Somewhere, somewhere, somewhere...

At the strategy day we agreed to look at how we could manage MREW more efficiently. Time pressure and the workload on officers was a big issue.

One of the first actions was the better management of our finances. If anything happened to our treasurer, no-one else understood what was happening. The risk was off the scale. All finances are now outsourced.

The next step with finances is to put in place a system where officers can track their own budgets and fundraising can track income.

Insurance is a very important area for all of us. We still have some work to do but all insurance is now outsourced. We are understanding a full review of our insurance policies, what’s covered and whether we are getting value for money.

Because of our commitments to you with things like insurance, some equipment, the magazine, the list goes on, there is a risk to the organisation with no guaranteed income. In the next few months we will be taking on a freelance, national fundraiser.

All legal matters are now outsourced.

The CIO. We needed to do this to protect our trustees and this has been a lot harder and a lot more work than a team moving to CIO. We’re not there yet but hopefully before long we’ll have something in place to put forward again. The trustees are undertaking a review of the document following rejection of the Objects by the Charity Commission. Jake Shakter (newly appointed CIO trustee), Steve Wood (current trustee), and a regional chair (Keith Giles), to identify the project steering group. The trustees felt that the steering group should be made up of knowledgeable members who will write the framework document and the scoping agreements.

We’ve come a long way in two years. Yes there is more to do, but if we sit back we give some of our members the opportunity to review the whole document. We took on an assistant secretary, following the strategy day and formed the Regional Chairs and Operations Groups.

Transparency was a major issue. You say time and time again you don’t know what is happening at national level. We understand this is an area we still need to work at, but you now have access to everything: budgets and minutes of all national meetings via the website.

The website has a new outward-facing page, and we are now looking at the members areas, exploring better pathways to the hard-to-find pages. I want to see all policies, meeting minutes and all legal papers in one place.

Lobby funds have helped us develop national training standards. Applying for the grant money is one thing but ensuring the training is carried out is another and that pulls a lot more work on the treasurer and training officer.

In the last two years, working through UKSAR, we have VAT refunds for teams. We are now looking at VED on marked vehicles which will help many teams.

Most of you will be aware that the national body received a paper from LDSAMRA setting out some concerns and suggesting an external review of the organisation similar to the Rescue 2020 report prepared for the Lakes teams. This was discussed in detail by the trustees and they have agreed that the process should be started by forming a working party comprising David Coleman (newly appointed CIO trustee), Steve Wood (current trustee), and a regional chair (Keith Giles), to identify the project steering group. The trustees felt that the steering group should be made up of knowledgeable members who will write the framework document and the scoping agreements.

We’ve come a long way in two years. Yes there is more to do, but if we sit back we give some of our members the opportunity to review the whole document.
The 2017 annual review is out, covering a twelve-month period up to April this year. This year features the usual round up of incident statistics and stories from around England and Wales, and a foreword from our patron, HRH The Duke of Cambridge.

Perhaps the most striking fact for 2016 is that over the entire year, there were just 14 days without a mountain rescue call-out somewhere in England and Wales. Over 2074 call-outs, from 32 statutory agencies, 1812 resulted in the deployment of a mountain rescue team. Total volunteer hours amounted to 81,778 — and that’s not including training and admin duties.

Sadly, the last twelve months or so has seen us saying goodbye to some of the most influential and longest-standing team members (we pay tribute to them in the review), but the losses continue — note the three obituaries featured in this issue alone. We may indeed be seeing the end of an era with the passing of so many of those who helped forge the rescue service we have today. They will be sadly missed but not forgotten.

Some members were able to pick up copies of the review at the May meeting, but a couple of copies will shortly be winging their way to every team. As usual, if teams wish to order extra copies to use for fundraising or awareness purposes, you can order copies at £1 each plus p&p from me via editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

Our supporters can also order individual copies through the online shop at the full cover price plus p&p — go to shop.mountain.rescue.org.uk — just as soon as I’ve put it on there!
Providing BESPOKE INSURANCE for Mountain Rescue England & Wales.

Under the guidance of Chris Jones, a retired Search Advisor (POLSA) who continues to work very closely with mountain rescue, we can confidently deliver the best insurance solutions for your team as we truly understand the activities and risks associated with mountain rescue.

As an affiliate of MREW, our insurance programme provides:
- Public Liability
- Employers Liability
- Directors & Officers Liability
- Vehicle Cover
- Legal Expenses

We can also provide the following cover for individual teams:
- Material damage
- Equipment
- Public liability
- Additional vehicles
- Event insurance
- Personal Accident cover
- Managing money on behalf of charities

“The Close Integro Insurance Brokers as we wanted to take a fresh look at our insurance with an overall review. We wanted a solution where the teams and team members could go directly to the insurance advisors and experts rather than the MREW committees, and feel that this is working well. Feedback from the teams that have utilised Integro’s knowledge and expertise has been very positive.”

Penny Brockman — Treasurer of the MREW

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www.integrogroup.com

OPERATIONS: MIKE MARGISON

Work on radio transition has been moving ahead at pace. We’ve also heard that our Libor application has been successful, with a full range of national courses being funded. At our next operations meeting in July, we need to review the operational priorities for the next Libor fund application, which is coming up fast as the application dates have changed.

We’ve a number of applicants for the vacant equipment officer post recently vacated by John Whithall. Interviews will take place before the November meeting with a recommendation made to the membership for consideration.

I have seen draft work on the update to the rope rescue guidelines which Al and the training group are working on. As I was instrumental in putting on the first national rope rescue course — ‘Rigging for Rescue’ as it was then — I am encouraged to hear that we are now looking to tender for the delivery of our own specific national rope rescue training course. I believe the training group are developing syllabus content alongside the delivery review. This has been a long time coming and I fully support the plan. The benefits of this approach have been evidenced in my own region by courses run each year with team members from across the region. The improved effectiveness in working together is much like the Swift Water 3 technician model.

In Scotland, the national training programme has been running for some years and has proved the benefit of this approach. Sharing of best practice is certainly the way forward.

It recognises the different working environments and needs, and that there is always the need for situational awareness on the ground with the experience of the team leadership. A national course ensures that key principles and many generic skills are correctly taught and understood.

SECRETAIRIAL UPDATE: DAVE CLOSE

A huge thanks to all those who have communicated with the management team over the last twelve months — it reassures me that communication across the last twelve months — it reassures me that communication across

PROMOTING THE POWER — AND THE PARTNERSHIP

Following on from the October Awareness Day tie-in, The Wanderers’ Guide, MREW’s press and social media team has been working with VARTA Consumer UK on a spring campaign called Powering Up in the Sunshine.

“We learnt a lot about the online content that people were interested in and the best way to present advice in graphics from the October campaign,” says Sally Swaid, a member of the MREW team, “and it seemed like a good idea to reinforce VARTA’s practical fundraising and financial support for MR teams across the country with a similar approach for the spring and into summer.”

Sally worked with VARTA’s PR agency, Prova, on the content of a second downloadable guide. From the VARTA Consumer UK point of view, the emphasis was on power packs and the ability to keep mobile phones charged by using them in the outdoors. For MREW, it was all about sharing safety advice — most of it taken from the book, Call Out Mountain Rescue — related to using mobile phones effectively when out on the hills and mountains.

‘Prove did all the design work and turned a lot of text info into attractive graphics,’ says Sally. ‘We then scheduled Twitter and Facebook posts over the weeks between the two May bank holidays. These used individual panels with each post as well as some posts that linked to the full downloadable document and others that linked to a brief animation with top tips for summoning help.’

All in all, the joint campaign reinforced the support partnership between MREW and VARTA Consumer UK and also gave followers of the two organisations on social media lots of information to keep them safe and keep them connected.

‘The strongest message and the post that seemed to be best received related to the Text Alert system,’ says Sally. ‘A lot of people seemed to be unaware that they could register their phone with the emergency services, making it simpler to use a text to raise the alarm in an emergency. It’s not a fool proof system but it increases the chances of being able to alert the police and, via them, mountain rescue.’

THE GUIDE IS STILL EASILY DOWNLOADABLE FROM THE VARTA WEBSITE: BIT.LY/2SG86LK

BLENCATHRA CENTRE FOR MOUNTAIN HERITAGE TRUST

On behalf of MREW, Mike Margison attended the opening in March of the new MREW ambassador Alan Hinkes at the opening in March.

The MOUNTAIN RESCUE MAGAZINE • SUMMER 2017

BOAT DECK OF THE DUSAN

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Andy Binstead, Binny to most of us, was a life well lived, inside and outside of mountain rescue. His passing on 10 April after an illness in March, aged just 49, was a shock to everyone who knew him. Pete Jones, another long-standing team member, in April aged 83, while walking the fells passed away after an illness in March, aged just 49.

One of Pete’s memorable cartoons

A mobile phone interface app, Vodapage to Page One, is now being hosted on the MREW servers and feeds into MRMap. An important step forward, it allows the Garmin inReach satellite trackers to display on MRMap and hopefully soon a direct interface for Spot Trackers. The outcome isn’t clear but it looks like Page One won’t be continuing with the existing service. Instead, users will be transferred to the Page One network. Predicted coverage data has been requested for areas where learning needs to take place. SARCall doesn’t interface, but it’s hoped that the new service will well.

Mountain Rescue England and Wales has two new men at the top, with Ray Griffiths and Peter Dymond OBE taking on the roles of president and vice president respectively. Both will be familiar names to regulars at national meetings and conferences — and, of course, is well known on his home turf in the Lakes. But for everyone else: who are they and what will they bring to the job?

Ray is the longest serving member of Patterdale MRT, having joined the team in January 1976, and he’s served in a number of roles with the team, including deputy leader for many years, as well as undertaking work for the region and MREW. He is, as I’m reliably informed, a profound font of knowledge on mountain clothing and kit, an equipment fetishist with a fervent interest in all things gadgety. His workshop stack was a legend at team winter training sessions says Dave Freeborn, former Patterdale team leader. As LDSD/MRA delegate on the MREW equipment subcommittee for almost twenty years, with Richard Taitel, MREW equipment officer at the time, he led the process of finding a replacement manufacturer for the Bell stretcher. So, does he feel about this now national he’s weighing? ‘It’s a daunting task, following Peter Bell, given everything he achieved for us. I hope to visit as many teams and regions as and to talk to people at all levels of our community. And, by ‘people’, I’m meant far beyond those wearing the jacket — the partners and families behind us, our fundraisers, and sponsors alike. I’d like even work colleagues who tolerate us (and yes, I’m) to vanishing at a moment’s notice.

Peter recently received the Distinguished Service Award for his contribution to the mountain rescue family’, over forty years service. ‘During that time,’ he says, ‘above all, I’ve realised that we all get involved in MR to help others. Mountain rescue is unique. We need to work together to do what we do, as a cohesive team, finding or rescuing people in need in mountain and wilderness areas. Yet all teams have evolved individual skills and responsibilities. Our teams operate in many different terrains but interact and support each other without question.

After such a long period of active membership, he’d begun to think his usefulness was coming to an end but MR is not known for letting folk fade away — not when they’re doing such a sterling work! While he no longer relishes the idea of flagging up to Striding Edge or the Helvellyn headwall in foul weather and at night (or both) with a heavy load, he recognises that ‘a slower folk do seem to get the heavier loads’. Ray is looking forward to the June Resuscitation Seminar, spoken and passed his Casualty Care course and is considering taking up running to join the racing angels!

His dedication to the mountain rescue cause then, continues unbound, both locally and nationally. By putting myself forward for this role, I intend to work hard to further the aims and interests of all the MR community in the best way I can.’

Newly-appointed vice president Peter Dymond has been an external trustee for a number of years, more recently as chair of the trustees, and will continue in that role until the charity becomes a CIO. He feels ‘very honoured and indeed humbled by his appointment’, viewing this role more of an ambassadorial position where he can represent MREW at relevant events and within the wider public arena, ‘helping to raise the profile of mountain rescue generally by championing the skills and professionalism of the membership and promoting the charity’s objectives’. He also believes that support, when requested, to those charged with the management of MREW, the regions, and teams, is a key element of the role. ‘Maintaining currency in mountain rescue is important. It’s difficult to be effective in this representative role so I hope that, occasionally, I will be invited to attend management meetings (as an observer), including those in the regions, where I can keep up to date with operational and organisational developments’. As many of you will know, Peter has been involved in search and rescue for forty years so has a good depth of experience in what he rightly describes as this humanitarian business. He was largely instrumental in the establishment of the cohesive and cooperative UK Search and Rescue organisation we have today in which MREW now plays such a prominent and leading role.

We wish Ray and Peter luck in their new roles.

Ray and Peter discuss taking on new roles at the top

JUDY WHITESIDE

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?
In summary, the journey of clinical governance aims to:

• Make sure patients receive safe, appropriate care
• Support volunteers to deliver safe, appropriate care

In MREW we care for about 800 casualties a year with a wide variety of problems. This is a significant challenge with a variety of care, multiple teams, wide geographical spread and the challenges of the mountain environment. To deliver good quality casualty care in this system requires structure and support.

In most healthcare organisations clinical governance refers to a systematic approach to maintaining quality casualty care in this system requires structure and support. In most healthcare organisations clinical governance refers to a systematic approach to maintaining and improving the care provided to patients. The term does not mandate one approach or any particular structure.

