

Mountain MAGAZINE Rescue



ISSUE 16

INCORPORATING MRC NEWS

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

APRIL 2006

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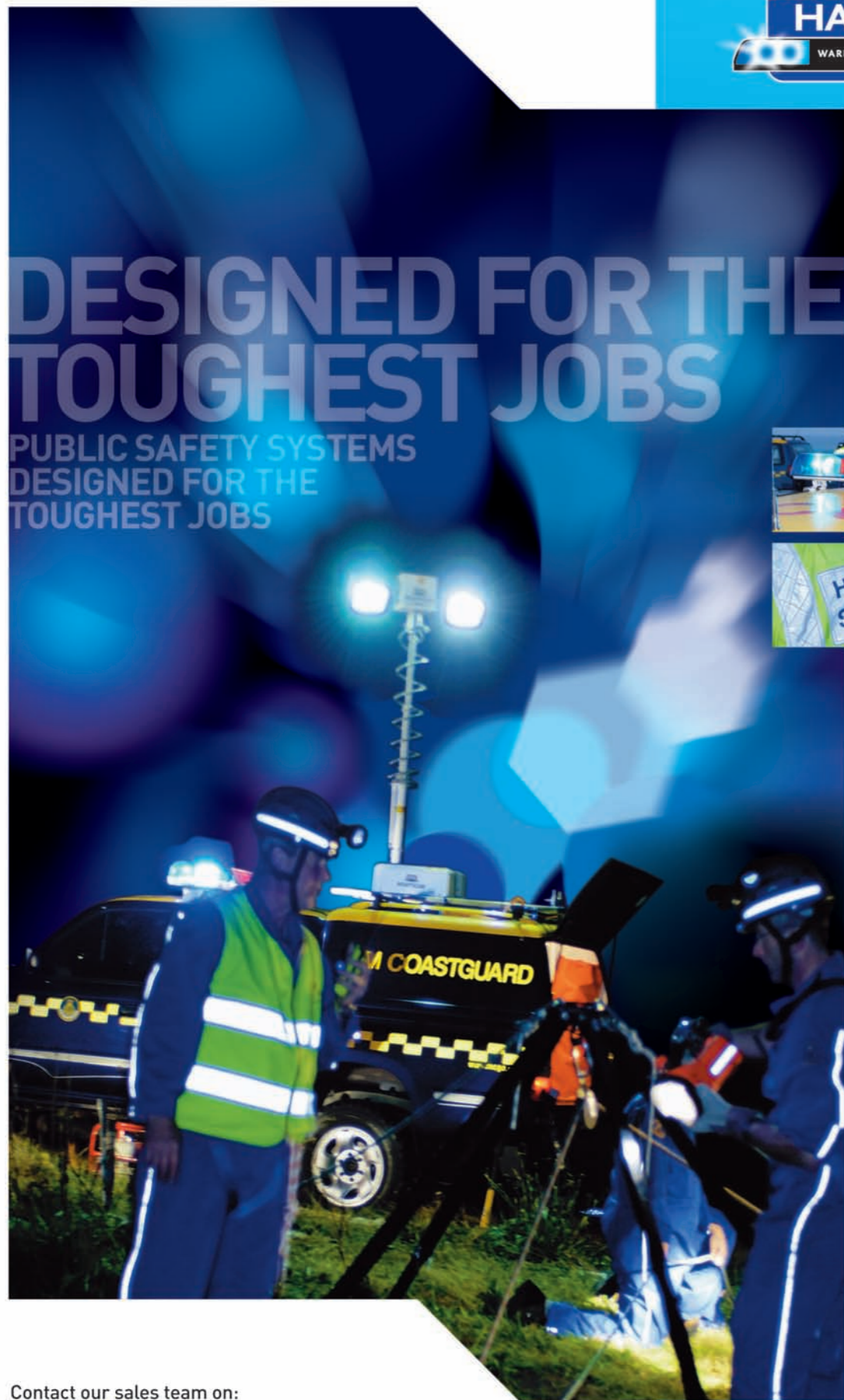
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INCORPORATING MRC NEWS

EDITORIAL

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue 17 - July 2006

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Front page pic
 Bowland Pennine MRT deal with snow call out.
 Photo courtesy of 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...

In two years time we shall see the 75th anniversary of mountain rescue in the British Isles. This will of course not be the anniversary of the MRC (E&W) but of all mountain and cave rescue as it was some thirty years later before Scotland and cave rescue separated to run their own national bodies.

It is therefore entirely appropriate that the conference in the anniversary year will be held in Edinburgh. The officers of the MRC believe that there is a strong case for marking the event in more ways than the conference alone. At present, there are a number of ideas but no decisions and suggestions will be most welcome. It would seem to be a unique occasion to reinforce the identity and purpose of mountain rescue.

We will, I believe, come out of the first 75 years in a very healthy position with many

achievements to be proud of. Increasingly we seem to live in an 'Eff-off' society where public spiritedness is hard to find and the concept of volunteering is a cause for derision. It is therefore both refreshing and rewarding to be part of an organisation which is the very antithesis of these views.

This week I read in the local paper that the council are to leave the flag on the town hall flying continuously because the act of climbing a ladder to an enclosed roof space is too risky. In the same paper there are a number of accounts of MR teams who have spent many hours on the hills in difficult conditions to assist several people who have been caught out by the arrival of winter conditions. How, I wonder, would the council apply their risk assessment to these rescues?

It would be impossible to accurately predict where mountain rescue will be in another 75 years. I do however most sincerely hope that the ethos of volunteering and selflessness, that has bound the service together, will still be there.

David Allan Chairman
 Mountain Rescue (England & Wales)

...AND FROM THE EDITOR...

It's taken eight years. But, finally – to the snorting sort of laughter, the knowing 'I told you so' type of which only those who've known you for a very long time can get away with – I've been and gone and done it. I've seen the film, written the book, got the tee shirt. So, now, I thought it might be a good idea to find out what on earth it is I've been talking about all this time.

Wind the clock back those eight years and I'd never even heard of mountain rescue in this country. Mountain rescue was red helicopters landing on the snow. Bloodwagons flying down ski slopes at the speed of light, their unsuspecting passenger not quite knowing whether to laugh or cry at being so rapidly relieved if their predicament.

And then I met him – without whom none of this would be possible – and my fate was sealed. Support member, team newsletter editor, regional meetings, national meetings, national newsletter (sorry, magazine) editor, team secretary, conference committee member, raffle ticket seller extraordinaire... and, more recently, co-author with Bob Sharp of a pretty comprehensive book about mountain rescue. Somewhere along the line, he who set me on this path and I went our separate ways and yet, remarkably, my association with MR has thrived. I still feel, as I did at the start, a tremendous respect for those who put themselves at the disposal of others in need twenty four seven, often at the expense of their own family and social arrangements, and even risk to their own wellbeing. And I've met some blummin good people, made some great friends and had a lot of fun along the way.

But why still here? Without the buzz of call outs, the thrill of a job well done, of being on the hill in the dark, of teamwork and banter? 'Why not

operational?' would frequently be the cry. 'Oh, no not me,' said I. Emphatically. 'Ooh, no!' To be honest, the thought had been brewing for a couple of years – since the idea for the book, really, but circumstances conspired against me. But it was the Outdoors Show which really tipped the balance.

There I am, at the NEC, alongside my mountain rescue colleagues, doing our bit for public relations, and offering for sale a few things which might promote our cause and put some cash in the coffers – not least of all the aforementioned book. Well, the trouble with this latter point – as I have discovered since its launch in November – is that when you're standing there signing copies of the book 'wot you wrote' people rather expect you to know what you're talking about. And the apologetic, 'I'm not actually operational...' at the end of whatever it is I've just said tends to take the edge off things somewhat.

And so it was I had a word with the team leader on the Monday, found myself in at the deep end on an team exercise on the Wednesday evening, purchased the essential head torch and gaiters on the Saturday morning, swiftly followed by a search call out assisting two neighbouring teams by late afternoon. Steady on lads, let me catch my breath!!

But, seriously, now I begin to truly understand what you've all known for a very long time. I've a steep learning curve ahead of me on the practical side of things but I'm looking forward to broadening my experience at the sharp end. And in many ways I have the better deal – the potential buzz of doing it and the very real buzz of writing about it.

Oh... and, before I forget, memo to all my fellow team members – this ain't designer mud on the boots any more!

Judy Whiteside Editor

NEW SUB COMMITTEE MEMBER

Mike Margeson reports, 'I am delighted to report that Ray Griffiths, deputy team leader of Patterdale MRT is joining the Equipment sub committee as the LDSAMRA rep. This is great news as it means every region is now represented by one if not two reps. I have known Ray for many years and am delighted he is joining the committee and look forward to his energy and input.

FPE/PPE EQUIPMENT CHECKING COURSES

There are still some places available on 6 May. The course takes place at Central Beacons HQ, Merthyr Tydfil. Cost is £15 per delegate and includes tea/coffee and a light lunch. Please note this is not grant aided by MR (England & Wales). The course is intended for MR personnel whose responsibilities include the detailed inspection of Fall Protection Equipment and is facilitated by Phil Bear of Height Safety Consultants Ltd. Phil has a long history in both MR and as a professional instructor in Safety and rescue in the UK and abroad. Contact Richard Terrell on 07971 191942 or email richardterrell2@aol.com. The course is limited to 25 delegates and will be operated on a first come first served basis. Closing date for entry is 30 April. NESRA are also looking to run their own regional course.

TECHNICAL/EQUIPMENT TRACK UK MR CONFERENCE

It's looking good in the technical and equipment department for this year's Conference at Lancaster. Speakers so far will include Jonathan Heart,

Lochaber MRT (Simple systems for long rope rescues); Dr Mark Taylor, Leeds University (Results from drop tests on belay devices with 280 three person loads; Inditherm, Dr Mick Levington and Tracey Binks, Duddon & Furness MRT (Heated rucksacks for Entonox project; Rigging for rescue Highline cableway tests and failers film; Jamie Kean and Paul Roshier (Scottish 'Katie' stretcher and casbag). Lyon Equipment are also providing a number of inputs including a possible keynote speaker from Petzl.

UK MR CONFERENCE LANCASTER, 22-24 SEPTEMBER

This year's conference takes place at Lancaster University – registration on Friday evening 22 September to lunchtime Sunday 24th. There will be four tracks of speakers on Saturday with a major plenary session on the Sunday morning. Cost will be £90 inclusive of accommodation and meals. BOOK EARLY AS THERE WILL BE ONLY 300 PLACES!

MOUNTAIN RESCUE 75 YEARS ON

Peter Smith, MRC Secretary, writes... 'In a previous issue chairman David Allan recounted the beginnings of mountain rescue in the British Isles. His article opened with '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.' 'David reminds us that long before that accepted date the order of the day had always been self help, especially within the climbing clubs, many of which have already

celebrated their centennial year. How things have developed since those embryonic days. 1936 saw the formation of the First Aid Committee of Mountaineering Clubs. A major transition occurred in 1946 with the formation of the Mountain Rescue Committee which, in the spirit of self-help, supported rescue posts. The concept of mountain rescue teams did not come about until 1947 with the creation of teams in Keswick and Coniston. Cave rescue developed its own separate identity. A substantial number of teams sprang into existence in the late 1960s causing mountain rescue to be dubbed 'the fastest growing sport'. Scotland chose to look after MR independently of England and Wales. Ireland and the Isle of Man have followed suit. Professional teams operate under the auspices of RAF, HM Coastguard and the police. The voluntary section has expanded to include SARDA and ALSAR. 'Two years from now, we shall be recognising the 75th anniversary of those beginnings of mountain rescue in the British Isles. This is worthy of celebrating, across the length and breadth, in proud recognition of all that has been achieved. The form and extent of any celebrations has yet to be formulated but a written record should be produced. I am inviting all teams (ie. all the numerous units in the British Isles that are regarded as part of the wider interpretation of the mountain rescue service) to compile their history. An important part will relate the beginnings of each team – was it in the aftermath of an incident? If so, that incident needs describing in detail. Where teams have amalgamated, describe the circumstances as well as the origins of

NEW ACPO REP

ACC Ian Shannon has agreed to be the new ACPO rep to mountain rescue. Ian joined the Metropolitan police in 1981 and served in a variety of operational roles in Central, West and North London and his last post in London was as Detective Chief Inspector at Tottenham. In 1998, he transferred on promotion to Merseyside police where he served as a BCU Commander on the Wirral. He was also seconded to work with Liverpool City Council for two years as an Assistant Executive Director, responsible for community safety and some social services functions. Prior to his appointment as Assistant Chief Constable in North Wales in January 2005 he had been attached to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, undertaking BCU inspections in Northern England. Ian is responsible for: the development of community and neighbourhood policing and partnership in North Wales; call management and response; professional standards; the administration of justice; and media and marketing. He is also involved in ACPO committee work in relation to police use of firearms and chairs the England & Wales Police Driver Training Conference. He has a BA in Government from the University of Essex, an MA in Police Studies from the University of Exeter and a Diploma in Applied Criminology from the University of Cambridge. He is taking Welsh lessons and aims to take a GCSE in Welsh in 2006. When not working or enjoying family life he plays tennis and cricket and enjoys cycling, skiing and walking.



those teams. I have always thought the most difficult time for a team is the first five years as it is tries to become established and then recognised for its true potential. That could be included. Other sections could cover – location and prime response areas; typical terrain; recruiting issues; development of HQ, vehicles and equipment; funding; training methods; maintaining momentum when too many incidents happen in rapid succession; maintaining

morale during long periods of inactivity, and so on. Don't be shy about that most important of topics. Responding to incidents is why we exist. Record a cross-section of some of the more worthwhile searches and rescues. This needs to be well documented. 'I will write in a similar manner to all teams asking for the histories to be put on CD. A year from now should be a suitable time to send your material to me for collation and subsequent publication.

From the Mountain Rescue Committee November 1951 – Revised Authorised List of Equipment for MR Posts

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 or more stretchers. | 1 reel linen thread, silkworm gut or nylon. |
| 1 inflatable pillow. | 2 surgical needles. |
| 2 rucksacks. | 1 1/4lb packet glucose tablets. |
| 1 eidersdown bag with waterproof cover. | 1 electric hand lamp. |
| 2 blankets in waterproof covers or bags. | 1 electric headlamp. |
| 1 balaclava helmet. | 1 folding glacier lantern. |
| 1 Thomas splint. | 6 candles. |
| 6 domette bandages 6". | 3 hot water bottles. |
| 6 triangular bandages. | 3 cups, incl. 1 feeding cup. |
| 1 roll 1 inch x 10 yds adhesive plaster. | 2 kettles. |
| 1 roll 3 inch x 1 yd elastic adhesive bandage. | 1 Monitor paraffin stove with spare solid fuel and accessories (for selected posts). |
| 2 straight arm splints. | 1 spoon. |
| 1 angular arm splint. | 1 jug. |
| 1 container sulphamide powder. | 2 thermos flasks. |
| 4 shell dressings. | 3 1/4 grain ampoules morphine or morphine hyoscine (6 ampoules for Clachaig and Idwal posts) |
| 1 packet gauze. | 1 holdall for medical accessories |
| 1 1/4lb packet cotton wool. | List of printed instructions |
| 1 pair scissors. | |
| 2 dozen safety pins. | |
| 1 pair dressing forceps. | |

FIRST RESPONSE...

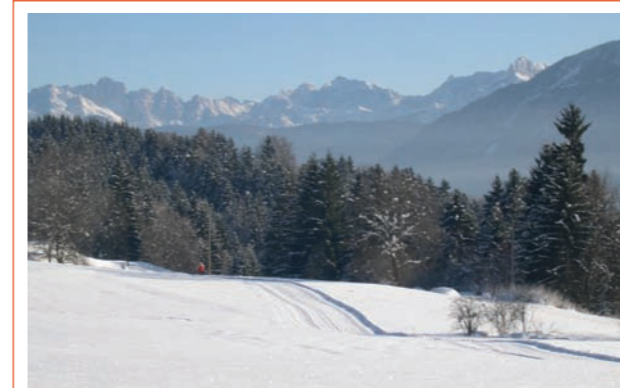


CAIRNGORM FUNICULAR ACCESS FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE PERSONNEL

The Cairngorm funicular operates year round and attracts some 240,000 visitors a year. To ensure that the surrounding areas designated for conservation under both British and European legislation are not further damaged, we operate a visitor management system that restricts access onto the mountain by funicular users. In summer this means funicular users may not leave the Ptarmigan building, while in winter during the skiing operation, funicular users are required to remain within the patrolled ski area. The requirements are set out in the Visitor Management Plan, a legally-binding document that forms part of the Planning Consent for the development, known as the Section 50 Agreement. Users that choose to ignore the restrictions are committing an offence, while the operating company, Cairngorm Mountain Ltd, is required to monitor and police the system. Some special arrangements were made when the Visitor Management Plan was published, which included qualified access for Mountain Rescue personnel. During the past few months it has become apparent that a rising number of MRT personnel, from civilian, police and RAF teams throughout the UK, have been using the Cairngorm funicular to access to the Cairngorm plateau for team training or personal mountaineering, without liaising

with the local teams (Cairngorm and Glenmore Lodge) nor by prior arrangement with CML. MRT members (sometimes with non-MRT personnel) are merely turning up, sometimes outside normal operating times, and expecting uplift. While there is provision in the Visitor Management Plan for emergency service personnel to use the funicular to gain access to the plateau, the guidance is quite specific – 'For the purposes of this VMP the following bodies and their appointed agents will, from time to time, require assistance from the Chairlift Company [Cairngorm Mountain Ltd] who will provide efficient, safe access via the funicular. Access and egress will be provided in response to either an emergency rescue call out or in order to maintain/replace equipment and services vital to the safety of the general public or the environmental integrity of the site. 'The following will have year round access: Cairngorm MRT (and agents); RAF MR (and agents); Glenmore Lodge MRT; Police Rescue. 'Cairngorm Chairlift Company [Cairngorm Mountain Ltd] will continue to provide whatever assistance is required to support the Cairngorm rescue services. The funicular will provide a more reliable and quicker means of access to the high tops than previously by the chairlifts and it is anticipated that rescue services responding to call outs will make more use of this access. From time to time mountain rescue

services request access for training purposes. Local rescue teams will receive access for training year round. These will be requested to provide at least 24 hours advance warning of a training exercise which requires funicular access. Visiting rescue services will not be able to use the funicular for training activities unless they are involved in a joint exercise with the local rescue services, in which case written notification of the training exercise will be required from the locally based rescue service. Rescue dogs accompanying rescue teams will be carried by the funicular.' In clarification, members of Cairngorm MRT, Glenmore Lodge MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT and Braemar MRT (those teams considered to be local) will have year round access for training when access for such an exercise has been requested in writing at least 24 hours previously. Any other MRT personnel will not have access unless engaged in a specified joint exercise with a local team. When engaged in a call out, it is expected that MRT personnel requiring access will be co-ordinated by Cairngorm MRT or Glenmore Lodge MRT team leaders, from whom an appropriate request will be received. I would be very grateful if all team leaders could make the above information available to all their team members. We will be allowing a period of 4-6 weeks to elapse before putting these restrictions back into force, in order that the information has time to filter down to all levels. As soon as the ski season is over, or immediately after Easter (whichever is earlier), we will be instructing our staff to restrict MRT access to call-outs and training exercises, prearranged in writing, through either Cairngorm MRT or Glenmore Lodge MRT. Please make sure all your team members know what the arrangements are, so they do not turn up and find themselves disappointed. It is certainly not our intention to detract from the important work undertaken by all MRTs in the UK. Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries. **Cathy Mordaunt** Ecologist Cairngorm Mountain Ltd cmordaunt@cairngormmountain.org



NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

Many thanks for the January newsletter – I am delighted to receive it as the last thing I want to do is lose touch with the MR world. The publication gets better and better. Attached is a picture of the course outside our house – the mountains in the background are the Julische Alpen of Slovenia – this summer's trip. You will see why we like it here. **Dave Little** Ex MRC Treasurer

DIARY DATES FOR 2006

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

Places: 24
Date: Saturday 6 May
Location: Merthyr Tydfil
Contact: Richard Terrell
07971 191942
richardterrell2@aol.com

MR (ENGLAND & WALES) AGM

Date: Saturday 20 May
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton
Contact: Pete Smith
01706 852335
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

NATIONAL TRAINING DAY

Places: CANCELLED DUE TO PLAS Y BRENIN NOT BEING AVAILABLE

PARTY LEADER COURSE

Places: 30
Date: Weekend 7-9 July
Location: Rishworth
Contact: Mike Marsh
01204 696383
mjm@boltonmrt.org.uk

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS

Places: 30
Date: Friday 1 – Sunday 3 September
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Dr A S G Jones MBE
3 Maes Tyddyn To, Menai Bridge LL59 5BG
01248 716971

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

Places: 40
Date: Monday 4 – Friday 8 September
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Dr A S G Jones MBE

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT REFRESHER

Places: 30
Date: Saturday 9 – Sunday 10 September
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Dr A S G Jones MBE

UK MOUNTAIN RESCUE CONFERENCE

Date: Weekend 22-24 September
Location: Lancaster University
Contact: Peter Howells
01633 254244
plhowells@plhowells.fsnet.co.uk

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

Places: 24
Date: Autumn
Location: Oldham
Contact: John Edwards
01457 870734
jmemr@fsmail.net

MR (ENGLAND & WALES) MEETING

Date: Saturday 18 November
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton
Contact: Peter Smith
As above

TEAM LEADER' S MEETING

Places: 50
Date: Saturday 2 December
Location: Derby area
Contact: Peter Smith
As above

REGIONAL NEWS

LAKE DISTRICT

Richard Warren (Secretary, LDSAMRA) writes... Peter Jackson of **Duddon & Furness MRT** was awarded an MBE for services to mountain rescue in the Lake District in the New



Year Honours list. As a young man of 21, Peter became the first leader of a newly formed mountain rescue team in the Lake District in 1967. At that time he was one of the youngest leaders any team had appointed. Now, nearly 40 years later, he is still a team leader with unbroken service through the intervening period.

Millom FRT was formed after a plane had crashed on Black Combe, the nearest summit to the town, on a trip from Blackpool to Newcastle. The wreckage was not found until long after the crash and it was clear that one of the two people on board had been alive for some time in the wreckage. A local landowner thought that a mountain rescue team was needed to provide the equipment and expertise to deal with any future incidents in the area. He approached the town's mountaineering club with the idea and a team was formed. Peter, as the most competent climber in the club, was duly elected as leader. In the early days, the team had minimal equipment, no base or vehicle and little specialist knowledge. Peter took charge of training and organising others to scrounge helmets and a stretcher from the local iron works, first aid training from the local GPs and temporary storage facilities in a loft. Over the years, team fundraising with Peter in charge, bought the team a series of vehicles, garage/storage facilities and all the equipment required to locate and evacuate casualties from the fells.

In the late 1990s, LDSAMRA commissioned a report - 'Rescue 2000' - to look at the provision of rescue services in the area. One of its recommendations was that the two teams covering the south west of the area of the Lakes, Millom FRT and Furness MRT, should merge. In 2003, after two years of hard work, the Duddon &

Furness team was formally launched. The new team elected Peter as a team leader, clearly showing the respect in which he is held.

Over the years, Peter's commitment to mountain rescue has been immense. He has consistently attended more callouts, practices and meetings than any other team member. It would be easy for someone in his position to sit back on his experience and to act against change. However, this has never been an option for him as, after all these years, his fundamental commitment is to providing the very best service to anyone lost or injured on the hills. The Lake District teams congratulate him on this well deserved honour.

At the LDSAMRA quarterly meeting and AGM, members were given an unexpected surprise when Jon Kerr, Senior Paramedic with Great North Air Ambulance, presented the association with an original watercolour painting of 'The Pride of Cumbria' in action over the Lakeland fells. The Pride of Cumbria is GNAA's latest addition to their fleet, brought into service around two years ago specifically to serve the people of Cumbria. In addition to the watercolour, Jon presented a £3,000 cheque in recognition of the strong support and co-operation provided by the teams in training their air crews in mountain rescue awareness. This donation will be regular annual award to the region.

The amalgamation of the Cumbria and Lancashire police forces is moving at a pace now that the police authorities have volunteered their agreement. Letters have been sent from LDSAMRA to Cumbria's Chief Constable, Michael Baxter, Charles Clark Home Office Secretary and the five Cumbrian MPs reinforcing the need for early dialogue and consultation to ensure that the current excellent working arrangements between the twelve Lakes teams and the Cumbria constabulary are maintained with no degradation. The Lakes are particularly keen to maintain the significant financial contribution from the force towards accident insurance and supply of radio equipment in addition to operational flexibility and autonomy. This latter operational recognition of the skills of the teams has been key to the success of mountain rescue in the Lake District. There has been very strong support from our MPs who recognise the massive contribution the voluntary teams make in supporting the Cumbrian force, which annually has to deal with between 350 to 400 incidents each year.

The region was saddened to hear of the tragic accident in late January on Ben Nevis where Rupert Bennett, a past team doctor in the Penrith team died and his two climbing colleagues, injured in the fall, one seriously.

A Tribute to Rupert Bennett Team Doctor Penrith MRT(1998-2001)

It was with tremendous sadness that we learnt of the tragic death of Rupert. All be it while doing the things that he loved, it is a great loss to the people of North Cumbria and, in particular, the many people he knew. We have lost a good friend, a solid companion and a compassionate professional.

Rupert became a member of the Penrith MRT early in 1998. He was quickly absorbed into the team and gained the respect of all team members for his sound judgement, wise counsel and mountaineering ability. On rescues, his was the calm voice dealing with the injured, supporting members conducting treatment and joining in the banter on the carry down off the fell. You would always find him near the stretcher, looking at or talking to the casualty - he brought the consulting room onto the fells!

He even found time to train the team members in medical matters and was a very enthusiastic teacher. He did not 'teach a book' but made people think about what was going on, constantly asking the questions of those he taught, always drawing out the best the members could give. He invariably had time for other people - if this country wanted a model of selflessness, they would not have to look too far. Rupert restored one's belief in modern society. He even carried out charitable work overseas in the remote hill villages of the Himalaya.

He will be greatly missed by all team members, past and present, who knew him. The team extends its condolences to Sally his wife, and to family and friends - who must be many! His passing will leave an enormous void in North Cumbria and its people.

The two injured climbers, both well known and closely associated with the Lake District mountain rescue teams, are recovering well. One is still in hospital but hopes to be back at work sometime in the future. 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.

SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS

Six of the Lakes teams were busy assisting the police during the severe weather conditions

● HANDLE WITH CARE ●

Each year millions of people visit the Lake District National Park. It's a special place, away from many of the pressures of everyday life. Friends of the Lake District work to keep it, and the rest of Cumbria, special for the benefit of everyone.

When we were formed, more than 70 years ago, we were at the forefront of the movement for the Lake District to be designated a National Park and our work continues today. Whether you come from near or far, we want you to enjoy the Lake District, but why not join us and help keep it special, too?

To find out more about us or to become a member contact:
Friends of the Lake District (MR)
Freepost LA1186
Kendal, Cumbria LA9 8BR
Tel: 01539 720788

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NATIONAL FUNDRAISING

Following the November MRC meeting, I was asked to chair the national fundraising group. It was felt this role needed to be split from the national treasurer's job, that national fundraising should be a separate post, to avoid any conflict of interest.

As a team leader and the chairman of PDMRO, why would I raise money for the MRC rather than my own team or region? Well, let's be honest about this, I won't be. My team needs money like any other but I needed to ask myself can the MRC continue to function without any money. The easy answer is 'No'. So does that matter?

Well in my opinion, without the MRC we would be lots of small charities doing a similar job but without a central body talking to the people and agencies that we as small groups would never get close to. I believe we'd finish up with poor - or no - kit development, the cheapest insurance instead of the best we can have; we would not have the medical developments seen in training and certification or the last medical book written; we would not continue to have access to the drugs we carry, just to mention some points. So I think we do need the MRC, and it does need to be funded.

I was happy to take on this job if the monies came from places I/we would not access as teams. But if we're going to have a central fundraising team they also needed to be helping teams with their fundraising. The national team will need to talk to people, companies and trust funds that would not support us as a local charity, but would support national charities. We need to get support from people living in our big cities well out of our catchments areas. Our first meeting took place on the 21 January at Statham Lodge in Cheshire. Working for a children's charity I have some knowledge of national fundraising but this is not my job within the organisation so the first thing I had to do was get some facts. This is what I found:-

- In the UK there are 189,530 registered charities. 163,700 are main charities, the rest are made up of branches from the main charity.
- The total monies received by charities in the UK is £34.6 billion. Of this, £11.6 billion is from voluntary contributions (individuals and companies) the other £23 billion from the other areas.
- The top 100 charities will take 29% of this voluntary income.
- The top 500 charities will take 42% of this voluntary income.
- Legacies make up £4.9 billion of the voluntary income. £1.1 billion of this money will go to the top 500 charities.
- The types of groups to receive government funding (grants) are - Oxfam, Action Aid, Save the Children,

British Red Cross, Barnardo's, UNICEF UK plus many others.

- Voluntary incomes for the top five are -
- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Cancer Research | £306 million |
| National Trust | £143 million |
| Oxfam | £133 million |
| British Heart Foundation | £119 million |
| RNLI | £91 million |

I also discovered there are only five places money can come from - individuals, companies, trust funds, government and trading.

So, in January, we quickly agreed that people within our group should take responsibility for one of these areas of fundraising and act as project managers. The project managers would have autonomy to co-opt others to help them if and when needed. They would be empowered to get on with the job, it was felt that my role as chairman was to be aware what all the project groups were doing, but not be running a project myself. I would report back to the Executive meeting, allowing Penny, our national treasurer, to ask any questions of me.

We split the five areas down, grants and trusts including corporate trusts, would be lead by Andy Brelsford with help from David Fildes. Shirley Priestley volunteered to take on trading with support from Neil Roden. Government negotiations would continue with those who have already put a lot of time and hard work in - Penny Brockman, Stewart Hulse, Andy Simpson and Tony Jones. Neil Roden volunteered to look at the idea of a national support group. It was felt that approaching companies required some level of specialist skill. Penny had a contact she would ask. And publicity would sit with Andy Simpson.

We spent time talking about supporting teams with fundraising then the question was asked do teams want our help? Stewart offered to put out a small questionnaire asking what do you wish to see from national fundraising. That same question is also being asked of the MRC. I hope you all sent yours back! I think it's fair to say we have a major project on, raising money without taking it away from teams, but also helping put some back into teams. Will it work? It's got to, it's down to all of us. If we think of the benefits - for example, central buying of one motor insurance policy for all our vehicles. I know that would cost a lot of money but how much are we paying at the moment team by team? We could all be on a win/win. If you have any good ideas or would like to help us, please talk to any member of the National Fundraising team or drop me a line. Times are changing and I think we need the MRC more today than ever before.

Mike France
Chairman National Fundraising

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REGIONAL NEWS

experienced over the second weekend in March, providing assistance to stranded vehicles. On the Sunday, the Wasdale team made themselves available and within a short period were on their first job. This was to rescue five stranded motorists who were stuck in snow on the A595 between Waberthwaite and Bootle. This was obviously going to be a difficult journey as the snowplough, which had been sent out to clear the road, was also stranded. Before the team vehicles could even get to the incident they had to clear the road of other stranded cars in order to make progress. Eventually, after a major effort from the drivers to break through the snow drifts, the convoy of two Land Rovers got as far as they could along the A595 but fell short of the stranded group by two miles. There was nothing else but to proceed on foot.

Two team members braved the arctic conditions



STRANDED SNOWPLOUGH

A595 AT WABERTHWAITE. PROGRESS BLOCKED BY A 4X4 VEHICLE WITH FOUR ON BOARD - NOTHING ELSE TO DO BUT GET OUT, DIG IT OUT AND PULL IT FREE

and battled through the waist high drifts whilst the two vehicles tried to find a different way round the blockage by the road adjacent to the estuary. This proved problematical as the vehicles became fully stuck in drifts and even with winches could not extract themselves. It was a local farmer with his tractor who eventually freed them. The two walking team members made progress along the A595 checking abandoned vehicles to make sure no one had been left inside. Eventually they



AS SEEN IN THE DAILY EXPRESS

reached the stranded convoy, checked there were no problems with the occupants and waited until a digger managed to dig its way through from Bootle clearing the road to that point. The walk back proved even more challenging with the road now so blocked that the returning Land Rovers could not get back to Gosforth. A number

of routes were tried but to no avail. Now the team had to be rescued.

A call was put in to the police for another digger to be sent in from the north and, after a long hard day for the team, it eventually broke through the snow to release the two vehicles. In all, four cars had to be physically dug free and towed out by the team, four buried vehicles checked for occupants and five vehicles and a snow plough reached on foot before they could also be rescued. The incident was closed at 5.00pm, after an eight hour day.

The following night (Monday 13 March) the team



STRANDED SNOWPLOUGH

were out yet again providing as similar service on Cold Fell, near Ennerdale - a further five vehicles abandoned in drifts and worsening weather. All vehicles were checked out with details passed to the police who then confirmed that all owners and occupants were safe and well at home after their own walk out.

SEA AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE WEEKEND COURSE

This event provides a unique opportunity for a behind the scenes look at how the rescue services and other organisations operate in the Lake District. Scheduled for 22-24 September, at Buttermere Youth Hostel, the weekend includes talks, walks, visits and a short mountain rescue exercise. Cost is £110 per person. For booking information contact the events team at Brockhole on 01539 446601. For more details of the event contact Derek Tunstall of **Cockermouth MRT** on derektunstall@tiscali.co.uk.

MID PENNINE

CALDER CELEBRATE 40 YEARS

Calder Valley SRT commenced their 40th year celebrations on 11 February with a commemorative walk and act of remembrance. The team was formed in 1966 following the disappearance of a local Water Board worker. Reservoir keeper Robert Akrigg disappeared in blizzard conditions whilst checking water levels in the winter of 1965. The protracted search lasted many weeks, involving police, farmers and local volunteers, but failed to find him. His body was found two months later. Over fifty team members past and present, together with family and friends of Mr Akrigg attended the commemorative walk around the original search area of Widdop. Team



CALDER TEAM MEMBERS AND FRIENDS GATHER FOR COMMEMORATIVE WALK

president, Bob Uttley led a prayer and flowers were laid close to where Mr Akrigg was found high on the moors. During the prayer a short snow flurry covered the congregation making the event even more poignant. Team leader Mick Smith reminded those present that the team was a living tribute to Mr Akrigg and from such tragedy had arisen a greater good in the formation of the team which had since gone on to save lives and ease the suffering of others. A social gathering followed at which MRC Secretary Peter Smith presented the team president with a certificate recognising the teams 40 years of dedicated duty.

ILKLEY MOOR B' AHT HAT...

Calder Valley SRT, Upper Wharfedale FRT and the **RAF** held a joint exercise on Ilkley Moor on 25 February. Tim Spencer, team training officer reports, 'Five fell parties were deployed by RAF helicopter who also recovered two of the seven casualties and redeployed one of the initial five parties. The day proved very successful with the flight crew from RAF Leconfield being very helpful and accommodating. Seven casualties were located at various points around Ilkley Moor, with various injuries and medical conditions. 'First to be found was a casualty with a fractured femur and shock. He was loaded onto a Bell stretcher and evacuated by helicopter. His son was carried off to the road with hypothermia. Shortly afterwards, a severely hypothermic walker was found near the trig point on top of the moor and elsewhere another casualty with a lower leg injury was found at Buck Stones. The former was evacuated using the RAF's stretcher and the latter was carried off to the road.

'A hypoglycaemic casualty was also located (the better half coincidentally of the medic in the fell party who found her - must remember to avoid that next time!) who had been told to display symptoms of being drunk and aggressive - potentially inviting many sarcastic comments. Lastly, two very cold casualties were located on the crags at Rocky Valley and, with the assistance



THE ORIGINS OF CALDER VALLEY SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM

Below the easterly horizon a dull ember-like glow gradually transformed into a glorious dawn with vivid reds and oranges blazoned across white clouds in a grey sky. Freshly falling snow flakes brought to mind the well known adage 'Red sky at morning - shepherd's warning'. As the colours mellowed into a pink that filled up half of the sky, some fifty walkers assembled by the Pack Horse Inn at Widdop. Most were members of Calder Valley SRT, past and present, along with families and friends. As the six mile walk commenced, they would reflect upon an event forty years earlier that was the catalyst responsible for the formation of the team.

