

Mountain MAGAZINE Rescue



ISSUE 13

INCORPORATING MRC NEWS

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

JULY 2005

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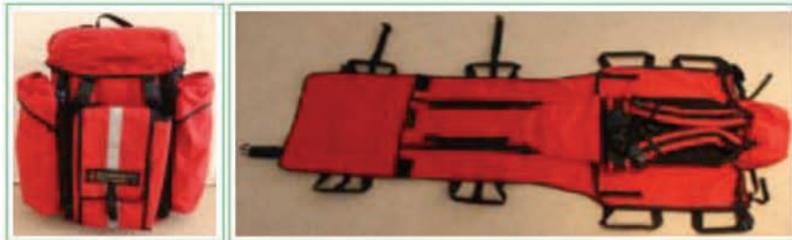
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INCORPORATING MRC NEWS

EDITORIAL

Editor

Judy Whiteside

Rossendale & Pendle MRT

8 bridgefoot close · boothstown · worsley

manchester M28 1UG

telephone 0161 702 6080

editorial email editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk

Website

Paul Baxendale

Paul Horder Keswick MRT

Dave Freeborn Patterdale MRT

Handbook

Eve Burton Buxton MRT

Statistics

Ged Feeney Penrith MRT

MRC Press Officer

Andy Simpson

Rossendale & Pendle MRT

www.mountain.rescue.org.uk

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Pat Starkie

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Front page pic

Bowland Pennine MRT at Denham Quarry call out. Photo supplied by Paul Durham

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...

It's an interesting view from up here – not quite what I expected in that it's pretty similar to the view from down there! Which probably isn't quite what you expected.

When I first came into MR in 1993, I assumed the 'Mountain Rescue Council' was some great monolith, housed in an ivory tower somewhere in London, pontificating about how we should do things at the sharp end. Little did I realise, when I joined the Executive 18 months ago, that it's run by you and me, team members (albeit, maybe, with a little service under their belt). It also runs a bit like a team, in that discussions take place within the Executive (the team council/committee), agreement is reached and then, on important matters, we seek approval from the main meetings and the various sub-committees (effectively the 'team membership').

There's also, just like a team, plenty of dissent, both within the Executive and from the 'team', but because the format is simple we can usually work out our differences for the good of the majority. I realise some of the issues we deal with are, potentially, quite complicated but no more or less important than decisions taken by your own team's council. They just affect more people.

I don't apologise for taking such a simplistic view – I believe it's the only way the organisation can work without becoming the bureaucracy some think it already is.

All Executive members are accessible (some more readily than others – just like a team) and more than willing to talk about the issues affecting

us all and take on board whatever suggestions you might make. You may not like what comes out of it but you can be assured that, we've all agreed on a given course of action.

Finally on this subject, it's worth remembering (and the Executive do) that every position on the MRC is re-elected every year. These are not 'jobs for life'. We are only in post because you put us there when your regional representatives voted us into office at the AGM, just like your team council!

That said, my mandated bit of the action mainly concerns the dissemination of information and publications to both teams and the public, an impossible task without the support and hard work of the Publications & Information Sub-committee. The other part of my job (with three others) is the thankless task of raising money on a national level. So, as I sit in my ivory tower in Manchester, I'm delighted to note that MR, and what we do, is getting more publicity than ever. A recent announcement from Clarence House suggested that Prince William is going to undertake 'work experience' with an MR team. Which one? Nobody knows but you can guarantee that when he does, your recruitment problems will be over as armies of graduates beat a path to your doors to enlist. On top of that, the government seems to have woken up to our financial plight. We're still keeping the parliamentary pressure on, re-stating our original aim – government money with no strings attached. (Incidentally, a journalist from Third Sector Magazine, a charity 'industry' publication, rang me for information for an article she was writing about how mountain rescue *didn't* want money from the government! Clearly we still have a bit of a mountain to climb, but we're getting there).

Andy Simpson Chairman, Publications & Information Sub-committee

...AND FROM THE EDITOR

'So...' said Dr Bob, our team chairman, 'if nobody's prepared to come forward to organise the Walk, we're going to have to make some hard decisions about money this year.' The carpet, as he has often remarked, suddenly became very interesting at this point. Thirty odd pairs of eyes glued to the coffee stain at their feet.

The previous organiser had decided to step down, after several years, due to work and family commitments, but this – the Rossendale Way in a Day event – is our biggest fundraiser each year. We usually run three walks a year, with routes covering different sections of our area, but were already down on potential funds due to complete apathy and consequent cancellation of the May walk. And, as every single one of you out there is aware – we all count on every penny that comes in.

Yet still the carpet looks appealing. You could have bottled the tension. And so it happened. That hand of mine went up again. (Note to self: Tape hands to sides when attending meetings.)

I've never organised anything like this before so it was a case of deciding how I thought it should operate and sticking to some sort of plan. Which was pretty much as in previous years, but with a

couple of changes – I wasn't about to reinvent any wheels. And then, as a non-operational team member I am reliant on the knowledge and experience of those used to doing the job. Adopting a 'Gold, Silver, Bronze' approach, I tapped into those skills and learnt (some might say rather too easily) the art of delegation. Perhaps the scrambled egg on my shoulders was a tad too extreme but hey, how often do I get the chance?

Having witnessed first hand the difficulties of prompting volunteers I took the tack of asking people to do specific jobs to which I knew they were suited but hadn't necessarily had the responsibility of before. By the same token, some were not given jobs they might have expected simply because 'they'd always done them'. All in the belief that if you take people out of their comfort zones, and offer them a challenge, they will usually prove more than up to the task and grow as a result – team building in action.

The response was great. An enthusiastic team who worked together, eagerly reported back at monthly progress meetings, a virtual full team availability on the day and a record number of walkers. In fact, a blummin good event all round. So thank you to all my team members for a great job done. And, before I get round to taping my hands down, dare I say – same time next year?

Judy Whiteside Editor

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Mike Margeson reports:- My comments regarding a 'wake up call', in the January magazine fuelled much debate. Not least of which was the healthy discussion about the term 'guidelines' by the Equipment Sub reps meeting at PYB. In the light of that meeting, I asked the main Council for confirmation and ratification of the whole role and mandate of the sub committees to produce guidelines. It was agreed we would look back through any previous guidelines and that these would be numbered, dated and placed on the equipment area of the website.

A review of the Equipment Inspection & Checking Course held in South Wales, with over twenty folk attending, was very positive. It was noted that this was the first MRC course in the south for a long time and could we do more? The next course is scheduled for September at Oldham - contact John

Edwards for details on jmemr@talk21.com A demonstration of the new **Bell wheel unit** attracted a good deal of interest from different regions. For more information, go to the Bell Stretchers web site. www.bell-stretchers.co.uk I would like to remind all that the **Product Liability Insurance** that comes with the Bell Stretchers only covers items that have had their service and load test within the five year period. **WARNING:** Those of you outside this criteria - and our records show that there are quite some number of teams with out of date stretchers - do at present have no product liability cover.

SUPPORTER MEMBER BADGES

Hot on the heels of the new Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) badge is the proposed Support Member badge. These should be available to teams by the end of July, and should be a useful



addition to fundraising. Teams can buy these at a discounted price of £1 for onward sale to supporters at £2 each. The idea is to maintain this figure as a base price, so as not to run the risk of different pricing in different regions. Of course, teams have the option to accept 'donations' at the point of sale, over and above the £2. Contact Penny Brockman or Andy Simpson for further details.

NEW COMMS OFFICER

Mark Lewis, from Western Beacons MSRT, has been appointed as MRC National Communications Officer. He brings with him an impressive background in electronics and radio systems, combined with over eighteen years experience in mountain rescue. In his professional

life, he is Senior Engineer with Commercial Radio Systems in Cardiff, responsible for ensuring all technical operations within the company are carried out effectively to the appropriate ISO and MPT standards. As a Western Beacons team member, he has held office as Secretary, Radio Officer, Search Manager and Team Co-ordinator. In a wider MR context, his work with South Wales SRA has seen him secure donations to South Wales teams of forty radios of current spec from a council, six base stations from a national utility, and funding from South Wales police in the support of the change to high band. He has been Radio Officer for South Wales and MRC Radio Sub Committee member since 1998.

MEDICAL SYMPOSIUM SATURDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2006

John Ellerton has announced dates for a Medical Symposium, at

Plas y Brenin, which will comprise a day of lectures and seminars given by UIAA members from round the world. The programme will have a rescue aspect and is intended for doctors and keen casualty carers. To register an interest, contact John on ellerton@enterprise.net, and he will keep you up to date as details emerge. The UIAA, incidentally, is the 'international BMC' and have an important place in mountaineering. Their medical commission is actively involved in prevention of accidents and first aid training of mountain guides. This event will be a rare chance for you to see the faces of the people that set the standards and have a wealth of experience on everything from 'tendon injuries in sports climbers' to 'the risks of base jumping.'