In 2015, the UK SAR Medical Committee recognised the need for all SAR UK organisations to have a clinical governance process and therefore produced a consensus Clinical Governance Framework Document (2015). Each organisation then developed bespoke local guidance. In MREW, the medical subcommittee (MREW MSC) recognised the need to support members and teams to take local responsibility for delivering the aims of clinical governance.

Our first Clinical Governance Guideline was published in 2016 on the MREW website. The current version is to be replaced with the Medical Subcommittee section under ‘Clinical Governance’.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?
There are four key activities to help us achieve ‘safe appropriate care’.

1. Understanding what we should do
2. Delivering care
3. Reviewing care to identify where we did well and where we need to improve
4. Making change when required.

To do the job we need a set of tools or map skills — to continue with the rather poor analogy! These are sometimes called to elements of clinical governance, which makes it sounds rather more complex than necessary!

Research and development helps our understanding of what we should be doing and defines what is good practice. Publications in high quality literature are the main source of information.

Education and training helps us deliver the care direct to the casualty.

Audit is a process of review by which we compare what we actually do with the standard of good practice and ask if we can improve our performance.

Openness and no blame culture is essential to allow constructive review of practice. This requires confidentiality for individual patients and carers. We need to open to change.

Management of risk to:
• Patients
• Carers — our own volunteers and our partner agencies.
• Organisations — teams, regions and MREW.

Information management helps us record what we do and provides an essential source of information to reflect on care. It can also be a tool to manage safe care e.g. a drug checklist.

The MREW MSC has three main work streams:
• Clinical practice
• Education and training
• Clinical governance

You will recognise that these support the aims of clinical governance. The output from this work is available on the Moodle VLE and provides an accessible resource for all members and teams.

EXAMPLES OF CLINICAL GOVERNANCE ACTIVITY

The MREW MSC uses the latest research literature to inform our practice and we can incorporate this into casualty care at local level. A good example would be the guidance provided on the management of hypothermia and the choice of drugs in our formulation.

We have developed a strong educational package for care through the Casualty Care Certificate. There is improved clarity over Extended Skills and the four levels of care as described in the First Aid Practice and Training document (2016). The changes to the assessment process create much improved assurance for the Casualty Care Certificate.

Incident reporting is really important and we have examples of where this has worked very well (e.g. a radiation-related event). Safety alerts (the recent X-band device alert) can be disseminated through extended channels the organisation. However, we can, however, be more open and improve this by sharing our practice across the organisation.

The MREW Clinical Records Guideline helps to explain how we use information in patient care.

The recent work in the MSC, looking at the introduction of methoxyflurane, has largely been around risk management for theorganisation in our already well-established system of care.

We have published guidance on a variety of topics such as appraisal for health care professionals and advice for teams on the position of doctors who are still in training posts.

I offer these examples to illustrate that clinical governance is not something new or scary and doesn’t necessarily mean a lot of extra work. In MREW, we are already doing a lot of clinical governance-related activity. In many teams there are excellent examples of clinical review meetings. Other elements will be addressed in team business meetings but not recognised as clinical governance.

IS THERE A MAP?
The MREW MSC Governance Guideline is written as a ‘challenge and response’ document. It does not tell you what you must do. It is a map to help individual members, teams and regions to ask important questions and develop locally appropriate answers. It provides a tool and framework for local decision making and implementation.

The current map is the Clinical Governance Guideline on the VLE. Just like any map it provides a route that can be navigated using a series of symbols (the questions). At each step you will need to identify the symbol (answer the question) and then make a local decision on an appropriate response (which way will you choose to turn).

This approach has been used successfully in other voluntary organisations.

I would encourage all MREW members, teams and regions to obtain a copy of the map and take some time to reflect on the questions.

Ultimately, our patients and our volunteers can reasonably expect us to have the aims and process of clinical governance as an embedded part of medical practice.

My thanks go to members of the MSC who have reviewed and helped to develop the document. I hope that you will consider joining the journey and find the map useful.

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

With the success of the online courses developed and taken by Al Head and Mike Greene we’re looking to enhance Mobile further. Any team member who wishes to be considered to attend a Mobile course or, indeed, to create an online course to benefit the membership, please contact me.

FUNDRAISING: DAVID THOMSON

We had a good turnout at the fundraising meeting in May and we’re still mulling over the last year’s expenses and finding it difficult to justify the cost of the new server and join Lynch built a map server with an improved interface. Well as keeping the mapping resources. This has led to significantly reduced costs. The new mapping engine also has an API over to read from the online shop.

COLOURFUL ADDITIONS TO THE PELI RANGE

Peli UK has added three new colours to their premium lightweight protective case, the Peli Air. Up to 40% lighter, the cases retain the stability and durability of the original Peli Protector case and models 1560 and 1565 are now available in yellow, silver, orange and black. The high visibility of the orange and yellow models is perfectly suited for search and rescue work. The cases are suitable for storing and transporting items which do not require additional protection but need to be protected from the elements. Cases for use in the medical sector or where the contents can be quickly customised and is easy to replace when equipment is upgraded. The yellow padded dividers offer greater visibility and versatility for even the smallest compartments. The Temspi system contains of 12 sliders, locking pins and a precision cutting tool to fully customise the interior.

THE PELI RAGE CARRIES THE LEGENDARY YOU BREAK IT, WE’RE FIX IT promise, as it is virtually indestructible. If you are looking for something different, we have the Peli Air range in a variety of sizes and colours. You can see them all online at peli-products.com/uk/Desktops Air.
Calder Valley team president Bob Uttley was appointed an MBE for services to the community in the Calder Valley and Todmorden. Bob, who has held the post of president for 23 years, became involved with the West Yorkshire team after his son Robert, a team member for some years, died while climbing Annapurna III in a white-out in 1983.

Bob is only the second president since the team’s formation in 1966, succeeding Phyllis Oakley in the role, and was instrumental in raising £100,000 to help build its current base in Mytholmroyd.

CVSRT press officer Tim Ingram said, ‘We’re extremely pleased for Bob and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate him. He truly is a fine gentleman and we sincerely thank him for all his years of support for the team.’

Brian Spencer of Keswick was also made an MBE, for services to mountain rescue in Cumbria. He had been a member of the Keswick team for 45 years, during which time he was involved in more than 1200 rescues, only retiring from team service in 2015, aged 80.

He described himself as ‘flabbergasted, embarrassed and humbled when he received the letter’.

Team leader Chris Higgins told the local ‘Times & Star’ he was ‘overjoyed’ at the news. ‘Brian was not only an active member but in the latter years he took on the job of overseeing the collection boxes from pubs, guest houses and businesses. We calculate that he was responsible for collecting more than £370,000, mainly in coppers and coins.

‘He was always working away in the background making a significant contribution.’

In Derbyshire, Bill Whitehouse was also appointed an MBE. The long-time member of Derbyshire CRO and former chairman of BCRC, joined the team in 1964 and spent 45 years as an operational controller, 32 as secretary and fifteen in the chair.

A team spokesperson said, ‘Bill’s dedication to voluntary rescue services goes much further than that. He has spent 36 years as the chairman of the British Cave Rescue Council and is still vice chairman. He’s been involved with MREW for 30 years, UKSAR for sixteen and also helped establish the mountain and cave rescue benevolent fund of which he is a trustee.

‘We are extremely proud of Bill and thrilled to see his long term and varied dedication to search and rescue recognised.’

Harvey Lloyd of Caernarfon received the British Empire Medal for services to the community, mountain rescue, mountaineering and heritage in Wales. He was a member of the Llanberis team between 1972 and 1996 and also organiser of the Welsh 1,000m Peaks Race.

Commenting on the honour, team secretary Phil Benbow said that Harvey helped make the team a success. ‘Harvey was a well respected and highly-regarded member of the team,’ said Phil.

Retired police officer Jon Rushon was honoured with an MBE for services to mountain and cave rescue in North Yorkshire. Jon, who served with North Yorkshire Police for 27 years, was a member of the Scarborough team for 40 years and was also the team’s production officer.

Harvey also received the Freedom of the Town of Caernarfon.

A number of mountain rescue volunteers, past and present, were recognised in this year’s Queen’s Birthday Honours. Judy Whiteside rounds them up.
OS STUDY REVEALS THAT MOST HILLGOERS ARE UNPREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES

A study by Ordnance Survey has revealed that many hillgoers are clueless about what to do if things go wrong, with one in eight of people asked would not know how to deal with a mountain emergency if they had no phone signal. And three-quarters of recreational walkers don’t plan their route properly or pack the right gear, the survey found.

The figures were released as OS announced it was teaming up with Mountain Rescue England and Wales to try to reduce outdoor incidents, following a year in which only four days were without a mountain rescue call-out somewhere.

In 2016, teams across England and Wales attended 1,613 incidents, up 170 on the previous year, of which 360 were serious or fatal. Mountain bike incidents also continued to rise, though not at the same rate as in previous years.

The survey of more than 2,000 adults from across Great Britain who enjoy recreational walking and hiking highlighted the need for a more safety-minded approach when venturing outdoors.

A total of 83% of those questioned admitted that if they were in trouble on a mountain and had no phone signal they wouldn’t know what to do. More than 90% of people carry paper maps, compasses or whistles, relying entirely on the functionality of their mobile phones, even though only 28% of all respondents would think to check in advance the availability of a mobile phone signal where they are heading.

“We certainly don’t want to discourage people from venturing out into the hills,” says Mike France, MREW chairman. “But people need to make sure they have the right kit and have let someone know the route they’re taking if they are heading off the beaten path. This can save lives.”

Almost 500 of the incidents documented could possibly have been avoided. People called for help because they were lost, stuck, or suffered a minor slip. Some said they were simply unable to continue, but these types of incidents place a huge strain on team members and resources. The Ordnance Survey’s Get Outside initiative aims to educate people on the steps they should take to ensure they enjoy the hills but avoid becoming a mountain rescue statistic.

Nick Giles, managing director of OS Leisure, said, ‘Great Britain is a varied and beautiful country, offering something different each time you head out. Mountain rescue does an awesome job in often difficult circumstances, and it’s a job we should all be appreciative of. While you can never eradicate accidents, let’s see if together we can reduce the number of mountain rescue incidents in 2017.”
FIRST SODS CUT IN WASDABLE

In early May, Wasdale team signed a contract to build a purpose-designed new base near Gosforth in Copeland, the next step to bringing their new base concept to reality. It follows an allocation from the Copeland Community Fund (CCF) of £218,043, earmarked funding from LDSAMRA of £12,000, and an interest in land granted by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

After over 40 years in the village of Gosforth, the team decided a few years ago that they’d outgrown their current base behind the Kellbank. Built on land that is currently owned by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and leased to a peppercorn rent, the new base will be modern and fit-for-purpose with enhanced training and welfare facilities, communications and accessibility to the AS95.

When LDSAMRA set up the Rescue 2020 fund, some years ago, one of the aims of which was to help fund significant projects which teams couldn’t ordinarily afford. Richard Warren, chairman of LDSAMRA said, ‘We are very pleased to support the team from the funds donated to the region. Aside from being a fabulous new facility for the team, the building will significantly enhance the region’s capability to deal with major regional incidents’.

Although the notion of a new base goes back a few years, the project began in earnest in 2014, thanks to Adam Holda’s dog Jasper, which went missing in the team’s patch. Jasper was found by a member of the public and then rescued by the team but the story triggered a viral social media campaign raising over £51,000 plus Gift Aid.

Team chairman John Bamforth said, ‘This is the culmination of a lot of hard work and donations by many people. I’d like to thank the CCF, NDA and LDSAMRA for their continued support and several benefactors who left very generous amounts in their wills to make this project possible. Singing out individual effort in a team is never easy but I’d particularly like to thank one of our members, Martin Young, our project lead, who has driven this important project forward with passion’.

The building has been designed by Richard Nicholls of Eigenform and further developed by WK Design Architects Ltd. After a competitive tender exercise, the contract was awarded to Roland HI Ltd. The team has been supported by Baker Mallett who have provided invaluable expertise with respect to construction design and management regulation and also supplying the project quantity surveying services.

PATTERDALE TEAM REPLACES STOLEN GENERATOR THANKS TO GENEROSITY OF SUPPORTERS

Over the Easter weekend, we reported that theessie had stolen the Patterdale team’s mobile generator from their trailer during a fundraising event. This vital piece of equipment was used to run the team’s promotional displays but, more importantly, to power laptops and communication systems in a major incident, and absolutely essential to day-to-day running.

Following Storm Desmond, the team realised it needed to improve its ability to remain self-sufficient in the event of a future major incident and initiated a commercial generator to supply the rescue base and fire station with electricity for at least 24 hours. This was kindly funded by the Cumbria Flood Fund. The plan was to purchase a second generator, of the highest specification, mean that not only are we better prepared to support our flood technicians when they go further afield but we can now get out to the various events we’d planned to attend across the county this summer.’

CALDER VALLEY WELCOMES FOUNDER’S FAMILY TO BASE

In April, Calder Valley team members welcomed relatives of founder team member Will Sutcliffe to their base. Will was a well-respected member of the team and sadly passed away recently. He always followed the team with interest and often attended the team’s meetings.

One of his two daughters, Hazel Stobbs, and his granddaughter Rosie were there to present the proceeds of a collection from Will’s funeral (almost £500). In addition to this, Rosie recently came third in a national bouldering competition in Reading, and donated her prize of a £20 DMM voucher to the team. DMM kindly doubled the value of the voucher.

