

MRC NEWS

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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE COUNCIL OF ENGLAND & WALES

ISSUE
FEBRUARY
2001
ONE

NEWS FROM THE MRC

Developments & discussions from MRC, November 2000

NEWS FROM ROUND THE REGIONS

A brief look at some of the incidents and news from teams across England & Wales

VIEW FROM THE TOP TABLE

Chairman, David Allan, introduces the MRC News

OFF ROAD IN THE LAKES

Off-roaders versus ramblers. Who spoils whose day on the hill?

NEWS FROM ABROAD

Paul Horder reports from IKAR

SEARCH & RESCUE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE

Update from Superintendent Bernard Kershaw, ACPO

RESPONSE DRIVING

Sergeant Dring, Police Instructor for Humberside passes on a few tips

NEW DOGS ON THE HILL

Update from SARDA

MRC TAKES THE PISC...

Determined to enter the new millennium (the real one, that is, not last year's overhyped damp squib of an affair) as a force to be reckoned with, the MRC is sharpening up its image. And they have just the group to do it.

The dynamic new Publications and Information Sub Committee – or PISC as it has now officially been dubiously abbreviated – have clearly not understood the meaning of the word volunteer as they enthusiastically embrace their respective tasks within the group.

The eight PISCies – not to be confused with that other bunch of small, elfin-like people indigenous to the South West of England (the



Piskies, if you're having trouble keeping up) – have split themselves into 4 sub-sub-groups, led by Chief PISCie, chairman Ian Hurst, Peak District Controller, Chairman of Buxton and a trustee of the MRC, Ian brings with him

almost 40 years' mountain rescue experience. In fact, with nigh on 200 years between them, and including two cybertechies and three advertising & marketing professionals, the PISCies should be able to sort something out.

PISCie who's who

So...about these sub-sub-groups? The website is already in the capable hands of Paul Horder and Paul Baxendale, hereafter known as Paul Squared, or P² for short, with Dave Freeborn, Patterdale Team Leader, looking after design and graphics. Paul H was responsible for developing both the Keswick and LDSAMRA websites, two of the earliest in MR. Paul B, Bolton dog handler and communications officer for SARDA (England), is never seen anywhere without his trusty palm pilot.

Eve Burton, Buxton, is looking after the Handbook. Many of you will know Eve from her involvement with last year's Millennium Conference.

Still wondering how on earth she got quite so involved, Judy Whiteside was appointed newsletter editor at Preston in November, and is ably assisted (at least, that's what he asked me to say) by Andy Simpson. Both Rossendale team members, Andy is operational while Judy takes care of publications and PR.

Ged Feeney, Team Leader of Penrith, has been Statistics Officer for the MRC for four years. He is currently undertaking a long term study on the behaviour of missing persons for the British Isles and Ireland.

Since sustaining a knee injury, Jacquie Hall, Northumberland NPSRT, has been carving out a niche for herself in the North East dealing with press and PR. Now she brings this experience to the MRC.

Down to business

Why the need for all this image tweaking? Well, it was felt that a more cohesive body was called for. A means to disseminate a diverse range of information – insurance, training, medical, equipment, whatever – from the MRC right down to grass roots so that every single team member is kept informed. But more than that, a vehicle whereby experience and opinion can be exchanged, matters can be debated, to which teams and individual team members alike can contribute.

And that's where the spanking new MRC News comes in. Not that the editors have delusions of grandeur but who knows... one day maybe, just maybe, we could run to 56 pages... full colour, glossy ads, guest articles from the movers and shakers in the world of mountains... international distribution...

But don't tell the Treasurer just yet. He'd hyperventilate.

MRC NEWS · KEEPING YOU INFORMED · PROMOTING MOUNTAIN RESCUE

ISSUE ONE

WELCOME TO ISSUE 1

MRC NEWS

Contributions to MRC News should be sent to
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Every care will be taken of materials sent for publication however these are submitted at the sender's risk.

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STATISTICS



Ged Feeney
Pennith MRT

...A WORD FROM THE TOP TABLE...

The past twelve months within the realm of mountain rescue have been eventful.

The year began on a sad note with the death of Peter Andrew. Peter gave years of unstinting service, often unseen and unsung, and his wisdom and counsel are missed.

Other events have been very positive. The Millennium Conference, publication of the Casualty Care Manual, the training day at Plas y Brenin, moves towards national fund raising and now the reincarnation of this publication are all a reflection of the skills and commitment which run through the service.

Repeatedly whilst I have been Chairman people from all areas of MR have asked that we raise the national profile. I am now confident that we are doing this in a robust and sustainable manner. It is, of course, only possible to do this when the internal organisation itself is strong and cohesive. There is no

...AND ONE FROM THE EDITOR...

So there I was cooking up something exotic (well vaguely Italian, anyway) for Friday tea, pinny on, large glass of something chilled at hand, when the phone rings. Peter Smith, MPSRO rep. I chat politely but the pan's bubbling, the wine's getting warm and, any minute now, surely he's going to ask if Andy is home. He's the rescuer you see, not me. He's the one who springs into action at some god forsaken hour of the night, instantly awake, sacrificing a warm bed and sleep for thermal undies and Goretex. (Whatever turns you on).

Anyway, some more chit chat later (I've managed to turn the pan down, something chilled restored to proximity) he has a proposition for me. Would I be interested in taking on the

doubt that the operational activities of our teams are performed at an admirably high standard. The skill, dedication and sheer hard work of team members is unbelievably high.

There is, however, scope for us to improve links and communication. We are making progress. The training day at Plas y Brenin, which enabled the sharing of ideas and discussion of best practice, was indicative of this. We look to build on this and expand the nature of the event.

Some concerns are voiced that we are heading towards a national format for conducting rescues. I do not believe that this is desirable or, indeed, attainable. Most people do agree, however, that there should be some basic minimum standards above which everyone would always operate. It is essential that these evolve from wide ranging discussions, with input from all teams. Opportunities for this to happen now exist in the guise of team leaders meetings, team doctors meetings etcetera, in addition to the conferences and I hope that these will continue to be supported and productive.

I firmly believe that mountain rescue is entering the new millennium in a very healthy condition and has the ability and facility to continue to successfully address the challenges that the future years will produce.

DAVID ALLAN
Chairman

MRC newsletter? Don't feel pressured. ...you *can* say no (He doesn't know me then)...take time to think about it...

Take some time to think about it? Have you seen dogs with bones? Course you have, you're rescue people. Chew, chew, chew...

Anyway, never one to pass up a challenge (well, within reason) I thought I'd give it a go. So here I am. And here it is... Thank you to all those who have contributed and I apologise if there appears to be a lot from the Mid-Pennine region, but they were easier to pester. I am still in the process of contacting teams and related search and rescue bodies.

I hope to make the newsletter representative of all the regions, a vehicle for news, information, comment, opinion, discussion... maybe a letters page if you've got something to get off your chest. It's not about teams airing their dirty washing in public but the exchange of ideas and experience and I hope you'll trust my editorial integrity.