IKAR MEDICAL COMMITTEE

In April 2007, there will be an evening of short mountain lectures by world leading mountain rescue doctors. The venue - North Lakes. It's been proposed to run a Medical Seminar for MR doctors and casualty carers over the weekend. Contact John Ellerton if you fancy organising the MR element. How many years is it since the last Langdale Ambleside Seminar? This is your chance to talk about the topics you want, and get the best advice available.

BIRTHDAY HONOURS

The Queen's Birthday Honours List on 11 June included an OBE for Peter Lyn Howells (MRC Hon Assistant Secretary), 'for services to police and to the mountain rescue service'. Also in the Honours List was the Queen's Police

MRC REGIONAL MEETINGS

Despite our best efforts, there remains a view in some areas that the officers of the MRC are distant to the grass roots body of mountain rescue. The move to UK conferences has perhaps aggravated this position since it is no longer feasible to have a session at the conference where the MRC officers directly field questions from the floor.

We are very committed to changing this impression and this year propose that the MRC comes to the regions enabling team members to meet us directly. Ideally, we would visit each region in turn. However, time dictates that this is probably not a realistic target. We have therefore compromised and intend to hold three meetings grouping regions together. For the future, a visit to each individual region might be possible, especially if the coming events are successful.

The first meeting will be on **Sunday, 6 November**. The venue is to be confirmed but will be in the Bristol area and we anticipate SWERA and SWSRA joining together for the meeting.

The second will be **Sunday 20 November** (following the MRC meeting on 19 November) and the venue is Lancashire Police HQ in Preston. It seems appropriate for PDMRO, NWMRA and MPSRO to join for this one.

The third will take place on **Sunday 4 December** at Swaledale team HQ (the annual TL meeting will be held at the same venue on the Saturday). We expect LDSAMRA, NESRA and YDRP to come together on this occasion.

The pattern of the meetings may vary and will be determined by the members in the regions, not the MRC. The MRC regional reps have agreed to play a major part in organising these events and suggestions for the content of the days should be addressed to them in the first instance.

David Allan

SUPPORT SEARCH & RESCUE OR PAY THE PRICE...

The Transport Select Committee's findings on the UK's search and rescue services showed that the voluntary organisations and volunteers within them deserve far more support than we are currently getting from the government. Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody MP, chairman of the committee, said, 'We owe a great debt to all those who work in the UK's search and rescue services. They take risks to save lives and help other people in distress. Many of them do this as unpaid volunteers, others are paid when they are called out and others are full time staff. This is the 'Year of the Volunteer'. The government just needs to sort a few things out, spend a little more public money, now, and look at what we are saving in the long term. Without volunteers, the Chancellor would have to meet the full cost of search and rescue on the coast, sea, rivers, lakes, mountains and moors. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution alone costs over £110m per year to run on a voluntary basis. I shudder to think what the cost would be if we ever needed a state-run version.'

Medal for Michael Tonge, Chief Constable of Gwent Police, who many will remember as the recent ACPO rep to the MRC.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Dave Allan presented Eve Burton with her Distinguished Service Award in May, at Plas y Brenin. Eve has been involved with MR for some 33 years now and remains a full active members of

the Buxton team, attending most call outs. She has devoted many years of her life to mountain rescue at local, regional and national level, as PDMRO Treasurer, Handbook Co-ordinator, Secretary to the regional training group and Conference Organiser. In her spare time (!) she has been known to hide behind the odd tree as a dogsbody for SARDA Peaks.

NATIONAL TRAINING DAY PLAS Y BRENNIN SUNDAY 22 MAY 2005

Jed Stone and Dave Worrall did a wonderful job in masterminding the event. Other members from Ogwen Valley MRO did a wonderful job in staging the training sessions. The local team undertook to set up the Training Day. Five training scenarios were put in place as part of a Round Robin exercise.

Team doctor Marion Waters and Anne Baker, both drafted in from Countess of Chester Hospital, instilled confidence amongst members during their session on pain relief for casualties using IM injections. Members with appropriate certification practiced on each other, while others used a mannequin. Comments indicated that training courses on Casualty Care should insist on using human volunteers rather than pretending with oranges. The degree of confidence experienced by the practitioner is totally different and confidence is essential with this technique. Members also worked on improving their technique in the application of a pelvic SAM splint.

A Protocol for Fatal Incidents was explained in great detail by two team members, Inspector Gerwyn Lloyd and DC Tim Bird, both of North Wales Police. This protocol has been implemented by rescue teams in North Wales. Teams elsewhere are recommended to develop a similar protocol. This session had implications for the interesting scenario in which members were instructed in dealing with guarding and recording a fatal incident, supervised by Trisha Foley, Crime Scene Investigation Performance Manager, of North Wales Police.

The session dealing with Rigging For Rescue concentrated on personal lowering skills. Under the supervision of team members Dave Meeson and Chris Onions participants had to show confidence in the techniques by manoeuvring themselves up and down along the brink

of a steep crag. The only outsider was Richard Terrell from Central Beacons. He encouraged members to transport an exercise casualty using a Bell Tangent stretcher with a wheel unit attachment. This attachment had been reviewed on the previous day by the Equipment Sub Committee.



At the closing debrief the twenty two participants representing seven teams expressed their delight and satisfaction with a variety of positive comments including 'really interesting', 'dispelled some myths' and 'integrating well with members from other teams'.

Peter Smith

Winners Berghaus Zenith Sleeping Bag worth £320!

Nice to know that mountain rescue team members clearly have their minds on less material matters than where their next £320 state-of-the-art sleeping bag is coming from... a spectacular postbag revealed a grand total of just fifteen entries to our April competition. Ah well... if you're not in it, you can't win it, as they say.

First prize went to Graham Dalley, with consolatory thermal mugs going out to D Tunstall, Gail Todd, Miss H Ashcroft, James Reading, Paul Burne and Jim Gallienne. Thanks to Alan Harrison of Berghaus for providing the prizes and picking out the winners.

Oh... and the answer to the question was, of course, Alan Hinkes.



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CONTRACT SALES

Lakes teams assist Nepal Porter Shelter/Rescue Post



PHOTO: PAUL ROBLEY

600M³ OF HAND QUARRIED STONE READY TO BUILD PORTER RESCUE POST AND SHELTER

It might not look much at the moment, but this 600m³ of rock has been hand quarried and shaped to build a porter shelter and rescue post 4500 metres above sea level! Machhermo lies high above the crossroads of several popular trekking routes in the foothills of Mount Everest. Everest base camp, and the peaks of Gokyo Ri and Kala Pattar are all visited by thousands of trekkers each season. Without the dedication of porters and Sherpa guides, tourists would be severely limited in their ability to visit these remote regions of Nepal.

It is a popular misconception that Nepalese people are immune to acute mountain sickness (AMS) and the cold. Altitude sickness is common with any rapid ascent above 2500m (a height well exceeded by most trekking routes in this area) and can strike any person at any time. Most reputable trekking companies look after their porters and provide them with food and accommodation. However, there are some organisations that are less than honourable, putting profit before people and over the last 10 years on average three or four porters have died each season with altitude-related illnesses or hypothermia.

Community Action Nepal (CAN), the charity founded by Doug Scott CBE, is working in partnership with the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG), and aims to help eradicate these problems by providing a porter shelter and rescue post at Machhermo. The post is being constructed by local craftsmen and will be manned throughout the trekking season by volunteer medics and locals trained in first aid response. CAN are funding the building of the shelter and, once completed, the responsibility of day-to-day running will fall to the IPPG.

The first stretcher was donated by Clapham CRO and taken out to Machhermo in 2003. Duddon and Furness MRT have been very helpful in securing vital equipment to donate to the project, which is due to be completed sometime in October 2005. Mike Margeson, along with his team DFMRT, has donated two stretchers (A Bell and a MacInnes Superlite) and vacuum mattresses and are also helping in the search for a casualty evacuation bag. Langdale Ambleside have also donated two large bags of extrication collars towards the project.

Once contacted, Mike sprang into action and very soon had the offer of some very useful equipment. Mike says, 'the team are only delighted that some of our old equipment can go to help such wonderful mountain folk as the Nepalese porters.'

The most common illnesses experienced by porters include AMS, high altitude pulmonary oedema (HAPE), high altitude cerebral oedema (HACE) and trauma from falls. The stretchers will prove invaluable as, presently, casualties are often carried for days on makeshift stretchers to receive limited medical assistance in under-equipped hospitals.

The sincere thanks of both charities go out to all who have helped in securing much needed equipment for the project.

Paul Robley

REGIONAL NEWS

LAKE DISTRICT

Richard Warren (Secretary, LDSAMRA) writes... The 2004 annual report for the Lake District teams was distributed throughout the area during May and includes the list of incidents for the region. The incidents show an 11% increase on the previous year, with a total of 390 calls involving 426 individuals and in excess of twenty thousand hours of rescue effort amongst our 400 plus team members. These figures, together with the number of people seen on the fells, would seem to indicate that walkers have returned to the area somewhere around the numbers we had prior to the Foot and Mouth outbreak. Certainly the numbers of walkers and cars that were in and around the various Lake District car parks over the May Bank Holiday weekend would support this view.