29 November 1965, being a Monday, required reservoir keeper Robert Akrigg to check rain water gauges in the catchment grounds of the Gorpel reservoirs, a function he had fulfilled unflinchingly every Monday for some twenty years. On numerous occasions he would have faced severe weather conditions living and working amongst those wild Pennine moorlands well above the 1000 foot contour. The blizzard raging that day, unpleasant and unwelcoming, would not have deterred him. The task was routine. The terrain was very familiar. He was well wrapped up to combat the ferocity of the storm. The deep snow prohibited any prospect of his fifteen year old son Donald travelling the nine miles to school. The same snow prompted him to share father's workload and together they departed from Gorpel Cottages, the family home, at 09:40. Skirting the bank of Lower Gorpel reservoir they reached the junction of Reaps Water and Dicken Dike whereupon they parted company. Donald, with his dog, was given the easier of two tasks. He continued along the estate track to the Upper reservoir, read the gauge, and returned to the rendezvous point an hour later at 11:30.

He waited for some time in the worsening weather before returning home expecting to be greeted by his father. In pursuit of the other task Robert had crossed over Reaps Water taking a footpath towards the rain gauge by the ruined farmhouse at Raistrick Greave about half a mile away. Worried about his father's non-return, Donald made several brave forays into the storm. All in vain. He alerted the engineer and manager of Calderdale Water Board who, by 17:30, had deployed 25 employees to search for the missing man reinforced by farmers, gamekeepers, eleven police officers and the licensee of the Pack Horse. Donald, distraught with anxiety, repeatedly retraced the route he had taken earlier in the day until, well after dark, he collapsed with exhaustion in the snow which was drifting up to twelve feet deep in places. Before he succumbed he was located and helped home in winds that were gusting up to 60mph. Searching was suspended at 01:30 on Tuesday morning. Caught in a blizzard one choice is to stay put using whatever shelter can be found. Robert would have pushed on knowing that he was not far from home, stumbling onward, hoping to come across a recognisable landmark, hoping for a track, albeit filled with snow, but a track all the same, leading who knows where, yet leading somewhere. Fiercely driven snow would fill his eyes with tears. Are the tears those of self pity for his plight? Tears for oneself turn to tears for those at home, waiting, waiting, waiting. Tears turn to prayers and when prayers for deliverance turn to prayers for the future wellbeing of your family you know that you have little hope. Robert's body displayed hope when it was discovered 69 days later, propped against a bank yet sitting upright, evidently in the hope that, should someone come near, he would be seen. The location



PETER SMITH PRESENTS A FRAMED CERTIFICATE RECORDING 40TH ANNIVERSARY TO CALDER TEAM PRESIDENT BOB UTTLEY

was nearly two miles due south from the intended rendezvous point with his son yet Robert should have returned from checking the rain gauge by walking due north for barely half a mile. In the weeks prior to that discovery the moors had been searched every day. On many occasions the searchers numbered three hundred. Strong public feeling debated whether Calder Valley should have its own rescue team. The inaugural meeting took place on 15 February 1966. Robert's body had been recovered on 6 February 1966. Forty years on the commemorative walk took place reflecting upon the disappearance of the reservoir keeper, his struggle to survive in appalling conditions, and the formation of Calder Valley SRT. Some of those walking had taken part in the search and become founder members of the team. Taking in much of the catchment area, the walk focused on a conjectured route between the point where Robert was last seen and the point where his body was found. Team president Bob Uttley delivered a eulogy while members of Robert's family placed flowers in his memory.

Peter Smith



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Geoff Crowther

Team Leader - Kinder Mountain Rescue Team



Photo: Courtesy of Kinder Mountain Rescue Team

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of other fell parties who had finished searching their areas, these casualties were recovered by some ropery team members.

'Luckily, the day went very much according to plan. There was a significant amount of planning involved prior to the exercise but once the first fell party was being winched in I had little to do except watch it happen. Running the exercise jointly proved beneficial and provided an opportunity to get to know better one of our neighbouring teams. At the risk of worrying team treasurers, equipment boffins from both teams were getting ideas into their heads within minutes of meeting.

'Thanks must go to all those who helped out including fellow CVSRT members, UWFRT for the catering, the RAF for flying and the various bodies for their patience on a cold winters day.

FURTHER AWARD FOR BOLTON

Bolton MRT has been awarded a Divisional Commander's Award for Good Citizenship from Greater Manchester Police. The annual event is held to officially commend police officers or members of the police support staff in recognition of excellent work. Team leader Garry Rhodes received the award from Chief Superintendent David Lea alongside only one other civilian – a floor manager in a job centre who had courageously gone to the aid of a colleague being attacked by an assailant with a knife. Most of the awards were for acts of bravery and to recognise successful police actions, which Garry describes as 'a humbling experience'.

NORTH WEST AIR AMBULANCE FAMILIARISATION

As the yellow helicopter came into land, passing motorists slowed to see it touch down on the school playing fields close to the Land Rovers and large number of red-jacketed personnel. Had someone been injured? Was there a major incident? What could be the cause of this commotion? Thankfully no-one was in danger, it was a joint training event hosted by **Bowland Pennine MRT** to familiarise themselves, along with colleagues from **Kendal MSRT** and **Cave Rescue Organisation**, with the new North West Air Ambulance. The Eurocopter 135, 'Katie' (named after her principle benefactor) is the region's only airborne medical asset serving the upland areas of Lancashire and South



NORTH WEST AIR AMBULANCE AND KENDAL MSRT VEHICLE AWAIT THE EVACUATION OF CASUALTIES

Cumbria as well as the flatter areas of Merseyside, Manchester and Cheshire. Nick Mattock, BPMRT's training officer said, 'It is important that teams train with the helicopter so we can work safely around it when required to do so, but also so we can grow in our mutual understanding of one another's capabilities'.

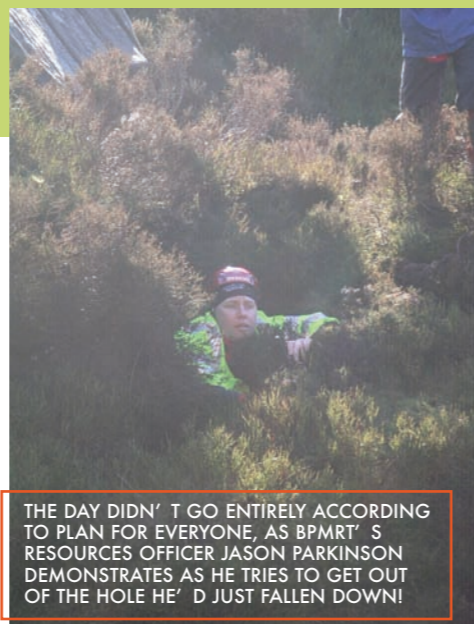
JANUARY EXERCISE 2006

On Saturday 28 January the Trough of Bowland was backdrop for what is believed to be the largest mountain rescue exercise hosted in England in recent years, with over 100 people on the hill. **Bowland Pennine MRT** had invited other teams to join them on their annual major incident exercise and were thrilled to be joined by personnel from **Holme Valley MRT, Kendal Mountain SRT, Calder Valley SRT, Rossendale & Pendle MRT, Bolton MRT** and **Cave Rescue Organisation**

in addition to Lancashire Constabulary search teams, the Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service rope rescue team, the Lancashire Constabulary air support unit and the North West Air Ambulance. The scenario for the day was that of a sponsored walk that had gone wrong leaving twelve persons unaccounted for. Control was run out of BPMRT's Smelt Mill headquarters where senior police search managers and controllers from other teams were able to work with BPMRT in planning the search and deploying around one hundred personnel to the fell. The police helicopter took part in the search phase building on the previous year's joint theoretical and practical training. As casualties were located one by one they presented rescuers with a range of challenges in terms of both their injuries and the situations from which they required evacuating. The exercise casualties tested every aspect of team members' experience and training from counselling distraught children through to technical rope rescue to create a three hundred metre aerial ropeway. Other teams were also given the opportunity to get 'hands on' with BPMRT's new lightweight Titan stretcher.

With all casualties evacuated and everyone back at Smelt Mill a debrief was held, which has since been followed by a more thorough email debrief. Feedback from the day was overwhelmingly positive with the majority of people having enjoyed the experience of getting out on the fells

with other teams, being able to share ideas and methods, and being part of the biggest exercise of its kind for some time. Participants from the other emergency services were similarly impressed having had the opportunity to actually get involved in what teams do and see how varied our skills are. Saturday evening featured a time-honoured MR drinking session fuelled by BPMRT's friends at the Bowland Brewery. Thanks go to all involved, especially to



THE DAY DIDN'T GO ENTIRELY ACCORDING TO PLAN FOR EVERYONE, AS BPMRT'S RESOURCES OFFICER JASON PARKINSON DEMONSTRATES AS HE TRIES TO GET OUT OF THE HOLE HE'D JUST FALLEN DOWN!

members of Lancaster University Hiking Club who gave up their weekend to provide the exercise casualties. Same time next year folks?

BOWLAND CHALLENGE

The Bowland Challenge, Saturday 3 June 2006, is a team walking/orienteering event over ten hours exploring the area of natural beauty around the Forest of Bowland, taking in many of the Lancashire fells and countryside. Teams of 4-6. Entry £30 per head. To take part, contact Bowland Challenge, PO Box 1052, Preston PR1 0WU. Info@bowlandchallenge.co.uk or www.bowlandchallenge.co.uk. Proceeds to support mountain rescue.



ROSSENDALE WAY IN A DAY

Rossendale & Pendle MRT are running their annual fundraising events on Saturday 1 July 2006. The Rossendale Way in a Day, a 46 mile circular walk around the beautiful Rossendale valley, and the 22 mile linear Halfway walk are joined this year by the Family Fun i-Spy Walk – so a busy day in prospect for team members. And something for everyone – from serious moorland yomp to family afternoon out on the hill. Entry is £12.50 for adult and £7.50 for under-16s for the main walks, and £7.50 per family for the Fun Walk. Last year's events proved a major fundraiser for the team, with profit to date heading towards the £8000 mark. For further information contact Judy Whiteside on judy.whiteside@zen.co.uk.

NORTH EAST

NEW TEAM LEADER, NEW TEAM NAME

Andy Crossley was appointed team leader of the **Scarborough & District SRT** in March, taking over from Andrew Priestley who had been in the post since July 2002. Andy joined the team in 1990 and was formerly deputy leader. The team is also changing its name to **Scarborough & Ryedale MRT** in order to more closely



TEAM INDUCTION – A GUINEA PIG'S VIEW

John Whittle, Probationary Member of Penrith MRT talks us through the process

Most Saturday mornings, 'The Herald' runs a piece on the Penrith MRT, either about its shouts, training exercises or fund raising. After years of reading, I found myself with time to volunteer and, having accidentally bumped into their recent ex-chair rattling his tin at me and saying that 'they need people like you', (Thanks, Mike!) I made a tentative approach, by ringing team leader, Ged FeENEy, and was warmly received.

Paperwork rapidly arrived asking for details of my relevant experience, a copy of my current driving licence, my medical background, including protection against hepatitis C. It also gave a simple and clear picture of the team's history, present structures, activity expectations and the commitment required.

As Dave, another recruit, and I were invited for induction, we discovered the team had just completely revised their induction process and we were the guinea pigs.

Hill Day. It wasn't long before one of the deputy leaders was organising 'a day on the hill' which turned out to be an extended interview/chat/Q&A session conducted in high winds and driving rain as we went the long way up Blencathra (sorry, Keswick). In poor visibility, navigation of a high standard was expected and hill work watched very carefully. Apparently, subsequent similar sessions with other potential recruits have proved invaluable providing the opportunity for applicants to acquire an understanding of what is required and for the team leadership to assess the potential qualities of new faces, thus avoiding later problems. Clearly, this was an important session to get right.

A Short Interview a few weeks later with all three deputy leaders included feedback on the hill day and was followed by a detailed briefing as the process that Dave and I were to be put through. This was divided into a set of briefing sessions with some practical elements to be rapidly covered before going into any degree of active service. It was made clear that the first six months were very much a suck it and see period for all parties. Then, in twelve months time a final appraisal and a recommendation to the team for membership.

Team Structure, Membership and Activity. PMRT is made up of forty active members with a wide range of experience, backgrounds and skills – from we tyros at the beginning of our time to one member who has forty years of service and is still going (very!) strong. The team covers the largest area of any team in England, from the Scottish Border down the West Pennine moors to include Cross Fell from the Shap fells up the western side of Eden, north to Ullswater's southern shore and all of the mid and northern Eden.

Time was taken in this initial session to give us a detailed description of the team, details of its patch, the nature of its call outs by time, area and type as well as paint a picture of the less well publicised duties for which a MRT can be asked to assist. PMRT had only just dried out from the Carlisle floods, and these relatively unknown duties, were an eye opener.



JACKET PRESENTATION

Equipment and Base Briefing was probably the hardest session. This was a massive memory job. Probably in hindsight it should be divided into a couple of sessions with the new handbook the team has now prepared. Another deputy leader, with the help of the quartermaster, gave a detailed explanation on every aspect of the purpose-built base, the equipment, the three mobiles (a pair of adapted Land Rover 110s, and a Sherpa used as comms and mobile ops room), their contents and the usage of those contents.

PMRT had just completely reviewed its equipment processes and the new systems seemed clear and well thought out, even to us. Vehicle checks are fastidiously done for every use. These were demonstrated and then we were asked to repeat them. Simple practical tasks were demonstrated and practiced (assembling/disassembling one of the stretchers, unpacking and repacking equipment bags and in sequence packing of the Land Rovers etc.)

Procedures and expectations around a call out were clearly given, as well as what was expected from us including the clear differences between a 'crash' call and a 'search', personal kit advice, maps list, first aid kit list and simple tips as to how to get organised and be at base quickly (a black art only being mastered nearly a year later).

Basic Crag Work took us out in one of the rescue vehicles, which we were allowed to drive for the first time. MRT procedures in rope handling, belaying, lowering and stretcher handling were all beautifully taught. Then it was up to Dave and I to repeat the process under the gaze of two of the deputy leaders, both of whom have extensive professional experience in instruction. This was an excellent session that demonstrated the 'right way', regardless of previous experience.

Medical Briefing by the team doctor was carried out at base and covered much of the medical kit, its uses and replacement. Our first aid kits were checked and added to. Most applicants, like us, will have a long record of first aid, but moving into the world of cascare is a real step upwards. PMRT remarkably has about 75% of its members fully qualified at this level. The rotation of training topics for medical assistance is designed such that over a three-year cycle new members of the team will also achieve this standard. For the moment we are carriers of kit only.

Both of us were logged through our initial period with simple two-way appraisals, as well as both of us having a mentor. Our mentors were experienced management committee members who were encouraging and very patient. They also took on the onerous additional role of remembering to ring us once a call out was initiated. Not an easy thing to remember when the adrenaline is flowing at 4am.

For the next six months the process allowed us to be part of the normal team – team meetings, team training, police driving training, night and daylight exercises, call outs (crash and search), fundraising and even the Christmas Social. This was a chance to gradually begin to gain the considerable range of procedure, skills and knowledge that a full team member must acquire. Names and faces began to become more familiar and our own contributions started to make a small difference.

After six months, following a review by the deputy leaders, we were given our pagers. So far, then, so good. We had searched through the very black night on the back of Cross Fell, worked with helicopters, carried stretchers up some exceedingly steep hills (a surprisingly frequent activity for we initiates), been stood down before we had hardly been stood up, made some new friends, learnt much and knew full well there is much still to learn.

PMRT has a 'spiral' training programme, which over time sees important issues covered frequently and other areas of training visited in a sequence that is relevant to the monthly practices and needs of the area. Being fed onto this system we are rapidly assimilating the knowledge needed.

There is no doubt that the process had been carefully thought out and meticulously executed. There is both a syllabus and a curriculum with clear recording of progress and experiences, plus review and appraisal that gives the process a sense of purpose and direction and throughout there has always been a real sense of welcome and fun.

For an established, mature and experienced team such as PMRT there is a need to be constantly preparing new arrivals to join the team. Though turnover is not as rapid as some teams in the region, it is obvious that the quality of the initial training will not only guarantee to maintain the quality of the team, but also gives a confidence to those who approach PMRT that they will receive the best possible start.

It has been a great experience for which we can only be grateful for the time and the good humour given as we have found our way. In a few months, if we make the grade, then Dave and I may get the team kit. It would be both a privilege and a pleasure to wear it.

identify with the area it serves. It is also hoped the use of 'MRT' will align it more with national profile raising activities and distinguish it from other local organisations with Search and Rescue in their titles.

NORTH WALES

NWMRA SCOTTISH WINTER SKILLS COURSE, 24-27 FEBRUARY 2006

Dr Gwyn Roberts, Llanberis MRT, reports... 'Every winter, the **North Wales MRA** organises a long weekend Winter Skills course for members of affiliated teams. Having written an article about last year's successful OVMRO-organised course, I somehow managed to let myself be persuaded to organise this year's course on behalf of Llanberis MRT, this year's course host!

'For a change, we moved the venue from Scotland's west coast to the Cairngorms, staying at Loch Insh Watersports centre. Our ten participants represented Aberdyfi, South Snowdonia, Ogwen and Llanberis MRTs.

'Saturday focused on refreshing winter skills – moving on snow/ice, crampon technique etc – in Coire an t-Sneachda. Some ice axe braking practice was included, though as Mal Creasey succinctly put it, 'it's better to practice not falling!' An ascent of the Fiacail Coire an t-Sneachda ridge, in increasingly windy conditions, proved more interesting than anticipated. Saturday evening concluded with a very interesting and informative presentation on avalanche awareness by Blythe Wright, head of the SAIS.

'Sunday saw us again in Coire an t-Sneachda, this time to tackle routes at a 2:1 student:instructor ratio. As in previous years we made use of the services of Plas y Brenin instructors who, as always, were excellent. Teams climbed various routes including Red Gully (III), the Runnel (II/III). Snow conditions were generally unconsolidated loose powder, but that made the teams appreciate the occasional areas of good neve/ice all the more. Abseiling from a (very large!) snow bollard of poor snow proved something of a test of confidence!

