

MRC NEWS



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

ISSUE
JULY
2001
TWO

NEWS FROM THE MRC

Developments & discussions from MRC, May 2001

NEWS FROM ROUND THE REGIONS

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

VIEW FROM THE TOP TABLE

David Little talks about National Fundraising

THE OFF ROAD DEBATE CONTINUES

John Saxton, Cleveland SRT puts his point of view

NEW RESEARCH FROM SCOTLAND

Bob Sharp's Analysis of Mountain Accidents

F15-C CRASH ON BEN MACDUI

Report from Flt Lt John Dunn

CASUALTY CARE - AN EXPLANATION

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FOOT & MOUTH ROUND UP

A (very) brief look at how teams have been affected

MEET THE TOP TABLE

Who's who at the MRC

NATIONAL FUNDRAISING...

One small step for man...

They've cogitated, debated and speculated... and on Thursday 28 June, at about 9.00pm a landmark decision, the impact of which could forever change the face of Mountain Rescue in England and Wales, was unanimously agreed and minuted. Steps towards National Fundraising can now be taken... but not without reservations.

Urgent need

The issue of central funding has been on and off the agenda for quite some time – this current burst of activity dates back 4 years. Mountain Rescue wheels are slow to turn! Much has been achieved – insurance, casualty care, national training days, Team Leaders' and Team Doctors' meetings, equipment development – but the only way to ensure that these advances continue, or even that Mountain Rescue remains where it is now, is to attract more funding.

The meeting at Lancashire Police HQ, Hutton, was set at the MRC AGM when, asked to vote on whether to accept Peter Panteli's 'Sum of the Parts' report, several regions felt that insufficient time had been given for a full consideration. The weighty (quite literally) report, published in March, caused controversy from the off, with grumbings that it should have been more widely distributed. Its content raised serious questions over the employment of a dedicated fundraiser and the setting up of an office, and suggestions for a 'Mountain Rescue Brand', along with fears that a national focus might be to the detriment of some teams' ability to raise funds locally.

Difference of opinion across the country has, perhaps, highlighted the gap between the busy, high profile teams and the smaller teams on the fringes who find it less easy to raise money. Although it isn't only the smaller teams who are 'on the fringes' – throughout England and Wales, teams have varied success with fundraising, irrespective of their size, largely dependent on their indigenous population and their ability to attract tourists.

In my region, Mid Pennine, the classic response is "Mountains? What mountains?.." before tripping along to the local RNLI to pop a pound in the box. Sea? What sea? And yet we

have some of the busiest teams in the country. Admittedly, not all the incidents involve dangling off crags but the search for missing youngsters, old people and injured casualties is nonetheless time-consuming and resource-guzzling. These casualties have an equal right to the best possible care, whether its through search and first aid training or state of the art equipment. It's worth noting that it was never intended that a national plan would eliminate the necessity for teams to 'rattle tins', but it might just allow a more efficient use of their time.

All that aside, Thursday evening saw a concensus on several points. The following statement was issued:-

The Council accepts that the report contains issues that are unacceptable to regions, teams and the Council. However, the Council feels that the report forms the basis for progress, governed by a Business Plan, (to be) created by the MRC. The meeting was happy to proceed on the basis of the points outlined by the Chairman. Namely, that no one was opposed to –

1. Central fundraising.
2. Fundraising for present commitments (eg. insurance, drugs etc.).
3. National training and meetings.
4. Research and development of equipment, and bulk purchasing initiatives.

There was also an acknowledged need for the regions to appoint suitable persons to the Finance Sub Committee, perhaps in addition to existing representatives, in order to create the required Business Plan and steer the National Fundraising initiative.

Steady evolution

Clearly, there is much to be done and there will, no doubt, be many challenging debates over the nitty gritty. The initial report assumed 'a steady evolutionary change over 5 years' and the key word here must be evolutionary. Nothing can ever stay completely as it always was. Times change, people change, the demands that are put on them change. Surely the way forward is through the very differences of opinion that have led to this very thought-provoking debate.

Judy Whiteside

ISSUE TWO

WELCOME TO ISSUE 2

MRC NEWS

NEXT ISSUE...

Issue 3 will be January 2002. 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** 8 Bridgefoot Close, Boothstown 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...

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

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Editor's Note

Articles carried in the MRC News do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the MRC.

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

Our Chairman has expressed the opinion that "we are healthy enough and have the ability to address the challenges of the future." Well, our first major challenge has arrived. Are we ready for it?... National Fundraising.

The MRC has, for more than 20 years, been urged to consider national fundraising. Despite regular discussions, it never received sufficient support to reverse our passive fundraising policy until recently. It was at the 1997 Derby Conference when the renewed call came from team members and this was echoed by opinions sought from around the country. It appeared that the time was right to try again. So, over the past 3 years, the Finance Sub Committee has been working slowly and carefully towards creating the opportunity for the MRC to take the final step.

I support the proposal to proceed because I believe that the long term well being of the whole of mountain rescue will be best served if we are able to take full advantage of national funding opportunities. However, I believe the recommendations

...AND ONE FROM THE EDITOR...

It was a real pleasure to hear how well received the newsletter was in most quarters (thanks to those who contributed) but there were, inevitably, those who thought we shouldn't have bothered or that it should have been posted on the Internet instead.

To those who thought we shouldn't have bothered, on the assumption that you're bothering to read this, I would only say that MR personnel are now, and will continue to be, better informed about the workings of the MRC and what's going on with teams around the country, than they have ever been.

Regarding the Internet, whilst not a technophobe, I do believe that there are several problems with that being the sole means of distribution, although I can't see any reason why the newsletter shouldn't be on the MRC website as well. The original Publications & Information Sub Committee decision to distribute as hard copies was

made will need some modification to sit more comfortably with our principles. The meeting on June 28 agreed that, whilst the principle of central fundraising was acceptable, we now need an appropriate Business Plan in order to move forward.

Naturally there are concerns about how MR will change, fundraising at local level, the effects on voluntary status, etc. Much time has already been spent by the Finance Sub Committee discussing these matters. Be assured that we, as team members, want to preserve and enhance the best of mountain rescue, as we currently know it. Uppermost in our minds is the strong ethos and proud traditions of unpaid voluntary service. So, our challenge will be to direct and manage change in a way that is acceptable to the membership and in the best interests of the casualties.

I expect, with co-operation from everyone, for us to be successful. This will mean that all teams benefit. We recognise that the management of such benefit is as equally important as managing the change. Therefore, we would plan this to be an evolving process, again based on the best of the present working system.

Together with the Finance Sub Committee, I look forward to the challenge and hope that we are given the opportunity to enhance the mountain rescue service in England and Wales.

DAVID LITTLE
Treasurer

taken because we wanted to ensure that every operational team member received a copy of the newsletter – whether they were 'netted up' or not.

In addition, my own experience of electronic media is that it can, at times, be frustratingly unreliable. As a daily computer user I frequently have difficulty accessing information. Maybe I'm doing something wrong but, surely, it can't be right that we exclude certain of our colleagues from receiving information purely because they don't have a degree in computer studies!

And whilst I'm on the subject of computers, another problem (some might say benefit) is that information distributed electronically can be easily forwarded to a third party. Take the case of the recent 'Sum of the Parts' report, produced by Peter Panteli at significant expense to the MRC yet, apparently, immediately accessible, free of charge, to organisations outside the MRC. I'm sure that with the cost and hassle required to distribute photocopies of the 64 page document (plus appendices) via the vagaries of snail mail, the information might not have been passed on quite so quickly.

Perhaps, when disseminating information, we should be a little more circumspect about how we send it and who we send it to?

ANDY SIMPSON

MRC NEWS

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE RECOGNITION

The MRC are to introduce a new system of recognition for the various contributions made to the work of Mountain Rescue. This involves the introduction of a two-tier Long Service Certificate, to be regarded differently from the existing Distinguished Service Certificate, and a Certificate of Appreciation.

The two-tier **Long Service Certificate** would recognise 25 and 40 years' service to Mountain Rescue*. The request for this can originate from any member of a team, region or the MRC and should be addressed to the MRC via the Secretary. It would then be endorsed by the President, Chairman or Vice Chairman, before presentation at a function of the team, region or MRC, as appropriate to the original request.

The Distinguished Service Award should be held in very high regard, a recognition of more than simply long service but an energy and commitment to getting things done – even to laying down one's life in the cause of MR, and would be awarded by the MRC. Its standing would be enhanced by only being awarded rarely and after due consideration. Nominees would normally be well known within mountain rescue

circles for their substantial contribution or support, resulting in significant advancement or benefit for MR. This might include admin, finance, organisation, training, leadership, equipment development, public relations, search and rescue techniques etc. Written representation for this should be sent to the Secretary in a document of fewer than 1000 words. Representation would then be made to a full meeting of the MRC and those present with voting rights could accept, decline or defer the proposal. The successful proposal would result in a presentation of the Certificate by the President, Chairman or Vice Chairman. The **Certificate of Appreciation** would be awarded to people

outside of Mountain Rescue, in recognition of a significant contribution to its work. *It was noted that Mountain Rescue encompasses a wide interpretation including the terms mountain, moorland, fell, cave, mine, crag, cliff and coastal rescue.

VODAFONE SPONSOR NEW MRC HANDBOOK

Delegates at the MRC meeting in May were lucky to get a first glance at the new MRC Handbook, redesigned, rewritten, updated (well as late as we could before going to press*), and reprinted, all in time to meet the original deadline. Phew! Organised and collated by Eve Burton (Buxton MRT) the new book boasts a completely revamped front cover echoing the dynamic

style of the web site graphics and incorporating the new MRC logo. Thanks to the efforts of Mike Margeson, various advertisers were secured, but we were delighted when Vodafone agreed to sponsor the handbook to the tune of £5000. Well done Eve! The new Handbook will retail at £5, but teams can purchase copies at the discounted price of £2.50 each. (We will be supplying retail outlets at £3.50.)

Any amendments to the insert (team contact details etc), or team orders should be addressed, in writing, to Eve Burton, 9 Princes Road, Chinley, High Peak, SK23 6AB or via email – eveburton@chinley35.fsnet.co.uk

*There have already been some corrections. These are listed on Page 16 of this newsletter.

DRUG LIST REVISED

Teams are advised that the drug list has been revised and updated.

