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## **Husband and wife mountain rescue volunteers receive MBE**

Husband and wife volunteers Becky and Iain Ashcroft have both been made an MBE at an investiture ceremony at Windsor Castle on 11 March, receiving their insignia from Prince William.

Between them, Becky and Iain have over 60 years of volunteering as mountain rescue responders for North East Wales Search and Rescue (NEWSAR) and are thought to be the first husband and wife team to receive an MBE as mountain rescue volunteers jointly.

They were both “honoured and humbled” to hear of their nomination as part of the King’s Birthday Honours last year, and also completely taken by surprise, having no idea of their nomination until the letter informing them of the MBE arrived.

Speaking after the ceremony, Becky said:

“We are still both surprised when someone mentions that we are both MBEs, and I do wonder if we will ever lose that sense of wonderment. Today’s investiture at Windsor Castle, however, really did make it feel real, and we both remain hugely grateful and honoured to have been nominated.

Mountain rescue is about team work, and behind us in North Wales is a strong cadre of fellow team members without whom we could not do what we do – and in accepting the award today, we are also acknowledging the fantastic work that they, and all mountain rescue responders across the country, do.

We would also like to recognise the contribution of colleagues in mountain rescue across the country, whom we train alongside on occasions to share learning and good practice, and make us the best we can be. While there are 47 mountain rescue teams across England and Wales, in reality we are one big team with a shared passion and purpose.”

That ethos of team work also extends to other agencies:

“Frequently we are working alongside other professionals – so this award also acknowledges the commitment of our partners in the emergency services, the Coastguard, and the RAF - each bringing their own specialist set of skills and expertise to the task of helping people who need us.”

Iain said:

“It is not unusual for us, when responding to a call for help, to find out that the people calling upon our services have no idea that mountain rescue teams are made up completely of volunteers.

We drop what we are doing – family events, work, social occasions and leisure time – to respond quickly to those in need of our help. But that’s not all -to have the skills you need to assist

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someone injured, lost, or stuck on a mountain requires hours and hours of training, then even more hours of practice, and in addition to that we need to maintain the specialist vehicles and equipment we need for the job. All of this is done in our own time, as is the fundraising which pays for our equipment.”

“We do it because we share a love of being outdoors, and there is a huge sense of achievement in contributing to the safety of others who share that passion. Today’s investiture recognises the significant contribution that volunteers like Becky and myself make to communities and individuals across the UK every day, and I am proud to have that acknowledged and to be part of it.”

Both Becky and Iain highlight that mountain rescue volunteers could not do the job they do without public support:

“Much of the fund raising that takes place to provide the clothing and equipment we need to do our job, comes from our local communities and businesses, and from the public, who always step up to support the work that we do and support our fund raising. Without those vital funds, there would be no mountain rescue teams. If you have donated to support mountain rescue in the last year – thank you!”

The couple said they had looked forward to today’s investiture with a mix of excitement and nerves, and now that it had taken place were left with a sense of pride. They said:

“Today has been one of those occasions that will live with you forever, and we cannot thank enough everyone who contributed to making it happen.”

## **Editors Notes:**

### **A little more about mountain rescue**

North Wales Mountain Rescue Association comprises nine teams working together to cover the region and include some of the busiest areas in England and Wales. They are:

- Aberdyfi Mountain Search and Rescue Team
- Aberglaslyn Mountain Rescue Team
- Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team
- Môn-SAR
- North East Wales Search and Rescue
- North Wales Cave Rescue Organisation
- Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation
- SARDA Wales
- South Snowdonia Search and Rescue Team

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NEWSAR is a volunteer-run rescue team that operates 24/7 across Flintshire, Denbighshire, Wrexham, and parts of Conwy and Powys, responding to mountain rescue emergencies and searches for missing persons.

As a registered charity, NEWSAR relies on donations and grants to cover its £30,000 annual operating costs. These funds support essential equipment, vehicle maintenance, and ongoing volunteer training.

**Donations to support the rescue team can be made via the [NEWSAR fundraising page](#).**

## **Need a little more detail?**

Please contact NWMRA Regional Media Officer, Jacqui Hanson

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