'An early start on the Monday saw ten bleary-eyed team members lugging a stretcher and assorted gear into Coire Cas. 60mph winds caused a last-minute change of spot for our lower practice – but communications proved challenging throughout the day. Two stretcher lowers were carried out, one using the ID-based system favoured by LLMRT, one based on the Rigging for Rescue scheme. It was then a matter of sledging the stretcher back to the car park, ready for the long drive home and the end of a pretty intense weekend. Many thanks to Phil Benbow and Roland Layland (SARDA/LLMRT) for organising this useful day.

PEAK DISTRICT

NEW YEAR DELIVERY FOR OLDHAM

Ian Grandidge reports on an unusual start to the

year for **Oldham MRT**... 'This year, as in previous years, the team was asked if they could provide cover for GMAS over the Christmas and New Year peak periods. A number of team members were happy to help out and, on Friday 23 December, one vehicle was on the road from 7pm to 7am. The vehicle was deployed by GMAS on a number of jobs including abdominal pains in Oldham, an assault on a female in Manchester city centre, a couple of transfers to Withington Hospital for surgical patients and a very sweaty panic attack in Reddish!

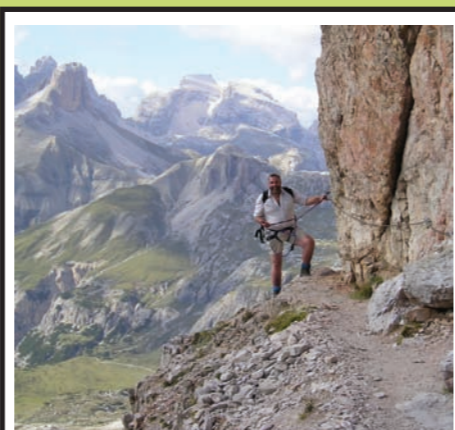
'On Saturday 24th, the same vehicle was on standby from 7pm, but GMAS did not require us to turn out and we stood down at midnight.

'On 30 and 31 December, only Emma G and myself were available to help out and we were tasked by GMAS to each work with a paramedic on a Rapid Response Vehicle. Emma was paired up with Derek and their vehicle covered Manchester city centre. I was allocated to work with Alan on a vehicle that covered an area just to the north of the city centre. Both vehicles were Red Response and were called to urgent 999 calls only.

On the 30th, we started at 6pm and I was treated to a variety of complaints. These included a middle aged female with abdominal pains, a young girl with a nut allergy who was suffering an allergic reaction, a middle aged female who was fitting, an elderly male who had suffered a suspected stroke, a homeless man collapsed in the street, and a young boy who was having a fit. We were stood down en route to a number of other jobs, the most worrying of which was for a 'baby abandoned on doorstep.' Although we didn't get to that incident I found out later that there was a happy ending. We stood down at 6am.

'On the 31st, probably the busiest night of the year for the ambulance service, we were out on the road at 7pm. Emma and myself paired up with the same paramedics from the previous night and were despatched to cover the same areas. There were a lot of people out and about on New Year's Eve and, perhaps not surprisingly, most of them seemed to be drinking. No great shock then to find that my first job of the night was for a male collapsed in the street, and no prizes for guessing that he was very drunk. After that we were stood down on the way to a few jobs, which all seemed to involve unresponsive, vomiting males so I can't say I was too disappointed. The next real job was for an elderly lady suffering shortness of breath. On arrival at her home we realised quickly that this lady was very poorly and needed both urgent treatment and evacuation to hospital. Unfortunately, due to the demands on the service that night, an ambulance did not get to us for an hour. Fortunately the lady responded well to the treatment we administered and after about twenty minutes she began to show good signs of recovery, although we were worried she might deteriorate at any time.

'This incident made us think about the types of situation we may be faced with in the team. A



OBITUARY GRAHAM BOOTH

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of the death of Graham Booth – aged 49. Graham first joined the Woodhead team (Yorkshire) when still at school and carried on in the Bridgend team (South Wales) when he went to University in Cardiff. He maintained his contacts with MR via Tony Jones and the Ogwen team when studying for his Forestry Diploma at Bangor University/ When he moved to Cumbria, he became a member of the Penrith team. It was while he was her that he trained his dog Rick and became a handler with SARDA. At the time of the Lockerbie air disaster, he was the liaison link between MR and the police. When he moved to Scotland, he joined the Tweed Valley team, but when he had to move for his work again, he reluctantly gave up his mountain rescue commitments – but not his friends in the MR community.

All who knew Graham will be aware of his love of the mountains and enthusiasm for mountain rescue. Our sympathy to his wife Ann and to his sons Stuart, Philip and Richard.

Mike Graham. Past Chairman.
Penrith MRT

sense of isolation, an oxygen supply that was almost depleted and a very real danger that this lady's condition may deteriorate further with the possibility of additional cardiac problems.

'All of the jobs I attended over the festive period were incidents that we may well come across in a mountain rescue situation. We train for these, both in the classroom and in team exercises, but for me to see first hand how these various conditions actually present themselves I believe was worth far more than any number of training sessions. I can only thank the team for allowing me the opportunity to go out with GMAS on these occasions and get some hands on experience. I know the other team members who go out also value the experience. I must also thank GMAS for putting up with us, especially Alan Robison my paramedic colleague for the 30th and 31st. I hope more team members can be offered, and will take, the opportunity to do something similar in the future, it truly is worthwhile.

'Now this wasn't planned but I've left the best to last, and it happened to be the last job I attended. It was approximately 05.00 on the 1 January when we were called to a house in Manchester. All the job description said was 'female, 35 weeks pregnant.' On the way to the job we discussed the possible scenarios and concluded that it would

probably be just a transfer to hospital.

'On arrival at scene we were ushered upstairs by a rather anxious looking expectant father. We saw that the upstairs landing was occupied by his wife who told us, in very urgent tones, that her waters had broken, the baby was on its way, and she felt an overwhelming urge to push. And that's exactly what she started to do, right there and then.

'Things didn't go particularly straightforwardly from there but, with Alan's expert handling and my inexpert open-mouthed staring, at 05.30 exactly, to the delight of mum Jodie and dad Mark, to the relief of paramedic Alan, and to the surprise of a totally gob-smacked Ian, baby Alex was born.

'There was some initial concern for the baby who was very blue and quiet but, with the assistance of some oxygen, he soon pinked up and put his tiny lungs to good use. About an hour later, in the company of two more ambulance crew and a midwife, a beaming mum and her healthy baby

boy were packed off to hospital for routine checks. That was my (and Oldham team's) first ever birth, and to come on New Year's Day, well, it doesn't get much better than that.

SOUTH WEST

THERMAL IMAGING FOR SARA

Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service have donated three thermal image cameras to **Severn Area Rescue Association**. The equipment was formally handed over at Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue HQ by Deputy Chief Terry Standing, and was warmly received. SARA has been in operation for over 30 years providing a round the clock rescue service using fast water rescue craft covering the rivers and estuaries of the Severn, Wye, Usk and Avon.

'The thermal image cameras, which work on radiated heat, and which have been invaluable to

GFRS in the search and location of rescued casualties, will now be a valuable addition to the equipment that SARA already use and will I'm sure be used on a regular basis.' said Terry Standing. On receiving the cameras Peter Wischhusen, Executive FR Officer and Deputy Launch Authority stated, 'Even though these cameras would be high on our wish list we would, as a voluntary organisation, find it very difficult to justify spending large sums of money to buy this sort of equipment. To receive them as a donation is marvellous.

'We will be able to use these on both land and boat operations. As you can imagine doing any sort of search and rescue during the night and in foggy conditions is extremely difficult and time consuming. Our line of visibility will be greatly increased with the use of these thermal image cameras.'

every time we send a pager back for repair, we are charged for water ingress damage even if it hasn't been out on the hill. How are we to know that these pagers are not water damaged when we receive them! It would be interesting to hear if other teams have had similar charges and problems.

The baseline for operational effectiveness is training. Our team carries out its training on Monday evenings and on one weekend per month somewhere in the Brecon Beacons. We have greatly overhauled the way that we handle the induction and training of new members. The team has two skill levels, a rescue member and a search member, both of which have a mandatory level of attendance at training, along with theoretical and practical assessments, which take place annually. Gone are the days when senior members could sit back and rely on their time in service to get them through the operational needs of the team. It is quite common now to see junior members who have more current technical skills than some senior members, who are unable to attend training.

A major development was the creation of a policy for response driving. The driver training is supplied by South Wales Police and lasts for one week. The policy dictates that only trained drivers are able to respond on Blue Light incidents, the benefits of this are cheaper vehicle insurance and safer travel for the vehicle passengers. On the technical side, we use rigging for rescue, which standardises raising and lowering systems, making it easy for new members to learn.

Having written about our history, operations and training, the final – but essential – ingredient is fundraising. If we cannot raise funds then we may as well stay at home. It's taken quite a while, but it is noticeable the general public are becoming more aware of the work that we do as rescue teams. For example, a day or two after the Snowdon incident with the young children stuck on the mountain, we were fundraising and people were so full of praise and very happy to donate, it was unbelievable. However, we're still miles behind the RNLI.

A few years ago we calculated that we saved South Wales police a massive £250,000 in overtime bills by attending incidents in their area. It's a shame that our efforts appear not to be acknowledged as a cost saving to the public purse. Surely, it must be time for the government to recognise the efforts of MR and come up with the cash! There are roughly 50 teams in England and Wales, if they gave each team £100,000, it would only total about £5 million – 'a drop in the ocean' – and this would be sufficient money to allow teams to manage their operations, purchase vehicles or lease property. So come on 'Top Table' put the pressure on!

Finally, if anyone is in the area and would like to come and train with us please let me know, my email is Selwyn.keenan3@virgin.net.

Selwyn Keenan Deputy Team Leader

Life after the tsunami



In the months following the tsunami, a great deal of effort went into raising money through collections and charity events, with both staff and customers helping out. Local councils, mountain rescue teams and schools also showed their generosity and, within twelve months, a staggering £80,000 had been raised. Every penny of the money went into the Tsunami Appeal project and work on the first stage of building a new school was soon well underway.

After months of intensive organisation and building work, and thanks to the tremendous efforts of all involved, the project finally became a reality with the completion of Midigama Maddiya Maha Vidyalaya (Midigama Primary School) in Welligama. The original primary school was completely destroyed by the tsunami and so the pupils relocated to Midigama.

The opening ceremony for the new school was held on 2 March, attended by high ranking dignitaries including the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister and the Inspector General of the police. Also attending were the UK contributors and organisers and a

WHEN WE ARRIVED, WE TOOK POLAROID PHOTOS OF ALL THE CHILDREN. IN RETURN THEY DREW US A PICTURE. THEIR FACES WERE ECSTATIC AS THEY WATCHED THEMSELVES APPEAR AS IF BY MAGIC ON THE PHOTO. FOR MANY OF THEM THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY HAD BEEN PHOTOGRAPHED.

The tsunami which hit Asia in the early hours of the morning on Boxing Day 2004 wiped out towns and communities, claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and left millions devastated in its wake. Fifteen months on, Ardmel are able to share their success story, showing how a little can go a long way in rebuilding a community torn apart and providing hope for the future.

Even before the true extent of the damage caused by the Asian tsunami became apparent, aid began pouring in. The world was shocked by such a tragic event and wanted to support those affected in any way possible. For the Ardmel Group, having close links with Sri Lanka meant an even greater desire to help out, and so the Ardmel Tsunami Appeal was launched.

The main aim of the appeal was for a mid long term plan, helping the community to cope with the aftermath of the tsunami, even after the cameras had stopped rolling. Ardmel planned to be involved in all stages – from collecting, overseeing and organising the building work. It was hoped this would ensure aid was not wasted on unnecessary admin costs and would enable contributors to see exactly where every penny had been spent. By dealing directly with Sri Lanka through their contacts, Ardmel was able to cut out much of the red tape and bureaucracy.



ALL THE CONTRIBUTORS HAS THEIR NAMES ADDED TO THE PLAQUE BUT SELECTED CONTRIBUTORS - INCLUDING OLDHAM MRT - HAD A CLASSROOM NAMED AFTER THEM WITH A BRONZE PLAQUE IN EACH CLASSROOM



KIDS IN LINE OUTSIDE THE NEW SCHOOL

group of three schoolchildren and their English teacher, from Glenwood High School in Fife.

For children from the affected neighbouring villages, the new school will provide fantastic facilities and exciting new opportunities. Currently classrooms are bursting at the seams and pupils have to wait their turn for lessons due to shortage of space in Midigama. The new school has six large classrooms, a library, home economics room, computer room, toilet block and staff room.

By helping a small section of the community affected by the tragic events of 2004, and providing a means of education for the local children, Ardmel has proved that a little goes a long way and that working together can help make a difference to people's lives. Charity at grassroots level really does work.

The Ardmel Tsunami Appeal is ongoing and the Group hope to continue with their success story long into the future.

For further information visit Ardmel's sister company website www.keela.co.uk

Crevasse rescue? In Scotland? Never!!

5 March 2005 proved to be one of those days, some good weather on the hill, skiers enjoying themselves and some of the best climbing conditions for a good while.

At 1 o'clock we got a shout from some climbers that their companion had fallen into a crevasse below Hidden Gully, a route in Coire an Lochan on Aonach Mor. Jeff, one of the ski patrollers on duty that day, dropped into Easy Gully and quickly made his way down and right below the crags, he was expecting the climber to be in the bergschrund, the gap between the rock and the snow caused by the snow 'creeping' down hill under the effects of gravity, but no, there was a hole in the snow pack a good 70m down slope from the crags. Jeff made his way towards a couple of climbers who were waving to attract attention. As he approached a shout warned him to avoid a small slot in the snow cover about 10m left of the hole the climbers were peering into. The injured climber was about 3m down sitting on a snow bridge, the hole below the bridge narrowed off another 3m down.

Jeff and the two climbers arranged a belay and put a rope into the hole allowing Jeff to abseil in to assess the casualty. The findings were radioed to patrol base allowing us to respond with appropriate equipment. The history of the incident was that Pete, the now injured climber, was ascending the snow slope to have a look for the start of the route. While descending to his companions he noticed a small slot in the snow and prepared to jump over it, the slot was in a 2m wide snow bridge, which promptly collapsed as Pete landed! During the fall Pete's right crampon caught on the crevasse wall, breaking his lower leg. By chance Pete's companions were looking at the view and missed his unintentional descent into the snow pack. Shouting failed to attract attention, so doing a 'Joe Simpson' Pete dragged himself onto the nearby snow bridge, tied some krabs and ice screws onto a piece of line and managed to throw the weighted line out of the hole thus alerting his companions.

A second patroller arrived with a drugs and splint pack and while IV access was gained, cyclimorph given and a splint applied, outside the hole a ledge had been cut for the stretcher. The plan for evacuation was novel, because of the slope angle we were able to dig through the side wall of the crevasse and slide Pete straight through into a cas bag and onto the stretcher, then using stomper belays the stretcher was roped down to the bottom of the coire where the welcoming sight of a Sea King organised by Lochaber MRT was waiting for us.

A team effort from patrollers and climbers to carry out the initial treatment and rescue, a handover to the Navy to fly Pete to Fort William, the ambulance to the Belford Hospital where Pete was stabilised and his leg immobilised with a back slab plaster, then a transfer to an orthopaedic specialist to have an external fixation fitted to hold all the broken bits in place. Seamless care from the hill to definitive treatment.

Tony Cardwell BASP UK LTD Director and Chief of Ski Patrol at Nevis Range



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RESCUE ICELAND 2006


The Icelandic Association for Search & Rescue are hosting an international SAR conference, October 20-22, Pre-conference seminars and courses will run October 17-19.

Pre-conference courses include a two day urban search and rescue course at the ICE-SAR training centre at Gufuskalar on Snaefellsnes peninsula; training for those who take part in rescue at sea at the Maritime Survival Training Centre; a two day jeep course aimed at rescue team drivers in the Icelandic highlands, in Iceland's superjeeps specially modified for driving in snow; and a two day practical under difficult conditions in the mountains, suitable for those who do high angle, search and other work in remote areas.

The main conference comprises between 70 and 80 lectures, including wilderness medicine, rescue at sea, mountain rescue and incident management. The conference and trade show will be hosted at the Grand Hotel in Reykjavik.

Registration before 1 June is 1kr 16,800 (approx US\$ 280). After 1 June 1kr 21,000 (approx US\$ 350).

For further details go to www.icesar.com/rescue or call +354 570 5900



PARTY LEADERS COURSE 2005

The course was well represented with 27 attendees from fourteen teams from throughout the UK and Ireland. The format has continued along the same lines as previous courses with a large emphasis on outdoor practical training backed up with intensive indoor sessions.

The weather this year was the best on record with everyone looking for their sun cream rather than the usual waterproofs. We were also honoured to work with the West Yorkshire Police Air Support unit who



PHOTO: BEN CARTER

HE'S BEHIND YOU...

came along on the Sunday morning to take part in the exercises. As always we were very well looked after by the staff at Rishworth School and we are very grateful for their continued support of the National Party Leaders Course. My thanks must go to Al Day, Simon Thresher, Howard Swift, Huw Birrell, Iain Ashcroft, Ged Feeney, Roly Leyland, Chris Moody and Ann Shaw for instructing again on the course. Thanks also go to Calder Valley SRT for their invaluable support in allowing us to use one of their vehicles and rescue equipment for the weekend. Final thanks must go to Peter Smith for his excellent planning information that has led to a relatively smooth handover.