Additions to the list –

- Paracetamol
- Codeine Phos.
- Chlorpheniramine (Piriton) tablets
- Diazepam tabs

Deletions from the list –

- Buprenorphine (Temgesic)
- Dextrosol tablets
- Frusemide inj.
- Atropine inj.

Changes to indications, dose etc –

- Aspirin
- Cefuroxime
- Diclofenac (Voltarol)
- Metaclopramide
- Glucagon

IKAR 2001

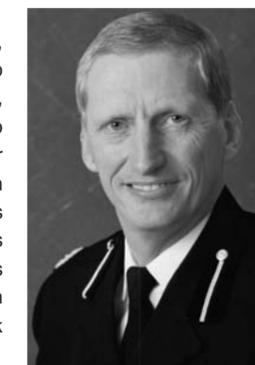
This year's IKAR takes place in Croatia, in October. The MRC have been asked to make a presentation.

MEET THE NEW ACPO REP

The May AGM at Preston was the first opportunity for many to meet new ACPO rep, Mike Tonge. Accompanied by Bernard Kershaw, who has been looking after the job since the departure of John Vine to pastures (and munros) North of the Border, Mike was keen to welcome the MRC to the Lancashire Police HQ venue. He also thanked Bernard for his work. Assistant Chief Constable (Operations Support) for Merseyside, Mike, 44, has a special interest in mountain rescue, being a keen walker and climber himself, remembering fondly two halcyon summers many years ago when, as a student, he worked in a Wigan bakery to finance trips to the Alps with four mates and a van. First drawn to the sport through his time as a Queen's Scout in his home town of Bolton, he studied PE at College, where he joined an expedition to the Faroe Islands, involving climbing and geological work and later took on the role of climbing instructor at Padgate College.

However, his climbing days were clearly numbered. Having achieved a number of notable ascents, including Mont Blanc, his climbing career calmed down somewhat following his marriage – a no doubt familiar tale! His fate was sealed on a climbing trip to Aviemore with his wife, soon after they were married, when they experienced a little trouble with the tent pegs. "No more" said Mrs Tonge, and so now he enjoys the slightly less ambitious peaks in the Lake District and Scotland with his wife and two young daughters. A keen sportsman, he has represented the Police at seven different sports, currently representing the British Police at golf with an impressive handicap of 2.

Having taken on the task for ACPO, Mike has inherited a lot of Committees, but is enthusiastically looking forward to working with both Mountain and Cave Rescue and to developing a relationship with other MRC member organisations.



YOU RESCUED US THIS AFTERNOON AND OUR RUCKSACK SEEMS TO BE MISSING...



HONOURS FOR STEWART

Stewart Hulse, President, founder member and former Team Leader of Langdale Ambleside MRT for 17 years, was presented with his Distinguished Service Award on Friday, 25 May. Team personnel, past and present, from Cumbria and further afield, together with representatives of the RAF, Police and Ambulance services turned out at a buffet supper in his honour at Charlotte Mason, St Martin's College. And this wasn't the only gong for this popular and much loved man – Cumbria Constabulary and the RAF also had their own to present. Recalling the initial consideration of Stewart's citation, MRC Chairman Dave Allan noted that there had been no need for discussion – the decision that Stewart should have the Award was unanimous, as he more than fulfilled all three criteria of innovation, commitment and behind the scenes activity. His frequent and controversial

confrontations with authority over many issues are legendary, the most recent his efforts to secure better personal insurance cover for rescue team members. The RAF presented Stewart with a book about

rescue and a painting of the RAF team featured on its cover. It was Stewart's idea back in the 1970s to visit RAF Acklington and persuade them to send a Whirlwind rescue helicopter over on a first practice exercise. Within two weeks, they were back to do the real thing, on the first of many missions. And, finally, from the Police, a Certificate of Appreciation signed by the Chief Constable. Stewart thanked those who had supported his family during his recent illness, comparing his absence to a sore tooth – it nags and nags, but when it's not there, you miss it! Langdale Ambleside Team Leader, Nick Verrall, summed it up with, "Stewart may have been controversial a lot of the time, but everything he ever did was for the benefit of casualties or team members. He argued on behalf of so many and for this, and for his rescue service and commitment, he is respected throughout mountain rescue." In June, news came in

that Stewart now has a further award to his name – the MBE, awarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours in recognition of his work with mountain rescue.

CONFERENCE 2002

The MRC have been awarded £157K by the Community Fund for the Conference and National Courses in 2002. The Conference will be held at the Heriot Watt University, near Edinburgh, over the weekend of 13–15 September, 2002, hosted by the MRC of Scotland. It is hoped that the cost for delegates will be close to the £20 charged for the Millennium Conference, although this is a significantly more expensive place to stay. The venue is excellent – everything on site, with conference rooms, accommodation and restaurant under the same cover, linked by a short walk. There is secured parking for a large number of vehicles, and easy access by road, rail and air (3 miles from Edinburgh airport). Details of the 2002 National Courses will be available later in the year.

CONFERENCE 2001

This year's Conference, at Grey College, University of Durham, 14-16 September is organised by NESRA, and the last in the present format – in future the event will be

ACPO EMERGENCY PROCEDURES SUB COMMITTEE INFORMATION NOTE Search & Rescue – Communications – Airwaves

The Airwave Communication system is now being rolled out and will, in due course, have an impact on communications facilities used by S&RTs.
The point of contact for any queries is
Inspector Geoff Lowe, Airwave Police Adviser
PITO (Police Information Technology Organisation)
PO Box 2474 Kidderminster DY10 1WX
Direct Line 07771 672 850
Fax 01562 754 242
Email geoff.lowe@tesco.net
Geoff.Lowe@pito.pnn.police.uk
Prepared by Supt Bernard Kershaw, Lancs.Constabulary (01772 618 704) on behalf of ACPO

bi-annual and rotated throughout the UK. The programme is such that delegates will have the opportunity to attend several seminars daily (some will be repeated) with a wide range of topics. Most importantly, the bar, which has been carefully vetted by the organising committee, has been passed on all counts, winning the 'bar tender' hands down. Or should that be bottoms up? Residential full board is £80. Camping (meals provided) is £35.50 but limited, and the cost for a day delegate (with lunch) is £14. For further details, contact Shirley Priestley on shirley@spriestley.fsnet.co.uk or Brian Wright on brian@cas-care.co.uk or call **07767 814051**.

EFFORTS TO HALT SPIRALLING TREND IN SCOUT FATALITIES

Mike Margeson, MRC Equipment Officer, reports that, through the links with the BMC Advisory Group and MLTB, the MRC have expressed deep

concern about what has seemed a spiralling trend in scout fatalities over the last few years. The Scout Association has begun to review its systems, in an effort to put its house in order, resulting in a new structure which, while not ideal, is a first step in the right direction. Channels of dialogue have been opened and advice on best practice offered.

CAS BAG DEVELOPMENT

Several concepts and ideas have now been considered and one or two small changes made. The next move is to get one made up for testing by the RAF. The vacuum mattress also needs some consideration. It's now 5 years since the last run and, ideally, we need another 60 (one per team). A number of recommendations were put forward last year, both at Plas y Brenin and the Conference. It makes economic sense to bulk buy but, at the moment, we don't have the funds available and

the vac mat cannot be bought off the shelf. THANKS TO THE AUDITORS...

A Certificate of Appreciation has been awarded to Keith Robinson & Company, auditors to the MRC, in gratitude for their outstanding service to mountain rescue.

...AND TO TERRY WYATT

Terry has produced the artwork and framing for all the MRC Certificates awarded over the last 30 odd years, but his involvement in MR goes back a lot further, to Easter Monday, 1952, when he became a casualty. A regular weekend visitor to the crags of Kinder Scout, he was climbing on the downfall faces when the heavens opened. Forced to abandon the route and take shelter, in his haste he slipped some considerable way, breaking one leg and badly spraining the other. In no time at all, members of the local rescue team appeared, whisked him to the safety of hospital and a sincere promise to his parents that he would never go climbing again! Three years later, after a spell in the army (and plenty of experience and training in mountain technique) he took up the sport again, topping off most of the best known peaks both here and in Europe. When he married, the climbing had to stop but the equally adventurous

activities of sailing and gliding took over. Moving to New Mills in 1967, he joined the local team, later to become Kinder MRT, and remains a member to this day "spending some of the happiest times of my life with them." For 3 years he was MRC Honorary Editor until, sadly, a divorce, a brain tumour and the collapse of his business forced him to resign. An operation on his brain revealed a dermoid cyst. All the surgeon could do was cut away the visible part which simply heals up and grows again.

Terry has had five such operations in 12 years and is currently waiting for another one. At the same time, due to a fall during a night rescue with Kinder, he has a serious back and leg problem which has cut down on his team activities on the hill. He still manages to climb, however, travelling twice a year to Pembrokeshire with friends from the Mynedd and Derby climbing clubs, where they spend every day on the sea cliffs, whatever the weather. The tumour has left him with a form of epilepsy, so he doesn't lead any more, but his friends are on their guard and able to protect Terry until the fit, small as it may be, subsides. "This way I am able to still enjoy the sport I promised to give up all those years ago." We can only wish him all the very best.

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS COURSE

Saturday 1 (08.45) – Monday 3 September (17.30) 2001

• Overview of search strategy, planning & the search area • Concepts of Probability of Detection (POD) • Planning the area for a POD • Terrain and scenario analysis • Sub-sectoring • Clue awareness • Observation techniques • Tracking, the step by step method • Search party size, control and equipment • Searcher spacing and Critical Separation • Advantages and disadvantages of different techniques and their applications • Briefing and debriefing.

At the John Phillips Hall, University of Wales, Bangor.

Dinner, Bed & Breakfast £270.00 Non Residential £170.00

Cost includes all course fees and materials, coffee and tea. Bar facilities available.

Closing date for applications is **10th August 2001**.*

* There is a maximum of 30 places available on this course. As over half the course is spent in the field, participants must ensure that they have adequate **Personal Accident Insurance**.

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT COURSES

Tuesday 4 (08.45) – Saturday 8 September (17.00) 2001

Sunday 9 (08.45) – Thursday 13 September (17.00) 2001

A 5 day course on the principles of effective search management, aimed at those individuals who would become part of the Search Management Team.

