

Mountain MAGAZINE Rescue



ISSUE 12

INCORPORATING MRC NEWS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN ENGLAND, WALES & IRELAND

APRIL 2005

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QUEEN**

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INCORPORATING MRC

EDITORIAL

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue 13 - July 2005

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

Front page pic

Bowland Pennine MRT and Air Ambulance on exercise. Photo: Alan Woodhead

Thank You

to everyone who has submitted news, articles and photographs for inclusion in the Mountain Rescue Magazine. If your contribution isn't here, don't worry. Everything is kept on file for future consideration, so please keep up the good work.

Editor's Note

Articles carried in Mountain Rescue Magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the MRC. Further, we do not accept responsibility for information supplied in adverts/advertorial.

...A WORD FROM THE TOP TABLE...

When I said 'I can lick anything' I didn't envisage licking stamps as Secretary. Fortunately most of the correspondence is done at my computer as I finish off the dinner wine. Only seven messages today. A prospective member needs to contact the nearest rescue team. A pharmacist seeks clarification about prescription only medicines. A team wants to order MR badges. Another in the I.O.M. seeks affiliation. A student wants help with a dissertation. Self confessed novices seek advice for their first winter ascent of Snowdon. A questionnaire, never simple, imposes its own deadline. The inference is that the Secretary is central to everything and will have a ready response or will quickly obtain one.

My job is made easier by the efficiency of Regional Secretaries who cascade information to every team within their region. The electronic distribution of MR minutes via email was a major step forward giving every team member access to current information. The excellent MR Magazine, although not my department, has similar aims. No more shall we hear members say 'If only I'd known' or 'When was that made available?' Let's put an end to the days when information was not disseminated or was filtered to suit the reporter or disappeared forever into the Leader's Black Bag.

Such is the thin edge of a wedge called parochialism. 'Beyond the team barricades doesn't exist or, if it does, matters not'. 'What has the MRC ever done for us?' Dare I mention the subsidised vacmats, casbags, ropes, stretchers, Rigging for Rescue, training events, insurance, legal support, casualty care manual etc? These things happen only when members cooperate at various times and at various levels to make collective progress

for mutual benefit. 'That's for the MRC to sort out. It's not for our members.' Pray tell what is mountain rescue but the members?

Collective progress invariably requires meetings and travelling. Our 2000 members are distributed over 500 miles between Cramlington and St Ives. Meeting partway is a compromise. A recent vote confirmed the venue for our November meetings - Police Training HQ in Hutton, although 150 miles from Cramlington and 370 miles from St Ives, is wonderful for the significant number of members who live within 30 minutes. These same members are less than happy about travelling 120 miles to Plas y Brenin for the May meeting although it suits many members who live in North Wales. Travel from Cramlington or St Ives incurs 260 and 380 miles respectively. The answer is that there is no answer. In that case we consider the objectives of the day. Dave Allan urged us to 'meet in the mountains' so we could enjoy them outwith the meetings. Plas y Brenin, as the National Mountain Centre, was an obvious choice and would strengthen our links with the BMC. I met with Mike Margeson in 2000 to formulate plans for a National Training Day back to back with the AGM. Mike used the event to introduce us to Rigging for Rescue. Subsequent training days have been equally successful and well attended. To facilitate this year's event, especially for long distance travellers, I have reserved beds in an excellent bunkhouse just along the road from PyB and I look forward to meeting, eating, drinking and chatting with members.

Indeed, everything I do is for the members, some of whom regard me as a good chap with C.H.A.P. standing for Courteous, Helpful, Approachable and Professional. So, members, should you approach me via secretary @mountain.rescue.org.uk I shall replenish my glass and deal with your correspondence.

Peter Smith MRC Secretary

...AND THE PRESS OFFICE..

Many of you out there will now be aware that a Transport Select Committee Report into Search & Rescue was published on the 2nd April. You may also be aware that the BBC reported that volunteer rescuers may be paid and their employers compensated for the disruption to their business.

Unfortunately, the press report seemed to be a knee-jerk reaction to the recommendations given in the committee report and is probably far more relevant to the RNLI than to MR. Nevertheless, a flurry of activity followed with people concerned about the public perception of us being paid for rescues or, worse still, the prospect of the government giving a chunk of money to the UKSAR Operators Group for them to dish out as they see fit amongst the various organisations involved in providing rescue services in the UK.

I have, since then, forwarded the full report to all regions and teams, together with the evidence

presented by Tony Jones and Penny Brockman on our behalf, so that some informed 'chatter' can take place. Without it, I think we're likely to expend a lot of energy speculating on what the government may or may not do. So far as I know, the Select Committee have to present their report to the House of Commons and relevant government departments, who then have 60 days to respond. Whether that results in any money forthcoming remains to be seen.

In the meantime, I believe we should continue lobbying parliament for what we want, irrespective of the other organisations who presented evidence, and see if we can make representations before any decisions are made.

Having said that I think the report is generally very supportive of the SAR services, particularly the voluntary element, and has now brought the whole subject more into the wider parliamentary domain. In my opinion this can only help the MPs who support us through their work on the All Party Working Group.

Andy Simpson MRC Press Officer

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Mike Margeson reports:– 'I have just been doing a review of the year for the MRC main meeting in May. People often ask 'What does the MRC do for us?' Well, the Equipment Sub Committee has had, as ever, a busy and productive year with, notably, contribution to the PyB training day, the first Equipment Inspection course and input at the UK MR Conference. We have also financially assisted forty three teams during the 04/05 financial year, and teams in all of the MRC regions have received financial support'.

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION COURSE 14 MAY 2005

The Equipment Sub Committee will be running an Inspection Course in South Wales on 14 May, at Central Beacons MRT HQ, Merthyr. Cost is £15 per person including a light lunch. The course will again be run by Phil Beard of Oldham team and is a grant-aided, recognised MRC course – not just for equipment officers but equally valuable to any team member. There are 24 places and it's hoped

another course will run later in the year. Further details and booking from Richard Terrell on 07971 191942.

BELL STRETCHERS

Peter Bell has notified Mike Margeson that a few stretchers have come in for service recently with the same two characteristics – bent joint pins and stiff, inflexible headguard webbing that appears never to have been tensioned. These indicate sustained poor user technique, not an occasional lack of familiarity with correct usage. **It is essential to insert a joint pin fully so that it engages in both portions of the joint mechanism.** Failure to do so jeopardises the integrity of the joint. Furthermore, a half engaged pin will bend slightly when the joint is tightened. Bent pins will make subsequent joint assembly difficult or impossible after repeated distortion. **Further the effectiveness of a Mark 3 Bell headguard depends upon its tautness.** After raising it, always tension it. Not doing so is like putting a seat belt on without fastening the buckle. Our thanks to Peter for his continued technical support.

MEMORY MAP

Following the recent publication of an article in *Computer Shopper*, which talks about Memory Map/Ordnance Survey and mountain rescue teams, it has become apparent that some teams may be using Memory Map software intended and licensed for individual use only. The currently available 'personal' licence restricts the use of the software to the individual who purchased it on his/her computer. It does not allow for use either by a team or by the individual on the team's behalf, or any use in a team vehicle or on a team computer. However, there are exceptions. If your team has purchased a 'commercial' copy from Memory Map, or if your team's software is the original Ordnance Survey issue and has been issued by your local police authority or emergency planning officer, it's okay to continue to use it. Both Memory Map and the Ordnance Survey raised the licensing issue as a concern and have been very fair so far, but this situation is worsening rather than improving. The MRC has appointed Mark

Moran to negotiate with Memory Map and Ordnance Survey on our behalf to obtain an appropriate licence at a suitable cost to enable teams to use the software. Further information on this will follow as it becomes available but, until then, teams should not use personal software under any circumstances. You may be aware that some Memory Map software is currently undergoing testing and development for MR use. This work is being undertaken under a development licence specifically issued for the purpose to the individual concerned. Should you need any clarification on the above please contact Peter Howells pHOWELLS@plHOWELLS.fsnet.CO.UK.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

In December, the Transport Select Committee issued a press statement announcing they were going to take evidence on search and rescue provision in the UK. Whilst this was primarily for the Maritime Sector, Mountain Rescue was requested to provide information to the UK Search and Rescue

committee. We also had the opportunity to make a direct submission. This document detailed the work of mountain rescue in England and Wales and included the approach we had made to government for support funding. We were subsequently invited to provide oral evidence in front of the committee – a

daunting prospect. In February, Tony Jones and Penny Brockman were interviewed, together with colleagues from ALSAR, for 40 minutes. This was filmed and can be found on the Parliament website. We continue to be in discussion with MPs and members of the House of Lords. The Treasury have responded to a letter from Lord Clark of Windermere in which the Treasury Minister stated he would await the report of the All Party Committee. As this is an election year, there will be the inevitable delay whilst the election campaign takes place so we must be patient as everyone knows the wheels of government turn slowly. Which doesn't mean sitting on our laurels – everyone can help to keep promoting government funding.

• Keep the lines of communication open with your MPs. Continuous campaigning to MPs will help them realise the importance of joining and supporting the All Party Committee.

• Promote the good work of mountain rescue through your local and the national press.

Keep Andy Simpson, MRC Press Officer, advised of any stories. If you have any direct questions relating to your approach to government please contact either Penny Brockman penny@pennybrockman.co.uk or Andy Simpson andy@andrewsimpsonadvertising.co.uk

NATIONAL TRAINING DAY SUNDAY 22 MAY

All team members are invited to this event. The aim is to enable the exchange of ideas about the management of six practical scenarios – namely the use of belay stakes, the practical problems of GPS mapping, dealing with

water safety, guideline techniques for rigging for rescue and a couple of medical scenarios. There is no upper limit on numbers although the organisers do need to know in advance how many wish to attend. It costs nothing to take part but you should organise your own transport and overnight accommodation if required. You will need full hill kit, including PPE. Responsibility for insurance lies within your own team – you should be covered under 'authorised training outside the home training area' – but please do check. The day runs from 9.00 am to 5.30 pm. For further information and booking, contact Richard Holmes on 0191 252 7485 or via r_n_holmes@hotmail.com

...AND IF YOU' RE HEADING FOR PLAS Y BRENIN...

If you're heading down to Plas y Brenin for the MRC meeting and AGM on Saturday 21 May, and/or the National Training Day on the Sunday 22 May, you might want to take advantage of some local accommodation. Peter Smith has reserved places at a bunkhouse barely five miles from Plas y Brenin which could enable you to attend your preferred events, get out on the hill and share a bottle of wine over the evening meal with members from all over the country. Option 1 is to book for Friday and Saturday night; Option 2 Friday night only; Option 3 Saturday night only. Each bed/night comes at just £7. Preference will be given to those booking both nights. Cheques to Peter in advance. Of course, by the time you read this, all the places may have been reserved, but it's worth mentioning, just in case! For further details, contact Peter on 01706 852335 or via secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

24 places. Everyone welcome. Date: Saturday 14 May Location: Merthyr Tydfil Contact: Richard Terrell 07971 191942

NATIONAL TRAINING DAY

100 places. Everyone welcome. Date: Sunday 22 May Location: Plas y Brenin Contact: Richard Holmes 0191 252 7485 r_n_holmes@hotmail.com

PARTY LEADER

30 places. This practical course promotes effective leadership of parties during a search and rescue operation, crucial to a successful outcome. Date: Weekend 8-10 July Location: Rishworth Contact: Mike Marsh 01204 654481 mjm@boltonmrt.org.uk

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS

30 places. This course addresses skills required by searchers in the field. It considers the vital role of search parties and how they maximise their efficiency and effectiveness. Date: 2-4 September Location: Bangor University Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE 3 Maes Tyddyn To Menai Bridge LL59 5BG 01248 716971

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

40 places. This course addresses the vital skills required to plan and manage a search operation. Date: 5-9 September Location: Bangor University Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE As above

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT (REFRESHER)

30 places. This course addresses the vital skills required to plan and manage a search operation. Date: 10-11 September Location: Bangor University Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE As above

MRC COURSES 2005

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Check out the website www.berghaus.com



INSURANCE UPDATE

Penny Brockman reports:– Once again it's been a busy period on insurance, and this could not have been achieved without all of the members of the insurance group. When you see them could you

give them a word of thanks – Tony Rich, Stuart Byatt, Peter Allwright and Stewart Hulse.

• MRC Website Members area

There is now an area specifically for insurance, containing copies of the

policies. This can be found as a link on the left hand side on the Home page. So when you need to provide a certificate of Public Liability you don't need to contact us – you can download it from the site. Frequently Asked

Questions (FAQs) will be placed on the website based on emails the insurance group received.

• Public Liability Policy

'An improvement was obtained in relation to Marine Liability under Civil



BE AWARE, AS IGNORANCE COULD PROVE TO BE VERY COSTLY

For many years I have taken an interest in the insurance cover provided for mountain rescue team members by police authorities throughout the UK. In 2004, I published a report of my findings. During this time, I have come across many horrendous anomalies and exclusion clauses which had been secreted away in the small print of certain police insurance policies, and never seen the light of day for years.