In the last issue, we briefly mentioned the ongoing problems with the tasking of Air Ambulances in the Lake District. As a direct result of the consultation process conducted amongst the MRC England & Wales member rescue organisations, the Confederation of Helicopter Ambulance Services (CHAS) protocol is now being redrafted following concerns expressed by the Lake District teams and some of the other regions. This is good news and we look forward to seeing and commenting on the new draft before it is tabled at a forthcoming UKSAR Operators Group meeting. It will not now be submitted to the July UKSAR meeting as there would be insufficient time to consult the regions. In the meantime, the LDSAMRA working group that's been dealing with this issue for the past eighteen months has met again with Cumbria Constabulary to establish a working arrangement whereby it is ensured that the correct assets are tasked at the appropriate time for each and every incident. Subsequent to this, the police have met with Ambulance Control and positive progress

THE NEW BRIDGE WITH GABLE IN THE BACKGROUND



has been made. A further meeting of the three interested parties is scheduled in the near future. The Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) has recently taken over responsibility for rescues on four of the waterways in the Lake District. These are Windermere, Ullswater, Derwent Water and Coniston. Despite letters to the MCA, we are still unsure how such rescues will be co-ordinated by the MCA. Will the MCA have their own resources immediately available to respond to any incident, will teams' assistance still be required, how will teams be tasked and, if so, is it still through the police? If this is the case, then on the ground it looks little different to the old reporting/tasking via the police except with the addition of another level of tasking with its inherent delays. In recent issues, we have also reported on the recent survey of bridges in the Lake District which highlighted a particular problem in the Wasdale valley. The narrow concrete road bridge that led 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 was demolished and a temporary steel framed bridge has now been constructed and road and foot traffic is back to normal. There has been no indication of when a permanent bridge will be built but when it happens we are hoping that disruption will be significantly less than that previously experienced with the recent closure. Kendal MRT represented both LDSAMRA and MR (England & Wales) at the recently run outdoor festival 'Head for the Hills'. This was a festival of walks, gear, skills and adventures organised by the outdoor magazines *Country Walking*, *Trail* and *Bird Watching*. It was held at Rydal, near Ambleside on Saturday and Sunday, 11-12 June, and attracted over 12,000 visitors. The Kendal team were present on both days along with their advance vehicle, answering the many and varied questions that the visitors to the area raised about mountain safety, funding and the wholly voluntary nature of the

service. It was a great opportunity to promote mountain rescue and raise funds at the same time. Thank you to those team members who gave up their weekend to support this event and represent the region's teams. 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.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

John Dempster, chairman of **Cockermouth MRT** and LDSAMRA was awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. A team member for forty eight years, since joining at the age of fifteen, he has recently led the project to build a new headquarters building in Cockermouth which was partly Lottery funded. His reaction to the award was, 'This award is an acknowledgement of the worthiness of mountain rescue itself.'



MID PENNINE

BOWLAND TEAM HONOURED

In early June, **Bowland Pennine MRT** was officially honoured by the Queen for its life saving efforts, with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2005. The award recognises the team's continuing service to the local community in Lancashire. Currently enjoying their twenty-fifth year in service, the team has recently begun fundraising for a new vehicle base on land near Junction 31A on the M6, just north of Preston. The new base will reduce the team's response time throughout the county and follows the much publicised rejection of a Lottery bid some time ago. Chairman Crispin Myerscough said, 'It's a great honour that the work of the team over many years has been recognised by such a prestigious award. It will be the icing on the cake of our Silver Jubilee celebrations.' Andy Binstead, team member for over 14 years said it was fantastic news for all rescue teams as it recognised the huge amount of time and effort all team members spend for the benefit of their local communities.' The team's nomination is believed to have come from someone who attended one of their regular talks. The annual award itself is relatively new – it was announced by Her Majesty in 2002 to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee to recognise the vital role played by hundreds and thousands of 'unsung heroes' of the voluntary and community world. It covers groups operating in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The number of awards made each year depends on the number and quality of nominations received and are made to groups rather than individuals.



A TRIP TO THE FOREST OF BEERLAND?

How many teams have dreamt of forging closer links with a brewery? Well **Bowland Pennine MRT** has succeeded! The Bowland Festival, sponsored by the RSPB and currently in its third year, celebrates the Forest of Bowland as an area of 'outstanding natural beauty'. The number of events being run are on the increase – as is the team's involvement in the event, providing safety cover for many of the fell and moorland walks. It's also an opportunity to meet and forge better relationships with local landowners. The aim of the week is to give visitors the chance to see many of the rarest birds in the UK in their natural habitat. Other walks, run by the county council Ranger Service, focused on the many new access areas open in the Trough of Bowland.

So what about the beer? In the wake of foot and mouth, many rural areas began to look at new ways to attract tourism and trade. Richard Baker, formally the economic development manager for the Falklands did just that, setting up The Bowland Beer Company in April 2003, brewing on a one Brewers Barrel (BBL) plant in a store room at the Bashall Barn farm shop a few miles from Clitheroe. In August that year, a five BBL brewery was installed in an industrial unit in Accrington, awaiting completion of its home at Bashall in what used to be the farm's milking parlour. The brewery finally moved to Bashall, England's smallest town, in late January and brewing started again in February 2004.

'Brewery tours were run as part of the Bowland Festival – with the team providing an unusually



A sunny day in Saddleworth

A glorious Sunday morning in early March – snow on the ground and an overnight frost. What better day for a walk over Black Hill and maybe a chance for some good photos? Beyond Running Hill Pits, I followed the Famin Road to the Holmfirth Road, admiring the many tracks left by cross country skiers along the gully beside the path. A couple of cars were parked up at the county boundary, with a family playing in the snow, and someone must have been busy the previous day constructing a shelter about four foot high built from snow blocks.

Between the road and Black Hill, the snow had almost filled many of the peat groughs – often leaving a narrow channel a few feet wide and about six feet deep, with sloping access from both ends. The mountain hares seemed to have enjoyed themselves with lots of footprints through these channels and a few disturbed patches, where I assumed they had spent the night. The hares were still around – I spotted up to four at a time as I made my way to the summit. An early lunch stop on the top beside the trig point with just a handful of other people passing by (also solo walkers) out to enjoy the conditions. The flagged section to the south was almost entirely covered

with snow – and, as I lost height, the snow got a little softer with it being more difficult to choose a route where I wouldn't break through the surface. At Red Ratcher, I stopped to take a few photos of the patterns of ice in the stream, then took a direct line across the tops to Ashway. My path crossed here with a number of runners who were competing in the Saddleworth Runner's New Chew event, and they were also struggling with the snow conditions – going calf or knee deep when they broke through.

From Ashway, I descended steeply towards the tunnel outfall – and wished I'd had my ice axe with me on some of the snow slopes. Then passed through Binn Green and up to Alderman. As I walked towards Dick Hill, I suddenly realised how spectacular the view across Dovestones had become. The partial snow cover and the strong side lighting were picking out the features of the hills and crags and I decided to try taking a panorama.

It worked better than I could have hoped and now I've got a three foot wide framed photo on my wall of the shot shown. It sits below a similar sized shot taken from Mera Peak in the Himalaya – but it is definitely not overshadowed!

Denzil Broadhurst

high level of safety cover!' said Nick Mattock. 'Richard has now suggested they will work on a 25th Anniversary Beer for us, to help celebrate our Silver Jubilee. Should the whole of the MR community have a fundraising brew? Something to think about, perhaps?'

Still in Bowland, the team has a new leader in the form of Phil O'Brien, replacing Tony Bond, team leader for the last ten years.

PEAK DISTRICT

OLDHAM ABSEILS SUCCESS

Oldham MRT ran their sponsored abseil in aid of the Tsunami disaster as planned in April, raising £8,500 towards Keela's appeal, to raise £250,000 for a new school in the Matara District of Sri Lanka. Team members were in place atop the Back Box in Rochdale at 9.00 am, ready for the first takers – some eager to go, some not so. 'By 2.30pm,' said Mick Nield, Oldham team leader, 'we had thrown – sorry – assisted 64 willing abseilers, one of which was a lady of 66 years, over the side of the 66 metre building. On behalf of the team, Keela and the children of the school, I'd like to thank Steve and his team at the Municipal Offices for their assistance, all those who took part and their sponsors.'