At the John Phillips Hall, University of Wales, Bangor.

Dinner, Bed & Breakfast £450.00 Non Residential £250.00

Cost includes all course fees and materials, coffee and tea. Bar facilities available.

Closing date for applications is **10th August 2001**.*

* There is a maximum of 40 places available on each course.

There will be a refund to volunteer members of the MRC and the MRC of S Rescue Teams. The amount of refund will depend on the level of grant aid and the uptake of places.

For further information or booking forms please contact –
Peter Howells 21 Laurel Road, Bassaleg, Newport, Gwent NP10 8NY
Telephone 01633 893447 (home) or 07836 382029 (mobile)
 or **Dr Anthony Jones MBE**
Ffriddoedd Site Office, Ffriddoedd Road, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2JX.
Telephone 01248 364131 (home)
01248 383477 (work) or 01248 371303 (fax)

Analysing Incident Reports – love it or loathe it but don't ignore it!

For some years teams have been able to record incidents into a computer database, provided free of charge. The info can then be sent electronically to the statistics collator for inclusion in a national database. This currently contains over 6,500 incidents, dealing with nearly 7,500 subjects. The intention with the follow-up programme was that, when a team had accumulated enough reports of its own, this data was ripe for analysis and reporting. For a similar number of years, this development has been on the back burner, but with the recent Foot and Mouth restrictions, the opportunity lent itself, so I got busy!

The result is a fairly straightforward programme that will produce a number of standard reports and charts which even casual users of computers will be able to handle without any tuition or heartache. Text based reports will enable teams and regions to gather info with a view to producing an annual report – I examined numerous team annual reports, in particular their incident histories, and RepGen manages to extract many of the essential details, creating a text file that can be used to create a document for editing prior to typesetting in a glossy publication. Similar reports exist for listing the location of incident (local hotspots) and the use of therapeutic drugs. These reports are fairly simple and in no way comprehensive. However, they will save the user much time in creating lists of incident dates, times, locations, numbers involved etc. Each can be saved as a file, in colour or mono, and saved in 3D or flat version. The programme is supplied on CD, complete with its own installation software or, alternatively, will soon be available to download from the MRC web site. For further information – email ged@gfeeney.demon.co.uk or phone **01228 525709**.

Ged Feeney MRC Statistics Officer (totally sad person)

THE QUESTION OF CASUALTY CARE AND THE MRC CERTIFICATE

There has been much confusion and concern surrounding proposals for the future of the MRC Casualty Care Certificate and their implications for team members generally. With hindsight, releasing the notes of November's meeting of the Medical Sub Committee (which were also reported here in the newsletter), without a fuller description of casualty care in total, was a mistake.

Dave Allan has produced a paper, due to be distributed with the MRC minutes, which aims to clarify the situation and clear up the misunderstandings. If reading the minutes doesn't excite you... here is a sneak preview.

Until 1985, the MRC were almost entirely dependent on outside bodies to oversee first aid examination and to provide certification. Around this time, it became apparent that the content of outside teaching was becoming less in tune with the practice of care within mountain rescue. It was also, fortuitously, a time when the medical manpower and expertise in MR expanded – to the extent that we were able to consider becoming self sufficient in respect of setting a syllabus, arranging courses and conducting the examinations.

The move towards 'invasive' first aid with the administration of drugs, active treatment of fractures, etcetera, clearly moved our practice away from the conventional first aid and this was recognised when we redefined this as Casualty Care.

As we have moved in this direction, it has been necessary to be in a position to demonstrate that people are being taught and assessed to a uniform standard. There is, of course, no change in respect of conventional first aid as taught outside MR. The skills learnt in this respect will continue to be 'covered' as before without the need for an MR certificate. It would be naïve to assume that further changes will not occur as new techniques and ideas emerge but, for the next few years at least, the current position should hold.

CASUALTY CARE AND FIRST AID IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE

The extent of medical training and the number of team members involved at any particular level are local team decisions. There is no preferred model that the MRC supports. Whilst it is likely that most teams will prefer those on call out lists to have at least basic life support skills there is, undoubtedly, a place in MR and CR for team members

whose other abilities more than compensate for only a very passing medical knowledge.

In an ideal world, we would like to have a mountain rescue team doctor, or other professional such as a paramedic, attend every injured party. This is clearly not attainable in the foreseeable future. Current figures suggest that there is a health professional present at 25% of rescues in England and Wales. It should, therefore, be the aim of teams to provide the best possible care for the casualties in the remaining 75% of incidents. The number of trained members needed to guarantee a presence on every call out will be variable. There may be an argument for keeping numbers limited in order to increase the utilisation of acquired skills.

It is important to keep reminding ourselves, and more particularly those outside MR, that there are many occasions when circumstances dictate that even the most basic first aid is difficult to perform. A blizzard on Helvellyn or an accident in some parts of the Easegill System might render any medical training irrelevant.

It is also important to remember that the biggest returns accrue from the most basic techniques. The ability to maintain an airway will pay greater dividends than all the drugs we now carry.

Notwithstanding the previous comments, it is probable that most teams will opt to have most people on a call out list possessing some basic skills. It is suggested that these should principally cover –

- Simple maintenance of an airway
- Arrest of major bleeding with pressure
- Recognition of hypothermia – and ability to insulate against
- Use of recovery position
- Ability to communicate basic facts by radio or phone

The teaching of the above is to be determined at local level. Team doctors, nurses or paramedics may wish to provide this. Some will acquire these skills as part of attending a basic Red Cross, or similar first aid course. In that case, they will attain more knowledge and skills than are listed above.

All of the above can happily be carried out and are 'covered' without the need for an MRC Certificate.

AIMS FOR 2004

Those who need to operate at a more invasive level will require the MRC Casualty Care Certificate. It is particularly important in relation to the use of drugs. Even the use of aspirin or Paracetamol is not encompassed by other non-MR/CR courses. Whilst this is, to a large

extent, driven by the need to present a clear unified policy to those providing our insurance cover, it is also desirable to have a common national level of training. To date, no way of achieving this, other than by a standard examination, has been identified.

It is correct that the law allows any member of a rescue team to administer morphine, but in today's climate, evidence of training in the administration of drugs would need to be demonstrated.

From 2004, therefore, an MRC Certificate must be held by those who carry out procedures outside the scope of a basic Red Cross or similar course. Whilst the MRC will set the examination and issue the certificates, it will not insist that everyone who sits the exam has attended a mountain rescue approved course. Most will probably continue to do so, but this does allow the opportunity for teams or individuals, to proscribe their own training and teaching leading to the examination.

We are aiming to make the examination more widely and frequently available by 2004. The syllabus is currently being scrutinised and will be re-issued in November 2001.

ADVANCED SKILLS

Our insurance recognises that a number of individuals have trained in skills above those covered by the MRC Casualty Care syllabus. At present, we do not officially provide any 'advanced' training courses although these do take place. The boundaries between the MRC syllabus and that of 'advanced' courses have actually become much less distinct in recent years. There is no standard of 'advance' qualification.

The problems relating to further training largely revolve around the need for active clinical involvement and the difficulties in providing this in an organised form. The main advantage in having a doctor or other health professional involved in casualty care is their active involvement with patients, and their ability to diagnose and decide, not because of their technical skills.

DOCTORS, NURSES AND PARAMEDICS

A reminder. If health care professionals operate outside the scope of the MRC Casualty Care provision, as they may frequently wish to do, then they must be covered by their own professional indemnity insurance. The cover provided by NHS Trusts for their employees will not provide this.

*David Allan
MRC Chairman & Hon Medical Officer*

WHO'S WHO ON THE TOP TABLE...

We've all heard the names. We've read their comments and contributions as they filter down through meeting minutes, reports or even the pages of this newsletter. But how many of our 2,000 odd (if you'll pardon the expression) team members can put faces to the names? And what on earth do they know about mountain rescue? Well quite a lot, actually...

Central to the Top Table sits Chairman, **David Allan**, whose involvement in MR goes back 26 years. Team Doctor for Furness MRT, David has also been MRC Medical Officer since 1988. Born in



Morecambe, he first took to climbing at the tender age of 12, when he cycled to the Lakes to climb in the Langdale Valley, his first rock climb the Evening Wall on Raven Crag. Since then, he's climbed across the UK and the Alps – France, Switzerland, Austria, the Dolomites, Pyrenees, Rockies, Mount Kenya and Iceland. He's still active but, these days, less steep rock and ice, more mountaineering, photography and painting. And, incidentally, he tells me he also has a day job – Consultant General, Vascular Surgeon and Clinical Director of Surgery to Morecambe Bay Acute Trust.

Born in India, Vice Chair **Tony Jones** was educated at Bishops in Cape Town, where his work with mountain rescue began in 1954, with the Cape Town section of the



Mountain Club of South Africa. Back in the UK, he joined the Ogwen Valley team, of which he is now an Honorary Life Member. Over the years, his involvement has spanned comms and helicopter liaison, medical matters, SARDA Wales (as President for 7 years) and training, driving the cause of MR forward through his work with ACPO, the Home Office and the UK SAR Operators Group. In 1993, he was the subject of television's This is Your Life and 2 years later received the MBE for his services to MR. With a record of search and rescue operations that spans South Africa, the UK, Norway, Austria, New Mexico and Washington State (USA) and a collection of certificates awarded that extends to South Africa, the USA, Eire and Ukraine, it could safely be said that Tony knows 'a bit about mountain rescue'.

Mike Margeson has been a full time outdoor instructor for over 20 years. An active and enthusiastic climber, he has expedited in Canada, Iceland and Africa and made many



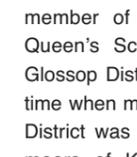
trips to the Alps. His MR career began with the Outward Bound Ullswater team, progressing through Furness MRT as Training Officer to Deputy and now Team Leader. MRC

Equipment Officer for the last 8 years, he is currently involved in development of the new cas bag, amongst other projects, and is a representative to the BMC Training Advisory Group, the MLTB and at IKAR.



