

in England and Wales

Mountain and Cave Rescue

Review of The year



Published April 2016. Suggested Donation: £2



Foreword

HRH The Duke of Cambridge



Main image: Stretcher training at Woden's Face, Borrowdale © Rob Grange/Keswick MRI. Top: HRH The Duke of Cambridge courtesy of Kensington Palace.



KENSINGTON PALACE

As Patron of Mountain Rescue England and Wales, a former RAF Search and Rescue pilot and currently a pilot with the air ambulance, I certainly recognise the invaluable skills of our mountain rescue volunteers and their selfless commitment to duty.

At the end of last year, that commitment and those skills were tested by the flooding that hit many parts of the country. As MREW volunteers were seen out supporting the huge rescue effort, I think many people were made aware, perhaps for the first time, that mountain rescue is about so much more than mountains.

Each year, those same volunteers also work with families and children in their community and with charities such as *Centrepont* and *WellChild* to deliver wonderful outdoor adventure days and lasting memories for young people in need. And this is all in addition to being available 24 hours of the day, 7 days a week, for search and rescue duties.

As Patron, I would like to offer my personal thanks to everyone involved in mountain rescue these last twelve months and to those who so generously support them in this vital work.

~

Fel Noddwr Achub Mynydd Cymru a Lloegr, cyn-beilot Chwilio ac Achub yr Awyrlu Brenhinol, ac ar hyn o bryd yn beilot gyda'r ambiwlans awyr, 'rwyf yn sicr yn ymwybodol o fedrau hynod werthfawr ein gwirfoddolwyr achub mynydd a'u hymrwymiad anhunanol i'w dyletswydd.

Ar ddiwedd llynedd, profwyd yr ymrwymiad hwnnw a'r medrau hynny gan y llifogydd a drawodd sawl rhan o'r wlad. Tybiaf i lawer o bobl, wrth weld gwirfoddolwyr MREW allan yn cefnogi'r ymgyrch achub enfawr, ddod yn ymwybodol, efallai am y tro cyntaf, fod achub mynydd yn ymwneud â chymaint yn fwy na mynyddoedd.

Bob blwyddyn, bydd yr un gwirfoddolwyr hefyd yn gweithio gyda theuluoedd a chyda plant yn eu cymdogaeth, a chydag elusennau megis *Centrepont* a *WellChild* i ddarparu diwrnodau rhyfeddol o antur yn yr awyr agored ac atgofion parhaol ar gyfer pobl ifainc mewn angen. Ac mae hyn i gyd ar ben bod ar gael 24 awr y dydd, 7 diwrnod yr wythnos, ar gyfer dyletswyddau chwilio ac achub.

Fel eu Noddwr, hoffwn gynnig fy niolch personol i baw a fu'n ymwneud ag achub mynydd yn ystod y deuddeg mis diwethaf ac i'r rhai sy'n eu cefnogi mor hael yn y gwaith hanfodol hwn.



On our TVs and in the press, we read about the financial constraints on the statutory emergency services and I wonder who will pick up the shortfall. In many rural areas, fire and rescue personnel act as ambulance first responders and we see ambulances sat outside Accident and Emergency departments for hours waiting to drop off their patients. I also wonder whether the police still have enough officers to search for despondents in the urban areas and if this is even their job. My concern with all these thoughts is this: is someone, somewhere thinking the voluntary sector could pick up some of this work?



Mountain rescue teams don't just help walkers and climbers who get lost or injured on the mountain or moorland. As volunteers, we're also there for our local communities and will assist the statutory services where we can.

Our control and command systems mean we can call other teams from the local region, or teams from across the country to help if incidents escalate. You will have seen this unfold on the news with the flooding in the north of England throughout December. Over those three storms, mountain rescue team members gave an estimated 17,000 voluntary hours of their time to help where needed and were very happy to do so, but is this now part of our role?

Many teams find themselves looking for the vulnerable despondent in very urban areas. Our members are trained to search and we do it well but, unlike the other services, our volunteer members only have so much time to give, and mountain rescue doesn't pay the personal bills. But if asked, of course our members will look for the despondent as well as giving their time to help the climber or missing walker. Apart from being well trained and highly skilled, our volunteers have big hearts and will carry out all these tasks when they can.

So it's clear mountain rescue will be there if you or your loved ones get into difficulty. And whilst our members are happy to give their time freely, the equipment, skills and qualifications required to be a mountain rescuer, and

the running of blue light vehicles, all costs money. The government offered VAT relief on our equipment in the 2014 budget and we welcome that. We are also eligible for Libor funding for training – again very welcome – but there's no guaranteed money to help run this organisation. That's why you will find team members on a weekend or a bank holiday, not spending time with their families because they are out fundraising, rattling buckets trying to get enough money together to pay for the headquarters or new waterproof jackets that are required.

Mountain rescue will always be there to help our local communities and the people in them. But putting together a long-term strategy is all but impossible without knowing if this year, or next year, we will have the money, for example, to pay the insurances or just to run the organisation.

Rightly so, the public and the services we work with expect our members to meet high standards of training and that costs money. These highly trained mountain rescue members should not be spending time fundraising, their time should be for attending rescues – this is what they have been trained for.

And this is where you can help: setting up a community fundraising group, being a non-operational part of mountain rescue, supporting both Mountain Rescue England and Wales and your local team and helping this life-saving organisation continue.



Chairman Mike France

Mountain and Cave Awareness Weekend: In 2016, this event is taking place across England and Wales on 30 October, just as the clocks change, a notoriously busy time for teams, as the

nights suddenly draw in closer and the weather turns colder. It'll be a great opportunity to get to know and support your local team and also learn a few tips to keep you safe through the winter.

KEY DATE

Main shot: Stretcher carry on the Woolpacks © Buxton MRT. Inset: PenMacra team member at work during the floods in York © Charlotte Graham Photography. Top: Ogwen team members join the rescue effort in York © Karen Phillips-Craig.

Front cover: Floods rescue in York © Scarborough & Ryedale MRT.

The Annual Review is designed by Judy Whiteside, written and edited by Judy Whiteside and Sally Seed, with contributions attributed where applicable. Copyright for images belongs to the individual photographer as credited.

This year's facts and figures

2015 has shown an increase upon 2014 in the number of recorded incidents from MREW teams. A (roughly) 10% increase puts the numbers back up at 2010 levels, ending the decreasing trend of the intervening years.

This increase cannot be attributed to one particular period of the year, or any specific activities as there is a general increase throughout all regions, activities and seasons.

Regional perspectives highlight some slightly different accounts of the year's activity. For example, although the average increase in incident numbers over England and Wales is around 10%, some regions have seen a much larger increase (Peak District: ~20%).

Likewise, the high number of recorded fatalities in the mountains of the Lake

District was offset by a slight decline in fatalities in other regions.

Some other specific observations are noteworthy. Incidents related to mountain biking accidents have increased alarmingly. Most regions have witnessed an increase of a small amount, but Lake District and North Wales teams report mountain biking accidents at almost three times the 2014 level.

Despite the overall increase in incidents for this year, the decline in recorded rock climbing incidents continues, with no fatalities recorded for this sport.

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

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	Persons assisted
2015	1179	39	700	1326
2014	1043	29	640	1281
2013	1011	22	624	1179
2012	1073	30	632	1292
2011	1078	33	671	1318

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

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	Persons assisted
2015	463	34	107	292
2014	398	29	87	289
2013	460	43	75	274
2012	445	47	114	300
2011	472	52	108	323

In addition to the declared major incidents there were numerous local incidents due to flooding and excessive rainfall in Cumbria, Lancashire and Yorkshire. National calls for help were met by the combined efforts of 32 individual teams travelling to the affected areas to assist their mountain rescue colleagues and their communities. MR teams provided a variety of essential services to the statutory agencies, from specialist water rescue to routine duties such as patient transfer and enabling access over challenging terrain to flood-stricken homes. The exact number of persons assisted during this period is not known.



Patterdale MRT on swiftwater rescue training © Michael Lishman.

We can't do any of it without your help...

Mountain and cave rescue, whether it's at team or regional level or nationally, simply couldn't continue as the voluntary service it is, without the generosity of the public and our various sponsors, and the continued support of key manufacturers and suppliers.

Each of our team members gives many hours of their time to help their communities and those in need. They do it without question. They do it voluntarily.

When the pager calls, they're off, often regardless of what they're doing or who they're doing it with. Speak to the families of any mountain rescuer and the stories are the same — children's birthdays, anniversary suppers, Christmas dinners, copy deadlines, business meetings... abandoned in an instant.

And they also put in hundreds more hours, tending to rescue kit and team vehicles, making sure the bills are paid and fulfilling paperwork, maintaining readiness for the next shout.

Yet, despite all this, they still need to put in thousands of hours just to raise sufficient funds to keep their teams in operation — collection boxes, raffles, events, personal challenges... even more time away from work and home.

All this is free of charge to the casualty. And our team members' time is given freely too — and long may that be so. So we'd like to say 'thank you' to all our supporters, sponsors and fundraisers — we couldn't do it without you!

Stay safe, and thank you.

NUMBER CRUNCHING

1815 call-outs from
32 statutory agencies of which
1642 resulted in mountain rescue deployment

1721 persons assisted

Total volunteer hours: **92,019**

(Operational hours, not including training or administration).

Rescuer hours:
Rescuing: **46,020** hours
Civil incidents: **23,162** hours
Searching: **22,837** hours

Only 15 days in 2015 without a mountain rescue call-out in England and Wales.

December flooding: **14,808** hours attributed to **32 teams** over **14 days**

How can you support us?

There are also a number of ways you can support nationally.

Read our books or buy your very own miniature Land Rover.

