Several years have passed since Pete Livesey wrote along these lines and raised the question whether, under every rescue circumstance, all the ethics and principles of mountaineering could justifiably be abandoned. As then, there is still no easy answer to the question but as circumstances change it needs to be asked from time to time.

What prompts me to raise it again is the mounting interest in PLBs and the pressure for mountain rescue to support their introduction on the land.

Mountaineering is many things to many people. Most would agree that it enables us to get back to things that really count, away from the less attractive parts of modern life. Inherent also is the freedom to put oneself in a dangerous environment and then deal with it. What Peter Boardman called ‘serious play’. It is not necessary to climb on north faces in high ranges to live these experiences.

Navigating in bad weather and tackling relatively easy faces create risks that we learn to overcome. These experiences give great rewards and enable us to reinforce our identity and especially our capability for self-sufficiency.

In modern society risk is becoming unacceptable. Anything is better than death, even a mundane existence in front of a television set. There are those who, as so often seen in the USA, would have society protect mountaineers against themselves. Sadly the views of Nietzsche, advising of the well-being to individuals and society of ‘living dangerously’ are no longer widely regarded.

The threats to this spirit of mountaineering come from many directions. Loss and erosion of the environment, greater density of people, and improved equipment are probably unavoidable. In addition, are the behavioural problems. The use of mobile phones clearly reduces the wilderness aspect of the mountain world.

Happy there are many mountaineers who each choose their use and are comfortable to live with any consequences. Perhaps the day is close by when they will be derided for taking this approach. I hope mountain rescue has not moved so far away from its mountaineering roots that it will be first in line with criticism.

This leads on to the introduction of PLBs. Another tool to diminish the contracting wilderness and undermine the philosophy of self-sufficiency in the hills? It is unlikely that mountain rescue alone will seriously influence the decision about their introduction but, before we jump on the bandwagon for their development, let’s not forget our mountaineering heritage.

I was delighted to read Julian Carraccio vigorously dismissing measures to make Broad Stand ‘safe’ after another accident there. Make people aware of the risks in the hills by all means. Taking away the risks and the self-sufficiency; surely not?

David Allan Chairman
EQUIPMENT NEWS
Mike Margeson reports...
I am delighted to report that the first service and load testing has been completed under our new agreement with Lyon Equipment. I would remind teams that it is best practice to ensure service and up to date load test certification. Records would indicate a good number of team stretchers are out of service and load test certification date. This is a cost that the MR(E&W) meets on teams’ behalf as we view this as particularly important.

BELL STRETCHER PACK FRAMES
These, as you are aware, can be put together to make a small emergency stretcher. They will not be included in the load test certification process undertaken by Lyon. They are not for use in a vertical environment and are envisaged for use only in exceptional circumstances for a carry.

BLACKS TESTING BU REAU CHECK S
Following on from Judy’s report in the last issue I have been working with Blacks to help facilitate a fast programme. A set of waterprooﬁngs and boots are being issued to a number of MR teams from every region. Those chosen will be taking part in a six month ﬁeld trial. A questionnaire has been produced and those members taking part in these tests will provide critical and honest feedback to Blacks.

STRETCHER QUESTIONNAIRE
We have received 24 returns out of 54 teams circulated. If your team has not responded, we lose the opportunity to gain your knowledge from your team’s experience. Quite often, in this sort of research, it’s the small, seemingly insigniﬁcant ideas which are of most use. All the data from this survey will be collated and published in the magazine and hopefully presented in the stretcher development track at the conference. If the form has not made it into your inbox, email mmargeson@hotmail.com for a copy.

UK MOUNTAIN RESCUE CONFERENCE IN STIRLING
I have just returned from the Braemar Royal Highland Games where I spent the weekend with Norma Crumlish. I am delighted to report on the incredibly brave and courageous work the mountain rescue teams undertake to one of the country’s most vital charities. The Hummer H3 is the ideal vehicle to offer.

CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU CHECKS
A position statement, guidelines and background information regarding CRB checks is available and can be viewed on the website. This page is under review by the Government and the indications are that charges might be imposed soon. All guidelines generated for operational SAR volunteers engaged in SAR operations or team training for SAR.

If an MR(E&W) recognised team, or members of such a team wish to be involved in activities outside SAR operations or SAR training, a possible requirement for CRB checks could exist and could depend upon the type of activity being contemplated. Any decision to initiate CRB checks should be taken by individual MR teams and acted upon locally.

Members of Llanberis MRT with the Hummer
To commemorate the landmark 75th anniversary of mountain rescue in England and Wales, Hummer has provided a specially modiﬁed vehicle to help our rescue and fundraising efforts. The newly launched, right-hand drive Hummer H3 will carry both equipment and personnel in rescue situations, and featured on the Mountain Rescue stand at the Outdoors Show in March.

Hailed as the offroad vehicle ‘like nothing else,’ the H3 is one of the most capable off road vehicles on the market today. Recently introduced into the UK, it is a smaller, more affordable and agile version of the larger H1 and H2 models. In addition to its iconic design, the vehicle boasts a number of advanced off road features, allowing the driver to enjoy full versatility in some of the most grueling driving conditions nature has to offer.

The only vehicle of its size that can climb a 407mm vertical wall or 60% slope, traverse a 40% side slope and navigate up to 610mm of water, it’s a sure-footed choice for mountain rescue and Hummer has further enhanced it with a number of specialist features. Grill and roof mounted spotlights aid visibility in treacherous conditions, and rock panel protection gives added protection to the lower body and door panels against rock strikes and other strong blows.

Steve Cavin from Hummer says, ‘We are delighted to provide such a tangible support to one of the country’s most vital charities. The Hummer H3 is the ideal vehicle to tackle some of the toughest terrains and we hope it can provide a valuable support to the incredibly brave and courageous work the mountain rescue teams undertake throughout the year.’

A request was made at a recent MRC meeting that the discussion of the ‘executive meetings’ be circumscribed. So here we are...
Madillo – the new lightweight helmet from Edelrid

When you’re out on a climb you certainly have enough to carry in terms of both weight and size, so anything to lighten your load is to be welcomed. And that’s where the new Madillo helmet comes in. Weighing in at just 380g, it’s not only super lightweight but holds up well, reducing the helmet’s volume by 50% to make just 10 minutes in on your back.

Manufactured, of course, to conform to EN12492, the Madillo shell is made from high strength, abrasion and impact resistant injected material. Two sorts of foam are utilised in the interior, EPP in the upper shell for its shock absorption properties and EVA is used around the sides for comfort. The Madillo adjusts from 52cm to 62cm – easily achieved by gently pressing on the back of the helmet whilst in place on the head. The design of the rear of the helmet provides protection, especially when the wearer is looking down. Oh... and it looks pretty good too!

Go to www.edelrid.de for more information.

The Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show in March was a roaring success for Mountain Rescue in general and Basecamp in particular. This year’s event felt so much more buzzy than previous events, when footfall had seemed to be dropping year on year. But no, with zip wires stretching over our heads, aspirant climbers jamming up and down imaginary caverns behind us and the unlikely magnetism of that big, shiny yellow thing (eyes right) there was definitely a buzz about the Mountain Rescue stand.

This was the first time Cave Rescue and SARDRA had joined us at the event, and – as is ever the case – our four legged friends took centre stage drawing oohs and also in equal measure to the Hummer. So thanks to Ordnance Survey for giving us a corner space big enough to accommodate the two vehicles (Edale also had a team vehicle on display), plus ten or so mountain rescuers, a dog a day and a mini gazibo housing a variety of merchandise. OS had also supplied two complimentary tickets per team, prior to the event, and it was good to be visited throughout the weekend by colleagues, and their families, from across England and Wales.

The Hummer has been donated for a year, to be shared amongst a number of teams. Without doubt, the most hopeful question of the weekend (besides ‘How many miles does it do to the gallon?’) was whether this was actually a raffle prize... sadly not the case. But perhaps it’s something we should think about? No pressure there then Hummer!

We were also able to deliver several presentations about the work we do. Andy Simpson and Graham Daley (Rossendale & Pendle MRT) gave an overview, and explained how to go about joining a rescue team. Bob Davey (Edale MRT) went through the life cycle of an incident, and John Coombs and Biscot (the real star of the show) talked about search dogs.

As for Basecamp, the support group set up last year, it was great to see many who signed up at last year’s show come back to say hello and give some very positive feedback about the magazine. And, of course, to welcome the ninety plus new members who joined our ranks this year. Basecamp membership now totals 200 and counting. A massive thanks to Burton McCall and Victorinox for their continuing support of MRT, not least in the provision of a very sexy Altameter Swiss Army Knife (worth £60) as a free gift to anyone signing up at the weekend. What that little beauty won’t do isn’t worth having!

Neil and I took the opportunity to chat to Matt Swain, editor of Trail magazine, and he has agreed to dedicate their Trail for Sale feature to Basecamp for a year, starting in January 2009. They will also give us regular newsbytes to promote the support group – which we hope will help spread the word and swell the membership.

We also met with walkingworld.com (not before having circumnavigated the entire show several frustrating times to find them, so incomprehensible was the floorplan – but more on that in a moment). The site is an online resource for walkers, which also encourages those new to the hills to extend their adventures with more than 4000 routes, contributed by over 200 walkers from around the country. The walks come in a unique format making them very easy to follow, with photographs to illustrate every important decision point and an OS map, so it’s well worth checking out the site. We can already see a good start. The idea is not just to raise funds to support all teams in England and Wales but to raise awareness of our work amongst walkers and climbers. So spread the word to your friends on the hill.