ANDY CAMPBELL PRESENTS A CHEQUE FOR £3,159 TO EDALÉ MRT TEAM LEADER TREV LAWTON (LEFT) AND TEAM DOCTOR STEVE ROWE (RIGHT). ANDY'S CLIMBING PARTNER ON THE DAY IS FAR RIGHT

RESCUE ON STANAGE EDGE

On Saturday 24 April 2004, **Edale MRT** was called to a climbing accident on Stanage Edge. Army sergeant, Andy Campbell, had fallen about 60 foot from the top of the crag when his abseil belay failed as soon as it was loaded. Fortunately for him, members **RAF Stafford MRT** were climbing nearby, and Edale's team doctor was only a few hundred metres further along the crag. As a result, the team's response to the incident was swifter than normal and probably saved the casualty's life. It was immediately obvious that he was suffering from serious chest, head, spinal and pelvic injuries and a request was made for an RAF Sea King. Again, the presence of the RAF team – which included their team leader – meant valuable minutes were saved in getting the aircraft to us. In

NEW LAND ROVER FOR KINDER

Thanks to a grant from the Co-operative Charitable Foundation, **Kinder MRT** has purchased a second Land Rover. Ken Blakeman and Geoff Crowther attended the Foundation's annual awards event in Rochdale, where they were presented with a certificate for £20,000. The vehicle was ordered from Guy Salmon's in Stockport during October, and fitted out as an ambulance by Macclesfield Motor Bodies, delivered to the team the week before Christmas. A dedication ceremony for the two team vehicles was held on the morning of Saturday 22 January with Hayfield's vicar, the Rev Hilary Egerton, officiating.

Although the Co-op grant went a long way towards paying for the second vehicle, a large sum of money still had to be found from team funds to pay for fitting out the vehicle. Chris Banister, Team Fundraiser, has been working hard raising money from local organisations and businesses to cover these additional costs. He is always interested to hear of other potential sources of funding, however, so if you know of any company or local business that may be willing to contribute to the Vehicle Appeal please get in touch.

Raising the profile of MR

Back in April 2004, Edale MRT was called to a fallen climber on Stanage Edge in the Peak District. Nothing unusual about that – Stanage Edge is one of many popular climbing edges in the Peak and attracts thousands of climbers each year. In this case, the climber sustained serious injuries and was evacuated by helicopter. Again, something that many teams do all too often. This particular casualty spent a lot of time in hospital and, sadly, is now in a wheelchair.

Some time later, we heard from the casualty who told us that, following his accident, he had sold all his outdoor gear in an effort to raise money for the team. He wanted to present the team with a cheque back at Stanage Edge.

Recognising how generous this was, the team thought it could make a good story and contacted all the local press inviting them to attend. For various reasons no one from the press could turn up, but *BBC Look North* did contact us saying they were interested in what a mountain rescue team did. They asked if they could spend a day with the team and follow what we did, look at the equipment, talk to some members etc, etc. We agreed to this and set the day up for the last May Bank Holiday Monday.

The BBC had been with the team less than two hours when we had a call. The call was perfect for television:-

- Young person with suspected spinal injuries (which turned out to be not serious)
- Compliant parents who were happy for the BBC to film (and indeed were interviewed and praised mountain rescue)
- Helicopter evacuation
- Perfect filming conditions

The most important point in all this is that it involved a normal family, on a straightforward day in the country, emphasising that mountain rescue is there for everyone not just the hard core climber or hill walker. This gave the whole incident much wider appeal.

The next day this was featured on both the lunchtime and evening news bulletins and the coverage came across very well. The BBC told us that Mondays are often days when they are short of news items. I think most of us would agree that weekends are when we are busiest, so we have an obvious link there. *BBC Look North* now have 'stock footage' of the team and we have an agreement in place whereby if we are involved in an unusual or interesting incident we can inform them and they will try to feature it.

I'm sure this principle applies to all TV stations and other teams could set up a similar agreement. It's a good way to raise the profile of mountain rescue. When the bulletins were shown, very few saw Edale MRT, most saw mountain rescue in general, and that's got to be good.

Neil Roden

Well, the AGM came and went in May with the usual round of exchanges and reports: some of it good and some of it less good! Mountain rescue can be a curious animal. It lays dormant for a long time and then all of a sudden, it wakes up and jumps to life with great energy. So what is happening up here in Scotland? Well, all teams have now received their shiny new radios, repeater sets and base sets. Radio Officers have attended national seminars to bring them up to speed and comprehensive documentation has been provided courtesy of Tom Taylor (ARCC), Nevis Hulme (Dundonnell MRT) and Ian Rideout (also Dundonnell MRT). A draft set of 'Radio Operating Competencies' has been established and will shortly be finalised. A very detailed document – the 'Land SAR Communications Manual' as approved by UKSAROPS Communications Working Group (CWG) is also available. This includes both background information and the radio procedures agreed by all the members of the CWG. The procedures are based on those previously issued to radio officers and submitted in discussions with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency MCA. This manual now provides the standard for radio communications across all land SAR agencies. Anyone wishing to see this document should go to the UKSAR website. The SARCOM vehicle continues to move around the country with Scottish MRTs developing their expertise in using it as a comms resource with other agencies and MRTs.

The AGM signalled a few changes to its Executive membership with a new Chair, Vice Chair, Training Officer and Equipment Officer. Full details will be published in the MRC booklet in the near future. Incidentally, if anyone wishes to contact the MRC of S then use the email address secretary@mrcofs.org

The MRC of S is developing its own stretcher courtesy of Jamie Kean (Kintail MRT) who is doing the developmental work and funding from the

Catherine Smith Memorial Fund. It is very different from previous or existing stretchers and is the result of a blank paper exercise that began around 2/3 years ago. The starting point was a round of discussions involving MR personnel from across Scotland which resulted in a very comprehensive technical specification. In a nutshell, the new stretcher has a three-piece load bed, with a quickly detachable head guard and wheel unit. The lower half of the load bed is a composite shell structure for drag ability, while the top is a lightweight metal frame structure providing lift and tie on points. The load bed incorporates storage for gas bottles, and casualty insulation. The wheel unit utilises a rubber torsion suspension system with a cheap and durable wheelbarrow wheel. The stretcher is called the Catherine Smith Casualty System, but is commonly known as the 'Katie'. Jamie is working to a fairly strict schedule and more information will be available by the next issue of the MR magazine.

Other matters 'hanging in the air', include the thorny issue of insurance, revised constitution and a call from a couple of members for a roots and branch examination of the MRC of S. It seems that we may soon be taking a close look at who we are, what we stand for, how we are constituted, how we are organised, and so on. But this may just be a load of hot air. Having been a 'non-member' of the Executive for some 20 years and a member for 8 years, I've seen the MRC of S work from both sides of the equation. I think it does a superb job, often in the face of extreme adversity. All the Exec members demonstrate extreme commitment, patience and energy. They work entirely for the benefit of the membership and the wider future of Scottish MR. The occasional knocks are to be expected. As a wise person once said, 'If you want to fly with the crows then you have to be prepared to be shot at'. If only crows had shotguns!

Bob Sharp. MRC of S Vice Chair

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L TO R MATT RYAN, IRENE CODD, CHRIS RYAN AND TERRY BROPHY

A team of four super mega athletes – Terry Brophy, Matt Ryan, Chris Ryan and Irene Codd – all members of SEMRA, entered the Outsider Inter Services Challenge 2005 at the end of May, organised by Outsider magazine.

Nine teams from the army, fire service, Gardai (police), Civil Defence, mountain rescue and two civilian teams competed in the multi-discipline twenty four hour 100km event, staged around Glendalough, Co Wicklow. We didn't enter until the last minute and as a result our training was squashed into a short sharp period, for which we paid the price!

First stage was a 10km hill run. We held our own on this, putting in a good time. Then it was onto the bikes for MTB Orienteering, picking up checkpoints, some mandatory, some optional with a time bonus. Pushing bikes up steep hills and dragging over fences and streams was hard going, made up for by some wicked downhill mountain tracks. Great sport.

We were back to base just in time to avoid a three hour time penalty, having gathered some optionals. Having got around all that safely, I managed to put my front wheel in a rut just at Event Control Centre and went out over the handlebars, with a heap of people watching. Some mothers do have 'em! Irene had jerked her knee somehow pushing the bike and was now in some pain, but she thought it would be okay once she kept moving. However, a while into the mountain navigation, she had to call a halt, despite mixed emotions. As this is a team event, all four team members must move as a unit, so this meant we were disqualified.

We decided the three remaining would continue on the stage, allowing Irene to return to base with the bad news. Hard to keep the tears back as she went away from us. Back at base, SEMRA team members were there to support us and Irene's knee didn't seem to have any serious damage, so that lifted our spirits. Chris wanted to stop, his Achilles tendon was getting sore, so we asked the organisers if we could continue with two despite disqualification, just for the training and for the hell of it. We were on two day passes from home and it would be a shame to waste them! Other teams had injuries too, so Matt and I were combined with two remaining Gardai, Aidan Lanigan and Kevin Grogan, to continue. It just so happens that Aidan is a SEMRA member as well as a Garda!

