

Kris Manning — A Life in Search & Rescue

Kris Manning has dedicated nearly forty years to Search & Rescue, beginning his service in 1986 at the age of 15 when he joined Berkshire Lowland Search & Rescue, then known as South East Berkshire Emergency Volunteers. What started as an early interest grew into a lifelong passion and commitment to operational response, national leadership, and the development of Search & Rescue practice across the UK.

His national impact began early as a founding member of the National Association of Lowland Search & Rescue (NALSAR later to become Lowland Rescue). During this formative period, he co-wrote the first memorandum of understanding between NALSAR and Mountain Rescue, helping establish the first collaborative framework that underpins how volunteer search organisations work together today. Over subsequent decades, he served nationally as Chairman, National Training Officer, and later as IT Lead, contributing to training standards, policy, organisational growth, and modern digital capability. He was also a founding member of UKLSI, supporting the professionalisation of SAR training across the UK.

Operationally, Kris has always remained a frontline volunteer. He has accumulated many thousands of hours of service over nearly four decades and has attended hundreds — if not thousands — of incidents in a wide range of roles. These have included searching on the ground, delivering medical support as a SAR medic, managing complex multi-agency operations as a Search Manager, leading teams, training new responders, and deploying as a Drone Pilot. He continues to serve actively today and recently stepped into a new role of National Search Advisor for Lowland Rescue.

Kris has long been dedicated to developing others. He has spent years specialising in Search Management and Technician training, travelling throughout the UK to teach, support, and speak on SAR matters. He has represented the volunteer SAR community in senior policing and government forums, offering insight drawn from extensive operational experience.

Alongside his operational and strategic work, Kris is a keen software developer and has created several software tools used within the SAR community, combining technical skills with frontline experience.

When he is not responding to incidents or working on SAR systems, he can often be found out on his motorbike, deep in a coding project, or enjoying some quiet time in the garden.