

WINTER 2024

# SCAA

# NEWS

[WWW.SCAA.ORG.UK](http://WWW.SCAA.ORG.UK)

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**PERTH BASE**

Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance, The Control Tower, Perth Airport, Scone, Perthshire PH2 6PL

**ABERDEEN BASE**

Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance, Hangar 2B, Farburn Terrace, Dyce, Aberdeen AB21 7DT

**GENERAL ENQUIRIES**

0300 123 1111 | [scaa.org.uk](http://scaa.org.uk)  
[enquiries@scaa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scaa.org.uk)

**YOUR STORY**

[communications@scaa.org.uk](mailto:communications@scaa.org.uk)

If SCAA was there for you when you needed help, we'd love to hear your story. Please contact Erin and we will treat your communication in confidence.

**DONATE**

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By post (to the Perth address above) please make cheques payable to "Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance" or "SCAA".

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**YOUR SUPPORT REALLY MATTERS.**

**TO HELP SCAA, SCAN THIS QR CODE OR DONATE AT THE DETAILS ABOVE. THANK YOU.**

# WELCOME TO SCAA NEWS

Hello everyone and welcome to the latest edition of SCAA News

Your charity has just completed its busiest ever year as we aim to meet the ever-growing challenge of ensuring that nobody in Scotland should die because help can't get there in time.

This summer, you responded in your thousands to support our SOS - Save Our Summer - appeal. Your outstanding generosity when asked to champion us through our busiest months and support the costs of our increased workload has been both heartening and humbling, raising an outstanding £150,000.

On behalf of the many people whose lives you have helped to save and everyone here at SCAA - thank you.

Take a look at our tasking map for that peak period on page 11 to see the impact of your generosity - our two emergency response aircraft flying all over Scotland to those most in need.

While summer is traditionally our busiest period, winter in Scotland brings a different set of challenges for SCAA as crews battle with extreme weather and shorter daylight hours.

Read on page 6 of the vital role our rapid response vehicles (RRV) play in ensuring our life-saving work never misses a beat.

People in Scotland rely on SCAA to be there for them on their darkest day and, with your continued support, we will get there in time.

Read Jamie and Steven's stories to learn the difference you are making to ensuring SCAA gets there on time. Both patients say they owe their life or the speed and extent of their recovery to SCAA and our crews.

On page 5 you will learn of an exciting operational upgrade for our Perth crew, with more enhancements to be announced in 2025. Coupled with a brand refresh, this will place SCAA on the threshold of a new decade in life-saving service which, with your support, will go on to save many more thousands of lives.

## Thank you again.

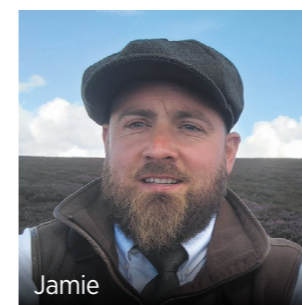
Stay safe,

**David Craig**  
Chief Executive



# "A MOMENT'S INATTENTION AND YOUR WORLD TURNS UPSIDE DOWN."

A moment's distraction led to a painful accident for ghillie Jamie when his quad bike rolled on a steep bank and threw him crashing into nearby rocks.



Jamie

Dazed and seriously injured, the estate worker attempted to drive on but collapsed, unable to continue his ride across the remote Angus Glens landscape.

"Luckily, we always carry radios, so I was able to call for help," recalled Jamie. "Colleagues found me about 10 minutes later and managed to get me back to the main estate house where they laid me on a sofa in front of the log fire."

While adrenaline had fired Jamie's initial responses, shock had started to set in and pain levels were rising.

**"I couldn't stand up," he said. "The pain in my back and shoulders was excruciating and I knew I had injured my hip and stomach. I started to really worry."**

Jamie's workmates quickly realised there was something seriously wrong and dialled 999. Within 15 minutes SCAA's helicopter was landing on the road outside.

"I worried that I was wasting everyone's time," said Jamie, "but I was so glad to see the team - I knew I was in safe hands with them."

**"They stopped the pain, kept me calm and my spirits up," he said. "They were so professional and reassuring - just the best you could hope for when you're in a world of pain and fear."**

After assessment and treatment at the house, SCAA airlifted Jamie to Major Trauma Centre care at Dundee - just a short flight away - where he was treated for two broken ribs and internal bleeding.