Or a teddy or a badge. Whatever takes your fancy. Or **join Basecamp** — the simplest way to support all the teams. You can even add a donation with the Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze options. Go to mountain.rescue.org.uk/shop.

Leave a legacy. A gift to us in your Will allows you to support our future — 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 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.

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.

Watch our Mountain Rescue Film then text a donation — You'll find the film at mountain.rescue.org.uk. Once you've seen for yourself the breadth of work we do, we hope you'll offer your support with by texting RESQ41, followed by the amount you want to give, to 70070. And please don't forget to tell your friends. Thank you!

Give via our appeal page — justgiving.com/mountainrescuefilm15.



Teamwork is key to flood response

Teams from across England and Wales join forces during widespread flooding in December. As storms Desmond, Eva and Frank cut a devastating swathe through the north of England, mountain rescue volunteers worked together to help their stricken communities. It was truly a multi-team operation, led by those who live and work at the centre of the chaos.

Flooding in Cumbria isn't unknown, of course, but this time mountain rescue was well prepared. When Carlisle flooded in 2005, team members could only look on in frustration but, by 2009, when Cockermouth, Keswick and other parts of Cumbria suffered badly, mountain rescue was playing a bigger role in the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). Local teams were heavily involved but without significant coordination between them.

Then, in 2014, the Lake District teams drafted a regional Major Incident Plan and set about training in Water and Flood Incident Management. 'Exercise Cloudburst' followed. Many thought the scenario over the top at the time but this regional table-top exercise, based on a fictitious flood of the small town of Egremont and the surrounding area, doubtless proved invaluable during the floods in December 2015.

Paul Cook, of Wasdale MRT, who was involved in the Silver role, explains: 'Those teams who are directly impacted by the incident and conducting rescues are designated Bronze and manage operations in their patch, potentially as part of a multi-agency response. A team further away, not impacted by the event takes on the role of Silver and is responsible for coordination and

resourcing, but not directing rescues in any area. In this way, an overview can be kept of where different teams are busiest and who might need some help. This information can also be fed into other agencies through forums such as the TCG (Tactical Coordination) and SCG (Strategic Coordination) meetings run by the main emergency services.'

As the rivers rose, jobs came from the police to MR Bronze, then out to teams via Airwave radio and team members were involved in a wide range of tasks helping recover people, pets and possessions. The local teams were busy in Cockermouth, Keswick and Kendal. Penrith team members attended a number of incidents in Eamont Bridge, Kirkby Stephen helped with evacuations in Appleby, and Patterdale team members, driven from their own base by floodwater, helped with the rescue of an Ullswater steamer that had broken free from its moorings. Duddon and Furness team members helped to move kidney dialysis patients in the south of the county.

With the local teams busy on home ground, a number of out-of-county teams were important to the rescue effort in Carlisle. Groups from the Peak District, Calder Valley, Ogwen, NEWSAR, Kirkby



Stephen, Penrith and Wasdale were all deployed in the town. Bowland Pennine MRT and CRO also supported in south Cumbria.

Leaving barely time for teams to dry their kit, three weeks later the waters rose again. This time the focus was on North Wales, Lancashire, Salford, West Yorkshire and York. And, once again, teams from across England and Wales – including a 52-strong contingent from the Devon teams – joined forces to help the stricken communities. Once again, Land Rovers emblazoned with names and logos more usually associated with their local habitats, were out and about hundreds of miles from their home turf, in the name of 'mountain rescue'.

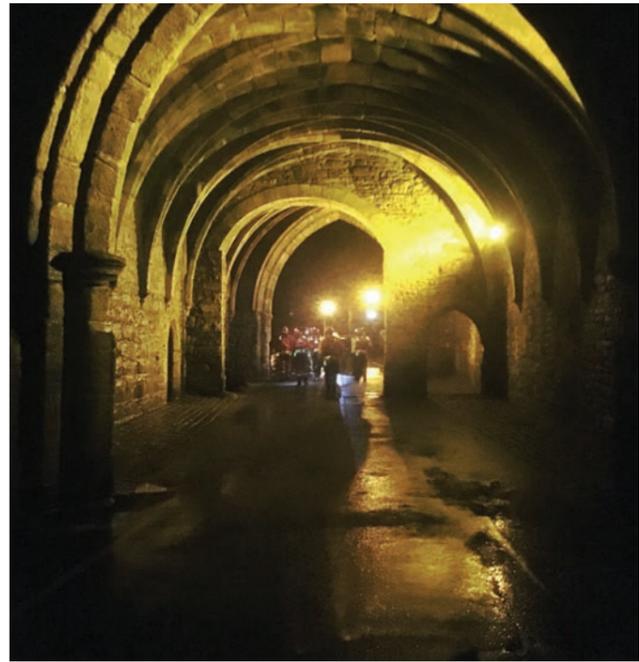
Ian Huggill, of Scarborough and Ryedale MRT, was Bronze water incident manager in York. He later thanked the seventeen rescue teams and the hundred or so mountain rescuers who joined the rescue effort, many of them deploying straight from call-outs elsewhere in the country.

'We came together to safely clear hundreds of houses and deserted cars, evacuated hundreds of people, families, dogs, parrots and assorted pets to recovery centres, delivered nurses and medications to house-bound patients and completed numerous other tasks. These came thick and fast throughout the day and due to the professionalism, dedication, unstinting effort and good humour of the volunteer rescue community we dealt with everything thrown at us and, importantly, people were delivered to safety in a timely and efficient manner.'

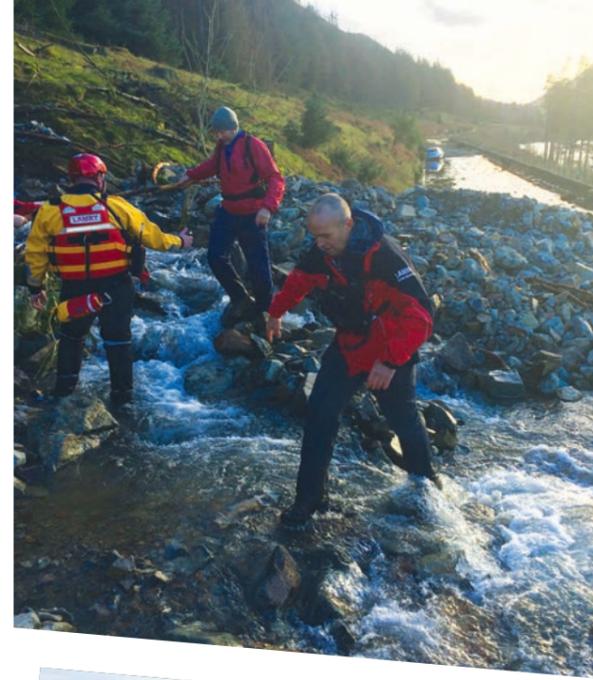
Mountain rescue was a significant factor in the flood response, working closely with the emergency services, other agencies and each other, and demonstrating beyond doubt that it is about so much more than mountains.

Main photo: Suburban streets of Carlisle © Karen Phillips-Craig. Left: Snatched rest at Eamont Bridge © Patterdale MRT. Top: Dartmoor member ready for action © Caroline Graham Photography.





ROLLER COASTER RIDE ALONG THE A591 FOR LANGDALE TEAM MEMBERS: DECEMBER



INCIDENT LOG



Langdale Ambleside team members had a rollercoaster ride during the rescue operation. Finally lifted out by helicopter, they were forced to abandon their team vehicle to its fate behind flood debris north of Dunmail Raise.

The team had been called to assist and evacuate twenty-five passengers from a coach that had broken down in a flood caused by a landslide on the A591. Normally this would have been a Keswick job but they were preoccupied by flooding in Keswick, so LAMRT took it on.

'We drove over a small landslide to find the bus limping on through the flood,' writes Nick Owen, team leader.

'The passengers were all automotive engineering students and they'd temporarily rigged the bus with a snorkel made from a drink bottle. However, it ground to

a halt when it hit the next landslide. At this point we started ferrying the passengers to a reception centre in Grasmere.

'The final run to recover the driver was almost complete when another, large landslide blocked the road completely. The two team members plus the driver then started to try and make their way on foot, but deep mud, flooding and darkness made progress difficult. A team of swiftwater technicians was dispatched and helicopter assistance requested.

'They were picked up and flown to Walney, because the aircraft needed to refuel and was also required to evac from a flooded property. They were dropped off there and collected by police, who took them to Barrow police station where they were given 'police custody' clothes (white boxers, grey sweatshirt and pants, then we

arranged an overnight hotel until we could get through the floods to retrieve them next day.'

The vehicle was finally recovered eight days later, when the army and Cumbria County Council (CCC) managed to dig their way through the floods. The images show team members on the second of two trips to recover kit, the state of the road, and the vehicle being collected after the army and CCC dug through and past.

'Looking through the dashcam footage... it must have been pretty scary!' concludes Nick. 'Two vehicles each did three trips through increasingly deep water, over growing landslide debris and increasing darkness. To maximise

room in the vehicles, two other team members waited with the remaining passengers in the coach. They saw water rise and fall, as landslides slipped into it and then drained slightly.

'If either driver had stalled at any point they'd have been in deep trouble. The hillside was awash, there was a curtain of water dropping on to the road. The flood water was full of logs. In one place the road surface had blistered up and was floating. Either vehicle and its passengers could have been lost when the road collapsed or if they'd been hit by any of the landslides. They did well.'

We think you'll agree that was something of an understatement.

Photos: Opposite from top © Keswick MRT, Scarborough & Ryedale MRT & Paul Burke. This page © Langdale Ambleside MRT.

Mobiles phones: good or bad?

