



The Stretcher



The newssheet of Devon Cave Rescue Organisation.
Distributed free but please make a donation to Cave Rescue just in case you're the next one in need of the stretcher !!!

January 2004

Welcome to the fourth edition of "The Stretcher". This edition will bring you up-to date with recent developments and news within Devon Cave Rescue Organisation.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you all a happy new year.

££££'s

The old bank balance is sitting steady, thanks to the work of a number of members, who have given time to raising the much-required cash over the last year. We again had the opportunity of raising cash and our profile at Kent's Cavern, Torquay, this year we attended on a couple of Saturday's when Kent's Cavern had special days for visitors, we also ran 5 main fund raising Sunday's and over these 7 visit's raised just under £1000.00. Thanks to those who put in the time and effort to help the team in this way. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Nick Powe and the staff of Kent's Cavern for the support they have given for the second year in succession.

Seven members of the team also spent a very enjoyable night visiting the pubs of Buckfastleigh, just prior to Christmas, the idea was to do a stretcher carry around the pubs and shake the buckets at the same time. We dressed our "casualty" (Rupert) in a Father Christmas outfit and strapped him into the stretcher and headed off towards the Sun Inn, then on to the Waterman's, where Father Christmas got more than he expected when a very attractive young lady sat on his lap. At this point Rupert suddenly realised the benefit of being Father Christmas. We then headed to the Kings Arms and shortly after to the White Hart. A pint was easily consumed in each pub and the buckets started to weigh heavy. In all we collected a fantastic £141.50. Thanks must go to the landlords of the above four pubs, hopefully by next year the Globe will also be re-opened. Thanks again to the members who gave their time and to the people of Buckfastleigh, especially the "Hen" night that we ran into.....



We have also purchased a number of collecting pots and more are ordered. Following a trial collecting tin that was put on the bar at The Welcome Inn, Exeter. The meeting place of the DSS. After the two months the tin was emptied and £11.71 was found, at this point the committee have decided that it is worth investing in more collecting tins. When you see a tin and your pocket is full of loose change, please pop it in.



Call Out

During 2003 we only received one call out and as I am sure many members know this was not one of the most pleasant shouts that we have been involved in. Many of you will remember the News reports, both local and national about an 18-year-old young lady called Alicia Eborne, who had gone missing in the area of Shaugh Prior, near Plymouth. I received a call from the Police on a Saturday afternoon requesting our assistance in searching a mineshaft in the Lopwell dam area. Dartmoor Rescue Group had been requested to assist in surface searching. They were already out on the Saturday and were expecting to be again out on the Sunday, but it transpired that they were stood down, but we were given the use of the Plymouth Section's control vehicle. A small team assembled at the TA centre in Plymouth at 9.30 and we were shortly tasked to go with a small team of Devon and Cornwall Police officers into the Lopwell Dam area. Prior to arriving in the Lopwell Dam area we were re-tasked to Denham Bridge, where the Police had earlier discovered the body of a young lady on a steep 45/50-degree slope below a footpath and above the river. The DCRO team were then asked by the Police to provide safety cover for



Scene's of Crimes officers, then to recover the body and finally to provide safety cover for 6 officers to undertake a fingertip search of the crime scene, this was achieved by setting up multiple belays from the tree's above the footpath and to attach each police officer wearing a harness to a rope and the lower them down the slope, three seeps of the steep slope were undertaken. An excellent working relationship with the police officers was established.

Considering the circumstances of this call out, I believe that the team members who attended gave a very professional demonstration of our skills, and thank them for their support on that day.

Our team's condolences were passed to the parents of the young lady, in the form of a card. I have also received a call from the Police thanking us for our support and offering any support to the team members who were involved in the recovery of the body.

I believe that the skills, the professional image and attention to detail that was displayed on this call out are mainly due to the training that has been undertaken.

Equipment

The kit is now fully stored at the fire station and all the main kit is labelled. The idea is that the label is removed prior to the kit going into use on a shout or a practice. We have also purchased and have been given some more kit recently, below a few bits of interest on the kit front;

Comforts Boxes; We now have two waterproof boxes (the same as the Heyphone boxes) kitted out with items that would provide some comfort to a casualty or casualties. If you are requested to collect a Comforts box then please remember to fill the Thermos flask prior to leaving the rescue store, to this end the boxes will not be security tagged. The following items can be found in each of the boxes. 1) Group Shelter 2) Small Thermos Flask 3) Night Lights & lighters 4) Dried Fruit 5) High Energy Drinks 6) Chocolate Bars 7) Sweets 8) Casualty Record Card 9) Note Book & Pencil.

