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mountain rescue

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ISSUE 28



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WELCOME TO ISSUE 28

Mountain Rescue is the membership magazine for Mountain Rescue (England & Wales).

Contributions should be sent to the editor at the address below.

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

EDITORIAL

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NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 29

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Editorial copy must be supplied as Word document.

Images must be supplied as high resolution (300 dpi) JPEG/EPS/TIFF/PDF

Advertising artwork must be supplied, ready prepared on CD or via email as font embedded PDF/EPS/TIFF (300 dpi) or Quark document with all relevant fonts and images.

FRONT PAGE

Search dog Mac
Photo: Keswick MRT

EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles carried in Mountain Rescue do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales). We do not accept responsibility for information supplied in adverts/advertorial.

mountain rescue



Challenging times...

How much is the current financial situation affecting mountain rescue is a question I am being asked increasingly frequently. The answer so far is, not yet. Other charities are reporting a 30% fall in company sponsorship and this is in line with our experience. No one is sure whether donations from individuals will go the same way. If teams eventually have to devote more time to fund raising this will ultimately create problems.

A ray of hope has appeared through the efforts of members of the fundraising group who are pursuing the issues of VAT, fuel duty etc. Having met a series of rebuttals in Westminster they have now generated support in Europe where there is a very sympathetic ear to the argument about charity based emergency services being taxed. Despite the positive indicators it may take some time to convince our own government.

As long ago as 1760 Adam Smith observed, 'There is no art which one government sooner learns of another than that of draining money from the pockets of the people'.

Events of recent months have most clearly demonstrated that the performance of teams on the hill has in no way been compromised by collapsing financial institutions. Those who predicted that a return of true winter

conditions to the hills in England and Wales would lead to a spate of accidents have been proved correct. Teams responded extremely well to numbers of incidents both on and off the hills often in some very testing conditions. As one team member remarked, 'often we are just bringing down broken ankles but this month has been all about saving lives'.

One thing is clear. The effort and expense of teams travelling far beyond their own 'patch' to sustain winter skills have been vindicated. This practice will need to continue into the future but it is important to record both the time commitment and the expense of this action.

The pocket book 'Call Out Mountain Rescue' has been an outstanding success. Sales have exceeded expectations and the reviews that have appeared have universally sung its praises. Will it make a difference? Events this winter are not encouraging. Perhaps 2008 was the year in which people bought the book and 2009 will be the year in which they will read it.

'Probable impossibilities are to be preferred to improbable possibilities'. Aristotle 363BC.

David Allan Chairman

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mountain rescue

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

Places: 24
Date: Sunday 10 May (One day)
Location: South Wales
Contact: Richard Terrell
07971 191942 richard@
rterrell.orangehome.co.uk

MR(E&W) AGM + SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING

Places: 60
Date: Saturday 16 May (One day)
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton
Contact: Peter Smith
01706 852335 secretary@
mountain.rescue.org.uk

PARTY LEADER COURSE

Places: 30
Date: 17–19 July (Weekend)
Location: Hebden Bridge
Contact: Mike Marsh 01204 696383
mjm@boltonmrt.org.uk

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT REFRESHER

Places: 30
Date: Wednesday/Thursday
2/3 September (Two days)
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Peter Howells OBE MStJ
01633 254244 or 07836 382029
plhowells@plhowells.fsnet.co.uk

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS

Places: 30
Date: Friday/Saturday/Sunday
4/5/6 September (Three days)
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Peter Howells OBE MStJ
As above

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

Places: 40
Date: Monday – Friday
7–11 September (Five days)
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Peter Howells OBE MStJ
As above

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

Places: 24
Date: TBA (One day)
Location: Oldham MRT HQ
Contact: John Edwards 01457 870734
tryagain@fsmail.net

MEDIA INTERVIEW SKILLS FOR MR TEAMS

Places: 20
Date: 3 October (One day)
Location: Patterdale MRT HQ
Contact: Richard Holmes
r_n_holmes@hotmail.com

FIRST RESPONSE SEARCH MANAGEMENT WEEKEND

Places: 20
Date: TBA (Two days)
Location: Smelt Mill, Bowland Pennine
Training Resource
Contact: Richard Holmes
As above

MEDICAL SEMINAR

Places: 60
Date: Saturday 7 November
(One day)
Location: Charlotte Mason College
Ambleside
Contact: David Allan 01229 585154
allan986@btinternet.com

MR(E&W) SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING

Places: 60
Date: Saturday 21 November
(One day)
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton
Contact: Peter Smith
As above

TEAM LEADERS MEETING

Places: 50
Date: Saturday 5 December
(One day)
Location: Swaledale MRT HQ, Richmond
Contact: Peter Smith
As above

co-opted to the Executive Committee until the AGM in May, when his continuation will be subject to a vote in the usual manner.

OVER TO RICHARD...

Richard Terrell reports... Well here is my first piece for the mag as the Equipment Officer. Even though Mike is a size 42 shoe the same as me, I have big shoes to fill and I'd like to thank Mike for all the work he has put in over the years. An update so far... please note that the equipment checking day in South Wales is now 10 May. By the time you read this the forms should be out. With the results from the stretcher questionnaire last year, a working group will be set up and I am pleased to say Ray Griffiths will be chairing this group. I will be meeting with Ray in the next few weeks to produce the terms of reference and scope of the working group and we will then be looking for volunteers. That's all for now as Mike has promised me loads of box files to work through, as part of the handover. You can email me on richard@rterrell.orangehome.co.uk or via mobile on 07971 191942. I am available most evenings apart from a Thursday which is team training when, as you can all appreciate, it's a bit difficult for me to take a call.

TRAINING UPDATE

Mike Margeson reports... John Poulter has stood down after many years as PDMRO training subcommittee rep. Thanks to John from everyone! As one stands down, others take on new roles and responsibilities. At my first meeting of the the training committee as Training Officer the need for a vice-chair and secretary of the the committee was discussed. I am delighted to say that Ken Owens has offered his services as vice-chairman, and Richard Holmes as secretary. Both of these are subject to the approval of the committee in May. The training calender looks good with the Party Leader, Bangor Search Management and Field Skills courses and the PPE/FPE Equipment checking courses all running. Plus, we have two brand new courses on offer. **Media Interview Skills for MR Teams** (see panel below for a brief overview) will be run by Steve Howe, Sally Seed and Dave Freeborn at the Patterdale base; cost £70 per person. **First Response Search Management** weekend will take place at Smelt Mill, Bowland Pennine MRT's Training Resource Base, run by Pete Roberts and Dave Perkins.

training calender

NEW EQUIPMENT OFFICER APPOINTED

Interviews took place in January with an interview

panel comprising Neil Roden, Mike Margeson, Bill Whitehouse and Huw Birrell. The applicants were Richard Terrell, Jim Duffy

and Ray Griffiths. The panel recommended Richard for the position of National Equipment Officer. Richard has now been

▶ PAGE 6

Media interview skills for mountain rescue teams...

When the media takes an interest in mountain rescue it can give team members the opportunity to put across a professional and rehearsed point of view which enhances its reputation. Some members may be happy to deal with a media interview off the cuff, but there are some basic rules which help to get it right. Not talking to the media is rarely a sensible option in those circumstances, and much good can be done in a coherent and professional interview with a print or broadcast media journalist. This workshop will make it clear how journalists gather news and compose their story. It will also begin to prepare those who face the cameras for the day they are asked to comment on an incident or to survive close scrutiny from a TV or newspaper journalist. It will be beneficial to teams who are actively fundraising and who wish to appeal to a wider audience.

Run by Steve Howe, journalist and commentator, and Sally Seed, a communications expert, and assisted by cameraman Dave Freeborn, it will include interviews with those attending, and an analysis of their performance. It will also include an emerging news story with simulated TV news items. The training team will replicate the atmosphere and style of local and national TV interviews. Some will be conducted as if they are live interviews and others recorded. Playback and analysis of each interview will help to recognise some of the pitfalls and opportunities presented by TV interviews. The emphasis will be to build confidence and to give the opportunity to practice the art of effective communication on air.

Nikwax launch new waterproofing wax for leather

30 years ago saw the launch of the flagship Nikwax Wax, widely regarded as the best waterproofing wax for leather boots. It set the standard for performance waterproofing, established Nikwax as a market leader and has sold in its millions. Now Nikwax is replacing it with a ground-breaking new water based, next-generation performance Waterproofing Wax for Leather.

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For more information call 01892 786400, visit www.nikwax.net or purchase online at www.waterproofing-world.co.uk And don't forget to play the webquiz to win some free Nikwax!



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 • WWW.PARAMO.CO.UK



Safe Light for safety

Safe Light is a Swiss organisation, which carries out research and development of visibility and safety equipment – UK Euro Partner is responsible for the distribution of Safe Light products in the UK.

Safe Light products are already used by mountain rescue teams and other leading organisations across Europe and Africa. The most popular product in the range is the Safe Light Baton, which provides a minimum of eight hours light,

contained in the Baton Safe Kit and the company have recently produced a Baton Reflector which allows the Baton to be used as a torch giving directional light, keeping both hands free.

These include the high visibility waistcoat with Dual Light Technology DLT08 making it the most visible certified product of its kind and, therefore, the safest; and the Safe Light Pod, which will attach to any flat surface and provide immediate light for a minimum of eight hours.

Products are designed to be quickly activated and practical, keeping the user as visible and safe as possible, whether walking on a hike or half way up a mountain.

A key benefit of working with a Swiss partner is their understanding of emergency needs and therefore the ability to develop effective solutions and distribute them quickly to where they are most needed.

UK Euro Partner will be presenting the entire range of safety products at the SHE exhibition at NEC, Birmingham from 12-14 May 2009. This is the largest Health and Safety exhibition in Europe, attracting visitors from outside the EU.

To read more about Safe Light and UK Euro Partner please visit www.uk-euro-partner.co.uk



Safe Light
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UKEP

What else is happening?

You will soon receive the training questionnaire already mentioned. As your training committee, we need to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the training provision at all levels. Your comments and feedback will provide valuable information and help to inform future planning.

As many of you will already know, I have put my head above the parapet on the issue of technical rope rescue. As Equipment Officer I was completely committed to the knowledge and skills base we tried to introduce in 2001/2 with the first Riggering for Rescue courses, supported by the training committee. It is now time to move on beyond that and to the future. I believe it is time we reviewed and looked at rope rescue in mountain

rescue before somebody does it for us. Hence I can report that we have set up a small group, representing a number of regions, to review rope rescue. Bill Batson has kindly agreed to lead this review group. Bill will be known to many of you as ex-chief instructor with the RAF MRS, a qualified Mountain Instructor and presently Head of Training at Lyon Equipment Training Centre at Tebay. He has already got the process under way. We particularly want to look at the possible initiation of our own Rope Rescue courses. These would be based round a tool box of skills and knowledge, not a 'one size fits all' approach. Is it time we had some Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) guidelines and principles of best practice? What might they look like? We look forward to much discussion and debate!!!

NATIONAL COURSES

Footnote from Peter Howells, regarding the Party Leader, and Bangor courses detailed on page 4... Please be assured that all these courses include the use of computers and technology in search and rescue, GIS mapping systems and interfaces with GPS references. Each course participant is supplied with a CD containing a number of programs useful to search planning and management. Course staff are fully engaged with the GPS/GIS and technology review to benefit teams by the use of modern technology.

Stop press...

● Distinguished Service Awards will be presented to Paul Horder and Ian Hurst at the MRC meeting in May.



Don't let the uplands down! BMC launches the Green Guide to the uplands

Outdoor enthusiasts can step into spring on the right track with the BMC's new Green Guide to the Uplands, a good practice guide for walkers, climbers and mountaineers. This brightly illustrated booklet contains essential information on issues affecting the mountain environment and offers advice on how each one of us can do our best to care for the fragile upland landscape and how to reduce our impact.

There's good practice on access, conservation, hill walking, climbing, scrambling and winter mountaineering as well as detailed advice on sanitation, transport, camping and sustainable crag use.

BMC Access and Conservation Officer Dr Cath Flitcroft said, 'We hope this booklet will be read widely and put into action by all those visiting the outdoors. It's full of advice to make your visit to the crag or mountain even greener.'

The BMC has a strong environmental ethic and this is the third in a series of Green Guides, following the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District guides, with further editions planned, so look out for the Pembrokeshire Green Guide. Download at thebmc.co.uk/greenguides



HMS VICTORY: ©DREAMSTIME

His Royal Highness Prince William of Wales requests the pleasure of your company...

'6.30pm. Reception and mess beatings. 8.00pm. Dinner on the gun deck. Black tie with miniatures.' Thus read the invitation to dinner on board HMS Victory, hosted by our Patron Prince William. Oh help... here we go again with the wardrobe crisis, but at least this time it wasn't just the ladies put in a sartorial flat spin. I mean dinner suit, bow tie and cummerbund aren't usually top of the rucksack packing list for the average mountain rescuer. And what exactly do they mean by 'black tie' in this context? Long, short, ballgown, off the shoulder, with or without décolletage? And that's just the chaps! A flurry of worried emails, followed by the gentle tap of pin numbers in retail outlets across the country, and we were sorted. (Never waste the opportunity to buy a new frock!)

Joining me (MR Mag Editor), Andy Simpson (Press Officer), Neil Roden (Basecamp) and Penny Brockman (Treasurer) from Mountain Rescue (England & Wales), were Michele Dickinson (Burton McCall), Anna Stanley (Goodyear), Dr Vanessa Lawrence (Ordnance Survey) and Chris Clayton (Carnegie Great Outdoors Sports Faculty, Leeds Metropolitan University). All four organisations have brought, or have the potential to bring, huge benefits to mountain rescue teams and their members over the last two years, and continue to do so.

An introduction to the evening, and a few instructions, were delivered by Lieutenant Commander 'Oscar' Whild. (Born plain old Douglas, the commanding officer gained his more flamboyant nickname on joining the Royal Navy and it sort of stuck!)

First, forget the romantic notion that the captain will be the last to leave his sinking ship. 'If you see

me running,' declared Oscar, 'run after me!'

Secondly, the ship – it goes without saying, perhaps – was a non-smoking area. But then came the worrying announcement that Victory was a 'dry ship'. This didn't mean, we were quickly reassured, that the champagne we were currently enjoying was about to be confiscated, but that there were no toilets! Argh! So a 'toilet break' would be announced just before dinner, at which point everyone could troop down the gangplank to the loo block on the dock. And let me tell you those metal walkways were not made for killer heels!

During the champagne reception, Prince William made his way through the ship, chatting to various groups, before the drumming of mess beatings by the Royal Marines Corps of Drums heralded food.

Dinner was on the mess deck, the lower gun deck which once served as the living area for the majority of Victory's crew. Hard to imagine some 460 men living, working and

sleeping on this deck, some 570 men eating their meals here.

And to eat? Oak smoked salmon, chargrilled chicken breast with Mediterranean vegetables and Parisienne potatoes, were followed by tarte au citron with raspberry coulis. Delicious. Of course. The sudden explosion of noise towards the end of dessert was explained as a firework party for Sir Donald Gosling, founder of the National Parking Corporation, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday.

As some of the party disappeared above to take a look, the wine glasses were cleared from the table (in line with naval tradition, once the food is eaten, they have to go – no lingering over a bottle of red here) and the vintage port arrived in its distinctive flat bottomed decanters.

Cue more traditions, as Lieutenant Commander Whild explained. The port should be passed to the left. The gentlemen should pour for the ladies. And we should remain seated during the loyal toast to the Sovereign.

Cover that rucksack!

Tricketts reduce vehicle insurance premiums and extend their exclusive mountain rescue policy range to include search dogs and personal kit

This year sees James Trickett & Son (Insurances) Limited extending their range of policies geared exclusively to mountain rescue teams and their members, and reducing the cost of their existing Motor Policy. Not something you hear every day from an insurance broker!

Thanks to the success of their scheme, they've negotiated a better deal with the insurers. As from 1 April, premiums are reduced across the board. But, not only that, if uptake continues at the present rate, the underwriters have pledged to make a donation back to Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) and Scotland in 2010. Tricketts are also in negotiation with the insurers for a reduction to the Trustee Indemnity Policy.

Tricketts' association with mountain rescue now goes back several years, thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of Stephen Darwen, himself a keen outdoors man. What began as a tentative toe in the water with a couple of teams, now extends across the UK, with an increasing number of teams taking advantage of the policies on offer.

And the ideas keep on coming. The company recently negotiated a special rate for SARDA Lakes, covering all 24 search dogs under a single policy. And the latest proposal is a policy, exclusive to mountain rescue team members and Basecamp members, which will cover your personal and team kit in your rucksack to the value of £3000, for a single annual fee of £63. So if your rucksack goes over a crag, or your kit gets nicked from the car boot (and don't we all know someone this has happened to?) you're covered – and it's probably cheaper than adding to the household or car insurance. The premium and cover are non-negotiable, and proof of team or Basecamp membership would be required.

Just to recap their existing policies:-

- **Motor Policy** – for individual vehicles or fleets, based on a nationwide flat premium. The policy provides cover for blue light use, and for any licensed driver aged between 25 and 65 with two years full driving experience (exceptions can be accommodated).
- **Trustee Indemnity Policy** – provides cover at varying levels of indemnity and will automatically provide Legal Expenses and Loss of Reputation cover.
- **Charity Connect Policy** will not only provide the standard cover for buildings and contents, but will automatically provide full accidental damage cover. Policies can be extended to give property owners liability, goods in transit, money and fidelity guarantee cover.

All policies attract a no claims discount after 12 months claim free and can be extended to cover certain fundraising events. For further details of all their policies, contact Stephen at James Trickett & Son (Insurances Ltd on **01706 212231** or email stephen.darwen@trickettsinsurance.co.uk

...by Judy Whiteside

History records a variety of reasons for this, according to the official HMS Victory website. King Charles, on his return from exile in Holland, was aboard the Naseby, renamed Royal Charles. He is reputed to have bumped his head on a low beam in the cabin when responding to a toast and exclaimed, 'When I get ashore, I'll see that my naval officers run no such risk, for I will allow them from henceforth to remain sitting when drinking my health'.

During the Restoration, the Navy had a large influx of gentlemen volunteers who formed a considerable mess. As they were not seamen by upbringing, they would have had great difficulty keeping their feet.

George IV, as Prince Regent, while dining aboard a warship is reputed to have exclaimed as the officers rose to drink the King's health, 'Gentlemen, pray be seated. Your loyalty is above suspicion.' The Prince was at constant variance with the King and favoured the Whig Opposition, but it is a matter of speculation as to whom their loyalty was directed. The Navy generally consider that loyalty to the person of the Sovereign takes precedence over political ties.

Whilst William IV was Duke of Clarence, he was dining on a man-of-war and is also reputed to have bumped his head on a deck beam when he stood up.

Probably more realistic is that it was impossible to stand upright 'between decks' except between the beams. Consequently only every third person would have been able to stand erect.

Which reminds me of another oft repeated comment prior to our trip that, heading for six foot tall in heels, I might find it difficult to stand upright – not a good look for the little black dress! Not the case, except when first boarding the ship or negotiating beams. And we also learned that, contrary to legend, our predecessors were not necessarily shorter. Lord Nelson, at five foot six, was average height for the time, but Captain Hardy towered at a strapping six foot four.

Apart from the shivering cold and teeth chattering, (we ladies spent most of the evening wrapped in our big winter coats!) it was a brilliant evening. An honour and privilege to be invited and a great opportunity to meet the Prince's other charities and get to know our own supporters better. Thank you.



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Openhouse help support search and rescue dogs

Openhouse are all about supporting organisations close to their hearts. As a result, at The Emergency Services Show in November, Openhouse agreed to help support the Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA), a charitable organisation helping the community to search for vulnerable missing persons using specially trained dogs. With the help of Openhouse they aim to raise more funds to help train more specialist rescue dogs.

As official supporters of SARDA, Openhouse are helping the organisation in any way they can, including the wellbeing of their search and rescue dogs. Openhouse went to see the dogs and their handlers in action, and watch how they help the community, and were blown away by how well the dogs worked together in an emergency situation.

Samantha Jones said, 'At Openhouse we are always looking for new ways to help out organisations in our business area. We are glad we have been given the opportunity to help out such a great cause, I just hope our ongoing support will help make a big difference for the organisation.'

If you would like to help SARDA either financially, or maybe you might like to help train the dogs, visit their website www.sardaengland.org.uk. For more information about Openhouse, visit openhouseproducts.com

LAKE DISTRICT

WASDALE 40TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Richard Warren writes... 52 team members, wives, husbands, partners and special guests attended the private dinner at the Wasdale Head Inn on 9 January. The dinner is a regular annual event but this year it was combined as a celebration of the team's 40th year. David Allan, chairman of Mountain Rescue (England and Wales) was invited, along with his wife Sheila, to present long service awards to team members past and present. In addition to the framed award, each person was presented with a glass tankard on a wooden base with a plaque showing his or her name and years of service.

Wasdale MRT was founded in October 1968 from the Wyndham Search Team, which ran for around three years prior to becoming WMRT. Before this, Cockermouth MRT and Eskdale Outward Bound covered the Wasdale valley and mountains. Members of the Wyndham team (formerly the Wyndham Mountaineering Club) included Don Greenop, John Kennedy, Mike Skinsley, Ian Angel, Brian Eales (first chairman), Alan Dunn (first team leader), Roy Sumerling, Maurice Pringle, Pat Pownall, Brian Clark, David Killick, Arthur Baldock, Charles Devlin, David Martin, Bill Ritchie, Robert Rudd, John Warbrick.



DR ROY COOKSEY MBE

NEW YEAR'S HONOUR FOR ROY

Roy Cooksey was recognised in the Queen's New Year Honours list with an MBE for his 23 years as leader of Coniston MRT. Typically, his reaction on learning of the award was humble and self-effacing. 'It reflected the merit of everyone in the Coniston team,' he said, 'I was simply the one collecting it on their behalf.'

Current team leader, Anthony 'Rob' Robinson said, 'He was the ideal man. He could almost have been born to do it. He was a very experienced rock climber and walker in his own right before he joined the team.'

'He was a Barrovian by birth and is currently living in the south of France. I was his deputy for the entire 23 years. He was one of the best, most experienced and most respected mountain rescue leaders in the country. He led from the front in everything.'

The Wyndham Club then became West Cumbria Climbing Club.

In 1968 the team had eight rescues to deal with (compared to 96 in 2008) and around 60 team members (compared to 58 in 2008), and operated out of a small room at Wasdale Head next to the Barn Door Shop. Now the team has a purpose built base in Gosforth.

25 years Long Service Award, to members now retired from the team, were awarded to Dave Barras (26 years), Allan Dunn (35 years – first team leader for ten years); Bill Pattison MBE (26 years – second team leader for eighteen years); and Maurice Pringle (25 years – past secretary and second chairman).

25 years Long Service Award to active members were awarded to Pete Baines (28 years); Martin Bentley (27 years); Julian Carradice (29 years – third and current team leader for the past ten years); and Dave Fryer (36 years – past secretary and third chairman); Peter Holburt (34 years); Penny Kirkby (25 years); John Noake (37 years); Susan Noake (36 years); Dave Willey (25 years).

40 years Long Service Award were awarded to Joe Moody (40 years – recently retired from team); Martin Willey (40 years – still fully active).

THIS WRAPPER MAY SAVE A LIFE

It has been a source of nourishment and sustenance for fellwalkers for generations, and now our humble confectionery bar could be a lifesaver. Kendal Mint Cake, carried by Sir Edmund Hillary on his successful 1953 Everest expedition, will play a vital part in helping those in distress on the Lakeland mountains in a unique tie-up with the Lake District's mountain rescue teams.

Wilson's, one of three companies making mint cake in Kendal, has produced 20,000 bars of the sugary energy snack to raise funds for the twelve mountain rescue teams in the area. 20p from each bar sold will go to LDSAMRA for distribution throughout the teams.

As well as raising money for the teams, each of the special bars carries essential safety information about preparing for journeys on to the fells and what to do if you are unfortunate enough to need our mountain rescue services.

The advice to those who are buying them is 'Don't throw away the wrapper unless you are going to buy another bar; the safety messages are on the wrapper and need to be kept. The wrapper may in fact save your life.'

The Kendal Mint Cake bars, which provide 323kCal of much needed energy when walking on the mountains, are made with sugar, glucose syrup, peppermint oil and salt. The confection was first produced in the former Westmorland town in 1869. The mixture is stirred constantly during production to stop it turning clear.

Wilson's has been making mint cake since 1913 and is run by managing director Andrew Wilson, grandson of the founder of the business. The bars will be sold through all their existing retailers throughout the county, including tourist shops, and



should be widely available by Easter. The bars usually sell for about £1.

Lakes teams have been urging walkers and climbers to go properly prepared on to the fells, following the significant increases in incidents. The advice on the bars includes checking weather forecasts, taking the right equipment (especially map, compass and torch), proper preparation and wearing the right kind of clothing. If successful, the firm could produce other confectionery in the mountain rescue range, to help the teams both raise funds and get across the safety message.

SAFETY CARDS

LDSAMRA has also produced 15,000 safety cards, which are being handed out to visitors to the district. These have similar hints on how to keep safe on the mountains and how to call out rescue teams. These have been funded by Adventure Capital, which promotes outdoor and adventure tourism in Cumbria. Thanks to Bob Smith, editor of grough.co.uk for his contribution to this article and continuing support to mountain rescue through his own articles on the website.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Dave Binks of **Duddon & Furness MRT** and Rob Brookes of **Langdale Ambleside MRT** have been given the LDSAMRA Distinguished Service Award in recognition of their outstanding contribution to mountain rescue for the development of MrMap and GPS tracking. Mike Nixon MBE, presented the awards at the January LDSAMRA meeting. Rob's involvement has been largely in hardware development. He was first



FROM LEFT: DAVE BINKS, MIKE NIXON MBE AND ROB BROOKES

involved in the project about 1998 while a member of **Kendal MRT**, initially working with Paul Horder from **Keswick MRT**. Initial work involved vehicle tracking but was put on hold due to lack of portable technology, but demonstrated that it was theoretically possible and worthwhile pursuing. The project was breathed new life when a link with Simoco was established and the availability of the GPS microphone.