For **Peter Howells**, born in Merthyr Tydfil, an interest in MR grew from his early years in scouting, through Civil Defence to the Police/Civil Defence MRT, which he joined in the 60's. The team later became Morlais, then Central Beacons MRT, of which he is now Team Leader. On a regional level, he represented South Wales at the MRC until 1995, during which time he was appointed Assistant Secretary responsible for the National Conference and Courses. His involvement has covered a broad spectrum – radios, training, equipment and the organisation of regional first aid courses – often key to wider reaching developments. In 1988, he brought instructors from the USA to teach the first 5 day UK Search Management course at Crickhowell, South Wales and, 3 years ago, the application to the National Lottery Charities Board resulted in £119K for the Millennium Conference and MRC Courses. This year £157K has been secured from the Community Fund towards the 2002 Conference and Courses.

Ray Davies has been Secretary since 1979. His interest in mountaineering began as a student, since when he has climbed all over the UK, Ireland, Scotland and the Alps, and remains an active hill walker and member of Glossop MRT. In 1957, as a Queen's Scout, he became leader of the Glossop District Rover Crew (later MRT) at a time when mountaineering activity in the Peak District was increasing rapidly as the grouse moors of Kinder, Bleaklow and Black Hill gained public access. The Four Inns Walk disaster in 1964 caused a huge



jolt for MR, when a rapid change in weather conditions caused the death from exhaustion hypothermia of three of the lightly clad event participants. Soon after, the PDMRO was set up with Ray (himself injured in the early part of the search operation) as one of the first Controllers. Over many years, he has used his skills and contacts with the textile industry to improve the casbag, through the use of down, a hood and full length

zip closure, on a bag that was large enough to hold two bodies for rewarming purposes. The advent of pile fabrics prompted further advances. He has represented the MRC at the BMC and MLTB and been newsletter editor. And, somehow, he has also found time for a spot of rugby and marathon running!

Legal Adviser, **Tony Rich** was born in Stockholm, his father a diplomat whose final posting before retirement was Ambassador in Switzerland. His family were keen hill walkers rather than climbers so, when he reluctantly decided to do a basic rock climbing course in North Wales thinking it would help get him out of trouble one day, he was very surprised to find that he enjoyed it immensely. He joined Cave & Crag Club in Birmingham and thus also became involved in caving. However, he does point out that "if any more of my friends suggest on the caving trips that I should go first, on the basis that if I fit then anyone can, there will be



trouble!" Involvement with the rescue world began 9 years ago with a proposed directive imposing strict liability on the suppliers of services. He was invited to attend a BCRC AGM to allay the concerns and was then asked to be Honorary Legal Adviser. His first task, apart from reassuring cave rescuers, was to help resist the proposed directive, which was done successfully in co-ordination with the other interested parties. In 1995, his remit was extended to the MRC. Professionally, he is a solicitor (admitted, he says, appropriately enough on April 1st, 1981!) with a special interest in liability law and the law affecting risk sports, and a Deputy District Judge. He has also, for many years, been Adviser to the BMC and serves on the Legal Experts Working Groups of the UIAA.

A love of the mountains is either in the blood or it isn't. Sometimes a spark is needed to ignite it. For **David Little** it was having a Himalayan mountaineer of the 1950s, John



Jackson, as his Science teacher. "Science lessons were brilliant as they always degenerated (?) into lectures on mountaineering, Nepal or planning trips to the Lakes." David's mountain rescue activities began in 1972 when he joined Cleveland SRT, of which he has been Treasurer, Base Manager, Team Leader and, since 1993, Chairman. He has also served as Secretary/Treasurer to NESRA. He took on the job of MRC Treasurer after the retirement of Harry Worsdall in 1988, overseeing the formation of a very strong and experienced Finance sub committee and the embryo of an Insurance sub group. On the professional front, he took early retirement from the Steel industry in order to pursue his outdoor interests "whilst still fit enough to enjoy them".

LAKE DISTRICT

MARATHON LIGHTENS THE LOAD

Millom FRT have purchased two lightweight oxygen cylinders thanks to the efforts of Pam Leverton, who completed the Shakespeare Marathon in Stratford upon Avon last year. The new carbon fibre cylinders weigh about 2.5kg each and hold a nominal 600 litres, enough for 40 minutes' supply at 15 litres a minute – a huge improvement on the old steel cylinders, weighing in at 6.5kg for only 20 minutes. Pam's first attempt at a marathon raised £605 which will definitely lighten the load for team members on the hill. As husband Mick, Millom Team Doctor, observes "When you have to get up 2,000ft, a mile away, the less weight you have to carry, the faster you get there."



Pam pictured presenting the two oxygen cylinders to Peter Jackson of Millom FRT

THE SHARPE LEGACY

In 1989, Maurice Sharpe of Lancaster, who loved to walk on the Lakeland Fells, made a substantial bequest to the Lake District Ramblers Association to be used 'for the provision of the facilities for the maintenance of freedom for fell walkers on the Lake District Fells.' Several projects have been funded by the legacy, including a bridge across Tarn Beck, on one of the rights of way from Seathwaite Tarn towards the Duddon Valley. The Sharpe Legacy Bridge provides safe dry shod crossing of a beck which can often be in spate and difficult to cross and will certainly benefit both team members and casualties where stretcher carry-off is called for. The project was instigated by Mick



Leverton, **Millom FRT**, who also acts as a Furness Footpath Secretary for the Ramblers, and organised by Lake District National Parks Ranger, Chris Berry, and National Trust Warden, Clive Stretton.

NEW TEAM FOR THE LAKES

This year saw the beginnings of a new Lakes team with **Millom MRT** and **Furness MRT** taking a very large step towards merger. Fully aware of the potential difficulties, both teams are committed to the move and determined that no problem should prove insurmountable. The belief is that the end result, anticipated to take a couple of years, will be in the best interest of casualty and MR provision. Six months on – how's it all going? The immediate key issue was the operational systems, as the two teams are already as one operationally and training together. Next up were the issues of training and equipment, and the process of discovery, taking what is best from each team. Comments Mike Margeson, Furness Team Leader, "I'm sure I can speak for all that, to date, things are going well and it is a very healthy process to go through. We remain convinced that we will be stronger, more active and better able to respond to what is now a large patch." In terms of response, the new team (as yet without a name) will be even better placed to support neighbouring Wasdale, Langdale Ambleside, Coniston and Kendal. Mike believes that the way forward is very much in working and training together.

PIANO RECITAL RAISES £1,440

Earlier this year **Penrith** and **Patterdale MRTs** got together to host a joint fundraising event. The Piano Recital, held in a local Penrith church, attracted an audience of almost 150 people who enjoyed a thoroughly dynamic performance from Graham Scott. Graham, who was no stranger to many of the audience having played at Patterdale's Lakeshore concert last year, introduced each piece with a succinct and witty description of its context.

The climax of the evening was Stravinsky's "L'Oiseau de Feu Danse Infernale, Berceuse et Finale", which left everyone spellbound. Graham kindly brought everyone back to earth with his encore, a short piece by Gershwin, "The Man I Love". With financial support from principal sponsor 'Travelling Light' and a number of local businesses, this first joint fundraising event for the two teams raised £1440 to be divided equally between them.

PRESTIGIOUS AWARD FOR PATERDALE

March saw John Ellerton (past **Patterdale MRT** Chairman) and Laurie Caygill (the architect) at a presentation at the Science Museum, London, to hear that the Rescue Centre had won a prestigious Civic Trust Award. The Award was one of only 27 made to buildings that reached the demanding standards set and the only project awarded in a National Park. Sitting under an Apollo Spacecraft and surrounded by eminent architects, it was hard for John and Laurie to comprehend the magnitude of achievement. The Centre was judged on an equal with buildings such as the Wetlands Conservation Centre, Slimbridge; Canon (UK) headquarters; the Great Glass House, Wales and, of course, the Kielder Belvedere! Although solid and utilitarian, the Centre was said to be "lifted out of the ordinary by the care with which it has been designed and built and its sensitivity to its context".

In May, Peter Phizacklea, Chairman of the Lake District National Park, presented a commemorative plaque for the building and certificates for the design team. The Centre has vastly improved the operational capability of the team. An ideal venue for training and promoting MR to a wider public, it is well utilised as a venue for meetings and is open to the public during Bank Holiday weekends.

A LOT LESS BOVVER THAN A SHEEP

An 'industry insider' reports that Lake District preservation organisation, Friends of the Fells, is appealing to walkers, climbers and mountain bikers to stockpile lawnmowers as part of a radical new conservation scheme. "In the event of the Herdwick sheep being culled", said the spokesman, "the Lakes will revert to scrubland within years. This scheme could be the only hope of keeping the area as it is."

The idea is that groups and individuals will be able to adopt areas of high fell which they will then be responsible for tending and mowing on a regular basis. "All we're asking is that outdoors people give up a couple of weekends a year to maintain their own small patch of the Lake District. It won't be necessary to weed, or anything like that, and Wimbledon style stripes would be inappropriate." The organisation has already drawn up provisional plans with the local electricity board to introduce a network of hidden power lines and sunken, invisible sockets across the fells. The infrastructure would take several years to put

in place but, once established, would remove the need to use invasive petrol-driven mowers in the outdoors. Lawnmower manufacturers are already conducting secret trials. Project Helvellyn features an adaptation of the existing hover mower, aimed at producing a machine with adjustable camber. The Helvellyn will enable mowers to traverse slopes of up to 60° whilst still achieving a close, consistent cut. Trials to date have found that cutting up and down the slope is simply too exhausting and can actually be dangerous. In one trial, a tester found himself in Goats Water after losing control of the mower high on the Old Man of Coniston. More news when we have it...

MID PENNINE

STATE OF THE ART HELICOPTER COMES ON LINE

West Yorkshire Police have taken delivery of their long awaited new helicopter. For those who know about such things, it is an MD Explorer and the most advanced Police aircraft in the country. Powered by Pratt & Whitney 207 E engines it has no rear rotor blade, and is, therefore, 50% quieter and 11% more powerful.

I SEE YOU'D
RATHER BE DRIVING
THE HELICOPTER...



Capable of vertical take off and landing, it's ideal for restricted or congested areas. Space age navigation enables it to pinpoint specific locations and a digital camera with 54 times magnification provides high quality images. It is also equipped with MR radio and has capacity for six passengers. Built in Phoenix, Arizona to the tune of around £3.2 million, it is hoped that the new helicopter will serve the force for the next 15 years.

