

Mountain MAGAZINE Rescue



ISSUE 17

INCORPORATING MRC NEWS

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

JULY 2006

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Mountain Rescue
INCORPORATING MRC NEWS
EDITORIAL

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NEXT ISSUE

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Editorial copy must be supplied as Word/Quark document.
 Images must be supplied as separate JPEGs/Photoshop EPS/TIFF (300 dpi)
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Every care will be taken of materials sent for publication however these are submitted at the sender's risk.

Front page pic
 Northumberland National Park Search & Rescue team on exercise with North of Tyne SRT and RAF Boulmer.
 Photo courtesy of Richard Holmes, NNPSRT

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 April, Dave Allan mentioned the looming 75th anniversary for British mountain and cave rescue and referred to the separation of the two services at national level when the BCRC was formed nearly forty years ago.

So, as chairman of the BCRC for well over half the period in question, I thought I would explain why that separation came about and examine how the relationship has evolved since.

Forty years ago the rescue world was in many ways a simpler place – and, before I get tagged a 'grumpy old rescuer', I'm not saying it was a better place. Just a different one. The problems facing mountain and cave rescue teams were local operational ones centring on inadequacies in communications, kit, training, transport and relationships with other services.

Since then the efforts of successive generations have gradually solved these problems, or at least reduced them to more manageable levels. If you don't believe me, ask your team's grumpiest old rescuer and I'm sure he (or she) will delight in telling you (yet again) how so much easier everything is now.

However, as the world has moved on new problems have emerged. Regulation and legislation (both home grown and European), insurance, litigation, risk assessment, health'n'safety, national fundraising, public relations and image projection are all issues that have risen up the agenda. Their relevance to the poor sod lying broken up the hill or down the hole is at times debatable and rarely immediately apparent but nonetheless they are real issues that must be addressed. And occasionally among the new problems there can also be the gleam of a new opportunity.

Faced with the problems of forty years ago and the differences between mountain and cave rescue tasks, methods and kit, the then growing number of underground rescue teams considered that they needed their own national body and so

...AND FROM THE EDITOR...

Well I suppose I asked for it! Experience. The opportunity to see life at the sharp end. Mountain rescue as it really is. And, in the very short time I have been responding to the pager along with my fellow team members I have witnessed some thought-provoking stuff – not a great deal of it actually 'mountain rescue' in its strictest sense.

There was the fruitless search – in what can only be described as a rough urban environment – for a vulnerable, missing from home and thought to be suicidal, possibly armed. 'Do not approach if you find', was the advice. Well we didn't, in the event but, when the lady did turn up some hours later, she did indeed get herself arrested for threatening a police officer with a knife.

Then there was the callout one Sunday afternoon to an 'injured quad biker' in a local quarry which turned into a confirmed suicide and three hours of hanging around (something, I have now discovered, that mountain rescue teams are often required to do an awful lot of). Three hours of silently creeping hypothermia and the sort of 'I wish I'd packed a flask' hunger pangs which are not

what became the BCRC was formed. Cave and mountain rescue at national level took an amicable step apart. Although teams that did both surface and underground work kept a foot in both camps and became conduits for information and views to pass between the two services and their national bodies. Nor for practical reasons did separation become too complete – one being that some existing rescue posts stocked via the MRC actually supported cave rescue teams.

In the 1980s the two bodies moved a bit closer when the BCRC became an affiliated organisation to the MRC. The MRC chairman or vice chairman started to attend BCRC meetings and BCRC officers started to become actively involved in the work of appropriate MRC sub committees.

The national issues of major concern in recent decades have moved from ones of operational detail to those which equally affect both mountain and cave rescue as charitable, volunteer emergency service providers. MRC and BCRC officers have found themselves increasingly involved in either trying to prevent something happening that would put some kind of a crimp in their services or seeking opportunities that, with optimism, patience and persistence, might actually lead to something useful. Inevitably this has led to closer co-operation, the beneficial pooling of resources and the submission of mutually supporting representations.

Separation is still needed because significant differences do (and always will) exist between what we do and how we do it. In some ways the differences have become greater over the forty years. For example, helicopters, search dogs and even radios don't work too well underground, which is tough on cave rescue but as neither do hang gliders, skis, sledges, ponies, mobile phones or mountain bikes I suppose things balance out. Actually mountain bikes have been tried underground – but that's another story.

So, where needs run parallel, the MRC and BCRC have learned to work together so closely that the space between them is difficult to perceive. But where there is not a parallel need there can safely be all the space in the world.

Bill Whitehouse Chairman BCRC

even temporarily satisfied by the ubiquitous three years past its 'best by' Mars bar skulking at the bottom of the rucksack. Before finally being tasked to recover the body – at precisely the point of stand down by an exasperated leadership, with its immediate and total mental surrender to that soon-to-be-enjoyed glass of wine. Seventeen team members instantly back into action-mode – hunger, cold and boredom entirely forgotten.

But here's the thing. Not only was this my first experience of such a tragic end to life, it was the first time I had witnessed my team mates pulling together as a team in this way, their swift yet sure professionalism tempered with an undoubted respect and quiet compassion for the life just lost. But what really impressed me was the concern the more experienced team members showed for those of us new to this – before, during and after the recovery – and their readiness to lend an ear to any team member needing 'to talk'.

Would that we could bottle all of this – this 'essence of mountain rescue' – and show it to the general public. Let them see, smell and feel the work that mountain rescuers do – both on and off the mountain – and how it relates to ordinary lives. We might really move our cause forward.

Judy Whiteside Editor

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!

SPEAKERS

This year sees a good selection of speakers and topics. Including:-

Equipment & Technical

- * **Keeping It Simple. Big Cliff Rescues** – Jonathan Heart (Lochaber MRT).
- * **Keeping Entonox Warm/Heating Project** – Tracey Binks (Duddon & Furness MRT).
- * **Test Results on a Wide Variety of Belay Devices on Two and Three Person Loads** – Dr Mark Taylor (Leeds University).
- * **Scottish Stretcher & Casbag** – Paul Rosher (Skye MRT) & Jamie Kean (Kintail MRT).
- * **Tapes, Knots & Anchors** – Lyon Equipment.

Water Related Issues

- * **The Carlisle Floods** – Ged Feeney (Penrith MRT).
- * **Boscastle** – Sgt Mike Rose.
- * **Flooding in North Wales** – Alistair Reed.
- * **Problems with Life Jackets** – Nick Gale.

Rescues

- * **Sharp Edge, Blencathra** – Mark Hodgson (Keswick MRT).
- * **Ben Lomond** – Bob Sharp (Lomond MRT).
- * **Tryfan** – John Hulse (Ogwen Valley MRT).
- * **Kinder Scout** – Neil Roden (Edale MRT).

Medical

- * **Tetanus to Bird Flu. Fact & Fantasy** – Dr David Telford.
- * **The New Drug Regulations** – Dr John Ellerton.
- * **Pain Relief** – Dr John Williams.
- * **Immediate Treatment of Medical Problems** – Alan White.

Other Agencies

- * **BCRC** – Bill Whitehouse.
- * **MCA/ UKSAR** – Peter Dymond.
- * **ALSAR** – Paul Dollemore.
- * **ARCC** – Tom Taylor.
- * **International Rescues** – Keith Ring.

General Track

- * **New Casbag for Cave Rescue** – Dr William Lumb.
- * **The Helicopter Incident in the Cairngorms.**
- * **CRO Rescues.**
- * **The Livingstone Incident.**

- * **The New Cas Care Book & Teaching CD** – John Ellerton.
- * **IMRA Structure & Development** – Pat Holland.
- * **A National Training Plan** – Seamus Bradley.

Andy Cave is confirmed as the Saturday evening speaker. There will also be presentation of Distinguished Service Awards by Peter Bell, before the evening lecture.

TRADE EXHIBITORS

There will be a wide variety of trade exhibitors supporting the conference at Lancaster in September. The following are already confirmed:-

- * Lyon
- * ISC
- * Keela
- * Mountain Equipment
- * Burton McCall
- * Millet
- * Slioch
- * DB Outdoor Sports
- * Montane

There is a high level of interest and provisional bookings not yet confirmed from at least another dozen companies. With such a wide range of exhibitors it's hoped there will be something new or of interest for all.

ORDNANCE SURVEY

Penny Brockman writes, 'Last year we became aware that some MR

teams were using digital mapping software which was licensed for personal use and not for team usage.

'It was felt that the best way forward was firstly to negotiate with OS for the use of their online mapping software and, secondly, to negotiate with a company for the enhanced digital mapping functionality. This would then give MR flexibility with digital mapping and not tie us to just one provider.

'Since last year we have been working with Ordnance Survey to arrange a contract to obtain 1:25,000 online mapping free for all mountain rescue teams.

The original purchase cost would have been around £100,000. Following a conference call meeting with representation from MR (England & Wales), MRC (Scotland) and Ordnance Survey, I am pleased to report that we have made substantial progress in negotiations with Ordnance Survey for mountain rescue throughout the UK to have access to the 1:25,000 mapping data.

'Ordnance Survey is preparing a contract to reflect the requirements of mountain rescue for using this data. For each team to obtain the software they will be asked to sign an addendum to the main agreement, which is similar to an end user licence agreement. The next step is to negotiate a deal with a company like Memory Map to ensure that the pricing structure takes into account the fact that we have received the Ordnance Survey mapping.

'Some of you may already be aware that the 1:50,000 and 1:10,000 mapping files for your area are available through either police emergency planning or country emergency planning.

'Lastly, I must thank a number of people who have been working in the background to enable this to happen. Namely, Mark Moran and Tony Rich from mountain rescue, and Ian Carter and Oliver Newman from Ordnance Survey. 'If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me via treasurer@mountain.rescue.org.uk or 07775 851737.

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Mike Margeson reports, 'I would like to report on various pieces of information from the recent Equipment sub committee meeting. Firstly, it was reported that 76 teams had received financial support for the purchase of equipment during the last year. This was shared amongst the regions although some teams were funded more than once.

'We have a small production run of **Vacuum Mattresses** being made at present. The regional equipment reps will be contacting teams to ascertain those teams with most urgent requirement for replacement. There will be a maximum of two or three available per region. 'We also have a number of brand new **Tangent Bell Stretchers** available with MRC subsidy making them half price (£1000) via the normal order procedures. 'We've had the opportunity to examine the developments cave rescue are making with their casbag. The replacement of pile with modern materials to reduce weight and size has much potential. Performance and durability trials will be followed with much interest.

'The on-going programme of **FPE/PPE Checking Courses** provided by the Equipment sub-committee continues to be well received. The most recent course ran in May in South

Wales – Richard Terrell reported this was over subscribed – and the next course will be held in the Peak District, please contact John Edwards for further details.'

