



Saving Lives  
in the  
Mountains

24 / 7 / 365

# MOUNTAIN RESCUE IRELAND

## Annual Report 2018

[mountainrescue.ie](http://mountainrescue.ie)



Any individual or group requiring assistance in the upland and mountainous environs on the island of Ireland will be responded to by volunteers embedded in the local community.

These volunteers are organised into mountain rescue teams and tasked by the police force, A.G.S. within Ireland and the P.S.N.I. in Northern Ireland.

This tasking leads to an emergency response which will search, locate and rescue those seeking assistance and escort them to safety or deliver them to more definitive medical care.

Collectively these teams come together as Mountain Rescue Ireland (M.R.I.) to represent the views of its members on mountain rescue and safety, to represent and liaise on general matters with government, to propagate information on mountain rescue and safety

and take such action as may be necessary to promote a wider appreciation of the need for mountain safety.

M.R.I. is a member of the International Commission of Alpine Rescue (I.C.A.R.) the international body for mountain rescue organisations dedicated to the advancement of best practice in mountain rescue worldwide.



This report reflects back on 2018 and presents the commitment and work of the teams dedicated to responding to those in need.

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M.R.I. consists of the following teams:

Donegal MRT

North West MRT

Sligo/Leitrim MRT

Mourne MRT

Mayo MRT

Galway MRT

Dublin/Wicklow MRT

SARDA (Ireland)

Glen of Imaal MRT

South Eastern MRA

Kerry MRT



## Police Service of Northern Ireland

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the PSNI to recognise the commitment of those in our community who volunteer with local mountain rescue teams and Mountain Rescue Ireland (MRI) as a whole, not forgetting the support provided by their families and partners.

Recent events have shown the value of the support that the teams provide to the PSNI and the wider community. Whilst many enjoy the opportunities that the outdoors provide there is the ever present risk of accidents, injuries and medical emergencies, combined with the nature of the terrain and the changing weather conditions. We are fortunate to have highly skilled and committed volunteers who can be called upon at any time of the day or night, whether this be in mountainous environments, providing specialist skills in missing person search or assisting those in need during severe weather.

It is a credit to those individuals who give up their time in order to provide this service and take the time to keep skills up to date, train new members and carry out all the vital background work and administration required.

I would like to thank MRI and their associated mountain and search dog teams for their assistance and commitment over the years and wish you every success in 2019.

**John Clyde**  
Superintendent.

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## An Garda Síochána

The Mountain Rescue Teams across the island of Ireland, under the governance of Mountain Rescue Ireland, provide an invaluable resource to the response agencies and the general public. There is an ever increasing level of use and enjoyment of our stunning natural amenities. In a variety of ways, such as camping, orienteering, walking, rock climbing, mountaineering and mountain biking.

With activities of this nature accidents and emergencies are inevitable. The challenging terrain and changeable weather conditions often result in these incidents requiring the efficient response of a specialist skillset. The mountain rescue teams around the country have again, in 2018, demonstrated these skills along with their dedication and commitment to meet a wide range of challenges.

The commitment of Mountain Rescue volunteers, and their families, cannot be overstated. I would like to thank Mountain Rescue Ireland and associated Search and Rescue Dog Teams for your commitment and dedication in 2018 and wish you all a safe and successful 2019.

**Michael O'Sullivan**  
Assistant Commissioner



## A big thank you to Mountain Rescue Ireland

### Mountaineering Ireland's Perspective

Enjoying the adventure, thrill and responsibility of being in the mountains is the core ethos of mountaineers. Skills training, self-reliance and environmental respect are key aspects of responsible behaviour and safe practice in the mountains. The benefits to our health & wellbeing, through physical & mental challenge and interaction & connection with nature, are well evidenced, as are the inherent risks associated with journeying into remote and wild areas.

The Mountain Rescue Teams continue to provide an essential yet voluntary service to many, including those who encounter difficulties whilst in the pursuit of adventure. 2018 has been a busy year for the rescue teams, where their services have been extended to assist the increasing number of incidents related to extreme weather events. Alongside attending rescues, team members engage in skills training and rescue practice, to enable them to operate efficiently and safely as a team during call outs, which are typically in the worst of conditions and at night time. Team members volunteer more of their time to fundraise for provision of this service. Mountaineering Ireland would like to ask that all participants join them in donating to this essential service.

To become responsible participants, we must make ourselves aware of the inherent risk in all things we choose to do. By preparing and educating ourselves, we increase our enjoyment of the activity and are in a position to make better decisions to help manage, minimise or avoid hazards and thus keep ourselves safer whilst we have fun in the mountains. By taking on this personal responsibility, we reduce the likelihood of needing to be rescued.

Jane Carney Training Officer  
[Jane@mountaineering.ie](mailto:Jane@mountaineering.ie)  
[www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie)



# M.R.I. Chairman's Report

2018 has seen a significant increase in mountain rescue team activity with 371 incidents throughout the year.<sup>1</sup> This increase has arisen due to the increase of frequency of severe weather events which has resulted in extreme precipitation and temperatures.

This has caused the freezing line to descend from normal altitudes and weather systems more normally associated with mountainous altitudes have reached street level. This has resulted in mountain rescue teams working with other emergency services to render humanitarian assistance during these weather events. With climate change bringing an increased frequency of extreme weather events, mountain rescue teams will be asked to fulfil duties to assist other agencies.<sup>2</sup>

MRI has completed its conversion from an association to a charity company during 2018 with the charity registered as a CLG with the CRO, the Revenue Commissioners and the Charity Regulatory Authority. The new structures have been designed to be compliant with the Governance Code benchmarks for charity best practice and will serve members best interests in years to come and give certainty to stakeholders.<sup>3</sup>

MRI was also able to develop a strategic plan for 2018 to 2021 and present to stakeholders in 2018.<sup>4</sup> Focusing on the fundamentals required to maintain volunteer emergency responders in upland and mountainous environments and seeking to ensure mountain rescue teams have these supports, it is clear that the strategic focus going forward into 2019 for MRI is to ensure that the remaining teams without mountain rescue bases secure the resources and support to develop them.

Teams responded to a 36% increase in incidents, year on year, during 2018 and this rescue activity was built on a foundation of training, equipping and maintaining the organisational capacity to respond 24/7/365. Critical to these efforts is the insurance cover that MRI provides

to the teams and special recognition is due again this year to Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring T.D. and Minister for State Sean Canney T.D. for the grant support for insurance costs for 2019. The CLAR 2018 programme (Department of Rural and Community Development) also allowed teams much needed resources to replace command vehicles and other equipment.<sup>5</sup>

Developments within mountain rescue from an international context were engaged also, with attendants at the ICAR Congress at Chamonix joining the discussions and developments around best practice in the commissions dedicated to terrestrial, aviation, medical and search dogs.

I would like to thank the members of the Board and Executive Committee for their dedication and service to the mission of MRI throughout my time in the chair and extend my best wishes to the new directors and officers who will take MRI into the next decade.

Finally, MRI would like to express its deepest sympathies with the family, friends and fellow team members of those who have passed away within the community within 2018.

Ar dheis dé go raibh a n-anamnacha

**Alan Carr**  
chairman@mountainrescue.ie

<sup>1</sup> See page 9. <sup>2</sup> See page 22. <sup>3</sup> See page 5. <sup>4</sup> See page 6. <sup>5</sup> See page 11

# M.R.I. Secretary's Report

It has been my privilege to serve as Secretary of Mountain Rescue Ireland for a third year. A significant portion of the job revolves around keeping a good line of communication open between the teams, the national officers and our various stakeholders.

Great strides were made by MRI this year in completing the process of incorporation, securing funding for much needed equipment and insurance cover, and, as this report bears out, teams at their local level continue

to develop in all sorts of ways, while at the same time maintaining a unique, professional, voluntary emergency service.

It has been an honour to work with my fellow MRI Officers and Mountain Rescue colleagues up and down the country. I wish you all the best of luck in the future.

**Ray Bradfield**  
secretary@mountainrescue.ie



# MRI Company Limited by Guarantee (C.L.G.)

From a humble beginning in 1965, with 6 attendants at the first Irish Mountain Rescue Association meeting in Bryansford Co Down, we have sought to facilitate interaction development, and representation collectively. This effort grew in the subsequent years to the current stage of development where every mountainous location on the island of Ireland has a mountain rescue team ready to volunteer 24/7/365 to any request for emergency assistance.