NORTH EAST

BAASIL THE WONDER SHEEP

There may not have been much activity since the foot and mouth outbreak, but one call out for **Cleveland SRT** certainly had its humorous side. On 4 April, a local vet asked the team to assist a farmer with a crag fast sheep. After consulting with the farmer and police regarding the necessary precautions, a small party of five were sent to evict the

sheep from its crag. Said Gari Finch, "I indicated to the police that MAFF were slaughtering millions but we were trying to save one! They saw the funny side and wished us luck." At the top of Roseberry Topping they could see the sheep, about 30 feet below the summit on a small ledge. What wasn't clear was how it had got there in the first place, surrounded by vertical crags leading to a 25 foot sheer drop. The plan was for one team member to abseil down to the sheep, get a rope round, then lower it, whilst another two took up positions below the ledge to persuade the sheep not to jump. As the abseil progressed, the hapless animal became a little restless, prompting much flapping of arms from below the ledge to discourage its movement towards the precipice. It worked. The sheep settled down and the abseil continued. However, it was clearly lulling the unsuspecting team members into a false sense of security, for it was also a thinking sheep! It had decided that the man abseiling down to it must be from MAFF, come to get it and, as the abseil continued, it took a run off its ledge, launching itself in an Olympic-style high dive to the ground below. Shouts of "Go back you silly sheep!" (or words to that effect) were ignored as the high diver landed 10 feet from stunned team members. Was it the end for Baasil? Apparently not as it neatly slid a few feet on its front, picked itself up and ran off. Last seen eating 200 yards away, happy in the knowledge that it had escaped the man from MAFF...

MISSING FROM WHERE?

Three members of **North of Tyne SRT** were driving along the A1 from Selby in the team vehicle when they saw a man walking along the hard shoulder – the spitting image of the missing person they had been looking for. So they stopped and spoke to him. He was semi coherent and claimed to have walked all the way from London. Convinced that they had the missing man, they phoned the police. Further questioning established that he was not the person from Selby... but he **had** been reported missing at Carlisle! Amazingly, he had been in Dover 4 days previously, planning to travel home to Carlisle, when he was mugged of all he possessed, so he set off and walked all they way to where he was found, near Otley!

NEW RESCUE CENTRE OPENED

Teesdale & Weardale SRT saw the Official Opening of their new Rescue Centre, Barnard Castle, on 31 March, by Lord Barnard. Their Base Appeal has been an incredible success for a small team. With so many team members organising and taking part in the events, they more than surpassed their original £25K target.

NORTH WALES

RESCUED BY TEXT MESSAGE

An injured Cheshire man had reason to thank text messaging when he fell whilst climbing in Snowdonia. He called the police from his mobile phone, with the information that he had fallen opposite Crib Goch. **Llanberis MRT** briefed C-Flight, but when the helicopter reached the spot, they were unable to find him and the staff at ARCC Kinloss couldn't get through on the mobile. Then quick thinking Plt Off Russ Gleason hit on the idea of trying a text message instead, hoping that the weaker signal would get through. The message read – "This is the RAF. We are trying to find you. Unable to find you at this moment. Can you contact us?" followed by a direct dial telephone number. A few minutes later, the phone rang and the casualty was able to give precise directions. Trapped behind a rock, he could hear the helicopter, and sometimes see it, but was unable to wave through pain. With the help of his Golden Shot style directions ('Left a bit, right a bit, up a bit' and so on... for the benefit of the much younger reader...) it wasn't long before the pilot, Flt Lt Al Conner radioed "Found him" and he was airlifted to Bangor with reported soft tissue injuries. He had slipped 800 metres east of Dinas Cromlech on the north side of the Llanberis Pass. For the Llanberis team it was a straightforward incident. "The perfect job really – drive to Nant Peris, stand around (in a purposeful manner, of course) watching 22 squadron work for half an hour, have a cup of tea then drive home again," said Ian Henderson.

PEAK DISTRICT

DARING CHICK RESCUE

Members of **Kinder MRT** found themselves involved in a daring rescue whilst out on the team's Easter bike ride. It appears that a duck and three ducklings had waddled up onto the main road and, in the process, one of the little 'uns had fallen through a grid in the road. Mother Duck was not about to

leave the area knowing that one of her offspring was missing. However, when two of the team took a closer look, the duckling was not alone – it was swimming about down there with a handful of its siblings! Clearly some sort of extreme sport for ducks. They tried the RSPCA but no answer. There was even talk of bringing the team vehicle out for a winch assisted rescue. But, in the end, the grid was lifted and each duckling scooped out in turn, then a couple of stones placed over the grid so they wouldn't fall down again. All the ducks then headed off up the Snake. Ahhh...

CLEAN WIN FOR KINDER

The new **Kinder MRT** Land Rover – featured in the last issue when it was dedicated to the memory of Dr Peter Andrew, Team Doctor for many years and MRC President – won First Prize for the cleanest commercial vehicle in the Hayfield May Queen Procession.

1055 YEARS ACTIVE SERVICE

The **Peak District MRO** wanted to make its own Millennium statement, like many others, so it was decided that they should recognise those team members who have given 25 years' active service to the organisation. Chairman, Mike France, wrote to all the Team Leaders asking them to go back through their records for the names and start dates of any team member who should be rewarded in this way. A fairly straightforward task you would think. Not for MR. Of course, detailed records may be kept today, and some probably did so some 10/15 years ago, but to find the personal files of those members who started 25+ years ago was an interesting exercise for all concerned. After weeks and months of looking through old boxes, Mike was surprised to find that 37 members within the PDMRO had given a staggering 1055 years active service to MR. Buxton (7 members/174 years), Derby (5 members/155 years), Edale (4 members/114 years), Glossop (5 members/151 years), Kinder (5 members/



Ken Sloan, Keith Eastwood, Dave Crossland, Barry Gregory and Mike France

145 years), Oldham (5 members/153 years) and Woodhead (6 members/163 years). There is now a system in place that, if a team member achieves 25 years' active service, the Team Leader will bring the information to the regional meeting so that action can be taken. Mike says it has given him great pleasure attending the team AGMs through the year to present certificates to these dedicated members. "Can I thank not just my members, who have given 25 years' service to mountain rescue, but all those in mountain rescue who have given 25, 30 and, in some cases, 35 or 40 years to the service."

AN ENTERTAINING EVENING

Early in May, an appreciative audience in the Memorial Hall, Kettleshulme, had a very entertaining evening organised by members of Kettleshulme WI to help with fundraising for **SARDA Peak District**. This came about after a talk given early this year to the WI by Malc Bowyer, a dog handler with SARDA, and his two search and rescue dogs, Glyn and Trigg. (The dogs talk better than Malc, allegedly). The evening started with a short talk from Malc and the dogs, followed by 'Who wants to be a Millionaire?' (local version), which proved very popular. But the highlight of the evening had to be the guest appearance of Dianne Oxberry, BBC North West weather presenter. Not sure what to expect (talk about the weather!...), everyone was pleasantly surprised to be so thoroughly entertained. A very pleasant couple of hours, rounded off with refreshments and a glass of wine, raised a wonderful £670 – a very welcome addition to the SARDA funds.



Dianne and Malcolm Bowyer with Norma Taylor and Search Dogs Glyn & Trigg

SOUTH WEST

RESCUE FROM BLACKMOOR SWALLET

Some time before May 3, a young man left his home in Radstock without, according to the press, any belongings. A week and a half later, he turned up at the bottom of a mineshaft on Mendip with a harness and ropes! The story of the intervening days is not without interest. Where was he during those days – down the mineshaft or living rough, in spite of

foot and mouth restrictions? Only he will know the answers. **Mendip RO's** involvement began 11 days later and included not only the rescue, but the plaguing by the media circus throughout. There were press interviews with the doctor, the children who found him, parents of the children, rescuers, staff at the Charterhouse Outdoor Centre and so on. Then there was TV coverage and yet more interviews with all concerned.

The story reached as far afield as France, Cyprus, Canada, Japan and even Cambodia but, should you have been on another planet or summiting Everest, the gist is this... The area was off limits and particularly quiet due to FMD. On the evening of the 14th, the Outdoor Centre had been given permission to take a party of schoolchildren from Trowbridge on a night hike to listen for owls etcetera. Several parents were in charge of the group. On passing close by the old mineshaft/cave known as Stainsby Shaft/Blackmoor Swallet, the children heard shouting, rather than the hooting of owls, apparently coming from the shaft. Understandably, they thought this was all part of their test or even a joke by the adults. On investigation, the shout was found to be real and coming from the bottom of the shaft. A person was seen at the bottom and was asking for a drink. He claimed to have been down there for some time. John Baker left to raise the alarm and get help, one parent remained at the shaft and another took the children back to the Centre. John contacted the police, indicating that he thought that this could be the missing person

from 11 days previous, and the MRO. First indications were that the man had serious injuries – possible spinal problems, dehydration and hypothermia. An intravenous fluid drip was set up at the bottom of the shaft. Due to the suspected serious nature of his injuries, it was felt necessary to haul him up the shaft in a horizontal position, with a helicopter evacuation to expedite hospitalisation. Using some cunning rigging and the Paraguard stretcher a fairly straightforward haul was achieved. Unfortunately, during the early hours of the morning, Mendip weather came into play. From a clear starlit night, the scene was transformed with a typical Mendip mist. When the helicopter arrived from RAF Chivenor the mist had done its work and the helicopter was unable to land. The journey to Weston Hospital had to be completed by

road. With that, most people, including the children, retired to bed at about 3.30am, only to be awoken by the Press at 6.00am! The injured man has since spent several weeks in hospital for treatment of problems arising from dehydration, circulatory problems and hypothermia.

NEW STRETCHER FOR EXMOOR

Exmoor SRT (no doubt grateful to be back in the South West again, after a brief foray to the South East in the last issue) have been presented with a cheque for £600 towards the cost of a new Bell stretcher which, with the help of the MRC, meant that they only had to fund £400 themselves. The equipment officers travelled to Wales to rendezvous with Peter Bell to collect the stretcher and, since then, team members have been busy with familiarisation training. The Lions Club have also helped out with £1000 towards running costs, having adopted the team as their appointed charity for 2001. Exmoor have now launched a new appeal (they are all, they assure me, very appealing) to fund the replacement of their ageing control vehicle/ambulance with a new or nearly new one. They have targeted £40,000 as the amount they need to raise. Publicity Officer Mike Long asks that if anyone knows who might be the best people to target, he would be pleased to hear from you on joanmike@lineone.net

IRELAND

HISTORIC APPOINTMENT

Mayo MRT has recently made a historic appointment in Irish (and maybe GB?) MR terms – the first female Team Leader, Ann Burke. Ann is a long serving team and committee member and a great asset both on and off the hill, with excellent mountain skills and a strong no-nonsense approach to administration.