I am now glad to say that in many cases where a 'sight' of the FULL insurance policy has been possible, these exclusion clauses have been deleted and many personal insurance benefits have been reviewed for the better. Nevertheless, there is one area which seems to have been neglected which, in my opinion, is very important and essential for everyone in mountain rescue – from area secretaries to team officials and, of course, team members.

All regional secretaries should have a current copy, and certainly not an edited or word of mouth version, of their individual police force MR personal accident policy. It is common for the regional secretary to liaise with the police on such matters and then inform and send a copy to the officials/trustees of individual MRTs. The team officials should then make every team member aware of the conditions and benefits of that particular policy. Sadly, the information I am receiving from team members around the country is that many are unaware of the conditions of their police insurance policy.

If this is the tip of the iceberg and many MR team members are oblivious to their respective police insurance scheme, I would then suggest that the officials of MRTs are leaving themselves open to possible litigation for unknowingly not having the welfare of team members at heart regarding personal accident insurance.

All I can say, after reading some police insurance policies – which at times horrified me – is that every regional or MRT official should as a matter of urgency be making a bee-line for the appropriate police department at the first available opportunity and making sure every team member had an up-to-date copy of the policy. The police have no right to withhold insurance details from team members, when they are putting their lives on the line to rescue casualties, sometimes in very dangerous situations, and in appalling weather conditions.

I would think ignorance by MR officials of informing team members of their 'insurance rights' is no excuse and could prove costly if a mountain accident occurred to a team member. These observations are not intended to frighten or cast doubt on individual MR officials' competence. On the contrary, my aim is to safeguard them from what I have uncovered during my research, and to prevent what might happen if MRTs have not got their house in order regarding personal insurance.

Stewart Hulse MBE

Liability contract of Insurance where we negotiated with insurers an increase in the existing policy wording relating to water-borne craft. Previously the current exclusion restricted liability to those crafts that were unable to exceed speeds of 7 knots. This has now been extended to include craft unable to exceed speeds of 10 knots.

• Personal Accident

Work continues with Paul Forrester (ACPO) on establishing a central policy for Personal Accident. This requires information from all the teams so we can obtain a cost for this type of policy and move forward. Every team should have received a questionnaire from Stewart Hulse. Can you please complete this and return to Stewart.

• Trustee Indemnity Insurance

Stuart Byatt's professional background on insurance has enabled him to identify the limitations of the Trustee Indemnity Insurance policy. He spent many hours resolving who was actually insured under the MRC Trustee Indemnity Insurance. The result was not good news as no team/region trustees could be insured under this policy. To help resolve this situation, a policy was negotiated for teams and regions to purchase. A communication was sent out on the 1 March 2005 to regional secretaries to broadcast to the teams – contact your regional secretaries for a copy.

LAKE DISTRICT

Richard Warren (Secretary, LDSAMRA)

writes... 'Over the past 18 months Lake District teams have been working closely with the Cumbria Police and the RAF to develop working protocols for tasking both military and air ambulance helicopters. The MRT/Police/RAF protocol for requesting and operating with military assets has been working very effectively for some time now with very good relationships. However, discussions between LDSAMRA, Cumbria Police and Cumbria Ambulance Service, concerning tasking of air ambulance, are still a significant way off an agreed way forward. There is some light at the end of the tunnel as a protocol has already been agreed between the Lake District teams and the Great North Air Ambulance Service based at Teeside (GNAA). This was developed in full consultation with GNAA and has proven to be extremely effective for those occasions when an air ambulance is the most appropriate asset to be deployed. The issues that exist between the Lakes teams, the ambulance service and air ambulance have been raised at regional and national level and are currently being explored at the UKSAR operators group. We would encourage readers to spend time reviewing the article in this issue of Mountain Rescue and, for those with members access, reviewing the additional background information contained within the members area of the MRC website. Comments from MRTs in England and Wales, on the Confederation of Helicopter Ambulance Services (CHAS) draft Standard Operating Procedures, are being taken to the next meeting of the UKSAR Operators meeting.

'In the last issue of the magazine we reported on the recent survey of bridges in the Lake District having highlighted a particular problem in the Wasdale valley. The narrow concrete road bridge that leads to the Brackenclough National Trust car park and campsite, the Brackenclough Fell and Rock Hut and Wasdale Head Farm had been closed to vehicle traffic due to structural weakness. The bridge is currently undergoing strengthening work and was due to be open for road traffic by Easter. However, there have been delays and it is now expected to be some weeks

before it will be open. Whilst this situation continues, roadside parking remains a problem for walkers, climbers and campers. Enquiries should be made to the National Trust.

'Wasdale MRT has recently retired its ageing, but low mileage Ford diesel ambulance/people carrier, replacing it with a brand new Peugeot Boxer 2.5 Hdi ambulance. This 13-seater ambulance has seat belts fitted and equipment cage at the rear. Various makes and models, Mercedes Benz, Ford, Renault were considered but the best deal came from Allied Vehicles in Glasgow. Ian Hopley from Allied Vehicles came up with an extremely competitive price for the vehicle, which included the fitting of all lights and radios. If other teams are interested and require further details please contact the team secretary.' 'If you have any questions on this article or indeed any of the Lake District articles or statements made then please contact me and I will ensure that you receive a response.'

MID PENNINE

ROSSENDALE WAY IN A DAY BACKWARDS

The first Saturday in July will see upwards of 250 people setting off at dawn on the 46 mile Rosendale Way in a Day challenge walk – or the slightly less ambitious Halfway in a Day, a snip at a mere 22 miles! This annual fundraiser for **Rosendale & Pendle MRT** around the breath-taking head of the Rosendale Valley, this year follows a clockwise direction, enabling well seasoned half-wayers to experience the opposite end of the trail. The entry fee is £12.50 for adults and £7.50 for children under-16. As usual team members will be on hand all day providing food and drinks, followed by a well deserved meal on completion. Rosendale Way veterans know this is a thoroughly enjoyable day out, meeting new friends and catching up with old ones. If you fancy joining the fun, contact Judy Whiteside on rossyway@aol.com or 0161 702 6080 (before 9pm)

BOLTON AWARD

Bolton MRT have received a prestigious award for their 'outstanding search effort' in August 2004 during a two day search of the River Bollin in the Dunham Massey area of Cheshire for a missing 15 year old boy swept away in the river whilst it was in spate. The boy's body was later recovered by the Police Underwater Search Team. The team carried out an intense search of both the river's surface, using their kayak team, and the banking of the river in association with the GMFRS Rescue Boat, and GMP officers. The first day took place in atrocious weather conditions of very heavy rain with the hope that the boy could still be found alive. But as the search continued, hopes of finding the boy alive faded. The GMP Chief Superintendent's Commendation in the form of a Divisional Commander's award plaque was presented by Chief Superintendent (Retired) Dave Ryder to team leader Garry Rhodes. Chief



Inspector Nick Phillips said, 'We are proud of the immense professionalism and dedication shown by the volunteers from the Bolton Mountain Rescue Team. The river was raging at a dangerously high level while carrying a strong undercurrent. Without their skills and support the whole search effort would have been severely hampered. It fills me with immense pleasure to officially thank them for their help and hard work.'

CALL OUT THE CAVALRY

An item in the Burnley Express, on March 8, told a tale of multi-agency co-operation (not including mountain rescue on this occasion) so woeful it brought tears to your eyes. Whether they were tears of anguish or mirth depended rather on your point of view...

'The cavalry was called out to rescue a sheep stranded in a river. Two fire engines from Burnley, a rope rescue team from Blackpool, the Incident Support Unit from Accrington and an engine carrying a boat from Preston, set off for Pendle Water at the bottom of Barden Lane, just after 12.15 pm on Friday.

'The animal had escaped from a nearby field and made its way down a path to the river, which it had then tried to cross. It got stuck on a grass island in the middle of the rapidly flowing water. 'Because of new fire brigade rules, firefighters have to be very careful when dealing with any water rescues. Once the situation was assessed, the other emergency services were sent back to base. But it eventually took a total of 10 firefighters to rescue the frightened four-legged creature. They made an attempt to get to it with a ladder but that frightened the sheep, which then ran off towards the other side of the river.

'Coincidentally, two RSPCA officers driving past stopped to lend a hand and helped to catch the sheep with a special noose. They got to the river bank from a nearby resident's garden and lassoed it.'

Least said soonest mended, methinks...

AIR AMBULANCE JOINS EXERCISE

The last weekend in January saw **Bowland Pennine MRT** hosting their annual major exercise in Brennand Valley, set in recently opened access land owned by United Utilities, and with some of Trough's most challenging terrain. With Observers from other emergency services and organisations present, the team was tasked to locate, assess and recover eight casualties with a variety of injuries ranging from hypothermia through multiple limb fractures and pre-existing medical conditions.

The day was supported with the much appreciated co-operation of both Lancashire



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WASDALE MRT NEW VEHICLE CENTRE STAGE

REGIONALNEWS

Constabulary Air Support Unit and the North West Air Ambulance. The LanCon ASU was deployed in a search capacity with its thermal imaging camera and new live-feed download link proving highly beneficial for the team controllers. Having previously prepared the helicopter in its casualty evacuation configuration, they happily filled the gap left when the NWAAs was diverted to a priority emergency. For its own part, the NWAAs was invaluable in transporting personnel and equipment as well as evacuating casualties to waiting team ambulances, with some impressive flying and landing! Nick Mattock said, 'As both helicopters are in great demand, it was a rare opportunity to have both at once and gave us a fantastic opportunity to further develop our communications as well as our helicopter handling experience. Thanks to both crews for all their assistance.'

NORTH EAST

ANNUAL NESRA EXERCISE

The 2005 training event, hosted by **Teesdale & Weardale SRT**, saw 50 team members from across the region joined by the Great North Air Ambulance and police officers in a major search in the Upper Teesdale area. The purpose of the exercise was to test the operation of the NESRA joint search control during a large scale search. Whilst the team members were having a look at the GNAA helicopter and discussing joint operating procedures with the crew, team leaders were receiving initial reports of an exercise air crash in the Upper Teesdale area. The exercise was also visited on Saturday morning by several officers from Durham Constabulary including a Chief Superintendent (Gold Commander), Senior SOCO, Ops Planning staff, two POLSAs and the NESRA liaison officer – Inspector Kevin Tuck. Lynne Brockley, the Senior SOCO, gave a brief



guide to team members on the crime scene preservation aspects of dealing with a mass casualty air crash.

At 11am teams deployed to Upper Teesdale in dry, but very cold weather – although the forecast snow had not appeared the exercise scenario called for the upper dale to be impassable to road

ambulances due to 6-8 inches of snow and icy road conditions, not that unusual for Teesdale in February. NESRA Control was set up at the windswept Cow Green Reservoir, with team controls sited nearer to the search areas of Cronkley Farm, Widdy Bank Farm and Cow Green Dam. A cascading command structure saw team controls co-ordinating their own search groups on the ground and reporting up to NESRA Control. Communications between team controls and NESRA were on High Band, with NESRA Control also using the police Airwave system for contact with the police, MOD and ARCC (all played by members of the exercise directing staff). Airwave was also required so police could contact teams in the event of a real call out. As the morning passed, further information was given to NESRA Control identifying the crashed aircraft as an American fighter with a crew of two. There were also reports of a party of hill walkers overdue for a lunch booking at the Langdon Beck Youth Hostel. A very effective search plan led to the locating of the aircrew and a party of seven hill walkers who had been injured by debris from the crashed fighter – assisted by some excellent work from two SARDA handlers (the handlers made finds, not the dogs this time).

At around midday a team from the British Red Cross arrived at Cow Green and quickly established a casualty clearing station at Cow Green Reservoir. This consisted of around a dozen personnel with four air shelters and two Land Rover ambulances. The whole facility was ready to receive casualties within 40 minutes of arrival – very impressive. The afternoon was spent on a crag rescue of two casualties (with search groups from Swaledale and Teesdale working well together after some initial confusion), the recovery of one fatality and the walking off of the injured hill walkers. By 5.30pm the bulk of the work was over and the exercise ended in the face of approaching darkness and deteriorating weather. Everyone returned to Middleton in Teesdale for a welcome meal and debrief. Adam Hearn reports that key lessons were learnt. 'Accurate log keeping is especially vital in a large scale search, with multiple agencies involved and the likelihood of several handovers during a protracted operation. The computerised logging system used by TWSRT was very effective at capturing all the information received at

NESRA Control.

'The Control area needs to be secured and any visitors need to be dealt with in a separate area away from the controllers running the search.'

'The new High Band radio system provides both opportunities and potential problems. Regions need to ensure that common methods of referring



to channels are agreed and that all teams are clear on the intended use of each channel. The adoption of a UKSAR-wide voice procedure as discussed by the Communications Working Group (November 2004) will reduce delays and misunderstandings on radio nets.

'Teams need to regularly exercise with each other and other agencies to ensure that procedures work and are understood by all those involved. If a team is using its team control vehicle as NESRA Control then that team may be restricted in its ability to both control and move its own search groups if it has only one other vehicle available.'

'It's important to have clear methods of referring to incident sites and casualties, visiting teams will not have the benefit of local knowledge. Procedures need to be in place for search groups to be switched from the control of one team control to another to take account of geography, evolving tasks and communications problems.'

