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ISSUE 30



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WELCOME TO ISSUE 30

Mountain Rescue is the membership magazine for mountain and cave rescue in England and 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.

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NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 31

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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

Goodyear 'Team of the Year'
Edale MRT
Photo: Goodyear

EDITOR'S NOTE

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

mountain rescue



It has been disappointing in the past three years to see how little use people have made of the calendar on the website. With the launch of the new site I would like to make a plea for the calendar to be employed. It enables everyone to be aware of what is happening and to avoid clashes of events. All national and regional occasions should appear there but, in addition, important team events can be included. In particular, casualty care courses and examinations appearing there would be very helpful to those who miss their own team events.

In some areas of the country there has been a surprising and disturbing rise in the number of incidents. Whilst a significant part of this rise can be attributed to a number of hapless people who wander into the hills in apparent ignorance of weather, terrain and the limited span of daylight hours, this does not account for the whole picture. There is a need to look into these numbers in more depth to avoid falling into the trap of 'speaking beyond the evidence'. It is all too easy to fall into the trap of 'cognitive illusion'. One of the basic flaws in our reasoning process is the tendency to see patterns and connections when in fact there are none. So if there is someone out there who would be willing to investigate in some depth the background to these numbers, please step forward now.

Having said this there are, of course, worrying statements being made on the edge of the world of hill-going activities. In recent months more than one voice has been raised in support of more paths and signposts to avoid the need for 'all that map and compass nonsense'! Having secured the 'right to roam' it would seem that a number of people want only to roam on more waymarked paths, preferably with all the waymarks within sight of each other.

Despite this increase in workload, mountain rescue teams continue to deliver a first class service and there are no instances when a team has failed to respond to a call. Perhaps we are in the situation that Alan Milburn, as Health Minister, planned for hospitals. 'All NHS hospitals will be above average'! Evidence maybe for Robert Louis Stevenson's observation that 'politics is perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is necessary'.

I am pleased to see how expeditiously the forward planning group has met and begun its task. The early signs hold promise of some very positive recommendations and I look forward to its first formal report and the challenge of implementation.

'So many worlds, so much to do. So little done, such things to be.' Alfred Lord Tennyson

David Allan Chairman

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CHECK OUT THE NEW WEBSITE!

The all new Mountain Rescue England and Wales website was launched in September. Rewritten, and redesigned, the site finally made it to screen thanks to the efforts of a small group of individuals beavering away over many months.



The members' area is now much enhanced and user friendly, back issues of the mag (not including the current one) are available for download together with other resources, there's a new Basecamp area for our support members and a regular news feed to keep you up to scratch with what's happening in the wider world of mountain rescue. Please take time to browse and explore – and feel free to offer constructive feedback!

MEMBERS' AREA AND TEAM ADMINS

At the time of launch, every team received an email with a user name and password – please don't blame the web team if these have gone to the wrong people, or bounced

back from non-existent email addresses – they were sent to the last recorded contact on the site (a prompt, if ever there was one, to keep your team contact details up to date!) The 'team admin' is now responsible for approving their own team members as they register on the site. Please note – team admins must log in using their team user name and not their personal user name in order to access the admin area.

When the team contact logs in they are able to alter their team profile, and approve, block or delete team members.

MEMBERS' AREA AND TEAM MEMBERS

The registration process is simple. Team members sign up via the publicly accessible page on the left hand menu, and using their full name to be recognisable (this full name will be displayed on any forum postings). On signing up, the member receives an automatically generated email with their user name and password and a note that their account will not be active until approved by the team admin. Once approved, the team member receives a notification email telling them their account is now active. If you forget your password, click on the link below the log in form.

BASECAMP AREA

Basecamp members reading this might be interested to hear they too can register with the site, via the Basecamp menu. The drop-down menu gives the option to sign up, or contact us. Click 'Sign up' and the process is the same – once you have submitted the form, your membership of Basecamp will be validated before you can access the area.

TRAINING UPDATE

Mike Margeson writes... The summer round of regional and national courses – Oldham, Party Leader and Bangor Search Management – all seem to have gone well. The only casualty was the First Response Search Management weekend, cancelled due to late withdrawals and low numbers at the new Smelt Mill venue. Talking to a few folk, and with hindsight, the date in early September was perhaps not the best choice. However we intend to reschedule a new date and try again. The other new course, Media Skills training day at Patterdale base has fourteen booked already and will be running. Autumn is looking busy, with the Medical Symposium and annual Team Leaders' meeting in December. The training subcommittee have a new representative from PDMRO in Trev

MEDICAL SYMPOSIUM

Places: 60
Date: Saturday 7 November (One day)
Location: Charlotte Mason College Ambleside
Contact: Peter Smith 01706 852335
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

PPE/FPE EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

Places: 24
Date: 1 November (One day)
Location: Swaledale MRT HQ
Contact: Mike Evens

MR(E&W) SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING

Places: 50
Date: Saturday 21 November (One day)
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton
Contact: Peter Smith

TEAM LEADERS MEETING

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

training calendar

Lawton, training officer for the Edale team.

TRAINING SURVEY

The cut off date was extended twice for this, eventually to 20 September. We will have the results to consider at the November meeting and will publish the findings in the next magazine. We received 160 returns but this still did not represent every team responding.

WEB OPPORTUNITIES

We'd like to see all training opportunities advertised throughout the year on the new website, and to build a resource of training articles and materials available as downloads. So if your team has a particular article or training resource worth sharing, please send it as a PDF to Gary Anderson, who will be managing the training area of the site. Email to gary.srmrt@googlemail.com

MACINNES MARK 6 STRETCHER

Peter Bell writes... Those of you who are looking at new stretcher design or just needing to replace an existing stretcher may wish to note that Hamish MacInnes has just restarted manufacture of his aluminium Mk 6 MR stretcher. I am assisting with the production but

with no input on design or operational characteristics. Hamish would be glad to receive any enquiry, be it technical or sales, so he can estimate demand and then plan production appropriately. His email is slowly@gofast.co.uk Hamish and I have been direct competitors for decades, but we've always enjoyed cordial relations. Although I have only recently moved on to producing the Mk6, I have been making parts for Hamish's Mk 7 for some time. I hasten to add that there is no connection between making for Hamish and ceasing to make my own stretchers two years ago. I have not sold the rights to any of the stretchers I used to make. I was approached recently regarding ongoing production of my mountain stretcher, but uncertain commercial viability seems to be an insurmountable stumbling block. As my priorities have always been technical, Bell stretchers are not designed for easy, cheap or effortless manufacture. I've spent over 35 years producing my own stretchers and have made some Thomas stretchers for Keswick MRT, so manufacturing MacInnes stretchers seems to me to round it off nicely.

PAGER INFORMATION PLEASE

Probably the very first simultaneous alert system for MR call out was the installation of firemen's night call bells by Langdale Ambleside MRT. Having been personally responsible for setting this system in place, I retain a keen interest and have followed the evolution of call mechanism closely ever since then. There are now many and varied techniques to call some or all team members. Some changes inspired by new requirements and some by the increased availability of highly sophisticated digital technology in all its guises. Now seems the appropriate time to write an article to highlight the ways in which evolving call systems have benefited both casualty and team morale alike. So, it would be really helpful if you could, on a team by team basis, send me a short email to define the system you currently use and add comments as you see fit. Please would you use pagers@vaagso.info as a contact email address for me.

Peter Bell

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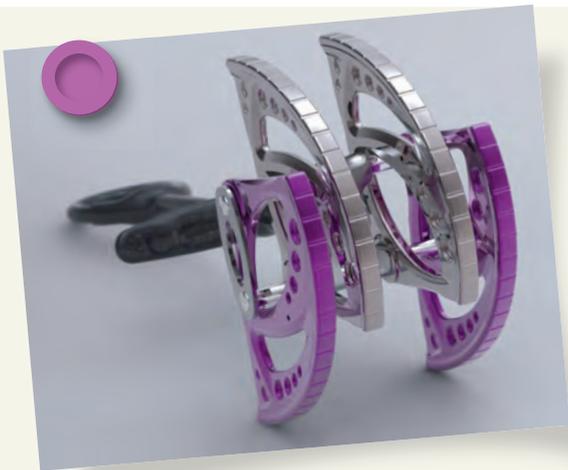


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▲ THE NEW DRAGON CAM

The summer shows saw DMM unveil a whole range of new products destined to be released in the Spring of 2010 or sooner. Several new carabiners including a replacement for the Spectre, and the Prowire, and some additions to the Aero range are planned.

The Aero HMS is a 'basic' HMS biner, but hot forged and with the benefit of a clean nose. The Aero Screw Gate fills the gap left by the Eclipse and Truscrew, and is definitely not basic, being hot forged and clean nosed, but not using the I-Beam construction. Spectre 2 is billed as Phantom's bigger brother, as it is styled on the shape of the Phantom. Larger, but still very light at 32 grams, it is also very strong. The Pro Wire 2, as the name suggests, replaces the original Prowire, and has a smoother and less snag-prone nose profile; an excellent 'first buy' draw that would be equally at home on sport or trad climbs.

However the undoubted star of the shows was the new Dragon Cam. Single stem, twin axle, hot forged cams and an extendable dyneema sling all go to make this a fantastic piece of protection. Six sizes, anodised for corrosion resistance and easy recognition will be launched in the Spring 2010. For more information, go to www.dmmclimbing.com

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PRINCE WILLIAM MAKES HIS WAY UP HELVELLYN FROM RED TARN PHOTO: BOB SMITH

the indoor snow slopes of Manchester's Chill Factor. More than fifteen team members practised their rescue manoeuvres in temperatures of -1.5°C and honed their abseiling and rescue skills on the challenging 12 metre climbing wall. Team leader Garry Rhodes said it was a real bonus to be able to practise in real snow conditions on the team's own doorstep.

Stephen Evans, Chief Executive of Chill Factor, was delighted to welcome the team to the world-class facilities and offer them 'a realistic scenario in which to practise their lifesaving skills.'

LAKE DISTRICT

BIG DAY OUT IN PATERDALE

July saw the Lake District hosting a major event in Patterdale, with Centrepoint and WellChild joining Mountain Rescue in a walk up Helvellyn and a steamer trip along Ullswater, in the company of Prince William. The event also marked the start of the Countdown to the 2012 Olympics Weekend supported by Cumbria County Council. Go to page 10 for a full report of the day, and other Royal events.

KESWICK CALLS REACH THE CENTURY

Richard Warren writes... **Keswick MRT** hit 100 rescues in late August with an additional twenty alerts where the team were called out but 'wheels did not turn'. The picture across the whole of the Lake District prior to the Bank Holiday was a general 14% increase in the number of individual team involvement callouts (490); 64% increase in team alerts (74) and 20% increase in the total, 564 compared to 475 at the same time in 2008 – at three quarters of the way through the year. Keswick has experienced a massive 77% increase in callouts and 66% increase in alerts. That said, some teams have seen no change.

North Wales is also experiencing a 20% increase over 2008 figures. So, is there a solution? I believe a strong national campaign, supported regionally and locally, would ensure the message really does get across to those groups that need to have greater awareness of the risks within a mountain environment, and greater responsibility in their approach to mountain activities.

MID PENNINE

BOLTON GETS THE CHILL FACTOR

After the early summer heatwave, members of **Bolton MRT** enjoyed a cool training session on



ALISTAIR GREENOUGH AND GARRY RHODES PRACTISE THEIR UNDERCOVER SNOW SKILLS

PEAK DISTRICT

MPS GET LOST ON KINDER SCOUT

July saw three Peak District MPs lost on Kinder Scout, and requiring the assistance of the four High Peak mountain rescue teams to bring them safely back to the valley. Tom Levitt (High Peak) had invited Charlotte Atkins (Staffordshire Moorlands) and Angela Smith (Sheffield Hillsborough) to join him for a walk on Kinder Scout. Unfortunately, a mishap occurred resulting in a call out for **Buxton, Kinder, Glossop and Edale MRT**.



TOM LEVITT MP BEING PACKAGED AND SECURED ON A STRETCHER PRIOR TO HIS EVACUATION FROM GRINDSLOW KNOLL ON KINDER SCOUT PHOTO: ROGER BENNETT

The event was planned to raise money for, and highlight the work of mountain rescue teams, raising awareness both publicly and, more importantly, in the Houses of Parliament. Tom Levitt has been leading a campaign for mountain rescue to be recognised as an emergency service with greater support from central government – indeed he promoted the concept of a Minister for Mountain Rescue in a recent parliamentary debate. He has also been highlighting the rules which mean that voluntary rescue teams, funded entirely by charity, have to pay 15% VAT on nearly everything they buy – and we welcome support from all quarters to ensure that every penny of publicly donated money goes towards providing the service for which it was given.

Tom, Charlotte and Angela called for help early on Sunday morning and the four teams, with the help of two search dogs, used the event as a very useful training exercise in search coordination and casualty evacuation. No other emergency services were involved. The four High Peak teams are

SOUTH WALES

CENTRAL BEACONS AT CAERPHILLY CHILDREN'S CENTRE 12 JULY

How does a team member say thank you to the specialist centre that helps his disabled son? Well, Richard Terrell decided to use his contacts in MR. 'What do you feel about us hosting an activities day for the children from Caerphilly Children's Centre?' he said. 'It'd be a good PR exercise.'

My initial response was yes, of course... but then reality struck! We already had a number of events looming, a myriad of store collections, and call outs were stacking up. I knew I'd have my own PR job within the team to get enough people to host the event properly.



OWAIN TERRELL WITH HIS DAD, RICHARD

But Richard's enthusiasm was infectious. We put our plan to the trustees, and I started seeding the idea among the team so that, if we did get the go ahead, it wouldn't come as a big surprise! The response was mixed, but this changed once they knew why they were doing it – and many team members already know Richard's son, Owain.

We got the green light from the trustees – with the usual provisos about insurance etc – and Richard had already spoken to Eve Chinnery, in charge of the centre, who was even more enthusiastic! It soon became apparent my role in this partnership was the voice of reason, as Richard had some brilliant ideas for activities! After many discussions with the insurers, thanks to Penny B and Stuart Byatt, we had a plan. There would be six activity stations (abseiling, radios/comms, off-roading, first aid, orienteering, 'hide and seek' with SARDA) and a barbecue, all to be held at Morlais Quarry.



The children ranged across the autistic spectrum and needed to be familiar with the people they were to work with, so each was assigned a responsible adult.

The big day arrived with the sort of weather forecast we had been dreading – 'heavy and intermittent showers'. Despite the fact we'd had a couple of callouts and a day's fundraising leading up to this event, the team turned up in force... even managing to be there on time! Equipment and kit were laid out, a toilet tent erected and everything set in readiness when we had what were to be the last few drops of rain of the day – enough to send us all into panic! Should we pack up and return to base now and set up there, or stick it out and hope? We stuck it out and, thankfully, someone upstairs was on our side and it turned out to be a reasonable day. The families arrived – children and parents alike were excited, nervous and apprehensive about the day. We sorted them into groups and rotated them round until everyone had tried everything. As expected, the off-roading and abseiling were a great success but, amazingly, so was everything else. A few of the dads and one mum had a go at the abseil too, just to prove to their children they had the bottle, and parents worked alongside their children to do the orienteering and first aid. The barbecue lunch, provided by Tesco and cooked by some of the centre staff, was a great success – though I think it could have been eaten all over again!

To prove we weren't just for show, our pagers went off during the afternoon session and a Land Rover and crew hurriedly dispatched. Luckily, it was stood down within ten minutes, so the day didn't have to be curtailed, but it did allow the families to witness the team in action.

Each child managed to 'win' a Sigg bottle (kindly provided by Burton McCall) for achieving all the points of the orienteering as well as

certificates for taking part in the day and party bags containing a variety of goodies to take home. I think the highlight of the day was a slice of the cake decorated with a photo of everyone, taken at the beginning of the day.

The aftermath has been amazing. Of the staff from the centre attending, a few were occupational or physiotherapists. Some of the children participating had amazed them (and their parents) with what they could do, or were prepared to try. Some of the older children have decided they might be able to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and all have returned to their various schools talking about their adventures with mountain rescue, and determined to come back next year.

As for the team, despite the fact it was a long, hard day, team members returned to base talking about how we could improve or change things for next year! So, it seems that, as a PR exercise, it was worth its weight in gold but, as a team-building exercise, it was priceless. Add to this the fact that we as a team have allowed these children to do activities we take for granted and that they may have never had the opportunity to do. Now, when Owain goes for his physiotherapy at the centre, he is known as the boy whose dad organised that fun day out with the mountain rescue!

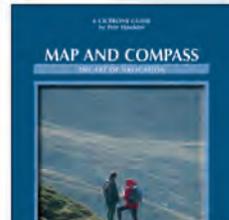
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▲ JAMES MARTIN AT THE WHITE LION IN PATTERDALE, THREE DAYS INTO HIS COAST TO COAST ADVENTURE PHOTO: JUDY WHITESIDE

grateful for the commitment shown by their local MPs in promoting mountain rescue, at the same time raising a little cash for the regional mountain rescue organisation.

HELICOPTER FOR BUXTON

July saw nine year old James Martin completing Wainwright's Coast to Coast route – with his Mum and older brother Josh – to raise funds for the British Heart Foundation and **Buxton MRT**. Inspired after seeing a helicopter landing on the summit of Ben Nevis, his ideal was to buy a helicopter for Buxton 'because they don't have

one.' In the event, he did hit his (more modest) target of £500, for which the team are extremely grateful. Mum Michelle was very proud of her two great boys. 'Josh and James (Little Legs) completed the Coast to Coast in memory of their much loved Nana and, even when the going got tough, they kept on going.'

'It was a remarkable feat, given the weather they had to endure, not to mention young legs,' said Roger Bennett. 'The team has sent him a letter of thanks and a Certificate of Special Appreciation. I suggested he looks at the Pennine Way for next year – not sure if mum is pleased or not!' Roger wishes to thank all those who encouraged him and his family, especially those who dropped cash in the tin. And a special thanks to a team member who swapped James's change for notes. '£140 in change was beginning to weigh a little heavy on the poor lad!'

YORKSHIRE DALES

RIVER RESCUE BRINGS DONATION

The dramatic rescue of a young family from the River Wharfe at Bolton Abbey over a year ago brought about an unexpected meeting with the landowners, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, for members of the **Upper Wharfedale FRT**. On hearing of the rescue, the Duchess decided the



▲ FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: HOWARD DRIVER, THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE, JEREMY DAGGETT (PRESIDENT, UWFRA), THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, AND CHRIS BOOTH (CHAIRMAN, UWFRA)

team would be the charity of the year at the Devonshire Country House Hotel at Bolton Abbey. Staff organised a number of fundraising events, the main being their Bonfire Night, which drew in over 2,500 people, raising £4600 for the team. Chairman Chris Booth, past chairman Howard Driver and president Jeremy Daggett visited the hotel to meet the Duke and Duchess whom they presented with a Certificate of Appreciation and a book on the history of the team, as well as appraising them of the work of the team – in particular the numerous rescues they had performed on the 30,000 acre estate. Commenting on the visit, the Duke said, 'The Bolton Abbey Estate has seen a good number of rescues over the years and it was such a pleasure to be able to meet some of the volunteers who make up this truly remarkable team. Hearing first hand the details of just some of their rescues, both on the surface and below ground, really brings home how vital a role they play in the Dales. So many individuals, and indeed their families, have cause to be forever thankful to these courageous and dedicated people. I salute them.'

ANDREA STANLEY

The **Severn Area Rescue Association** announces the tragic sudden death of Andrea Stanley, a longstanding member of SARA and, for the past seven years, its Executive Secretary.

Andrea will be sadly missed not only for the massive amount of work she did on our behalf, but also as a very respected, helpful and friendly person, whose shoulder was always there to lean on in times of need by any member of the four SARA stations.

Andrea was responsible for all of the administration work of the association. The job was a full time position which took up five to six days of her week. Answering the SARA organisation phone line, dealing with suppliers, day to day administration on behalf of all stations, receiving letters and emails and dealing with their requirements, were all day to day work for Andrea. All of this workload she completed with professionalism and integrity, and never took one penny out of the organisation funding for the time she spent on its behalf. Added to this, she also had to cope with running her husband Alan's business.

Andrea was highly respected by everyone in the organisation and was able to speak to members of all stations, of whatever rank, and resolve any issues which others found insurmountable. Such was her personality, her wisdom and sense of humour, it always allowed her to achieve what others found difficult or impossible.

Andrea will be so very sadly missed by every member of SARA. Her integrity, energy and graciousness will mean her position as executive secretary will be an impossible act to follow.

Geoff Dawe

THE FIRST ALSAR CONFERENCE

After much discussion, the ALSAR Conference 2009 went ahead over the weekend 21–23 August at the Cadet Training Camp, Yoxter. Situated in the Mendips, the remoteness of the camp meant that much 'social discussion' took place after the official programme had ended each day.

The opening address was given by the Mountain Rescue president Peter Bell, whose kind and thoughtful words set the tone for what was to be a thought-provoking weekend.