The Mayo team are kept busy across the county, covering a patch that includes Achill Island, popular with tourists and walkers. They deal with over 30 calls per year to Ireland's 'Holy Mountain', Croagh Patrick, most notably on Reek Sunday. This, the last Sunday in July, regularly sees over 16,000 pilgrims visiting a small chapel at the summit. They are mostly ill prepared for the ascent (wearing their Sunday Best) and every MRT in the country, at Mayo's request and with IMRA co-ordination, turns out to handle the casualties. Last year saw several dramatic



Mayo MRT

carry offs. The Irish Civil Defence set up a field kitchen/camp for the teams at the bottom, and the Irish Army Air Corps and local voluntary ambulance service provide onward transport to Castlebar Hospital. In fact, the annual event has now become an invaluable training event for all the teams!

ALSAR

UPDATE – IT'S NOT ALL UP HILL

There's been a lot going on in the world of ALSAR recently. The current teams are South East Berkshire EVSAR, Buckinghamshire SAR, Norfolk Lowland SAR, Suffolk Lowland SAR and East Kent SAR, with Leicestershire and South Midlands in probation. The Association of Lowland Search & Rescue, established in 1998 and listed for the first time in the new MRC Handbook, will have teams represented for the second year at the MRC Search Managers course in Bangor. So far this year, the Buckinghamshire team lead the field for call outs with 14 incidents recorded. Keen to make a contribution to search and rescue in this country, South East Berks are currently developing tactical communications and scenes of crime training packages, specifically geared to lowland search and rescue, in conjunction with the Thames Valley Police, and Suffolk LSAR founder, Kevin Waterson, is working closely with SARDA on prospective Lowland dogs and handlers. South East Berks was awarded a Thames Valley Police Area Commanders Commendation in February, acknowledging a number of years' service and specifically their work in two recent incidents. The first involved saving the life of a suicidal female, the second a vehicle search in a triple murder case. The vehicle in question, believed to belong to the suspected offender, was successfully located. The East Kent team has also received a certificate of merit from Kent Constabulary for good service.

The current Committee and contacts are – Chairman (Kris Manning – 07973 732212 or 01344 482877) Vice Chair (John Dutton) Secretary (Bob Ellis) Treasurer (Bob Ellis – holding) and Training Officer (Roger Waghorn).

The ALSAR website is at www.alsar.co.uk

RAF

EVEREST ACES

Members of the twelve strong team from the RAF Mountain Rescue Service have become Britain's first single service expedition to reach the summit of Mount Everest. Lead climbers Chf Tech Dan Carroll from Lossiemouth and Cpl Rusty Bale from Kinloss made it to the top at 06.25 BST on May 22. They returned to base camp at 17,300ft two days later. Although lucky with the weather, temperatures of -30C at the summit and a considerable wind chill factor made for a taxing ascent. "When you've made it to the top the thing you have to realise is that you have only got halfway. It was a very difficult climb, very exacting and a lot more of a technical challenge than we had expected," explained Cpl Bale. The remaining members of the party were hoping to summit, making it the largest number of servicemen to reach the top in a single expedition, but were beaten back by bad weather. As I write, they are back in Kathmandu awaiting a flight home.

According to a report in the RAF News, the team was also involved in three dramatic rescues. As members were resting at base they were alerted that a climber from another expedition, who was being guided down the mountain suffering breathing problems, was overdue at his camp. The New Zealander was found 4 kilometres away. Too sick to continue, he had been left in a tent for the night with another climber. Two of the RAF team set off up the glacier at night to assist. When they reached the casualty, his oxygen levels had become dangerously low and he was suffering from a respiratory tract infection complicated by high altitude. Joined by a further eight members of the RAF team and four civilian climbers, he was evacuated along the hazardous Rongbuk glacier in driving snow, reaching the RAF medical tent at base camp in the early hours of the morning. Wg Cdr Kirkpatrick stabilised the casualty and he was handed over to the care of his team members and evacuated later that day.

The second drama occurred as Flt Lt Atkins

continued on page 12...

Analysis of Scottish Mountain Accidents

Strategies for Improving Mountain Safety, Analysis of Scottish Mountain Incidents 1996/99, is one of the most comprehensive examinations of Scottish mountain incidents ever undertaken and one of the most exhaustive in the UK. It was undertaken as part of a larger study on mountain safety, concerned with the methods used to promote safety and the causes of accidents. The study, based on the examination of over 1000 incidents, provided information regarding the profile of those people involved. Much confirms what is already known about casualties and why incidents take place. For example, the data shows that many people slip on wet rock and that the majority of incidents happen to hillwalkers. Several observations present new information and are worthy of further consideration by various agencies. Some of the key findings are listed below.

- Men are more likely than women to be involved in an accident even when participation figures are accounted for. Possible explanations are that men take part in more hazardous activities, men participate more and men are greater risk takers.
- With increasing age, women are more likely to be involved in an incident. This is explained in both participation and

physiological terms.

- Over half of all casualties are classified as 'experienced'. Although experienced people tend towards more hazardous activities, this finding sends a strong message, especially for men, that experienced people should always remain attentive.

- Half of all casualties reside outside Scotland. There is a need to target safety promotion towards this group, especially younger men and women, and tourists (who are involved in 7% of all fatal accidents).

- There are incident high points in summer (August) with females and winter (February) with males. Safety campaigns should be timed to anticipate the periods of enhanced risk.

- The majority of incidents involve those who hillwalk. General safety messages should reflect this.

- The last few years has seen a shift from summer hillwalking incidents to snow/ice climbing incidents. This is explained in terms of changing patterns of participation and the presence of a possible skills gap.

- Many incidents take place when the weather is not inclement and the terrain is not serious – footpaths, dry and fine, walking uphill. Safety messages should alert hillgoers to not relax on caution.

- Slips and stumbles remain

the prime causes of incidents – particularly in the summer months when the terrain is wet or broken. The older and the more experienced hillwalkers (especially women) are especially prone. Safety messages should reflect this and highlight the often serious consequences of a slip.

- Many slips result from poor concentration and distraction (especially with men) and almost half take place walking uphill or flat. Safety messages should reflect these facts.

- Navigation, poor planning and bad timing continue to be linked with very many incidents (especially with men). These are skills which can be developed and effort should be expended in minimising these weaknesses.

- Group separation is connected with navigation problems and with people becoming lost or overdue. There is a clear message here for group management.

- A significant number of problems arise through absence of key items of equipment. There is a need to keep reminding people to carry essential back up items.

- Those most 'at risk' belong to professional occupations – medics, scientists, engineers, teachers, judges, architects, accountants, solicitors.

Research partly funded by the Leverhulme Trust

Bob Sharp (MRC of Scotland)

gained was that odd sensation of weightlessness in the arm whenever we stopped for a break. People used to ask me why I was forever throwing butties and coffee over my left shoulder and gallingly point out that Jack Douglas did it better anyway.

When on top form, messages could be received with the clarity of a conversation whispered across the A6 at rush hour. This was due in part to the radio's propensity to deliver a badly distorted version of BBC Radio 2 whenever the Holme Moss transmitter mast came into view which, unfortunately on Kinder, occurs quite frequently. To make matters worse, the Beeb had recently started 24 hour broadcasting and so there was no respite even after midnight.

Sadly this did nothing to reduce the frequency and duration of all-night exercises – but our then Team Leader, Bob Conway, never was one to entertain protests. Things only changed when he noticed that team members, when out in daylight, always wore sunglasses, often got lost, and were frightened of walking near the edges of crags.

Next issue: Gas Lamps – their parts in our Downfall.

John Mottram (Kinder MRT)

...DRIVING OFF-ROAD... PC OR PR?

In Issue 1, we asked for your views on this contentious topic.

John Saxton, Vehicle Officer for Cleveland SRT responds here with a piece that is, in his own words, "opinionated and garrulous". Judge for yourself...

The off-roading debate is one which has run for years and is likely to do so for many more. Like fox-hunting, each side holds on to their beliefs with an almost religious zeal. Like fox-hunting, many of the arguments either way are emotively-fuelled misconceptions.

The commonest argument is that vehicles off-road damage the surface of tracks. Inevitably they do, just as vehicles wear out the surface of the M1. I don't hear many people campaigning for the banning of vehicles from the motorways because they wear them out. Usage of any method of transport, including foot, will wear out the surface on which you travel, hence the amount of footpaths which are now surfaced in those hideous flagstones, which look awful and are hard on the feet.

Should walkers have been banned from footpaths years ago to prevent this becoming necessary?

One of the most vocal antagonists to off-roading, next to ramblers, comes from the horse-riding fraternity. It is interesting to note that I cannot think of any horse riders in our region who are involved in Mountain Rescue, and yet they remain one of the commonest recipients of our services. However, due to its relatively small hooves when compared to a vehicle tyre, a horse exerts a greater pressure on a soft surface than does a Land Rover, thus sinking further into the track. I am sure that everyone has spent hours searching soft forestry tracks, wading up to their knees in mud which has been pitted with hoof marks. These marks leave holes which fill with water, turning the ground into a sponge which saturates the whole track, whereas a vehicle leaves

track marks which then act as drainage channels, thus draining the track and keeping it in a usable condition. Indeed, many tracks and unsurfaced roads depend on the passage of vehicles to maintain the route in a serviceable condition, and have done so, quite literally, for centuries. With the recent increase in recreational off-roading, it is notable that many roads which previously took hours to traverse with the use of chains and winches, are now easily passable with minimal experience or equipment.

But what about these ruts left by vehicles? Many times have I heard that a track is ruined by the off-roaders, who have left tracks two feet deep. This is, of course, a total myth. If you try to drive a Land Rover down a track with ruts this deep, you will find that your vehicle sits upon its differentials, with the wheels twelve inches in the air. Nothing but a large tractor can leave ruts this deep, for which we have to thank the local farmer whose land it is, who has to drive along the track through necessity and who would continue to do so if all recreational traffic were banned.