Maybe I've got it wrong. I'm sure you'll be the first to tell me. So, see you again in the Summer. Mine's a glass of Chardonnay.

JUDY WHITESIDE

MRC NEWS

RIGHT TO ROAM

MR continues to make its presence felt at Whitehall. There are now records of MRC proceedings in both the Commons and the House of Lords, thanks to our considerable input to the Right to Roam debate. However, it clearly is not a straightforward issue – Chairman David Allan was prompted to comment, on reading Hansard for the House of Lords, that "...apart from First Year Medical students, he had never before seen such a concentrated mass of uninformed opinion..." Clearly an issue set to ramble on... (ho! ho!)

JOHN VINE CROSSES THE BORDER

ACPO representative John Vine has moved from his post as Assistant Chief Constable of Lancashire to take up his new position as Chief Constable for Tayside. His replacement has now been confirmed as Assistant Chief Constable Mike Tonge from Merseyside Police. Thanks must go to John for his very positive involvement – he will be missed.

MILTON KEYNES SUSPENDED!

The Milton Keynes SRT has been officially suspended. The

Lowland teams are now seeking inclusion in the MRC Handbook.

NATIONAL FUNDRAISING

With increasing demands on the MRC as a body, the need for a national fundraising initiative is paramount. Whilst it is hoped that we can move forward quite quickly, initial talks to various experts threw up more questions than answers. A contract has now been signed with UCS Consultants, starting in January. First job for MD Peter Panteli is to prepare a fundraising development plan. His report, due at the end of February, is expected to look at where we are now, what our realistic needs are over the next 5 years, and then to suggest a strategy for the future. Key to all this is the understanding that the MRC is unique, and that whatever UCS do has to sit well with us as a body.

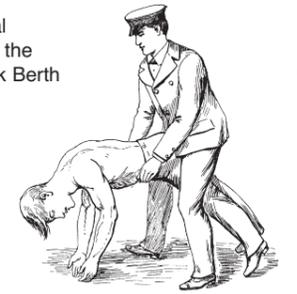
LAST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

September sees Durham hosting the last

Interesting manoeuvres

From the Manual of Instruction for the Royal Naval Sick Berth Staff. 1915
Page 204

Number One
Draining
the Stomach



annual get together. In future, full UK Conferences will be bi-annual. The first, in 2002, will take place in Scotland, most likely at either Edinburgh or Glasgow. In 2004, Northern Ireland takes the reins.

MORPHINE CHECKS

All teams are reminded of the need to check compliance with the requirements for handling and storage of opiates. Each team **must** have a named person responsible for the controlled drugs. The MRC drug licence has been successfully reapplied for at a cost of £180 per year. Remember that you may be subjected to spot checks of your CD storage and register
You have been warned!

CAS BAG TAKES OFF

With the current casbag now 8/9 years old, various concepts have been considered for future improvements – two main developments have emerged. The current design limits access to casualties, once enclosed, and for those over 6 ft tall, it is simply not big enough.

The new prototype is bigger and zips round the sides and top for greater access. The concept of airlift-ability allows the bag to be winched away without a stretcher. Casualties without back injury do not always need stretcher support and, with increasing use of smaller helicopters, there is less available stretcher space on board. The new bag has attachment points, a safety rig for winching and a non-slip rubberised base – all excellent developments. The plan is to make 6 or 7, one for each region, which can then be circulated round the teams for a couple of years for use and feedback.

PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS

Following the popularity of the Sunday session in May 2000 at Plas-y-Brenin, it has been suggested that several medical scenarios could be usefully demonstrated eg. pain relief, IM injections and splintage. Careful marshalling would ensure a hands on approach.

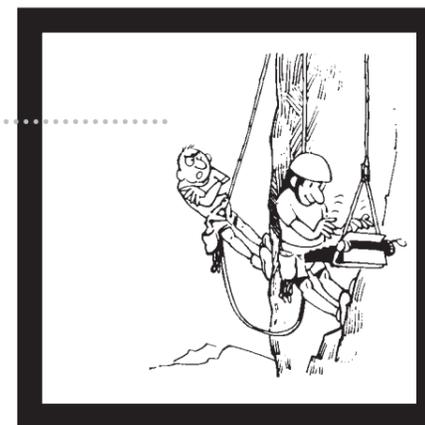
If you don't know how to use it... don't get it out!...

Your mother might not have told you this, but when it comes to defibs, it's good advice! To quote the Chairman again, "These things are spreading like chickenpox", with more and more teams keen to put them in their vehicles. However, in the light of the legal action against the St John Ambulance, and increasing public awareness of the issue, MR teams need to beware of the implications. You don't **have** to have a defib but if you do – you absolutely have to know how to use it!

CAN'T YOUR ARTICLE WAIT
TILL WE GET TO THE TOP?

Editor's Note.

Articles carried in the MRC News do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the MRC... nor the Editor, for that matter. (What do I know? I'm accused of having designer mud on my Meinds...)



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FOR STUART

Stuart Hulse, until recently Team Leader of the Langdale Ambleside Team, is to receive the Award in recognition of his dedication to MR over many years. Stuart has not been too well lately and we all wish him a speedy recovery.



brokers. In the event of a claim, or potential claim, you should inform the MRC Treasurer, David Little (*not* the insurance company) as soon as possible after the incident – QBE require notification within 7 days. Teams must operate within the scope of the insurance document in order to be covered. This may require the MRC to establish protocols for the management of certain conditions eg. fractured ankle. Doctors are excluded from the policy as they carry their own professional cover. Paramedics are covered by the policy when off-duty, provided they work within the scope of the document.

CASUALTY CARE EXAM

By 2004, individual team members **must** hold the MRC Casualty Care Certificate – no other qualification is acceptable – in order to be eligible for MRC insurance cover. The exam will no longer test competence in CPR, which is to be assessed prior to the exam as an entry requirement – the basic requirements for team membership (ABC

assessment, basic CPR, how to arrest bleeding and the use of the radio for medical messages) should be assessed by team doctors.

An educationally sound rubric is to be written for the multiple choice question (MCQ) paper, consisting of 10 extended matching questions followed by 38 MCQs with a total mark out of 200. Candidates are to complete the matching questions first, the papers will then be collected and the remaining 38 questions given out. The time allowed will be 10 and 50 minutes respectively, with no negative marking and a 60% passmark, papers marked by the external examiner.

For the practical exam, standard marking proformas for medical and trauma scenarios are to be used with candidates taking one of each. Unsafe approach or unsafe practice could mean an immediate fail. Each scenario should take about 15 minutes to complete and candidates may ask other colleagues to assist, for example with a log roll. A bit of local fine-tuning of scenarios may also be required. If both the practical and the MCQ are failed, no resit will be allowed for one year. If one part is failed, a team member may resit that part between 3 to 6 months of the exam date. However, should they

fail again, a complete resit must be undertaken after 12 months, using a different external examiner.