There were representatives from almost all the ALSAR teams along with outside delegates from Dartmoor Rescue Group, Mendip Cave Rescue and the Severn Area Rescue Association. Our visitors from non-ALSAR teams all commented on the ideal networking opportunity this had been and how much they hoped they would be invited to the next one.

The speakers for the weekend covered many and varying topics that, while not directly search related, gave those present many ideas to take back to their teams. Dr Tony Jones captivated the audience with his observations of how search and rescue had developed over the years, while Alfie Ingram educated us with how mountain rescue is organised in Scotland.

The main thread of the weekend was medical, ranging from clinical governance to TRiM (Trauma Risk Management). The latter session was headed up by Jim Campbell, ALSAR's Training Officer and the concept is to be adopted by ALSAR as the preferred method for dealing with traumatic events.

We also had sessions on search theory and

statistics, which gave many food for thought on how we had done things in the past. Alan George gave an impromptu session on how the Avon and Somerset Cliff Rescue Team works and his well-equipped vehicle was the envy of many.

Saturday night was taken up with a magnificent curry supper and party games in the camp mess.

Sunday's sessions followed very much in the same vein as Saturday with a final session being an open forum for all present to give their thoughts on how ALSAR should move forward in the coming years. These ideas will be discussed at length in the forthcoming committee meetings and, if feasible, adopted or implemented. It was very encouraging to have many views aired by those whose voice might not otherwise be heard.

At the closing address it was clear to all those present that there is the desire and passion to move ALSAR forward. Many of the ideas reflect those shown by Mountain Rescue, and all agreed that both organisations should continue to forge even stronger links wherever practical.

Could I finally thank all those from MREW who attended and spoke. Their encouragement and enthusiasm was clear for all to see. How we move forward is up to the teams but, if the enthusiasm shown by the delegates is reflected by the teams, the future is, as they say, looking good.

Adrian Edwards

Civil Defence volunteers scaled heights to raise £1,500

Civil Defence volunteers have raised more than £1,500 for good causes by scaling the highest mountains in England, Scotland and Wales. Nine out of ten participants managed the Three Peaks Challenge within 24 hours, over the late May Bank Holiday.

The volunteers who completed the nineteen miles and 2,995 metres of ascent were Jim MacGregor, David Kermeen, Mick Naylor, Nick Webb, John Callow, Andrew Greaves, Phil Styles, Johnnie Sayle and Andrew Quirk. Team member Tom Stewart turned back before summiting either Scafell Pike or Ben Nevis in order not to slow down the team but he did complete the climb of Snowdon.

As well as being a valuable training and team bonding exercise, the challenge helped raise £1,060 for the Isle of Man Search and Rescue Dogs Association and £250 each for Llanberis MRT in Wales, and the island's nearest mountain rescue team, Bowland Pennine MRT, in Lancashire, which the team presented during the trip. It proved a fascinating insight to get a look around the two MR bases. The team were also accompanied up Snowdon by Richard Beech from the Llanberis team who pointed out where historically many of the incidents they have attended occurred.

The challenge began before even leaving the Island as the Steam Packet discovered our vehicle with passengers was too heavy for the SeaCat's ramp but, after walking on as foot passengers, we were under way. We completed Snowdon thirty minutes quicker than the four hours allocated, and then began the real challenge. Our two dedicated drivers, Nigel Smith and Judith Bartram, also had a major challenge, not only navigating to the mountains but the endurance of driving the distance. The first real snag was a major hold-up on the M6 at Preston where an earlier crash had closed two lanes of the motorway.

Scafell Pike was by far the hardest and least enjoyable of the three and, after a continual slog uphill, the team was rewarded by thick wet mist and no views. Also, the footpath protection in place to prevent erosion created a very slippery surface in the rain. Worse was that people completing the three peaks in the other direction were passing on stories of half a metre of snow on top of Ben Nevis. This certainly put the team on edge.

It was then a long six hour drive to Fort William, Scotland, at the base of Ben Nevis. This was a chance for some of the team to get some much needed sleep although obviously the drivers had to take it in turns. Ben Nevis had no visible sign of snow when we set off. It was 4.00am Sunday morning when most sane people are safely tucked up in bed! We made good progress up the 'tourist track' – a name local rescue groups are not keen on. This became very evident later on when we were surprised to see how poorly equipped some people tackle the mountain. Nine members of the team summited by 7.30am with the long slog back down to the bus still to come. It then became clear what a good choice it was to set off at 4.00am as the track becomes a continuous line of people, like ants climbing the mountain.

The final combined total walking time for the ten members was 114 hours 25 minutes, with prizes given out for people who had guessed how long it would take the team. This method of fundraising proved beneficial, as the money is paid up front for a guess, which overcomes the problem of chasing up money after the event.

We would like to thank Isle of Man Civil Defence and all their sponsors for getting behind our efforts. The intention is to take part in future challenges and forge further links between the Isle of Man Civil Defence and mountain rescue teams.

In July, the team competed in the Isle of Man against Limerick Civil Defence with a number of hill stances furthering training. Isle of Man Civil Defence would welcome the opportunity for any visiting teams to work together in a joint exercise.

Jim MacGregor



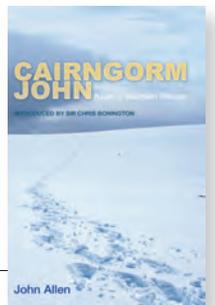
▲ THE TEAM PRIOR TO SETTING OFF

BOOK REVIEW

CAIRNGORM JOHN A LIFE IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE

by John Allen

Reviewed by Neil Woodhead



Cairngorm John isn't just a book about MR – it's an essential addition to any mountaineer's library, where it sits in harmony with technical guides, epic tales of ascent and Boardman and Tasker prizewinners. John joined the Cairngorm MRT in 1972 and was involved in hundreds of rescues during his thirty five years as a volunteer, including half as the team leader.

The real beauty and depth of the book is in how it appeals to such a wide array of readers with its fresh, original and intelligent approach. To all those of us in MR, it will appeal as a fascinating read, covering the development of MR in Scotland, drawing on details of actual rescues and covering a broad spectrum of our work. To our long suffering partners, families and employers, it goes a long way to explain why we go out late at night in poor conditions saving lives in wild and remote places. To mountaineers, fell walkers and lovers of the great outdoors it brings a subtle blend of both inspiration and warning.

John clearly has a very deep love affair with the Cairngorms and this emanates from the pages, making you want to pack your boots and head north to roam the great plateaus. It also comes as a stark warning not only to pack your ice axe and crampons, but to make sure you are skilled and adept in their use.

For the general media and the vast proportion of people, who still fail to understand how MR operates, it will help to educate them that you can't simply call a big yellow taxi to pick you up from the summit of Helvellyn because you're feeling tired or running late!

It is with great humanity that John touches on the human cost of death in the mountains. The story of one couple who suffered tragedy in the Drumochter hills is splendidly written – a couple who died together doing what they wanted to do, simply enjoying one another's company in the hills. But I'll leave you to read Cairngorm John to find out what really touched John and his surprise the following autumn.

The most poignant story followed two years later with the Mallinson family, on their return from the magnificent Ben MacDhui. Their terrible ordeal on the plateau is heart-rending and the locating of eight year old Helen is impossible to read without at least one tear in the eye. John really brings to life what the rescuers went through that night in doing all they could to save her – only to be told the devastating news when she arrived at hospital. His colleague's comment to the press is something that should be remembered by us all – 'whatever the rights and wrongs of it, the parents are suffering acutely and I am not going to say anything that will add to their distress.'

Cairngorm John isn't all about tragic circumstances though, and another of the book's great strengths is the magnificent vein of great humour running through it. The twisting mix of sadness and wit are blended together with perfection. 'Kick Ass Day' and the true meaning of TLC are the kind of priceless gems we all need in MR.

The successful rescue of Paul Hyett from Ben Alder over the Easter weekend of 1991 is a magnificent tale – both from the technical aspects and for the image it portrays of a loving honeymoon couple spending their special night together at Culra bothy in a large red furry survival bag. I'm sure it was a night neither of them was likely to forget and Cairngorm John is just that kind of read.

Cairngorm John. A Life in Mountain Rescue by John Allen MBE. Published by Sandstone Press Ltd. www.sandstonepress.com. Hardback with dust sheet. 320 pages. Price £19.99. ISBN: 978-1-905207-24-4.



A month of right Royal engagements

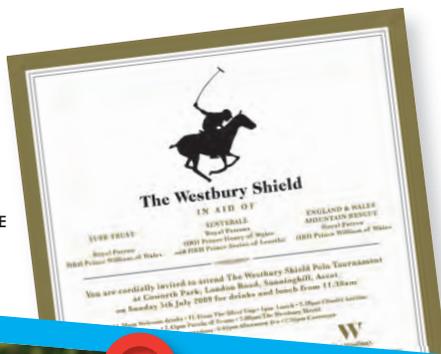
by Judy Whiteside

Royal engagements, we might be forgiven for thinking, are rather in the nature of buses. Nothing for months, then three come along at once. Or so it seemed in July, what with our third charity polo match since Prince William became Patron, a trip to Buckingham Palace in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall and then what proved to be a major PR event in the Lakes, which brought two of Prince William's charities – ourselves and Centrepont – together with WellChild – one of Prince Harry's. Three very different events, in three very different locations.

RESCUE

RESCUE KIT AWAITING THE PRINCE'S ARRIVAL
PHOTO: JUDY WHITESIDE

PRINCE WILLIAM AND PRINCE HARRY, MID-CHUKKA
PHOTO: MIKE FRANCE



Polo in Berkshire...

So first things first... Early July saw Mike France and I travelling to Coworth Park in Berkshire for the polo. This year was slightly different to previous years, which had been at the invitation of Audi UK, with the Audi team taking on Prince William's team (the Prince playing alongside his brother Harry at last year's event). We were fortunate enough to pick up a donation from Audi of £25,000 at each of those events, and Mike certainly grabbed the attention of the assembled celebrities with a few well chosen words about what we do. Great days out with a generous pinch of celebrity-spotting thrown in!

This year, not a celebrity in sight – well nobody we recognised anyway (Royal players excepted!) But we had more than our share of princes with Prince Harry and Prince William pitching their polo skills against Prince Amir Shah of Pehang and Prince Rashid of Jordan.

The Westbury Shield, sponsored by the Westbury Hotel in Mayfair, was supporting three charities – the Tusk Trust and Mountain Rescue (Prince William's charities) and Sentebale (Prince Harry's).

The day began early – leaving Manchester at 7.30am to arrive in time for welcome drinks (and what could easily become a very habit forming 11.00am glass of Pol Roger!) The Polo Agency Silver Cup, between Polo Magazine and Enigma took us up to lunch and the charity auction.

And this is where we really felt our place on the fiscal ladder of life as our fellow lunchers bid for a variety of holidays, ranging from two nights for two at the Westbury (price guide £1000!); through a two day cruise for six around the Greek islands on a private yacht (though not quite sure how far you'd get in two days!); seven nights in South Africa;

improving your polo swing in Thailand (note to self...); seven nights on sun-drenched Turtle Island in Fiji (with a guide price £13,000, this went for a mere £6,100, disappointingly – perhaps we should have clubbed together?); to a magnificent seven nights at the Apes Hill Club, Barbados (guide price £10,000, this did achieve a grand more.)

There was also a raffle. I forget what the other prizes were as the old grey matter only registered the 'your height in Pol Roger champagne' prize, before I was skipping out to warn our driver to clear a space in the boot. I was, after all, in possession that day of a fine pair of killer heels. Sadly, the boot returned to Manchester as empty as it had left. Ah well.

The afternoon saw the match between the Royal teams, described on the Tusk Trust website as 'a highly competitive and at times physical contest, [which] saw The Apes Hill

...the old grey matter only registered the 'your height in Pol Roger champagne' prize, before I was skipping out to warn the driver to clear a space in the boot.

Club team, of Prince William, Prince Harry, Harald Link from the Thai Polo Club and Malcolm Borwick, an accomplished member of the England polo team take away the inaugural Westbury Shield.' Couldn't have put it better myself.

Then followed the presentation of prizes.

THE TUSK TRUST

Set up in 1990, the Tusk's range of over 40 different field projects across Africa aim not only to protect wildlife, particularly endangered species, but also to help alleviate poverty, through sustainable development and education amongst rural communities who live alongside wildlife. The charity is part of the Princes' Charities Forum which brings together all of the charitable organisations supported by Prince William and Prince Harry and includes Centrepoint and WellChild. For more about the Tusk Trust, go to www.tusk.org

Sentebale was founded by Prince Seeiso from the Lesotho Royal family, and Prince Harry, after Harry spent part of his gap year in 2004 as Prince Seeiso's guest, working as a volunteer on a number of local welfare projects. During the visit the two Princes became good friends and Sentebale was born out of that experience. The charity is dedicated to transforming the lives of Lesotho's orphans and vulnerable children, the forgotten victims of poverty and the HIV/Aids epidemic ravaging the kingdom. The Princes have a continuing role as active patrons but Sentebale's main operations are now based in Lesotho. For more about Sentebale, go to www.sentebale.org

SENTEBALE

Only one of us was allowed to shake the Royal hand this time round, so Mike went off to the corale whilst I hovered with the camera attempting to record the event. Not very successfully, I might add. Then it was afternoon tea, and back up the motorway and down to earth.

Bit of a gripe on the press write up the following day. The Mail Online, and doubtless other papers and online news sites, ran a story that Prince William had arrived and exited the polo match on his black Ducati superbike. Now this may or may not have been true. But my gripe is their description of the event as raising 'funds for the Tusk Trust, an elephant conservation charity, and Sentebale, Harry's charity for African Aids orphans.' Not a blummin' mention of Mountain Rescue anywhere! Sometimes you just feel invisible.

In late July, we heard the good news that the auction and raffle monies had been totted up and divvied out – and a donation of £13,155 found its way into our national pot. So many thanks to the Westbury Hotel for inviting us along, and all who bid or bought raffle tickets.

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Party at the Palace...

Thursday 16 July was an altogether different day. We were invited by Prince Charles to be part of an event designed to 'celebrate and showcase some of the work of the nine leading youth organisations, and officially launch their partnership in YOU London.' The aim of the day was to recruit more adult volunteers, to enable more young people to join, and to share some resources.

Ten of us went along to represent Mountain Rescue, in the company of a handful of guests. Our 'quota' for the day was just twenty people and our guest list was drawn from those who have consistently supported us in recent years. Unfortunately, some of those invited were unable to attend due to other commitments but we were joined by Tony Taylor (Keela), Richard Woodall (Mountain Equipment), Stephen Darwen (James Tricketts Insurance Brokers), and Sam and Rich Mayfield (Hard Rock Challenge).

The day passed in something of a whirlwind, from stepping aboard the 11.00am Manchester-to-Euston, just before lunch – fresh as a daisy and chock full of eager anticipation – to alighting from the train later that evening, lightheaded and hungry on account of the distinct lack of choice in the buffet car leading me to foolishly choose one of those two-plastic-cup bottles of cheap white wine and a bag of salt and vinegar, by way of an evening meal!!

We'd strolled through those iconic gates at 3.00pm sharp (ID and admittance card firmly in hand!), crossing the perfectly manicured gravel under the envious eyes of a hundred tourists. We'd savoured the cucumber butties (yes, they really do cut the crusts off) and teensy scones with jam and cream, chatted

LOOKING VERY CORPORATE – THANKS TO KEELA, WHO PROVIDED OUR POLO SHIRTS AND JACKETS. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: ANDY SIMPSON, JUDY WHITESIDE, PENNY BROCKMAN, PETER BELL, SAM MAYFIELD, RICH MAYFIELD, PETER SMITH, RICHARD TERRELL, MIKE FRANCE, BILL WHITEHOUSE, MARK LEWIS AND NEIL RODEN PHOTO: BILL WHITEHOUSE

We stood in line to meet the Prince of Wales, discreetly presenting him with a mountain rescue supporter badge. Which he, of course pledged to wear always...

with our guests, and stood in line to meet the Prince of Wales (discreetly presenting him with a Mountain Rescue Supporter badge, which he, of course, pledged to wear always!) Oh, and Peter Bell, as our President, got to take tea with the Prince and Mayor Boris, along with a select few others. An interesting day and a privilege to be invited.

And a perfect day out in the Lake District...

Then there was Patterdale. And a day which didn't just bring together the three charities involved, but saw mountain rescue team members from across England and Wales, and the Lakes in particular, entertaining children and teenagers from WellChild and

Centrepont, meeting Prince William and working together 'on the hill' (I use the term loosely as there was a fair amount of water involved too). The culmination of many months of planning, it represented the first major event of this nature for Mountain Rescue England and Wales since Prince William became our patron.

It was certainly a memorable twenty-four hours – not least of all for those unsuspecting members of the public who happened to choose Friday 24 July to risk the rain and wander up Helvellyn, or take a ride on the Ullswater Steamer, and chanced upon a somewhat familiar face on their travels! ('You'll never guess who I bumped into at Red Tarn...')

But a bit of background first. Centrepont,

YOU LONDON

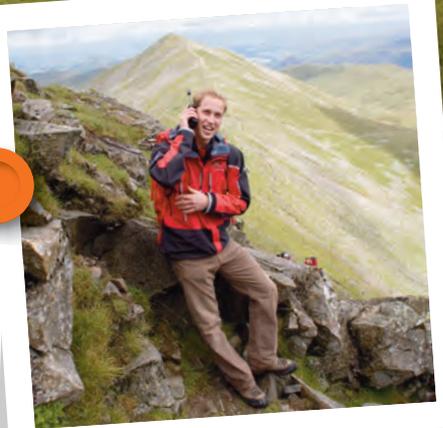
Over 1300 young people from some of the UK's oldest established youth groups joined The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall at Buckingham Palace to launch the 'YOU London' event – the Scouts Association, Air Training Corps, Girlguiding LasSER, Boy's Brigade, Prince's Trust, Air Cadets, Sea Cadet Corps, St John Ambulance, Volunteer Police Cadets and the Army Cadet Force. The Prince called for these and other youth organisations 'to work together nationally in partnership to maximise adventure and community opportunities for young people and to raise recruitment levels of adult volunteers.' It is hoped to roll out the YOU London idea nationally so that every young person in the UK has the same opportunity to join a youth organisation. For more about YOU London, go to www.youlondon.org.uk



PRINCE WILLIAM LEAVES PATTERDALE BASE PHOTO: JUDY WHITESIDE



ABOVE: GROUP SHOT AT RED TARN
 RIGHT: THE GROUP MEANDERS UP
 TOWARDS SWIRRAL EDGE
 FAR RIGHT: SORRY CAN'T SPEAK NOW,
 I'M ON THE HILL... PHOTOS: BOB SMITH



WellChild and Mountain Rescue are linked through The Princes' Charities Forum, where we are represented by David Allan, chairman of Mountain Rescue England and Wales. The Forum meets twice a year to facilitate opportunities for Prince William's and Prince Harry's charities to work together and support one another. Great in theory, but how we might, as an organisation, actually make this happen wasn't immediately obvious.

Then last year saw teenagers from Centrepoint – a charity which works and campaigns to give homeless young people a future – travelling to Ambleside to join in the It's a Knockout contest organised by the Lake District mountain rescue teams. The event was one of several throughout the year, across England, Wales and Scotland (the 'Mountain Rescue Committee' having started out as a UK organisation, the two bodies split in 1965), to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the nationally coordinated body for mountain rescue. The following day (everyone having dried out!) the group were taken along to Aira Force for a stroll.

Feedback from Centrepoint was that the kids had enjoyed a great day, having never experienced anything the like of that before. It was suggested a return event might be in order – this time, perhaps, taking the kids up a 'proper mountain'.

The planning began. William would join six of Centrepoint's homeless young people from Consett and Sunderland in an expedition from Red Tarn to the summit of Helvellyn, led by mountain rescue team members. During the walk, the group would raise a 2012 Olympics flag to mark the three years until the start of the London 2012 Olympic Games. Cumbria County Council held a similar event last year when an Olympic flag was hoisted on the summit of Scafell Pike, attended by Chris Bonington and other local celebrities and officials. The flag flying would mark the beginning of the Olympic Open Weekend, a three day celebration for the whole of the UK.

The WellChild involvement came a little later, as minds continued to be exercised about how we could work with other charities within the Forum.

'The idea sprang,' explains Mike France, 'from a conversation with Kedge Martin, then CEO of WellChild – now of Sentebale – about the success of a Royal Navy Day in 2008, which had involved some of the children. Patterdale base seemed the ideal location as

it is disability compliant, but how to entertain the kids and their families?

'Jim Walker at Ullswater Steamers was approached, and delighted that his company and staff could be involved. We initially thought that, after climbing Helvellyn, William would be airlifted by RAF Sea King for a low flyover of the boat, but this eventually developed into him and his party being delivered to the steamer by the Patterdale rib, to board mid-voyage – which allowed him to meet and chat with the WellChild families.'