As the organisation developed and times changed it became appropriate to change the organisational character and incorporate as a charity company limited by guarantee (C.L.G.) in order to give certainty to both internal and external stakeholders in M.R.I. This process was completed during 2018 and recognition is deserved for the legal firm Dechert L.L.P. and The Wheel for supporting us on this journey.

## MRI Board of Directors

<b>External</b> Mountaineering Community	<b>Internal</b> Company Secretary	<b>Internal</b> Chair of the Board	<b>Internal</b> Treasurer	<b>External</b> Charity Sector
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## MRI Executive Committee

### Elected Officers

Secretary	Chair	Treasurer	
Public Relations	Medical	Statistics	Peer Review

### Project Officers

Aeronautical	Tetra	SARCALL
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## Executive Committee Members

Representatives from each of the member mountain rescue teams



## Members of MRI (CLG)

Members of the Company



## MRI Board of Directors

External: Jane Carney  
Internal: Ray Bradfield, Secretary  
Internal: Alan Carr, Chair  
Internal: Jerome Hopkins, Treasurer  
External: Niall Greene

## MRI Executive Committee

Secretary - Ray Bradfield  
Chair - Alan Carr  
Treasurer - Jerome Hopkins  
Public Relations - Ruth Cunniffe  
Medical - Paul Butcher  
Statistics - Lorcan O'Neill  
Peer Review - Derry Cullen  
Aeronautical - Diarmaid Scully  
Tetra - Kenny Roberts  
SARCALL - Donal McNamara

MRI now serves the community through the following company objects:

- to benefit the community by assessing and keeping under review the need for, and the requirements of, mountain rescue services in Ireland;
- to encourage and assist in the formation, training, and development of mountain rescue teams;
- to represent and liaise with community and state services with regard to the achievement of its objectives;
- to propagate information on mountain rescue and safety and take such action as is necessary to promote a wider appreciation of the need for mountain safety;

MRI has adapted the governance standards for a Type C organisation under the Governance Code and is recognised by them as such. As we go forward MRI will demonstrate compliance with charity best practice by incorporating best practice in at the design stage.

MRI enters 2019 with the former association dissolved the new formation dedicated to serving the mountain rescue volunteers throughout the island. We would like to thank Niall Greene and Jane Carney who have volunteered to serve on the board as external directors.

# Strategic Plan 2018-2021



MRI developed its 3 year strategic plan during 2018 and declared the priority was to deliver to mountain rescue teams the means required for them to continue their mountain rescue mission of saving lives 24/7/365 in Irelands upland and mountainous regions, and to protect and support its members and their teams and volunteers as they save lives in mountainous areas.

M.R.I. will seek to secure funding towards the delivery of this strategic plan. M.R.I. will monitor the delivery of this plan at Board and Committee meetings and present progress to the membership annually at general meetings.

MRI Stakeholders have been critical in allowing MRI volunteers to deliver search and rescue services

throughout 2018 and your support will be required in 2019. However, none of this would be possible without the volunteers who dedicate themselves to be on call 24/7/365, along with their families and employers who form the foundation upon which this rescue service is built on.

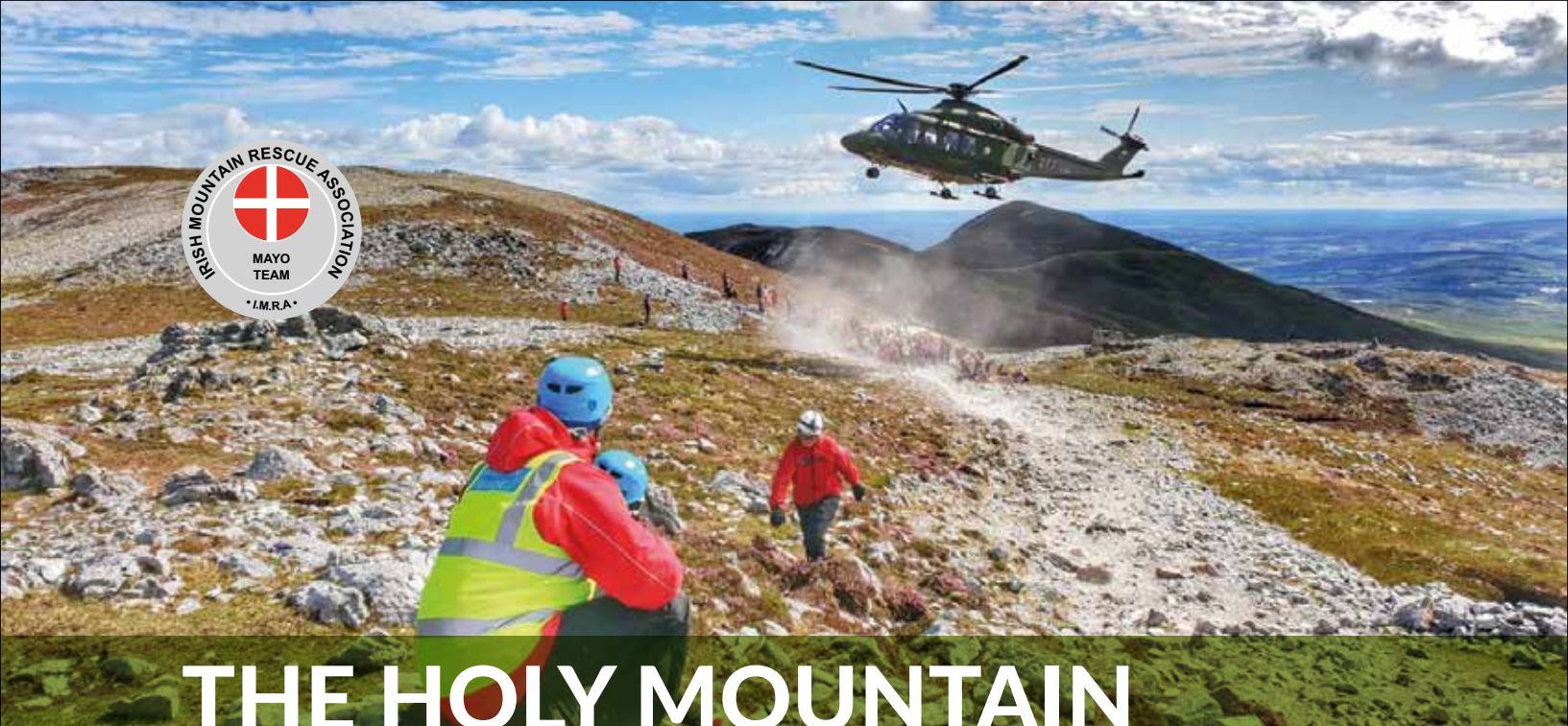
To deliver on this, M.R.I. has identified the following strategic goals:	
1.	Insurance coverage to protect the team operations
2.	Capital funding for teams to develop or maintain rescue bases
3.	Capital funding for to replace team emergency response vehicles when needed
4.	Current funding to maintain and replace rescue equipment
5.	Current funding for training to maintain the mountain rescue skillset

Annual Report 2018



- **Training and equipment** costs continue to be a challenge especially in a context of increased rescue activity. MRI is engaged currently with the DTTAS in relation to a review of the grant support systems.
- **Emergency response vehicles**, critical to reaching casualties, can now be funded through grants sourced through the CLAR scheme operated by the DRCD.
- **Rescue bases** are a need for all mountain rescue teams and MRI is assisting teams with sourcing the required support.
- **Insurance** is foundational support for all volunteers and MRI would like to acknowledge the support of Minister Ring and the DRCD.

To deliver on this strategic plan MRI will seek to ensure that all mountain rescue teams are housed in appropriate bases. MRI will work with teams, local authorities, agencies and State funders to deliver on this strategic need.



# THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

## TEACH NA MIASA

### CROAGH PATRICK

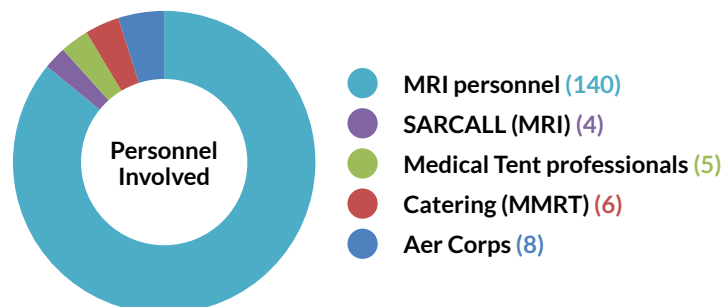
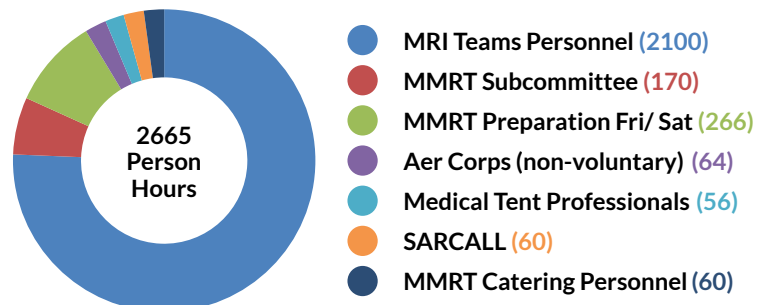
Each year on the last Sunday of July Mayo MRT co-ordinate the Annual Reek Sunday operation. Once again 2018 was a full and busy weekend for MMRT but this national operation wouldn't be possible without the support of the other MRI teams as well as our colleagues in the PSNI and Calder Valley MRT.

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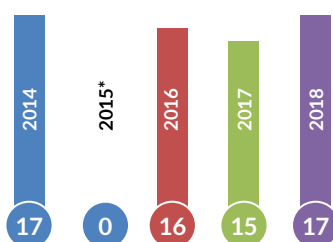
In 2018, MRI teams dealt with a total of 17 casualties on the mountain. The 2018 Reek Sunday Operation required a total of 2665 person hours to effectively plan, organise and provide assistance over this weekend.

This year's planning commenced in April with a weekly subcommittee of 7 MMRT personnel and involved working closely with MRI teams and a number of voluntary organisations including the Order of Malta, Mayo County Council, the Irish Air Corps, An Garda Síochána, Civil Defence, the Local Church Authorities, Local landowners and the Murrisk Development Association.

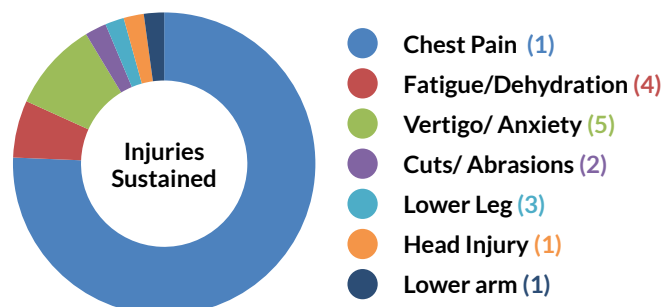
The following illustrates a breakdown of personnel numbers involved, person hours and injuries sustained during Reek Sunday 2018.



Casualties Reek Sunday 2014-2018



\*Event Cancelled



# 2018 STATISTICS REPORT

The most significant snow event for many years caused a spike in activity in 2018 for mountain rescue teams. Although the effects were felt everywhere and lasted many weeks, more than 60 of the 371 incidents in Ireland in 2018 occurred in the first few days of March and were concentrated mostly in the East and South-East of the country.

Mountain rescue teams have vehicles that can deal with difficult driving conditions, including snow and ice. At a time when major and minor roads were impassable, these vehicles made it possible to perform essential tasks that otherwise might not have been possible. One of these vehicles (that was funded by a CLAR grant) enabled a remote rescue in west Wicklow, one of many – see below.

Mountain rescue was no longer confined to the mountains but instead was diverted to the lowlands to assist in transport to hospitals for patients and medical staff alike - a task willingly undertaken by mountain rescue teams.

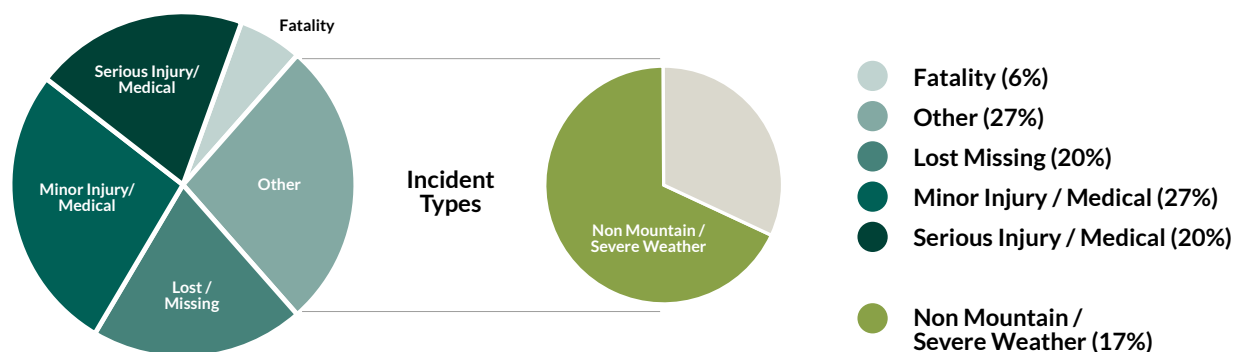
Unfortunately, the snow brought out the usual number of snow tourists wanting to test their winter driving skills. In Wicklow one third of the severe weather incidents were because of cars getting stuck in the snow. Mountain Rescue personnel will only assist people and bring them to safety if necessary. They will not rescue vehicles. This can be a problem for some people who expect to have their cars rescued as well as themselves.

Many people underestimate the risks of driving to the mountains in snow and ice. Temperatures can drop very quickly as night approaches, visibility can go to zero

in heavy snow and travel on foot can be impossible. Without proper clothing and food, hypothermia and even frostbite can set in very quickly.

Mountain rescue teams deal with fatalities every year and in 2018 there were 22. They were spread unevenly throughout the year with almost half of them occurring in the second quarter and none in the third quarter. Many of the fatalities occurred in the lowlands or even urban settings. Because of their search skills, teams are often tasked there to find a missing person. About a quarter of the fatalities in 2018 occurred in non-mountain settings where the services of search and rescue dogs were requested to find missing persons.

The trend of response times getting shorter is continuing with many incidents being over within one hour of being tasked. On the other hand the random nature of incidents means multiple callouts can happen at the same time. In one case in recent months four serious incidents happened almost simultaneously covering the full area of operations for the team and stretching available resources to the limit. New medical equipment and expertise allowed one casualty to be monitored and walked off rather than being evacuated by a helicopter that was needed for another casualty.



## Case Study: DWMRT / GoI MRT - Storm Emma - Beast from the East Incident

A callout was received for medical assistance in West Wicklow. Team members drove to nearest access point which was blocked by a 3m snow drift. They left the vehicle and walked 1.5km over fields to the house and gave medical assistance. The patient required an evacuation, so the team walked back to their vehicle

where a farmer with a digger removed a fence on the ditch and they drove the 4x4 over a very steep ditch and through fields to the house. Here the patient was picked up, evacuated and handed over to the waiting ambulance crew.

A total of 12 Mountain Rescue personnel were involved.

281  
DAY TIME

371

83  
NIGHT TIME

TOTAL  
INCIDENTS

72  
HELICOPTER  
TASKINGS

13,634  
PERSON  
HOURS

999



GARDA  
/ PSNI

Callout Officer

Callout SMS



MOBILE BASE

HELP!