Rob has spent many hours doctoring stock equipment to accommodate GPS chips, doctoring computers to accommodate multiple radio inputs, balancing needs of radio versus data, tweaking vehicle and base radios to meet the many demands of rescue work, and running tests to check reliability and effectiveness.

Dave joined the project more recently, bringing in considerable technical programming skills to make a useable interface for teams to benefit from the technology. Initially he was involved with development of re-broadcasters and repeaters, but soon put his programming skills to good use with the creation of MrMap. Ongoing work to make MrMap useable by teams using other equipment continues, and has involved work with a number of overseas organisations. The work carried out by both Rob and Dave raised the profile of both our region and Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) with interest in the project now coming from Eire and Scotland.

Both Dave and Rob consulted end-users constantly to develop a product that is easy to use and stable and, in many cases, bespoke. MrMap is now used across the country by many teams and is a leap forward on a par with the introduction of morphine to mountain rescue. Explaining to new team members that there was a time before MrMap will be like trying to convince a teenager that there was a time before mobile phones.

One major step was the negotiations with equipment manufacturers to make commercially valuable software available to mountain rescue, free of charge. MrMap has considerably enhanced team member's safety and helped considerably in the efficiency of searches, and ironically, greatly reduced the need for voice communication. To reinforce the point about team members' safety and the effectiveness of searching, Keswick team members have written a detailed account of a very recent rescue 'The Skiddaw Job', where the GPS tracking system earned its keep during full white-out conditions on a search and rescue incident lasting eighteen hours, involved 71 rescuers and saving five lives. (See page 24).

Many personal sacrifices have been made by Rob and Dave to make the system work. Their continued intention is to make MrMap a product that is free to use for all mountain rescue, with no financial benefit for either person. The recognition of distinguished service also acknowledges the sacrifice made by family members while Rob and Dave were, and still are, involved in the project.

If you have any questions or comments on this article or indeed any of the Lake District articles or statements made, then please contact me and I will ensure you receive a response.

PENRITH TEAM CELEBRATES HALF A CENTURY OF RESCUE

This year Penrith MRT celebrates 50 years of safeguarding the lives and welfare of those enjoying the Cumbrian fells, a proud record which has seen team members called to help in a staggering 600+ incidents in the intervening five decades. Callouts have ranged from a single walker with a twisted ankle, to multiple casualties in train derailments and plane crashes – every incident, to some extent, a step into the unknown.

A chance conversation with one of the team's founders sparked off the idea of a chronicle of the 50 year history, which is to be shared with the public. During a street collection for team funds in Penrith on Christmas Eve, I met Colin Hulse, one of the first people in the town to answer the call for local volunteers to help with incidents in the fells back in 1958. Having spoken about the team's early days to various groups, Colin had gathered an archive of cuttings and photographs which will now make up part of this chronicle, just one element in a series of events planned for this anniversary year.

The team patch covers a staggering 1,000 square miles across North East Cumbria, including the Eden Valley. Looking back on the earliest days Colin recalls that, in contrast to today's hi-tech communications systems, vehicle and handheld radios, mobile phones and pagers, team members in the 50s were alerted to incidents by a telephone call from the police. The message was then relayed from member to member by telephone. After one particular incident, where team members had to carry a man with a broken leg down from Haweswater on a five-bar gate, fundraising was started for a stretcher, the team's first piece of dedicated equipment.

Team members now call on three dedicated rescue vehicles – two Land Rover 110 County Station Wagons and a modified Renault Master van, plus a large array of medical equipment including blood monitors, oxygen, and a variety of neck collars and splints, and technical equipment including rope and rigging equipment for crag and steep ground work. Back in the 50s, team members got around in an old US Army jeep belonging to one of the members, which was later replaced by a disused ambulance, donated by the county council. Training exercises in those days took place at Cowrake Quarry, Beacon Edge and the Pencil Mill Quarry at Watermillock, where members practised the skills needed to lower a stretcher on ropes. Medical help was provided by the local GP who, as none of the members had any expertise or training in this area at all, was an essential element of most call outs. With no access to mobile phones, helicopters or any modern day kit, the work of could be laborious.



'There were not the number of people fellwalking that there are these days, but there was rock climbing which is dangerous and there were fatalities,' said Colin. Memorably, the search for one walker who had died on the fells lasted for two months. 'Some searches went on for week after week. One summer every weekend for six or eight weeks we were out. We found him in the end when the bracken turned at the end of the year, up at the top of Eskdale.'

He added, 'Looking at the current Penrith team website it's amazing to think it all began in such a small way. Now their power to communicate, medical skills, use of search dogs and rescue boats and helicopters improve the survival chances of any victim greatly.'

Despite the sometimes sad and difficult nature of the work, these were 'good times', remembers Colin. And, despite having left Penrith and the team in 1965, to return to the town some ten years later, he has maintained at least two friendships from those days with men that have since left the area. 'The idea of the team was born out of the desire to serve,' said Colin, who was one of the youngest members at the time.

Nowadays, the team answers an average of 30-40 callouts each year, ranging from assisting farmers in animal rescues on mountains and in rivers, to crag rescues involving technical rope access, to extended searches for missing persons and non-mountain incidents such as plane and train crashes. They are also available to back-up other teams in the central Lake District when they are stretched to cover more than one incident, and have contributed to major searches in Northumberland, Durham and Southern Scotland.

Vital to the work of every team is the backing of the public, as the teams operate as charities and do not receive any government funding. The generosity of members of the public, local and national businesses, provides Penrith with a financial lifeline of £20,000 per year to cover running costs.

Over the year, the support of the community for the rescue service will be recognised and acknowledged as part of the anniversary celebrations. A display which records some of the events of the last 50 years will be exhibited in various libraries. There will also be an open day where the public will be able to see the range of technical equipment used by modern mountain rescuers. Other events will include a one-off gathering of as many past team members as can be contacted – a chance to meet with old friends and current team members, and to celebrate the work of the volunteers who have made up the team.

Ged Feeney has stepped down as team leader, after 25 years a remarkable achievement. He was presented with a long service certificate for 30 years in mountain rescue. Ged joined the team in 1979, was a deputy from 1981-4 and team leader from 1984. Ian Clemmett was elected team leader at the recent AGM. Long service awards were presented to Keith Smith (42 years), Mike Graham (28 years in MR) and Jane Wise (30 years in MR).

Mike Graham ex Chair of Penrith MRT

NORTH WALES

SWITCH TO TEXT

Chris Jones writes... **North East Wales SAR** had been using pagers for call outs and team messages for many years but we were aware that pagers are yesterday's technology, as some telecoms companies are not investing in this system. Some observers reckon that in the next five years or so the system will stop. So where does that leave us?

Texting is the obvious replacement. These days everyone has a mobile and the majority of people text, and it would be stating the obvious that texting is massively popular amongst the younger generation (this counts me out).

About 18 months ago I was given the task by our management team to evaluate the use of text messages to replace our pagers. Today the pagers have gone, although a limited number have been retained so the police can contact us, and the team use text messages for training, fundraising messages and call outs. The treasurer is happy, instead of an annual budget of £2000 for pagers we are using about £500 annually in texting costs. The response to fundraising requests and to call outs has never been better. When the two systems (pagers and texting) were run in tandem for a period the pagers very quickly fell in to disuse because of the better response to a text message. So how did we do it?

Do a Google search for sms services and there are millions of hits, so how do you choose? We met a few likely companies and they were expensive, aimed at large organisations with big budgets. Then I came across World Text www.world-text.com who had some experience in providing this service for the emergency services. They are specialist but small enough that I could email or even phone the owner if I had a problem and we are delighted with their service. When I wanted the date and time

adding automatically on every text sent out by us this was done, at no cost.

Visiting the World Text website for the first time is bewildering. There is a wide range of services on offer and it quickly gets into very specialist services. The first task is to set up your own user account and, helpfully, World Text also offers a free evaluation of their services.

For NEWSAR I looked at the sms paging and the bulk sms services. With paging, standard messages are held on the World Text site and a single word text to a phone number sends this message to a pre-defined list of mobile numbers (your membership) surprisingly this service has not been used as it lacks the flexibility of the bulk sms service, which is what we use on a daily basis within our team.

With this service pre-defined lists of mobile numbers are held on the world text site. For us we have 'group1' for the first responders and 'groupa' for all team members. A text message sent to <worldtext phone no.> .groupa 'message-message' will send a text message 'message-message' to all team members. This text message can go to mobile phones and even landlines if a member has poor reception at home.

I can visit the World Text site and check their records of which text has been successfully sent. When a message has been successfully 'sent' this means that the owner's handset has returned a message saying the text has been received. Typically the message has been delivered to the handset within seconds, although this is not always the case. One busy weekend, when we sent about 400 texts, I analysed the records and we were getting about 94% of messages received within ten minutes of sending. World text investigated the delays for us, a service we never got with pagers. They also offer an email to sms service, which we use. I have set up a free password protected ioogle website which exists so messages can be

The factory has been even busier than ever over the past few months bringing all the new products through to production. As a result of all this hard work we have three new biners on the market now. The Ultra Oval, which comes with the option of four different gate versions, the new Belay Master which is I Beam construction and has a clean nose, and a groove to locate the clip more securely in position.



PHANTOM SCREWGATE ▲

Finally on the biner front we have the new Phantom Screw Gate, which is at present the world's lightest screwgate biner, at 41grams featuring a keylock nose. However as with all DMM products we have made no compromise with strength or size, so it is a fully functional size and also strong – 24kn, 9Kn, 9Kn. Check out our website for full details of all new products www.dmmwales.com

Latest news from



sent off to team members' mobile phones either to groups or to individuals.

Text messages are bought in bulk, in advance and cost about 6p per message, the more you buy the less they cost. These can be automatically bought for the customer when a pre-defined level of message held in the account is reached. In effect this means you cannot run out of messages at a crucial time, a very useful facility. All accounts can be set up to accept texts from a list of mobile phones and no others, and we have used this facility to limit the users of the service a small number of team officers.

Authors celebrate book sales with donations to Peak District mountain rescue...



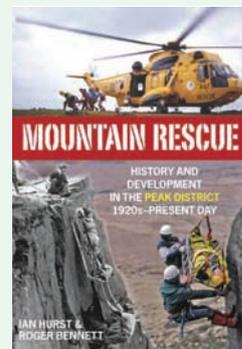
▲ FROM LEFT: BUXTON TEAM LEADER, NEIL CARRUTHERS, ACCEPTS THE 'BIG CHEQUE' FROM IAN AND ROGER

Roger Bennett and Ian Hurst have donated a total of £1000 to the **Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation** and **Buxton MRT** thanks to the success of their book 'Mountain Rescue, History and Development in the Peak District 1920s – 2007'. The original print run has now sold out and publishers The History Press are arranging for a reprint.

This illustrated book chronicles the development of the rescue service from its early days into the efficient, streamlined and essential service it is today, covering significant rescues, the geography of the area, helicopters used, search and rescue dogs and the in-depth training and commitment required. It offers a fascinating and unique insight into the dramatic world of mountain rescue in the Peak District, which can be one of the harshest yet most deceptive environments in England.

It's all here – incidents and accidents, newspaper clippings, black and white archive images, dogs, equipment, training, vehicles, macramé stretchers and some very dodgy bobble hats. Amazon Books gave the book a five star rating as 'engaging comprehensive, and entertaining.'

The book can be purchased from all good bookshops locally, the Peak District National Park Visitor Centres and The History Press – 01453 883300 at £12.99, with all proceeds to mountain rescue.



It must be said the World Text website is very daunting and can be confusing and should be read carefully, the lists of mobile phone numbers do need setting up with care and require testing. There have been odd results. The texts will find you wherever you are – I think Florida and Australia are the furthest they have travelled – however they cost the team just 6p as the mobiles are UK registered. There is no easy way around this.

I also run a number of email lists for team members, and specialist groups of team members and some of the general traffic that would have been paged is now sent using email. Of around 40 team members, 100% use texting and everyone apart from one person uses email and this is how we keep in touch as a team.

Texting is not a perfect solution but of course if you miss a text it will get to you when you are back in range, unlike paging. The team is saving a substantial amount of cash and above all it is working, responses to texts are better than pager responses. I anticipated that the hardest part would be changing people's habits. The mobile has to be with you 24/7 but this has been relatively easy. My advice is look at it, because one day in the not too distant future you may have no choice.

PEAK DISTRICT



▲ NEWLY GRADED SEARCH DOG MEGAN WITH DAVE

NEW DOG ON THE BLOCK

Buxton MRT dog handler Dave Mason and his four year old border collie, Megan went to Derwentwater, in January for the annual SARDA assessment course. Over three days, the pair had to search through some of the toughest conditions the Lakes has to offer,

during periods of high winds and torrential rain storms. Each area took roughly two hours to complete, under the scrutiny of SARDA handlers and police dog handlers from around the country. Dave has been a member of the Buxton team for seven years. Megan is a local dog, from Buxworth farm stock, and has been training as a search dog since she was a 14 week pup. Her instinctive drive to chase sheep was trained out of her at an early age (although this brought an early onset of hair loss for Dave) and replaced by a drive to be around people and wanting to play with everyone she meets. She still isn't that keen on helicopters though and is often to be found hiding between Dave's legs when one appears.

At the age of two, she successfully achieved Initial Grade, which put Megan on the call out list to assist teams and police forces throughout the UK in the search for missing and vulnerable people in urban, rural and mountainous areas. At the time, Megan was one of only seven in the Peak District and surrounding area. Since then, she has responded

to 35 calls for assistance, and there has been a number of highlights during this time.

In January last year, during the hours of darkness, whilst in the Tankersley area of Sheffield looking for a missing person, Megan indicated that she had located the scent of a human. Despite continued efforts by Dave and Megan they could not locate the person, but reported the indication to the rescue team who rechecked the area at first light. A body of a deceased male was located in deep undergrowth where Megan had indicated. In March 2008, she successfully located six very cold walkers in near white out conditions on Kinder Scout. They were evacuated from the hillside, safe and well.

Megan put everything she had into the three day assessment, successfully attaining Full Search Dog – a title she will keep until her retirement. Which is not planned for some years to come!

THE GENEROSITY CONTINUES

In 2002, Keswick MRT kindly donated their Land Rover 110 to **Edale MRT**. Seven years later, Derwent Mobile Two 'the second' has been replaced in service with a brand new Land Rover. However, not ready for retirement yet and still fit for active service, the old G-reg vehicle is set to continue service with **Glossop MRT**.

The new Land Rover commenced active service in March, which means that all three of the Edale Land Rovers are now equipped with identical equipment.

The vehicle was purchased as a 110 Land Rover 'utility' vehicle in silver, fitted with towing pack and snorkel kit by the local dealer and was delivered to Edale in late December. Two months of hard work and project management has seen this standard vehicle transformed into a front-line mountain rescue ambulance.

Having been stripped down by a small group of team members, it then went to a local fabricators for the rear bulkhead, rear meshing and stretcher bed construction. From there it made a 200 mile trip to the auto-electricians in Leamington Spa for fitting out. 'All three Land Rovers have been fitted out by the same company' writes James Stubbley, 'and they now have a good understanding of what we require with our vehicles.'

On its return it was transformed with appropriate vehicle livery by another specialist and then team members completed installation of the final equipment, radios, aerials and phone'.

...AND THE 'TEAM OF THE YEAR' IS...

Edale has been voted Goodyear Team of the Year, a title which brings with it a £2000 donation towards safety equipment and the chance to star in a professional photoshoot courtesy of Goodyear. See page 19 for more.

MORE NEW YEAR HONOURS

Barry Gregory was awarded the MBE in January for over forty years of mountain rescue work. Barry, of **Woodhead MRT**, first volunteered with the old Huddersfield Scout Rescue Unit when he was just



**MOUNTAIN
EQUIPMENT**

Field Trials for new Women's Specific MRT Jacket

The latest mountain rescue product from Mountain Equipment, the Women's MRT Jacket, is now in the final stage of field trials. Shortly after the introduction of the Men's Kongur MRT jacket last year, the company responded to a strong demand for a women's specific version of this GORE-TEX Pro Shell jacket and began the development process.

For the past four months a pre-production Women's MRT Jacket has been on field trials with Gaynor Lewis, a member of SARDA and the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team. And it has certainly been a baptism of fire for the new design, with one of the busiest winters on record for the team!

The trial findings will be used to help perfect the design that will go into production. The Women's MRT Jacket is expected to enter service with teams in June 2009.

For team order enquiries, contact Martin Dixon on 07710 358762 or email martin.dixon@mountain-equipment.co.uk.



19. Since then he has devoted much of his life to rescue – working not only with the Woodhead team, where he is currently treasurer and was chairman, but also with the PDMRO.

'I have been involved in many rescues and searches but this honour has come as a great surprise. After 40 odd years in the job, praise is not the reason you do it. But it's been a major part of my life and I'm delighted to be recognised.'

SOUTH WEST

NETWORKING ON THE HILL

Four members of **Dartmoor SRT (Ashburton)** were ascending Snowdon in January when one of their party broke his ankle while practicing ice axe arrest. His friends made him comfortable and called the Llanberis team, who called an RAF Sea King to airlift the casualty to Bangor. Llanberis team members then walked off with the remaining three to a waiting Land Rover, and drove them to their vehicle.

'At their base in Nant Peris, we did some paperwork,' said Tim Heming, one of the Dartmoor party, 'then set about admiring their kit! We would like to thank them again for their assistance and hospitality, and we hope we can catch up again 'some time in less operational circumstances.'



Slidetite winner

Well... there we were underestimating the wordpower of the average mountain rescuer! '50+ excellent', we said. The seven readers who took the trouble to put themselves in the frame to win a Bumper Slidetite Kit exceeded even that, but the runaway winner was Richard Hutton of Cornwall SRT with a spectacular 103 (sorry Richard, we disallowed the acronyms and abbreviations and a couple of repeats). The winning words? deist, deities, deli, delis, detest, die, dies, diesel, diet, diets, dit, dits, distil, ditties, edit, edits, eel, eels, eldest, elide, elides, elite, elites, elitist, else, ides, idle, idles, ids, islet, istle, its, led, lee, lees, lei, leis, lest, let, lets, lett, letts, lid, lids, lie, lied, lies, list, listed, lit, lits, see, seed, set, sett, settle, settled, side, side, sild, silt, silted, sit, site, sited, sled, slid, slit, slide, sleet, slit, steed, steel, stele, stet, stile, stilt, stilted, ted, teds, tee, tees, test, tested, tie, ties, tide, tides, tidies, tilde, tildes, tile, tiled, tiles, tilt, tilted, tilts, tit, tits, titi, title, titles, titled.

Slidetite products are designed for the worst of weather conditions making quick and easy work of securing loads, and all components can be used without even taking your gloves off. If your team has not yet received a Slidetite sample, email sales@slidetite.com and they'll pop one in the post.

Slidetite®

Go for an Oscar! A casualty's view of the DRG weekend...

'I'm Dave from Dartmoor Rescue - how are you?' This was my first encounter with the search team which found me during the Dartmoor Rescue Group (DRG) training weekend in November 2008. As usual, the weekend was based at Okehampton Battle Camp on the north side of Dartmoor. This year the camp hosted 180 attendees from DRG and from rescue teams stretching from Cornwall to the Peak District. We also had attendance from members of the police and fire service who came along to gain an appreciation of what we do.

The weekend was planned by training officers from across DRG. This year they arranged for the deployment of twelve exercise casualties with a variety of ailments across about 30 square miles of Dartmoor. They also arranged for a couple of helicopters to assist during the exercise; one from RAF Chivenor in north Devon and the second from the Devon and Cornwall Police HQ in Exeter.

For the casualties (which included me) the day started with a hearty breakfast in the canteen followed by our casualty briefing. It was really well organised with our verbal

briefing supplemented by a handily laminated card with all the relevant casualty details. Mine said:-

Name: Body Craig

Scenario: Scrambling accident at Black Tor, collapsed near path, and a grid reference.

Injuries: Laceration to head, lower back injury and shock.

Transport with: Wessex 6 (4 wheel drive).

Instructions: 'Go for an Oscar!'

After getting our briefings and cards we went into Make-up. What a laugh that was. A DRG member from Plymouth used his box of theatrical make-up to provide us with a variety of injuries. Headwounds were stuck on, dripping blood applied, eyes blackened, open fractures created and some rather impressive face burns made.

No sooner was this done than we were off in our 4x4 transports to a variety of roadheads which gave us access to the hill and our allotted locations. In some cases we set off alone and in others, minders were sent off to accompany our volunteer casualties

I had a 45 minute walk in to my grid reference. It was a nice walk in - cool, no rain but thick, thick mist. A fairly typical Dartmoor day in November. After finding a nice spot - not too easy to locate from the path - I settled in to wait.

While the casualties were getting set up, the controllers had been busy allocating teams and deploying them into various search areas. They had been given a scenario and general areas but no specific locations. This was meant to be a test for them too.

NAME: BODY CRAIG
SCENARIO: SCRAMBLING ACCIDENT AT BLACK TOR, COLLAPSED NEAR PATH.
INJURIES: LACERATION TO HEAD, LOWER BACK INJURY AND SHOCK.
TRANSPORT WITH: WESSEX 6 (4 X WHEEL DRIVE).
INSTRUCTIONS: 'GO FOR AN OSCAR!'



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- Military
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See the Blizzard Heat™ video at:-
www.blizzardsurvival.com

01248 600666
info@blizzardsurvival.com



David Hicks

It is with the greatest of sadness and deepest regret we record the news of our former team secretary David Hicks's passing. David at 54 was a Kirkby Stephen team member of long standing, offering his wholehearted support over many years until, over the last year or so, his illness made it less than possible to participate actively. Team members remember him as quietly competent and willing to tackle anything requested of him. They recall his particular skills in navigation and his interest in orienteering. He served as an excellent secretary and IT officer to the team for whom his efforts were thorough and well done. Morris music and dancing at his funeral reflected his interest and that of his wife Jan in this ancient tradition. The whole team acknowledges, with thanks and appreciation, the collection and donations received in his memory. David will remain in our thoughts.

Arthur Littlefair
Team Leader
Kirkby Stephen MRT



RAF SEARCH AND RESCUE FORCE COMMANDER CHANGEOVER

Group Captain Jonathan Dixon has taken over as RAF SAR Force Commander from Group Captain Steve Garden, who is retiring from the RAF. To mark the handover of command, both gentlemen took part in a routine training mission which took them to Holyhead Mountain, involving personnel from the RAF MRS and SAR aircrew from C Flight of No 22 Squadron, both units based at RAF Valley on Anglesey.

Looking ahead to the challenges which lie ahead over coming months, Group Captain Dixon said, 'Much has taken place within the past eight months. Following the successful move of the Force HQ from RAF St Mawgan to RAF Valley, I do not see the pace of change reducing as we move towards the start date of the SAR harmonisation programme. This is the first cross departmental harmonised programme between the DfT and MOD which will provide a coherent SAR capability with a phased roll out from 2012.'

Group Captain Dixon began his flying career as a search and rescue pilot on the Westland Sea King at RAF Manston in Kent. Following a flying tour in Northern Ireland and duties as aide-de-camp to the Deputy Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces Central Europe, he was promoted and subsequently commanded No 84 (Helicopter) Squadron in Cyprus. He returned to RAF Search and Rescue, commanding No 22 Squadron for two years. He next served overseas as the Chief of Staff with No 903 Expeditionary Air Wing in Iraq. During his last tour he was a member of the Directing Staff of the Advanced Command and Staff Course.

Group Captain Dixon's new role will see him travelling to various helicopter and mountain rescue units across the UK.

Courtesy Emergency Service Times

▲ ABOVE: GROUP CAPTAIN STEVE GARDEN (2ND LEFT) HANDS OVER COMMAND TO HIS SUCCESSOR, GROUP CAPTAIN JONATHAN DIXON (3RD FROM LEFT) RAF PARAMEDIC WINCHMAN SERGEANT ED GRIFFITHS (EXTREME LEFT) AND WARRANT OFFICER PETE WINN (EXTREME RIGHT) ACCOMPANIED THE NEW RAF SAR FORCE COMMANDER



▲ CRAIG'S SEEN BETTER DAYS!

After what seemed like no time at all I heard a search team moving up the hill on the other side of the valley from me. I could have shouted but thought they deserved a bit of a longer search so I didn't call out to them. I then heard another team above me – they were so close I could hear them talking – I expected to be found imminently so I splashed water on my face for the 'cold clammy' effect and waited... and waited and waited. The voices faded and I realised they had missed me. Through the fog I could hear the helicopters flying past – it looked like they wouldn't find me either.

After 30 minutes or so I started blowing my whistle. After another half an hour of six blasts – pause – six blasts the search team returned. The first aider swiftly moved into action and after a very professional introduction and primary survey, he followed with a good secondary survey. They made me comfortable and ready for a helicopter extraction.

Unfortunately it was almost 4pm by then and the 'End exercise' message came through on the radio. I may not have got my helicopter ride but, following the debrief, the search teams and my fellow casualties all felt it had been a worthwhile experience from which we had all benefited. Roll on the next callout!

Craig Scollick
Dartmoor Rescue Group
(Ashburton)

YORKSHIRE DALES

HOPE LIGHTS BRIGHTEN THE FUTURE

Throughout its 60 year history **Upper Wharfedale FRA** has kept at the head of the game by watching developments in the design of many pieces of equipment it uses regularly and when nothing suitable is available commercially, as with other teams, it has designed and had manufactured specific items to meet its needs.

It should come as no surprise then, that when one of the team's controllers came across a light won by his son at a BOFRA Championship Fell Race, a connection was made between the light that was designed for fell running and other outdoor activities and an ideal piece of kit that could be used in rescue work.

▶ PAGE 14

The light in question was a Hope 2 LED and it wasn't long before a 4 LED was trialed in the very harsh environment of caving. The success of this resulted in further discussions with Hope, during which they developed a prototype 1 LED lamp which proved to be just what the team needed for use as a headlamp both underground and on the surface.

Further development and modification to meet some of the conditions encountered on rescues led to an initial order being placed for six of the 1 LED and four of the 4 LED models. In addition many team members have decided to invest in one of the 1 LED lamps for their own use whilst caving or walking. The 1 LED has proven ideal for most situations – close up work, map reading as well as walking in difficult terrain – whilst the vast beam spread and distance of the 4 LED gives almost searchlight capabilities across open ground.