Mike Marsh

FORTY YEARS OF IMRA

Forty years of the Irish Mountain Rescue Association were celebrated in Killarney the weekend of 27-29 January. The meeting hosted by the Kerry team – with their usual full commitment and professionals – was a great success. During the conference, guests heard that Garda liaison officers will soon be appointed to each MR team; Civil Defence and IMRA are co-operating at national level to the benefit of both sides; a Voluntary Services Committee has been set up in West Cork modelled on the similar South Tipperary committee, to bring together voluntary services in co-operation and so improve the service to the casualty. A facilitated discussion agreed that such committees, based on mutual respect and co-operation, were the way forward. Workshops were also held on dp to date Lost

person Behaviour statistics to be used in planning searches for lost persons; how to build a MR base where participants visited the new and impressive Kerry team base in the grounds of the Garda station, Killarney; and helicopter operations in MR. The conference also saw the launch of the much anticipated first national mountain training manual for new members. All present were highly impressed by this publication, sponsored by Vodafone. We hope this will be the first in a series of such manuals. It will be tested in a pilot induction, hosted by the South Eastern MRT in Kilkenny early in March. The social aspect of the meeting was not neglected and the Saturday night meal was a very pleasant experience with over 100 persons present. Joss Lynam gave a very interesting talk on the various milestones in the development of

adventure sports in the country. A special birthday cake was brought ceremoniously on a stretcher and cut by the Kerry and IMRA chairmen, Gerry Christie and Pat Holland. Distinguished Service Awards were presented to Gerry Foley, Sligo MRT; Frank Partridge, Tramore CRT; Uel Hamilton, North West MRT; Derek Keegan, Dublin/Wicklow MRT; Ernst Mackey, Glen MRT; Maureen Chevens and Maureen O'Reilly, Kerry MRT; Henry Smith, SARDA; and Stephen McGrath, Galway MRT. The AGM was well attended on Sunday and those present heard reports from the officers, committee members and teams as well as from our invited guests. Team members went home after lunch, tired but happy that IMRA is steadily moving forward in supporting and developing the work of mountain rescue teams. **Pat Holland**



5 quality activities for instructed groups in the Peak District

IRISH DOG TEAM RETIRES

After years of invaluable service to the people of Ireland, both Henry Smith and his search dog Morse have decided to retire from SARDA Ireland. Henry himself was a founding member of SARDA Ireland, set up in 1987. He has held many positions within the organisation including chairman, treasurer and training officer. Always a man for the outdoors, and besides his involvement with Dublin/Wicklow MRT, he is into horse riding and the scouting movement.

Over their years of service, Henry and Morse have become a legendary team having travelled the length and breadth of Ireland – from Donegal to Cork, Dublin to Galway – helping save lives. Henry has assisted in incidents across both lowland and mountain areas, and in coastal and river searches.

SARDA Ireland would like to wish both Henry and Morse the best of luck in the future and a well deserved retirement.

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OUTDOORS SHOW NEC 17-19 March 2006

On the weekend of the 17-19 March a series of co-incidences brought Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) to a prime position at the Outdoor Show at the NEC. Alan George from ASCRT rang me in mid-February to ask if we were attending the show. During previous discussions at the national fundraising group we'd decided we couldn't afford to pay for a stand so wouldn't be attending. Alan's phone call prompted me to think that there may be a way if we tried to hi-jack someone else's stand where we could perhaps give out leaflets, something for which Alan could provide staff, if I could produce the leaflets. A fortnight after Alan's call came a request from the show



TEAM MEMBERS CATCH UP ON A BIT OF CRAG... ER, SORRY, CRATE WORK

organisers for us to attend 'with one of your helicopters'. They gave us a prime position at the entrance to Hall 2, something which, had we paid for it, would have cost in the region of £30,000. Needless to say, we accepted their invitation and set about organising what to put on the stand. As it turned out we managed to persuade Central Beacons MRT to lend us their shiny new control vehicle and I managed to convince my team leader that one of our new Landys would look great at the NEC for a long weekend. In addition Alan came up with various bits of display material which, together with supporters badges, mugs and handbooks allowed us to make a pretty good offering. Even Blacks (the retailer) came up trumps, providing everyone staffing the stand with matching clothing. We also managed to blag a jacket from Keela for Saturday's raffle and another on Sunday from Mardale. In terms of income, the show put a little money in the bank and should allow us to invest in a few promotional bits and bats for the Ski & Snowboard show which we've also been invited to attend. As a PR exercise I think it was an unmitigated success with several thousand people visiting the stand over the three days of the show, allowing us to increase our profile amongst our core users, outdoor people, as well as networking with many organisations and manufacturers who might support MR.

Hearty tanks should go to Alan George, Avon & Somerset CRT, Rossendale & Pendle MRT, Severn & Avon RA and Central Beacons MRT who all supplied staff and materials for the stand and without whom we couldn't have organised the event at such short notice.

Andy Simpson National Press Officer



RAF LEUCHARS REUNION

2005 saw the RAF Leuchars MRT celebrate their 50th anniversary. The main event was the Reunion on Saturday 1 October. The traditional dinner dance was held in the Drummond Arms hotel in Crieff. Nearly 130 current or ex-troops and guests attended of whom 119 sat down to dinner. The hotel did us proud with the meal before the Bill Smith Band entertained us with a ceilidh. The overwhelming feedback was that it was a resounding success, but I'm bound to say that because I organised it.

The current team organised a series of events for the Saturday afternoon including lectures by current and past team members. Most of these focused on the development of mountaineering skills and associated revolution in equipment. In the early days they had little more than their RAF uniforms, and equally basic training. Today they use purpose designed equipment and can call on a measure of mountaineering experience (often a very considerable measure). Some presentations related directly to the higher profile expeditions in the big mountain ranges, or to the more memorable jobs (Kinabalu in Borneo! Lockerbie, Mull of Kintyre etc). There were also comparative demonstrations of equipment (ancient and ultra modern) and a visit from a Sea King rescue helicopter. These were all very well received. Several ex-troops were attending their first reunion for several years, some their first ever. Many renewed former friendships, some of which had been dormant for decades.

The actual cause for celebration was the formation of the team in 1955 when Jim Bulmer brought the remainder of the RAF Ezell team with him and established the first team at RAF Leuchars. We whippersnappers were honoured by the attendance of Jim and five of his original 1955 team. Since Jim formed the team it has seen enormous changes, some I touched on earlier. One change I witnessed was the downgrading of dogma and the realisation how much we could learn from the civil mountaineering community. Previously we ran in-house courses, but stuck to methods because 'We always did it like that'. Ideas were now adopted (stolen?) from almost any authoritative source. The team now send candidates for formal training in mountaineering skills at outdoors centres such as Glenmore Lodge. They also use the military equivalents, most of which are now accredited by the mountaineering bodies. There are still the in-house courses, again these now aspire to the best techniques available. There have been less obvious but none the less major changes in the command structures, to which the team leader is answerable. Today's team leader has to work in a far more formalised environment than his forbears. The team now has the benefit of highly developed search techniques and even more highly developed technology. First aid has seen an equally quantum change, indeed it is no longer an adequate term for the care the RAF MRTs can now provide. In common with the civilian teams, they still have to find people before they can help them, and their stock in trade is still hillwalking. Often the priority is still to get the casualty off the mountain and sort the rest out later.

The team still exercises pretty well every weekend, and members continue to enjoy as many out in the hills as they can, but the RAF is shrinking and pressure from their primary jobs limits the options for most. Many things change over the course of 50 years, but not all, the team are still using the same buildings!

If you served on the RAF Leuchars MRT and wish to be invited to the reunions, please contact me at david.rodgerson@talktalk.net or 07715421524.

David Rodgerson RAF Leuchars MRT 1986-1995

The Peak District, Britain's first National Park, was established in April 1951. The area's special qualities are well known to the people who live in the towns and cities that surround the National Park but for visitors from further away, whether from Britain or abroad, the magic of the Peak District is just waiting to be discovered.

1 Rock Climbing in Burbage Valley. Classic Peakland gritstone climbing set in one of the Peak Districts' most dramatic moorland locations. 'Top out' and savour your success with views that go on for miles. (Suitable for both the beginner and those wanting a more advanced challenge).

2 Caving down Giants Hole. The deepest cave system in England and a classic introductory trip in to the underground world. The upper chambers are accessible to beginners, with a number of more testing options for the adventurous at heart. The lower system provides a sporting day out for those with a little more experience. (Caving is particularly good for encouraging support and working together as a team).

3 Abselling in Millersdale. Take the plunge with an exciting 70-foot free hanging abseil over the river Wye. The easy access ensures that groups of limited mobility can enjoy this dramatic, personally challenging and memorable activity. (As a disused industrial venue this is an environmentally sustainable activity).

4 Hollowford High Ropes Course. Situated beneath the 'Shivering Mountain' of Mam Tor the course has been designed with a mix of personal and team challenge elements. (An activity that is well suited to building teams and increasing an individual's self-confidence).

5 Ridge Walk. Connecting Mam Tor, Hollins Cross & Lose Hill. Enjoy this as a circular walk taking in 'The Great Ridge', the village of Castleton and the summit of Mam Tor. With breathtaking views over Edale to Kinder Scout.

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- AALA (Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority) Licence - a legal requirement if any member of the group is under 18
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TEAM PROFILE: AVON & SOMERSET CLIFF RESCUE TEAM

Editor's note... Somebody, (exactly who I cannot remember now, or, shall I say, I'd rather not name names) over a few beers and fired by the sort of inspiration which comes when two or more members of disparate mountain rescue teams gather together for the greater national good, suggested we begin a regular piece. A profile of each mountain rescue team in England and Wales. Yeah, that's a good idea, I humoured... as another gin and tonic hit the deck. But (a momentary flash of common sense kicking in) hang on a minute... fifty two teams and counting should just about see the series finished by the year 2019... Yeah... but it's still a good idea came the parry. Right. Guess we'd better get started then... So... in this, the first of a verrrry long series, we introduce... Avon and Somerset Cliff Rescue Team.

How many operational team members in the team?

Forty six fully operational members, ten aspirants in training plus the support of around 70 wardens from the Mendips and, of course, an army of unsung heroes in the form of support members, partners and children. The team includes five chief rescue officers and four search managers.

Where are you based?

The team works out of three main rescue posts and two secondary quick response locations.

1. The primary multi-role operational centre is at Avon Quay at the eastern edge of the Avon Gorge near the main climbing area in Bristol. This is home for the two Mercedes ambulances – one is fully equipped for cliff and industrial structure operations, the second for search and rescue, both are also equipped as command and control vehicles and carry Bell stretchers.
2. Charterhouse on the Mendips in North Somerset, which houses search equipment and a command control centre, alongside the Mendip wardens.
3. The Cheddar Post in Cheddar Gorge, houses

the specialist kit required to support rescue on the 450ft+ cliffs that make up this impressive gorge.

4. South Gloucestershire houses one of the team Land Rover ambulances with easy access to the motorway network (M4/M5) with a primary response capability to move quickly within the team's c.1855sq mile area of responsibility.

5. East Harptree is home to a Land Rover Ambulance and is strategically placed to support the Cheddar and Charterhouse Posts.

What is your operational area?

CUBA – Counties that Used to Be known as Avon ie. South Gloucestershire, Bristol, Bath, North East Somerset, North Somerset and Somerset. The team covers the same area as Avon & Somerset police – 1855sq miles and technically also includes the island of Steep Holme. The area is very diverse including gorges, city centre, quarries (inverted mountains), an international airport, urban and rural and altitudes ranging from -6ft to over 1000ft above sea level. (This isn't a typing error – we believe we are the only undersea mountain rescue team which causes great

concern to SAR helicopter pilots who are new to the area.)

The exception is an area of Somerset to the west of a line drawn from Hinkley Point on the Bristol Channel running south to Tiverton which is normally covered for land search only by our neighbours – Exmoor SRT.

How are calls outs co-ordinated?

The team only responds directly to requests from the Avon & Somerset police control room. This generally takes the form of a phone call or pager message to establish contact with one of the five chief rescue offices (CROs formally known as Designated Incident Controller DIC, but team/public opinion and political correctness encouraged a change).

The nature of the incident is discussed with the co-ordinating inspector and a response agreed. This can be in the form of advice, a search management advisor, full or partial call out for the team. The callout is achieved directly by the CROs mobile phone or via the web using an SMS provider that sends a message to the teams'

paggers and mobile phones via a single template text message. The message is normally delivered within seconds and progress can be tracked on line to identify unavailable members, as it shows that the message has not been delivered to the mobile phone.

Team members can confirm attendance by voice or text and can use one of the two radio repeaters that cover the area to confirm progress en route. The message typically moves the team to an RV point near the incident where briefings take place. In the case of a cliff incident this will include the appointment of the incident's cliff top manager (rigging), safety manager and crag face master (all cliff face activities). In the case of search, the team's CRO controls the search on behalf of the police whilst the POLSAR works in partnership with the team's search manager to develop the search plan.

What types of incidents do you primarily deal with?

Who knows what tomorrow will bring, but the team has been successfully involved in missing person searches urban and rural, rescue at height from cliffs, structures and building (including suspension bridges).

Do you have busy times or seasonal fluctuations?

The spring and summer periods have been busier over the last year, but there always seems to be a call on the night of the Christmas party. Calls typically come in late afternoon/early evening as the light begins to fade.

What is your relationship with other emergency services?

Based on mutual respect and a good working relationship with Avon & Somerset police, this is validated by the team's non-statutory Category 1 responder emergency service status (first in region). This has been achieved by delivering a consistent quality service in line with varying police requirements for each unique incident. This quality of service has enabled us to develop compacts of understanding with the Avon Ambulance Service and the West Country Ambulance Service, in both cases we are regarded as co-responders. We also train on a regular basis with paramedics in order that we can deliver them safely to the scene of an incident

regardless of location or height. The team is currently developing a relationship with Avon Fire & Rescue – high line rescue team in order to deliver the best possible outcome for the casualty. We hold regular briefing sessions with police, ambulance and fire control.

Are you involved in civil contingency measures?

The Civil Contingency Act came into force in April 2005, which splits the emergency resource to be used in a major incident into three categories –

- Cat 1 – full time stat bodies with real time response targets and capabilities
 - Cat 2 – local authority, utility services, social services, which respond to a pre-defined plan, voluntary support agencies under the control of the local authority emergency planning officer, (with slower response times). The Act does not initially define any volunteer response as Cat 1, however Avon & Somerset police had a requirement for real time emergency response for search and rescue. They effectively subcontract this work to ASCRT via a compact of understanding which includes 5 key deliverables –
 - 1. Land search and rescue for missing persons.
 - 2. Specialised cliff rescue from quarries and gorges.
 - 3. Technical rescue from buildings.
 - 4. Technical rescue from bridges.
 - 5. Operational assistance with scenes of crime, skilled negotiations and specialist operations.
- Due to the sensitive discussion points, the police normally represent us at the local Cat 1 resilience forum for planning purposes.

What level of skills/expertise is expected of prospective team members?

In a nutshell, none. During the selection weekend, for which potential aspirants are required to make a donation to the team to cover costs and help fundraising, we look for willingness to participate, potential, ability to learn, application of knowledge gained and current skills (although there is no minimum requirement). A sense of humour and the ability to operate within the team are also key requirements. This year's intake involved a helicopter flight, abseiling, team exercises, navigation and a search exercise with all roles including CRO being carried out by the potential aspirants. The individuals receive feedback at the end of the weekend and those with appropriate attributes are offered the opportunity to join the team. Recent intakes have included mountain instructors, IRATA, experienced cave rescue team members, doctors with wilderness qualifications and the usual mix of outdoor folk.

How is training developed?

Training is broken down into the development of attitude, knowledge, skills and experience. Knowledge areas are broken down to general personal skills, first aid, search, cliff eg. rigging, descending, barrow boy and single man pick up. Search training is delivered using a modular system which delivers a competent and rounded search party member within six months.

How does the team raise funds?

By luck and lots of good will – collection tins and writing letters.



How does the team interact with the public?

Over the last year the team has increased its public and corporate image through its Cat 1 status, newspaper and local television news coverage. Effort has been increased on website content and hyperlinks with major equipment suppliers and government bodies eg. police. The team regularly gives talks to the police control rooms, schools, youth groups, Probud and other interested groups.

There is a 'year in the life' ITN documentary on Bristol covering the four seasons in production and the team appears in all four parts. This is due to be shown in Spring 06. We are also due to feature in the BBC Inside Out programme. There is still room for improvement and the team look forward to the MRC PR Aid Memoire being released soon which was promised in March 05...

Which are your neighbouring teams?

- North – SARA & Gloucestershire CRT
- East – Wiltshire SRT
- South East – Dorset SRT
- South West – Dartmoor SRTs and Devon CRT
- West – Exmoor SRT and South Wales teams
- Under foot – Mendip CRO

Which regional organisation do you belong to?

The region also includes Cornwall SRT and Cornwall Mines Rescue as well as the teams listed above. The team takes a full and active role in the SWERA activities including the hosting of the recent MR(E&W) roadshow at Portishead.

How do you view the MRC?

What they do, they do well, if a bit slowly, but what about some leadership or vision for the future of mountain rescue which supports the needs of all of the teams in England and Wales? Currently we are unclear of the role of the MR(E&W) and therefore will always be disappointed by its leadership performance, which could be unfair. We appreciate that members of the MRC are also volunteers like ourselves so we do not for a minute question their good intent.

In summary...

2006 will see the 30th year of successful operation for ASCRT. It has been varied, occasionally stressful, demanding at times but rewarding.

So that's it... Avon & Somerset Cliff & Rescue Team Saving Lives – Above and Below Sea Level (Even non-mountaineers).

Alan George

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GPS BASED SEARCH. EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM LLANBERIS MRT AND OTHER NORTH WALES TEAMS

A personal view from **Dr Gwyn Roberts**

Over the last two years at Llanberis MRT, we've been proactively developing the team's GPS skills. Training events have ranged from evening sessions round the log fire at Ty'n Llan covering GPS background and the use of the Garmin Etrex, low-level GPS-based micro navigation exercises, a hill nav ex (using GPS to find the beer!) to a major search exercise in November 2005.



The Garmin Etrex (in its several variants) has become our GPS receiver of choice on the grounds of availability, low cost and ease of use and data download. A number of these units are held by the team, supplemented by members' own Etrex units.

So when it became necessary for LLMRT to initiate a major search on Snowdon earlier this year, it was natural that GPS was to play an integral part in the deployment of search teams, and in analysing the results of the search. The incident was co-ordinated by LLMRT on behalf of North Wales police, with the invaluable help of OVMRO, RAFMRS, AMRT, NEWSAR and SARDA (Wales). Over 2000 man hours were to be expended during this search by MR troops.

