

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP



Newsletter

Issue 14, June 2018



GCRG Depot, Littledean Hill, Cinderford, Glos, GL14 2TT

Phone – 01594 827999

SARCALL Response Number – 07537415551

Please ensure all SARCALL messages are responded to

Editors note:

Apologies for the delay in producing this newsletter (the last one was in July 2017) as all effort was being put into the completion of the 50th anniversary publication (see later in this newsletter). As ever, there is the usual information which will be included in every newsletter (committee/warden & SARCALL info etc) plus details of previous training and anything else of interest to GCRG/Cave Rescue.

This newsletter (like any other newsletter) can only be as good as the information/articles contained within and consequently, if anyone has any photos or articles or anything else they'd like to see included then please forward/contact the Editor.

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2018 DATES FOR THE DIARY


9th September: GCRG training, venue to be arranged.

9th December: GCRG training, venue to be arranged.

MEMBERS OF THE GCRG 2018-2019 COMMITTEE

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Ordinary Member <i>[Support to the Chairman]</i> <i>Rachel Brown</i> brownrm@btinternet.com 01453 511100 (H) 07855 798403 (M)	Ordinary Member <i>[Driver Records and Assistant Training Co-Ordinator]</i> <i>Kev Brockway</i> ozonekev@btinternet.com 01453 511100 (H) 07970 033345 (M)	

SARCALL INFORMATION



Gloucestershire

Cave Rescue Group

SARCALL Information for Team Members

When you receive a SARCALL SMS alert sent by a GCRG Warden reply to it to indicate your availability.

If you are unable to reply by SMS text message try using the GCRG specific SARCALL response web page.

Alternatively call the originating warden or the Depot where a message may be left on the answer phone.

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

SAR ▲ Axxx ▲ message if you are available

SAR ▲ Lxxx ▲ message if you have limited availability

SAR ▲ N ▲ message if you are unavailable

Where

▲ = a space

xxx = time in minutes until you will arrive at RV point

message = relevant additional information, free text.

Useful phone numbers

GCRG Depot	01594 827999	
GCRG Wardens	Mobile	Home
David Appleing	07804 300598	01242 581385
John Berry	07979 791083	01594 822823
Kevin Brockway	07970 033345	01453 511100
Andrew Clark	07707 992510 07411 207149	01600 716970
Maurice Febry		01242 242160

David Hardwick	07780 676341	01454 299035
Martin Holloway	07918 900334	01666 504415
Greg Jones	07974 008519	01989 218763
Paul Taylor	07803 539945	01452 505673
Peter Turier	07462 181899	01452 539199
Colin Vickery	07548-240124	01684-293202

(Version 6. Jul 2017)

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

SARCALL ALERTS

SARCALL is the primary tool used by GCRG when initiating a call out. Not only is it the way we notify members of the details of the call out, it is also how you, the members, let the Wardens know if you are available.

It is **EXPECTED THAT ALL MEMBERS WILL RESPOND TO ALL SARCALL ALERTS** - the team need to know both who is and is not available.

SARCALL alert messages are sent by SMS to mobile phones, automatic voice message to land lines and email.

Mobiles

The callout SMS text alert will give brief details of the incident and contact details for the originating Warden.

When replying to these texts YOU MUST use the phone on which the callout text was received. This phone number is recorded on the SARCALL system as belonging to a particular individual, sending texts from other phones will result in them being ignored.

Similarly, the correct format of message must be used. Incorrectly formatted messages will also be ignored. This system is fully automated and the wardens will only see "valid" messages. No feedback on the success or failure of a response text is sent to team members.

The GCRG SARCALL setup has now been configured to allow you to just REPLY to the received alert text (just as you would any other text message).

Home Phones

For land line numbers a text to voice translation is applied and a spoken version of the SMS message should be received on home phones. It is known that the voice translation is not perfect and there is the potential for such messages to be difficult to understand. If such a message is received, which you think may be from GCRG, but cannot be understood, please check your mobile phone and email.

