

The Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team - 50th Anniversary

Dawn MacKinnon

AMRT was formed in 1964 in response to a growing awareness that there needed to be a more structured approach to the problem of organising and conducting search and rescue operations in the area of the Cairngorms, Deeside and Donside.

The Team has developed a professional approach to mountain rescue and one which ensures that members of the Team are highly skilled as both mountaineers and mountain rescuers.

The Team trains every Thursday night and one weekend in three. It has two bothies which are used for training weekends and when on call outs. One is at the Spittal of Muick and one at Derry Lodge on the Mar Estate. The use of these bothies gives the Team a base close to the area of operation when called out to rescues in the Cairngorms.

Members of the Team come from a range of backgrounds, for example doctors, oil industry workers and teachers. Each one of them shares a passion for the hills and mountaineering and a dedication to mountain rescue services. Training is rigorous and comprehensive, a necessity for each and every Team member to ensure complete readiness for operational duties. Over the past fifty years there have been many changes in equipment and technology but the resolve to answer a call to rescue, whatever the conditions, is unchanged. Every one of the Team members is a volunteer and they all have jobs, families and outside interests, so giving their time freely makes them a very special bunch.

AMRT is on call 24/7, 365 days a year. Called out by Police Scotland to assist in search and rescue anywhere within their operational area, the Team could be involved in searching for mountaineers and walkers in the mountains or for missing people in and around Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. There have been some headline grabbing rescues such as the Cairngorm disaster of 1971, the light aircraft crashing into the waters of Loch Muick in 1992, the search for a missing child in Aberdeen in 1997 and the F-15C fighter jets on the summit of Ben MacDui in 2001.



Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team 2014.

Shortly after the formation of AMRT, it was decided that a parent body should be established to assist in providing funds and support for the Team. Since its establishment in the late sixties, Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Association has developed very close links with the Team, and indeed a number of Team members sit on the Association's Executive Committee. In the mid 1990s the Association changed its name to the Aberdeen and St John Mountain Rescue Association in recognition of the support which the Association and the Team had received locally from the Order of St John.

AMRT continues to be the best that they can be at what they do. There is a unique combination of 'older' members of the Team who bring with them a wealth of experience and the 'young' guns who are just coming into the Team, or have only been involved for a few years. This mixture of knowledge and enthusiasm will ensure that AMRT continues to be a dedicated, exceptional collection of people who will give their utmost to ensure that if required, they are ready to help anyone who needs them.

We have had a busy year, celebrating the past five decades of search and rescue operations with our Annual Sponsored Walk in June, followed by a day in Union Square in July. In August we organised a talk by Mark Beaumont about his adventures. In September we had a reunion with as many former team members as we were able to get in contact with and enjoyed an informal evening in Braemar followed by a day at the Derry Bothy. Our final event was an anniversary ceilidh in November. Although these events are primarily fundraising activities, they also allow us to raise the profile of the Team in the surrounding area and enable us to show the public who we are and what we do.