



Irish Mountain Rescue Association Annual Report 2006



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Introduction to the Irish Mountain Rescue Association

The Irish Mountain Rescue Association (IMRA) is the representative body of the twelve Irish mountain rescue teams that operate throughout the island:

- 1 Donegal Mountain Rescue Team
- 2 Dublin Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team
- 3 Galway Mountain Rescue Team
- 4 Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue Team
- 5 Kerry Mountain Rescue Team
- 6 Mayo Mountain Rescue Team
- 7 Mourne Mountain Rescue Team
- 8 North West Mountain Rescue Team
- 9 Search and Rescue Dog Association (SARDA)
- 10 Sligo Leitrim Mountain Rescue Team
- 11 South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA)
- 12 Tramore Cliff Rescue Team

The twelve teams consist of over 350 men and women who provide a voluntary emergency service to people lost or injured while walking or climbing in the mountain ranges of Ireland. This 24-hour 999/112 emergency service is funded by state funds and public donations.

The Irish Mountain Rescue Association (IMRA) has the following objectives:-

- 1 To assess and keep under review the requirements of mountain rescue services.
- 2 To establish mountain rescue services as required to benefit the public.
- 3 To act as a central organisation in liaison with civil and service authorities.

IMRA operates as a co-operative association of the teams that works on consensus, using a development plan, for the best interest of the teams and the casualty. Each team has developed administrative and operational practices based on their experience of working in their local communities and terrain. IMRA respects the tradition of each team and at the same time looks to identify opportunities to benefit all teams and to promote practices developed by one team which will benefit all teams. It works with the teams to offer national events to aid and assist in the development of the teams.

These events include:

- National Conference and AGM (hosted by and rotated amongst the teams)
- Induction Course (for new trainees)
- Equipment Course (for Team Equipment Officers)
- Party Leader Course
- National Training Exercise (hosted by and rotated amongst the teams)
- National Operation ("Reek Sunday", Croagh Patrick, Co. Mayo, the last Sunday in July)

At the local level, each team also develops its own schedule of management meetings, training, and fundraising to make sure that its members are appropriately skilled and equipped when needed. IMRA was founded in 1965 and over the years has established links with other agencies to ensure that it has the most up-to-date information and the necessary resources to respond to incidents. These links (in no particular order) include:

- The Order of Malta
- The Irish Red Cross
- The Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI)
- The Irish Coast Guard (IRCG)
- An Garda Síochána (AGS)
- Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- Coilté
- Department of Environment
- Department of Justice
- Department of Defence
- The Air Corps
- Civil Defence
- The Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC)
- Bord Oiliúnt Sléibhe (BOS - the Irish Mountain Training Board)
- The Mountaineering Council of Ireland (MCI)
- The Irish Cave Rescue Organisation (ICRO)
- The Mountain Rescue Council of England and Wales (MRC E+W)
- The Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland (MRC of S)
- The Mountain Rescue Association (MRA, covering the USA and Canada)
- The International Commission of Alpine Rescue (ICAR)
- The National Parks and Wildlife Service





IMRA Chair, Pat Holland (center) flanked by IMRA Secretary, Liam McCabe (left) and IMRA Treasurer, Michael O'Malley (right).



Three years as IMRA Chair, 2004-2006. Three years ago, my agenda was to:

- Build on previous committees' work
- Be an effective, efficient chairman
- And support needed change in MR
- Make strong links with stakeholders
- Conclude negotiations with government
- Support and protect MR teams
- Make IMRA relevant and necessary
- Be a mediator, a consensus-builder
- Be a leader with a small L.

Tasks set then by the AGM and the Executive Committee were:

- Confirm established patterns of business for committee and meetings
- Develop our training programme
- Support and grow relationships between teams

- Better PR nationally
- A plan of events
- Good meetings
- Staffing and funding for it
- Better communications
- Better inter-team networking/knowledge.

What progress have we made on the tasks set for us?

The Gardai have committed publicly to appoint a liaison officer to each team. We have got an additional €100,000 from Government for a Development/Research Officer, funding for national development projects as well as additional funding for the smaller teams. We now have good relationships with several major stakeholders which are bringing benefits. We have agreed a national training framework.