And finally, thanks to all those who supplied some covetable prizes for the raffles on Saturday and Sunday – specifically Towsure, Warrick Rhodes Clothing, Aquapac, Vaude, Jordans, Yosman Outdoor Leisure, Activit.com, Regatta, DMM, Montaine, Nikefax, Demand/DVD, Silva, Paramo, Kea, Osweidi Bailey and Ellis Bingham.

So that was the Outdoors Show 2008. Plans and ideas are already taking shape for next year’s event. Which brings me round to the only beef I have about the whole thing (echoed by others I met and, I feel sure, by many members of the public) – please can we have a floorplan diagram that’s easier to read. I know my eyes might not be what they once were but, even with the 20/20 of my youth, I’d have been hard pushed to read the seemingly 0.5 point type on some of the smaller stands. Beef over! Great event OS – thanks for having us! Hope to see you next year.

Judy Whiteside Editor

RAFFLE PRIZES DONATED BY OUR FELLOW EXHIBITORS

NEW EMS CASES FROM PELI include a lid organiser and padded trays for safe storage of medical gear for EMS professionals, all housed in a watertight, crushproof, dustproof Peli Protector® case. EMS cases are available in Peli case sizes 1500, 1550 and 1600.

Pele products are covered by the legendary “You break it, we replace it” lifetime guarantee.
WE RE VICTIMS OF OUR OWN LAKEDISTRICT
WHEE-WOLF GRID REFERENCE CARDS

Keswick Brewery was approached in early 2007 by the Keswick team to brew a special beer for the team’s 60th anniversary. We were pleased with the idea of ‘Thirst Rescue’ was born. Sue takes up the story: ‘We were really pleased to create a beer for this special occasion. We decided upon the recipe and we took up the team’s suggestion for the name, Thirst Rescue.’

As planned, brewers Phil and Sue have since reinvented the Thirst Rescue recipe as they would like to add it to their permanent beer list. To celebrate the opening of the new pub, the brewery created three types of malt and blended five types of hops, to give a special, golden bitter with aromas of citrus and exotic fruit.

The new recipe will be relaunched at the Dog and Gun. The existing, darker and stronger Thirst Rescue with the same speciality hops.

The brewery are donating 5p from every pint sold of the new recipe beer. ‘We hope this pubs will also support the campaign by matching or beating our donation.’

The donation from the brewery can go to the regional body, MRE&iS or Australia. Any contribution from the pub itself can go to their local team or a team of their choosing or simply be added to the regional or national donation.

The ‘Dog and Gun in Keswick has a long history of supporting the Keswick team. They hope to put Thirst Rescue as a regular brew and have already said they will match our 5p per pint donation!’ added Phil Harrison.

The team are delighted that the beer can be sold and supported in this imaginative way to benefit rescue teams all over the country and not just in Keswick. The picture on the pump clips which updated for the Thirst Rescue relaunch in May. To reflect the wider MR community, look out for it in a pub near you or why not ask your local to get some in? Cheers!

PENRITH VEHICLE SEES NEEDY TEAM
In May 2007 Penrith MRT set itself the ambitious target of raising a sufficient fund to purchase three new vehicles to replace the existing fleet. Through a combination of fundraising events, an unexpected bequest and two generous sponsors, the team is close to achieving its objective.

New equipment is heading to the shops very soon, including the long awaited Offset Nuts (formerly made by HB Climbing). The Locking Revolver has been in great demand and is now available in new locking versions. Also the new range of harnesses is also going to be available in the next second edition of our kit guide. The team’s new kit, which is now comes in three sizes and benefit from Quick Buckles. The Viper is an excellent entry level harness which also has Quick Buckles, three sizes but no fastening system. For the younger climber, the range includes Body harness (Toonkit) and a kid’s sit harness (Tomkit). New chalkbags and ropebags complete the latest offerings for the Spring.

Check out our website for details of our new foraging press we are installing. It is a massive statement of our intent to not only maintain our mountain rescue service to its full potential, but also to help us further increase our efficiency in production. For more information about our products please visit www.dmmwales.com
funding target and has placed orders for two modified Land Rover 110s and a modified Renault Master van. Now they wish to share their good fortune with any interested organisations that go the extra mile for the borough and its people. ‘Being nominated in the

MID PENNINE

TEAM LEADER GETS MBE

Bolton MRT team leader Gary Rhodes was awarded the MBE in the Queen’s New Year’s Honours list. In his time with the team, he has attended more than 900 incidents, but says the one which finds him sitting atop a helicopter crashed in Brinscall Moor near Chorley in February 2000 when he was part of the first ground rescue team to reach the scene only to discover the pilot who had died. ‘It was the first time I had seen the aftermath of a plane crash and it was horrific,’ he said. A more light-hearted moment came when team members were called out as they were attending a Roman-themed fancy dress party. They rushed to the incident – a man who was injured after falling into the River Croal – still wearing togas beneath their waterproofs and makeup. Soggy soggy soggy soggy.

EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTRE READY FOR ACTION

North West Ambulance Service Trust opened its new Emergency Control Centre at Broughton near Preston in January, a development which should prove key to the working relationship between mountain rescue and the ambulance service in Lancashire and Cumbria. The impressive facility, now one of the best in the country, aims to significantly improve the service to the customer. Key factors include improved system and quality call handling, and a pledge to work in a more integrated way with their partner organisations. A dedicated Mountain Rescue and Basics Doctor desk will be responsible for all mountain rescue and basics calls. For details of how to get in contact with the Ambulance Control Centre, please call 111 or 01772 865865, or email: info@nwas-mcc.org.uk.

PAK DARTMOOR RESCUE TRAINING WEEKEND, 14-16 NOVEMBER

The Wednesday evening meeting was well attended and included a special guest speaker, Tom Crone of the Dartmoor Search and Rescue Association. Tom gave an overview of the Association’s history, current activities and future plans. The meeting was followed by a presentation on the challenges faced by the team in Dartmoor’s often harsh conditions.

WILLIAM HARRISON, ABBEYDALE

The island’s Emergency Planning Officer Martin Blackburn, Head of the ICE Civil Defence, said, ‘Search and rescue dogs are a very useful asset to the emergency services. They can cover a lot of ground very quickly and there have been numerous occasions when search dogs have saved the lives of casualties in the UK.

Jim has been a very dedicated member of the Civil Defence volunteers and made a great personal contribution in terms of the time and money he has spent to get Star to this standard.

The JRT and Star are being used by experts at the North Pole, South Pole and other rescue organisations across the UK.

To find out more about Slidetite, call 0141 418 3659 or email sales@slidetite.com.

SOUTH WEST

AUTUMN IN OLDHAM

Oldham MRT have won a Friso in Oldham Award for their work. The awards, sponsored by an impressive list of local companies and judged by an independent panel, pay tribute to the people and organisations that go the extra mile for the community and its people. ‘Being nominated in the “first place”, says the team’s quarterly Bulletin, “was both a pleasure and a surprise. Being told we were the only one of the top price-winners along with an invitation to a special luncheon was a bigger one.”

Five team members attended the lunch, which turned out to be a glittering event delivered in a highly professional manner that would have done justice to any Oscars ceremony. The award was presented between the lunch courses and the three finalists in each group received a specially produced Oldham Chronicle ‘Friso’ in a gift frame. The presenters then opened a gold envelope to announce the category winner. ‘For the great address’ ran the joke, ‘the winners are... (a short pause is customary here)... then

ERNEST BURGAN

What happens when a hobby inspires an idea, the idea becomes a range of products produced, and these products lead to a successful business? Well... at some point, it’s time to give something back.

This is certainly the case with Slidetite. A new accident with an old fashioned bungee cord whilst packing for a holiday led to the invention of a fully adjustable hook. In no time at all, Slidetite became a full range of products, which guarantee you can secure loads of any size, rapidly, safely and securely. Soon Slidetite products were circumnavigating the globe, being used by experts at the North Pole, South Pole and all points between.

Slidetite’s owners, Pete and Anne Nolan, felt it was time to give something back. Being passionate hikers they were well aware of the work done by mountain rescue. The summer floods of 2007 brought the message even closer to home – Slidetite is based just outside Gloucester. This led to a collaboration with a Land Rover magazine to donate mini Slidetite Flood Kits to multiple mountain rescue and other rescue organisations across the UK. (See last issue of MR Magazine.)

A current competition in ‘Land Rover Monthly’ could lead to your team getting a bumer Slidetite kit! The competition is entitled ‘get one give one’. Winners get a bumer Slidetite kit for themselves and one is all the mountain rescue team of their choice. The competition ends on 30 April so keep an eye out.

To find out more about Slidetite, call 0416 418 3659 or email sales@slidetite.com.

A Hybrid of perfection

In the last few years the hybrid word has been thrown around a lot. Hybrid cars, hybrid plants and hybrid golf. There is now a new hybrid on the scene – the amazing new Scuffer Trousers by Keela. Combining our latest Stretch-Tec Advanced Fabric, this latest innovation by Keela is half climbing, half walking, 100% outdoor trousers. Tailor fitted using action ergonomics to ensure maximum wearer comfort all day long, the Scuffer Trousers are water repellant with ‘feel to it’ believe it quick-drying properties and have enhanced performance by prevent boot rub. Designed to be the ideal year round choice for outdoor enthusiast this hybrid combination has lead to the perfect balance of outdoor requirements. Perfection has arrived.