In this GPS-focused article, we provide an overview of our experience, the key issues and some lessons learned during this major search and the earlier GPS training sessions.

The background to the search was that a lone walker left his car at Pen y Pass car park on a Monday in early January. The car was discovered by his concerned friends on the following Thursday, at which point the Llanberis team was alerted.

Hasty searches revealed no trace. The overhead team's defined search area was broken down into search segments which were overlaid (as tracks) on a 1:25000 digital map of Snowdonia, running on a wide screen laptop. We concluded that a single colour (black) worked well for outlining search segments, and would subsequently allow the teams' search tracks to stand out clearly when overlaid.

Detailed searches were carried out on the Thursday afternoon, and all day Friday and Saturday. Each search team was given two laminated maps produced from the digital

mapping system – a detailed map highlighting their particular search segment, and a more general view showing the whole search area. A4 proved to be a convenient and manageable size for these maps. They were given to teams as two separate maps (rather than back-to-back) for redundancy – all would not be lost if one were to blow away!

(In a hypothetical scenario where search regions are conveniently rectangular or triangular, it is easy to programme waypoints into teams' GPS receivers to define the corners of search regions. This had been done successfully during exercises. In reality, of course, the shapes of search segments rarely turn out to be this convenient, hence the use of printed maps!)

The main use for GPS was to be the logging of teams' tracks. Teams were also instructed to mark (waypoint) the location of any article of interest found. As part of the deployment process, each search team's Etrex was subjected to the following steps:-

- New batteries fitted
- Check correct co-ordinate system and datum
- Clear active track and tracklogs (no need to delete waypoints)
- Using self adhesive label to identify the GPS unit – essential to avoid confusion at RTB! Team 1, Team 2, GPS units labelled as 1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C

• Aim for a minimum of two GPS units per search team – many teams had one for each member.

• All GPS units remained switched on until return to base. This ensured that no-one forgot to switch on, and that the GPS unit had sufficient time to acquire ephemeris signals before reaching an area of restricted sky visibility.

Equipment used at base for managing the search included:-

- Two to four laptops, (preferably wide-screen 17" +) running digital mapping software
- Two printers

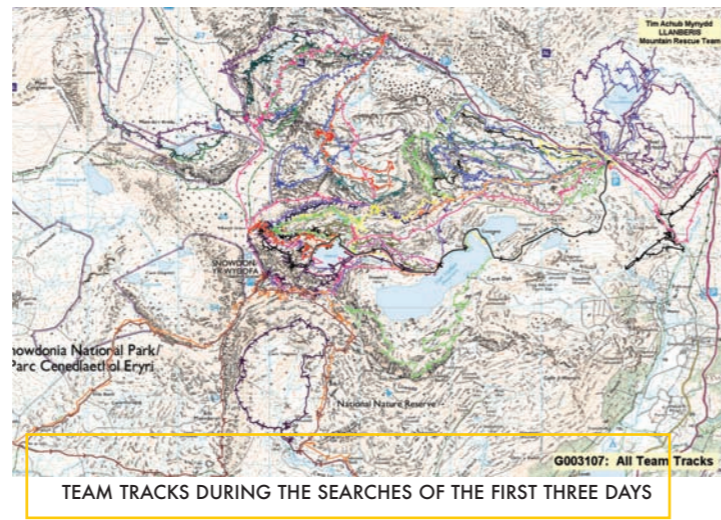
- Two laminators
 - Two USB download leads
- Why two of everything? Basically in order that we had full redundancy in case of failure.

Handling the return of teams to base, as always, proved to be an exercise in information management. Conscious of the ease with which digital data may be lost or accidentally overwritten, the procedure we adopted to avoid overload and silly mistakes was the following:-

- Create new 'date' category on digital mapping system, to allow filing of tracks by date
- As each search team was being de-briefed, download Etrex data to digital mapping software on laptop
- Assign team name, colour to downloaded track, and SAVE. (Note that it is saved BEFORE editing/tidying up the track – this would happen off-line later).

- After downloading all tracks from one search team, BACKUP (memory stick)
 - After confirming track has downloaded correctly, delete track log from Etrex, ready for re-use.
 - Repeat for next search team
- Later, when the pressure was off, tracks were 'top and tail' edited to delete vehicle/aircraft transit times for clarity. Velocity spikes were also removed.

- Key issues (hill teams):-**
- If only two GPS units in a search team, ensure they are carried by those on the OUTSIDE of the search line. (Members of some search teams swapped positions during the



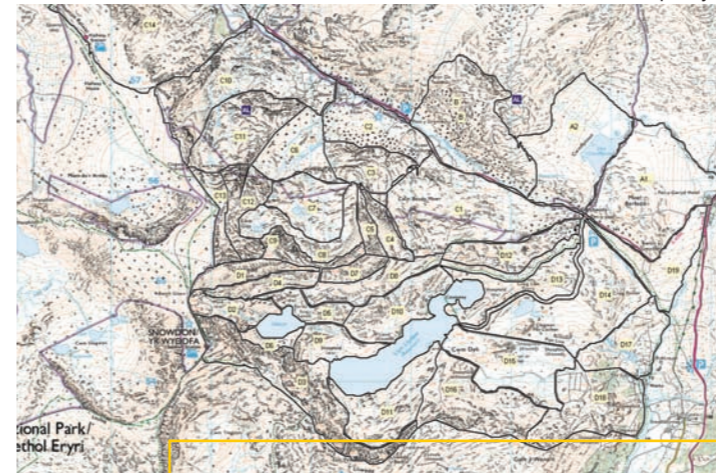
search, forgetting to swap the GPS unit).

- Teams were instructed to carry GPS units in the hand, on a rucksack strap (neoprene cover) or inside their rucksack top cover, NOT in a pocket! Not surprisingly, differences in the data quality proved very noticeable!

projector. Good feedback also for teams to see where they've been!

GPS data quality

1. Generally, GPS units carried high on a rucksack shoulder strap, or in the hand, provided the best data quality (smoothest tracks). Units



inside rucksack top pockets also gave reasonable results. Not surprisingly, GPS units carried inside jacket pockets resulted in noisy data (or none at all if the antenna was pointing inwards!)

Tip: Note that in open countryside with a good sky view, it may well be possible to get away with a poorly-sited GPS unit – it may appear to perform even inside a jacket pocket. As we

- Key issues (base):-**
- Management of large volumes of data – demands discipline and frequent backups!
 - Some reliability issues connecting to Etrex (why did they choose that silly connector?)
 - Store raw data before editing it
 - Fixed or semi-fixed base set-up would be easier and cheaper) than laptops, and less clutter/cables
 - Difficult for overhead team to all see laptop – use large external monitor (e.g. 24" TFT) and/or

get onto ground with less sky visibility (eg. steep ground, ravines, trees), less satellites are visible, therefore the position of the GPS unit on the body becomes much more critical.

2. Tracks of teams operating below large steep cliffs (eg. close in under Lliwedd), suffered noticeable degradation of GPS data. Signal reflection (multipath) from the cliffs above caused errors of several hundred metres, typically showing the receiver inside the cliff.

Note: The GPS unit cannot warn the user of

these errors. Errors are compounded if the GPS unit is poorly located.

Benefits of GPS data/digital mapping:-

The overall verdict was that, despite feeling like more work at base due to lack of familiarity, the benefits were significant. GPS proved invaluable for confirming (or not!) a team's search report. In conjunction with the search deployment form, the GPS data allows an assessment of the thoroughness of a search.

Compared to using paper maps, presenting and sharing results electronically becomes easy.

As with any new technology, there is a need for on-going training; digital mapping skills need to be rolled out within teams.

As far as we know, this was the first time that GPS had been used to this extent for mountain rescue in N. Wales. Indeed, this may be one of the largest GPS-based searches carried out to date in the UK.

It is our belief that if we as an MR community are to get the best out of GPS technology, we need to share our experiences and compare notes. We hope that this article will play a small part in that process.

We welcome any feedback, via llanberismrt@mountain.rescue.org.uk. LLMRT now use GPS on all call-outs, and look forward to the roll-out of GPS data over high-band!

Footnote: At time of writing, despite the search re-commencing several times in the light of new information, no traces of the missing person have been found.

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Steve Taylor takes a little ice with it

Sitting down in the Sparrowhawk one evening after team training, the subject got round to where to go for some winter ice. 'I'm not paying £27 for pizza and chips or £6 a pint for beer either, so definitely not Norway' said Steve. 'Well where then?' asked Pete. 'I don't know.'

'Oh, you sort it,' said Pete... and so I did. There's a book by Joe Josephson that covers 800 ice climbing routes in and around the Canadian Rockies, I got a copy and took a look. The following week I had it all planned and put it to Pete.

Canada. Canada? Banff to be more precise, flying into Calgary, coach transfer to the hotel. All sorted mate.

OH MY GOD!

In no time at all, the trip that was just an idea a few short days ago was now a reality. On 25 February, 2006, at 6am we were picked up and off to Manchester for our direct flight to Calgary which would take us a little over eight hours. Which is pretty good when you consider that last year it took us nine hours to get to our room in Norway. A room with an outside loo!

'We thank you for traveling bla bla bla airline bla bla bla we wish you a safe bla bla and the outside temperature is Minus 18.'

Out came the down jacket and stayed out! I have to say my Rab down was never off my back even in bed!

Tip number 1 – book a ski bag onto the flight, this allows you to put all your hardware in one bag and its only £15 return.

Tip number 2 – do listen to your mum and take your hat, gloves and down jacket. Also any other kit you see fit for minus stupid conditions.

We boarded the coach at the airport for the 80 minute journey to Banff. As you glide along the highway in air-conditioned luxury you are treated to outstanding scenery unfolding before your eyes. The Rockies grow like angry rattle snakes ready to strike, white waves cascading on an open wild stormy beach, tells you that the spindrift up there could be a problem. But from the warm coach it is just enough to take your breath away!

Every now and then famous

classic routes become visible from the highway. Sea of Vapours WI 7. The Terminator WI 6+. Then as we approach Banff, one of our first objectives springs into view – Cascade falls, a WI 2 ramp leads to a 3 pitch WI3 100m long which looks awesome, and achievable.

For those not as familiar with WI routes it usually means that it's one less than the Scottish grading system IE Sharp Edge or Striding Edge in the Lakes in winter conditions is a Scottish grade I/II climb. For example WI3 = Scottish IV

At last we arrive at the hotel. Irwin's Mountain Inn. Very cosy. Two queen size beds, free breakfast and, thank God, a loo.

We dump our bags and as it's now 2pm local time and too late to get a climb in today, its off to collect the car.

Tip number 3 – prebook the car hire – £120 for the week. Car hire is essential. We went with the English perception that all is not far away. Canada isn't like that. It is simply vast.

We bum around, a bit of high level shopping, we found a good gear shop called Mountain Magic. A few beers (£1.80 a pint) and it was time to head back to the hotel where we unpacked the gear and then repacked the gear ready for an early start.

Sunday morning dawned and, at 8am, the outside temperature was 23 degrees. I'm not even going to bother with the minus any more because it never got to plus. First port of call was Hafener Creek with up to seven routes from WI3 up to WI6 plus mixed routes up to M6 5.10 – all within our capabilities but with the jetlag and the unfamiliar

conditions, and rock hard ice... we top roped most of the routes but, hey, the safest climber is the one who goes home in same condition they came.

Day after day we hit route after route, the extremes of temperature became bizarre for us two Lancashire lads – 35 degree at the top of one route out of the wind! So cold my lighter would not work for my one pleasure cigarettes. Canada is not a welcome place for smokers – nowhere allows smoking. I can hear the majority cheer fairplay! But for the few of us left it's an important point.

Day Five an injury – just a broken nose but enough to give you tip number 4 – when ice climbing wear a helmet that takes a visor!

As the week unfolded we visited areas such as the junk yard, Johnston Canyon and back to Cascade falls but unfortunately we were not able to climb due to the Avalanche risk. Tip number 5, check with wardens before each climb about the avalanche risk this is a real problem and will kill you!

Our last climbing day was at Grotto Falls – a frozen river walk up to the falls, pure beauty, native Indian paintings on the canyon walls, virgin water fall ice that the axes went in to like a knife into butter, the calm trees waving at their tops, powder snow fluttering down, pictures of Grotto falls. But a strange rustling noise followed us...

In the pub that night we were chatting to a fellow climber and explaining the noises we thought were following us. Was it a bear? Maybe a brown? 'Cougar,' came the reply. A what?? Cougar. They stalk you, then they attack but not to kill.

They'll take your calf and Achilles in one bite then retreat to watch you bleed before coming for the throat nasty. Tip number 6 – don't go alone! They don't attack folk in pairs.

We even managed a day skiing at Lake Louise. A gondola ride takes you to the top of the mountain. You ski the 2.5km back down. Out of this world! But Peter, being the intrepid explorer he is, decided to board. Ok the truth – I am crap at skiing so Pete thought, to even the odds, he would board. Unfortunately he had put his camera on a tape around his neck, fell, landed on said camera and broke a rib. Tip number 7 – direct from Pete, you got it, camera and body, when falling, don't mix.

The best thing I find about climbing around the world is networking. At climbing areas we met different nationalities – Americans, Canadians, Swiss, English and a mad Frenchman who was soloing extreme routes. We had banter, shared noodles and generally had good crack. This happened at every location and in bars, shops and just about everywhere we went. And not just with fellow climbers. Don't underestimate the Canadians what you see is what you get – just a bloody nice set of people that will share their thoughts and kindness with all who want it. We never had a bad word to say about any of the folk we met. Which in this day and age isn't bad?

I could list many more tips but I think mine and Peter's biggest tip is quite simply this.

Go to Canada. It's got it all – ski, climb, walk, sightsee. You will not be disappointed.

Our trip was booked as a package from Inghams and other packages are available. I also recommend a guesthouse lodge for independent travellers – a lady by the name of Rusty Kirby on holidaylodgebandb@hotmail.com

What are you waiting for?

Incident Reporting & Recording Policy

Update from **Ged Feeney, MRC Statistics Officer**

Background

A number of incident reporters have asked the question 'What incidents should be reported?' There does not appear to be an accepted definition for what constitutes a reportable incident. It would make the job of all reporters and the Statistics Officer, less arbitrary if there was a policy in existence.

Over the last few years, there has been an increase in the demand by government agencies for planning information. It is vital that the data collected is robust, verifiable and can withstand audit. In addition, it will be an appropriate time to move towards harmonising the incident reporting of the voluntary bodies providing Land SAR for the UK – namely, ALSAR, BCRC MRC and MRC(Scotland).

There follows an outline of the current practice for selecting whether an incident should be included within the statistics. Then, the recording criteria are discussed in detail. Finally, there is an attempt to create a policy that is sufficiently rigorous but workable.

Present Situation

At present, the final arbiter in the reporting process is the Statistics Officer. He uses his judgement as to whether an incident is sufficiently material for recording and/or fitting

a) *Recording and Filing* – recorded on the incident database, given a reference number and therefore used in subsequent reports and analyses. The original report is then filed with all the other reports and archived.

b) *Filing only* – the report is not deemed sufficiently material to be entered onto the database, it is not given a reference number, it is not included in any subsequent reports, but it is filed with the other reports for archiving purposes.

What follows is an attempt to define the

criteria used to determine whether to record a report ie. its materiality.

Recording Criteria

1. For a record to have any meaning, the report must have a minimum amount of information. An incident should have a starting point, it should involve at least one member of a team, have a location and some narrative outlining what was done or requested. An incident cannot be recorded if insufficient information is submitted in a report.

2. From the information in (1) above, it should be possible to determine whether the incident required the reporter or MR member to stop what they were doing, leave their present location and take an active part in any response. The point being that a passive response does not constitute an incident for recording purposes.

3. When someone happens upon an incident where their training, experience or equipment could assist someone, it is their duty as a citizen to render all necessary help. There may be exceptions to this. eg. if involvement removes the need for a genuine 999 emergency call.

4. Teams often provide SAR cover for organised events, fell races, mountain bike events etc. Often that cover is not used, but sometimes their services are required for numerous competitors. The degree of assistance provided is also likely to vary from individual to individual.

5. Teams often receive requests from the emergency services for assistance during severe weather or other local emergencies. eg. flooding, landslides, major celebrations etc. The reports are invariably numerous during any 24 hour period and may even extend over a number of days.

6. Incidents often span more than one day. They can last many days. They can even be interrupted whilst further inquiries are made. It is not

uncommon for a search to be resumed many days after its suspension, especially when new information comes to light.

Recording Policy

Incident reports will be filed without being recorded in a database or combined into a single recordable incident on any of the following grounds:-

1. **Inadequate information** – an incident will not be recorded if any of the following items are missing

- 1.1. incident date, when first notified
- 1.2. location or locale
- 1.3. cause of incident or reason for alerting the MRT
- 1.4. team submitting the report

2. **Passive Response** –

an incident will not be recorded if the reporting team was placed on 'standby' and not tasked to action. This may include simple checks like visiting local car parks doing vehicle checks, or driving a road for a look-see etc.

3. **Act of a Good Samaritan** – an incident will not be recorded if the incident reported refers to assistance given as that by a good citizen.

4. **Provision of SAR Cover** –

in cases where the reporting team is providing SAR cover for organised events, individual reports will be combined into a single incident no matter how many casualties were assisted. The team's attendance will not be recorded if the team were not called upon to respond to any request for assistance.

5. **Aid during Local Emergencies** –

in cases where the reporting team is operating in support of other emergency services during periods of local emergencies, individual reports will be amalgamated into a single incident covering the whole period of the emergency, no matter how many persons were assisted or how long the particular event lasted.

6. **Multi-day or non-continuous incidents** –

separate reports relating to the same event, even though it might extend over many days and/or cover non-consecutive days, will be amalgamated into a single record. However, the record will reflect the team's involvement over those days by recording the number of man-hours contributed by the teams involved.

I intend to present a policy document to the MRC at the next Annual Meeting (May 2003). Anyone wishing to contribute or comment should do so in writing before the end of March 2003. Write to me at 57 Castlesteads Drive, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 7XD or email gfd@gfeeney.demon.co.uk



Dogs, horses, cows and search teams...