Representatives from all twelve Lake District teams were to be there on the day, along with Andy Simpson and Mike France, as national Press Officer and Fundraising Chairman respectively, and myself (pen and paper constantly jostling for attention with camera in hand!) Tim Radford, chairman of the Ogwen Valley team, travelled up from North Wales to observe and pick up a few ideas for 2010 when a similar event is planned for Snowdonia.

After several months of organisation, bringing together all the parties concerned, and in liaison with Clarence House – the big

CENTREPOINT

Centrepoint was founded in 1969 by Ken Leech, vicar of St Anne's, Soho. Concerned about the number of young people sleeping rough in the West End of London, he and a group of local volunteers opened up the basement of the church as a temporary night shelter. Forty years on, the charity continues to work and campaign to give homeless young people a future. Every year they provide over 290,000 nights' accommodation to Britain's young homeless. They work directly with more than 800 young people each day. Since 1969 they have helped more than 73,000 young people, almost all between 16 and 25 years old. 'When we first meet them' explains their website, 'all are homeless or at serious risk of becoming homeless; many are on a downward spiral. Almost half say they have slept rough at some point in their lives.' To find out more about Centrepoint, go to www.centrepoint.org.uk



SOME OF THE CENTREPOINT YOUNGSTERS POSE AT RED TARN WITH PRINCE WILLIAM AND THE 'COUNTDOWN TO THE 2012 OLYMPICS' FLAG PHOTO: ANDY SIMPSON

WELLCHILD

One of Prince Harry's charities, WellChild is committed to helping sick children and their families throughout the UK as they deal with the consequences of serious illness and complex conditions, through a programme of care, support and research. WellChild Children's Nurses work with the children and their families to ensure that children with complex care needs can leave hospital and return home. They are vital in the prevention of frequent re-admissions. The WellChild Helping Hands scheme enlists the support of volunteers from companies and organisations up and down the country to tackle individual home development projects.

WellChild has also invested more than £20million in ground-breaking children's health projects, including providing funding for the development of the Neonatal Research Laboratory at Evelina Children's Hospital in London, the WellChild Pain Research Centre at Great Ormond Street Hospital, and the Children's Research Centre at Birmingham Children's Hospital. To find out more about WellChild, go to www.wellchild.org.uk

TOP: WILLIAM MEETS EMILY, WITH HER MUM, DAD AND BROTHER PHOTO: JUDY WHITESIDE
BELOW: AN EXCITED HARRISON TAKES WILLIAM FOR A WALK UP AND DOWN DECK PHOTO: SALLY SEED



day dawned. With the sort of rain that really, really wets you.

Andy Simpson, who was set to join the morning's hill party, admits he was concerned. 'What should have been a beautiful July day for such an auspicious occasion began with torrential rain, so much so that I idly wondered how much bottle the Royal helicopter pilot would need to bring his precious cargo in on a day like this. My job was to accompany the press reporters as far as Red Tarn, at which point we'd wait for the Royal party to arrive, take some pictures, and then they'd go back down the hill whilst the party of young people from Centrepoint, with the Prince, made the ascent of Helvellyn without them. As official MREW photographer from this point on the hill, I felt it was necessary to get ahead of the party at every opportunity in order to get the action shots required that would be splashed across the world's media the day after – little did I know!'

Team members gathered at Patterdale base early on the Friday morning for a final briefing before the mountain rescue hill party departed to meet the press pack and make their way to Red Tarn.

'It still wasn't looking good weatherwise at 9.00am,' continues Andy, 'when the press assembled at Glenridding car park, dressed

in an assortment of sailing, walking and Asda car park gear ready for the walk. One or two bits of kit were borrowed just to make sure we didn't end up with half of Fleet Street suffering from hypothermia, and then we drove up to the Youth Hostel to begin the walk to the tarn.'

Meanwhile, those team members remaining at base continued to prepare for the arrival of the Royal Flight (and the Royal party's subsequent departure to Red Tarn), swiftly followed by the six WellChild kids and their families.

Thankfully, as the distinctive crimson helicopter hove into view across the fire station roof, the rain began to clear. The weather gods were smiling on us after all.

'This bode well for the second part of the day,' said Richard Warren, 'which involved a very quick descent from the summit plateau to the vehicles in the valley bottom, followed by a dash up the lake in the inflatable rescue rib.'

Richard, as chairman of LDSAMRA, played a key role in the coordination of the day's activities, and the organisation leading up to it. 'Although the final arrangements on the day had to accommodate some significant challenges and changes in the final few weeks leading up to 24 July, the planning and preparation paid off. The day went like clockwork with pre-defined locations and arrival/departure times met – absolutely crucial, as we needed to get Prince William to the summit and

back down to the lake in order to meet up with the WellChild group. This had to be timed very carefully to allow a mid-lake transfer from the Patterdale rescue rib to the Ullswater steamer at 1500 hours.'

Back with Andy who confirms that the 'one enduring theme of the day was timing, with each five minute slot scheduled to within an inch of its life. [Thanks in no small way to Richard.] Fortunately, the Prince's party arrived ten or fifteen minutes early so there was a bit of slack for the photographers and TV camera people to get the shots they wanted before we set off up the hill.

'The couple of miles walk had spread everyone along the path, but we were shepherded to the tarn by an assortment of MR personnel tasked to the job. Once there, we had confirmation that the Prince had indeed arrived at Patterdale and was making his way up, about an hour behind us.



ABOVE: ALL EYES TURN TOWARDS THE HORIZON AS THE PATERDALE TEAM RIB APPROACHES RAVEN PHOTO: JUDY WHITESIDE
A SMILING WILLIAM ARRIVES ALONGSIDE PHOTO: MIKE FRANCE





PHOTOCALL AS THE PRINCE PREPARES TO LEAVE THE STEAMER PHOTO: JOHN WILLIAMS

'Knowing how long it had taken me to get to Red Tarn, I set off a few minutes early and gained a suitable vantage point for my award-winning shots. Three pictures later I was running up the hill trying to catch the party, having completely failed to take account of a bunch of keen youngsters following a fully trained member of our armed forces. Fortunately they stopped for lunch just before the sharp bit of Swirral Edge so I had a chance to pass them and find myself a suitable aerie from which to take a few more pictures.

'Five minutes and a couple of shots later, I was playing catch-up again as I reached the top of Swirral Edge in time to see the Prince's party disappearing towards White Side, having been to Helvellyn summit, had some pictures taken and set off again. By this time we'd separated from the Centrepoint party and were heading down the steep scree slope into Keppel Cove to meet a couple of vehicles sent up to collect us and take the Prince to Glenridding to meet the Patterdale boat, for onward transfer to Ullswater. Not only was the timing perfect but the sun had come out and blazed down upon us for the rest of the day.'

The event attracted massive media coverage for mountain rescue – particularly the Patterdale team – including national press and television coverage. Due to the safety aspects of taking such a large group of people – around sixty people at Red Tarn for the press call, and fifty climbing up to the Summit via Swirral Edge – no pre-event publicity had been permitted. Once the hill party had set off up the mountain, journalists, photographers and cameramen (and women) joined the rest of us at Glenridding pier, to follow the afternoon's events on the steamer.

News reports had the 'canny' Prince praising the mountain rescue teams as 'unsung heroes'. William was said to have set a 'cracking pace'. He was also 'very interested' in the piercings of teenager Johnny Glendinning, one of the six Centrepoint teenagers on the hill. 'I have nineteen on my face,' said Johnny, adding that the Prince 'was not what I expected at all – a really canny lad and very down to earth.'

On his part, William said it was great he was able to do something with these young people, for whom it was a fantastic challenge and not something they would normally experience. 'I have really enjoyed meeting them.'

Meanwhile, back at Patterdale, team members were kept busy meeting and greeting the WellChild families, and demonstrating all the gizmos, whistles and bells around the team's base, before departure for Glenridding and what now promised to be a sunny sail to Pooley Bridge and back.

I was fortunate enough to be amongst the group assigned the steamer trip with these remarkable children and their families and, at the risk of repeating the word twice in one sentence, I can't tell you just how remarkable each one of them was. Between them, they have battled a veritable shopping list of

(12) from Merseyside; and Oliver (10) and Harrison (8) both from Barrow in Furness – with their equally remarkable parents and siblings, whose lives have been so radically affected by the children's need for 24/7 care.

Linda Partridge, the Director of Programmes for WellChild, quoted one of the many parents the charity has helped over the last three years. 'We're not a family – we're two families trying to exist as one,' adding that this comes at 'enormous financial and emotional cost'.

'We have grand plans,' said Linda, 'for every child with a long term health condition to have access to a WellChild nurse.' It's a big hill to climb but you can't help thinking they'll get there. The kids were, she said, 'delighted and excited' to be there. And they certainly appeared to enjoy the day.

But back to the Prince who, as we were steaming up towards Pooley Bridge, was striding back down the hill towards 'Engagement 2'. From the back of the steamer, we speculated about whether the various dots in the distance actually heralded the arrival of the Prince, but finally we saw the rib, powering towards us. Excitement mounted, hands began to wave, positions were chosen... but, not so fast, as Dave Watkinson, at the wheel, performed an impromptu circuit of the steamer, a smiling William waving his hand at the expectant crowd, much to everyone's delight.

Then they were alongside – having expertly crossed the bow wave. The steamer, incidentally was still moving at this point. It's a manoeuvre, I learned, that the team have practised many times before, in training for the extrication of casualties, and can be made somewhat hairy by sudden gusts of wind. But all went according to plan and the Prince and

Young Harrison liked the Prince so much he invited him to his house...

medical conditions and complications – brain tumours, spinal ependymoma (a malignant tumour of the spine), speech and coordination difficulties, chronic lung disease, cerebral palsy, a life-limiting condition affecting respiration, Arnold Chiari Disorder (which blocks the fluid between the brain and spinal column), ME...

And they've been through a catalogue of treatments, any one of which the majority of us would wince at the very thought of – variously surviving successive rounds of chemotherapy, radiotherapy, ventilation, repeated resuscitation and operative procedures and, in one case, a premature birth weight of just one and a half pounds. Yet here they were bright and sparky, amazingly vital – Lily (5) and Thomas (11) both from Tyne and Wear; Emily (10) from Manchester; Jade



GOODY BAGS AWAITING NEW OWNERS PHOTO: JUDY WHITESIDE

Beware slippery grass!

party were duly welcomed aboard ship by Mike France.

William was then taken through to meet the children and their families. And, can I just say, what a natural! He sat with each in turn, chatting and listening to their stories, for all the world as if there was nobody else 'in the room'. Joanne Holmes, Harrison's Mum was equally impressed, 'He is such a lovely guy – genuinely lovely. He genuinely wanted to meet the children.' Young Harrison – who liked the Prince so much, he invited him to his house – stole the show a couple of times, (delivering, in the process, a gem of a photo opportunity for the assembled press!) taking the Prince's hand to lead him along the aisle between the seated families, and later asking him for a hug (which he duly received I might add!)

All the families admired William's easy manner and his clear interest in their individual experiences. Lily's Mum, Shirley said, 'For children like Lily, whose lives have been taken over by their illness, something like this makes such a difference. It can be hard for the whole family, especially when we are separated because Lily is in hospital. We are really grateful to WellChild for recognising how special Lily is and giving us all this wonderful opportunity.'

So, an amazing day all round. Lots of smiling faces and an almost palpable sense of relief back at Patterdale, as we tucked into a rather tasty afternoon tea buffet and exchanged tales. (I'm noting by the way, as I write that last sentence, that 'afternoon tea' appears to be a recurring theme with these events!) Oh and then there was the impromptu photocall as one particular Penrith team member found himself on the receiving end of an ambulance gurney (see right). And I daresay there were more than a few 'post-traumatic' beers sunk that evening!

A huge thanks must go to Ullswater Steamers, for allowing us to invade what was essentially still a timetabled service on which members of the public were able to buy a passage in the normal way (oblivious of the surprise in store). Executive director Peter Hensman was delighted to welcome the Prince and the children aboard The Raven, and the company had gone out of their way to accommodate our needs.

'Thanks must also go to all who helped make the day a great success and very memorable occasion for everyone involved,' adds Richard. 'Special thanks to Karen Frith, of Penrith MRT who led the mountain leader group accompanying the Centrepoint youngsters, and to Martin Cotterell and the Patterdale team who hosted the day and ran numerous dry runs to ensure timing was perfect.'

I think the over-riding impression of the day must be just what a 'nice bloke' is our second in line to the throne.

'At one point,' Andy confirms, 'we picked up a couple of teenage lads who were just out for a walk and found themselves striding off with the future King of England, who welcomed them with open arms. It was probably the

Friday 24 July was an eventful day for all concerned – some a good deal more than others. Take Daryl Garfield for instance...

The Penrith team member was one of many Lake District mountain rescuers out on the hill with the Centrepoint youngsters and Prince William. The morning, as we have reported, went well. Everything flowing seamlessly according to plan. Even the rain stopped raining!

Shortly after the Prince left to join the WellChild kids on the Ullswater steamer, one of the Centrepoint youngsters was reported to be having difficulties. She was duly packaged on a stretcher, and the assembled team members did what they do best, carrying the stretcher down hill. And that's where things started to slip...

Back to Daryl, who'd just taken over from Mark, Keswick TL, as one of the stretcher bearers. Five minutes in, he put his foot down on the grass and it went from under him with a 'snap'. Unable to put any weight on it, but still not thinking it broken, he tried to walk but to no avail. Cue multiple mickey-taking and camera calls from his mountain rescue 'mates'!

Cascare practice

'I WAS well looked after,' stressed Daryl, who at least gave his pals a chance to practice their cascarse skills (including canula placement!) and their bedside manners before being stretchered off for the remaining half mile. Then back to Patterdale base in a team vehicle for a good deal more mickey-taking!

He spent the next seven weeks at home, thanks to a broken fibula: bored, restless and frustrated at not being able to do anything much. 'Daytime TV is not all it's cracked up to be!' The double whammy, incidentally, was that he was due to start a new job on the Monday after the incident, as a driver trainer with Cumbria Fire Services, and had also been looking forward to some basic training work with his prospective search dog,

Dram. Fortunately, both the fire service and partner Karen were very understanding!

At the beginning of September, the cast came off and Daryl returned to work on light duties. When I caught up with him, he'd just returned from two weeks of residential physio at the Fire Fighters Charity rehab centre. The ankle is still sore, but he has managed to attend two team call outs, both on comms. There's a lesson here for all mountain rescuers – all it takes is a bit of slippery grass. It was a bread and butter job, the sort of thing we do every day.

And lessons learnt? 'Don't let Mark Hodgson give you the stretcher to carry, and dont break your leg in front of five other MR teams and assorted MREW dignitaries!!!' Fair comment!



third time this had happened during the walk and will, no doubt, provide some enduring memories, not just for the Centrepoint people but also for those who just happened upon the Prince on what would otherwise have been an ordinary day out.'

We very much hope that the links with these two charities will continue, with plans already in the making for events next year and the year after, involving the different mountain rescue regions. It's early days yet but we do know that both Centrepoint and WellChild would be happy to continue the association. And, to coin an earlier phrase, minds will continue to be exercised about how we might work with the other charities within the Forum. So watch this space.

Thanks to all those whose comments, observations and photographic skills have contributed to this article.

Don't forget you can find us on Facebook!

Many a story hits the Basecamp Wall before the mag, so it's worth checking out. And, despite a distinct air of scepticism from one or two quarters (ah well... their loss, eh?) the fanbase continues to grow. It's updated regularly with news bites and comment on developments in mountain rescue from around the country and beyond, but we welcome your input with posts and uploads – be it links, stories, photos or videos. So, if you're not already an aficionado, then get yourself a profile, and show your support by 'becoming a fan'. Help us to generate awareness and spread the word about mountain rescue.

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So far trials using the ESP system have provided exceptional results and this could be the textile innovation of the century. Results obtained suggest that it provides relief to many sufferers of various ailments from arthritis, to Parkinson's, to the humble muscle sprain. For athletes – could this be the next 'Dolphin Skin'? A little bird has told us that it is due to be tested with an international cricket team and it will be very interesting to see what happens!

The ESP collection comprises: tops, base layers, compression garments and support straps. For further information, visit the website www.keela.co.uk or contact Keela by email at esp@keela.co.uk or call 01592 777000.



Red Devils drop in on UK Launch of new Victorinox Soldier's Knife

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To mark the launch the Red Devils, who are officially sponsored by Victorinox, performed a spectacular display in front of an appreciative crowd of over 30,000 – flying a 200sq ft Victorinox flag. Once safely down, the team were met by the Commander of the 16 Air Assault Brigade, Brigadier J Chiswell MC, who was presented with a Soldier's Knife that had been carried in freefall.

Every member of the Red Devils is a serving member of the Army's elite Parachute Regiment and is issued with a selection of indispensable Victorinox

products to help them with a variety of important day-to-day tasks. Officer Commanding the Red Devils, Major Paul Blair, said 'We're extremely pleased to be able to work alongside Victorinox this season. Like Victorinox, the Parachute Regiment is renowned for its versatility and unrivalled standards, so we see this is a very natural and relevant partnership.'

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Victorinox, makers of the original Swiss Army Knife, chose this year's Colchester Military Festival on 18 July to launch their new Soldier's Knife – with a little help from the Parachute Regiment freefall team The Red Devils.

Originally created by master cutler Karl Elsener in 1891, the original, now iconic Swiss Army Knife has become a universally recognised symbol of pioneering innovation, Swiss craftsmanship and multi-functionality. Now, on its 125th anniversary, Victorinox has completely re-designed its military Soldier's Knife (issued to the Swiss Army since 1891), to meet the needs of the 21st century armed forces.

The new knife (srp £34.99), designed in collaboration with the Swiss Army, features only those essential tools that a

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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.

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would like to offer your team the following prices for 2009.

Packs	RRP	MR
Pursuit Classic (W, S2, S3)	110	65
Ascent Classic (W, S2, S3)	130	75
Ascent Classic XPD (W, S2, S3)	180	105

Sleeping Bags

Sanctuary 900 XP	320	189
Sanctuary 700 XP	280	165
Sanctuary 500L XP	250	147

Tents

Microlight	200	120
Olympus	370	220
Hemisphere	550	320

Order Process

The order must originate from an officer of the team (Secretary/Equipment Officer) and is for the benefit of team members only. Orders can be made via email jamesathompson@mac.com or by post James Thompson, Macpac UK Agent, 32 Rivelin Park Crescent, Stannington, Sheffield S6 4GF

- Payment to be made with order
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James can also be contacted by phone on **07971 478063**, should you need to discuss any details with him.

Goodyear tyres

Goodyear have pledged to supply a maximum of FOUR free 4x4 tyres to each of the mountain and cave rescue teams during each year of their partnership agreement, for those tyres that require replacement through wear and tear. This applies to tyres only and teams must pay for any charges for valves, balance and fitting.

How? Teams should first notify Penny Brockman with the team name and address, the name and contact details of the person responsible, details of the vehicles officially used by the team (make and reg no, tyre size (including

speed rating) and the terrain on which each vehicle is likely to be used.

Additional Tyres

Any additional tyres needed by teams may (subject to availability) be bought online from www.hiqonline.co.uk at 5% off the price specified from time to time.

Team Member Purchases

Team members can also purchase tyres for their own vehicles (subject to availability) online from www.hiqonline.co.uk at 5% off the price specified from time to time.

Terra Nova discount

Secure yourself a team member discount on Terra Nova products – the process is simple. All you need to do is register an account using the link below, then email Terra Nova asking to be added to the Outdoor Professionals price list, including your name and address details so they can trace your account easily.

[www.terra-nova.co.uk/Checkout.aspx?](http://www.terra-nova.co.uk/Checkout.aspx?action=register&redirectto=/Login.aspx)

[action=register&redirectto=/Login.aspx](http://www.terra-nova.co.uk/Checkout.aspx?action=register&redirectto=/Login.aspx)

Terra Nova will confirm that you have been added to the price list and can buy through the site at the reduced rate. Prices will be displayed at the full RRP until a member logs in. You

can do this as soon as you revisit the site – when prices will change to the offer prices – or view the full RRP prices and log in at the check out. The offer prices will then automatically be updated.

Initial emails and any queries should be directed to [shopping@](mailto:shopping@terra-nova.co.uk)

terra-nova.co.uk as more people pick this up and responses will be quicker.



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SAR Products is pleased to offer any mountain rescue team (except Oldham MRT and Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) who purchase equipment from SAR directly) 25% discount – at the end of the year, MR(E&W) will receive 10% of all MR sales. *The deal does not include the Pro Alp as we only sell this at trade, but this may change in time.

