

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 !!!



August 2002

Welcome to the second edition of "The Stretcher", when the first edition came out many months ago, I said at that stage that it would only be produced when there was some news worthy items, so let me update you all with the news of DCRO.

REACT NOW

Well the name of this newssheet is the most important news – we are now the proud holders of a "REACT" stretcher. I say that we are the holders of this stretcher because we don't actually own it, the history of this saga, is that following the last rescue back in late February, Lee Woodward (Secretary) made contact with West Country Ambulance Service (WAS) and finally after much trying, Lee got hold of Ken Wenman the No.2 of WAS and asked them for their help, the answer came back and approximately 5 weeks ago we collected from Dragon Caving the stretcher we have been aiming for, for a very long time. I am very pleased to be able to put in print a very big **THANK YOU** to Lee, without his efforts we would still be using the old and very worn out Neil Robs. I hope we can all take the lead from Lee and find out from the Equipment Officer (Geoff Dommett – 07775 988993) what else is required and then get on the phone and start the hunt for free kit. It's out there we just need to go and ask for it.



The React (photo left), for those who have not yet seen it is a plastic outer shell that wraps both width ways and length ways around the casualty and can be hauled both vertically and horizontally, it comes with an excellent spinal splint, and all packs away into a large tackle bag,

With double shoulder straps and carry handles and haul loops. It's an excellent piece of kit and again **MANY THANKS** to Lee for organising it.

Whilst we discuss the Stretcher it's worth noting that the only way for you the team members of DCRO to become familiar with it and know what it does and how it does it, is to come to the training evenings and rescue practices.

One of the aims of DCRO when it changed its direction and became a more professional organisation was to have two of these stretchers, and the news is, the second react is now on order and should be with us in a few weeks time. The funding for this second stretcher is well underway and many of you are aware how this is being organised, and a few and growing number are helping with this. More about this below.



Keith Pearson, Chairman, accepting the new "React" Stretcher from Terry Towler, Area Station Officer for West Country Ambulance.



Terry Towler becoming the first "Casualty" in the new "React" Stretcher. (Spinal Splint not in use)

MONEY MONEY MONEY

How to raise all the funds that we would need, was the question being asked by many team members, when all said and done we only need to raise £1200.00 + for two stretchers, £300.00+ for rope and tackle bags plus more and more. Luckily the art group of the caving world came to Devon to do some sketching and this gave the opportunity of meeting the new owner; Nick Powe of Kent's Cavern Show Cave in Torquay. Nick was approached and asked if it be possible for DCRO to stage a demonstration and presentation of DCRO and Cave Rescue every Sunday, inside the Show Cave. The great News is that Nick said YES, so we now find ourselves in Kent's Cavern throughout the summer months. The fund raising is going very well, especially when up to now the last four Sunday's have all been very hot and sunny and therefore the cave hasn't been packed, on



Setting up for another day's fund raising in Kent's Cavern, Torquay.

average each Sunday has only seen 150 people through the cave whilst we have been in attendance, even so the result has been great and on average we are earning 50p per tourist passing through the cave. If you haven't been and given your time to assist in the fund raising, then please come down to Kent's as many Sundays as possible and rattle a bucket. Please don't leave the fund raising to the same old few, there every weekend, you're a DCRO team member, so please come and be part of the team. If you can't help on Sundays, then you can still make a contribution by putting your hand in your pocket and making a donation, send all cheques to Jon Whiteley, address at bottom of last page.

The facts and figures of the fund raising up to publication date are as follows

7th July 02 - £90.00

14th July 02 - £60.00

21st July 02 - £92.00

28th July 02 - £84.00

4th Aug 02 - £227.00

This makes a total of **£553.00** so far, please come and help us double and double it again.



TRAINING

The training nights over the last 12 months have gone very well and have been well attended, thanks to everyone who has supported, I hope that you have found them useful, interesting, informative and lastly enjoyable.

