

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE CAVE RESCUE GROUP

*Cave Rescue in the Forest of Dean, Wye Valley, Cotswolds and part of the Thames Valley*



Registered Charity No. 900316



The Depot, Littledean Hill, Cinderford, Glos, GL14 2TT, Tel: 01594 827999

## Newsletter

*Issue 17, September 2021*

### Editors note:

Last issue was June 2020, No. 16

*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. Thanks to all who provided articles/photos.*

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## 2021 DATES FOR THE DIARY

**2 October** .... S&MWCRT Training Event at Llangattock likely start time 09:30, location to be advised.

**17 October** .... Joint SARA/GCRG Training Exercise at Otter Hole Cave. Casualty evacuation From outside of the cave by boat across the River Wye. Aimed at the GCRG CasCare team. Meet time TBC but likely 09:30 in the lower Wynd Cliff car park.

**31 October** .... MCRO training event. Location to be advised.

**21 November** .... Combined GCRG, SECRO, MCRO training event at Emmer Green chalk mine, Reading. Start time of 09:30. The venue (scout hut) is booked for the weekend & it is planned to have a meal/social on the day (Saturday) before.

**25 November** .... Coal mines exercise, venue to be decided. Starting at 18:00.

## 2022 DATES FOR THE DIARY

**May** ... AGM (date to be decided)

**Summer** ... Auction at the depot

## GCRG COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<p><b>Chairman</b> <i>Paul W Taylor</i> <a href="mailto:chairman@gcrq.org.uk">chairman@gcrq.org.uk</a> 01452 505673 (H) 07803 539945 (M)</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b> <i>Pete Mason</i> <a href="mailto:secretary@gcrq.org.uk">secretary@gcrq.org.uk</a> 01179690389 (H) 07999492961 (M)</p>	<p><b>Treasurer</b> <i>Liz Maisey</i> <a href="mailto:treasurer@gcrq.org.uk">treasurer@gcrq.org.uk</a> 01666 504647 (H)</p>
<p><b>Communications Officer</b> <i>Craig Cameron</i> <a href="mailto:comms@gcrq.org.uk">comms@gcrq.org.uk</a> 01594 834481 (H) 07802 890153 (M)</p>	<p><b>Information Officer</b> <i>Gareth Jones</i> <a href="mailto:info@gcrq.org.uk">info@gcrq.org.uk</a> 01452 532014 (H) 07982 455650 (M)</p>	<p><b>Training Co-Ordinator</b> <i>Ian Healey</i> <a href="mailto:training@gcrq.org.uk">training@gcrq.org.uk</a> 01594 811187 (H) 01594 562444 (W)</p>
<p><b>Equipment Officer [Medical]</b> <i>Nicky Bayley</i> <a href="mailto:equipment@gcrq.org.uk">equipment@gcrq.org.uk</a> 07790 664278 (M)</p>	<p><b>Equipment Officer [non-Medical]</b> <i>Alex Carrington-Moule</i> <a href="mailto:nomarch@yahoo.co.uk">nomarch@yahoo.co.uk</a> 01453 298650 (H) 07973 142320 (M)</p>	<p><b>Ordinary Member</b> <i>[Newsletter Editor]</i> <i>Jon Maisey</i> <a href="mailto:jon.maisey@outlook.com">jon.maisey@outlook.com</a> 01666 504647 (H)</p>
	<p><b>Ordinary Member</b> <i>[Driver Records and Assistant Training Co-Ordinator]</i> <i>Kev Brockway</i> <a href="mailto:ozonekev@btinternet.com">ozonekev@btinternet.com</a> 01453 511100 (H) 07970 033345 (M)</p>	

## SARCALL INFORMATION

### 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.

### Useful Numbers

GCRG Depot	01594 827999	
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
Ladi Broadman	01594 832023	
David Hardwick	07780 676341	01454 299035
Colin Vickery	07548-240124	01684-293202
Martin Holloway	07918 900334	01666 504415
Greg Jones	07974 008519	01989 218763

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.

Peter Turier	07462 181899	01452 539199
Paul Taylor	07803 539945	01452 505673
Other contacts	Mobile	Home
Dave Tuffley [Forest Mines]	07799617934	01594 824343
Jon Maisey [Cotswold stone mines]	07922 267052	01666 504647

(Version 7. Jun 2020)

Changes to your details? Email [info@gcr.org.uk](mailto:info@gcr.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.

## CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

I hope you are all well and are slowly getting back into the caving mode. It's been a long time.

Welcome to the latest excellent GCRG Newsletter and thanks go to Jonathan Maisey for all of his work to collect the contents, process it all and produce the end results plus also all of those who have responded to his requests. The newsletters don't write themselves so if you have anything Cave Rescue related then please get those typing fingers out and get it sent off to Jon. I know he will be more than pleased to receive it.

Sunday September 12th 2021 was a very significant day for the GCRG as it was our first underground face-to-face training session since March 2020 at Cowshill Cave. How great it was to see so many people and to actually get underground and undertake some tasks. Thanks to Ian and the team who went into Old Bow a few days previously and put out all of the cards for the teams to search for. The severed hand was not quite what people were expecting! With the majority of the cards located the two teams had their respective casualties to deal with. Two heart attacks on the same caving trip. Note to self, don't cave with either of those two again bit of a liability!

New equipment was tested in the form of the BCRC heated jacket and Casualty Bag. Good feedback was gained which we can pass onto the team producing the items. Cave link performed very well even with extremely poor antenna checks underground but also showed that the application of a small amount of water made a big difference.

Yes we were a little bit rusty but it was great to see that "Team Effort" back in action again.

Well done to everyone. (A full report for the next newsletter)

Thanks to Jonathan Wright for allowing us to make use of the Old Bow mine.

SARCALL worked well and thanks to everyone who responded. There are still a few of you out there who we are not hearing from so look out for an email. You may have decided that you no longer wish to be on the Call Out List. That's fine but if it is the case then it's good to pass that information on so you can be dropped from the list.

Look out also for a new GCRG Membership form. Re-vamping of the form is long overdue so everyone will be receiving a form to fill in so we can have all of the latest and updated information.

There are plenty of activities in the diary for people to take part in and plans are also underway for another round of evening sessions at the GCRG depot. These proved popular before and is something that we need to build on. Nicky Bayley is running a series of "First Aid" related sessions in conjunction with SARA so look out for these if you have an interest in or are already an Advanced First Aider. Also plans are underway for some sessions on stretcher loading and handling.

In addition to this if there is something that you particularly would like to practice or learn about then please let the committee know.

A recent request to support the S&MWCRT for an incident in OFD fortunately only resulted in GCRG being placed on Standby and the two injured casualties being "Walking Wounded" highlights that accidents can happen and as we progress forward with greater levels of caving both in our own area and surrounding caving areas we need to be able to respond to any request. Skill levels have faded but now we are moving forward again.

I hope we will see you at the Training Sessions.

The BCRC Medical Weekend that the GCRG Hosted on behalf of the BCRC was without a doubt an excellent event and one that certainly continued the tradition of great events within the Forest of Dean that we have seen over the years. A full report for the next newsletter. My thanks go out to everyone from GCRG who helped with this event and also everyone who came up to the GCRG Depot the weekend before and gave the place a good spring clean both inside and out.

There is always work to be done at the Depot so please look out for further working Sessions

Paul Taylor

*Chairman GCRG*

## **CAVE RESCUE CALLOUTS (since June 2020)**

11 October 2020

### **Noxon Park iron mine**

At approx. 18:00, GCRG members were placed on a full callout (and told to assemble at the depot) for a group of cavers who'd been caving in Noxon Park and were subsequently reported overdue. Approx 15 mins or so after the first SARCALL the GCRG members were stood down when the group, who'd safely exited the mine, phoned their 'contact' to state they were out and all ok.

This was GCRG's first callout for 15 months and it generated an excellent response from the members.