RIGGING FOR RESCUE WEEKEND COURSE 2001

Run by Rigging for Rescue course director, Kirk Mauthner, assisted by Bill Batson (Chief Instructor RAF Mountain Rescue), Mike Margeson (MRC Equipment Officer & Furness MRT Team Leader) and Pete Barnes (Millom MRT Deputy Team Leader & Training Officer), this residential course will take place the weekend of 27/28/29 July, at a venue yet to be confirmed. Guests will be Pete Bell (Bell Stretchers) and Ade Scott (Technical Rescue Magazine). There will be 2 course places per region. Rigging for Rescue offers a ropework seminar that is renowned for its focus on applying the critical thinking and systems

analysis skills required to competently incorporate ropework and rigging into effective rescue systems. The weekend will include practical and solid theory-based sessions, the material for which is normally a 5-day programme. A clear, open and receptive mind is essential. It is hoped that course members will go away and review their current thinking and practice, and then cascade information down to the teams through regional training days. This is a unique opportunity to experience some of the theories and practice recognised across North America as being at the forefront of rope rescue and good practice. Further details of Rigging for Rescue programmes and work can be found on their website – www.riggingforrescue.com or by contacting Mike Margeson on mmargeson@aol.com

SEARCH MANAGEMENT COURSES 2001

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS

Saturday 1 – Monday 3 September
 Cost £275 Residential
 £170 Non Residential

1ST SEARCH MANAGEMENT

Tuesday 4 – Saturday 8 September
 Cost £450 Residential
 £280 Non Residential

2ND SEARCH MANAGEMENT

Sunday 9 – Thursday 13 September
 Cost £450 Residential
 £280 Non Residential

As in previous years it is hoped to make a part return of fee to volunteer teams dependent on grant aid and the take up of places.
 For further details, contact Dr Anthony Jones (MRC Vice Chairman) or Peter Howells (MRC Assistant Secretary)

LAKE DISTRICT

DAILY EXPRESS ON SKIDDAW

An eye-catching story in the Daily Express, Tuesday, January 2 talked of two foolish and ungrateful rock climbers snubbing their heroic rescuers before inviting readers to contact the newsdesk with the identity of 'Britain's most selfish climbers'. Sadly, the tale their reporter told would appear to be a very long way from the truth, as those actually involved in the incident can testify.

On New Year's Eve, when the entire country had already had a generous dose of winter weather and further blizzards were forecast nationally, there were MR teams involved in recovering lost souls from diabolical conditions everywhere. In the Lake District alone, seven teams were out in the afternoon, plus RAF Stafford, covering about 6 incidents.

The two men in question climbed Skiddaw in worsening weather, eventually finding that conditions were so severe that they went to ground 100 metres from the summit, at 930 metres. They raised the alarm by mobile phone but were then out of range for the next couple of hours. **Keswick MRT** eventually spoke to them about 10 minutes before finding them and asked them to shout. Conditions were so severe, with extreme wind and blown ice crystals that, crawling up to the cairn which sheltered them, it was impossible to either see or hear them until they were literally alongside. Actually getting to them was not easy. The only way to move was in scrums of three members. When they reached the men, all that could be done was get the hell out of it. Downwind. Already, one of the casualties had lost both his gloves trying to open a bivvy bag when it acted like a sail and tore the gloves right off. During the course of the rescue, several items of equipment were lost, including a stretcher and two headguards. The stretcher was only located three days later.

The two men were told that unless they got out of it then, they would die. They were dragged down the mountain. People got off the mountain the way they were blown. There was little alternative. Many members said afterwards that they had been frightened for their own lives – a very rare phenomenon. Everyone involved listed numerous bruises the next day.

As to the allegedly 'ungrateful climbers' they did say thank you and that their rescuers were all heroes. And the team did get their names and addresses as routine. They

realised what an epic it had been for all involved and that, but for their phone, they would have died.

The same day that the Daily Express reported the incident, the Keswick website home page made it absolutely clear that the team in no way wished to be associated with the 'story'. *"..what was certainly a difficult rescue has generally been well reported. We are disappointed that the Daily Express has chosen to sensationalise in this case, without due regard for the feelings of the two casualties or the views of the rescuers."*

You can only speculate as to why the paper chose to report it in the way they did...

STOP PRESS FROM KESWICK...

Two climbers on Aspirant, a winter climb on Great End, found the almost totally buried body of a man. In his late 60's, he had gone missing in Borrowdale in September prompting a search which involved 153 rescuers from 11 MRTs at one stage, including 17 search dogs and a helicopter – 3390 man hours expended. The discovery brings to an end a four month mystery. At least the family can now come to terms.

MISSING ANGLER WASHED UP AFTER COASTAL SEARCH

In August, **Furness MRT** were involved in the wide scale search for Barrow fisherman, Michael Jackson, reported missing in the Morecambe Bay area, during a night of very poor conditions and winds reaching 35 mph. Lancashire Police, the team, helicopters from RAF Valley, Coastguards from Walney, Millom and Arnside, and Lifeboats and inshore craft from both Barrow and Fleetwood carried out an extensive search of the shoreline but failed to find either the missing man or his 16 foot day boat. His body was washed ashore some two days later.

RAMBLERS CLASH WITH NUDISTS

Not, I'm afraid quite what you might imagine with Brasher-shod walkers taking on the naked ones in fierce hand to... er, hand... combat. No, this is about a right of way issue near **Millom**.

Apparently, a naturist camping and caravan site is situated on the outskirts of Haverigg village, slap bang next to a public right of way which was never reinstated after the area was strewn with mines and closed down during the war.

Now the local Ramblers Association and the

County Council have applied to have the two mile path reinstated as a right of way. Horrified naturists are concerned that passing walkers will peek into the site and are fighting gamely to hang on to their modesty.

A member of the Lakeland Outdoor Club reportedly said, "We just want the right to strip off and enjoy the quiet and solitude. If every Tom, Dick or Harry is allowed to come through, it will mean the end of our club." Could make for interesting call outs though...

MID PENNINE

BODY FOUND AFTER THREE YEAR SEARCH

The three year mystery of missing milkman, Colin Patchett, was finally solved in July last year, with the discovery of his body by a farmer rounding up his sheep on moorland near Coldwell Reservoir, Lancashire, close to the spot where he was last seen.

Rosendale SRT was called to assist with the retrieval of the remains. Mr Patchett, who had apparently threatened and attempted suicide on several occasions and was believed to be suicidal when he vanished, was identified by dental records, but no cause of death was established.

Since his initial disappearance in early November 1997 the team had been called to search on two or three occasions, most recently in November 1999, when Lancashire Police identified new search areas.

On a lighter note, some dismay was expressed that CPR had not been given and that there was no obvious use of the team's latest gizmo, the pulse oximeter. A hurriedly scheduled lecture to drive home these medical training messages, and other chest matters was, unfortunately, brought to an abrupt halt by the pagers – but, doubtless, there will be more...