Members should also check that there is no blackout period set for SMS texts to their home phone numbers. (During this period, messages are stored and delivered only when the period ends). There is a default blackout period of 10pm to 8am. To remove this from your home number call the BT SMS text control line, 0800 587 5252 and remove any curfew period - this service is generally controlled via BT irrespective of your home phone supplier. If by default your phone does not forward its own number when dialing (no caller line id) you will need to ensure this is sent when removing the curfew by entering the appropriate code before dialing the BT SMS text control.

Email

This will contain the basic information as sent in the SMS but may also contain important additional information on the incident, if the originating warden entered this when initiating the alert.

Members can have multiple email addresses for SARCALL alerts e.g. home, work and mobile. If you would like additional addresses added to your SARCALL profile then please let me know (they will only be used for alerts).

Replying to the Alert

The automated SMS response system is the preferred way for people to respond as it effectively frees up the wardens phone line and should also reduce the frustration of team members trying to get through to them, when there might be 40 people all calling the same number. SMS responses are also visible to all wardens giving them a dynamic picture of the total and individual team member's availability, as well as the actions that they are taking.

Remember the format of the text message must be one of the following:

SAR Axxx <message>	if you are available
SAR Lxxx <message>	if you have limited availability e.g. morning, or evening.
SAR N <message>	if you are unavailable

Where

xxx = time in minutes it will take you get to the meeting point

<message> = relevant additional information (no swearing, jokes or comments on the location or casualty).

Response texts are placed in the SARCALL incident log and this is visible to other organisations nationally.

Multiple text replies can be sent - only the most recent will be displayed - useful if your availability changes.

If people are picking up other members of the team or particular equipment en-route then mentioning this in the message area of the text is a good idea.

If you cannot reply by text message then there is a SARCALL response web page. For security reasons this web address is not reproduced here but was notified to all members prior to the last practice.

If neither of these methods are available to you then please call the originating warden or the Depot, where a message may be left on the answer phone.

Checking your SARCALL Setup

The ability to receive SMS texts on your home phone can be simply checked by sending an SMS text from any mobile phone to your home number (The message which comes through may give you an additional number to ring to change the blackout period depending upon your phone line supplier).

Confirm that there is no blackout period set for SMS texts to your home phone numbers

A response SMS can be sent at any time and will remain visible to GCRG wardens for 5 days. Email me and I will check it for you. The SARCALL number is 07537 415551 and is best stored in your contacts.

Keeping information up to date:

Obviously it is vital that GCRG has up to date information for all members, so if anything changes please let me know. Additionally, if your availability to be called out changes for any reason please let me know - members can be marked as temporarily unavailable within SARCALL thus stopping alert texts being sent to them.

Gareth Jones (GCRG SARCALL Team Admin, info@gcrg.org.uk)

GCRG CALLOUTS AND SUPPORT TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

4x4 support during snowfall

In early March 2018, GCRG members Colin Vickery, Trevor Perkins and Paul Taylor, used the GCRG landrover and their own personal 4x4 vehicles to assist the local authorities with the transportation of essential staff around the county while the roads were impassable for normal vehicles.



GCRG landrover in the snow

Photos by Paul Taylor

Support to SARA for land searches

4 June 2018

Kev Brockway received a call from John Dutton, SARA Land Search Manager at 21:43 asking for assistance in an urgent land search in Cirencester for a vulnerable young male who had been missing for 10 hours.

Kev sent out a SARCALL to the GCRG Land Search Team, 4 personnel were available; Kev Brockway, Martin Holloway, Colin Vickery and Dave Appleing. All 4 assembled at Cirencester police station with SARA personnel. After a briefing, everyone split up into different teams searching parkland and wooded areas in and around Cirencester for the missing male. All areas requiring searching were searched by 02:30 the following morning and everyone returned to the police station for a debrief and well-earned brew. The decision was made that the search be ceased overnight and resumed the following day so everyone were stood down. The following morning the missing person was located safe and well and so there was no need to call GCRG out again.

23 May 2018

Rachel Brown was contacted by John Dutton from SARA in the afternoon asking if a GCRG Warden could contact him, there was a missing person to search for. Kev Brockway contacted John in due course to be told that it had been a search for a missing person but that the person in question had now been found safe and GCRG assistance was now no longer required.

Nothing entered on Sarcall as it was not necessary.