UWFRA Controller Harry Long feels the team has made the right decision. 'The rugged construction and reliability of these lamps have made them stand out against other systems and having the firm on our doorstep at Barnoldswick was clearly a bonus.'

Contact Hopelights at info@hopetech.com



The birth of Exmoor SRT. A brief personal recollection.

SOUTH WEST

In the early nineties I was working as a Field Surveyor for the Ordnance Survey. One morning in 1991, I arrived at my desk in Barnstaple to find a yellow flyer that one of my colleagues had picked up; he thought I might be curious. It was an invitation to attend a meeting for anyone interested in setting up a search team in North Devon. Being a keen hill walker, knowing something about maps and thinking that I might meet a woman, I decided to go along.

On the night of the meeting I duly entered the Town Room at the Civic Centre and quietly sat down. Looking around, my initial impression was that I was waiting in line for an audition for Dad's Army! The meeting started under the chairmanship of Euan Crawford, the then Emergency Planning Officer for North Devon. I was to learn that, with the demise of the Cold War, the Devon Emergency Volunteers (a civil organisation set up to co-ordinate things should The Bomb ever have been dropped) were to be disbanded. Some of its members were looking for worthwhile community based projects in which to become involved, of which this was one. An acorn had already been planted...

They had already found a name, the North Devon Search Volunteers, and it was to this

fledgling organisation that I swore my allegiance. Although I was initially cynical (having already mentally assigned the roles of Corporal Jones, Private Godfrey et al to the gathered throng!), I had a gut feeling that within the room there was a genuine will to create something special. I was to be proved right. We started with a handful of CB radios... and that was it!

At the following meetings an embryonic structure to the team was agreed upon, argued about, changed, fought over, agreed on again, altered again, re-assessed... do you get the picture?

A uniform was agreed on... we were all to wear bright red caps! It was simple, cheap and surprisingly effective. Next, a badge was designed and, at our own expense, sweatshirts sporting our very own logo were purchased and worn with pride. We had an image. It didn't last long however as, by 1992, the name had changed to Exmoor Search and Rescue Team. We redesigned the badges and sewed them on over the old ones... we now had a new image!

This was a time before laminated maps. Our indoor meetings resembled the Blue Peter studio as we cut up maps and set about them with sticky backed plastic. We gave up evenings to travel to Bideford and learn first aid under the watchful and cheery eye of Sally Friendship of St John

Multi-agency approach and the mindset to keep going by Jim MacGregor, Isle of Man Inland SAR Group

We have both a pager alerting system and SMS text facility for call outs but, at 20:10 on 12 February, the Emergency Services Joint Control Room telephoned me direct to ask if I could assist in the search for a missing person whose car had been located at the side of a coastal road. Living just ten minutes from the RV point, I arrived there at the same time as the police search adviser (Polsa).

A police dog handler and the other locally based SARDA dog handler were tasked to search north of the Howstrake tram stop, whilst I was tasked to search with my dog south of the missing person's car on the steep cliff line. To the south of Lag Birragh there are vertical cliffs down from the A11. The Douglas RNLI lifeboat was assisting the search by shining its lights towards the cliffs and sending up flares to illuminate the area. It was useful to be

able to hear how the search was progressing as most of the search groups use a common talk group on the Island's Tetra radio system. I could see the IOM Coastguard teams were searching along the top of the cliff line. Meanwhile, I could hear that the hill search teams from the Fire Service and from Civil Defence were being deployed to carry out hasty searches of the paths along the Groudle light railway and up the Groudle River, back towards Onchan.

After completing a search of the cliff line I carried on with a hasty search of the footpath south towards Onchan Harbour. Meanwhile the police and SARDA dogs continued to search the long disused Howstrake holiday camp.

Word came through at 21:30 that the lifeboat had sighted a body at the foot of the cliffs, just above

the water line. Permission was given to recover the body via the lifeboat. The Polsa had been joined by search managers from the other services and it was decided the search would need to be continued until the body had been positively identified as the missing person. After completing the hasty search, we proceeded to a new RV point at Groudle Cottages where there was more space for the assembled vehicles and a mobile control unit set up for the search managers to co-ordinate their teams under the direction of the Polsa.

Teams were still being deployed with police, Civil Defence and Fire Service personnel searching main footpaths and roads in the area. A person matching the description of the missing person was located in the pitch darkness in a shelter at Groudle Light Railway Station. The railway is run by

Swiftwater rescue training

With rescue teams increasingly called to assist in flood and swiftwater rescue situations, proper training is essential to ensure teams can operate in a safe manner in the most demanding conditions. The Gold Standard in this area is the Swiftwater Rescue Technician programme which trains team members to operate alongside other agencies and teams within an agreed protocol, enhances team safety and provides team members with an internationally recognised qualification.

Howie Crook (member of Kendal MSRT) offers swiftwater rescue technician programmes in a very cost effective package. The accelerated three-day programme is tailored to your team, run either in the Lake District or on your home patch. Costs are kept to a minimum and hard pressed volunteers save an extra day of their time over the standard four day programme.

Howie has invested in top of the range Lomo drysuits, so you don't suffer, and Safequip rescue vests which meet the latest standards. He has extensive experience in water rescue having trained police, fire, paramedics, RNLI and MR teams from across Britain, and is also a qualified Mountain Instructor and Kayak Instructor/Assessor with over 20 years of moving water experience. For further info, contact Howie at Re-Think **01539 739050** or email howardcrook@rethinktraining.co.uk



LEFT: ORIGINAL TEAM
RIGHT: ROB STURGESS

Ambulance. We went on to tackle imponderables like, 'Should we search at night?' and 'Should we go underground?' Both quite spurious as we didn't have any torches!

There was a great spirit in the team. Our early exercises were entertaining and I do remember having a lot of fun. Each exercise ended with a search – looking for stray team members whose understanding of magnetic bearings and Naismith's Rule were at best fragile. We knew our limitations however and knew we needed help. To this end we turned to Dartmoor Rescue Group whose help and support was unerring and freely given, both in advice (helping us to stop reinventing the wheel) and materially (giving us our first Land Rover). By this time, and before we had full accreditation with our two local police forces, we had already attended our first two call outs; a lady missing from a care home in Minehead and a gentleman from Challacombe. Both were fatalities. Our feet had hit the ground and we found ourselves running.

It is a testament to the spirit of this early incarnation of the team that when we realised our CB radios had a range shorter than a thrown breezeblock, individual team members put their hands in their own pockets and loaned the team, interest free, the money needed to purchase sets fit for purpose. To repay the loans, we started fundraising with jumble sales, street collections, our own 100 club, even selling ice creams at a local village fête. By the end of our first year we had a surplus of around £200 in the bank and we were dead chuffed!

We were accruing equipment from all quarters at a vast rate of knots and it soon became apparent that we had a storage problem. John Wright offered us his workshop in which to store the kit, and his drive to park the Land Rover. We bit his hand off. He then donated an ageing caravan which we painted yellow, used it as a

control vehicle and parked it alongside the Land Rover on his drive! Chris, his wife, is a saint and still supports the team now.

Things moved quickly. We became a registered charity, we were assessed by Dartmoor Rescue Group and the police and as a result we were welcomed into mountain rescue (and had to change our badges yet again – our needlework was by now second to none amongst the search and rescue teams of England and Wales!) We were accepted as a police resource for both the Devon & Cornwall, and Avon & Somerset constabularies. Exmoor National Park also came on board, seeing us as a really useful resource. We had arrived.

So that's how it started, others will fill in the gaps to the present day. The acorn planted by Barnstaple's answer to Warmington-On-Sea's Home Guard has grown into a healthy tree with sound roots. They started something special, something to be proud of. Rest assured the oak continues to be well tended.

For the record, also in the room that initial night were Sami Bryant and John Wright – both, like me, new recruits and set to give enormous contributions to the future team. Sami still does and so would John if not for his untimely death. Also a survivor of the Devon Emergency Volunteers, Ray Poole remains a stalwart supporter of the present team. Many people have since come and gone but only three of us remain from that first meeting of which just two have appeared on every call out list.

Oh yes... and yes I did meet a woman!

Rob Sturgess Search Manager
Exmoor SRT

volunteers and only operates at Christmas and at summer holiday weekends. This person was contained by the Civil Defence team that had found him until the police dog handler attended and interviewed him before ruling him out as the missing person. This highlighted the need to maintain the search ethos and for the next hour the Fire Service, Civil Defence and SARDA continued to search main paths in the area.

At 22:30 the body was positively identified at Douglas Lifeboat station and the teams stood down after a hot debrief. The incident highlighted how effectively the IOM ISAR group works together on the same comms channel and with the benefit of their respective search managers attending a central co-ordination point. Also there is clear co-operation between the groups and a willingness to re-search areas which had already been searched by other groups due to the possibility of the missing person moving into an area.

The IOM ISAR Group does not receive anywhere near the number of call outs faced by some teams in England and Wales but co-operation between the teams is excellent. Five incidents have been recorded by the group in the last month and the various special skills of the different teams have all come into use. This dedicated group consists of fire service personnel, coastguards, Civil Defence volunteers and two SARDA dog handlers, co-ordinated by three Polsas.

YES, THERE WAS A RESCUE, BUT NOW WE'RE LOOKING FOR THE LAND ROVER KEYS



© DAVID ALLAN

ACPO and mountain rescue

by ACPO ACC Staff Officer Dyfan Jones

As I sit writing this article I am trawling my brain wondering how I can make the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) interesting and relevant to mountain rescue. I have been looking for a humorous story to combine policing and mountain rescue, and whilst I'm sure many of you reading this will have a repertoire of funny stories (most likely at the expense of your local constabulary) I cannot get away from the fact that mountain rescue and policing are intrinsically serious issues.

Rescuers and police officers do share values, not only around the core issue of saving life but also an acknowledgment that it is the work and not ourselves that we should take seriously. Pomposity and self-importance have no place when lives are at risk.

But what are the police and the Association of Chief Police Officers doing for us? If I say it's complicated I can imagine thousands of eyes rolling in their sockets across the country.

One of the more frequent complaints regarding the police in this field is the disparity between forces, whether it is in terms of personal injury insurance or training assistance. You will be aware that each police force is in effect independent. There are historical, operational and constitutional reasons for this. However, we all acknowledge that pragmatic and effective collaboration, co-operation and a range of common standards are desirable and ACPO plays its part in bridging this gap.

Beyond the 44 local police forces there is no national operational policing structure and so chief officers voluntarily combine through ACPO to agree approaches, lift the performance of the police service and protect lives. ACPO is divided into fourteen broad business areas ranging from citizen focus to crime to finance and resources. To give you an idea of where search and rescue sits in the overall scheme of things we come under the Uniformed

Operations Business Area. This area is further divided into four sub-groups on operational Issues, conflict management, roads policing and emergency procedures. Search and rescue comes under emergency procedures along with other portfolios such as emergency planning (major disasters, flooding etc), infectious diseases etc. These groups are responsible for overall strategy and advising on best practice, however, in most cases (policies do sometimes become law) it is advice and cannot be imposed.

My staff and I spend a great deal of time encouraging our colleagues nationally to engage with their local mountain and cave rescue teams but in the end good local relations

are paramount. Most regions have a nominated liaison officer from the local police force (generally speaking from operational planning departments or police search co-ordinators). If your region does not have access to a liaison officer please contact me through Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) and I will try to facilitate this.

As the Assistant Chief Constable of North Wales Police, I can say with some certainty that we rely more than most on our mountain and cave rescue teams. I have the privilege of being the vice-president of the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association. I meet regularly with its Chairman Dr Tony Jones and had the pleasure of speaking to David Allan earlier this year to discuss issues which affect us. I would by no means consider myself to be an expert but I like to think that I keep in the loop and understand the critical issues

to forge good local links and working practices.

In North Wales, this co-operation has manifested itself in several ways. In partnership with NWMRA we have run several fatal incident protocol courses, where team members are taught the principles of scene security, preservation of evidence and other key skills. Teams are provided with cameras, evidence kits and other necessary equipment for use when an incident occurs in a location which our officers and crime scene examiners cannot access. The success of these courses is due, in large part, to the efforts of two of my officers in particular, Detective Inspector Gerwyn Lloyd and Detective Constable Tim Bird. Both are active members of Llanberis MRT and Ogwen Valley MRO respectively. They have combined their policing knowledge and their mountain rescue experience to produce a course which fulfils our needs and which is practical for teams operating

No police force in England and Wales has the expertise or resources to search for and rescue people in the kind of terrain you specialise in... this is why we and the public rely on you so heavily, and you never fail to deliver.

Mountain and cave rescue have to compete with a long list of police priorities from road safety to knife crime to neighbourhood policing for funding, resources and general attention. Some of these priorities stem from central government others are issues which communities tell us are important to them. Part of my job is pointing out that mountain rescue teams provide a service which, if it wasn't provided by committed volunteers, would have to be paid for by the taxpayer.

I firmly believe that the best way to maintain good relations is operationally on the ground. It's still important for David Allan, Tony Jones and I to have a good working relationship but it is down to individual teams and the local officers

in hostile circumstances. The profile of the course is increasing and indeed the last course was attended by two representatives from IMRA.

Following a critical debrief after some recent incidents NWMRA and North Wales Police identified a need for greater co-ordination between us when it comes to dealing with the media. This is an ongoing piece of work which we hope will come to fruition later this year.

I appreciate that positive publicity is the lifeblood of charitable organisations and I fully support teams speaking to the media about their work. However, as you will know only too well, there are tragic occasions when people lose their lives on the mountains. Most of you will also know that such incidents will normally

result in an inquest. In some circumstances it may even lead to other court proceedings. In these cases, much of the information which you are privy too will be subjudice or under the consideration of the court and any disclosure of this information may be considered an interference with the court process. The aim of these courses will be to foster a co-ordinated approach to the media and assist with any media handling skills which teams feel they would like to develop.

Some time ago I helped to negotiate a national agreement with Airwave to allow handsets to be retained in secure facilities by mountain rescue teams. The agreement is still in effect. I am aware that it has only been partially applied in some areas and, unfortunately, not at all in others. I am afraid this is one of those areas where the guidance is just that, though I do issue periodic reminders that the agreement is still in place. Regrettably, the current financial climate will not make things easier.

I am reliably informed that personal injury insurance provided by police forces is one of the major bones of contention amongst the teams. I have heard anecdotal evidence which amply demonstrates why this is the case. Following my meeting with David Allan and Tony Jones I began a scoping exercise to look at the possibility of a single insurance policy, modelled on the North Wales and Cumbrian models to which I have volunteered North Wales Police to manage. Sufficient interest has been expressed by some forces that I am now looking in more detail to see if a combined scheme is viable. I should stress that this is still in its infancy, there is a long way to go and not every force has signalled a willingness to take part. However, I believe that if we get a core of police forces to subscribe to the scheme, then others will see the benefits and follow suit. Watch this space.

So in closing, let me, on behalf of all my colleagues across the country, thank you all for the peerless work you do. Inland search and rescue is ultimately a police responsibility derived from a constable's duty to protect life. After all; a missing person on the side of a mountain or down a cave is still a missing person. However, while we are pretty good at finding people in most circumstances, no police force in England and Wales has the expertise or resources to search for and rescue people in the kind of terrain you specialise in. This is why we and the public rely on you so heavily, and you never fail to deliver.

Cicerone celebrates forty years in publishing

Cicerone has a birthday to tell you about. The company is forty this year. Cicerone's first guide, published in 1969, was to Winter Climbs in Ben Nevis and Glencoe, priced at whatever 35p was in old money. Cicerone has grown nearly every year since then and today, as 40 years ago, remains committed to providing the best guides for walkers, trekkers, mountaineers and cyclists.

New guidebooks for 2009 include two new Lakeland Fellranger guides and new guides for Scotland and the north of England, including Dan Bailey's second mountain ridges book, this time to the Ridges of England, Wales and Ireland. Overseas titles include guides for Walking in Austria, Trekking in Slovenia and, later this year, a guide to reaching a variety of summits – Europe's High Points.



BLUELIGHTS HORSE OF THE YEAR SHOW

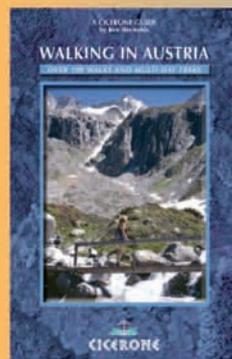
Saddle up for Blue Lights Horse of the Year

No, we're not kidding. Emergency service workers are being invited to saddle up for the Blue Lights Horse of the Year Show 2009, set to take place at Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool on Saturday 8 August.

Last year's event attracted about 5000 people, there to watch 100 horses and 40 competitors from the police and fire service compete in dressage, jumping and 'Street police nuisance lanes' and was the first time an equestrian event had been part of the World Firefighters Games. Feedback was extremely positive.

For a chance to enjoy the action this year, and win a family ticket to the final show day, answer the following question – where will the Blue Lights Horse of the Year Show 2009 take place? Email the answer and contact details to registration@bluelights.org.uk The winner will be notified in June.

CICERONE guides for 2009



Tour of the Queyras
Walking on the Orkney and Shetland Islands
Lakeland Fellranger:
guides to the Southern Fells, and Mid-Western Fells (March)
Walking in the Yorkshire Dales: North and East (March)
Walking in Austria (March)
Pyrenean Haute Route (April)
The Isle of Skye (April)
Trekking in Slovenia (April)



Autumn Highlights...

Europe's High Points
White Peak Walks (2 new guides)
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Ridges of England, Wales & Ireland
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

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*20% shorter after 18,641 miles, 7% shorter after 12,427 miles, 5% shorter after 6,213 miles; Tested against two leading competitors, from February to April 2008 by TÜV SÜD Automotive, tyre size: 225/45R17; Car: VW Golf 2.0 Fsi; Report #76230122-1. **Versus tyres without Smartwear technology.

Goodyear Team of the Year

Edale MRT has been crowned Team of the Year – an accolade which will see them receive a £2000 donation to be spent on safety equipment, courtesy of Goodyear.

As official safety partners of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales), Goodyear launched the campaign to highlight the fantastic work done by search and rescue teams across the country. Since the launch, you have been voting in your droves for who should receive the additional donation.

Neil Chapman, from Edale said, 'We're delighted to have received this donation, and can't thank Goodyear enough.'

'Like all mountain rescue teams, our members participate voluntarily. We also receive no government funding, therefore donations such as these are vital to maintain our high standards'.

The team is currently replacing one of its aging Land Rover ambulances at a total cost of almost £50,000. The prize money will therefore be used to purchase new communications equipment including a radio and satellite phone for the new vehicle.

'Goodyear takes safety extremely seriously,' explained Anna Stanley, 'and we're very pleased to have been able to make this donation to help improve the quality of the service that Edale provides.'

'We're aware that all mountain rescue teams do a fantastic job and provide a vital service in their own areas. By running this competition, we've successfully been able to raise awareness of teams locally which will hopefully benefit their fundraising efforts in 2009'.

Goodyear has also pledged to support the roll out of GPS navigational equipment for all teams and made sets of its Wrangler MTR tyres available to teams for use on their rescue vehicles, to ensure that safety is not compromised.

Neil added, 'We're extremely grateful to Goodyear for this donation which will undoubtedly help us to improve the service we provide to people across South Yorkshire'.

In addition to their win, Edale team members are soon to be stars of the small screen, in an ITV documentary, Total Emergency, which will air over the coming weeks.



TOP: SEARCH DOG TYKE ON THE RUN MIDDLE: LEFT TO RIGHT, MATT HOOD, ANDY JENKINS, NEIL CHAPMAN, ROB SMALL AND IAN BUNTING WITH THEIR NEW VEHICLE ABOVE: ANNA STANLEY FROM GOODYEAR

sponsorship news

A Yabba Dabba Doo at Bedrock and no, it's not the Flintstones

by John Whiteley, Devon CRO

January 13, 2009 saw Devon Cave Rescue Organisation (DCRO) along with Devon & Cornwall Police and the USAR team from Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Special Operations come together at Kent's Cavern, Torquay for Operation Bedrock.

Kent's Cavern is a National Protected Monument, an International Prehistoric Show Cave and a gateway to UNESCO's English Riviera Global Geopark and lies in a steeply wooded valley in the attractive village of Babacombe, now part of Torquay – the 'English Riviera'. The cave is regarded as the oldest scheduled ancient monument in the UK. Much of it was once filled with mud and clay, together with hundreds of animal bones dating back to the Ice Age. The cave was excavated over a number of years, between 1865 and 1880, by William Pengelly and many of the finds provide evidence that early man lived in the cave. These exhibits can be seen in the Natural History Museum in London and local museums.

The cave is a 'show' cave, open for tourists throughout the year. Each year the owner of the cave, Nick Powe, closes the cave for a two week period for cleaning and conservation work. Kent's Cavern is one of Devon's foremost tourist attractions and it was around this aspect that Operation Bedrock was a planned.

A senior police officer briefed the scenario for the day – a major collapse of the entrance of the cave had occurred as a result of building works to residential properties above the cave. This collapse had resulted in

a large number of people being trapped – injuries unknown.

With the briefing now over, Operation Bedrock swung into action presenting an ideal opportunity for co-working between three key organisations. Silver Command was quickly set up within one of the small rooms adjoining the cafeteria and reception areas for the show cave. Bronze were based at one of the two entrances of the cave and, of course, Gold was off site (in this case Gold was not activated). A fairly new and developing aspect of Silver command was a 'Silver SAR cell'. In this cell was a representative from ourselves (DCRO) the Fire Service USAR and also the police. This body worked on the individual tasking of search and recovery groups and reported on a regular basis to Silver Command.

The USAR team were first to enter the cave, with gas monitors. This was done on the basis of testing the environment for gas escapes – the rationale being that if there had been a building collapse of the houses above the cave, then the environment could well be contaminated by leaking gas mains. There could be stray electrical currents from high voltage mains electricity, from both the houses above and the mains lighting for the show cave (which for the purposes of the exercise were turned off). Water leaks and sewerage were also potential risks. What a horrid thought – a cave flooding with raw sewerage!

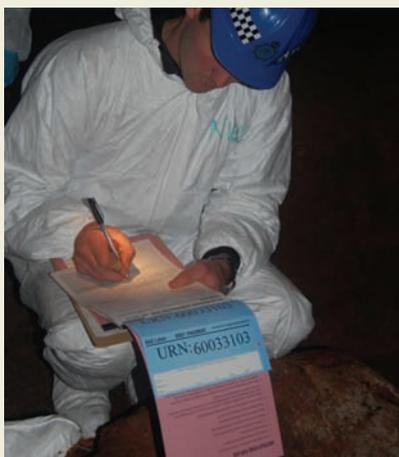
Once the initial sweep of the cave was complete and the environment declared safe, team members from DCRO and USAR entered to search for and treat the injured visitors, based on common triage protocols. The casualties were a group of students from Cornwall College studying 'Emergency Services'. The exact number of missing visitors was deliberately unclear, and their possible locations underground equally



unclear. In fact, casualties were scattered throughout the cave with a variety of injuries – from walking wounded to expired (presumed dead). For the purposes of joint working we mixed the DCRO team members and the USAR team which, by the end of the day, gave everyone a very clear understanding of the abilities and skills of both organisations.

Within the DCRO members attending Operation Bedrock we had a strong contingent of first aiders but more importantly casualty carers and also one paramedic from the Somerset Air Ambulance, so the casualties received a very prompt assessment. Those who were deemed to be a triage 'Red or 1' were managed and recovered to the surface, with the upmost care and professionalism. A variety of stretchers were used – some, if the cave environment had been more constricted, would not have been suitable for the likes of tight squeezes and twisting passages. DCRO use two React stretchers with spinal splints and also have a standard mountain rescue issue vacuum mattress. The USAR team had one Slix and also a Ferno plastic basket stretcher.

Once the cave was clear of 'live' casualties, the police deployed their Disaster Recovery Teams (DRT), with underground guides from DCRO and the USAR team. The DRT's were led to the locations of a number of casualties who were deemed dead, and their role involved the photographing and identification of the casualties, recovery of any evidence or artefacts surrounding the bodies' location and, finally, bagging of the bodies for recovery to the surface. Once on the surface, the police ran through the procedures for



dealing with multiple bodies in a temporary mortuary, each body was further photographed, items of clothing, footwear and personal effects removed, identified, labelled, photographed and bagged in evidence bags.

Communications between the Silver SAR cell and the underground teams were critical to the planning in the SAR cell, and to allow factual briefings to Silver Command. DCRO use the now-common (within cave rescue teams) Heyphone whilst, initially, the USAR team attempted to use their UHF/VHF handheld radios. The Heyphones performed well with a base set inside the SAR cell, and the ground antennae trailing out of a window and into the posh flower beds surrounding the show cave complex. The performance of the Heyphones was slightly compromised because much of the land outside of the cave is a mix of the infill dug out back in the 1880s. This can result in poor earthing. However, by using brass earthing stakes, satisfactory comms were achieved, with two underground locations and one surface.

The USAR team found that, unfortunately, UHF/VHF signals do not work well underground, as the signal does not bounce well around the twisting and turning passages of the show cave. They soon moved to a second communication method of hard-wired comms, which meant running metres and metres of cable from the Silver SAR cell into and throughout the cave. In the very near future, along with other cave rescue teams, DCRO will be testing the new cave radio the Nicola Mk3. Hopefully, this will give improved communications, but will co-work alongside the Heyphone, so perhaps we'll see the USAR teams across the UK following the lead of cave rescue teams.

Key aspects learnt from the day for all three organisations were many and the importance of co-working, recognition of our own and other organisations skills and expertise was very much the message that emerged. As a venue, Kent's Cavern was a good testing ground, although it didn't offer any tight squeezes or really muddy passages and also meant we had an easy time washing off all the kit. After all, they don't want those tourists going away covered in mud and bruises. But apart from that it provided an ideal venue for Operation Bedrock

The staff of the show cave took an active part in the operation, providing advice on sections of the cave, and I am confident that the exercise reinforced the importance of managing very large numbers of visitors to this unique venue. As for the catering staff, well they made sure all the comforts you could ask for, were available. In fact, next time we're involved in a major incident I hope the catering will be as good – I for one could not fault the excellent hot lunch they laid on for the hundred plus emergency services staff.