The team would like to thank Hazel and Rosie and all those who attended the funeral and donated to Calder Valley. Sincere condolences to Will’s family and friends.

LAKES AND MREW LAUNCH REVISED SAFETY LEAFLETS THANKS TO CICERONE

Cicerone has a long history of supporting mountain rescue safety campaigns. Over several years, they have sponsored leaflets specifically aimed at visitors to the Cumbrian fells, as well as the wider hilwalking public.

‘At Cicerone, we seek to play a positive role in supporting charities directly associated with mountain and outdoor activities’, says Lesley Williams, of Cicerone, ‘and we are delighted to sponsor these information leaflets’.

‘The number of call-outs in the Lakes dropped last year by around 10%’, says Richard Waring, but we still received a huge number of 999 calls for what we regard as totally avoidable incidents. These leaflets primarily target those people who perhaps need a little bit of help in preparing themselves for their outings onto the fells, many of whom won’t have been high up on a mountain before.’

‘The same principles of safety apply anywhere in the great outdoors, of course’, says Judy Whittaker, who designed the icons used in both versions, ‘and the MREW version is designed to address those areas outside of the Lake District. The information included also echoes the advice available from the MREW website.

Hilwalkers are encouraged to take the leaflets along with them, tucked in their rucksacks as a reminder of what to do and who to call in case of emergency. With this in mind, a significant improvement might be to produce water-resistant leaflets but this would incur more costs and would require some external funding support. Potential sponsors please take note! The Lakes version is available to download from idswarm.org.uk.

Above: Patterdale team members with their two brand new generators! © Patterdale MRT.

New Harnesses Thanks to West Yorkshire Police

Calder Valley team is the latest group in the district to benefit from money returned under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA). The district’s Partnership Funding team bought ten specialist harnesses using money seized from criminals. The harnesses were presented to the team’s equipment officer Richard Smith and deputy team leader Jonathan Cole at Halifax Police Station.

Copies of the MREW Version are Available to Teams, Individuals and Businesses Who Would Like to Carry Stock. Contact Editor@mountain rescue.org.uk to Order

REVISED SAFETY LEAFLETS THANKS TO CICERONE

Based in Milton, Cicerone produces guidebooks for walkers, mountaineers, trekkers, climbers and cyclists so are ideally placed to work with mountain rescue in providing this potentially life-saving information.

‘At Cicerone, we seek to play a positive role in supporting charities directly associated with mountain and outdoor activities’, says Lesley Williams, of Cicerone, ‘and we are delighted to sponsor these information leaflets’.

‘The number of call-outs in the Lakes dropped last year by around 10%’, says Richard Waring, but we still received a huge number of 999 calls for what we regard as totally avoidable incidents. These leaflets primarily target those people who perhaps need a little bit of help in preparing themselves for their outings onto the fells, many of whom won’t have been high up on a mountain before.’

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Above: Calder Valley team leader Ian Calder welcomes founder Will Sutcliffe’s granddaughter Rosie to the rescue team base © CSMR.
Superintendent Vince Firth said, ‘We are delighted to be able to support Calder Valley Search and Rescue Team through money taken from criminals under the Proceeds of Crime Act. This money is going directly back to support the wider community and the fantastic work Calder Valley team members do each and every day.’

‘We regularly work closely with the team, their support is invaluable to us, particularly when searching for missing or potentially vulnerable people. They do a fantastic job in supporting the communities of Calderdale each and every day and helping to keep people safe.’

NORTH WALES
KATE HUMBLE AND BBC FILM CREW VISIT OGWEN

The film company, contracted by BBC Wales, was making a series about life along the Dragon’s Back, a route from North to South Wales along the highest points.

Kate Humble, with her Welsh Collie called Teg, started on top of the Great Orme where they met a tenant farmer.

‘He’s farming land recently bought by the National Trust for an annual rent of just £1,’ says Chris Lloyd. ‘For this, he has to farm to protect the ecology of this peninsula.

‘The company also wanted to look at mountain rescue, especially the work of the search dogs. Filming took place in April. Earlier in the week, the weather had been fine and we hoped the dramatic backdrop of Tryfan would make for some good footage. Unfortunately, good weather never lasts long, and the actual day was slightly hazy.

‘Team members and a couple of dog handlers met the film crew at Ogwen base. Everyone was on best behaviour and it was Kate Humble who broke the ice with an expletive!’

John Pailthorpe of SARDA Wales takes up the tale: ‘When the BBC contacted OVMRO asking if Kate Humble could visit to film part of an episode for an upcoming series about people working and playing in the Welsh mountains, several members of the team were happy to help out.

‘Of course, the Snowdonia mountain weather did not make things easy. It was a blustery, cold and very wet day with only the odd break in the driving rain. As a dog handler herself, Kate particularly wished to meet Sally Armond and her search dog Spin, who have been valued members of OVMRO and SARDA Wales for around a decade.

Spin is a small, smooth haired Border Collie with many years’ experience as an air scenting Mountain Rescue Search Dog and

NEW SAR TEAM MEMBERS TIE A DIFFERENT SORT OF KNOT

Former team leader Iain Ashcroft and long-time partner Becky Vaughan, both of North East Wales Search and Rescue, were married in typical mountain rescue fashion in June, accompanied by stunning scenery and a Land Rover polished to within an inch of its life. Congratulations both!”
A rising trend, particularly in the work of the search and rescue dogs, is attributed to the role played by Irish Coast Guard volunteer Coltona Lucas, who died in September 2016, during the search for a missing man off the Clare coast with Killybegs Coast Guard.

The MRSI annual report pays tribute to Coltona’s role in dog-assisted searches. The mother of two, an experienced member of the Irish Coast Guard’s Doolin unit and a SARDA dog handler, was recently awarded a posthumous Claire Person of the Year award. She was also an experienced climbing instructor with many associated skills, ranging from first aid to boat crewman.

Many of the twelve mountain rescue teams were also deeply affected by the loss of the four Irish Coast Guard Rescue 116 air crew — Captains Dara Fitzpatrick and Mark Duffy, Paul O’Reilly and Colm Smith — who lost their lives in the crash off north Mayo in March. Team members, particularly those from the Mourne Mountain, Dublin-Wicklow and Glen of Imaal teams, who had trained with the air crew, and participated in extensive shore searches on the west coast during the two months before the incident.

The report records that the Dublin-Wicklow and Glen of Imaal teams were the busiest last year, with 66 call-outs, while a 37% increase in Mayo’s searches on the west coast during the two months before the incident.

IN THEIR WORK DURING 2016

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OUT WITH TEESDALE TEAM

Teesdale & Weardale team were only too happy to oblige and so four members of staff from across the country, including one from head office, joined team members for their March exercise at Cow Green reservoir and Meldon hill — a not unsubstantial hill at over 2500 feet.

Two volunteer casualties, Linda Collins and partner Merv Stapleton from St Johns Chapel in Upper Weardale, along with a team doctor to oversee the treatment provided, were duly driven along a shooting track adjacent to the Pennine way to a point approximately one mile from the point which would become the incident site, the remnants of a small building known as Meldon Hall.

The weather was typical of March in the high Pennines,’ says Scott Bissett, the team’s press officer, ‘with low cloud rolling in and out providing a real test for team and clothing, but showing the staff from JD Sport the tough conditions in which we have to operate. By late morning more information had been gleaned on the possible whereabouts of the incident and the four JD staff where taken by Land Rover to a point approximately 1.5 miles away so they could walk in and witness the find and subsequent treatment.

The casualties were located by search dog Sam and the rescue team moved in! When checked by medics, one of our volunteer casualties was found to be genuinely mildly hypothermic, so warmed up and walked off to the nearest Land Rover. The remaining casualty was treated for a mid-shift fracture and given analgesia before being wrapped in a cast bag, winched and loaded onto a Bell stretcher. Due to the wet conditions it was easy to skid or drag the stretcher over the heather making the carry-out easier and smoother for all concerned’.

At the after exercise debrief, one of JD staff remarked, ‘I thought I was fit, but you guys are like machines’. There was also excellent feedback from our casualties who were very impressed with the level of care given. Everyone was cold, wet and very happy — a great way to end the team’s winter hill training. TWSMRT would also like to thank the Brinkdale estate and NWM for special land access.

DISCOVER A NEW LANDSCAPE OF ADVENTURE

You want to focus on the rhythm of the climb, on each axe strike and change in terrain. Having the right kit allows you to focus without any distraction. Our team of in-store experts are here to answer your questions, highlight the latest tech and ensure that you have the perfect fit whatever the weather, allowing you to focus on the next step. Developed to withstand the harshest environments and crafted for endurance with unrivalled performance, our 2017 collection boasts world famous brands including Arc’teryx, Mountain Equipment and Norrona.

NORTH EAST

JD FOUNDATION STAFF ENJOY DAY OUT WITH TEESDALE TEAM

Sports retailer JD Foundation recently donated £250,000 to Mountain Rescue England and Wales and, in return, asked whether some of its staff could join a team for the day to see what we do.

The Teesdale & Weardale team were only too happy to oblige and so four members of staff from across the country, including one from head office, joined team members for their March exercise at Cow Green reservoir and Meldon hill — a not unsubstantial hill at over 2500 feet.

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WITH 20% DISCOUNT* FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS.

PEAK DISTRICT

ASDA CREATES 7-INCH REPLICA OF DERBY'S 9-FOOT STATUE

At the end of 2014, after 34 years in the role, Steve Hilditch MBE stepped down as Derby team leader. Recognised for his commitment to mountain rescue and scouting with an MBE in 2015, Steve was also awarded the Silver Wolf medal by the Scout Association, a most prestigious award only bestowed on a few.

In appreciation of his hard work and dedication, the team wanted to create the ‘Steve Hilditch Trophy’ to be awarded to team members who epitomise the ethos of mountain rescue.

Martyn Turner, a former team member, had seen ASDA’s ‘3DME’ project, which allows anyone to have a miniature figurine of themselves created using 3D printing technology. The customer stands in a futuristic scanning pod and, in just twelve seconds, up to 1500 images are captured and stitched together electronically, the finished ceramic figurine available for collection within 21 days. This seemed perfect, but the only reference available was ‘Peat Grough’ — an impressive nine-foot statue weighing over 150kg. Clearly a plan was needed.

Tommy Hornby, ASDA’s photo processing and 3D operations manager, thought it might be possible to create the required images using a hand-held version of the scanner. So, in secret, a few of the team joined Tommy to erect a scaffold system next to the giant and he spent an afternoon attempting to capture a likeness of the giant. It was a challenging task — not only because of the sheer size of the statue, but the unwanted reflections coming off its high gloss finish — but Tommy returned to his office with the scans and spent a further day stitching them together and correcting anomalies. The result was unbelievable: a 7-inch statuette, complete with rope and climbing gear.

Two were made — one for Steve and his wife Kim and one for the team to use as an award — both mounted on wooden plinths made by Martyn’s father and presented to Steve and the team in 2015.

Sadly, Steve lost his battle with cancer later that year but, before his death, he had nominated the first recipient of the award. At the team AGM in March, Kim presented it to Nic Berry.

Everyone at Derby would like to thank ASDA and Tommy Hornby for their generosity and support.

IAN HURST REMEMBERED

Buxton team has unveiled the latest addition to its response vehicle fleet with delivery of a new Toyota Hilux 4 wheel drive, now the team’s primary response vehicle.

The Toyota Hilux Double Cab 4WD, 2.4D with Icon Specification in Metallic Silver, complements the existing fleet of three vehicles, and each has a specific role in the team’s response depending on the nature of the call-out.

The total cost of replacement is over £45,000, funded by the magnificent support of the public. Continued careful budgeting built up a cash fund specifically targeted for the purchase but the individual help of two

THERM-APP HZ: SMARTPHONE TECHNOLOGY THAT SAVES LIVES

Therm-App™ Hz is a high-end solution for security, safety and search/rescue applications. Through its highest 25 Hz frame rate, Therm-App Hz delivers smooth thermal images using a variety of interchangeable lenses ranging from 6.8mm to 35mm. Even though the prices of thermal cameras have been drastically reduced over the past few years, a thermal camera’s price tag might still seem like a lot of money, but according to search and rescue and security teams it’s worth every penny.

The Therm-App Hz allows us to deploy thermal imaging directly from our pockets making it unnecessary to call in air support units or wait for equipment to arrive. Bad weather that might prevent air units or drones from operating or simple lack of availability is fast making the Therm-App Hz amongst our most important pieces of equipment. You simply cannot get a better image from any other android based device at this price point, and the ability to share pictures and information immediately amongst team mates via email/mms/nfc or any other method your mobile supports is superb.

THERM-APP Hz IS EXCLUSIVELY AVAILABLE IN THE UK VIA WWW.THERMAL-VISION.COM. TO ARRANGE A DEMONSTRATION/EVALUATION SESSION CALL 0844 693 3380.
In June, Ben Brindley from Tideswell ran seven marathons in seven days, an amazing achievement which raised £2000. In September, Becky Higton presented the team with a cheque for £5,000 which she had raised with a sponsored climb of Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa. Becky was helped by the team and given treatment by the team doctor when she suffered breathing difficulties whilst running in the Christmas Cracker fell race in 2014. To say ‘thank you’ she set off on an amazing fundraising event.