"Who knows what damage would have been done if I'd been taken that long bumpy journey by road," said Jamie. "SCAA made it speedy and comfortable, ensuring I was in hospital as quickly as possible with no further trauma to agitate my injuries."

Jamie was able to leave hospital the following evening, with enforced bed rest at home thereafter and a six-week recovery period before he could return to work.

"I count myself lucky," he said. "It was a simple accident - a moment's inattention and your world turns upside down. It could happen to anyone."



**"SCAA is making a huge impact on the welfare of rural workers and residents like myself and it's a huge comfort to us all to know that they are there when things go wrong."**

"Working in Scotland's remote countryside is a real pleasure but we're all aware that it carries risks and help can take some time to reach you," added Jamie.

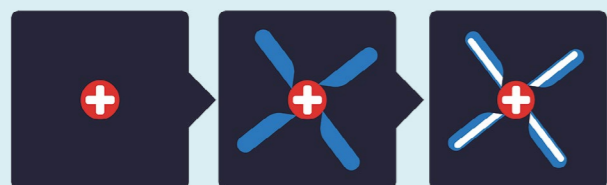
**"Luckily, I had SCAA on my side - they were fantastic, just brilliant. They have helped people I know in the past and now I have personal experience of what a phenomenal and vital service SCAA provides for rural Scotland. I owe them a huge debt of gratitude."**

# OUR NEW LOOK

As many of you know, in 2023 SCAA marked 10 years of operations in Scotland. During this time of reflection, we also considered what the future of SCAA will look like, with a key focus on our branding. Organisationally we recognised that a full rebrand was unnecessary as our predecessors did a fantastic job in creating a strong brand. Instead, we aimed for a simple refresh.

Throughout this process, it was important to us to honour the legacy of those who came before us and to ensure that the patients we transport to hospitals remain at the centre of every decision we make regarding our service.

We wanted the new logo to reflect our Scottish identity, the speed at which we respond, and the medical expertise we bring to the scene of traumatic incidents. We began by retaining the medical cross from our original logo, then incorporated the helicopter rotors to symbolise speed. As a nod to the flag of Scotland in our original logo, we added a white saltire to the blue rotors. These elements were added to the logo that already appears on the side of our helicopters, creating what we believe will be a SCAA logo of the future – a succinct representation of what we do.



**We look forward to seeing this new logo across Scotland in the coming months.**



## WHAT'S YOUR LEGACY?

Did you know that every year, gifts in Wills fund as many as 100 of our life-saving missions?

After you've provided for your loved ones, we'd be very grateful if you'd consider including a gift in your Will to Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance. No matter what the size, small or large, your legacy will be used to fund our frontline time-critical service so that we are there for the people of Scotland when they need us most.

**Saving lives in Scotland can be part of your legacy.**

For more information about leaving a gift in your Will to SCAA, or to receive a copy of our Legacy brochure, please email Kathryn at [k.cooper@scaa.org.uk](mailto:k.cooper@scaa.org.uk).

There is also information on our website at: [scaa.org.uk/support-us/a-gift-in-your-will](https://scaa.org.uk/support-us/a-gift-in-your-will)

"I had a life-threatening mountain fall and was airlifted to hospital. Assistance and evacuation by the air ambulance was critical to my survival. Please consider, as I have done, leaving a legacy to these heroes who devote their time to save others."

Ian Stewart,  
SCAA Legacy Pledger



**YOUR SUPPORT REALLY MATTERS. TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT LEAVING A LEGACY GIFT, SCAN THIS QR CODE. THANK YOU.**

# YOUR SUPPORT WILL BE OUR EYES IN THE DARK THIS WINTER

This winter, SCAA at Perth will operate the charity's first night vision capability, enabling crews to safely respond to emergencies in Scotland after dark.

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of our supporters, including an extremely generous donation from players of People's Postcode Lottery, we can fund vital equipment to make missions which have previously proved challenging – due to restrictions on our night flying – become accessible.

**Crews at Perth will be the first to undergo demanding training to operate the state-of-the-art night vision imaging system (NVIS) equipment in preparation for this winter's deployment on Helimed 76.**

SCAA Chief Executive David Craig explained that the night vision capability would allow the charity to respond to challenging HEMS (Helicopter Emergency Medical Service) incidents during periods of darkness.