Pocket knives to the top of the world

The Swiss knife has been taken on expeditions to the highest mountains in the world. It has been taken up the 8848 metre Mount Everest and up Anapurna in Central Asia. In 1970, Chris Bonington led the Anapurna South expedition. This mountain is the smallest of the 14 peaks over eight thousand metres high and, like Everest, lies in the Himalayas on the border between Nepal and Tibet. Following the successful expedition, Bonington sent a letter of thanks to the Elsener knife factory for its assistance, recounting the following story:-

'Your support enable us to climb the highest and steepest mountain face in the Himalayas. It was the most difficult mountain expedition in which I have ever participated. The extremely difficult conditions tested both climbers and equipment to the full. During the expedition, the Swiss pocket knives showed themselves to be excellent servants. They proved highly versatile, for example for cutting finger and toe nails high up the mountain, or filing down a spanner to the precise width required for repairing the seal on a leaking oxygen tank.

During our adventure, I think we used every single blade on the knife except for the fish-scaling knife, there being a distinct shortage of freshwater fish halfway up the south face of Anapurna. The knives even stood up to blows from a hammer; despite this treatment the blades remained sharp. The kitchen and butcher's knives were used extensively at our base camp. Finally, they had to deal with whole necks of mutton, and I can assure you that Nepalese goats and oxen and amongst the toughest in the world.

At the end of our expedition, the kitchen knives were a much sought after prize amongst our Sherpas and I think the knives were just as sharp as they had been at the beginning of the adventure.'

In another letter, Bonington thanked the company for its support of the British Everest expedition up the south west face in 1975:-

'...as always the Swiss knives proved their worth superbly. In fact, Doug Scott and Dougal Haston reached the top thanks to one of your knives. Doug used it to free Dougal's oxygen system which had become blocked with ice... From 'A Friend in Need. True Stories' by Victorinox.

For further information about Victorinox knives, visit victorinox.com or call 0116 234 4644 for details of your nearest stockist.

What tales can your Victorinox tell?

Last issue we asked you to write in and tell us your 'true story' (maximum 200 words!). We promised to feature the best one, and reward the writer with a SwissChamp XLT, boasting 50 functions and worth a cool £125. Now, either you were all far too busy having adventures to put pen to paper, or not one single person has ever used a

Swiss knife for anything more exciting than demonstrating that yours has more blades than your mate's. And we're sure that's not true.

One entry did drop into the inbox, which I am keeping on file (must try slightly harder though Bob – I know you'll be reading this! Ed.) but we know there must be more tales out there, positively bursting to write themselves. So we've extended this to another issue... Come on... you know you want to...

Adored by adventurers and gadget fans the world over, BBC TV wildlife expert Simon King describes the SwissChamp as 'the one essential piece of kit I have with me on all my trips. A classic piece of kit and a complete must have.' So what are you waiting for? Send your story to editor@mountain.rescue.co.uk and watch this space.



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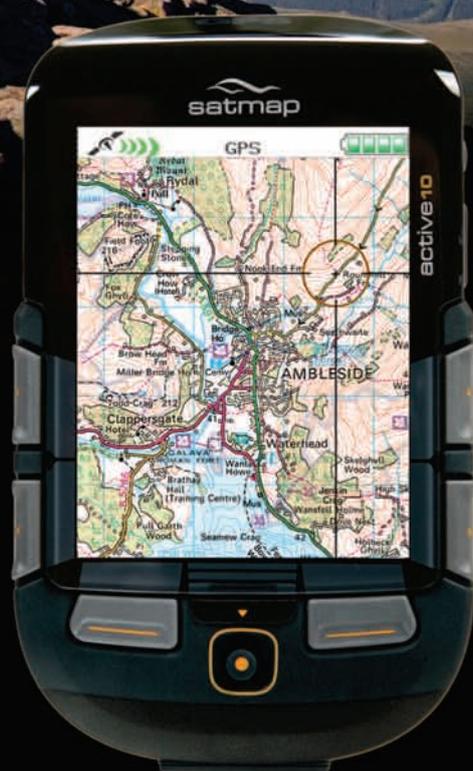
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As reviewed by The Gadget Show on five

QUARTERLY INCIDENT REPORT FOR ENGLAND AND WALES SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2008

The following is a listing of the number of incidents attended by MR teams in England and Wales during the period from 01/09/2008 to 31/12/2008. It is grouped by region and shows the date (day/month) the incident began. It is not comprehensive as many incidents have yet to be reported.

Lake District

Cockermouth	06/09, 17/09, 22/09, 01/10, 05/10, 23/10, 25/10, 25/10 25/10, 26/10, 21/11, 23/11, 07/12, 29/12, 29/12
Coniston	11/09, 14/09, 21/09, 04/10, 09/10, 15/10, 24/10, 28/10 04/11, 06/11, 29/11, 27/12, 28/12, 30/12, 30/12, 30/12
Duddon & Furness	30/09, 02/11, 11/11
Kendal	13/09, 13/09, 14/09, 28/09, 30/09, 04/10, 12/10, 24/10 25/10, 27/10, 11/11, 16/11, 14/12, 28/12, 28/12
Keswick	04/09, 06/09, 06/09, 08/09, 11/09, 20/09, 28/09, 04/10 05/10, 25/10, 25/10, 25/10, 25/10, 30/10, 31/10, 08/11 05/12, 19/12, 22/12, 28/12
Kirkby Stephen	07/09, 23/09, 30/09, 13/10, 23/10, 25/10, 04/11, 11/11
Langdale Ambleside	13/09, 13/09, 18/09, 20/09, 30/09, 04/10, 11/10, 12/10 12/10, 15/10, 25/10, 25/10, 29/10, 30/10, 31/10, 01/11 16/11, 03/12, 03/12, 04/12, 06/12, 07/12, 07/12, 12/12 12/12, 16/12, 22/12, 22/12, 28/12, 28/12, 30/12
Patterdale	04/09, 04/09, 04/09, 05/09, 15/09, 18/09, 28/09, 29/09 10/10, 11/10, 14/10, 09/11, 16/11, 06/12, 14/12, 14/12 22/12, 29/12
Penrith	04/09, 05/09, 14/09, 18/09, 21/09, 23/09, 28/09, 09/10 13/10, 14/10, 23/10, 24/10, 25/10, 28/11, 06/12, 06/12 08/12/9
Wasdale	06/09, 08/09, 11/09, 16/09, 21/09, 03/10, 22/10, 25/10 26/10, 26/10, 28/10, 23/11, 20/12, 22/12, 26/12, 31/12

Mid-Pennine

Bolton	01/09, 10/09, 11/09, 14/09, 18/09, 21/09, 22/09, 05/10 07/10, 10/10, 12/10, 18/10, 18/10, 29/10, 30/10, 03/11 14/11, 16/11, 28/11, 29/11, 02/12, 03/12, 03/12, 04/12 08/12, 30/12, 31/12
Bowland Pennine	11/09, 14/09, 28/09, 10/10, 12/10, 12/10, 20/10, 08/11 11/11, 22/11, 06/12, 23/12, 24/12
Calder Valley	10/09, 05/10, 18/10, 04/11, 07/11, 08/11, 04/12
Holme Valley	19/11, 19/11
Rossendale & Pendle	16/09, 27/09, 27/09, 18/10, 08/12

NE England

Cleveland	06/09, 12/09, 20/09, 06/11, 14/11, 18/11, 19/11, 2/11, 04/12, 20/12, 29/12
Scarborough & Ryedale	07/09, 17/09, 27/09, 28/09, 02/10, 21/10
Swaledale	06/09, 23/09, 12/10, 20/12, 11/11, 09/12, 20/12
Teesdale & Weardale	23/09, 27/09, 30/09, 17/12, 20/12, 20/12, 29/12

North Wales

Aberglaslyn	12/10, 16/10, 25/10, 29/10, 29/10, 08/11, 07/12, 31/12
Llanberis	04/09, 04/09, 14/09, 15/09, 19/09, 27/09, 03/10, 11/10 14/10, 17/10, 19/10, 23/10, 26/10, 08/11, 05/12, 06/12 07/12, 10/12, 25/12, 28/12, 28/12, 29/12, 30/12
North East Wales	06/09, 18/10, 18/10, 19/10, 20/10, 16/11, 03/12
Ogwen Valley	05/09, 10/09, 11/09, 13/09, 15/09, 16/09, 20/09, 24/09 24/09, 27/09, 27/09, 29/09, 01/10, 08/10, 11/10, 11/10 18/10, 23/10, 24/10, 25/10, 27/10, 27/10, 09/11, 21/11 29/11, 06/12, 18/12, 28/12, 29/12, 31/12
Outward Bound Wales	16/09
Snowdonia Nat Park	29/09, 23/10
South Snowdonia	16/10, 25/10, 31/12

Peak District

Buxton	01/10, 01/10, 15/10, 28/10, 10/11, 12/11, 17/11, 17/11
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	18/11, 23/11, 27/11, 27/11, 28/11, 17/12, 25/12, 30/12 30/12
Derby	29/09, 10/11
Edale	01/10, 01/10, 28/10, 29/10, 12/11, 17/11, 17/11, 18/11 23/11, 26/11, 27/11, 28/11, 30/11, 30/11, 06/12, 07/12 17/12, 25/12, 30/12, 30/12, 30/12
Glossop	25/09, 01/10, 01/10, 12/10, 17/11, 17/11, 18/11, 02/12 02/12, 02/12, 02/12, 04/12, 04/12
Kinder	25/09, 06/10, 15/10, 02/11, 17/11, 17/11, 18/11, 21/11 23/11, 27/11, 02/12, 02/12, 02/12, 02/12, 04/12, 30/12
Oldham	06/09, 14/09, 16/09, 21/09, 22/09, 08/10, 20/10, 06/11 10/11, 19/11, 19/11, 02/12, 02/12, 05/12, 26/12
Woodhead	04/09, 16/11, 17/11, 17/11, 19/11, 19/11, 07/12, 07/12

South Wales

Brecon	11/09, 20/09, 21/09, 21/09, 23/09, 27/09, 03/10, 04/10 05/10, 07/10, 10/10, 24/10, 26/10, 26/10, 29/10, 22/11 25/11, 27/11, 02/12, 07/12, 09/12, 10/12, 26/12, 28/12
Western Beacons	02/09, 02/09, 11/09, 14/09, 20/09, 21/09, 23/09, 27/09 03/10, 04/10, 04/10, 05/10, 15/10, 24/10, 01/11, 27/11 02/12, 10/12, 21/12, 26/12, 28/12
Central Beacons	02/09, 02/09, 06/09, 06/09, 11/09, 14/09, 20/09, 20/09 21/09, 21/09, 23/09, 27/09, 04/10, 05/10, 07/10, 10/10 12/10, 15/10, 24/10, 26/10, 01/11, 22/11, 23/11, 24/11 25/11, 27/11, 02/12, 09/12, 26/12, 28/12
Longtown	21/09, 23/09, 07/10, 25/11, 07/12, 28/12

South West England

Avon & Somerset	17/10
Cornwall	05/09, 06/09, 14/09, 21/09, 12/10, 21/10, 25/10, 29/10 30/10, 01/11, 13/11, 17/11, 29/11, 03/12, 10/12, 15/12 17/12, 18/12
Dartmoor	02/09, 26/09, 12/10, 15/12
Exmoor	08/09, 05/10, 15/10, 17/10, 08/11, 04/12

Yorkshire Dales

CRO	08/09, 11/09, 15/09, 25/10, 27/10, 11/11, 30/12
Upper Wharfedale	10/09, 27/09, 03/10, 05/10, 12/10, 20/12, 22/12

RAF

RAF Valley	29/09, 23/10, 29/10, 31/12
RAF Leeming	20/09, 12/10, 25/10, 30/12

SARDA

England	10/09, 27/09, 23/09, 30/09, 04/10, 25/10, 29/10, 17/11 06/12, 20/12, 24/12, 22/12, 30/12
Lakes	13/09, 18/09, 23/09, 30/09, 13/10, 23/10, 25/10, 25/10 25/10, 28/10, 30/10, 31/10, 04/11, 11/11, 19/12, 22/12 22/12
Wales	06/09, 11/10, 20/10, 25/10, 29/10, 03/12, 07/12, 23/12 24/12
South Wales	23/09, 04/10, 05/10, 15/10, 24/10, 26/10, 01/11, 22/11 23/11, 24/11, 07/12, 09/12, 10/12, 21/12
Southern Scotland	13/10

Non specialists (Non MR)

	11/09, 18/10, 16/09, 11/10, 27/11, 28/12, 31/12
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Keswick MRT: Tuesday 20 January 2009: Rescue No 7. Saving lives in wild and remote places

A difficult but successful rescue of a group of walkers, stuck in extreme conditions, on Skiddaw in the Lake District...

Saving Lives...

The rescue started with a pager message on 2.30pm – ‘Group of 4 stuck on Skiddaw’ – and concluded at 9.00am the following morning when we were all relieved to receive an update with the news, – ‘Casualty had core temperature of just 24.1° C when admitted to A&E. She’ll be OK, expected release tomorrow.’

This casualty wrote several days later to say, ‘I am at last able to move the fingers on my right hand enough to write to you all to say a very big thank you for saving my life...’

In the words of one Keswick team member who summed it up for all of us, ‘Feel good. Sore, tired... but good.’

Our (most serious) casualty went on to say

in her email, ‘I know there were individuals who played a particular part in helping to bring me down on a stretcher but I wish to thank you all for your efforts in being there for me and for my friends [*] – we know that without your help we would not be here to tell the tale!’

[*] Another of the casualties owes her life to a crucial decision made on the hill that night and to the skills of one of the Keswick search dogs, Mac, and his handler (of which, more later).

In fact, a total of 71 rescuers responded, including members of the Cockermouth, Patterdale and Keswick teams, plus eight SARDA Lakes search dogs and their handlers, and altogether we saved five lives that night.

Wild & Remote Places?

‘Skiddaw is often described as ‘merely a grassy hill.’ But its summit is the summit of a mountain. The summit is completely exposed to the north and its weather can be fierce.’ AW Wainwright, 1961

During the rescue it became apparent that five (not four) people from the original party of seven were stuck. A group of two had made their own way down to Keswick and called at our base to say so. That left a group of four on the hill, but each group thought that the seventh person was with the other. She was, in fact, alone, lost and in considerable danger.

The walking party of seven friends were

Lake District

out enjoying the day together, training for a big trek this year in the Himalaya. They had planned a fair route for their abilities and experience but were overcome by the conditions underfoot and the atrocious weather on the summit, especially the poor visibility, plus the wind speed and resultant wind chill.

In the event, snow, ice, 50+ mph winds and a white-out severely hampered navigation on this otherwise familiar hill.

Our GPS-equipped radios were an enormous help throughout the search and rescue in these very difficult conditions: where radio signal coverage permits, they pinpoint each rescuer on a map on the computer screen back at our base.

Keswick deputy team leader who made the initial response takes up the tale...

'I rang the mobile number given and was relieved when it was answered. I started to ask the usual questions. Where are you? How many in the group. Any injuries? At first I thought, this sounds like a little girl on the end of the phone. She was quite anxious, talking very quickly and obviously having to shout down the phone to make herself heard.'

The upshot was that there were four of them in the group and they were stuck in high winds and white-out conditions. They had no injuries but were starting to get quite cold. Asked if they could move to a more sheltered position they felt that they couldn't move safely from where they were.

The grid reference given was only four figures. Asked about their route, the group said they had started their walk at Millbeck, gone past a waterfall and continued up Broad End towards the top. This was all we had to go on.

Our first vehicle drove up the icy forest track to the col behind Dodd for the fastest access to the summit ridge.

The second vehicle was despatched to Millbeck, from where team members would retrace the group's intended route. Keswick search dog Ginny and her handler were tasked to ascend Skiddaw by the 'normal' route via Jenkin Hill.

'I then rang again to see how they were doing, to tell her what we were doing and that we were on our way. We find that if we are in frequent contact with a casualty it not only helps them, in that they know what's going on, but we also pick up snippets of information we didn't have before.'

That action proved to be vital in locating and reaching the group quickly.

'During the conversation I quizzed her again about their location and, this time she managed to give me an altitude of 928m – a very precise figure. There is a spot height of 928m on the ridge, just 1/2k south of the summit trig point.' [The group had established that they were in the small shelter cairn at this point on the exposed summit ridge].

After a quick chat with a deputy team leader in the first Land Rover, our 4WD Transit was re-directed to follow it.

Knowing that radio coverage at the back of Skiddaw is poor, we contacted the team leader of Cockermouth MRT, to say we had a potentially serious call out and ask if he would open their base to aid radio communications.

Once again, we contacted the group to let them know how far away from them our first team members were now.

'You could hear the relief in her voice when told they were half an hour away. She said they were very cold now.'

Some impressions recalled by the first wave of rescuers on the hill...

'...slogging up front of hill – icy but sheltered from wind... need for urgency and speed but must keep together... casualties told we will arrive in half an hour – we'll be running then!... hit by a gale as we topped-out...'

'...v windy... idiot... idiot... should have gone home to rest strained Achilles'... idiot – why are you carrying a heavy stretcher?!... regroup on last climb to summit... windy, frozen shale and snow – scarily slippy... visibility poor'...

'...the wind was stripping the snow from the rocky scree, which was covered in ice... just

and 3 fed; Casualty 4 not... all moved into more sheltered position, into a shelter [that we had carried-up]... Casualty 4 put into casualty bag – deteriorating quickly (GCS down to 8)... curled up in foetal position making incomprehensible sounds... expressed need for speedy evacuation to team members (lots of times – sorry lads!!)'

In the meantime, before the light faded completely, two team members had made a quick search of the immediate area and the summit ridge in an attempt to find the remaining member of the walking group, but to no avail.

Knowing we still had a missing fifth person to find, we asked Cockermouth team if they could help with this and co-ordinate the rest of the SARDA Lakes search dogs. We agreed a search area on the North side of Skiddaw and left them to get on with it, confident in the knowledge gained from working together closely that this was in good hands.

The second wave of Keswick team members had arrived at the casualty site now, making 15 in total. Getting our four casualties off the hill, with one of them (so far) on a stretcher was going to be very hard work and it needed doing quickly. The best route by far in the conditions would be the 'tourist' path down

We all know the dangers you put yourselves through in helping us and are truly humbled that we survived through your dedication...

standing up was difficult... the light and visibility had deteriorated and it was difficult to see even with goggles on...'

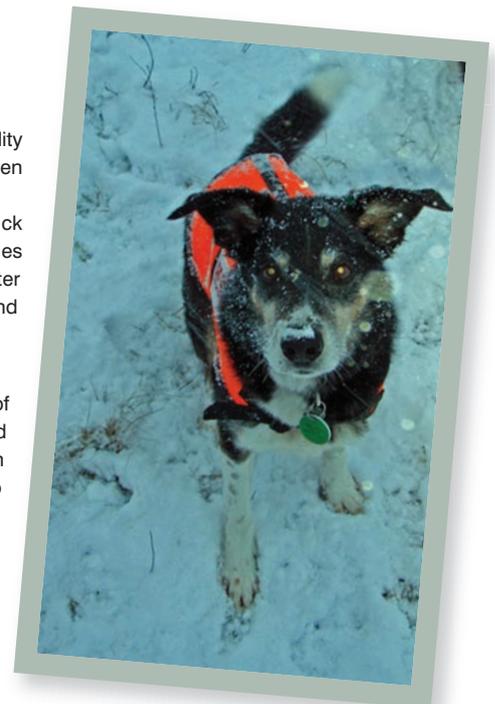
Soon, though, the first wave of Keswick team members found the four casualties huddled on the summit ridge, who said later that they 'will never forget the joy of hearing and seeing you!!'

The Keswick team paramedic recalls...

'I arrived first on the ridge... relief of seeing group immediately: no extended search... but casualties have little protection from wind here... bottle of water lying next to them totally solid – these guys are going to be cold... get to work and assess casualties whilst rest of team find more sheltered spot and assemble stretcher for our route down.

'Casualty 1 – cold but fine; Casualty 2 – cold but fine, has had heart op recently; Casualty 3 – cold fine but with severe thigh cramp. Casualty 4 – cold, not fine! ...unco-operative, unable to converse and stiff-jointed...'

'Tried to feed casualties... casualties 1, 2



SEARCH DOG MAC
PHOTO: KESWICK MRT



Jenkin Hill, despite this being back into the wind initially. At this point, we asked Patterdale MRT to help, as they were already out and about. To their credit they came straight from finishing a search on High Street and, after checking-in with our Transit, now parked on the Gale Road below Skiddaw, for flasks, food and yet more equipment, they set-off up Jenkin Hill in good humour.

Meanwhile, knowing that help would be on its way, three Keswick team members and a search dog headed back up towards the summit for one last search, leaving twelve Keswick team members remaining to evacuate the four casualties.

[Note: each walking casualty needed a rescuer on either side of them for support and guidance. Our stretcher requires six team members to carry or sledge it any distance. We usually work in shifts, with those 'resting' from a turn on the stretcher carrying the rucksacks, route-finding, and providing light by pointing torches at the stretcher bearers' feet].

The deputy team leader who made this life-saving judgement on the hill admits that it was a very close call indeed...

'We now had one casualty on a stretcher, one that was marginal (who later needed carrying on a stretcher) and two that I knew would need considerable assistance in walking off. The visibility was between five and ten metres on the ridge with strong winds.

'Do we all go down with the four casualties? Effective searching would be impossible with just a small number of team members and we literally had our hands full. I knew that Base would have more team members and other teams on the way to help. I thought the chances of finding the fifth casualty were slim but if she was lying on the fell she would not survive the night.

'After checking that the team members we were leaving behind had enough equipment, I decided that three of us would go and have a look. We searched the lee slope of the ridge, at times wading thigh-deep in powder snow and other times on frozen rock, covered in verglas.

The conditions were deteriorating and the light was gone. Radio mikes, goggles and jackets were all icing-up.

'From the trig point we worked diagonally down towards the fence, which was almost buried in snow. Visibility was down to 10m, when search dog Mac started to bark and then led us to the casualty, some 70m away from the fence.

'I would judge our effectiveness searching without a dog to have been less than 1%. The fact that we had a dog with us tipped the balance for me in deciding to search for the fifth person. I have no doubt that Mac saved her life.'

Conditions on the ridge were very difficult. Team members were aided by GPS radio tracking from our base, guiding them towards the top – despite being only a few metres away from the trig point, normally a prominent landmark! (Mac's performance in those conditions converted at least one astounded and humbled search dog 'non-believer').

Mac's handler remembers...

'The snow had drifted along the fence so that only the top couple of inches of it were showing. We sank up to thigh deep in places making it hard going. A report came in that a lone headtorch had been spotted descending Jenkin Hill and this was possibly the fifth person, but communications were very broken. We could not stop searching because of an assumption. We pressed on.

'As we stopped to check our location, I didn't notice at first that Mac had darted off, and looked round just in time to see him coming down the slope in front of us. He barked, barking urgently before turning and heading back up the way he had come – telling us he had found something. We headed up the slope, following him into more exposed conditions.

'Then I saw the orange survival bag on an open area of iced, frozen grass – we had found the missing fifth person. She was lying with her head and shoulders out of the bag and into the prevailing wind, her gloved hand gripped around a walking pole, her head covered in snow. She was alive, but very cold. She could speak, but was confused and shaking, clearly suffering from hypothermia.

'I knelt down to shelter her and let her rest

her head on me while talking to her and Mac shuffled in beside her for shelter. We got into a shelter, which was a struggle to keep down in the wind and changed her cold, wet hat and gloves for dry ones then tried to get some food inside her.

'Do we request a stretcher or do we walk her down? Was she too cold to walk? We transmitted our 'find' and our grid reference. We were not sure how long it would take for backup to arrive but the fact that she was shivering, meant we decided to get her on her feet. Waiting any

longer would have been dangerous for her in these conditions.

'We headed down out of the worst of the wind, supporting our casualty, and made our way back to the fence while one team member concentrated on the navigation (using dependable map and compass, backed-up by my GPS).

'The going was very slow due to conditions underfoot and the cold, our casualty was struggling to walk due to the cold. We encouraged her continually as we struggled, and made gradual progress along the fence over Bakestall. As we descended, the wind dropped and increasing numbers of Cockermouth team came to join us and help support our casualty off the hill. She was becoming warmer by the minute and was now out of immediate danger.

'As we reached the lower slopes, the Cockermouth vehicles below Dash Falls were a very welcome sight. By now, it was gone 8.00pm and we had been out for five hours in terrible conditions. I was tired and hungry. Mac was too, as he had missed his dinner.

'However, the night was not over yet. Over the radio, we learnt that the rest of the team evacuating the party of four were still on the hill. Two of the casualties were now on stretchers and the other two needed help to walk, so progress was slow. Worse still, the second stretcher party were still on top of Jenkin Hill. Cockermouth and Keswick team members sped-off now to join the Patterdale and Keswick team members already making their way up Jenkin Hill to help.'

Back to our Paramedic and the stretcher parties descending Jenkin Hill...

'1 stretcher and three walking with assistance, at first... hoping that casualty with cramp would ease with walking... difficult to keep all together on summit ridge... hard to keep track of all people whilst hauling a stretcher in these conditions... overriding need to keep going as quickly as possible... regular checks of casualty on stretcher – still moving and groaning – GOOD, keep going... HELL, THIS IS HARD WORK!

'Painstakingly slow on frozen scree when off route... GPS radios – brilliant invention... added boost on hearing fifth casualty found and

75TH MOUNTAIN RESCUE ANNIVERSARY

doing well... team with casualty with cramp gone to ground... but more people and gear coming up the hill... regular checks on casualty on stretcher – still moving and groaning – GOOD, keep going...

'HELL, THIS IS HARD WORK... off the scree – great... but into knee deep, soft snow – f***** brilliant!!... worried about two walking casualties going slowly... pep talks and good support from team members keeping them going...'

With a wind chill factor of minus 13 °C, a 80+km per hour wind, ice on the summit scree and visibility down to a few metres, Skiddaw was not a comfortable place to be that night... let alone to be hauling stretchers and supporting casualties off the fell.

While co-ordinating all the rescue resources involved required a very clear head from the deputy team leader and his small group of helpers back at base, enormous respect goes to all the rescuers working together out on the hill who, despite these very difficult conditions, concentrated on finding and bringing all the casualties back down to safety.