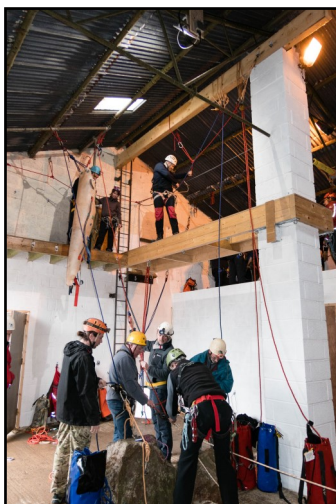
GCRG TRAINING

Depot: 10 March 2018

The March training day saw over 20 team members involved in a 'round robin' multi-station activity at the GCRG Depot. Subjects included the use of the Larkin Frame, how to get the best from SARCall, how the Land Rover and trailer work (and how to set them up on site), stretcher hauling and a new set of task cards for everybody to try.

Thanks to everyone who attended and to all of the training staff.





All photos by Nicky Bayley

Westington Stone Mine: 10 June 2018

The June training day was to take place in the north of the county at a site close to Chipping Campden and in a stone mine^[1] that GCRG had never had access to before (thanks to Paul Taylor for arranging this).

Approximately 25 members of GCRG (and members of the Midland Cave Rescue) attended and the day started with a briefing to explain what was going on. Volunteers were asked to take on specific roles (taking the comms into the mine [France Phone and Cave Link], etc) and then a number of teams were established. Each team was provided with a survey of the mine and the map was divided up into specific search areas. In each search area a number of 'cards' or other 'items' had been placed (not hidden) and the teams had to report back (via the France Phone or Cave Link) to surface control and state what they had found. Once a team had completed their search area they then moved onto a secondary area etc until the whole of the available^[2] mine had been searched. The idea of these searches was to ensure that everyone underground was able to understand the layout of the mine and navigate their way around. Following the searching, lunch was called and everyone had a break under the hot afternoon sun.

Following lunch, the afternoon exercise was to locate and deal with two casualties^[3] somewhere in the mine. Both casualties had suffered from various injuries and it was up to the first aider/medic to ensure that they were dealt with in a suitable manner.

Unknown to the rescue party, Nicky had been made up to simulate extensive head injuries and compound fracture of the lower leg. This certainly had the added effect of making the whole response much more realistic. Once Nicky had been put into the appropriate stretcher it was then a straightforward (apart from the tricky entrance) carry back out to the surface and the control point. Once Nicky was safely outside, the second casualty (Firas) was carried out with no issues. During Firas's carry comments were made regarding the relative weight of Firas compared to Nicky he was definitely harder work!

The day was finally completed by approx. 15:30 when a debrief was held for everyone to discuss how they think the day went. While most people had been underground, the site owner arrived and was shown around the surface control setup, briefed on how the exercise was going and presented with a copy of the GCRG charity calendar.



All photos by Paul Taylor

- [1] - Technically, stone 'mines' are not mines at all and should be referred to a 'quarries' but most cavers refer to them as mines in order to prevent confusion with surface/open cast stone quarries.
- [2] - Parts of the mine were considered unsafe for a GCRG exercise and had been marked off by tape (and on the surveys) as 'no entry'.
- [3] - Nicky Bayley and Firas Fayed who both volunteered to act as casualties.

At the debrief a number of points were raised:

1. All teams should use the same commands to prepare for lowering/lifting/carrying the casualty; underground there had been a variety of commands used but everyone was aware of what was going on.
2. Underground search teams should not move into another search area until surface control has given the ok.

GCRG ON FACEBOOK

GCRG has its own FaceBook page and can be found quite easily by a web search for “Facebook” and “Gloucestershire-Cave-Rescue-Group”

SWERA (South West England Rescue Association)

SWERA is the regional association of Mountain Rescue England and Wales for voluntary search and rescue teams in the near South West of England, comprising Bristol, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset (part) and Wiltshire.

GCRG is a member of SWERA and the GCRG page can be found at the following location:

<http://swera.org.uk/teams/gcrg/>

Together with 'Mendip Cave Rescue', GCRG represents the 'underground' element of rescue within the SWERA area.

GCRG SHOP

GCRG badges



The group has had a quantity of these enamel badges made up for sale to the members (and supporters) at a price of £3 each and with all profits going back to GCRG.