On the point of Hot drinks for casualties, it is worth noting here that one of the best drinks to give a casualty is Hot Black Current or Hot Orange. This is because Tea and Coffee are a diuretic and make a casualty want to pass water, not good if you're strapped into a stretcher.



Antenna; We have also been given a 3db gain Antenna for the radios, by a company called Sigma Communications, this will give us better comms from the fire station, one small sticking point is that if we wish to mount this on the side of the fire station then we need planning permission, the cost of this planning permission is the down side. Chris Sillitoe is exploring the chance of obtaining a mobile 6m high mast that the antenna can be mounted on and put on the hard standing beside the fire station. This would mean that we do not require planning permission, watch this space.

Heyphones; We are also in the middle of producing another Heyphone, this one will be a dedicated Surface Heyphone and will have the facility of linking a VHF radio direct to it, via a "Talk Thru" box. This will allow communications direct from "Control" to the cave, without the need for an individual to be sitting manning both a Heyphone and VHF. This is important as the location for a Heyphone is not normally in the area of a cave entrance. This will need for members to be trained with the setting up of this Heyphone. Members must also remember that with this "Talk Thru" your communications may be listened to by outside people and organisations, so correct radio protocols and language must be used. The Heyphone batteries are also now permanently on charge on a charging rack, please remember to take these off charge and add to the Heyphone cases prior to leaving the store.

Ropes; we now have six rope bags, each containing two 50m ropes. The bags are colour coded and match the colour of the ropes (nearly). There are two blue bags containing blue rope, two red bags containing red ropes and two yellow bags containing white ropes.

The following are the agreed uses for the ropes if being used in a hauling situation for example Bakers pit entrance shaft.

Blue Bags	-	Blue Ropes	-	Haul Ropes
Red Bags	-	Red Ropes	-	Safety for casualty.
Yellow Bags	-	White Ropes	-	SRT for barrow person

I would like to thank Andy Ruming and his new company "Speleolabs" for producing the bags at a very attractive cost, not only do they perform well, they look the business...

Speleolabs *supporting DCRO*

First Aid; there are now two fully stocked First Aid kits in the store, these are stored in the old Heyphone cases, and are marked as First Aid.

TRAINING

Over the last year we have had 6 training evenings and two full day rescue practices, they have generally been well attended, during 2004 it would be really good to see some of the faces that have not been seen during 2003. Please see the calendar below for the dates of the evening training sessions and also the rescue practices. It was suggested at the committee meeting that we should run three rescue practices during 2004, if you have an opinion or any ideas then please let Simon Mullins or myself know.

Feb 11	-	DCRO Training night 8pm @ the Rescue Store
Apr 14	-	DCRO Training night 8pm @ the Rescue Store
May 9	-	Rescue Practice and AGM. Place and time to be advised.
Jun 9	-	DCRO Training night 8pm @ the Rescue Store
Aug 11	-	DCRO Training night 8pm @ the Rescue Store
Oct 13	-	DCRO Training night 8pm @ the Rescue Store
Dec 8	-	DCRO Training night 8pm @ the Rescue Store



A First Aid course was run by Guy Ridsen during 2003 and 6 members of the DSS attended. This was a very good course and it was mainly based around the correct treatment and examination of a casualty. When the next course is run I would suggest that as many people as possible attend (maximum 12) it is hoped that another course can be run during 2004.

We have also been offered two places on a Casualty Care course that is being run by West Brecon Cave Rescue. Many of these members have attended this course and have benefited. At present the following have shown interest in the course Mark Ashcroft, Andy Rimming, Rupert Goddard and Jon Whiteley. If there is anyone else interested, please can they contact me ASAP.

DCRO OFFICERS

Chairman: Keith Pearson

Controller: Jon Whiteley

Secretary: Rupert Goddard

Treasurer: Colin Smith

Training: Simon Mullens

Equipment: Geoff Dommett

Post 1: Chris Sillitoe

Post 2: Ali Neill

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you at the next training night and rescue practice.