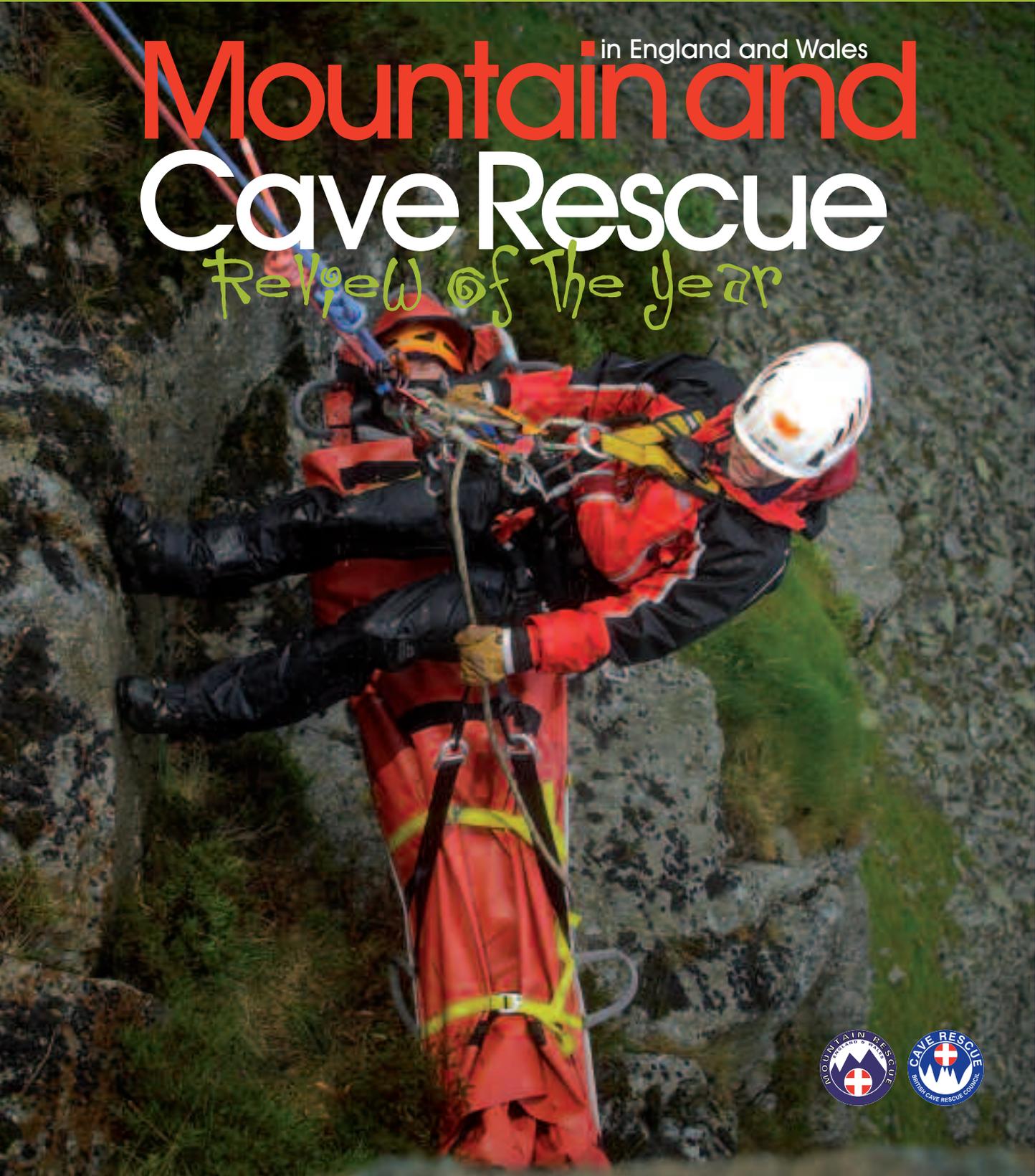


in England and Wales

# Mountain and Cave Rescue

*Review of The year*



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# Foreword

## HRH The Duke of Cambridge



Main shot: Rescue on Wharfedale during a Three Peaks cyclo-cross race © Andy Binstead. Top: HRH The Duke of Cambridge courtesy of Clarence House.



I have been proud to be Patron of Mountain Rescue England and Wales since 2008, and in that capacity, and also as a RAF Search and Rescue pilot, I have seen for myself just how important the concept of 'team' is to those who participate in MREW.

Whatever the scenario – whether it is the local 'M' team gathering for a fell rescue, or whether it is supporting one another through fundraising – it is always so impressive to witness how every member knows his or her role, is prepared for their part in the incident and is looking out for others on the team.

Your sense of 'team' extends beyond MREW. The fact that you volunteer your time and energy to rescue total strangers demonstrates a team ethic that is always generous and outward looking. There are times when your life-saving work goes largely unremarked in our communities, as you quietly and modestly put yourselves on the line to save others. During more high profile incidents, such as a major flooding alert, your sense of teamwork embraces a wide network of other organisations. In these times, your sense of togetherness and your diligence sets a great example.

Your ability to support others is not limited to rescues. Every year, MREW hosts an activity day for young people from three charities in The Princes' Charities Forum, which I share with my wife and Prince Harry. One Mountain Rescue team will host the event and others from the same Region will get involved, hosting a memorable day in the outdoors for young people who would otherwise never have that opportunity. Again, the team work is what makes the day special, tackling the barriers, building up confidence and creating an atmosphere where even the most unconfident young person feels that he or she can achieve something special. It works because of the commitment and enthusiasm of everyone involved.

On the occasion of your Annual Review 2012, thank you to everyone in Mountain Rescue for hundreds of jobs well done, on the mountains and in our communities.

Wiliam



2012 proved to be a very interesting year for mountain rescue in England and Wales, encompassing almost all the situations we might expect to encounter with the addition of some new and unexpected events.

Whilst some teams had very busy times and others less so, the overall number of incidents continues an inexorable rise.

Sadly the greatest increase is with people who are simply lost and overdue. This is all too often the result of failure to take simple measures, such as noting the time of sunset, to stay out of trouble. Amongst these, however, have been very challenging rescues in difficult weather, terrain and with serious injuries. It is apposite to note that in the most testing conditions mountain rescue teams usually work alone without resource to helicopter support. Approximately 80% of incidents in the hills are dealt with entirely by mountain and cave rescue teams.

Figures from Sport England show mountaineering and fell walking to be one of the few outdoor sports with an increasing number of participants. Taken together with a study that points to some 80% of hill goers saying they would modify their plans (or indeed not go at all) if mountain rescue was not on hand, this suggests even busier times ahead.

The search at Machynlleth involved numerous mountain and cave rescue resources. Effectively carried out on the ground it tested our ability to produce a well coordinated national response to

major incident and this is one of the challenges we shall deal with in 2013.

Securing the finances to allow the service to continue to deliver has always been an uphill task and probably more so now than in previous years. It is worth repeating the often unappreciated fact that no one in mountain and cave rescue is paid, either on the hill or dealing with the background 'paperwork'.

2012 also delivered some different and very enjoyable occasions.

The opportunity for a number of people to attend the Jubilee Concert was greatly appreciated and will live on in the memory of those who were there. It was a great honour for a team member to carry the Olympic torch on its last journey from the steps of Buckingham Palace and again something that will stand out in the annals of mountain rescue.

Undoubtedly, 2013 will bring new challenges but we are confident that we shall be able to live up to the words of Bill Tilman: 'When they bring you the heifer be ready with the rope'.

Main shot: Rescue in Ambleside © Paul Burke. Inset: Taking care of a casualty, inside the cas shelter © Daryl Garfield. Top: Call-out on Sharp Edge © Keswick MRT.

Front cover: Penrith team members, on a photoshoot with Petzl © Dave Willis, courtesy of Petzl.



**Chairman**  
**David Allan**

**Mountain and Cave Awareness**

**Weekend:** This annual event takes place across England and Wales every May Bank Holiday weekend – a great opportunity to get to know and support your local team.

**National Training Day: Plas y Brenin: Saturday 4 May:**

A chance for team members to network with other teams and hone their skills.

**Princes' Charities Forum Day:**

**13 July:** This MREW event is hosted by NESRA this year, with young people and families from WellChild, Child Bereavement and Centrepoint charities joining in the fun.

**UK MR Conference 2014: Aviemore:**

**September:** The bi-ennial conference brings together mountain and cave rescue team members from the UK and Ireland, with speakers travelling from across the UK, Europe and beyond, to network, educate and exchange information. This key feature of our mountain rescue calendar will be hosted by Mountain Rescue Scotland in September 2014.

**KEY DATES**

# This year's facts and figures

The continued reduction in incidents during 2012 is both welcome and encouraging. Whilst it is very easy to jump to conclusions about this trend, it would be unjustified without taking other factors into consideration.

## Mountain

Whilst the weather doubtless contributes to a number of mountain accidents, there also appears to be evidence that many would-be hill users were 'put off' venturing into the hills by the persistently poor weather during 2012.

Sadly, there seems little evidence that people are better prepared than in previous years. Many incidents resulted from over-ambition in both the planning and execution. It is rare that footwear and clothing are major contributors to accidents but poor navigation skills and inappropriate navigational gear both figure prominently in the incident reports — alongside late starts, poor reading of terrain and an inability to modify plans.

Efforts to educate and improve skill levels must be addressed. For example, too high a price has been paid by rock scramblers during 2012 — it is eight years since this figure stood at zero! In the last ten years, rock scrambling deaths total 27, whereas rock climbing deaths were 14 for the same period.

The conclusions are very stark: many participants are ill-prepared for the activity.