After some food and Red Bull, it was very fast night navigation over about 6km in the woods, then we met up with our ever-growing fan club, in the team van for hot chips and a laugh. You can't take yourself too seriously when you're wearing tights! An all too brief mandatory rest was followed at daybreak by a tough cycle up a mountain road past Glenmacnass waterfall, part of the Tour de France route when it came to Ireland in 2000. Drop the bikes at the top of the pass to make a route over the hills picking off more controls and down to the Lough Dan Adventure Centre and Lough Dan, venue for the 6km canoeing leg. It's damn hard to keep a canoe going in a straight line at that hour when your head's still in bed! Then it was onto the bikes once more and hell for leather 20km back to Glendalough with a rope river crossing thrown in.

Ignoring disqualification, a team change, missed bonuses, time penalties and staggered start times, we had a minor victory in that we were first to finish – but then it's the little victories that count. Overall, it was good crack and a great experience, with a light hearted atmosphere and plenty of banter between the teams. Before we had our clothes changed we were talking of next year – my name is definitely on the list.

PS. Our thanks to Keela who gave us Odin multi-activity rain jackets especially for the event. We looked like a team in our red jackets and they were brilliant in the showery windy conditions during the event.

Terry Brophy. SEMRA

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IN THE BEGINNING...

By **David Allan**

Noel Kirkman, in his succinct history of the MRC, records 1933 as the year in which the 'Stretcher Committee' was formed and thus were the seeds of an organised mountain rescue service sown. It is quite clear that Wilson Hey, of later morphia fame, and A S Pigott were the prime movers but what factors brought events together in 1933 and what had gone before?

At the end of the 19th century British climbing was seen as the handmaiden of Alpinism. Accidents occurred in the Alps but were not seen to happen in the 'training ground' of British hills. This was the period described by H.M.Kelly as the 'Easy Route phase' when such climbing as occurred took place within the confines of gullies and on moderate ridges.

Around the turn of the century the pattern changed. Pioneers began to explore crags and faces previously deemed inaccessible. It is interesting to note that quite independently similar developments were happening in England, Wales and Scotland.

The birth of climbing clubs gradually led to an interchange of information about routes, achievements and techniques. In 1889, the first meeting of the Scottish Mountaineering Club was held in Glasgow, followed by the Climbers Club in 1898, the Rucksack Club in 1902 and The Fell and Rock Climbing Club in the Sun Inn in Coniston in 1906.

As the standard rose, and the number of players increased, accidents happened. Again a striking similarity is evident in the different climbing areas. In 1903 the accident on Scafell had such an impact on the climbing world that no new major routes were attempted for a number of years. In North Wales, Easter of 1910 saw two prominent members of the the Climbers Club. killed on Glyder Fach and Lliwedd and similar shock waves ran through the climbing scene. Ronald Robertson fell in eastern Gully on Glyder Fach and survived evacuation to hospital in Bangor

where he died the following day. His rescue from the hill, and indeed the retrieval of the climbers who died on the mountains, clearly presented challenges for those involved.

Some discussion within the climbing clubs was stimulated and during 1903-04 first aid kits were established at Pen y Pass and Wasdale Head. The kits consisted of a Furley stretcher, a St John Ambulance hamper and an instruction manual. There are unfortunately no records of the use or effectiveness of any of this equipment.

The clouds of World War rapidly enveloped the climbing world and effectively mountaineering in the British Isles was eclipsed until 1920. Several of the pioneering spirits of the age did not return from France and, of those returning, many did not return to climbing. It is reasonable to speculate that without the intervention of war the growth of mountaineering would have continued and the concept of mountain rescue might have been brought to the fore some twenty years earlier.

In the 1920s climbing activity gradually resumed. The level previously attained only by climbing geniuses such as Herford, Botterill and Jones became the norm and British mountaineering shook itself free of its subservience to Alpinism.

Inevitably, the toll of accidents began to re-emerge. There was now a new factor. The experiences of the battlefield had demonstrated very clearly the importance of good field care in the survival of casualties. Those climbers who also practised medicine were undoubtedly well aware of the relevance of these

findings to mountaineering accidents.

It now required the emergence of people with the drive and commitment to make changes happen. There were undoubtedly many contributors but the two dominant names are those of Alfred Sefton (Fred) Pigott and Wilson Harold Hey.

Fred Pigott was an accomplished climber. His first ascent of East Buttress on Clogwyn du'r Arduu in 1927 was a milestone event. He was a sugar merchant who escaped from his city life to mountains in the British Isles and the Alps whenever possible. His contribution to mountaineering was recognised in due course by Presidencies of the Rucksack Club, the Karabiner Club and the British Mountaineering Council.

Wilson Hey was a surgeon at Manchester Royal Infirmary and he rose to eminence within his profession. Away from surgery mountaineering became a passion. He is reputed to have caused serious concern amongst his colleagues by hanging from the outside window sill of the second floor operating theatre to strengthen his fingers before climbing trips! The Manchester University Climbing Club was founded in 1927 and Hey was the President from 1928 until 1930. He climbed extensively throughout the British Isles and the Alps. His experiences led him to develop a great interest in mountain safety and he railed against what he saw as decreasing overall mountaineering skills as the cause of some accidents. He met and climbed with Pigott and they shared a common interest in improving the lot of the

climbers overtaken by misfortune.

At this stage of course most accidents involved climbing falls and tended to be of a serious nature. The era of hill walking and the sprained ankle of Loughrigg Terrace and the like were twenty years away. Both men closely witnessed the difficulties of treatment and evacuation of badly injured climbers and resolved to attempt to improve the situation. There was then no forum, other than the major climbing clubs, where these issues could be aired. Therefore, within the Rucksack Club, Climbers Club, FRCC and the SMC the idea of some uniform approach to the improvement of rescues came to fruition. The support and involvement of the Scottish club was an immense boost to progress. The close relation Wilson Hey had with his Scottish colleagues was reflected later over the morphia issue when a number of individuals and clubs in Scotland volunteered to pay his fine and legal expenses!

Then, as now, the provision of an effective stretcher for safe removal of a casualty from the hillside was paramount and thus it was to this element that the group paid first attention and the 'Joint Stretcher Committee' came into existence.

Perhaps this co-operation over matters of rescue had wider repercussions in the mountaineering world. In 1933, after the Joint Stretcher Committee was formed, an editorial in 'The Mountaineering Journal' contained the following: 'Do we need a central association of mountaineers to which all the clubs of Great Britain belong? I am inclined to think that we do.'

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Location: Bangor University

Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE

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Date: 10-11 September

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MRC COURSES 2005

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The Association (BASP) goes from strength to strength. Our first aid courses continue to be increasingly popular with outdoor enthusiasts ranging from ski instructors and ski guides, to mountain bike leaders, water sports instructors and mountain rescue team members, estate workers or holiday company reps. The BASP trainers are continuing with personal development with all the regular trainers now trained to teach the use of defibrillators after a successful training weekend at Bridge of Allan, where we received instruction and validation of the new BASP defibrillation training programme from BASICS Scotland. This was the icing on the cake after a very successful trip to Tignes in April where we attended the FIPS congress. At FIPS we covered subjects as diverse as avalanche rescue on the Col du Palet to crevasse rescue on the Grande Motte glacier as well as using the new (PHGM) EC145 rescue helicopter. I think this demonstrates the wider aspect of BASP where we keep up to date with developments in the ski and mountain rescue world. This benefits those whom we rescue be they skiers or mountaineers, and also allows trainers to pass on the latest ideas to clients on courses. Many trainers are now trained as A/D32/D33 VQ assessors. The Association encourages trainer development in rescue skills as well as medical, and encourages new ideas in adult education so we can deliver a good course to those whom we teach. We have also become a Company Limited by Guarantee. This is for the same reasons as many mountain rescue teams and other Associations. We want to protect our members. Membership is open to anyone be they mountain rescue, ski patroller, first aider, paramedic or doctor, or just someone who has an interest. Membership has many benefits including discounts on equipment, access to training or just enjoying the company of like minded folk in the rescue world.

For more information about BASP UK LTD please visit our website www.basp.org.org or give us a call and talk to Fiona Gunn 01855 811 443

ICAR MedCom Spring Meeting 2005 Paklenica, Croatia



Going to the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR) twice a year gets you to interesting places. The Paklenica National Park was reopened ten years ago after the Croatian Serbian war. Some of the hot spots were 10km from the Park and destruction is still very evident. Land mines prevent the exploration of the higher peaks but the National Park is desperate for tourism to take off and the facilities were outstanding.

The President, however, makes sure the Commission's work gets done before the delegates have too much fun – this year a change from a ski tour; the Adriatic sea for swimming and the best limestone climbing I have seen! Over two days, the 22 delegates were locked away in a room to conduct the business of the Commission.