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QUARTERLY INCIDENT REPORT FOR ENGLAND AND WALES APRIL-JUNE 2009

The following is a listing of the number of incidents attended by MR teams in England and Wales during the period from 01/04/2009 to 30/06/2009. 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	05/04, 19/04, 28/04, 05/05, 16/05, 17/05, 25/05, 26/05 29/05, 29/05, 29/05, 20/06, 21/06
Coniston	01/04, 10/04, 25/04, 25/04, 02/05, 03/05, 25/05, 28/05 28/05, 28/05, 30/05
Duddon & Furness	24/05
Kendal	23/04, 09/05, 15/05, 09/06, 18/06, 19/06, 28/06
Keswick	01/04, 02/04, 07/04, 12/04, 12/04, 19/04, 19/04, 21/04 22/04, 24/04, 02/05, 07/05, 10/05, 11/05, 11/05, 11/05 13/05, 13/05, 15/05, 16/05, 16/05, 17/05, 17/05, 26/05 26/05, 26/05, 27/05, 30/05, 31/05, 01/06, 10/06, 12/06 13/06, 14/06, 15/06, 15/06, 20/06, 21/06, 22/06, 24/06 26/06, 27/06, 29/06
Kirkby Stephen	04/05, 02/06, 07/06, 20/06
Langdale Ambleside	05/04, 08/04, 13/04, 17/04, 02/05, 02/05, 03/05, 09/05 09/05, 10/05, 10/05, 11/05, 11/05, 11/05, 14/05, 16/05 16/05, 17/05, 19/05, 21/05, 24/05, 31/05, 31/05, 02/06 12/06, 16/06, 23/06, 28/06, 29/06
Patterdale	11/04, 12/04, 12/04, 14/04, 19/04, 29/04, 09/05
Penrith	04/04, 05/04, 06/04, 15/04, 17/04, 08/05, 29/05
Wasdale	05/04, 15/04, 20/04, 03/05, 17/05, 24/05, 28/05, 14/06

Mid-Pennine

Bolton	10/04, 12/04, 04/06
Bowland Pennine	06/04, 18/04, 29/05, 31/05, 01/06, 12/06, 18/06, 28/06 30/06
Calder Valley	23/04
Rosendale & Pendle	04/06

NE England

Cleveland	05/04, 06/04, 18/04, 12/05, 24/05, 23/06, 27/06, 29/06
North of Tyne	04/04
Swaledale	06/04, 02/05, 07/06, 13/06, 26/06, 27/06

North Wales

Aberglaslyn	11/04, 12/04, 02/05, 02/05, 03/05, 16/05
Llanberis	03/04, 04/04, 07/04, 09/04, 11/04, 11/04, 13/04, 13/04 13/04, 13/04, 14/04, 18/04, 28/04, 02/05, 02/05, 09/05 16/05, 16/05, 16/05, 16/05, 16/05, 21/05, 24/05, 25/05 25/05, 26/05, 28/05, 30/05, 31/05, 04/06, 06/06, 06/06 06/06, 07/06, 18/06, 20/06, 20/06, 20/06, 26/06, 27/06
North East Wales	03/04, 09/04, 12/04, 23/04, 16/05, 19/05, 06/06, 18/06 26/06
Ogwen Valley	02/04, 03/04, 04/04, 04/04, 08/04, 12/04, 09/05, 16/05 16/05, 17/05, 19/05, 23/05, 23/05, 25/05, 26/05, 28/05 01/06, 03/06, 05/06, 05/06, 06/06, 06/06, 06/06, 06/06 06/06, 06/06, 11/06, 13/06, 14/06, 21/06, 27/06
Outward Bound Wales	03/04, 15/04, 25/04, 02/05, 09/05, 16/05, 16/05
Snowdonia Nat Park	21/05
South Snowdonia	03/04, 11/04, 03/05, 09/05, 11/05

Peak District

Buxton	16/04, 02/05, 07/05, 09/05, 16/05, 17/05, 18/05, 24/05 31/05, 31/05, 01/06, 13/06, 14/06, 14/06, 15/06
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Derby	04/04, 03/05, 15/05, 16/05, 31/05, 06/06, 27/06, 30/06 30/06
Edale	03/04, 03/04, 05/04, 10/04, 11/04, 16/04, 18/04, 18/04 19/04, 25/04, 25/04, 26/04, 26/04, 26/04, 29/04, 04/05 16/05, 17/05, 18/05, 23/05, 01/06, 01/06, 03/06, 13/06 13/06, 14/06, 21/06, 28/06
Glossop	18/04, 18/04, 26/04, 29/04, 04/05, 06/05, 18/05, 19/05 03/06
Kinder	18/04, 01/05, 03/05, 17/05, 18/05, 19/05, 03/06, 14/06 15/06, 15/06
Oldham	12/04, 12/04, 13/04, 19/04, 27/04, 30/04, 17/05, 18/05 22/05, 29/05, 29/05, 30/05, 01/06, 01/06, 04/06, 04/06 06/06, 16/06, 30/06
Woodhead	04/05, 15/05, 16/05, 16/05, 03/06, 06/06, 17/06

South Wales

Brecon	16/05, 02/04, 11/04, 11/04, 15/04, 25/04, 03/05, 04/05 08/05, 12/05, 13/05, 19/05, 22/05, 04/06, 07/06, 10/06 20/06, 21/06, 23/06, 26/06, 28/06, 28/06
Western Beacons	02/04, 06/04, 11/04, 15/04, 25/04, 12/05, 21/06, 23/06 26/06
Central Beacons	02/04, 11/04, 15/04, 18/04, 25/04, 30/04, 04/05, 19/05 21/06, 28/06, 28/06
Longtown	18/04, 24/04, 07/06, 20/06

South West England

Cornwall	04/04, 12/04, 14/04, 23/04, 09/05
Dartmoor	09/05
Exmoor	18/04, 09/05, 06/06
SARA	15/05

Yorkshire Dales

CRO	04/04, 04/04, 25/04, 26/04, 02/05, 03/05, 09/05, 16/05 17/05, 20/05, 31/05, 31/05, 01/06, 05/06, 07/06, 10/06 14/06, 23/06, 25/06, 27/06, 27/06, 27/06, 27/06, 27/06 28/06
Upper Wharfedale	12/04, 24/05, 28/05, 30/05, 31/05, 01/06

RAF

RAF Valley	09/04, 06/06
RAF Leeming	06/04

SARDA

England	04/04, 25/04, 03/05, 04/05, 22/05, 01/06, 02/06, 03/06 04/06, 27/06, 28/06
Lakes	16/06, 20/06
Wales	02/04, 03/04, 09/04, 03/05, 16/05, 19/05, 06/06, 11/06 17/06, 26/06, 30/06
South Wales	06/04, 15/04, 18/04, 24/04, 30/04, 04/05, 12/05, 19/05 10/06, 26/06

Non specialists (Non MR)

	08/04, 11/04, 12/04, 11/06
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Outreach training in Snowdonia

The Outreach Rescue Organisation, based in the Snowdonia National Park, have for over fifteen years, been running a range of rescue courses for the Emergency Services within the UK and overseas. All Outreach courses are delivered by MRT/SAR personnel, including SAR paramedics, with many years of operational and training experience behind them and include rope rescue, water rescue, search and casualty care.



Recently, Outreach were accredited by Edexcel to deliver, in parallel with our Casualty Management in Specialist Rescue course, the First Person On Scene (FPOS) award. This nationally recognised qualification offers progression from basic first aid training and introduces proven life saving techniques such as oxygen therapy, airway adjuncts, C-spine immobilisation, basic life support and Automated Electronic Defibrillation (AED) training.

We deliver the syllabus in both the environment and the situations mountain rescue teams operate in, with a strong emphasis on the practicalities of providing care and safe evacuation. It is aimed specifically at personnel working in relatively remote rescue environments who are responsible for the management and treatment of casualties until hand over to definitive medical care. This four day course will provide rescue personnel with the confidence and ability to deliver treatment for life threatening injury and illness in both an urban and non-urban environment and meets the requirements for NGB awards. For further details, or to talk about this or any of our courses, contact Tony Emsley or Ian Ellis via telephone on 01248 601546, or email **outreach90@aol.com**

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Mountain rescue teams and the response to a national flooding emergency

by Ewan Thomas, Water Officer

Mountain rescue teams have been dealing with incidents involving water since the service first started. Fast flowing upland streams, lakes and rivers are a key feature of our mountain landscape and, inevitably, incidents in or in close proximity to the water are dealt with as routine. Our involvement with water, be it river bank searching or the rescue or recovery of persons from the water, has gone largely unnoticed by the statutory services and the government until the summer floods of 2007.

The inquiry into the 2007 floods examined, amongst other things, the rescue response. The final Pitt Report praised the significant contribution of mountain rescue personnel. Unfortunately, the report concerned itself with a particular flood episode so the significant flood response made by other teams to other floods remains anonymous. However, the report has brought the previously overlooked capabilities of mountain rescue teams to the attention of the government and the statutory services.

Sir Michael Pitt concluded that the response to the major floods of 2007 was ad hoc and as such represented an unnecessary risk to those in need of rescue and those doing the rescuing. The report recommended that the government put in place an effective flood rescue capability using the skills and expertise of all the responding organisations, including ours. The government responded by agreeing to the recommendations and has now started to develop the National Flood Rescue Framework, which is expected to be completed in draft form by the end of 2009. The framework is being developed in a DEFRA funded project by a project team that has specialist input from the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), the RNLI, the coastguard agency, the MoD and Mountain Rescue.

Our engagement with the Flood Rescue project started before the government had officially responded to the Pitt Report. Our Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) representative invited me to attend a flood rescue workshop being run by CFOA in North Carolina, one of the most flooded states in the USA. The Charlotte Fire Department's flood rescue capability is very highly developed, in response to the many hurricane-generated, wide area floods it attends each year. Not only do their services know the theory but they have lots and lots of experience. CFOA has chosen its partner for technology transfer wisely.

The North Carolina experience was enlightening for all those attending (including every FRS in England, DEFRA, MCA, RNLI, MoD, Mountain Rescue, the Environment Agency and the Met Office, to name a few). The simple message, loud and clear was that

wide area flood response is a multi-agency event, blending the skills of many organisations from widespread locations. Managing the mix of resources in a flood event is complex, and ensuring that individuals from different agencies and from different locations can all work safely together requires detailed pre-planning. Flood response is not all about boats and swiftwater technicians, other less obvious skills and capabilities are also required to achieve the best outcome.

Mountain rescue teams bring an unexpectedly broad set of skills to flood response. Conventional thinking measures flood capability by counting boats and individuals trained, equipped and willing to jump into flood water. This 'sharp end' however, though critically important, is only one part of the response, and a part that the FRS nationally and the RNLI is reasonably well resourced to meet. MRTs however have a broader role at flood incidents, where our skills are put to best effect. In collaboration with the project team, the key identified roles for teams in a flooding incident are:-

- Water Margin Search during the inundation (rising) and receding (falling) phase
- Logistics support to boat teams
- Air asset support (preparation of landing sites, comms to helicopters, receiving casualties)
- Search Management
- Tracking assets (using GPS tracks either in real time or using downloaded tracklogs)
- In-water rescue (specialist water teams)
- Wading recovery after inundation phase (still water)
- Lily pad management (high spots in flood zones using air placed teams)

- Intelligence gathering including spotters
- Cover for displaced FRS assets (in home area)
- Independent communications network

The task list includes a small number of 'wet' tasks and a very large number of dry tasks; tasks that most team will feel are well within their capabilities and expertise. The MR response to floods, therefore, need not be limited to those teams with a water rescue capability. We are also to be deployed into less obvious roles where our capability to work independently, remotely and from within our own resources can be used to best effect. Getting our full range of skills written into the framework document has been my key objective, and we are now fully included into the planning for these large civil catastrophes. Documents like this can so easily become a mechanism to exclude volunteers but, in our case, this danger has been averted.

I am aware that within mountain rescue teams there is an opinion that we should not formally engage in civil emergency response and another that we should not engage in water rescue, which many perceive to be outside our core competency. There are equally firmly held beliefs that we should provide emergency assistance if it within our capabilities. There cannot be any compulsion for teams to engage in the response to flood incidents, but equally there has to be a recognised mechanism for those teams that wish to do so. This will be achieved by a register of assets for flood rescue. Teams who wish will declare their capabilities, be they in-water rescue, bank team searches or tactical

▶ PAGE 55



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When you think of BaseCamp....

When Basecamp was first launched at the Outdoors Show in March 2007 it was to set up a national support group who recognised the work teams do, and create a way in which they could feel involved. The name Basecamp grew from the idea of people providing support for the teams, whilst the team members themselves went out on rescues.

For most people the words 'Base camp' suggest the foot of very serious mountains – Everest, Annapurna and K2. Now, working with Community Action Nepal (CAN), we are looking to run a fundraising event in Spring 2011 with a trek to Annapurna Base Camp, affectionately known as ABC. This would, of course, be 'Basecamp to Basecamp'!

Treks of this nature are regularly led by CAN, the charity set up by Doug Scott to help support the porters and sherpas in the Himalaya by taking much needed work to the area.

The trek to Annapurna Base Camp is a fantastic trip, taking you right into some of the world's highest mountains to experience life in the Nepalese Himalaya. Setting off from the fascinating city of Kathmandu, an internal flight takes you to Pokhara and the start of the trek. The gradual climb passes through remote villages with ancient farming, to less vegetated areas and into the high mountains. The trip will be fully supported by local porters who will help carry equipment and food. All you will be expected to carry is what you might need in your day sack, typically waterproofs, water, some snacks, a first aid kit and, of course, your camera.

The trip takes sixteen days – a substantial portion of the holiday allowance for some people, I know. Easter is late in 2011 and so there is an option to have the trip then and make best use of bank holidays. The maximum altitude is about 4,200 metres – you will almost certainly feel the effects of reduced oxygen but the trek is designed to take that into account. The ascent is steady and rest days are built in. The idea is that everyone who goes on this 'trip of a lifetime' will raise money for Mountain Rescue England and Wales.

At this stage, I am looking at initial interest in the idea – if there are sufficient numbers, I'll explore this in a lot more detail and get some idea of costs. Please email your thoughts or questions to neilroden@tiscali.co.uk marking your email 'Annapurna 2011'. I will report back in the next issue but, in the meantime, take a look at www.catreks.com for more information about Community Action Nepal. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Christmas is coming...

We might not like it, but we can't stop time. Christmas is just around the corner – which probably means a shopping trip or two, wondering what you can buy that person who really does seem to have everything. Apart from anything else, more time at the shopping centre, equals less time the hills.

So, why not cut out the worry and simply enrol someone as a member of BaseCamp?

You can download the application forms from the website and, if they are sent to Neil Roden in time, he'll post out the pack to either the gift recipient or the purchaser. It's an ideal gift! And just £24 for a single membership, so what's the dilemma? Problem solved!

Included in the pack will be a copy of the current (October) magazine, and the next magazine will land on their mat in January 2010. You will have bought a gift that makes a really good quarterly read and, at the same time, helps mountain rescue teams and their members across England and Wales.



Help to raise funds for SARDA (England)...

On the 25 October Adrian Ward, of Inner Wolf Limited, will be running in the Great South Run, Portsmouth, in aid of SARDA (England). The Great South Run is a ten mile course run by an ever increasing number of fun runners and charity runners. Adrian ran the course last year as a fun runner, in one hour thirty-nine minutes, and decided to run this year for a good cause. Being a dog lover and regularly outdoors he chose SARDA. This year he is hoping to shave nine minutes off his finish time, bringing it down to an hour and a half. As a relative late comer to distance running he's currently training hard, always accompanied by his two dogs, Milo and Sam, to achieve and hopefully better this time.

Please help and give what you can to achieve the £1000 target set – even a small donation helps. You can make a donation at www.justgiving.com/southernforwards. If everyone gave just one pound we could blow the £1000 target out of the water! Incidentally, this is a totally safe and secure way to make donations.

VAT EXEMPTION ON ADVERTISING

The Government's response to the recent petition for exemption from VAT on purchases for mountain rescue teams was disappointing. However, teams that are charities do get some VAT concessions on purchases.

Advertising and certain fundraising goods supplied to charities, such as collecting tins, preprinted appeal letters and lapel badges given free in acknowledgment of a donation, can be zero-rated in many circumstances. This may include space or air time sold to the charity to communicate with the general public and the related design or production. Backdated claims have recently been restricted to three years but otherwise it is possible to request a credit note for VAT inadvertently charged.

As you would expect, there are restrictions. If the advert is not placed on someone else's space or time, zero-rating will not apply eg. on your own website. Nor to exhibitions, or items bearing the charity's logo such as pens, mugs or car stickers. Charities interested in learning more can request a copy of VAT Notice 701/58 for a little light reading. A suitable declaration form, to notify suppliers of your charitable status, is included in the leaflet.

As always, seek up-to-date professional advice relevant to your specific circumstances, particularly where large sums are involved.

Heather Simpson Treasurer NWCRO

dear editor





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A focus for Flash

by John Coombs

I was a little late writing this article as I had to fill in a 'mutilated bank note form' and send it off with the remains of a £20 note. Flash had carefully selected it from amongst others of lower denomination in my son's wallet and shredded it!

Six months on from when I picked her up last October she is probably worth marginally more than £20. Back then, having vetted, and tested Flash, I decided to give her try.

She loved a game with a ball and I used it to get her to 'speak' – she soon cottoned on that she could have the ball if she barked – so we tried a few team members running away, hiding and laying down on the ball – she searched for each and raved and yapped until the ball was tossed in the air for her. Brilliant! I was already starting to plan how I could show off my 'Instant search dog' to the other handlers on her first training weekend.

Next I took her home and introduced her to my five pet sheep – I threw a ball into the midst of them and was delighted to see Flash ignore the sheep, scatter them in all directions, and retrieve the ball – well done Flash!

I put the toy in my pocket. Once the ball was out of sight, however, Flash lived up to her name and, before I had time to think, was off after the sheep. Not so good – though I did manage to call her back, which gave some hope. But my balloon had burst. If she made it, progress was going to be just as hard as with all our dogs – no instant search dog after all!

After a couple of weeks it emerged that Flash liked the chase game so much that she had learned ways to 'arrange' it for herself. This was done by running, barking at any dog she met – making it retreat rapidly so she could chase it. Or (almost as good) cause them to chase her – and as a bonus, a very satisfying indignant reaction from the humans involved as well! Flash extended this to horses, sheep, hens, and humans.

Preparing for search training

- Socialise and allow her to take an appropriate place in the team and domestic situations.
- Train her to SARDA (England) registration standards for control around stock and obedience.
- Develop a game that will be a reward for finding people, and be used to build a reliable find sequence.
- Last – the one that you always look out for with an adult dog – look for any undesirable behaviour and temperament traits that would make her impossible to live with or train.



A search dog must be so focused on searching for and finding people that other distractions are ignored. There seemed a long way to go. We had judged that she was young enough, and of the right temperament, to learn new habits to replace the old. Flash is too much of a live wire to settle into a pet home – so I had to grit my teeth and settle down to a long haul.

Fortunately SARDA (England) has a policy of preparing all dogs and handlers thoroughly before search training starts, which gave me a plan to work with.

I had serious doubts – I did not realise at first how traumatic the move to a new home was for Flash – her confident and playful nature masked an emotional wound that would take some time to heal.

The main purpose of an air scenting mountain rescue dog is to clear ground reliably. If it is not reliable it is useless. This reliability comes from a single minded drive to find. This of course has to be under some control to search systematically. So there were my objectives.

Obedience training and structured games give a framework for building drive, and the right relationship with a dog.

Passing the registration tests in a formal situation on a SARDA training weekend ensures the relationship holds up when the handler is nervous.

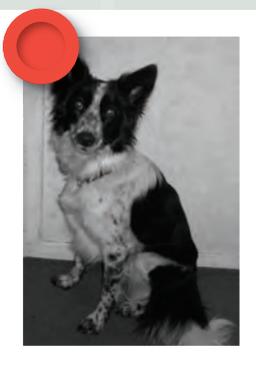
Stock control is the big one – the way we usually do it is to get control of the dog, so she knows that sheep and game are not allowed, and then focus onto finding people (though with this you never finish, a dog is being trained and retrained throughout its life).

Flash is my fourth search dog. New handlers have to complete twelve days' bodying before they can be considered for registration as a trainee with SARDA (England).

I'm always asked how to stock-proof a dog. The answer is to establish a relationship with the dog so it listens to you, and then make it clear she shouldn't take an interest in sheep. SARDA has lots of techniques for getting the message across but they all depend on a good dog/handler relationship.

Anyway, that's what we did. Flash passed her stock test in November and her control test in December 2008. Once my nerves had recovered, I started work on controlling Flash at a distance.

That's fairly easy with a collie – but requires



the handler to make an effort and go to the dog and reward it when it's a long way off.

Lot's of work but with Flash if you put the work and the time in, you get a fair return



Control Test: Dog and handler must successfully demonstrate all the following exercises

- The dog must walk to heel, on and off the lead on rough ground.
- Come when called.
- Drop and wait at a distance.
- Bark on command.
- Ten minute down stay – five minutes with the handler out of sight of the dog.