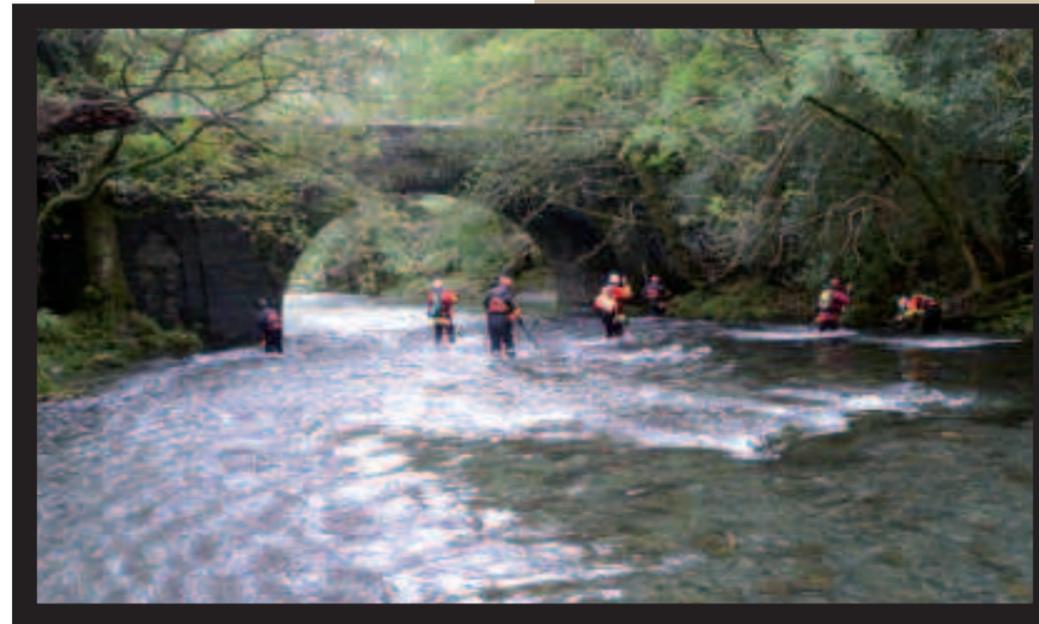
Efforts to address the consequences of challenge events does not seem to have abated. Whilst they do not affect all areas, they do have a significant impact on already busy mountain rescue teams.

### A summary of the last five years' mountain incidents and accidents in England and Wales.

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	Persons assisted
2012	1055	30	626	1280
2011	1078	33	671	1318
2010	1118	53	658	1394
2009	1059	37	667	1471
2008	886	48	557	1202

### A summary of the last five years' non-mountain incidents and accidents in England and Wales.

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	Persons assisted
2012	417	44	112	275
2011	465	52	108	317
2010	710	44	118	335
2009	597	59	126	401
2008	457	57	99	346



## Non-mountain

2012 will be remembered for the wrong reasons and the circumstances relating to what must be the largest deployment of MR resources are still very raw in people's memories. The level of support afforded the police in dealing with a child's disappearance in Machynlleth, Mid-Wales, must be remembered. We can only wish that the contribution of MR personnel in this search effort, gave some hope to parents, relative and residents.

Those involved learned a great deal and the place of mountain rescue in all local communities has clearly received a significant boost.

Teams have witnessed a steady increase in the number of 'resilience' deployments, to assist the statutory services during busy periods and poor weather. Greater cooperation between teams and the ambulance service has been noted this year.

## Machynlleth

On Monday 1 October 2012, in the quiet mid-Wales market town of Machynlleth, a five-year-old girl called April Jones was abducted from near her home. The search marked the start of one of the largest SAR operations in the UK for 20+ years involving many services, agencies and members of 23 mountain and cave rescue teams. John Hulse, of Ogwen Valley MRO, provides an overview.

The sheer scale of the operation, the large rural area and the incessant press attention produced many challenges. The teams tackled numerous specialist search tasks, with support from the local community, and alongside the RNLI, USAR, Coastguard, RAF and police officers from around the UK.

During the week, teams from across England, Wales and Scotland joined Brecon and Aberdyfi team members in the search and, in several regions, teams were organising local 'backfill' to provide cover for colleagues mobilising to Machynlleth.

The unprecedented level of press attention saw rows of satellite trucks, with the media filming us, filming the town and filming each other, with the sea of red MR jackets providing a vital mountain rescue identity.

The generosity and total support of

the entire community at Machynlleth will never be forgotten by those who attended. Managing the many offers of food, help, accommodation etc, was an important and unfamiliar role for the overhead team. It was a truly humbling experience to be there.

By the time the teams stood down, the search had covered an area 72.26km square, with 208 search areas of median size 0.26km square. There were 1,075 'searcher days', with approx 13,400 hours of time, and more than 6,000 SARCALL SMS messages sent, 2,670 on the Saturday.

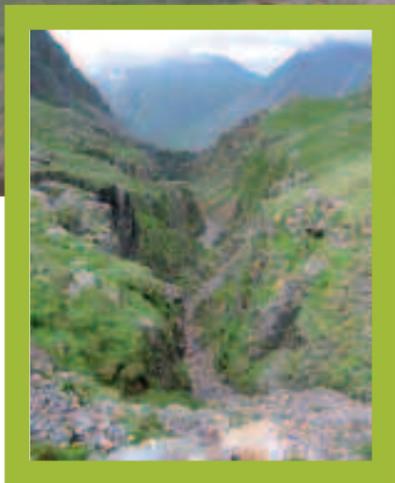
Our very sincere thanks go to all the members, teams and regions, families and employers who so willingly directly and indirectly supported the operation. Above all, our thoughts go out to the family of April and to the community of Machynlleth.

*During this one week, the unpaid professionals of Mountain Rescue England and Wales contributed an estimated 9250 man hours to the search for April.*

*To put that into context, this would take one person well over five working years.*



Top: Swiftwater teams from Ogwen Valley search the river © Ogwen Valley MRO. Left: Kinder team members search through the thick undergrowth of the river bank © Kinder MRT.



## Beauty spots and hot spots

Behind the statistics of any mountain or cave rescue team, there will be stories – the story of the person needing to be found or rescued and the stories from within the team of the rescue or search itself. But what about the stories behind the locations? A brief glance at any team's annual report reveals regular call-out spots – but they're not always the ones you'd expect.

Classic black spots in the Lake District include Scafell Pike, where incidents usually fall into the Wasdale team's area on the north western slopes. Paul Cook from the Wasdale team takes up the story: 'As the highest mountain in England, Scafell Pike attracts a lot of visitors, not all of them prepared for the conditions. It also tends to be the 'middle of the night' mountain for charity groups tackling the Three Peaks (with Snowdon and Ben Nevis on the days either side) so we're used to call-outs at all hours and around the head of Piers Gill up to Lingmell Col seems to be a particular challenge for navigation.'

'However, an unusual feature of 2012 was two rescues in almost exactly the same place on the steep unpleasant ground next to Straight Gill close to the Corridor Route. Both incidents necessitated extended rescues with search and crag evacuation in the dark and the same navigational problems at the top of Piers Gill were the cause.'

'In both cases, parties had continued going up until things got too scary for them. They should have avoided making a difficult situation worse by not getting in deeper and deeper but turning back as soon as they suspected they were in difficulties.'

The full stories of both incidents feature as 52 and 65 from 2012 on the Wasdale website.

But accident and navigational black spots aren't only on the high mountains. Elsewhere in the country, a pretty river valley with stepping stones attracts Peak District walkers, and the cycle routes of Guisborough Forest, south of Middlesborough, are a great draw for mountain bikers — and the associated incidents.

Kevin Corcoran, press officer for Derby MRT, has reported on eight call-outs in the

past year at Thorpe Cloud, a picnic spot with no sign of significant safety risks.

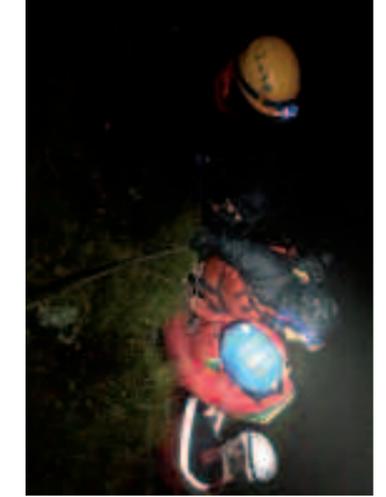
'I think it is the popularity of the spot that has created the problem,' says Kevin. 'It's very easy to walk along the valley towards Dovedale or up and over Thorpe Cloud itself and large numbers of people flock to the area when the weather's nice, few of them regular walkers. The Cloud may be pretty small by hill standards, but it has a steep path down one side which is descended by so many people who've probably never walked on a steep gradient before, that there are inevitably many slips and trips. I think eight call-outs to a beauty spot in one year must be a record!'

But the Cleveland team comes close. They cover the area of North York Moors from Pickering up to and including Middlesborough. Pete Mounsey, team secretary explains: 'We have Guisborough Forest in our patch, a really popular area that is actively promoted to visitors. The Forest has seen a dozen or so call-outs in the last year, mainly involving mountain bikers but also walkers and the odd scrambler. The mountain bikers are drawn by a Red trail in the forest that has a long downhill stretch as well as plenty of climbing and it is that combination of slope, trees and speed that creates the problems.'

'Our other black spot is a bit like Derby's Thorpe Cloud. Roseberry Topping is a very distinctively-shaped hill — the 'Yorkshire Matterhorn' — and a local beauty spot. The crowds of visitors make it a regular location for a call-out. In fact, Guisborough Forest and Roseberry Topping together account for almost 30% of our call-outs this year so far.'