Our first national training manual, a new members induction, has had a successful trial run and has been evaluated by a cross-teamgroup. A second manual (party leaders) is on the way. We now have an agreed policy on lowland search and on helping other services to take on that challenge. We have agreed the level of contingency funding which IMRA will hold as a reserve in case of a team emergency (loss of vehicle or similar disaster).

Team assessments, stats reports, equipment checking courses etc are continuing. Funds have also been received from a variety of sources. Search Planning is being promoted nationally. We have good committee meetings and our annual conference is going from strength to strength.

We had some good PR and a website www.mountainrescue.ie. We have continued with our national exercises (Tramore, Sligo, NW). We have

continued to compile operational and contact lists for all teams. The Croagh Patrick annual cooperative operation continues and improves with benefits from our networking. A committee policy to work for '€20,000 living grant' for teams was agreed. The new development officer has started work and we have got funds for GPS radios.

Relationships are getting better between teams. But can we improve them further? We need to keep bringing teams together in as many ways as possible. We need to keep working together to identify joint needs, strengths and plans. That is what IMRA is all about.

There are several major challenges ahead of us. As well as dealing with the day to day work of helping the casualty and keeping the teams running we will have to invest time in our relationships with government agencies. Insurance is also a current and very serious concern.

The biggest challenge will be working and sticking together while maintaining team independence. We need to negotiate an understanding among us how the IMRA process will proceed. How will teams support and develop each other? Should there be strategic partnership between teams? The proposed Policy Day in March 2007 will, I hope, discuss these issues.

Finally I want to thank:

- Previous chairs and committees
- The officers during my term, Dermot, Liam and Michael
- The members of the Executive Committee during the last 3 years
- The team leaders for their support, advice and steers
- My team for letting me go (and hopefully taking me back!)
- My family for all the time I stole from them.

Financials

RECEIPTS:

Opening Balances:	
Immediate Deposit Account	5,004
2 month Deposit Account	29,394
Cash on Hand	1,150
Cash in Bank	6,821
	42,639

INCOME:

5% Levies on NCC Grants	7,931
IMRA Sub	3,000
Public Liability Fund	4,306
NI MRTs in ROI	70
Donations	8,017
Training Income	636
Grant Income	29,832
Net Interest	302
	96,393

EXPENDITURE:

Subsistence	336
Travel & Motor Fuel	2,021
Telecoms & Postage	223
Stationery & Printing	4,125
Training & Accreditation	11,508
Insurances	31,483
Mountain Rescue Equipment	759
Communications Equipment	16,050
Development Grant	1,814

CLOSING BALANCES:

Immediate Deposit Account	5,004
2 month Deposit Account	15,325
Cash in Bank Outstanding	8,723
Cheques Cash in Hand	744
Current a/c transfer	215
	96,393

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2006 AND CONFIRMED BY AUDITORS

» 2006 in Review

Highlights

2006 was a year that saw a number of much needed developments for Mountain Rescue in Ireland.

On March 22, Minister Pat "the Cope" Gallagher announced a grant of 291,000 for Mountain & Cave Rescue. A portion of this money was set aside for the national organisations of the Irish Mountain Rescue Association and the Irish Cave Rescue Organisation and the rest was divided up between the twelve Mountain Rescue teams.

On July 29, over 150 MR personnel from all over Ireland come together at the invitation of the Westport Branch of the Order of Malta to help provide first aid support to over 10,000 pilgrims climbing Croagh Patrick on Reek Sunday. Reek Sunday has now become a National Operation for the Irish Mountain Rescue Association.

A National Exercise in conjunction with other

emergency services was held in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh the last weekend of September.

On October 24, Joe Ganly of Joe Ganly International, completed an in-depth and professional review of the insurance needs of Mountain Rescue. He released his finding with recommendations for both the teams and the national body.

On November 13, Mr. Paul Whiting, joined IMRA as our full-time Development Officer. Paul will not be operational (i.e. involved in Searches or Rescues) but will be involved in national projects to support the development of the organisation and the teams.

IMRA purchased new radios with GPS handsets which allow the real-time tracking of search parties while out on operations.