Meanwhile, back on Jenkin Hill...

'...Base on radio for us... can't hear all of message for wind... stop, try to talk... glove off, hood frozen, still can't hear... move two foot... stop stretcher tipping... move below stretcher... hold... move two foot... repeat... feels like hours...must keep moving... second walking casualty almost unresponsive... stretcher case unresponsive... others will catch up.

'...message comes in over radio – fifth casualty found, evacuating to the north – tell walking casualties to cheer them up...

'...stop... regroup... second walking casualty v. bad... back to three hauling the stretcher... won't run straight... regroup...

'...top of the zigzags now... stretcher stops again – caught on something... just stop and look at it... surely it can't be my turn to lift it again?... ** is just looking at it, too!... he's as tired as I am... keep going...

'...Patterdale team doctor stops on his way up to check casualties... he comes down with us as a Keswick team doctor is already with the second stretcher party...

'...really good boost to meet other team members coming up the hill with comments of support and encouragement...

'...never been so pleased to see light of Keswick come out of the gloom... and to hand over the stretcher to members of the Patterdale team...

'...lights of Keswick in sight... could lie down on path... knackered...

'...too tired to chat and joke as normal on way home – drink three cups of hot chocolate in Transit before we reach Keswick... fish and chips at base when we arrive back...'

The second wave off the hill arrived back at base about an hour later and devoured some pizzas and a glass of wine, before drying and sorting out all their equipment, ready for the next rescue. (The wine had been donated to

Keswick team by a grateful casualty in 2008 and it was very welcome tonight!) Many team members did not get home until well after midnight and there was still more sorting and checking of equipment to be done the next day.

Of course, we expect the same treatment when it's our turn to help out Cockerthorpe or Patterdale... eh, folks!

Altogether, two casualties were transferred by Cumbria Ambulance Service to the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle, one with hypothermia, who was accompanied en route by the Patterdale team doctor, and one with severe cramps.

The other three casualties were taken to Keswick Cottage Hospital for check ups. It is unlikely any of them would have survived the night where they were, stuck in such appalling conditions.

Word came through the next day (we don't always get any feedback on our casualties so it's always really useful to know things that can help to reinforce or improve our first aid diagnosis and treatment skills for next time).

'[Casualty] (aged 64) was pretty ill, with slow atrial fibrillation (35-40) and a GCS of 7. Core temperature on arrival at hospital was 24.1C. BRILLIANT job by [Paramedic] and the stretcher team.

'They had realised she was as close to death as you can get and evacuated her rapidly and as smoothly as possible. It was a real achievement to maintain some cardiac output. Not sure how she will get on in hospital; rather disappointing initially but let's hope that her underlying physiology will compensate.'

It did. To finish with the heartfelt words of this particular casualty, 'We all know the dangers you put yourselves through in helping us and are truly humbled that we survived through your dedication as have countless others before us, and as will many more in the future.

'Words cannot express our sincere thanks, very particularly mine, and my donation is a drop in the ocean to what your organisation deserves – what price can anyone put on a life?! Many, many, MANY thanks.'

*Thanks to:- Search dog Mac, Patterdale MRT, Cockerthorpe MRT, SARDA Lakes search dogs and handlers, Andy and Jessie at the National Trust for proof reading, Mr and Mrs *** (2008 Rescue No 3) for the wine – very much appreciated after a long night. Thank you!*

Skiddaw summit note:- A Pictorial Guide to the Northern Fells, by A W Wainwright. Book Five, The Northern Fells.

Visit www.bbc.co.uk/cumbria/content/webcams/keswick_webcam.shtml for a regularly updated view of Skiddaw.

Glossary:- GCS. Glasgow Coma Scale – used to assess level of consciousness.

keswickmrt.org.uk

Having read the various comments on the above, and Mike Nixon on how the Keswick (originally called the Borrowdale MRT) was formed after an accident to Wilfred (not William) Noyce on Napes, Great Gable... Before the Second World War there was a 'rescue team' in Borrowdale, made up mainly of workers from Honister Quarry. Their 'leaders' were Gerry Wright (founder of the Mountaineering Council – later changed to the well known BMC) and Stanley Watson, a local mountain guide – who once climbed Kern Knotts crack blindfold!! The Abrahams brothers made a film of this which must be in somebody's dusty archive?

There are photos of this quarry team leaving Seathwaite and crossing Stockley Bridge wearing only their work clothes – no fancy red caggys in those days – and carrying the St John's stretcher en route from a 'call out', or whatever it was called then.

In addition to the quarry team, the Keswick St John Ambulance Brigade in the 1930s carried the first 'rescue box' to the top of Styhead Pass which contained a St John's stretcher and fastened to a pole, alongside a box with a 'suitcase' inside, containing first aid kit. The former lasted into the 1940/50s but the suitcase was ripped from its mountings by a storm and the contents scattered over the fellside with some bandages floating in Styhead Tarn. In the mid-1950s, the Keswick team carried up the second box (similar to what is there today).

So there we are – a little bit of memory from the past, when there were no vehicles with screaming sirens and flashing lights, no proper protective clothing, no head torches, no crampons, no radios, no pagers etc etc... just a willingness to help those in trouble on the fells day and night.

Des Oliver





Bowland Pennine MRT: Christmas Eve 2008 Rescue No 42.

This was the second call for search assistance from Lancashire police in 24 hours. A missing person search of a mature wooded plantation. Paul Durham reports.

The pager alerted us to possible search for a 61 year old vulnerable male whose vehicle had been found by police near the hamlet of Whitewell in the heart of Bowland at just before 14:00. At the end of the day, 'white' we were not. 'Well' we were, but it could have been a very different outcome.

The call out page was not received until 15:09 by which time the team's SARDA search discrimination dog, Mij, and handler Iain, had been dispatched to the location, along with air scenting dog and handler, Andy Colau. The radio traffic between them and our control during our approach indicated the dogs were showing great interest in a number of locations but seemed to be unable to get a lock on. Upon arrival, we were briefed that Mij had trailed a scent from the misper's van into the wood that straddled the nearby summit and that the police air support unit had cleared the open ground in the vicinity. As the dog teams withdrew, it was decided an intense sweep of the wood around

the indicated high interest areas would be undertaken. By this time the light had gone.

Fourteen of us made our way to the wood edge and formed a compact line-out, the spacing between us only 5-7 metres. The left hand end of the line was parallel with a path through the wood – a clearly defined feature – the right hand end floating, with me at the end of it. The plan was to sweep through the wood then, when we emerged at the other side, the line would pivot around me for the return leg. Someone suggested I should be the swivel, I preferred to be the pivot. The time was now 17:00.

Once into the plantation, the regular spacing of the pine trees and the good ground under foot gave no indication of what was to come. With head torches sweeping 360° and the searchlight coming on every twenty metres or so, to conserve battery life, the first leg was uneventful and took exactly one hour. The second leg started, again uneventfully for the first 200 metres or so. Then to a man we

encountered a mass of felled trees the likes of which I've never encountered in 35 years of searches. It became clear that at some point in the past, part of this exposed summit plantation had been flattened by cyclonic winds with mature trees laying on the ground, the tops of which were pointing straight at us. The searchlight was useless in giving me any indication of the depth of the area, I could see nothing beyond the first 10-15ft diameter root ball.

Branches of all sizes and diameters were encountered as I battled my way through. The sky was black, my breath white in my headtorch reflection and the air blue.

I levered myself over moss covered trunks, snagging my jacket and trousers on every stump. Branches snapped and crumbled into dust as I grabbed for every possible handhold. The flattening must have been some years ago as new trees had now sprung up amidst the carnage, adding to my difficulty. The discipline of the sweep line immediately evaporated as I

Mid Pennine

was joined by Pete and Nick as we fought to make forward progress. When a root ball was encountered we climbed over, around, under them. We jumped into the water and mud filled hollow they left or straddled over them trying to avoid the deepest part. Hands by now were covered in mud, lichen, moss, who knows what else. We crawled beneath tree stumps, trying to find the least torturous route forward. Time after time, try as we might cul de sac after dead end was encountered. All to be reversed. Four cakes and two buns this was hard work. The radio traffic and shouted voices indicated we were all in the same boat – scant consolation

I crawled under a trunk and, using a side branch, pushed against it to lever myself forward. It crumbled in my hand and the trunk settled a few millimetres into the mud with a soft squish. My pelvis and legs were still beneath it. In an adrenalin filled panic I rolled into a foetal ball in my eagerness to escape. Laying on my back I looked up at the trunk, it was about a 300mm in diameter. Laying across the top of it, two further trees of similar girth. The muddy water trickling down my neck wasn't cold, not till much later anyway. The thought of the consequences of what I'd just escaped from frightened the living daylights out of me. I instantly taught myself a lesson – again would I crawl under a fallen tree stump in search of anybody, male or female, young or old, accidentally or intentionally needed to be search for. Even with colleagues in very close proximity, without lifting gear or chain saws the chances of escaping unharmed were slim.

We'd all lost any concept of time, the only thing that mattered was getting out safely, keeping to our intended bearing as closely as we could. Eventually the conditions eased and the sight of lights appeared across the valley.

Emerging into the open was heaven. I've never smoked but if someone had offered a Henson and Bedges who knows. We stood there, covered from head to foot in stinking mud and stagnant water. I'm still pulling pine needles from various orifices days later as I write this.

As we leaned again the wall waiting for the others to emerge, I recited the escapade under the trees. Nick admitted he'd never considered the possibility, as the colour metaphorically drained from his face.

ABC upon approach to a casualty site is driven into us from our first training session. The lesson I've learned from this experience is that occasionally situations sneak up on you well before the casualty site is even reached. Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks.

Postscript: The misper was found in the open ground near to the wood the following day – Christmas Day – and taken to hospital for treatment. The dog handlers had both reported they sensed or may have glimpsed someone intent on avoiding being identified whilst the dogs were working.

bowlandpenninemrt.org.uk



This month's **Star Letter** wins a Mag-Lite 2D Cell courtesy of Burton McCall*



GREETINGS FROM AUSTRIA

I thought it about time I expressed my appreciation for the Mountain Rescue mag again and let you know I am still alive and kicking here in southern Austria! The 'newsletter' gets better all the time, thanks to your enthusiasm and brilliant editorship. I always look forward to its arrival as I enjoy reading about the progress being made by the MRC and teams. I still have a fringe involvement in mountain rescue with the Cleveland team but, unfortunately, only at the end of a keyboard – practices and call outs at this distance are a bit difficult. So, many thanks once again for keeping me in contact.

Spring is starting to show its first signs here. There's still over half a metre of snow on the north side of the house and we still have the odd brief snowfall (100-200mm) but the warmer temperatures at our level (750m), mean it disappears fairly quickly. The avalanche risk has been high for the past few weeks – the rescue teams have been quite busy. It was recently the tenth anniversary of the Galtür avalanche which killed 31 people. Seeing our hotel owner again in a TV interview, reliving the tragedy, was heart-rending. His wife and daughter-in-law were among those killed as well as a guest. He, a fellow mountain rescuer, had managed to get us on the last helicopter out before the avalanche struck. By the way, Austria has just announced that it has now put legal powers in place to prosecute/charge off-pistors/tourers who cause avalanche damage.

Overall, we've had a great winter. It started late November and then we had 1.5 metres of snow in two days in mid-December, followed by four weeks of high pressure so the conditions have been superb. With that and numerous snowfalls since, the locals believe we've had one of the snowiest winters on record. Our local ski resort, Nassfeld, still has over 3.5m of snow on the pistes so the skiing has been brilliant. Unfortunately, I am still 'rubbish' but I get down even if I have to use gravity – the hard way! We've gone cross-country skiing most days since Christmas. Really great exercise – lost over a stone in weight! Sadly, the valley courses, and the one over the road, are disintegrating now but those over 1100m are okay. In between skiing, I've started snowshoeing – it's given me a means of access onto the mountains but hopefully, one day, I will be a good enough skier that I can go ski-touring.

Even though a great winter is starting to disappear, it's no reason to be too sad because there's lots to look forward to. We have the Sextener Dolomites just up the road, the Hohe Tauern starts in the next valley and the Julische Alpen/Triglavski Narodni Park start over the south ridge of the valley, in addition to our own mountains of the Gailtal. It's a super area (junction of Austria, Italy and Slovenia), well worth a visit. So, if you are tempted to visit the region, please call in for Kaffee und Kuchen or perhaps something a little stronger. Just give me a ring on 0043 4283 30553 for directions... and please extend the invitation to all at mountain rescue.

Best wishes

Dave Little (Former MRC Treasurer)

* Why not write in with your views and win the Star Letter prize in the next issue?

dear editor



Left: Burrowing through snow to the Bank Above: Karnische Alpen



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The addition of steel links gives the strap strength but also makes it lighter than the solid stainless steel models. The watch has a large date window and chronograph function and is considered to be a professional dive watch. The hands, hour markers and bezel are all fitted with Luminox Light Technology, which allows you to read your watch in zero-light conditions without pushing a button or needing to recharge. This is a serious watch for rugged conditions.

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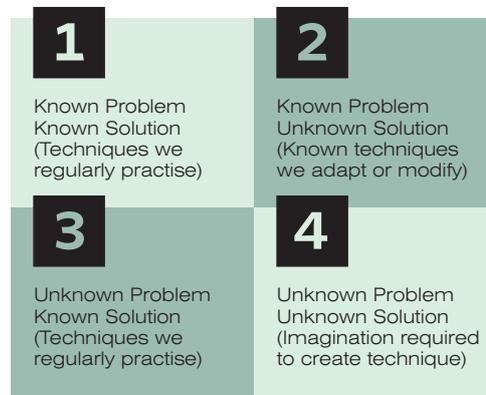
STEEL & BLACK PVD STRAP: RRP £431

Duty of care, training implications and Memoranda of Understanding

by Jim Davis

This might sound like nothing to do with most of you, but, in reality, it really is. As volunteers, you should understand what you are, and are not, offering to do.

I once did a presentation with regard to business continuity using a rescue as an example. The response was, 'All mountain rescues are the same, so your solutions (ways you manage your responses) are no good to us.' I can hear you laughing, but I had made the basic mistake of assuming they would think each and every rescue is different rather than all rescues being a known problem – mountain with the same known solution – mountain rescue! To get two incidents truly the same is very unlikely. We get many which are similar (we might call them 'our bread and butter'), many that are significantly different, and some that are bizarre. To put these in some sort of context for us as rescue teams, look at the diagram below. It would be nice to operate in box 1 but, in reality, we usually operate in box 2 or 3. I have related the solution to techniques in each box because that is what we need to refer to in response to requests for Memoranda of Understanding.



When rescue teams were first formed, they discharged their duty of care by instinct and this is still an essential element. Now due to the lack of understanding and trust by those who may not understand the implications of the duty of care, rescue teams are sometimes seen as cavalier in their regard to health and safety. However, this is far from the case. The introduction of

health and safety legislation has resulted in the misconception that there is only one 'Health & Safety' way of addressing the duty of care. The Memoranda of Understanding can provide a comfortable solution to other bodies with whom rescue teams work. It is reasonable that, for example, the police, fire service or county emergency planners should want to know what a rescue team can do, so they can be used effectively and not be a wasted resource. It is equally important that rescue teams are tasked with an aspect of rescue which they can discharge autonomously, otherwise if they are directed (ie. told how to do something) they would potentially fall foul of being 'employed' and therefore subject to the Health and Safety Act. Hence, the need to be clear at team level about what you offer and how you train for it.

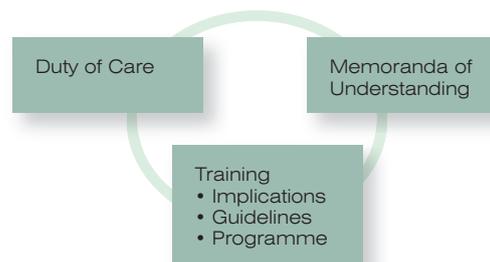
I should mention here that Memoranda of Understanding can be used equally well internally within teams or between teams regarding certain aspects of response.

Historically, the Mountain Rescue Council and British Cave Rescue Council together resisted the use of prescriptive words because these words had been appropriated by external agencies (eg. Health & Safety), taking on meanings which resulted in their usage within rescue teams being avoided. Member teams have in recent times found their own solutions, some embracing them, others not.

In conclusion, my suggestion is that, in response to requests for Memoranda of Understanding, teams refer to and restrict their commitment to the known techniques that they use and practise. I am the last person to wish to see proliferation in paperwork and suggest it be kept to a minimum. It always turns out to be restrictive which in the end might not be in the casualty's interests.

We need to continue to protect sensibly the privileged position and reputation of voluntary mountain and cave rescue by being clear about what we offer.

The views expressed here are my personal views, arrived at as a result of my involvement in mountain and cave rescue at both team and national level, and involved in training, over the past twenty years.





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Fern - the UK's latest drowned victim search dog

While SARDA has traditionally provided dogs to search mountains and, more recently lowland areas, SARDA (Ireland North) has extended its repertoire of search dogs to include those which look for persons missing, not just in the mountains and countryside but also in collapsed structures and, uniquely, under water.



FERN SEARCHING LOUGH NEAGH ▲

The SARDA (Ireland North), is a registered charity and a member of the National Search and Rescue Dog Association (NSARDA), which has sister groups in England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.

The idea of training a dog to search for persons under the water was first brought to the UK by Neil Powell in the late 1980s, after attending an International Symposium on search and rescue dogs held in Stockholm. One of the course presenters was John Sjöberg, a member of the Swedish Special Forces. He had trained his Australian Kelpie dog, Sampo, and then other dogs in the Swedish Armed Forces, to search for underwater

swimmers who were engaged in spying missions in the Swedish Archipelago. He gave a demonstration, in which he and his dog, travelling quite quickly in a 'rigid raider' type of boat, scanned the waters for a lone swimmer who was somewhere beneath the surface. In what appeared to be a very short period of time Sampo gave a bark indication to his handler, the boat stopped and the engine was revved up, to alert the swimmer that he had been located. Remarkably, from just beside the boat, the swimmer surfaced.

Training regime

Clearly, the training of a dog to find dead human remains under water will be different from what was demonstrated in Stockholm, but the principle is very much the same. It requires a dog of exceptional ability and involves a slow and very carefully structured training regime, not just of the dog, but also of the handler. He or she must become highly proficient in search strategy and in reading wind direction and strength as well as water movement and how each might influence scent flow conditions. In effect, the dog handler becomes the 'legs' of the dog, as he or she uses the boat to best advantage.

The first two Drowned Victim Search Dogs of SARDA (IN), and the first in the UK and Ireland were a German shepherd dog, Cuisle, and a golden retriever, Cracker. Unfortunately, despite some remarkable successes by the two dogs, this new approach to water search was met with a great deal of scepticism by the authorities which did little, if anything, to encourage its progress.

Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered, continuous experimentation and development have produced a training method and assessment protocol which SARDA (IN) believes to be unique, and, which is the first of its kind in the British Isles. In fact, it has now been adopted by the National Search and Rescue Dog Association of the UK and Ireland, as the measure by which all their Drowned Victim Search Dogs will be judged in future.

Demonstration

In September, it was demonstrated to search dog handlers from around the UK and the Republic of Ireland during a three day seminar held in Newcastle, Northern Ireland. Drowned Victim Search Dog Fern, a four year old Springer, was used to illustrate to the delegates, just how effective a search tool she was, when she was put through her paces in Lough Neagh, the biggest lough in the British Isles.

There are three levels of assessment grade: Novice, Senior and Advanced. To give a small insight into what is required for Novice grade, the dog and handler (who must already have achieved RYA Powerboat Handling Certificate, Level 2), are assigned an area of one square kilometre of lake or reservoir. The handler with his or her dog, working from a boat, is expected to make full use of prevailing conditions to narrow this search area down to a target area of 50sqm, within a time span of approximately one hour, from start to finish.

In fact, a target area of 5sqm was recently achieved by Fern after a tragedy in Northern Ireland where two teenagers lost their lives in a lake. In the actual search, she very quickly narrowed the area down to a specific location from which the two young people were then recovered by divers.

Searching for someone beneath the water has always been very difficult and can take many days, often involving large numbers of people with all the attendant implications of cost and personal risk. The Drowned Victim Search Dog team, on the other hand, consists of one dog, one handler, one safety person, a greatly reduced search time and a high probability of success.

Courtesy Emergency Service Times



BASECAMP SUPPORT NEWS + STU

Our Basecamp members support us through their annual subscription fees and through fundraising events. But what do they get up to when they're not supporting us? Well, it would seem, some of them undertake all manner of outdoor pursuits, usually in the mountains, in support of a variety of causes...

Spa 2 Summit 2009: Cheltenham to Pen-y-Fan in 36 hours

by Ken Long, Spa2Summit team

The idea of walking from Cheltenham to Pen-y-Fan had been circulating in my head for a few years but time and circumstance stopped it from happening. Then in 2008, after a wet and unfulfilling summer, the ball started rolling. Feeling doughy after a summer of sloth, I looked at the prospective route on walkjogrun and saw it was 58 miles in a straight line. I emailed Pete this news and suggested we get fit over the winter and plan to do it in June 2009. The plan, such as it was, involved a three day unsupported hike. No problem!

It was at this time the health of Pete's dad, Hugh, took a turn for the worse. Diagnosed four years previously with bowel cancer, he'd had the necessary operation and a six month course of chemo, which seemed to do the job. At no time did he let his health slow him down, which was mightily impressive but then he was diagnosed with liver cancer, which proved to be inoperable. During what was an incredibly difficult time for the family, the Macmillan nurses proved to be invaluable. They were supportive not just of Hugh, but of the whole family.

I suggested we added a sponsorship element to our hike to raise a little money for Macmillan. Pete and Hugh were really enthusiastic about the idea as they really wanted a way to thank Macmillan for all their help. Sadly, in November, Hugh passed away. Our challenge now had an extra edge.

In very short order, things started to escalate! From three days to 36 hours was the first big change. Then our team of two started to grow. Chris was on board within two days, then Grant, Ollie, Scott and Simon. Jonty offered his services in a support role, operating what has become known as the Jonty-copter! We also now have a reserve support driver and the offer of three sports therapist/masseuse-types for the challenge itself. A number of other friends have offered to help in whatever way they can.

With this many people involved was a simple, word-of-mouth promotional campaign going to do our efforts justice? We decided 'No'. A number of ideas were bandied back and forth via email. The Gloucestershire branch of Macmillan Cancer Support were contacted. Chris offered/was bullied to produce a website to promote the challenge, which Jonty offered to host. We set up a blog (<http://spa2summit.blogspot.com>) and a Just Giving page (<http://www.justgiving.com/spa2summit>) to give ourselves a web presence prior to the site going live. 1:25000 OS maps were spread out across living room floors and routes chosen.

This was great, but then the reality of walking what was going to be closer to 70 miles began to sink in. None of us had done anything like this before. Experience walking in the hills and mountains of the UK, some 10k and half-marathons, these were a

good base to start from, but we were obviously going to need more. Gyms were joined, training plans put in place, and in some cases, even stuck to! We decided we'd endeavour to walk together as a team, in our training, at least three times and use these walks to become familiar with our route. 21 February was the first of these walks - approximately 20 miles, from Cheltenham to Mitcheldean, in the Forest of Dean. More training was done, energy drinks and gels bought, kit examined and debated, and weather forecasts watched expectantly.

The day dawned clear and bright. We had an excellent day, 20.6 miles in seven hours seven minutes. The route was long enough to bring home the realities of what we were undertaking and show up any problems in kit choice and fitness levels. The team worked together brilliantly, taking turns at the front to keep things going at a good pace and morale was superb. There were some killer blisters but these are problems best addressed now rather than in June. We were all hanging by the time we reached Mitcheldean, although we did break into a spontaneous run up the last hill, possibly caused by the thought of a cold one in the pub!

Our next walk is from Mitcheldean to Crickhowell, towards the end of April. More training before then, I think!

Whilst all this has been going on, we've been working on promoting our challenge. We've approached local outdoor shops to help with the gear. We're doing a presentation at a charity breakfast organised by the Gloucestershire County Council legal department in April and we are awaiting delivery of our posters and leaflets from Macmillan. A hit list of local media is being drawn up with the aim of pushing Spa2Summit all along the route.

www.spa2summit.org is now live. Chris has done a superb job and it's brought immediate results through our Just Giving page! Brilliant! Spa2Summit 2009 is picking up momentum, but we still want your support! Can you donate or help us in other ways? (We're particularly looking for quad bike/helicopter transport off the summit of Pen-y-Fan, as the thought of the two mile walk down to the Storey Arms after 70 non-stop miles is making us sad!)

For further updates, please check our blog and website. If you can help in any way please contact me on 07866 563607 or ken@spa2summit.org or contact Pete on 07746794957 or pete@spa2summit.org.

Pete's father Hugh loved the mountains and spent as much time as he could walking there. It seems appropriate that this walk will be his way of giving something back to Macmillan in appreciation for all their work. We hope you can help.

**WHEN NINE YEAR
OLD SHANNON
MATTHEWS WENT
MISSING FROM
HER HOME IN
DEWSBURY,
WEST YORKSHIRE,
WHO'D YOU THINK
HELPED THE
POLICE SEARCH
FOR HER?**



Shannon Matthews disappeared from her home in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, one afternoon in February 2008. According to her mother and teachers reports, she was 200 yards away when she went missing for her. What then did she do? Well, it would seem, she was involved in a rescue mission.

Members of the Home Valley and Calder Valley teams, along with other rescue teams, searched for Shannon in the area around Dewsbury and the surrounding hills. It was a search that lasted for several days and nights. Shannon was eventually found in a field near to the village of Dewsbury.

Of course, we know now that Shannon was found close to the other end of the valley where she was last seen. But Mountain Rescue teams were more than able to find her in the end. It was a search that was a testament to the skills of the rescue teams, and the bravery of the searchers.

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**WHEN IT RAINED
AND RAINED, AND
RAINED, AND THEN
RAINED SOME
MORE, TRAPPING
200+ SHEFFIELD
PEOPLE IN THEIR
OWN HOMES, WHO
D'YOU THINK
HELPED THEM
BACK ONTO DRY
LAND?**



The floods in the Metropolitan Shopping Centre and the city of Sheffield, West Yorkshire, trapped 200+ people in their own homes. It was a search that lasted for several days and nights. Mountain Rescue teams were more than able to find them in the end. It was a search that was a testament to the skills of the rescue teams, and the bravery of the searchers.