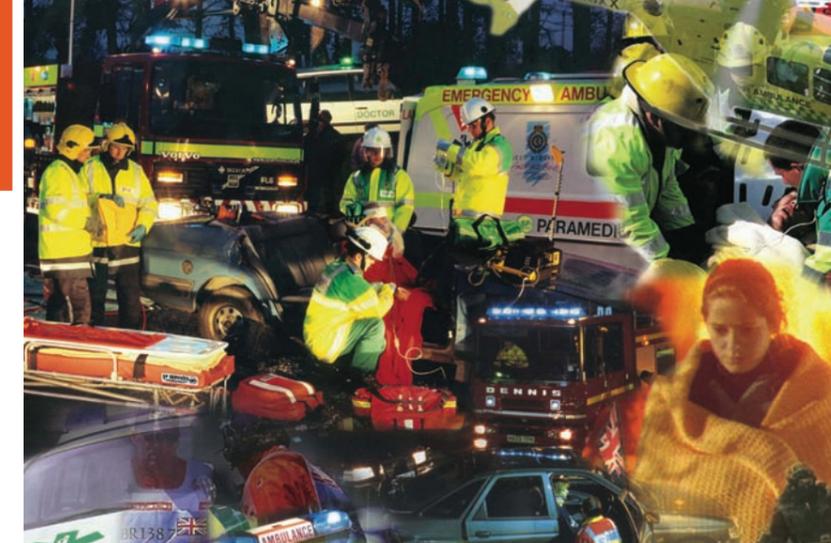
SEARCH & RESCUE HELICOPTERS

During the past two months, there has been considerable speculation in the media and elsewhere that the SAR Helicopter Forces (MOD and MCA) will be privatised in the foreseeable future. The SAR Helicopter Harmonisation Project has been in existence since 2000. The project is tasked with bringing about a unified SAR helicopter force to maintain and improve the current SAR helicopter provision. Two factors must be borne in mind, a) the MOD SAR helicopters are approaching the end of their service life and b) the MCA contract comes up for renewal in the next decade.

At the UKSAR Operators Group meeting on 16 May, it was categorically stated that there are no plans to privatise the SAR helicopter services. The Harmonisation Project is moving to the next stage which is the procurement stage. What is being proposed is a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) in relation to the acquisition of new airframes for the service. This stage is being handled by the Defence Procurement Agency. The location of bases and manning of units has not yet been decided. The following letter from DfT has been circulated to members of the Operators Group. 'Dear Group Member 'You may have seen in the press that on Tuesday 9 May 2006 this Department, together with the Ministry of Defence, announced

(through a joint press statement and a written Ministerial Statement laid before the House of Commons) the next stage of the joint Search and Rescue helicopter project through a Private Finance Initiative. In making this announcement, the Government recognised the effectiveness and high standards of the current UK SAR Helicopter service currently provided by the Ministry of Defence and the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, and emphasised its continued commitment to maintaining these, when the existing Ministry of Defence helicopters come to the end of their service life and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency service contract comes up for renewal in the next decade.

'The decision to proceed to this next stage provides an opportunity to bring together the current search and rescue helicopter providers into one harmonised service under a single contract providing the taxpayer with a service that is better value for money whilst remaining as effective as the current one. The service will continue to offer all the capability it currently provides, both maritime and over land. Indeed newer airframes, optimised training opportunities and greater harmonisation between the providers, will enhance the service. There is certainly no intention to change the current arrangements, whereby the service is free at the point of need. It will continue to be managed jointly by the Ministry of Defence and the Maritime & Coastguard Agency and will also continue to use a high proportion of military aircrew alongside civilian aircrew trained to the same high standards.'



Emergency Services Show 2006 champions information sharing for search and rescue organisations

This brand new event is providing a unique platform for all organisations involved in emergency planning and response to exhibit, network and share information at one venue. Aimed at all Category 1 and 2 Responders and other Emergency Responders throughout the UK, the new show will be held at the Royal Horticultural Halls, London WC1 19-20 October 2006 and should appeal to anyone involved with mountain rescue.

The new show, encompassing all emergency services and suppliers, will provide visitors and exhibitors with access to a host of primary and secondary responders, agencies, independent organisations and specialist equipment suppliers from all over the UK. With access to all the latest information under one roof, operational responders and key decision-makers will have an unmissable opportunity to network, share new concepts, technologies and techniques to benefit and improve their planning and business operations, and ultimately improve public safety.

The 'Emergency Support Zone' will provide a specific area for information sharing between emergency services and support organisations – an outstanding opportunity for all voluntary organisations under the umbrella of the Mountain Rescue Council to network with and glean up to date information from a host of other emergency responders, including The Environment Agency, St John Ambulance, ATOC, Salvation Army, UKISARG, SIESO, British Red Cross, Maritime Coastguard Agency and Tubelines Emergency Rescue Unit.

In addition to a plethora of exhibition stands, a dedicated Emergency Services conference, central to the exhibition, will provide an exciting forum for discussions, debates and information sharing on emergency planning and co-responding.

So whether you are looking for the latest communications and IT equipment, training and education resources, technical rescue and medical equipment, or simply want to network or benefit from hearing about the latest issues at one of the high profile conferences, The Emergency Services Show 2006 is the place to be!

For more information on exhibiting or visiting, please contact David Brown on 01273 453033, email davidbrown@mmcpublishings.co.uk or visit www.theemergencyservicesshow.info

DIARYDATES FOR 2006

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS

Places: 30
Date: 1-3 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: 4-8 September
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Dr A S G Jones MBE

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT REFRESHER

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

UK MOUNTAIN RESCUE CONFERENCE

Date: 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: 18 November
Location: Lancs Police HQ Hutton
Contact: Peter Smith
01706 852335
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

TEAM LEADER'S MEETING

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

I THINK THE EQUIPMENT BUDGET FOR THIS YEAR JUST ROLLED UNDER THE DESK...



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LAKE DISTRICT

Richard Warren (Secretary, LDSAMRA) writes... Accident statistics for 2005 in the Lake District are showing worrying trends. 19 fatalities were reported in mountain related activities, the highest figure on record. Ten were reported as 'collapsed' with medical problem, mainly heart related. It's interesting to note that in only two cases did companions attempt CPR. This must surely act as a wake-up call to hill users to learn basic life support. It is no use saying 'it will never happen to me'. Major trauma claimed six victims. Two rock-climbing deaths resulted from leader falls, one caused by a large rock fall on a popular crag. Both of these incidents occurred within eight days! The other four deaths resulted from falls on steep, rocky ground while hill walking. These occurred toward the end of the day, consistent with other accidents reported when people are becoming tired. This must be taken as a sign to improve people's awareness that fitness levels are important in safe movement on difficult ground.

NEW TEAM LEADER IN LAKES

In March 2006, **Langdale Ambleside MRT** elected a new team leader. Nick Owen replaced Nick Verrall, who had taken the decision to leave the team after a move to the north east Lakes. Nick Verrall had been a team member since 1992



LAMRT NEW TEAM LEADER NICK OWEN

and team leader for about seven years. Nick Owen is assisted by deputy team leaders, Roger Pickup and Phil Taylor, and by a group of enthusiastic, skilled and committed team

members. Outside MR, he is a keen mountain biker and music lover. LDSAMRA would like to thank Nick Verrall for his contribution to the region's business over the past few years and particularly his involvement in the various working groups over recent years. We all wish him well in his new location.

It's been the three yearly round of MRC cascade exams for **Keswick MRT**. Out of 47 members in the team, there are now 42 members with the MRC qualification or higher. Over the last two years or so, the team has encouraged as many members as possible to take the exam, but didn't expect such a high level of take-up! Members who don't have the MRC or greater qualification all still have a first aid qualification. The team pass on their thanks to all the in-team trainers who delivered the training and the doctors from neighbouring teams who were able to assist in the exam process.

Similarly, the Keswick team are now in the process of driver training reassessment. Defensive driver training was introduced for all team members three years ago, the view taken at the time being that driving a Land Rover with six team members and a heap of gear was potentially one of the highest risk areas of the team's operations. Everyone who took the original training has benefited from the experience. The refreshers and reassessments are reinforcing the lessons everyone learned.

THIRD DOG GRADING FOR MICK

Mick Guy ('Dog Mick') has just had his third search dog Ginny graded. She is now a fully-fledged partner for Mist, both of them successors to Spin. To train one dog as well as being a fully operational member of a very busy team takes commitment. To train a second takes dedication. To train a third... well perhaps that's back to commitment, but of a differing sort! Congratulations to Mick and Ginny.

Several Keswick team members assisted with a large scale search in the area of Murton and Hilton in the North Pennines recently, the search co-ordinated by Kirby Stephen. When the group arrived at one of their designated search areas they were confronted by a series of signs stating



MICK GUY WITH GINNY AND MIST

'Beware - Unexploded Ordnance' or similar at the perimeter of the area. What sort of way is that to treat a visiting team - were they trying to tell us something?

PATTERDALE RIBS AND SATS

As with many other teams, **Patterdale MRT** are occasionally called to assist in rescues on the water. This may be searching the shores of lakes or tarns for missing persons, lake rescue or perhaps ferrying team members and casualties across Ullswater. And of course, last year, the Team played a significant role in evacuating people and pets during the floods in Carlisle. To prepare for these eventualities, the team training programme includes swift water rescue. This spring, when water levels were suitably high, team members undertook a series of training sessions on (and in!) the water. These included handling the Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) and practising 'man overboard' procedures both in daytime and at night. Training culminated in a full day session working in the River Eamont covering the skills needed to rescue casualties safely from fast moving water.

The training programme covers a variety of different subjects with first aid, not surprisingly, featuring quite heavily. To enhance first aid training sessions and to give team members a much better understanding of the human anatomy, the team recently took receipt of a life size teaching skeleton. The skeleton, generously donated by Manchester based Easi Trading, will

MEDIA COVERAGE OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE EVENTS

Most teams will have been approached by enthusiastic TV companies at some time in the past to explore the idea of a TV documentary on mountain rescue, only to have their expectations dashed at the eleventh hour when the executive producer finds out that the TV crew would spend most of its time sitting at the pub waiting for that call. This in itself is difficult enough from a business case perspective, but when they realise that the crew will eventually arrive at the casualty site only to find that the injured person has already been evacuated from the area, the idea is usually knocked on the head. So how do we promote the voluntary nature of the service and the work we do?

Two teams in the lakes now regularly carry video equipment and cameras on their incidents with a view to sending footage to news agencies. This brings the work of mountain rescue into the living rooms of those who eventually provide those much needed donations. The last issue of Mountain Rescue contained photographs of blizzards in Cumbria. In addition to the photographs, video footage was passed onto the news agencies, which managed to hit both local and regional television news coverage. These photographs are excellent opportunities for team donations and also increase public awareness on safety in the hills and the 24/365 nature of the totally voluntary professional service. Care has to be exercised when submitting any photographs to protect the identity of the casualty and companions unless permission has been sought beforehand.



AS SEEN IN THE DAILY EXPRESS

predominantly be used by the team's advanced first aid group - six team members who receive regular, additional training to a more advanced level, including invasive procedures such as intubation and cannulation.

Three members of **Kerry MRT**, based in Southern Ireland came over to look at the Patterdale team Land Rover ambulance earlier this year. The vehicle has been converted with a full roll cage and, although designed to carry just team members and kit, converts to a flat bed stretcher carrier in just 20 seconds. Colin Todd from Lakeland Land Rover, was the mastermind behind the conversion having spent a lot of time going through the spec provided by Patterdale's equipment officer Tim Jones.