To show your support to the group & fly the flag these can be purchased at any GCRG training event or contact Jon Maisey or Paul Taylor and they can be delivered to club socials or posted out etc.

GCRG Head/Neck wear

Available in black or red and available at £10 each with the GCRG logo on it.



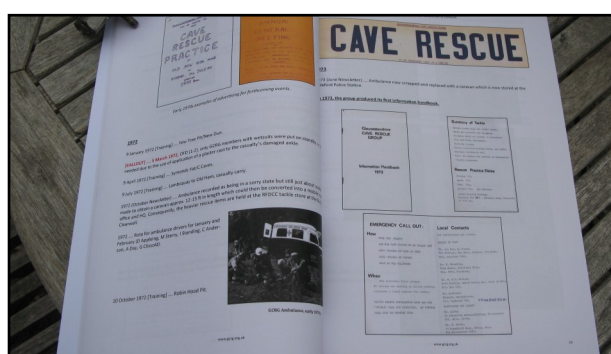
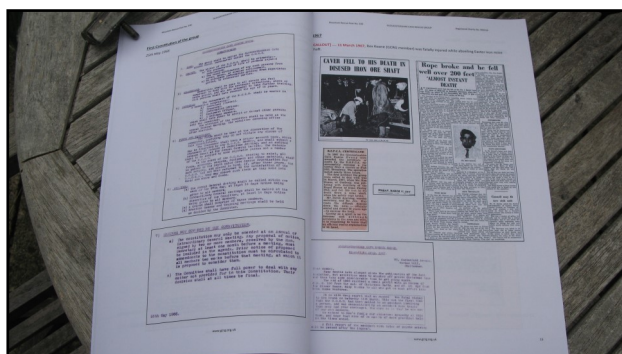
GCRG mugs

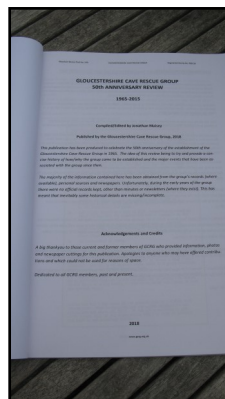
Like a unique hand-crafted mug to support GCRG?, of so, Nicky has made a batch of the excellent GCRG mugs & will make more if required at £10 each ... contact Nicky (via equipment@gcrg.org.uk) to place your order.



GCRG 50th ANNIVERSARY PUBLICATION

This publication is (where records allow) a summary of what GCRG has been up to in the 50 years since its formation in 1965. It describes how the group was initially established and how it has expanded over the decades to become the organisation it is now. The publication has been recently printed and is available (initially) to all GCRG members who attended the anniversary event at Clearwell Caves in 2015.





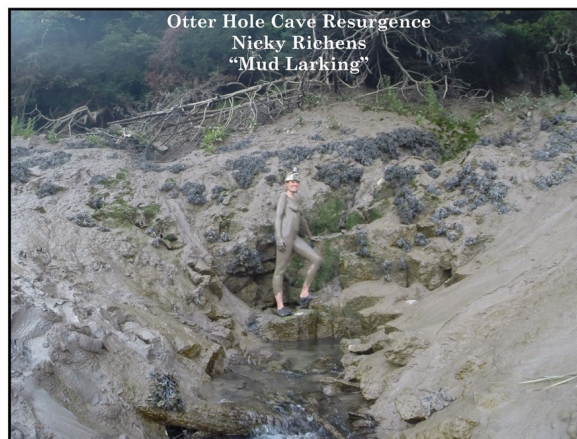
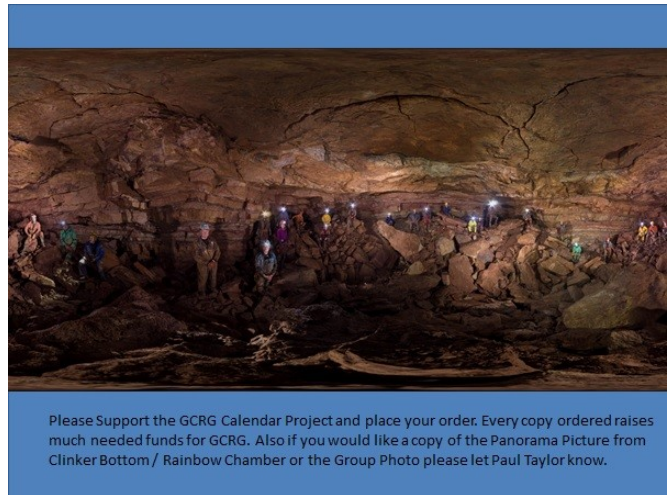
2019 GCRG CALENDAR