MOUNTAIN  
RESCUE BASE

Mountain rescue teams are only possible due to the commitment of the volunteers who dedicate to being on call 24/7/365 to assist those in need

75  
LOST /  
MISSING

97  
MINOR  
INJURIES

73  
SERIOUS  
INJURIES

22  
TOTAL NO.  
FATALITIES\*\*

79  
SEARCH

98  
OTHER\*



\*Mountain rescue teams are tasked to a variety of incidents arising from their wilderness & mountainous capabilities.  
\*\* Mountain rescue teams provide support for other emergency services in recovery operations

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Registered Charity Number: 20026370. CHY (Revenue) Number: 10412

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# 2018 FINANCIAL REPORT

## Income 2018

	2018	2017
• Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	78,520	78,520
• Department of Rural & Community Development	75,190	88,816
• Team subscriptions	3,144	12,435
• Donations	9,125	2,086
• Sundry and training	3,334	2,000
• Other Income	534	-
• Fundraising	-	285
<b>Total income</b>	<b>€169,847</b>	<b>€184,142</b>

## Expenditure 2018

• Training and accreditation	9,704	4,363
• Insurance	95,374	77,629
• National conference and AGM	2,327	13,314
• Fundraising costs [incl. P.R. and advertising]	-	1,045
• Telephone	-	75
• ICAR	4,397	-
• Printing and office costs	5,417	3,634
• Website costs	90	400
• Mountain rescue and communications	62,037	16,490
• Travelling	990	897
• Legal and professional	492	369
• Bank charges	355	385
• General expenses	40	1
• Subscriptions and memberships	550	1,612
• Auditor's remuneration	1,574	1,574
• Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	64,102	63,292
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>€247,449</b>	<b>185,080</b>

Amortisation of government grants  
Surplus/(deficit) for the year

€40,000  
€40,000  
(€37,602) €39,063

**2018 MRI  
INCOME**  
**€169,847**

**2018 MRI  
EXPENDITURE**  
**€247,449**

A copy of the company accounts can be found on our website

mountainrescue.ie



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# CLAR 2018 PROGRAMME



**An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail**  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

Mountain rescue volunteers maintain a response posture capable of responding to any request for emergency assistance to upland and mountainous areas 24/7/365. This dedication extends to training to maintain the skill set, inspection and maintenance of equipment, organisational administration and fundraising to sustain this capability into the future.

The greatest challenge for teams has been the replacement of large capital items such as first response vehicles, organisational command vehicles, rescue stretchers or similar equipment. The challenge related to finance and the necessary funding to maintain effective resources by replacing equipment that had reached the end of its operational life.

The development of the CLAR grant scheme from the Department of Rural and Community Development in order to support small scale infrastructural projects in rural areas has allowed mountain rescue teams to replace these capital items. In 2017 mountain rescue teams were able to replace aged vehicles and equipment using the CLAR scheme and these were presented to Deputy Sean Kyne TD, Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development at the MRI AGM in 2018.

CLAR 2018 allowed mountain rescue teams to procure needed vehicles, upgrade of vehicles, facility upgrades and other equipment. MRI would like to express its gratitude to Minister Ring and the officials at the Department of Rural and Community Development for supporting us in our mission.



# North West Mountain Rescue Team

Team Chair: Graeme Stanbridge  
Team Leader: Jonathon Shields  
Website: [www.nwmrt.org](http://www.nwmrt.org)



## Annual Report 2018

In 2018 the team was called out on 46 occasions (as at 30 Nov 18). Most notably half of these call outs were in the first three months which has been an increasing trend for two reasons. The first is an increased number of searches for despondents in the Belfast Hills. In response the team are actively seeking a base in Belfast where a fully equipped vehicle can respond more rapidly than the East Section base in Broughshane 30 miles away. Secondly, increased assistance to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service to access casualties in extreme weather conditions.

Fundraising has intensified under a newly appointed officer. Street collections throughout the province not only provide a valuable and regular income but are essential in keeping the team in the public eye which aids recruitment. The third Broughshane 5K & 10K run is firmly established on the running calendar and we hope to break 500 runners in the next event on 5 Aug 19. We hope to replicate the run in another location using the experience we have learned.

Only one recruitment campaign rather than the normal two was completed. At the start of the year eight members completed an induction and progressed to probationary membership where they continue to gain skills and experience. Recruitment was paused whilst new operational standards were introduced allowing additional training time to upskill current members and recruitment will recommence on 2019.

The team was awarded a £16,000 grant from the Department of Justice under the 'Search and Rescue Funding Scheme for 2018-2019.' This grant helped fund 22 members becoming certified Search Managers by The Centre for Search Research; four members attend both the MRI Party Leader and Rigging Courses; the purchase of vital equipment including replacement ropes, tech kit and 12 man shelters to assist the NI HEMS team in carrying out advanced emergency medical procedures; fuel and maintenance for our fleet of Hilux Vehicles.

With the introduction of new operational standards there has been much investment in training. In addition to Section training twice a month, monthly team training was reintroduced allowing us to come together regularly under a central command for large scale exercises or specialised training. Across the team, members have been improving in their core skills especially in rigging and search. Our new Hilux vehicles introduced in 2017 came with blue lights and most of the team attended training with the Police.

It was with great sadness that the team lost one of its father figures and President Uel Hamilton when he passed on 4 August. Uel was a founding member of the team in 1980 and served in all major appointments. Uel was also a member of Foyle Search & Rescue and it is commendable to be part of a voluntary rescue service, but to devote so many years to two organisations is exceptional public service. Many members have benefitted from the skills and knowledge he passed on and the team will try to emulate the devotion Uel displayed to enhance our support and standing in the community.





Team Chair: Dave Goddard  
Team Coordinators: Neville Watson, Ian McCracken,  
Andrew McKee, Martin McMullan  
Website: [www.mournemrt.org](http://www.mournemrt.org)

# Mourne Mountain Rescue Team

52  
CALLOUTS



Requests for Team assistance continues to rise with 52 such incidents occurring in 2018. Neatly, this correlates to one per week but the reality is different. The summer months see a rise in the number of call-outs with perhaps two or three per week but such is the popularity of the Mournes, we can expect at least one call during every month of the year. Weekends remain our busy time of the week but we are seeing an increasing number of mid-week calls. This presents challenges to the team whose members are completely voluntary and have normal jobs and family commitments. Call outs alone required members to put in almost 2,340 man hours of work, we do not record time given to training, administration and a myriad of other necessary tasks.

Early in the year the team assisted other organisations with emergency cover during times of bad weather. Several days were spent ensuring hospital staff could get into work and patients in the care of District Nurses received essential visits.

The range and severity of injuries sustained by those involved in accidents requires a high level of medical capability. The team has met these challenges by providing training for all members up to MREW Casualty

Care Certificate standard. Additionally ten members have attained WEMT (Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician) level or higher. Along with this expertise has come to need for more specialist equipment and techniques for more effective intervention.

The most common injuries dealt with by the team involve the lower limb but we have had to deal with a number of very serious and multiple injuries. We would like to express our gratitude to the crews of Coastguard helicopter R116 and UK crews, our local Air Ambulance and PSNI aircrews who have been invaluable in speedily evacuating casualties to hospital care. Sadly the team were involved in two fatal accident recoveries.

Internal training is held twice per month, a full day and one evening session with additional sessions to prepare candidates for medical examinations. All have been well attended by our 30 full members and we have six new members being integrated into the team. Notable event of the year which received worldwide press and social media coverage concerned a plummeting Mourne ewe which injured a passing walker. Pigs might fly but sheep definitely don't.

Annual Report 2018



# Dublin & Wicklow Mountain Rescue

Team Chair: Edmund Fagan  
Team Leader: Mark Flynn  
Website: [www.dwmrt.ie](http://www.dwmrt.ie)



## Annual Report 2018

Our team consists of 57 rescue team members as well as associate and honorary members. In 2018 we welcomed 7 probationary recruits.

We are constantly upskilling and developing our capabilities. In 2018 a group travelled to Scotland for winter conditions training. We also started training 13 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) under the auspices of The Order of Malta Ambulance Corps. The standard of care the team will be able to provide will be greatly enhanced by these upskilled practitioners. Members also participated in technical rope course hosted by MRI in Doolin and ISRT in Ballykeeffe.

We work hand in hand with Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue Team and a joint callout officer arrangement continued as a valuable and effective collaboration during the year. During 2018 the two teams also co-operated to develop medical procedures and other initiatives. The unprecedented impacts of Storm Emma will live long in the memory. We responded to 28 medical emergency callouts over one weekend. Our training, equipment and personnel allowed us to perform in the most extreme conditions.