Like what you’ve read? Send and email with your details to competition@keela.co.uk and you will be automatically entered into a lottery draw for a chance to win a pair of Scuffer Trousers for yourself.
the Smelt Mill base into a freshening wind with urban parkland and extensive salt marshes. Vast tracts of moorland with a few isolated crags, rivers, lakes, canal, climbing quarries, terraced cottages the team now own all four plus a recent extension to house a vehicle. Having started with ownership of one of four terraced cottages the team now own the cycle unit of four members. There are within the patch many easy access paths through forestry, valleys, open moorland and alongside the canal. A very rapid search of these can be achieved by using mountain bikes. At present the members of this group use their own bikes but the intent, now that it has proved its worth, is to have customised team bikes. More work for the fundraisers. This should not be a problem if the article by Paul Durham in the last magazine is correct. Another new idea which has yet to come to fruition has been the trial of ‘tracking them’. There have been a few problems with this but work is to go on to try and resolve the obstacles. The aim is to improve searching skills and clue awareness. Search management is important and Phil has attended the national course in this. During 2007 the team have been fortunate in not having to use this in anger, believes it will play a much greater part in many incidents. Lastly it is pleasing to note the active involvement of the team with regional and national matters. The team has long standing members on the national equipment and financial sub-committees in Pate Taylor and Ian Oldish respectively. Simon Harris holds the GIS/GPS Group. At regional level, the team currently provides chair and training officer. The Mid Pennine representatives to the MRC have been regularly provided by Bowland Pennine and have participated in determining the course of mountain rescue as a whole.

The frequency of meetings has been increased as it became apparent during 2007 that many issues were being carried over without the time to address them fully. There are now six meetings during the year. Some of these will be specific to topics such as strategic planning which is one of the subjects always postponed in a reactive rather than pro-active environment. Formal detailed minutes are not kept but notes of the meetings are recorded especially in the group to matters being referred to or to the main meetings.

So what has been discussed in recent meetings? In January a detailed look at anticipated financial positions was considered. In the past this was never necessary because a paucity of central money left little or no opportunity for planning to spend. The cautious success of national fundraising had changed the picture and we can now consider making suggestions about how monies will be used. In relation to this, the value of, and requirement for, national training events was aired. With the imminent appointment of a training officer it was suggested one of the first tasks of the post should be to answer these questions. Discussions also revolved around the potential savings that could be made by the central purchasing of items common to most teams’ use. The constitution has also occupied some time. There are pressing reasons from a Charity Commission perspective why some changes are necessary and it seems appropriate to consider the whole at the same time. There are the anomalies already referred to in respect of officers and some other matters of detail. Tony Rich will look at the discussion and develop it into proposals for change to be put to the main meetings.

The next meeting is the one which will look at strategic plans. Amongst these will be a detailed evaluation of our use (or not) of the website and how this might be improved. Each officer will be invited to present aspects of the previous year and the demands of their area of involvement. There is always considerable cross over between the subcommittees’ interests and this will seem appropriate. In an attempt to defuse these overlaps (and occasionally conflicts) can be aired and resolved.

It is important that the notes from these meetings will appear on the members section of the MRC website. 

David Allan
Criminal Records Bureau Checks

Mike France provides useful guidelines and background information for teams recruiting new members.

What are the benefits for you as a rescue team of doing CRB checks? Well, it will tell you whether the person you are checking has been prosecuted for an offence with children, young people or vulnerable adults. But bear in mind, if someone has not been prosecuted it does mean they have not committed an offence.

What other ways could you check the background of a person wishing to join your team without doing a CRB check?

Pick up two references, one from their current employer, and the other from a past employer. This also gives you the opportunity to let their employer know about our service, allowing the new member to get time off work to attend incidents. Only use a personal reference if they are a young person without a true work record.

Any employer that uses CRB checks will tell you it is only part of the checking process carried out on someone, it should never be the only check you do.

We all use a membership application form for new members. These should hold personal details such as next of kin, medical details, driving details and offences, if any. This document should be like any employment application form. It could have a section for references taken. It should be signed off to show they have been taken up, by whom and when.

If you decide as a team to take up CRB checks, here are some points to think about:

A CRB check for volunteers is free at all the moment.

1: You need someone to countersign the application form. Your countersignature will need to be checked by the CRB and be given to your team leader. This person’s CRB check is more detailed than other checks because the person will be checking and recording on behalf of the applicant on the CRB form. The countersignature will need to send their original documents to Liverpool for checking. Documents required are:

- Passport
- Driving licence
- Birth certificate
- Marriage certificate
- P60 or P45
- Banking details

It’s worth noting that CRB will not now let any organisation countersign if you are not checking more than fifty people per year, so you will need to use an umbrella group to do your checks. Question - would it be better for all the teams in your region to do checks through one person? This would be a big ask for that person.

So you’ve decided you are going to do checks. Every existing member will need checking, then all new members, and this check should be repeated every ‘n’ years – you will need to decide how often.

Team members will need to fill in the CRB application form, and provide three of the above list of documents for the countersigning officer to see, the officer will then take details from these papers. Only the countersigning officer can take these details from the original documents, copies will not do. The form will then be sent off to Liverpool for checking, which can take some weeks.

You need to remember once you have started this exercise you will need to keep it going. Within my region – PDMRD – we’ve looked at this in detail and have decided we are not going to do CRB checks for the following reasons.

Would we have members working with or giving medical care to children, young people or vulnerable adults on a one to one basis without any other person about? Maybe, but this would be very rare. I know it only takes one small window of opportunity for someone to strike but if you risk assess this, it is very low.

Would we have new members giving medical care or working with this group of people by themselves? I hope not. We think the best way of checking new members is through references. And there are some good practices to follow if you are working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, as follows.

Under NO circumstances should mountain rescue team members:

- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching in any form.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Let allegations made by a child or young person go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child ‘even in fun’.
- Make sexist, racist or derogatory remarks.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or young people that they can do themselves.
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Use any physical demonstrations of affection.
- Take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- Take children to their home.

If any team member has any doubt about a colleague’s behaviour or attitude towards children, young people or vulnerable adults, then it is vital these concerns are brought to the attention of their team leader and team chairman.

If you receive an allegation about a team member:

- Immediately inform your team chairman.
- Record all the facts as you know them.
- Ensure no one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise.
- All allegations or suspicions must be referred immediately to the police.
- On receipt of a referral, the team chairman should liaise with the police who, in turn, will co-ordinate with social services.
- Internal discipline procedures should be instigated.
- Get support. Use your regional chairman or perhaps a person you’re more than willing to give direction and advice, if and when required.

Mountain rescue is perceived by the community as a trusted public service with responsible adult people working in it. However members cannot rely on the good name of mountain rescue to protect them. It is vital that members involved with children, young people or vulnerable adults maintain a sense of vigilance and do not adopt the belief ‘it could never happen to me’.

This paper has been put together to assist mountain rescue teams recruiting new members. I’ve included some good practice guidelines members should adopt when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Bear in mind that other child care professionals may add your own differently – always seek advice if you are unsure.

Mike France is chairman of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation and CRB countersigning officer for National Children’s Centre.

Childline: 0800 1111

Warm as toast!

Base layer, mid layer, shell, has been the conventional layering system for years. Consequently, most walkers and climbers carry a mid layer for extra insulation - more often than not a fleece jacket. However, this iconic piece of kit, carried for extra comfort and security is, in practice, often a serious weakness in the clothing system. The wetter the weather gets, the less it insulates and getting it on and off is a complicated and uncomfortable manoeuvre, especially in high winds and heavy rain or snow. Even if you can find a sheltered spot to remove your shell, you still lose most of the heat stored in your base layer - just the opposite of what’s needed.

So what’s the alternative?

Base layer, shell - Paramo overlay - the Hirosam Smock and Gilet can be easily and quickly put on over a shell and will immediately halt heat loss even if the shell’s wet. Our synthetic overlays insulate well even when wetted and allow the garments beneath them to stay dry. It means a much better survival potential should misadventure occur.

Visit: www.paramo.co.uk/torres

Prepare to stay toasty this winter!

I found the Torres Smock an excellent piece of kit for the extremes of temperature on the glacier in general above 6000m. It could be pretty wet when the sun was out. But a cold breeze would have us stoppging and trying on our jackets for extra insulation, and particular when we stopped for a break or were sitting around the stoves. The Torres Gilet gives a quick source of insulation – without having to take off our Aspen Jackets and lose heat in the process.

Mike Dawson, Tibet expedition 2007

For further details please contact Katie Trowse, Sales and Marketing on +44 (0)114 236 1606, email katie@olmec.co.uk or check out www.surelight.com.
Behind every great instructor... is a greater training experience

Training and Qualifications in Mountain Sport

Webmaster Wanted by MR(E&W)

Following the retirement of Paul Basaldale as webmaster, we urgently need to recruit someone with the necessary technical and interpersonal skills to take his place. You will be working with the Publications and Information Subcommittee (PISC), but expected to operate within a small group of experts, both technical and editorial, to take our website to the next level. Currently the MRE(E&W) site and services are hosted from a server which is owned by us but sits in a computer room owned by Zen in Oldham. They kindly provide this service, together with power, aircon, security, internet connectivity etc, free of charge as a service to the community. This is a unique position as it means we can do whatever we like, without incurring cost or having to work through an ISP.

You will need the following technical skills:

- Unix administration
- Comfortable coding in php
- Experience of apache, php, mysql installation and maintenance
- Familiarity with phpBB, CMS/MIS systems and a distinct advantage

And the following personal attributes:

- An inside knowledge of the workings of MRE(E&W) a distinct advantage
- Ability to work as part of a team

As with all appointments within the national body, the webmaster will need to make a substantial commitment of time and energy in addition to his/her team responsibilities and be able to execute developments in the website in a timely and efficient manner to move the project forward.

If interested, please contact Andy Simpson at press@mountain.rescue.org.uk or call on 0161 764 0999 (W), 0161 764 5211 (H), 07836 717021 (M).

Rescue Training at Glenmore Lodge

Glenmore Lodge has developed its most comprehensive range of rescue courses for 2009, designed to complement your own team training programmes. With sixty years of outdoor education and mountain rescue experience behind us, what can we do for you?