Different types of tracks maintain themselves in different ways. Many are down to bedrock; these will never wear out, but rely on constant usage to keep them passable. Others are across soft and boggy moorland, and it is only possible to drive across these with winches and shovels, creating deep and ugly damage. Even then, however, some of these tracks have survived because they are so bad. Some 48 hours after such a crossing, the morass has shifted back across the track, leaving no signs of passage. It is knowing which track will self-repair and which should be left alone which is one of the learned skills of off-roading.

Ah, but what about those nasty, smelly exhaust fumes, upsetting the delicate ramblers' noses? Surely it is an insult to the environment to allow this. But how have those oh-so-delicate ramblers arrived at their set-off point? Not, by any chance, by car, with a nasty, smelly exhaust? Their argument, that they left their smelly vehicles at the foot of the hill carries little credibility – they obviously don't go out on windy days. Apparently, only about 4% of atmospheric pollution is due to vehicles, and the rest is due to industry. Therefore, to reduce our pollution by as little as 2%, we would have to reduce our vehicles' contribution by half.

The vast majority of off-road users appreciate their environment, and take care of it. There are many voluntary organisations which arrange working weekends to repair damaged or worn-out tracks and many clubs exert voluntary restraint, not using those tracks which are vulnerable to damage, or after episodes of wet weather. It is through responsible behaviour that the right to continue access will have any future. Unfortunately, the popular press puts it in a social category somewhere between Harold Shipman and Hannibal Lecter. It is necessary to be sensible and sensitive to the surface and to other users. Driving in a way which will inevitably cause damage, with stones and mud flying, achieves nothing but bad publicity and a damaged or stuck vehicle. (I don't know which is more embarrassing.)

Irresponsible behaviour in a marked Team Land Rover is unacceptable by any standards. I suggest that off-roading is left to the experienced members of the Teams, and the inexperienced members gain experience at the many off-road centres where driving which would be considered antisocial elsewhere is considered *de rigueur*. Most teams maintain programmes of driving in just this way, without problems, and with obvious benefits to vehicles, reputation and personal kudos.

Tracks should never be driven without explicit permission from the landowner unless under rescue conditions, and, even then, an attempt to contact the landowner is a blow for PR. Unsurfaced roads should probably not be driven at all if they are not in condition, as it can end up with red faces as the farmer uses his tractor to pull you out.

Let's face it, we are fighting a battle on two fronts here – the front of vital necessity and the front of reputation. PC and PR. As the current Government can testify, the PR side appears more important than any actualities, bearing in mind that our income derives in the greater part from the uninformed public to whom reputation is everything. In the twenty-first century, when political correctness is the *raison d'être* of Mountain Rescue, and saving lives an incidental extra, we are obliged to consider deeply those issues which our predecessors would have considered to be a waste of time.

Oh, and if the Mountain Rescue Off-road Driving Club ever exists, can I join?

continued from page 11...

was making his way up to the ABC point on the mountain. He encountered a Chinese scientific expedition trying to rescue one of its team at 20,000ft. He offered his assistance and discovered that the casualty was suffering from severe high altitude fluid on the lungs. As the casualty had not received any treatment and seemed close to death, he administered a capsule of medicine from his medical kit to assist the man's heart. In the absence of medical oxygen, or the means for rapid descent, the drug kept the patient alive long enough to get him down the mountain.

The next day, there was another drama when a member of an Australian Army team, climbing down the mountain, reported to Wg Cdr Kirkpatrick that he had experienced some 'worrying neurological symptoms' at higher altitude but they had eased as he descended. A suspected mild heart attack was diagnosed and he was advised to leave the mountain and return to Kathmandu.



*Officially Mad By Royal Appointment
Flt Lt Ted Atkins*

The expedition had been officially launched after the team met HRH Prince Charles on 26 February, followed by a press release at MoD in London on the 27th. The visit to Highgrove, by Royal Invitation, was the best start the team could have. HRH Prince Charles was given a demo of the clothing, tents, oxygen and communications equipment that would be used by the team on Everest. He inspired the team with his enthusiasm, wished them a safe and successful attempt on the mountain and expressed the opinion that Expedition Leader Flt Lt Ted Atkins was slightly mad for attempting such a venture!

Looking to the future, there is an expedition to Bolivia planned for later in the year.

Information courtesy of the RAF News (available fortnightly from your local newsgagent for only 60p!) and the MRS News.

In the February issue of the MRC newsletter there was a disturbing report from the North East about Van Aerial Disease, thought at the time to afflict only MR teams and others in rural situations where vehicles and overhanging trees come into close proximity. According to researcher Ann Tennabent, however, there is now alarming evidence that a pernicious variant is already well established in many other parts of the country. The new strain seems to be particularly prevalent in urban and suburban areas and is probably being spread by young, lager-fuelled and follically-challenged males attired in remarkably untidy clothing and expensive footwear (not to be confused with some older hillwalkers, whose coiffure and apparel can be very similar). Outbreaks tend to occur between the hours of 11pm and midnight and targets of the virus may be readily

identified as they take on the distinctive physical disfigurement known as Van Dallism. While the result of an attack is generally regarded as irreversible there is, nevertheless, hope since those of us directly affected by this malaise in Derbyshire have discovered that the principal effects can be remedied by judicious application of the substitute Cotanga.

Jonas T Thomm

I was intrigued to discover from the MRC Newsletter that Exmoor has moved. According to the Regional News section, it is now in the South East. Does that explain why so few DRG members travelled to Exmoor's training weekend?

**John Whiting
Devon Rescue Group**

...the newsletter was well received by the team members... but could we be in the SOUTH WEST

this time. Our lads and lasses think the patch we have is big enough without most of the south of England (joke really, it was a good publication)...

**Mike Long
Exmoor SRT**
Thanks to John for pointing the error out to me via the DRG newsletter. I can only apologise profusely for moving Exmoor lock, stock and barrel across the country. They are now back where they belong – hope the experience wasn't too traumatic. Judy.

In an article about the IKAR 200 Conference... the writer notes that "The central European stranglehold (on MR) is gradually breaking!" No reference is made to the northern England stranglehold on MR in this country.

**John Whiting
Devon Rescue Group**
Ouch! Can't wait to hear your comments after this newsletter...

At the May MRC meeting, the private area of the MRC's web site was launched. This private area is protected by a username and password combination, available from the Regional secretaries. It currently contains areas for each of the MRC's sub committees to store documents and an area for resources which will be useful to the webmasters of all the MR teams. The area is still in its early days with more information being added all the time. Coming in June will be the addition of a page for the incident reporting software complete with downloads and updates.

The MRC web site now has a search facility. This will allow you to search not only the MRC site itself, but also the newsgroups and all the sites that we link to. Give it a try with your team name – you will be surprised!

Has your team got its official MRC email address yet? If not, you need to email a request to – **webmaster@mountain.rescue.org.uk** and we will get one sorted out for you. While you're there, why not check that we have a link to your team's web site? If not, then let us know.

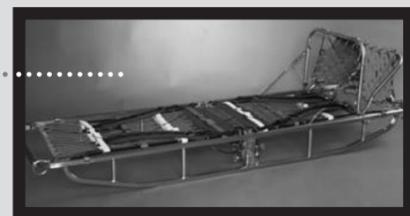
Paul Baxendale

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Please note that further efforts to reduce the weight of the Mark 3 Bell stretcher without loss of strength, the current model weighs 14.9 kgs, plus 2.85 kgs of headguard and 4.2 kgs of handle – 21.9 kgs complete.

The Mark 3 and the Tangent, of course, both split in two for the uphill journey. The new carry system reduces the weight considerably. The headguard end of the Mark 3 (the heaviest bit) now weighs under 14 kgs and compares well with one piece folding stretchers.



The Bell Tangent is significantly lighter. Its handles and headguard can be carried separately and added on site when required, and both halves of the stretcher, including integral lift rings and carry system, weigh only 13.7 kgs when assembled.

Peter and Lisa Bell

THE WEAKEST LINK

Try a simple test – lie on any stretcher fitted with plastic, quick release buckles and get a convenient strap fastened quite tightly around your chest. Breathe out and then take a good, big breath. If the buckle is quite old and well used, the chances are that it will pop open.

This shouldn't happen. And it won't happen if your stretcher has been checked diligently on a regular basis and kept in good nick. But stretchers can get taken for granted – "Oh, it's tough as old boots"... "Bomb proof"... "It never gives any trouble..."

It is disturbing how many Bell stretchers come in for service with a number of faulty quick release buckles.

Metal buckles are not quite as easy to fasten, but they will not let you (or your casualty) down and that is why I prefer to fit them. If the Bell stretcher is to deserve its reputation for tough durability, its buckles should be in keeping with the robust nature of the rest of the stretcher. With a little training and practice, you can soon become adept at fastening the linesman's buckles and it's even possible to secure them using only one hand.

We can supply four different buckles – plastic quick release, aluminium linesman's

buckles, stainless steel linesman's buckles or a stainless snap buckle. The latter is heavier and may not be suitable in snow or ice. I like the stainless linesman's buckle best, but now fit aluminium ones as standard as they bring the weight of the stretcher down.

Teams wanting to trade in linesman's buckles for plastic quick release ones can do so but, as they are not in accordance with our own recommendations, please note that we require a formal written order.

Bear in mind that although you may look after your kit well, many stretchers do not come back for regular services. This year we've had two old timers, one supplied in 1975, the other 1983, back for their first service.

Thanks to those teams who have returned Bell stretcher questionnaires. About a third have come back so far. If yours has gone astray please email us – **pbell@bell-stretchers.co.uk** or ring **01539 732281** or fax **01539 68444** and we will send another out to you.

Answers so far do not suggest a lot of enthusiasm for either wheels or skis. Many indicate that the weight of the Bell stretcher is a disadvantage. No surprise there! Positive comments include "It does the job" (Patterdale) and "It's never failed us." (Longtown).

Double F15-C Crash on Ben MacDui

The search for, and eventual recovery of, the pilots of the two American F15-C aircraft lost in the Cairngorms on March 26 was a team effort in every sense of the word, involving not only the RAF's SAR assets but also civilian and Police MRTs. Furthermore, Glenmore Lodge and Braemar MRT freely gave of their facilities.

