

24<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## Dangers

**“[We are] never watchful enough against dangers  
that threaten [us] every hour.”**

*Horace, Carmina*

Being familiar with the Highlands of Scotland, I've known about mountain rescue work all my life. The Scottish Mountain Rescue Service (SMR) represents 25 Mountain Rescue Teams (MRTs) made up of 850 trained volunteers. (See [www.scottishmountainrescue.org](http://www.scottishmountainrescue.org)). They're available 24/7, 365 days a year, responding to emergencies and carrying out a specialist search and rescue service in the mountains and remote communities. It's often impossible to search for people by helicopter in Scotland because of the prevalence of low cloud. So most of the search and rescue work is on foot, often at great risk to the teams. Remarkably, the SMR and the MRTs are charities. Those involved face personal hardship at no cost to those rescued and with no public funding. Their work is a service to those who need help when they're in danger.

The SMR's motto could be Horace's words above. Too often they have to rescue people who've *not* been aware of, or equipped for, dangers in the Scottish Highlands. Sudden weather changes, loss of direction-awareness, rapid drops in temperature, poor visibility, not informing others of your plans, being ill-trained ... there are many dangers.

It's a metaphor we would all do well to need. Life is often beautiful. Our treks can be easy and safe. Our resources are usually sufficient for our needs. But there are always dangers, planned-for or unexpected. We can never be watchful enough for such perils. We can never do too much to warn others of hazards ahead. We can never duck our responsibility to pass on life's lessons to those who've never experienced dangers before.

If dangers threaten us every hour, should we decide not to venture into the hills, stick to the glens or just stay at home? Of course not! But let's be prepared for the dangers. Let's be properly equipped for the journey. Let's be as ready as we can be for every eventuality. And, despite our best efforts, should we find ourselves overwhelmed, let's give thanks for those who will search for us, come to our aid and bring us safely home.

### **A prayer for today**

*Thank you, God, for those who look out for me – no matter what. Amen*

*An original reflection by @ Tom Gordon* Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>