In October, the team responded to four callouts at the same time in four different locations across the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains. The nature of the incidents reflected the diverse range of activities enjoyed in our hills including hill-walking, rock climbing, paragliding and mountain biking.

Our team were County Winners for Wicklow in the National Lottery Good Causes awards and went on to win the National Category for Sport and Recreation. We hope our success in these awards will help raise the profile of Mountain Rescue nationally.

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's CLÁR Programme is a vital source of project specific

funding and our capabilities to support the local community were greatly enhanced by the vehicle and equipment we were able to purchase with the support of the programme. We would also like to thank Aviva Insurance for their support in 2018.

We are grateful for every donation and all support however we would like to take this opportunity to mention the fundraising of Pamela Hallahan. Pamela is the sister of Kevin Hallahan who died in an accident while training with the team in Wales in 2017. Pamela and her family and friends raised more than €10,000 in sponsorship by running the Cork Ladies Mini Marathon. This was an incredibly generous gesture by Pamela and all who supported her. We are very thankful for such generosity and goodwill.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for all of the support our team received during 2018. Without the support we receive from friends, family, clubs, individuals, companies, community funds, state agencies and participants and volunteers at our fundraising events the team would not be able to provide the service we want to provide. Thank you.

We have benefited from the hospitality of An Garda Síochána who have provided us with space at Roundwood Station for many years. We hope to establish a permanent base in the area and we are actively fundraising and engaging with stakeholders to hopefully realise what we have long dreamed about. We have three main fundraising events of our own which are all hill based and provide significant training opportunities. The Art O'Neill Challenge is a long distance ultra-marathon or trek in January. In March we host Walk the Line in the Dublin Mountains. Then in November we host Run the Line, a trail running event based around Glencullen Adventure Park. We would love to meet you at one of these events in 2019!



Team Chair: Brendan Beirne  
Team Leader: Christiaan Clotworthy  
Website: [www.wmr.ie](http://www.wmr.ie)

# Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue

96  
CALLOUTS



15

As 2018 draws to a close, it is proving to be one of the Glen Team's busiest years yet, with call-out numbers in the high 80's. The call-out profile remains reasonably typical with lower leg injuries predominating, closely followed by lost hillwalking parties requiring assistance. There have been some particularly interesting shouts during the year including an overnight stretcher carry on Camaderry followed by a dawn heli-lift and calls caused in some part and certainly complicated by gorse fires during the dry summer weather. Speed of locating subjects and completion of calls has continued to make significant improvements due to the consistent use of Sarloc. We are grateful to our good friends and colleagues in DWMRT for close cooperation and collaboration on many of the calls.

Our major fundraising event - The Moonlight Challenge, took place on the night of 24th November and was an unmitigated success, with around 750 participants safely completing the course with no significant mishaps. The funds raised will play a major part in some of the development projects planned for the coming year including upgrades to our Toyota Hilux 4WDs and VW Rockton response vehicles. We are also planning upgrades and expansion at our MR base in Trooperstown. We are particularly grateful to the Charlie Froud Foundation who made a significant donation to the team on the 10th Anniversary of the Corriebracks plane crash at their annual Black Tie Ball. It goes without saying that we are indebted to the numerous clubs, companies, groups and individuals who make donations in support of our work in Co. Wicklow.

Our new TL, Christiaan Clotworthy has been building on the good work of his predecessors. We have introduced a new membership structure which allows full team members to continue their commitment to Mountain Rescue through a reserve membership category. We hope that this will retain significant skills and experience while

allowing members to better accommodate MR with their work and family commitments.

After a pause in recruitment of around 5 years, the Glen Team has just welcomed 8 new members. All have noteworthy hill and outdoor experience we're sure that they will be significant to the development of the service in Co. Wicklow over the coming months and years.

The team took part in the MRI peer review process during the Autumn and were delighted to be given a clean bill of health.

Our routine training continues every Wednesday night with the focus on search and medical skills. Specialist training including PHECC EMT & EFR, Technical Rescue, Swift Water and Search Management takes place in parallel. We had a very successful winter training trip to Norway early in the year and are planning a similar event in Slovenia in 2019.

The committee and members of Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue Team would like to thank our colleagues in MRI, An Garda Síochána, Coast Guard, Defence Forces, National Ambulance Service with a long list of other statutory and voluntary services with whom we cooperate in serving the public. We would like to say a particular thanks to the families of Mountain Rescue and emergency services personnel for their kindness and support throughout the year. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous, Peaceful New Year.

Annual Report 2018

# South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association

Team Chair: Michael Power  
Team Leader: Liam McCabe  
Website: [www.semra.ie](http://www.semra.ie)



52  
CALLOUTS

## Annual Report 2018

South Eastern Mountain Rescue is a strong team who currently have 53 members. SEMRA has successfully trained an additional 10 members. All members have completed their training and have increased the strength of the team to 53. To date in 2018 SEMRA have been tasked with 6 Searches, 7 Rescues, 28 severe weather callouts and have been tasked to assist other MRT's on 3 occasions.

2018 was a year of extreme weather conditions. In February the South East of Ireland came to a halt due to extreme snow. At this time SEMRA were tasked to assist both the HSE and An Garda Síochána. However, July saw temperatures in the South East reach up to 33°.

During the year a number of fundraising events were conducted. These included the annual collections in Waterford, Dungarvan, Carlow and Clonmel. The money raised from these collections has gone to the general day to day running of the vehicles and upkeep of the team base. SEMRA also held a night walk called the Long Way Round where additional money has been raised and that money has been directed into the day to day account of SEMRA for the general upkeep of the organisation.

SEMRA entered 2018 in a very positive light when they received a very welcoming donation from the Dara Fitzpatrick Memorial Run to the value of €9000 in January. This donation was directly used for training. The money was initially used to hold a training event at Ballymacarbry Community Centre, Waterford on the weekend of 21st April 2018. An invite was extended to all other Mountain Rescue teams on the Island of Ireland to participate in this event.

The event facilitated over one hundred attendees on each day. The attendees included a representative of Coast Guard Rescue 117 and members of the Defence Forces. All teams brought their own special knowledge to the occasion for the futuristic combined development of all

those who attended in the interests of skills development in Mountain Rescue scenarios.

The event was conducted over two days. The first day involved a series of round robin training events on Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> April where the teams got to mix and make new friends and re-establish connections with other friends while developing skills and knowledge.

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> April a simulated major incident involving several missing persons and casualties across the Nire Valley was conducted. Significantly, this event tested the use of the SARCALL log on the hill in a busy control room while overseeing a difficult operation.

SEMRA also attended a winter training exercise in Poland to upskill members on the team in March 2018. The team sent 8 members to the 'Valley of the Five Lakes' in the TATRA Mountains for five days to train and experience the more physically difficult conditions of these mountains. The course was delivered by members of the TOPR Mountain Rescue Team of the Tatra Mountains.

SEMRA is currently advancing towards registration as a PHECC licensed C.P.G. provider. All team members are trained or at an advance stage in their PHECC training and this process will be completed in early 2019. SEMRA has also a transparent and comprehensive safety management system in place.

### Grants Received

Coast Guard Grant: €7407. Waterford Leader Grant: €18047.97. HSE Grant: €4000.

### Remembrance

During the year SEMRA and SARDA member Gerry Tobin's beautiful dog DEX passed away. This dog was loved by all the members of SEMRA and we will all miss him dearly.



Team Chair: Henry Smyth  
Team Leader: Gerry Tobin  
Website: [www.sardaireland.com](http://www.sardaireland.com)

# Search and Rescue Dog Association

19  
CALLOUTS



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The Search and Rescue Dog Association Ireland (SARDA Ireland), is a national voluntary emergency search and rescue organization concerned with the deployment of Air Scenting Search and Rescue Dogs to search for missing persons. Our dog teams, which consist of the handler and their dog are tasked to search anywhere in Ireland and are effective in mountains, woodlands, rural and urban areas, waterways and seashore. We are regularly tasked in mountain and lowland areas. Our capability is available to all mountain rescue teams throughout the island. We are part of the umbrella organisation NSARDA which represents Search Dog Associations in the UK, Ireland and the Isle of Man.