"SCAA will be able to deploy to non-surveyed locations anywhere in Scotland during darkness hours this winter using the very latest technology, to the benefit of both patients and crew," he said. "This will ensure each duty shift is unimpeded by when the sun sets or skies darken, enabling SCAA to respond more often to those most seriously ill or injured."

David explained that night vision capability marked a significant investment for SCAA, funded entirely by the support of the people of Scotland – including players of People's Postcode Lottery.

"Every single supporter should know that they have helped SCAA achieve this latest ambition through their generous donations. You are, quite literally, life savers."

**"SCAA has ensured that your donations have been converted to investment in improving our frontline operation."**

Our pilots and paramedics are our frontline delivery team who recognise the benefits NVIS capability will bring for patients, crew and the charity.

Senior base pilot at Perth, Captain Kimball Chilcott, explained:

"Civil Aviation Authority rules don't allow us to land at the scene of an emergency by night," he said, "as we are unable to perform the required visual airborne reconnaissance to survey the landing site for safety hazards."

"This means during the dark winter hours, we are limited to operating out of lit surveyed sites such as hospitals and airports – which reduces our operational capability considerably."

"Having NVIS will give us the potential to respond to time-critical emergencies in the dark, as it enables us to have the situational awareness and required visual field to safely determine the suitability of a potential landing site," he added.

"During the winter months, NVIS will make us available to respond to HEMS throughout the entirety of our shift, in turn making us more able to reach those who need us most."

# SCAA'S RAPID RESPONSE VEHICLES BECOME WINTER WORKHORSES

After 11 years in operation, Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance helicopters are now a familiar and welcome sight all across the country.

Less familiar to people perhaps – but equally important to the charity's life-saving mission – are SCAA's Rapid Response Vehicles (RRVs), based at both its Perth and Aberdeen bases.

These state-of-the-art, hi-tech customised vehicles provide another vital asset in SCAA's fast-reaction life-saving capabilities – all funded by public donations.

Deployed primarily within a five-mile radius of each base, the BMW F15 X5s allow paramedics to reach patients quickly in a blue light response which would prove faster by road than air.



Although unable to convey patients to hospital care, the road vehicles get paramedic care quickly to the scene of illness or injury which has proved a lifesaver time and time again.

And with SCAA recording its busiest ever year, the value of these vital resources is apparent, with paramedics responding in the RRVs on 263 occasions.

SCAA Helimed 76 paramedic Rich Garside said the radius of operation for the vehicles could be extended on the very rare occasions the helicopter was offline for extreme weather or technical reasons.

**“The RRVs play a key role in SCAA's response to emergencies,” he said. “Every second counts in many cases and the BMWs prove a very fast response platform to local incidents. Having that capability has resulted in many lives saved over the years.”**

Rich recalled the different vehicles which have served the charity over the years.

**“We started with a Honda Civic, then a Kia before opting for a Skoda Octavia,” he said. “In 2019 we upgraded to what has proved a real workhorse for emergency services throughout the UK – the BMW X5.”**

It's what SCAA did with those basic frames, however, that resulted in one of the most advanced emergency response vehicles operating in Scotland today.

**“The vehicles have been customised for our specific needs, creating the perfect operational**



**road partner for SCAA paramedics and a highly effective emergency response service for the critical care of patients,” explained Rich.**

**“These are high-performance vehicles, customised to emergency services specifications and then tailored to SCAA paramedics' specific needs,” said Rich.**

A spacious interior allows the transport of all essential life-saving drugs and equipment for immediate treatment and resuscitation.

The very latest technology onboard offers paramedic support in areas such as electronic patient data transfer and information.

**“We can take on some challenging weather conditions in these machines,” said Rich. “They are four-wheel-drive, with all-season tyres fitted and a stock of extra blankets and**

**snow shovels for good measure. We've been able to get through to people in need even when the weather's been at its worst.”**

During the past year, 75 of the 263 RRV responses by SCAA were to cardiac-related emergencies. A further 32 were to road traffic collisions.

RRV crews attended 200 medical emergencies and 56 trauma cases, with SCAA paramedics escorting 37 patients onwards to hospital in road ambulances.

And Rich detailed one example from the H76 crew to show the impact of their road-based work.