Foundation to mountain rescue brings team members up to speed in one concentrated five day package to cover summer and winter. For newer members of the team, or those needing an update, the essentials of being a member of a mountain rescue team.

Summer – all the essentials for summer with emphasis on the importance of working within small teams and focus on the following skills – navigation (including GPS), security on steep ground, casualty handling, basic-line search, anchor selection, rope work and basic stretcher lower.

Winter – all the essentials for winter with emphasis on the importance of working within small teams and being able to ‘winterise’ your team members with the following – personal movement, avalanche awareness, winter navigation and casualty management, winter belays/anchors, transceivers, probing and stretcher lower.

Rigging for Rescue explores the latest concepts in rigging for rescue, looking not to specialised gear but more towards getting the best from our common rescue equipment. These workshops will challenge what you know and aim to give you solutions to those unusual problems many teams have encountered. It is recommended that those signing up are competent with rope work and anchors. This two day course tests the concepts with steep ground scenarios. Dates are available both summer and winter.

Tailor Made Team Training Designed through close liaison with your training officer, this course can take many forms, from a general full team training at the Lodge to specific on site training in your patch. Take a look online to see what we offer. Go to www.glenmorelodge.org.uk Or for specific team needs, email shaun.roberts@glenmorelodge.org.uk

Nightsearcher Lighting Products

Now you can enjoy the perfect hillwalkers’ pint – bottled and kegged!

Trail magazine has bottled a new walkers’ beer – Trail Ale – following the success of the draught version launched in November last year. Designed with the help of readers’ suggestions, the ale is now on sale in 500ml bottles and 5 litre kegs. The unique hillwalkers’ brew from the Great Gable Brewing Co is also still on tap at the Wasdale Head Inn. Head brewer Howard Christie describes Trail Ale as a light, bright, 3.8% alcohol, easily drinkable session ale designed to refresh and rehydrate thirsty mountaineers after a testing adventure.’

5p from every £3 bottle goes to Wasdale MRT and the kegs – retailing at £25 – will also raise money for the team, the exact amount to be decided soon. Team chairman Richard Warren said, ‘Trail Ale on tap has already raised £540 for mountain rescue, and we are thrilled that beer-loving hillwalkers and climbers can continue to support us by buying the bottled version.’

Follow the instructions on the label on the back of the bottle, and you can get three copies of Trail magazine for just £3, saving you £3! Trail’s editor Matt Swaine said, ‘It’s great for walkers to be able to support the Wasdale team while they celebrate their latest hillwalk with a pint, bottle or keg of Trail Ale from the Wasdale Head Inn.’

Call us now on 01479 861256 www.glenmorelodge.org.uk

A P R I L 2 0 0 9  M O U N T A I N  R E S C U E  M A G A Z I N E  P A G E 1 7
Preparation for the unexpected

When a major incident occurs how can you be sure your organisation is ready to respond efficiently and professionally? The key lies in ensuring all members of your response team are adequately trained and have exercised their skills in a safe learning environment. The Health Protection Agency’s Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response provides exactly those conditions through its extensive training and exercise programme, all elements of which can be tailored to meet your requirements and at a cost to suit your budget.

Training

The Emergency Response Training Team delivers a range of courses which seek to improve the emergency services’ ability to respond to incidents and emergencies. Flexible solutions are offered where the length, structure, content and emphasis can reflect the needs and requirements of any client organisation. Bespoke courses such as those detailed, can be held in-house to assist both public and private sector organisations to equip themselves and prepare for the unexpected.

Logists’ Course

A day and a half intensive course on the importance of evidential records and documents in any post-incident legal proceedings. Notes are reviewed using objective assessment criteria and constructive feedback is given to strengthen writing skills.

The course gives an overview of the potential threats and the role of key players, using tailored case studies in an interactive way.

Health Emergency Planning (Fast-track)

Building on the success of the Emergency Planning Officer’s training modules for Acute and Mental Health Trusts, Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities, the HPA, in partnership with the Emergency Planning College, now offers this five day training course covering the principles of emergency preparedness and its relevance to the organisation, an understanding of the development of emergency plans and guidance on the internal audit and evaluation of emergency plans. The course is suitable for those who wish to enhance knowledge of health emergency planning procedures.

Other bespoke exercises also included ‘Exercise Phoenix’ which was a two day command post exercise for the world famous bi-annual Farnborough International, the world’s largest business air show. Exercise Phoenix tested the responses of the organisers and associated agencies to a series of incidents during the seven day event.

The course team who design and deliver bespoke exercises have a vast range of experience across the whole of the commercial spectrum, from small to medium sized enterprises through to multi-national companies across the globe. Exercises range from off the shelf products, tabletop, command post and communications, to live exercises of any size or complexity.

Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response, Health Protection Agency, Porton Down, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 0JG.

Exercises

The Health Protection Agency’s Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response also offer bespoke exercises to test the responses of organisations during incidents. Those are designed to meet the needs of your organisation in testing, both the staff and the emergency procedures and may cover a range of scenarios ranging, for example, from flooding to aviain flu.

Previous clients have included the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales where exercises were developed to test responses to a deliberate release of biological agents, IAMS and pandemic influenza.

In February 2007, the Agency was responsible for designing and facilitating ‘Exercise Winter Willow’, the largest command post exercise ever held in the UK. This exercise was based on an influenza pandemic and tested the responses of over 5,000 personnel from across Government departments and allied agencies.

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Well for a start, the clue is in the word ‘suspension’. Trauma guardsman has been standing for quite some time without exercising his legs and using the body’s lower limbs. The shock in the body means the blood is back to the heart (venous return). So, in effect, the blood begins to pool. Blood that pools soon becomes oxygen free ( stagnant hypoxia), and a natural build up of toxins, which are unable to be excreted, gathers in the lower limbs.

According to Dolan & Holt L 2000 this type of hypoxia can occur at a local level where vascular obstruction causes a reduction in blood flow distal to the obstruction. This sudden collapse or pre-syncopal condition is actually the body’s own partial fall prevention.

On at least two occasions I have experienced this phenomenon myself, once when I had been standing in the same position for several hours, on a practice with the Upper Wharfedale team. Fortunately, I was aware what was going on and shuffled off the hill but, if it happened to me, it could just as easily happen to you.

The mechanics of suspension trauma. Basically, the venous return is affected, pooling of the blood occurs in the lower limbs due to gravity loss of muscle pump, and this can cause a staggering 20% of the casualty’s circulating volume. This soon leads to cellular hypoxia which is fine if, like me, you were stood still in a safe place, once you collapse to the ground your blood auto transfuses back into your circulatory system and you regain consciousness, a shift of that 20% back to where it is needed. However, if you’re stood near a rift, on a ladder, and not secured to any safety equipment the potential for disaster is huge.

Now add to this equation that you’re a climber on a cliff face, your harness is tight, the casualty’s lower legs are entangled in their harness (bending) and very narrow material. This begins to dig into your femoral veins and, after some time, the loss of blood transmutes affect on your lower body affecting your thoracic pressure. It’s at this point that it moves from what is essentially a peripheral hypoxia to a compartment syndrome. The casualty is suspended vertically and the lungs are unable to move due to fear, hypothermia or hypoglycaemia. There may be other factors playing into the mix including traumatic injury, causing hypovolaemia, dehydration and pain. Or he could be just old fashioned stuck!

Now add prolonged vertical suspension of over thirty minutes to what we have already discussed and a different problem arises altogether. The pathology of prolonged circulatory deprivation can cause a build up of pressure, hazardous toxins and electrolyte imbalance. In essence it is similar to a prolonged crush injury, or compartment syndrome. The body contains many individual compartments and it’s those that are affected. In the case of major femoral blood vessel obstruction, the worse case scenario is that toxins are released back into the blood stream without being diluted or a controlled release, which can cause global organ failure and death. This has been documented in the past, in a totally innocent fashion, where the rescuer hasn’t taken into consideration the pathology of the incident.

The groups at risk? First and foremost we are potentially at risk. Of course our casualties are at risk, but if we can identify early the possibility of this occurring, it’s one more string to our bow when considering how best to initiate treatment of the casualty. Keep moving and don’t have your harness too tight – remember the best protection is our own intellect.

Methods of identification? If the suspension has been short in duration, less than thirty minutes, then a simple rescue lowering them to the ground and elevating the limbs would suffice. However this is unlikely, by the time the team is mobilised and arrives on scene, it could well be over forty minutes. So it is least warrants a passing thought.

Something to take into consideration when one suspects crush syndrome, associated with suspension trauma – according to Wyatt, Bingham, Clancy Moroz & Robertson, 2004, ‘symptoms depend on the underlying cause but muscle pain, tenderness and swelling may not be present at the time of admission’. They go on to say, ‘adequate pulses detaily do not rule out a compartment syndrome’. If the casualty is found to have been there for over thirty minutes treatment must take a fairly radical change. Try to keep the casualty’s head higher than his/her legs (this increases the toxins in the lower limbs for now at least), avoid ischimic heart failure, and overload of the right ventricle, by avoiding the right leg return.

The casualty must be returned to the horizontal position very slowly over a period of 30 minutes (www.remotemedics.co.uk). This minimises the effects of the toxins released back into the vascular spaces. In effect you are treating the casualty as though he/she has a crush syndrome injury.

The normal ABCs and primary survey need to be undertaken, plenty of observations written on the cascard. It is prudent to keep a track of time scales, when dealing with such a case. Furthermore, high concentration oxygen therapy needs to be initiated as soon as practically possible. If you have access to team paramedics, nurses or doctors, then initiate intravenous access and IV fluid management to assist in diluting the toxins on release and effective analgesia. On the worse case scenario the casualty may require resuscitation, so IV access is a must.

The most suitable method of casualty evacuation would be RAF SAR to a regional trauma centre.