And the moral of these stories? Probably that accidents can happen to anyone, anywhere — and that it is wise to take a few simple precautions and plan for the unexpected. And, if you see a mountain rescuer shaking a tin, make a donation — it might be you that needs them next!

Main shot: Thorpe Cloud in Derbyshire © Derby MRT. Insets: Piers Gill © Stephen Horncastle, and Roseberry Topping © Mick Garratt — both images licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Licence. Top right: Night-time rescue from Straight Gill © Wasdale MRT.



## CHALLENGERS LEAVE SCAPELL PIKE IN 'DISGUSTING STATE': SEPTEMBER

It seems 'fashionable' visitors are turning Scafell Pike into a toilet with huge amounts of litter and human waste left on the mountain during the Three Peaks Challenge.

Adecco Kendal took up their own challenge in September and went up the Pike armed with bags and litter sticks supplied by the Lake District National Park Authority.

Richard Warren, of Wasdale MRT, said: 'Many walkers on the summit were very complimentary to the ladies of Adecco but most surprising was the number of walkers who had the cheek to ask the girls if they could put their rubbish into the sacks rather than carry it off the mountain themselves. They were very politely reminded that it was not a paid service and they should remove their own rubbish. The girls did not remove any of the human excrement (of which there was plenty), but did 'carefully' remove many tissues and many, many banana skins and orange peel.'

'Thanks must go to Adecco for coming to clean our mountain. Let's hope the message got across to keep our countryside and our mountain tops clean for the enjoyment of all. Remember to leave nothing but light footprints when going out on the fells. Take away great memories but, especially, take away your litter.'

## RESCUE FROM HIGH LEVEL TRAVERSE, PILLAR: 27 OCTOBER

10

It was late one Saturday afternoon, when Mark Trodden and friends – crossing the slab between Pillar Rock and Robinsons Cairn on the High Level Traverse in the Lakes – saw their pal Andy slip on ice, cracking his head as he fell. 'Initially,' says Mark, 'he didn't seem too badly hurt. After a few minutes contemplating his 'near death experience', we carried on. But, as we progressed along the traverse, his gait became more and more unsure, the pain in his head increased, and he vomited. It became obvious he'd been concussed and we should get him off the hill soon. Light was fading fast and we knew a storm was on its way in.

'We got him wrapped and bagged and tried for a mobile signal on either of the two phones we were carrying – to no avail. I went along the

ridge, managed to get intermittent signal with both mobiles and, at about 6.30pm, got a call through to police with a request for mountain rescue. After giving all the required details regarding the accident and the group, we were asked to remain in position so a member of the assigned team could contact us for confirmation of details. By now, the light was gone and a fair nasty sleet was blowing.

'Within fifteen minutes, we'd received a call from Chris of Cockermouth MRT, who asked for confirmation of the location of the casualty, nature of the accident and group details. I also advised him we'd have to move back to Andy's location, out of signal, as it had started to blow a hooley and we needed to get into warm kit.

'The move back was a tad horrendous. The sleet wasn't

track. Those guys can shift! 'One team member quickly got to grips with assessing Andy's injury and condition whilst another deployed what has to be the biggest bothy bag I have ever seen over all of us before proceeding to fill out an incident report. During this time, Chris was liaising with RAF Valley, guiding in the SAR Sea King whose beating rotor blades we heard just five minutes later.

'Very quickly the helicopter was in hover dangerously close to the rock face and, minutes later, an RAF Medic appeared under the bothy bag to assess Andy's condition for winching aboard. Meanwhile, team members were assessing the best location to winch Andy from and the pilot was doing a sterling job maintaining the helicopter in a stationary hover whilst buffeted by strong winds

## INCIDENT LOG

accompanied them to their vehicles. Who were we to refuse?

'So, we dropped down to the vehicle and, once the team had dekkitted and loaded up, we were on our way to Black Sail where they managed to blag us a bed for the night! Not only that, they took Andy's kit back to their base in Cockermouth for us to pick up the next day, so we wouldn't have to cart it all the way back to our cars, parked in Langdale. We could not have been treated with greater consideration and kindness!

'Next morning, after a cracking breakfast, Martin kindly got hold of the hospital for us so we could find out how Andy was doing. Ironically, he was on Pillar ward!

'A very soggy eight-hour yomp later to retrieve our cars, then it was on to Whitehaven, via Cockermouth base, to visit Andy, now dozing on his bed, with a sizable lump on the right of his head. Apparently, on his arrival, he couldn't recall the year or date, his home address or his home phone number, but was recovering well by the time we got there.

'I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to all those involved in the call-out. Andy recovered well and soon returned to work and we have mercilessly ribbed him about the difference between dry rock and iced rock!

'Seriously, though, the excess weight of his pack and the quantity of clothing he had on, combined with over-tiredness and dehydration, undoubtedly contributed to his accident.

'This was a wake-up call for him – for all of us – and he realises just how close a call it was. But, hopefully, we've all become a little bit more hill-savvy as a result!

*Light was fading fast, the temperature was dropping like a stone and the wind was picking up. Conditions on the traverse were getting worse by the minute with more and more ice appearing.*

traverse for a further ten minutes trying for signal but still nothing – it was obvious we'd have to go higher. So, together with another member of the group, I made for the ridge heading up to Pillar, knowing I'd have line of sight to Wasdale Head and, if we still couldn't get a signal, we could drop down to the hotel in the valley. Our other team member was tasked with ensuring Andy was kept warm and awake.

'Light was fading fast, the temperature dropping like a stone and the wind picking up. And conditions on the traverse were getting worse by the minute with more ice appearing.

'Eventually, we crested the

just covering the route of the traverse – hard enough to follow in daylight – it was covering the ice too. It took 45 minutes to cover less than a kilometre but we made it back. It transpired that Andy had vomited a further three times.

'We were surprised, just about five minutes later, to hear the sirens of the Cockermouth vehicles coming along the track from Ennerdale, and even more surprised to see the head torches of the first two team members arrive about 200 metres along the traverse only thirty or forty minutes after that, having ascended some 400m or so over difficult terrain and a distance of 1.5 to 2km from the

and with visibility severely reduced by the sleet. Luckily, we were above a spot from which it was safe to winch him aboard and, after less than thirty minutes from the team's arrival on scene, Andy was being winched aboard the Sea King and on his way to the West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven.

'The three of us remaining were fully kitted and well prepared to remain on the traverse in our bags until first light before moving to our original intended destination, the south side of the River Lisa near to the Black Sail Youth Hostel, but the team kindly offered to take us along the valley to Black Sail, if we



## SNOW WREAKS HAVOC ACROSS THE UK

Seems as though winter is reluctant to leave us these days, as snows continue to fall well into 'Spring' and team members regularly get tasked to recover motorists from their stranded, snowed-in vehicles. In Cumbria in March 2013, team members from Duddon and Furness, Kendal, Wasdale and Cockermouth spent an entire day assisting with traffic stuck in snow drifts on the A595 – and cars remained stuck there two days later.

Near Bala, in North Wales, a couple were trapped in their car in a snowdrift for eighteen hours. Aberdyfi team members reached their location at 8.00am the following morning but the pair still faced a challenging walk to safety. They had been following satnav instructions and become stuck on a remote and narrow moorland road. An attempt to reach them in the team's 4x4 had failed due to the extensive drifting. Team members set out at 4.30am in what were described as 'very testing driving conditions', making their way as far as possible up the road before proceeding on foot.

Elsewhere, team members trudged through the snow to deliver food parcels, transported patients for dialysis appointments and even dug out army vehicles.



Main shot: Langdale Ambleside vehicle in heavy snow © Paul Burke. Inset top: Edale team members return from delivering food parcels © Dave Torr. Inset above: Glossop team members rescue stranded motorists on the Snake Pass © Glossop MRT.

# The Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics

There was something of a party atmosphere in the world of mountain rescue over the summer, as teams across England and Wales joined in the celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics. Beacons and fireworks blazed in the night skies and Olympic torches burned aloft, proudly carried through their communities by a number of team members.



Over 4,200 beacons blazed across the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Commonwealth and Overseas UK Territories on 4th June and, throughout England and Wales, team members joined in the fun atop their local summits. A few even witnessed the final beacon-lighting in the chain, by Her Majesty The Queen, after a spectacular concert at Buckingham Palace.

The beacon lighting also provided an opportunity for mountain rescue to work with another Royal charity, Walking with the Wounded, as seventeen members of Llanberis MRT and SARDA Wales

Track to the summit, and later descending along the path to Llanberis.

Once the official beacon was lit, Llanberis team members lit up the night sky even more, with a display of paraflares. 'The intention,' said John Grisdale, Llanberis team chairman, 'was to draw attention to the charity work of all the Welsh mountain rescue teams so the Welsh Dragon will breathe flames once again in support of the celebratory events.'

In the north east of England, there was a different sort of light show. In Teesdale, experienced walkers, used to being in the hills at night, were asked to volunteer to carry electronic flashing beacons up onto Kirkcarrion where the jubilee beacon for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was lit in 1897. Walkers were accompanied by members of the Teesdale and Weardale team.

The Bank Holiday Weekend also saw mountain and cave rescue team members travelling south to Buckingham Palace for The Diamond Jubilee Concert, flags at the ready. We were there at the invitation of our Royal patron, alongside guests from all the Royal charities.

Against all the published odds, the skies turned blue and the sun appeared, setting the scene for a stunning evening's entertainment. In the company of the Royal Family, and a variety of dignitaries and politicians, we rocked along to an eclectic collection of music, across the six decades of the Queen's reign. The atmosphere was electric, everybody was in high spirits and the feeling of patriotic pride was just incredible. Truly a once in a lifetime event!