'Airwave is very useful for liaison with the police and access to the telephone network in areas not covered by mobile phones companies. Being a trunked system it also allows users many miles apart to communicate. When the national network is fully implemented, suitably equipped teams will be able to talk to each other from great distances on the way to incidents.'

'The use of mobile repeaters should be investigated. Suitable equipment could be left in a locked car to operate unattended providing High Band coverage to a difficult area without tying up valuable personnel.'

He concludes, 'NESRA wish to express their thanks to all those who took part in the exercise, both the MR teams and the casualties, GNAAS, police, BRC and landowners. The exercise could not have taken place without your enthusiastic participation – thank you.'

THEY LIKED THE ANTENNA SO MUCH THEY GOT ANOTHER ONE!

With the changeover from Low to High Band VHF **Teesdale & Weardale SRT** have purchased a new elevated antenna for their Control vehicle. The antenna fits on the 8 metre telescopic mast to improve contact with search groups. The Skymasts Low Band antenna the team have been using for many years has given sterling service. Durham Constabulary's Communications Workshop, which has provided maintenance and support to the team for many years, recommended another Skymast. The company has now offered to supply antennas to MR teams at cost. They offer a wide range of antennas including both High Band and combined High Band/TETRA for both base stations and mobiles. Contact Skymasts at www.skymasts.com or 0160 4498004



NORTH WALES

FORTY YEARS OLD

Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation was inaugurated forty years ago on 12 March 1965. Ron James founded the team at Birmingham Education Authority's outdoor education centre, Ogwen Cottage. Ron and his colleagues had been running a private mountaineering school at Ogwen cottage since the late 1950s. Before long this centre of



RON JAMES 1968

expertise was being called upon for mountain rescues in Northern Snowdonia. In the early 1960s the school was sold to Birmingham Education Authority which meant the staff could now enjoy school holidays. In 1964, when members of the staff were enjoying a summer in the Alps, one of the remaining members of staff had a serious fall. Without his colleagues at Ogwen Cottage, he had to rely on the old fashioned method of rescue which was to make up a rescue team of any passers by.

Ron realised there was a need for a team that could offer rescue cover for 365 days of the year and not just during 'term time'. He approached local mountaineering organisations such as the North Wales Mountaineering Club, a list of volunteers was drawn up and OVMRO was formed. Ron remained the senior team leader for a couple years before moving to IM Marsh College in Liverpool. Dr Tony Jones MBE then became Chairman. Following on with Ron's initiative, Tony developed the team and its members. Another prominent member was Dr Iuean Jones, whose Mountain Rescue First Aid training was taught throughout the UK.

OVMRO hit the headlines for the big search at Easter 1973 when four young boys on their Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme were missing for three days and the team has remained high profile ever since. In 1988, members carried out a rescue of four stranded paddlers on the Conwy Falls which was filmed by a local press camera man. Ten years later, members took part in a reconstruction for the

BBC's '999' programme. About that time, Tony was selected for 'This Is Your Life' and several of the team's clients appeared to thank him, and OVMRO, for successful rescues. In 1999, the team was filmed for nine months by a BBC crew who joined us on rescues, at committee meetings and at home. The documentary gave a good insight into the commitment given by team members.

Tony remained Chairman for over twenty years before passing the office to Roger Jones (the voice of Ogwen), another member from the early days. Most recently, KC Gordon has been Chairman. KC was one of Ron James' staff at the original Ogwen Cottage and was Secretary of the British Mountaineering Guides for many years. Contrary to popular opinion, Ogwen Valley MRO has not been based at Ogwen Cottage since 1975, but at Bryn Poeth at the east end of Llyn Ogwen, in a small water bailiff's cottage which the team has renovated and extended over the years. There are now two custom built Land Rover 130 ambulances, in stark contrast to the assortment of private vehicles used to transport members forty years ago. Another change is the extensive assortment of new and specialised equipment – back then, the equipment was basic, in short supply, scrounged and borrowed.

Search and rescue has changed too. Whilst clothing, equipment and training have improved, thus reducing the incidence of serious injury, hypothermia and missing persons, the number of rescues remain at between 50 and 60 per annum. And like other MRTs, many of these are due to use of the mobile telephone by inexperienced people.

OVMRO remains innovative, being one of the first to have a voluntary external audit, a web site and a supporters group. Recently, Kirk Mauthner came across from British Columbia to instruct a large number of team members in Rigg for Rescue.

The last forty years has seen major changes in mountain rescue. Many greatly assist the rescuer and the casualty – such as equipment, communications and helicopter support. However, the public expectation, the high standard of training and the cost of running a team puts a greater strain on the mountaineer who volunteers to help his fellow mountain user in his own time. Where will the next 40 years take us?

Chris Lloyd OVMRO

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PEAK DISTRICT

OLDHAM ABSEILS FOR ASIA

Members of **Oldham MRT** have decided to rerun their best fundraiser activity to date in aid of the Asian Tsunami Appeal. The sponsored abseil on Sunday 17 April will invite people to abseil off the top of the Municipal Offices in Rochdale, a drop of 60 metres. Team leader Mick Neild said, 'Many people secretly harbour a desire to abseil – and to climb – and it is simplicity itself to be involved in a sponsored abseil. The hardest bit is getting the sponsorship together, but for this cause we expect it to be an easier task. We have chosen to set a £100 minimum sponsorship as we feel that this is very achievable and we aim to have about 150 participants.' The team easily reached its target number of abseilers last time so hopes are high for the April event. The plan is to donate the funds to a Sri Lankan charity focused in helping children.

SOUTH WEST

CHANGE OF NAME FOR DARTMOOR RESCUE GROUP

Dartmoor Rescue Group has undergone a reorganisation with the former Sections now separate and independent charities, with DRG continuing as the umbrella charity for the four teams. As a result they have new names and charity registration numbers. The former North Moor Section has adopted the new working name of **North Dartmoor SRT**. Their address has also changed to PO Box 52, OKEHAMPTON EX20 3WZ. If you require any further information please contact Tom Baxter on 01837 52920. For those unfamiliar with the background Dartmoor Rescue Group was formed in 1968 after a meeting in Tavistock where a small group of local moorland enthusiasts gathered together to start helping the police with search and rescue on

NOT STRICTLY REGIONAL BUT...

From the Oldham MRT BULLETIN, proof that life should be lived backwards...
The most unfair thing about life is the way it ends. I mean, life is tough. It takes up a lot of your time. What do you get at the end of it? A death. What's that? A bonus? I think the life cycle should be reversed and here's the proof.
You should die first and get it out of the way. Then you live in an old age home (you get kicked out when you're too young). You get a gold watch, and then you go to work. You work forty years until you're young enough to enjoy your retirement. You do drugs and alcohol, party and get ready for high school. You drive around like a maniac until they take your license away. Then you go to primary school, become a kid, play and have no responsibilities. You become a little baby, whine and bitch about everything, and people HAVE to pay attention to you and cater to your every need. You hop into the womb and spend your last nine months floating... Finally, you finish off as an orgasm.
Any questions?
Dave Allport Oldham MRT

Dartmoor. Within 12 months officially recognised sections were formed in Okehampton and Tavistock and the Group later expanded to four Sections (based on Ashburton, Okehampton, Tavistock and Plymouth). The Section at Okehampton operated under the name of North Moor Section, a name chosen by its members when it was formed in 1969. In addition to attending incidents on Dartmoor the team frequently assists police with incidents in other areas of Devon and Cornwall. Team members also attend and assist with various events on Dartmoor such as the annual Ten Tors Expedition, and the Oak Croak Race.

SARDA

DRAMATIC RISE IN LAKES DOGS CALLOUTS

The 2005 SARDA Lakes Yearbook*, published in March, shows Lake District search dogs were called out 68 times in 2004 – an increase of 105%. Not all were huge, dramatic multi-day rescues – some were called off or resolved before the dogs even got on scene. The fact that the numbers have continued to rise over the eleven years that the Association has been in independent operation, shows the value that mountain rescue teams and, increasingly, the police, place on the contribution air scenting dogs can make to a search. The intensity of the training programme (33 training days a year) is considerable, as we are currently in a phase of having quite a number of new young dogs, while some of the senior assessors/instructors are also training new dogs. Prospective handlers must commit themselves to a minimum of one weekend a month, and at least one night a week, up to grading, and then maintain that by regular training throughout the dog's working life. As well as training with their own rescue team. Small wonder that most team members regard dog handlers as barking mad!
During the period covered by the Yearbook, seven new search dog teams were graded including, most recently, Kirk Outhwaite (Cockermouth MRT) with search dog Alpha, who graded at the age of 19 months – the fastest recorded grading in Lakes history.



KIRK OUTHWAITE WITH SEARCH DOG ALPHA

There will always be searches where we were either not deployed in the right place, or the person was not actually missing at all, but these are more than redeemed by the successes – a man with a head injury found in Upper Esk by search dog Comet, a misper with a history of self harm saved by search dogs Mist and Skye near Shap, a missing child found by search dog Dynamite near Appleby, or a missing trio benighted on Scafell who were delighted to see search dog Rosie, are just some examples. The knowledge that one of the dogs has helped to save someone's child, father or mother boosts the morale and training of the whole Association.
With the Right to Roam legislation coming into force, we rely on the goodwill of landowners and tenants, who give us access to land on which to train. The need to ensure the security of the dog with stock is paramount. We also rely heavily on our dogsbodies, who turn out in all weathers to act as casualties. Their contribution is invaluable and, believe it or not, they get as much satisfaction from hearing that one of 'their dogs' found, as any of the handlers.

Mick Guy SARDA Lakes

*The Yearbook is available through the Lakes website www.sardalakes.org.uk

Placing faith in misper stats

It's 22.30 hrs and the mobile rings. No one I know – 'private number'. This usually means the police. Especially at this time, and I am right. An Alzheimer's sufferer in his mid 80s has been missing since mid-morning in a large conurbation. The POLSA officer has just been alerted and, knowledgeable of the urgency in such scenarios and time elapsed, immediately consults the team. Thirty five minutes later, I am at the police station gathering information. The missing person lives at the edge of a large town. PLS at home at 11.30hrs. Advanced stages of Alzheimer's and has been missing before, including a very recent wander. He used to live, work and socialise at the far side of the town, some 4 miles distant. Previous wanderings utilised the bus corridor he lived on, which gave direct routes to this other side. A few weeks prior he was found walking the bus route in the area he used to socialise. And now a possible LKP, a sighting of him at 15.00hrs, near this same location – some 3.5 miles from home. Surrounding terrain was mixed. Housing, industrial estates, parkland and disused railway corridors leading straight out into open countryside. So where do we start? Police were undertaking road searches and had used air support and dogs to check around where he lived, and now the plan focused on clearing random cemeteries and parkland areas throughout the town. My mind cast back to countless previous Alzheimer's searches and the talk given by Robert Koester at the Bangor UK MR Conference. The possible LKP, earlier wandering history to this area, and regression behaviour pointed strongly to the area of town well away from where he lived and, as I sat in the police station, the activity and thought processes going on around me added more focus to this developing theory that he had, again crossed the town and the LKP would be the starting point. It is so easy to go with the flow, especially when your team are gathering in the police car park, awaiting briefing, and wondering whether they can get some sleep, before work. You start to develop your own hunches, and the pressure

to 'stab in the dark' around the map, builds. You resist. Self talk kicks in – 'get it right' – 'apply the theory'. The POLSA is a welcome ally. My well thumbed Missing Person Behaviour Stats file opens. The reported LKP, repetitive wandering and regression behaviour point strongly to this area well away from his PLS, his home. This cannot be ignored. But neither can the reported 70% of wandering 'finds' within 1km of the PLS and natural entrapment of streams, ditches and boundaries. A small area some 400m from his home was identified. Open grass, a few trees and a small stream. Previously searched by police dogs and Air support, but subsequently discounted in lieu of possible LKP sighting. Robert Koester's story at the conference, of simple application of theory to complicated search areas, rings true.

A plan quickly formulates. The complexities of urban mapping and geography are stripped away, a small grassed area with stream stands out – this becomes the initial priority, against the flow of opinion on the LKP. Search teams are deployed. Within 40 minutes, a body is found, in the small stream, only 400m from his home. The missing person enquiry is resolved within two hours of the team being called.

The possible LKP, whilst fitting past behaviour and much of the missing person behaviour stats, was likely borne from mistaken identity, based upon a genuine desire to find the missing person. It carried with it a degree of genuine logic and expectation that could have diverted search responses well away from where the missing person was. Robert Koester made the point that we must remain guided by known facts, and not be mistakenly diverted by the complexities of 'other' evidence and terrain complications. Alzheimer's behaviour wandering outcomes are to an extent predictable and as such any search plan must as an initial priority, mirror this prediction.

Thank you Mr Koester and the Missing Person Behaviour Stats – again!