You might be surprised... Mobiles often get a bad press in the mountains. They're not the most reliable way of calling for help – batteries can quickly run flat and signal coverage in the hills is still hit and miss. And it can seem all too easy to call out mountain rescue for the slightest thing rather than trying to get off the hill independently.

The use of mobiles has grown hugely and the majority of calls for mountain rescue help are now made to the police by mobile. The days of someone running down the hill to the nearest house or public phone box to summon help are well and truly over. But, at the same time, those minutes or hours saved by calling direct from the incident site can make all the difference in a life or death situation.

So there are good and bad sides to the ubiquitous mobile phone — and also several stories behind the scenes that show them making an even bigger difference.

SARCALL, SARLOC and rescuers using the network

Recent years have seen mountain rescue working with the emergency services to developed systems that use the benefits of smartphones to help in search and rescue.

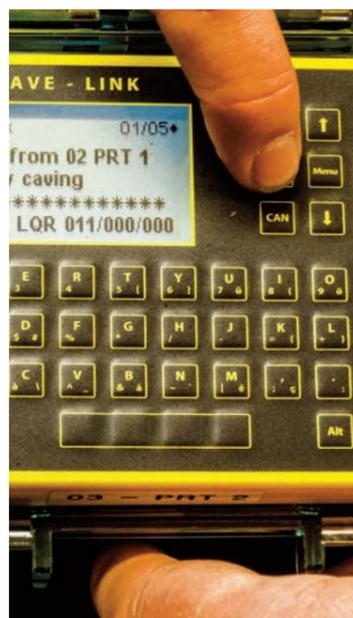
First, SARCALL, the incident call-out and management system used across almost all the teams in MREW and cave rescue too. SARCALL uses smartphone technology to respond quickly to a call-out, then alerts team members, logs their availability and tracks their status as they approach muster points. And it confirms they are safe back home after the incident too. In addition, team leaders and other authorised people can create and update the incident log from their mobile phone.

In parallel, SARLOC can be used to communicate with informants or casualties via SMS. A delivery receipt lets the team leader know the message really was delivered to the target mobile phone.

'During major incidents, the system is a great way of keeping track of where

people are and who is available to support,' says John Hulse MBE, a member of the Ogwen Valley MRO and a lead on the development of the SARCALL technology. 'As the system has evolved, many more organisations are using it, including national level organisations such as the ARCC (Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre), NMOCC (National Maritime Operations Centre), RNLI flood teams, helimedics, HM Coastguard helicopter bases and MR teams in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

'We're now in a situation where the coordination of both paid and voluntary resources can be much more effective because of mobile phones, integral GPS, shared incident logs and common processes.'



Main photo and top: Joint training exercise involving Cockermouth, Keswick and COMRU at the Honister Slate Mines © Rob Grange/Keswick MRT. Left: The Cave Link in action © Andy Harp.

ADVICE FOR USING YOUR MOBILE TO BEST EFFECT IN AN EMERGENCY

If you're the casualty, how do you make the most of your mobile phone and maximise your chances of maintaining contact once you've called for help?

- Keep your mobile phone in a plastic bag somewhere warm and accessible, where you can hear it. And pack a spare battery (fully charged) in a separate bag too.
- If the signal is poor, stand still! Keep the phone in one position to maintain the connection and use text if you can – it often works with less signal.
- Shelter the microphone from the wind and increase the receive volume settings as necessary.
- Fully charge the battery (and a spare) before setting off.
- Minimise your call time to conserve battery power.
- Schedule your point of contact calls and switch off when not required.
- Check for coverage with every phone in your party. Then use just one phone at a time to preserve batteries – or swap batteries to those with best signal.
- Consider taking all the available phones to a more prominent location (usually higher ground) to get network coverage but take care not to get lost or separated in the process.

Over ground, underground and Cave Link

Mobile phones aren't much good at communicating through solid rock but there is equivalent technology for cave rescue. Paul Taylor, of Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group is one of several people who've been trialling and demonstrating a new system in the UK.

'I first came across Cave Link, a system developed in Switzerland, at a cave rescue training conference in Croatia,' says Paul. 'It works using a texting approach and enables cave rescuers underground to communicate with each other and with people at the surface without the hassles of interference and the barriers of solid rock! Cave Link has been shown to have a depth potential of about two kilometres, much better than anything else available, but there's a price tag to go with that performance.'

In the past year or so, six cave rescue teams, including those in Gloucestershire,

South Wales, Somerset, Scotland and Yorkshire, have invested in Cave Link units. These purchases have been as a direct result of the generosity of supporters, donors and fundraisers.

'Cave Link doesn't give all the answers to underground communications,' says Paul, 'and there are still some who prefer to speak to somebody rather than text. However, the system certainly gives us another option and it is already helping rescuers to keep in touch and enhance their response in an emergency — which is what it's all about.'



This year has seen a new initiative for mountain rescue, an opportunity for every team across England and Wales to gain a greater awareness of how well they do business, so they can develop and enhance their performance. It's a process which is owned by the team, for the team, with most of the effect achieved internally during the four to six month review period.

The aim of Peer Review isn't just to encourage greater self-awareness in teams — it's hoped that those who volunteer for such scrutiny will share their best practice with the wider mountain rescue family, enabling continuous professional development across the entire organisation.

outcomes are becoming apparent, not least the relationships being forged between the reviewers and those team members under the spotlight. Hopefully, these will continue, sharing good ideas, into the future. Bowland Pennine, for example, have already suggested a follow-up visit one year on, to help the team maintain momentum with their ongoing development.'

With teams increasingly building stronger bonds and working together on multi-agency incidents such as urban flooding and cross-border searches, the entire process is very timely. Kev Camplin, team leader of Bowland Pennine, agrees.

'One thing for sure, participating and assisting the Lakes teams and working on the floods in our own area during December shows how well our mountain rescue community works together. We certainly hope the review team's input will push our team forward and make us more efficient.'

John Bamforth, of Wasdale MRT confirms that the process is extremely thorough. 'Luckily I had the chance to speak to Kev Camplin prior to the initial question set landing on my desk. His advice was to allow a full day for the questionnaire because their evening session had gone on until the early hours. It was also very useful to have a scribe and plenty of tea, coffee and refreshments on hand!

'We chose a scenario that involved casualty care, boat handling, steep ground, stretcher handling, command and control — and a second incident. We felt this would give a reasonably rounded picture of the bread and butter of what we do. Although we'd practised a similar incident about eighteen months previously, and there'd been similar real rescues of casualties on the Wastwater screes, this one still had its challenges.

'For example, the boat we had was new and had never been used in anger for a scenario like this. And you never know what issues casualties will present. In the end we had both a trauma and



a medical situation to deal with on very steep ground which we dealt with methodically and demonstrably.

'The hand-over-hand movement of the casualty and stretcher, down the screes to the lake shore, went as well as we'd hoped. But the loading and unloading of the stretcher onto and from the boat presented issues and the eventual boat access to the northern side of Wastwater was different than we first planned.

'A second incident shortly after this tested us out again with a search in a gill followed by trauma treatment at a river crossing. Evacuation from Greendale Gill always presents a challenge, given the narrow path and steep slope on one side and steep drop on the other, but the team did this well and in a calm and communicative manner.'

...previously unexpected outcomes are becoming apparent, not least the relationships being forged...

'The process is developing extremely well,' adds Tim. 'Feedback from both Bowland Pennine and Wasdale has been constructive and positive. It's still early days, but we have another five teams with dates in the diary and three more who have expressed a real interest, but have yet to book their dates. And, understandably, some are watching to assess the outcome of the initial experiences.'

It's a process which, in both the short and the longer term, can only benefit the teams — and, more importantly, their casualties.

Facing page and inset: Wasdale team during their peer review day on the hill © Wasdale MRT. Top: Bowland Pennine team review © Bowland Pennine MRT.



Bowland Pennine MRT and Wasdale MRT have begun the review process. Tim Cain, of Swaledale MRT, is leading the review team and he is very enthusiastic about progress thus far.

'The process begins with a question set which encourages the team's leadership to closely consider the way they do everything, across the board. Together, we review their answers to those questions and then a day on the hill enables a closer look at the team in operation. With the feedback from this, and the team's own thoughts about the results, they can then decide what to do with any lessons learned, and choose whether to share that learning with colleagues, regionally and nationally.

'The interesting thing for me is that, as we move forward, previously unexpected

Holding a mirror up to mountain rescue

Fiftieth birthday for Ogwen team

The story of mountain rescue in Snowdonia reaches back to the 1800s but it was in the 1950s, when the Climbing Club moved their rescue kit to Ogwen Cottage, with the formidable Mrs Williams in charge, that a more formally organised rescue service began to develop in the Ogwen Valley. By the end of that decade, three young men had followed their dream to Ogwen...



post, the first fully-manned post in Wales. In the event of an emergency, a two-starred red flare would be fired to break high above the Nant Francon Pass to signify that someone was in trouble and 'call' the three 'leaders' back to base.

Sadly, financial pressures led to the sale of the school to Birmingham Education Authority, in April 1964. Mason-Hornby and James remained in charge, with James as warden and chief instructor, and Mason-Hornby as senior instructor. The agreement was that the rescue team would continue and, from that time on, the number of team members grew significantly.

However, with new ownership came change. The instructors now enjoyed the same school holidays as other teachers, the six-week summer break a glorious opportunity to explore mountains further afield. That first summer, with most of the staff away in the Alps and the RAF Valley team training elsewhere, an accident happened which had a significant effect on how mountain rescue would be delivered in the valley.