And then came The Games, with a number of team members helping the 8,000 Olympic torches on their convoluted tour of Great Britain — including John Hulse, of Ogwen Valley MRO, who proudly represented MREW, carrying the torch through the gates of Buckingham Palace.

One way or another, a year to remember for everyone involved!

joined a group of soldiers, just returned from an ascent of Everest, to light a beacon at the summit of Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon), at 10.29pm. At 1,085 metres — the highest point in Wales — the beacon was one of four to be lit on the summits of the highest national peaks in Britain.

The joint venture was in support of the Trust set up by Prince Harry, patron of Walking with the Wounded, and the Duke of Cambridge, patron of Mountain Rescue England and Wales. Members of the Llanberis team accompanied the soldiers, escorting them from Pen y Pass, along the Pyg



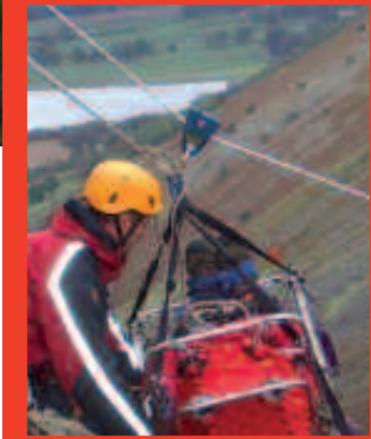
**Main shot:** Llanberis team members light up the sky above Snowdon © John Grisdale.  
**Inset left:** Fireworks at The Palace © Judy Whiteside. **Inset above:** John Hulse (right) with Wai Ming-Lee and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry at Buckingham Palace © Ian West. Press Association Images.

**Top:** Buckingham Palace lights up as guests leave the Diamond Jubilee concert © Emma Porter.

## Quite a year to remember!



# UK Mountain Rescue Conference



## How are we looking?

Paul Amos, chairman of the MREW Trustees, opened the weekend's events and activities. With communications currently a key theme within mountain rescue, his overview of the reputation and perceptions of mountain rescue organisations and mountain rescuers was a great catalyst for discussion.

How does mountain rescue look to the outside world? There's no easy answer to that because it depends on who is looking.

Perhaps it's best to start with another question: Why is it important to know what the rest of the world thinks? After all, the nation generously parts with its charitable cash and, when the adventurous (or not so adventurous) get in trouble, they call you. You turn up and get them out of trouble and then melt away. They are grateful, and so are you. It sounds straightforward, but it's incredibly powerful. It's the bedrock of mountain and cave rescue. It has stood the test

*We have a strong image and a reliable reputation.*

of time for almost 80 years, but it is already changing.

In 2008, Peter Dymond identified the need for the wider mountain rescue to embrace a new way, one that was seemingly at odds with traditional values and, since then, mountain and cave rescue teams have become more and more involved in the wider emergency response, not just search and rescue. Team leaders are now as likely to find themselves in command roles at Silver or even Gold level in an emergency as they are directing recovery from a crag or a cave. In addition, teams are being integrated into emergency planning forums, not just for wide area events but for local inter-operability and inter-agency activities.

When this emergency services community looks at us, what do they see? They see the volunteer ethos — positive, professional, a heroic image. And, when it comes to search and rescue, they know that you know what you're doing.

To this end it is great to see teams becoming more involved in preventative work. Mountain and cave

rescue is rightly proud that it rarely criticises the people it rescues but it is increasingly providing high profile advice on how not to get in trouble in the first place. Prevention is better than cure and, with some teams in North Wales and the Lakes attending an ever increasing number of calls, such a philosophy takes on a new meaning.

A Royal Patron and national sponsorship relationships have resulted in a higher profile. A higher profile means more money, more influence and an enhanced capability to sustain what we have and be more able to meet future challenges. But with money and profile come 'obligations' and this can be scary.

It seems to me that mountain and cave rescue is in a good position. Our service sits sweetly within the Government's wider agenda for public safety, local determination and value for money. We are small and independent enough to survive most organisational disasters, but strong enough to influence the top table. We have a strong image and a reliable reputation. And we are now working with, and seen to be working with, other organisations — the world of inter-operability.

So how does the future look? There are challenges ahead, but there is an expectation that MR will rise to these challenges in a modern way. Professional volunteer rescue services are an integral part of the wider emergency framework, but the bottom line is this: Whenever the public gets in trouble on our hills and moorland, or underground, they can always expect a professional response, which is always available and for which they will not have to pay. And for that, on behalf of the wider world, I thank you.

**Main shot:** Night-time filming with Calder Valley SRT for an Emmerdale storyline © James Thacker. **Inset:** Steep ground stretcher training © Pete Robertson. **Top:** Vehicles assembled outside September's UK MR Conference in Leeds.



## RESCUERS GATHER IN LEEDS: SEPTEMBER

Mountain Rescue England and Wales hosted the 2012 UK MR Conference, attracting over 300 delegates and presenters from across the area and beyond. The theme for the weekend, interpreted in many different ways, was Technology in Mountain Rescue.

Peter Howells, as conference organiser, was pleased with the planning, the support and the outcomes of the event: 'There was a great atmosphere and lots of constructive discussion about the challenges facing rescuers across the UK and Ireland,' said Peter.

'We attracted Rory Stewart MP, no stranger to mountains himself, as a keynote speaker, and he challenged the organisations with his perspective on what we do and how we are perceived. And, later that evening, we were entertained by Tim Mosedale, a double Everest summiteer and one of very few Brits to have climbed the mountain from both sides.'

David Allan was also delighted with the event: 'The quality of information was exceptionally good and there were many lessons to carry away and expand on. The outside world sees us as a single entity so it was striking to see the commonality of challenge and purpose running through all the organisations.'

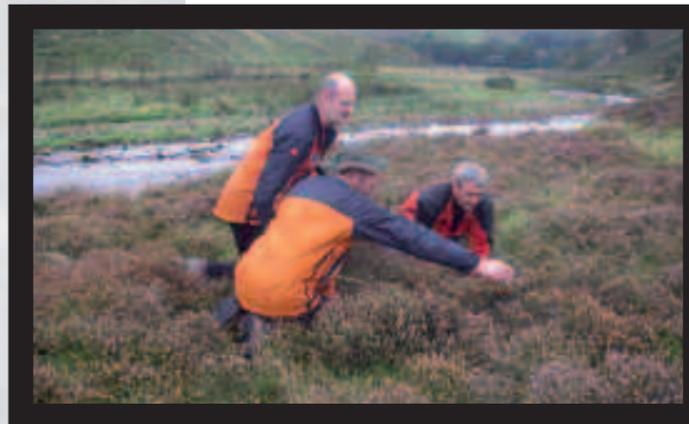
The next UK MR conference will be hosted by Mountain Rescue Scotland, in Aviemore, in 2014.



Learning to search effectively is one of the core skills for mountain rescue – whether searching for a walker lost in the mountains or for a vulnerable missing person in a lowland or urban environment – and MREW’s Training Officer, Al Read, is involved in organising and delivering courses in Search Management and Field Skills for teams across England and Wales.

‘Improving the search capability of teams is key underpinning knowledge in almost every incident situation,’ says Al. ‘The three national courses per annum support each team’s local training programmes with input and experience from across the UK and beyond. We continue to have instructor support from the USA, with Dr Don Cooper coming

*It’s about being as effective as possible, as quickly as possible – with the vocabulary and knowledge to work well with the other emergency services.*



**Main shot:** Penrith team members avalanche training © Daryl Garfield. **Inset:** Looking for the sweet stash on a tracking course hosted by Bowland Pennine MRT, instructed by Tony Wells of New Zealand © SARINZ.

**Top right:** Derby team members undertake a search for a missing person in Markeaton Park, Derby, in July, 2012.

over, and police search advisers help out on these courses too, so we’re drawing on a significant history and experiences of major searches.’

The courses cover two essential aspects of search — the field skills of individuals and also the planning and management of an effective team search operation.

‘There are some aspects of searching that humans are good at and some where we aren’t so good,’ says Al, ‘and we try to cover the full range. Whether it’s evidence handling and recording information or tracking skills, managing routes and what we call purposeful wandering, there is a core of knowledge and learning that a training course can cover, practice and then develop so we’ve all got the skills we need.’

Similarly, in planning and management, there is search theory to be covered, the allocation of resources, aspects of multi-agency working and information handling.

‘This is about us being as effective as possible as quickly as possible,’ says Al. ‘It also means we have the vocabulary and knowledge to work well with the other emergency services, particularly in situations where a search has to be thorough but speed is also important.’

Desktop exercises reinforce the learning and Al is keen to gradually increase the difficulty of these and build the pressure. ‘Part of any training programme is to build confidence as well as improving skills,’ he says, ‘and we also find that we learn a lot from each other on these training events. Most of us have our own experience to add to the scenarios and joint training across MREW is certainly one of the best ways of really building on what each team is learning locally.’

Without a firm understanding of search, mountain rescue would not have been as effective as it was at the April Jones search.’



## TEAMS BATTLE BLIZZARDS TO FIND STRANDED BROTHERS: MARCH

Members of three South Wales teams battled night-time blizzards to rescue two brothers who got into difficulties attempting South Wales’s highest mountain, using SARLOC technology to pinpoint their location. The boys had set off for the summit of Pen y Fan, but as the weather worsened, one of them suffered an injury and they called 999. Members of Brecon, Central Beacons and Longtown teams were alerted about 3.15pm. The brothers said they were stranded 600m (2,000ft) above Llanfrynach, south-east of Brecon.

Neither the air ambulance nor the RAF were able to fly. Sixteen rescuers set off in worsening conditions, as rain turned to snow and visibility dropped to less than 40 metres. It soon became clear the walkers had misjudged their position but, thanks to SARLOC, they were found sheltering in a tent, and suffering from hypothermia.