Over the past 12 months, Paul Taylor and Nicky Richens, with the help of many GCRG (and non-GCRG) members have worked very hard to produce a caving 'themed' calendar for 2019 and which GCRG can sell to raise some much needed funds. The calendars cost £8 each (+ £2.50 p&p if required) which is a bargain compared to the stuff available in WHSmith etc. The order forms are available from the GCRG website. The two panorama photos taken in Rainbow Chamber, Clinker Bottom, are available as extra purchases (contact Paul Taylor for more information).

So far, 224 have been sold (out of an initial batch of 250) and this has raised a significant sum of money for GCRG. Once the 250 have been sold, further orders may be available depending on demand.



The calendars are also available for sale from the Gloucester Speleological Society and Clearwell Caves.



AND FINALLY!

One of the reasons why it was so important to have the depot in a warm/dry usable state (remember how it used to be?) is that it can help to earn its keep by hiring it out to various groups. Sometimes it takes the views of an outsider to make us realise how fortunate we are to have such a fantastic resource with the depot and for those people who've worked behind the scenes to achieve this. See the GCRG 50th publication to understand the history of the purchase and development of the depot.

The email that follows was received from Joel Corrigan, one of the instructors at the March training event and provides praise indeed!

"Paul, Nicky, Craig, and the GCRG (I'm bad with names & have a terrible memory so please forward this to whoever else I should have included).

I would like to offer you all a huge, huge thanks for trusting me/the Dachstein Caving Expedition crew with your pride & joy last weekend & I am fully aware that you all took a massive risk that I might have burned the hut down!! Hopefully Craig has reported back that it was left clean, tidy & relatively shipshape & that a healthy wedge of cash has been left in the safe? If not then he's probably enjoying cocktails on a tropical beach!

And talking of which I'm very obliged to both Nicky & Craig for being on standby & helping me out as required (Craig made multiple trips on Sunday night as it took longer for us to pack up & clean up than we expected.....).

We managed to sell a few buffs & tankards, some full memberships to the GSS (I didn't manage to get any RFDCC forms printed off), and I've told them that once the calendar comes out I'll put a link on our Facebook page & will give them a push. Tony Seddon from Starless River was there to assist/sell goodies so I'll ask him to maybe try to sell some as well.

I've come to realise that with some imagination & creativity the garage/shed is actually a phenomenal resource for rope training as we managed to set up tyroleans, tensioned abseils, ceiling aid routes, pendulum/counter balance rescue drills and all sorts of weird & wonderful obstacles that have probably never been considered before so I think that Steve would have been chuffed. We cooked breakfasts for thirty five or whatever the final number was, we had loads of tents set up all over the place, and had enough space in the main room for presentations without feeling crowded. Miss Grace's Lane was the ideal cave to run a technical SRT rescue practice & everyone was still happy even though we didn't get to surface until 7pm on Sunday evening (it was about 22.30 or later when I finally headed back home).

I've been running these events on & off for the last twenty years all over South Wales & the Mendips but I can honestly say that the GCRG depot is without doubt the best place we've ever used & you should all be very proud that you have such a great set up. This will be my twentieth year of organising the Dachstein expedition & on the assumption that we formalise the connection to the Hirlatz Hole (making our cave the 5th or 6th deepest in the world) I may decide to retire or keep going until it's the deepest (a genuine possibility). If I don't pack it all in then I'd like to book for next year if you'll have us back?!!

On that note I have a list of very keen, capable & (in some cases) experienced young cavers who should really get involved with cave rescue but not all teams are particularly welcoming. Some of these girls & boys are more local than others but if you want some fresh blood then I can send them your way if that's of interest?

Yours

Joel Corrigan"