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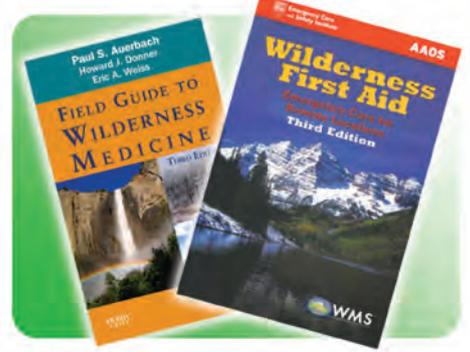
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Stock Test

- The dog is allowed to run free with sheep in a pen. She is called through them by the handler and commanded to stay while the sheep are herded nearby
- The dog is failed if she decides to interact with the sheep



The Balabanov Game

This is something new for us – SARDA dogs normally work for a toy and a kind word but structured play can be adapted to train a dog in many ways.

The essence is to develop games that are played with the dog, so the dog is totally committed but the handler is in control, alternately teasing and rewarding the dog.

The thing that a dog really enjoys is to play tug with a hessian bite roll and win – if you get it right she will enjoy it so much she will bring it back for you to play tug again. That didn't happen to start with – Flash ran off with it, taunting me gaily. The solution was to leave the dog's lead on so I could tread on it to stop her running away – and then run backwards to get her

to bring it back for another game of tug.

The handler has to learn the game just as much as the dog. Shake from side to side and don't twist, or lift the dog's feet off the floor when playing tug – that spoils the fun.

I was able to build in a leave and make her wait before she was allowed to grab it again.

Two weeks, an asthma attack and several muddy bums later we both got into it. Flash wants to win the tuggy toy more than anything in the world now – but it's no fun without a human.

Once we learned it together I was able to use the game to train all sorts of things. We judged we were ready to start search training at the start of 2009.

All the exercises and commands become part of the game. 'Lie flat and you can play!' 'Wait for it – Now!' 'Speak, Flash' and you might get permission to grab it...



The handler has to learn the game just as much as the dog. Shake from side to side, don't twist, or lift the dog's feet off the floor – that spoils the fun!

Postscript

Please don't get a dog until you have completed a 'bodying' apprenticeship with SARDA and are sure you have the full backing of your team. Ask us and we will try to help you find the right dog.

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'A Crawl down the Ogre,' 'Life and Hard Times' and 'The Three Peaks'

October

- Wed 14 **Ambleside** University of Cumbria, Percival Lecture Theatre, Rydal Road 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/Mountain Heritage Trust olivia.toppin@cumbria.ac.uk
- Thu 15 **Glasgow** Boyd Orr Theatre, University of Glasgow 'Three Peaks'. 7.30pm. CAN/Super 7 www.super7.co.uk
- Fri 16 **Richmond** St Francis Xavier School. 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/Swaledale MRT – 07821 031960.
- Sat 17 **Rotherham** College of Art & Technology Theatre Eastwood Lane S65 1EG 'Crawl down the Ogre' 7.30pm. CAN/Phase – 01709 702550 info@phaseworldwide.org
- Sun 18 **Wetherby** The Bridge Hotel, Walshford. 'Crawl down the Ogre'. 7.30pm. CAN 01423 358673 www.wetherbyfestival.co.uk
- Mon 19 **Arbroath** Webster Memorial Theatre 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/ROKPA 01241 435900
- Tues 20 **Inverurie** Town Hall 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/ROKPA – 01382 872020
- Wed 21 **Elgin** Elgin Town Hall 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/ROKPA – 01343 562600
- Thu 22 **Invergordon** Art Centre 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/ROKPA – 01349 854414 7.30pm. CAN/ROKPA – 01856 879900
- Sun 25 **Wick** Assembly Rooms 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/ROKPA – D R Simpson's shop
- Wed 28 **Perth** Perth Concert Hall 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/RSGS/ROKPA – 01738 621031
- Thu 29 **Dunfermline** Carnegie Hall 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/ROKPA – 01383 602302
- Fri 30 **Moffat** Moffat House Hotel 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/ROKPA – 01387 373232 ext 230 charity@rokpauk.org

November

- Sat 14 **Maryport, Cumbria** Senhouse Roman Museum 'Mountaineering and the Landscape' 7.30pm. 01900 816168. senhousemuseum@aol.com
- Sun 15 **Maryport, Cumbria** Senhouse Roman Museum Author's Forum. 7.30pm. 01900 816168 senhousemuseum@aol.com
- Mon 16 **Wirral** Birkenhead School, 58 Beresford Road, Oxton 'Three Peaks'. CAN/Classrooms in the Clouds (supported by ICE) 7.30pm – 0151 666 7237
- Tues 17 **Colchester** Colchester Institute Main Hall, Sheepen 'Three Peaks'. 7.30pm. CAN/HEADWAY 01206 381456. valpryor@btinternet.com
- Wed 18 **Oldham** Uppermill Civic Hall, Uppermill, Saddleworth 7.30pm. CAN
- Thu–Sun **Kendal Mountain Festival** Brewery Arts Centre 19–22 01539 725133 www.mountainfest.co.uk
- Sat 21 **Douglas Scott at the Kendal Mountain Festival** 2.00pm. Kangchenjunga 30th Anniversary Historic Event. 01539 725133 – www.mountainfest.co.uk
- Mon 23 **Buxton** Opera House 'Life & Hard Times' 7.30pm. 0845 127 2190
- Thu 26 **Rickmansworth** Watersmeet, High Street 'Three Peaks'. 7.30pm – 01923 711063
- Fri 27 **Bassenthwaite** Primary School, Sports Hall 'Three Peaks' 7.30pm. CAN/School Funds 017687 76690

On sale at lecture: Doug Scott Books – Himalayan Climber, The Shishapangma Expedition – plus NEW Doug Scott Mountain Posters. Pick up information on Community Action Nepal at www.canepal.org.uk or call 01768 484842. See our latest trekking programme with Community Action Treks Ltd www.catreks.com 017687 71890 or email

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Spring 2007 Everest North Ridge Expedition

by Chris Harling



Before heading further up the Rongbuk Glacier, we spent a week acclimatising to 5100m and made climbs up minor peaks above BC. The main ingredients of successful acclimatisation are rest and plenty of fluids. I made a big effort to drink at least six litres day and do very little during these periods.

So, on 16 April we set off for the first of three trips up to Advanced Base Camp (ABC), through some amazing scenery: endless tottering ice pinnacles and ridges of moraine stretching as far as the eye could see. The effort and willpower needed just to maintain a slow plod as we approached 6400m was incredible. The final climb up to ABC was a real killer, perhaps only a 200m climb but with heavy bags and weary limbs, which refused

to cooperate, it was a real mental battle. Some of the team were literally physical and mental wrecks when they staggered into camp!

We were all really hit by the altitude at ABC – just walking a few metres from your tent to the mess tent, left you gasping for a few minutes and what little appetite you had at BC was whittled away to none – forcing down good food with no enjoyment became essential to try and maintain any strength.

Gaining the North Col at 7000m would be Everest's first real test for us. I felt strong after three days rest, and got a good rhythm going once we were on the steep fixed ropes. With adrenalin flowing, I managed to keep going up the 45-50 degree ice slopes without taking a break.

After twenty-one monotonous chopstick meals in a row, which consisted of the same range of dubiously indecipherable Chinese dishes, always washed down with Coke (for safety) it was with great pleasure we arrived at Everest Basecamp (BC). The journey there had been amazing in itself – breathtakingly endless views over the barren Tibetan Plateau, untouched villages and tantalising glimpses of distant 8000m peaks. Our first view of the biggest was through the dusty windscreen of a wildly bouncing Landcruiser from about sixty miles away – it looked enormous, steep, and imposing. My fellow passengers and I were rendered speechless.

Reaching the col was amazing – at last getting close-up views of the North Ridge and the NE ridge to the summit far above. You could pick out the infamous Second Step and the summit ridge, despite being a sobering 1800m below still. I was also amazed to find that it had only taken 3.5 hours to get there so I was really pleased that my training seemed to be paying off, and even more pleased that it was about an hour before any of the others made it onto the col!

Our next trip up to ABC on the 28th was done in one go – a really tough day climbing 1300m over fifteen miles, on a route which is rather similar to walking through a quarry, with boulders and loose scree to negotiate most of the way. The previous scenes of collapse and

carnage amongst the team on arrival at ABC, were to be repeated – it would not get any easier next time either!

This second time on the mountain, our goal was to spend two nights camped on the notoriously cold and windy North Col and to climb up to 7500m (where the mountain really begins to rear up) on the day in between. Despite the benefit of a week's extra acclimatisation, we found the climb to the col harder than previously because of the loads we carried: down sleeping bag, down suit, food, high altitude mitts, axe, goggles, sweets etc, etc. Arriving mid-afternoon meant it was pretty nippy on the col, so I wrestled myself into my down suit for the first time in anger – an exhausting act in a cramped tent. Merely sitting up from a lying position, left you gasping for a minute or so, before you could even think about what you actually sat up for.

Sleeping at 7000m was actually not too bad, although Robin and I had 'periodic breathing' – you stop breathing for around fifteen seconds suddenly followed by rapid heavy breathing – this often causes you to wake up with a panicky feeling of suffocation. It's also unnerving listening to your tent mate 'dying' every few minutes!

Leaving the North Col last the next day, I caught up with most of the other nine climbers scattered over the long snow slope, in various states of exhaustion and motivation levels. It was just too easy to sit down – all the body kept saying was, 'Sit down and rest... sit down and rest... sit down and rest.' I had spent months mentally preparing for this – keeping going no matter what your body demands! Heading up above the North Col felt like being on the mountain proper for the first time. Seeing tents as tiny dots of colour high above, we began to get a real perspective of how enormous the mountain really is.

It had taken just under five hours of relentless toil to climb the 500m up to 7500m. I felt a tremendous sense of contentment sitting alone on the side of the mountain. Despite my down suit with hood done up tight, I soon got cold in the windy conditions and reluctantly headed back down the now empty snow slope to the tents on the col – in only forty five minutes!

We were back in the comparative luxury of base camp three days later, which by now felt like returning to sea level (despite being 300m higher than Mont Blanc). We planned to have at least five days rest before making our summit attempt, but this would not be contemplated until we had a decent weather window forecast. The forecasts emailed to us always came with a given level of confidence in it being correct – the further ahead the forecast, the lower the confidence. Initial indications suggested the possibility of low summit winds on 15 May. Confidence in this, however, was low. We would have to leave BC on the 10th to be able to make use of these conditions.

On 11 May, we set off to ABC for the third time. It was odd not knowing whether this was the start of our attempt at the summit, or just

another acclimatisation trip – only the weather forecast would dictate which it was to be.

Over the next couple of days, the confidence level in the forecast grew, but the wind speed was marginal for a safe summit attempt at 18–20mph and –15°C daytime temperature. By mid morning on the 13th another team had slightly better conditions forecast. A meeting was called and we all made our own individual decision to go for it, leaving ABC after a hurried lunch and a last minute packing session.

The climb from Camp 3 on the North Col to Camp 4 at 7800m was billed as physically the hardest day of the whole expedition... and it was. With much heavier bags than last time, it felt extremely tough. Looking at my watch at 7500m, we were delighted to discover we had climbed the snow slope over an hour faster than previously! The ability of the human body to adapt to the lack of ambient oxygen is amazing.

Arrival at Camp 4 was a triumph of teamwork and encouragement, with five of us climbing together for the last few hundred metres of mixed ground to the tents. We all agreed it was the hardest seven hours of our lives!

Next day would take us up into the so called Death Zone, above 8000m. We began to use our oxygen masks for the first time, which meant carrying a 5kg bottle in our bags as well as our own gear. Gaining height with the claustrophobic masks on, did not feel any easier and any movement above 7000m required an all out effort – it was still an all out effort with the oxygen, you just moved a bit quicker!

I really enjoyed the climb to Camp 5 at 8300m. It was an intricate route weaving through endless buttresses and ledges, interspersed with steep snow slopes. With the weather being windy with blustery snowfalls and no visibility, you could have easily been forgiven for thinking you were climbing on the flanks of Ben Nevis in February – except for the fixed ropes and groups of climbers in down suits. With the weather deteriorating all the way up to 8300m, we could only hope that the forecast would be right and the winds would drop... since it would be later on that same evening we would hopefully be departing Camp 5 for the summit. As we arrived on the rocky slopes of our high camp, inclined at 40 degrees, in mid afternoon, it was snowing heavily, but the winds were dropping and it felt relatively mild... in only a few hours we would discover if the weather window forecast five days before would materialise.

We began to get our gear on (very difficult in a sloping tent with eight oxygen bottles



rolling about) at about 9.30pm and eventually emerged, with only crampons to don, at 10.30pm. Looking up the slope toward the NE Ridge, all we could see was a snake of blinking lights disappearing into the cloud. It turned out most other teams had set off around 9pm and the others in our group had followed suit.

The climb through the night was a bizarre experience. All sense of time, distance and where we actually were was lost. With the snow falling very heavily all you had to concentrate on was following the steps in front and forcing the next foot forward. It was reassuring to be connected to the fixed ropes on the tricky sections, especially when the snow would suddenly give way or a mini avalanche would come sliding down from the blackness above. There was the occasional steep technical section where you delicately



climbed straight up teetering on front points, but most of the route seemed to be diagonal traversing along small ledges and across steep snow slopes. Perception of danger and fear during the climb, were non-existent. Thoughts of a slip or an accident never entered my consciousness – mental process was focused solely on where the next foot was to be placed.

The practicalities of a rescue in the event of

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As our tenth year approaches, it is good to remember the successes and achievements. During the past nine years, we have guided 46 people to the top of the world, including Ian McKeever who went on to break the world speed record for climbing the Seven Summits (the seven highest peaks on each continent). In 2003 we staged a high altitude rescue for Conan Harrod, who had broken his leg during his ascent on the North East Ridge at 8500m. Conan went back and successfully summited in 2006. In 2006, we also put the youngest Britons on the summit, two nineteen year olds. This record still stands.

For 2010, we already have a strong team established with one celebrity sportsman signed up alongside a mix of clients from across the globe. The team includes two Dutch climbers who plan to become the first men to climb 9000m. Their bid will start with a dive from over 150m under sea level.

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an accident or medical emergency above 8300m are extremely difficult. The route traverses the fall line more than it climbs, the footing is generally insecure and belays poor and widely spaced. A casualty not capable of climbing for himself on this terrain would be extremely difficult to move down the mountain, even with a team of trained rescuers with the best rescue gear – add the problems of extreme altitude and lack of specialist equipment and rescue effectively becomes impossible.

Without experiencing the sheer physiological output required to move your own mass – let alone that of another climber – above 8000m, it is difficult to grasp the desperate nature of attempting to drag another person back down across Everest's upper North Face. Only those who have been capable of moving for themselves have been rescued from high on the mountain.

At about 5am on the 16th it began to get light and we found ourselves below the climb's most formidable section, The Second Step. A couple of climbers were having trouble on it, so we decided to have our first sit down in seven hours and get a drink and a few sweets. We also changed oxygen bottles here and left the empty ones for collection on return.

After a couple of awkward steps and a short snow ramp, we got to the famous ladder which seemed very steep and hard work to climb (we were now at 8600m). After a wild step out right at the top of the step with several thousand metres of the North Face now visible dropping away below, we climbed into hazy sunshine – at some point during the long dark climb through the night, clouds had begun to disperse, the wind had dropped completely and a pristine alpine snow ridge lead up to the Third Step and summit pyramid beyond. The weather conditions were far better than the forecast had suggested. I looked at my watch for the first time – it was only 5.45am. Through the dark tinted lens of my goggles things were looking good.

Having made a final dizzying traverse out onto the North Face and pulled back up onto the summit ridge we could for the first time see the actual top, with prayer flags streaming in the breeze, about 100m away. For the first time, I allowed myself to think I was actually going to make it. We 'strolled' along the final undulating ridge taking pictures, soaking up the incredible vista and enjoying the sensation of climbing on the roof of the world – conditions were beyond perfect! The views were



breathtaking. Makalu, Cho Oyu, Lhotse – other surrounding 7000m peaks looked tiny, and even the mighty Ama Dablam looked like an insignificant pimple far below.

The descent was an equally demanding mental battle to maintain progress – muscle fatigue and deterioration are rapid over 7000m. The body literally consumes its own muscle mass in preference to extracting energy from food. The brain, starved of oxygen and sleep, begins to play tricks and hallucinations are not uncommon. For one member of the expedition all this was compounded by a more serious problem – snow blindness as a result of a few moments on the summit without goggles. Despite being fully mobile, the team effort required to guide him down the mountain, step by step, crawl by crawl was huge. Constant propping up, pushing and pulling assisting with balance and verbal encouragement was as much mentally draining as it was frustrating. The descent from the North Col two days into the rescue was captured by the cameras filming for Discovery – we were in no mood for interviews though. Happily the casualty made it safely back to ABC, was treated by a doctor and made a fully recovery – he knows how lucky he was.

Arriving back at BC the next day, we could fully relax and celebrate – never has a beer tasted so good! And to lie down on a comfy mattress in my own tent and sleep, knowing all the effort was over... bliss!

Chris is a Mountaineering Instructor and member of Keswick MRT. With fellow team member Chris Gillyon he produced the Mountain Logbook to raise awareness of mountain safety – for further information go to www.mountainsense.co.uk or email info@mountainsense.co.uk



A brief dip into eponymous medical terms 5

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



Figure 1

Hippocrates

It might be justified to include this name purely in his capacity as 'the father of modern medicine' but it is in fact his attachment to reduction of the dislocated shoulder that brings him in.

The Hippocratic technique is the forerunner of the method currently advocated in mountain rescue. The difference is that the Hippocratic method is a single operative technique and involves using the foot in the axilla as counter traction (Figure 1). Although out of favour now I have, over the years, found this to be a very effective procedure even on the east face of Pavey Arc. It should not be necessary to add that removal of footwear is important.

Hippocrates of Cos lived from 460BC to 370BC and travelled widely throughout Greece teaching medicine. He was the first person to describe illness as a natural phenomenon rather than divine intervention and established the idea of diagnosis and prognosis. He attempted to establish medicine upon a backdrop of anatomy and physiology although the concept of four humours as the basis of physiology imposed some limits on his success.

He did make significant advances in the management of trauma and was the first to advocate rest and immobilisation along with traction for the reduction of fractures.

Langerhans

The Islets of Langerhans in the pancreas were described in 1869, long before the existence of insulin was confirmed. Indeed the word insulin is taken from the Latin 'insula' meaning island. The islets form some 1-2% of the total mass of the pancreas and are found mostly in the tail of the organ (Figure 2).

Initially thought only to produce insulin, the cells of the islets are now known to be of five different types. Alpha cells produce glucagon and beta cells produce insulin. The destruction of the latter by auto-immune processes is responsible for type 1 diabetes, and the possibility of transplanting these cells may radically change the treatment of this type of diabetes.

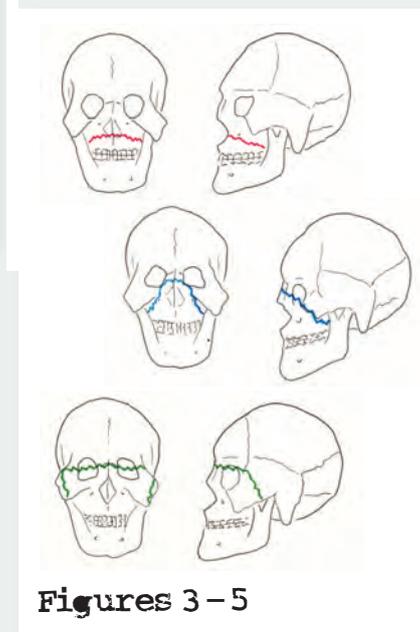
Paul Langerhans lived and worked in Berlin.



Figure 2

He combined the roles of pathologist, physiologist and biologist. He served in an ambulance unit in the Franco-Prussian war and later became Professor of Pathology in the University of Frieling.

In 1874 he contracted tuberculosis from his work and, in 1875, retired to Madeira in search of warmer air. He made a partial recovery and made a study of marine worms and wrote reports on the weather in Madeira. He died of renal failure in Fuchal in 1887.



Figures 3 - 5

Le Fort

The name of Le Fort is linked with facial fractures. He was the first to recognise and describe the three patterns of facial fracture. Three types were listed as Le Fort I, II and III (Figures 3, 4 and 5). Published in 1901 the descriptions have proved accurate and, although the advent of CT scans and 3-D images have rendered the descriptions less important, they are still of value in clinical assessment.

He also recognised the frequency with which brain injury accompanied facial fractures (50%), probably the most important thing to remember about these injuries.

His experimental work was carried out using cadavers and dropping weights onto the faces from different heights.

Rene Le Fort lived from 1869 to 1951. He was born in Lille and worked for most of his career as a French Army surgeon.

Louis

The Angle of Louis is also known as the manubrio-sternal angle. It is an angle of 140 degrees, formed between the manubrium and the body of the sternum, and is at the level of the second rib (Figure 6). This is a very useful reference point in locating the second rib and is a surface marker for the bifurcation of the trachea and the beginning of the aortic arch. It is at the same level as the disc between the 4th and 5th thoracic vertebrae.

Antoine Louis lived from 1723 to 1792. He was a French surgeon and physiologist and became Professor of Physiology at the Salpetriere in Paris in 1750.