John Glews was left to 'house-sit' at Og Cott for the summer, with instructions to call Plas y Brenin if necessary. While attempting a new route on Clogwyn Ddu, above Idwal Slabs, a peg came out and he fell, sustaining considerable injury. As he waited for rescue, it occurred to Glews that the current rescue service, dependent as it was on the availability of Og Cott staff and the RAF, was insufficient. What Ogwen needed was continuous mountain rescue cover, delivered by an independent group of rescuers available throughout the year.

When the hastily-gathered rescue party arrived, Glews was unimpressed by their lack of skill and attempted to tell them what to do even as he lay seriously injured on the stretcher. When colleagues later visited him in the orthopaedic hospital at Gobowen in Shropshire, he was still in intensive care. They resolved there and then that the need for a permanent rescue team was a priority.

By autumn 1964, that new team had been conceived, comprising a number of team leaders — mainly the instructors from Og Cott — with a pool of skilled rescuers at their disposal, on call round the clock. And it would be an entirely voluntary enterprise.

The inaugural meeting of the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation took place in March 1965, with Mason-Hornby in the chair and James as senior team leader.

Og Cott served the team well, but when Birmingham Education Authority revealed plans for an extension, which meant the loss of storage, fundraising began in earnest for an 'Oggi base'. In October 1977, the team finally moved into their new home, Bryn Poeth. They remain here to this day, thanks to a still continuing process of fundraising, building work, renovation and more fundraising.

In a story familiar to every team, what began as a local resource, catering for the needs of a very specific section of society, is now a fully-fledged 'community resource', sometimes called to work far outside the bounds of North Wales (most notably, in the December floods, in York and Carlisle).

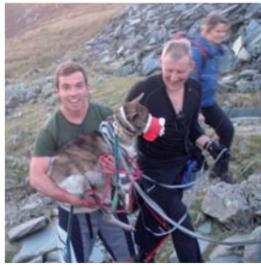
But it's safe to say that, over fifty years, Ogwen team members have been instrumental in driving forward standards in casualty care, swiftwater rescue, communications technology (SARCALL and SARLOC), team training, technical rescue rigging and equipment design which have spilled into the national consciousness. They've developed a thriving model for support membership with their 'Treble Three' group, they've offered themselves up for audit and inspection (long before the idea of peer review took hold), and they've continued to exchange ideas with experts and teams from around the world.

Mrs Williams had indeed been a redoubtable lady. Her advice, in the event of a call-out, was unequivocal. 'Fire a red flare from the car park — get the climbers together and put the one with the cleanest boots in charge!' But such advice could hardly stand the test of time.

It was the late-1950s when three young mountaineers hatched a plan to set up their own mountaineering school and the seeds of today's Ogwen team were sown. Tony Mason-Hornby, Ron James and Trevor Jones were convinced that many climbing accidents could be avoided if climbers were properly taught and, in spring 1959, they resigned their 'comfortable' jobs to realise their vision.

'Og Cott' opened during Whitsuntide 1959 and quickly earned a reputation for excellence. By August, it had become the first privately-owned school to gain official recognition as a mountain rescue

Main photo: The 'Henry Sadler' search 1967 © OVMRO. Inset: Bryn Poeth in winter © OVMRO. Top: Pensive team members at a Princes' Charities Forum day in 2015 © Paramo.



**TIGER ON THE LOOSE
WREAKS HAVOC ON
HAYSTACKS: APRIL 2015**

When Cockermouth team got the call to rescue a missing Tiger with a sore snout, close to Buttermere, they could hardly have imagined they'd be running around for two hours trying to capture comedian Bill Bailey's dog.

Team members knew it was a 'Mr Bailey'. What they didn't realise was that this was THE Mr Bill Bailey of Never Mind the Buzzcocks fame. As it turned out, Tiger had already headed for the fells by the time help arrived. Two energetic hours of 'catch me if you can' and one team leader with a bitten hand later, Tiger was finally reunited (suitably muzzled) with his owner.

'They did such a fantastic job,' said a delighted Bill Bailey. 'I was very impressed with their operation and very grateful to them for responding as they did.'



**WARWICK DAVIES ESCAPES TO DERBY
FOR THE WEEKEND: APRIL 2015**

Life certainly wasn't too short for comedian Warwick Davis, thanks to Derby team members who 'rescued' him from what could have been a rather tricky spot on a Cromford cliff face. The big movie star, whose acting credits include Return of the Jedi, Harry Potter and Willow, and the TV sitcom Life's Too Short, was visiting the Dales with his family to film an episode of his Weekend Escapes series. First stop was the Peaks and Dales, where he managed to get stranded forty foot up a pole before the team stepped in to rescue him. By all accounts Warwick was a real trooper, even though the filming had overrun and he was very tired. A great day out all round.



**FAREWELL TO BILL
TURNBULL: FEBRUARY 2016**

Bill Turnbull left the BBC's flagship morning news programme in February, after fifteen years on the iconic red sofa. In celebration of his time living and working in the Peak District National Park, he went out and about with a camera crew, meeting some of the locals, including members of Buxton and Edale teams at Teggs Nose Country Park, near Macclesfield, where they filmed a local rescue exercise. And, on Wednesday 24 February, the programme went out live from Edale village, in the shadow of Kinder Scout.



From top: Cockermouth, Bill Bailey and Tiger © Cockermouth MRT; Derby team members with Warwick Davis © Derby MRT; Buxton with Bill Turnbull © Buxton MRT; Jo Brand on her 'hell of a walk' accompanied by Glossop team members © Glossop MRT.

**ONE HELL OF A WALK FOR SPORT
RELIEF: JANUARY 2016**

Glossop team members walked a while with the feisty comedian during her efforts to complete the walk in the face of blisters, aching limbs, uncertain terrain and good old Storm Jonas with its driving rain, hail and 60mph gale force winds which literally blew her off her feet. By the finish line in Liverpool, she had clocked up 135.7 miles from east to west across the width of the country and raised £1,159,220.

A fantastic effort by Jo. And just to complete the name-dropping, Jo was joined along the way by some of our other MR pals (and some yet-to-be-pals) including Bill Bailey, John Bishop, Billy Bragg, Alan Davies, Lesley Garrett, Sue Johnston, Gabby Logan, Lee Mack, Davina McCall, Louise Minchin and Ricky Tomlinson.

CELEBRITY WATCHING

NEWS LOG



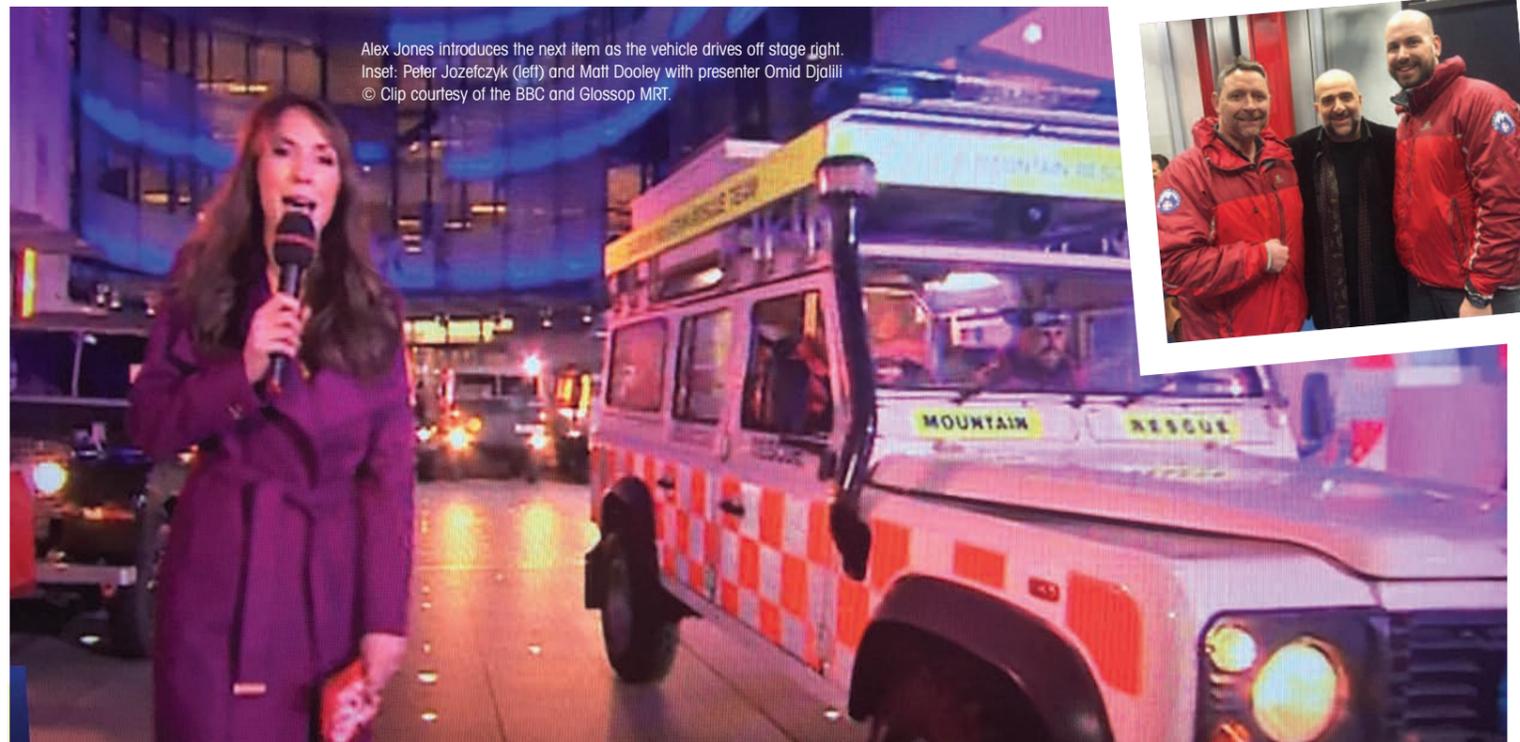
Guy Pocock (left) presents the award to Dave Freeborn.