Communication in the area covered by Patterdale is generally good although a couple of places require a relay to be set up. However, there have always been a couple of blackspots completely



ANDY BERLYN OF HF HOLIDAYS HANDS THE SAT PHONE TO TIM JONES, EQUIPMENT OFFICER PATTERDALE MRT

devoid of communications. To plug these holes the team invested in a satellite phone funded by a donation from walking holiday specialists HF Holidays Ltd. All being well, the team now have communications, by one means or another, throughout their area.

'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.'

ALTRINCHAM SCHOOL GIVES BIG THANK YOU TO KESWICK

When pupils at Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College in Altrincham set about raising money for charity during the season of Lent there was one particular cause very close to their hearts. Back in October, retired staff member Glenys Kilner plunged 50 metres from Sharp Edge on Blencathra, sustaining many very serious injuries. Her fall caused both lungs to be punctured and an air bubble to develop which threatened her heart. **Keswick MRT** rescued Glenys, who was airlifted to Carlisle Hospital by RAF helicopter. At one point, her blood pressure dropped so low medics feared she could die before they landed, her chances of survival described as 'very low', but Glenys has since made a remarkable recovery. Husband Phil, writing to thank the Keswick team said, 'A little longer on the mountain would have made all the difference. I have read your website reports about so many similar accidents and know that not all rescue

attempts have a successful outcome. My wife considers herself as lucky and we hope to be back on the fells eventually but will be avoiding such exposed places as Sharp Edge in the future.'

The whole college community, staff and pupils alike, took part in the annual 'Sponsor Day' activities, including a Weakest Link style quiz and a sponsored fancy dress run/walk. By the end of April, the money raised was collected and counted - a grand total of £6,200 - to be split between the various charities. In May, representatives from Childline, Francis House and Keswick MRT were each presented with a cheque for £1000 - an event which proved something of a baptism of fire for Judy Whiteside, picking up the cheque on behalf of Keswick, and casually informed at the very last minute that she would be expected to address the 700 or so pupils and staff and explain a bit about mountain rescue and where the money would be spent. Er... Talk about thinking on your feet!

John Cornally, head teacher at the school said, 'We have a personal debt of thanks to the Keswick mountain rescue team. We encourage our pupils to see helping others as a fundamental part of their Christian belief and we are proud to see how they have responded so magnificently to this challenge.'

MID PENNINE

ITS A RIB CRACKING RETIREMENT FOR TEAM LEADER

Langdale Ambleside team members were on a call out in Crinkle Gill one Sunday in May, to a scrambler who had slipped and broken his leg. As they scrambled up with the stretcher in torrential rain, the thought occurred how lethal were the conditions. Within minutes of reaching the casualty, one of their members radioed to say he himself had indeed slipped and fallen and broken a number of ribs. So not one but two casualties were ultimately airlifted out by Gannet in 'an extremely impressive bit of flying'. And the



YEAR 10 GIRLS FROM THE BLESSED THOMAS HOLFORD CATHOLIC COLLEGE AT THEIR FUNDRAISING SPONSOR DAY

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Flora of the Fells Festival 2206

The secret of the Lake District fells will be uncovered this summer during a special programme of events celebrating Cumbria's mountain landscapes and focusing on the distinctive flowers and plants found there. The Flora of the Fells Festival, from April to October, is part of the Flora of the Fells Project, an initiative to raise awareness of the importance of mountain habitats in the county, funded by Friends of the Lake District and English Nature. Over 140 events throughout Cumbria include walks, talks and nature-based arts and crafts workshops. Highlights for July and August include visiting hay meadows and exploring Cumbria's limestone areas, the best places to see wild flowers in the county, and a series of farm-based events demonstrating the importance of farming in maintaining flora. But perhaps the most unusual is an ascent of Helvellyn by moonlight on Thursday, 11 August, retracing the overnight journey of Samuel Coleridge Taylor. Project Officer, Martin Varley believes the festival is a great opportunity for people to discover a fresh side of the Lake District. 'The festival is a chance to discover a new face of familiar places and see the variety of nature the county has to offer.' Events are bookable online - go to www.floraofthefells.com - or for a free guide call **01539 733187**

mystery casualty on the radio? None other than the retiring team leader of **Rossendale & Pendle MRT** Dave Barrington, who frequently attends the Lakes team call outs at the weekends. Dave subsequently spent a couple of days in hospital in Carlisle before returning home to Lancashire, a little bruised and battered but still smiling. Some people will do anything for a ride in a helicopter!

But joking apart, it was an unfortunate end to a seventeen year career as Rossendale team leader – a mere drop in the ocean of his 36 year involvement with mountain rescue. Dave was presented with a piece of engraved glass at the team AGM in June in recognition of his dedication, commitment and undoubted enthusiasm over many years. He plans to continue on the back benches, no doubt keeping a watchful eye on the new team leader, Andy Simpson!

Andy, better known to many as MRC Press Officer, who has been with the team for thirteen years, was voted in at the AGM in June. He faces the future with not a little trepidation. 'Dave is a hard act to follow,' said Andy, 'but these are exciting times for the team and I look forward to meeting the challenge.'



ROSSENDALE & PENDLE NEW TEAM LEADER ANDY 'INDIANA' SIMPSON

BODY PART SEARCH AND RECOVERY

Members of **Bowland Pennine MRT, Oldham MRT, Bolton MRT and Rossendale & Pendle MRT** met at Lancashire police HQ in April for a full day course and exercise. Organised by Lancashire Constabulary on behalf of the mountain rescue teams operating in Lancashire and Greater Manchester, and endorsed by Greater Manchester Police, the day concentrated on the latest national police systems for documenting and carrying out searches which include the search and recovery of body and body parts. Various topics were covered, including the role of the police senior investigating officer, the expectations of the police in utilising mountain rescue teams at major incidents, the role of the crime scene investigator, the recovery of evidence and the documentation systems in operation – all followed by outdoor practical sessions. All the team members who took part now have a greater understanding of the need for thorough searching and documentation, the thinking processes

behind certain police actions and the police role in enquiries of this nature. Thanks to Inspector Neil Sherry and Sergeant Terry Considine of Lancashire police for organising the day's excellent activities.

MINISTER LEAVES BOLTON FOR ARMY

Mike Thomason of **Bolton MRT** has retired from the team to start a new career with the British Army. Mike joined the team as a seventeen year old in April 1994, and has given steadfast support as an operational member ever since. During his spell as fundraising officer, he introduced the toner cartridge recycling appeal, which continues to be a big money raiser for the team. Mike became a Minister of the Church following many years at Theology College, eventually taking up a position in the local Horwich and Adlington areas. Along the way he acquired a number of nicknames. 'Early on', said team leader Garry Rhodes, 'it was 'Buttons', after his habit of constantly pressing buttons and switches whenever we were daft enough to let him into the front seat of a team Land Rover! 'Sonic' came next, after he took a tumbling fall down a hillside on a team exercise, looking remarkably like Sonic the Hedgehog as he rolled headlong out of control. And 'Rescue Reverend' needs no explanation. Having said that, we did have to explain to a number of casualties that Mike was not present to read them their last rites – he'd merely responded to the call out direct from his church duties, still wearing the dog collar. 'Mike's ministerial background came in very useful at times in the team both sad and good. He has conducted many a prayer on incidents involving deceased persons, which always helped enormously with coming to terms with what we had to deal with. He's also led many a Dedication Service for items of team kit, including blessing our Land

Rovers, the team base at Ladybridge Hall and our control trailer (and next year he's due to marry team member Craig Lamb to team support member Johanne Bentley) as well as offering words of comfort and prayers to team members whenever they have had reason to need such.'

Mike is off to join the army as a Chaplain in the Royal Army Chaplains Department, with his training due to take place at the Chaplaincy Centre and at Sandhurst, after which he will be posted to Paderborn in Germany. He was given a cracking send off in January at the Jolly Crofters pub in Horwich when team chairman Tony McNally presented Mike with a beautiful engraved glass tankard, inscribed with thanks for his service to Bolton MRT and a short line about accepting the Queen's Shilling. The whole team wishes Mike and his wife Susan all the very best in his future career as an Army Chaplain. May all his postings be safe ones and may his God look after him. Good Luck Mike from all your friends at Bolton MRT.

The group then retired to the Vaynol Arms/Ty'n Llan for a welcome tea, coffee and griddle scones break arranged by landlady Ann Cumberberton. Llanberis team secretary, Ian Henderson, gave an overview of how the team is called out and how it operates. There was an opportunity to look at key equipment, advanced first aid kit and the drugs carried by the team and a chance to practice with the vac matt. This gave them a hands on opportunity to assess some of the difficulties that can arise with casualties in difficult locations with spinal injuries. Much of the technical equipment (ropes, stretchers, kit bags,) had already been taken down to the crag demo location. The key points concerned the constant juggle between

MOUNTAIN MEDICINE FOR THE LAY CLIMBER 30 SEPTEMBER 2006

This UIAA Mountain & Climbing Medicine Symposium to be held at Plas y Brenin on Saturday 30 September 2006.

It has become a tradition that the UIAA Medical Committee meet annually in a different country for a business meeting – a day is spent on business, a day climbing (to overcome any international differences!) and a day giving their services to the host country as speakers as a gesture of thanks. In the UK we have decided to open this meeting to non-doctors and all speakers will do presentations in English with the audience needs in mind. This will bring to the UK some true international experts.

Please forward the information to anybody that you think may be interested. This could include members of the UIAA Medcom, guides, AMI members, commercial expedition companies, MRT members, sports climbing team members, expedition members. Bookings are being taken on a first to send application form with cheque basis. We expect a heavy demand. For further information, contact David Hillebrandt, Derriton House, Derriton, Holsworthy, Devon, EX22 6JX. Telephone 01409 253814.

NORTH WALES

MOUNTAIN MEDICINE DIPLOMA

The annual Mountain Medicine Diploma course Mountain Rescue Day was hosted in North Wales by **Llanberis MRT** and co-ordinated by Malcolm Creasey and Nikki Wallis. The day kicked off at RAF Valley C Flight where the group of 22 international doctors from all over the world undertook safety briefings for the familiar yellow taxi in the skies, the RAF SeaKing. Following a lunch on the move, the group met at the Llanberis base in Nant Peris for the afternoon sessions hosted by Nikki, Llanberis team member and National Park Warden.

Netti Collister, with her collie Fen, and Roland Layland, from SARDA Wales, gave an introduction and demonstration of search dogs working on the steep hillside overlooking Nant Peris where body Pete Walker had been hidden. Topics covered included the use of four different types of search dog – tracking, trailing, air scenting and... what was the fourth type, Roland? The 'F' dog?? Oh yes, that's a search dog that gets in the way!!