The chance of us coming across a suspension trauma is slim and it is only a potential risk, however it is still something to take into consideration next time you’re just hanging about.

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www.remotemedics.co.uk www.aesmedictrauma.com

Steve Giles is an active member of Upper Wharfedale FRA and an ambulance paramedic, giving specialist support to the team in first aid and medical training.
Thoughts on the casualty care exam

David Allan BSc FRCS on twenty five years of teaching and examination of casualty care in mountain rescue

More than 25 years have passed since mountain rescue in England and Wales decided to establish an in-house system for the teaching and examining in first aid relevant to usage on the hills. Although quite daunting in the early stages, the venture has proved to be immensely successful. In those early days we seemed to look for a thorough grounding in leg injuries, pain relief, hypothermia and a passing acquaintance with matters relating to medical conditions. Since then, the knowledge base has changed and expanded enormously and will undoubtedly continue to change as new information emerges.

The written paper is simply an exploration of this knowledge store. The format of the questions on the paper has progressively changed and, I think, improved. Although far from perfect it does continue to get better and the vast amount of work undertaken by those who write and collate the questions should be acknowledged. Most people who sit the written paper have little overall difficulty. The grasp of facts has largely progressed in step with the expanded knowledge base and the scores on the papers have steadily risen to reflect this. I do not believe there is any evidence that the questions have become easier.

The practical examination is a test of the ability to apply the knowledge to good purpose. This part of the examination causes much greater difficulties and virtually all those who fail, do so in this section. Any practical test has a certain aura of unorthodoxy with a play acting casualty whose skills in this department may vary. There is, however, good reason to believe that the stresses of an examination situation do bear close relation to those of a live situation and the ability to rationalize thoughts and actions is tested in the same way. Given this tenet then, the observations I make about the examination apply equally to the management of real casualties.

One of the unavoidable aspects of mountain rescue casualty care is the inherent delay in reaching the victim in most cases. In common with the examination this should allow time for some advanced thoughts. In particular, given the nature of the incident, a pecking order of probabilities can be mentally assembled. This requires a working knowledge of injury patterns. There are a finite number of damages that result from a fall on the outstretched hand, for example, and a fall onto the heels is likely to lead to a regular pattern of possibilities. Having a good grasp of the mapping of injuries makes the task of establishing a diagnosis so much easier.

Another advantage of the inherent delays is that most casualties will have reached a degree of stability allowing for careful evaluation rather than immediate hurried intervention. I am referring to the conscious casualty throughout. In some ways dealing with an unconscious patient presents fewer challenges in diagnosis and the focus is on practical matters of the airway etc. Establishing the diagnosis is the most difficult part of most clinical situations. I have little doubt that, given the diagnosis of a fractured tibia and fibula, almost everyone on a call out list will make a very adequate show of treatment. Neville Marden recognised this many years ago when he wrote his excellent text ‘Diagnosis before First Aid’. Almost all the people I have witnessed coming to grief in the examination have stumbled at this fence. There are three steps to use. Ears, eyes and hands in that order and virtually never any other. The temptation to begin examining the patient in advance seems to be irresistible to many and is common to the early stages of medical student education. Early in my training I was taught by a very experienced surgeon that if you are not close to the diagnosis when you have finished talking to the patient, you probably never will be and this has proved to be true. An accurate history of events is essential in all trauma situations. Too often the unqualified word ‘fall’ appears on casualty records. Alone its value is nonexistent. Kerb edge, stile, or off Naples Needle? The patient will, in most situations, be able to tell you what is wrong and equally what is not. Taking also pays other dividends. The person who is able to converse in unimpeded sentences has no major chest injury.

One note of caution must be inserted here. The existence of distraction injuries causes grief in and out of the examination. The distraction injury we are concerned with is that of a relatively unimportant but exquisitely painful injury obscuring another injury of more serious import. A fracture dislocation of the ankle will not produce haemodynamically significant shock. Look elsewhere. The other related issue is that a patient in extreme pain may well feel disinclined to make much conversation with you. Consider relieving the pain and then re-addressing the history. Admittedly a few patients will remain inherently disinclined to talk at any stage. Looking comes next. The general appearance of the patient is very revealing. Anxiety is an important marker for shock. Appearance can also be reassuring. The pink patient with no difficulty breathing has no significant chest injury. Much can be seen beyond the face and the skin. Simply look at the position of the limbs. Are the knee cap and the big toe pointing in the same direction?

Only having exhausted the two previous lines of enquiry should you proceed to the third. The first thing to examine is the radial pulse. It is a most reliable monitor and a casualty with an easily palpable slow pulse is unlikely to be in serious difficulty. Have a system of examination which you adhere to. When it comes to examining the limbs, again invoke the help of the casualty. Asking him, or her, to move each limb in turn will tell you more at the outset than grabbing hold of the arms or legs yourself. The patient will almost certainly localise the site of injury more rapidly and accurately. The ability to elevate the arm and to grip your hand firmly without pain means it is unlikely that you will find much wrong during further examination. When you do examine the limbs and other areas such as the chest, be familiar with and rely on bony anatomical reference points to decide whether there is an abnormality. Always take an opportunity to compare right with left if you are unsure about the degree of deformity and swelling, for example, at the ankle. The next step is treatment but, in addition, a cup of coffee is most useful. This should be seen as an opportunity to think about your findings and consider any discrepancies in the picture you have formed. Remember also that things may change. Be prepared to have a second look at intervals and do not be afraid to revise the diagnoses you have made.

Be familiar with the approach you are going to use. In both the examination and real life, this will come over as confidence. This will impress your examiner and more importantly reassure your patient. Take every opportunity to practice diagnostic steps. You will use those with every casualty you encounter.

This is an assembly of personal observations from many years of practical examinations and is by no means a comprehensive guide to either the examination or casualty assessment.
So, for one week at least at the beginning of January, I have to admit I was addicted to Coronation Street. I was utterly obsessed with it. I watched every episode religiously. I would stay up late into the night to catch the show. It was a fantastic training day with the opportunity to do the work up over a half a dozen times. Everything was incredibly slick and a huge crowd had gathered before to watch the action. Being able to work alongside the RAF was always very exciting and it was great to see everything go plan. After the action of the previous day, we returned to film everything again in close-up. This involved dangling the wreck man from a JCB in the quarry while we worked around him! The actor Rob left strapped into the vacpack, cameraman and stretcher between takes, despite desperate pleas to let him out to go to the loo.

All that was left was to race over to the location hotel at Ullswater where we wanted to film our arrival with the blue lights flashing and sirens going. We thought this was the end of our bit until we were asked if it would be possible for us to be available again in couple of weeks as they were going to have to return and finish off a few bits and pieces.

So back we went at the beginning of December to film a big abseil to create more action and a few other bits at the top of the crag. It was too windy up on Thwaite Pike so this was rescheduled down in the car park. Continuity was important and it was interesting to see the photos they had taken previously despite attempts by some to wear a different hat on every take.

By the time you read this the storyline will have aired and ‘Liam’ will be on the way to recovery. In total, we spent four and half days filming, having to redo several scenes a number of times. It was a great experience and we learnt a lot. Around 20 million people watch Coronation Street each week and we hope mountain rescue’s work will have been raised across the country for this. Most importantly I should add that the dog was alright and came to no harm!

Nick Jones Keswick MRT
Forensic strategy for mountain rescue

Gyles Denn provides guidelines for team members attending a suspected scene of crime.

Terms

Casualty: for the purposes of this document, any person or persons, Missing From Home or victims of criminal activity, requiring medical or general care.

Deceased: Person or persons where life is extinct.

Scene of crime: The area and around where a criminal activity is suspected to have taken place, inclusive of actual casualty or deceased.

Priority list

1: Safety of self.
2: Safety of all other persons in attendance at the scene or teams-members, other attending services personnel, general public.
3: Safety, preservation of life, medical and general care of casualty.
4: Maintenance of integrity of scene and forensic evidence.

NB: the priority list must be adhered to with no exception. Integrity of scene and forensic evidence contained in can be maintained to a high level, whilst providing FULL safety and medical attention but the priority list must be adhered to.

At no time can safety or proper medical care be sacrificed to maintain scene or forensic evidence integrity.

Procedure

If a deceased is located:-

Treat as a scene of crime.

When a deceased is located assume a scene of crime and unless stated by an appropriately authorised person ie. coroner, deceased.

Scene of crime: The area and around where a criminal activity is suspected to have taken place, inclusive of actual casualty or deceased.

Personnel not involved in immediate cas care

Establish a single entry/exit point – a single pathway in and the same pathway out of the scene of crime/casualty location.

Mark single entry/exit point and log location. Log the location of entry/exit points via sketch notes and grid reference if practical.

Limit access to scene of crime to ONLY the single entry/exit point. Regardless of rank, status or seniority, all access must be restricted to the single entry exit point.

NB: If multiple entry points to scene were used during initial location of casualty is, as a result of a line search, log all points via sketch notes and grid reference (if practical) and ensure further access is by the single entry point.

Establish a cordon of the scene of crime. Make the cordon as large as possible – think in tens and hundreds of metres not metres. Further investigation teams such as CSI and others can reduce the size at a later time, but forensic evidence may be lost if it needs to be enlarged at a later time.

Limit access to scene to essential personnel only.

Log initial arrangement of scene.

Sketch, photograph and note how you originally found the scene, location and the orientation of any items contained within the scene.

Log all access of personnel to scene of crime.

Log all equipment taken into the scene of crime.

Log all interruptions to the scene including any movement of items, and the introduction of items such as medical paraphernalia.

Casualty carer and persons involved at cas site

Wear Gloves.

Log initial findings at scene. Utilise a scobe to log via sketch and notes your initial findings such as location and positioning of casualty and injuries.