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TWO OF THE SEVEN POSTERS ON DISPLAY AT THE SHOW

Do they mean us?...

'More Cumbrian Curiosities... Mountaineering and Mountain Rescue' Lancashire County Council, publicising a Discover Cumbria event in April.



Mountain Rescue at the Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show...

...by Judy Whiteside

February and March saw Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) at the NEC in Birmingham for two outdoors shows, in a fundraising, meet-the-public exercise that can only be described as a game of two halves, the second metaphorical forty five minutes being a distinct improvement on the first.

The Boat and Caravan Outdoor Show in February was – and we were not alone in describing it thus – dire. If there is one word I heard from the various exhibitors, as we paced our pitches, shifting from weary foot to weary foot, energy draining from us like so many ageing batteries (yes, thank you, no witty retort required here), stifling serial, eye-watering yawns and wishing we were somewhere else (anywhere else!!) while the caravan buying public steadfastly ignored us, it was that one. Dire.

A quick reccie and a spot of inter-exhibitor commiserating, as one torpid minute seeped into the next, revealed the National Trust, the Wildlife Trust and the Ramblers' Association, all of whom you might loosely put in the same camp as us, to be suffering in much the same way. Back on the Mountain Rescue stand, in the odd moment when my invisibility cloak had apparently briefly slipped from my bone-tired shoulders, public comment ranged from the frankly ill-informed 'I bet you get sick of rescuing people in flipflops'; through the distinctly uncompassionate and missing-the-pointed 'I'd leave 'em up there if it was up to me'; back to the misinformed (and I still haven't sussed out which team this is or whether they're a bunch of actors with Mountain Rescue stamped on their hi-viz, remunerated backs – answers on a postcard please) 'You lot are advertising Aldi now... you must have raked it in from that...' Inference being we don't any longer need to collect money in plastic buckets or sell our souls at outdoor shows. Groan.

Well, as the saying almost goes, you can take

the girl out of advertising and stick a mountain rescue badge on her polo shirt, but you can't take the advertising out of the girl. Old habits die hard. And I just happened to have a layout pad and Pentel pen in my bag. Half an hour later we had a stack of headlines and a poster campaign for the next show. The idea is to tell the public what else we've been a part of over the past twenty years, the stuff that affects their lives even if they never set foot on a mountain crag – aircraft and train crashes, floods, missing children and old people searches to name a few (it was topical that, as the posters launched at the show in March, teams in the north east of England were out searching for missing chef Claudia Lawrence and appearing regularly on TV and radio news clips). I'm not for one minute, by the way, suggesting we launch ourselves as anything other than what we are – a mountain rescue service, and blummin good at it. It's absolutely vital we remain true to our core values and the thing which brought us all into existence, (rescuing people from mountains) but there's a much bigger story to tell alongside that.

Which brings me to the second half, The Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show in March – with a frenzied few weeks between times, pounding the keyboard to design, write and produce the campaign. The posters were well received, sitting nicely alongside three 'news boards' chock full of stories and images of rescue teams at work across the country, and a new display board featuring our Royal Patron.

The stand was much bigger than previous years. Plenty of space to display the various bits of promotional material, a team vehicle, quadpod with stretcher and casbag suspended and tables for merchandise and Basecamp stuff. Burton McCall were as supportive as ever, offering a Victorinox Swisscard, badged with the Mountain Rescue Supporter logo, to tempt members of the public into Basecamp membership. Montane also

donated a large box of windproof shells as further incentive. Through Burton McCall, Mountain Equipment offered a pair of Kongur MRT jackets as first prize in a draw, also to promote Basecamp, the second prize a Swiss army knife, signed by Everest summiteer Jake Meyer. Our only regret was that we hadn't utilised the pillar smack in the middle of the stand. Had we known it would be there, we could have organised demonstrations and put it to work for us – watch this space for next year!

This year's show appeared smaller – only one hall – but the atmosphere felt good. Lots of buzz and certainly a good deal more interest in mountain rescue. Invisibility cloaks firmly packed, back at home in our respective cupboards. The pocket handbook sold exceptionally well – shifting 70 books over the three days – and we signed up 81 new Basecamp members. (This was in addition to the twenty signed up at Saturday's Xscape event at Leeds Carnegie, organised by the students, and seven others who signed up by email or telephone after the show). And, apart from the opportunity to chat with the public, correct a few misconceptions, and build on friendships old and new with our colleagues in other teams, it's always great to meet with the familiar faces of our older friends – the gear and clothing producers and resellers who support us throughout the year.

So thanks to all those who helped out on the stand, and those who expressed an interest in helping out next year. Hi to new friends made, and welcome to all our new Basecamp members – your support is a key element in our national fundraising plan. Thanks also to Ordnance Survey for inviting us to the show and continuing to support us at every level.

As I said, it was a great second half. All I need now is some sleep.

Support Mountain Rescue Join BaseCamp...

Now you can support mountain rescue and benefit all the teams in England and Wales. For £24 per year for a single membership, £42 for joint membership you will receive a Supporter's badge, car sticker and four issues of Mountain Rescue Magazine – January, April, July and October – delivered direct to your door. **Interested? Fill in the form below and return to Neil Roden. BaseCamp, White Cottage, 9 Main Road, Grindleford, Hope Valley, Derbyshire S32 2JN.**

Please send me details of BaseCamp membership.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

B&B SUPPORT NEWS + STU

So that's where the money goes...

by Tim Nicholls
Wasdale MRT Supporter

I have regarded, somewhat cheekily, that being a supporter of Wasdale MRT and doing the odd bit of fundraising, is a bit like taking out insurance – you pay the premiums and hope not to have to make a claim. Well recently I had the opportunity to see at first hand the Wasdale MRT in action.

It was what I sometimes describe as a 'typical Cumbrian day', all grey and grizzly. The tops were clouded out, and I decided to choose between Threading the Needle and a wander down the Screes. In the end I decided on the walk down the Screes, up the Greathall Gill path and over Illgill Head, because I have done this walk several times before, know what to expect, and know that it is within my skill level.

So I bumped off from the National Trust campsite heading down the eastern shore, with the wind and drizzle on my back. The rocks were a bit slippery, but not too bad. I wasn't hacking along but just taking my time. After about 90 minutes I had covered nearly three-quarters of the Screes and was somewhere below Low Adam Crag approaching the big boulder field. At this point I caught sight of two people in front of me, moving very slowly, one down by the shoreline, the other somewhat higher up and closer to the line I was taking. As I approached nearer, I could see they were both using trekking poles and was formulating a bit of glib advice along the lines of 'it's easier to use your hands'. Unfortunately I didn't get a chance to use this bon mot as the person (it turned out to be a lady) asked me if there was a way up to the top because 'it looks nice and green'. I assured her that, although it looked nice and green in places, there certainly wasn't a practicable route up there, for folks like us.

On enquiring why she was contemplating such a route, it turned out that her (also female and aged 70+) companion had fallen, hurt her back or ribs and banged her head. They were not carrying a mobile phone, hadn't seen anyone else and were starting to get a bit desperate, hence the plan to try and climb up, and did I have a mobile phone and could I call the MRT please?

At this stage I wasn't sure if the MRT were needed, the casualty didn't appear to be bleeding and so I clambered down wondering how to diplomatically tell her to get on with it. However it soon became clear that she was in a lot of pain from just sitting still, that breathing hard hurt her more and, although she had no obvious head injury, they don't have to be obvious to be potentially serious. It was quite clear that her companion and I weren't going to be able to get the casualty off the Screes unaided.

One of the few low level locations in Wasdale where you can get a (poor) phone signal happens to be along the lakeside path, so I climbed up a few metres and found I had about one bar of signal, dialed 999 and asked for Police – Mountain Rescue.

OK, it seems obvious now, but what I should have done was to get an accurate grid reference nailed down before making the call, instead of talking to the operator via a poor signal, and trying to open out a map in the wind with my other hand, work out where we were and get the grid ref right, and it's at time like these that your mind goes mushy and you can't remember whether it is eastings or northings first! Oh and, of course, it would have been much simpler if I had packed the GPS that morning. If.

Call made, we settled down to wait. I offered use of my bothy bag but the casualty declined to use it, maybe I should have been more assertive? Anyway she was well dressed for the conditions, seemed quite warm and in reasonable spirits, especially now that contact had been made, and conversation turned from the important (how will we get off here) to the mundane. (We'll be late getting to the B&B in Keswick). Shortly my phone rang, it was Wasdale MRT confirming our position, the team were assembling at Gosforth and would be with us soon. I confirmed we were on the Screes and about opposite the shelter on the western bank, where the roads from Greendale and Nether Wasdale meet.

We laid out the bothy bag beside us as a big red target, and used camera flashes to mark our position. I also had an emergency strobe but, well, um, I have to admit it hasn't had a new battery in it this year. It wasn't long before we saw a Land Rover towing a boat arrive, and then head up towards the Northern end of the lake. That was a bit mystifying as the map marked several landing stages on the opposite bank that were closer. Perhaps they just like riding in the boat!

As we were discussing this, there was a clatter from up the screes and several men carrying unfeasibly large rucksacks at an unfeasibly fast rate, almost running across the boulders, arrived, and I could see a well practised routine unfold as they took details, checked the casualty, managed to get a lot of bodies into a large emergency shelter, administered painkillers and called up the boat team. Shortly a team doctor arrived to check the casualty. It was decided to evacuate the ladies by boat, I declined the offer of a ride, to continue my walk and, well, it did look rather choppy out on the water, as the wind was picking up.

Thank you to all the team who got dragged out of nice dry warm offices on a wet Thursday morning, and I hope you won't take it the wrong way if I say I hope that I don't have to call you again!

Lessons? Well get that grid ref before phoning, check batteries in emergency equipment before each trip, be more assertive when dealing with possible casualties and get them into shelter.

Ah well, I suppose I had better sell some more car stickers!

Technically 'green' bamboo socks from Bridgedale

Socks made from bamboo? You mean 'bamboo' as in pandas? As in 'Eats shoots and leaves'? But isn't that wood? Won't it be a bit scratchy? Well, no, actually because, apparently, it's not wood at all, just woody grass. So that's okay then.

Still sounded a bit improbable on the comfort front, but Marcus at Burton McCall asked me to put aside any scepticism and test out a pair. So I did.

The press release sells them as being simultaneously technically advanced and environmentally friendly, thus ticking all the marketing boxes. When they arrive, even the packaging is on-message – made from 100% recycled paper, printed with vegetable based inks. In fact, they are produced in partnership with Booshoot Gardens 'Plant a Boo™' campaign to help raise awareness of the ecological benefits of bamboo. Far from simply just panda food, bamboo efficiently removes CO₂ from the atmosphere through photosynthesis, thus helping our planet breathe.

So far so green, now on with the socks. I'm afraid I can't claim to have walked a thousand miles in them, or pushed them through a thousand punishing wash cycles, but I can say I'm impressed. Very soft, very comfortable (silky even), good fit and thus far they have resisted shrinking (which is more than can be said for one or two rival brands, even with the appropriate washing/drying instructions followed to the letter).

When I expressed this concern about 'activity' socks in general, Marcus explained that although my socks hadn't 'shrunk' as such, Bridgedale socks will often appear to shrink when you wash and dry them – but this is intentional. 'Before the socks are packaged, they are ironed flat – purely for aesthetic/marketing reasons. When they're exposed to heat during drying, the lycra contracts, resetting the sock back to its original, proper, seemingly smaller size, which is infinitely better than a stretched baggy

Mountain Rescue Mile Challenge...

Students at Leeds Metropolitan University hosted their charity swimming event in February in aid of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales), raising an impressive £747. Teams of four swimmers paid £20 per team to swim 64 lengths of the university's



Mountain Sense saves lives

Two members of Keswick MRT – both professional Mountaineering Instructors – have launched the Mountain Logbook in an effort to raise awareness of mountain safety. Chris Gillyon and Chris Harling, aided and abetted by fellow team members, brought the freshly minted book along to The Outdoors Show for its first public airing.

The Logbook sprang from the runaway success of their 'Mountain Sense' laminated card, which details the key ingredients of safety awareness – what to wear, what to take, what to watch out for and how to call for help in an emergency. Looking

at their impressively stark but stylish stand and their 'corporate' jackets – predominantly black, echoing the style of the cards and the book's cover – it's hard to imagine what a whirlwind journey they've had and the hours spent pulling the whole thing together on a shoestring.

The idea for a safety campaign came last November, in response to the growing number of mountain accidents (during 2007/08, calls for assistance in the Lakes alone came close to a staggering 900!) It started life as a series of distinctive posters, strategically placed at key locations around Keswick, carrying a checklist of what walkers should carry whilst on the fells.

'People started calling for more advice,' said Chris Gillyon, 'so we decided to put together a laminated card which could be taken away and kept for future reference.'

What they lacked in budget, they certainly made up for in grit and determination, as they set about printing off 5000 cards, trimming them to size by hand, before laminating into A4 sheets and trimming them out again to the correct size. (Bad enough laminating 40-odd team ID cards once a year!!) All this over several dozen spare hours, no doubt sandwiched between call outs and the day job!

'We underestimated just how popular the cards would be. In the first three weeks alone, over 1800 cards were taken from just ten stands located in shops, pubs, hotels and the tourist information centre. By Christmas they were flying out.'

Efforts to find a sponsor have so far been unsuccessful, perhaps due to the straitened times we live in. And so the logbook was conceived – a multi-function tool aimed at hill walkers wanting to record their days out in the hills, which might also raise sufficient funds to finance the cards.

Besides providing a place to log completed walks, this 100-page, spiral bound A5 book contains six tear out route cards, inviting you to leave details of your intended route, along with personal information, any medical conditions and a contact name and number in case of emergency. (There's also a handy fold out version, so you can photocopy extras). Plus a kit checklist, and handy tick boxes for you to assess your hill walking experience and navigation ability. All invaluable to a mountain rescue team in the event of an accident.

'Many people do leave details of their objectives and planned routes, at home or back at their hotel, but often leave out vital information – simple things like the colour of clothing or whether or not a torch is being carried,' explained Chris.

There's also a no-nonsense guide to mountain safety, clothing, equipment and emergency procedures; and lastly, complete listings of the most popular groups of UK mountains where peak baggers can chart their progress.

The book is already selling well in outdoor shops and bookshops in Keswick, including Cotswolds, Ultimate Outdoors, the Tourist Information Centre and Book Ends but is also available through the Mountain Sense website – www.mountainsense.co.uk – at £7.99 plus postage and packing. So, if you're a Basecamp member, or even a rescue team member who wants to keep a record of their travels, check out the website or enter our free competition to win one of three Mountain Logbooks and help spread the mountain safety message.

And if you're a business or individual just itching to sponsor the campaign, Chris would be delighted to hear from you! For further information, or to offer sponsorship, contact Chris via email at info@mountainsense.co.uk



kit crit

by Judy Whiteside

sock.' He did add, however, that he didn't know if this was true of all socks! I rest my case, m'lud.

Anyway, I've walked up hills in them, run along old railway loopline trails in them, travelled to the NEC in them and just worn them around the house. No blisters, no rucking, no colour bleeding and, not to be too indelicate, no sweat. And I still appear to have a matching pair in the laundry basket which, in the matter of socks, is highly unusual.

I noticed there were a few companies at the Outdoors Show flogging bamboo this and bamboo that, so I guess it's the latest thing. Bridgedale's version was launched in March and combines a 'naturally silky, breathable, anti-microbial yarn made from a sustainable (there goes another buzzword!) source of bamboo.' They also contain COOLMAX®, an advanced moisture-wicking yarn that helps keep your feet dry.

The socks are available in men's and women's fits and colours. (Apparently women's socks are generally 30% narrower than men's.) And they retail at a modest £10.99 so why not give them a run for their money, and help save the planet at the same time? For more information on Bridgedale products go to bridgedale.com or contact 0116 234 4682.



BRIDGEDALE BAMBOO CREW WOMEN'S SOCK IN AUBERGINE
MEN'S SOCK IN GREY



pool. Prizes ranged from a free meal with drinks, to a bottle of wine and four cinema tickets.

Other fundraising efforts have included a cake bake sale and donation bucket trips in which the event team wore 'mountain rescue supporter' tee shirts to raise awareness of the charity. So, thanks to them for their sterling support.

competition

Answer three easy questions correctly and you could win one of three Mountain Logbooks.

1

What three things should you always carry on the hill?

- a) Map, compass, torch.
- b) Sandwiches, flask, Mars bar.
- c) Camera, ipod, binoculars.

2

How would you call out Mountain Rescue?

- a) Stand on the highest rock you can find and hope they hear you shouting.
- b) Dial 999, ask for 'Police' then 'Mountain Rescue'.
- c) Post a Twitter message from your mobile phone and hope someone picks it up.

3

Mountain rescue teams operate in seven geographical regions across England and Wales. In which region is the Keswick team based?

Send your answers via email to Judy Whiteside, including your name and address details – editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Closing date 30 May 2009. First three correct entries in the postbag win a Mountain Logbook.



Ten days in the life of a mountain rescuer

by Liam McCabe Chairman of IMRA

On the last Friday in January, along with three colleagues from South Eastern MRT and Paul Whiting, the Development Officer for Mountain Rescue Ireland, I boarded a plane to Glasgow. We were joining the Scottish Arrochar MRT on a weekend winter training camp in the Cairngorm mountains in Aviemore. Arriving in our bunkhouse at 1.30am we were greeted by Mark Leyland, Arrochar team leader, and some of the team members, with a welcome cup of tea and sent to bed!

We were a mixed group of experienced and trainee mountain rescuers. Paul Whiting supports the mountain rescue teams and is employed by the Mountaineering Council of Ireland. It would be fair to say I knew very little about snow and ice work prior to this trip. Unfortunately, winter conditions in Ireland do not lend themselves to extremes of snow, and ice climbing is now a rare opportunity for most Irish climbers. This trip was aimed at up-skilling our team's winter skills.

That night reminded me of Christmases past, the anticipation and excitement of what lay ahead made sleeping difficult. At seven o'clock we were up and, by eight, we were briefed, split into three groups with party leaders appointed. Ross was my party leader. He is an Arrochar team member and I could tell from the onset that he was good fun, but very confident. I found out during the morning

that Ross is a professional outdoor instructor and boy could the man teach...

The trip to Aviemore and the funicular railway (which is what they call the train) lasted about ten minutes but felt like an hour. We were booked on the first train up and planned to make our way to a quiet training bowl beyond the top of the train line. Like most well made plans, this only lasted until we reached the train station. The trains weren't running due to high winds. This meant we had to walk into our training area, which is not a problem but it does burn up valuable training time and also energy.

The groups split up at this point, as each needed to find a quiet spot with a safe piece of ground to practise the use of crampons, ice-axe arrests (stopping yourself if you get into a slide) and the use of an ice-axe. The training was great because the Arrochar team are not a Highland team and this training weekend acts as an annual refresher to up-skill and



PROBING
PHOTO: BRIAN COOK

refresh their personal winter skills. This meant that the Irish delegation could blend in easily and comfortably with our hosts. There is no doubt that we were on a steeper learning curve than our hosts, but their professionalism certainly did not make us feel uneasy. Far from it, we were truly part of the group.

I learned quickly how to travel on crampons (John Wayne's walking style was mentioned more than once), how to hold my ice-axe, how to arrest a slide feet first, head first, head down, head up, on my belly, on my back, without any ice-axe and grabbing an ice-axe as I slid. It was great fun, hard work and I still have the bruising two weeks later to testify to the ordeal. And it was still only 11.00am.

Then things changed...

The team leader was with our group when his radio lit up. One of our groups training higher up the mountain had witnessed a lady being blown off the Coire Cas ridge. She had taken a serious fall down a steep snow-covered slope into a boulder field. Mountain rescue first aiders were at her side in minutes and now they needed more oxygen at the incident site and they needed it fast. Charles, a member of our group had oxygen in his personal first aid kit and he headed immediately up to the incident location. The rest of our group closed up the training site and made our way up the hill. Mark (the team leader) was on the phone and the radio co-ordinating the mountain rescue response. I have been involved in hundreds of mountain rescue incidents in my time, but this was very different. It felt like I was a fly on the wall watching the Arrochar team wind up a rescue response. We slotted into the team and awaited instructions.

When our group arrived in the holding area just short of the incident site, the group that witnessed the accident, as well as another police mountain rescue team who were training in the area, were delivering first aid to the casualty. Very quickly the Ski Patrol and a tracked vehicle arrived. The casualty was transferred to the tracked vehicle and, as the vehicle passed our location, I could see that Charles and a group of first aiders were working hard to keep the casualty alive.

It was a sharp and timely reminder of the

seriousness of the environment we were working in. Not long afterwards, as we regrouped and had a hot drink, we watched the RAF helicopter touchdown in the car park below in very windy conditions. We could see the stretcher being immediately loaded into the helicopter and it quickly moved away towards hospital where specialist medical assistance was on standby. When our fellow rescuers returned they brought news that the casualty was alive and that she had made it to hospital. They also brought news that the lady was Irish, not that this should make a difference, but it did to me and to my Irish colleagues. The spirit of the entire group was lifted to hear she was still alive and Mark immediately got us back into our training groups and into our training programme.

As a result of the incident we were now much higher up in the mountain and so we practiced moving on steep ground. We started by taking off the crampons (it's amazing how quickly you learn to depend on them) and cutting out steps with the edges of our boots, then cutting steps with the ice-axe and finally we put back on the crampons and learned the French and American techniques for walking in crampons. We practised on easy ground and built up to some serious ascents using crampons and ice-axes. Anybody who has ever used crampons will know that going up steep ground is child's play when compared to coming down. But our instructors were amazing and we all progressed at our own pace and to our own levels. The final hill training for the day involved building snow bollards and belaying members up and down steep ground. After this it was time to work our way down the hill and home.

On the journey home I received a call from a friend in Glen of Imaal MRT (one of IMRA's twelve teams). He had been contacted by the family of a friend to say that she had just been killed in a fall while on a Scottish mountain. The family were frantically looking for information. I am not sure even today who was more shocked, my friend when he discovered I was at the scene of the accident (he knew I was in Scotland and thought I might have some contact numbers for Scottish teams) or myself when I discovered the casualty had died.

I related the basic outline of the casualty's fall and the tremendous and co-ordinated effort of the emergency response, hoping it may act as some comfort to him, and to her family. I later found out that the casualty was a very experienced climber and just days away from returning home after a round the world ten month climbing trip.

Back in the bunk house... the duty of a team leader in Scotland and in Ireland is very similar in almost every way with one exception. Never in fifteen years of mountain rescue have I seen a team leader co-ordinate the delivery of a five course meal for almost thirty people with such military precision! On Saturday evening, we enjoyed a great night's entertainment including a magnificent



TOP: ARROCHAR TEAM MEMBERS
ABOVE: THE IRISH GROUP PHOTOS: BRIAN COOK

meal (with a haggis starter), a few drinks and a five minute presentation by each member of the Arrochar team on a different facet of avalanche awareness. It was hugely interesting, as much for the learning as it was for the not so dignified audience response to the speakers. By the time this was finished we were all fit for bed.

Then after what appeared to be ten minutes, it was seven o'clock in the morning and time to get up. Our Sunday training included a train trip to the top and a short trek to a small bowl just north east of the summit of Cairngorm. It was a wonderful training location because it was sheltered, safe, full of clean snow, and big enough for our three groups to work in.

We rotated between three workshops:-

- The first one involved digging trenches to evaluate the snow layers and practising the various avalanche tests discussed the night before. We got a very good hands-on feel for layering and snow compaction.
- The second workshop was based on using the various electronic avalanche transmitters and receivers. These devices are the best chance a person caught up in an avalanche has of being saved. The principle is that all members of a group wear the devices and they are set to transmit while on the hills. If one member is caught up in an avalanche the remaining group change their setting to receive mode and they can quickly locate the buried member. It was a real eye-opener to see just how effective these devices are.
- The final workshop was the most interesting. It was an avalanche probing workshop. For years I have watched on TV as groups of rescuers walked forward inserting



MAUREEN - PROUD OWNER OF A NEWLY DUG SNOWHOLE! PHOTO: BRIAN COOK



“The best way to learn is from experience.”



The Scenario...

“When you arrive at the scene the sun is setting and the rain clouds are gathering. Two cyclists are slumped against the mountain side with a small group of walkers hovering over them. It's wet, cold, exposed and with night falling you have to get the cyclists and walkers off the mountain as quickly as possible. You observe that one cyclist has fluctuating consciousness and are concerned about deterioration; shallow and painful breathing, prolonged CRT, cold body temperature, increasing pallor and cyanosis. The other is moderately hypothermic after giving his extra clothing to his friend. He is nauseous, shivering intermittently and suffering from slurred speech and periods of quietness. With an excited and panicky crowd of walkers to control, two effectively disabled patients, and icy rain starting to fall you are in one tricky situation.”



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probes into the ground on snow covered hills. Learning how to do this and how effective it really is has been an eye opener.

After the workshops, Mark called for a lunch break and by now the cloud cover had lifted. The scenery was spectacular as we dined on sandwiches and hot tea. The last task of the weekend was to build an emergency snowhole – a cave in the snow that allows a stranded walker to escape the extreme weather conditions and await help or choose a better time to move on. Some of the snowholes were big, some were small, some were deep and others weren't but, boy oh boy, did the owners take pride in their shelters! It was hard work but it was great fun and it certainly warmed us all up.

We made our way off the hill and in the car park, the Irish delegation said their heartfelt and most sincere thanks to our hosts, and now friends, from the Arrochar team. The drive to the airport took four hours and we all arrived home on Monday morning well after midnight. We thought that was the end of our winter training for 2009. How wrong we were...

Fast forward one week...