The new vehicle has been dedicated to the memory of Buxton’s late president, Ian Hurst MBE, who died earlier this year. Ian’s widow, Zan, and her family, helped launch the vehicle into service. The team sends a huge ‘Thank you’ to all those who made the purchase possible — every gift is greatly appreciated.

# OUR BLUE LIGHT MENTAL HEALTH RELAY IN DERBYSHIRE

On Saturday 10 June, Kinder team members welcomed the relay torch to the county as it passed from the north west to Yorkshire. Representatives from Derbyshire Police, Derbyshire Fire & Rescue, NWAS and Lancashire Police were there, alongside the Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioner Hardyal Dhindra for a very wet morning heading to Kinder Scout.

Our Blue Light was established in 2016, following the success of the Blue Light Walk and aims to improve the mental health, wellbeing and working life of the blue light emergency services. The relay is set to stop off at different cities and locations throughout its journey round the north of England. Events are planned for every weekend, through to September, with local emergency services and community groups getting the torch and taking it to the next location via any means, be that run, cycle or even kayak! To find out more, check out ourbluelight.com/mental-health-relay.

Handyal Dhindra for a very wet morning heading to Kinder Scout.

It was a cold and blustery day in April but nearly one hundred fellow mountain rescuers from teams across the Peak District lined the churchyard to pay tribute to Ian Hurst MBE.

Ian had been a stalwart of mountain rescue from the early 1960s, a Justice of the Peace since 1986 and a Peak District National Park Ranger for nearly forty years. A great family man, he was just thirteen days short of his 74th birthday and missed seeing his ninth grandchild by just five days. He will be sadly missed by friends and colleagues from across so many different areas of the community.

Fellow team members carried Ian into the church for a poignant service performed by the Parish of Buxton Curate, Margaret Slyfield with a eulogy spoken by old friend and team colleague, Roger Bennett.

‘He will be forever remembered by all who knew him, the sort of man that can never be replaced,’ said Roger.
**KENDAL’S NEW WHEELS APPEAL GETS OFF TO A FLYING START**

Kendal team members would like to thank Don Shore, a founder member of the Kendal based BOOBoys walking group for arranging a fundraising event to mark his 70th birthday. The event raised £2,710 — a fantastic start to the team’s New Wheels Appeal.

I am delighted,” says Don, “that so many friends were able to help commemorate my significant birthday in such an enjoyable way. Fortunately, we’ve never needed to call out the rescue team and I hope we never will. However, it’s been a comfort to know they are there, just in case. They have done, and will continue to do, a great job in aiding those who have found themselves in difficulty on the fells. My thanks go to all who have supported me in this appeal to help KMRT continuing fulfil their vital role.”

The money raised by Don and the BOOBoys will be used to replace our ageing control vehicle,” says team chairman Dave Hughes. “Have technology like satellite broadband and digital radios is changing how we can coordinate our response to call-outs and our existing vehicle was designed to be used differently. We’re hoping to raise £45,000 this year to customise a new vehicle and Don’s efforts are very welcome! I’d also like to thank the people of Kendal who donated during our collection in the town centre recently, raising a further £1,350, which will go straight into the New Wheels Appeal.

Don and the BOOBoys have been walking the Lakeland fells as a group since 2004. ‘In a typical year,” says Don, “we will venture out 45 times and climb a total of 100,000 feet at an average of about ten miles per outing. We’re a hard core of some ten regulars but several more who accompany us when they can and we had a really good turn-out for my 70th birthday walks.”

For his special ‘birthday walk’, his regular band of BOOBoys were accompanied by a number of honorary BOOBoys and BOOBoys, aged from 4 to 72 years old — and a good day out was had by all.

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**EXMOOR TEAM CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF SEARCH AND RESCUE**

‘1992 won’t seem long ago to many readers, but the world of search and rescue has changed a lot since then,’ writes Phil Sparks. Exmoor deputy team leader. We started out as the North Devon Search Volunteers, but this was changed to Exmoor Search and Rescue Team, reflecting our first ever search, for an elderly lady near Minehead in Somerset. The tragic result brought home the reality of what the team was doing.

John Gant and Sami Bryant-Jones have been stalwarts since the first inaugural night in Barnstaple. Back then, the team’s bank account was held in a tobacco tin, which progressed shortly afterwards to a tin with a key. Into this tin John, Sami and other members put their own money to buy the first set of radios.

John has been a long-standing search manager, where his eye for detail and thoroughness has been a vital asset. Many years ago he produced a set of plastic circles that correspond to the missing person behaviour and age statistics these have been invaluable. Nowadays, he spends hours playing with the IT and advising me on how to use it — but on a cold night several miles from the nearest phone signal, this is so important.

One unfortunate casualty of John’s long membership has been his trousers. Last Christmas his wife bought him a new one — his second in 25 years. We all look forward to training exercises near John’s home, as a fried breakfast of eggs from his own hens or (being in Devon), a cream tea, is often provided.

The plots for his exercises are legendary. We’ve rescued Father Christmas stuck on a rock face and searched the moor for clues to the whereabouts of missing ‘glamour’ film star! However, the most memorable occasion was being ‘rescued’ from the beach by the RNLI. She now knows that the sea is wide and cold and lifelines travel very fast. We had one very bedraggled medical officer that day.

‘Without John and Sami’s dedication and hard work, many changes would not have been achieved with such thoroughness and integrity. All of us at Exmoor thank them for their time and dedication.’

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**WINNING WALES**

Two South Wales teams have been celebrating awards recently.

Western Beacons (pictured above) say a massive ‘Dolch bawb. Feloydin ni!’ to everyone who voted for them in this year’s People’s Projects. Their votes helped the team secure £44,100 in funding. Meanwhile, Longtown MRT received the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service in June for service to the public, saving lives in remote places for more than fifty years. ‘The award is in recognition of the work of team members past and present,’ reads the team’s Facebook page, ‘and they should all be very proud.’
It is 3.00am; the search has just come to a successful conclusion after eight hours of searching difficult ground in appalling weather conditions. The casualty was located by a hill party way off their intended route with life threatening injuries, but due to excellent cascare, and some innovative ropework, they were safely evacuated to the waiting Coastguard S92 and hospital. Team members are exhausted and looking forward to their beds. Valuable lessons were learned during the call-out, but how are they captured?

Peer review has identified that debriefing is a skill that may not be as well developed as it might be across mountain rescue. Post call-out debriefs, like post-training debriefs, tend to be — at best — informal narratives. Fatigue, emotion, time pressure, complex situations and ‘unknown unknowns’ all contribute to human error and omissions. These ‘human factors’ can result in the loss of valuable learning opportunities and potentially impact on a team’s ability to continuously improve. The format which follows is designed to mitigate the inevitable human factors we all face following a call-out or training exercise.

**POST EXERCISE AND CALL-OUT ‘HOT DEBRIEF’ FORM**

1. **Purpose of the call-out/exercise.** (Insert outline of mission/task)
2. **Feedback** (Ask the whole group the following questions. Capture responses below and on the rear of the sheet)
   a. What one thing went really well?
   b. What one thing didn’t go so well?
   c. Did anything out of the ordinary happen?
   d. Did you have any equipment failures?
   e. Does anyone have any injuries?
3. **Key Learning Points:** (Ask the members present to comment on the following questions with a show of hands, enter a cross in the majority response box)
   a. Were we safe at all times?
   b. Did we observe any ‘near misses’?
   c. How detailed was the Initial Information (Situational awareness)
   d. How clear was the verbal briefing?
   e. How effective were radio communications?
   f. How effective was the cascare?
   g. How effective was the IT? (SARMAN/SARCALL/SARLOC)
   h. Was our driving safe?
   i. Was our welfare?
   j. How fit for purpose was the equipment?
   k. How thorough was our handover?

Add detail to the notes below for any future action requirements.

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<tr>
<th>KEY LEARNING POINTS</th>
<th>DEFINITELY / OUTSTANDING</th>
<th>YES / GOOD</th>
<th>MAYBE / OK</th>
<th>NO / AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT</th>
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Note. The form can be stored in SARCALL before the incident/exercise is closed.
**The most northerly of peer reviews**

**IAN NIXON**

NORTHUMBERLAND NP MRT

Back in March three intrepid and very gallant mountain rescue team members headed north to a far flung corner of England. In fact, had they travelled much further they would have been in Scotland. For those of us who are involved in mountain rescue in this part of the country it meant only one thing... it was time for the peer review of the Northumbland National Park Mountain Rescue Team or as we affectionately know as by our sister team, the ‘Parkies’.

After much discussion the team’s committee and operations group decided to engage in the process because, for us, the timing was right. The team’s operational leadership had changed two years earlier and we were well on the way to delivering a three-year development plan. Peer review provided us with an ideal opportunity to review the progress we’d made and to identify areas for development.

The process of completing the question set prior to the weekend was as a valuable experience in its own right. The weekend comprised of two parts: the first was when there was an opportunity for our reviewers to meet team members, interspersed by two interviews. The second day comprised of two long days where we were supported through a self-evaluation process.

Day one was spent at our base exploring all aspects of the team’s operational procedures, training, vehicles and equipment, technical rescue and medical. Day two involved an exercise in the Lordshaws and Simonside Hills area, a real time exercise based on an incident, many years ago.

The whole process was highly beneficial and whilst there were no surprises the review very much helped us to confirm what we already knew and that we’re not so good at. Areas of good practice highlighted by the reviewers included:

- The information sharing across the whole team with brief details of incidents circulated once or twice a week by the corresponding incident officer and a summary of all incidents in near real-time and updates on the outcomes of incidents provided in the team leader’s monthly briefing.
- The skills framework developed and implemented by the team, underpins training and provides for a future program of development for trainers and a means by which progress is monitored.
- The implementation of a simple tagging system for all equipment, including medical, used in both Land Rovers provides a visible, accountable system — at a glance you can tell what kit is out of the vehicle.
- The medcomms system whereby a casualty can call a highly-experienced and qualified healthcare practitioner within the team for additional advice over the phone/radio.
- The team’s casualty carers, a team of whom have extended skills, maintain currency and competency through periods of ‘observation’ with North East Ambulance Service Paramedics.
- The implementation and use of satellite broadband to enhance the management of incidents and communications no matter where the incident is in the team’s large operational area, a significant proportion of which is not covered by a reliable mobile signal.
- The links with Northumbria Police and Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS), identified as being particularly strong and the inclusion of the team in NFRS’s immediate mobile response plan demonstrated the level of integration.
- The review also confirmed that our practice is still developing in many areas, with the recording of individual training and skills being a key area for further development.

Practice is currently limited to specialist areas such as casualty care and water; but this needs to be extended to all skill areas going forward. The (over) reliance on Tetra Airwave as the primary medium of communication between control and hill parties, and the ageing VHF radios, many of which are faulty and can no longer be repaired, was identified as a vulnerability.

The things which made the weekend work and ensured we benefited from the process were:

- The preparation, preparation and even more preparation put in ahead of the weekend, ensuring most things went to plan!
- The commitment and enthusiasm shown by all team members and their willingness to engage in the process in an open and honest way — there’s no point trying to hide things!
- The style and approach of our peer reviewers

**THE WHOLE TEAM WOULD LIKE TO THANK MREW FOR SUPPORTING THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS AND OUR REVIEWERS — TIM CAIN, JOHN HULSE AND MIKE WAKERLEY — WHO HAD LONG JOURNEYS BACK HOME AFTER A TIRING WEEKEND**

Three reviewers were supportive yet challenging — the probing questions really did make us stop and think.

But what was really, really important was that the reviewers were well looked after. They were very well fed and watered, they were early to bed in all three county rooms both nights, and were even chauffeured around, on day one at least!

As a team we’ve already begun to address the areas for improvement identified during the process. For instance, a form to support a structured ‘hot debrief’ has been introduced, the standard operating procedures all have clearly identified team officers as their owners, and funds have been swiftly raised to replace our ageing analogue high band radios with digital ones. The funds, including the MREW grant, will enable us to hand a package to each member.

Having digested the feedback received from our reviewers, we now intend to refresh our development plan which will guide us through the next three-year period. We are also keen to share practice and continue to learn from others inside and outside of mountain rescue.

We have, for example, already shared our generic and dynamic risk assessments with two out-of-region teams — the discussions and feedback from risk assessment is based on practice adopted from NFRS.

Finally, the whole team would like to thank MREW for supporting the peer review process and our reviewers, Tim Cain, John Hulse and Mike Wakerley, who gave their time and had long journeys back home after a tiring weekend.

**Thoughts from a peer review**

**ROGER HARTLEY**

SCARBOROUGH & RYEDELA MRT

All our team were very positive about the process and looked forward to welcoming the review team to our patch. They arrived from the north and south on Friday night and were shown around the base and then directed to their accommodation.

At SMR/RT we had arranged for the heads of our subcommittees (training, medical, ops, PR, equipment, vehicles and the members reps), to be present on Saturday for the mammorph question and answer session. As I was one of the reviewers on the first peer review undertaken, I can say that it’s far better over a full weekend than over an evening and a day. Having said that the stress levels are probably equal on both sides of the table. I think it’s fair to say that each subcommittee has found improvements they could make as a result of this process. Our reviewers also pointed out areas of good practice that should be shared around the wider MR community. This started one of the longest conversations as to how to disseminate this without it looking like bragging or the reviewers trying to impose their will on other teams. So, with that in mind, there is a list (not very long) at the end of this article of the areas the reviewers thought were good practice. It anyone wants any further info on them drop me a line and I’ll share what we have. Maybe if every team that gets reviewed produces a list of good practice all other teams could dip in when needed.