He almost achieved much greater fame by inventing a prototype guillotine, the Louisette, but this was superseded by the superior model of Joseph Guillotine!

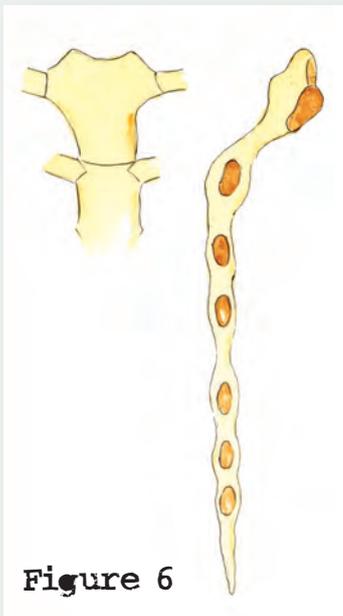


Figure 6

At last... a sanitising wipe that's been proven to kill Swine Flu

As a leading supplier to the emergency, hospital, sport, veterinary, occupational health, first aid and retail markets for over thirty years, Steroplast Healthcare has always been eager to offer the best and most effective health care products available – and the latest drive to slow down the spread of Swine Flu has proved no exception.

Over the past months, the team at Steroplast has been busy searching for a sanitising wipe that's proven to be totally effective against the **H1N1 Swine Flu Virus**. After investigating many alternative products and manufacturers, the company's close links with the NHS brought Clinell Universal Sanitising Wipes to their attention.

The Clinell range, which is now the leading brand in infection control, was originally developed by two doctors to deal with the growing MRSA problem. The advantage of Clinell wipes over alcohol gel (which can only be used on physically 'clean hands') is that it can be used on 'dirty hands' making it ideal for situations where it's impossible or impractical to wash hands – such as mountain rescue.

Fully effective in 30 seconds and lasting for up to 24 hours, Clinell gives total confidence to the user and the patient that they are protected from infection caused by bodily fluids like blood, vomit and urine. Proven to kill at least 99.999% of germs including MRSA and the H1N1 Swine Influenza Virus, Clinell Universal Sanitising Wipes are one of the most effective antimicrobial products on the market.

The five pack sizes (packs of 40 and 200, tub of 100, bucket of 225 and the maceratable pack of 140) mean that they can be carried easily, whatever the mode of transport. The smaller packs are also ideal for mountain rescue, being compact enough to carry inside a rucksack.



Tested in accordance with European standards EN1276 and prEN12054, Clinell Universal Sanitising Wipes provide a single, universal product that not only disinfects and cleans hands but which also leaves surfaces and equipment germ-free.

GAMA Healthcare, the official supplier of Clinell products to the NHS has recently named Steroplast as their exclusive supplier to all other markets. Steroplast can deliver next day anywhere in UK for further information Call 0161 902 3030 or email sales@steroplast.co.uk for prices and further details.



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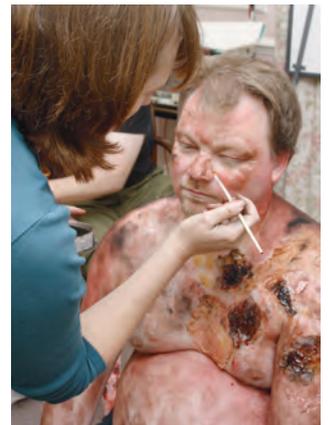
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Omnats and helmets

by Andrew Joseph

Helmets are one piece of equipment I don't skimp on, I never forget it and always wear it. A crappy helmet is better than no helmet. A helmet needs to be light, strong, comfortable, with the emphasis on comfortable. But if it's uncomfortable, it won't get worn, no matter how light and strong it is. I'm prepared to pay a premium for comfort and strength, if it's light then so much the better.

I have seen several accidents where the helmet saved the wearer from much worse injuries had they not been wearing one. One of these involved my wife, and also served to remind me of the need for maps!

We had arrived at the forest parking place, got the bikes out, backpacks on, when I realised I'd forgotten my cycling shoes.

'Bugger!' I said (my apologies if I have offended anyone, but be ready for more apologies 'cos I don't know any Latin).

Bev (my wife) and Robert (our son), pootled off together while I went home to get my shoes. I would meet them later. Back to house, get shoes, back to car park, get on bike and pedal like crazy to catch up.

After fifteen minutes of lung-bursting riding, I caught up with them. Meantime, they had been having adventures. Robert's chain had come off and been rectified, and they had passed a man with a dog. Life was good.

We set off again, but instead of the crunching of tyres on gravel, Robert and I heard a sort of muffled 'thud'. I stopped quickly, as this was not the sort of sound that bodes well. Bev was lying on the ground, face down, with the bike in a tangle above her, she was not moving, which was strange. She usually moves, even just a little, like when her eyebrow arches. We rushed back up and she started moving again.

'What happened?' I asked.
'I don't know, one minute I'm riding the bike, the next I'm on the floor! You tell me what

happened!'
'Are you okay?' 'Yeah, I think so... my neck hurts a bit but I'm ok.'

We examined Bev's helmet, a few scratches but it seems sound. Phew, that could have been nasty. We just need to remember to buy a new one soon.

On our bikes and pootle onwards. After a few moments, Bev asks, 'Did we pass a man and a dog?'

'Yes,' says Robert, 'about ten minutes ago.'
After another few moments, 'Did we fix Robert's bike chain?'

'Yeeses...' A bit of concern creeps in. As usual it's uninvited and most often, unfounded, but it makes its presence felt.

'Did we pass a man with a dog?'

Woah now! something's wrong here!

'Did we fix Robert's bike chain?'

'Lets have a nice little rest,' I suggest. Concern was now being ignored, fear had just hammered on the door!

I checked Bev out as best I could, nothing obvious but I was sure she had concussion, and possibly other problems that scared the hell out of me. 'I think I'll just call for an ambulance to meet us...'

'I'm not getting in an ambulance, there's nothing wrong with me, I'm going home!' And true to her word, Bev starts running home, probably just to prove that there is, indeed nothing wrong with her. Home, however, just happened to be in the opposite direction, and

she's forgotten her bike.

In the meantime I'm through to the ambulance service and trying to explain the problem.

'Is the casualty breathing?' asks the female emergency services operator.

'Yes, she's legging it up the road!'

'Is the casualty conscious?'

'Yes, she is! She's bloody well running away from me! I'm on the verge of laughing in hysteria. I'm trying to catch a runaway, paranoid wife with some form of head injury, and the operator is asking me if she's breathing!'

'Can you get her to stay still?'

'I'd bloody sit on her if I could catch her!'

'Sir, we need you to stay where you are so we don't lose phone contact!'

'But then I won't know where my wife is!'

'Oh!'

By this time Bev and Robert are out of my sight. Robert (who is twenty something years old and extremely handsome, like his dad) is trying to calm Bev down and get her to stay in one place.

'Where are you? Can you give me your grid reference?' asks the operator. As luck would have it, only that morning I had taken my OS map of the area, out of my bag. I didn't need it on our local ride, I knew every inch of the place. Getting lost was not possible! However, I have now come to realise that maps, grid references, compasses and GPS devices are

a great means of being found.

So... No, I can't give you a grid reference Miss (or maybe Mz) emergency operator person, because I'm an absolute, complete, incompetent, half-witted IMBECILE who shouldn't be in charge of a teddy bear let alone taking his beautiful wife and son riding along dangerous mountain roads!!!

All right calm down mate, do your best and give them some info.

'I'm on Margam mountain, about halfway between the Golf Club and Bryn village, on the eastern side of the mountain on the highest fireroad.'

'How do you spell Bryn?' Oh for the love of Pluto!

'We have the helicopter in the air. They should be with you in a few minutes, please stay where you are.'

'I can't, I have to look for my wife!'

'Please keep the mobile phone switched on, the helicopter pilot with contact you directly.'

I find Robert and Bev well inside the trees, around the corner and up the hill. You know where I mean.

'I'm not getting in no ambulance, there's nothing wrong with me.'

'Bev, you have concussion, you're not making sense...'

'I beg your pardon!!' That menacing arch of the eyebrow.

'You keep repeating yourself, and anyway, they're not sending an ambulance...'

'Good, see, you've just wasted time and essential services...'

'... they've got a chopper up and heading for us.'

'I'm not getting in no flippin* chopper!' (* edited for the benefit of the delicate). And off she runs again, and me with my bad back.

My phone rings. 'This is the emergency helicopter from Morrision Hospital, can you give us more info on where you are?'

'We're on the upper fireroad on the eastern side of Margam mountain, between the Golf Club and Bryn, but now we're in the trees.'

'Oh.'

'Rob, grab a space blanket, open it up, get out in the clearing and wave like mad!'

Robert does so, managing a passable impression of a chimp learning semaphore. I tell the helicopter peeps what we are doing, they soon spot us and land nearby.

Bev meanwhile is exhausted and submits to my gentle insistence that she go to hospital. Yeah, right, the only reason she's not running now is because the chopper cuts off her escape route!

The helicopter lands in a maelstrom of wind, flying gravel and those small purple plastic drinks bottles that live in the forest.

They sent out the baby red helicopter. Pretty soon they have Bev strapped to a board but I could see there was only enough room for the driver, and the guy who was not the driver. Where the hell does Bev go?

'Going into a bit of a dark tunnel now luv,' says

the other helicopter peep, the who was not the driver. Now, this sort of statement is not the thing someone who is strapped to a board and a bit of a claustrophobe, wants to hear. Bev starts to hyperventilate 'Ahuah ahuh ahuh.'

'1..2..3.. lift and push...' and they start shoving her up what appears to be the engine exhaust, only square. Still, they must know what they're doing.

Clunk!

'Damn... it's stuck!'

All of a sudden there's a hammering and yelling 'getmeoutgetmeoutgetmeout!' I did mention that Bev was a tad claustrophobic didn't I?

'Pull back a bit and push again.'

This time the stretcher slid through and Bev's face pops out into daylight. She takes a big lungful of air... 'Hhnnuuahhh!'

Robert and I wave our goodbyes to the helicopter. Bev can't see us and anyway, she couldn't wave back even if she could see us, they've strapped her down even tighter to prevent more damage to their baby chopper. We slowly make our way back to the car. It begins to rain.

My stomach churns as we return home, what sort of damage has Bev suffered, broken neck, intercranial swelling, ripped jacket? And I made it worse by not having a map, or a GPS, or anything!

It turns out Bev suffered nothing worse than a stiff neck, a mild concussion and a few grazes. On closer examination we could see her helmet was a write off and we had to buy a new one. But, thanks be to the deity of brown dogs with black ears, her head is fine. A few nicks but structurally sound and still running like new.

I've learnt my lesson, I always have a map and compass, torch, GPS device and spare batteries, and a fully charged mobile phone. And I pray to Pluto that I never need 'em.

By the way, this is actually a true story, the phone conversation with the operator is as close to verbatim as I can remember it. And it still makes me laugh and feel sick at the same time.



The Emergency Services Show

24/25 November 2009, Stoneleigh Park, Coventry

The challenging and complex nature of today's emergencies, makes it essential for individual agencies to work together to ensure a more effective response. Now in its fourth year, The Emergency Services Show is leading the way in encouraging multi-agency co-operation, by bringing together relevant organisations and equipment suppliers. It's an essential event for anyone involved in mountain rescue, providing an invaluable insight into the workings of your emergency partners to promote effective collaboration.

Over 350 trade exhibitors will give unrivalled access to cutting edge technology including SealSkinz, and Lyon Equipment whose dedicated Work and Rescue department, set up over twelve years ago, has established itself as an authority on working in the vertical domain.

The Networking Zone includes the Blue Light Zone for police, fire and rescue and ambulance services and the Emergency Response Zone, providing a unique opportunity to find out more about specific emergency responders, professional, government and voluntary organisations. Mountain Rescue is exhibiting within the Emergency Response Zone (stand E9) alongside other exhibitors, including the National Flood Forum, the Mine Rescue Service Ltd, RAF SAR and the Flood Forecasting Centre.

The networking opportunities presented by the event are an invaluable way to develop interagency collaborations, initiatives and strategies and The Emergency Services Show provides an ideal environment to gain a better understanding of emergency response issues and a forum to debate these with like minded professionals.

The integral two day conference 'Planning, Response and Recovery' provides an exclusive opportunity to join decision makers from other agencies and features expert speakers to explore current strategic thinking and past, present and future challenges in emergency response. Topics will include Communications Interoperability, Community Resilience and a review of multi agency training, alongside more specialist subjects including the preparation and response to Swine Flu.

For further information and to register for the Exhibition and Networking Zone (which are free to attend), and the Conference, visit www.theemergencyservicesshow2009.com



Andrew Joseph was all set for a career in mining, but an allergy to coal dust and Mrs Thatcher (!) put an end to that. Nursing beckoned but, after several years in psychiatry working with the deaf mentally ill, he was injured in work, wrecking his back and leaving him with permanent pain, loss of sensation in his lower legs and feet, and a limp so bad he needs a walking stick – at 28!

After ten years on the sofa, he discovered he could ride a bike. "You don't limp on a bike. I could ride for miles and miles and sweat. I stopped being addicted to painkillers, sleeping tablets and whisky (well, perhaps not the whisky). I'm now addicted to riding several days a week (and the odd tot of single malt). I still get bad days, sometimes I can't get out of bed, put on my socks,

talk in sentences or think straight. But I know these pass and then I can ride again. Oh, and my blood pressure has come down.' Realising he was advising people on how to ride, he decided to get a bit of training and is now a part time mtb/cycle coach/guide with MIAS level 2 qualification.

Mountain bike accidents and injuries

by David Allan

This article deals only with incidents involving mountain bikes that have presented to and been dealt with by mountain rescue teams in England and Wales. It does not claim to be a comprehensive account of mountain bike accidents as they occur in all situations. From the early years, when they were something of a novelty in the mountains, the appearance of mountain bikes rapidly advanced until there were few territories they had not entered.

Mountain rescue teams quite quickly became used to call outs to deal with casualties from mountain biking. Some teams deal with them regularly and others infrequently depending on the nature of the terrain within their area.

The number of incidents presenting to mountain rescue each year has steadily increased and continues to do so.

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Incidents				
25	27	33	46	59
People injured				
25	23	35	45	68

In common with fell walking accidents the vast majority of injuries are sustained during descent. Those teams who have been involved with competitive events have noted a significant rise in the frequency of accidents and injuries during these events. The forces involved in downhill spills however can be considerably greater than with fell walking tumbles, and the injuries have more in common with climbing falls than with hill walking trips and slips (Figure 1).

Broadly speaking, the injuries can be grouped into three patterns. Firstly, injuries to the ankle and lower leg as result of trying to

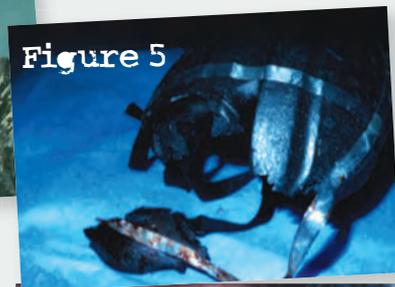
put the foot down when travelling at speed. Secondly, injuries sustained from contact with the bike itself. Thirdly, and potentially the most serious, those arising from a trip head first over the handle bars.

In addition it should be remembered that mountain biking is largely a lightweight sport and, in the event of an accident, there is little immediately available to combat the risk of hypothermia in inclement weather conditions.

The type of injury sustained in the first situation is familiar to all mountain rescue teams as a fracture of the ankle or lower tibia and fibula in all their forms and guises (Figure 2). Impact with parts of the bike may result in a number of injuries (Figure 3). Handlebars have been known to cause abdominal injury (Figure 4).

In the early years in New Zealand a number of serious liver injuries were seen as a result of this mechanism and changes to handlebar shape were made as a result. In a shocked casualty with no external evidence of bleeding consider carefully the possibility of an intra-abdominal problem. Penetrating wounds from other metal parts is possible and relatively innocuous wounds must be viewed with a degree of suspicion especially in areas such as the neck.

Accidents resulting in a flight over the handlebars carry the greatest risk of serious



injury. It is possible that an outstretched arm may prevent more serious injury. In this situation one or more of all the possible patterns of injury may ensue from wrist fracture to dislocated shoulder and fractured clavicle.

Even with an outstretched arm the head, face and neck are at risk. The helmets worn do not afford the same degree of protection as climbing helmets. The very lightweight type whilst offering some protection may collapse on impact (Figure 5). The wound in (Figure 6) was sustained whilst wearing such a helmet. The possibility of brain injury is very real and meticulous observation and Glasgow Coma Scale recording are imperative.



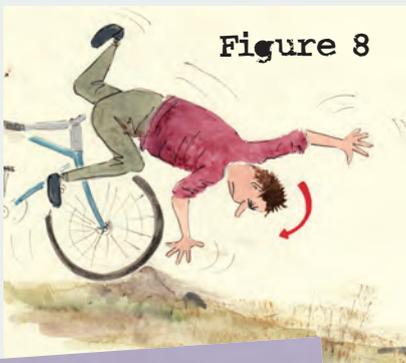


Figure 8

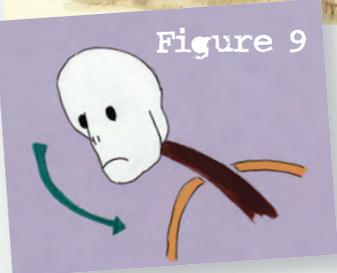


Figure 9

Facial injuries are common. These may range from extensive abrasions (Figure 7) to more major Le Fort type fractures which carry risks to the airway. Facial fractures also carry an overall 50% possibility of underlying brain injury.

The forces at play are likely to be exactly those most capable of causing serious cervical spine injury. A combination of flexion and rotation of the neck is very common (Figures 8 and 9).

This combination is the one most capable of unlocking two cervical vertebrae producing a fracture/dislocation with an unstable spine and a spinal cord at greatest risk of damage (Figure 10). In (Figure 11) an X-ray shows the typical displacement of vertebrae associated with such an injury.

It is apparent that mountain accidents must be approached with a high level of awareness of the possibility of serious injury. It has been said that all these casualties should be presumed to have a cervical spine injury until proved otherwise and there is a great deal of merit in this approach. Having a clear picture of possible injury patterns is big step towards making a good working diagnosis and this is never more true than in this type of incident.

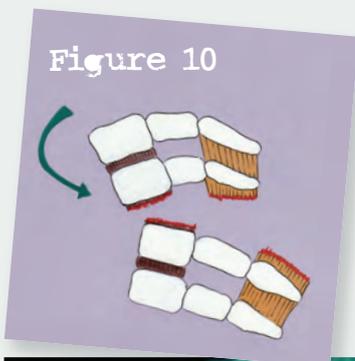


Figure 10

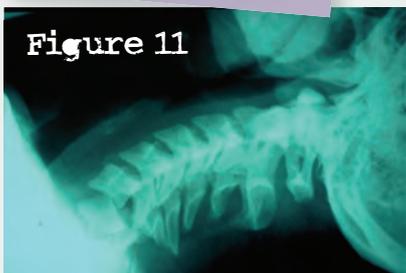


Figure 11

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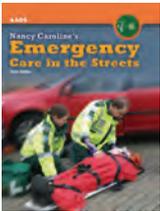
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Programme

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Fracture dislocation of the ankle

Mr Mike Greene FRCS
A&E Consultant; Team Doctor
Wasdale MRT

10:30

Cold water drowning

Prof Mike Tipton PhD
Prof Physiology Southampton
University; Medical Adviser RNLI

11:30 Coffee

11:45

Analgesia study

Dr John Ellerton MB ChB MRCP
Medical Officer MREW; Team
Doctor Patterdale MRT

12:00

Problems presented by the elderly

Dr Jill Cook MRCP
Consultant in Elderly Medicine

12:30

Trauma deaths in North Wales

Dr Linda Dykes
A&E Consultant

13:00 Lunch

14:00

CasCare training in the RNLI

Paul Savage
Clinical lead/training manager

14:30

Routes of drug administration

Dr John Williams FFA
Consultant Anaesthetist

15:00

Current thoughts on airways

Dr Karen Greene FFA
Consultant anaesthetist

15:30 Tea

15:45

Pathology of long falls

Dr Theo Weston MRCP
Team Doctor Patterdale MRT;
Doctor with the Great North Air
Ambulance

16:30 Discussion

17:00 Finish

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Delivering the training programme

by Bob Sharp

In this third article we'll focus on actual delivery of the programme. We've looked at aims and purposes, and the kinds of things that help decide what to include in a programme, but now it's time to examine execution – how it's all delivered. This is central to any mountain rescue training programme. You may have the most laudable aims under the sun and a comprehensive array of topics to cover, but if your presentation is awful then you may as well not bother!

Planning the content of a training programme is important but so too is the way it is presented. For example, it's no good devising a potentially good programme, which is then presented ineffectively or by the wrong people. Training needs to be well structured, delivered professionally and most of all it should be useful and enjoyable. Members must be motivated to attend training sessions and they must learn. Therefore, people who are technically competent and have the capacity to communicate effectively and enthusiastically must deliver training. Teams have an obligation to identify these people, whatever their level of experience or role within the team.