Completed and 'in press' papers:-

- Use of Automatic External Defibrillators in the mountains (*Limited but take to fundraising events*)

- Lightning Injuries – Prevention and on-site treatment in mountains and remote areas (*Standard management brought together*)

Five papers were studied in detail and should appear in their final form in October:-

- Snakebite in the mountains; on-site treatment (*Adder bites – low risk; simple dressing, elevate and carry off. Elsewhere – can be very serious!*)

- Eye problems in mountain rescue (*Largely high altitude*)

- A statement on the use of mouth-to-pocket mask ventilation (*Pocket masks are preferred over mouth-to-mouth and face-mask ventilation*)

- A statement on the use of the KED in crevasse accidents (*When a vacuum mattress won't fit, use a KED and an external pelvic support to lift the casualty*)

- Medical training CD for avalanche rescue (*A full version on all that is known on avalanche rescue*)

Preliminary drafts were reviewed on:-

- Volume resuscitation in mountain rescue

- Evaluation of avalanche safety devices

- Training of first responders
- Suspension syndrome

All twenty or so completed IKAR papers can be viewed on their website – www.ikar-cisa.org



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**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
CHAMONIX – MONT BLANC**

BY ANNE SAUVY



Mountain Rescue – Chamonix Mont Blanc is essentially a diary charting a 'summer season' for mountain rescue in and above the Chamonix Valley. An ideal setting for an ideal 'coffee table book'?

Well, it should be.

The fact that the author, Mme Anne Sauvy, is passionate about her craft is never in doubt. With five published books to her name already one would anticipate being whisked away to

adrenaline fuelled drama of the high mountains. Unfortunately it just never happens. With 34 chapters and 4 appendices, translated from the French by four individuals, this book struggles to get itself off the starting blocks.

My first question, within the first couple of chapters, was, 'Who is this book aimed at?' I still don't know. If it is for the climbing, mountaineering, mountain rescue fraternity then it misses the mark by breaking no new ground whatsoever. If it is intended for the wider, interested but less well informed audience, then it is just downright confusing!

Mme. Sauvy is opinionated, (fine – should fit in with the MR world!), but she goes beyond strong opinion and into the arena of rants. Rants about journalists, (although in fairness she does state this is merely a French perspective), about the weather forecasting service, of the state legislature, et al. The book is written with passion – far too much for my liking – and ends up as a contradictory lecture, which misses its stated intention of exploring the 'human aspect of mountain rescue' to any reasonable degree.

All we really end up with is a procession of incident, after incident, after incident... A few of these are then explored in greater depth but I continually had the feeling that there were many that should have been examined more closely, both from the 'human aspect' and the drama perspectives, but were simply glossed over. There seems to be much too much emphasis placed on the irrelevant tangents that Mme Sauvy continually explores. So much so that I risked repetitive strain injury flicking backward and forward to try and maintain the thread!

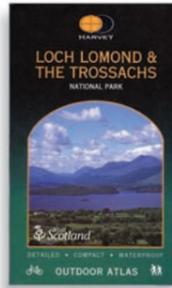
Towards the end of the book the author states she is going to 'condense' the last few days of the season. This she does and gives the impression she had become bored. Well, so was I.

This is no easy read. The subject matter could have made for an excellent book. Unfortunately, style, translation, opinion and criticism have scuppered it. **Barry Robinson**

Mountain Rescue. Chamonix - Mont Blanc (close observation of the world's busiest mountain rescue service) by Anne Sauvy. ISBN 1-898573-52-2 Published 2005 by Baton Wicks. Price £14.99.

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Oldham Weekend 2005

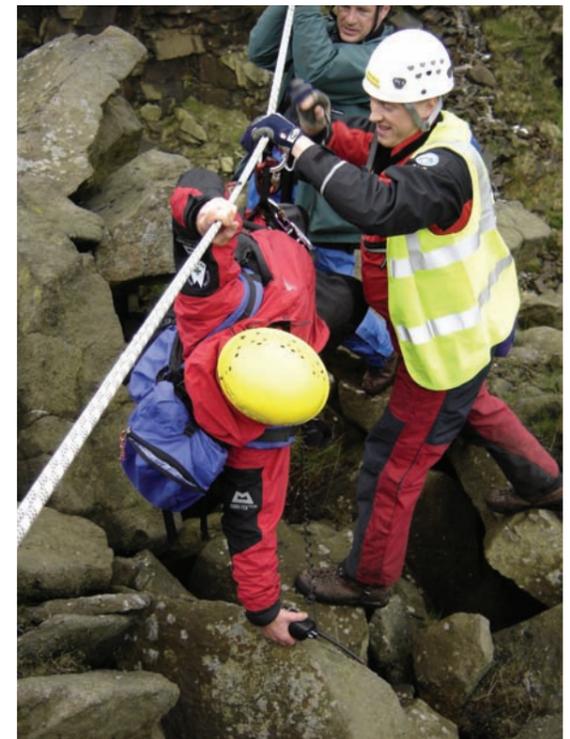
Friday

'Would driving for 800 miles, missing a weekend's spring climbing in the Glen and being away from our families for three days be worth it?' I asked Billy, as we sped across Rannoch Moor and onward toward the M8 and the relentless M6. 'Dunno, but I really like the stereo and leather seats in this hire car and I'm right up for some of that grit stone', was the predictable response. And so our discussion moved to climbing, rescue stories and the inevitable Lochaber MRT discussions about clampy things versus prussiks, tape slings and the good old figure of eight. Fortunately, Billy and I agreed on most things and so the discussion didn't end up in its usual fight and general disarray, so we sped on toward the metropolis of northern England in good spirits.

Our drive time of just about six hours led us to Uppermill and the very well positioned headquarters of Oldham MRT (thanks to Mick Nield's directions) and, of course, the Cross Keys Inn. Here we arrived at about 2300 and managed to get a few beers in before being upstaged by Neil Hinchcliff (Team Leader, Torridon MRT) who made the very respectable journey time of 11 hours to Oldham on his old clapped out Kawasaki 125 and carrying his rucksack on his back! His first comments on inspecting our deluxe hire car were to ascertain whether or not we had our treasurer's OK for such a jazzy motor? Billy and I muttered something about Scottish Executive funding and hurriedly shuffled to the bar and got stuck into the Lees bitter and meeting some of the other delegates.

Saturday

Twenty four delegates from teams all around the UK awoke to the smell of a traditional breakfast and



gallons of tea. Introductions to the folk we missed last night spilled over into breakfast followed by the packing of sacs and general sorting out of kit. Oldham team members now started to drift in, resplendent in their team kit and obviously up for a bit of crag action with this year's new meat. Off we went to a local gritstone edge and were soon into lowers, pick offs and introductions to all the pieces of equipment that we were to use over the weekend. All the exercises were very well run and organised and it's a credit to the Oldham team that they involved all their members in the delivery of the rescue training. It was great to see new team members and trainees as involved as much as the old sweats. Ideas were exchanged, experiences

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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CALL OUT DENHAM QUARRY

Paul Durham explains his actions and thought processes acting as cas site manager during a 'fallen climber in quarry' incident in April.

The pager beeped into life at approximately 21:00 on Saturday 23 April. The message read 'Ambulance assist of fallen climber in Denham quarry grid ref SD123456'.

The quarry is a regular team training area, five miles up the road towards Preston. Once in the car, the first call was to the team controllers paging service confirming my attendance, followed by the switching over of the vehicle set to Lancs Ambulance frequency. As soon as the radio settled down, the first transmission was from the on scene paramedic requesting a rope rescue team to get the injured climber off a ledge. Ambulance control confirmed the team had been

called and was responding. I called up control and said an incident manager (me) would be on scene within ten minutes. I immediately rang the full team paging service and dictated a message which said that a full lower would be required, the message was duly sent out. Approaching the quarry, I again rang the controllers paging service indicating my arrival time on scene.

As I arrived at the RV point an ambulance and fast response car were present, appearing to have

been abandoned more than parked in the car park. Still dressed in 'civvies' my progress was immediately barred by an ambulance technician fearing I was a relative of the injured party. As I explained myself, her sigh of relief was audible.

I quickly got booted and suited in high vis jacket (our team's recognition of cas site manager), boots, helmet and Petzl. With team radio (set to main team channel) in hand, I strolled around the pond towards the four green and fluorescent clad persons – two perched on the tiny ledge 15 foot up overlooking the deepest part of the murky pool and two more at the foot of the crag. Arriving at the foot of 'Splash arete' I introduced myself to the assembled explosion in the yellow and green paint factory.

From the ledge above me came a familiar voice, a paramedic with whom I'd undertaken numerous joint home visits in my role of First Responder for Lancs Ambulance. He explained that the 16 year old lad had fallen approx 25 feet having been previously adjacent to the highest set of graffitied letters 'H.L.C' seen in the main picture and had landed on the ledge above the lower set of the same letters. His blanketed feet can just be seen projecting over the edge of the ledge. The injured lad and his two friends had been to the local hostelry prior to visiting the quarry. The lad had a suspected fractured wrist (and possible elbow), bruising to the chest (with equal air entry and breath sounds), lacerations to his face (minor), lacerations to chin (major) and had partially severed the end of his tongue. Oh, and by the way was unconscious upon arrival but was now back with us. Content that everything was in hand, medically speaking, I said that the full team was en route and that the first thing we'd do was to make them safe in harnesses and top ropes given the precariousness of their position above another potential 25 foot slither into the black lagoon beneath. To further ensure their safety I insisted they were helmeted against falling debris whereupon one of their

colleagues sprinted back to the ambulances, returning with two sparkling white helmets.