On Monday night at around midnight on the 9 February my pager went off. It was a request for support from the Glen of Imaal and the Dublin & Wicklow teams. My team neighbours these teams so it is not unusual for them to call on our assistance. I kissed my family good night, packed my bag, filled my flask and off I went to the Wicklow mountains. When we arrived at the Army Information Centre (Rescue Base) we started to get a feel for the major incident that was building up. Two experienced climbers were in real difficulties in the Lugnaquilla area of the Wicklow Mountain. They had been out since early the previous day and now they were disorientated, unable to move due to steep ground and exposed in freezing conditions with zero visibility and deep snow cover. The mountain rescue co-ordinators, as well as trained Wilderness Emergency Medical Technicians from the ambulance service, talked to the casualties throughout the night.

At 4.00am my hill party was tasked to search an area to the South of Slievemaan Mountain which lies to the South West of Lugnaquilla. We were dropped off by army transport and commenced a gruelling three hour climb along exposed ridge lines in deep soft snow. When we arrived at the summit of Slievemaan (the top of our search area) we conducted a sweep search of the summit and a hasty search of the South Western side of Lugnaquilla. After an unsuccessful attempt by the Irish Coast Guard helicopter to pick us up from the summit (due to poor visibility) and due to the onset of fatigue and tiredness, it was time for our group to start the long and



AIR CORP HELICOPTER DROP OFF
PHOTO: CONNY O'CONNEL

difficult trek back to our pick-up point.

As we descended we were following the progress of the search over our VHF radios. We all got a big boost around midday to hear that our colleagues in a combined party from the Mourne and North West teams had made a find. The two casualties were located on the opposite side of Lugnaquilla from our search area. Finally the first phase of the operation was over. All of us on the mountain that morning were under no illusion and knew from the grid reference quoted, that the operation was far from over. It was going to be a major operation to extract the casualties because of the deep snow and the steep ground involved.

It was only during our decent that the true scale of the operation started to register with us. Although we were monitoring the emergency channels as we searched uphill, our focus was on navigation and on searching. It was only when we heard our call sign 'Sierra 2' that we actually tuned into the radio. Now, as we descended, we were glued to the radio trying to make out the status of the casualties and we became in awe of the strange call signs from the RAF Sea King helicopter and the Welsh accents over the radio from the RAF and Ogwen Valley teams. We could also hear the reassuring familiar voices of our friends from the Glen, Dublin & Wicklow, Mourne, SARDA, North West, PSNI, Kerry and Mayo teams.

As we descended through the cloud cover, finally we could see the helicopters we'd been listening to all morning, flying over our heads. The Aer Corps AW139s, the RAF Sea King and the Coast Guard helicopters were working like buzzing bees overhead as they ferried the mountain rescuers and the army rangers up towards the casualty sites. None of the helicopters were able to penetrate the cloud but they saved hours of manhandling by bringing the rescuers and their gear up to the base of the clouds. As we listened to the operation in full swing, we were very proud to be associated with the small family that are the Irish Emergency Services.

The army transport on the road below was a welcome sight as we broke cloud cover, as was the canary yellow of the RAF Sea King. Although the helicopter was not coming to

collect us, it was good to see it in the flesh (this was the same RAF helicopter that had transported the casualty from the Scottish mountains the previous week) and we knew it had more critical work to do than to save us another hour of trudging through the snow.

If the army transport that picked us up on the road side was a welcome sight, I could have married the army cook who made the soup. When we returned to the Army Information Centre, the area was alive. A full scale rescue operation had swung into gear immediately after the combined Mourne and North West party located the casualties. Nobody in the base was underestimating the difficulties facing them.

One of the incident co-ordinators from the Dublin & Wicklow team approached us to see if we were available to go back on the hill. It was about 2.00pm and, although there were a lot of people on the hill, darkness was turning into enemy number one. As we readied our gear, those of us available to return were waiting on helicopter transport when word filtered back that the teams on the hill were now mobile with the casualties and that our services were no longer required. On another day this would have been received as frustrating news. On this occasion we were glad to strip off our gear, say a quick goodbye, depart the scene and return home.

It was around four o'clock on 10 February and I was delighted to be able to ring home to say to my children that I was going to be able to make it home after all for my 36th birthday party – what a day! It ended with a great party and a very long night's sleep...

Liam McCabe is a member of the South Eastern MRT, he is also chairman of Mountain Rescue Ireland which acts as the representative organisation for the twelve mountain rescue teams operating across the island of Ireland.

If you would like to find out more or support the voluntary work of the Irish mountain rescue teams, please visit our website www.mountainrescue.ie

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Snippets from the Journals

STUCK IN THE MUD: AN UNUSUAL FOOTBALL INJURY

A 29 year old footballer attended the emergency department following a twisting injury to the left leg. He stated that, while playing football, he had attempted to change direction and his studs had remained stuck in the mud. He felt a sudden crack and severe pain in the left hip/buttock region. His past medical history included a right femoral and tibial fracture. He had no personal or family history of osteogenesis imperfecta or fragile bones. On examination he was unable to weight bear. He was tender in the left buttock on palpation and very tender on passive rotation of the left hip. There was obvious deformity or shortening. The patient was given intravenous analgesia and an anteroposterior radiograph of the pelvis was obtained.

Judet views and a CT scan confirmed a fracture of the left iliac bone extending into the acetabulum. The defect of the acetabular roof measured over 8mm. The patient proceeded to open reduction and internal fixation with a view to delaying the development of premature arthritic change of the hip joint. A Smith-Peterson approach was used along the external iliac crest. Lag screws and a plate were inserted. Two months later the patient is still partially weight bearing with two crutches. He is aware that he will probably require further resurfacing of the acetabulum in the future.

Athletic trauma to the hip and pelvis is rare. The fracture in this case would be more often seen in high energy hip or pelvic injury.* However, as football players hit harder and skiers ski faster, the incidence of this kind of sports-related trauma can be expected to increase. Our patient weighed approximately 90kg and had bulky thigh muscles, which would have contributed to the torque required to cause such a shearing injury. (*Emerg Med J*; February 2009 Vol 26 No 2).

* This injury could conceivably be sustained fell running downhill at speed. David Allan.

DEFIB OR CPR FIRST?

Sophia (*Emergency Med J*) is a fan of life support courses, but always likes to look at the evidence behind their recommendations. In patients with out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and slower response times (more than five minutes), questions have been raised over whether immediate defibrillation is the right step. There are not many robust randomised studies of cardiac arrest. However, one in 'Resuscitation' examined whether three minutes of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) before defibrillation resulted in a more favourable outcome (survival to hospital discharge) in out of hospital ventricular fibrillation arrest. No difference was found between the two groups in return of spontaneous circulation or the more important marker of survival to discharge, regardless of the response time. (*Resuscitation* 2008; 79:424-31).

PREINJURY BETA BLOCKADE IN GERIATRIC TRAUMA PATIENTS

Researchers from Wisconsin examined trauma records of geriatric patients over a ten year period. It is already well known that the use of beta blockers decreases morbidity and mortality in geriatric patients undergoing non-cardiac general surgery, but it seems that this increases mortality in the same population who experience trauma. More evidence that medicine in the elderly is not so simple! (*J Trauma* 2008;65:1016-20).

Medical Symposium 7 November 2009 Ambleside. Proposed Programme

- Cold water drowning
- The pathology of long falls in winter
- Mountain bike accidents
- Fracture dislocation of the ankle
- Problems posed by the elderly
- Update on the MR analgesia survey
- Current thoughts on airway management
- A review of routes of drug administration

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Mountain Emergency Medicine: Developing doctors skills



PHOTO: SVEN CHRISTJAR SKAIAG

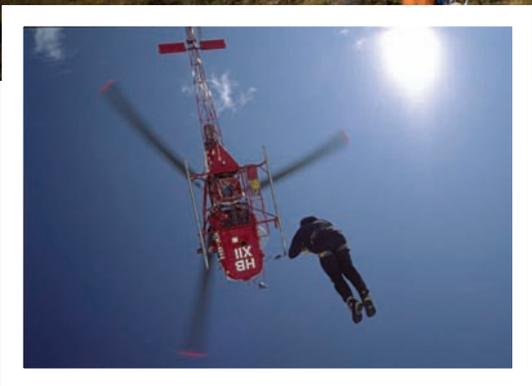


PHOTO: JOHN ELLERTON

It seems a long time from my early days in Patterdale when, apart from a few words of advice from a Langdale Ambleside doctor, I had to learn ropes by myself. Of course, Patterdale team members were constant companions as we developed the medical aspects of mountain rescue. Vacuum mattresses, monitoring, defibrillators and the progress of Casualty Care have been highlights over the twenty or so years but what of educating future mountain rescue doctors? For a period a healthy northeast Lakes and then regional group formed but it wilted as personalities moved on. With the formation of a UK Diploma in Mountain Medicine, organised by the University of Leicester and Medical Expeditions, a new opportunity arose. The Diploma is an international qualification that meets the standards of three international

groups – the UIAA (effectively an international British Mountaineering Council), ISMM (International Society of Mountain Medicine – a society of research orientated medical researchers) and ICAR (International Commission for Alpine Rescue – rescue doctors from around the world). Thus all components of mountain medicine are taught and the interactions between science, expeditions, and self- and organised- rescue are brought into focus. The basic diploma encompasses the core knowledge and has been successfully completed by over 70 doctors in the UK now, and many thousands in the rest of the world.

Additional modules in expedition medicine and rescue medicine can be added and it is the latter that is designed for the doctor wanting to develop his mountain emergency medicine skills. In conjunction with Dr Oliver Reisten from the Alpine Rescue Centre, Zermatt, Switzerland, I have

encouraged Air Zermatt to run their established German-speaking course in English. The module is divided into two weeks and the first took place this September. Six students, including myself, arrived in glorious weather and soon found that the skills required were suitably advanced!

The aim of the course is to develop competence in the more extreme outdoor environments, so the doctor can carry out his work without becoming another casualty. We experienced a canyon, via ferrata, tyrolienne and, of course, helicopters. With five helicopters on site there was none of the frustrations of UK helicopter training. We learnt how to get into a hovering helicopter and deploy using a winch or long line (a fixed cable under the helicopter). All these were performed first in the hanger and then for real on a crag. Needless to say the specialist technique of transferring from being secured on the ground to under the helicopter required the most practice and concentration as there is no second chance for both you and the casualty. The second week of winter skills is to be held in April; expect more extremes and surprises!

Dr John Ellerton has been one of the Patterdale team doctors for more than 20 years. As medical officer for Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) and a member of ICAR Medcom, he is frequently away teaching. On the first Tuesday of the month and on as many call outs as he can, the team benefit from his experience.



PHOTO: JOHN ELLERTON

medical stuff...

A brief dip into eponymous medical terms 3

David Allan continues his examination of what's in a name

Cheyne-Stokes respiration

Also known as periodic respiration this clinical picture is seen in a range of conditions. It is characterised by short episodes of rapid breathing followed by a period of complete apnoea. (Figure 1)

It arises when there is disturbance of the respiratory centre in the brain. In mountaineering experience it is very common in sleep at altitude when the periods of apnoea are often alarming to companions. In this situation the lowered partial pressure of oxygen affects the respiratory centre.

Head injuries may exhibit this, usually as a late and ominous sign as part of the Cushing triad. It is also encountered in carbon monoxide poisoning, morphine overdose, heart failure and following a CVA.

John Cheyne and William Stokes first described this picture. John Cheyne was born in Leith and graduated from Edinburgh Medical School at the age of 18! He served for several years with the Royal Artillery and then taught war surgery in Dublin. William Stokes lived from 1804 until 1878 and was Professor of Medicine in Dublin.

Colles Fracture

This is possibly the most widely recognised fracture. It is certainly very

common and a frosty morning may see an A&E department dealing with several such injuries. The injury is caused by a fall on the outstretched hand. (Figure 2) and is a fracture of the distal radius. It becomes commoner

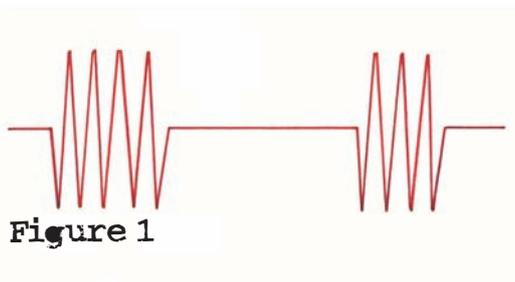


Figure 1

with advancing years, particularly in women with a degree of osteoporosis affecting the bone. The classical appearance is that of the 'dinner fork' deformity of the wrist (Figure 3).

The severity of the bony injury varies. A simple fracture with little displacement may occur (Figure 4A). More severe injury results in involvement of the joint and often an associated fracture of the ulnar styloid (Figure 4B) and displacement of the fracture may occur (Figure 4C).

Simple splinting of the injury is the only on scene treatment required. Almost all of the fractures will heal uneventfully but if the joint is involved, later pain and stiffness will almost certainly develop.

Abraham Colles was born in 1773 in Kilkenny and studied medicine in Edinburgh. He then spent time training with Sir Astley

Cooper in London before returning to Ireland where he became Professor of Anatomy and Surgery in Dublin. Remarkably his accurate description of the nature of this fracture was made some 100 years before X-rays were available. He died from gout in 1843!

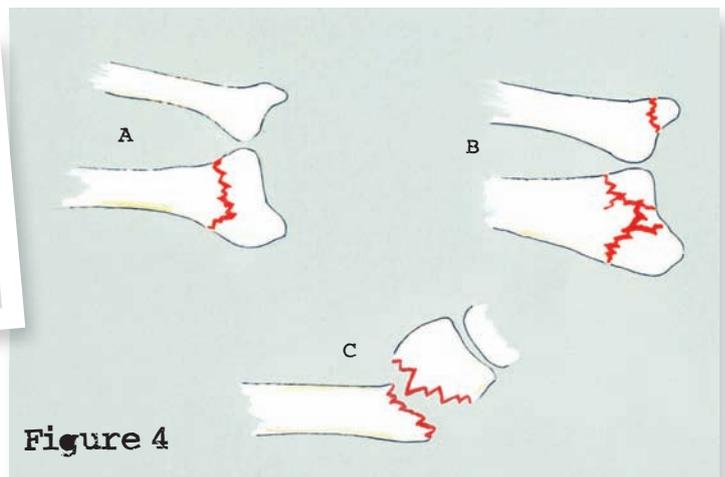
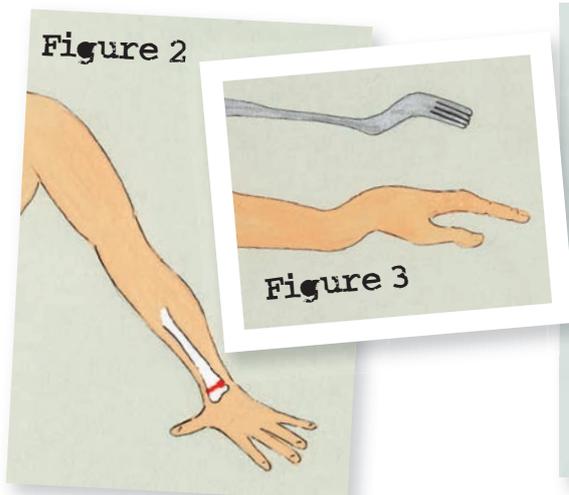
Cushing's Triad

This syndrome is also called Cushing's reflex. It describes the three things that develop with an advanced stage of raised intra-cranial pressure. These consist of elevated blood pressure, raise pulse rate and slow or Cheyne-Stokes respiration.

Any condition causing raised ICP will eventually lead to this. In trauma, both cerebral oedema and intra-cranial bleeding may be responsible. Rapidly expanding brain tumours also produce the same picture.

The effects are the result of pressure being exerted on the mid-brain in the region of the foramen magnum at the base of the skull (Figure 5). There will usually be a GCS recording of 3-5. Dilated pupils and some limb paralysis will also be present. The situation will quite quickly progress to respiratory and cardiac arrest.

Henry Williams Cushing was an American neurosurgeon. He was born the youngest of ten children in Cleveland and studies medicine at Yale. He progressed to Harvard, the Massachusetts General Hospital and finally John's Hopkins in Baltimore. He served with the US Army Medical Corps during WW1. He also described Cushing's disease, a tumour of the pituitary gland which



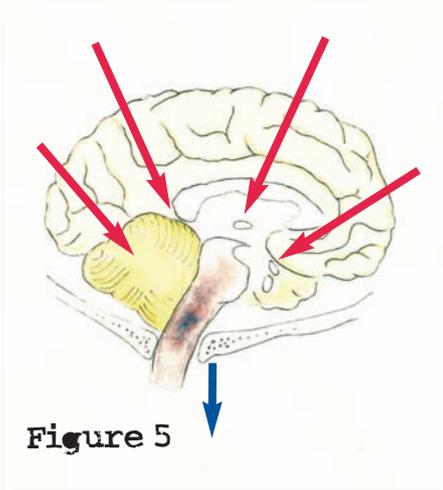


Figure 5

is also common in dogs and horses. He died in 1939 and was commemorated on a US postage stamp issue in 1988.

Eustachian Tube

This is the canal which connects the middle ear to the naso-pharynx and permits equalisation pressure within the middle ear. (Figure 6). Normally the tube is closed but opens when a pressure difference is detected. This produces the 'popping' sensation with change of altitude. Swallowing and yawning can open the tube to help with pressure equalisation. Without the facility to equal pressure the middle ear would be damaged and hearing and balance impaired.

The tube also drains mucus from the middle ear into the throat. In upper respiratory infections and allergies the tube becomes blocked with resultant impaired hearing etc. In children the tube is narrow and more horizontal hence the higher incidence of ear infections in childhood.

Bartolomeo Eustachius lived from 1500 to 1574 in Italy. He produced the first account of the anatomy of the ear. He was also the first to identify the adrenal glands. He published a work of ground breaking anatomical illustrations and engravings following which he lived in fear of ex-communication from the Roman Catholic church!

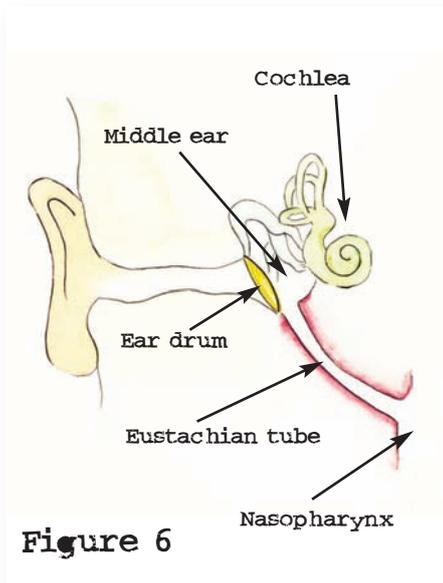


Figure 6

CO²LD

An investigation into the effect of the cold on bottled oxygen, and its implications in Mountain Rescue

by Shaun Roberts,
Glenmore Lodge MRT

Whether we welcome it or not, cold is often the rescuers' companion, one that must be managed with our clothing, equipment and level of activity, to ensure it does not get the better of us. We may have the strategies and indeed energy to keep this companion at bay but this can not always be said for the casualty. A cold environment means a cold casualty; it also means cold equipment and in particular cold oxygen cylinders. What affect does the cold have on our oxygen, a gas so important to many of our casualties? Is the pressurised gas within the cylinders influenced by a cold environment and could we do anything practical in field to prevent or reverse this? For a few years now I have had an oxygen cylinder placed in a remote rescue box, well away from a warm cosy base, and people would often comment that this would be very cold oxygen for the casualty. Well I am not a scientist but I am certainly curious and I wondered – would it?

So here you have the following experiment which has certainly settled the issue in my mind. Armed with three oxygen cylinders, fridges, freezers and some fancy temperature/humidity meters I set about finding some answers to the question – does a cold cylinder mean cold oxygen?

Experiment

Three bottles of oxygen were stored overnight at different temperatures:

- Bottle 1: 12°C average temperature
- Bottle 2: 3°C average temperature
- Bottle 3: -18°C average temperature

The bottles were removed from their storage and individually connected to standard oxygen tubing and trauma mask with reservoir. The temperature and humidity were measured in the mask reservoir to represent the oxygen being inhaled by the casualty. The flow rate was set at 12 L/min.

Results

	Temperature	Humidity
Ambient Air	14.0°C	48.2%
	Reservoir Temperature	Reservoir Humidity
Bottle 1 (12°C)	13.3°C	6.7%
Bottle 2 (3°C)	12.3°C	6.2%
Bottle 3 (-18°C)	11.3°C	6.3%

Although the temperatures in which the bottles were stored varied by a temperature range of 30°C (-18 to +12°C) the temperatures measured at the reservoir only varied by a temperature range of 2°C (11.3°C to 13.3°C). Even an oxygen bottle stored at -18°C produced warm oxygen! Humidity within the reservoir remained fairly constant at around 6.5%.



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Change of Ambient Air

The test on the warmest bottle was transferred outside where the ambient air temperature was 5.8°C and the temperature measured in the reservoir dropped over a short period (3 mins) to 7.3°C. Clearly indicating that the ambient air temperature was having a great influence on the temperature at the mask.

Expanding Gas

I was curious what the temperature of the oxygen was as it expanded from the bottle, so the temperature of the oxygen was measured where it directly exits the bottle, at the regulator nipple.

- Bottle 1: -6.0°C
- Bottle 2: -6.1°C
- Bottle 3: -21.0°C (-7°C after one hour)

The coldest bottle (bottle 3) was then re-measured at the end of the test, a period of approximately 11/2 hours. A temperature of -7.0°C was then recorded, showing that the bottle content had seemingly warmed up.

I could understand that as the gas expands it cools, the opposite to the compression and heating we feel at the valve of bike inner tube when pumping it up. A little subsequent research showed that this expansion and cooling is termed the Joule-Thompson Effect and frankly looks a very complex subject, so I'll leave it at the bicycle pump. So even warm oxygen cylinders produce cold oxygen at the point the gas exits the bottle. The fact that the temperature at the mask is greatly raised from the temperature of the gas leaving the bottle means that all of the heating is taking place within the tubing.

Heat Pads

Would applying heat pads to the tubing, which has been common practice within many teams, raise the temperature of the oxygen at the mask?

Heat pads were subsequently applied to the tubing in various ways to attempt to increase the temperature at the reservoir.

1. Tubing wrapped around a single heat pad did not raise the temperature within the reservoir.
2. Tubing coiled into a foil pouch and sandwiched between two heat pads did manage to raise the temperature by approximately 0.7°C.

It was concluded that any configuration of heat pads had little or no influence in raising the temperature of oxygen at the reservoir and that the temperature of the environment along the entire length of the tubing appears critical in raising the temperature of the oxygen for the casualty.

Conclusions

1. It is clear that the ambient air temperature acting on the tubing and mask reservoir has the greatest influence on the temperature of the oxygen received by the casualty, and not the storage temperature of the oxygen bottle itself.
2. A cold oxygen cylinder does not mean cold oxygen for the casualty.
3. Heat pads applied to the tubing have little or no influence on the oxygen temperature received by the casualty.
4. The low humidity of oxygen received by the casualty remains a key factor in cooling (ref: Casualty Care by John Ellerton).

Best Practice

Attempting to raise the temperature of the environment, in which the oxygen tubing and mask reservoir are located, seems the key factor in raising

the temperature of oxygen for the casualty. The oxygen bottle itself often represents a cold mass and for this reason teams may be reluctant to place it inside the casualty bag. However, trying to run the tubing through the casualty bag and doing our best to bring the casualty bag up around the mask and reservoir seems the best way of providing the casualty with the warmest oxygen possible. If heat pads are available then they would be best placed within the casualty bag to help raise the temperature of that air space occupied by both casualty and oxygen tubing.

Note: Standard lightweight CD bottles from both MGS and BOC were used.



Across the Divide upcoming events

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Plus we have spaces left on our Europe bike rides The Euro Three Cities and London to Paris both in June 2009, also a wonderful trek from Finan to Petra in November 2009 – all these events you can raise funds for the charity of your choice.

Further details on these events, and many more, can be found at acrossthedivide.com



Bare bones and boulders... a tale of woe

by Alan Jeffreys

Draining the hill slopes of Breabag and Beinn an Fhuarain in Assynt, NW Sutherland there is a superb cave called Uamh an Claonaite. Initially a very fine stream cave accessed by a tight squirm down through loose boulders, Claonaite passes through a series of sumps (areas where the whole passage is under water), revealing itself only to cave divers. In 1980 members of the Grampian Speleological Group succeeded in bypassing sump one to allow non-divers access to most of the system. Beyond sump three however remained diver-only territory which ended at an overflow pool – sump six – for over a decade. This final stretch of passage was low, awkward and thrutchy, creating quite frustrating territory to hump heavy diving equipment along.

Convinced we had missed some vital clue, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, I conducted a series of sometimes solo dives to this remote part of Claonaite, first attempting to pass sump six (which ultimately pinched out) and then discovering a high level route into a chamber where, clearly, the main flow diverted into a small stream passage ending at a sump subsequently numbered 6b.

Following up this work, in 1995 divers Simon Brooks and Mike O'Driscoll passed sump 6b after thirteen metres, to emerge into spectacularly large passage which continued gaining dimension until they finally reached a breathtakingly huge chamber – The Great Northern Time Machine – where the river spilled over a waterfall to swirl away into sump seven, in what was clearly younger cave than the massive abandoned caverns above. During an exciting follow-up trip, seven of us

On a calm day in March 1996 therefore, I clambered down into Claonaite, armed with diving gear and a long, sealed plastic tube filled with bubble wrap. There were other people in the system, two of them planning a training (in one case introductory) dive but I was on my own with this one. (The prospect of a fiftieth birthday party back at base tended to speed me along too). One by one the sumps yielded, although the 'carry' between sumps three and five proved as tiresome as ever, and the tube with a mind of its own nearly throttled me a couple of times when underwater but eventually I surfaced in Claonaite 7 and dekkitted.

The bone site was a five minute hands and knees crawl away but en route was a chaotic pile of vast limestone blocks, atop of which a shaft soared up into darkness. From the streambed I could clearly hear what sounded like a substantial amount of water falling from it so, curious to see what was going on, I began moving up a gentle slope of boulders and mud on the far side of the shaft. Half way up, I rested my hand on a large rock to maintain balance (the other hand being full of plastic tube). Shockingly, the jagged fragment slid down slope, taking me with it; it must have been perched on a pin head.