David Bartles-Smith
Team Leader. Teesdale & Weardale SRT

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MICHAEL TONGE, CHIEF CONSTABLE OF GWENT POLICE AND PHIL DIGGINS, GWENT POLICE EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER PRESENTING THE CHEQUE TO TIM POTTS (TEAM CHAIRMAN) JOHN WEALE (COMMS OFFICER) AND MARK NICHOLLS (TEAM LEADER)

SOUTH WALES

POLICE TO THE RESCUE
Longtown MRT have recently received a substantial donation towards the cost of new radio equipment. The enforced change from Low to High Band meant the team, like all others in the country, was faced with the prospect of considerable financial outlay to replace all hill radio sets, vehicle sets and masts. Recognising the valuable service mountain rescue teams bring to communities in the Gwent area of South Wales, Gwent Police responded with a magnificent donation of £10,000. Longtown hope to make the change in the next month or two and are grateful to Gwent Police for their continued support.

UNsung HEROES OF THE DALES THE CLIMBER'S LIFE BRIGADE

By **Stanley Watson**

I have just come down from the fells. It has been a hard day – an awkward novice on the party. I am thinking of my bath and savouring the perfectly wonderful smell coming up from the kitchen. The telephone rings and I answer it reluctantly; I hate answering the telephone. Only the other day I suggested to our local postmaster that it would surely be the first present one received in Hades! But this is no time for joking – the message is grave and urgent...

'There has been an accident on Scafell Pinnacle. There are not enough men here at Wastdale to form stretcher parties. Would you please organise rescue parties from Borrowdale? A man is believed dead and a girl badly hurt.'

Phew! Seathwaite to Scafell Pinnacle with two stretchers and first aid kit? Pity the Borrowdale branch of the St John Ambulance Brigade! Six or seven miles (as the hiker wobbles) over a rough mountain track. The last bit of the precipice itself. Nearly to the top of Scafell Crag, three thousand feet high.

I stand by the phone and send messages up and down the valley. They run from Mrs Honey's at Seatoller to get hold of the ambulance men, just returned from work. They run to Stonethwaite, Rosthwaite, Grange – it is only a matter of minutes before the whole valley knows.

Some of the men have been lucky and have had part of their evening meal. Others have not been so fortunate. These men have been mostly working at Honister Quarry. They're tired after a day of heavy manual labour. Never mind! Off they go, and a quarter of an hour after I receive the first call for help, the stretchers are on their way up Sty Head Pass.

Hikers help

At Seathwaite, one or two hikers and a rock climber join us. They are very welcome. We pass other hikers coming down from their day's ramble. They see the stretchers and look pained. I speculate with the idea of requesting their help, but immediately give it up. I have never got over the reply of one strapping fellow, who said that he would be glad to come but that it would make him late for dinner!

Rapidly we mounted Sty Head. It's a grind at this pace. We make a wonderful time – an hour and a half from Seathwaite to the bottom of Scafell Crag.

Lord's Rake looms up on our right. We really begin to use our hands now as well as our feet. At the little rocky pitches near the top, the stretchers are passed up from hand to hand. A narrow ledge opens up into Deep Ghyll, and so we begin the West Wall Traverse. On either side of us now the great cliffs tower. Our ledge overhangs the depths of Deep Ghyll, at the far side of which the Pinnacle rises, caught by the yellow evening light. It soars aloft, slab upon slab, tier upon tier, to a climax out of our sight. 'Scott!' someone says. 'Did they come down that?'

We lug the stretcher along and meet a man who tells us that it is not as bad as we had been led to believe. He says that the girl has a broken arm, but was able to walk down to Wastdale. The man, however, is lying at the top of the second pitch of Deep Ghyll.

I feel rather relieved at his position – at least he will not have to be slung down by ropes. We might be able to carry him. Then another pleasant surprise – he is alive – we might save him yet!

Danger spot

We press forward up our ledge. At one point it narrows to a mere splinter of loosely piled stones. Here is a death trap for the unwary; a careless step and you will skate into perdition down the Great Chimney!

I shout a warning, anxious about our little flock. After all, they are not rock climbers. It is asking something of them to come into these places, but not a man falters. I believe they would follow silently up the Pinnacle itself without complaint.

Cautiously peeping over the edge, we see a little group lying in the bed of the Ghyll, just at the top of a sheer vertical drop of many feet. We make a dropping traverse down the ledges and one by one we gather round. There is a constant cascade of falling stones. We cannot help it – there are so many of us and we must be quick. The displaced

scree roars away to one side of the injured man and leaps out into space. Two men protect him from stray fragments.

We get him on to the stretcher. How gently he is lifted up and the stretcher slid underneath. He is handled like a baby, for these men know their job. The patent apron, for crag work, is fastened over him so that he is safely held in the stretcher, whatever angle it may assume. Two climbing ropes are fastened to the head of the stretcher and led away up the gully. Several of the rescuers stream away with them, seeking the best foothold they can in the steep, loose, shifting scree. Eight others stand by the stretcher. 'Right – lift!'

Rough going

The ropes tighten; the stretcher rises gently. There is an immense plunging as we pull and lift together. It is unreasonable to expect each man to keep his balance in a place like this, but the ones who have kept their feet take the weight until those who have lost theirs recover. There are always enough of us upright to keep going.

In this way, with the mighty concerted grinding of steel nails* upon the giving rock, we move like some huge juggernaut up the gully. There is a thunderous roar as tons of screes shoot down Deep Ghyll. We cannot help it; we know there is no-one underneath.

The effort required seems out of all proportion so that the injured man may glide smoothly. A sea of figures, perched at forty five degrees, rearing and plunging – falling and up again at once, as the scree gives way underneath them. And in the middle of it all the injured man, borne like some strange calm in the very centre of a violent turbulence.

We are high enough now. 'Whoa, there!' Now we've got to get him out of the Ghyll and up on the West Wall. He is passed gently up the rocks and slowly taken down that narrow ledge. The inside men are

scraped against the wall; the outside ones are nearly being pushed over the edge. Now for the head of the Great Chimney. 'Careful boys. Fall out! Single file here.'

The stretcher is lifted high and one or two of us get underneath to give added support over the bad bit. The ledge broadens a little, but steepens. The ropes are behind now, being used for checking.

Policeman gets down to it

The little cavalcade reaches Lord's Rake. Our forces are augmented by folk from Wastdale. There is a policeman amongst them in his shirt sleeves – good lad; he's not afraid to get down to it. 'Make him a sergeant!'

No, we don't go down Lord's Rake; we go up it a few yards to the top. Then there is an abrupt little descent beyond a rough, broken track leading out on to the smooth grassy shoulder of Scafell. It's all plain sailing now. The rocky bit is over and we make for the Burnmoor track unimpeded.

From Deep Ghyll to Wastwater takes us about two hours. Now then, you hikers! What do you think of it?

Seathwaite to nearly the top of Scafell and down to Wastdale Head in four and a half hours, with two stretchers and ropes, etc; first aid kit and a difficult rescue out of a rock climbers gully all thrown in. Nothing like it has ever been done before. It is doubtful whether it will be equalled again.

And after a hard day's work at the quarry. And John Hind just got back after three weeks illness in bed!

But we still have Sty Head Pass to get over, but now we only have one empty stretcher to carry and the first aid kit. We get refreshments at the Wastdale Inn.

The Pass is in pitch darkness. We stumble over boulders and realise that we have lost the track. We are too tired to care much and flounder our way up through the

wilderness of scree coming down from Gable. I begin to wonder whether I can make it. Sparks fly from my nailed boots – always a sign of exhaustion. I have fallen down a dozen times. I never pretended to be able to walk long distances. I'm a rock climber – not a locomotive!

Then back to work!

At last we succeed in finding the signpost at the top. Now we're all right – only two or three miles to go. We stumble along down the pass and at long last reach Seathwaite. I feel more dead than alive as I crawl into my bath. It is 8 am. The sky is just beginning to grey... I can cancel my climbing for a day, bit in three hours *they* must be up again... to go to the quarry...

Is it fair that climbers should have the right to call upon the unrewarded services of these unsung heroes of the dales?

Is it fair that anyone should insult them by sending ten shillings 'for the stretcher bearers'? To pay a specialist £30 for a visit lasting a quarter of an hour and ten pence to the poor man who sweated blood for hours and lost his work perhaps, bringing him down?

Does the public know that sometimes these men are not even *thanked* for their services and yet they go on doing it because their motto is 'Service before self'? Have climbers as a class, the consciences to allow this sort of thing to go on?

It has simply got to stop. I propose to start a fund for mountain rescue work (it should have been done years ago by the clubs) in order to alleviate this glaring anomaly. It is hardly fair to saddle the unfortunate victim of a climbing accident with rescue costs (although he would have them to pay in other countries – *and* through the nose), but I cannot believe that climbing clubs and climbers would refuse to contribute. As soon as some public-spirited persons come along whom I can trust to administer the fund correctly, I shall hand the job over to them. I have enough thankless tasks to do without looking after this one. Nor do I want any reward for myself as long as I get justice for *them*.

With thanks to Des Oliver for sending this 1930s news cutting which illustrates wonderfully the old adage that, however much appears to change, so much apparently remains the same. I am told that Stanley Watson was a rock climbing guide who once climbed Kern Knotts Crack blindfold!

REGIONAL NEWS

SOUTH WEST

Alan George ruminates... 'It may be over simplistic but, as I see it, anything that is not within the UKSAR framework is not a bona-fide 999 emergency service land search and rescue resource, but falls into the category of a community volunteer. The listed resources being the statutory emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance, HMCG) together with the voluntary Mountain Rescue (England & Wales), the MRC of Scotland, British Cave Rescue and ALSAR, inclusive of their constituent bodies (ie. NSARDA).

Locally, regionally and nationally, we need to be as one on this point. If we don't stand together, be it above or below ground, to ensure a uniformity of standards then all the hard work and effort put into gaining formal recognition will be wasted, and a further opening of the floodgates for anyone to think that they can set up what and where they like.

So may I suggest two things. Firstly, make sure the world and his dog know that land search and rescue – mountain, cave or lowland – is an established and formally recognised 999 emergency service, albeit staffed by unpaid volunteers, and should not be confused with the community volunteer groups.

We should also be aware that many of these community volunteer groups are now clamouring for recognition in the volunteer forums being set up within the new Civil Contingencies & Resilience Bill framework. That was certainly the message I put across in a recent presentation to Regional Government Office in Bournemouth. (Who now recognise SWERA as the lead regional rescue forum.) I left little room for doubt with the local government emergency planners, agencies and groups that we are firstly, a 999 emergency service but secondly, unpaid volunteers. Admittedly, there was a little confusion – comments such as 'Our local 4x4 club and Raynet group do search and rescue', and 'How can you be a category one responder? You're

volunteers.' The penny dropped once they were forthrightly and swiftly educated with the difference between those community volunteers (and a damn good job most do in their own field) and the service we all provide being akin to comparing the chap around the corner with his stirrup pump and bucket with the Fire & Rescue Service. We should all be passing this message on at every opportunity, as I feel sure it should be drummed home that, 'Yes, the police have primacy over Land SAR and are the co-ordinating body but we are the recognised category one responders with the professional skills who do the job. And we do this under our own command and control, as there is no other who can exercise better professional judgment, or could make best value decisions without our skills and experience in the environment.'

We've a major task to educate the councils with regard to representation on the local volunteer forums, funding and lumping us in with the other local community groups. We should get an equal share of any local funds as a community/volunteer group. As, for example, the play, social, minority groups and other local organisations do. But we should also be given the same level of consideration as, say, the Fire & Rescue Service and a degree of respect – not only from government (local or central) but also from the other emergency services and agencies.

A degree of in-house tidying up is required to ensure that service level agreements are accurate, in place and bombproof, recognised and acted on if deviated from. Further, teams should ensure they are represented as both volunteers and emergency service providers. Be prepared to raise hell when you find that central government funding has increased from £18 to £40M+ but there's still nothing for us, as local councils have decided to use it all to fund their own Emergency Planning Departments. Because nobody told them they can't.



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The Scottish Executive announced in November that the MRC of S was to receive a highly sophisticated SARCOM vehicle to aid communications on large-scale call outs. The Chairman and Radio Officer put in a significant effort not only in specifying the technical requirements of the Unit but also in lobbying key members of Parliament and the Executive over a long period of time. Whilst there had been some discussion on the proposals for this vehicle at various Executive and General Committee meetings, some disquiet was felt among a very small number of individuals. This was not helped by a measure of secrecy that the Scottish Executive stipulated over the announcement. Perhaps understandably, some members of the General Committee requested two EGMs to discuss the background and circumstances surrounding the sourcing and specification of this vehicle. As a direct consequence, the Chairman resigned his post. The vehicle is a superb piece of kit and has the capability to facilitate communications with all emergency organisations. It has a GPS tracking capability which worked to good effect at a joint exercise some weeks ago. It is clear that the operational use of the vehicle, the training of members to use the various features and its deployment across the country (it is presently based in Inverness)

are matters that require attention. This is well recognised by Ian Rideout the MRC of S Comms Officer, who has arranged a number of Radio Officers' meetings to deal with the various issues, the next one scheduled for mid-March at Glenmore Lodge.

Elsewhere on the comms front, all teams have now been issued with the new radio handsets and are busy trying them out. Reports are favourable in regard to improved reception, but important protocols need to be adhered to in regard to the MCA license. Teams are busy training on these matters.