Hearing the arrival of a further two vehicles, I strolled back to the car park escorting the two ambulance ground crew out of the immediate area of the cas site as they did not have helmets. The stroll

the path acting as gatekeeper to it.

I updated the two paramedics with the plan of attack when the necessary equipment and personnel arrived in approximately 25-30 minutes time. I also suggested that due to the very limited space on the ledge and the technicalities of belays, ropes and unfamiliar

Arriving at the foot of the Splash arete, I introduced myself to the assembled explosion in the yellow and green paint factory.

back gave me the time to formulate a plan of attack. Firstly, the safety of the three persons on the ledge. Secondly, the extrication of the casualty and, finally, the evacuation to the road head. Upon arrival at the vehicles, three more members had arrived. Sean, a capable rock maestro was requested to isolate the top of the crag preventing undue access to it and the risk of falling debris that usually accompanies such inquisitiveness. Iain, with radio in hand, took on road head link, whilst Alison was asked to keep a log of persons attending. As the rescue was at a stable and static phase no further actions needed to be taken at that time.

My plan – given that the ledge was only 15 feet off the ground – was that the Bell should be brought to the foot of the crag from where, with handles extended, passed up to the ledge, loaded with the casualty and passed down to the ground crew. Safety would be provided by top ropes to all persons on the ledge and the stretcher.

Strolling back to the foot of the crag and with all unnecessary persons away from the danger area, I looked at controlling, or at least limiting, access to the cas site. It was evident that a single path around the pond was the only access route to the scene. So I positioned myself on

equipment, I would be happier that the loading of the casualty onto the stretcher and his extraction be undertaken purely by MR personnel. They agreed given that the casualty was medically stable. I suggested that they stay on the ledge providing continuity of care until the last possible moment whereupon they'd be lowered off by one of the team to ensure their safety. They volunteered the fact that they had requested, via their control the attendance of the Lancashire Police Air Support Unit – Oscar November 99 – to illuminate the scene with its night sun. The photos show the request subsequently provided.

Following a 20-25 minute time out, the equipment and additional ten team personnel arrived at the car park followed shortly by a metallic clang of belay stakes being emptied from their box and the heavy thud of a 25lb lump hammer paying them some attention. Whilst this was going on the sound of an

approaching helicopter preceded the switching on of the night sun and we were all bathed in artificial daylight.

Quite quickly Jason appeared at the top of the crag and clearly visible on his harness were spare harnesses and top ropes and he proceeded to abseil down onto the ledge. The sight of him with the spare harnesses was a clear indication that my plan of action had been adequately transmitted to all concerned. My attention was now concerned with ensuring safety at the bottom of the crag and I insisted that team members be held out of the direct line of falling debris to the right of the scene until needed. Alan and Neil soon joined Jason on the ledge by abseiling down from the top.

Team leader Phil arrived at the foot of the crag and I briefed him on the plan at the end of which, he felt comfortable enough to return to the far end of the pond and watch the action from afar whilst liaising with a senior ambulance officer who had now arrived.

Whilst reiterating the plan to all

was suggested. Initially unsure of the appropriateness of our suggestion until it was made clear of its similarity with their vac splints, sealed the matter.

The plan now had to change as the developing spinal implication made the initial manhandling option inappropriate and that a full horizontal lower would be needed. Some minutes delay caused by the necessity to rig the stretcher for a horizontal lower allowed for the medics to be lowered out of the way to be replaced with the vacmat. Also it now seemed appropriate to get a fourth MR person onto the ledge to assist in the manoeuvring of the casualty onto the vacmat. A call over the radio for an additional harness to the foot of the crag soon saw Paul shinning his way up the short wall and having his belay attached.

The accumulative effect of these delays resulted in a call being made to Iain at the road head – who had previously indicated he had comms with ON99 – 'How long can they stay on scene?' The 45 minute response was reassuring as I felt we would be all done and dusted with 25-30 minutes.



concerned the casualty conspired to throw me the proverbial curved ball by indicating he was developing a pain in his spine. Intense conversations between myself and the medics resulted in their request for a KED against which our vacmat

Due to the confined space on the ledge the handles of the Bell were folded away and the stretcher hauled up. The intricacies of cocooning the casualty in the vacmat and his loading onto the stretcher were a mystery to most of



us, it being done above our heads and out of sight. Sufficient experience was on hand however that I never questioned it.

Soon shouts and radio traffic increased as the stretcher neared the edge of the ledge and the short lower commenced and finished almost simultaneously.

As soon as the stretcher was clear of all ropes, I invited the medic into the scene to check his casualty. After a brief conversation with the lad, he indicated he was happy with the situation and he departed to a safe distance while the evac team briefly struggled with the stretcher on the very narrow and steeply shelving piece of ground above the pond.

As it departed a roll call was taken to ensure everyone was back and the remaining paramedic thanked us for our help and was most grateful for a rescue well done and, as he put it, 'without Trumpton showing their faces'.

Total time from call out: approximately 1 hour 45 minutes.

POST SCRIPT. As you will have seen, the rescue had periods of waiting whilst people and equipment arrived to complete the task. During these waiting times I had a number of issues to think about. Firstly, safety was paramount. Secondly, whilst the team had undertaken numerous training exercises on its own in the quarry, we now had third

majority having made it all the way to the bottom. Given the rarity of this event, in gathering gloom and with the added complication and scrutiny of ambulance and police, I was determined that everyone should benefit from the experience whilst ensuring it was undertaken with the highest degree of safety. Yet I had two doubts in my mind, would some people's 'red mist' descend in the excitement and would the training we'd done over the years stand the test.

I learned many years ago that mountaineers, or persons involved in outdoor pursuits, are some of the most determined in society. Once they've set their minds on driving to wherever to tackle 'that' route,

this one is to harness and not frustrate that strength of character of fellow members and colleagues. The way I have learned and developed my cas site management skills – and I'm not saying it works for everyone – is to keep my hands in my pockets. Not get involved with any aspects of the rescue. Excluding myself from the sharp end, to delegate tasks to others, instead of allowing them to decide for themselves what they want to do. The real skill is recognising that all rescues have active and passive phases to them. In this particular example, the action at the top of the crag in preparing for the lower is countered by the passive attitude at the bottom. The bottom cannot function until the top has done its bit. As the rescue progresses, the pendulum swings bringing some into the action at the bottom and allowing others to fade away having done their bit at the top. This is illustrated by Pete in the bottom right of the main photo, stood with hands in pockets. Whilst he could do nothing at this moment, he was deeply involved in the evacuation phase of the rescue.

The final skill is recognising that some strong willed individuals may want to participate in every active phase and aspect of the rescue. Maximising their satisfaction in their prolonged involvement, to the sacrifice of someone else's satisfaction, consigning others only to the passive margins of the rescue and the frustration that may bring. Recognising this personality trait and managing it effectively, is the real skill. Having seen its effect on other occasions, I was determined not to let such potential ill discipline spoil the operation particularly given the scrutiny we were under.

Busier, high risk teams may not recognise the risk, given the frequency of call outs, the constant flow of adrenaline and the satisfaction such frequency produces. As a voluntary service we survive by the satisfaction and gratification we all gain from a successful operation. Low risk teams, who strive to reach the highest standards with fewer

opportunities to put them into practice, should not underestimate how counterproductive individual acts of selfishness can be. If the satisfaction is not spread equally across all participants, those missing out may feel marginalised and reluctant to go the extra mile in mastering the core competencies we need in the knowledge that members X, Y and Z may always steal the limelight.

Whilst I had no influence on who abseiled down to the ledge, it was within my power to look around those assembled at the bottom and select who I thought would benefit from being given this rare opportunity of being the fourth member on the ledge ensuring the best mix of skill and experience. Two days later he thanked me for selecting him.

On another occasion more oxygen was required and Sarah dispatched to get it. I could have taken it from her and hogged my bit of limelight by placing the mask on the casualty myself. This may have left her feeling marginalised and naturally so. Instead, I asked her to do it, guiding her through the protocol. As I said earlier, with my hands firmly in my pocket, how could I assemble the kit and administer it?

I was told a long time ago, the verb to manage has two definitions. Firstly, to lead and control. Secondly, to make do and get by – 'Oh, we'll manage'. Aim for one and you may

achieve the other. Aim for the other and you will definitely not achieve the one.

I had considered that if any act of ill discipline were likely to occur it would do so when the stretcher reached the bottom of the crag. Maybe, just maybe, some of those whose part in the rescue was now coming to a conclusion, would grab the final bit of limelight and want to get involved with the final evacuation phase. I'd prepared myself to step in and limit this risk if it occurred. I was determined everyone should have equal satisfaction as best I could. The potential threat nearly occurred but pleasing, and surprisingly, it didn't. Discipline held.