2018 culminated in some very high points and also some very sad times for SARDA Ireland. The upgrading of two of our operational search dog teams featured as a high point in December. Mick Grant and Ziggy alongside Louise Burgoyne with Lyla got through the tough three-days upgrade assessments in Wicklow and successfully qualified as full mountain rescue search dog teams. Both teams are members of the South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association and have been responding to tasking's from the Gardaí and Mountain Rescue. Both dogs have been first on scene at casualty sites. In other news, 2018 saw the passing of Dexter. Dex and his handler Gerry Tobin (who is a member of South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association) qualified as a search dog team in 2013. During his career, Dexter attended numerous call-outs with Gerry, and Dex's find on an unconscious casualty in Wicklow in 2015 directly saved a person's life. The loss of this fine dog was untimely, unexpected and is deeply regretted by everyone in SARDA Ireland.

Meanwhile, we are happy to note that there has been increased interest from the public to become involved with SARDA Ireland. Many new people have started to volunteer as 'dogsbodies' (those who hide on the hills for our dog teams) and to assist with fundraising.

There are also several more prospective operational handlers and some very promising young dogs on the team. SARDA Ireland members generally get together on national training weekends every six or seven weeks. These weekends take place in different locations, including Wicklow, Kerry, the Comeragh Mountains and Connemara. National training weekends offer an opportunity to set up large search areas, keep an eye on each dog team's progress, offer valuable feedback to all handlers and to share knowledge and experience.

As we are a national team, with members based all over Ireland, these weekends also provide a chance for all of us to get together socially: also an important aspect for any team. Outside of the national training weekends, smaller groups meet together for training regularly in their respective locations around the country. In 2018 several team members attended training weekends and were requested as assessors for sister organisations in the UK. We also attended other events such as school and college visits. 2019 will see another eventful year for SARDA Ireland with several dog teams in preparation for operational and upgrade assessments.



# Galway Mountain Rescue Team

Team Chair: Dermot Hughes  
Team Leader: Rory Sherlock  
Website: [www.gmrt.ie](http://www.gmrt.ie)



17  
CALLOUTS

## Annual Report 2018

The team responded to 17 callouts in 2018. These occurred in the months of March, April, July, August and November and included assistance to the Gardaí during Storm Emma, three calls to Diamond Hill and two callouts to search for elderly gentlemen who were missing in difficult terrain.

The most significant call out of the year was the rescue of 22 Venture scouts and five adult leaders from Ben Corr in March. This was a great team effort, when just 10 GMRT members were greatly outnumbered by their casualties, but the team members on the hill performed superbly and the callout ended well for all concerned.

### Summary of fundraisers – what the money was used for and dates for 2019 events

Fundraising income in 2018 totalled €12,278. Two supermarket bag packing events were held in August, a table quiz was held in September and a street collection took place in October. All funds went towards the teams running costs.



### Recruitment of new members

Team added one full member in 2018 and currently has six recruits in training. Applications for new members will reopen in January 2019.

### Grants received

Galway County Council €4,550  
Galway City Council €5,000  
Clar €8,988

### Training highlights

The team held 44 training events representing 333 person hours. There were five interagency events including a joint exercise with the National Parks Service on Diamond Hill.

### Remembrance

The team received donations in memory of two members of the local community - Sean Halloran Jr and Eoin Burke.



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Team Chair: Colm Byrne  
Team Leader: Robert Hunt  
Website: [www.mayomrt.com](http://www.mayomrt.com)

# Mayo Mountain Rescue Team

34  
CALLOUTS



2018 was, once again, a busy year for the Mayo Mountain Rescue Team with 34 callouts and an additional 17 incidents coordinated on Reek Weekend.

This year, from an organisational point of view, a significant step for the team was being incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. This gives the team a whole new identity and a new constitution, with new rules and articles of association and most importantly greatly limits our liability. There are currently 31 active members on the team. The team also recruited five probationary members this year.

Training is a huge part of the team calendar and this year was the 10th year of hosting the National Rigging Course. The team wish to thank all the instructors who have collaborated in developing this course and who have generously given their time, and much more, in the true spirit of volunteerism. Team members attended REC, WEMSI and in-house Cas Care, Party Leader and Search Management training. We are also pursuing the PHECC pathway and have secured Leader funding for EFR training for the team.

Fundraising is important for any mountain rescue team. Having a new HQ building, since 2016, has given us a long-awaited home which is essential for storing team equipment, vehicles and for holding meetings and training. This means the costs of operating the team have increased as we need to maintain these new facilities. We held a number of fundraising events during the year. The ones that had the greatest buzz were the Moonlight in Mayo event (in its second year) and the Community based collections held in Castlebar and Westport. The support that the team receive from the members of the public and casualties that we have helped is always humbling. This year two casualties from Reek Sunday in 2017 raised large donations for the team.

Reek Weekend itself involves a large planned and coordinated operation between all the agencies and the 11 MRI teams. An average of 120 mountain rescue personnel from across Ireland and the UK came to assist in the operation in 2018. It is the busiest weekend operationally for the team. The team wish to acknowledge the time and effort of all the mountain rescue teams in assisting with the Reek Weekend operation this year and acknowledge the assistance of the Gardaí, Coastguard, Order of Malta, the Ambulance service and the local communities throughout the year.

In August, the family of John Quinn visited us in our HQ in Westport to present a donation of €4,800 which John's family and friends raised in his memory. John Quinn of Castlebar, Co. Mayo, who had been living in Strasbourg, died in a tragic hiking accident in the Vosges mountains in Alsace on the 12th May 2018. His loss struck a chord with the Mayo Mountain Rescue Team. His walking community were made up of people like those in the Mayo Mountain Rescue Team itself, people from all different walks of life with the same enjoyment of the outdoors. John will be remembered by the team when we help others just as he helped bring people together through his enjoyment of hillwalking. The team are using the donation to buy new equipment.

MMRT team members continue to show great commitment to this voluntary service and have fantastic support from our team member families which allows the team to be available 24/7, 365 days/yr. Go raibh maith agibh!

# Sligo Leitrim Mountain Rescue Team

Team Chair: Ciaran Davis  
Team Leader: Iain Mounsey  
Website: [www.sligoleitrimmrt.ie](http://www.sligoleitrimmrt.ie)



## Incidents

During 2018 SLMRT conducted 3 Searches, 6 Rescues and over 240 person hours given. These were a mix of operating with other agencies including other MRTs, Garda, Irish Coastguard, RNLI, HSE and Fire Services.

## Training

Training this year comprised of 40 sessions covering the following: REC 3, REC 4, Night Navigation, PPE Inspection Course, Joint exercise with RNLI, Joint Exercises with neighbouring teams, Communications, Medical Refreshers, Rigging Course Doolin and the Party Leader Course

## Events

The team also committed to 10 different events as part of our fundraising strategy and public relations. Our fundraising covered a pub quiz, our annual street collection and the centrepiece the Ben Bulbin Night walk which continues to be a popular event. Other assistance has been given to local events based upon the numbers of people involved and the terrain covered, these include the Warriors Run, Sligo Way Ultra, St Patrick's day parades in Sligo and Leitrim, a number of education days with various schools, scout groups, local community groups as well as the national exercise of Croagh Patrick.

## Fundraising

At the start of the year the team suffered a major setback when our base was subject to a burglary. In our efforts to remain operational we would like to thank An Garda Síochána, Sligo/Leitrim for the very swift action to apprehend the perpetrators. In addition we would like to thank all the companies, organisations and individuals who helped us in any way they could. This was a huge boost to the team and we could not have recovered as quickly as we did without your support. During the year the team conducted 4 major fundraising events beginning with the Pub Quiz to which we thank the Thomas Connolly's, Sligo for hosting us. This was then followed

soon after by the announcement of funding under the CLAR scheme from the Department of Culture, Heritage & Gaeltacht. This gave us funding of €27000 to upgrade our vast array of equipment including communications, casualty handling equipment and PPE. We would like to thank the efforts of the Mountain Rescue Ireland and the Department of Culture, Heritage & Gaeltacht as this has made a vast improvement to the team's resources in being able to provide a professional service to the local community. The now infamous annual Ben Bulbin Night Walk continued our fundraising efforts with around 200 supporters enjoying the guided hike to the top Ben before finally hitting the streets of Sligo for our annual street collection.