Team members carried them through peat hags and waist-deep snow, rather than use the path which is on the edge of a precipice, with a very real risk of going over the edge. By 10.00pm, an RAF Sea King was able to fly in and winch the boys aboard.

The eleven-hour rescue saw team members facing some of the most challenging conditions of the winter.

# Effective search skills – an essential quality

**THE LAND ROVER DONATION CHAIN CONTINUES**

When the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge donated a Land Rover wedding gift to mountain rescue, it began a chain of donations that has gone from Patterdale in the Lake District, via Glossop in the Peak District and on to Snowdonia.

When Patterdale's name was drawn from the hat to receive the 'Royal' Land Rover, it was an ideal opportunity to pass on an

existing vehicle to another team elsewhere in the country and a second draw selected Glossop MRT. In January, John Williams, Patterdale team chairman handed over the keys and the ten-year-old vehicle.

In turn, a further draw for the old Glossop vehicle saw South Snowdonia MRT the winners.

And, once the Patterdale vehicle had been re-liveried in

Glossop's name, their old vehicle duly made its way across to its new home in Snowdonia.

The South Snowdonia Land Rover looks out across its new home



**LUCKIEST SHEEP IN CUMBRIA**

Witness the luckiest sheep in West Cumbria, swept into a group of Swiftwater Rescue Technicians from Wasdale MRT, who were doing a spot of training on the River Derwent. The fortunate animal was duly retrieved from the water, graphic demonstration, were it needed, of the reason you need up-stream 'spotters'!

**READY TO SWALLOW THE UNWARY – THE GREAT BRITISH PEAT BOG**



The second wettest year ever recorded saw peat bogs featuring in a number of incidents for Buxton MRT. In a six-week period leading up to October, the team were aware of three incidents involving trapped hill walkers.

One incident, in October, occurred as one of their team members was walking between Rushop Edge and Brown Knoll. An elderly gentleman walked into a bog and was soon up to his waist in the brown sticky, stinking, glue-like peat bog. Fortunately, he managed to extricate himself – very wet but otherwise unharmed.

A major concern with incidents such as these is the danger to the victims of hypothermia brought on by wet clothing and the energy expended fighting to remove themselves from the bog.

In the event, all three incidents resulted in the walkers becoming trapped and thankfully released without harm.

The peat bogs on Kinder Scout and surrounding moorlands are a familiar hazard to regular users, often providing a challenge in terms of navigating them safely. However, 2012 was different. Following extensive rainfall the bogs were particularly wet and waiting for the unwary walker to stray into them.

Walkers must be vigilant and keep a wary eye open for the peat bogs and avoid them if you can.

**IT'S A RUBBISH JOB**

March 2012 saw members of Oldham MRT responding to calls for help from the Saddleworth community and a request to help collect 43 discarded and unsightly car and truck tyres at Denshaw, which had proved inaccessible to council staff. In little over two hours, they collected more than 45 bags of rubbish, sundry road signs and other detritus, which twice filled the British Waterways transit van! Job well done!



**INCIDENT LOGS**

**MONTANE DONATES £15000 TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES**

The generous donation marks the end of two years of fundraising by the outdoor clothing company. 'We've had a connection with mountain rescue throughout our twenty-history,' says Paul Cosgrove, Brand Director with Montane. 'Two years ago, we launched a small range of specialist lightweight clothing at the Outdoor Show in Birmingham, specifically to raise money for MREW. It seemed only fitting to hand over this money to the national mountain rescue organisation as part of its awareness weekend.'

David Allan (MREW Chairman) and Neil Roden, along with Eddie Harrison and Dagmar Johnson of Kendal MRT, met Paul at Montane's Staveley showroom in May, 2012, marking the start of a full weekend of mountain and cave rescue awareness-building for teams across England and Wales.

'This kind of national support eases the financial pressure on teams and we welcome it,' says Dagmar Johnson, 'but we are also hugely grateful to the local people and businesses who have always supported us.'

David Allan added: 'Without this sort of support for volunteer rescue from companies like Montane – in both money and kind – we wouldn't be able to function.'



Above: Eddie Harrison, Neil Roden, Paul Cosgrove, David Allan and Dagmar Johnson at Montane.

Left: Keswick MRT assist a helicopter winch of a casualty on Cat Bells © Keswick MRT.

**ALE TAKES THE HIGH ROAD...**

Members of the Aberdyfi SRT carried a keg of Cader Ale from the Cader Brewery up the pony path from Ty Nant to the summit of Cader Idris, in late September, cheered on their way by surprised walkers. The reason for the high spirits was to raise funds for a new and much needed team van.

Team member Nick Young, one of the porters, explained the idea. 'A local micro brewery from Dolgellau has created two new ales named after Cader Idris, and some of the proceeds from their launch are going to the team's van fund. To help out, we decided to tap into the event by taking one of their barrels up to the summit. To be honest, some of the team could do with the excise!'

Graeme Rothery, another of the stout band of volunteers, reviewed his day. 'It was quite mild down at the car park but, in the strong wind chasing us to the top, it was

bitter. With a fair draught blowing, it took a lot of bottle to get the heavy keg up to the summit cairn, but in the event this thankfully did not prove a bar to our success. If it had been any lager, we might have struggled.'

Once safely back down off the mountain, it was just a short hop for the team to reach the Cross Foxes for a celebratory pint with the brewers, Cwrw Cader.

The team reported their tale thus, tongue firmly in cheek but not everyone, it seems, appreciated its subtle creativity. In October, although slightly out of kilter with other MR stories in the headlines, the Cambrian News kindly ran the 'barrel carry' story but on this – the one occasion, says Graham O'Hanlon, where the misspellings were intentional – they'd spell-checked it. So Nick Young was newly quoted as suggesting his fellow team



members need more 'exercise' rather than 'excise', clearly missing the point on all of those finely crafted beer-puns.

Aberdyfi team members with their cask of Cader Ale on the summit of Cader Idris.

The launch of Idris Bitter and Cader Gold was held at the Red Lion in Dinas Mawddwy in October, during an evening of beer, food and bonhomie.



# Going underground



Cave rescues involve cavers rescuing fellow cavers who are injured, trapped or lost. Exploration of the fragile and unique underground environment is rewarding and a privilege yet, when things do not go to plan, this fascinating world becomes harsh and hostile, necessitating battles against the elements of cold, water, mud, rock falls, foul air, darkness, vertical depth and remoteness.

For cave rescue teams, these challenges require experienced cavers with knowledge of local caves and mines, technical rescue and casualty care skills together with teamwork, ingenuity and effective communications. And it's not always over once outside of the cave, as the casualty must be safely taken down the fell.



The remit of the underground rescue teams who are members of the BCRC is broad and often does not involve rescuing only cavers but anyone who has ventured underground and suffered a mishap. A significant number of rescues involve animal casualties, ranging from lambs to bulls, which bring about their own challenges.

It also includes any underground void (both above and below water). Last year even saw one team attending the rescue of a builder who fell 10m down a well that no one knew existed!

The BCRC cave rescue divers are world-renowned for their technical abilities. In recent years, they have been called out to assist in cave diving rescues across Europe and as far afield as Mexico.

There are thirteen BCRC teams in England and Wales who carry out voluntary underground rescue and provide invaluable support for other SAR teams. None more so than during one of the largest SAR operations in the UK for over twenty years when three cave rescue teams were part of the effort involved in the search for five-year-old April Jones in Machynlleth, mid-Wales in October 2012.

**Main shot:** Cumbria Mines Rescue Unit take part in a photoshoot for Petzl at Hospital level, Coniston Copper Mines © Dave Willis, courtesy of Petzl.  
**Left:** Recovery of a sheep from a lead mine shaft near Castleton © Bill Whitehouse.

**Above:** Rescue of a girl with a back injury © Bill Whitehouse. **Top right:** An exercise in Peak Cavern © Bill Whitehouse. **Right:** Rick Stanton and John Volanthen with their Royal Humane Society certificates.



## ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY AWARD FOR CAVING TRAGEDY RESCUERS: OCTOBER

In October, Rick Stanton and John Volanthen, members of the BCRC overseas diving team, went to Buckingham Palace to receive Royal Humane Society Bronze Medals and certificates from HRH Princess Alexandra (the RHS President) for the part they played in the attempt to rescue Eric Establie from the Dragonniere cave in the Ardèche, France.

The citation on the certificate read: 'For having, between 3 and 14 October 2010, at very great personal risk, courageously assisted in attempting to save the life of a man who had been diving alone in the extreme conditions of the flooded passage of Dragonniere de Gard, Ardèche Gorge, Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, France, where it is thought a collapse of gravel and silt had blocked his return to the surface.'



GLEISION COLLIERY  
PONTARDAWE SOUTH WALES: SEPTEMBER 2011

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Working  
outside the  
comfort  
zone...

Every once in a while, an incident occurs which places team members outside their comfort zone, stretching the skills and experience of those involved to new levels. In September 2011, South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team members had just such an call-out assisting the Mines Rescue Service, police and fire service, when an inrush of water from old workings flooded the lower section of a working coal mine in which seven miners were working. Brian Jopling, team member and BCRC Equipment Officer, was able to report on the incident in July, 2012

The call came in at 3.30pm, from the South Wales Fire Service. Mines Rescue Service Limited (MRSL) was already on site. The Land Rover was held at the team's depot in Penwyllt, local members were put on standby, others were called out and one team member was despatched directly to the incident. When it was confirmed that cave divers were required, the Land Rover was stocked with the team's comprehensive dive rescue kit and the divers called out.