It smashed onto my right leg, causing complete failure of that limb, so that I fell/slid against a dipping roof, ending up sitting on the rock pile while

bitten out of my wet suit. I was bleeding profusely – very profusely – and I quickly discovered that the arm was completely useless. Presumably the limestone boulder had side swiped me as it passed although I had not been conscious of any such blow.

Realisation of my predicament now flooded over me. I was injured, possibly incapacitated, beyond three sump dives, in as remote a spot as could be achieved in Scotland, some half a mile from daylight, on my own and with no firm prospect of anyone else coming as far. I think I could be forgiven for disintegrating into self pity and fright – the situation was clearly about as serious as it could get.

My first action was to attempt to stand. This I managed, my right leg taking my weight despite extreme pain. This at least was good news. It was unlikely that it was broken, merely severely bruised. Having become kind of mobile, I staggered back down to dive base, where at least there was a flat floor and space to move about. One look at the placid sump pool was sufficient to dissolve my resolution. Sump 6b was not the easiest of dives, being a winding tube just larger than body size, with snags and lumps to trap the unwary. Despair surged up again as I contemplated having to dive back out handicapped by serious injury. Could I do it? Would I be able to pass the sump or perish under water? Could I indeed even put my diving gear back on? It all looked highly improbable and I sat there, shivering, bleeding and downright scared.

However, no point in self pity. No-one else was going to help me, so better to bite the bullet and make an effort. Kitting up proved 'interesting'. With only one hand I contrived to pull on my neoprene hood and mask and buckle the air bottle round my waist while sitting down (cave divers wear bottles like gunbelts, rather than on the back). My adapted canoe helmet and mask proved more difficult. With only one hand I could not



UCENTCHOKETOP. THE SQUIRM THROUGH BOULDERS AT CLAONAITE ENTRANCE IS TYPICAL OF TERRAIN THROUGHOUT THE CAVE PHOTO: PETER GLANVILL

explored all manner of vast tunnels including one where large animal bones lay scattered on a sandy floor. This transpired to be an almost complete skeleton of a bear, about which palaeontologists in the National Museum of Scotland salivated helplessly. I decided to bring out a good bone sample for them to positively identify and date.

the offending boulder continued downhill until it broke against an immovable cousin. As I stared stupidly at my wellington boot wondering if I could still stand or better still walk, I became first aware, then alarmed at quantities of blood dripping off my right arm. The wound seemed to be high above my elbow, where a chunk of neoprene had been

fasten my quick release chin strap so I was forced to hold helmet with cap lamp in my left hand. Thus equipped I braced myself and stepped into the pool.

There was a two metre dive down into the tunnel proper and the gods must have been in a good mood because I found visibility to be absolutely gin clear. Thus I could progress without clutching the guide line, which in other circumstances would have been a foolish omission, and with only a minimal amount of snagging of pressure gauges etc on the floor, I managed to surface safely on the near side. Immense waves of relief poured over me because I felt I had conquered the worst obstacle on my road to daylight. Cold water also temporarily cauterized my arm wound. Stripping off my diving gear and stuffing smaller items into a tackle bag I began what evolved into a nightmare journey, squirming up through boulder piles, forcing tackle ahead of me in tight crawls, descending head first out of a ceiling high exit with a three metre drop onto boulders followed by another kit-up in cramped conditions before diving sump five. All this hard work started my wound bleeding heavily again, which did little to boost my hard won confidence but at least I was moving toward relative safety and other members of

I was injured, possibly incapacitated, beyond three sump dives, in as remote a spot as could be achieved in Scotland, some half a mile from daylight, on my own...

my club. It was this achieving that kept me going; knowing every step got me closer to deliverance.

Sump five went very easily, it being a straightforward, rather shallow dive but on the near side I faced the worst section of my self rescue. All the equipment had to be properly packed away because the passages leading to sump three (sump four is bypassed) lie on an incline, both roof and floor, with perhaps 60-70cms negotiable height, rutted and fretted by water action. Every movement was

agony, and the dull weight of my diving kit caught and sagged into every hole and depression. I was near to tears of utter frustration as movement shrank to a half body length each painful surge, my strength barely up to humping the leaden bags in front and up over blocks of limestone. At the end of the first section of this almost intolerable passage, insult was added in the form of a huge boulder fall where a tortuous route through massive breakdown led to yet another sloping streamway.

Inch by inch I hauled my kit and ravaged form up and across the choke. At the top, I fed my diving gear down through a body sized opening and, feet first, began to follow it. Just then I caught sight of a flash of light – or was I hallucinating? But then voices accompanied it! The truth dawned on me – Fraser and Graham had indeed passed through sump three (the deepest and longest dive) and were coming on down the cave. The wash of relief was indescribable.

Once they had received a mumbled summary from me about what had occurred things began to happen apace. First, I enjoyed the relative but welcome luxury of crawling along unencumbered to sump three where it was possible to stand upright. There, they kitted me up with a fresh air bottle and properly fastened helmet. I waded into the sump, which comprises a steep gravel slope down to a low point, followed by an equally steep ascent to air on the other side. Under water, my troubles were greatly lessened by absence of gravity and, tugging gently on the guide line I drifted steadily through, feeling the pressure ease as I rose toward the water's surface.

As I emerged, there was, bizarrely, applause from two people – Roger and Nikki – seated on the mud bank. (They had mistaken me for Graham and thought they were congratulating him on his first successful sump dive). I staggered out, quickly disabusing them about my condition. Roger, for reasons I have never been able to fathom, possessed a roll of gaffer tape which he used to bind up my arm wound – which was, apparently, horrendous. My morale was boosted hugely by the thought that all dives had now been completed and all I had to do was pass along 1/4 mile of familiar stream passage, with its ramps, small climbs and crawls, and struggle out of the tight entrance.

My leg, though hurting, still supported my weight so, closely assisted by Nikki on



CLAONAITEBELHAVEN. THE AUTHOR CROUCHING WHERE HE ENDED UP INJURED. THE OFFENDING BOULDER LIES BEHIND AND BELOW HIM
PHOTO: COLIN JAMIESON

troublesome scrambles, I made steady progress toward the entrance, while Roger raced out ahead to alert a rescue party. As it turned out, I exited before anyone arrived and, shivering with shock and exertion, started the mile long trudge down valley to the car park. Over half way down I met an ad hoc rescue party coming up – I am not sure who was the more pleased! By the time I reached the road, an ambulance was in attendance and I was taken to Raigmore Hospital at Inverness, a fifty mile journey I prefer to forget.

I was operated on overnight to clean out and repair my arm, losing most of my bicep in the process and when I awoke on the ward next morning I was astonished to find my right leg totally black from knee to foot with immense bruising, ice packs stacked along it to reduce the swelling. All in all, including subsequent physiotherapy, I was out of action for a couple of months.

Divers visiting my accident site some time later delighted in reporting a strange whiskery fungus growing where my copious blood flow had decorated the cave but sadly it was all gone before anyone could collect a sample!

This incident highlights what enormous difficulties are faced by rescue teams dealing with a prone casualty from such a place in a part of the country remote from large population centres. If I had not been mobile, there is little doubt I would not have survived my ordeal. Rescue through underwater passages is a technique with little case history, and carrying a casualty all that way would have been a monumental epic requiring large numbers of cavers. Lessons? First, solo caving into remote places requires very careful consideration. Second, all boulder piles need to be treated with caution and respect. Third, once again the matter of

Searching swiftwater safely

by Howie Crook

I don't know about you, but I reckon we all have one big nagging fear regarding the safety of mountain rescue teams. To me, it's searching around the water margin, particularly around rapids, and even more so at night. I hear it loads – 'remember the Death Beck incident, the water was raging that night.' I've attended several incidents in very worrying conditions – rivers in full spate at night and the following conversations made me shake my head with concern.

With the recent focus on swiftwater rescue, and subsequent equipping of teams, my concern if anything is increasing as we find ourselves increasingly involved in this area of work. I know that we have saved, and will continue to save, lives in these situations. And that we are very good at most aspects of searching as it lies at the core of what we do. I've seen many examples of first class organisation and co-ordination of large scale multi agency searches. We just need a bit of tweaking.

Before we go any further let me identify some of the things I've seen and heard of:-

- Lack of knowledge regarding water search protocols resulting in haphazard searching.
- Red mist resulting in personnel taking unnecessary risks.
- Not knowing where people are within search groups.
- People operating on their own!
- Mountain rescue personnel with no PPE, including buoyancy aids!
- Searching at night in high risk situations.
- Searching at night in high risk situations without adequate experience or training.
- Searching at night in high risk situations without adequate experience or training or PPE!
- Lack of back up for people at the water margin.

I believe we can address many of these issues by looking at two key areas – Effective Briefing and Group Management – and that a few changes have the potential to vastly increasing safety on the ground.

Effective briefing

Co-ordinating a large scale search can be fraught – telephones ringing, search patterns to work out, comms to organise, interviewing and interpreting witness information, co-ordinating with multiple agencies. In my experience, the quality of the briefing is vital to the success and outcome of the exercise. This is backed up by the fire and rescue service, who have known for

some time that there's a direct correlation between the quality of briefing and the quantity of radio traffic – the more radio traffic, the harder it is to obtain a clear picture and for key messages to get through.

Often control will assume certain things, perhaps, if you're controlling a river search and dispatching a group, you might assume that they would all wear adequate PPE for the conditions but clearly people choose not to.

Having a simple model to brief people can help to ensure everyone has the right information. Many agencies use the SMEAC model. It's stood the test of time and pretty much all military use this model to the extent that it becomes second nature.

SMEAC

- Situation
- Mission
- Execution
- Administration
- Command, Control and Communication

By writing down this information you know what you've said, and your groups out in the field have something to refer to. I find that by having briefing sheets prepared on waterproof paper, then stored in your buoyancy aids, ensures you've always got the them to hand (drop me an email for blank printable copies).

When briefing a group, it is of particular importance to allocate a sub group leader for each river group. Ensure group members know who this is. Make that person responsible for both comms and the overall safety of the group.

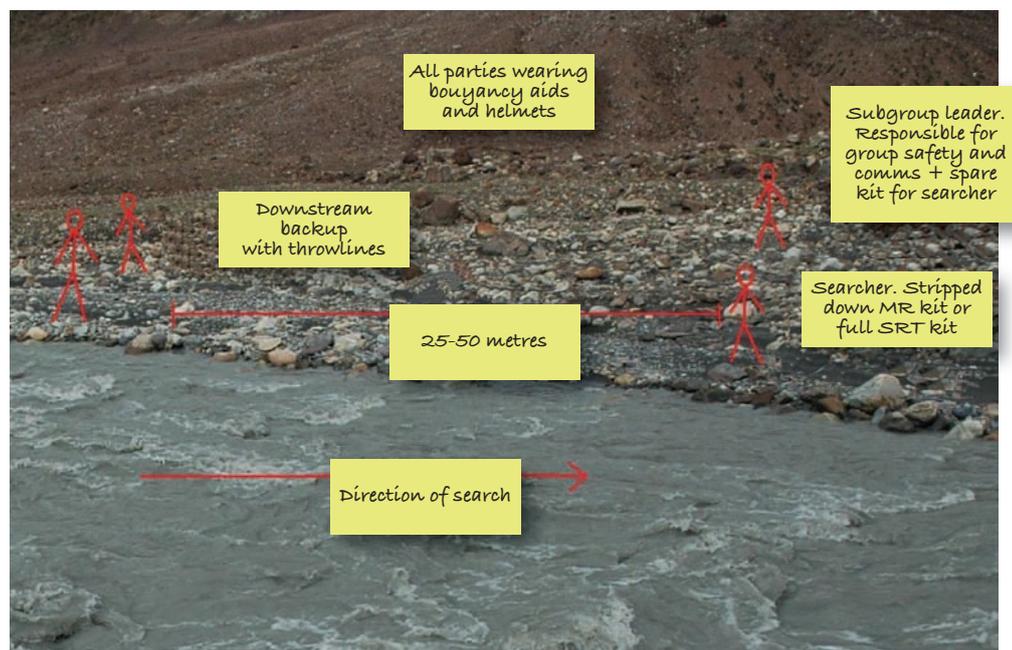
Other thoughts

- Ensure the group has a search pattern.
- In no circumstances should people be deployed to riverside searches on their own or without buoyancy aids, I'd like to see people wearing helmets and carrying throwlines.
- Many teams now have basic kit. Don't let lack of kit be an excuse. Know where additional resources are, and call them in as soon as possible.

Typically searches are undertaken as either a hasty search, or an effective search.

Hasty searches – urgent searches to locate someone. Realistically these teams are someone's best hope if they are in the water or on a disappearing island (see last issue). If you're dispatched on a hasty search you're going to be moving fast, you're going to be breathing hard or out of breath, it would be really good to be wearing full swiftwater PPE.

Effective searches – leave no stone unturned, so you can categorically say an area has been covered. Slower in nature.



SMEAC - Team briefing

Situation

What has occurred? Time - Outline - Who. Example: Car in water @ 16.00 - missing one female, age 61 - PLS GR 467974

Mission

What are **you** (specific team you are briefing) going to do? Example: Your job is to carry out a river side hasty search from point GR 467874 to GR558999.

Execution (the plan)

How will we deal with it? What equipment? How many personnel? For how long? Example: 4 people - hasty search - aim to be at GR558999 in 60 minutes then report back - 1 x searcher, 1 x comms, 2 x back up - group leader (name).

Administration

What gear? When resupply/relief? Food, water and rest? Example: Food available at (location) - take full swiftwater PPE, throwlines, radios, phone, map.

Command & Communications

Where will the command post be? What communication system? Example: Control is situated at Sedbergh fire station - relay based at (location) - 'ask for radio relay' phone number 01367 27653 - comms channel 63b.

Group Management

So we've got a sub group leader, I'd super-strongly recommend that you have a waterside briefing before you to start to search. This might be two minutes just to check that everyone knows how they are going to operate. These two minutes make all the difference.

For example... 'Right, John, you're going to be searcher, Tim and Sarah downstream backup. We want you about 50 metres behind us, I'll be next to John, handling comms, if we feel a section is too risky, we're going to just walk around.'

Search patterns

If you don't have a system, the one shown in the photo works really, really well. In this format, everyone is in support of the searcher. Some teams deploy the searcher in stripped down MR kit so they might have a chance if they fall in, others deploy in full SRT kit, which has to be my preference. Often there is a huge amount of kit within an hour of your base. Don't try to handle things on your own. You don't want to be wearing a rucksack if you're in any danger of falling in the water!

Next to the searcher is the subgroup leader. They're in a position to carry extra kit for the searcher and also act as comms, as they are away from the water's edge. You're never going to hear anything on the radio standing next to a rapid. The party leader is responsible for group safety. From their objective position they might be advising the searcher to skip certain bits.

Downstream backup follows at an appropriate distance downstream, they will be carrying throwlines. This should be two people so they can look after each other, otherwise one person is very exposed. An appropriate distance may be 20-30 metres downstream. To be able to use a throwline, a casualty must be orientated and head above the water, so the distance allows this if someone was to take a dip. They want to be close enough to be able to effect a rescue before someone gets swept away from the bank.

In this pattern the group moves upstream in a continuous fashion. At some sections the group leader may decide to hold the backup in position and then bring them forward. This is called 'staged search spacing' and is critical for the backup to be effective.

So, there's some ideas, go out and play with them, develop your own and share your findings.

Howie Crook sits on the MR Water Safety Panel and likes writing articles and running swiftwater training courses! Thanks to Ewan Thomas for sharing ideas on search patterns. Email Howie at howardcrook@rethinktraining.co.uk to get examples of SMEAC which you can print out.

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Why do teams train?

by Bob Sharp

Aside from operational activities, training is the single most important thing a team does. For many teams the time and resources invested in training is considerable. Good training and well thought-out training programmes are central to a team's effectiveness, safe operation and professionalism. However, training is only successful if it adheres to a number of key principles and is planned in conjunction with the team's overall aims. A team which simply repeats the same programme year on year with little regard to its operational needs and how they change over time is unlikely to operate effectively. Similarly, a programme, which ignores the importance of training techniques and methods of delivery, is doomed to remain sterile and uninteresting.

For a training programme to work properly, it has to stand scrutiny against a wide number of criteria. Consider the following questions, which could be asked of a team's training programme.

- Does it include all the relevant activities every year and if so why?
- Is the correct amount of time spent on each activity?
- How is the overall programme evaluated for effectiveness?
- Are the most appropriate people and resources used to deliver the programme?
- Is the team mindful of different methods of delivery?
- How confident is the team that members actually learn skills?
- What methods does it use to measure learning?
- Does the team know how other teams go about training?

Many of these, and related questions, centre on the importance of delivery and evaluation and not just training content. For example, a team's annual programme as well as the learning of individual members must be examined for effectiveness; it is inappropriate to make assumptions about (or worse still not even consider) whether aims are met or whether things could be done better.

In this series of articles I'll examine some of these topics in more detail. But let's make a start by looking at why teams train. Some of this will be obvious but there may be a few topics some teams have not considered.

The aims and purposes of training

The purpose of training may be seen simply to improve the technical skills of team members. I think this is a limited perspective. Training should have a much broader impact than this and address a number of areas. Why do I say this? Well, for one thing, human learning is a multi-dimensional process; it can have physical, cognitive, perceptual and qualitative components (see Diagram 1). For example, many aspects of first aid require competence in the physical skills (how to treat various problems), perceptual skills (recognising what the problem is), decision

making (deciding on order of priority when there are several casualties), knowledge acquisition (anatomy and physiology) as well as attitudinal capacities (resolve and fortitude when faced with a dire situation). Similarly, mountain rescue is a multi-various arena where different skills each requiring their own knowledge base and skills are selected and decisions made to enable everything to come together to good effect. So, technical skills invariably take place within a wider context

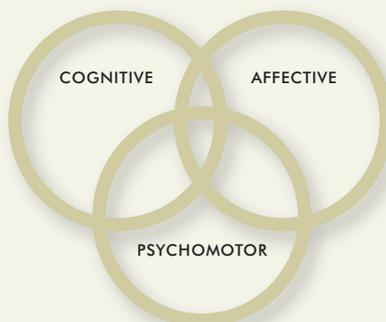


DIAGRAM 1: THREE DIMENSIONS TO HUMAN LEARNING
 AFFECTIVE = FEELINGS, EMOTIONS, ATTITUDES, ASPIRATIONS, MOTIVES
 COGNITIVE = INTELLECT, MEMORY, KNOWLEDGE PERCEPTION, ANTICIPATION
 PSYCHOMOTOR = SKILLS, MOVEMENTS, TECHNIQUES
 TAKEN FROM SHARP (2004)

and training should recognise this. Indeed, in some cases, the learning of technical skills may be less important than knowing when and how to use them.

So, how should this be reflected in training? I believe there are five broad areas.

Technical

One of the clearest aims of training is to help members develop their knowledge and skills in relevant technical areas – radio communication, first aid, use of pyrotechnics, rope handling skills etc. This is probably the bedrock of any training programme. Team members should know how to perform techniques and be competent in their execution. They should also learn about any limitations, specific applications and safety implications etc. There might also be an associated knowledge base underlying each technique (eg. rope types, manufacture,



KNIT ONE PURL ONE
 PHOTO: BOB SHARP ▲

maintenance) that should be gained.

It's fairly easy to identify a team's technical requirements (as long as the right information is used – we'll look at this in the next issue) but it's important to recognise that the profile of skills required by one team may not be the same as another team. And the relative importance of particular types of expertise may vary between teams. These factors will dictate how much time a team spends on training and how that training is delivered.

It's worth mentioning at this point that the word 'training' is, technically incorrect. For many people training conveys notions of exercise and fitness. Indeed, it's a rather old-fashioned term that is no longer used by many professional organisations (eg. education and coaching). Traditionally, training implies one-way communication between the 'instructor/leader' and the learner. This is a major weakness because modern principles of learning focus on the interaction between people and especially active involvement by the learner. More will be said on this topic later. So, even though the word training is commonplace in mountain rescue, it should be recognised that it has little to do with exercise and fitness. More important, team training should not be seen as 'top down', but more an interactive process where everybody learns.

Attitudinal

The success of a team depends on the individual effectiveness of its members. This, in turn, relies on individual commitment. Training should facilitate commitment by engendering positive attitudes between members (whatever their level of experience or background in life) and to the over-arching cause of mountain rescue. In addition, training should assist team morale and good teamwork both within the rescue team and with external agencies. Central to this is good communication between members which ensures everybody is fully informed at all times about the team's affairs. If everyone knows what's going on and feels involved in all aspects of the team's work then a solid basis exists from which positive attitudes and values can grow.

One expression of positive attitude is the recognition by all of the skills and limitations of each other. A major strength of any team is the diversity of skills and perspectives individuals bring to it. Some excel in particular areas whilst others are less competent. It's crucial that team training maximises the various talents and interests of individual members and at the same time develops the skills of those who are

less capable or show interest in particular areas. The role of team leaders and those responsible for training in motivating members and encouraging positive attitudes is central in taking everyone forwards. Involving team members (especially newcomers) in training delivery will be looked at in more detail in the third section of this series.

Leadership

It's fairly obvious that good leadership is vital not only in the way technical subjects such as rope handling and radio communications are managed, but also to over-arching areas such as financial management, search administration and team leadership. Key subjects like these need to be properly managed and led. It's worth saying that not everyone is capable of (or indeed interested in) good leadership. Also, it doesn't follow that someone who is technically competent in a particular area (eg. radio comms) will be able to lead training in that area.

The important point here is that teams must ensure that people who take on leadership roles are those best suited to the role and do so for the right reasons. It's probably a little altruistic to say this, but my view is that people should lead for the simple good of the team and not for personal gain or ego satisfaction. One way a team can facilitate this is to use training as a 'proving ground' for leadership. Opportunities should be devised for individual members to take responsibility and assume leadership roles. A good model is to put someone in charge of a scenario, with backup from a more experienced member who can advise and prompt when required. In this way, the member can take responsibility whilst making decisions (and mistakes) without any accompanying disastrous consequences.



LOCATING THE CASUALTY
PHOTO: BOB SHARP ▲

Sometimes, putting someone in a 'trainee leadership' role can reveal leadership qualities that otherwise go unnoticed. Incidentally, a lot of mileage can be gained by letting people make mistakes and we'll return to this topic in greater detail in a later edition.

Safety

It's commonly accepted that whilst mountain rescue teams are voluntary in nature, they work to high professional standards. Training provides a good opportunity to establish and reinforce – particularly with newer members – standard operating procedures that are effective, robust and safe. This is central to the professional approach. Inculcating a standard and safe approach to practice is something which, at some times, may be up front and observable, but at other times it may be light touch and barely visible. Of course, it's up to individual teams to decide what constitutes safe practice, as much will depend on the team's local environment and operational requirements.

Training should seek to reinforce good practice and opportunities sought to examine potential hazard areas (eg. by comparing contrasting rope techniques). Time should be set aside within the training programme to establish, revise and critically examine its standard operating procedures. A useful strategy is to involve the entire team in this process – rather than just a selected group. Sometimes it's surprising how perceptive a new member's observations can be. Total involvement like this helps to ensure nothing is overlooked or dealt with inadequately. The same applies to the team's risk assessment. The involvement of all team members in such vital matters helps to cultivate team commitment and develop a sense of team 'ownership'. At the end of the day, safe practice and the use of standard procedures should become part of a team's culture. Training should play a big part in developing that culture.



▲ CUTTING OUT THE SLAB
PHOTO: BOB SHARP



▲ THE BURP TEST, USED FOR LOOKING AT NEWLY DEPOSITED SNOW. A 30CM BY 30CM SECTION OF THE UPPER LAYERS IS ISOLATED AND LIFTED ON THE SHOVEL WHICH IS THEN TILTED BACK SO THE LAYER SITS AT AN INCLINATION OF ABOUT 30 DEGREES. THE UNDERSIDE OF THE SHOVEL IS THEN STRUCK FIRMLY WITH A FLAT GLOVED HAND. ANY SHEAR THAT OCCURS SHOULD BE NOTED AND EXAMINED. ALTHOUGH SUCH A SHEAR MAY NOT CONSTITUTE A CURRENT AVALANCHE HAZARD IT MAY BE BURIED AND CONTRIBUTE TO FUTURE INSTABILITY. COURTESY BARTON WRIGHT. PHOTO: BOB SHARP

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Programme development

It may not be obvious, but a training programme should 'sow the seeds of its own destruction'! Programmes should be self-critical and generate feedback about weaknesses – team and individual – and show where additional or different training is required. It's already been suggested that training programmes shouldn't be repeated the same way each year. They should grow and develop across time – there are always more effective ways to deliver particular topics. Therefore, it's incumbent on team members – especially those responsible for training – to adopt a critical approach to change and look for ways to improve as the team moves forwards each year.

It's worth noting that operational work should be viewed as an extension of training. Rescues don't always go to plan and unexpected events occur. These experiences should be noted (probably at a hot debrief just after the rescue) and subsequently used to inform training. Rescues, of course, provide team members with the opportunity to practise skills in real settings and consequently learn on the job. Sometimes it's difficult to apply a skill properly if it takes place in a simulated environment or when conditions such as the weather/stress are otherwise favourable – especially if it requires a high degree of co-operation between team members. Rescues therefore provide opportunities for learning in real, stressful situations. Of course, from an operational viewpoint, it's critical that members are deployed such that their weaknesses don't compromise the rescue or add risk to individuals. But there should be opportunities to give new or less skilled members responsibility under the watchful eye of a competent team member.

Bob Sharp has over thirty years experience in mountain rescue, and a lifetime of professional experience in education and coaching. This article summarises what he feels are the key features of a good training programme. This is not intended as a blueprint for success but readers may extract the points appropriate for their particular circumstances. His ideas may serve just to confirm existing good practice or, in other cases, may indicate a new way of looking at things or provide a reminder of practices used in the past that could be resurrected.



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moving oneself if at all possible helps your rescuers enormously and in this case meant the difference between living and not living. I still cave; I see no reason to stop. But perhaps the erosion of confidence caused by a series of injurious incidents has made me contemplate potential accidents rather more. Nowadays, I look longer before I leap!

Thanks go to fellow cavers Fraser Simpson, Graham Marshall, Roger Galloway and Nikki Brown for all their help and support, and apologies to Dick Grindley whose fiftieth birthday bash I managed to disrupt so effectively.




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