From the originator of the call (who sent details to the GCRG Chairman) ... *"I reckon that if I was a family member or non caver, I would have found the police response very reassuring. Being a caver and involved in cave rescue, it was a bit worrying to wonder if they'd actually followed procedure.*

*Thank you so much, to you and the team. We really appreciate it. I hope some of my waffle might be of some use."*

### **From the GCRG Chairman**

*I would first like to say a massive thanks to everyone who responded via SARCALL and by phone to either attend, act in a support role or indicate that they would not be able to attend this incident.*

*Considering this is the first Full Team Call Out that we have had for almost 15 months and within that period of time we have also had to deal with the Covid-19 Pandemic the level of response to the initial SARCALL message was excellent. In excess of 30 + available to attend and again SARCALL worked perfectly when within a short time period we were able to issue a Stand Down and only three people actually turned up at the GCRG depot. Two of which live very close so were on their way and arrived before the second message had been sent.*

*I reiterate my thanks to everyone.*

*Best Regards*

*Paul W Taylor*

4 September 2021

### **OFD**

At 19:09 GCRG was put on standby to assist SMWCRT with a rescue from OFD, Pendulum Passage. At 19:40 GCRG was stood down as the casualty was a 'walking wounded'.

## **LAND SEARCH SUPPORT TO SARA/GFRS/POLICE (since June 2020)**

A number of GCRG members have volunteered to also be available for surface land searches, supporting SARA (Severn Area Rescue Association), GFRS (Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service) and Gloucestershire Police in their searches for missing people. Since the last newsletter (June 2020), GCRG has supported the following surface callouts.

22 August 2020, missing person, Cirencester

12 September 2020, missing person, Cirencester area

22 October 2020, missing person, Stroud

23 November 2020, missing person, Cirencester

29 December 2020, missing person, Nailsworth

13 February 2021, missing person, Stroud

23 February 2021, missing person, Churchdown (Gloucester), missing person

27 February 2021, missing person, Forest of Dean, missing person

19 March 2021, Hartpury, missing person  
5 April 2021, Long Newnton (Tetbury), missing person  
16 April 2021, Bishops Cleeve (Cheltenham), missing person  
29 April 2021, Over (Gloucester), missing person  
31 May 2021, May Hill area, missing person  
8 July 2021, Forest of Dean, missing person  
30 July 2021, Tidenham (Forest of Dean), missing person  
17 Aug 2021, Dursley, missing person  
24 Aug 2021, Nibley, missing person

## **REPORTS OF LANDSEARCH CALLOUTS (since June 2020)**

Saturday 22nd August 2020

### **Area of search .... Cirencester**

*Details provided by Kev Brockway*

At 05:04 on Saturday 22nd August we were woken by the phone ringing. SARA (Severn Area Rescue Association) asked for the assistance of GCRG Land Search team to search for a vulnerable missing person in Cirencester. 5 or so minutes after arriving the police took a call informing them the misper had returned home. Once 2 Advanced First Aiders had attended the house and assessed the casualty we were all stood down. Those attending, Rachel Brown, Kev Brockway, Paul Taylor, Martin Holloway. On Stand by Emma Porter and Mike Clayton.

Saturday 12th September 2020

### **Area of search .... Quenington, near Cirencester**

*Details provided by Kev Brockway*

Land search called out at 17:45 to assist SARA in a land search for a high risk missing person. RV was Quenington near Cirencester. The team searched until 01:00 the following day and were stood down to resume the following morning. The following morning the team was contacted to be told the Misper had been found safe and well. GCRG personnel attending Kev Brockway, Rachel Brown, Dave Appleing and Colin Vickery. Paul Taylor followed on Sarcall.

Thursday 22nd October 2020

### **Area of search .... Stroud**

*Details provided by Kev Brockway*

Land Search call out at 17:18 to assist SARA with a search for a high risk missing person in Stroud. Team was stood down 10 - 15 minutes later as Misper was found safe and well. Nearly had at least 3 less for the GCRG AGM (held later that evening) as Martin Holloway, Rachel Brown and Kevin Brockway were on route.

Monday 23rd November 2020

### **Area of search .... Cirencester**

The Land Search team was called out early this morning to search for a missing male from Cirencester. 4 attended, Martin Holloway, Colin Vickery, Paul Taylor and Rachel Brown with Kev Brockway, Emma Porter, Mike Clayton available in the evening.

The male was found at approximately 15:00 hours and the team stood down soon after following the man being given the necessary help from the police.

*Details provided by Kev Brockway*

Tuesday 29 December 2020

#### **Area of search .... Nailsworth**

GCRG Wardens (Dave Hardwick/Dave Appleing) were approached by GFRS for assistance in locating a missing individual and potentially linked to smoke seen coming from one of the Nailsworth mines at the W. GFRS wanted GCRG help if it was necessary for an underground search. GFRS later reported that the individual had been located in Nailsworth and cave rescue help was no longer required.