Difficulties to be addressed

IMRA and its teams are made up of volunteers. After training and responding to call outs (i.e. incidents

requiring the need of the specialist skills of Mountain Rescue), volunteers by their very nature have little time left over for other necessary tasks involving Mountain Rescue. One of these tasks in fundraising. All teams are under financial pressures with the money generated each year (through grant and donations) being less than the running costs of the teams. Providing financial relief to the teams is of the utmost importance to IMRA.

The major issue facing Mountain Rescue teams is the cost of insurance, and in particular, personal accident insurance for team members in the event of a catastrophic accident. In the history of Irish Mountain Rescue, we have been fortunate to have never had a catastrophic accident occur to our members due to the high levels of training, preparation, readiness and risk-management our teams maintain, but our members want to make sure that they and their families are adequately protected in the event of an unfortunate accident. Currently each team has to devote somewhere

between 70-80% of the grant received from the Department of Transport each year to provide the necessary coverage. This leaves little money over to pay the cost of vehicle maintenance and running costs, buying and maintaining specialist mountain rescue and first aid equipment and training.

How can you help?

If you are a private individual, a walking/mountaineering club or any other group which may potentially benefit from our specialist services, make a donation to support us in our life-saving work. Instructions on how you can make a donation can be found on the "Supporting M.R." page of our website www.mountainrescue.ie. If you are a company or corporation, you may like to sponsor us through your Corporate Responsibility initiatives. Contact our Development Officer, Paul Whiting, on 023-59822 to discuss how sponsoring IMRA could be beneficial to your organisation, the Mountain Rescue volunteers and the wider community we serve.

» Executive Committee

The IMRA Executive Committee consists of the three elected officers of National Chair, National Secretary and National Treasurer plus the team leaders of each team (or their representative – normally a senior team member)

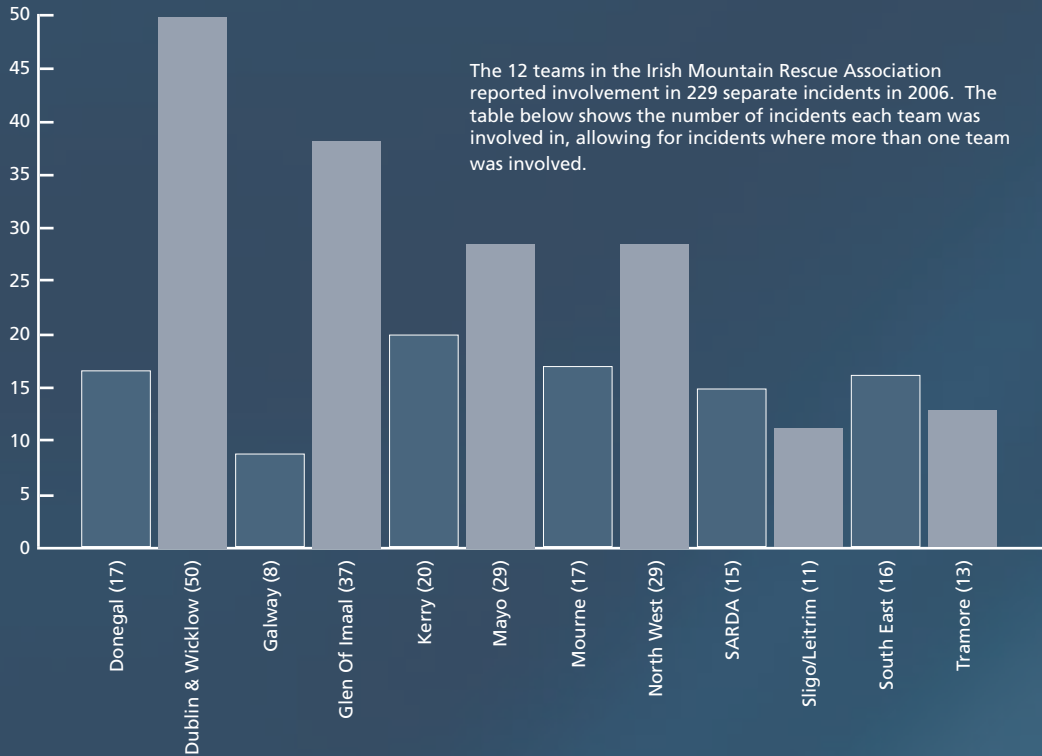
In addition to the Elected Officers, the Executive Committee also consists of a team of Appointed Officers in a particular area of interest working on behalf of all teams.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	OFFICER POSITION	TEAM
Pat Holland	National Chair	SEMRA
Liam McCabe	National Secretary	SEMRA
Michael O'Malley	National Treasurer	SEMRA
Seamus Bradley	Team Rep.	Donegal MRT
Kenny Roberts	Team Rep.	Dublin Wicklow MRT
Jarlath Folan	Team Rep.	Galway MRT
Diarmaid Scully	Team Rep.	Glen of Imaal MRT
Gerry Christie/Tim Long	Team Rep.	Kerry MRT
Dave Fahy	Team Rep.	Mayo MRT
Ed Kilgore MBE	Team Rep.	Mourne MRT
Joe Dowdall	Team Rep.	North West MRT
Jarlath Folan	Team Rep.	SARDA
Trevor Lindsay	Team Rep.	Sligo Leitrim
Raymond Cowman	Team Rep.	Tramore