So, a long day, leaving both reviewers and reviewed in need of refreshment. To give the reviewers chance to talk to the wider team and get the low-down on the committee from the other team members we put on a barbecue and some refreshments. These reviews do seem to revolve around the breaks in proceedings and I’m sure sometimes more is learned when questions aren’t being asked.

The following day, despite our best efforts, the reviewers turned up for the exercise looking refreshed and remained so throughout. A couple of our team members had organised an exercise with the usual clutch of terrible accidents. The rest of our team genuinely didn’t know what was coming including the incident controllers for the day. For some reason we (I think that means I), had agreed to host tonight’s reviews. Dr Dave Strachan, Derek Hammond, Vicky Coumbe and, of course, Tim Cain so there was an ideal opportunity to put them all in one party, make Tim the party leader and send them ‘somewhere safe’. Clearly that wouldn’t have been right, so they were thirty spread around control and the search parties. The exercise seemed to go well from what I saw, obviously there were things that could have been better but that’s why we exercise in the first place. We’ve been the first to leave as she had to travel all the way back to Plymouth (whichever that is). Several debriefs followed and the rest of the team had everyone departed. All we had was the long wait (probably seemed longer than it did) for feedback and the returned question set.
We are now in the middle of the review of the review (if that makes sense), and here’s the thing. The biggest part of the process is deciding which recommendations to take on board, that will either streamline our operational procedures or make our admin more efficient, or that we can happily ignore as irrelevant to us. This is probably going to take us another couple of months but we are already seeing benefits from the peer review process.

I just wanted to say a big thanks to Tim, Vicky, Dave and Derek for all the hard work they put in. I know it’s a long weekend but you should know that it has already made a difference.

GOOGLE PRACTICE
- Dealing with complaints
- Integrating new members into the team
- Documentation of equipment maintenance
- Vehicle log books
- Call-out process
- Team’s leadership and control structure
- Team social cohesion.

INCIDENTS' REVIEW

January to March 2017

Lake District
- Coniston 7
- Dodd and Furness 7
- Kendal 2
- Knott 15
- Kirkby Stephen 1
- Langdale Ambleside 27
- Patterdale 5
- Patterth, 6
- (last quarter: 75) 70

Mid-Pennine
- Bolton 21
- Bowland Penrith 19
- Calder Valley 21
- Assenndale & Pendle 21
- (last quarter: 46) 63

North East
- Northumberland NP 1
- Scarborough & Ryedale 11
- Swaledale 7
- Tendale & Wasdale 15
- (last quarter: 39) 20

North Wales
- Aberdyfi 4
- Aberglaslyn 6
- Llanberis 11
- Ogwen Valley 5
- South Snowdonia 3
- (last quarter: 77) 29

Peak District
- Castleton 14
- Edale 5
- Glossop 6
- Kinder 12
- Oldham 4
- Woodhead 47
- (last quarter: 63) 47

South Wales
- Brecon 3
- Llangollen 10
- (last quarter: 5) 10

South West
- Avon & Somerset 5
- S A R A 3
- (last quarter: 7) 8

Yorkshire Dales
- Upper Wharfedale 8
- (last quarter: 18) 8

Search Dogs
- England 5
- South Wales 3
- Wales 4
- (last quarter: 13) 12

Total 314
- (last quarter: 373)

VISIT OUR SHOP

G O T O ‘ I M A G E S O F A W A R M I N G  P L A N E T ’
S A / 2 . 0 ).
CM Specialist Vehicle Division apply superb craftsmanship and conversion skills to a range of specialist vehicle solutions for Mountain and Lowland Rescue organisations, ensuring long service life and maximum response to every incident.

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When is a press contact not a press contact?

IN THE

IT’s just over a year since I wrote about social media in this column but a couple of recent enquiries, issues and calls from journalists have reinforced the need to mention it again.

In April 2016, I wrote: ‘There’ve been a couple of times recently when teams have been surprised that a journalist has picked up on a story or a picture of a casualty as “we didn’t send a release out to them”. Many teams now have 1000s of followers on their Facebook pages and 1000s of followers on Twitter and it would be unusual if none of those people were journalists.

More recently, mention was made at the MREW AGM of live streaming of video from an incident and there’ve also been examples of journalists picking up on team criticism of a casualty on Facebook when the press release itself had been carefully worded to avoid it.

All of this creates issues and I thought it would be worth expanding on them.

• Everyone’s a critic — you and your team need to agree your stance on criticism. I know it’s not a uniform approach although there is rarely a good idea and posting needs planning and control.

• There are clear rules about not featuring helicopter interior images or rescue footage online. These rules are part of the SAR-H training and briefing so please check and remind yourself of those rules. Don’t rely on a chatty “that’s fine!” from crew members on the day — it’s not their decision.

• Think about possible outcomes. Basically, until you know that a casualty or search subject is safe and OK, don’t post anything — words or images. A fatality may be highly unlikely but it’s not worth the risk of posting something inappropriate.

• Timing is everything — following on from that “Think ahead” angle, it’s worth reinforcing to all your team members (and probationers and their friends and families) from Day 1. A simple post online about “heading off to XXX for another call-out” seems pretty harmless but it can cause problems. There are teams that have had volunteers turn up to help — not ideal during a difficult rescue and sometimes confusing about someone’s expertise too. And there are other teams who’ve had local news journalists turn up during a search asking questions and getting in the way of doing the job. You can’t control this if it comes from other emergency services but you need to have your own rules. Then at least you can be consistent in your responses, clear in your communications and you’re not going to be seen as the culprits by the others involved.

This all seems a bit negative and it’s not meant to at all. The connections between social media posts and print and broadcast media can be really helpful to MRE and to spreading the word about safety and planning. It’s just a case of being aware of the potential pitfalls and planning to avoid them.

If you’ve examples from your team, positive or to be avoided, I’d be interested to hear about them so please get in touch via sally@stoneleighcomms.co.uk or via the editor.

Thanks —

Sally Seed

MREW media trainer and PR consultant, Sally Seed, looks at an aspect of publicity and PR and offers some advice.

active 20

THE ULTIMATE SPORTS GPS

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• Waterproof (IP68)
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• Hi-Res OS mapping
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• Barometric Altimeter
• Wifi
• Bluetooth Smart

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The innovative Nomad 7 Plus Solar Panel has a detachable kickstand for mobility and patent-pending electronics to ensure the best solar charging experience — even when charging phones directly from the sun. Charge any USB-powered devices even in unpredictable environments, without the need of a battery! Its thin profile, light weight and intelligent design make it easy to use anywhere. The Solar Intensity Indicator uses patent pending electronics and LED lights to accurately communicate the quality of current solar conditions. Once a load device is connected, the indicator lights will blink in accordance with how fast the device is charging. The dynamic auto restart feature has the ability to track power flow history, the Nomad 7 Plus knows the difference between a device that is fully charged versus one that disconnects due to environmental causes (i.e. last of sunlight, etc.). When environmental cases are detected, the Nomad 7 Plus will automatically reconnect the charging device and continue charging.

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THINK ABOUT POSSIBLE OUTCOMES BASICALLY, UNTIL YOU KNOW THAT A CASUALTY OR SEARCH SUBJECT IS SAFE AND OK, DON’T POST ANYTHING – WORDS OR IMAGES

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TO FIND OUT MORE, GO TO WWW.GOALZERO.COM OR CALL 0116 234 4646

THINK ABOUT POSSIBLE OUTCOMES BASICALLY, UNTIL YOU KNOW THAT A CASUALTY OR SEARCH SUBJECT IS SAFE AND OK, DON’T POST ANYTHING — WORDS OR IMAGES.
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a set of symptoms following exposure to, or the witnessing of, a traumatic event. These symptoms typically include vivid distressing memories of the event or flashbacks (otherwise known as intrusion or re-experiencing); avoidance or numbing behaviour; an altered view of the self, others or the world; and a degree of hyper-vigilance, as if constantly on alert. PTSD can occur weeks, months or in the case of ‘delayed onset PTSD’, years after the event.

There are many theories that attempt to explain why PTSD symptoms occur. Advances in neuroscience and the advent of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) support the theory that traumatic experiences are not processed by the hippocampus (a sea horse shaped structure in the brain involved in laying down memory), in the same way as normal experiences. As a result, the memories ‘get stuck’ in the brain. When the stuck memory is triggered, for example by a particular sound or smell, a common feeling is that the danger is current and happening now, as if the memory — and the fear that goes with it — cannot be put in the past. Symptoms can persist for months and even many years without intervention.

**WHO EXPERIENCES PTSD?**

Most individuals will be exposed to trauma at some time in their lives yet relatively few people will go on to develop PTSD. The lifetime prevalence is 10% for women and 6% for men. This does not necessarily mean that women are more prone to PTSD, it could imply that women experience more traumatic experiences. The figures vary greatly depending upon age, type of trauma, traumatic experiences. The figures vary widely for a given cohort. For example:

- 86% of women refugees in Kabul and Pakistan
- 81% of UK professional fire-fighters and Pakistan
- 7%-8% of people in the United States

**HOW DOES A PERSON WITH PTSD FEEL?**

PTSD can be severely debilitating. Individuals can feel that they are a different person from themselves pre-trauma. They can often feel that they are going mad and at the same time feel powerless to do anything about it. Feeling that they can’t cope with the symptoms or questioning why they can’t ‘get over it’ compounds and perpetuates their distress. In 80% of cases PTSD is accompanied by further co-occurring symptoms, such as anxiety, panic disorder, depression, chronic pain, substance misuse, obsessive compulsive disorder and suicide thoughts.

**WHAT HAPPENS IN THERAPY?**

An important part of EMDR and TF-CBT therapy is psycho-education which helps the individual to see that their symptoms are common and their bodies and minds are normal, that the symptoms are, in fact, evidence that they are trying to protect the self from further harm. Self-compassion is encouraged, to help detox the individual from feeling themselves up and adding extra burden to their uncomfortable feelings. Exploration through talking and therapeutic exercises help identify erroneous, harmful, negative appraisals with a view to modifying these existing associations with the traumatic material. The individual is also encouraged to reclaim a life. As a result, emotional distress is reduced.


**REFERENCES**

3. US National Comorbidity Survey (2001-2003), show the figures vary widely for a given cohort.

**WHAT IS THE TREATMENT RECOMMENDED?**

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE), the body that advises the NHS on treatment, recommends two approaches for the treatment of PTSD:

- Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy
- Pharmacological Treatment.
We’re here for better mental health

Get involved with Mind’s Blue Light Programme.
Visit mind.org.uk/BlueLightSAR

Contact our confidential Blue Light Infoline
Get helpful advice on mental health for you or a teammate. We can support to local support services too.

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Benevolent Fund:
There for the mountain and cave rescue family in need.

JUDY WHITESIDE, SECRETARY & TRUSTEE

Lot’s to report since the spring magazine, not least a small change in wording title for the benevolent fund – less of a tongue twister than the registered version!

First off, the reason we’re here at all, to help team members and their families who have been affected by or suffered hardship as a direct result of their involvement in a mountain or cave rescue incident. Since our first falling steps, three years ago, we’ve dealt with seven applications, which have continued to broaden the range of applications we receive – including two for physical rehabilitation, one for financial support, three for counselling and one for support with funeral expenses.

All seven have fallen within the guidelines set out in our Declaration of Trust, but there’s no doubt that the varied nature of claims has interrogated the robustness of those guidelines!

MENTAL HEALTH IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE

It’s also raised concerns amongst the funds trustees about the issue of mental healthcare within mountain rescue. Are we looking after our team members sufficiently well? When I first got involved in mountain rescue, almost twenty years ago, the prevailing culture – following particularly traumatic or harrowing incident — was always, ‘We go to the pub and chat things through over a pint.’

And, as a benevolent fund trustee, I am always happy to field enquiries and point you towards the appropriate help, where possible. On occasion, we may even be able to offer financial help, if your case fits the fund’s criteria and other avenues have failed you.

We’re here for better mental health

What can affect mental wellbeing?
We all have times when we have low mental wellbeing – when we feel sad or low, or find it difficult to cope.

Your mental wellbeing can be affected by a number of factors like:
- recent or traumatic events
- impact of physical injuries
- work related stress

It can also be affected by other things in your life, for example, if you:
- suffer from a lot of stress
- experience loneliness
- have relationship problems
- are worried about money.

So if you need to, I’d recommend that you experience a period of poor mental health.

Benevolent Fund:
There for the mountain and cave rescue family in need.

Silent working on a search and rescue service. He said ‘I’ve accessed support through the Blue Light Programme and it’s encouraged me to be more aware of my own mental health and see that there was other people just like me who I could talk to and understand. It’s made me understand how to support colleagues more than before too.’

Mental wellbeing is just as important as physical wellbeing. If you work or volunteer in a search and rescue service, it’s especially important for you to look after your mental wellbeing and seek support if you need to.

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Simple topics

Over the last couple of years MREW has begun to develop and use Moodle as its preferred virtual learning environment (or e-learning), alongside the ISAR e-learning environment for the SAR-H stage 1A training.

Moodle is free open source software that is hosted on the MREW server and access is available to any team member and others who have a proven need for access. It’s been around since the early-2000s and is increasingly being adopted and adapted by a large number of institutions, including the Open University which supports over 250,000 students using it.