On the veterinary couch with Helen Moss

I was en-route down the M5 to attend a search callout when my mobile started ringing. It was my team leader, who very calmly said, 'Could I have a talk with you about dog psychology?' It was the first time I've received a call like this and I'm sure it won't be the last and not just for me but for many more of you out there.

As a vet, I have training in how to handle all kinds of animals in many different scenarios so was able to pass on some information on dog psychology that was of use. However, it is not just dogs that may find themselves caught up in a rescue situation. Horses, cows, sheep and pigs may also be in the vicinity. Knowing how to handle different animals in different scenarios can be of great assistance when in the field, not least from the point of view of damage limitation!

DOGS...

All dogs are pack animals and, as a result, are very loyal to their owners, who they view as the pack leader. If the owner is collapsed or injured and on the ground, most dogs will immediately go to the owner, investigate and remain with them. In this scenario, sightings of the dogs can be very useful for search managers as well as teams on the ground as a means of highlighting areas to be searched.

Breed of dog must also be borne in mind as this can impact on their location in relation to the casualty. It is beyond the scope of this article to go into great detail but the following points form a general rule of thumb. Territorial dogs such as Jack Russells, Terriers and Rottweilers, to name a few, would feasibly remain guarding their owners whatever. Generally speaking, the majority of breeds including Heinz 57s and Labradors would potentially remain with the owner but may bark to attract attention or just sit there patiently until help arrived. A small minority of breeds such as Collies would, perhaps, find their own way home and can be harnessed in the search for their own owner in the style of good old Lassie! You may be thinking that lost dog behaviour is a somewhat inexact science and you would be absolutely correct, as training regimes used by the owner will undoubtedly influence the dog's behaviour.

Handling of dogs at the casualty location is important as they may not be as friendly as you expect them to be. It is more than likely that the dog's normal personality will be changed given the unusual circumstances. A dog does not understand all of our movements or communications and may not understand that we are just trying to help. So caution on our part is necessary.

Stance, ear position, mouth form and noises can all help highlight the likely nature of a dog, as the pictures indicate. There are a few simple techniques which can be adopted in order to prevent rescuers becoming the dog's next tasty snack. In all circumstances it is important that the initial approach to the casualty occurs slowly and not in a way that overcrowds the situation. Allow the dog to approach the rescuer first. This is far less threatening and should enable the rescuer and dog to bond more quickly.

Restraint of the dogs a short distance from the owner will facilitate an initial evaluation of both parties. It is best to use a proper dog lead, with slip leads being the easiest to apply but anything can be adapted including slings.

As well as caring for the casualty it must be noted that the dogs have also been missing so they too may be hungry and dehydrated. Although the dog may think it is a great idea to tuck in to a packed lunch, we must remember that some human food is poisonous to canines. Most notable is chocolate which has been known to kill dogs. Unless you are lucky enough to be carrying dog food it is probably best to just address the dehydration and offer the dog a drink of plain water.

HORSES...

A scenario of a rider thrown from their horse may not be impossible for search teams to encounter and, yet again, knowing a bit about the animal can help search managers and teams on the ground.

Horses, by their nature, are a migratory pack animal capable of covering large distances at a time. This can affect the possibility of using sightings in one of two ways. The first is that the horse will stay in the vicinity of the owner, especially if it is in a field or there is access to grass and water nearby. Secondly, and probably the more likely, is that something may have spooked the horse causing it to rear and buck and throw the rider. As a result of this the horse is unlikely to stay where the rider has fallen. Horses are capable of traveling at more than 24 miles per hour across country and may not necessarily be limited by barriers such as hedges and fences. In view of these factors, sightings of a lone horse with saddle and bridle may not initially point to the location of the rider.

If a horse is present on arriving on scene, it is of utmost importance to restrain it. They are capable of inflicting serious damage by their nature of being a large heavy animal – some I've met getting on for 700kg weight. Ideally someone who is used to horses should be responsible for the handling of it, or at least someone who is confident. Horses are very quick to pick up on nervousness in a handler and, as a result, will take advantage of the situation by becoming harder to restrain. I speak from experience when I say it is b#'*~y painful when a horse stands on your foot! The consequences of a casualty being stood on don't even bear thinking about!

Horses with tack can easily be led away by a handler holding the reins and directing the horse with vocal cues. The only cue you will need is to tell the horse to 'walk on'. Ensure you are standing on the left hand side of the animal as training protocols dictate that this is the side from which handlers always work. Horses that are getting excitable can be controlled by a short downward and backward tug on the reins as this will simulate its rider giving it a signal to stop. Once moved to a safe distance from the casualty, the horse can be told to 'stand' and can then be controlled by continued hold on the reins. As soon as possible,

the horse should be handed over to someone known to the casualty who is capable of leading or riding it back home where it can receive attention for possible injuries and/or dehydration.

FARM ANIMALS...

Cattle, sheep and pigs can all be included in this category but why, I hear you ask, am I including them here? Well, they may be of no help in casualty location but incorrect handling of a field full of farm animals can make life a nightmare for a team on the ground and an excellent source of amusement in the pub afterwards! I could probably guarantee that most of you at some time or other have had to walk through a field of cattle or sheep.

Pigs, for example, are prone to aggression especially when there are piglets present. Like any maternal instinct the first concern of the sow is for her offspring and as a result will employ tactics to ensure their safety. Charging and attempting to bite is not unheard of and believe me being hotly pursued by half a tonne of pork is not enjoyable! For the searcher, a brief scout around the perimeter of the field would be ideal being particularly vigilant about the activities of the porcine field mates. If you are unlucky enough to discover a casualty in a field with pigs, notify the farmer as soon as possible and ask them to either remove or contain the herd to ease the process of assessment and evacuation.

Cattle and sheep can both be treated in the same manner. They are generally inquisitive and cause no harm but like any animal it is never worth turning your back on them. Sheep usually lose interest and can be kept at bay by shepherding them across the field unless your sandwiches are particularly smelly in which case you don't stand a chance of any peace! Cattle can be handled by vocally encouraging them to move away as well as by extending arms to either side of the body. Creating the illusion of widening the body gives the impression of a physical barrier through which the cattle can not move. Most cattle encountered will either be females or castrated male (steers). Wherever a bull is present even more caution should be exercised, with at least one person in charge of monitoring the bull's movement. Further to this, the farmer should be contacted if possible as they have a better knowledge of the animals under their care as well as having the proper resources to be able to handle and herd them. Just for the record, the colour of your clothing has no bearing on the mood of the bullock. If he is in a bad mood he really doesn't care what colour you are wearing so the simple rule is... send your mate in first!

Animal behaviour is a long and complicated subject so it is beyond the scope of this article to offer little more than a brief insight and a few basic guidelines on how to deal with different animals in a variety of situations. However, you never know, it might just help someone out there who requires your services as well as being the saviour of your lunch and feet!

Okay girls! Time to stand up and take control!

Sorry chaps, but this is one for the girls. So better look away now. Move on to something butch about ice climbing or something, cos you know what us girls are like when we get together... all that talk about hormones, and bodily functions and stuff.

Okay, girls, now we're on our own... It had to be a woman! I mean, if blokes had to go to all that trouble just to have a pee on the hill, you can bet your last pack of Tena Lady one of them would have invented something by now. You know what it's like. You've been looking forward to this trip for days. Weeks even. Rucksack's packed, kit's all there – butties and flask, chocolate, lip salve, sun cream, map, waterproofs, spare clothing, tissues, sunglasses, blah, blah, blah – you've availed yourself of the facilities, 'just to make sure', in spite of having already 'been' at least three times before leaving home (never, never waste the opportunity to spend a penny) and you're off. It might be half an hour later, it might be five hours later, but sooner or later, as you watch your male companions diving behind trees and walls or even, heaven forbid, walking two feet to one side of the path and turning their backs (as if that somehow renders them invisible) to relieve their burgeoning bladders, you hold on. And hold on. And hold on. Until, quite frankly, you can think of little else but the overriding desire to pass water. Surely there must be a bush somewhere round here? Small rock? Medium sized tussock? And then you see one. 'Sorry chaps,' you squeak, vocal chords strangled by desperation, 'you go on... just nipping behind this tussock for a pee.' (to chorus of knowing remarks about women's bladders. One thing to say about that, chaps – if you're still here – and that's 'prostate'.)

So there you are, positioned behind said medium sized tussock. And suddenly aware of just about every other living being on the hill within a two mile radius. Is that group of rambles going to make it round the corner before you manage to get your trousers down? Will that couple you passed a mile back have put on a spurt and choose the exact moment you bare your bum to the world to catch you up? What if there's some innocent twit on the opposite side of the hill, bins trained on the lesser spotted whatever it is a hovering a couple of feet above you? Then there's the snakes, ticks and nettles to worry about... the need to squat in exactly the right position so as not to end up spending the rest of the day in soggy pants and, as if that were not enough, the distinct possibility you'll lose your balance and topple over mid flow.

If it's summer, the chances are you can sort yourself out pretty quick. But winter? Forget it! Knickers, thermals, tracksters, waterproofs.... Not to mention the fact it's blummin cold out there. And possible peeing down. If you'll pardon the pun. As I said, if blokes had to go through all that...

Well, thank goodness for Samantha Fountain (and with a name like that, it had to be she), entrepreneur and inventor of the Shewee – a seven inch long plastic funnel device which allow women to urinate whilst standing or sitting without removing clothes. Samantha developed the idea whilst backpacking around Europe, which presumably involved a fair amount of tussock-hunting. In 1999, she won the James Dyson Product Design Award, appeared on the Beeb's Dragons' Den series in 2005, and was recently awarded a Silver at the British Female Inventor and Innovator Awards 2006.

I met Sam at the Outdoors Show in March, where she tells me she sold just under a thousand Sheweese over the three days, so there is clearly a demand. 'It struck me how much easier it was for a guy to go to the toilet in a place where there are no facilities or nowhere to squat behind,' explained Sam, 'so I came up with a way of effectively urinating like a man. Men could just stroll up and be on their way in a few seconds, while women were having to take off backpacks and clothing and then attempting to find somewhere to squat, all the time worrying about touching things for fear of germs, keeping

their dignity and keeping warm. Shewee does away with all of this fuss – there really is no end to situations where Shewee would be handy.'

So how does it work? According to the product information, it's easy peesy. (Last of the dodgy puns, I promise).

'One. Undo trousers or pull down front of trousers. Push underwear to one side and place Shewee securely against your body under the crotch, with the outlet pipe pointing away from the body and out of your clothing. No need for bare bottoms!

'Two. Aim to wee in the most appropriate place available wherever you are and away from feet. Either into a toilet, a suitable disposable container or discreetly behind a conveniently located tree.

'Three. When you have finished, pull the funnel away. The liquid repellent coating ensures no drips or splashes. You can also use the funnel to wipe off any drips if you don't have paper.

'Four. Place Shewee back into it's resealable pouch for using again later that day or for washing later. Shewee is hand or machine washable.'

The Shewee retails at £5

and is currently available direct from www.shewee.com

Sam recommends testing the thing out in the comfort of your own home first, before swaggering confidently into the hills with the menfolk. And, yes, I

have. Since you ask. But not yet out there amongst the elements. Think I might need to choose my walking companions carefully...

Judy Whiteside



Gŵyl Gerdded Ynys Môn 2006

Isle of Anglesey Walking Festival 2006

June 10 – 25

Walks for all the family
Featuring two Charity Walks – the S4C walk for Autism and the Christian Buildings Trust Walk

Teithiau cerdded i'r teulu oll

BORROWDALE 1939...

By **David Allan**

The MRC recorded the first incident in the Borrowdale Valley in 1939, although there is no doubt that other unrecorded episodes occurred prior to this. Three MR posts had been established by this time, being located on Sty Head, at the Scafell Hotel and in Keswick Police Station.



KESWICK MRT

was established and, accordingly after diligent enquiry, a 1938 Humber Estate car with the capacity to carry eleven was purchased for the sum of £100.

The need was demonstrated for two bottles of brandy to be carried in the rucksacks in 1956. There is sadly no clear record of the use to which these were put. Also in that year, two Davy automatic escape devices were purchased. One of

Until 1946, the equipment in these posts was used by as many volunteers as could be assembled no the day. In 1946, events conspired to change this. On 26 April, Wilfred Noyce fell from Shark's Fin on Tophet Bastion and fractured a leg. The ensuing rescue extended through the night and took twenty two hours to complete. At the end Noyce was in better condition than most of the rescuers and a farmer remarked that life was easier if climbers were killed outright when they fell!

Rusty Westmorland was involved in this rescue and realised that a dedicated group of rescuers with some training was required. An advert appeared in the local paper and the Borrowdale Mountain Rescue Team was born with Rusty as team leader.

During 1948, the team dealt with nine accidents but of these five had a fatal outcome, a reflection largely of the fact that most people were going into the hills to climb. Communication was not entirely sorted out and, on one memorable occasion in April 1948, the team was called out by a letter from the police requesting their help with a search! Fundraising however was not a major issue and the annual income was £59.

In 1950, a letter from the MRC advised that team members could claim £1.00 per day in respect of loss of earnings but there is no evidence that claims were actually made.

1951 was a landmark year when a decision was taken to rename the team Keswick MRT, to establish the base of operations in Keswick, and to withdraw the post from the Scafell Hotel. Discussions were also held to determine whether the air raid siren in Keswick could be employed to call out the team but disappointingly this did not materialise.

By 1954, the need for some form of transport

these were eventually used in earnest on a rescue on Pillar in 1962 but the result cannot have impressed as the devices were never brought out again.

The Humber Estate neared the end of its life in 1959 and was traded for a soft topped Land Rover. During this year there were 25 callouts and the callout list had risen to 45 people. A vigorous debate about the continued use of alcohol for casualties took place in 1960 but although the medical officer recognised some evidence against its use the brandy stayed in the rucksack!

Keswick Town Council recognised the value of the team in 1961 and built a garage to accommodate them in the town. It is also of note that at this time excellent support came from the Lake Hotel which opened its doors and offered free hospitality to team members after rescues at any hour of day or night.

The Thomas stretcher was always, and still is, the preferred stretcher but, in 1965, the cumbersome task of carrying the stretcher up the hill became too much and after some debate a decision was made to saw it in half, a procedure which was eventually undertaken by Peter Bell.

1966 was notable for a visit from the Duke of Edinburgh and a demonstration of crag rescue was laid on at Falcon Crag. In 1967 the police advised the team that the practice of travelling down the valley with a number of members standing on the tailgates of the Land Rovers was no longer acceptable! It was not however until 1985 that a four wheel drive transit van was purchased for the carrying of people on call outs.

1991 was an important year when

a decision was made to furnish all team members with personal pagers. In order to make this effective however the call out list was drastically pruned down to a manageable and active group of 35 people.

The need for a new custom built base was established and a site found in 1993 with the building completed and occupation in 1997. The team raised the necessary funds themselves to build and equip the new building, at a total cost of around £240,000. A significant blow to the fundraising process came with the announcement that the National Lottery would not support the project. Efforts were renewed, the target was finally reached and the building constructed (without a lift!)

Keswick MRT now has a callout list of some 47 people and deals with over 90 incidents per year and these are almost entirely events occurring on the hill. In the first 30 years of its Keswick MRT dealt with 670 rescues and 1654 in the ensuing 30 years. There is one intake of new probationary members per annum and approximately 50% of applicants are accepted.

Training is a major issue and members have regularly travelled to Scotland for winter training and more recently twelve members visited Chamonix for the same purpose. Team members have also been sent to Canada to experience first hand the principles of rigging for rescue.

Mark Hodgson has been team leader for thirteen years. He is homegrown having joined the team initially in 1972, before moving away from the town for few years. He took part in his first rescue at the age of 17. He is preceded by only three previous leaders. Rusty Westmorland who lived to the age of 98, George Fisher MBE and Mike Nixon MBE.

Mark continues to have great enthusiasm for mountain rescue. The extraordinary team spirit and the purely volunteer ethos are the things at



TEAM TRAINING CHAMONIX 2005



ABOVE: TRAINING INCIDENT STONECROFT BECK
LEFT: A RATHER DAMP MARK HODGSON, TEAM LEADER, AT INCIDENT TO RECOVER CRAGFAST GROUP, BASE BROWN



the items at the top of his list of reasons to be so involved. These factors mean there is a lot of fun to be had whilst undertaking a very public service. He firmly believes that

MR is, and must, remain closer to sport than to business and its practices should be driven by skills not legislation or fear of litigation.

His key to maintaining high skill levels and team performance is regular review of procedures and rescues.

Keswick MRT is in a very fortunate position in respect of matters financial and has recognised this by donating vehicles to other teams and offering free places to other team members on courses which have been held in Keswick. Mark is confident that the team will continue to take this approach in the future.

There are concerns with matters both local and national. He is aware of a steadily decreasing element of self reliance amongst most hill goers and is able to quote many instances where basic skills and some affinity with the mountains would have removed the need for mountain rescue involvement.

Team members are finding increasing difficulty in responding to call outs during the working week. This has not yet compromised the team's operational capability but will become of concern if it continues. In common with many teams across the country, Mark notes the steadily rising average age of team members. New team members sometimes have conditions attached to their commitment, a trend that seems to be recorded in many voluntary bodies.

Regarding the day to day management of the team, Mark explains, 'We have a committee because the charity commission requires it. No formal decisions are made by the committee. Recommendations are made by the committee for debate and agreement, or otherwise, by the full team at a quarterly business meeting. We have a 'safety-net' of a limit of £500 expenditure without committee recommendation and team agreement.

The only exception to this being if there is a need to replace operational equipment due to damage.'

In fact, the team has no sub-committees so prospective new members, and probationary members seeking full membership, are debated and decided upon by the full team. The team leader and three deputies are each elected by the full team at the AGM and must achieve a 75% vote in their favour to continue in office. Currently they hold four business meetings a year (which can and do take a few hours!) to manage the team but, as time moves on, they run the risk of having to increase this number. 'Whilst this might not sit too well with some team members,' says Mark, 'the whole ethos of the team is that the team runs the team, not a selection of committees and sub-committees. In this way we ensure openness, team members feel totally involved in decision making that affects them, and they recognise that their contributions do make a difference.'