Thanks to those people who have organised a session, some of the subject areas that we have covered are VHF radios and voice procedures, Heyphone setting up, a simulated rescue – controllers exercise, Bolting, a basic first aid night, Rigging and drinking coffee and eating cakes. The training nights will continue throughout the rest of this year and into next, please let Simon Mullins (Training Officer) or Alan Brady who assists him know if there is something special you would like for an evening. Thanks to Simon and Alan for all their training inputs and support. The team have made some big advances in knowledge and commitment, well done and thanks to all who have supported the training nights.

The next training night will be on the Wednesday 14th August, hopefully you are reading this just in time to come to the DSS Hut, Crest Hill, Buckfastleigh, to find out how the new react stretcher works and to try using it, See you there.

We also had a half day training / rescue practice at Bakers Pit, thanks to all those who attended, it was a useful afternoon looking at hauling from Bakers, the “P” hangers, mid way up the shafts and at the top of the shafts have made the job very easy, Many thanks to Andy Stewart for installing them.

CALL OUT LIST

You may have received with this newssheet an updated “DRAFT” Call-Out list. Please check your details and ensure that they are correct, any mistakes or omissions should be notified to Jon Whiteley by the 1st September.

You will notice that the Call-Out list now only shows 3 main areas, “**1st Call**”, “**2nd Call**” and “**Supporters**”. You have been allocated to one of the three lists; this allocation has been based upon one or more of the following criteria;

1. Being known as an active caver.
2. Having attended DCRO Training Nights
3. Having attended DCRO Rescue Practices
4. Personal expression of commitment (if applicable)

If you feel that you have allocated to the wrong list, please make contact with Jon Whiteley (01626 859005 or 07748 762580) and discuss.

For future rescues, the DCRO Committee feel that it is important that team members have knowledge and experience of techniques and equipment. Those individuals who are on the “1st Call” list are those who have demonstrated all of the above criteria and will be called first, when we are requested to attend by the Police. Those who are on the “2nd Call” list are those who have for a number of reasons only been able to meet some of the criteria, and those who are on the “Supporters” list are those who may be able to provide skills or support but do not necessarily cave regularly or attend training events.



If you know someone who is an active caver and would fit to either “1st Call” or “2nd Call” lists or know someone who may be able to support DCRO if and when a “Call-Out” occurs (even if it’s only to make coffee and bacon butties) then please ensure they are introduced to members of DCRO as soon as possible. The complete and full Call-Out list will be distributed at the beginning of September.

Equipment

The amount of equipment that we now currently own is growing and apart from the recent acquisition of the React Stretcher from West Country Ambulance Service. We also received from Devon & Cornwall Police six VHF radios, (as per picture right) these radios are on the same frequency as the Dartmoor Rescue Group (DRG), in fact Alec Collyer who is on our call list but also DRG’s did all the organising and the programming. Many thanks Alec for sorting all these out and also for running a Radio training session. The radio’s all have three batteries each and an extension microphone, plus we have a magnetic aerial for vehicle mounting. They are programmed with “MR ch1” and “MR ch3”, these are the Mountain Rescue/Cave Rescue frequencies, and the controllers radio also has access to DRG’s repeaters, “DART RP” and “OKE RP” if we find ourselves on a shout with DRG then all teams can communicate with individual controls and by using the repeaters we can cover the whole of Dartmoor and much of Devon. We also have the ability of using Dartmoor National Parks (DNP) repeater “PONY RP” this gives us access to talking direct with DNP wardens and their headquarters at Bovey Tracey.



Contact has recently been made with both the Devon Air Ambulance and the Devon & Cornwall Police Helicopter. We could find that either helicopter may arrive at a Cave Rescue incident, either requested by ourselves or by Ambulance personnel, if this is the case then contact prior to arrival can be made, the Police helicopter can be contacted on the MR ch1 frequency and the Air Ambulance on MR Ch3 frequency. Both have requested that apart from casualty condition, one of the most important pieces of information they require is an accurate Grid Reference (6 figure), the landing site would need to be either level or of a very shallow angle, ensure that there are no overhead power or telephone lines.



They “Heyphones” are proving to be very reliable and are superseding a number of peoples scepticism, they have been tested in a variety of locations and with practice seem very easy to set up, the importance of ensuring a really good earth connection is critical, on a recent visit to Reeds Cave, Buckfastleigh, it proved very difficult to find either 6” deep mud to push the pegs into or enough water to lay the braids into. Communications were established and proved satisfactory but at times speech was broken, I’m sure that with a little scrabbling about, soft deep mud could be found.