SEARCH FOR SCHOOLGIRL SWEEP INTO RIVER

Rosendale SRT were called in to help Lancashire and Yorkshire Police, and CRO, in the search for missing Hannah Black, one of two girls swept into the flood swollen River Ribble at Stainforth Beck while out walking on a school adventure trip. The body of her friend had already been recovered 5 miles away. Still hopeful of finding Hannah alive, the 21 team members searched for fourteen hours, without success. Her body was finally discovered three weeks after the accident.

HOLME VALLEY WIN GRANTS

The **Holme Valley** team has been awarded grants of £3,000 from Lloyds TSB and £5,000 from the Millennium Fund.

TEAM MEMBERS RECOGNISED BY POLICE FOR BRAVERY

Three members of **Calder Valley SRT** have been awarded commendations by the Divisional Police Commander in recognition of their actions in saving a man's life.

The 37 year old had gone missing, stating he was depressed and intent on suicide, but at 4.30am, police received a mobile phone call from him asking for help. The calls were broken and he sounded in poor condition, but he mentioned Rishworth reservoir, one of five in the area. It was dark, very wet and cold and he wanted to get out. Mick Smith got to the scene to find officers asking the man to splash but the acoustics and geese on the water made him difficult to locate. They were also having problems with their torches. He was eventually found, non-coherent, holding by his hands onto a rock escarpment which overhung the water, some 10-12 feet below – very difficult to see or reach. Mick climbed down the rock and traversed to him via ledges under the deep water, reaching him just as he appeared to relax and slide off the face into the reservoir. Bodily dragged back onto the rock and onto his feet – he was hypothermic and had evidently been drinking – he was held trapped against the rock face until John Howe and Andy Milner arrived to help set up ropes and security, and muster the troops in double time – there was none to



L to R John Howe, Mick Smith, Andy Milner & Neville Sharpe

lose. As other team members and the doc arrived, the by now semi-conscious casualty was hauled up the face by Mick and Andy. Then all three were hauled directly up, with the man dragged by the harness to level ground. Taken by helicopter to Halifax, he made a full recovery.

Another testimonial to the mobile phone. A lucky man – and, without doubt, had he not

managed to recall the exact reservoir, he would have drowned.

IS IT SOMETHING IN THE WATER ?

The cold light of day proved lucky for another two casualties last August with the **Calder** team called to an urgent evacuation from Studley Pike early one morning. A heart pounding climb through the mist to clear skies on the top revealed a tent and two lads, who it transpired were doing the Pennine Way in a week (!). Whilst cooking their breakfast at 6.30am they were confronted by a man, covered in blood, asking for help. Apparently, he and his partner had attempted suicide the previous night by taking pills and slashing their wrists. Having woken still in the land of the living, they now wanted help. With mist now shrouding the Pike, both Xray 99 and the RAF were scrambled, and the casualties evacuated, no doubt chastened by the experience. As to the two lads – one heck of a start to the day.

PEAK DISTRICT

BUXTON TEAM STRIKES OIL IN DOVE HOLES

Phase 2 of Project 2000, rebuilding their operational base, hit a couple of setbacks for **Buxton MRT** last year. Before plans were submitted, they were already aware of a 33,000 volt cable lying in the way, which Norweb had agreed to move free of charge. By summer, the discovery of two rather large stainless steel pipes directly under the planned building presented further problems. What the pipes are has not been identified but, according to local history, there used to be a petrol storage dump in Dove Holes and the pipes may well have served that depot. The team's architect is confident that a way round the situation can be found, although convincing the driver of the JCB may be a little more difficult! With a new base on top of 33,000 volt cable and a few thousand gallons of petrol, Buxton seem set to enter the new millennium with a bang!

It is hoped that a new start on construction can be made in March.

LAND ROVER DEDICATION

Kinder MRT have dedicated their new Land Rover to the memory of Peter Andrew, the late team doctor, better known to many as PDMRO controller (and Chairman for three years) and, of course, MRC President. A ceremony on Saturday, December 9 was

attended by most of the team along with honorary members and Gaynor Andrew, Peter's wife, and his two sons. There were also several local dignitaries, including Martin Doughty, leader of Derbyshire CC and Chair of Peak District National Park Authority, John Bull, County Councillor for Glossop South and Chair of Peak District National Authority Planning Committee, Sarah Clarke, Chair of Hayfield Parish Council, George Wolfe, Secretary of the Clutterbuck Trust, a sponsor of the team and several members of the New Mills Bonfire and Carnival Committee.



Kinder MRT new vehicle

PENNINE WAY ABSEIL

Back in early 2000, **Oldham MRT** set the challenge of a sponsored abseil down the Pennine Way Hotel, Oldham, on Sunday, 10 September and what a response they got ! 120 people applied with 90 actually taking part on the day – and none backing out – and by 4.45pm they had just over £9,000 pledged.

So far they have collected nearly £8,000, with an expected £3,000 still to come in. A fantastic result from all participants. A number of people got match funding from their employers and one lady, not happy at being beaten for the most collected, went right back out and collected a further £150, making her total a staggering £500.



Rope skills also came in useful when one of the team overheard discussions in Saddleworth Church about repainting the clock faces and asked if the team could assist in any way. Many months later, on a wet and miserable October Saturday, they were dangling off ropes, scraping off the old

loose paint before repainting. A brighter Sunday saw a second coat of black paint, ready for the Oldham 'clock man' to gild the numbers and hands.

NORTH EAST

VAN AERIAL DISEASE

It has come to light that an outbreak of van aerial disease has been reported in the **Teesdale & Weardale** area. The incidence of this particular strain of virus usually occurs during forward or reverse movement into a restricted space, often with low overhead facilities... Whilst the outbreak is clearly very worrying for the Equipment Officer involved, and will no doubt be entered into the vehicle casualty log, he can probably rest assured that this is not an isolated case. The last year has seen similar reports coming in from across the regions.

In the Mid-Pennine region, a team doctor was forced to perform an emergency mud-flapectomy, without anaesthetic, when the vehicle body part in question "just came off in his hands". Across the country, teams have reported abrasions and disfigurements which suddenly appear overnight with no apparent cause and no preliminary symptoms.

But in the face of adversity, there is creativity. In the Peak District, a complaint commonly known as 'a windscreen full of dead flies' was quickly remedied by the express delivery order of some, presumably, more robust live ones and a chronic case of 'inoperative interior courtesy light' in a team vehicle was soon remedied by the judicious use of the ON switch. So fear not Teesdale. You are not alone...

NORTH WALES

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

At a recent meeting of the NWMRA in Bangor, a police representative outlined the possible implications of the new Human Rights Act for mountain rescue teams. It would appear that the police are going to investigate all mountain fatalities as possible criminal situations. The first to be treated in this way was the fatality on Tryfan Bach. It would seem that Ogwen were interviewed at great length. What it will mean is a much closer inspection and report of the incident site, photographs and so on, and a much tighter control of paperwork.