The group then retired to the Vaynol Arms/Ty'n Llan for a welcome tea, coffee and griddle scones break arranged by landlady Ann Cumberberton. Llanberis team secretary, Ian Henderson, gave an overview of how the team is called out and how it operates. There was an opportunity to look at key equipment, advanced first aid kit and the drugs carried by the team and a chance to practice with the vac matt. This gave them a hands on opportunity to assess some of the difficulties that can arise with casualties in difficult locations with spinal injuries. Much of the technical equipment (ropes, stretchers, kit bags,) had already been taken down to the crag demo location. The key points concerned the constant juggle between

Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue (second edition)

Six years ago the first edition of Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue was distributed at the UK Millennium Mountain Rescue conference in Lancaster. The aim was for every mountain rescuer to have a copy to mark the new century. The feedback I received was encouraging. Ten days after the launch, Nikki Wallis had a question about page 197 and interest from non-mountain rescue circles was high. The MRC just about broke even and had established a group of people (and a text) that would serve as a nucleus for further development.

And so, two years ago, I started the process of compiling the second edition taking into account the many comments I had received. Doctors (and others) wanted more guidance and the wider outdoor establishment were interested. An international publisher also wanted to be involved. After much deliberation, I decided that commercialising was not for me. As with the first edition, the second would be commissioned by the MRC and would not be the syllabus for MRC Casualty Care exam. This arrangement allows freedom for teams to pitch the level of first aid to their environment, the MRC to set its exam and the contributors to write down what they think is important.

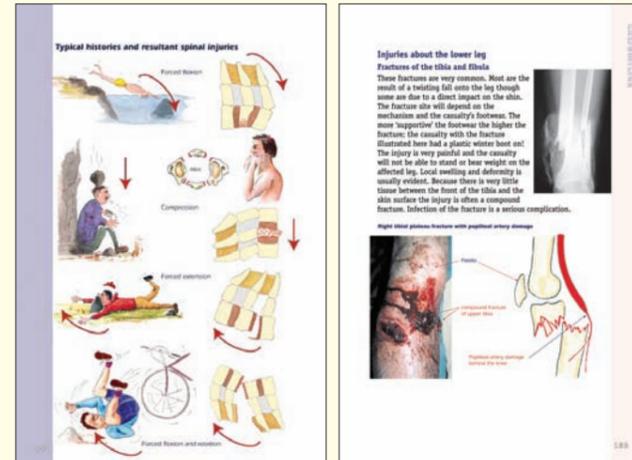
So what has changed?

The basic first aid is essentially the same but a surprising amount of the detail is different. The Basic Life Support and AED protocols now reflect the 2005 European Resuscitation Council guidelines. Many topics are discussed in much greater depth; drowning has expanded from half a page to six pages! New topics have also been added – anaphylaxis, suspension induced syndrome, removing a helmet and the effects of warfarin, to name a few. A chapter called 'For Rescuers' puts together information specific for UK rescuers. It covers the occupational health issues as well as 'advanced' casualty care.

The complexity of management has increased as the text has expanded into paramedical and medical treatments. This may seem rather daunting at first glance to the causal reader, so to balance the complexity, I have added a chapter called 'The Basics' for those wanting core information (equivalent to the current entry criteria for all MRC team members).

OK, the second edition costs more than the first, a lot more. To compensate, the book is now almost twice the size, in full colour with many pictures, new illustrations, and an index. Casualty Care remains an amateur production and, though the MRC will make a few pounds profit for each book sold, the contributors and myself do not. I hope you find that acceptable.

John Ellerton MRC Medical Officer



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Team Leader – Kinder Mountain Rescue Team



Photo: Courtesy of Kinder Mountain Rescue Team

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WHALLEY WARM AND DRY DO IT THE ROSSENDALE WAY

Outdoor retailer Whalley Warm and Dry has further developed their close relationship with Rossendale & Pendle MRT by sponsoring their major fundraising event, the Rossendale Way in a Day, which took place on Saturday 1 July. The annual 46 mile circular walk takes in the beautiful Rossendale valley, with the shorter Halfway covering a mere 22 miles in a linear route. This year the team also organised a shorter five mile Family Fun I Spy Walk, so it was a busy day all round. Besides the sponsorship, father and daughter John and Liz, from this family-run Páramo Premier Retailer were on hand on the day with an on-site store – which proved very popular.

In 2004, the Rossendale team provided safety cover for the Whalley Warm & Dry 'Lancashire Three Peaks', circular walks around the Ribble, Calder and Hodder valleys, all including the ferry crossing at the site of the old Hacking Ferry. This event will be run again in 2008. Whalley Warm & Dry stocks the full range of Páramo Directional Clothing Systems and are hoping to help the team with their future kit requirements from this increasingly popular high performance British brand – already worn by several mountain rescue teams across the country. As well as the new Páramo range, Spring collections from Lowe Alpine, Columbia and Brasher have recently arrived. To support the volunteers of mountain rescue teams, Whalley Warm & Dry also offers discount on production of a team member card.

REGIONAL NEWS

location of incident, injuries sustained, kit required (both technical and medical) with the continuous unknown quantity of trained MRT personnel and resources that will be available. The outdoor session on Conway Crags demonstrated steep crag lowering and raising and hands on with a steep ground stretcher lower on the copper mine scree covered slopes. The day rounded up back at the team's 'second base' The Vaynol Arms where much chilli, curry, rice and chips was consumed together with the obligatory bit of alcohol 'purely for medical reasons, of course'.

THE RESCUER RESCUED

We all know rescue teams take a measured view of risk when out rescuing those in need, but what happens when they take the day off to do a spot of climbing themselves, only to find things don't go quite according to plan? Nikki Wallis found out earlier this year when she ventured out on what was 'probably the best climbing day of the winter', according to witness Sean Kelly, and found herself falling 80m down Trinity Gully, and surviving with nothing more than a broken ankle and 'only two lives left' to quote Nikki! It was about the same time that the conditions, although ideal for climbing, caused extreme difficulties for

climbers and walkers on the traditional routes up Snowdon, with five accidents in one day, including a fatality, mainly due to poor equipment (no axes or crampons). Sean, who captured on camera the moment the winchman descended to Nikki and her partner, seen in the shadow belayed to a rope supporting them from above, explains. 'I didn't realise anything untoward was happening as I soloed past Nikki and partner. He was on his mobile which I took exception to, for invading my space, little realising he was talking to the RAF Rescue. As the chopper approached I realised that he appeared to know the crew. He then shouted a warning to me to hold on as the chopper was coming in close. I waited at the entrance to Trinity Gully, feeling very insecure on the steep and very hard ice which, although it was superb for climbing, meant that any fall would have serious consequences, as it would be quite difficult trying to effect an ice axe brake and arrest. Another couple of climbers appeared, having traversed in from the left (north west), quite clearly seen in the photo. They had heard Nikki scream out when she fell,



THE RESCUER RESCUED

SEAN KELLY

but I had heard nothing, nor even seen her camera which must have fallen past me. I must have shot off six or seven shots of the rescue but was finding it difficult to stand facing out, without

PEAK DISTRICT

JOHN NICHOL VISITS SOME REAL HEROES...

Earlier this year, as part of a recent series of articles on 'Real Heroes' in the Sunday Express, PDMRO was asked to select a team to represent mountain rescue. After a meeting of the regional executive committee, Buxton was selected as the team that would be featured. The articles were written by



John Nichol, a freelance writer who is perhaps best known as one of the first Allied air crew shot down and paraded on Iraqi TV during the 1992 Iraq war. Few would fail to recognise his bruised and battered face as he and

fellow crew member, John Peters, were exhibited for the world's to see. John and a professional photographer, joined the team on a bright, but bitterly cold, Sunday morning for a training exercise which was to be based on the 500 foot face of Mam Tor, known locally as 'the shivering mountain' overlooking Castleton and the picturesque expanse of the Hope Valley. John joined the team during the briefing and showed a great deal of interest in the significant planning that is undertaken before any practical rock face training session – hardly surprising, as he had also volunteered to be our 'Cas' for the exercise. After a few shots with the team, we were about to start the exercise, when my phone rang, the duty controller had tasked us to attend a real

incident. The police had requested mountain rescue to assist in the evacuation of a 65 year old female who had fallen and apparently sustained a lower leg injury. A 20 mile run to Youlgreave by both team vehicles revealed that the lady, one of a rambling group from Ilkeston, was much closer to the road than first reported and, apart from a little moral support, no team assistance was required. So, one and a half hours later, we all had that *déjà vu* moment as we stepped out to walk to the summit of Mam Tor. Whilst the team were setting up the myriad of ropes required for the rescue, I spend the time getting John ready to go over the edge and explaining exactly what was being set up. It was at this point, John decided to share with me that he was, in fact, afraid of heights.

All rigging in place, John and I were lowered over the edge and, despite his initial worry, John and I abseiled to a suitable position on the face. We were joined shortly afterwards by team members Roger Bennett and Elaine Weston who had been lowered with our Bell stretcher and John looked much happier when he was secured in place for a stretcher lower down the face. I am sure he would be the first to agree that he is not a small guy and, by the end of the lower, Roger, Elaine and I all knew we had done the full 500 feet! In his article, John described this whole lower as like living through some sort of SAS assault, adding that the team's calm, professional approach was very reassuring, both of which I felt were a fitting accolade to all of the team who worked very hard to make the exercise run smoothly.

The articles were published over four weeks, concluding with the article on mountain rescue. It was a very proud moment to see the team make the national press. I am totally biased when I say that, in my opinion, there are many fine teams in the regions and throughout the country, but none better than my own. It's a strange feeling to read that the job we do makes us heroes. Like you all, we just think we're doing our bit for the community, but it's interesting that this is obviously a view that much of the general public share. Perhaps we should make more of this – without going over the top – in our PR and fundraising work?

Neil Carruthers. Team Leader Buxton MRT

NATIONAL FUNDRAISING

Taking on the role of chairman for National Fundraising, I did not know just what the job would entail or how much time it would take. I am just starting to find out (thanks Dave). At the last MRC meeting, Judy asked me to send her an update about NF and just so I did not forget, I got an email a few days later – just as a reminder – saying don't forget to write a piece about National Fundraising for the mag – thanks Judy. So, for my update. Hopefully, by the time you read this, we will have had our third meeting. I know Mountain Rescue (E&W) has had fundraising on its agenda for many years and I have my personal opinion about how successful I think that's been, but we now have a new team looking at fundraising, and they are very keen to make it work. Can I thank you all for filling in Stewart's questionnaire. One of the first questions we asked was, 'What would be the point of national fundraising if you guys did not need any financial help?' Thanks to the honesty of your answers, we now have three very clear common things you would like to see us look at – insurance, common equipment and medical kits.

Insurance has been an issue for some time – some teams seem to do well, others not so well. I understand this is also being looked at by some members of the executive committee. The equipment sub have been buying us some commonly used equipment for some time like vac mats, ropes, Little Dragons, 540s and casbags but, if they had more money, the limited budget

they have could be added to. They could then increase the range of equipment they supply us.

We also have three other things on our agenda – VAT, road tax for mountain rescue vehicles and a national supporters group. Again, hopefully by the time you read this, we will have produced a national guideline paper of just what we mountain rescue teams can buy that is VAT exempt. We also think that our vehicles should not have to pay road tax. I know we insure them as ambulances but in many cases they are personnel vehicles or kit carriers and not ambulances. So if a marked vehicle for the use of MR was road tax exempt that should make our lives easier and save you money.