It has a number of features that, hopefully, will make national training more accessible to all learners (assuming you can access the internet). MREW teams are spread throughout England and Wales and having access to Moodle means that every team member should be able to gain access to materials that may help with training, be it as a instructor or a student. The courses can also act as a useful repository of information and documents that support operations as well as some administration type activities (for example the training subcommittee makes use of Moodle to share information to its attendees. Figure 1).

HOW DO I GAIN ACCESS?

Moodle is accessed via the web using a normal web browser such Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome etc. It can also be accessed via various apps available to mobile devices once you have downloaded, installed and provided your log in details.

You will be provided access via a user account and, to set one of these up, an email address (ideally a team one), your full name and your team is needed. Send this to: moodle@support@mountainsciences.org.uk

You will then usually receive an email with your username and a password that you will need to change.

If you forget your password, Moodle provides a way for it to be reset automatically but if that does not work then an email to the above address should the right information to you at some point.

Once you have access to Moodle, you can update your profile in much the same way that you can on Facebook.

COURSES IN THE MREW MOODLE VLE

Once you’ve gained access to Moodle you will see that you will have access to various online courses. A lot of the courses are open and allow ‘guest’ browsing so you see the content of the course. Others are more limited and you may need to request access to the course.

Some courses are not visible to team members unless they have an instructor or manager level role (and the same applies to hidden topics within a course).

USING MOODLE

Moodle has many ways to provide learning to participants, these include:

- Simple topics bring together different content text, files, pictures and videos to provide a session that can be worked through.
- Forums allow participants to post and receive information. Usually a forum is based inside a course so it allows participants to share ideas, comment or generally discuss the different themes from the course.
- Books offer a more structured page by page approach and can include links to other useful documentation and resources.
- Lessons are similar to books but allow more assessment of progress with the use of questions to check someone’s understanding as well as allowing some branching to allow deeper exploration of subjects if it is wanted.

- Quizzes draw their questions from a question bank so the people can check how well they’ve learnt something or be pulled together to create an exam paper.

A great advantage is that Moodle allows people to learn at their own pace and can also help with offering more background information that can be covered during any course, provide pre-course materials to help people read into what they may be doing.

A range of images is also provided so they can be put together to show some of the above topics.

WHAT CAN’T I DO?

Using Moodle does need a participant to behave in the best interest of others, and it does have an acceptable user policy. For example, a lot of material used to create content has a copyright associated with it and the material might not be available to be downloaded and used outside of the MREW context. If that does happen that material may have to be withdrawn so others then lose access to it.

LOOKING FORWARD

Moodle will take time for content to be developed and it is useful to have a range of people who can take on different roles within the Moodle support environment. Courses content is often time consuming to produce, especially content that is more interactive or pulls in a range of different ways of learning.

Not everyone is happy with computer-based learning but many items can be printed to help. However, Moodle does provide a much wider access to materials that can help with training team members, be they just starting or to the more experienced team members how wish to pass on their hard-earned experiences. 😊
The dictionary definition of 'Boxing Clever' is to use inventive thinking above all other attributes in order to achieve an end goal and this is equally apt for Boxing in navigation. It is much underused and people often try to circumnavigate obstacles, such as rough terrain or marsh ground by walking its edge and invariably get stuck! The bottom line is that Boxing circumnavigates these and other obstacles and keeps you on your original bearing.

Boxing requires practice and, like all navigational techniques, should be second nature for mountain rescue responders so they are not having to think how to, rather where to and concentrating on searching, stretcher carrying etc.

There are three levels of difficulty for Boxing: Rough, Pure and Stepped. Learning them all will put you at the top of your game! The golden rule for Boxing is 'DO NOT MOVE YOUR COMPASS BEZEL'.

**ROUGH BOX**

1. As you approach the obstacle, identify a very clear intermediate landmark that is on your course beyond the obstacle.
2. Stop at a point before the obstacle (A) that you will be able to see once you have reached the landmark (B).
3. Circumnavigate the obstacle to the landmark (B). Once you have reached it, turn around and confirm that you are in the correct place by taking a back-bearing to the point before obstacle (A).

**PURE BOX**

1. Stop at a safe distance when you reach the obstacle – in this case a bog. Estimate its size, either from the map or visually if it is not on the map.
2. The detour starts at right angles to the bog by choosing either east or west on your compass.
3. As you have been walking on a bearing the needle of your compass will be pointing north. Rotate your body until the red north of the compass needle points to either east or west on the compass bezel.
4. Pace this bearing until reaching the edge of the bottom of the bog and when it is safe to, walk forwards again, stop and turn and follow your original bearing.
5. On reaching the edge of the bog, and when it is safe to walk across the top, stop. Then rotate your body until the red north of the compass needle points either east or west on the compass bezel — whichever is the opposite of the start of your detour.
6. Place this bearing using exactly the distance that you originally paced and stop. Turn and follow your original bearing.

**STEPPED BOX**

1. Stop at a safe distance when you reach the obstacle, facing it. The detour starts at right angles to the obstacle by choosing either east or west on your compass.
2. Rotate your body until the red north of the compass needle points to either east or west on the compass bezel. Counting your paces, walk in this direction until reaching an area where it is safe to walk forward again, then turn and follow your original bearing until reaching another area where you need to detour, and stop.
3. Again, rotate your body 90° in the same direction as Step 2, and pace this bearing until reaching an area where it is safe to walk forwards again, stop and add these paces to your first east/west part of the detour.
4. Repeat this as much as is required to reach the top edge of the obstacle and when it is safe to walk across the top and stop.
5. Rotate your body until the red north of the compass needle points either east or west on the compass bezel — whichever is the opposite of the start of your detour. Pace this bearing using the total east/west distance you covered and stop. Turn and follow your original bearing.

*IN WINTER, WHEN BOXING AROUND SHEER DROPS, TAKE A VERY WIDE MARGIN FROM THE EDGE BECAUSE OF POTENTIAL CORNICES.*

---

**LYLE BRO THERTON**

navigation

The digitalisation of navigation is leading us seriously astray. Have we gone too far to find our way home?

Our sophisticated, professional, cut-of-town house guest has an appointment across the city and asks for guidance to a well-known location. “Easy: just head straight south until you hit 17th and it’s two blocks right.” She nods for a moment, yet with a look of puzzlement. “Um, which way is south?”

It’s a good thing I’m painfully aware of the assault that is ‘mansplaining’, so we don’t discuss the fact that it is noon on a cloudless spring day in a city built on a strict north-south grid pattern. All I do is escort her to the front porch and point down the street at, you know, the sun.

It would be wise to think that humans aren’t losing the basic skills of navigation, but experience and science both teach us that we are. Granted, our centuries-long evolution into urbanites has already reduced the life-or-death consequences of knowing neither where we are nor where we are going. But once you add in our ever-increasing willingness to depend on electronic aids, fawed as they and their users are, any hope of our retaining innate directional skills seems doomed. A passenger mentality is thus becoming humanity’s default pose.

And what are those innate powers? Sexually dimorphic, to be sure. Studies of human navigation, of which there have been many, indicate that women appear to favour the mental logging of landmarks, while ‘mansplainers’ lean towards establishing a map-like schematic in their minds. Beyond that, the science gets murky, if occasionally magical. There is, for instance, evidence that our brains have a neural response to a magnetic field. We know that when we let our iphones lead us astray and then get confused about it? Inevitably they send up calling fellow mobile phone users for directions — time-wasting activities which probably wouldn’t have been avoided with a few pen strokes hastily scribbled on a napkin. If I were a business running a mission-critical operation with multiple mobile participants, I would seriously consider banning GPS use, except as a last resort. Such problems have often simply don’t work. When they do, many people can’t read them or even respond appropriately to their commands. Who among us has not experienced a situation where associates failed to make a meet-up because their nav tool led them astray and then got confused about it? It’s time to start the resistance. Make navigation a life-time learning and don’t forget the kids. If we let that one skill be time-wasting activities which probably wouldn’t have been avoided with a few pen strokes hastily scribbled on a napkin. If I were a business running a mission-critical operation with multiple mobile participants, I would seriously consider banning GPS use, except as a last resort. Such problems have often simply don’t work. When they do, many people can’t read them or even respond appropriately to their commands. Who among us has not experienced a situation where associates failed to make a meet-up because their nav tool led them astray and then got confused about it? It’s time to start the resistance. Make navigation a life-time learning and don’t forget the kids. If we let that one skill be...
It was a great effort to help Ron off the cliff by Càrn Gorm MRT and the helicopter, something we should never take for granted. Next day they had another incident on the same cliff.

The picture (left) was one I used to advise on our training sheet with RAF Mountain Rescue where many had limited knowledge of the cliffs. Fingers Ridge was my second rock climb in the team in 1972 and I did it fairly often afterwards, mainly in summer.

Loose rock and rubble is normal on mountain routes and to be expected even on the most solid and well-travelled line but, this year, a dry May and exceptionally heavy rain in June exacerbated the natural erosion. My advice is to treat every handhold and foothold as if it were loose because many are or will be in the future — so take care. And remember the three T’s: ‘Tip, Tap and Test’ with your care. And remember the three loose blocks Andy had removed, my concern about them.

‘Tip, Tap and Test’. And for remaining loose debris from the lower pitches as Andrew (not Andy!) and I climbed, making the route and the Goat Track path below that much safer.

I was quite pleased with the amount of dangerous rubble we managed to clear from the first two pitches. But, at the top of the slabbly corner of pitch three, just past the optional loose block belay on the left and after about a metre or two on the loose Annie, a large area of slab just slid off with me on it!

I fell backwards with the slabbly gulotine-like blocks following me in flight until the one wire runner placed all the start of the arête came tight. By some miracle, the fall held after about five metres and I was left hanging upside down on the damaged rope. Amazingly, I’d only been hit by one block as it bounced by, hitting and crushing my right arm. As the blocks whizzed by, they cut the main anchor sling at the foot of the pitch. This was between Andrew and the spike belay and the other thread runner and Andrew’s trouser’s we’re out too.

‘One of the blocks must have just missed him by a millimetre or so as it sliced through the runner and the belay sling! Fortunately the rope wasn’t cut through but nicked and my locally offset No 3 wire had held. If it hadn’t been cut out by the falling block and I wouldn’t be typing this.

Spotting the severed sling, Andrew managed to place another sling before I was lowered in agony onto the belay ledge. Once we were all secured again, he phoned the rescue services and we prepared for the wait by wearing our extra warm layers, box and group shelters. It was just after 10.00am, very wet and windy.

‘We had a long wait until Càrn Gorm team members arrived. The chopper couldn’t just lift us off as hoped, due to the poor viz and gale force winds, so we needed lowering off, which took a lot longer as kit had to be carried in.

Eventually, a complicated lower from the plateau was set up to avoid more rockfall. It was about 4.00pm before we’d been lowered of the climb and as late as 8.00pm before being chopped in to AE and finally knowing how bad the injuries were likely to be.

The big concern at the hospital was they couldn’t find a pulse on the cold damaged arm. At one point it looked like I’d need surgery to repair the arteries, or worse. Various tests and an angiogram were carried out. I explained that over forty years ago I’d severed my wrist, damaging the tendons, nerves and artery. Since then I’ve had impaired hand function and, unknown to me or anyone else, not had a normal arterial pulse! So, at around 10.00pm, the good news was that nothing was badly broken, just crushed a bit and I still had circulation. The prognosis was that I should make a full recovery over the next month or so!

‘A big thanks to Càrn Gorm MRT and, in particular, John Lyall and Duncan Scott (doctor) for raising their necks in a particularly tricky and dangerously loose rescue and to Andrew (also a doctor and my second climber) for remaining calm and supportive, in miserable weather three pitches up, for the six or more hours following the accident before being lowered off.

‘And a big thanks obviously goes to the SAR helicopter crew, paramedics, doctors and Raigmore Hospital nursing staff.’

Shaun Roberts, principal at Glenmore Lodge, believes the nature of writers over the last decade, along with the intense precipitation has had an impact on Coire an t-Sneachda.

‘We’ve experienced a number of writers with very deep snow packs, including snow laying at depth on the steep broken ground of the Coire. Over a session and under the influence of gravity this snowpack will displace, but often not dislocate, blocks and boulders of significant size, leaving behind a significant challenge for the summer climber.

And this year we enjoyed a super dry May but then received almost our monthly quota of rainfall on one day in June. ‘I suspect these weather patterns are having an impact on the stability of some areas and we continue to approach climbing in Coire an t-Sneachda with a more heightened sense of the objective danger.’

Heather Morning, Mountain Safety Adviser with Mountaineering Scotland says, ‘Hillwalkers, scramblers and climbers should be particularly vigilant when journeying either below or ascending or descending the Goat Track in Coire an t-Sneachda — particularly those who are other parties above or there has been heavy rainfall in the previous few days.

‘Specifically, hillwalkers should be particularly cautious when ascending or descending the Goat Track in Coire an t-Sneachda when there are climbers above them.’

Check out Heavy’s blog at heavywhalley.wordpress.com

Over one weekend in early June, a couple of bad accidents occurred in the Cairngorms. One of these involved Ron Walker, hurt when a loose boulder came away. He has given his permission to repeat his tale and pass on some tips for rock climbing in the mountains.
Archie became a member of the Lomond MRT in 1989, serving as operational member, equipment officer and latterly trustee. We’d met a few years before and I knew him to be a keen mountaineer and aspirant Munroist. When the team needed extra personnel to help with a large-scale search, I cajoled him into joining us. He seized the invitation with immediate enthusiasm.