The entire operation was one of the smoothest I've been involved with in the 32 years I've been with BPMRT, undertaken with calm professionalism, no undue shouting or frantic running around. The three services, MR, police and ambulance co-operated well together with the ambulance crew in particular willing to follow all suggestions put to them. Not bad for a low risk team and testament to why such technical rope rescue techniques are vital. The next time it may be a building.

We went back to the quarry the following Wednesday to replay the rescue, putting the same people in different positions. Shall we say that exercise syndrome played a significant part in a somewhat less smooth outcome.

Great fun none the less.



Whilst the team had undertaken numerous training exercises on its own in the quarry, we now had third party involvement, the police and ambulance services. It was vital we conducted ourselves impeccably, did a sound job safely and avoided embarrassment.

Once the stretcher had passed through that bottle neck the carrying crew strolled easily back to the car park. The final obstacle was the locked steel gate which was smoothly dealt with and the stretcher lowered alongside its more elegant ambulance relative. The crew oversaw the transfer of the casualty to a spinal board before being loaded onto the ambulance.

party involvement, the police and ambulance services. It was vital we conducted ourselves impeccably, did a sound job safely and avoided any embarrassment.

This technical rope rescue was a most rare event for a low risk team without major crags in its area. The dozen or so quarries in the area are sources of regular call outs to evacuate fallen climbers, the vast

despite the weather conditions and elements, displays a certain mind set. Occasionally, such dogged determination, as we all can testify to, leads to tragedy. So when such determined individuals join a rescue team, each with their own beliefs that their way is the right way, equally strong yet acknowledging management is essential. I believe the skill in managing situations like

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REPORT FROM SRI LANKA

Gary Foo reports on OSAR's role in the post-tsunami recovery operation

On Sunday 26 December 2004, an earthquake in the Indian Ocean triggered the giant tsunami wave of water which moved at speeds of up to 500 mph, causing massive loss of life and devastation, on a scale never before witnessed in modern times. Oxfordshire Search & Rescue was one of the many NGOs to respond. Our role was broken down into three phases, during which we provided medical relief on the front line to victims, taught in a hospital, liaised with the police, searched for bodies and remains, and worked with other international NGOs on the ground.



On arrival at Colombo airport, Sri Lanka, we went straight to the Apollo Hospital, the largest private hospital in Asia, based in Colombo. This pre-arranged meeting with the Chief Executive, Dr Rana Mehta, was to establish a teaching schedule with the head of Emergency, Dr Romesh Bulathsinghala. Our first tasking was to teach doctors, nurses, security and

the Deputy Inspector General, D W Prathapasinghe, the chief of police there. This meeting was established through the assistance of DFID (Department for International Development) in the UK. The DIG was very helpful and hospitable, putting OSAR in touch with Chief Inspector Gunrathna, who took care of everything. One of the worse train

...the train was thrown like a tennis ball, the tracks wrapped round palm trees like little metal coat hangers.

admin staff in a variety of subjects, including Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery, Triage and Trauma Care in the Field, Basic and Advance Life Support and Communication Skills. While there, we were also invited to the roof helipad for an emergency incoming Medevac from Galle.

After a few days at the Apollo, the team went down to Galle to meet

disasters in history had occurred in Galle, with hundreds of people killed as a result of the tsunami. Recent new reports and intelligence indicated that hundreds more bodies had been found in Tellewatta and Godagama, the site of the train derailment. The tsunami was so powerful the train was thrown 'like a tennis ball' and the railway tracks 'wrapped around palm trees like little metal coat hangers'.

Search methods, logistics and equipment were discussed. One of the challenges facing the team in this area was the fact that local maps of this uncharted, marshy jungle area were hard to come by and the terrain had been significantly altered by the tsunami rendering some trails completely useless and hazardous – even with a water vessel. Some bodies were completely preserved in the mud and sludge underwater and, every now and again, would surface. Other body parts and remains would also be located on the ground within the swampy marshlands and off the beaten track.

The police and local villagers were always so very kind and hospitable and, where a vehicle could easily travel, one would be provided.

'King coconuts' were plentiful and there was never a shortage of police officers or locals who would arrange these thirst-quenching treats! We also ate from our own meal ration packs and used the water and water

purification systems we always carry in our kit. Unfortunately, the lack of certain current mapping, especially in the swamps and marshlands, created a unique challenge in the usual search scenario. For the most part, the usual technique had to be adapted. This was done successfully with local intelligence gathering and taking a scientific approach to the whole process. By the end of the second day, the team was



successfully able to report more body remains located to the police and local coroner.

The necessary standard operating procedures were established during regular briefings and sitreps. OSAR's mandate was unique, as we seemed to be the only NGO operating in Sri Lanka in this capacity, due to our specialised training and resources. It was a privilege to be able to go out and help these wonderful people, so tragically affected by the tsunami. We were invited back in June to participate in an Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery Symposium, the first of its type in Sri Lanka.

OSAR is, of course, a registered charity and all members had to pay towards the trip. However, there was considerable help from various sponsors in the form of both cash and equipment. We also produced a 45 minute video of the trip, the profits from sale of which went towards the funding of the return trip in June.

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FIRST RESPONSE...

LYME DISEASE

I am in the process of contacting all outdoor pursuits groups on an important matter concerning everyone in contact with the countryside. I am one of a group of people who were walkers, climbers, horseriders, agricultural workers, animal keepers, all of whom contracted Lyme disease (a tick-borne disease) in the UK. We have members that were infected in Scotland, Ireland and from north to south England.

Studies indicate tick-borne diseases are on the increase and ticks are more abundant for longer periods due to the warmer climate and milder winters. In fact, Lyme disease (correctly termed Borreliosis) is on the increase in most countries, and even those who had never seen cases before are now seeing them with a frequency.

With the combined knowledge of scientists from the Game Conservancy Trust, Lyme specialist doctors and those of us living with the disease, we have created an information leaflet explaining the spread of, signs, symptoms and

associated diseases. We also recommend methods of bite prevention and what to do if you find an attached tick and suspect you may have been infected. We have recently created a leaflet for the horse-riding establishment, of which the British Society is now distributing over 60,000 to their members. We are not selling anything but what we hope is that, once we send out the leaflet and accompanying letter, group leaders could either photocopy and distribute to their group members, or display where it can be read. We also have PDF copies of both the horse riders' and walkers' leaflets, which many groups have already uploaded to their websites. Should you require either the electronic or printed version, please contact us via email (with your postal address for the printed version). I hope very much you can help in our efforts as this is a devastating disease and prevention is far better than cure.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15



between personnel were discussed and reviewed and at no time did I feel the Oldham approach to this training exercise was about forcing their concepts onto other teams. Quite the opposite in fact, as I felt the balance between instruction and respect for the delegates' own

knowledge and experience was very well maintained. As the weather worsened throughout the morning the training gained even more relevance and I for one enjoyed the difficult wet and slippery conditions on the crag – when do we do rescues in beautiful weather and on perfect rock?

It was further testament to Oldham that they reviewed conditions and involved the delegates in the decision to continue or not. I'm delighted to say that a sensible decision was made and we all pushed on with the training. The day grew more interesting as a real call out started to develop and team members were tasked to deal with a fatality on a local moor. Again, good decisions were made and I felt an excellent balance between responding to the call and still managing the commitment to the training was made by the team leader and the various section heads.



Lochaber MRT were delighted to get involved with the call out and Billy demonstrated his wheel carrying, (and

beat the helicopter there at all costs), prowess with much vigour and the reports of him powering over the moor to help develop his thirst for the evening's merriment will be very well received back home in the Fort.

I can't remember much about Saturday night!!

Sunday

Sunday dawned dry and bright and the day was spent putting the previous day's techniques into action on slightly larger and more committing terrain. An opportunity to see the system put to a more robust test was well appreciated. Abseiling down through the stream bed, suspending Neil Hinchcliff over the gully floor and all the conversations about the various techniques were the highlight for me. It was good to see variations made to the working system and some flaws ironed out on the day. Being involved in too slick an operation would smell of too much pre-planning and not enough reliance on the basics of adapting and overcoming problems as they arose. It was good to see the Oldham folk manage some of the technical issues as they arose and overcome problems quickly and with minimum fuss.

After the debrief, a return to the accommodation, quick shower and clean up and the Lochaber lads were right up for the spit roast. We were not disappointed!! What an excellent end to the weekend – demonstrating the high level of teamwork evident in Oldham MRT, with everybody chipping in to help. The evening became an opportunity for a good social. Sadly, the Lochaber lads didn't perform so well at the table traverse but we held our own on the social side of things and arrangements for training and socialising opportunities were made throughout the evening – Kerry MRT booked in with us for June 2005!! Quite how we go about convincing the MRCofS that we need to go water training on the Thames with the lads from the Met Police I have yet to work out!!

Jonathan Hart. Lochaber MRT

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