These were very different conditions to those in which team members are normally deployed so the call-out was limited to a support team and cave divers.

The support included a team member who is a mining engineer and knows professionally most of the MRSL staff and the HM Mines Inspector and also knew one of the three who had escaped the inrush and one of the missing miners. He was able to discuss the mine plan with a mining surveyor, MRSL and the incident commander and assure himself that the missing miners may have reached higher mine passages, cut off by the flood.

The initial team was five, plus two divers, with seventeen members (including four further divers) on standby. A further two divers were called later.

It was believed the inrush had breached the working face. Two miners working closer to the entrance escaped into higher levels and got out. A third came out of an old entrance by a route at the time unknown about 75 minutes later. Four were missing. The alarm had been raised about 9.20am.

The fire service attended first and called MRSL who installed more pumps to reduce water levels and conducted searches of the upper levels and old workings. MRSL encountered low oxygen levels and were redeployed with re-breathers. The search reached flood levels at all accessible points with no sign of the missing miners. High level workings above flood level were inaccessible by any dry

route but connected to the area the miners had been working.

At 8.00pm, two divers conducted a dry reconnaissance. The length of the flooded section had been reduced by pumping and their opinion was that they could dive. Inter-agency briefings were held and it was decided by Gold Command that, if two other divers were present, fully kitted, at the dive base then, after a final check of levels and conditions, a dive would be undertaken.

There was a suggestion that hardwire communications between the divers and dive base be used. The divers informed the incident commander that it was standard practice to use a dive line from dive base and that headphones, microphones and wires would compromise the safety of the dive. This was accepted.

At 10.30pm, two more divers were on site. MRSL undertook a final check of the pumps and water conditions and, at 12.30am (now Friday morning), two divers entered the water, operating on a plan agreed between themselves, Silver Command, MRSL and the HSE.

The dive plan was to proceed with caution through the flooded section, looking for snags and damage to the mine level. On reaching an airspace, they were to proceed under air (dive gags in, as foul air might be present) to check the first of two side headings without entering, then move up the gently rising main passage to the working heading but not to enter. Finally, they would go to the end of the main passage, some 140m from the dive base. At all times, divers should examine the roof and supports for damage. There would be no attempt to recover or rescue any miners found.

The team had the kit on site to supply trapped casualties with all the sustenance required until the pumps cleared the flood water and one of the divers present was an advanced cave rescue first aider. All four were equipped with two independent dive sets (two cylinders, two mouth pieces and two contents gauges), several

lights and spare line reels. Cave diving procedure follows the Thirds Rule: one third in, one third out, one third reserve.

At 1.30am, all divers were back on the surface. The dive length was 30m, in better visibility than expected, in around 800mm of water over 800mm of slurry – with a conveyor belt running the whole length of the main passage. The main passage was rising from a shallow 'V' at the deepest point and, after wading some 40m in slurry and debris, the body of one miner was discovered. The divers moved forward some further 50m to where the working heading branched off. At this point, both the main passage and the working heading were blocked by a jumble of wooden pit props and debris washed in by the inrush. Flashing lights and shouting – or more precisely, taking a deep breath, removing the gag, shouting then replacing the gag – drew no response.

The divers reported that the main passage was undamaged. At the blockage at the junction of the main passage and working heading, the roof supports were in place with no sign of roof collapse. The 700mm-high side passage nearest the dive base, which led to some old workings, was not seen – possibly under slurry or behind the damaged conveyor belt.

After a debrief, the cave rescue controller suggested that cave rescue had played its role and that, as MRSL was more than capable, trained and had the right equipment to conduct a search and rescue or recovery when the pumps had cleared the flood, the team should now stand down. By 4.00am, all team members had left the site.

Some twelve hours later, the pumping allowed MRSL to conduct a search and, at 6.00pm, it was announced that all of the missing miners had been found dead. It was now a recovery operation.

This was a first for the South and Mid Wales team. We don't cover working coal mines, have the training, equipment or the remotest wish to do so. Working coal mines,

with the associated dangers of explosive gases, fire and foul air, are not caves or abandoned mineral mines. MRSL is extremely competent, well trained and equipped. All of us have the greatest respect for what they do. However, cave rescue team members were treated as equals throughout the incident by all agencies, and possessed one skill set that neither police, MRSL nor the fire service have. All agencies worked as a team, with every action considered: generic risk assessment at its best.

The team later attended the Gold, Silver and Bronze debriefing in December 2011, ably represented by Ewan Thomas of Brecon MRT, who knows the team well and was called because of his expertise in swiftwater rescue. It transpired that it was Ewan who suggested cave rescue involvement with specialist divers as neither MRSL, fire nor police had suitable teams available.

It was clear that Silver and Gold commanders had little idea of the skills cave rescue has or, indeed, how voluntary teams operate – something we have never found on cave rescue incidents. We were questioned at length about how cave rescue fits into the scheme of things when considering HSE legislation and able to satisfy the police, fire service and MRSL. However, the HSE inspector seemed to have some difficulty understanding generic risk assessment and the fact that, as volunteers, our members were there by choice, could (and would) reject any task we thought outside our skill set, and that our members act by consensus not compulsion. I think the fact that cave rescue team members are skilled and experienced enough to make value judgments based on circumstances without recourse to a surface controller, sometimes for hours, was not fully understood. It also became clear that the Gold

Commander (from South Wales Police) accepted that to conduct a search dive was the correct thing to do as the chance that miners were trapped was very real and the skills

were available.

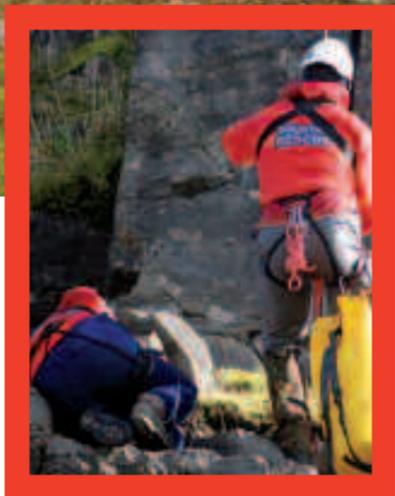
Prior to this incident, the last time the team worked with MRSL was 1954, when they assisted on a cave rescue. We're occasionally asked to search, or rescue animals from, disused coal mines as MRSL doesn't have the remit to cover disused coal mines. During a normal cave rescue, the fire service becomes involved if help is required with pumping or flood control. The police usually have a presence at the start of an incident then leave cave rescue to get on with the job – whilst always ready to respond to requests for assistance.

Medically, the team is well provided with advanced cave rescue first aiders and has four doctors – all cavers before qualifying – including a consultant orthopaedic surgeon. But one of the most important aspects of cave rescue is the need for every team member to be capable of looking after themselves in adverse conditions. The team has conducted rescues lasting up to 44 hours – several over 24 hours – and deployed over 200 cave rescuers on one incident. The worst case scenario is an accident in a single-entrance cave that can take a good caver ten hours to reach the furthest extremities – and there are two such caves on their patch!

With an investigation by the police and HM Inspector of Mines underway, and criminal charges laid, when all investigations are complete, we may learn more about the cause of the inrush.

For the team's part, it was a valuable learning curve. To be launched into a multi-agency rescue attempt was a bit of a shock to our corporate system and, to a degree, we were out of our comfort zone as much as the statutory agencies were with us, but we coped. The other agency commanders, with very little knowledge about what and who we are, must be admired in the way we quickly became accepted as fellow professionals, albeit unpaid.

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# Taking rescue to the Senedd

Mountain rescue teams in Wales were high profile last year, not only with the coverage of rescues from the mountains and underground but also support in flooded areas and the protracted search for April Jones at Machynlleth in Mid-Wales.

Being in the news is only part of the communications challenge facing teams and Dave Worrall of Ogwen MRO was one of those involved in an event that aimed to give members of the Welsh Parliament, or Senedd, a fuller briefing on the nature of search and rescue and the challenges facing teams. 'The idea of presenting to the Welsh



National Assembly came about from a meeting of MREW where there was a discussion about the All Party Groups within Parliament,' says Dave. 'For those of us across the border, Westminster isn't the only Government and having asked the question, it seemed inevitable we should follow up with some sort of Welsh contact too.

'As secretary for the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association, I approached the Assembly Member (AM)

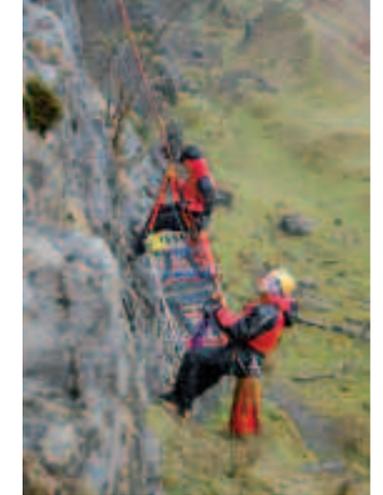
for North Wales whose constituency includes the operational areas of Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation and the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team. Alun Ffred Jones is the AM for Arfon and, following an initial meeting, he agreed to sponsor us and the South Wales region to visit the Senedd together and give a full Welsh perspective. Dave Lewis (secretary for South Wales Mountain Rescue) Association, and I then had the task of pulling together a visit that would achieve our aims and those of the AMs in Cardiff.'

After months of planning — visiting any government building is a complex process and agreement had to be obtained for vehicles, kit and personnel — more than ten members from mountain rescue in Wales visited the Senedd on Tuesday 5 February 2013 with the visit being sponsored by Alun Ffred Jones and a brief speech from the Minister with responsibility for mountain rescue in his sport portfolio, Huw Lewis.