APPOINTED	OFFICER POSITION	TEAM
Mary Mullins	Assistant Secretary	SEMRA
Seamus Bradley	National Training Officer	Donegal MRT
Paul Moran	National Equipment Officer	Dublin Wicklow MRT
Gerry Butler	National Communications Officer	Dublin Wicklow MRT
Ronal Lenihan	BOS Representative	Glen of Imaal MRT
Diarmaid Scully	Department of Defence Liaison Officer	Glen of Imaal MRT
Diarmaid Scully	Irish Aviation Forum Liaison Officer	Glen of Imaal MRT
Dr. Patrick O'Sullivan	MCI Representative	MCI
Gerry Butler	Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council Representative	Dublin Wicklow MRT
Raymond Cowman	Civil Defence Liaison Officer	Tramore



» Incident Statistics 2006



» MEMBER TEAMS:

Donegal
Dublin & Wicklow
Galway
Glen of Imaal
Kerry
Mayo
Mourne
North West
SARDA
Sligo/Leitrim
South East
Tramore Sea & Cliff

» CO-OPERATING AGENCIES:

An Garda Síochána
Civil Defence
Duchás
Fire Service
H.S.E.
Irish Air Corps
Irish Army
Irish Coast Guard
NI Coast Guard
P.S.N.I.
R.A.F.

Data regarding the number of IMRA hours was available for 189 incidents - a total of 8,375 person hours, the equivalent of almost 1,047 working days, were invested by teams to deal with these incidents in 2006. This compares to 1,135 in 2005 and 2,652 in 2004 (due to a number of long searches).

Other organisations and services assisted in approximately 54% of incidents - this has ranged from 50-64% since 2001.

Incidents included searches (51%), rescues (43%), and requested standby/assistance for organized events (6%).

Excluding standbys, which are previously arranged with the requesting group, 63% of callouts came through the Gardai/PSNI.

SOURCE OF CALLOUT

Gardai/PSNI	65
Other Team/Organisation	18
Member of the public	5
Direct from casualty	4
Friend/Member of Group	2
On Site/Came across incident	1
Other	5

Consistently, summer and autumn appear as the busiest times - summer (32%) was busier than autumn (25.8%) in 2006 with

the winter season only marginally less (23.5%). As in every other year, over half of all incidents occur at weekends (53% in 2006) - 33.5% on Sundays and 19.5% on Saturdays 2006.

Information on the number of people assisted was recorded for 195 incidents in which, 350 people were directly assisted by mountain rescue personnel; 130 of these were injured, 10 fatally. The proportion of those assisted who were injured (37%) is slightly higher than in previous years (2005: 26%; 2004: 29%).

Where injuries were noted, lower limb injuries were most often noted (38%), followed by medical problems (17%) and upper limb injuries (10%). In addition, there were three cases of serious multiple injuries and two with head/spinal injuries. Eleven cases of hypothermia were treated, three of whom also had other injuries.

For searches, the distance between the point where the individual was located and the point they were last seen was recorded for 42% of cases; the mean was 9.4km (median 2km; range 0-110 km).

Teams conducted 36 stretcher evacuations ranging in distance from 0.3km to 6km - the average being 2.4km. Evacuation by helicopter took place in 34 cases.