The two aircraft, from the USAF base at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, were first reported overdue from a low flying sortie during the afternoon of the 26th. They had disappeared from radar screens while over the Cairngorms on a routine mission. It rapidly became apparent that they must have crashed somewhere in the mountains. A major search was immediately launched by the ARCC. MRTs from Kinloss and



Leuchars were called out, together with Cairngorm, Braemar and Aberdeen, and SAR helicopters from Lossiemouth and Boulmer. Leeming MRT would also be called out later that afternoon, to join a search in conditions that Al Sylvester would later describe as "quite frankly the worst I have seen in more than 17 years." Aside from freezing temperatures and driving snow, the ever present yet hidden danger of avalanches threatened – invisible in the white out conditions.

Uniquely, in an attempt to locate hotspots, a Tornado GR4 carried out a number of flypasts of the area, hoping that the aircraft's infrared equipment would pick up heat sources such as pilot or wreckage. However, this was unsuccessful and the main search had to be carried out on foot.

Initially, the search had included a huge area of the Cairngorms as far West as Ben Alder but, as parts of the wreckage were discovered, it soon became apparent that the crash site was close to the summit of Ben MacDui, the UK's second highest mountain.

Sadly, during the second day of the search, Leeming MRT personnel located the first body and, following permission from the Procurator Fiscal, carried the

dead pilot down the mountain to a point where he could be winched on board the rescue helicopter. In desperate conditions, the search for the second airman continued as further search teams were deployed by helicopter to a point as close to the crash site as the weather allowed, each journey completed on foot. Any high level heli search was impossible, despite the courageous efforts of the aircrew, as the weather and minimal visibility continued to severely hamper operations.

The search intensified, but fresh snow and continued horrendous weather made progress very slow. It soon became clear that this was developing into a major search operation, the like of which has not been seen for many years. For the first time, the MRS Chief Instructor and acting OC MRS were deployed to the ARCC at Kinloss to provide an interface between the controllers and the Team Leaders on the ground. They also advised a growing band of American servicemen who had travelled to Kinloss to initiate their investigation.

With their own MH53 Jolly Green Giant helicopters available, the USAF personnel had their own means of reaching the crash site. This presented its own problem as it became clear that mountain safety would become a major issue in the post crash management phase of the operation.

With no sign still of the second pilot by the evening of the 29th, things were not looking good. With a reasonable weather forecast for the next day, it was decided to mount a major push the next morning. It was around this time that RAF Stafford MRT were deployed to Braemar and Kinloss were told to stand down for some well deserved rest.

By Friday morning, the weather had indeed cleared. With much improved visibility, a combined Leuchars-Leeming-Braemar MRT search party located the body of the second pilot around noon, buried under snow and still attached to his ejection seat. Rescue 137 was deployed, complete with two USAF armourers who would disarm the still live seat prior to recovery of the pilot. With the seat made safe, the body was transferred to a waiting snow cat and taken down the mountain to the waiting helicopter.

With the SAR phase complete, the management of the incident was transferred to RAF Lossiemouth, designated as the PCM station for the crash. Despite the temporary let up in weather conditions,



it was very evident that the crash site location was itself a serious risk to any non mountaineers. So, it was decided that RAF MRS troops should accompany all non military MR personnel whilst on crash site. 2 Squadron RAF regiment personnel had earlier been tasked to provide a crash guard, but this was clearly impractical due to the location and their involvement was wisely limited to that of 'gate guardians' at the adjacent road heads.

In any 'normal' crash site situation, the RAF MRS would withdraw at this point, leaving the long term crash guard and AR&TF 'Crash and Smash' to complete the clearing of the wreckage from the site. But this was no ordinary crash site and a unique solution was called for. A rota system of RAF MRTs was drawn up where each of the teams would take it in turns to provide safety cover in one week stints.

As the MRS News (May issue) went to print, there were personnel at Braemar providing supervision, escorts and safety advice to the seeming hordes who visit the site daily. Instead of the usual 24 to 36 hours that we might normally



expect to spend at an aircraft crash site, our involvement in the double F15-C crash will continue until the last piece of wreckage is cleared. This may be weeks or months and depends solely on the weather.

This was a tragic accident and the thoughts and sympathy of every member of the RAF MRS go to the families and friends of the two American pilots. It has also emphasised that, for as long as aircraft continue to operate over the remote and inhospitable areas of the UK, the need for a dedicated rescue service will also continue and that the service provided by the RAF MRTs is second to none. Whensoever.

Flt Lt John Dunn SO3MRS(S)

Pensioner says NUTS to taped off kissing gate...

No sooner had Issue 1 hit the fells and valleys up and down the country than Foot and Mouth followed suit, sadly with less edifying results. With call outs at an all time low, annual fundraising events cancelled, and the chance to get out on the hill completely scuppered, the majority of teams appear to have used the quiet spell to consolidate, get the paint brushes out, train (not more medical!) and look at alternative methods of fundraising. There is even a malicious rumour that some Team Leaders are actually washing their socks! Nothing like a bit of pent up frustration to concentrate the mind!...

In Cumbria, there were three non mountain searches for missing persons including an old lady found injured at the bottom of a steep bank in a local wood – hence the headline. There have been numerous stories of walkers going onto the fell, oblivious to restrictions, but only one reached the press. Two walkers were sighted on Skiddaw and reported to police who proceeded to publicly disinfect them.

The South West, like Cumbria, Dumfries and Galloway, was severely stricken by this disease which has crossed all barriers and occupations, affecting everyone. Even efforts at beating the restrictions through more imaginative fundraising were hit in Northumberland. A 20 year old girl who was rescued from the Cheviot whilst on a DofE Gold expedition in 1999, planned to do a sponsored parachute jump to raise money for NNPSRT. It was all going eerily according to plan until the airfield was closed... you've guessed it, because of Foot and Mouth!

In the Peak District, the Ranger Service erected more than 12,000 closure signs on public rights of way and access points leading to open country, with Rangers appointed Footpath Inspectors. Teams introduced Bio-Security measures ensuring that disinfectant regimes complied with MAFF advice in disinfecting vehicles, equipment and personnel. Although there were no confirmed outbreaks in the Peak District, there have been cases outside the National Park resulting in restrictions which affected parts of the Park.

Training has been inventive. Western Beacons have used sea cliffs, Central Beacons urban parks, a climbing wall centre and a river ravine in the town centre. In Mid Pennine, the Rossendale team took on eleven new trainees, attended yet more cas care lectures and learnt how to taste wine (okay, so it was a fundraising event). It is reported that one of the Lake District teams now plays a mean game of table tennis.

Even little old ladies and errant children hell bent on leaving home, and potential suicides appear to have had second thoughts about it all – at least for the duration of the worst months of crisis. But as the restrictions have relaxed, the casualties have returned and the persons gone missing. In North Wales and the Lakes, as pathways opened call outs increased immediately.

As I write there are still restrictions on search dogs – dogs and handlers pace the floors in anticipation. Let's hope that by the next issue all this is very old news, and we are all free again to get out on the hill. In the meantime, there are an awful lot of freshly painted bases, squeaky clean vehicles and clean boots out there.

(Info from Ged Feeney, Jacquie Hall, Ian Hurst, Mike Long and Peter Howells)

Peak District National Park 50 years old...

The Peak District National Park was the first National Park in England and Wales, designated on the 17 April 1951. Its 555 square miles incorporate parts of Derbyshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and a number of metropolitan authorities.

Surrounded by the major conurbations of Manchester, Sheffield, Derby and the Potteries, the area has long acted as a green lung for those populations, but it was April 1932 before pressure for public access to the hills and moorlands for recreational purposes culminated in the infamous mass trespass onto Kinder Scout from Hayfield. Five of the protesting ramblers were subsequently imprisoned for riotous behaviour.

The newly established National Park considered that public access to the privately owned moorlands, mainly in the North of the National Park, was a high priority. Negotiations with landowners led to the first Access Agreement, signed in 1952, allowing public access on to Kinder Scout. The Warden Service (now Ranger Service) was inaugurated in 1954 to manage public access, providing support and assistance to both visitors and local communities alike. In 1965, the Pennine Way was opened in Edale – the country's first National Trail.

As with so many aspects of conservation, many of the National Park's achievements are invisible on the ground. For so many people, the Peak District brand is the largely accessible magnificent landscape and environment – over 1600 miles of public rights of way and 80 square miles of upland moorland available for recreation through Access Agreements and Accords. About 60% of all access agreements in England and Wales are in the Peak District National Park and, now the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 is in being, many more areas will be made available. Again, we were the first in setting up a Countryside Access Forum to take this forward.

With over 22 million visitors annually, the Peak District is the second most visited National Park in the World. (Mount Fuji National Park in Japan is the most visited). The Goyt Valley, Upper Derwent and Roaches traffic management schemes have relieved areas overrun by visitors cars. The Tissington, High Peak and Monsal Trails provided traffic-free safe routes on former railway lines for walkers, cyclists and horseriders. Losehill Hall at Castleton was converted into the country's first National Park Study Centre.

Formal celebrations marking the 50th birthday of the National Park may have been curtailed by the Foot and Mouth crisis, but over 30 villages have signed up to mark our birthday in their Village Well dressings celebrations. Designed to reflect the aims of all the people who campaigned for National Parks, who wanted everyone to be able to enjoy the outstanding natural beauty of our countryside, its wonderful wildlife and rich cultural heritage, it is hoped that the event will take place later this year.

Ian Hurst (Chairman Buxton MRT)

AMENDS TO HANDBOOK INSERT TO DATE...

Page 5. Ian Hurst. Correct email address – imh@peakrang.u-net.com
Page 7. New SARDA (England) Chairperson is Nicki Lyons. Details on Page 17 of Handbook.
Page 7. Euan Thomas. Correct post code – SA10.
Page 11. Patterdale MRT. Correct email address – enquiries@mountainrescue.org.uk
Page 13. Teesdale & Weardale SRT. Correct email address – stan@whites53.fsnet.co.uk
Page 31. Joe Dowdall. Correct address – 30 Orchardville Gardens.
Page 36. Call signs. Mike November. Association should read Derbyshire Constabulary.

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