Our other goal for the moment is to look at a national supporters group. We think there are lots of people that walk the hills and mountains within the UK that live in our big towns and cities that would support mountain rescue. My team, like many others, have a supporters group and I would not want to poach my group members or yours, so we need to be careful how we target these people. However, think how much we could all benefit if we lift the profile of MR by having all these new supporters and maybe the knock on to us as local teams would be these people understand our work a little better, look at the national website, use the links to the local websites and then financially help us all.

Mike France
Chairman National Fundraising

LIFE SAVING RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Team Simoco solution enhances comms for the mountain rescue teams in the UK's largest national park.

The Lake District Search & Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA) co-ordinates the mountain rescue teams that cover this 885-mile region. Effective communications in the field is essential, allowing teams to plan and manage life-saving rescue operations. To meet new OFCOM frequency standards and improve communications across the Lake District landscape, they required a new radio communications solution.

Team Simoco delivered a PMR solution including 12 TSF2025 base stations – configured for remote, local and ground-to-air for helicopter communication – 100 mobile units for use in vehicles, over 400 handset units and SRD 1000 desktop controllers for the mountain rescue headquarters.

For the mobile units Team Simoco provided the SRM9000, a transceiver platform specifically designed for easy vehicle mounting in remote situations, making it ideal for the challenging terrain of the Lake District. Rob Brookes, who manages communications for LDSAMRA, said, 'The system has already been put to good use – during one holiday week we had around 200 rescuers searching for a potential suicide, with the system handling multiple transmissions from widely varying directions.'



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Burton McCall to attempt 3 Peaks Challenge in aid of Mountain Rescue

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Staff from Burton McCall, exclusive importers and distributors of a range of leading outdoor brands, are to race against the clock and overcome steep, rocky climbs to tackle the Three Peaks Challenge

on 5 August 2006, in aid of mountain rescue.

Almost twenty staff members are to leave the comfort of their desks and venture onto the UK's highest peaks – Ben Nevis in

Scotland, Scafell Pike in England and Snowdon in Wales – to complete three gruelling climbs, all within 24 hours.

As a major organisation in the outdoor sector, Burton McCall decided to test their practical outdoor skills and challenge themselves, whilst raising money for 'mountain rescue, the essential charity that outdoor adventurers can rely on'.

Marilena Shaw, Challenge Organiser at Burton McCall said, 'The 3 Peaks will be an exciting and rewarding climb and as a team, we will be achieving our goal to raise money for mountain rescue, who are indispensable in keeping us safe.'



any support, all the time buffeted by the updraught from the rotor blades.'

Admirably leaving aside the quote from ARCC Control up in Kinloss, 'Well, what were you doing out climbing on a nice day like this – you should be at home doing the housework', Nikki feels fortunate to have lived to tell the tale. 'I think this is the first time I have actually roped up on it, having climbed it I don't know how many times... gulp...' She did, however, note some intriguing data coming out of the Polar Monitor AXN700 (a combined heart monitor, altimeter, barometer, compass) she was wearing.

The unit captured the altitude as she fell, where she ended up, and her heart rate from the point of falling through to when she became stationary. 'Contrary to what I would have thought, my heart rate did not elevate from the flight/fight response but gradually came down to a slightly elevated rate. Was this due to already working at maximal heart rate, or to calming hormones working their effect because something dire was about to happen? Hmmmm...

'Believe me, I thought I was going to end up at the bottom of the Trinities and just another statistic for LIMRT. I was really thinking "What a shame... this wasn't planned... this is it... and on a really easy route as well... oh dear..."'

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SOUTH WALES

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

The days when your average walker or climber could join a rescue team, and be used on callouts the next day, have long gone. The team management has to ensure that all those on the callout list achieve and maintain a suitable level of competency to ensure the safety of the rescuer and the rescued. These minimum standards, for members and party leaders, are laid down by the national body, to meet insurance criteria

For mountain rescue teams, insurance cover is an integral component for the protection of its members, based on what you need, and the cost in providing it. For example, in South Wales we have been unable to fly in military helicopters because the MOD policy did not provide suitable cover for rescuers in all circumstances. The police, after many months, have now agreed to fund a policy, but it only allows a maximum of three team members per flight, which isn't really much use! On the vehicle front, you must be over-25 to drive team vehicles and, further to this, for response driving you have to complete and pass a police driving course. At first sight, the examples quoted appear to be restrictive. Nevertheless, we must have effective insurance policies in place, to provide the relevant cover for our members when they turn out on operations or training.

Our members give their time freely, and in most cases also forfeit pay when they attend incidents during working hours. So why, in the current light of litigation and blame, do they take on this responsibility? Well, here are a few comments from some of our recent members.

'I joined the team to challenge myself to see if I could make it in such a diverse area. I have no previous experience of hill walking let alone mountain rescue but I enjoy challenging myself and take pride in achieving something I think could be beyond me. The best part of this whole new experience is learning new skills from some really knowledgeable and helpful team-mates. I like the fact that I am continually encouraged to air any questions I may have and people are always on hand to provide an answer. When I'm asked about what I do in my spare time I can now say I am involved in something special and prestigious.'

'I have taken as much advice on board from all experienced members and have set myself a target of 3-5 years to reach an acceptable level of competency and also I am level-headed enough to understand that this is a continual learning curve. I am pragmatic enough to understand that it will not always be an enjoyable experience but am resilient enough to understand that it will not always be an enjoyable experience but am resilient enough to stay the course to achieve something special with this.' Paul Williams
'I first found out about the team when a member of the team was attending a business club breakfast (Neil Bowen) two and a half years ago. I joined because I have always enjoyed outdoor activities. I like the unpredictability of MR where one minute you can be sat in work and the next you can be on your way to a callout to help a person who really needs help. I enjoy the challenge of learning new skills and being associated with like minded people.' Chris Davies

So there you have it, even though it takes a minimum of six months training and assessment to get on the callout list, it seems we can still pull in the volunteers! They are also happy to search all day and night in varying weather conditions for no reward! Come on, you might say, what's the catch? Well if you ask around, I'm sure that you will find that the majority would like some form of recognition for the effort they put in. The recognition needed is not a financial one, it is that all employers simply give MR similar rights to the TA, when it comes to time off from work for operations and training. After all we do provide a first class service to the country as a whole.

As an example of recognition or lack of it, in April, the team was involved in a demonstration for the Welsh First Minister, Rhodri Morgan at Dan yr Ogof show caves. Mr Morgan's image of MR was that the team consisted of professional, paid members of the police and fire service, that was until he was enlightened by me and a few other members. After the demo, we discussed a possible scenario about what would happen when your fundraising letter lands on the desk of a civil servant or politician – what would they do with it? Would it be binned because, like Mr Morgan, they think you get paid already? Therefore, to maximise our chance of at least the letter being read, it was decided to create a media DVD, which covered all the usual aspects of the team. A copy was sent to Mr Morgan and his associates so that they could make more informed factual judgements in the future. The DVD has two versions, one for fundraising and the other for recruiting. If anyone wants to find out how a DVD can help promote their team they can contact Contemporary Multimedia Design about this very effective way of fundraising and promotion on 01656 818818.

Selwyn Keenan. Secretary and DTL **Western Beacons MSRT**



PHOTOS: RICHARD HOLMES

NORTH EAST

SEARCH AND RESCUE SQUADRON STAGE MOCK AIRCRAFT CRASH

'A' Flt 202 Search & Rescue Squadron from RAF Boulmer staged a mock aircraft crash on Sunday 21 May in order to provide an opportunity for RAF personnel and the Northumbria Search & Rescue Service to train together and test out their life saving equipment. The training exercise focused on the rescue of twelve casualties from a stricken twin-engine aircraft that had crashed in the Cheviots, en route from Newcastle to Dundee.

Two Sea King helicopters from RAF Boulmer and RAF personnel were involved in the exercise together with over forty members of Northumbria Search & Rescue Service, incorporating Northumberland National Park and North of Tyne rescue teams and four search and rescue dog handlers.

Following an emergency call to 'A' Flt 202 Squadron, the first aircraft was quickly on the scene to assess the situation. The captain of the helicopter soon realised additional support was required and called for the second aircraft to assist, together with Northumbria Search & Rescue Service who set up incident control at Ingram village. The teams quickly established a communications relay from close to the summit of Brough Law and were positioned by a Sea King helicopter.

Team members were flown direct to the crash site by the helicopter in several waves to assist in casualty triage, casualty care and evacuation. Mountain rescue personnel assisted the helicopter aircrew in the management of the



NSRS AND RAF BOULMER

twelve casualties, which included two deceased, including transferring casualties onto the helicopters and handing over the less seriously injured for further medical treatment at Ingram incident control. Injuries encountered included major trauma, broken bones, haemorrhage and serious head injuries. The rescue operation was made more challenging by the separation of several casualties from the main crash site. However, these were soon located by search and rescue dogs and their handlers.

The exercise also provided an opportunity for the RAF to exercise the use of mobile ground to air communications equipment, which proved to be a great success.

Wing Commander 'Bunny' James, Officer Commanding 202 Squadron, was delighted with the outcome of the exercise. He said 'the exercise had provided both the Search & Rescue

Squadron and the mountain rescue volunteers an excellent opportunity to work closely together in a simulated exercise that had presented real and diverse challenges'. He considered the exercise to be a great learning experience from which the valuable lessons learned could be taken forward into future operations and exercises.

Richard Holmes, spokesman for Northumbria Search & Rescue Service commented that 'the exercise had been judged a great success by all those who attended. Northumbria Search & Rescue Service continues to enjoy a close working relationship with 202 Squadron at RAF Boulmer and it is reassuring to know that in the event of an incident of any size, Northumberland is served by a highly professional, highly skilled search and rescue service, ready to respond 24 hours a day, 356 days a year.'

Incident report...

Introducing the Incident Report within the Incident Report... a look behind the dry statistics at what really happens when the pager goes off....

Keswick MRT were involved in a different type of rescue in the early hours of May Day Bank Holiday weekend – the rescue of eight people who had crashed their speedboat onto rocks in the middle of Derwentwater at around 0300.

This was the first of four rescues in the day for the team, the last concluding around about 10.00pm.

The initial call came at 3.41am on Sunday morning, for team assistance with a speedboat which had crashed onto rocks off Friars Crag on Derwentwater. Within 30 minutes, the team boat was on the lake and ferried five team members and a paramedic to the scene to assess and treat the injured casualties. The boat brought back three uninjured casualties to the boat landings where they were checked over by ambulance staff before being taken to team HQ to warm up. The boat then ferried the team doctor and other team members, along with further medical equipment including vacuum mattresses, out to the rocks to assist with the remaining casualties.

Rescue boats from Nichol End Marine and Platty Plus were also called in to help,

these larger boats to transfer two casualties with suspected back injuries to the boat landings where they were transferred to waiting ambulances. An RAF SeaKing had been called by the Coastguard Agency – the casualty with head injuries was winched from the rocks and flown direct to Cumberland Infirmary, along with the ambulance paramedic who continued to monitor and treat the casualty.

Coastguard volunteers from Keswick and Maryport had also been called in by the Liverpool Coastguard. However, the management of, and the undertaking of the rescue on scene, was undertaken by the mountain rescue team, working in close association with the ambulance crews, rescue boats, police and the RAF.