**MOUNTAIN RESCUE FILM
TAKES TOP AWARD IN
SHORT FILM COMPETITION:
OCTOBER 2015**

The judges had twelve short films to choose from and the six-minute promotional film, directed and produced by Dave Freeborn, won first prize in the documentary category.

The winner attracted a £100 prize – which Dave donated straight back to the film appeal campaign*. As a commercial filmmaker and long-time mountain rescuer, Dave was in a unique position to show the breadth of work undertaken by rescue teams across England and Wales.

***TO DONATE TO THE FILM APPEAL CAMPAIGN, AND HELP SUPPORT MOUNTAIN RESCUE VOLUNTEERS ACROSS ENGLAND AND WALES, GO TO JUSTGIVING.COM/MOUNTAINRESCUEFILM15. THANK YOU.**



Alex Jones introduces the next item as the vehicle drives off stage right. Inset: Peter Jozefczyk (left) and Matt Dooley with presenter Omid Djalili © Clip courtesy of the BBC and Glossop MRT.



STAR TURN ON THE ONE SHOW FOR GLOSSOP: JANUARY 2016

Thanks to a feature about Land Rover Defender production coming to an end, Glossop team members Matt Dooley and Peter Jozefczyk found themselves centre stage on prime time evening telly, along with one of their team vehicles. Researchers for BBC's 'The One Show' contacted the team after discovering they'd been involved with delivering a baby in the back of their Defender during the bad winter of 2009/10. With Peter driving, Matt was in the 'hot seat' facing the microphone, coolly answering questions about the team's involvement in the floods in Cumbria, York and Salford, amongst other things. And presenter Omid Djalili clearly bonded with Matt offering that, should his current employment falter, the latter had a fine career ahead of him as an 'Omid Djalili lookalike'. Great PR for Glossop and mountain rescue in general.



Farewell to old friends as a new era begins

Main photo: Sea King at rest © Judy Whiteside.

In 2015, mountain rescue in England and Wales bade a fond and very heartfelt 'farewell' to the military search and rescue (SAR) crews and aircraft with which members had worked so closely over many years. The familiar sight and sound of the yellow Sea King helicopter has been replaced by new aircraft in a distinctive red and white HM Coastguard livery.

The venerable Sea Kings had come to the end of their operational life. The move to the civilianised SAR delivery structure was completed in 2015 and is gradually being embraced.

The great news is that the new aircraft are exceptionally good SAR platforms with de-icing, advanced avionics, better winches, longer range, faster speed and very high overall reliability.

The new aircraft are crewed by many of the familiar and highly experienced crews who previously flew the Sea Kings supporting our operations. As such, in many locations, we have superb new aircraft crewed by exceptionally experienced search and rescue aviators who already know our teams — a great combination for us and for casualties in our mountains.

The change of aircraft and provider is just one part of the equation. The Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) has also moved from the military

environment at Kinloss Barracks to a new home at the National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) at Fareham. This new facility houses a state-of-the-art coordination environment which covers the whole of the UK.

To help ensure that this change is successfully managed for MR teams, the SAR-H Migration Group, led by John Hulse of the Ogwen Valley MRO, has been working very hard with the MCA, NMOC and Bristow Helicopters. They have agreed the training provision, developed the training materials, supported teams and worked closely with partners to get the best possible operational service and the smoothest possible handover.

'The work will continue for some years yet,' said John, 'and it is good to see everyone in MREW actively engaging with the new partners, developing protocols and helping to shape the future of land SAR together.'

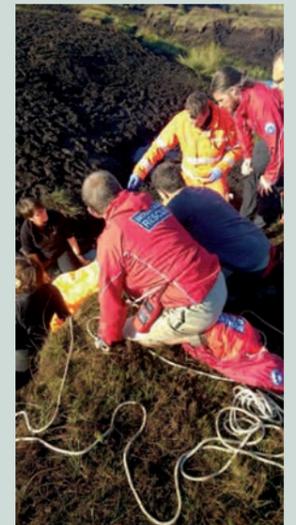
Early days...

- In Wales, the Caernarfon base began operations in July and the St Athan base began operations in mid-October.
- Other bases covering England and Wales are on Humberside, at Newquay in Devon and Prestwick in Scotland.
- The advanced avionics and vision equipment of the S-92A helicopters have already been useful operationally in the hills and the new aircraft also have a very stable hover.
- The downwash from the new aircraft is stronger than the Sea Kings and teams have been training to cope with this. Eye protection has become a priority and teams are adapting to manage those at the scene of an incident to keep them safe and clear of the downwash.
- The operational rate at Caernarfon in the summer months surprised everyone with the base completing 107 SAR operations within 30 days, making it by far the busiest SAR-H base in the UK.
- The higher airspeed of the S-92A now means that the aircraft is frequently on-scene significantly faster than the Sea King.



COAST TO COAST WALKER CAUGHT OUT BY NINE STANDARDS BOG:

Kirkby Stephen team members were forced to employ a rarely-used technique when a young man got stuck in the notoriously boggy ground near the Nine Standards summit during his Coast to Coast attempt. He was well and truly sunk in and had to be dug out by team members with their bare hands. Once extracted and checked over, he was given a lift in the air ambulance and then one of the team Land Rovers back to their base, but happily was back on his Coast to Coast trek the next day, complete with heavy rucksack. He and his walking pal went on to finish the route and sent the team these pictures of the rescue — congratulations to them for not being put off!





CASUALTY THANKS TEAM FOR 'SAVING HIS LIFE': NOVEMBER 2015

Mountain biker Andrew Morton had nothing but praise for the rescue team he credits for saving his life when he careered off his bike breaking a bone in his neck. The actions of Rossendale and Pendle team members, and Andrew's quick-thinking friends, undoubtedly saved him from paralysis or worse.

When his bike hit a stone and he went over the handlebars, landing on his neck, Andrew heard it crack. 'I knew right then it was serious. My friends told me not to move and called the team straight away. I can't thank them enough for what they did because it could have been much worse for me – I could be in a wheelchair or worse'.

Andrew was put into a neck brace and stretchered over fields and fences to the team vehicle before being taken to Royal Preston Hospital where he spent three weeks, then wore a brace for twelve weeks after his discharge.

His wife Janice was also out biking when she heard about the accident. 'I had to cycle home and change into dry clothes before making my way to the hospital. On the way I got another call saying he was going to Preston, to the spinal unit, and I knew then it was serious. What the team and his friends did was absolutely amazing.'

In fact, the incident inspired Janice and her cycling group to ride the 120-mile Sandstone Way mountain bike route between Berwick-on-Tweed and Hexham, raising more than £1,500 for the team. We wish Andrew a full recovery.



Photo © NEWSAR.

STOLEN KIT AND DAMAGED VEHICLES STUN TEAM MEMBERS: MAY 2015

North East Wales Search and Rescue made a desperate appeal when their team doctor Tom Beach had his vehicle broken into and a rucksack containing £1,300-worth of equipment stolen, just hours after he'd taken part in a rescue on Moel Famau.

'It was obvious the red Grivel 451 rucksack, first aid kit and their contents belong to a member of a mountain rescue team,' said the team's Becky Waudby. 'While some of the items are standard things you'd find in any rucksack, such as a climbing harness and head torch, others are clearly labelled with mountain rescue livery, including Munro and Fitzroy jackets and a Petzl helmet.'

Despite the appeal, the kit was never returned, presenting the team with the prospect of replacing it with team funds already earmarked for other items. They also spoke of their gratitude at the public response to their news, as donations to the team rose sharply soon afterwards.

If theft of a team rucksack wasn't bad enough, over in Llanberis, vandals surpassed themselves in early June, effectively putting one of the busiest teams in the country out of action thanks to three damaged vehicles. Two of the team's Land Rovers and another vehicle were vandalised while parked at the rescue base in Nant Peris.

NEWS & INCIDENT LOG



Photo © Llanberis MRT.

Only days before, team members had been praised for their exceptional bravery when they put their own lives at risk to save swimmers in difficulty during an incident in which two men died. How disheartening to then report that all three vehicles had been disabled after an attempted theft of the vehicle doors. The perpetrators also cut through a number of wiring looms in an attempt to disable the alarms.

The incident sparked an amazing response from so many people. Within days, the team reported having received huge support: financial donations, parts, vehicles, repairs and time. A long list of thank yous included Land Rover (locally and nationally), local garages, fellow mountain and cave rescue teams (neighbouring and further afield) CCTV experts and many individuals. North Wales Police offered vehicles and garaging and help with the press. And, needless to say, social media proved its worth in spreading the news.

BRINGING NEW MEANING TO THE TERM 'MONEY LAUNDERING': DECEMBER 2015

Ray Griffiths has the unenviable task of collecting up the teams's donation boxes from around Patterdale. Quite a task for any team at the best of times but, post-floods it presented a whole new challenge: how to dry out the contents of the boxes before banking them.

The box in the Tourist Information Centre in Glenridding survived all three attempts by Mother Nature to destroy this beautiful Lake District village but the cash inside was a little soggy to say the least. Cue Ray's ingenious 'money laundering' technique: one Lakeland rotary airer and one piping hot stove. Job done in no time and fivers duly banked. The team wants to say thank you to everyone who might have contributed to this particular box towards the end of last year – you can be absolutely sure your money is now safely with the team (not to mention spotlessly clean and crisply folded)!



Photo © Patterdale MRT.



Photo © Penrith MRT.