*Details provided by Kev Brockway & Dave Appleing*

Saturday 13 February 2021

#### **Area of search .... Stroud**

At 03:05 on Saturday SARA requested assistance from the Land Search team of GCRG to search for a missing person in the Stroud Area of Gloucestershire. The GCRG team were deployed at lunchtime to carry out searches in a number of places in and around Stroud. Following nothing having been found and further intelligence having been received and followed up by the police we were stood down at about 18:00 hours for the night to recommence searching at 09:00 the following day the 14th February.

The team was stood down at 08:26 before deployment as the police had found the missing person. A great result.

GCRG members involved were: Colin Vickery, Rachel Brown, Emma Porter, Mike Clayton, Martin Holloway, Jo Clarke, Kev Brockway. Plus Graham Smith and Josh Rowson from MCRO.

*Details provided by Kev Brockway*

Thursday 8 July 2021

#### **Area of search .... Forest of Dean**

At 18:31 SARA requested assistance from GCRG for the search of a missing person in the Forest of Dean. Paul Taylor, Colin Vickery and Martin Holloway all responded that they'd be able to help but the search was then stood down by 19:15.

*Details provided by Gareth Jones*

Friday 30 July 2021

#### **Area of search .... Tidenham**

*At 09:36 SARA requested GCRG assistance for a missing person near Tidenham. 10:32, 3 GRG members report available from PM onwards; 17:56 team stood down for the night & later in the evening the team was stood down completely. On 1 Aug the police suspended the search, pending an investigation.*

*Details provided by Gareth Jones*

Tuesday 17 August 2021

#### **Area of search .... Dursley**

03:00 Call out to assist SARA with search for missing person. Dursley Gloucestershire. RV 0400 hours at Dursley Police Station. 11:33, team stood down as the missing person was found by a member of the public.

Tuesday 24 August 2021

### Area of search .... Nibley

At 08:58 SARA requested assistance for a missing person search in Nibley. At 14:12 the GCRG personnel were stood down. Martin Holloway responded and attended; Colin Vickery, Rachel Brown and Kev Brockway responded as available in the afternoon but were not required.

*Details provided by Kev Brockway and Gareth Jones*

## **TRAINING SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER (June 2020)**

*Since the last newsletter, GCRG personnel have been involved in the following training events. Reports for some/all of these events can be found further on within this newsletter.*

*14th March 2021 (held online)*

*13th June 2021 .... Held at the Dean Field Studies Centre, Parkend*

## **REPORTS OF TRAINING EVENTS SINCE JUNE 2020**

*14th March 2021*

*Held online due to Covid-19 restrictions*

The online session consisted of a number of pre-planned & recorded presentations on the following subjects:

1. Little Dragon (presented by Gareth Jones)
2. Stretchers (presented by Nicky Bayley)
3. Slishman Splint (presented by Nicky Bayley)
4. Jag Bridle System (presented by Ian Healey and John Holden)
5. Z Rig (presented by Ian Healey & John Holden)
6. Keeping the casualty warm (presented by Gareth Jones)
7. Rescuender (presented by Mike Clayton)



### **LITTLE DRAGON**

*Gareth Jones*



### STRETCHERS

Nicky Bayley



Full video available at ... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pQH61KR6xA>

### JAG BRIDLE SYSTEM

Ian Healey & John Holden



Full video available at ... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCQLYScQiuQ&t=28s>

### SLISHMAN TRACTION SPLINT

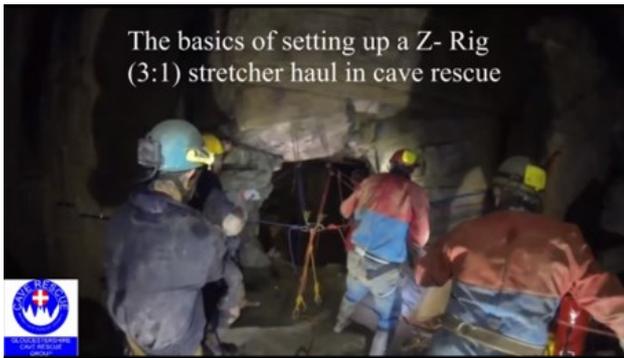
Nicky Bayley



Full video available at .... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPa6lqI8Y-s>