## Members

Currently we have 18 active members with 8 probationers approaching assessment. Over the course of 2018 team members gave up over 4,440hrs of their time to commit to incidents training and fundraising.

## Vehicles

SLMRT has 2 Vehicles in use, a 2008 Ford Transit Van, a 2015 VW Rockton 4x4

## Team Base

The team is currently housed within an area vacated by the Sligo County Council. This has provided us with a secure facility in which to keep all the vehicles and equipment and also space to conduct training. We are very grateful for the assistance provided by Sligo County Council.

## Equipment

With the announcement of funding by CLAR a huge amount of equipment has been changed, upgraded and added to. For the team this was a very welcome and vital source of funding which has enabled us to further our high standards of team training and ultimately the care of our casualties.



Team Chair: Brian Pat Murray  
Team Leader: Garret Wilson  
Website: [www.facebook.com/DonegalMRT](https://www.facebook.com/DonegalMRT)

# Donegal Mountain Rescue Team

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CALLOUTS



DMRT (Donegal Mountain Rescue Team) provides an emergency response for the remote and upland environment of Donegal, starting at the northern tip of Ireland Malin Head stretching down to the stunning cliffs of Slieve League while taking in the Derryveagh Mountain Range and the Bluestack Mountain Range and all the upland and remote areas in between.

Throughout 2018 either through Callouts or Training DMRT have worked closely with our colleagues in various Mountain Rescue Teams, An Garda Siochana, NAS, R118, various Coastguard teams, and the RNLI. DMRT has also deployed the use of SARLOC on callouts which is a system whereby the lost person smartphone can pass its location to the team using its GPS System.

DMRT currently have 24 Responders. We currently have 20 responders under REC First AID 2 who are Emergency First Responders and 1 Emergency Medical Technician. The structure of team training this year has been made up of both training sessions and scenario callout training days which in turn would cover Search Management and Search Techniques, First Aid, Navigation, Rope Work and Communications.

As always for DMRT a large amount of the team responders time is taken up with fundraising, be that the annual bucket collections or the many hours spent in the background completing grant applications. DMRT each year holds two street collections to raise much needed funds for the day to day running of the team. Once again, the general public stepped up to show their continuing support for DMRT with the collection in Donegal Town raising just over €2000 and the collection in Buncrana raising just over €2300. Many of the local walking clubs along with the local people of Donegal and local businesses supported DMRT throughout the year by holding fundraisers. DMRT also received kind donations from some of the people that were assisted on the

callouts. DMRT secured €18718 through the Clar funding scheme in 2018.

To date DMRT have been called out 18 times in 2018 and have held 37 training exercises. This year the callouts ranged from assisting groups to lone walkers on the hills along with assisting An Garda Siochana with low land missing person searches. It was noticeable this year that out of all the people assisted by the team 16 of these people were from outside of Donegal and were visiting the County.

DMRT vehicles are equipped with Tetra radios and search teams now carry tetra radios during operations, all searchers can now be tracked in the incident control unit by using tetra tracking.

Donegal Mountain Rescue is looking forward to hosting the annual Mountain Rescue Ireland AGM on the 30th and 31st of March 2019. One of the biggest needs the team has is a base, DMRT has been working over 2018 to try and locate a base to operate from and moving into 2019 hope to gain support from both local Government representatives and County Councillors to secure an operational base.



# EMMA

A rescuer's perspective  
from DWMRT

# AND THE BEAST...

Early March 2018, inspired lots of talk about one of our favourite topics: the weather. The Beast from the East set the scene, and Storm Emma arrived to stop much of Ireland in its tracks. Emma gave us blizzard conditions and up to a metre of snow in places; she did her worst over eastern parts of Ireland.

During this time, community spirit abounded, and the voluntary and auxiliary emergency services mobilised in great numbers to assist their professional counterparts. Amongst the emergency services, mountain rescue (MR) teams are uniquely placed to respond to severe weather of the kind experienced in March 2018. Being accustomed to operating in winter conditions, MR volunteers can offer a vital emergency service far beyond where vehicles can safely reach.

While Storm Emma's worst effects were felt in Leinster, severe weather of this nature can cause problems anywhere in the country. A number of MR teams had a busy time during Storm Emma, this account is written from the perspective of the Dublin & Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team (DWMRT).

At 02:13 on Friday, March 2nd, the team was woken with Storm Emma's first tasking; a call to an abandoned car stuck in a snowdrift. Following investigation, it became clear that no response was required. Stand down. Three hours later, at 05:30, a second tasking; a request to transport a patient from snowbound west Wicklow to Beaumont Hospital, in Dublin, for transplant surgery. Unfortunately, within minutes of the call coming through, word was received that the donor organ had gone to another patient.

As dawn broke, the scale of the challenge began to reveal itself. Roundwood, the village where DWMRT is based, woke to 20-25 centimetres of snow on the ground, with drifts of up to two metres in the village and on the approach roads. This was the pattern all across upland areas of Dublin and Wicklow. Two of the team's three response vehicles, MR3 and MR4, were snowed in, trapped behind a snowdrift over one metre high.

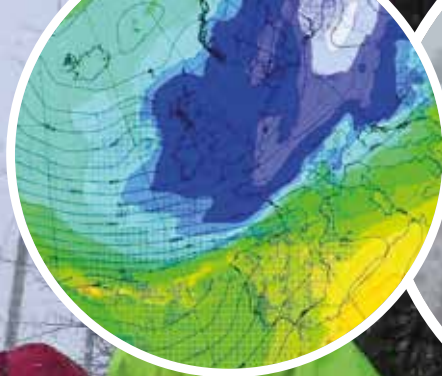
DWMRT was officially tasked to assist the National Ambulance Service (NAS) at 08:55. For the next few hours, the MR personnel who were able to leave their

houses helped out where they could. The team's only available response vehicle, MR2, began its day doing emergency calls for NAS. Team members' private four-wheel-drive vehicles were pressed into service, transporting tired front-line emergency staff home, and bringing in fresh troops to help keep the health services operational. MR2, crewed by a DWMRT advanced paramedic (AP) and an emergency first responder (EFR), completed three calls that morning: epistaxis, a fractured forearm, and a suspected deep vein thrombosis. All three calls were in housing estates in south Dublin. A shortage of available crews, and difficult access to minor roads created significant problems for NAS for the first half of the day.

Meanwhile, in Roundwood, after much shovelling, and more than a little swearing, MR3 and MR4 were freed from their snowy barricade. Roundwood was still entirely cut off, most importantly, from Friday morning's milk delivery. A convoy of Land Rovers, equipped with snow chains, met the milk delivery in nearby Newtownmountkennedy and returned to a thirsty, but grateful, Roundwood.

At 12:35, Garda Command and Control tasked the team to evacuate a family home near Ballinascorney, in south Dublin. MR2, the team's trusty Volkswagen Rockton, responded with its crew of two MR personnel. The vehicle was stopped by deep snow approximately 1.5km from the house, and from there, a chilly snowshoe trek through biting wind beckoned. More than 20 MR team members responded in total, and with the help of the Civil Defence Hagglund all-terrain vehicle, we safely evacuated five people and an ageing German shepherd dog from the house. The operation lasted over six hours from tasking to stand-down.

