

Glenelg mountain rescuers mark 50 years

6 March 2023

Glenelg Mountain Rescue Team is celebrating its 50th anniversary of helping to save lives on the hills – remarkably with one of the original members still in the line-up.



The team gather to celebrate

Photograph: CAMERON MCMURDO

The team was set up in 1973 by the late Dr Catherine MacInnes, the then local GP and former wife of famous Scottish mountaineer Hamish MacInnes.

It has served the area unbroken since that time, with the all-volunteer group turning out any hour, any day and in any weather to help people in trouble on the mountains.

One of the members who helped form the fledgling team back in 1973 was local man Johnny Cameron who, now in his 70s, is still very active in the team today. At a special birthday event and AGM last week, Johnny was presented with a quiaich and a framed photograph of one of the first rescues carried out by the team.



Toasting 50 years of Glenelg MRT are, from left, leader Ronnie MacDonald, Johnny Cameron, who has been in the team since its inception, and former leader of 20 years Donnie MacDonald

Photograph: CAMERON MCMURDO

Glenelg MRT leader Ronnie MacDonald said: “When it first formed, in common with many other mountain rescue teams, it was mainly to help local people who worked on the hill such as keepers, ghillies and forestry workers. Of course, that has changed over the years with the mountains increasingly used for recreational purposes by climbers, walkers and tourists.

“We have 31 team members at the moment which from a community of just 250 folk is pretty good, and there are other young folks wanting to join. We have two female members and we’d like to see more. In fact my own daughter is keen to join.”

Glenelg MRT’s patch covers a vast area of 550 square kilometres taking in the Glenelg peninsula, Arnisdale, Kinlochourn, Barrisdale and Knoydart, and stretching as far south as Loch Morar.

But apart from a demountable unit for storing gear such as stretchers, the team has operated for the past 50 years without any official base.

One of its future aims is to secure a piece of land from the Scottish Fire and Rescue service at the local fire station on which to build a small base for equipment as well as mustering purposes.



Pictured (right) the newly-formed team taking part in one of the first rescues in 1973, clockwise from left, Charlie MacDonald, electrician; Johnny Cameron, Forestry Commission; Ian ‘Goaty’ MacDonald, Forestry Commission; Iain Campbell, Eileanreach Estate; Allan MacAskill, Forestry Commission; Hugh Ian MacLure, Forestry Commission; Willie MacKenzie, postman; Dr Catherine MacInnes, GP; Duncan Cameron, Forestry Commission; and Allan Morrison, Forestry Commission.

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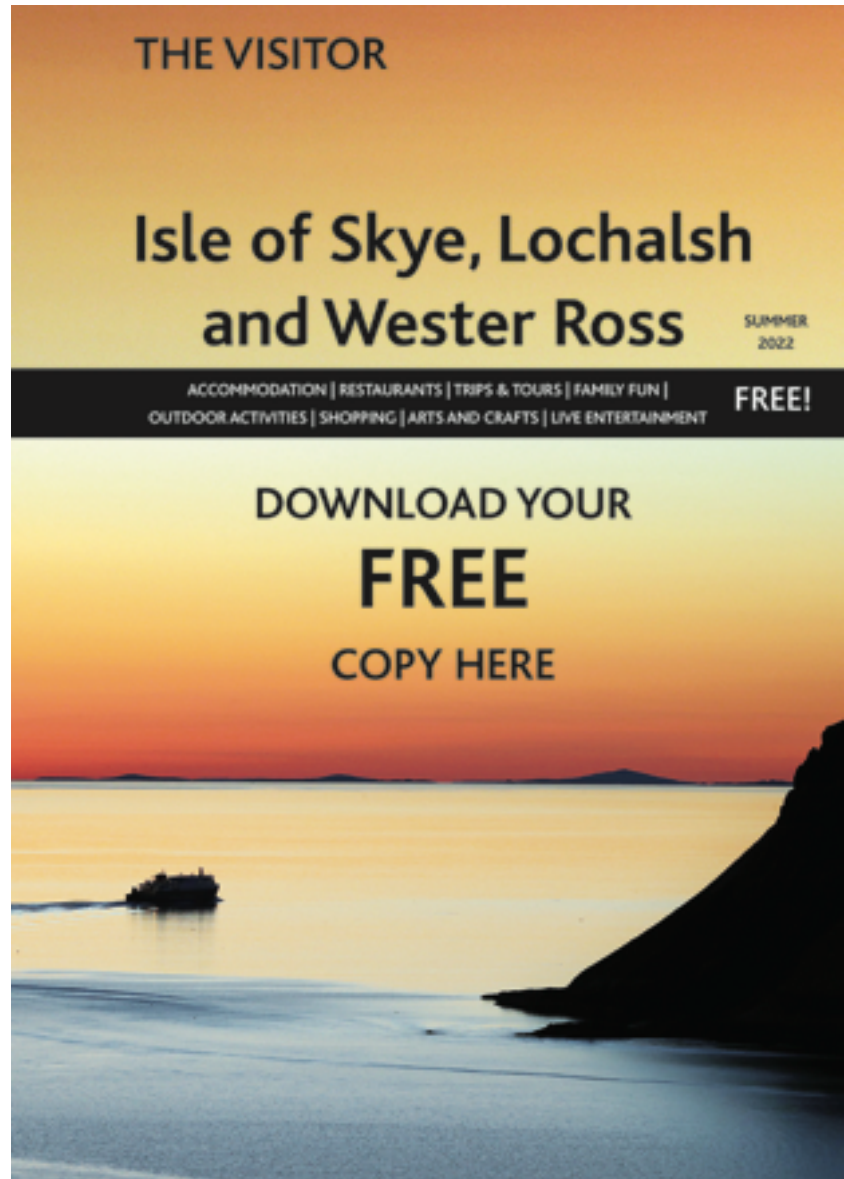
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