SOUTH EAST

RAY MEARS OPENS NEW RESCUE POST IN NORTH DEVON

On Saturday, 21 October 2000 **Exmoor SRT** officially opened their new centre in Barnstaple with Ray Mears, TV's Extreme Outdoor Survival expert and President of NSARDA, on hand for the day. Until recently, the team vehicles had been kept at the President's home, in a large paddock and stable area but, due to a property move, something more permanent had to be done to survive.

The Open Day helped to raise community awareness of the team's work as well as much needed funds. Although not having been in the position of needing to be rescued as yet, Ray said that he was "more than aware of the vital role played by rescue teams throughout the UK." The team covers an area from Bude to Hinkley Point and inland via Holsworthy, Tiverton, Taunton and Bridgewater.



L to R Ray Mears, Pam Stapleton, Dave Humphries and Storm

NEXT ISSUE...

The next issue of MRC News will be out in Summer but the information gathering will continue throughout the year. You can send articles, news items, photographs, anecdotes, letters... complaints even... hard copy or disc (in Microsoft Word/Quark XPress format for copy and JPEGs/Photoshop EPS or TIFF for scans, please) to the editors

Judy Whiteside & Andy Simpson

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Worsley, Manchester, M28 1UG

via telephone/fax on **0161 702 6080**

or via email to

newsletter@mountain.rescue.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you...

Training and Equipment Seminar, Plas-y-Brenin, May 2000

Successful responses to incidents are based upon realistic training in search and rescue skills together with the appropriate application of well-maintained equipment. Training and Equipment officers need to see beyond the limited horizons of team parochialism, which is why 50 members, representing 21 teams, got a refreshing buzz from this interactive gathering.

A Round Robin of four activity bases were visited in close proximity to the splendid National Mountaineering Centre – Lowering Systems, run by Bill Batson and Jason Taylor of the RAF; Marsupium (for single person recovery), run by Julian Carradice and his Wasdale MRT; Belay Systems, run by Plas-y-Brenin Chief Instructor Ollie Saunders; Vacuum Mattress, run by Tony Jones and Ted Burton, under the guidance of David Allan.

After initial tutoring, all members practiced the hands-on skills and, at some stage during the day, everyone did learn something new. From the organisers' view the most worthwhile aspect was the large-scale gathering of like minds eager to share experiences which would benefit their respective teams.

Peter Smith · Jim Davies · Mike Margeson

Party Leaders Course, Bangor, September 2000

The crux position during an incident is that of the Fell Party Leader who has to interpret the wishes of the Incident Controller, and to do so out there where the going is tough and getting tougher. Saving life and reducing the suffering of the casualty involves motivating your Party to search, treat and recover those at risk, without compromising the well being of your Party members. Some are born to the job. Some are allowed to learn by trial and error. Most of us find the prospects quite daunting and prefer to be tutored through the techniques.

This course, crafted by the Mid-Pennine SRO, requires prospective Party Leaders to manage a succession of realistic practical scenarios, in a training situation. Confidence in the ability to be Party Leader grows and grows with practice. Planning ahead, deciding strategies, coherent briefing, giving orders, delegation, additional resources, recording, reporting back, etcetera, became second nature for the 22 participants drawn from teams across the UK. An international cast of Course Instructors combined the roles of lecturers, demonstrators and mentors.

We know that most members now feel better equipped to be a Party Leader. What we hope is that more regions will now use this course as a basis for their own regional courses.

Peter Smith · Jonathan Whiting

27 nations returned to Europe, this time to Merano in the South Tyrol, Italy, for IKAR 2000. Our presence at these events is important – putting us firmly on the MR map. The central European stranglehold is gradually breaking!

Practical demonstrations and visits included rescues from chairlifts and cable cars, helicopter demonstrations, visits to the local SAR Coordination Centre (which handles a stunning 2000 medical emergencies each month) a visit to the local rescue helicopter hangar and to the local SAR Training Centre. A packed five day itinerary. The four main Commissions comprise Terrestrial Rescue, Avalanche Rescue, Air Rescue and Mountain Emergency Medicine.

In the Terrestrial Commission alone, 40 delegates, from 19 countries heard various accounts of rescues. In the Polish Tatra, a soldier had died and another suffered from severe hypothermia in an expedition involving 30 soldiers. Chamonix recounted problems when three helicopters from different countries attended incidents when local resources were stretched and the co-ordination became problematical on different VHF radio frequencies. In Gondo, Switzerland, a mudslide had left 13 dead. Slides and video of the

catastrophe were presented. In the Brig-Zermatt valley, 14 km of railway had been swept away. The entire infrastructure of communications, including telephone and radio, had been severely disrupted.

The use, or should that be misuse, of mobile phones is now being felt in the Chamonix Valley. Does IKAR need to address this? An account of the progress of the MRC/LDSAMRA GPS-GIS Project was presented. Other members suggested looking at the Garmin NavTrek II phone, due for release in Austria in 2001. (Late 2001 in the UK). Some users can rely on GSM for data transmission; others, radio networks. The whole concept as a potential search tool is new to most delegates.

The Avalanche Commission was attended by 40 delegates. An update on Avalanche Detection Beacon Standards was presented. The new standard is (pr) EN 300718. Apparently, 150 million mobile phones are being made annually but only 60,000 avalanche beacons. There is, understandably, inadequate R&D being applied to beacons. A total of 150 avalanche victims were recorded, over half of which had been in cross country incidents. There was no reliable data yet available from Canada.

The Air Rescue Commission recalled various incidents of interest. Thankfully, these had been fewer than in the previous year. A visit had been made to the Agusta factory to see the A109 Power, and various delegates made miscellaneous presentations. Questions were asked about the feasibility of aerial avalanche detection and of aerial mobile phone detection.

The Medical Commission discussed a lot of canyoning medicine. They intend to produce a medical book and were seeking sponsors. The new MRC Cas Care Handbook was of great interest! There was also much discussion, inconclusive, on the best treatment for frostbite.

A sad and sobering note entered the proceedings when an Austrian delegate announced news of the Kaprun funicular disaster during a session. The Commission stood in silence.

Finally, the IKAR website has received 86,133 hits from over 5,000 visitors. 345 articles and documents have been processed through the site. Anyone wishing to access for private MR use can do so. Username is ikarreader, password is hochfirst and the site address is

<http://www.ikar-cisa.org>

IKAR statistics can be viewed under Publications. IKAR 2001 will be in Croatia.

GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM (GPS) & GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS)

This topic was introduced as a miscellaneous item at the 1999 Commission in Sonthofen, Germany. A brief paper on the subject has been on the IKAR website since then.

In England, until a year ago, we have been looking at a system which used GPS data to track, in real time, the movements of a rescuer on the mountain, or in wild country. The prototype used a normal GPS receiver (with data port available). This was connected to a device rather like a computer modem and this, in turn, was connected to a transceiver radio. This rather clumsy arrangement of components could be programmed to transmit data back to the rescue control centre at predetermined intervals, and with the rescuer's individual ID and position.