GO CATCH THAT SHEEP!: BLOOD, SWEAT, LAUGHTER AND TEARS IN A YEAR PACKED WITH OVINE RESCUE TALES

Teams across England and Wales are regularly called to rescue a wide array of animals, stuck in any number of tight spots. Sheep especially, contrary to popular belief, have a habit of going their own way as Penrith team members discovered in June 2015.

The team received a call when a farmer reported that one of his flock had panicked while being gathered, jumping into the lake and swimming across to an island. It seemed a straightforward rescue: five team members would paddle across to the island to gently encourage the hapless animal into a position where they could secure it in the boat. The hope was that it might be exhausted and compliant. The sheep, however, had other ideas. It was far from exhausted and evaded all attempts to rescue it, leaping back into the water and swimming back to shore.

Concerned for the animal's welfare, one team member used his 'advanced paddling techniques' to hook a paddle under the sheep's horns and grabbed hold until they were all safely back on the right side of the water. Job done. Except that, no sooner had the team departed, the thankless animal promptly jumped straight back in and swam back to the island!



Photos © Cockermouth MRT.

Sometimes, the outcome is more tragic. In December 2015, fresh from a weekend in Carlisle, assisting the flood rescue effort, Ogwen team members barely had time to drive home to north Wales and hang their soaking kit out to dry before they were called to a local flooding incident to help rescue an entire flock of sheep in the Conwy Valley. The farmer had watched in horror as 170 pedigree Welsh ewes were swept away in a torrent of water when a section of embankment gave way near Llanwrst. Sixty-six sheep drowned or died from exhaustion despite frantic efforts by himself and a local vet, who both swam across the water-filled fields to reach the traumatised animals.

Six sheep still needed rescuing when team members arrived with their inflatable dinghy. Only three could be ferried at a time and one ewe died en route. Two were in such a bad state they didn't survive the night.

In March 2015, six pregnant Swaledales were saved from a twenty-foot Cumbrian ravine. The farmer called Cockermouth team out to Croasdale Beck in Ennerdale, where the sheep were stuck but it was quickly going dark so the rescue was postponed



till the morning. Next day, the team devised a pulley system with one team member standing in the stream, attaching one sheep at a time to the pulley. His teammates then hauled the six Swaledales to safety. 'We're always happy to support our local farmers', said a team member. 'Over the years we've rescued a whole range of animals: a raven, goats, a horse and numerous dogs'. Echoing rescue team members everywhere.



Main photo: Andy Peacock and Corrie at work © Michael Lishman. Top right: Search dog Bute © Christyne Judge.

Search dog and handler at work

Andy Peacock is a member of Patterdale MRT and a mountain search dog handler for collie Corrie. Together, they work as part of the Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs. This is his story of a search on Helvellyn, the third-highest point both in England and in the Lake District, during 2015.

The pager on my belt warbles urgently, alerting me to a possible search. It's a wintry night in February and two walkers are overdue so I grab my kit and put an excited search dog in the car, not relishing the idea of heading out in the conditions. At base, just as we're formulating plans, the phone rings. The walkers have turned up.

But there's a second call: a 68-year-old man, climbing and walking on Helvellyn, is also very overdue. A large scale search of the Helvellyn massif is launched involving Patterdale team and our neighbours, Keswick MRT, as well as all available search dogs.

After meticulous planning, Corrie and I are given the search area of Striding Edge, Swirral Edge and the headwall of Helvellyn, with another search dog joining us as soon as possible. It's a short journey to Greenside Mines before heading on foot up to Red Tarn outflow. It's quite icy so I put on my micro spikes and set off with Corrie, out searching in front. Al, my colleague and navigator for the night, is just behind.

We make good progress, with Corrie working hard in the strong winds. By the outflow, the wind is gale force and the temperature has plummeted. It's bitterly cold so Al and I stop to put on as many warm layers as we can. The wind direction makes it sensible to start searching the ground between the tarn and the Swirral Edge path before moving onto the headwall and Striding Edge. Al, using his GPS, takes a mid-line to help me keep orientated, while Corrie and I zigzag between the path and the tarn.

A little way along the edge, it becomes quite steep and icy so the micro spikes are swapped for full crampons, my walking poles for an ice axe. The wind is now coming down from the top of Helvellyn so I work Corrie into the wind and she's able to clear a lot of ground without the need for climbing right to the top corner of the path. Satisfied that part of our search area is clear, we move

onto the headwall. This area is very steep with plenty of ledges and gullies and tonight they're covered in a layer of snow that was quite unstable.

I can see the eerie blue glow from Corrie's illuminated search collar moving along the edges above us and over the many rock outcrops. There's evidence of snow slides down to Red Tarn and, as we go on, we come across avalanche debris from a larger slide. I call Corrie back to us and sent her off to search the avalanche tip, while Al and I dig a hasty pit to check the current snow conditions.

We start to approach one of the main gullies on Helvellyn when Corrie suddenly takes off. I can tell by her speed and urgency she's picked up a scent. By this time, another search dog is working on Striding Edge and various team members are on the summit searching too.

As our dogs work by air scenting, they don't discriminate who they are searching for and may pick up any human scent carried in the wind, so Corrie might just be picking up on the other rescuers. She shoots down into the gully and straight across before quickly climbing out, picking her way up and over the rock buttress in an incredible display of agility, at home on the steep, exposed terrain.

I watch her work, knowing she will return and indicate by barking at me if she finds anything. She zigzags up and down the outcrop, nose held high into the wind. She's definitely onto something! Then her body language changes — either the scent has been lost or there's nothing there — so I call her back. Al and I give her some fuss before sending her into the gully to search as high as she can, all to no avail.

We have a quick chat and decide to alter our plan, double back and lose height at the same time. We're keen to return to the avalanche debris. As we set off, Corrie suddenly decides she wants to head down too — but in the opposite direction!



I can see the beam of a search torch in the distance as the other handler covers Striding Edge. Suddenly, I hear Corrie barking. Thinking she may be picking up on the other handler's scent, I make my way over to the lip to call her back. She appears at the edge, barking excitedly, then turns around and disappears again. This is part of the 'find sequence' which enables the dog to get the handler to the missing person by barking or 'indicating' and running between the two. When I get to the lip I shine the strong white beam of my search torch down the slope... Rock... Dog... Rock... No. Wait a minute. That looks like a person lying in the snow...

'Al, Corrie's found him!' My heart races as I make my way down, breathlessly trying to send a Find message over the radio. We arrive, make ourselves and the casualty safe, then begin first aid.

Soon we have doctors and a stretcher on scene, rope systems ready to lower the casualty down to Red Tarn. Due to the weather, the Sea King is unable to fly into Red Tarn basin so lands much further down the fell. Members of two MR teams and six dog handlers work seamlessly and tirelessly to treat and evacuate the casualty.

Very sadly, the gentleman, who was experienced and well-equipped for the conditions, later passes away in hospital. I know Corrie played a crucial part and, along with the professionalism and dedication of the other rescuers, given him the best chance of survival. We feel it acutely in rescues such as this but we train hard and harder still.

The search dogs play a vital role. I feel very honoured to serve alongside such people — and completely overwhelmed to have the privilege of working Corrie. Words are really never enough!



Photos © Andy Harbach and Judy Whiteside.



Royal connections in North Wales

Each year, Mountain Rescue England and Wales works with others in the Princes' Charities Forum to enable sick or disadvantaged young people and their families to take part in a fun-filled day of outdoor adventures. In June 2015, it was hosted by Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation and involved team members from across the six North Wales teams.

'We worked with five youngsters from Centrepont, five children from Child Bereavement, six from Place2Be and five WellChild families,' says Ogwen's Chris Lloyd, 'and had them walking, searching, climbing and abseiling as well as learning a bit about how mountain rescue works.'

'The feedback we've received makes it clear how memorable and enjoyable it was for those who took part — and I

...the memories will stay with them for a lifetime.

know that's true for team members too. The hard work pays off with all the smiles we see. Good teamwork, good results.'

The adults who accompanied the Place2Be children couldn't have been more impressed by the day's events: 'All these children were very deserving of the trip, for overcoming issues in their personal lives. This day had a huge impact on them and I'm sure the memories will stay with them for a lifetime.'

The Child Bereavement UK team were enthusiastic too, thanking team members for a fabulous couple of days. 'It was a tremendous experience for all of us. You

made the experience so challenging and yet positive for all of our group. They haven't stopped talking about it!'

Then, in November, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge themselves were in North Wales and met with mountain rescuers to see how outdoor activities can contribute to good mental health, especially for young people.

'Mental health charities, especially those working with young people, are a key focus for the Duchess of Cambridge,' says Mike France, MREW chairman, 'and the programme for the day had been put together by MIND. It was great that the couple combined their interests with a visit to an outdoor centre that included both rescue and mental health charities.'

As it turned out, the Royal couple's time with MR was also one of the most photogenic parts of their day-long programme. The next day's newspapers — including The Times — were full of MREW red jackets, climbing helmets and big smiles as both the pair tried out the climbing wall at The Towers Outdoor Education Centre in Capel Curig. In a year when the Ogwen team celebrated its 50th anniversary these Royal connections and events seemed more appropriate than ever.

MIND and MREW

Mental health charity, MIND, launched its Blue Light Programme in August 2015, aiming to extend its support for those in the paid emergency services to search and rescue volunteers working in England.

'Being involved in search and rescue can take a toll on volunteers,' says Bill Whitehouse, a trustee of the Mountain and Cave Rescue Benevolent Fund and chairman of the British Cave Rescue Council. 'MIND recognised that they could support the mental health of team members in various ways. They set up an information and advice line for volunteers and their families, resilience training courses and a series of booklets on seeking help, mental wellbeing and managing stress and anxiety. It's good that the potential problems are recognised and I hope we've been able to raise awareness and prevent the worst symptoms among mountain rescuers.'