**“A recent cardiac arrest emergency saw SCAA deploy rapidly to the scene, work with Scottish Ambulance Service ambulance crew colleagues, utilise the mechanical CPR machine, deliver two shocks on the defibrillator and achieve a spontaneous pulse,” he said. “The patient was sitting up chatting by the time the team finished their paperwork.”**



# A TEAM EFFORT TO SAVE A LIFE



Steven is still trying to piece together the events of his ‘catastrophic’ cardiac arrest which left the 62-year-old requiring 29 minutes of CPR, a defibrillator being used three times, and Scotland’s Charity Air Ambulance being called to airlift him.

It started as a fairly normal Saturday for Steven; working in the morning with plans to cycle from his home in Kincardine to meet his wife, Mary, at their caravan in Pitlochry – a distance of around 70 miles.

“My only memory of this day now,” Steven recalls, “is prompted by a photo I took of myself having a coffee in Dunkeld approximately 15 miles from my destination – as we now know I didn’t make it.

“With around a mile to go, it seems I suffered a catastrophic cardiac arrest crashing off my bike onto the roadside in a crumpled heap.”

The avid cyclist fell unconscious, and as a result of the accident, has lost all memory two weeks prior to the incident. His wife and bystanders on the scene have helped Steven to paint a clearer picture of what happened that summer’s day.

First to come to Steven’s rescue was a local vet who either witnessed him fall or found him lying unconscious by the roadside.



Steven and Mary

**“She [the vet] started doing CPR immediately,” he explains. “Shortly afterwards, a van stopped to help, containing two trained paramedics and a nurse on holiday from London – someone was definitely looking out for me.”**

CPR was continued on Steven for the next 29 minutes whilst the emergency services were called and dispatched.

A local land ambulance arrived followed soon thereafter by SCAA, who were able to land adjacent to the A9 near Pitlochry.

The SCAA crew were able to assist alongside the other health professionals at the scene. Steven was later informed that it was at this point a defibrillator was used twice, and it was used once again later in Ninewells Hospital, Dundee.

Meanwhile, growing increasingly concerned over Steven’s non-appearance, his wife Mary rushed to his side after the police advised her of the situation.

SCAA airlifted Steven who was transferred to the cardiology department in Ninewells.

**“I was rushed in to have an emergency procedure to insert a stent in my main artery which had been blocked by plaque stopping the flow of blood to my heart,” he reflects.**

“I was then put in an induced coma for the next two days whilst in recovery. I’m grateful to the SCAA crew who met my wife when she arrived at the hospital to update her on my condition.

“Fortunately, everything went well and just over a week after the accident I was allowed to leave the hospital and recuperate at home for the next few months. I was extremely fortunate to have only sustained a very large scar on my knee and minor memory loss due to the incident – how lucky is that!”



Steven and Mary



Steven and Mary

Almost four years later, Steven is leading a normal life and has even jumped back in the saddle to complete more long-distance cycles with Mary, including the same route he did the day of his accident. Recently, he dropped by our Perth base and met one of the SCAA paramedics who attended to Steven on the day of his incident – allowing him the opportunity to fill in some of the blanks from the day of his accident.

“I cannot thank all the people enough who were involved in helping me at that time, and clearly without the aid of SCAA getting me to hospital quickly and the fast reaction of passers-by, I would not be here to tell my story.”



John (JP) Pritchard MBE

# A SAD FAREWELL

This summer, SCAA bid a sad farewell to its longest-serving crew member when Helimed 76 Lead Paramedic John Pritchard MBE took up a promoted post with the Scottish Ambulance Service.

But John will not be straying far from the life-saving Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS). John's new role is as Area Service Manager with ScotSTAR/HEMS South which sees him work closely with paramedic teams at the Government-funded Helimed 5 in Glasgow and SCAA's Perth-based Helimed 76 - his old aircraft.

"I feel a great sense of pride and achievement when I look back on the challenges the charity faced when we first set up in 2013 - how we all pulled together to launch a fledgling HEMS - and see how SCAA has developed into what it is today," he said.

"I've been privileged to work with some true professionals and meet many remarkable people. It's been a phenomenally rewarding and humbling period in my life."

In his 11 years plus with SCAA, JP has faced just about every challenge the air ambulance service could throw at him.

"No two days were the same," he explained. "You just never knew what awaited you when you clocked on each morning. Life was certainly never boring."

JP will still cover the odd shift on the air ambulance, so his flying days are not over.

# POSTCODE LOTTERY SUPPORT WILL HELP SCAA FLY INTO THE FUTURE

SCAA is immensely grateful to players of People's Postcode Lottery for their support.