**Z—RIG FOR CAVE RESCUE**

*Ian Healey & John Holden*



Full video available at ... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2d433fsMcCU>

**KEEPING THE CASUALTY WARM**

*Gareth Jones*

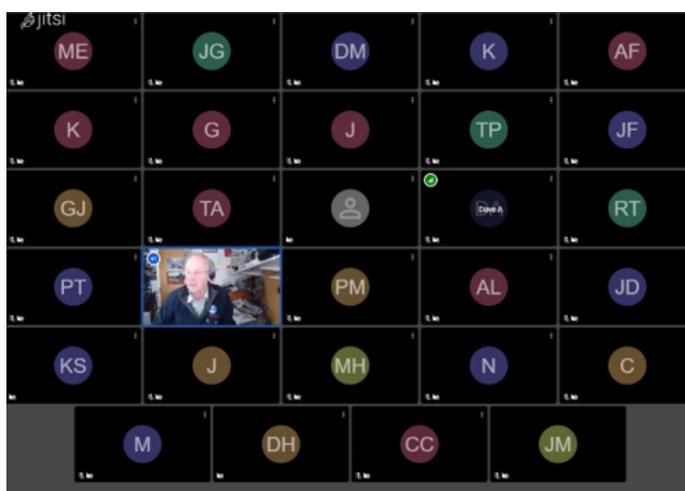


Full video available at ..... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kgrdq8eQxgg>

In addition to the GCRG produced videos there was also a presentation by Mike Clayton & Emma Porter on the use of the Petzl Rescucender.



This was the first time that the group had attempted an online training session like this. It proved very well that it is a valuable and relevant method of training if a physical gathering of group members is not possible.



A well attended online training session and the videos are available from GCRG's own YouTube channel at the link below.



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbb3v4lcSbxSLyUF5FqlqWA>

### **Training day at the Dean Field Studies Centre**

13th June 2021

*To quote Ian Healey who organised this event ... "Our first live training day after 15 mths of Covid interruption. Thank you to all attending - we practiced a variety of techniques we hadn't done for a long time as well as getting introduced to new equipment (new stretcher, Maestro and Jag stretcher bridle)."*

Thanks also to all those who volunteered (Ian Healey, Jennie Lawrence, Kev Brockway and Martin Holloway) to help run the event and provide training/demonstrations, including stretcher loading/handling and also the use of the Little Dragon.

*A 1 minute montage of the day's events has been put together by Ian Healey and is available from the link below ...*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyYzp6ZMJfA>

## DEPOT NEWS

### **Break-in and new barrier at the GCRG Depot.**

On the 20th of June 2021 the depot grounds were broken into, but luckily (this time) neither the actual building nor the garages were touched. It is thought those responsible were probably after one or more of the caravans. This was subsequently reported to the police.

Thanks go to Daniel Howell our Deputy Gaveler by responding so quickly to the request for assistance with the provision of the new barrier at the GCRG depot. A phone call on the Monday morning after the incident at the depot resulted in the barrier being installed on the Tuesday morning. The whole thing took no more than 3 hours and shows that with the right tools and equipment what can be done. To be honest we would have struggled to have even got our tools sorted let alone dig out a hole around 1.5m deep in that time. Many thanks to all.

Thanks also to Pete Turier, Jo Clarke and Gareth Jones who dealt with the aftermath on the incident on the Sunday. We could do without it.

Hopefully the new barrier will act as a further deterrent.

Yes it's a bit of a fiddle but if you have used a Forestry barrier to go to a cave or mine site then it's exactly the same.

If you visit the depot please ensure that the green barrier is back in its locator during your visit and that the original 5 bar gate is kept closed. It does not need to be locked but does just provide that initial barrier for any unwanted visitors.



Paul Taylor

*GCRG Chairman*

## SWERA, WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS GCRG A MEMBER?

*The following article was written by Paul Taylor for the Mountain Rescue magazine and is reproduced here.*

SWERA is the **South West England Rescue Association**, and (per its Constitution) exists: *"To establish, maintain and co-ordinate an efficient voluntary mountain, moorland, water, cave and lowland rescue liaison organisation in South West England"*.