At the control centre, the received data was fed into the serial port of a computer with GIS mapping software. The movements of the rescuers could then be seen, in real time, on the computer screen. The routes taken could be plotted with 'snail trails', with each rescuer identified in a different colour. Clicking on any rescuer on the computer screen could bring up specific data about that person – whether he had the stretcher, ropes etcetera, and whether he was a doctor or paramedic, and so on.

We saw great potential in this system for improving the management of searches, in particular, and in providing documentation to show evidence of the way in which areas have been searched. However, the project came to a halt a year ago for two reasons.

1. The accuracy of GPS data was not then considered to be accurate, reliable or helpful enough. However, since then, as we all know, Selective Availability has been lifted and GPS accuracy has been greatly improved – to an acceptable level.
2. We could not find anyone who would be prepared to develop this idea into an acceptable unit, which would be robust, weatherproof and at the right price. Perhaps the removal of Selective Availability will stimulate the development of GPS usage?

An American device, which will do a similar job, has appeared on the Internet. About the size of a mobile phone, it collects GPS data and transmits it via the GSM network to a control centre with GIS mapping software. The device which we trialled in England used transceiver radios in the low band VHF range, although it would work on any frequency. A device that could use either system should be possible. We are committed to researching this further, seeing its application as a most useful tool in search and rescue. Perhaps other commission delegates already have experience of this technology? Perhaps a sharing of ideas can help with the development of this idea?

Paul Horder (Keswick MRT)

...AS I WALKED OUT ONE FINE SPRING MORNING...



...they came in search of paradise...

It was a Spring day in 1999. The first of the blossom falling like powder puffs over the now withered and rotted leaves of Autumn. The gentle breeze and wistful sunshine belied the coming menace. Fresh-faced lambs, tails clean and fluffy, gambolled carelessly on the newly greening grass... awaiting their fate. The tiptiptap of some two dozen sticks, echoed along the sleepy lanes.

They came here every weekend, well-creased guide books in well-thumbed flap and button pockets – though this was merely for effect, so trusting were they all of their leader, that they never looked for themselves.

Here and there, a badge or label, stitched lovingly into place, the legend Ramblers Club, Dun Smylenn Branch, glinting dustily in the Lake District sun.

And all of them, each set of knobbly knees, each pair of pale-fleshed pins, each puffy little ankle, tucked into their uniform, their identity – the red socks. They had to wear them. Some maybe even slept in them. To forget would be certain dishonour... expulsion. And not one would dare to contemplate a life beyond this. This reverent game of Follow-my-leader.

With increasing activity from walkers, horse riders, cyclists, motorcyclists and off-roaders (MR or otherwise) ...with claims that 'green laning' makes muddy morasses of footpaths and that off-roading simply should not take place at all...

Should MR team members be encouraged to practice in their own time, or should they stick to closed courses once or twice a year? What do you think?

Why not send your views to newsletter@mountain.rescue.org.uk ?

And it wasn't even that they particularly enjoyed it... their faces would betray them had that been the case. Their eyes might have sparkled with a diamond brightness as they drank in the beauty of the hills, the sweep of the valley, the haunting stillness of the lakes. Their cheeks might have glowed with the honest flush of a good day's walk, their hearts swollen with the joy of life and nature.

But all they saw was him. Their leader. His map was out... and his compass. On he marched, whistling here, barking instructions there, tapping his stick on the rocky pathway, with manic yet miserable enthusiasm, following each dot and contour on the folded paper in his hands, never actually seeing the surroundings... but merely following the map, mentally crossing each portion off as they covered it, another notch on the tired old bedpost, another tick on the rambling calendar.

This time they were up the back of Tarn Hows. The sign at the start of the track had been adamant – Road Not Suitable For Vehicles. Military Vehicles Prohibited. They were safe, cocooned in their misery.

Then they heard it. An almost imperceptible throaty rumble. Maybe it was thunder? The ground began to tremble, a sleeping giant awoken from a long slumber. Leaves skittered along as if by way of escape. Sheep stood frozen, willing their lambs to stay still, become invisible. A lone black crow flapped noisily from a bush, the bearer of news, dark messenger of the approaching storm.

Then, in seconds... an earth shattering cacophony split the air. Stones scattering, tyres crunching on the loosened

earth. Not one, not two, but four lumbering giants, roaring through the crisp May morning air. And inside, they were laughing! Imagine the impudence – the sheer bare-faced enjoyment! "Bloody Hell!" came the expletive, a lone rambler daring to speak. Bright faces, full of grins, eyes dancing with excitement, looked down on them. Laughter and shrieks, like spring water gurgling fresh and sparkling into the sheer light of day. And children! How could they bring them?

The frontrunners, distinctive in their red t-shirts, their grip confident on the wheel. "Scandalous!" spat another red sock, righteous indignation bristling from every pore. Then, as quickly as they had come, the four-wheeled aliens were gone.

As if a dream had been broken, they looked to their leader again, each one of them recomposing their face, hardening the downward curves of their mouth, shaking their head in stunned disbelief. They'd talk about it later, in the safety of their homes, and for years to come. Yet none really understood. None could truly explain what had taken place that day.

One brave soul did dare to venture that he had seen something. Something glinting yellow on the red left breast of each of the leaders... 'Mountain Rescue – Off Roaders'. But as none had ever heard of anything like this before, they could not even begin to imagine the enormity, the meaning...

But each knew in their heart, when alone in the gathering darkness of their rooms, red socks steaming on the radiator, that life in the Lake District might never be the same again...

Rossendale SRT



...skinny dipping with clothes on...

Behind the scenes at Conference 2000

No matter how much planning you do for an event of this magnitude there are always the unexpected events...

Fuel Crisis – What Fuel Crisis?

The last few weeks to the climax of the Conference, life became very hectic, to say the least. It was easy to become insular to what was going on in the outside world, watching no television and reading no newspapers. So, having arrived at Lancaster, I was surprised to take a phone call on the Friday evening from a team member that they couldn't attend because of not being able to get fuel. As I hung up the phone, I thought "What a classic excuse! Could they not come up with something better?" – even saying this to a member of the same team later in the evening. Only on Sunday did I become aware that Britain was in the midst of The Fuel Crisis.

Usually the Conference is held the weekend after, by which time the shortage of petrol was really taking its grip on the nation. That would have had dire results, especially since a group of people had given a large chunk of time over a year to put together this special event.

Overseas Speakers

There's an old adage amongst actors – never work with children or animals. To this I can add – watch out for overseas speakers.

These included three of our friends from across the Atlantic – Steve White, Jim Segerstrom and Don Cooper.

Steve arrived body and soul with us on the Thursday but his bags had a trip to Istanbul. There he was, standing in the only clothes he had. Next to strike him was his computer blowing but this, we gained the impression, was a frequent occurrence. Though he must have been mortified, less than 24 hours in the UK, bags gone missing, computer blown up, he never let on. He took it all in his stride and I heard that he did a fascinating talk.