When working with a large group of people it's inevitable that not everyone will be able to attend training sessions. Some kind of repetition needs to be built into the programme, or additional sessions programmed for those who miss key events. Consideration should also be given to accommodating the needs of members with different levels of experience. New members might be given the opportunity to attend supplementary sessions whilst those more experienced might benefit from practising certain topics or attending outside courses at a more advanced level.

Teams should consider the instructional style in which topics are delivered. People learn in different ways, so strategies should be devised that cater for differing learning types and levels of experience. Some people learn best when given a comprehensive account of the skill or problem. Others learn best if they're given the chance to question and analyse the skill. Many people can't be bothered with verbal descriptions, lectures and chat. For them, learning is all about practising and having a go – even if it means making a hash of things.

experiences. This may sound rather trite but sometimes people misunderstand the meaning of learning. Learning is the ability to do something correctly on repeated occasions. If someone can execute a skill correctly only once then they have not learned; they must be given the chance to practise repeatedly to ensure it can be recalled time and time again, especially under stress.

As emphasised before, the key function of training is to help people learn skills and develop existing ones. To maximise the effectiveness of training, teams should take note of recognised principles of learning and practice.

Principles of learning

Learning by doing

A successful mountain rescue involves a whole raft of activities; members travel to the scene of the incident, people are deployed, equipment is chosen, first aid is administered, decisions are made, search tactics considered, leadership is undertaken and so on. All of this results in things taking place in the real, practical world where people carry out actions. Therefore, it's logical that training should mirror practice and involve members in 'doing things'. Indeed, it's accepted that for most people, the best way to learn is to physically practise what they're trying to learn (as opposed to read or listen). However, even though this is well accepted, there is a danger that within the time constraints of a training programme, too much time is spent by trainers presenting information and describing how things should be done at the expense of members actually practising. Indeed, a common mistake made by those who are competent in a particular area is to overload learners with information (sometimes the wrong kind of information) when all the learner wants to do is have a go.

A useful rule of thumb for all trainers is to split information into three categories – what learners COULD know, SHOULD know and MUST know. If there are time constraints then it is best to impart only the MUST know information and let people pick up the rest at other times. This distinction is described more fully later on.

So, physical practice is vital. But what kind of practice? Here are some key principles.

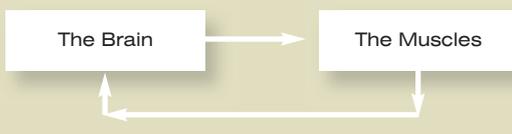


MAKING ERRORS IS A VITAL PART OF THE LEARNING PROCESS PHOTO: BOB SHARP

Active learning

Practice is vital but it is effective only if the learner is actively involved in the process. It is widely accepted (and supported by a wealth of research) that it's far better to challenge people by getting them to work out how to do something rather than telling them what to do. Using this principle, a good strategy is to set a task (eg. linking multiple anchors to a single point) and challenge a group to come up with possible solutions. This approach may unearth a number of answers (good and bad), which can lead to discussion and analysis and an eventual solution. Active learning like this encourages an understanding of underlying principles and aids memory retention. It's also a way of alerting members to procedures that may be unacceptable for reasons such as poor safety. This approach may not be applicable with more prescriptive subjects such as radio communication and first aid, but in other areas, every opportunity should be devised to engage members in active thinking and challenge.

FIGURE 1: CLOSED LOOP MODEL OF LEARNING



Training should always be kept fresh, fun and exciting. It's well known that people learn well if what they practise is enjoyable, meaningful and relevant. Above all, members should actually learn from the training

Errors in learning

It might seem rather odd to say that allowing people to make mistakes is a good thing but again, it's been shown that when people make errors (within the limits of safety) their understanding is enhanced and they retain skills longer. Thus, it's often argued that you only know what is right if you also know what is wrong! This principle is often used in teaching skills in outdoor activities such as skiing, canoeing and navigation (the effort in climbing back up 1000ft because of a compass error is a salient learning experience!). It can be extended by actually showing people some of the things you shouldn't do. For example, the act of tying a figure-eight knot can result in a few simple errors. A good idea is to give a demonstration and then let people practise and watch what they do. If they do it incorrectly then ask them to try again or suggest what is wrong. They might make a few attempts before they get it right. Time is not wasted doing this; to the contrary, this is quality learning.

Overlearning

There is always a danger that someone has practised something successfully once, and assumptions are made the skill has now been learned and can be called upon in the future. This is a risky assumption! Skills are learned only when they are rehearsed many times and subsequently can be applied in a wide variety of situations, perhaps under stress. It's all well and good setting up say an abseil system in the warm confines of the rescue base, but to do it on a freezing cold night in the dark when suitable anchors must be improvised is a world away and can only be achieved if the skill has been overlearned in the first place. Overlearning involves practising something perhaps dozens of times – often beyond the point you think it has been acquired. Only then can skills be performed correctly and resist failure under pressure. It's probably impractical to achieve this level of performance through formal training. The only way for members to become fully skilled is to practise further in their own time.

Practised familiarity

To pick up on the last point, the training provided by a team should be seen by everyone as only a small part in the journey to becoming a competent team member. It's vital that team members practise relevant skills and gain wider mountaineering experience in order to develop their overall competence and confidence. The art of 'practised familiarity' is critical. There is a clear difference between attempting something once successfully and executing skills repeatedly and accurately with confidence. A major goal is for all members to learn the skills and techniques required by their own team so they can be applied at times of need, with confidence and precision as if they were second nature. To do this involves a commitment beyond the training organised by the team. Team members should be alerted to this obligation before they join.

Feedback

Many people are aware of the maxim 'Practice makes perfect.' Trouble is this is wrong! The correct expression is 'Practice with feedback makes perfect.' It's very easy to practise a skill but unless that skill is corrected through feedback the inevitable outcome is that bad habits are picked up and potential is unfulfilled. Feedback is absolutely vital to learning because if there's no way to examine how well you've done, there is no basis for change and improvement. This 'closed loop' model of learning is schematised in Figure 1 (previous page). Feedback is self generated (you see that you tied the knot incorrectly or you hear yourself saying the wrong words on the radio) or can be provided by another person ('well done, that's just right').

In a training situation there may be many people involved, limited time and much to cover. In this situation, feedback may take a back seat and assumptions made that members will automatically notice and correct mistakes. But this is false logic. Team members regularly use wrong radio protocols, use a compass incorrectly or adopt the wrong system for tying casualties to stretchers. In these cases, the person may not be incapable of executing the skill correctly; it is more likely they have never, or rarely, been corrected when they made a mistake on previous occasions. In other words, they have not been given adequate feedback.

The problem is solved if trainers accept the value of correcting poor practice and take time to provide useful feedback. Team members also should accept that making mistakes and receiving corrective feedback is a natural part of learning. Of course, it goes without saying that praise should also accompany good performance. People like to know when they have done well. Success breeds success!

Principles of instruction

Providing information

Rarely are people left to their own devices to learn a new skill. Invariably they're given information in some form. Typically, learners are told or shown what to do or physically guided in some way. So, if we take the knot-tying example, a learner could be shown a demonstration by another person (visual guidance), or they could be told how to do it (verbal guidance) or their hands could be physically controlled by someone (manual guidance). Which of these is best? Well, much depends on the skill in question; in some cases one method might be better than others and at other times inappropriate. For knot tying it's fairly simple to give a demonstration, whereas it might be quite complicated to describe the process in words (try it now!). Helping someone by holding and guiding his or her hands – perhaps from behind – may be useful. In the case of first aid (cardiac massage) it may be extremely useful to provide manual help in order to demonstrate the force and frequency required.

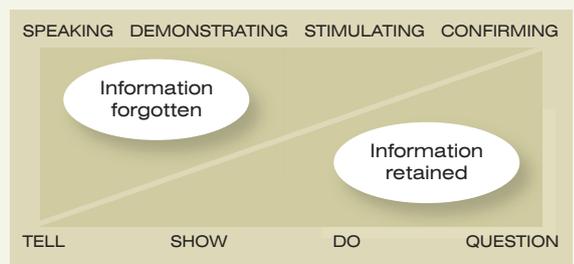


FIGURE 2: THE LEARNING GRADIENT

In broad terms demonstrations are commonly used and very useful. But they have to be shown correctly, repeated a few times and also shown from the correct angle. Note that if you stand in front of someone to demonstrate they see a mirror image; far better to stand next to them. Verbal guidance ('chalk and talk') is a common technique and doesn't rely on any props, but has many limitations. Firstly, you have to find the right words to explain the skill and the learner has to reverse this by translating words into movements. And there is the risk of confusing or boring people who just want to have a go. Also, it's very easy to overload them with information.

It's important for trainers to be aware of these approaches but they should also be mindful of what is called 'the learning gradient' (Figure 2). The learning gradient summarises four distinct approaches to instruction; speaking to the learner, demonstrating an activity, ensuring the learner practises the activity and, finally, questioning the learner about the activity. Each of these can be placed on a continuum in regard to the amount that is learned. The diagram shows that describing what to do is the least effective technique whereas allowing the learner to practise is much better. The most effective approach is to go one step further and encourage those learning a new skill to assess or review what they are doing by explaining what the skill may feel like or why they might be experiencing difficulties (active learning). Self analysis and discussion with others typically leads to far better understanding, enhances memory retention and motivation and most important, allows people to generalise their skills to other situations.

Variability of practice

Every rescue presents a unique set of challenges. The weather, personnel, time of day, location, etc are always different. So, even though individual members may possess a given set of relevant skills, it's the capacity to improvise, select, adapt and apply skills to suit any given situation that is vital. The only way to develop this is to vary practice to mirror real situations. The key factor is diversity. It has been shown that when people learn a skill under identical circumstances, their ability to generalise that skill is limited. However, when practice is varied, the ability to apply that skill in different and unique settings is enhanced. To take the example of knot tying

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again, variable practice might involve the individual using different widths and types of rope, practising with eyes closed, tying knots 'backwards', practise with gloves on, in the rain, with ice covered ropes or whilst doing something else such as talking to a fellow member or holding onto another item of gear. With a little imagination, a wide assortment of tasks can be devised for most skills (rope management, first aid, radio comms, navigation etc) to add variety to training.

The underlying significance of variable practice is that it enhances perceptual qualities such as understanding, anticipation and resourcefulness. These are some of the key qualities relevant in the real world of mountain rescue.

Information overload

Many teachers, coaches and instructors are guilty of overloading learners with too much information. Because they know so much they sometimes fail to recognise that not all of their knowledge is relevant. One of the greatest skills of any instructor is to see the learning of a skill through the eyes of a beginner. This gives them a better appreciation of how much slower beginners pick up information, as well as what cues and types of knowledge are relevant in the early stages. Figure 3 is a valuable reminder for all those charged with training others to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information.

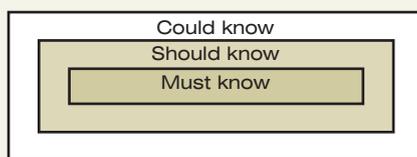


FIGURE 3: LEVELS OF INFORMATION

Let's apply this to a group of team members working with helicopters for the first time. The person in charge could tell the group about the history of military helicopter provision, the role of the ARCC as well as issues relating to deconfliction. They should let the group know about local provision as well as the operating capability and uses of helicopters in MR. But, they must inform the group on the safety issues and protocols relating to emplaning and deplaning. There is a vast amount of information associated with the use of helicopters but little of this is relevant at the start. In time, most can be imparted to members but the key thing is to know what information is relevant at what stage. One way to tackle the issue of relevance would be to brief everyone on matters such as provision and operating capability during an initial meeting. This could be followed with a safety briefing video and then practical work a few days later with a visit by the local Flight whose crew give a safety brief.

Another approach is to reverse this by arranging a practical session first, followed by an in-depth look at all the surrounding issues at a later date. Sometimes, people are more inclined to digest the theory having sampled the practice first. It's possible to take any topic

and identify the different levels of information. This is something that all good trainers do before they deliver their subject. Take the task of tying a figure-eight. The 'could know' information might include a discussion about strengths of ropes and their composition, design and care. The 'should know' information might include comment on the uses of the knot, as well as alternative knots. The 'must know' category would include specific guidance on tying the knot as well as how to avoid common mistakes.

Cue selection

Good trainers not only think about the speed and amount of information they convey but, more specifically, the exact cues the learner needs to think about. Learners need to focus their attention on things that matter which enable them to work positively and avoid confusion. Returning to the knot example, let's assume the trainer has put to one side all the 'irrelevant' information and concentrates on the skill itself. What aspects (knowledge, cues, movements) are key and in what order should they be delivered? Here's one way a trainer might describe the task.

'Take a bite of rope about a metre long and hold the two ropes in your left hand and the loop in your right hand.'

'With your right hand take the loop across the two ropes, let go the loop, take your right hand under the two ropes to regain the loop, bring it to the top and push the bite down through the loop created in your left hand.'

'At this point you can see why the knot is called a figure-eight. Finally, pull the bite with your right hand and simultaneously pull the two loops with your left. The knot can be finally tightened by holding the knot and pulling tight each of the four ropes separately.'

The trainer may, simultaneously demonstrate the skill but even so, there is too much information in all this. There's a need to reduce it to manageable proportions. One way is to break the skill into three elements – the initial bite of rope, the figure-eight pattern and the final pull through. In this way, a lot of information is chunked into a convenient number of items each of which has a distinct purpose. The key is prioritising what is critical and what is irrelevant; what are the key cues. If possible it helps to present information as a visual picture ('Do you see the figure-eight appearing?') or work out some kind of mnemonic ('The rabbit comes out of the hole, around the tree and back down the hole').

A technique that can help reduce information overload is to describe a skill as a series of sequential steps. For example, the process of taking a bearing from the map can be seen as three steps.

Step 1: Align the compass edge against the point you are at and the point you are going to (direction of travel arrow pointing the way you are going).

Step 2: Rotate the compass housing so the orienting lines on the compass are parallel to the grid lines on the map (north to north).

Step 3: Remove the compass from the map and add three degrees to the bearing.

It's vital to think carefully about the precise cues relevant to success. Cues can summarise a lot of information and make the learner's task much more meaningful and manageable.

Distribution of practice

Whilst there's a lot of information available on how long you should practice for and how often – especially in sports coaching – this cannot be applied to a rescue training programme since most training sessions are constrained by practical considerations. However, there is one useful tip that can be applied easily and that is the principle of massed practice. Research shows it's better to spend a substantial period on a single skill or topic rather than alternate from one skill to another. The point was made earlier about the value of overlearning and the same applies here. It's a fact that skills have to be practised time and time again (perhaps in different contexts) for learning to take place and to establish the ability to apply those skills in different settings.

So, for example, it would be unwise to spend a short evening session on a wide variety of different topics such as radio communications, rope handling and first aid. Far better to focus on one of these subjects and explore its different aspects and leave the other topics for another occasion. In fact, a good strategy is to spend an evening on one topic and then develop the same topic at the next whole day session when it can be applied in context. Concentration and progression – as opposed to flitting from one topic to the next – maximises the chance of learners attaining a learning threshold. It may mean some topics are left out of the programme or delayed for a period but this is a small price to pay for maximising the learning of key skills. It is unacceptable for team members to spend an entire year training and to have learned very little because they sampled skills too briefly. Quality rather than quantity is the right philosophy.

It's worth emphasising the importance of development and progression in learning. Trainers should think about how they progress a topic across sessions to give it meaning and substance. With most topics it's necessary to devote a number of sessions to ensure learning takes place. Much will hinge on a team's schedule so, whereas one team may develop a topic over two successive evening sessions, another might initiate a topic one evening then develop it at the next training day. Development also applies to level of difficulty or challenge. So, something may be practiced indoors before it is applied outside. Or the transition may go from daytime to nighttime, or roadside crag to mountain big wall. The key thing is to build progression into the training programme so that successive challenges (and ultimately operational rescues) build on previously learned strengths.



Edale MRT

by Ian Bunting

Edale is one of seven teams that make up the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation (PDMRO). The team's history was for many years intertwined with that of the Peak District National Park Ranger Service; indeed up until the early eighties team members had to be National Park Rangers to join the team. Even now, out of the eight people that have held the post of team leader, only one has not worked for the Ranger Service in one form or another.

The team's prime operational area is not large when compared to many other teams, throughout the country – being approximately 141 square miles – and some would argue it contains no mountains. The centre of the patch, however, is the Hope Valley, the most popular area of the most visited national park

in the country. It is here, at the LaFarge Cement Works in Hope, where the team is based. Overlooking this to the north are the featureless moorland expanses of Kinder Scout and Bleaklow, both as navigationally challenging as any 3000ft peak. Then to the east there are the 20+ miles of world famous gritstone edges including Stanage, Burbage, Froggatt and Curbar, to name a few.

The area and the clientele, as with most areas, have dictated the type and frequency of incidents Edale attends, the majority being known location incidents, with casualties varying from medical conditions (asthma and heart problems), minor twists and scrapes to some fairly serious trauma cases, most of which are due to climbing accidents. Fortunately, in the Peak District, most fallen climbers end up at the bottom of the crag so technical rope rescues are few and far between.

Incidents are generally close to the road and of short duration. If a job lasts over two hours, it's considered an epic. A quick response, however, is vital so as not to keep the patient, ambulance or air ambulance waiting. To assist with this quick response, the team has three Land Rovers. All of which are kitted out in an identical manner with sufficient equipment to carry out any job. The Land Rovers are kept at different locations within the team's area thereby ensuring that at least one vehicle can

be crewed within ten minutes of the team receiving a call. The aim is always to try and turn two vehicles out, as concurrent incidents are not unusual.

In 2009, the team was also very fortunate to be offered the opportunity to have an emergency response driver course prepared specifically for its authorised blue-light drivers, and those members undertaking that training for the first time. This course was prepared and delivered by police driving instructors from South Yorkshire Constabulary and has ensured team emergency response drivers are trained to a high standard as one would expect for such a role.

In the majority of cases, if we are contacted immediately, team members can be at an RV or incident site before any other resources. This, of course, means that team members are highly likely to be in the thick of it from a casualty care point of view. The Mountain Rescue Casualty Care certificate has, for the last few years, been the minimum first aid requirement for team members: the corollary to this being that, at present, forty team members hold a current certificate. The only team members excused from taking the cas care course are the team's five doctors. That said, any doctor joining the team must sit and pass the exam at least once – if, for nothing else, it's a good source of entertainment when their exam results come out with less than



MAIN SHOT: TEAM VEHICLE
 PHOTO: GOODYEAR ▲
 INSET: TEAM MEMBERS AND VEHICLES
 ABOVE: NIGHT RESCUE
 PHOTOS: TREV LAWTON

perfect scores: not quite physician heal thyself...

Whilst missing person searches only account for about a quarter of the team's callouts, a lot of time and effort has been spent training team members for searches. This has included sending seven people on the MREW Search Management course and a number of people on the Field Skills course. As well as the knowledge gained, it has also provided the team with good links to the police forces that send officers on these courses. The prime example of this being in 2007 when we were given an incident control van by South Yorkshire Police, arranged through contacts made on the course.

Over the last couple of years the team has tried to utilise the medical experience and skills it possesses by hosting a Trauma and Casualty Care weekend for mountain rescue team members. This weekend is proving very popular with attendees from all over the country as well as abroad. It is hoped this will now become an annual date in the Mountain Rescue calendar.

Of course, nothing would be possible without the funding the team receives from donations, bequests, grants, talks or collections. The team has worked hard over the last few years to increase its profile within the surrounding areas and fundraise whenever possible. There is barely a week goes by without some sort of fundraising activity being carried out. The team is assisted in this by its support group 'Friends in High Places', the brainchild of Neil Roden, who also established the national support group, Basecamp. With a membership of around 250 the annual subscriptions alone raise over £2000 for team funds and several FiHP members are actively involved in the work of the team.

In summary, Edale is a busy and well equipped team with dedicated members, four well maintained vehicles and a well appointed headquarters which is involved at the forefront of care and treatment of trauma patients.



The future of mountain rescue

Whilst some might take the more philosophical approach towards the future, believing you're always where you're meant to be at any point in time, there's no denying the changing pace of mountain rescue needs addressing. What with call outs rising dramatically, new technology, medical advances, and legislative limitations and requirements (not to mention other organisations snapping at our heels), there's a concensus we must seriously consider where we want – and need – to be in five, ten years from now.

August saw the very positive first meeting of a new group set up to do just that. A wide range of topics included training, branding, our relationship with ALSAR, central purchasing, volunteer status and mountain safety education. And, perhaps surprisingly, the regions shared very similar views on the majority of subjects.

Full minutes of the meeting are available on the Members area for those interested, and we welcome your feedback. Group members are Jon White (SWERA), Ewan Thomas (South Wales), John Hulse (North Wales), Andy Simpson (Mid Pennine), Richard Warren (LDSAMRA), David Bartles-Smith (NESRA), Peter Huff (Yorkshire Dales), Bill Whitehouse (Cave Rescue), and Neil Roden (PDMRO).