Thanks must go to the group known as “CREG” Cave Radio Electronics Group, they have been working on the design of these radios for a few years, and seem to





have come up with a solid robust working design. CREG are continuing to work on the design and will assist Cave Rescue teams with the maintenance of the sets and with future developments, they are currently working on a talk through set, which would allow an underground cave rescue team to talk direct with the control post, even if the control post is miles away, the way this will work is to connect an add on box between a surface Heyphone and a VHF radio, all this would fit in a self contained box, I'm sure this really appeals to many CRO controllers, as it would allow a controller to stay in a nice warm and cosy caving hut or local pub, in fact you could run a whole rescue from the warmth and comfort of your bed....

The second "React" Stretcher has been ordered, this will be funded from the fund raising activity at Kent's Cavern, and very soon we are aiming to purchase three 100m lengths of rope, each length will be coloured differently, to facilitate ease of controlling hauls, tackle bags will also be purchased for these ropes. Also on the shopping list are three large Petzl pulleys, these are specially designed to take high loads. I can assure you that the shopping list will continue to grow, if any body can help with providing either funding or equipment, please talk to the Equipment Officer, Geoff Dommett.

A growing issue for the committee is the safe and secure storage of all this expensive equipment, I can assure you all that a number of storage possibilities are being looked at, but if anyone has any great ideas, please let Jon Whiteley know, you may have the answer we are searching for. The value of all the equipment that we currently own or have on order or just about to purchase, is excess of £3,600.00, this doesn't include any equipment that we have owned for a number of years.

WWW

Those of you who have access to the World Wide Web might find it interesting to look and download two documents that relate directly to Cave Rescue. The first of these is a complete guide to the design, construction and use of the "Heyphone"; this is a very comprehensive document, with circuit diagrams, parts lists and all information necessary to reproduce these excellent items of equipment.

The second document is called "Life on a Line" by Dr Dave Merchant a member of a CRO team, this is basically a book that very clearly explains all facts and figures and especially techniques involved in Rigging for Rescue, the first two sections of this three section document are currently available and the third section should be in the public domain later this year.

Both documents are in PDF format and can be printed out, for reading at leisure. The web addresses are:

Heyphone: <http://www.sat.dundee.ac.uk/~arb/heyphone>

Life on a Line: <http://www.draftlight.net/lifeonline>

Both these web site are worth looking at, as is the DCRO web site, which is undergoing an update, please keep your browser pointing in its direction so you keep yourself informed about what's happening.

Thanks

The time has come to say thank you to a few members of the team, who have been giving up hours of their time over the last few Sundays at Kent's Cavern, Torquay. We are doing really



well, as you see from an earlier article. Lets hope we can keep collecting for the next five weeks and collect even more money.

Again many many thanks to those listed below, I hope I have not missed anybody out and the names are not in any particular order.

Keith Pearson, Lee Woodward, Kim Hodgess, Geoff Dommett, Steven Dommett, Ted Colley and Carol, Chris Kelland, Colin Smith and Red and Ryan, Rupert Goddard, Rob Gittins, Dave Millin, James Millin, Christine Millin, Bill Tolfree.

T-SHIRTS are now available and must be ordered on the form enclosed and returned with a cheque to Jon Whiteley (address below). Every purchase of a T-Shirt will include a £1.00 donation to DCRO funds. Don't miss this opportunity to get this trendy item of après caving attire.

DCRO OFFICERS

Below is a list of Officers if you need to make contact.

Chairman: Keith Pearson

Controller: Jon Whiteley

Secretary: Lee Woodward

Treasurer: Keith Pearson

Training: Simon Mullins

Equipment: Geoff Dommett

Thanks for your continued support, see you at a training night, rescue practice or at Kent's Cavern real soon.

Jon.

Please remember that if your unable to give your time on a Sunday to the fund raising activity at Kent's Cavern. You can always support the cause by picking up your cheque book and filling it out and sending a cheque to either Jon Whiteley or Keith Pearson.