As for our second speaker, Jim Segerstrom, instead of his bags going missing – he went missing. We heard on the jungle drums that he'd missed his flight from San Francisco and was now arriving on Saturday morning.

I'll let you into a little secret – if you want someone to do something for you, the art is to ask them when they've had a few drinks. Even if they refuse, you can always tell them next morning that they said yes – can't really lose! It was three days to go to the start of the Conference and no opening speaker – Don Cooper came to the rescue. Don and I have an agreement – if I speak in the States he checks the lingo and vice versa. Topsy in the early hours of Saturday morning, there I was reading his speech, and the very same joke I had used in the States was there. In case you missed it – there are three differences between Americans and Brits – we speak English they

don't, if we have a World Series we invite the rest of the world and if you meet our Head of State, you only have to go down on one knee...

Rooms Glorious Rooms

The evolution of e-mail rather than slow-mail was a tremendous benefit for communication, in every circumstance but one.

On the Friday, Lancaster gave us a copy of the room listing, produced from the spreadsheet we had e-mailed to them, but it was now very different. To them it might have been a minor change but, to us, it had huge consequences – they had resorted the spreadsheet alphabetically and then allocated the rooms. This meant that team members were dispersed all over the campus. Three hours to go before registration and Eve and I had to reallocate 500 people to rooms. This may sound easy but there were medical conditions... the calculation of size of teams to number of rooms to buildings... in some buildings, we were only using some of the rooms...

Time was counting down and, with the registration staff waiting there with bated breath, we were able to deliver a sorted list with a few minutes to spare.

Well, it's now 2001. All the countries have agreed on a 2002 UK Conference to take place in Edinburgh. I, personally, feel that those two days were a big step forward in Mountain Rescue history. I hope you will be back for more and maybe I will even meet some of you.

Maybe I can leave you with a thought... If you can remain calm while those around you are in a blind panic then you have obviously failed to realise the seriousness of the situation!

Penny Brockman

PAULx2

The idea of this column is to keep you up to date with the MRC Internet Group – part of the Publications and Information Sub-Committee – whose task is to develop Internet facilities for the MRC. The areas covered include email, news and discussion groups and the world wide web.

One of the first things that people use when they go on the Internet is email – a very powerful messaging system that allows you to send not just simple text messages but also images, sound and other information. An email address is in two parts separated by an @ sign. The first part says who you are, the second where you live. The email system works rather like a pigeonhole system – when you send a message to someone it is taken to the set of pigeonholes specified by the part of the address after the @ and put in the pigeonhole with the name in front of the @ sign. When you connect to the Internet for email, you download any messages waiting for you in your own pigeonhole.

Passing messages from one person to another is useful but there are other facilities that make email even more powerful. You can forward email from one address to another – this allows you to have messages sent to a number of logical addresses like info@muggins.com and secretary@muggins.com and you can receive them all by just checking one email

address. You can also set up email broadcast groups. These allow you to set up a single email address and, if a message is sent to it, it will automatically be sent to everyone in that group.

MR people have been using email for quite a long time and, in fact, it played a vital role in organising the last Conference. One of its largest problems is that addresses for the 'formal' contact for MR Teams are constantly changing, making it an unrealistic option for widespread use. Fortunately, there's a way round the problem – the MRC is now issuing formal email addresses for key posts in the MRC and one for each Team. These addresses have the form team@mountain.rescue.org.uk (e.g. keswickmrt@mountain.rescue.org.uk)

Any mail sent to these addresses is then forwarded to the appropriate person's own email address, this means that it will no longer be necessary for everyone to try to keep track of changes in email addresses. It will be done centrally and a list of all the addresses can be found on the MRC website. Clearly, the email address of the contact point will need to be updated from time to time but it should be possible for teams to do this themselves on-line in a few months' time. If your team doesn't yet have its MRC address your official contact point should email webmaster@mountain.rescue.org.uk and request one.

Next issue we'll have a look at news and discussion groups and how to access the MRC groups.

Paul Baxendale

RESPONSE DRIVING

Sergeant Michael Dring, Police Driving Instructor for Humberside Police, covers a few of the common errors in response driving which may be of interest for MR teams

Driving too fast for the vehicle and road conditions

The secret is to remain well in control and not to place yourself under unnecessary pressure. If you are driving to your personal limit and that of your vehicle there is no room for error. All you save is seconds but you risk everything. Risk should not come into the equation. Remember, when you get to the scene you want to be fresh and in a calm frame of mind to make professional, well-balanced decisions based on the situation you face. If you and your colleagues have been thrown and bounced around in the vehicle en route, you will focus on the journey and not the job in hand.

Cutting right hand bends and cornering too fast

When driving faster than normal, there is a natural tendency to turn into right hand bends early. If the view of oncoming traffic is restricted, perhaps by drystone walls or trees, you risk colliding with the other vehicles in the centre of the road.

The best way to deal with bends is to get the speed down well before them rather than braking actually in the bend. This shifts the vehicle weight forwards, loading up the front and making the rear light which makes it unstable – with a Land Rover, a recipe for disaster.

Police drivers are taught the system of car control to deal with each hazard they approach. By employing it, you should always be in the correct position, at the correct speed and in the correct gear. When approaching a right hand bend with no cross view –

1. Position nearside.
2. Set correct speed for bend – always ensure you can stop safely in the distance you can see.
3. Match gear to engine speed.
4. Drive around the outside of the bend – don't cut.

You are now in the correct position at the

correct speed and in the correct gear to deal with the bend safely. This means nothing can surprise you. You have removed the element of risk before you entered the bend.

Driving too close to people with siren and lights deployed

Try this quick experiment. Stand upright and get a colleague to stand behind you as close as he or she can without physically touching you. Stay in this position without saying anything for one minute. Think about how this makes you feel. Now think about how you would have felt if your colleague had been repeatedly shouting in your ear, "Get out of the way!"

If this doesn't make you feel uncomfortable and nervous, I would be surprised. The effect you have on car drivers is much the same and can cause all sorts of reactions. Nervous drivers may stand on their brakes. Some may be angered by what you do and make it difficult for you to pass. Remember, the use of emergency equipment does not grant you the freedom to do what you wish. It is purely to warn people of your presence. What you want to achieve is their assistance to help you get by – for this you have to be polite and ask the question.

Wherever possible, position towards the centre of the road so that the car you are catching and any oncoming traffic can see you. Wait for the reaction. Don't move up until you can see that the driver is making an attempt to pull over. Only then should you move up and overtake. If in doubt – HANG BACK!!!

Pushing people only leads to complaints and the chance of running into the back of members of the public. If you have an accident, you won't get to the emergency and you waste other resources which have to be deployed to deal with your accident.