At the time he was a senior civil servant responsible for the UK’s Benefits Agency and some 70,000 employees! He had chosen not to live in London but to commute almost every day from his home in Scotland. Mountain rescue opened up a new dimension to his life, respite from his heavy workload and enormous responsibilities, regular forays into the Scottish mountains and, most important, an opportunity to help others less fortunate. That was Archie’s style throughout life.

Very quickly he became a key team member and, whilst not able to attend all rescues, his wise counsel, quiet authority and canny ability to make important decisions when most of us were flailing, ensured the team ran smoothly at times of great stress. He played a significant role when the team faced ‘competition’ from a rogue rescue organisation intent on taking over our patch. His ability to deal effectively with confrontation, communicate easily with senior members of national organisations and manage publicity successfully helped the team surmount the challenge.

It was clear early on that Archie had an utterly selfless approach to the team’s work. Typically, he was always the first to volunteer when others might back off. He involved himself fully (and often organised) fundraising events, and when other team members had left the post following a rescue, he would remain cleaning the vehicles and sorting out gear. He always considered others before himself. This was epitomised on a rescue in which he suffered a severe leg injury. Tasked to climb to the summit of Ben Lomond to serve as a radio link, he fell through a snow bridge and suffered severe hyperextension of his right leg. In considerable pain and in need of urgent medical attention, he insisted I leave him to take up the link position and that the team continue searching for the missing girls. I reluctantly agreed and it was two hours before he was eventually airlifted to A&E. So severe were his injuries, he was off work for over six months.

On another occasion, he revealed what a true team player he was. Descending the Cuillin ridge, we witnessed a walker fall several hundred feet from Collies Ledge. Within seconds, we located the man and proceeded to apply first aid. There was little need to talk as we coordinated our efforts in harmony. Archie’s calm approach and capacity to make clear judgements under pressure ensured the walker received the very best treatment and he survived!

Not content with just local matters, Archie represented the team at national meetings in Scotland and played a key role at several UK MR Conferences. He was a key figure with RESCUE 2020, bringing to bear his outstanding interviewing skills. As his ‘scribe’, I marvelled at his capacity to engage people in a friendly way whilst teasing out critical and revealing details that might otherwise have been hidden from view.

He struggled with ill health for the final four months of his life, but continued as a trustee and also to critique my efforts at writing notes about mountain rescue. Indeed, I suspect that everything I have written for this magazine over the years has received a light touch from Archie’s wide knowledge and wisdom. Archie was one of our unsung champions. When he spoke at a meeting, everyone listened. His wise advice was often sought and his selfless approach was a lesson for us all. Held in great affection, one of the team’s two vehicles was named after him when he retired from active service a couple of years ago. ‘Lomond Archie’s’ legacy will continue for many years into the future.

Archie Roy w ill be rem em bered by m any in m ountain rescue – not just in Scotland but across England, Wales and Ireland too, through his involvement with the UK MR conferences. Bob Sharp describes his close friend, next-door neighbour and Lomond team colleague.

Top: Archie and Morag on the John Muir Way, his last ever hill walk. Above: Archie and team members after all completing ‘The Great Murno Bash’, a fundraising event organised by Archie but also designed to break the Guinness record for climbing the four most extreme (east, west, etc) Munros in Scotland.

FACE THE DARKNESS

With our new outdoor series Switch on and focus single-handedly, instant battery check at first switch and fast charging thanks to LS9 3.0.

SEE US ON STAND L40 AT

THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW

Summer 2017
Mountain rescue magazine
The wind affects how the dog
wind to be the most interesting and
expecting one thing, then it changes.
unpredictable. The handler can be
search dogs in action, I find the effect of the
routes. As a lay observer of search
assessor to help plan the shape of
the search area and the search
assessor requires. This is often a joint
achieved by the training session, the
first task is to get to the location the
assessor decides the scent isn’t helpful and
no-one is there. Brilliant! It helps if there’s no ground scent
leading directly into the location —
after all the arm of the exercise is to
find the body by taking advantage of
the air scent. The dogs are not
following a trail for a specific person
but seeking the scent of someone in
the search area. They cover the
area by mixing free ‘hunting’ and
roaming with direction and control
in the forest and hide as an ‘upright’ body
behind a tree. Alongside a narrow
track, and in the pitch darkness, I
was surprised to see a head torch
approaching, earlier than I’d
expected. It turned out to be a
mountain biker making his way up
an unofficial track.

Hungry midges, long
grass, unsuspecting
mountain bikers and
slobbery dogs –
what’s not to like?

The answers are usually about
liking dogs and wanting to do
something to support such a
worthwhile organisation as the
search and rescue dogs.

For me the start of ‘dogsbodying’
came about after hearing the
experiences of a long-established
‘body’. I’d recently retired, had the
time, expressed some interest and
was invited to go along and see what
it was like. I found it fulfilling to be with
such clever dogs and took an
interest in the training and
development of individual dogs over
the months and years.

Of course, their training would be
impossible without volunteer bodies
to use for practice. Being out on the
mountain sides is enjoyable anyway and
these training sessions add a
valuable purpose to a nice day out.

One definition of a dogsbody is that
it’s a person who does unpleasant
tasks others don’t want to do
perhaps hanging about in obscure
locations for lengthy periods in all
types of weather?

Having listened to what is to be achieved by the training session, the
first task is to get to the location the
assessor requires. This is often a joint
problem in agreeing the description
of sections of a hillside for the best
body location. It can often be
something like, ‘See that pointy-
shaped patch of heather with a small
crag to the side, up there near the
green/brown grass? Find somewhere suitable in there...’
As you might expect, by the time
you’ve trekked up to the area it looks
nothing like the verbal description from below.

Next, the local wind direction and
speed can be related to the
assessor to help plan the shape of the
search area and the search
routes. As a lay observer of search
dogs in action, I find the effect of the
wind to be the most interesting and
unpredictable. The handler can be
expecting one thing, then it changes.
The wind affects how the dog
searches and how far away from me
the dog first picks up my scent.

With the dog approaching from
downwind with a moderate direct
breeze blowing my scent can be
picked up well over a hundred
metres away. Then there are the
occasions when the wind is variable
and the dogs have difficulties even
fairly close to my hiding place. I’ve
seen times when the wind has
picked up my scent, blown it down
the hillside and dumped it down at a
small location. The dog then
investigates that location and
decides the scent isn’t helpful and
no-one is there. Brilliant! It helps if there’s no ground scent
leading directly into the location —
after all the arm of the exercise is to
find the body by taking advantage of
the air scent. The dogs are not
following a trail for a specific person
but seeking the scent of someone in
the search area. They cover the
area by mixing free ‘hunting’ and
roaming with direction and control
in the forest and hide as an ‘upright’ body
behind a tree. Alongside a narrow
track, and in the pitch darkness, I
was surprised to see a head torch
approaching, earlier than I’d
expected. It turned out to be a
mountain biker making his way up
an unofficial track.

I was leaning against a tree and he
would be passing within touching
distance. What should I do? Warn
him I was there? Creep away deeper
into the forest and risk being seen
acting suspiciously? Or do nothing,
be spotted at the last moment and
frighten him off his bike? I chose to
do nothing and luckily, he was
concentrating on his torch beam
lighting the track, not noticing me
right by his shoulder. If he had been
a dog he would have known of my
presence a minute or so earlier.

Main photo: Search dog Rona with
Ashness team members and the Air
Ambulance © Rob Grange.
SARDA IOM starts the next chapter in an exciting journey

JIM MACGREGOR

Over the last twelve years, since its formation, there have only ever been two dogs on the call-out list with SARDA IOM, which covers the whole of the island (220 square miles). This constantly poses a high dependency on the two handlers to cover the area and contrary to many people’s views, the majority of the island is rough moorland.

Over the last two years the two search dogs on the call-out list have continued to respond to a variety of incidents and also attended call-outs when training in other areas such as North Wales and England.

Jim MacGregor and Mountain Search Dog Star, have now been operational for over ten years. Jim qualified as an NSARDA assessor and is currently treasurer for NSARDA.

Gary Wright and Holly qualified as a full Level 3 Search Dog team when SARDA IOM held their first assessment on the island. This coincided with SARDA Wales visiting the Isle of Man for a week and carrying out a great training week in glorious sunshine. Further cementing the strong working relationship between the two organisations.

New beginnings have come about in the last twelve months with the addition of two new pups, securing continuity and innovation for the future. Marc Marshall and trainee search dog Matt have begun their training, passing the stock and obedience tests at six months. Matt has been funded through NSARDA by a charity set up in memory of Matt Leach by his partner, and Matt now has his own Facebook page — search for @Mattsearchandrescuedog. He’s making great progress towards becoming the island’s next air-scenting dog.

Jim MacGregor has started on his own new chapter, training a wired haired pointer (Ruby), kindly sponsored on the island by Pokerstars. Ruby passed her stock and obedience tests at ten months and is now making progress to becoming a trailing dog. SARDA IOM reviewed the types of call-outs we receive in the Isle of Man and decided a trailing dog would be hugely beneficial.

The organisation continues to forge strong relationships with other SARDA organisations and has a policy of being viewed externally at least once a year to maintain the high standards set. We continue to do school talks, exercises with St John cadets, IOM police cadets and joint exercises on the island.

Left: Malc and Matt. Above: Search dog Matt © SARDA IOM.

SARDA England news

JACQUIE HALL

Sadly, our dogs don’t last forever and a new generation of SARDA England dogs is starting to emerge as some reach the end of their career.

Search Dog Jake, handled by Tim Holfreter of Cleveland has sadly had to be retired due to an ongoing injury but Jake now has a young aspirer in the household: 12-week-old Labrador Murphy. He was joined in the SARDA puppy class at Carlton in Cleveland by Border Collie Chief, also twelve weeks old and owned by Tony High. Tony already has a fully graded Border Collie, Ila.

Occasionally, handlers opt to take on a rescue dog instead of a puppy. Nick Shepherd was tipped off about a beautiful (and only) six month old German Shepherd bitch called Lady looking for a home and being fostered by German Shepherd Rescue (North East). Nick, from Kinder team, already has a fully graded German Shepherd Dog called Dolly who is still operational and has had seven successful finds to date. Following a thorough vetting by the GSD Rescue, Nick was permitted to take Lady and, after only a few weeks training with Nick, she passed her obedience test and also her stock test on the same day — quite a feat! Lady is now an official SARDA England trainer and more importantly, has fitted in well to the Shepherd household. Very apt surname!

We have another Golden Retriever puppy joining us soon. Lottie, from Esmon, will soon make her first appearance at training and a Springer Spaniel called Orion too! Border Collies certainly seem to be in the minority just now!

MORE DETAILS OF ALL OUR DOGS AND HANDLERS, CALL-OUTS AND FINDS CAN BE SEEN ON OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.SARDAENGLAND.ORG.UK


SOLIDARITY OVERSEAS SERVICES MALTA WITH URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE K9

HAROLD BURROWS MBE

NSARDA assisted in a major incident exercise, Novex 2017, in Malta over the weekend of 29/30 April. There were search teams from Iceland, Norway, Italy, Malta Police and USAR K9 Malta taking part, with dogs and humans searchers. The exercise was put in place by John Gird and his team in USAR K9 unit with backing from SOS Malta.

SATURDAY 29 APRIL

Handlers and their dogs were picked up from the airport at 22:30hrs on 29 April and taken to ‘home’ for the exercise. There they were briefed and given fifteen minutes to have their gear together and be ready to depart for the search area. Once at the disaster area, a full briefing and maps of the search area were given. Each team was allocated an area to search, along with an aerial Google map of the search area. As teams made it to their casualty, the location and condition of the casualty was relayed back to search control. Final debrief was held with us all getting back to base for 03:30hrs.

SUNDAY 30 APRIL

The day began at 0600hrs with breakfast and a full exercise briefing showing the extent of the disaster area to be searched, and the amount of the hillside that had fallen away. Explosives were still on site and care had to be taken and a safe route across the area established. All dogs and handlers had to be winched across the disaster area, to the base of the collapsed hillside, where the search for casualties began.

As the casualties were located, first aid and psychological assistance was given. Due to the extent of the search area, and to speed up the recovery of injured casualties, dogs were given to the search teams and worked well with the unknown handler to the dog. A major medical facility was set up by the medical team of trauma doctors and nurses, along with the psychological team.

As the search teams worked through the area, it was the search team leader who made sure that refreshments were given to the search parties, along with some rest periods. It was apparent that some time out for both physical and psychological rest was needed for search dogs and searchers as midday approached, shade was becoming a problem for all taking part in the exercise, which added another dimension for the search teams.

The end exercise was at around 1500hrs, all participants agreeing it was a tremendous exercise put together, with a lot of learning over all. The teams were taken back to base to wash and get ready for the BBQ being held on Sunday night. The local Scout group once more were cooking the food and kept the beer cool as well.

NSARDA was pleased that USAR K9, one of our associate search dog groups, had put on such a great exercise for dogs and handlers to take part.
We’ve been friends for over forty years, meeting in Cub Scouts in the 1970s, progressing through Scouts and Venture Scouts, our outdoor skills and sense of responsibility shaped by Baden Powell and our more modern scout leaders. We’ve both been members of mountain rescue for about two decades and our socialising centres, as always, in the mountains.