The new stretcher is progressing with a second prototype. Some readers will recall the highly positive reception received by Jamie and Paul Rosher (Skye MRT) at the last UK MR Conference. Jamie has funding and a clear specification to work to that should see Scottish MR with a brand new stretcher within the next 1/2 years. The remaining issue, of course, is to find a manufacturer prepared to take the project on board once the prototype is complete and agreed.



Scotland's Alfie Ingram might well speak frae his sporan... but the Editor exercises her right to reply...

February's issue of *Casbag* (Scotland's MR Mag) carried a meandering piece penned by Alfie Ingram – *Speak Frae the Sporan* –

Information Sub Committee, especially after a couple of beers. We've a publication to be proud of, he admits. And 'having been spurred on initially by the success of the MRC of S housemag *Casbag*, the roles are now reversed as the *Casbag* has been reborn in a very similar form to the MR Mag. The ultimate compliment.' Mmm. Ironic isn't it? But then he spoils it all.

'As the MR whatsit is the technical house mag of a mountain rescue organisation, for which I believe there is no shortage of copy, it is somewhat questionable whether *What I did on my holiday* type of articles should fill up valuable column inches when there are plenty of other more appropriate glossies available, all apparently gasping for this type of stuff.'

Sorry Alfie. But you're wrong. There is a place for *What I did on my holiday*. Just as there's a place for the odd cartoon, funny story or 'You know when you're in mountain rescue when...' (which, pardon me for mentioning, appeared to excite a good deal of interest from the MRC newsgroup, usually the home of very earnest mountain rescue chat).

Sure, Mountain Rescue Magazine is the house mag of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales). But let's not forget its central *raison d'être* – the dissemination of information right down to each and every individual team member. And the best way to encourage readers to notice and absorb information is to make it look and feel interesting. Etched into a brass plate in The Printworks, Manchester, once home to the Withy Grove Press (in its heyday the biggest press plant in Europe) are the words of Lord Kemsley, Chairman of Allied Newspapers in 1937. 'I do not believe for a moment, that decency need be dull,' he said. 'A newspaper, to fulfil its function, must inform, entertain and educate.' In other words, there should be a balance. Give your readers page after page of dry fact and protocol and they'll very quickly glaze over. The impression might

persist (dare I say it?) that this is merely a vehicle for the Executive to hand down directives 'from above'. Result? A grass roots mountain rescue membership which might (wrongly) claim it doesn't receive information. And another round of 'us and them'.

Developing Lord Kemsley's point a little further, I believe a magazine such as this should not only inform, entertain and educate – but also involve its readers. Yes, there are articles about technical or legal requirements, about developments in training or equipment. But by inviting comment, anecdote, travel tales – provided they are well written and have some link with mountain rescue – information travels in all directions and we all learn something. And the odds are that those dry old facts and protocols will be far more readily absorbed in the process.

The majority would appear to agree judging by the countless verbal and written plaudits and the number of people enquiring after subscriptions – and wanting to contribute. Comments like 'Keep up the excellent magazine. One day all MRTs will pull together under the guidance of the MRC and your magazine,' from Chris Lloyd (OVMRO) or 'Many thanks for the work you do on the magazine. It is an excellent publication and a very good way of finding out what's going on round the country. Long may it prosper,' from Alasdair Clement (DSRT). Mountain Rescue Mag goes out across Great Britain and, internationally, to all corners of the world. I've even received change of address notification from the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations in Davos, Switzerland, else they miss an issue. Praise indeed.

So Alfie, I'll carry on doing what I'm doing as Editor for as long as I'm entrusted with the task. Perhaps you could let me have a wee story about your next mountain adventure – along with a piccie or three, of course – and I'll give you pride of place in a future issue?

FIRST RESPONSE...



THE RNLI AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE – WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Anne Leuchars raised some interesting questions of identity in her article in Issue 11 'Do They Mean Us?' The RNLI is a wonderfully well run organisation, but it seems a shame that mountain rescue is constantly compared to it as they are not really alike. It's true both organisations are charities, but there the comparison ends. The RNLI has a very straightforward effective structure. All the stations are funded by one umbrella charity (the RNLI). The boats are crewed by volunteers, but all the volunteers are paid to train and to attend call outs, and all equipment is provided. In addition, the coxswain/engineer of larger lifeboats is a full time, paid employee who has a house provided by the RNLI. The RNLI also receives some direct government funding. In addition, Roselynn Crowther (the RNLI's Chief Press Officer) appears to be confused when she states that lifeboats do not come under the Maritime & Coastguard Agency and are not government funded. The RNLI are called to attend incidents by the Marine Coastal Agency (Coastguard) ie: 'The Coastguard', who is the Government appointed agent for missing persons at sea. All members of the Coastguard, whether fully employed or volunteers are also paid, by the government, to train and to attend call outs. The RNLI, therefore, do come under the Marine Coastal Agency (Coastguard); they cannot legally act without them. (Although some inshore lifeboats can self-task, they must report to the coastguard immediately after the incident has been handled). I agree, however, that we should marvel at the health and wealth of

the RNLI as an organisation, and ask how they have achieved it. The structure of mountain rescue is very piecemeal and cumbersome by comparison. Each local team is run as an individual charity, and fundraises locally to meet its running costs. Members are all volunteers, but are not paid either to train or attend call outs. In addition to these individual team charities, the area committees are separate charities (made up by representatives from the local teams) which report to the Mountain Rescue Council (MRC), which is also a separate Charity! I have been involved in mountain rescue for over 25 years, and Chairman of a team for fifteen, and am still hard pressed to answer a basic question with any degree of clarity – 'What does the Mountain Rescue Council do?' The MRC provides no funds to the local teams (although it will sometimes help towards the cost of replacing expensive items such as stretchers), so why should any member of the public be asked to contribute towards national fundraising schemes run by the MRC, when all the local teams, who provide the actual rescues, have to raise their own funds? Until the mountain rescue community becomes clear about its own identity, I'm afraid that Anne's Mr & Mrs General Public will remain confused by the image of mountain rescue, since there is no effective organisational structure. As Penny Brockman (MRC Treasurer) so rightly says, 'Change is inevitable.' I just wish it would happen. (These views are personal and do not in any way represent the views of the ASCRT)

Duncan Massey
Hon. Chairman ASCRT

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NWMRA Winter Skills

WEEKEND COURSE MARCH 2005



Photo: Harley Feldbaum

'Crikey, from which museum did you nick those crampons?' OK, so they weren't new. They weren't even step-in. And sharpening them the previous evening had more to do with removing rust than from any delusions of cruising grade VI ice. But they had been with me to the Alps several times and to Nepal. And now that it turned out that my recently bought Terminator crampons just wouldn't fit my (also rather old) plastic boots, these old friends were just going to have to do!

But to start the story from the beginning. Six of us from Llanberis MRT, along with colleagues from Ogwen, South Snowdonia and SARDA (Wales) were based at the Joint Services Training Centre at Tulloch, some twenty miles north east of Fort William. We were signed up to an intensive weekend course organised through the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association (NWMRA). The course had the dual aims of brushing up on personal winter skills and providing an opportunity for exercising rescue skills on snow – something that has been in somewhat short supply in North Wales in recent years!

The course was available to members of rescue teams and organisations that are part of NWMRA. Within the course, groups would be organised based on ability and training needs.

After enduring the nine hour drive by minibus, Friday night was earmarked for a general briefing by Course Director Tim Bird (OVMRO). We chatted about the aims of the course, people's experience and aspirations, and we had an opportunity to shake down personal equipment and to check crampon fitting (or not, in my case!)

Saturday: Winter Mountaineering Skills Refresher Day

The Search & Rescue aim for this day was to refresh team members in the skills required for safe movement across mountainous terrain in winter conditions.

We were blessed with fine dry weather on Saturday. We were away from the base bright and early and heading for the White Corries chairlift in Glencoe. (...anything to minimise walking!). With the snowline down to around 600m, the views across Rannoch Moor were stunning.

Under the watchful eyes of instructors Mal, Tim, George and Phil, and working at a ratio of 1:4, we spent a very productive day refreshing key winter skills including:

- Avalanche awareness
- Digging of snow pits
- Crampon technique
- Step-cutting
- Cutting snow bollards
- Various ice axe belays

Practicing self-arrest proved to be the fun part of the day, starting with two forward rolls. It's a variant we'd not tried before, but it made for some interesting photographs. And we did that one without an ice-axe, I hasten to add!



Photo: Elidir Owen

Testing some of these belay methods 'to destruction' in a safe environment proved very educational, especially finding just how many people it took to 'cheese-wire' through a bollard in hard snow.

Sunday: Winter Mountaineering Skills Improvement Day

This day was designed to provide an opportunity for team members to practice skills 'at a higher level than they would normally be comfortable with'. Hmmm.....! The stated Search & Rescue aim was that team members would become comfortable in a more difficult environment so that they could move the rescue focus on to the party in difficulty.

In practice, this meant splitting into smaller groups, with a 1:2 ratio. In addition to the teams' own instructors, four Plas y Brenin instructors were employed on this day.

Four teams with instructors headed off to Glen Orchy and Ben Udlaidh. Our faces dropped when we reached the packed parking spot. However, we needn't have worried as our somewhat late arrival meant that the first wave of climbers were completing their routes by the time we reached the corrie. And what a view that was – virtually every icefall complete, just like the guidebook topo. Blue skies too.

Gerwyn and I, teamed up with Ollie Sanders, headed off for South Gully/Black Wall (IV). Ollie led off effortlessly up the first pitch. Being relatively easy-angled, it proved a good way of easing rusty crampons (and legs!) back into the rhythm of moving on ice.

The next pitch, taking a direct line to shouts of 'is this really only Grade IV!?' proved a bit more of a challenge, but after much scraping and stretching we were at the next belay. Here, ice screws and Abolokov threads were the order of the day. We had hoped to abseil off the Abolokovs ('just to prove that they work'), but those plans were thwarted by another party traversing in to follow the line of our route. After a scratchy top pitch, a slightly tricky descent through sticky, balling snow, and finally locating the boulder where we'd left our sacks, it was back to meet the others and to compare stories.

Other pairs tackled grade IV and V routes including Peter Pan Direct, Quartzvein Scoop and Organ Pipes. A great day was had by all, even though one Llanberis team member is thinking of auditioning for Man U after his perfect header of a football-sized lump of ice.



Photo: Nikki Wallis



Photo: Nikki Wallis

Ben Udlaidh proved a good choice of venue – easily accessible and not too intimidating, allowing team members to concentrate on their ice climbing technique. The quality of the instruction from PyB staff was, as always, excellent.

Meanwhile, other groups that day bravely faced up to the arduous trek into Stob Coire nan Lochan, to be rewarded with a great day on Twisting Gully (III) and Dorsal Arete (II). This despite the party immediately ahead of one of our teams trying their hardest to dislodge them by dropping assorted bits of gear, including gloves, ice axes etc!

Monday: Winter Technical Rescue Skills

Monday's objective was an MR exercise to enable team members to practice technical rescue skills in a winter environment. In keeping with our tradition of avoiding walking wherever possible (well, what do you expect from an MR team with a railway up to its highest peak!), we headed off to the nearby Nevis Range gondola. An hour's walk in snow which varied from powder to ice brought us onto the Nid Ridge.

Struggling to remember the key points of the previous evening's late night briefing, we split into groups to do a stretcher-lower down a Grade I gully using Rigging for Rescue techniques. Short 50m ropes were used to give more opportunities to practice handovers, and to pass knots through belay systems. Predictably, setting up snow belays within the gully proved quite time-consuming. For those of us with limited previous experience of Rigging for Rescue, it proved an invaluable exercise in the use of the brake rack, the radium release hitch and all the other bits that make us this system.

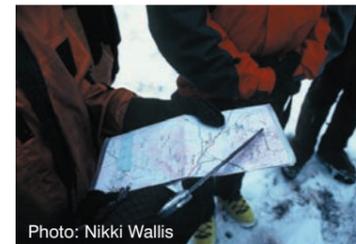


Photo: Nikki Wallis

Points from Debrief:



Photo: Nikki Wallis

- Course was very well organised and run (thanks to Al Read, Tim Bird and all the team!)
- Made good use of time available – cramming virtually a week's course into a long weekend.
- Sensible to run at regional level, option for other teams to 'host' in turn
- Provided further opportunity for inter-team co-operation, which is always useful
- ... and yes, I do need a new pair of crampons!

Dr Gwyn Roberts Llanberis MRT

• ADVERTORIAL •

Team Vehicle Insurance Premiums

James Trickett & Son currently act as insurance brokers on behalf of three mountain rescue teams in the North West, including Rossendale & Pendle MRT, setting up insurance policies for the team vehicles. This area of insurance is always tricky given that the majority of team vehicles tend to be quite old but high in value due to the equipment carried. But, in recent weeks, a bigger problem has emerged – the fact that teams frequently operate under blue lights – and, with that, the potential for a drastic hike in premiums. With this in mind, Stephen Darwen at Trickett's approached an underwriter to provide a nationwide facility so all rescue teams could benefit – with good results. His work has already saved one team a considerable sum. The proposal he now offers is for fully comprehensive cover for any driver over the age of 25 years and holding a two year full driving licence. The company offers a nationwide facility to quote anywhere in the UK – from John O'Groats to Land's End – at an extremely competitive rate.