Players have raised more than £1.15 million over the past five years, but a new long-term partnership with People's Postcode Lottery and their Postcode Care Trust means players will continue to support our work long into the future.

David Craig, chief executive of SCAA, expressed just how important this funding would be, saying, "We have been very fortunate that SCAA has been supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery for many years now. This money will help us to continue funding our life-saving service and will fly into the future."



# SUMMER MISSION OVERVIEW



A hillwalker who sustained ankle injuries in a fall at the remote reaches of **Loch Nevis** was airlifted to hospital in Oban by SCAA for X-ray and advanced care.



SCAA airlifted a woman injured in a fall into a ditch near **Kenmore** to Ninewells Hospital in Dundee in under 15 minutes.



One day in June, SCAA's crews spent nearly 11 hours in the skies above Scotland taking emergency care to our most remote island communities. Helimed 79 made a flight to **Fair Isle** to airlift a patient requiring urgent medical care to hospital at **Lerwick**. Helimed 76 ensured that patients from **Barra, Dunoon** and **Rothsay** were airlifted to mainland hospital care in the fastest possible time.



SCAA's Helimed 79 was deployed to a serious road traffic collision near **Achnasheen** in the Highlands. An injured motorcyclist was then airlifted to the Major Trauma Centre in Glasgow.



SCAA was quickly on scene when a toddler was injured in a fall at **Ballindalloch**. Our air ambulance helicopter airlifted the youngster - accompanied by his mum - to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness for treatment to a leg injury.



SCAA was deployed to the countryside near **New Deer** when a man was crushed by his horse while trying to rescue the animal from a ditch.



SCAA made the challenging landing among the lofty turbines of a remote wind farm near **Stonehaven** to reach an injured off-road biker and airlift him to the Major Trauma Centre at Aberdeen.

# YOUR IMPACT THIS SUMMER

CALL OUTS: **310** (JUN/JUL/AUG)  
HELICOPTER: **236**  
RAPID RESPONSE VEHICLE: **74**

The summer months saw a significant increase in demand, with June, July and August seeing an extra call out a day in comparison to the winter months. Thank you to all who responded to our SOS appeal. Your generosity enabled us to respond to over 300 life-saving emergencies throughout the summer, helping multiple people across Scotland every day.

# THANK YOU!

Thank you for continuing to support Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance. Whether you donate, volunteer or play our lottery - we can't keep flying and saving lives without you.

If SCAA was there for you when you needed help, we'd love to hear your story. Contact Erin at [communications@scaa.org.uk](mailto:communications@scaa.org.uk) in confidence.

## IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP SUPPORT SCAA, YOU COULD:

- Enter a fundraising event or organise your own
- Become a SCAA Volunteer
- Make a one-off or regular donation
- Play our weekly lottery
- Leave a gift to SCAA in your Will



## YOU CAN DONATE TO SCAA:

- Online at [www.scaa.org.uk](http://www.scaa.org.uk)
- By phone on **0300 123 1111**
- By post to:  
**Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance,  
The Control Tower, Perth Airport,  
Scone, Perthshire PH2 6PL**

(Please make cheques payable to "Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance" or "SCAA").



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You can access our Privacy Policy on our website at [www.scaa.org.uk/privacy-policy](http://www.scaa.org.uk/privacy-policy). If you would prefer a hard copy, please let us know and we will post it to you.

# CHRISTMAS SHOPPING!

SCAA merchandise can be purchased via our website at [www.scaa.org.uk/browse](http://www.scaa.org.uk/browse), by calling 0300 123 1111, or just click on the item below to view it in our online shop.

Christmas Cards - £4.50



Christmas Cards - £4.50



Christmas Cards - £4.50



Christmas Cards - £4.50



Water bottle - £12



Women's Bodywarmer - £32



Men's Bodywarmer - £32



Hooded Sweatshirt - £26



Cycling Top - £35



Buff/Bandana - £7



Activity Book - £3



2025 Slim Diary - £5



Beanie Hat - £10



Baseball Cap - £14



SCAA Football - £10



Jute Bag (small) - £6



Canvas Shopper - £8



SCAA Teddy - £15



Adult Socks - £5



Children's Socks - £2.50



Golf Towel - £15



Pet Collar - £5



Pet Bandana - £5



Frisbee - £5



Scan here  
to browse our  
online shop!