This was the first rescue undertaken by the Keswick team where the MCGA has taken over responsibility for rescue on the four 'public access' lakes in the Lake District – Windermere, Coniston, Ullswater and Derwentwater. It's fair to say that there are certainly lessons to be learned with regard to MCGA plans for rescue on Derwentwater following this incident. At time of writing, a multiagency debrief is about to take place and we are fairly sure of a full and frank discussion.

The second call of the day came late morning, to the assistance of a female walker who had suffered a series of faints whilst walking on Scales Fell, Blencathra.

The third call came mid afternoon. A 50 year old female walker from the Bolton area had slipped and sustained a suspected fractured lower leg at the head of Mousethwaite Coombe, Blencathra, whilst descending from a day's walking. She was treated at the scene by the team and carried from the fell where she was transferred to an ambulance and taken to Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle.

The final call of the day came at approximately 6.15pm. A walker from the Kendal area had slipped and fallen, sustaining a suspected dislocated shoulder and a laceration to his head while descending from Scafell Pike at Esk Hause. Team members attended the scene and treated the casualty's injuries. He was then airlifted by a SeaKing helicopter from RAF Boulmer (in less than ideal weather conditions!) and transferred to hospital in Carlisle.

Lakes

QUARTERLY INCIDENT REPORT FOR ENGLAND AND WALES JANUARY-MARCH 2006

The following is a listing of the number of incidents attended by MR teams in England and Wales during the period from 01/01/2006 to 31/03/2006 It is grouped by region and shows the date (day/month) the incident began. It is not comprehensive as many incidents have yet to be reported.

Lake District

Cockermouth	02/01
Coniston	02/01, 09/01, 20/01, 10/02, 05/03
Duddon & Furness	10/02
Kendal	01/02, 01/02, 02/02, 05/02, 10/02, 11/02, 12/02, 17/02, 19/02, 11/03, 12/03, 12/03, 12/03, 12/03, 19/03, 22/03
Keswick	02/01, 16/01, 10/02, 13/02, 18/02, 19/02, 21/02, 25/02, 27/02, 01/03, 02/03, 10/03, 11/03, 13/03, 16/03, 18/03, 22/03, 23/03, 25/03, 26/03
Kirkby Stephen	10/01, 12/03, 22/03
Langdale Ambleside	25/01, 26/01, 31/01, 01/02, 01/02, 05/02, 10/02, 11/02, 12/02, 13/02, 15/02, 17/02, 17/02, 18/02, 19/02, 22/02, 02/03, 02/03, 10/03, 11/03, 12/03, 13/03, 13/03, 17/03, 18/03, 19/03, 22/03, 28/03, 12/03, 14/03, 17/03, 18/03, 22/03
Patterdale	22/01, 30/01, 04/02, 21/02, 22/02, 24/02, 07/03
Penrith	01/02, 19/02, 03/03, 12/03, 21/03, 22/03, 25/03
Wasdale	13/02

Mid-Pennine

Bolton	01/01, 01/01, 01/01, 14/01, 15/01, 22/01, 29/01, 29/01, 11/02, 11/02, 19/02, 01/03, 01/03, 04/03, 04/03, 05/03, 12/03, 19/03, 26/03, 26/03
Bowland Pennine	01/01, 22/01, 29/01, 26/03
Holme Valley	13/01, 30/03
Rosendale & Pendle	01/03

NE England

Cleveland	10/01, 04/02, 11/02, 06/03
Scarborough & District	01/01, 13/01, 15/01, 26/01, 24/02
Northumberland NP	22/03
North of Tyne	22/03
Swaledale	22/03
Teesdale and Weardale	22/03

North Wales

Aberglaslyn	05/01
Llanberis	03/01, 04/01, 05/01, 21/01, 31/01, 11/02, 11/02, 21/02, 22/02, 25/02, 07/03, 17/03, 18/03, 18/03, 19/03, 19/03, 21/03, 22/03, 25/03, 25/03, 26/03
North East Wales	05/01
Ogwen Valley	05/01, 16/01, 28/01, 28/01, 29/01, 11/02, 11/02, 18/02, 17/03, 26/03
Snowdonia Nat Park	18/02

Peak District

Buxton	04/02
Derby	22/01, 21/02, 07/03, 22/03
Edale	24/01
Glossop	12/03, 24/03
Kinder	07/01, 12/02, 12/02, 12/02, 26/02, 12/03, 16/03, 18/03, 24/03, 26/03
Oldham	21/01, 05/03, 05/03

South Wales

Brecon	08/01, 15/01, 19/01, 22/01, 26/01, 12/02, 20/02, 21/02, 21/02, 23/02, 23/02, 23/02
Western Beacons	09/01, 15/01, 22/01, 22/01, 12/02, 20/02, 21/02, 23/02, 23/02
Central Beacons	08/01, 09/01, 15/01, 19/01, 22/01, 22/01, 26/01, 21/02, 23/02, 23/02, 23/02
Longtown	04/01, 19/01, 22/01, 26/01, 21/02, 23/02
Severn Area RA	19/01, 26/01

Yorkshire Dales

CRO	11/01, 02/02, 04/02, 04/02, 11/02, 12/02, 25/03
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RAF

RAF Leeming	21/01, 18/03, 22/03
RAF Valley	05/01, 29/01, 17/03, 22/03

SARDA

SARDA (England)	01/01, 10/01, 15/01, 22/01, 13/02, 01/03, 22/03, 26/03
SARDA (Lakes)	10/02, 19/02, 22/03
SARDA (Wales)	05/01, 29/01, 17/03, 26/03
SARDA (South Wales)	04/01, 09/01, 15/01, 19/01, 22/01, 05/02, 12/02, 20/02, 21/02, 23/02, 23/02

Trek Kilimanjaro 30 June – 10 July 2007



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Charity Registration No. 221124

Following a call from the team leader at 2.15pm on Friday 5 May, from the Greater Manchester Fire & rescue Service, Oldham MRT was turned out to an incident just off Rochdale Road in Milnrow.

A young Alsatian dog had fallen part way down a sixty foot steep, loose embankment on the edge of the River Beal, while out walking with its owner.

One team member abseiled down to the dog – which was too frightened to allow him to approach. The young teenage brother of the owner was then put in a harness and

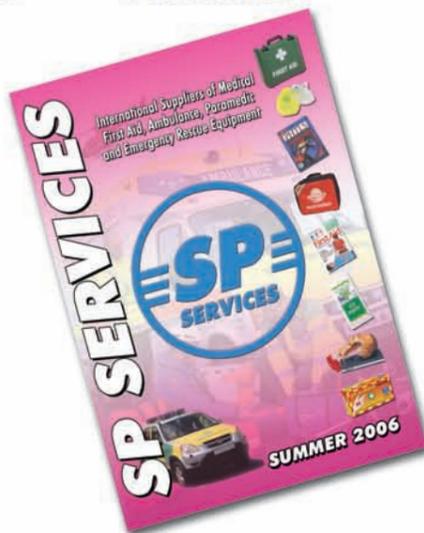
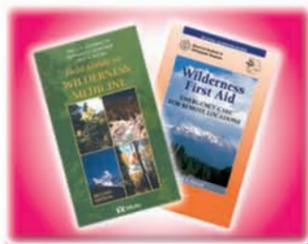
lowered down to the dog to calm it down. Once he was down, they were also able to get the dog into a harness, and all three were safely hauled to the top using a pulley system set up by other team members. The dog survived the ordeal unharmed and the boy and his dog went off safely home at 3.30pm.



Peak District

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Kit crit Scarab



Over the past three months Bowland Pennine MRT have been trialling a new descender designed for vertical crag work and hauling. The device is of a double-stopping design, made by ISC in Wales. It is quite similar to a couple of descenders on the market at present, but is certainly worth a closer look.

Technical Spec:

CE 0120
 EN 12841 Type C Rope adjustment devices
 Rope dia: 10.5-12.5mm
 Min static slip 3.5kN-4.5kN (depending on rope)
 100kg Fall Factor 1 on a 1m drop (11mm rope)
 4.2kN & 5cm slippage.
 Weight: 169g. Recommended for two person rescue by manufacturer.

Interestingly the Scarab has also been tested with a 200kg mass falling 1m to give a fall factor 1 scenario, the results were 5.7kN peak force (rope glazed). This would fit in with the current ideas on rope rescue loads during main line failure.

The Scarab comes in a belt mounted pouch which makes it a bit of a pain to deploy. Without the pouch, the handle sticks out and you find yourself catching on Land Rovers, fences, sheep etc!

How it works in the field:-
 The device works by squeezing

the handle thus allowing rope to feed around the cam. The more you squeeze the faster you go until the second stopping feature comes into play and you start to slow again, it was very difficult to squeeze hard enough to stop completely, but does prevent impact with the floor! When used in a rescue situation with a 2-person load, it was very difficult to start the device moving (you need very big hands to work it - XXL or above!) as under the extra load the handle is positioned further away from the device. Under a 2-person load it was almost impossible to get the second stopping action to work as the device is very difficult to start moving, once moving it was quite smooth, but we could not squeeze hard enough, fast enough to get the double stopping action to work.

The Scarab comes into its own when you need to change from descent into ascent or at any point where you need to raise or tension ropes. The device can be used as an ascender very well and has one of the smoothest cam actions I have ever come across.

The conclusions from the tests were that Scarab is good solid UK made descender ideal for well-trained rope rescue team members for lowering, raising and with care for two person rescues. Of the 15 or so descenders that we have had access to, the Scarab rated very highly for the raising, hauling and the tensioning of ropes aspect of technical rope rescue.

The Scarab should be generally available as this goes to print. We got ours from www.xitraining.co.uk in Carnforth.

A personal view by
Alan Woodhead
 MPSRO Equipment Officer
 Bowland Pennine MRT

ADVERTORIAL

XI TRAINING

Xi Training Ltd has been running height safety and rescue courses for the emergency services and the industrial safety sector for many years. We run courses from Fall Protection PPE inspection through to multi-day rope rescue and evacuation training. We have worked closely with mountain rescue for many years offering technical advice, training and equipment supply. We are highly aware of the difficulty in resources within rescue teams, (we have 20+ years of MRT experience in the company!) so we will always try to offer the best value service we can.

Whether you need specific height safety information, want the best price for a new rope or simply want to know 'what's new' in rope rescue then contact us:

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alan@xitraining.co.uk

DOUBLE AWARD FOR KEELA

Keela - a name with which many rescue teams around the UK will be familiar - has been awarded by the APPSS (Association of Police & Public Security Suppliers) High Commendation for Innovation, for their unique, innovative System Dual Protection.

'We are obviously delighted with this award,' said Arlene Kidd, Marketing Manager, 'and the endorsement



LORD MACKENZIE PRESENTS ARLENE KIDD (KEELA) AND BLANE YOUNG (SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE) WITH THE AWARD

from such a prestigious establishment. Even more so as, to our knowledge, this is the first time an outdoor clothing company has received such an honour.'

The criterion for this award is that a product must have been used successfully by the police force for a minimum duration of two years.

