

Press Release

South Eastern Mountain Rescue complete 500 callouts since 1977

On Sunday 19th January 2020, at the end of a busy week South Eastern Mountain Rescue,(SEMRA) received their 500th callout since the team was founded in 1977.

There was always a tradition of hill walkers helping hill walkers but following a light air craft crash in the Galtees members of the local clubs got together to make it a formal arrangement. Since those early days of storing what little rescue equipment they had in someone's shed and being called out by knocking on doors in the absence of mobile phones, SEMRA has come a long way. They now have four team vehicles (three 4WD and 1 mobile base), a dedicated base building which is being extended to include a training room, a paging system for call outs and top of the range rescue equipment. However, the purpose and people of mountain rescue remain the same, hill walkers helping hill walkers.

SEMRA were busy over recent days. The team assisted Cahir Gardai to help search for a missing man in Toureen Woods at 1am on Friday Morning. The 500th callout came on Sunday when SEMRA were tasked to assist an injured walker from the Peaks Club in Clonmel who had been walking on the Galtee Mountains near Cahir. Members of the Peaks Club would had been involved in setting up Mountain Rescue in the south east back in 1977.

Over the years SEMRA has worked and trained with the Coast Guard helicopter Rescue 117 based in Waterford. The team have built up a strong working relationship and work very closely together. On Sunday, as often the case, SEMRA members assisted the winchman in treating the casualty and loading the casualty on the stretcher and then providing hi line assistance when the winchman and casualty are lifted to the helicopter. It is fitting therefore, that Rescue 117 were involved in our 500th callout lifting the casualty to University Hospital Waterford.

The service provided in responding to 500 call outs over the last 43 years would not be possible without the support of their families who let them go at all hours of the day and night. SEMRA are very appreciative of the support received from hill walking clubs, running clubs, local businesses and the general public. Without their support SEMRA could not provide a search and rescue service. SEMRA cover the mountains of the South East including the Blackstairs, Brandon Hill, Ballyhoura Mountains, Knockmealdowns, Comeragh Mountains, Slievenamon and the Galtee Mountains.

The team has 50 members who live in all areas of the south east. This enables them to provide a prompt response to all of the mountains in their area of operation. SEMRA are currently recruiting new members. New members are normally recruited every two years. On this occasion it has been a little longer as they have had relatively low turnover from their members who are very committed. If you are an experienced hill walker and would like to hear more about joining South Eastern Mountain Rescue please send an e-mail to semrapro@gmail.com

Anyone in need of assistance on the mountain should not hesitate to contact SEMRA by dialling 999 or 112 and ask for Mountain Rescue.

SEMRA very much appreciates the on-going support from the media and the public.