Dave Worrall and Dave Lewis wanted to keep the messages simple:—

- Highlight the work we do in the mountains and also community and emergency services support
- Make it clear that we are twelve teams — more than 300 volunteers — available 24/7, 365 days a year and we operate in all conditions
- Let AMs know that there are no paid staff in MR and virtually all our money comes from donations.

'We also wanted to raise issues around insurance for our member teams (there is variation), communication systems including Airwave and IT systems, some



support for agreed unpaid time off work with employers, the privatisation of the helicopter services,' says Dave Lewis. 'And, of course, extra funding would be nice!'

Alun Ffred Jones was a huge help ahead of the visit, informing the AMs and getting them to agree to listen to the rescuers' message.

'All in all, 17 of the 60 or so AMs spent time with us and discussed issues,' says Dave Worrall, 'so we were very pleased with the response. For our part, we needed to go with a clear message and our focus was simple: if we all take the same risks in helping people, surely

*Seventeen out of the sixty Assembly Members spent time with us and discussed issues so we were very pleased with the response.*

we should receive the same insurance cover? The message was well received and, on the strength of the initial meeting, we have been invited to meet with the Minister in the future.'

**Main shot:** An Aberglaslyn team member fires a smoke flare for the heli, high on the Miners Track, Snowdon © Mike Gibson. **Left:** Western Beacons team members on a training exercise in November. © Western Beacons MRT. **Top:** Longtown team members training in Llangattock © Longtown MRT.

**Above:** Senedd visitors, left to right: Back: John Grisdale, Iwan Thomas, Antoinette Sandbach AM, Harold Burrows, Huw Birrell, Penny Brockman, Dave Williams, Dave Lewis. Front: Phil Benbow, Nigel Dawson, Dave Worrall.



# A fun day out in Keswick

Images of the day courtesy of Keswick MRT, Mike France and Judy Whiteside.

Now a key date in our national calendar, the Princes' Charities Day is an opportunity for mountain and cave rescue team members to entertain children and young people from WellChild, Child Bereavement and Centrepont. This year it was the Lake District's turn to play host, in a suitably sun-drenched Keswick.

The three charities involved focus on the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people in difficult circumstances. Centrepont and Child Bereavement share the patronage of Prince William with Mountain Rescue England and Wales, and Prince Harry is patron of WellChild. The charities are encouraged to work together, to promote their work and create opportunities for disadvantaged young people.

Now in its fourth year, the event continues to go from strength to strength. Despite flooding and torrential rain across most of the country — and fears that the day would be extremely wet for all concerned — the skies were blue and the sun shone. All the outdoor activities went ahead as planned and

the wet weather alternatives remained on standby!

Keswick team members were supported by Cockermouth and Penrith teams who each ran one of the organised activities, with Duddon and Furness team members assisting with transport. The activities included a morning visit to Derwent Island with a trip around the house and gardens for the children and families from WellChild — including a delicious mid-morning snack of tea and scones with jam and cream — followed by a choice between a drive to the top of Latrigg in a mountain rescue vehicle or a session at the Calvert Trust adventure centre in the afternoon.

The children from Centrepont and



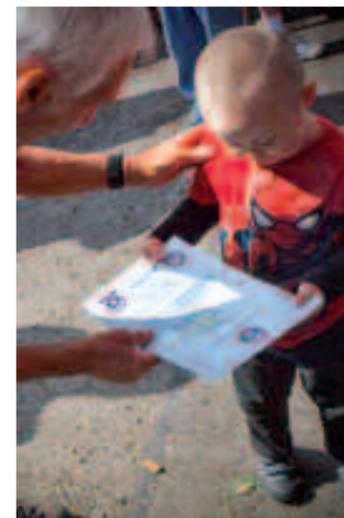
Child Bereavement each had sessions abseiling and slack-lining, and taking up active roles as MR team members in a simulated rescue and evacuation of a casualty, which included a line search and search dog demonstration.

Lunch at Derwentwater Hostel heralded great excitement as a Sea King helicopter from RAF 202 Squadron landed on the lawns overlooking the lake, later thrilling onlookers with their dramatic departure and several flyovers.

The fun-packed day concluded with still more delicious tea and cakes back at the Keswick base, with certificates and goody-bags presented to all the children and families by Mike Nixon MBE, President of Keswick MRT and LDSAMRA.

David Allan, chairman of Mountain Rescue England and Wales, said: 'It's a privilege to see mountain rescue team members working with the children and families from these three charities and a delight to see so many happy faces. We're now looking forward to next year's event, which will be held in the North East of England.'

*Organising an event like this depends on the commitment, support and hard work of many people. The glittering prizes are the faces of the children – awe, excitement, smiles and the sound of laughter. One of life's priceless occasions.*



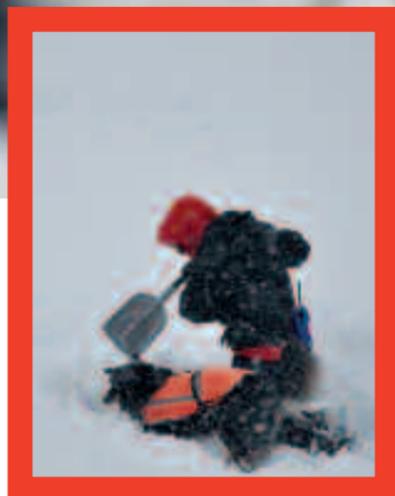
## Who are the other charities?

**Centrepont**, another of Prince William's charities, 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 volunteers opened up the basement of the church as a temporary night shelter. More than forty years later, the charity continues to campaign to give homeless young people a future.

**WellChild**, one of Prince Harry's charities, is committed to helping sick children and their families as they deal with the consequences of serious

illness and complex conditions. Their care and support enables many terminally ill children to leave hospital and return home, whilst also supporting their siblings and parents.

**The Child Bereavement Charity**, another of Prince Harry's charities, supports families, and provides training to professionals, across the entire spectrum of child bereavement — both when a child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement.



## A nose for searching

Search and rescue dogs are an integral part of every mountain rescue team. And when an incident occurs, a dog and its handler are often the first to be tasked, to search for the casualty, or simply eliminate potential search areas. But why are they such a valuable resource? The answer's in the nose, as Iain Nicholson, trailing dog handler, explains.

Views vary on just how much more effective than a human's is a dog's sense of smell — some say a thousand times, some millions — but there's no disputing that it is. A dog needs a good nose to get the scent, but also a good brain to process that information.

The olfactory system is made up of nasal chambers and sinuses which serve as receptor areas for scent, capturing the minute scent particles for the brain to process. Typically, a human has five million nasal cells dedicated to the olfactory process, but when compared to the estimated 220 million cells of a German Shepherd, the difference in capability is immediately obvious!

The nasal membrane area is made up of maxillo and ethmo turbinates, each with its own function. The maxillo turbinate creates turbulence, warming and moistening the air as it enters the nose — a sort of pre-processor for the scent system. But it's the rear part, comprising the ethmo turbinates, which

*Once the scent has arrived, the brain recognises, interprets and files the odours in memory for future reference.*

is the real business end. Here the high concentration of olfactory cells works on the pre-processed air to best effect.

And now the clever bit! The vomeronasal organ — a tubular canal starting from the front of the canine tooth — contains olfactory cells, and 608 nerve bundles. This concentrated scent collector connects directly to the part of the dog's brain for processing scent. And it's surprising how often this comes into play.

Trailing dogs, for example, will often lick a leaf or piece of vegetation when working on a trail — the start of the

process of using the vomeronasal organ to process concentrated scent to the brain, rather than via the nasal route.

For scent odours to reach the olfactory area, active sniffing is needed. At rest, a dog breathes approximately fifteen times a minute, 31 times a minute when walking. But when a dog sniffs, this rises to between 140 and 200 times a minute.

Essentially, sniffing changes the air pressure in the nose, resulting in the scent odours entering the nasal cavities and not the mouth. Some studies on the breathing patterns of dogs, across a number of trails which were increasingly difficult, found that they increased their sniffing frequency, and also the duration of the sniffing bouts, on the harder trails. The reason is that the scent on a 'hard' trail is much less than the 'easy' trails.

So where does all of the scent get processed once it's in the nose?

The olfactory lobe of the dog's brain processes the information sent by the nerves from the nasal areas and vomeronasal organ. Almost every cell in the olfactory network is linked directly to a part of the nervous system which, in turn, is linked to the olfactory lobe in the brain for processing — a dedicated multi-lane, high-speed 'scent motorway' to the brain.

And, once the scent has arrived, the brain recognises, interprets and files the odours in memory for future reference. Often, a trailing dog will turn its nose when offered a scent article, signifying to the handler that they have 'stored' the scent and don't need a reminder at that time.

So next time you see a dog sniffing around you know it's hard at work!

Main shot: Close up of a dog's nose © Peter Sandground. Inset: Joy Grindrod and Einnich, avalanche training in Scotland with Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs © Daryl Garfield. Top: SARDA Wales search dog Cuanie indicates to handler Helen Howe © Rob Johnson.



### ELEVEN TEAM MEMBERS, ONE SIX-STONE DOG AND A RATHER SHARP EDGE: APRIL

One Lake District casualty was described as 'very lucky' to have survived his fall of 300ft from notorious black spot, Sharp Edge, in April. And members of the Keswick team had to show dogged determination as they approached the unfortunate mountaineer: a six-stone rottweiler!

The 38kg dog had slipped off the edge and landed precariously, becoming stuck on a rocky slab sloping at 45 degrees.

Four members made their way to the site on Blencathra for what looked like a distinctly problematic rescue. However, while they were en route, the dog fell off, travelling a further 100m down the fell towards Scales Tarn.