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DOLLIE DAYDREAM

Alan Woodhead takes a trip to the Queen of the Dolomites



September 2004 saw a small team comprising of six, from Bowland Pennine MRT and Holme Valley MRT, travel out to Venice and then on to the Dolomite Massif for a bash at the highest peak in the Dolomites, Marmalada – at 3,342m or 10,964 feet ‘The Queen of the Dolomites’

sheer size of the route to be enjoyed to the full.

This was our second year out in the area so we already had a good idea of routes. The main difference on the Marmalada is the extra altitude and the final descent over the glacier.

The route, as with most of those in the area, follows the old wartime mountain routes for the troops. In the guidebooks it receives a grade 4C – ‘Demanding routes, frequently involving steep rock faces and requiring a fairly high technical climbing ability. Not for the novice or those unsure of their confidence in the mountains. These routes are for the experienced mountaineer, often with exposed and unprotected pitches. The extra altitude and weather may be major considerations in these routes.’

We started from the valley by the reservoir ‘Lago di Fedaia and quickly ascended to the refuge Fiacconi 2650m by a very rickety two person-standing cage!

From the top of the lift the route descends for about one and a half hours down and below spectacular cliffs until the corner is turned at 2500m and the small glacier leading to the start of the West ridge is in sight. A brisk walk up the

glacier leads to the start of the Via Ferrata marked by the steel wire safety line.

The West ridge route is well marked all the way and is also well protected with a number of good ladders over the steep pitches. The main ascent onto the ridge itself takes about an hour and brings you out at 3000m onto a steep narrow rock ridge broken only by 30 – 50m rock pitches ascending to 3300m on short ladders and steel spikes protruding from the rock as foot



ASCENDING WEST RIDGE



THE LADDERS

holds on some airy traverses.

The final part of the ridge is unprotected but less exposed to the summit, which has a small refuge at 3343m. According to the guidebook it sells hot drinks but, on our arrival, we found it closed and had to make do with our lunchtime leftovers!

After a short time at the summit, the descent route takes you down a snow fan leading to a marker post showing the descent route. Unlike the rest of the route the

descent is steep, unprotected and needs a good head for heights. It can be down climbed but there are pegs allowing for three abseils to the ledge above the glacier. As this is the last climbing part of a lengthy day extra care needs to be taken to maintain a quick descent without adding additional hazards. Slick rope work should allow the glacier to be reached in an hour.



ASCENT TO THE GLACIER

The final part of the route down the glacier is easily walkable, but does require ice axe, crampons, rope and the ability to crevasse rescue. At the end of the glacier the route goes back onto the scree and moraine leading to the two man cable car back to the valley – or, in our case, straight to the bar at the refuge Fiacconi thus missing the last cable car down (not for the first time this trip!) On leaving the refuge it takes about an hour back down in the setting sun back to the valley ending another fantastic day in the Dolomites.

Technical details:	
Grade:	4C
Ascent:	850m
Descent:	850m
Via Ferrata:	400m
Time:	6 hours
Highest altitude:	3343m



START OF DESCENT

MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Chamonix/Mont Blanc by Anne Sauvy

Bâton Wicks £14.99
ISBN 1-898573-52-2
368 pages and 36 photos tpbk(f)

After writing a rescue novel Anne Sauvy was asked by the Chamonix MRT to report on its activities through a whole summer season. The result is a powerful and thought-provoking book. This sensitive, technical and risky activity is given the full scrutiny of a powerful writer – and experienced alpinist. The technicalities are here but do not predominate. This is more like Wolfe's *The Right Stuff*. The elation of success and the hopes, anxieties and tensions of the rescuers are carefully studied. The rescued, survivors and bereaved are also sensitively observed and supported. This was the same year (with the same team) that the Sky Travel series *Mountain Rescue* was made so the spectacle can be seen on TV (shown periodically) while the in-depth account is provided here.

Available in equipment stores and bookshops in early May.



REVIEW NEXT ISSUE

‘MOUNTAIN RESCUE CHAMONIX – MONT BLANC’

HELP MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

In last issue's article on mountain rescue in Bosnia & Herzegovina, writer Barry Robinson told the tale of his time with the UN Police Peacekeeping Force following the Bosnian conflict. It's an area still close to his heart, but his plans to launch an appeal for kit to help resurrect and support the country's rescue service, desimated during the war, were placed firmly on the back burner with the dreadful events of Boxing Day 2004. With a good deal of Asia rocked and destroyed by the tsunami, it seemed an inopportune time to launch a Bosnia Appeal.

Whilst a great many teams have organised fundraising to help the Asian appeal, it's heartening to report that several have indicated their willingness to help with Bosnia also. Bolton MRT have pledged radio equipment; DSRT a number of cas bags, evacuation stretchers and shelters; medical equipment from Wales; and there's even the possibility of an all terrain vehicle. One or two of Barry's Rossendale & Pendle team mates, and Harold Burrows from SARDA Wales, are helping out with the appeal, and will be joining him in the mercy mission across to Bosnia once all the kit is collected. The hope is that one or two suppliers might come on board too. Berghaus has already pledged help in the form of kit – more on that in future issues.

So, as the ball appears to have begun to roll, now seems like as good a time as any to launch the appeal. There's no fixed date as yet for the trip, but the hope is for either October this year, or early Spring 2006. Barry is off to Bosnia in June to progress things over there. The hope is to donate as much kit across as possible – be that radios, clothing, hardware, stretchers, medical supplies or the odd vehicle! The entire Bosnian mountain rescue service currently stands at around 60 trained personnel with another 20 ‘in training’. The entire area boasts one team vehicle – a single 4-wheel drive, ten year old Toyota donated by Medicin Sans Frontiers.

So if you have anything you think might be of use, please give Barry a call on 01282 830824 or email on bazzerrobinson@supanet.com

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photos: Mick Tighe

RESCUE ON AONACH MOR

Mick Tighe on rescuing the rescuer

28 DECEMBER 2004. Fiona and Richard were my companions for the day, we caught the early gondola at Aonach Mor, heading for a grade II ridge climb called Spare Rib round on the west side – I had a chat with Mike in the gondola station, not knowing then how the day would pan out for the both of us. It was windy – very windy at times – but we made good progress and romped up the ridge in good style, reaching the summit around 1.45pm, from where Fiona navigated us to the ski-patrollers hut – which is where things took a rather dramatic turn.



The piste machine had just arrived, which I thought rather strange as it was far too windy for skiing – the clue came quickly enough when I saw Tony and Willie with a stretcher. 'There's someone with back injuries below the Twins,' Tony said, heading off towards Easy Gully, 'Have you got a dead-man?' I hadn't got a dead-man, but once I'd deposited Fiona and Richard in the ski-patrol hut and told them to stay put, I was able to pinch their ice-axes to make a T-axe, and I headed over to join Tony and Willie at the top of Easy Gully, where they were busy sorting out a pre-stretched rope.

I soon had a slot cut, just back from the cornice edge, and set up the T-axe. Tony decided to go down first. A wee jump on the cornice and wumph!... away it went, a few hundred tons of snow rattling off down the hillside, and Tony in hot pursuit – fortunately he didn't go very

far and was left dangling in space a few feet below the plateau where a cornice had been seconds before. Fortunately, my hastily arranged belay had held and assuming the slope below had now been scoured of any further avalanche potential, Tony carried on down.

Having been left with a vacmat and oxygen bottle to take down, Willie helped me with a quick repack and we decided to leave my own sack on the summit with Willie. As he had no technical gear, he would head back to the ski-patrol hut, sort out a casbag and await the arrival of the rescue team. I abseiled down Easy Gully once Tony was free of the rope.

Tony was working his way across the slope towards the casualty when I got off the rope and I set off in his tracks, twenty to thirty metres behind. We'd only gone maybe another fifty to a hundred

metres when we heard the by now all too familiar wumph of a cornice, and I don't know about Tony, but I looked up to see the inevitable wall of snow hurtling towards me. Instead a black-looking object appeared out of the mist, whacking into the snow between Tony and myself. 'It's Willie!' Cried Tony and we were on him in seconds. He landed face down in the snow and a big wound on the back of his head was already pumping lots of blood. Fortunately, Tony had the first aid pack destined for the initial call out, so Willie had a bandage on in minutes.

We cut a ledge, made him as comfortable as possible and then wondered what the hell to do next. Tony stayed with Willie and, having pinched Willie's radio, I headed off in search of our initial casualty, taking nearly half an hour to wade through the chest deep snow to the bottom of Forgotten Twin, where I found

Mike lying badly injured with his two – non-injured – companions in attendance. Mike had been knocked off the climb by a small avalanche just as he was about to clip into a belay at the top of pitch one. He'd fallen back down the ice pitch and been held by an ice-screw runner. His clients took the tension off the ropes and pulled them through the runner – they tried to make Mike comfortable and, in doing so, removed his harness. Don't know the exact times, but it must have been around 3.15pm and Mike had been lying there for about two hours – he'd be there for a while yet.

He was conscious, breathing well, but in considerable pain. A quick squeeze of the pelvis confirmed Mike's own diagnosis that it was broken – he said he could feel the broken bones grating if he moved. Pain in the lower back indicated possible injuries there, and

a foot heading off in the wrong direction required little further investigation, except to check there was no blood loss – which there wasn't.

Although I had the vacmat I didn't want to move Mike with just myself and his two clients, so I got the oxygen on and set to cutting a platform and setting up belays – feeling very frustrated that I couldn't do more for Mike at this stage.

I spoke to Roger, and I think Kevin, around this time and my heart sank to hear there were only eight of the team on their way up in the piste machine. I asked Roger to send four over to Easy Gully and help Willie/Tony, and four to abseil down the Twins, being careful not to knock

hear from him that no helicopter had been called and no more team members had been called for back-up – this was quickly rectified.

The rescue of Willie was progressing and once Tony saw him heading off in the stretcher he came over to join us – the idea being that Tony could give some pain relief before we moved Mike onto the vacmat and stretcher. As it was Tony couldn't find a vein to get a line in and he consequently put some morphine into his leg as a lesser option – with limited effect. We now had just enough people to get Mike on the vacmat/stretcher with the arrival of Chris, Emma and Neil the ski-patroller. For Mike the lift was a painful affair, but we soon had him

Within minutes we had our casualties doubled and our manpower halved.

any more avalanches down on us. Also around this time Davie Austin came on the radio to say he had some Nevis Range staff who were keen to help, but didn't have any technical gear – I asked him to take them up to the summit.

Not too sure what was going on over in Easy Gully, as I had a radio on the Nevis Range frequency, whilst the others were toiling with the new MR radios. Roger finally appeared – abseiling down Forgotten Twin – and we discussed how to get Mike off the hill. The avalanche danger was too high to traverse either way across the slope, and if we took him down to the bottom of the corrie we'd have needed an army of troops to carry him round to the gondola station – the only way seemed to be a difficult, but relatively short, haul back up Forgotten Twin. Roger headed off back across the slope and up Easy Gully to set up a haul system.

It took a long time to get everything in place for both evacuations and poor old Mike was still there lying in the snow – he was being attended constantly by myself and/or one of his clients, and later by Tom when he arrived. He was still lucid and there were no breathing problems – but he was starting to get very cold, having been there for around four hours now.

Jonathon had set up a radio link down in the Aonach Mor car park by now and I was surprised to

trussed up like a turkey and ready for the 500ft return journey up Forgotten Twin.

With Mike's injuries, the book tells us he should go up – or down – a cliff face horizontally. As is often the way in the real world, however, we couldn't do it that way. We only had one pre-stretched rope that reached the stretcher from the top – the other, shorter, one was joined by a dynamic at the top and about 20ft of linked slings at the bottom. It would have taken two barrow boys, and a lot more rope and pulling power to drive the stretcher up horizontally, and Roger had spent a long time cutting an exit slot through the cornice at the top – it would have needed a JCB to cut one wide enough to get the stretcher through horizontally.

We spent a long time ensuring Mike was safe in the stretcher – this included threading a short length of rope all the way round the vacmat, ensuring it would not part company with the stretcher. As it was Mike was very

comfortable on the way up the gully – better than he'd been all afternoon, according to himself.

The haul up Forgotten Twin was an interesting journey – unfortunately one of the ropes got hooked under a large icicle partway up – this required some aid climbing up the side of the stretcher to hack it free. Roger and Davie Austin did a fine job with the ropes – Nevis Range staff and my two clients, Fiona and Richard, provided the pulling power, with some help from Chris in the piste-machine.

As those doing the pulling at the top will no doubt tell you, there are massive forces involved in pulling two folk up a cliff face, and it's a pretty scary activity hanging there in space. On this occasion there seemed to be very little alternative, but if at all possible I suggest avoiding it.