Who are the other charities?

Centrepont provides shelter and support to homeless young people, helping them develop skills for a better future. Prince William is patron.

WellChild helps seriously ill children and their families, enabling many terminally ill children to leave hospital and return home, whilst also supporting their siblings and parents. Prince Harry is patron.

Child Bereavement UK supports bereaved families, and provides training to professionals across the entire spectrum of child bereavement. Prince Harry is patron.

Place2Be is a new charity to this event. It provides emotional and therapeutic support in schools, helping build children's resilience through talk, play and creativity. The Duchess of Cambridge is patron.

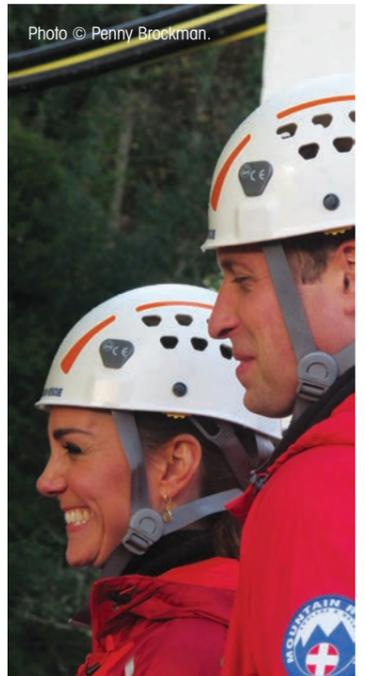


Photo © Penny Brockman.

Eighty years, above and below



Throughout 2015, many teams were posting on their social media channels about the demise of the Land Rover Defender. CRO, however, didn't join in because they've just been involved in putting the finishing touches to the newest member of their fleet: a Land Rover Defender!

The new vehicle is one of the last 130 spec Defenders, now out of production. The vehicle was finally put on the run in early February, 2016, replacing the team's W-reg 'CRO 2', which they say 'will eventually sail off into the sunset, after carrying out a few more fill-in duties for us'. As the photos show, it might still be a Land Rover, but there's been a fair few things change since the 1970s!

The Clapham-based Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO) celebrated eighty years in the business in 2015. One of only three teams in the UK who operate above and below ground, they list mountain bikers, parapentists, canoeists, off-roaders, cave divers, climbers and, of course, casual visitors, passing wild life and grounded helicopters amongst the many they have helped.



Since 1935, the team has attended more than 2,700 incidents, involving 3834 people, aged from five months to 87 years, 245 lambs, 214 sheep, 77 dogs, thirteen calves, nine cows, nine ducks, one bullock, one highland heifer, one cat and a rabbit, plus a wide variety of objects. More recently, they assisted in the recovery of a coastguard helicopter which had found itself bogged down on their patch for five days.

It was an accident at Ginging Hole in October 1934 which led to the formation of a more formal rescue service. A group of Moor and Fell Club members had reached the final chamber of the pot, when one of them displaced a boulder on the notoriously rotten scree, which crashed into his right leg, breaking it in two places. The night was cold, wet and swathed in fog as rescuers fought to recover Weetman alive.

His own clubmen hauled him up the final 40-foot pitch but once there he refused to move again, his leg painfully bound in an improvised splint. It was many, many hours before Weetman was finally hauled up the final surface pitch, put on the stretcher and carried to the hut where he was stripped and wrapped in hot blankets and hot water bottles before carriage through a blinding rainstorm to the waiting ambulance.

By the following month, a new rescue organisation had been proposed. At a meeting attended by representatives from all the major rambling and caving clubs at the time, Norman Thornber, Reg Hainsworth, and Godfrey Wilson were appointed as wardens, Cliff Downham as secretary. Thornber also took on the role of 'press correspondent'. A list of equipment was agreed and a letter sent to Settle police outlining cooperation on rescues. A number of circulars went out to hostel keepers and farmers and the Central Rescue Organisation became officially operational in February 1935. Three years later, the name was changed to the Cave Rescue Organisation.

In the early days, cavers were called from far and wide, Leeds, Bradford, Burnley, Accrington and Lancaster. Indeed, until the late-1970s, teams from all those towns would often meet on an ad hoc basis to familiarise themselves with new discoveries and equipment.

During the latter part of the 1930s, there were six recorded incidents. The first recorded incident was 9 June 1935 at the Gaping Ghyll winch meet, when a caver was injured. The first recorded fatality in a cave was on 7 May 1936 at Alum Pot, near Selside, when Mabel Spinks was hit by a falling rock. At the time, some thought the rock may have been thrown down by a passer-by.

The most significant incident was at Rowten Pot in Kingsdale, near Ingleton on 9 May 1939, when a caver fell off a ladder on the big pitch and landed on the ledge, breaking his leg. He later rolled off the ledge and down the next pitch, landed in water and drowned. The subsequent rescue by the fledgling CRO was a lengthy affair and attracted massive media attention.

World War Two interfered somewhat with most caving activities. No incidents were recorded until late-1946 when Harold Sargent, aged 30, an RSM in the Royal Engineers, became exhausted, fell fifteen feet from a ladder and later died from hypothermia. Only a month before, whilst climbing in the Himalayas he was said to have fallen several hundred feet and landed on a ledge, where he lay for three days before being carried a hundred miles to hospital!

The 1960s started off quietly enough, but as caving became more popular so the incidents increased — although, during this period, only 45% of rescues were from caves. Things were beginning to change!

The first diving fatality was in March 1964, in the main downstream sump of Lancaster Hole, involving Alan Clegg, an experienced caver and CRO treasurer.

Throughout the 1970s, CRO counted

several professional cavers as members. On a caving trip to France, Mike Meredith and Dusty Spencer met with French caver Fernand Petzl, who'd just started making ascenders, descenders and pulleys in his workshop at the foot of the Chartreuse. They brought some of his gear back to the UK, intent on selling it on to cavers here. Meanwhile, Ben Lyon, then chief instructor at Whernside Manor was already making caving ladders and importing Blue Water rope from the USA. He saw the potential and took on the buying, selling and distribution from the front room of his cottage. Climbing technology was changed for good.

The eighty years have seen many a story, and not without tragedy close to home. In March 1986, team member Dave Anderson drowned while searching for two missing cavers below the flood level in Rowten Pot, earning a posthumous Distinguished Service Award.

In 2009, a £130,000 extension to CRO HQ at Clapham provided a new control room and storage facility and, the following year, 75 years after its formation, received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

Above-ground rescues have become more frequent and the team's ability to deal with water underground has easily transferred to the waterfalls at Ingleton, for example, a frequent entry in the incident stats. And the numbers have steadily risen. In 2015, team members recorded 2377 'volunteer hours' over 82 incidents. The Cave Rescue Organisation currently has over 80 rescuers on its books — an operational list of 52 plus a further 36 in a support role — regularly called to perform mountain and cave rescue duties, as well as more wider community support such as missing person searches and floods.

Facing page: The team of 1976 line up with their equipment outside their depot. Insets: Land Rovers past and present. Top: Rescuing the rescuer as team members help recover the marooned S-92 helicopter © CRO.

NEWS & INCIDENT LOG

JAVED TAKES ON THE CHALLENGING MONTANE SPINE RACE, TWICE: JANUARY 2016

The Montane Spine Race is 'a 268-mile, non-stop, uncompromising winter challenge encompassing the entire Pennine Way. Widely recognised as one of the most demanding national trails in Britain'. So says the race website. Javed Bhatti upped the ante in January when he set out to run the route in both directions in aid of mountain rescue. And he did it – possibly the first time 'the double' has been achieved in winter conditions.

The 52-year-old was one of only 24 ultrarunners to complete the race at Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders. Yet, despite the event being dubbed the most brutal race in the country, he promptly turned around and ran the route southwards, a total distance of 862km (536 miles). His initial aim was to raise £500 for Mountain Rescue England and Wales but he quickly passed the £5,000 mark.

The Lichfield-based runner arrived at the southern end of the Pennine Way in Edale shortly after 6.30pm on the Sunday, just over fifteen days after leaving the Peak District village on his northern leg. Cheered on along the way by members of the various teams whose patches cross the race route, he was greeted at the Nag's Head by, among others, members of the Edale team.

He'd always planned to do a double and had hoped to do the second leg a little faster than the first but, unfortunately, the weather was against him, what with snow, ice and the wind blowing straight in his face. Nevertheless, it was a fantastic achievement by Javed. No wonder he was smiling! On behalf of mountain rescue, thank you.



Photo © Edale MRT.

FIRST CALL FOR S-92 HELICOPTER: JUNE 2015

At the Princes' Charities Day in North Wales, wistful talk about the demise of the yellow bird met mischievous speculation about who would be the first to call its newly operational red and white successor, once the Caernarfon base went live the following Wednesday. Would it be Llanberis? Or Ogwen? And how soon would it be?

Well, the speculation didn't last too long. Wednesday started out warm and sunny and two young couples from Somerset, who were staying in North Wales for a couple of days, set off to climb Y Garn, one of Snowdonia's 3000 foot peaks. But, by afternoon, conditions had changed: the skies had turned grey and a light rain was falling. The four had descended Y Garn and the path by the side of the Devil's Kitchen (Twi Du). They were continuing on the path towards the base of the Idwal Slabs which, en route, crosses the Idwal stream at a little gorge. This 'difficult' step is renowned for incidents. Unfortunately for the eighteen-year-old girl, she slipped on the wet rock sustaining a painful ankle injury. She tried to continue but the pain was too severe.