Avoid contact with anything contained within the scene unless essential to safety or medical or general care. This includes the casualty.

Log all contact with items contained in the scene (where possible).

Log all actions within the scene (where practical).

Take only essential items into the scene of crime.

Remove only essential items from scene of crime. It may be scene of crime to remove casualty from the scene, but do not remove any other items found is. any clothing no longer worn by the casualty. If casualty’s clothing must be removed for medical examination etc. it is advised these are left at the scene of crime (if practical).

Cut binding in areas away from knots and joins. Binding such as ligatures, and bodily bindings such as rope, should be removed by cutting through areas that are not knots or original joins and never undoing knits.

Mark cut ends of bindings. These can be marked with adhesive tape, or link the ends with string/cord (ie. tie string/cord to both cut ends so they are linked via a length of string/cord).

Cut clothing in areas away from original damage – do not cut clothing through puncture marks such as knife slashes, weapon puncture holes or tears already present on the clothing.

Do not destroy items used within the scene. If it is essential to remove from the scene of crime items such as soiled bandages, needleless gloves etc. do not destroy but preserve for future analysis and investigation.

At all times adhere to priority list.

All personnel

Do not enter the scene of crime cordon unless essential to safety or medical care or instructed to do so by an appropriately authorised person such as the crime scene manager.

Do not come into contact, remove or add any item to a scene of crime unless essential to safety or medical care.

Be prepared to surrender any item that is suspected of entering the scene as it may become subject to future investigation. This could include items such as medical equipment, personal clothing, rucksacks, boots.

Prepare to provide elimination samples. You may be required to provide samples for elimination purposes such as boot prints for footwear mark analysis, clothing for fibre analysis, mouth swabs and hair samples for DNA analysis, finger prints for fingerprint analysis.

SARDA

Once a crime scene is established:-

At all times adhere to priority list.

Establish single entry/exit point.

Note the route you used to access the scene of crime.

Log route of search dog into scene of crime.

Limit contact between search dog and casualty.

Limit access to the scene of crime to ONLY the single entry/exit point. Regardless of rank, status or seniority, all access must be restricted to the single entry exit point.

Remove search dog from scene of crime at the earliest practical time.

Follow guide lines for cas carer – when assuming role of casualty carer (initial or prolonged) follow the previous guide lines for casualty carers.

Forensic evidence

It is not within the scope of this document to list all types of forensic evidence. The following are points to remember/consider.

1. Every action taken in and about a scene of crime has the potential to compromise forensic evidence.

2. Every item taken into a scene of crime has the potential to compromise forensic evidence and any item has the potential to add new false forensic evidence to the scene of crime through shedding etc.

3. Every surface type has the potential to hold DNA and fingerprints.

4. Absolutely any item alien or non alien to the scene of crime has the potential to provide forensic evidence.

5. Footwear marks (boot prints) can be quite unique due to weight distribution of individuals, wear and tear pattern. Once a scene of crime is suspected. be aware of any step you make (where practical) ensure you are not stepping on markers that are part of the scene of crime.

6. Foliage disturbance – not always an evidence in itself but often a good indicator of what actions took place. Do not travel along routes of original foliage disturbance. If there is only one original access point to the scene of crime is, only original gap in foliage etc. do not travel along this route (where practical).

7. Blood spatter patterns, formed by blood falling, spouting etc. are good indicators to what actions took place. Do not disturb any blood found at the scene of crime (where practical).

8. Body fluids – body fluids such as blood and semen are excellent sources of DNA evidence. Do not disturb body fluids found at the scene of crime. Record the location of body fluids (were practical). Record and alert investigating teams to presence of semen is, on casualty’s clothing.

Gyles Denn is a forensic toxicologist and expert witness to the criminal justice system. He has been employed by the Forensic Science Service since 2000. Although he specialises in toxicology, he also has the resources of the FSS, which covers all the speciments of forensic sciences, to draw upon. His colleagues in other departments such as evidence recovery, who are leading persons and highly respected in this field, have advised and checked the strategy. Gyles is also a member of Bolton MRT.
When you’re carrying mobile phones, digital cameras, GPS units or your top of the line-pool and the referee fails to pull you something to protect those expensive toys without adding too much weight to your rucksack. For the past few months we’ve been using some waterproof bags called Alocsaks (below). Our initial impressions are that they are a really useful and lightweight way to protect your kit from water and dust.

We’ve seen Alocsaks described as ‘ziplock bags on steroids’ and that’s a pretty fitting description. They were originally designed for storing hazardous waste (including anthrax!) and more recently all kinds of outdoor people have been using them to housate - especially adventure racers who seem to love keeping food in them! Alocsaks are made of a super tough, slightly stretchy plastic and come with a liquid tight ziplock mechanism. Just to reassure buyers even further the manufacturers (Watchful Eye Designs) do quote US navy tests approving them for long-term submersion to depths exceeding 60 metres. In fact, Watchful Eye even claim they can be used for operating digital cameras underwater but we’ve been too scared to try that out!

The bags come in a wide range of sizes but we’ve only tried the three sizes that best suited our needs. The Alocsak #1 (4.5 x 7in) is our favourite and fits things like mobile phones or small digital cameras perfectly. The Alocsak #2 (8 x 9in) is good for larger GPS units, travel documents or maybe a compact first aid kit. Finally, the Alocsak #4 (12 x 12in) is good for larger guidebooks or maps. We have heard of the larger bags being used to store clothes and we’ve successfully stored things like midweight fleeces in them but, in our opinion, these bags work best with faster items as they tend not to stress the ziplock mechanism so much. Clothes would be better stored in lightweight drybags like the brilliant ones made by Exposid. Watchful Eye also makes a range of bags called Opsakas with a ‘gusseted bottom’ (ouch!) that may suit bulkier items but we haven’t tried these yet.

To seal the bags you all need to do is run your fingers over the seal a few times and hey presto! We had worried the seal might pop open in use but we’ve never had this happen. It seems to be very important that you take care to expel all the air from inside the bag before sealing as this helps to stop it getting ‘squashed’ open. Another way to keep them sealed is to pack them carefully among items like clothes rather than giving them the space to move around and gradually open. One feature that was really useful in a full on blizzard last winter was that you can operate buttons on some equipment through the sealed bag – we used a mobile phone easily and you could probably do the same with many compact digital cameras. In terms of durability that’s been using the same bag for a few months and they are still serviceable.

Alocsaks could extend their working life by keeping them inside another bag such as a nylon stuffsack. This will undoubtedly help protect them from bumps and scrapes in the top of your rucksack but all adds extra grams to your load.

Alocsaks aren’t that easy to get hold of in the UK and can seem quite pricey for what is effectively a waterproofed plastic bag. They are currently sold by www.backpakinglight.co.uk and www.hike-lite.co.uk in various sizes (both excellent sites with lots of useful information on ultra light backpacking) but we got ours from good old eBay at prices ranging from 99p for the smallest to £1.99 for the largest. The seller we found was happy to bundle a selection together as one lot to save on postage. Just google ‘Alocsaks’ and you’ll find reviews that go far more detail than we have here – just don’t tell anyone you’ve spent hours of your life reading about the pros and cons of plastic bags!

A personal view from Paul Lewis, Mountain Instructor

Astron Soft Shell From Mountain Equipment

The Astron Hooded Jacket is one of Mountain Equipment’s lightest soft shell jackets to date, able to fend off the elements and breathe in less cold conditions, yet still light and packable.

Conceived predominantly from a lightweight version of Polartec® Powershell®, using a perforated membrane technology laminated to the fleece, it will block 98% of the wind, repel rain and snow and is considerably more breathable than other traditional soft shell fabrics.

The slim, active cut features Polartec® Powershell® panels and fully lock zipped seams to eliminate bulky uncomfortable seams in a garment that’s comfortable over base layer or microfleece.

The generous helmet compatible hood is fully adjustable. So, whether you want shelter from the wind on exposed belay ledges or have simply been caught out in an unexpected shower, you can easily immerse yourself in the Astron. Two large pockets, positioned high on the torso, are easily accessible whether carrying a rucksack or wearing a climbing harness. The Astron is suited to a multitude of environments - perfect for climbing, scrambling and mountaineering.

Sizes: S, M, L, XL. Colours: All Black, Cobalt Blue/Black, Black with Red Piping. RRP: £120. Also available in this season: Astron Jacket and Pull-On and Astral Jacket (for women).

For further info on the Astron Hooded Jacket and other pieces in our soft shell collection see www.mountain-employment.co.uk.

Kit crit Alocsaks Dry Bags with Attitude

When carrying mobile phones, digital cameras, GPS units or your top of the line pool and the referee fails to pull you something to protect those expensive toys without adding too much weight to your rucksack. For the past few months we’ve been using some waterproof bags called Alocsaks (below). Our initial impressions are that they are a really useful and lightweight way to protect your kit from water and dust.

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One life (left) ... Live it!

Paul Lewis

My mate Al has a radical approach to superstitions. If Al sees a ladder he strides right under it, he dances carelessly over pavement cracks and even waits till someone else is on the stairs just so he can cross their path. Well Al is hardcore and he’s lived to tell the tale, but I’ve lived by a far more wimpy code – I religiously pick up pennies, buy lucky heather and even get hot sweats if I don’t salute the magpie! I’m also a firm believer in the old nine lives theory despite it sitting rather uncomfortably with a love of all things adventure.

I first lost a life back in 1985 when my friend Dave and I got avanched in number 4 gully on our first winter trip to Scotland. Number two fell to an accident in Pembroke, a third to a very close encounter with a gnarly crec on the Zambezi River and four when I got persuaded to paddle the River Ouen in spate as my second river descent. Last, but certainly not least, life five (and probably my closest partner and one of life’s great carers) sat next to me on the back seat with her head in my lap. That just left me – all round rock god and Brad Pitt lookalike – and a little prone to exaggeration!