Mike and I popped out nicely through Roger's slot, and so comfortable had Mike been in the upright position, he asked to be stashed on the piste-basher that way for his journey down to the top gondola station. We were able to get another bottle of oxygen on the go there, and whilst Mike was obviously suffering, he remained in remarkably good form throughout his ordeal. The usual gondola/ambulance transfer to the Belford ensued, with Mike arriving an hour or so behind Willie, approximately seven hours after he fell.

At the time of writing (a week later) Willie is back home recovering from two big head wounds and two – hopefully not too serious – bone fractures in his back.

Mike is in the Southern General with a broken ankle, fractures to his pelvis, ribs and spine. He has full feeling down his legs, which makes me feel better about waiting until I had enough people to move him, and he's in good spirits.

This account perhaps makes it sound like everything went very smoothly, but of course it didn't. Tony Cardwell summed up the situation in respect of Willie's fall very succinctly, 'Within minutes we had our casualties doubled and our manpower effectively halved.'

The folk who were there worked like Trojans, of course, and I'd personally like to thank everyone concerned as well as wish Willie and Mike a speedy recovery.

Postscript

Thought I'd leave the above as I wrote it just after the rescue, but for those not familiar with the area and folk involved a few explanatory notes might help clarify things. Aonach Mor is the ski area next to Ben Nevis above Fort William in the Western Highlands of Scotland – the company that runs the ski complex trades as Nevis Range. Various folk mentioned in the text are Nevis Range staff or members of Lochaber MRT, some are both. The climbs mentioned: Easy Gully, Forgotten Twin etc are short (150m approx) ice climbs/gullies on the east side of Aonach Mor, and are commonly accessed via the ski lift system – saves three hours walking! Some two months now after the accident Mike and Willy are both out of hospital and recovering well.



SOUTH EAST GULLY

Guy Wilson reflects on losing his gloves and a very close shave

The Cicerone guide Winter Climbs in the Lake District describes South East Gully on Great End thus 'South East Gully 200m grade III ** (Grade III – More sustained than a II with significant ice pitches and some technical sections on buttresses). The other classic of the crag, left of central Gully, giving a good and popular climb. Follow a snow slope (frequently icy) to a chockstone which turned on the right at 60m. Take the right fork up steep snow to an icy chimney which may be climbed direct or turned on the right wall (40m). The gully now curves gently to the right with one or two small pitches leading to the summit (90m).'

Meanwhile, *Cold Climbs* the British Ice climbing bible has this to say. 'The smilingness of the place remains nearly always unchanged – there are still the doubts and memories, the cornice cracking on Central, the helicopter hovering, the slide to the screes, death and permanent injury. Yes, this is still a mountain crag, and sometimes you know it. But with a basic knowledge of the thermodynamics of water, it shouldn't happen to you.'

With life unfortunately being complicated by things that are probably not important (but at the time seemed so), I picked Peter up later than intended that morning, as I was mentally unraveling clutter. Not satisfied with just being late, I wanted breakfast too. We stopped on the way to Ambleside, ate a full and leisurely breakfast that I pushed around the plate, looking for corners that weren't there. I was in no rush, and had no idea if Peter was. If I'm honest, I probably didn't even want to climb that day, I think I just wanted company, somebody to talk to. But, as the cliché says the journey taken

winter's day. Above the snow line, the mountains looked majestic in cloaks of white, black rocks sticking out from buttresses where the gradient was so steep that the fine powder would not sit. Above us, a pale blue sky, with the sun warm enough to toast the tops of my ears. We stopped frequently for gulps of water and to strip clothing as we sweated under our packs. As we came up underneath the face, the sun dipped down behind the summit and the chill returned. We stopped to put on harnesses and attach crampons. We grew colder still and became impatient to get moving.

swirled round my head like spindrift 'I shall be telling this with a sigh. Somewhere ages and ages hence; Two roads diverged in a wood, and I – I took the one less travelled by. And that has made all the difference' ... South East Gully is certainly less travelled by.

I roped up to lead the first pitch, underneath a layer of powder. There was some ice and the axes found a good enough purchase, the easy angle made progress swift to the chockstone. In my impatience to be started, I had gone off without Peter's rack of gear. I was only carrying a few slings, extenders and a couple of screws, more in hope of ice than anything, so I turned the chockstone on the right without placing any protection. Pulling myself over the obstacle I felt sick, which I put down to not having really eaten my breakfast, but also knowing it was probably more to do with fear and exertion. I was finding it very physically taxing. I moved on up the steepening slope, looking for somewhere to place some gear but found nothing before I came up against the steep ice pitch. I managed to

get a large screw placed and brought Peter up.

'Now I know why you stopped,' he quipped, as he eyed the steep ice. I just grinned back at him. You lay yourself bare at these moments! Stopping beneath this vertiginous impasse was a naked admission that

I didn't feel up to it, and so it now made it a question for him to answer. He picked up the gauntlet, went past me, and began the assault. He gave me a running commentary on the difficulties with a few creative Anglo Saxon expletives thrown in to underline the real difficulties. I tried to look up and watch his progress, but the spindrift got in my eyes and little falls of powder were slipping from my helmet down my neck. All was not lost on me however, until he was safely over the problem section when he immediately brought me up. I want you close to me on this bit, he said, best if you're close. I must say that the experience of traversing the narrow ledge (for that's what awaited) whilst maintaining balance using both axes nicked into a crack in front of oneself and being painfully aware of the void to ones left, certainly focuses the mind. At least, it certainly focused mine! That was the second time I had been scared that day – it seemed to become habitual.

I took lead and swam up through deep powder snow. My heart was pounding out of my chest and I could have done with a drink but my Sigg bottle was in my pack, strapped to my back. I stopped to get my breath and looked first down the gully and then out across the valley. God it was beautiful! The browns, reds, and russets of the lower slopes first gave way to the white snow of the peaks and then the blue sky, darker than before. It's getting on, these days are short days, I thought. I continued up the steepening gully till all the rope ran

out. Once more I placed a screw for protection and brought Peter up. 'I don't know whether to congratulate you or punch your lights out for that lead', he said. I knew what he meant. A fall could have meant barreling down the gully for 120m. I just couldn't see anywhere to place gear and it seemed better in the fading light to continue.

Pete moved into the lead once more and soon came up against another chockstone. Strangely, this sting in the tail is not mentioned in the guide book, but a bit of asking around later revealed it to be a bit of a stopper for some parties and the point at which many decide to abseil out. I hate abseiling, so voted to carry on. Pete continued to throw himself at this belligerent lump of rock and it continued to repel him without looking at all flustered. I stood silently. I deliberately offered no encouragement, as he might have taken it as criticism, which he doesn't suffer at all. I willed him over it. I knew it must be difficult. When it comes to belligerence however, or sheer bloody mindedness, lumps of rock would come an easy second to Peter. Still, inwardly I felt huge relief when I finally saw him pull over the top. He looked back at me and I quite clearly heard him say the F word (as one would) as he disappeared into the falling dark. I saw his head torch come on and the rope ran out quickly, signifying he was making good progress on the easy ground. The rope came tight on me and I followed him up. I got two solid axe placements in under the chockstone and prepared to haul myself up, wondering why he had struggled so much. The monpoint of my crampons

attacked the rock without purchase; my feet scraped away desperately but could find no nick or ledge for a hold. My arms grew tired, I pulled as hard as I could on my axes and pumped away furiously again with my feet. My head torch went out as it frequently did, that damn loose connection and I tried to bang it against the rock wall to shed some light again. Spent, my feet no longer able to sustain any purchase by friction alone, they dangled below me and my hands let go their grip on my axes. I hung for a moment, held there by my leashes alone in the dark, and then horror of horrors, to my utter disbelief I began to slip free from my gloves and leashes. I dropped back down into the gully.

I looked up above me into the dark and the spindrift blowing down the gully made me squint. I smacked my helmet once, twice, a pool of yellow light flickered into life as it picked out snow flakes against the black sky and beyond them the taunting silhouette of my axes with gloves still attached. Panic flooded through me! OK, simple. Just climb back up this tangle of ice and rock with bare hands in the dark – right. Even though I'd failed to do it with axes and gloves already! Then, just get the bloody things back on. The cold on my hands was painful. I got one hand on the top of my axe and realised the axe hold was a bomber one, reached up with my other hand and grasped it with both, hauled myself up level. I rammed one hand into the glove which by now was like cardboard. Changing hands then, I got the other one on. Hooking an axe over the top of the chock stone I pulled myself slowly on top and eventually knelt gasping for air, trying to suppress the nausea in my throat. I felt a tug on the rope and stood up and continued up the slope. Pete was in a snow bucket belaying me from the summit. 'What took you?' 'Nothing,' I replied. 'Come on, let's get down'

Much later, after discussions with more experienced climbers, it was felt that due to the lack of ice and snow build up within the gully, the grade was nearer IV than III. We however experienced no warm after glow of having vanquished the elements. No bravado, we truly knew that this time we had just gotten away with it. With our tails between our legs, we gratefully fled the summit.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL RESCUE TEAMS

Rigging for Rescue has become a 'hot topic' within the UK MR community. Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) has always encouraged teams to adopt a technically robust approach. It is also generally accepted as best practice, that any tradesperson requires a degree of professional development over time to combat the effects of skill fade and maintain pace with the technology and methodology advancement. Some teams are lucky to have an internal source of expertise to facilitate this process; others have sought external support from training providers within and outside the UK. One such training provider which has run contract seminars for a number of MRTs in the past is Rigging for Rescue.

Rigging for Rescue was established by Arnör Larson in the mid eighties. Arnör was a leading member of the British Columbia Council on Technical Rescue that developed the benchmark Belay Competence Drop Test Method for rope rescue systems. Kirk Mauthner steered Rigging for Rescue throughout the 1990s and was credited with developing the Radium Release Hitch and undertaking pioneering technical rescue research. Mike Gibbs took over the helm in 2002 and has continued to grow Rigging for Rescue into the most sought after seminar on technical rope-work in North America.

Rigging for Rescue is fundamentally different to many technical rescue training programmes as it focuses on the development of critical thinking and skills analysis founded on a bedrock of scientific principles. Their training philosophy is based on developing the art of rigging which cannot be taught through learning drills by rote.

Through considerable research and analysis, Mike and his team have tested and evaluated numerous ropework



THE PIKEN PIVOT METHOD

Pat Moret and Doug Kemp were part of the small team responsible for founding Cornwall Rescue Group – one of the newest MRTs. They still assist with the team's more advanced training, but these days they spend most of their time as Technical Rescue instructors with Rig Systems. In October last

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



AIR AMBULANCES AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE

A Lake District Perspective

The Confederation of Helicopter Ambulance Services (CHAS) has recently issued their (Draft) Standard Operating Procedure titled *Transfer of Information in Relation to Off Road/Mountainous Incidents Involving the Use of Helicopters*. This states that the protocol has been agreed between CHAS, Ambulance Service Association, Association of Chief Police Officers of England & Wales and ARCC Kinloss. The purpose of the protocol is defined as "...in order to clarify the procedures in off road/mountainous incidents involving the possible use of helicopters." Yet, unbelievably, Mountain Rescue was not invited and has not been involved with the development of these protocols.

LDSAMRA has been in discussions with CHAS, via North West Air Ambulance, for over two years to try to agree a working arrangement for use of air ambulances in mountain rescues in the Lakes, without success. Our contact at CHAS is also the Operations Manager for North West Air Ambulance and the CHAS representative at UKSAR. At all stages we have been advised of the imminence of this 'National Agreement' (Guideline 10).

Despite many protestations to CHAS they continued to develop these protocols without any meaningful involvement of mountain rescue. Conversely we wrote and agreed a working arrangement with Great North Air Ambulance, who now have an aircraft based in Cumbria in less than two weeks (at the time of writing). A copy of the working agreement between LDSAMRA teams and the Great North Air Ambulance is also available at the same location, along with CHAS Guideline 10.

The following bullet points are drawn from a document titled *The Tasking & Use Of Helicopters In Mountain Rescues In The Lake District*. This document was written by LDSAMRA to summarise the frustrations that still exist.

Interestingly, negotiations have proven extremely difficult with the North West Air Ambulance based at Blackpool, but very amenable with the Great North Air Ambulance. The concerns of LDSAMRA were raised by Tony Jones at the September UKSAR meeting.

The document was also sent to the Chief Constable of Cumbria Police and also the Chief Executive of Cumbria Ambulance Service. A full version is available on the members area of the MRC website.

* Interface difficulties between Police and Ambulance Authorities

* Delays in the passage of information between the police and ambulance control at callout initiation and further delays in teams being called by the police

* Decisions as to which resources are tasked to a mountain rescue being taken by totally

inexperienced personnel in police or ambulance service control rooms.

* These same people tasking air ambulance and military helicopters with little or no knowledge of or regard to such issues as:

- * weather
- * cloud levels
- * wind strengths
- * daylight levels
- * casualty party size
- * land-on or winch requirements

* Teams not knowing that both the air ambulance and a military aircraft might be attending the same incident

* Air ambulances seeking high profile incidents to raise their profile and fund raising capabilities

* A suspicion that air ambulances/ambulance control wish to take over responsibility for mountain rescues

* Ambulance control tasking an air ambulance and then not telling the teams when called that they have.