The ratio of time on a rescue to time on support work has drastically changed. Equipment inspections, log books etc, etc... mean that many more hours may be spent in this type of activity than being on the hill and it is more difficult to sustain enthusiasm for this over the years.

At national level Mark feels that the voluntary SAR services are at times not well recognised by the statutory services and often ignored in the planning and changing of provision. There are concerns about the call out system. Again a topic which echoes around the country. Perhaps there is a case for a more direct routing of calls to mountain rescue to avoid both 'missed calls' and delays.

On mobile phones he believes that the balance is favourable and many instances of more effective deployment of MR have followed their use. There is, nevertheless, a regular flow of irresponsible use and there is also a very definite over reliance on them.

Mark has one regret from leading such a busy team and that is that it leaves him with insufficient time to become more involved with national matters.

One hopes that in due course this may change. His experience and wisdom would be a great asset to the national body.

FRIENDS OF THE LAKE DISTRICT

Friends of the Lake District (FLD) has worked tirelessly for more than 70 years to protect and conserve the landscape of Cumbria and the Lake District. Since 1978 it has also been the Campaign to Protect Rural England county branch for Cumbria. Not everyone sees the protection and conservation of this beautiful county as a priority, so it is not unusual for FLD to be accused of being preservationist – especially when it comes to commenting on development proposals. But, in truth, the organisation only objects to a small minority of such proposals, and then tries to make positive suggestions as to how some of them could be changed to be more sustainable or to mitigate the worst aspects of the potentially harmful effect on the landscape.

Occasionally FLD can be in apparent opposition to other groups which appear to have similar views. Most notably the organisation found itself pitted against Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace over the proposal to build 27 turbine at Whinash, on the eastern fringes of the Lake District National Park. Whilst FLD recognises the immense threat posed, not least to the landscape, by climate change – and in principle supports renewable energy projects – this was felt to be the wrong development on the wrong scale and in the wrong place. Fortunately the planning inspector and the government agreed and refused consent for the development, which meant that the wildness and visual beauty of that unspoilt area will not be wrecked. FLD will take a principled but pragmatic approach wind turbine developments proposed for elsewhere in Cumbria.

The special qualities of Cumbria, and primarily the Lake District, are what bring visitors to the area to help underpin the rural economy. These special qualities have evolved over many millions of year; in the last few millennia man has taken a hand, and will continue to influence how they change. Friends of the Lake District tries to ensure that such change is incremental and made with a feeling for the landscape because, without such attention, those special qualities may be lost – and with them the very reason for people to visit Cumbria and the Lake District.

ANGLESEY WALKING FESTIVAL

The Isle of Anglesey Walking Festival 2006 offers you sixteen days of walks where participants will learn about the history of several local coastal and rural villages, the 'World Famous Tour' of Moelfre where you'll learn about shipwrecks, cannibalism, smugglers and ghosts. Experience the Lion's Trail in Llanfair PG, so named because of the four magnificent lions that sit on either end of Britannia Bridge. There's the Rhoscolyn Headland Walk, a tour of Plas Newydd, home to the Marquis of Anglesey followed by a historical boat tour, beautiful scenery, flora and fauna, a church trail, birdwatching, maritime and industrial heritage – Anglesey has it all! Further inland, see the old coal mines at Pentre Berw and, new for 2006, a new spotting experience, lots of fun for all the family! All the walks are guided by professional, knowledgeable guides who will help you get the most from your experience. There will also be the opportunity to spend some evenings in the company of local historians and folk bands and a chance to dine on local Welsh produce. Refreshments will be available in most places and some will also include visits to local businesses.

In 2006, in order to sustain the festival, and develop it for the future we are introducing a fee per walk and also giving participants an option to enjoy some walks through the medium of Welsh. We hope this does not effect your participation or enjoyment.



Guy Wilson on Scottish ice

FAR LEFT: MORNING AT THE START OF THE AONACH EAGACH RIDGE
LEFT: GUY AT SUMMIT OF DORSAL ARETE, STOB COIRE NAN LOCHAN, GLEN COE

The hardest winter since 1963 (The year I was born so don't ask me about it) did not materialise and maybe all grannies rejoiced or at least the government department responsible for paying top ups to pensioners winter fuel bills. For the rest of us who wouldn't die of cold but were dying to climb in a winter wonderland, a bit of planning and big dollop of luck was necessary.

An offer to fly out to Rjukan, Norway at the end of February for a few days climbing and skiing materialised and before one could say Rjukanfossen I was winging my way out to Rjukan Hytte Caravanpark to meet Norwegian guides Jan and Terje. We spent a day climbing a few short ice falls whilst they told me of their plans to run winter survival courses on the Hardangervidda plateau – digging snowholes, catching fish through the ice and lighting fires etc. Other possible activities include ice climbing and skiing, telemark or downhill. I'll be giving more details about an organised trip for Ray Mears types next winter around about October time but, in the meantime...

Once back in the UK, a weekend visit to Scotland at the beginning of March was made in the company of Jim 'Jimdog' Haydock (a police dog handler, hence the monicker) to do a few routes on the east face of Aonach Mor (Corrie an Lochain) near Fort William. We left Lancashire on the Friday afternoon with forecasts of white outs and blizzards, impassable roads and treacherous driving conditions. However, not a snowflake was seen once past Ingleton! We had clear roads and clear skies but also, thankfully, majestic white mountains all the way up. Obviously some soft southern ponce on the BBC or a London Shogun driver making up the weather reports.

Friday night was spent at a hostel and a hostelry in Glen Nevis. Saturday morning found us without too much of a hangover awaiting the 8am climbers' gondola at the Nevis ski range. The gondola and chair lift for a price gets one a fair way up the 4000 foot Aonach Mor. One is left with the last 315 metres of height to gain the top. Once on top, we abseiled off a snow bollard into Easy Gully (grade I, 100m) which was sporting a large cornice and then plodded our way down the steep snow bowl to the base of the cliffs in fairly deep and thankfully well consolidated snow. Easy Gully, the usual means of descent, is in certain conditions, very real avalanche risk. Unfortunately our chosen climb, the three star classic Left Twin was already occupied as was Right Twin, so we jumped on Forgotten Twin (grade I/II, 120m). Three twins? A gentle introduction to the day. A short ice ramp lead to an easier angled gully and a belay, a couple of short ice pitches later and Jim belayed just below the exit cornice. A bite of flapjack purchased from Bernie's in Ingleton and a gob full of coffee from the flask once on top and we were lowering through the cornice of Easy Gully once more and this time we got on 'Left Twin' (grade III /4 *** 120m).

I took the first pitch and got my first taste of the frequent spindrift avalanches which found their way not only down my neck but up my nose too. Jim took the second pitch with some steep moves on the final hard pitch to belay, leaving me a short snow plod to the cornice which thankfully wasn't too big. Unfortunately, we were not going to be in

time to make the last gondola down at 5.15pm giving us an extremely long downward slog back to the car. However, luck was in and the gondola was still running for staff at nearly 6 o'clock and we were generously allowed on. My luck was to continue. I somehow lost a crampon getting on the gondola at the top station but it was kindly returned to me by a lady in the next car down. Phew! With that kind of luck I should have bought a lottery ticket.

Sunday and already it was time to go home but not before stopping off at the Buchaille Etive Mor in Glen Coe. The great shepherd of Etive, that most beautiful of mountains that stands all gnarly at the head of the Glen was too good to miss. Curved Ridge (grade II *** 300m), a beautiful line, it had everything, ice pitches, rock scrambling, snow slopes, soloing and roped moving together, protecting the odd anxious moment. On one side the dark imposing Rannoch wall, all around grand rock architecture and falling away across the valley floor the vast sweep of Rannoch Moor. All this and a route that ends at the summit. A summit with sunshine on this occasion and fantastic views of hills that stretched into the distance like white topped mountainous seas.

Less than two weeks later on the Thursday and Jimdog and I were once more speeding round the Blackmount and down past the Kingshouse and The Buchaille Etive Mor to Fort William. This time we stayed at 'Callun', home of Alan Kimber, author of the Cicerone guide to Ben Nevis and Glen Coe as well as mountain guide.

Friday morning and it was back down to Glen Coe to plod up the gruelling path to Stob Corie nan Lochan to do Dorsal Arete (grade II *** 120m). Jim later came back to knock off the eye catching Twisting Gully (grade III 4*** 150m) While I, on the other hand, had a much needed day off lying in bed till 9am, reading The Times, cooking myself a lunch of pan fried scallops wolfed down with a french stick and not to mention the odd dram throughout the afternoon. Well one has it to do occasionally. Twisting Gully was first climbed by WH Murray and party in 1946. Murray wrote the superb 'Mountaineering in Scotland' whilst a prisoner of war. An account of a climb of Twisting Gully can be found in 'Cold Climbs' compiled by Wilson, Allcock and Barry and published by Diadem.

Saturday and Sunday, Jim and I had booked time with Dave Hollinger, a guide who Jim had climbed with the year before. Saturday, Aonach Mor, gorgeously blue skies but rising temperatures. Jet Stream (grade IV 4 ***). I looked up the steep ice pitch to see a silver jet liner leaving a perfect vapour trail, the route name becoming clear. Several steep sections brought us to a small snow bay where we had to exit right. The exit being devoid of snow or ice and called for some delicate hooking to make the move. Around

us lumps of ice dislodged by the ever rising temperatures fell from the buttress to our right. Easier climbing then lead to the cornice. Quickly back down and we jumped on another IV 4* Solar Wind. Fortunately, the sun had moved round and the route wasn't dropping in bits anymore. Another gully climb that lead to a snow bay at just less than half height. More mixed climbing to exit a steep wall then continuing up the steep gully to the exit cornice. We even made the gondola by the appointed hour.

On our second day with Dave we walked into Corrie Leis, Ben Nevis, as far as the CIC hut before turning towards the No 3 Gully area. Jim made an



AONACH EAGACH RIDGE, GLEN COE

executive decision and decided upon Green Gully (grade IV 4 ***). A steep yomp up the snow in bright sunshine had me leaking sweat in buckets and I was very glad to eventually come up under the first pitch where we stamped out a luxurious two foot square platform in the steep snow. The ice on the route, though steep, was reassuringly solid and axes went in securely. The first pitch started as steep ice but soon relented to a grade II snow climb. We belayed on the left wall. Further steep ice pitches followed with good peg belays on the right wall. Soon we came onto the snow slope in the upper reaches and exited right. Our descent route was down No 4 Gully and back down towards the CIC hut and the long slog back to the north face car park.

Soon enough, it was Tuesday and our last day of climbing. By this time we had been joined by Fred Weeks a member of the Cave Rescue Organisation who lives in Ingleton. The three of us were to do the Aonach Eagach ridge overlooking

Continued on page 30...

A to Z of MR

Gary Foo of Oxfordshire Search and Rescue team continues his own personal glossary of terms, moving through B into C...

- **Clue** A message or signal that serves to reduce uncertainty with respect to the subject's location, as well as identification purposes for the police authorities.
- **Clue Awareness** The ability to perceive clues left by the subject such as tracks and other signs, rather than just the subject him/herself.
- **Contusion** An injury resulting from the impact of a blunt object. Although the skin is not broken, tissue damage and swelling often occur.
- **Co-ordinated Search** The combined facilities, equipment and procedures established interacting to provide the response to search and rescue incidents.
- **Critical Incident Stress** A stress reaction experienced by emergency responders during the incident that may have long term, debilitating psychological and physiological effects upon them.
- **Critical Separation** Determined by two searchers walking away from a simulated subject in opposite directions, until each searcher can just see the simulated subject. The distance between them is the critical separation.
- **Crust** A hard, fairly thin layer formed of well bonded snow. Bonding may be due to refreezing or melted grains (sun crust) or wind packing (wind crust). Could be dangerously hollow underneath presenting an unusual danger.
- **Cumulative Probability of Detection** The overall probability of detection that results when a segment has been searched more than once.
- **Cyanosis** A condition characterised by a noticeable blue or grey colour in the tongue, lips, nail beds and skin. Cyanosis indicates that the blood is not carrying an adequate supply of oxygen, or that blood flow is curtailed.
- **Datum** The most probable position of a search object, corrected for drift, at any specific time.
- **Datum Line** A line that runs perpendicular to the base line of a search area, usually marked at either end of the search area to define the area adequately.
- **Debriefing** The exchange of information, usually at the close of a situation, that conveys important knowledge and experience.

Mersey Regional Ambulance Service

First Aid Training

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PETZL LEDS 80% BRIGHTER

Petzl's line up for 2006 boasts the confident claim that key models in the LED range are now 80% brighter than the same spec models from last year. The affected models are the Tikka and Zipka. Additionally, the Tikka Plus and Zipka Plus models now shine more than 30 metres where, previously, the figure was 17 metres. This performance leap in a single year completes a programme of steady improvements over six years. A new Tikka today shines almost three times more brightly than a new one at the time of launch in September 2000.

NOTTINGHAM CLIMBING CENTRE

Nottingham Climbing Centre, boasting 600 square metres of climbing wall, welcomes climbers of all ages and experience, from beginner to professional. The centre offers full matted bouldering with 40 graded bouldering problems and monthly competitions in winter; a 5m high freestanding arch providing problems at all grades and most angles; 50m of walls with a variety of angles from slab to overhangs. Up to 25 top ropes are available on the tower, headwall and sidewalls which can be moved to new locations upon request. The centre is open 10am-10pm weekdays and 10am-7pm weekends. Membership costs £3 for life plus £4-6 to climb for as long as you like. Equipment is available to hire or buy. We offer tailor made courses for individuals and groups which in the past have included schools, children, adults, scouts, guides, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, ladies' circles, round tables, special needs and companies such as Vauxhall, Citroen, Mars and Boots. Our instructors have vast experience of every type of group so we are confident we can meet your needs. The recently extended balcony with snack bar offers both hot and cold snacks and drinks and a Monday Club welcomes competent climbers new to the centre. For further information, speak to Derrick, Jason or Steve on 0115 9245 388 Or write to us at: Nottingham Climbing Centre, The Sports Ground, Haydn Road Sherwood, and Nottingham. NG5 1EB. email: info@nottingham-climbing.co.uk www.nottingham-climbing.co.uk

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESCUE AT HEIGHTS



Rescue experts from The Training Centre in Cornwall have pioneered a new course that aims to build a better understanding of medical rescue techniques and best practice for dealing with casualties at heights. The Emergency Medical Rescue at Heights (EMRAH) course, which is the first of the kind in the country, teaches rescue professionals how to treat casualties in distress and deal with 'suspension trauma', which can be life-threatening if handled incorrectly. Although the course was developed on the cliffs and in the classrooms of the Training Centre's base at Lusty Glaze Beach in Cornwall, the syllabus can be taught on-site or at other high ropes facilities nationwide. Among the first to undertake the course were senior members of the London Eye rescue team. In the event of emergency, these team members are responsible for co-ordinating rescues from the popular London attraction. The IRATA (Industrial Rope Access Trade Association) level 3 qualified rescue professionals received the first part of their specialist medical training in Cornwall, but will later receive on-site training on the London Eye itself. Jeremy Griffiths, Manager of The Training Centre, commented, 'With our cliff rescue experience we are able to teach rescue techniques unique to casualties at heights.'

Continued from page 28...

the road through Glen Coe. In brilliant sunshine we walked up onto Am Bodach at the eastern end of the ridge and up onto Meall Dearg. Hardly a breath of wind stirred on the ridge and blue skies and sunshine accompanied us all day. An ice axe and crampons were necessary but enough to deal with the short ice pitches encountered. We got climbing on ice and down climbing on ice, as well as some superb easy rock climbing on the pinnacles.

Eventually we topped out on Sgorr nam Fiannaidh and finished down the western slopes towards the Pap where we sat in the sunshine outside the Spar shop Glencoe slaking our thirsts with a cold can of Fanta while waiting for the taxi to take us back up the pass to our car. An extended wait as it happened as our taxi was waiting for us outside the Cop in Ballachulish? Anyway, once reunited with the car and back under our own steam it was onwards towards the Clachaig Inn for refreshment of a stronger nature to celebrate a most excellent day.

In a little under four weeks I had managed to exceed all my expectations for the winter climbing season, forged some new friendships and made plans for next year, it had after all turned out to be a good winter and granny hopefully didn't get too cold either.

Mountain Rescue at the Palace

On February 15th the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh hosted an evening reception for members of the emergency services at Buckingham Palace. This was on the same day as many people picked up their gongs for work during the day of the tube bombings, so there were a number of recognisable faces knocking around the place sporting shiny new medals.

Ten people were invited from MR around the country, including the MRC Chairman, Dave Allan, as well as a couple of Keswick team members who also took a vehicle with them to display amongst other emergency vehicles lined up in the quadrangle just behind the facade we recognise as the palace - which the Queen had a look at during the day through a window!

The evening started with us being herded into the Palace where various Palace staff were placed around the rooms, ready to engage any bewildered looking guests in conversation until the Queen made her entrance. In addition an army of liveried footmen made sure everyone had a drink and a canapé. The MRC Chairman was one of the lucky few lined up to officially meet the Queen and our Keswick colleagues and I managed to block the exit, so the Queen also had to talk to us on her way out. Other than that, Princess Anne attended,

as did Prince and Princess Michael of Kent.

At 8pm exactly, the most spectacular exit was made by an RAF Sea King crew who jumped into their helicopter which had been parked on the lawn and flew off, leaving everyone in a cloud of aviation fuel fumes.

Having said that, the most amazing thing of the evening was that as soon as the Queen had worked her way through a room the waiters produced ashtrays for those clearly gasping from a lack of nicotine. One fire officer ended up fast asleep on a beautiful antique chair surrounded by a cloud of smoke from his pipe. You'll be pleased to note that the mountain rescue members present didn't partake, not wishing to damage the chandeliers, persian carpets or Louis XIV piano.

A great time was had by all.

Andy Simpson MRC Press Officer



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The first of these is the BMG Open Day on Saturday the 3 June which will be an opportunity for all who are, or may be interested in becoming a BMG member within the next few years. This will take place in the Lake District and is free to all successful applicants. The following weekend, Saturday 10 June, there will be the opportunity to attend a day aimed at marketing a small outdoor business or guiding company. This will be based in Lancashire, for further details see www.bmg.org.uk Applications for either event from 01690 720386 or guiding@bmg.org.uk

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