I had decided to not wear a helmet – Neil shouted as they disappeared round the corner. What he didn’t realise was that Cal and I had decided to not wear helmets today. Why? I’ve absolutely no idea. We had used helmets on every other Jordan climb. We knew the rock was unpredicatble brittle. We knew it all, yet still decided against. How was I to know that I would soon have sandstone blocks raining down on me? Another life lost and a decision I will never take again.

I missed Cal and chucked up. A final gear check, a quick ‘say it all’ glance at each other and I pulled onto the rock. Straight away I felt wrong and I should have stepped back down, but I don’t really do stepping back down half as often as I should. It probably didn’t help that the first section was the sort of steep technical slab climbing I love and eventually I was getting seriously intimidated by what lay ahead. I fumbled around with my gear and eventually managed to place a Rock 6 and a large cam. Then I took the cam out again. Why? I decided I would probably need it higher up. How was I to know that this single wire would soon be the only thing left to stop an 18 metre fall? Do I lose a life for that?

I chucked up and moved up into the crack above. The rock steepened. I weakened, but the only way was up. I knew I needed more gear but nothing would fit. I tried, moved up, tried again, moved up – things just weren’t working out. Above me a large fluke of rock encrusted me with the promise of a rest. Even better, I was sure that cam would fit perfectly into the crack next to the fluke. Let’s just go for it.

I leant back off the flake and just kept leaning. I have no idea at which point I realised...
I was falling rather than leaning but then many things about that fall don’t make sense. Did I lose my leg on the corned ledge? Where did all those grains come from? Will this fall ever stop? Well yes, I can answer that one. I came to a stop upside down with my face staring at the sand one metre below me. Each of my double ropes was coming from a different side of my harness and I was constricted between them — the breath ripped from my lungs by the vice like stopping force. But at least it’s over or maybe it’s not.

I had heard a deep cracking noise as I went into the rock and it turned out the whole piece of rock was coming down to join me (amazingly the freeze size block hit the ledge and shattered on the way down, which undoubtedly saved my life). Bricks to breeze bricks to boulders. We all wanted to join the gravity party. Unfortunately, I was hanging upside down directly in their path. Several pieces hit my back and legs — not a single piece hit my head. Any lives left?

As the rocks cascaded down I’d been aware of another sound strangely reminiscent of the squawk of the monkeys as I disappeared under the car at all that time ago. Call it Call Cal’s screaming Cal’s hurt. Oh God no. I twisted round to see Call’s beautiful face contorted, panicked and, literally, her fear was for me. She had managed to run far enough to the side to hold out my face without me hitting the ground. Far enough to the side to miss the barrage of rocks. But not far enough so that she didn’t have to witness my blood flowing on to the sand.

Neil and Natalie also heard the fall, the screams and then the returning silence. They were worried and wanted to be at home but was a long way from it. I didn’t sleep that night but fell asleep in the breeze of the morning and slept for hours. The others packed it. I slept. Successful and stroked my head. He drove gently with me lying in the back of the flatbed. The kind of journey I had wanted on the way out and now got but couldn’t enjoy.

We made a pre arranged stop at the famous Rock Bridge of Burdah. We had all planned to climb up to it but now did not. The others offered to slip it but why should they suffer for my misfortune? I slid under a shaky overhang while Suzieman collected wood and made tea. I gave him the climbing ropes. After a fall like that I wouldn’t climb on them again but they would be useful for him to tie down his tent when the sandstorms came. We couldn’t share a common language but we connected.

I looked around at the gorgeous expanse of desert and everything seemed so right. Recent memories flooded my mind. Only then did my tears start to flow. First little splashing droplets, then deep consooling sobs. But no sorrow sobs. These were tears of joy. Tears that looked forward to a great future. The happiest tears I have ever cried. The fall had stripped everything away and I was stronger than ever. I may only have one life left but it’s mine for the taking — you bet I’m going to live it!

My back was certainly around a while. The granite and sandstone geological formations belonging to the pre-Cambrian period of around 550 million years ago. It’s also been impressive people for a while. Evidence shows that prehistoric man lived there over 200,000 years ago.

Rather more recently, the majority of the place was brought to public attention when T E Lawrence(Archer of Arabia), famous for his part in the Arab uprising of 1916-18, started documenting his fascination with Wadi Rum in his book ‘Seven Pillars of Wisdom’ published in 1922 (well worth re-reading before your visit). The important bit of history, from a climbing point of view, came in 1984 when Di and Tony Howard made the first exploratory visit at the invitation of the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism. When they first scouted, only one climb was documented (although Bedouin had been scrambling over the peaks for centuries) but, after several subsequent visits, they wrote the first climbing guidebook in 1987 (Time and Climb in Wadi Rum and the potential of the place was officially recognised.

Wadi Rum’s People

The Bedouin are the inhabitants of Wadi Rum. Many still have a semi-nomadic lifestyle grazing their sheep and goats for several months before moving its pasture. Most still live in the traditional ‘beehive’ shaped huts called ‘beit sha’ar’ (translates to ‘houses of hair’). Which you can see dotted throughout the desert.

They are a proud and independent people who, if treated with respect, will reward you with friendliness and openness. We found them surprisingly welcoming — and respect our terrains for delicious sweet like and enjoyed some life enhancing evenings sat’ family groups under majestic sky lights.

Transport

Wadi Rum is easy to access. Several airlines fly to Amman’s Alia International Airport and from there you can take a bus or taxi to Rum. Many of the bus routes involve taking one bus to the coastal resort of Aqaba then another to Rum so if there’s a group of you it’s certainly worth considering bartering a good taxi deal instead.

Once in Rum you don’t need a car because most of the climbing is within walking distance and if you want to access places like Barah Canyon you can use local Bedouin 4 x4 transport (or go Lawrence style and hire a camel!) Having said that, if you want to travel to some of the other Jordanian sights like the Dead Sea or Petra a hire car may be worth considering.

Accommodation

Avoid the campsites at the back of the Wadi Rum Resthouse, either in your own tent or one of their pre-pitched ones. There are loads of lodges available to suit all budgets if you are staying in Amman, Petra, Aqaba or any of the other tourist centres during your stay.

Food

Rum village has a few small shops selling a limited range of basic provisions if you want to cook yourself. If you are staying via Aqaba it’s better to stock up on provisions there (particularly fresh food). Of course, you do have the far more relaxed option of eating the reasonably priced food in the Rest House Restaurant for your main meal instead.

Weather

September, early October, January, February and March are said to be the best times to visit for climbing. We went in mid April and it was already very hot but manageable — if you do decide to go in one of the hotter months leave a day or two at the start of your trip to get your body used to the heat and wait out for dehydration.

Climbing

Climbing in Wadi Rum does best suit climbers with a love for adventure and a head for fragile sandstone but don’t let my little tale of misadventure pull you off in reality’s awesome climbing and should be on everyone’s must visit ticket. There are climbs of all grades, climbs of all types, climbs that can be accessed in a few minutes, right through to some that require expedition style planning... and everything in between. Enjoy!

Equipment

If you plan to climb you’ll need the correct clothing and equipment. Of course, you do have the far more relaxed option of eating the reasonably priced food in the Rest House Restaurant for your main meal instead.

Three hours later, shock set in and I lay there for a long time. On reaching Rum you don’t need a car because most of the climbing is within walking distance and if you want to access places like Barah Canyon you can use local Bedouin 4 x4 transport (or go Lawrence style and hire a camel!) Having said that, if you want to travel to some of the other Jordanian sights like the Dead Sea or Petra a hire car may be worth considering.
Returning to Redlake we found the first teams clearly going strongly. A friend's son was beginning to pass our base. They seemed to be in good spirits and going well. I spotted in a team going south west. He without great difficulty. We crossed and made a cautious report of our crossing place.

Warren) and the checkpoint at Pupers for a morning, to ensure they were not walking in the vicinity and to keep them safe by us overnight, although crossable without difficulty at Broad Crossways. They reported a team camped by the Erme, a good sheltered from the winds and above the pair of blue tents camped by the Erme, a good spot sheltered from the winds and above the high water mark. The team members were all well. They'd felt themselves and were settling in with the intention of an early start. I told them of the army's considerations at that time they were on their way to the holding area, the second stick, this time nineteen, to do with our charges. Neither the Avon Dam nor Cantrell Gate provided easy access to larger military vehicles. Nor were we happy with the prospect of the seven mile slog down the Redlake Tramway with 110 dependant kids. We could hear the helicopters evacuating Pupers. It was by then raining heavily, winds had dropped from the night before to 'light to fresh' and visibility was down to perhaps 200 metres although beginning to show signs of lifting. Eventually, control advised us we were to be given a helicopter, that we'd be given thirty minutes warning of its arrival and not to get excited at the sound of Pupers evacuation.

My last experience of control telling me a helicopter would arrive in 20 minutes time was that it arrived two minutes later. We were galvanised. We stripped out our tent and made ready to strip another for a holding bay and whilst 44s set out to get ready the first twenty evacuators, 44b talked out across the past bog that surrounds Redlake to the only firm dry ground, suitable for a helicopter to land, in the vicinity of the workings. We took a GPS reading and reported this to control whilst also reporting that our driver claimed to have had training in helicopter landing.

We chased back to the campsite to assist 44a and whilst they took the stick first around to our tent, we advised the next twenty to get themselves ready, fully dressed and with as much kit stowed as possible then to head back to the tent and send out 45 to help us. We returned to the shelter of our tent to try to keep the kids warm and dry, helped by a wind change requiring the closing down of one side of the tent and the opening of the other. We waited some minutes before calling Control, finger on the pulse as ever, to advise that as there were no last few kids on their own around the back of the tip. If we sent out 45 we had 34 in our holding bay. At least they were warm and dry.