Several years ago South Yorkshire Police had a problem with their wet weather clothing. Condensation formed in both wet and dry conditions and, despite the jackets being expensive and claiming to have 'breathability', there were many complaints from the wearers. After trialling the Keela jackets using the SDP system, they found exceptional wearer comfort in both wet and dry weather conditions and complaints have now changed to praise.

System Dual Protection (SDP) uses two layers of waterproof, breathable fabric with an air gap in between. It is therefore not only waterproof, windproof and breathable, but also has the ability to transport sweat away from the body, working in both wet and cold conditions to keep you dry and comfortable. It is now used by police forces throughout the UK and is the preferred choice of many specialist units including anti-terrorist, firearms and dog sections.

In April, Rube Fernando, Director of the Ardmel Group, also received the Queen's Award for Innovation, on behalf of the company. This was awarded in recognition of the technological advancement Ardmel has made in garment construction by using sewing and fusion solutions combined with adhesive technology. In particular, the latest project, the Advanced Construction Technology (ACT), which includes ultrasonic cutting and sewing systems, hot presses and lasers.

Keela Ltd is part of the Ardmel Group, a privately owned Scottish company, founded in 1980 with a manufacturing factory based on the east coast of Scotland. The company produces high quality outdoor products, both for work and leisure activities and is one of the few UK manufacturers left in the industry. Mountain rescue teams, police, military and many more often wear Keela's products. The brand is highly reputed for performance, quality, value and fit for purpose - ready for the elements.

Ardmel is the engineering arm. This side of the business designs and manufactures specialist equipment for clothing, electronics and the motor industry. Ardmel's success at being at the forefront of technology enabled the launch of Keela. Today, they lead the way with innovative fabric joining technology, enabling Keela to produce cutting edge designs with the newest fabric concepts and advanced process methods.

For more information about Keela products call 01592 777000

Hide 'n' Seek for Landies

Looking suspiciously like a participant in some monster game of Hide and Seek, this is actually the moment when the West Brecon Cave Rescue Land Rover was reunited with its anxious owners. Back in May, the vehicle went missing following a break in at the team's HQ. It was found in the forestry above



Banwen/Glynneath by a guy attending the Ted Dragon Rally stage at Glynneath over the weekend. It was the police helicopter which pinned down the exact location. The Land Rover had been driven down into the trees so could not be easily found.

The good news was it was recovered in remarkably good condition. The medical gases were still on board. It was even locked and the alarm set! It was subsequently taken to the police workshops for forensic examination before going off to Land Rover, Swansea for a thorough check over and to have new locks and a tracker system fitted. Replacement steel doors have also been ordered for the team base.

New underground casbag

With the increased co-operation on medical issues between cave rescue teams in the United Kingdom, it became clear that no-one was satisfied with the current array of casbags used for immobile casualties underground. With the exception of the full neoprene version, none of the bags used had been designed with our specific needs in mind and all had both good and bad points. What appeared to be lacking was a product that combined all of the former and a limited number of the latter.

Following the BCRC Medical Moot at Penwyllt three years ago, the project started with parallel designs developed in South Wales and the Yorkshire Dales. At this

point the aim was to try and distil years of experience into a standard design or a list of features that would be looked for in any new product. At the same time Adrian Moore at Aiguille Alpine was consulted with his manufacturing experience. Through Jim Davies (BCRC Training Officer) basic materials research was undertaken at the University of Leeds to identify the best fabrics to use along with a suggested design.

A combination of cordura, vacuum mattress and pile was suggested for the base, with a outer/flectalon/sportwool layered system for the upper portion. This was then discussed with Adrian Moore and a prototype fabricated. In the end an integral vacuum mattress proved impractical and was substituted with an inflatable camping mattress.

This bag has been trialled in underground practices, inspected in relevant AGMs and been reviewed by several MRT's both North & South of the border. There is an ongoing process of specific field trials looking at functionality, along with further primary scientific research to look at the design and how the materials work together.

To date the bag appears as warm as anything on the market, is lighter and compacts better. There is a full length zip (external baffle) both sides with multiple sliders for ease of access. The fabric will be waterproof if washed regularly with a proprietary cleaning agent. Handles are easy to use but don't get in the way.

I can offer personal testimony as to the warmth of the bag (especially when wet) following recent underground trials. It is hoped that by the end of 2006 all alterations will have been suggested/made and we will be in the process of manufacture for the BCRC constituent teams. There will be the ability to inspect the bag at the UK MR Conference at Lancaster University in September 2006.



Key parameters included ease of access to the patient, limited size/bulk of the design, warmth when wet, robust materials/construction and functionality. The final report and recommendations were passed back from the Performance Materials Department at the University of Leeds.



Points of note (first prototype):-

- Based on primary materials research at University of Leeds.
- 6'2" 17st patient and MRC vacmatt will fit inside.
- Spiral vs moulded zip (production will be moulded).
- 6 zip sliders give two access ports anywhere. Full opening.
- Wide compression straps (load bearing).
- Daisy chain handles an storm flaps.
- Load bearing top and tail loops.
- Compact weight and size (no bigger).
- Fitted with thermarest (insert) underground.
- To be packed in a drybag.
- Washable/robust.
- Waterproof by treatment.
- Drainage holes if needed.
- Harness port.
- Designed to fit over helmet and boots.
- Made in partnership with Aiguille.
- Warmer then current MRC design.

Issues from field testing to date:-

- Buckles not gripping enough.
- Buckles further to left on lower straps.

- Smaller Velcro patches needed.
- Easy to manhandle.
- Warm.
- Harness port flap wrong way round. Possibly needs another.
- A5 plastic see-through document on front.

Plans:-

- Field testing (6 underground teams and Lochaber).
- Further materials research.
- Full scientific testing with another University.
- Production Spring 2007. Cost approx £350.

William Lumb BCRC Medical Officer



ADVERTORIAL

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The Technotrend Microphone Interface Unit (MIU 2) was designed to answer the call for a safer means of communicating via PMR whilst driving. Indeed, since its successful launch, legislation was introduced in December 2003 to make the use of a hand-held phone whilst driving a specific offence, making MIU 2 an even more valuable addition to any professional vehicle's communication system. Using state of the art technology, the unit provides excellent clarity of speech and noise suppression. In addition to its quality performance, the advantages of the MIU 2 are the ease of installation and the fact that no modification to the radio is necessary. The MIU 2 uses a PTT switch which, once pressed, enables the user to communicate through a remote microphone. The unit has been successfully used by many of the UK's police forces and emergency services and the product will be beneficial to other users of PMR equipment such as land, sea and air rescue services, as well as commercial applications. The MIU 2 can be configured to most PMR radio types and is compliant with the Automotive 95/54 'e' mark directive, mandatory on all aftermarket electrical/electronic equipment fitted to vehicles after October 2002.

For further information please contact Technotrend Ltd, Unit B5 Armstrong Mall, Southwood Business Park, Farnborough, Hants GU14 0NR. Telephone 01252 513346. Fax 01252 547498. www.technotrend.co.uk david.roberts@technotrend.co.uk

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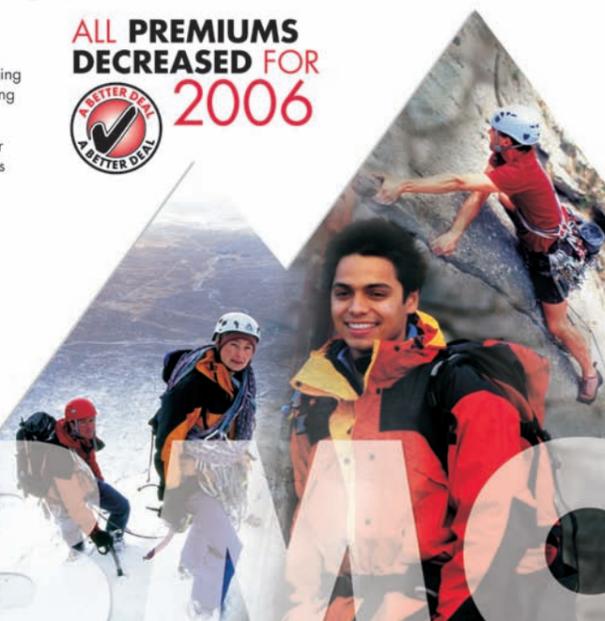
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A to Z of MR

Gary Foo of Oxfordshire Search & Rescue team continues his own personal glossary of terms, moving through D into G...

- **Declination** The difference in degrees between magnetic north (the direction of the magnetic needle on a compass point) and true or geographic north (the direction maps are printed towards).
- **Despondent** A type of missing person who is severely depressed or suicidal.
- **Distress** A search and rescue incident where there is a reasonable certainty that one or more individuals are threatened by grave and imminent danger and require immediate assistance.
- **Distress Beacon** A generic term used to describe an emergency locator transmitter (ELT), emergency position-indicating radio beacon (EPIRB), or a personal locator beacon (PLB).
- **Ditching** Forced landing of an aircraft on water.
- **Dynamic Rope** Slightly flexible kernmantle rope often used for rock climbing.
- **Elopement** A walk away.
- **EMT** Emergency Medical Technician – trained in advanced first aid and life support, using more sophisticated medical equipment.
- **Evidence** Something legally acceptable before a court, such as

- an object or a witness, which bears on or establishes an issue. In tracking, evidence is divided into physical and incorporeal.
- **Evidence Search** The facts, circumstances and proof that a certain chain of events has taken place in regards to the subject of a search.
- **Extrication** The act of releasing people trapped in or under vehicles, industrial machines or natural or man-made enclosures or crevices as a result of an accident.
- **Field Craft** The overall body of knowledge and experience related to the safe and successful conduct of activities in a wilderness area.
- **Field Evacuation** The removal of a person, usually injured or adversely affected, from an isolated wilderness environment to a secure staging area, command post or control centre.
- **First Responder** A person trained in the medical and mechanical skills and knowledge necessary to successfully manage the care of an individual on the first discovery, until the person can either be evacuated or placed under more intense care. The term is

- usually associated with police, fire and ambulance response in non-search and rescue environments. The training usually refers to basic life support, secondary first aid, oxygen therapy and the use of AED (automated external defibrillator).
- **FLIR** Forward Looking Infra Red – can be mounted on a helicopter or fixed wing aircraft. FLIR provided images of the ground based on temperature differences, humans and animals are easily identified on screen.
- **Fracture** Open – a situation in which a broken bone has punctured the skin surface. Closed – a situation in which there is no broken skin over the site This is also know as a simple fracture. Spiral – a twisted break. Compound – multiple breaks. Greenstick – bend on one side of the bone, break on the other, often seen in young people.
- **GIS Mapping** Geographic Information System – a system of software, hardware and data that will analyse and present information that is tied to a spatial search area.
- **GPS** Global Positioning System – a specific satellite based system used in conjunction with mobile equipment to determine the precise

- position of the mobile equipment.
- **Grid Location** Most maps used in search and rescue have a grid superimposed to aid in describing the location of particular points. The rectangular grid runs approximately north-south and east-west. A point on the map can be described by its position relative to the grid.
- **Grid Search** An attempt to find the subject, or clues, by lining up three or more searchers and having them proceed in a parallel fashion through their assigned search area.
- **Ground** A ground search or rescue activity is one which occurs on land. For the purposes of these procedures, this includes the ground portion of all activities associated with missing aircraft and the air portion of all activities involving searches for or rescues of people on land.
- **Ground SAR** The conduct of a search and rescue operation to assist persons lost, stranded, trapped or injured in an area on land.
- **Ground Search Party** A group formed to conduct all or part of an organised GSAR operation.