The owner reported that the dog was standing, which sounded positive and, shortly afterwards, team members were able to report that the animal appeared unhurt, apart from cuts and abrasions, and was able to walk.

Arrangements were made for the dog to be assessed by a local vet once the owner had brought it down from the hill.

All in all, an eventful day for one very lucky rottweiler!

## Sponsorship and fundraising

# Keeping mountain rescue on the road



The Royal Wedding present Land Rover, HRH1, now at home in Patterdale © Daryl Garfield.

A major running cost for every mountain and cave rescue team is the purchase, maintenance and insurance of their fleet of team vehicles – however small that 'fleet' might be.

This year, thanks to the ongoing support and generosity of Go Outdoors and their customers, we were able to fund the vehicle insurance for every mountain rescue vehicle on the road. Which means a huge saving for the individual teams.

And the benefits of central fundraising and purchasing don't end there. The vehicle insurance is only one of a portfolio of insurance policies provided by MREW to cover teams and their members, sitting alongside Public Liability insurance for operations (including helicopters), training and fundraising, and medical and legal cover for Casualty Care.

In terms of equipment, central funds have enabled the development and provision of stretchers, load testing and servicing as well as other mountain rescue-specific equipment such as the casbag, lightweight casbag and vac mattress. Last year also saw an opportunity to purchase selected equipment, supplied via the Government grant.

MREW has helped fund and supported

the development of SARCALL, SARLOC and SARMAN communications systems, now used extensively by mountain and cave teams. We've collaborated with Mapyx and Ordnance Survey to develop and aid online search management



and personnel tracking. And our two legal advisers offer free advice and support where needed.

Then of course, there are the publications, essential not just

for improving communication (Mountain Rescue Magazine) and facilitating training (John Ellerton's Casualty Care book), but in conveying a vital safety message to the public (Call Out Mountain Rescue?).

So thank you to Go Outdoors and all our long-term supporters such as Mountain Equipment, Keela, Paramo, Montane and Land Rover.

You've made a big difference.

## How can you support mountain rescue?

Mountain and cave rescue in the UK is free of charge to the casualty but we rely on the support and generosity of the public to maintain this valuable community service. Without you, we simply could not function.

Of course, each team is responsible for raising funds on their own patch — find your local team on the map (back cover) and then take a look at our website for the relevant contact details — [mountain.rescue.org.uk/organisation/](http://mountain.rescue.org.uk/organisation/) teams. There are also a number of ways you can support nationally.



**Read our books or buy a badge.** Or a teddy, or a car sticker. Or a thermal mug. Whatever takes your fancy. Go to

[mountain.rescue.org.uk/shop](http://mountain.rescue.org.uk/shop) for details of all our merchandise and how to subscribe to Basecamp.

**Join Basecamp** — the national support group for mountain rescue in England and Wales — the simplest way to support all the teams. In return you will receive a 'supporter' badge, a window sticker and a year's subscription to our quarterly Mountain Rescue magazine. You can join through our online shop — and, this year, in response to requests from our existing supporters, you can now add a small donation to your subscription with the Gold, Silver and Bronze options. You choose which amount you want to pay — single membership starts at £24 per year with joint membership at £42.

### Remember us in your Will!

A gift to mountain rescue in your Will allows you to support our future. Legacies are a vital part of our funding — even a small gift can make a big difference. And it's the surest way to fund the equipment and training for the years to

## Equipping a team member: the costs

Teams work hard to raise sufficient funds to provide the necessary fit-for-purpose kit for their members, including warm, waterproof clothing, comms equipment, bigger items such as vehicles, and their rescue base buildings. That said, the majority of team members wear and carry a combination of essentials supplied by their team, and their own gear.

Bear in mind that team members must be prepared to be out there for many hours — or may be called to two or three incidents within the same day, often in dreadful conditions.

And with the clothing (and spares), the rucksack full of personal first aid kit, maps and compass, torch, headlamp and batteries, notepad and pen, radio, pager and mobile phone, the grand total for each team member is not far shy of £2000 — which we think you'll agree is a huge commitment in personal and team finances.



come as gifts are exempt from inheritance tax, capital gains tax and income tax, so the charity receives the full value of your bequest.

**Give securely online** through [mountain.rescue.org.uk/giving/online-donations](http://mountain.rescue.org.uk/giving/online-donations).

**Organise an event in aid of Mountain Rescue England and Wales** or join an existing one and raise sponsorship. You'll be providing funds and raising awareness. It might seem daunting but, with lots of enthusiasm, commitment and support, you will find the experience enjoyable and very rewarding.

Take a look at our website for a more detailed guide to organising an event — [mountain.rescue.org.uk/funding/organising-events](http://mountain.rescue.org.uk/funding/organising-events). And good luck with the fundraising!



# Where to find your local team

## Lake District

**Mountain Rescue:**  
Cockermouth  
Coniston  
Duddon & Furness  
Kendal  
Keswick  
Kirkby Stephen  
Langdale Ambleside

Patterdale  
Penrith  
Wasdale  
**Mines Rescue:**  
COMRU  
**Search Dogs:**  
Lakes District Mountain  
Rescue Search Dogs

## North East

**Mountain Rescue:**  
Cleveland  
North of Tyne  
Northumberland Nat Park  
RAF Leeming MRT  
Scarborough & Ryedale

Teesdale & Weardale  
**Mountain + Cave Rescue:**  
Swaledale  
**Search Dogs:**  
SARDA England

## Mid Pennine

**Mountain Rescue:**  
Bolton  
Bowland Pennine  
Calder Valley  
Holme Valley

Rossendale & Pendle  
**Mountain + Cave Rescue:**  
CRO  
**Search Dogs:**  
SARDA England

## Yorkshire Dales

**Mountain + Cave Rescue:**  
Upper Wharfedale  
CRO  
**Mountain Rescue:**  
RAF Leeming

## North Wales

**Mountain Rescue:**  
Aberdyfi  
Aberglaslyn  
Llanberis  
North East Wales  
Ogwen Valley  
South Snowdonia  
RAF Valley  
**Cave Rescue:**  
North Wales CRO  
**Search Dogs:**  
SARDA Wales

## Peak District

**Mountain Rescue:**  
Buxton  
Derby  
Edale  
Glossop  
Kinder  
Oldham  
Woodhead  
**Cave Rescue:**  
Derbyshire CRO  
**Search Dogs:**  
SARDA England

## South Wales

**Mountain Rescue:**  
Brecon  
Central Beacons  
Longtown  
Western Beacons

**Cave Rescue:**  
South  
& Mid Wales CRT  
**Search Dogs:**  
SARDA South Wales

## South West England

**Mountain Rescue:**  
Avon & Somerset  
Severn Area

**Cave Rescue:**  
Mendip CR  
Gloucestershire CRG

## Midlands

**Cave Rescue:**  
Midlands CRO

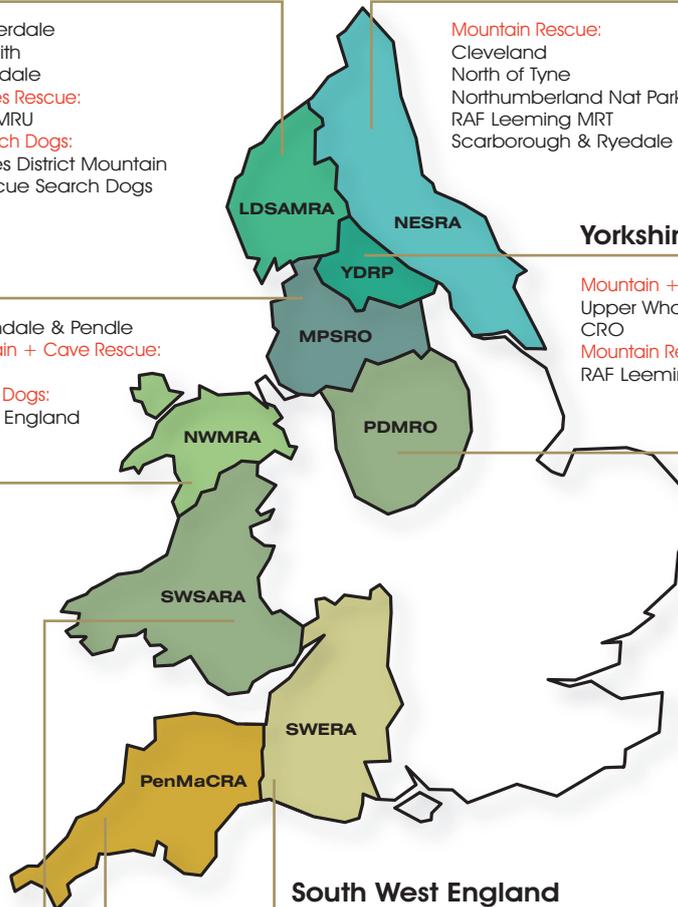
## South East

**Cave Rescue:**  
South East CRO

## Peninsula

**Mountain Rescue:**  
Dartmoor (Ashburton)  
Dartmoor (Okehampton)  
Dartmoor (Plymouth)  
Dartmoor (Tavistock)  
Exmoor

**Mountain + Cave Rescue:**  
Cornwall  
**Cave Rescue:**  
Devon CRO  
**Search Dogs:**  
SARDA England



In case of accident or incident requiring Mountain Rescue assistance  
Dial '999' — ask for the 'Police' — then 'Mountain Rescue' or 'Cave Rescue'



To find out more about mountain and cave rescue in England and Wales go to [mountain.rescue.org.uk](http://mountain.rescue.org.uk) or [caverescue.org.uk](http://caverescue.org.uk)

Mountain Rescue England and Wales is a registered charity number 222596.  
British Cave Rescue Council is a registered charity number 1137252.