Inappropriate use of sirens and lights

There are times when the use of emergency equipment will actually slow you down – the road layout is very twisty or narrow, and full of double white line systems which make overtaking dangerous. If you come up behind traffic and it is obviously going to be difficult to overtake, think about what will happen if you keep your equipment on. The public will try to help, but the only way they know how is to stop or slow. They won't think twice about stopping on a bend, making it impossible for you to overtake safely. Sometimes, it's quicker to switch off

Attitude

The essential ingredient in response driving is the correct frame of mind – positive attitude. If we allow negative attitudes to build up they affect not only our physical performance and coordination, but also our decision-making ability. The professional will remain calm and relaxed. If you allow the drive to become a personal challenge, you will tense up and feel under pressure. This will lead to rash decision making and even aggressive acts. You will blame others who you feel are thwarting your efforts – for example, the driver in front who won't get out of the way. The minute you start blaming others, you are losing self control and your concentration is becoming focussed away from the actual job at hand.

Remember, always drive with at least 10% in reserve. This relieves the pressure and allows you to remain calm, safe and always under control. The net effect is you always get from A to B and when you get there, you are still in a calm, positive state of mind – and so are your colleagues. There is nothing worse than sitting in a vehicle that is being driven too fast along bumpy lanes. It is frightening, causes animosity between colleagues and, for some, motion sickness. Think about what you actually lose timewise by taking a bend 5-10 mph slower than the vehicle's limit – fractions of seconds. Ask yourself, is it worth the risk? The answer is simple – NO. Not if you are professional.

Thanking the public

Often forgotten, but invaluable. The public try to help but, as I have said several times, they might not always do what you want. Remember, it is not their fault. You must take responsibility, as it is you who is asking for assistance, even if they don't do what you want.

If they hold you up, it is down to you using your equipment incorrectly. You are the one causing the problem because you want to get by. So say "Thank you" with a polite wave. Saying thanks leaves them with a warm feeling inside. They are more likely to help again in the future and less likely to complain if you have done anything wrong.

Remember, we all rely on the cooperation of the public. Negative publicity can damage this.

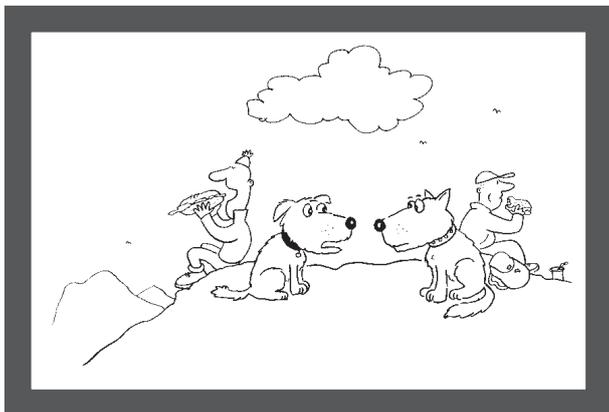
Missing Persons Behaviour Study

The Millennium Conference saw the launch of a study into Missing Persons Behaviour which has been more than two years in the making. Search and Rescue bodies in the UK and Ireland were encouraged to join in what can only be a worthwhile and life saving piece of research.

For many years, Search Management Courses have been promoting the use of such statistics as a management tool in search operations. Armed with the information, search managers can target limited resources with a greater chance of success. Operations can be concluded in a shorter time, to the benefit of both the search subject and the searchers.

Statistics currently available originate from the USA and Canada – where society and environment are sufficiently similar to the UK and Ireland to enable the data to be used to good effect. However, there are some differences not reflected in the data. Also, search manuals recommend that each country collect its own information – only then can such tools become more robust.

Ged Feeney, MRC Statistics Officer and organiser of the study, comments, “We are looking to collect data that is both up to date and relevant to the circumstances found in the UK. Using a single form, or simple computer programme, this can be collected and collated centrally. Search teams in the UK and Ireland will be able to access and reassess the raw data as developments are made, giving it even greater relevance.”



... MINE'S THE TUNA MAYO ON BROWN, NEW BOY...

New Dogs on the Hill... watch out for your butties...

SARDA has been undertaking national training for nearly thirty years and January has been a busy time with assessments taking place in England and Wales.

Assessors for the courses came from all over the UK and, following intensive multi-day assessment, congratulations to the following people who have reached initial grade:

Brian Alport (Northumberland), Matt Robertson (Dartmoor), Shamus McCaffrey (Dartmoor), Helen Morton (Mid-Pennine), Pete Shaw (Mid-Pennine), Malc Bowyer (Peak District), Dave Coss (Peak District), Mark Hall (RAF Stafford), Shaun Murphy (South Wales) and Dave Parfitt (South Wales). Marcus Griffiths (North Wales) passed his assessment in November.

The following reached full grade:

Kevin Stead (Yorkshire Dales), Izzie Manning (Peak District), Dave Marsh (Mid-Pennine).

Paul Baxendale SARDA (England)

Not more committees...

A look at the new UK Search & Rescue Strategic Committee with Superintendent Bernard Kershaw (ACPO)

While life, for many, may seem to be ruled by an endless round of committee meetings, often with little or nothing to show for all the talking, it may come as something of a surprise to find enthusiasm for yet another set of committees. But these are new and, in dealing with search and rescue as a whole for the first time ever, provide a real opportunity for the voice of mountain rescue to be heard at government level.

Over the last 3 years, representatives from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Ministry of Defence, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the RNLI and the Fire and Rescue Service, along with the MRC's own Tony Jones, have been toiling away to create a new structure. The aim has been to create clear channels of communication, from the grass roots to the very top, allowing all the issues relating to search and rescue, whether on land, sea or air, to be dealt with in a coherent way.

The newly created United Kingdom Search and Rescue Strategic Committee is an interagency forum with responsibility for advising on the structure, scope and framework of search and rescue. It is supported by the United Kingdom Search and Rescue Operators Group, on which the Mountain Rescue Council of England & Wales and the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland are represented, together with colleagues from the British Cave Rescue Council and the Association of Lowland Search and Rescue (ALSAR). This is the key committee in the new structure and is already driving forward work on a national framework document and a review of search and rescue helicopter provision.

The importance of these committees cannot be underestimated. It has to be said that whilst relationships with ACPO, through their presence at committee meetings, has always been good, liaison with other agencies has often lacked a common forum. In particular, no proper interagency framework existed.

Representatives from MR teams are now sitting down beside colleagues from the Coastguard, the RAF and other agencies, to discuss matters of mutual interest and ensure that both the practicalities and difficulties of search and rescue, in all its manifestations, are properly considered.

To maximise the benefit of the new structure, there is much work yet to be done. Tony Jones, for example, will be leading on a communications sub-group which will eventually deal with all requests for access to the search and rescue channel, and other consultative groups will be formed. All in all, this can only be a positive move forward in ensuring that the views of the mountain rescue community and other specialist groups are properly heard.

With the prospect of such potential for the future on the table, this particular round of committee meetings should be far from boring...

