



MIDLAND RESPONDER

Newsletter of MROC 4x4 Response

May 2017

Working together – Saving lives, reducing harm

Issue No 4

WELCOME to the fourth edition of Midland Responder.

The newsletter can be a source of group interaction so please feel at liberty to send in any items that you would like to contribute and share.

Website: Our website contains lots of useful info such as Midlands flood alerts, photo albums, handy links, newsletters and a shop page: www.mroc4x4response.co.uk
The members area holds documents and information, accessed by password.

Facebook : Our Facebook page has been up and running for a while now and is there to be used by any of you for general chit-chat and discussion; set up as a closed group so posts can only be read by members and not the whole world.
The page can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1493898804198499/>

GROUP DRIVER TRAINING

From the onset of the group we have always maintained that all drivers will attend a course in Off Road Driving and also Recovery and to date this has been carried out by LRE at Eastnor and has worked well with them kindly adapting part of their course work to specifically suit response and the type of work we are likely to be doing.

At the moment we have a number of drivers yet to attend the recovery course and a small number to attend the Off Road Driving course, the biggest issue for us being, as always, financing these as, although we benefit from preferential rates, they are not cheap as we have no specific income.

To that end you are all aware that we are this year changing our strategy on training and will in future undertake this ourselves 'in house'. Graeme Wright, Phil Rock and Richard Smith attended the relevant Instructor course in November following which they have the necessary qualification to carry out the required training for the group. They will not only train new volunteers but also deliver regular theory and practical refresher training to the whole team. We presently have a few members who haven't attended a practical Off Road Driving course and a considerable number who haven't completed a practical recovery course; it is hoped to rectify this as soon as possible.

For the last four years our theory refresher training has been carried out by Phil Ackroyd who is a Senior Instructor at Land Rover Experience. Phil, who is an MROC member, has kindly and voluntarily given us his time and the benefit of his vast experience at no cost to the group and aided by the kind permission of LRE to allow Phil to use some of the LRE presentation and course material for the purposes of the exercise.

Their help in facilitating our training has really been appreciated and on behalf of the group and I would like to thank Phil and LRE for their support during those years.

Welcome new members

Since the last newsletter we welcome Nathaniel Hale, Mark Lawson, David Potter and Kevin Da Costa to the team.

TRAINING OFFICER

This is a position that has needed filling for quite some time and as you know Graeme Wright offered to take on the role in addition to his other position of Press & Publicity Officer. I trust that you will all give him your full support and he will be assisted by Richard and Phil to implement a structured training programme and also be able to put new members through the courses much more quickly than we have previously.

TRAINING GROUND UPDATE

The training ground work is still ongoing; to date we have cleared a lot of undergrowth, fabricated some obstacles, forged a driving track through part of the woods and erected some new fencing where the old fencing had ceased to exist as a fence.

The Local Authority are more than happy so far with that work but we have more to do.

More obstacles need to be put in place and work has started with a large excavator, once again courtesy of John Chesters, and we now have a larger hill on the site. Although not finished due to lack of funding, it is partly useable.

During October another workday was organised and headway has now been made into the rest of the wooded area to provide two stream crossings and another circular route, thanks to those who were able to offer their services.

The stream crossings have been given a lot of thought and we have now purchased 35 concrete sleepers that will be used to fabricate the two crossings. This work should hopefully be taking place on May 21st following which the ground will be useable. Small trees/stumps are to be used to fabricate another obstacle in the field to create a cross axle section.

We also have some more lengths of fencing to establish along the southern boundary of the first wood.

Remember that the work we put in now, and any further work and regular annual maintenance to keep the area useable gives our group free use of the land as and when we require.

THEORY TRAINING DAY

Following a change of location again this year, courtesy of Graeme and Julie Wright, the course took place on April 8th at their home and was well attended. Many thanks to Graeme for this and I'm sure you all appreciated the work and time he put in to make this a success. Judging by the favourable and positive comments received afterwards it seems that the day was enjoyed by all.

EXERCISE SAHARA was a live exercise announced last year and following a number of format changes it eventually took place on Monday March 20th and was based on a severe flooding event in Warwickshire. This for us was probably the best exercise we have been involved in as it tested our resource and ability to cope with a real time emergency situation. Full reports appeared in the journal.

SHOP: Available now are the new magnetic vehicle signs. These are 300mm x 300mm in size, cost £4 each and are intended for use when we are called out.



For those that cannot use magnetic we have the same sign in laminated format that can be stuck to internal windows and these are £2 each.

These signs cannot be posted!

On the shop page of the website you will also find links to stickers, clothing (note - navy top, black bottoms), snow footwear and chains.

TRACKER? Should or shouldn't I? Often a question pondered over, usually due to the cost. At the moment and likely to continue there is a huge increase in the theft of vehicles in the West Midlands particularly Land Rover's.

On the 'shop' page is a link to 'Skytag', a tracker that is easy to self fit and reasonably priced, helped because we have an ongoing discount scheme agreed with Guy Topsom the MD of the company. It is a GPS tracker system that can locate and track your vehicle anywhere in the World, within metres. The police have direct access to a real time mapping system so if your vehicle is stolen they do all the work for you.

A £15 donation from Skytag is received by the response group for every unit purchased. Maybe worth a look? I fitted one in 2009 and am very pleased.

HSE TRAINING

In October of last year Graeme and myself attended a course for RADS SAFE training held in Coventry courtesy of CSW. RADS SAFE is an awareness Course developed specifically for emergency responders to a road/rail incident where radioactivity may be involved. Interesting and enlightening, details for those who may have a passing interest can be found at: <https://www.radsafe.org.uk/index>

The conclusion we came to, and also what is taught, is that in every circumstance of any road or rail accident where there is radioactive material involved, it is either so well protected or of such a miniscule amount that there is absolutely no danger or health risk to anyone whatsoever.

Of course, in the event of such an incident the emergency services have a procedure to follow that is likely to leave most people within visible distance wondering if the end of the world is about to be affirmed. Truth is that by far the biggest problem with any such incident is the media.

FIRST AID TRAINING

Later this year marks the 3 year anniversary of when as a group we last attended a course so it is planned to hold another refresher session; mentioned at the recent training day as being October, this has now had to be postponed and the date we are looking at is Thursday November 9th providing suitable premises can be found. This has to take place midweek and will last about 2 hours – only every 3 years so I urge you all to make the time available to attend. The course will be run by a charity, FastAid, courtesy of Jeffrey Way and a small donation will likely be asked for.

Edited by John Kesterton