The last two flights went without hitch and 45 also departed soon after too did the rain and cloud and, by late morning, the moor was deserted. We sat atop the tip, working with them all again next year.

I must thank my team. That was, perhaps, the only time we were all together and dithered. I strongly commend each and every one of them, the children's future, our own. I strongly commend each and every one of them, John, Rob and Mike, for their own Ten Tors medal. I look forward to working with them all again next year.
y Judy Whiteside talks to herself. No change there then.

With greatest apologies to my other team members and, indeed, anyone else who knows me, but I was asked to do this... so here goes.

To paraphrase my own words on the back of the cartoon book (below), I didn't do much join mountain rescue – over my dead body! – but find myself slowly and relentlessly sucked into it in the manner of quicksand. And the more I struggled to escape, the deeper I found myself entrenched.

Alongside my colleagues at Mountain Rescue business meetings, I'm a rookie. Not for me the several decades of dedicated service, literature, and the camaraderie of the team. After all, I'm not the one to tow the inevitable segue from woggles, to the ‘flying up’ bit (where we're a little bit near, and I mean way near, and I mean under your wing. Don't get me wrong, I'm not a professional – we've had to become)

The nearest I ever got to familial encouragement in the outdoors department was dear old Auntie Bossie who, as lifelong Brown Owl and guiding devotée, killed me out in little brown frock and neat yellow tie, and that brings more work.'

Strange then that many years down the line, Mountain Rescue? 'available, as they say, from all good bookshops!'
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Paul Whiting reports on the IMRA National Conference and AGM

This year saw the Mayo team host the event at the Westport Woods Hotel over the weekend of 19/20 January.

National Conference

Saturday morning kicked off with two stimulating talks in Session One. Dr Paul Groot (MAE consultant, member of the College of Rescue Medicine and a doctor on HM Coastguard rescue helicopters) spoke on why rescue medicine is different to other forms of first aid and the issues and considerations for practitioners of rescue medicine. Jonathan Hart (Vice chair of the MRC of Scotland and member of the Lochaber team) spoke on the pros and cons of the various approaches used in technical rope rescue, based on experience gained with his own team and during a winter sabbatical with mountain rescue teams in the Yosemite and Grand Canyon national parks. Both Paul and Jonathan had spoken at the Shell Seminar in November 2007 and came highly recommended by one of our members who attended.

Session Two saw three break-out sessions – a media training workshop to aid teams in working with the media and in promoting their activities; a training and development subcommittee meeting; and a medical subcommittee meeting. The formation of the subcommittees is a major step forward for mountain rescue in Ireland. It means all teams receive the same information and have a say in the activities and recommendations made by the sub.

After an excellent lunch, there were a further three parallel break-out sessions.

Session Three consisted of three meetings – team leaders, treasurers and fundraising, and VES (Voluntary Emergency Services). The first two allowed the elected officers of the teams to discuss issues at a national level, while the third allowed attendees to look at the opportunities and areas still to be developed in working with other VES. This is particularly important in regards to the National Emergency Management Framework being developed between the three major emergency services - the Garda, Health Service Executive and the fire services.

Session Four saw the Mayo team take the bold move to offer attendees ‘something different’, not at all related to mountain rescue. Probably we’ve all attended a training event, exhibition or conference where, at the end of the day, we’ve walked away being mentally drained by the amount of information we’ve had to absorb. This is not the case with the Photography, Salsa Dancing, Horseriding or History of Westport Walk proved to be very popular.

Session Five in the late afternoon consisted of two topics – a Reek

Sunday National Exercise (SWOT Analysis and GPS Radios Workshop. Each year IMRA has a national operation – ‘Reek Sunday’ - hosted by the Mayo team and a national exercise rotated amongst the teams, which provide a great opportunity for teams to work together and learn from each other. In late 2006, IMRA purchased GPS radio microphones for teams, enabling them to make use of the MR map software being developed by David Binks. This workshop was an update on the technology and launch of the technical manual for the system.

In the evening, a dinner was held with the annual presentation of awards. The teams nominate team members whom they wish to recognise for their contribution to the development of their team. The recipients for 2008 ‘Distinguished Service Awards’ were Hannah Cuddy (Glen of Imaal MRT), Don Murphy (SARDA), Dave Goddard (Mourne MRT), Tim Long and Tim Murphy (Kerry MRT), Liam and Fran Lynch (Sligo Leitrim MRT) and Ollie Garaghy (Mayo MRT).

In addition, IMRA presented three Certificates of Recognition.

• Mayo MRT presented an award to a local Westport family. The Herraghty family have a farm on the back side of Croagh Patrick and, for a number of years, have given permission to set up their rescue base for Reek Sunday on their land. This entails allowing the teams to camp overnight and having the Air Corps helicopters landing and taking off from the field directly in front of their house. They have also allowed land to be levelled for portabaths and the parking of team vehicles. Unquestionably a huge inconvenience and they selflessly and generously ask for nothing in return.

• Tony Jones MBE, of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) for his ongoing support of IMRA and commitment to the mutual support of IMRA and MRE(A).

Moderate Update

AGM

AGMs can be difficult things to report on. Besides the obligatory reports from the teams and elected officers, what really allowed this AGM to stand out from others was the report from IMRA chair, Liam McCabe. Liam claimed that 2007 has been one of the most successful years for IMRA in regards to its development. His report centred on the message ‘Look what we can achieve when we work together’. He avoided singling out any one person for praise and really acknowledged the work done by all the officers and the executive. The highlights for 2007 include -

• Multiple national training events including Equipment Officer, Party Leader, Driving, Training the SAR Trainer courses, National Operation for Reek Sunday and National Exercise.

• A comprehensive and satisfactory insurance package for members.

• Winning a grant from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to cover the insurance package.

• Production of ‘Call Out’, our new, high quality magazine, and the ‘Mountain Rescue Book of Knowledge’, which allows all teams to share their organisational and operational documentation.

• A permanent home and address (thanks to the Mountainwuling of Council).

Another aspect of this year’s AGM was the presentation by Seamus Bradley, of the Donegal team, on some special software he’s been developing for IMRA called SAROPS. Briefly, this software allows teams to keep a record of members’ training and operational activity and to generate standardised risk assessments for all training and operations. This will be released to the teams during 2008.
What has the MRC ever done for you? Well for a start, you are the MRC. It’s team members just like you who go along to the national meetings to discuss how best we all might move forward. In training, publications, fundraising, equipment, communications. And they do it by sitting on the subcommittees. But, just so you know what goes on behind closed doors, in the first in a series profiling exactly what the subcommittees do for you, chairman Andy Simpson, talks about PISC.

In past years, the Publications & Information Subcommittee (PISC) seemed to restrict its activities to periodic production of the MRC Handboook and the issue of information of general interest, usually in the form of a brick of paper that dropped on various people’s doorsteps containing press cuttings, memos and minutes from subcommittee meetings. I’m glad to say the whole thing has become a bit more sophisticated. When Ian Hurst of PDMRO took over as chair in the late 90s, he quickly realised the need for the MRC to communicate and become more accessible to its grass roots membership. He actively recruited and encouraged members to come forward who not only represented their region but brought professional skills to the group.

One of the his first projects was to establish the MRC website, making sure the right people were in place to get something up on screen. This was quickly followed by the MRC News, forerunner to the hugely successful Mountain Rescue Magazine. Andy Simpson, talks about PISC.

Handbook is being worked on at present with a directory of contact details for each team and other organisations, and more general information about mountain rescue – has now evolved into an online directory and a separate printed handbook. A new version of the Handbook is being worked on at present with a view to promoting mountain rescue to a wider public and increasing our profile amongst those who ultimately pay for the service.

Other projects included the recognition of a particular skill to the group and further develop our corporate profile for MR. For many, this concept didn’t sit too well at the outset, but, as we develop, the ethereal recognition needed amongst the public and more immediately through the web site. This latter medium is not perfect but, as we develop, the readability, accessibility and quality of the information provided makes the MRC in particular, and the wider MR world, far more within reach of ordinary team members.

In addition, the Handbook – comprising a directory of contact details for each team and other organisations, and more general information about mountain rescue – has now evolved into an online directory and a separate printed handbook. A new version of the Handbook is being worked on at present with a view to promoting mountain rescue to a wider public and increasing our profile amongst those who ultimately pay for the service.

Other projects included the recognition of a need for some kind of corporate profile for MR. For many, this concept didn’t sit too well at the time, and still doesn’t with some but, as a national organisation, the establishment of corporate guidelines was necessary to achieve physical recognition operationally (the lines of mostly red jackets attending major incidents), and the more external recognition needed amongst the public to help us compete locally and nationally for the elusive charitable donation. Combine this with the PR and commercial partnerships we now have, and we see a far more visible organisation with a valuable brand, able to bring in funding for training and equipment which benefits every team in the country.

PISC works very closely with the national fundraising group, acting as marketing consultant in their quest for funding from the public and commercial sectors. A final point, perhaps worth making, is that rather than looking for regional representation for the sake of it (although it is always a bonus) we prefer to recruit those people from within mountain rescue who can bring a particular skill to the group and further develop the projects we undertake.
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A P RIL 2 0 0 8

PAG E 43
M O UNT AIN RESCUE M A GAZINE
A P RIL 2 0 0 8
I always wanted to teach children in the outback.
I never thought I'd be the school bus driver too.

When you've got a 4 x 4 with seven seats, you're suddenly the most popular teacher in town.
And the next thing you know, it's the local bus driver.

No joke when the catchment area is 2,000 sq miles.
And a sudden shower can turn a parched track into a sea of mud.
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Plus it has an entertainment system that helps me handle six kids too.

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