It was established in 1978 by the late Fred Barlow MBE but is probably the least well known of the regional rescue associations. During the 1980s it was the equivalent of the current (Local Resilience Forums or 'LRF's) with membership including Fire, Police and Ambulance and was chaired by a representative of one of these services.

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Over time there have been a series of developments which have presented challenges to SWERA. Not least, several years ago it was agreed by MREW that the original region would be divided into two, with the teams that now form the Peninsula (PENMACRA) region separating. This was driven largely by the wide spread of the region and the related administrative challenges.

In recent years there have been some areas where teams within the region join together on an ongoing basis to enhance training opportunities, for example in respect of Casualty Care and Outdoor First Aid training programmes and both operational and equipment inspection training for technical rescue. In 2017 the Association ran a very successful Princes Charity Day in the Forest of Dean, which perhaps raised the bar for these events quite significantly. Nevertheless it was recognised by the member teams and by MREW that SWERA was not delivering as a Regional Association to the extent that would be expected.

Since the AGM of April 2019, several meetings have taken place and a great deal of significant work undertaken to overcome issues and to re-invigorate the region. Through a series of online General Meetings in 2020, a new Executive Committee has been voted in, with the aim of leading SWERA forwards through renewed focus, greater collaboration and improved mutual support. A new logo and social media presence have been created to underpin this 're-launch'.

Reflecting its constitution and the geographic area, the SWERA Region is unlike other MR regions in comprises a balance of teams from Cave Rescue, Mountain Rescue (with particular focus upon technical rope rescue) and Lowland Search and Rescue. This represents most of the voluntary search and rescue activity within the area, and allows for the regional association to ensure discipline specific and relevant peer support to teams.

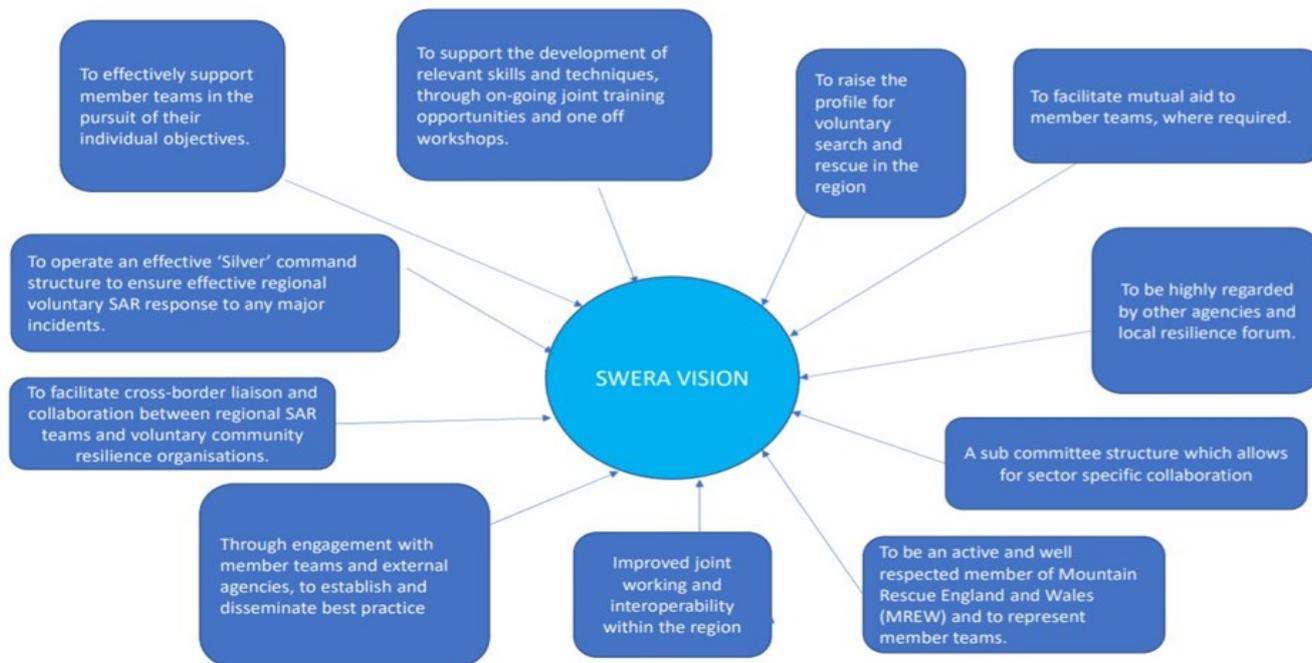
The membership currently comprises the following teams:

- Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group (GCRG)
- Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA)
- Mendip Cave Rescue (MCR)
- Avon and Somerset Search and Rescue (ASSAR)
- Wiltshire Search and Rescue (WilsAR)
- Dorset Search and Rescue (DorSAR)
- South East Cave Rescue Organisation (SECRO)
- Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation (MCRO)

The region is a sum of its parts and includes two cave rescue teams (Midlands and South East) who did not hitherto have regional representation – SWERA was the 'natural' region for them to belong as their operational areas abutted our boundaries, they already had mutual training and operational links with some of the other SWERA teams. They bring new ideas and a wealth of experience to the table and further increase the effectiveness of the Association – South West England is already a large area and so even without Covid ours would be largely a virtual table, so geographic spread is no issue!

The management structure of SWERA includes members of most teams within the Specialist Officers. It also includes an MR 'sub committee' of SWERA comprising just the MR teams (as there is one for Cave and one for Lowland), where specific matters that relate solely to their national bodies or specific disciplines can be discussed in an appropriate forum.

A new Vision for the Region has been developed, and is summarized in the following diagram (see next page).



As mentioned there are several teams that already train and operate together; however there remains opportunity for the region to wider coordinate these sessions to the advantage of all member teams Two joint training events (Covid-permitting!) have already been planned for 2021 with the plan that this will be annual events for the future. Developing a shared training calendar with open invitations for regional teams to collaborate for relevant training opportunities will enhance the effectiveness of all teams.

A new Silver command cell will be facilitated by the region involving appropriate persons from each member team; agreements made between these members about the operational details of the cell and the potential for training / table-top exercises test and ensure resilience.

Lastly and probably most importantly we plan develop the arrangements and shared understanding of respective capabilities for teams to provide mutual and coordinated assistance to each other on callouts, particularly the larger and more prolonged missing person searches. This already happens to a limited extent and works very well, but this can developed further for the benefit of both our casualties and our members. Watch this space..

*Paul Taylor*

*GCRG Chairman*

## **FUNDRAISING**

### **Equipment Auction—Summer 2022**

You will all I am sure recall the very successful auction that we held in 2015 to dispose of the equipment that was given to GCRG from the late Steve Tomalin. Where have the last 7 years gone.? For some time during that period I had thought that it would be nice to hold a similar event and plans were being drawn up for 2020. However, we all know what happened and of course this rolled on into 2021. Although we have seen a vast improvement in our ability to get out and about, this is an event that needs to be in the warmer summer months so we can make it a social event like the previous one. So 2022 it is to be. We don't have a specific date yet but keep your eye out.

However, in the meantime can you start having a look through your garages, sheds and store rooms for any items of equipment that you are not using but that could be passed onto others to make use of and in the process make some money for GCRG. Primarily in the OUTDOOR activity field of things but we can also look at other items of general interest. Please let the committee know and we can then see if the items are suitable and arrange for collection or delivery. More details to follow.

## 25 YEAR SERVICE AWARD

At the AGM in May, the outgoing Secretary, Pete Turier, was presented with a framed certificate to recognise his 25 years in GCRG. Pete had taken on the Secretary role in 2000 and so had done 21 years in post ... not a bad record! A copy of the photo here is now held at the depot.



Photo Credit: Paul Taylor

## GCRG ON FACEBOOK



GCRG has its own presence on FB (see the link below)

<https://www.facebook.com/Gloucestershire-Cave-Rescue-Group-1828966887343731/>



Here you will find regular updates regarding the activities of the group and its members (including GCRG's support to local land search operations).

## GCRG SHOP



GCRG currently has enamel badges and buffs/neck tubes for sale.

The badges are available at £3 each (plus postage, if necessary) and the 'buffs', available in black or red at £10 each (plus postage, if necessary).

Any of these are available at any GCRG event or can be posted out as well (subject to postage costs).

Contact the Chairman or Secretary for further details.

Nicky may still have some mugs for sale, if interested please contact Nicky Bayley.

Neck warmer/tube, available in black or red and available at £10 each with the GCRG logo .



Other GCRG-branded clothing may also be available, contact the Chairman or Secretary for further details.