Today we were meeting up for the first time in a couple of years so it was a good chance to have a bimble and chat. The mountain of choice was Colsion Old Man, just out of Sim’s ‘home patch’. The friendly giant which would allow us old (ish) men to walk, talk and then wander the gear shops of Ambleside before meeting up with my wife, and mum, who were spending the day café-touring.

The sky was clear, the visibility as far as the eye could see and all was set for a great day. The Walna Scar Road gave way to the track to Goat’s Water. We stopped for a levée at the water’s edge and spotted familiar lines on Dow Crag, a few scramblers and climbers were visible, making their way ever higher. Brext had been sorted out, the internal politics of our respective teams discussed and compared and the state of our profession (teaching) lamented. The day improved since the first photo when school trip ski kit, corduroy trousers and a school coat were pretty much standard walking kit!

I took a photograph of Sim that we agreed improved since the first photo when school trip ski kit, corduroy trousers and a school coat were pretty much standard walking kit!

We reached the snowline and managed to provide steps and helping her stay upright. As we reached the relative safety of the path Sim’s phone pinged — a call-out assist with Coniston team. A fallen walker/climber near Goat’s Water. With no phone reception, we offered to help. We escorted them to the bottom of the snow by providing steps and helping her stay upright.

As we were reaching the summit slope of the Old Man a group looked ‘not right’. We loosened the laces and reset the support her leg better and put more kit bandaging as swelling around the knee had made this tight too. We reassured Dan to support her leg better and put more kit underweath to keep them warm from the snow. We’d already been on site for an hour and the forecast cloud had swallowed the day. More concerning for us was whether it might impact on the ability of the S92 to fly.

The S92’s clattering rotor blades sounded much louder and louder. Surely they were coming for us? We’d been here about an hour and a half by now and it was getting colder all the time. It was flying directly towards us, bingo! And then it disappeared behind a ridge line and the all-too-familiar howling sound of the wind. ‘Should I take my radio? No, I shouldn’t need it.’ The day was going to be a relaxed affair. Both long-serving team members in very different teams – I am in DSRT Tavistock on Dartmoor, Sim in Dudordon Furness, in the Lakes – were packing light for an enjoyable short day on some well known fell.

Coupled and small groups were slithering and slipping their way towards the summit. A couple of them asked about conditions and we were able to tell them that the route towards Goat’s Hause was in the sun, the snow was a little softer and, by choosing your own route, the descent on untracked snow was likely to be safer than trying to descend this way which was compacted, slippery and difficult. Few had winter boots stiff enough to kick a step, few had crampons or axes.

We encountered a group having particular difficulties, a mother who was finding ascending difficult and was even more afraid of descending so we offered to help. We escorted them to the bottom of the snow by providing steps and helping her stay upright. As we reached the relative safety of the path Sim’s phone pinged — a call-out assist with Coniston team. A fallen walker/climber near Goat’s Water. With no phone reception, we scrambled to the ridge line to gain a signal and a quick call to Coniston base with an offer to help meant we were tasked with providing steps and helping her stay upright.

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ANDY HODGES
HAS BEEN A
MEMBER OF
DSRT TAVISTOC
SINCE 1994 AND
IS PART OF THEIR
HASTY TEAM. HE IS
CERTIFIED HEAD
OF AN INNER
CITY PRIMARY SCHOOL
AS WELL AS
ASPIRANT IURL AND
AUTHOR FOR CICERONE PRESS.
Incidents

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PAGE 59

area for winching was tricky, off-camber paths covered in ice and compacted systems meant the process worked assemblers being from four different mates from DSRT Tavistock in the York school field by helicopter. Once he was stretcher. Things were beginning to take Comms was also easier with more carrying the two halves of a Bell appeared from over the summit shelter and more MRT personnel were our normal operational parameters. Emotional first aid is often as important cold each week so we were well within Emma was concerned it would be dark soon. I reassured her we were with her close to the summit unable to move. The sound of the approaching S92 was a relief to all. The team swung into recovery — Emma for not having to endure a couple of hours of being bumped and slid down the path, or us for not having to perform the same operation with little likelihood of support teams to help!

Footnote 1: Emma was discharged from hospital later that evening with a confirmed dislocation and a referral to a knee specialist for a recovery treatment programme. She said, ‘Just wanted to say a massive thank you to the combined efforts of the mountain rescue team members who gave me

Footnote 2: As a number of MRT members were already on the hill at the time of the call-out, you may notice some are not wearing helmets — this is because, like Sim and I, folks were just out for a walk and just happened to be in the right place at the right time.

CONTROLLING THE CONTROLLABLES

I’ve been an outdoor instructor and expedition leader for ten years and I’ve tweaked and changed the kit I use over time. Once you find a brand that does the job you stick with it and my Paramo kit and I are in it for the long haul! On a recent trip to Peru, I took the Aeon jacket, Temporizip neck, Ventura fleece, Viter Adventure Light and with it, the kit you wear as a leader is always under scrutiny by clients. They want to know why you chose that brand, its benefits and how much it costs. I had a lot of glowing reviews about Paramo, getting tonnes of backchat on the social media platform, but the only real proof it’s good is feedback. ‘We certainly had less seasons in one day, every day! The sun shone bright and hot followed by wind and rain but I was well versed in what piece of clothing to whip out and when. I knew my kit would stand up to the rigours of long days on the hill with its great weight and temperature control features. The trousers are like wearing your favourite pair of jeans and the softness of the Temporizip and the Ventura fleece next to your skin is a huge bonus. Control the controllables they say — having the right kit is certainly a controllabil’ says Jo Bradshaw.

IF YOU OR YOUR TEAM ARE LOOKING FOR GEAR TO KEEP YOU DRIER AND MORE COMFORTABLE IN ALL CONDITIONS CONTACT 01925 786446, EMAIL CONTRACT.SALES@PARAMO.COUK.

Oldham MRT has a rescue of a different kind in early May, when a team member received a call, late afternoon, from the RSPB to see if he could assist in putting back some long-eared owl chicks of Dove (Hole). The RSPB had been notified by a walker that, due to high winds, two chicks had fallen out of their tree, along with most of their nest. The chicks were put safely back in their tree and also got themselves a new home in the form of an old hanging basket which now houses what remains of their nest — necessarily being the mother of invention, as the saying goes. Well done to all involved in getting our fluffy friends safely back in their homes.

A week later, the RSPB reported that the chicks had been spotted in the nest and are definitely looking bigger.

CONTROLLING THE CONTROLLABLES

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JUNE: ANNUAL PRINCE’S CHARITIES DAY TAKES PLACE IN SOUTH WEST

This annual adventure day is hosted by Mountain Rescue England and Wales, to entertain children and young people – and their families – from some of the charities under the patronage of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry.

One of the young people was heard to say, ‘I can’t do that, I’m scared of heights’. Yet, within fifteen minutes, she had climbed to the top of the 30-foot climbing wall, thanks to the confidence instilled by the instructors.

Before leaving for home all the young people received a certificate and goodie bag from Mountain Rescue England and Wales.

‘Mountain and cave rescue team members are always ready to help and support people who get into difficulty no matter where or when,’ said MREW chairman Mike France, ‘and they used many of their rescue skills here, to give the children and young people – many of whom have huge challenges in life – a special day out.’

MAY: SOUTH EAST CRO RECEIVES GENEROUS GIFT

In early May, team members held an exercise at a mine in Surrey to test communication equipment and practise stretcher carrying. Members of Paul’s family went along to meet the team and donate the £2,500+ raised. Paul’s brother Martin paid tribute to him as the cheque was handed over. Paul had been an active member of the team, often taking on controller’s duties during exercises.

Above: SECRo members receiving the cheque from Martin Dold outside the mine entrance © SECRo.

COMING UP IN AUGUST: OGGIE TEAM INVITES YOU TO TAKE PART IN THEIR 9TH ‘OGGIE 8’ EVENT

• Saturday 5 August
• A team event over eight 3000ft peaks surrounding the Ogwen Valley
• Full marshalling and event support
• Legendary after-party food, drink and goody bag
• £25 per person to enter
• Plus recommended £100 per person sponsorship.

For more information and to apply online, go to ogwen-rescue.org.uk/oggie_8.
“Meeting suppliers in one place saves us so much time and money.”

Ian Fairclough, Incident Controller, Scarborough and Ryedale Mountain Rescue Team

Mountain Rescue England and Wales

All MREW officer email addresses end with @mountain.rescue.org.uk
We’re pleased to announce that two new calling authorities have been added to SARCALL. The North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) is now using SARCALL to call out teams. This project is led by Ian Nixon of Northumbria National Park MRT and is also a SARCALL regional rep. NEAS is the fourth regional ambulance service to join SARCALL, and we look forward to welcoming others in the near future.

South Wales Police now regularly calls out the region’s four MR teams, together with South and Mid Wales CRT. This successful integration has been led by Nigel Dawson and Mark Lewis, the SARCALL reps for South Wales. Working towards an integrated information environment, the Air Wales Air Desk which controls and tasks the three Hallmarks in Wales, is also starting to use SARCALL. A key reason is to promote sharing of situational awareness and help improve linkages with teams and other calling authorities. The possible use of SARCALL ‘in-flight’ is also being investigated. The Air Desk project is led by Mark Lewis.

Elsewhere, the RAF Mountain Rescue Service wants to extend their use of SARCALL to message and interact with their teams across the UK, and to link better with the civilian teams and other partners. This exciting development is being led by Dave Wright, the Scottish national lead for SARCALL, and is partly driven by the missing helicopter incident in Snowdonia in March, which resulted in a major search and multi-agency operation for all the North Wales teams and the RAF MRT teams.

In the Republic of Ireland, the An Garda Siochana (Police) is installing SARCALL across a number of control centres. As part of this process, uptake of the SARCALL platform is now well underway in a number of the MR teams across Ireland.

The BCRC teams all now share a single call group of doctors and medics through an option in the dropdown menu of each team’s SARCALL page. This adds a layer of resilience and ensures all teams have access to the best possible medical knowledge and information. Brendan Snowe, the BCRC medical lead and a member of Derbyshire Cave Rescue, is coordinating the list, supported by the SARCALL team.

An increasing number of Lowland SAR teams and MR teams in Scotland are also adopting SARCALL. Again this is really encouraging and will help deliver a far better major incident response, if required. We now have over 100 search and rescue teams actively using the platform from Cornwall up to northern Scotland.

Once again, in June, we were pleased to support Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue at Glastonbury, on a ‘free-to-use’ basis. Glastonbury is probably the biggest music festival in the world with well over 150,000 people on site each day and the use of SARCALL, at an event of this size and complexity provides excellent system performance information — a phenomenal opportunity to work as part of a highly complex, high intensity, major event over a five day period. It also strengthens the excellent relationship between MR generally, and the PenMaCRA teams and DSFRS in particular.

There’s a huge amount of learning from SAR operations, yet we are sometimes poor at capturing that vital information for debrief and training purposes. To enable learning points of incidents and operations to be captured within the specific incident log, a new facility has been added. This debrief facility can store individual entries in either a ‘Team Only’ or All Partners’ scope. This separation helps maintain confidentiality for specific entries but allows the sharing of other entries with partners. The debrief tool is available via the incident logger when the incident is closed.

Many users are members of multiple teams or regional groups (eg regional water teams) and this has resulted in users having multiple log-ins and passwords.

To reduce the challenge of managing multiple SARCALL accounts, we’ve introduced a simple sign-on process. This has proved a popular and very successful facility. When a team is called out via a calling authority, an incident log is automatically created. Teams are requested to ‘manage’ their open logs and ensure prompt closure once the incident is complete. To assist with this process, a warning message will now appear on a team’s SARCALL home page if there is an open incident log present. The warning message and associated hyperlink allows team users easy navigation to the open log and also enables the Close log process to be completed.

The new SMS responses ‘Get history’ facility enables an Excel report to be downloaded, listing all the SMS responses for the user’s team. This enables team leaders to review and analyse the SMS responses received from all team members.

Jon Lynch has been experimenting with analysis of the SMS responses data and this is producing some very interesting information.

The Traccar app, hosted on the MREW servers, allows a member’s phone to send its GPS position to a central server. This position then appears on MRMap and the SARCALL Map as a team asset. Traccar is simple to use and very lightweight on a user’s mobile phone battery. The app is now helping to establish SARCALL sessions in some teams.

● A number of teams have also fitted tracking devices such as TK103 or similar to team vehicles that will integrate with Traccar.

These GPS-enabled devices record and send data via a SIM card to the server and then to MRMap. In discussion with the MREW ICT group, the SARCALL team has developed a method to automatically create a new record in an open incident log when a team vehicle leaves a base or arrives at a well-known RV location. This is achieved by setting up a number of geo-fences in Traccar. Note that care and thought needs to go into the drawing of these geo-fences, but once this is done, a clear audit trail is established to evidence the movements of team vehicles and assets. This could be especially important in the event of an incident log being carefully reviewed. A detailed ‘how-to’ guide will be available in July.

● As part of the on-going development of SARCALL, an increasing number of pages are being converted into a mobile-friendly format.

This process will continue along with further improvements in the database and application.

● To keep users abreast of developments and ideas, the SARCALL team has established a Facebook page.

If you are a social media user and have not yet signed up to the Facebook group, search for ‘SARCALL – News’ and request access, one of the admin team will then approve you.

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