

Report on BBMC Mountain Rescue - 13 January 2024

The Boys' Brigade Mountaineering Club arranged a meet at the [University of London Mountaineering Club's Caseg Fraith](#) hut on 12-14 January 2024 to help two members, currently training for their Mountain Leader Awards to practice their skills, including winter techniques, with an experienced Mountain Leader from the Club. A group of 5 went out on the [Carneddau](#) mountains on Saturday 13 January. The other two members of the group were the Hut Warden (who is also a BBMC member) and the wife of one of the trainees, who is a ship's doctor on a Royal Navy destroyer (currently in the Red Sea), but who had come home to sit an exam.

The temperature on the Carneddau was sub-zero and visibility was often poor. We climbed [Pen yr Ole Wen](#) via the ridge to the south of Cwm Lloer and then [Carnedd Dafydd](#) where we stopped for lunch. Here we decided whether to go on to [Carnedd Llewelyn](#) (the third highest peak in Britain outside Scotland, at 1,064 m / 3,491 ft). As it was only 1.00 pm, we decided to go on, as there was plenty of time to get back in the light.

We were descending from Carnedd Llewelyn via the Craig yr Ysfa ridge when, 100m below the summit, we encountered a very steep patch of extremely slippery loose soft snow with many jagged rocks protruding through it. Several of us slipped and one of us started to slide but, fortunately he had his ice axe in his hand and was able to stop himself with an ice-axe arrest. One of the two girls immediately in front of us, without axes or crampons, slipped a longer distance and a jagged rock carved a long (15cm) deep gash on her upper thigh.

After she had recovered from shock, our doctor treated and bandaged her wound. Other members of the group gave her a hot drink and chatted to and reassured her. A very effective military bandage was applied over her ripped trousers, which also served to protect her modesty. We thought it safer to get her moving rather than risk her getting hypothermia waiting for the Mountain Rescue Team in sub-zero temperatures. A call had meanwhile been made to Mountain Rescue and they had agreed that this was the best course of action to take, if the casualty could walk, which she felt she could.

We led her most of the way down, cutting a few steps with an ice axe on the steeper slippery parts, and our Mountain Leader roped her up and protected her on the difficult scrambles. We met the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Team just above the Ffynon Llugwy reservoir, where they had parked their vehicle. After checking the casualty over, administering some antibiotics and filling in the necessary paperwork, the MRT thanked us and allowed us to continue our descent to the reservoir and then follow the road back to the Caseg Fraith Hut (they didn't have space in their vehicle to give us all a lift). They then helped the casualty to walk slowly down to the reservoir, driving past us on the reservoir road (it was completely dark by then) and checked that we were all safely down, thanking us once again.

We got back to the hut at 6.30pm and, after having some tea and showering, we went out for a meal at the [Yr Wyddfa Bar in Plas y Brenin](#) (the National Outdoor Centre in Capel Curig). We only arrived just in time to order a first course, but we were too late to be able to order a dessert!

It was an eventful (and long day), but we felt very happy to have assisted in a rescue. The casualty who was very brave to attempt the walk down, her friend and the MRT, who avoided a long walk up and a long walk down carrying a stretcher (which would have been required if the casualty had waited for them near the summit and got cold or hypothermic), were all very profuse with their thanks.

On reflection, we could clearly see God's providence in making sure, we were in the right place, at the right time with the right people and the right equipment:

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- One of our group has an Achilles' tendon problem which slightly slowed the group's walking speed. If he hadn't been in the group, then we would not have been in the right place at the right time.
- We could also have very easily decided not to continue to Carnedd Llewelyn after lunch and returned via the Craig Llugwy ridge or we could have reversed our route after Carnedd Llewelyn and returned by the easier Craig Llugwy ridge instead of the difficult Craig yr Ysfa ridge.
- It is very unusual for the BBMC to have a doctor in a walking group (probably never happened before)! So, it was providential that, on this occasion, we had a doctor in the group, and not just an ordinary doctor but one who was trained by the military to treat battle injuries!
- We sometimes, but by no means always, have a Mountain Leader in a walking group. So, it was providential that we had one on this occasion who is very skilled in rope work and navigation. He also knows these hills well as, up until recently, he was part of another walking group that walked in Eryri every Thursday.
- We had the right equipment (we would never go out on the hills in winter conditions without ice axes and crampons or micro spikes, bivy bags and group shelters), but we also had several first aid kits, including one with military issue bandages. We do not always carry a rope, but the Mountain Leader who was with us, always does.

You can read the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation's reports on their website and on Facebook (the casualty commented on their Facebook post with photos of her injury, thanking us yet again) and on [@CasegFraith's](#) X / Twitter post about the rescue at:

<https://ogwen-rescue.org.uk/incident-details/> under 13/01/24

https://www.facebook.com/OVMRO/posts/754722330017410?ref=embed_post

<https://twitter.com/CasegFraith/status/1746295172688752742?s=20>

and more information about all the Carneddau mountains (including how they got their names and other information about them) at:

<https://bbmc.boys-brigade.org.uk/welsh-3000s-list> or <https://bbmc.boys-brigade.org.uk/welsh-3000s-map>

Other photos from the day taken by various members of the group can be viewed on [Google Drive](#).

We believe that it was no coincidence that we were in the right place at the right time with the right people and the right equipment!