Nightsearcher introduces Solaris range

In 1989 Colin Howard, Managing Director, began manufacturing NightSearcher products, designing and specialising in rechargeable lighting solutions for the police, fire services and industrial markets, where the company has developed a high reputation for quality and service. NightSearcher's continued success and gradual expansion is aided by the dynamic nature of health and safety requirements, coupled with the demands from both new and existing market sectors. Our product range now includes high quality and carefully selected searchlights, handlamps, floodlights, flashlights and head torches. We are constantly evolving to meet the ever-changing needs of a diverse customer base – many products are now exported to countries throughout the world – yet we remain customer and solutions led.

The new Solaris range of lighting systems uses the latest CREE LED technology, which gives a clear white light on a surface area and does not affect natural night vision. The newly designed head, equipped with internal aluminium heat sink system and a polycarbonate front lens makes it extremely robust.

It runs cool and can be used safely close up and in confined spaces. Solaris bases are incredibly durable, watertight (to the depth of five metres) and chemical resistant. The cases come with a lifetime guarantee.

Supporting prostate cancer research



The morning after the first Snowdon500, we woke up to find our marquee wrapped around a large tree in the grounds of the hotel. It seemed the mountain was keen to see us leave and sent some strong winds to help us on our way! Not to be beaten by a few puffs of wind, we took the decision to invest in a much stronger tent for 2009, one the weather couldn't destroy.

The day of the event dawned bright and full of promise but slid rapidly downhill. By 8.00am, with winds of 75mph and gusting higher, it was decided – on the advice of our safety team from Llanberis MRT – that it was too dangerous to go to the summit and the route was amended to avoid the exposed Llanberis path. The contingency plan had everyone going up via the Miners Track and returning on the Pyg Track to the start point at Pen y Pas, then back on the buses to the hotel.

As the one with overall responsibility for the event it is very disconcerting to see helicopters struggling to lift people from the mountain but, as we had planned everything with safety as our primary concern, I was reasonably happy no one had been put at risk. Fortunately, we had only one or two minor injuries from amongst our group although there were reports of six evacuations from the mountain that day.

Special thanks must go to Matt Rannametts and John Harragan for the days of hard work they put in to make the event such a success and also to the team of volunteers who make everything run so smoothly. As ever, the marshals from Llanberis MRT did a magnificent job and we could not even consider running the event without their help and advice.

Like many others, I did not get to the summit (even the train couldn't get there!) but on getting back to the hotel it was obvious the mountain had again taken against our tent and given it the same treatment as the last one, so goodness knows what conditions were like at the top!

Despite the conditions, it was a fabulous event and a real challenge. The spirit on the mountain was fantastic! Everyone you met had words of encouragement which helped to keep you going despite the wind, rain, heavy rain, hailstones, very heavy rain, glimpses of sunshine and snow – typical weather in the mountains in May!

Once all of the money has been received and Gift Aid claimed, we should have made in the region of £200,000. Next year's event is set for the weekend of 22-23 May. If you would like to be part of this spectacular 'day out', go to snowdon500.co.uk or contact us on **07503 782616** for an info pack and entry form. No guarantees about the weather, but we CAN promise no more tents – next year, registration will take place in the hotel function room!

For the last two years, we've had a stand at the Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show, at the NEC – on both occasions designed and built, free of charge, by Eddie Harragan from Stand Innovations. Eddie has already agreed to build our stand for 2010 so thank you Eddie for your commitment. Please come and visit us at the show and see the fruits of his labour!



Accident blackspots in the Scottish hills?

Is it us or the mountains to blame?

by Heather Morning

Four incidents and two fatalities this summer, on or close to the Clachaig Gully path at the western end of the Aonach Eagach prompted me to consider the thorny issue of accident 'black spots'. Check out the UK Climbing Forum (www.ukclimbing.com) and you will see for yourselves the massive interest in this subject – to date (31 July) there have been 7859 hits on the Clachaig gully issue alone! Whether we like it or not, accidents in the mountains create emotive responses. The press love to get hold of a mountain rescue story – the avalanche incident (resulting in three fatalities) in Coire an Tulaich on Buachaille Etive Mor last winter resulted in a huge amount of press coverage. Compare this, to the press coverage of road traffic fatalities that occur on the UK roads every day.



Are there places we should avoid in the mountains? Are we putting ourselves at unnecessary (and in some folk's eyes unacceptable) risk? Should a list be published, and reviewed regularly, of locations where accidents are occurring? Is there anything wrong with learning by other people's mistakes? Or is there a bigger picture to consider here?

Warning signs in the mountains?

Should we be putting up warning signs? Do folk read them and if they do read them are they acted upon? Last winter, following a spate of ten accidents in just over a week,

MAIN SHOT: LOOSE UNDERFOOT CONDITIONS ON THE DESCENT **LEFT:** DESCENT TRACK CLOSE TO CLACHAIG GULLY

Langdale Ambleside MRT, in conjunction with the local police, displayed warning signs at the main access points onto the high fells in Langdale. The signs warned hill walkers of 'snow and ice on all upland paths above 300m'. However, despite the warnings, the rescue team continued to get called out to recover folk stuck on steep frozen ground. The Clachaig gully descent off the Aonach Eagach has historically been a well known hazard. William Poucher in his book 'The Scottish Peaks', first published in 1964, describes the Clachaig Gully descent off the ridge. *'It is also possible to descend a steep, stony path following the west side of the Clachaig Gully. In wet weather or poor visibility the descent is quite unpleasant and exposed in places. Considerable care should be taken'*. Some readers will also remember the warning sign located at the Am Bodach lay-by at the eastern end of the ridge, warning climbers not to consider descending off the ridge prior to the final summit of Sgorr nam Fiannaich.



The nanny state?

I suspect many of us head into the mountains to get away from our increasingly litigious and sanitised world. We go there to challenge ourselves, both physically and mentally; to make very real decisions that have very real consequences. Do we want to see a 'Via Ferrata' rigged across the pinnacles on the Aonach Eagach? Would a sign warning of the dangers of descent down the Clachaig Gully side be acceptable on the summit of Sgorr nam Fiannaich? How about a line of cairns guiding folks down the south side of the ridge towards Loch Achtriochtan or north towards the Pap?

A considerable amount of money has been spent on the summit of Ben Nevis to do just that. A series of large, well constructed cairns guide folk to and from the summit, around the top of Gardyloo Gully and past the potentially dangerous ground of Five Finger Gully. These cairns were built in the summer of 2008 and follow the line of the traditional 'pony track', but they are not without contention. Discussions are ongoing as to whether the close proximity of some of the cairns to the precipitous North Face is likely to 'lure' somebody over the edge in winter conditions.

It's a numbers game

Research into the Scottish mountain rescue statistics reveals the accident hotspots. Of course, it doesn't take a genius to work out that the largest number of accidents happens where the largest concentrations of people go. Take the tourist track up Ben Nevis – due to the Ben's iconic accolade of being the highest mountain in the UK, it attracts huge numbers of people. Recent figures from the Glen Nevis Ranger Service suggest two hundred thousand people per year ascend the mountain via the tourist track alone. By the law of averages, the more people there are, the more accidents are going to happen.

In the five years from 2004-2008 there were 101 rescue call outs for the Lochaber team to incidents on the tourist track. That makes it the highest number of call outs to one specific location in Scotland. Does that then put the tourist track at the top of the 'black spot' league tables? Is Ben Nevis a KILLER MOUNTAIN? Realistically, the answer has to be a resounding NO. For your average hill walker, the tourist track is an easy, well constructed path all the way. It's the people who are on the path that causes the problem – this may be poor fitness levels, pre-disposed medical conditions, inadequate clothing and equipment, lack of navigation skills and poor general hill sense. For many Ben Nevis ascensionists it may even be their one and only mountain climb!

The mountain rescue statistics also reveal the accident 'black spot' hotspots in Glencoe, the Aonach Eagach and Buachaille Etive Mor not surprisingly coming out on top. In the five years from 2004-2008, there were 32 incidents of the Aonach Eagach, closely followed by 29 incidents on the Buachaille. This again reflects the popularity of these locations. There are plenty of other places in Glencoe, due to the nature of the steep terrain where an accident could occur.

Heading east to the Cairngorms, the Northern Corries in winter have to be the classic 'black spot' hotspot. There are literally hundreds of folk on a good day walking into Coire an t-Sneachda and Coire an Lochain to enjoy the winter mountaineering and climbing which is so accessible from the road. The Northern Corries alone accounted for 38 call outs for the Cairngorm team in the same five year period.

So, are there any answers?

We are increasingly living in a society which likes to attribute blame. A recent coroner's

report on a fatality on Ben Nevis in January 2008 draws upon Rule 43.

'In the Coroner's opinion, action should be taken to prevent the occurrence or continuation of such circumstances, or to eliminate or reduce the risk of death created by such circumstances. Additional safety measures should include more visual and audio warnings of possible dangers'.

I am not sure if visual and audio warnings are appropriate or effective. There are already signs at the Glen Nevis visitor centre to educate folk on the appropriate clothing, equipment and experience necessary for a safe ascent of the mountain. Perhaps the way forward is to encourage and foster a culture of self reliance through the provision of training. You wouldn't think it was acceptable to jump in a car and drive without having some professional instruction first. Should venturing into the mountains be any different?

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland, the body which represents the interests of Scottish climbers and hill walkers, promotes the importance of self-reliance in the mountains. Through their mountain safety initiatives, the Council offer subsidised training course in mountain skills. The current courses on offer can be viewed at www.mcofs.org.uk.

In conclusion, I would suggest it is not the mountains that are the killer. It is folk with inadequate experience and equipment who are exposing themselves to a greater level of risk.

Many thanks to Bob Sharp for his kind support and information regarding accident statistics.

Heather Morning is Mountain Safety Adviser with the Mountaineering Council of Scotland. She is also a member of Cairngorm MRT and a SARDA dog handler.



Who's who interview:

Bill Whitehouse

by Judy Whiteside

Given the distinctly uninspiring, not to say uninspired, start to his 46 year long caving career, it's remarkable that British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) chairman, Bill Whitehouse, is still up to his snowy white beard in it. But, these days, Bill's affable pragmatism seems almost a given around the committee table, the interests of the cave rescue community never far from his thoughts.



A boarding school boy, he was lured along to a mountaineering club meeting by a schoolpal, in an effort to while away yet another 'dire Sunday afternoon'.

'Slide show and talk over, the guys started taking names – who wanted to go up and who wanted to go down. As I don't have a head for heights – and not wanting to appear a complete wimp – I opted for down.

'What I didn't realise at the time was that you can have just as big drops in caving as in climbing – the advantage is, of course, you can't actually see them!'

That first experience left him battered, bruised and muddy. And absolutely certain he'd never pass a single moment of his time that way again! Famous last words.

A 'Derbyshire caver,' he first joined the Eldon Pothole Club (where he's still a member), then Derbyshire CRO in 1964 – its secretary for 32 years, chair for the last seven – and has been a controller ('taking the calls and making it work') since 1970 and BCRC chairman since 1980. Oh and then there's the various subcommittees and UKSAR.

It was twenty odd years ago – thanks to a constitutional change for the Mountain Rescue Council, inviting two regional reps to the twice-yearly MRC meetings – that he began to attend as a cave rep, and there he is still, treading that very fine line between the interests of the two organisations.

And it is a fine line. Cave and mountain rescue may have been working together for many years – indeed some teams work above and below ground – but, whilst there are substantial areas of common interest, there will always be intrinsic differences.

'Cave rescue has always been very close to the caving community. To get involved with cave rescue you HAVE to be a competent caver

before you throw your first six'.

So how close can they get without either side suffering?

'There are reckoned to be around 5-6000 cavers in the UK at any one time. Tot up the cavers serving on teams, and you're looking at around 1300. That's 25%. It's an astonishing statistic.

'A lot of cavers live in areas where they couldn't serve on teams, so the recruitment pool is probably nearer 3000, which means 40% of the total potential cave rescuers are already serving on teams.

'Many cavers don't want to 'play at cave rescue' (as some might term training!) but will willingly turn out when needed. Many teams run on an informal system with core members providing management, working the gizmos and acquiring the cascade skills. The rest are competent cavers.'

'A mountain rescue team member knows if they don't perform or attend training, they're out. But cave teams have to be more pragmatic and flexible with their members and on their training, and utilise the varied commitment of those team members accordingly.

Why anyone would choose the dark, cold, smelly wetness of a cave over... well, over anything really, has always baffled me (even despite the occasional breathtakingly beautiful shot finding its way onto my desktop). But many of the circumstances in



ABOVE: 1964 BERGER FILMING TEAM – BILL CENTRE SHOT
TOP: ENTRANCE TO THE CHOUROUN DES AIGUILLES IN SOUTHERN FRANCE 1974

which they go to the rescue – be it flooding, rockfalls and bad air, not to mention multiple pitches, vertical drops and jamming constrictions within the caves, or any combination thereof – potentially put their own lives on the line. Arguably more so than the average mountain rescue. Yes, cavers are undoubtedly a breed apart. There's an adventuring evangelism about them reminiscent (I imagine) of those early mountaineers, striking up new peaks because they were there, or risking life, limb and the farmer's gate to save their mates. Multiply that tenfold and you have cave rescuers.

'Many cavers only spend a few years in the sport, unless they get involved with other things like digging, photography or cave diving. I've never considered myself a hard caver, although I've always enjoyed it.'

He makes the point that, whereas thirty years ago people came into mountain rescue teams as mountaineers, now many join teams outside mountain areas and they're not necessarily walkers or climbers. But in caving, even for the people only operating on the surface, 'it's better to have cavers, ex-cavers, semi-retired cavers...' because at least they know what's being talked about.

Surely the pool for cave rescuers must be getting smaller? And older? Whilst Bill concedes that most of his caving these days is done from the safety of his word processor, he can still help run the show as a controller. And there are still people coming into the sport – despite numbers having peaked in the 90s.

'Foot and mouth definitely had an effect because people found other things to do. There are now so many new and interesting ways of hurting yourself in the hills that, where the cave for mountain rescue has gone up, for cave rescue it's gone down.'

'When you look at the stats since 1952, when DCRO was set up, it always averages out at six rescues a year – sometimes as high as fourteen, sometimes only two. Some things do change, such as where they occur, but I can't see them going up. That said, they might not go down either.'

'As new outdoor sports have come along, they've attracted some who might otherwise have gone into caving. Many taste it, going into caves once, or occasionally – or, as youngsters, with an instructor – but it's just one of the many things they do.'

Another difference between mountain and cave rescue is that we still don't know what's down there in terms of caves. Despite the dwindling numbers setting off to find them, every year there are new caves to go at (back to those pioneering souls) – Titan, for instance, at 450 foot deep the biggest in the country, was only discovered in 1999. And cave rescuers have to keep abreast of all these developments and be close to the local cavers, to know what they're up to.

'There was an incident in Lathkill Head Cave, near Monyash in Derbyshire some years ago. One weekend, half a mile of new passage was found and, in the middle of the following week, a couple of cavers went overdue on a trip 'somewhere' in the cave. Only the original discoverers (both team members) knew where the new stuff was. One we had to allow underground as a guide, the other we kept on the surface for advice.'

Retired now (from the paying job!), Bill started his working life working as a valuer at the Inland Revenue in Loughborough. When a friend tipped him off that there might be a vacancy at Matlock, he jumped at the chance to be nearer the caves. You get the impression they were glad to see him go. 'They let me go with remarkable alacrity!' Perhaps it was those eternally itchy feet, chomping at the bit to commute every weekend from Leicestershire to Derbyshire for his weekly hit.

There he stayed, until the Government worked out it was 'far too nice a place to have an office' and moved it all to Sheffield.

He's seen a lot of changes. His first stint as team secretary, there were few meetings a year, minutes run out on a borrowed Roneo Gestetner. Now it's not just the number of meetings that's grown, but the expectations, the need for computer skills, state-of-the-art equipment, first aid training. 'Are we', he muses, 'a better rescue service because the quality of products are better than we used to have? Do more people get rescued, more quickly and in greater comfort? Or have we just got sucked in?'

'It's one of the reasons it's so difficult to get people to take on the admin jobs [a problem not confined to cave rescue!]. Those who did the job years ago have learned to assimilate the workload as it's crept up. But now, when someone new comes along – it's scary. They see it as a big lump.'

'When you're dealing with volunteers, there's a sense of there being a cut-off point where the demands are too much and they walk away. Also, the world of work has changed, particularly at the younger end. People spend more time commuting or working under pressure and the recruiting pool is the same people for cave rescue as it is for every caving club or organisation.'

'That's one reason why cave rescue can benefit from being closer to mountain rescue. MR has grown over the years, where we haven't, so has a larger pool of administrators and greater economies of scale.'

Cave rescue has ridden along with this, symbiotically, for a number of years, so why not bite the bullet and make it formal?

'It has become more formal with the recent MREW constitution changes but, to go further, is a bit like suggesting that soccer and rugby join up because they both play on grass and have goalposts at each end. There are fundamental differences.'

'Yes, there are lots of similarities on the requirements and concerns such as fundraising, insurance and casualty care... but even there, the way we deal with a casualty is slightly different. And, because the training tolerance threshold is lower, fewer take their first aid skills to a higher level. It's entirely possible to foresee a situation underground where not a single rescuer able to reach the casualty has a cascare qualification.'

'We couldn't have a blanket set of protocols because of these basic differences yet there are many areas where we need to work together, such as the development of the lightweight casbag, and on issues affecting volunteers generally.'

Has he been involved with any rescues where he could truly say someone had been

snatched from death?

'The only one that always comes to mind was in Dido's Cave in Matlock, in the mid-90s. We had a call about a party of scouts down a cave. When they emerged, there was one missing. It was an evil night, scything with rain, wet and horrible. It wasn't a big cave but much of it was fairly deep water. An old lead mine, the entrance at river level at Matlock Bath.'

'When we met up with local people, the lads running the trip had already gone back in and not found the missing boy. We searched again and concluded that he must be under the water and drowned. But there was nothing to say where he'd gone in. The dilemma was, do we get our divers out – it was now midnight – or let them have a night's sleep before starting recovery, but the lad's parents were on their way so we decided to do it.'

'Cave divers tend to be spread further afield so it takes time to assemble. Systematically, they began picking off known flooded passages. As two of them were looking at the last passage, the diving controller – who was standing up to his chest in water – started to kick around and found something. Yet there was no known passage at that point. When the divers returned, he asked one of them to go back down and into this new passage. He'd only been gone a few minutes before he was back. He'd found him. 'He's alive!' I can still hear those words!'

'The diver had swum under where the lad was and emerged in an air bell. The air was bad, you couldn't see through this hole, and he hadn't a lot of air left. We'd just taken delivery of a full face mask to bring casualties back through flooded passages but it wasn't yet in service. There was no time to wait for more air to come, the lad was up to his neck in water and hypothermic.'

'Two divers went back in, gave a quick lesson in using the diver's gag and we pulled him through. We got him to the surface and he recovered quite quickly.'

'One of the few occasions when you knew with absolute certainty he would have died. We were later asked by the BBC to do a '999' reconstruction of it.'

He hasn't been at the sharp end for many years, but still hopes 'to put something back,' his enthusiasm for cave rescue as strong as ever. Forty-six years since that first miserable foray underground, I think we could safely say Bill got the bug.



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support, to a centralised database. Teams that prefer not to appear on the central register need not, and will not be part of the 'national' response.

Developing an understanding of who does what is a key part of the Flood Rescue Framework – it will no longer be ad hoc. There has to be certainty. The management system to be adopted from the North Carolina model is one of team typing. A team is defined as a package of resources that can achieve a desired outcome. For example, a Type G team is a tactical support party of six trained, equipped mountain rescue responders with a leader and a vehicle, whilst a Type B team is a water rescue team of six with a boat.

In principle, the response to a flood emergency would be to call one 'typed team' from any one mountain rescue team rather than the entire team. This avoids depletion of team resources, allowing the teams to still provide a mountain rescue response even though it may have donated some of its personnel and equipment to the national emergency. As these flood incidents are likely to be protracted, relief would be provided by calling typed teams from other organisations, spreading the workload and ensuring a sustained response.

Currently, Mountain Rescue is developing a draft water syllabus, having already developed the bank team syllabus. These have been designed by MR water specialists who have a unique perspective of the needs of teams. Whilst the focus of the syllabuses is very much the search of, and rescue from, water and water margins in a mountain rescue context, we have been mindful of the 'equivalent' courses designed for the fire service. The framework will identify training requirements for those placed against and in water, and our syllabuses will meet these requirements.

Through the initial cooperation of our CFOA representative, Paul Amos, a kind invitation by CFOA to their flood rescue workshop and the subsequent DEFRA funded project, Mountain Rescue has been handed an opportunity to contribute to and influence the Flood Rescue Framework. The very significant wet and dry roles that we can play in a flood emergency have been identified and our engagement has significantly raised our profile with other services nationally. We are now in a position where those teams that wish to assist the response to flood emergency can do so in a planned and informed way.

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