Saturday, March 3rd, started early with a tasking at 05:06 from the Gardaí to Manor Kilbride, in west Wicklow. A person needed to be evacuated to hospital from a family

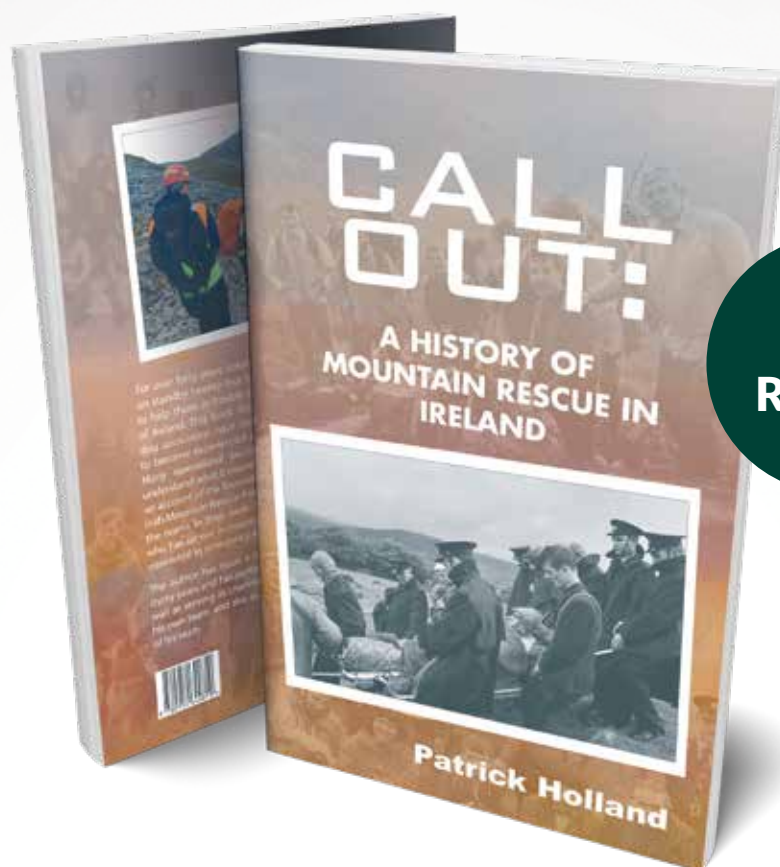


home. Again, MR2 responded initially with a crew of two MR team members, an AP and an EFR. This time, MR2 could get no closer than 5km from the house. The crew snowshoed over deep snow to reach the house, where they assessed and treated the patient. Another hill party followed the first, to perform a stretcher-carry if required. The Irish Coast Guard helicopter, Rescue 116, was tasked to the incident and the patient was airlifted shortly before 08:30. Thanks to the efforts of a local quarryman, and his 10-tonne loader, the 5km snowshoe to the house became a 3.5km snowshoe back out. Before the hill parties had returned to base, a second tasking was received. Two vehicles, with five MR personnel, responded to Stepside to a help evacuate a paediatric patient to hospital. The patient was transported in an Order of Malta stretcher-capable, four-wheel-drive, and was escorted by an MR vehicle as a backup.

DWMRT responded to 24 taskings between March 2nd and 4th, working alongside a variety of agencies to provide an emergency service in, at times, very severe winter conditions. Those 24 taskings were a variety of emergency, medical and humanitarian. If the thaw didn't arrive when it did, the focus of the team's job would have

switched to transporting food and essential supplies to snowbound people. Such a change in focus would have placed huge demands on the resources that DWMRT had available. None of the taskings during Storm Emma were in locations where the team normally operates, and all would have been handled by the statutory emergency services if weather conditions were not a factor.

A mountain rescuer's job, typically, starts when he/she leaves a vehicle. When vehicles are not an option, MR can provide a vital emergency response. Storm Emma has been described as a once-in-a-generation weather event. The fact is, that with climate change, weather events like Storm Emma are becoming more frequent. We are seeing, in January 2019, the same meteorological conditions that gave us the Beast from the East. A sudden stratospheric warming, caused by a warmer-than-usual Arctic Ocean, has pushed cold, polar air further south than it should be. All of this changes our local climate from our usual mild, damp conditions to much colder ones. As mountain rescuers, we must anticipate, and plan for, more cold weather events that will bring our operational areas down from the hills, and into our towns and villages.



**Book  
Release**

For over fifty years volunteer mountain rescue teams have been on standby twenty four hours a day, every day of the year ready to help those in trouble on the hills and mountains of the island of Ireland.

This book describes how the teams and the search dog association have developed from very modest beginnings to become experienced and capable frontline 999/112 services.

Many operational incidents are described and readers will understand what it means to be a member of a team. It also gives an account of the foundation, development and difficulties of the Irish Mountain Rescue Association which represents and supports the teams in their work.

This book will be of interest to anyone who has served in mountain rescue as well as those serving in, or interested

in emergency services. It is, I hope, an important milestone, a record of our 40 plus years of dedication and service. Thanks to all those who assisted and supported the work of research and preparation for publication.

The author has been a member of mountain rescue for nearly thirty years and has participated in many rescues and searches as well as serving as chairman of both the national association and his own team and also as the team leader, the operational leader, of his team.

c.180 pages, soft bound with sixteen illustrations

Available from **Pat Holland** ([pathollandchange@gmail.com](mailto:pathollandchange@gmail.com)) with a discount for bulk orders from MR teams and other emergency services. Single copies available from [www.lettertecbooks.com](http://www.lettertecbooks.com), costing €20 plus P+P each.

# IN REMEMBRANCE

Since 1965 MRI and our mountain rescue teams have been led by people whose dedication built the organisations that we have today. It is important that we recognise their dedication and achievements.

## Uel Hamilton 1946 - 2018



A founding member of the North West Mountain Rescue Team with 38 years of service, the Derry man was also one of the longest serving member of the Foyle Search and Rescue Team. For years he spent every Friday and Saturday night monitoring the shores of the lough for anyone falling into the water or supporting families.

In 1980 he and some friends formed the North West Mountain Rescue Team after they were out hill walking and stumbled across an accident. Over the years he filled every key appointment, assumed the role of team leader in 1993 and was President at the time of his death.

In 2012 Uel's dedication to mountain rescue was recognised with the naming of the team's rescue base in Fermanagh to Hamilton House, and in 2018 Foyle Search and Rescue presented him with a special recognition award for 22 years of service.

Although ill in the last six years, Uel remained committed. He raised funds and supported other volunteers. He had tremendous pride in both North West Mountain Rescue and Foyle Search and Rescue and instilled it in volunteers he trained. He had an innate kindness, which he used discreetly. UEL Hamilton was "a shining example of service to the community" and is sorely missed.

## Brendan Walsh 1942 - 2018



On February 9th 2018, we were informed of the death of Brendan Walsh. He was a founding member of the Irish Mountain Rescue Association (IMRA), which later became Mountain Rescue Ireland.

In the early 1960's Brendan was the Mountain Rescue Officer for the Dublin Branch of the Irish Mountaineering Club and during that time developed relations with a number of like-minded organisations including some in Northern Ireland. Arising from this a meeting was held in 1965 at Lord Roden's home in Bryansford, Co. Down. The Irish Mountain Rescue Association was formed here with Brendan Walsh as its first Secretary/Organiser. Brendan was a solicitor, Notary Public and Dublin City Sheriff in his professional life.

A celebration of Brendan's life took place at the chapel in Mount Jerome Cemetery where MRI was represented by Diarmaid Scully. On that occasion, Brendan's family asked that mourners make a donation to MRI, if desired, in lieu of flowers.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Brendan's wife, Ruth, his children, Sinéad, Cara, Aifric and Oisín, extended family and many friends, and thank them for the great generosity and support they have given to Mountain Rescue in Ireland.



Facing into 2019, recognition is needed that saving a life in an upland or mountainous environment requires commitment to the mission at many levels.

For the mountain rescue volunteer to assist the casualty they must be supported by the mountain rescue team in the provision of the following:



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The casualty requiring assistance is dependant on all these levels for support, regardless of the casualty being a visitor to or a resident of the island. It is vital that all stakeholders: local councils, government departments and agencies, and other interested parties recognise their place in the mountain rescue mission.

**Saving Lives  
in the  
Mountains**

24 / 7 / 365

[www.mountainrescue.ie](http://www.mountainrescue.ie)

# SMALL CHANGE BIG DIFFERENCE

Mountain rescue teams are only possible due to the commitment of the volunteers who dedicate to being on call 24/7/365 to assist those in need.

These volunteers achieve this with minimal state support, and assume the costs of their own time and effort. We are required to reach out to the public to ask for support for the work that we do.

Please visit our website and give what you can.

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*donate today*  
[www.mountainrescue.ie/donate](http://www.mountainrescue.ie/donate)

Alternatively you can make an online transfer via the details below

AIB Bank, Killorglin, Co Kerry  
BIC: AIBKIE2D  
IBAN: 43AIBK963634012108043





# Saving Lives in the Mountains

24 / 7 / 365



[mountainrescue.ie](http://mountainrescue.ie)

Mountain Rescue Ireland (MRI), Head Office, c/o Irish Sport HQ  
National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, Ireland