* The increased safety risk to casualties, their companions and their rescuers. There is significant and conclusive evidence in the public domain regarding the risks associated with helicopters in mountain rescue incidents, evidenced locally most vividly with the incident on Stickle Pike involving Kendal team members in a military aircraft. That incident could very easily have resulted in six deaths. The casualty did not have life threatening injuries.

* Requests for military helicopters are more and more being filtered by the question 'Are the casualties injuries life-threatening?' If the answer is no, then the tasking of a helicopter is less likely to occur. Why then do ambulance control task an air ambulance to relatively minor injuries such as a broken ankle?

* Until such time that the running of a mountain rescue incident is returned to the relevant mountain rescue team, the probabilities continue to increase. There is absolutely no evidence that calling helicopters before calling teams has ever changed the medical

outcome for a casualty.

* For a team leader to effectively manage a mountain rescue on behalf of the police (and team leaders have many years and many hundreds of incidents experience in this area – much more than an operator in ambulance control or an inspector in a police control room) they need to be aware of what is happening and evaluate the local conditions and all available resources, at which time a reasoned risk apportioned decision on the best way to affect that particular incident can be made.

Examples where some of the above have affected rescues in the Lakes include:

* Air ambulance tasked to a mountain biker but could not find him. 2.5 hour delay in calling the relevant MR team.

* Air ambulance en-route to a casualty with head injuries developed engine trouble and had to land. No information passed to MR team that AA had abandoned the rescue. When air ambulance didn't arrive military helicopter requested which evacuated the casualty.

* Numerous examples of land ambulances that had been tasked not turning up at RV points and when calls were made to ambulance control being advised that no ambulance available as it had been diverted.

* MR team called to an ankle injury 100 yards from the road. Air ambulance and road ambulance also attended.

* Land ambulance and air ambulance both tasked to an incident some 2500' above sea level with the casualty site in thick cloud. MR team not called until much later.

* Police call military helicopter to the same incident that ambulance control have tasked an air ambulance. The MR team didn't know both had been tasked (by others) and neither helicopter knew the other was attending.

* MR team alerted to an ankle injury but advised that air ambulance was on scene and no team involvement required. After some delay, team were asked to attend to

assist with stretcher carry and to walk the casualties companion from the hill.

* Air ambulance attended a fatal heart attack. On request advised that no road ambulance available to meet air ambulance to transfer body to local hospital.

These examples are not one-offs, and they will continue to happen. Time is the only determining factor before something goes seriously wrong.

In conclusion, it appears to LDSAMRA that CHAS are attempting to railroad through a protocol that is both unworkable, and insulting.

It is the current belief within LDSAMRA that we are not alone in our frustrations over this matter. This in fact has been confirmed by the police who are also aware of difficulties in other areas.

It was suggested by CHAS that their protocol would be sent out to all regions and teams via the MRC 'once agreed.' I stress again that LDSAMRA have had no part in agreement or even in the development of the protocol.

We strongly suggest that all teams and regions review the protocol and consider it in the light of the points raised above, as well as relative to your own area and methods of operations.

If you are unhappy about the workability of the document as it applies to mountain rescue we suggest that you contact your Chief Constable to formally register those concerns.

If you have similar concerns about the Guideline, or any other issue with regard to air ambulance/ambulance control, please write to your Chief Constable and also the Chief Executive of your local Ambulance Trust. We believe that publicising our serious concerns to a wider audience is the only way in which we are able to influence any further debate on the subject. Please also copy any such letters to Peter Smith, MR (E&W) Secretary.

Mark Hodgson
Team Leader Keswick MRT & LDSAMRA
leader@keswickmrt.org.uk

Wild Talk for wild places

About 12 months ago long-time friend Louis Hume, of Cleveland SRT asked me to support him in his new post as Comms Officer. With no particular interest in radio himself but with a desire to improve his team's hill comms he gave me a brief as broad as it was simple – improve comms reliability and make it easier to use.

A simple brief started simply enough. We developed new procedures for radio checks, battery charging and isolating faulty kit, thereby eliminating frustrating radio failures in the field. Next project was wiring up five radios and two mobile phones into their impressive new control vehicle. Following the brief it had to be field maintainable with nothing more than an Allen key to change faulty antennas. After several freezing winter evenings in the unheated team hangar the task was completed. Any team member should now be able to replace a blown fuse or set up a standby aerial with no more equipment than common sense. High band, with its multichannel functionality and its training considerations, is currently on our agenda.

I have learnt much in the past 12 months. I've been roped-in (often literally) on training exercises from line searches to crag rescues, even winched and lowered during helicopter training (an experience for which I am very grateful to the team). Most team members just want to press and talk and don't want to have to think too much when operating their



radios. Thanks to CSRT, I am now fully aware of the frustrations of unreliable or fiddly comms gear when in precarious places with a howling cold wet wind. Keeping it simple and reliable remains at the forefront of everything we do. As the name suggest Wildtalk has always been about

communications in remote places. We have customers in the deserts of Mongolia to Premier league football teams, from rope-access specialists to night-club doormen. All wild places at times. Everything we sell we are confident is reliable and, where possible, everything is supported by spares. If you would like to discuss ways of tackling your radio communications problems please don't hesitate to phone. Meanwhile please visit our website www.wildtalk.com

Aaron Ward

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23



ROPE SPAGHETTI OR DISCIPLINED SYSTEM?

participants should be competent riggers with an inquisitive and open mind. RfR uses a data-based approach where systems are analysed using published research and explained using simple physics. Mike Gibbs describes this as a journey into the past rediscovering knowledge that has been lost since the days of sail, farming by horsepower and human engineering. One of the most useful skills is the development of an objective and process driven critical analysis system, whereby riggers are able to swiftly decode rope spaghetti into component parts.



STEEP STRETCHER WORK

Other areas include the misconceptions about static rope and peak force; the difference between simple, compound and complex pulley systems; belay systems for rescue loads and the mechanics of tensioning lines including the Kootenay Highline System.

RfR is especially adept at handling enquiries and actively encourages delegates to bring along equipment and rescue systems so the class are able to test and analyse. Pat was astonished to see video footage of a failure test undertaken on a conditional 2 point stretcher bridle belay system, where the whole rig literally hit the ground; he had been happily using this system for a decade. However, this was only half the answer as Mike Gibbs went on to implement some subtle changes to the system which removed the previous flaws.



THE KOOTENAY HIGHLINE SYSTEM

RfR will be visiting the UK over the summer of 2005 and all MRT members are welcome to attend. The first seminar will be presented in North Cornwall with a second planned for a more central location. Any teams who are considering putting their members on this programme should contact Jonathan Barnett of Rig Systems on 01208 814538.

Jonathan Barnett

DEALING WITH MISSING DEPRESSED PEOPLE

Notes from a Seminar Session with Tom Legassick, Mental Health Team, Cumberland Infirmary.

1. What is Mental Health?

Tom outlined how Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' spelled out what basic needs were necessary for people to have a sense of well-being. These included basic physical needs (food, warmth, shelter, sex, etc), social needs (love) and emotional needs (recognition/esteem). If these are in place, then Maslow believed that 'self-actualisation' took place, and people were able to function normally. (Though there will be a range of what people consider 'normal'.)

2. Mood Swings.

As everyone experiences different amounts of stress and tension, their moods of optimism/pessimism swing up and down. At the extremes of mood swings, are what are called 'psychotic thresholds'. If someone gets so down, or so up, then they are seen to be outside the norm, they cross the psychotic threshold, where the following disorders may be displayed:-

- Disorder of thought
- Perceptual problems
- Paranoia
- Tangential thinking
- Affectual disorder
- Behavioural Disorder
- Locational confusion
- Belief that others are reading their mind
- Withdrawal - doing nothing

3. Handling.

• These people need to be understood for who they are, not what disorders they display - otherwise alienation takes place. Don't try to persuade them their view is wrong. Understand them but take control, because their life is out of control and often they know it, and want someone to take control for them.

• Depressed people need to be treated as High Risk - they are liable to suicide, and make elaborate preparations for the event. The more preparation they have made, the higher the risk.

• If they are out of control, or in a dangerous place, then you need to take control. Communicate clearly, informatively and unambiguously what you are going to do. ('Where we are is dangerous. We are going to walk down the hill together, to meet up with the others, and we will be alright.') Often, the depressed person will respond positively to this, and meekly go with you.

AMBULANCE DEFINITION

DVLA Guidelines on taxation of team vehicles

The Department of Transport (DVLA) has produced a document which details the requirement that now **MUST** be met by vehicles which are to be taxed as an 'AMBULANCE'. The full document can be found in the Members Area/Training of the MRC Website. This document is used by the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency to check whether a vehicle meets the AMBULANCE definition. It was introduced in January 2004, as ambulances being vehicles that are 'constructed or adapted' cannot meet the conformity of the 'Single Use Vehicle' definition.

If you intend to register a vehicle as an ambulance it will have to conform to every one of the conditions below. In addition the Licensing Office will wish to inspect the vehicle before registration. You must ensure that there is no outstanding work and that the vehicle is equipped as listed below.

Can our control vehicle be taxed as an ambulance?

Yes, provided you do not describe the vehicle as a control vehicle, it is not marked as a control vehicle but is marked front, rear and both sides as an AMBULANCE and that it conforms to all the requirements below.

AMBULANCE DEFINITION

The vehicle shall be readily identifiable as a vehicle used for the carriage of sick, injured or disabled people to or from welfare centres or places where medical or dental treatment is given by being permanently marked 'Ambulance' (or 'Ambiwans') on both sides.

The vehicle must have the following equipment or characteristics:-

- An optical warning system. ie. a blue warning beacon (or special warning lamp) or a device which fulfils the same function
- An acoustical warning system
- One operational 12v socket for medical devices in the patient's compartment
- The electrical supply system shall consist of at

(Easier when they are in withdrawn mode.)

• Once you are out of danger, the person needs to be handed over to the authorities, NOT TAKEN HOME. The most dangerous time (ie tendency to do further harm to themselves or others) is within the next three days. The police have the power to section them and take them to a place of safety.

4. What you need to know from the police, before taking the search on.

• History. Does the misper have a forensic history of violent behaviour? 37% of young men between 18 and 35 have a conviction for violence. If the misper has one, then do not go in groups of less than three.

• Drink or drugs. If the misper is a substance abuser, proceed with caution, and have a companion. These factors can make the person's behaviour unpredictable. Drink and drugs can make someone close to the psychotic threshold slip over it.

• History of mental health/depression. If the misper has a history, the case must be treated as HIGH RISK and speed of response is important. Potential for suicide is high.

• Living alone? If the misper lives alone, or is a 'loner' then he/she is at HIGH RISK. Speed of response is important, likely suicide attempt.

• Known physical infirmity/handicap/illness. These tend to generate depression in mispers, and can also push someone over the psychotic threshold.

• Last known sighting etc. Nuts and bolts of search work but may point team in direction of misper. Beware 'last seen' near woods or water - strong links with suicide.

5. Review.

After an incident involving a depressed misper - always review how the case was handled after two or three days, to assist team members to recover their balance, and to learn any lessons.

Mick Guy

MRC DIRECTORY

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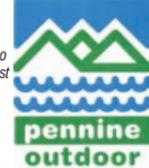


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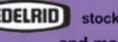
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least four separate subsystems as follows:-

- * basic system in non-equipped vehicle
- * supply system for specific body mounted devices
- * supply system for patient compartment
- * supply system for communications.

Apart from the basic system (the pre-converted vehicle system) the road ambulance body shall not be used as part of any of the supply systems. (ie it must be an insulated return system)

- * A communication system
- * with a transceiver permanently installed
- * connected to external antenna(e)
- * A permanently fitted bulkhead
- * separating the driver's compartment from the patient's compartment,
- * if fitted with a door that it is self closing while the vehicle is moving and secured against self-opening,
- * having one or two windows with a minimum separation of 100mm,
- * A permanently fitted window;
- * shall be made of material displaying an 'e' or 'E' marking
- * shall have a maximum area of 0.12m2
- * shall allow direct visual contact with the driver
- * shall be secured against opening
- * shall have an adjustable blind or other means of preventing the driver being disturbed by the light of the patient's compartment.
- * External Windows;

* positioned or screened to ensure patient's privacy,

- * displaying an 'E' or 'e' marking.
- * Restraint systems and on board items.

* All positions for occupants on board shall be fitted with a permanent restraint which when subjected to a force of 10g shall prevent the occupant becoming detached such as to create a hazard to the safety of other persons on the ambulance.

* All items (eg. medical devices/equipment /objects) on board shall be fitted with a permanent restraint and when subjected to a force of 10g shall not become detached such as to create a hazard to the safety of the persons on the ambulance.

* The maximum distance the patient, the stretcher and any item attached to either the holding assembly or stretcher may travel is 150mm.

- Evacuation
- * It shall be possible to release all persons in the ambulance without the use of equipment on board the ambulance.
- Doors
- * An audible and/or visual signal shall warn the driver when any door is not completely closed when the vehicle is in motion.

The document also provides a list of items which should be stowed on board according to the section headed restraint systems and on board items.



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