstrated said that they thought it was very good and could see how it would make the jobs of those running a rescue incident that much easier.

As GCRG is not the busiest cave rescue team in the country we can all get a bit rusty when it comes to remembering what to do so, a double credit card sized card showing what to do in the event of a SARCALL message being received was handed out to all who attended. If you have not received one please contact Gareth Jones via info@gcrg.org.uk and he will make arrangements to get one to you. In addition to this, it contained all of the contact details for the GCRG Wardens so if all else fails and you wish to pass on your information you can contact a Warden direct.

On the three and nine month periods of the year, the Gloucester Fire and Rescue Control are going to be testing the SARCALL system by activating their Call Team button. This is a slight miss wording as they do not call all of the team they only call the GCRG Wardens and it is the Wardens who move things to the next stage down to the GCRG membership. However when these tests take place it is now going to be our intention to move the test on to a Full Team Status and request a text response. These messages will always come with the word TEST contained within them. If you receive any messages and they do not then please treat them as being real and respond accordingly. The test message will not come out at 01:00 and will be after 18:00 but please when it does come, take the time to respond as it is only practice that will get us all used to how it works and what it can give the controllers.

For the system to work well and efficiently you need to ensure that your information held by Gareth is up to date, if you change your mobile or house phone please let him know as soon as possible?

In addition to this it is now extremely simple for Gareth to update information and so if you are going away on holiday and do not wish to have a series of messages on your phone either while you are away or when you get back on the answering machine. Please let him know and he will un-tick your box in the SARCALL system and your phone will not be activated. This saves the group money in not wasting the cost of sending a text when you are on holiday and unavailable. Let him have the date when you will next be available and on that date he will put you back in the system. Nothing could be simpler.

If there is any aspect of the system that you do not understand or would like some help with then please either contact Gareth by email at info@gcrg.org.uk or give him a ring on 01452 532014 and he will help you all he can.

Paul Taylor

FLOATING PULLEY DEMO AND PRACTICAL

The workshop I ran was a pitch head haul (from the platform) using our new Petzl "Rigs" these replace the Petzl "Gri Gris" and are load rated for hauling/lowering, only one rope was used to allow for clarity (this was explained to the group).

The haul was rigged through a releasable pulley (using a Gri Gri) once at the top this allows the casualty to be brought back towards to the top of the pitch, a system that is required if the belays are out away from the pitch head, we used the weighted dummy who was in the full body harness.

The Jockey person was on separate SRT rigging and operated the releasable pulley.

The casualty was hauled up and lowered several times for each group allowing a change round of persons.

The session was repeated 5 times as part of the round robin of workshops.

Steve Tomalin

USE OF VHF RADIOS / COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOLS

A short training session was held for the correct use of the VHF radios. The training included the operation of the radio and the correct protocols to use when transmitting.

Each session was split into two groups for some practical use of the radios. Using two separate rooms in the Depot, each group had to transmit and receive information. When passing information the use of the phonetic alphabet was incorporated too.

Effective use of the radios relies on regular practice and the training session appeared to provide the valuable hands-on time that members need.

Mike Clayton

EQUIPMENT CHECKING

The objectives of the session were to familiarise people with the contents of the kit bags [*see the attached diagram*], check all the kit, noting down any missing or damaged items, and show people what records are kept and why.

We also used the opportunity to replace the gri-gris and stops with the new petzl riggs which will be used for belaying from now on. The reason for switching is because the gri-gris and stops are not rated for rescue use. The riggs were purchased earlier this year, funded by a grant from MREW. Many thanks to all those who worked hard to get us the money – an awful lot of people's time and effort goes into these things behind the scenes, and it's much appreciated.

For the benefit of those who couldn't make the training day, below is a diagram showing the bits and bobs in the kit bags. Each bag also has a rope, the colour being the same as the haul line attached to the bag, and the length marked on the bag tag. The ropes are in 50 and 30m lengths, and you should always take 2 kits underground to rig a pitch for a haul (one red rope and one blue rope)



Although as volunteers we do not legally have to comply with Health and Safety Laws, we do use them as a guide to ensure that all the equipment we use is in good condition. The kit has to be checked over at regular intervals, and good records kept so that we know when we need to replace items.

I hope that people found it a useful exercise, as I'm sure it is one which we will be repeating, and many thanks to all those people who helped in what is quite a time consuming task.

Nicky Bayley

SARCALL

Points to consider


1. A reminder that any changes to phone numbers, addresses, skills, etc needs to be notified to me via [info\(at\)gcr.org.uk](mailto:info(at)gcr.org.uk)
2. A reminder that SARCALL is very flexible and if (for whatever reason) members are temporarily unavailable for callout then they can be excluded from alert texts. Again all members need to do is let me know.

3. A reminder about the SMS blackout period and how to change and test it. The basic info I send to new recruits is below (feel free to edit as required).

The SARCALL callout SMS messages are sent to both mobile and home numbers. For home phone numbers there is a text to voice translation applied and you should receive a spoken version of the SMS message. It is known that the voice translation is not perfect and there is the potential for such messages to be difficult to understand. If you receive such a message which you think may be from GCRG, but cannot be understood, please check your mobile phone.

There is also a default blackout period set for texts to home phone numbers when such messages are not forwarded to the home number but are stored up and delivered when the blackout period ends. This period is approximately 10pm to 8am. As this is typically when a callout might be expected, we ask team members to ensure that there isn't a blackout period for texts set on their home number by initially calling the BT SMS text control line, 0800 587 5252, and removing 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.

It is highly recommended to check the ability of texts to be received via your home phone line and the removal of the blackout period by simply sending a text from any mobile phone to your home number (The text which comes through may give you an additional number to ring to change the blackout period depending upon your phone line supplier).



Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group

SARCALL Information for Team Members

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

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

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

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

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

Where

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

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

This blackout/curfew is easy to update at anytime, thus in the event of a callout you can reset it before you leave home to avoid further texts disturbing other residents. It can then be removed again upon your return.

GCRG CLOTHING

I am looking to place another order for the GCRG logo clothing fairly soon, so please let me know if you would like anything.

Tshirts: £10

Polo Shirts: £15

Sweatshirts: £15

Full/half zipped microfleece: £25

All in navy blue

Mens sizes: S/M/L/XL/XXL

Ladies sizes: 10/12/14/16/18

Also available for a donation are:

2 heavyweight fleece jackets, both Large, one grey and one red (see photo)

Fluorescent yellow fur lined waterproof coats:

4 No. Small

2 No. Medium,

3 Pairs of fluorescent yellow waterproof trousers size Small

2 No. fur lined waterproof coats, Large in navy blue.

Items will be available to view at the next training day





Nicky Bayley