Mountain rescue was called at about 6.00pm. A helicopter evacuation seemed preferable so the request was made. And, of course, Idwal Slabs is Oggi's patch, so it was they who got the call. As team members arrived at Ogwen Cottage, the aircraft was already inbound to the casualty. The hasty party, complete with Titan stretcher, soon joined the winchman on the path, in the shadow of the Devil's Kitchen, as the helicopter circled in Cwm Idwal. Working as a team, the winchman and Ogwen team members soon treated the casualty, giving her analgesics and splinting her injured ankle. The aircraft came into the hover below the towering black cliffs. Using the 300 foot per minute winch, she was quickly winched aboard and whisked down to hospital in Bangor. The remaining three were walked down for tea and chocolate cake. And that was that. The Caernarfon-based S-92. Open for business.



Photos © Mark Lewis.

ROYAL POLO MATCH BENEFITS MOUNTAIN RESCUE: JUNE 2015

Polo was on the agenda again in June, when Mountain Rescue England and Wales was selected as one of the beneficiaries at the Beaufort Charity Polo Day. Mark Lewis (ICT Officer), Dave Close (Secretary) and Penny Brockman (Financial Director) travelled to Gloucestershire to represent us and join in the fun – and they were in good company, with the Irish Guards Appeal and the Household Cavalry Operational Fund also benefiting from the day – and Catherine Duchess of Cambridge and two year-old son George also amongst the spectators.

The day proved as entertaining as ever, with the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry taking opposite sides in the match, part of the Gloucestershire Festival of Polo. The action-packed game saw the Royal Salute team, including Prince Harry, fighting against the Piaget team, including our royal patron, the Duke of Cambridge. In front of an enthusiastic crowd, the match was at four goals each in the final chukka but, in the closing seconds, Prince Harry scored the winning goal.

'We were well looked after,' said Dave. 'The auction to raise funds for the charities was brisk, with a substantial amount raised for which we are extremely grateful.' So, once again, thank you to our patron and to the Beaufort Club for their hospitality and the donation.

C-FLIGHT 22 SQUADRON RAF VALLEY CLOCK UP THEIR 10,000 ON TRYFAN IN A BUSY DAY FOR THE OGWEN VALLEY TEAM: APRIL 2015

Easter Saturday 2015 was a big day for the Ogwen team, with multiple back-to-back jobs and amazing support from the RAF on three of the incidents. The calls began at 12.30pm with the final incident finished at 9.30pm, under a glorious moonlit sky.

The morning cloud lifted from the tops to reveal a superb day, a party of two middle-aged couples just four of the hundreds making the notorious scramble up the North Ridge of Tryfan. Unfortunately, as one of the women climbed up to her partner, she lost her footing and fell about 50 feet. She bounced a couple of times before coming to rest on a ledge, her fall halted by the second man in the party. Knocked off balance, he fell about 20 feet hitting his female partner. The first lady to fall suffered lacerations to the head and injuries to her arm, leg and possible pelvis. The man suffered head injuries and his partner suffered an ankle injury. Fortunately, a member of Keswick MRT was first on scene and able to call for mountain rescue.

Two team members carried out immediate casualty care. A Sea King was requested and a stretcher party mustered at Oggi base. As the stretcher party made its way up the North Ridge, the helicopter was able to get to the casualty site and eventually winch the three casualties aboard. Whilst they were flown to Ysbyty Gwynedd, the remaining man walked off the mountain with team members. After some refreshment at base, he was delivered to his friend's car (his friend having handed over the keys before being winched) and was able to drive to the hospital. The incident was concluded by about 3.30pm.

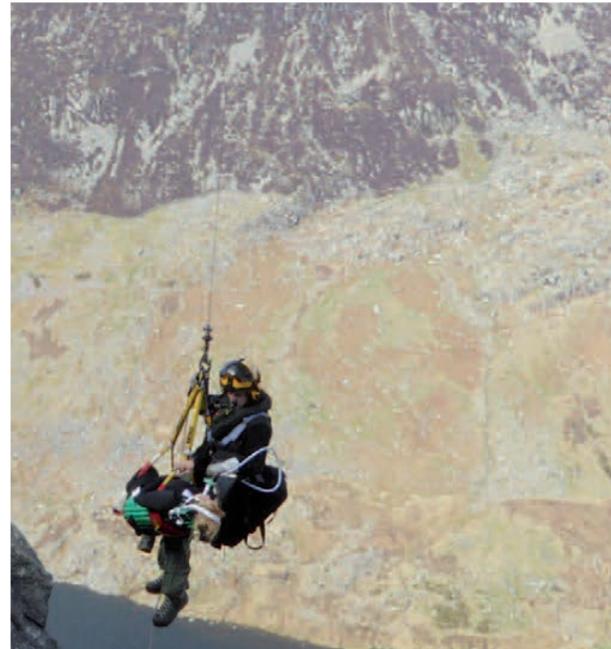
Whilst members were repacking kit and grabbing some late lunch, two people drove to base to report the sighting of a lone black Labrador stuck on a ledge on the lower slopes of Pen yr Ole Wen. At about 4.15pm, three team members drove down to the mass of visitors and cars at the Idwal Visitor Centre and went in search of the dog, now no longer visible from the road. As they reached the Point Last Seen, in came a further call-out for a casualty with a dislocated shoulder above Tryfan Bach. The search party of three returned to the valley floor and headed back up the lower slopes of the North Ridge, where a couple had deviated from one of the many paths in the area. Whilst descending a steep heather-covered slope,

the woman, from Equador, slipped and dislocated her shoulder whilst arresting her slide. Due to the steep location and the injury, the helicopter was requested once more – the 9999th rescue by C Flight, 22 Sqn RAF Valley. Our three-member team arrived almost at the same time as the winchman. Once more, a stretcher was deployed up the mountain side, the casualty treated and winched aboard. Her partner walked down with team members back to base for refreshment before being delivered to his car. This incident was concluded shortly after 7.30pm.

As team members were once again sorting kit, screams were reported to have been heard by a number of people in the Cwm Bochlywd area. So, shortly before 8.00pm, three team members set out to investigate. In the meantime, a man was reported by friends to be overdue. As the three team members made their way up to Cwm Bochlywd at dusk, a small cluster of people could be seen low down on the ascent to Bochlywd. On investigation, they found the injured woman sitting down with her partner, having been assisted by other walkers including the overdue man.

The young woman (in her early-30s and from London) had injured her ankle high up in Cwm Bochlywd. Assisted by her partner and fellow walkers, she'd made a very brave effort to descend the steep and rocky footpath. She and her partner had also been up the North Ridge of Tryfan earlier in the afternoon and descended into Cwm Bochlywd. They'd become separated for a short time, just as the woman injured her ankle. Her screams of pain and for the attention of her partner, could be heard throughout the Cwm on this glorious and calm early evening. With the onset of dusk and still some distance to the road, 22 Squadron were requested again.

Shortly afterwards, once again the familiar sound of the yellow Sea King was heard coming up the valley: Rescue number 10,000! The young woman was winched aboard and flown down to hospital in Bangor. Her partner joined team members walking down to the road. He was then driven to his car and given directions to the hospital. This incident was concluded at about 9.30pm on a glorious moonlit night in the Ogwen Valley.



Main photo © John Hulse. Inset © John Carrie.



Where to find your local team

Lake District

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

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:**
Cave Rescue Organisation
Search Dogs:
SARDA England

Yorkshire Dales

Mountain + Cave Rescue:
Cave Rescue Organisation
Upper Wharfedale
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
Eddale
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

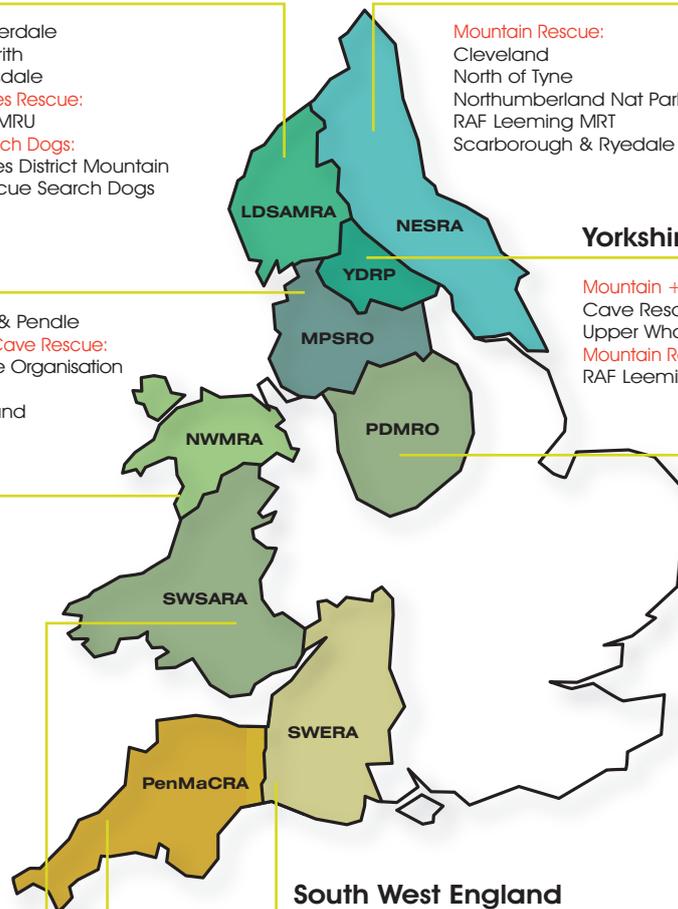
Peninsula

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
or cave 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 or caverescue.org.uk

Or find us on social media via
Facebook: facebook.com/MountainRescueuk • Twitter: [@mountrescueuk](https://twitter.com/mountrescueuk)
youtu.be/srkBVDU5BQo (English version) or youtu.be/utoHlnrBF8E (Welsh version)

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