WHAT KATIE DID NEXT – DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SCOTTISH STRETCHER AND CASBAG

Update from **Jamie Kean** Kintail MRT

The first prototype Katie was completed in February 2004 and then was tested and demonstrated at various times and places in the twelve months following. In February 2005, approval was given by the Stretcher Development Committee for further work to be done, with a requirement for two lighter prototypes to be designed and manufactured, if possible within a year. The following documents show how much work has been completed so far.



FOLDED AND READY FOR TRANSPORTATION

Design work has been carried out to accommodate as many as possible of the changes requested by MRT members following the user tests at Aonach Mor, Glen Nevis and elsewhere. Lighter and stronger materials for the shell have been investigated and sourced. Two Carbon Fibre/Kevlar composite shells have been moulded. This process took about two months longer than anticipated due to technical difficulties encountered in the moulding process. The tightly radiused curves on the edges proved hard for the vacuum bag to form into, causing delamination on a number of attempts. For future work a revised mould would probably prove more economical in the long term. One scrap shell has been used to make a mock up of Prototype 2, using an aluminium perimeter frame. This was demonstrated at the Shell seminar at Carbisdale Castle. The one piece mock up weighs 11kg as a bare loadbed. This is 6kg (35%) lighter than prototype 1's loadbed, but does not take into account the use of titanium (removing possibly as much as 2 kg) and clamps (adding just over 1 kg).

The arrangement of the apertures for handholds, tie on and lift points has been altered to suit RAF winch-men's concerns over stability when winching and to match Paul Rosher's most recent SCS Casbag webbing system.

The method of attaching the frame to the shell has been evaluated and a new system designed, which gives a bracing effect at the welded corners and a cleaner appearance. In

addition, the width of the stretcher is reduced slightly and there is less risk of abrasion damaging the edges of the shell and causing splinters to injure bearers or tear clothing.

The mock up has been tested for fit into a Merlin helicopter (possible future SAR role?) and fitted easily in three different orientations, including across the fuselage. Stress calculations have been carried out on all loading situations and the worst case scenarios determined. The stretcher is designed with a factor of safety (FoS) of 1.6 based on the results of these calculations. A higher FoS could be used but the trade-off for safety is increased weight. A FoS of 1.6 is a commonly used engineering compromise. Upgraded latches for the base of the shell have been specified and obtained.

A test stand has been constructed to allow for simulation of horizontal and vertical lower situations with loads in place. Helicopter winch strops have been designed and materials ordered. It is worth noting that helicopter winches are rated to lift 275 kg maximum. The combined weight of a large casualty possibly in wet clothes on a stretcher with a large winch-man alongside could be getting close to this figure. This emphasises the importance of a lightweight stretcher.

In regard to size, Katie P2 has a loadbed that is wider than a MacInnes Mk6, yet the stretcher overall is narrower. The length of the loadbed is very similar, approximately 25mm shorter. In

comparison to a Bell stretcher, Katie P2 has a longer loadbed and a similar width.

As regards ongoing work, computer aided drawings (CAD) are currently being made of the stretcher, incorporating all changes from Prototype 1. Titanium framing material currently is being sourced and a skilled welding company with experience with this material is being located. Barrow-boy handles design being developed in two possible directions. Models are to be built and tested to determine best performance with respect to ease of use, strength



GAS BOTTLE LOCATORS CAN HAVE OTHER USES

and weight. Concepts are developing in regard to head guard re-design but they are not yet complete. The wheel unit requires further design work to optimise structure with the titanium frame and also to suit revised shell/frame joint system.

Estimated delivery time was likely to be April due to delay with shell moulding. Further updates will be issued in due course and you can see the Katie at the UK MR Conference in September.



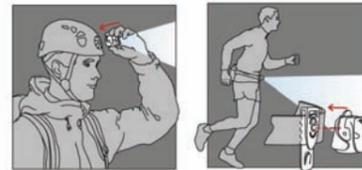
GLEN NEVIS TESTS ON PROTOTYPE 1, WITH PAUL ROSHER'S CASBAG INSTALLED. FEBRUARY 2005

Petzl introduce new headtorch system for summer

Petzl, well known for their headtorches, are introducing a new system called 'Adapt' this summer. The Adapt can be retro-fitted on any new or old Zipka or Tikka, (including the new powerful XP models) and converts your headtorch into a quick release/attach system. The Adapt system includes;

- Adhesive mounting – can be stuck onto Petzl helmets and many other plastic, metal or glass surfaces.
- Belt/Pocket clip – to attach the light to a belt, webbing strap etc.
- Headband

The Petzl light uses a very positive 'click-fitting' to attach and detach the light from these mountings. The adhesive is approved for use on Petzl helmets as well as polycarbonate, nylon, fibreglass and glass. This system allows you to have a strapless system on your helmet and, using the same light click-fit it from your helmet onto webbing straps.



ADAPT HEADBAND

ADAPT TIKKA XP CONNECTOR



ADAPT TIKKA CONNECTOR



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Petzl products are distributed in the UK and Ireland by **Lyon Equipment Limited, Dent, Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5QL. T: 015396 25493 F: 015396 25454. E: info@lyon.co.uk**



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It's a small world!

For most readers of this magazine, mountain rescue is a big part of our lives. It takes up time in the evenings and weekends and frequently interrupts plans we've made with family and friends. But, from time to time, I like to get away from it all and forget about mountain rescue for a while.

A couple of years ago, I booked a trekking holiday in a Ladakh, a remote part on North India – eight days trekking with no phones or PC and a chance to spend time in the mountains was very attractive. I booked through a trekking agency and was asked to meet an agent in an hotel in Delhi. My instructions were clear, but mildly concerning. Be at the Hotel Nikko in Delhi at 16.00 and a man called Mandeep Singh will meet you. You won't miss him – he'll be wearing a turban. So there I was, sat in the bar when, sure enough, a man with a turban arrived at the appointed time. We introduced ourselves and soon got down to the detail of the trek.

Mandeep spoke such good English, I felt I had to compliment him on it. He explained that in the late 1970s he had worked in the UK as an outdoor instructor, firstly at Loch Eil and later at Plas y Brenin. I said I knew both places reasonably well and we talked about the mountains in those areas. He said that when he had been in North Wales he had been involved in mountain rescue. I responded saying how remarkable that was and that I too was involved in mountain rescue. We passed a little time talking about MR and how it was then and how much it has changed over the years. After a while Mandeep went quiet and was obviously deep in thought.

Eventually he said, 'Do you know anyone called Tony Jones?' (Who, as regular readers will know, is our very own Vice Chairman... You go halfway round the world...) **Neil Roden**

TEAM PROFILE: WOODHEAD MRT

By **Mike France** team leader

Woodhead MRT, like most of the other PDMRO teams, was formed following the death of the rover scouts taking part in the four inns competition in 1964. I understand one of the concerns of the scouting association following this tragedy was sending these young people into the hills without proper support.

Gordon Stuart Withers was 19 years old, he was a member of 32nd Dalton, Huddersfield Rover Scouts, sadly he died from exposure on a Saturday night in April 1964 on Bleaklow. Talking



to a good friend of mine and one of the original rescue team members, Peter Blackburn, he tells me that the Huddersfield Rover Scouts and their leaders were asked if they would like to be members of and help start up a mountain rescue team in this area. A team was formed and called Huddersfield Scout MRT. They joined the other thirteen teams, most with scouting names and backgrounds, that formed the PDMRO in September 1964.

Being a scout and then a leader I joined the team at 19 years in 1971. They had been together for six or seven years by now and seemed to know what they were doing. OK, we were scouts, we knew about basic first aid, we understood the outdoors, we could use map and compass, we went on our annual camps to the Lakes and Wales, we had walked all over the Yorkshire Dales and the Peak District and, as scouts, were used to the team spirit, but where did we learn the rescue skills, I asked Peter?

From the local Civil Defence. A guy called Pete Blackley was the Civil Defence training coordinator for Huddersfield. He was ex-RAF or Lakes mountain rescue, Peter told me. He showed us the ropes, how to tie a stretcher, how to carry out a line search and what kit we needed.

When I think about it and look at my team today and see the professionalism and the skills the members bring, then I look back to those early years and see those young men (no females), they/we were very keen but I don't think they would last two minutes in a rescue team today, most would probably not pass the entrance assessment. Having said that, all groups and organisations need to start somewhere, they may not have given the professionalism that we expect of a team today but that's all there was. They

learnt fast and are still about today.

We were being called out about twenty times per year on proper mountain rescue calls not just police missing persons. One of the teams first major call outs was to the waterman who went missing in the Calder Valley area – Peter Smith wrote about him in last month's magazine.

There is one other major difference about the team then to now – the running costs. In the early days, for years we never had any more money than a few hundred pounds. We didn't have Mike Margeson and the equipment sub giving out kit like they do today. What little we had we bought. Our first ambulance was an ex Huddersfield County Ambulance bought for the sum of £75 fully equipped – that was the deal. (It had a little blue light on it and a cot stretcher). At that time the team did not have a spare £75 to buy a team vehicle so one of the team members, Dave Crossland lent us £45 to buy it. Dave was in the same rover scouts group as Gordon Withers and one of the founder members of the rescue team. He is still an operational support member today and our training officer.

We now had a team ambulance but when I joined the team I was a young plumber with a van and a landline telephone and, consequently, I was welcomed with open arms. I hear you younger members saying, 'So what? You had a van.' The older member knows just what I am going to say! No mobiles, no pagers, not everybody had transport or a telephone so, when the call came, I got the phone call and then had my pick up run to do, knocking on members' doors and waking them up, waiting for them to make a flask and butties, then going onto the next until the van was full. I can remember the committee patting themselves on the back for a search we did one morning. The RV was Kinder filter house. From the first call to the team being ready to go on the hill took only four hours. Today, if we are not at a roadhead and ready to go in 30 minutes, we have an inquest.

As the years passed, some of the thirteen original teams fell away, some joined other teams and renamed themselves. We, the Huddersfield scout team, joined up with the Sheffield scout team and Stocksbridge scout team to become Woodhead MRT. Why the name Woodhead? Well, because we are based right at the top of the Woodhead Pass, on the Derbyshire, South Yorkshire boundary. You will have heard the name before on the radio or TV weather reports, in this area is the Snake Pass or Woodhead Pass where the start of winter is usually marked with one or the other getting blocked by snow.

After this amalgamation of the scout teams, Barry Gregory, who was the Huddersfield scout team leader, took on

the role of team leader for the new Woodhead team. Again Barry, the last of my original members, is still with us as an operational support member and the team treasurer.

Over the years, the team has developed and, like every other team, we've had our ups and downs. One of the big ups for us was around the mid-80s when we had a call from Don Page, chief ambulance officer of South Yorkshire, long before all this NHS ambulance thing and air ambulances. He wanted to offer the people of South Yorkshire medical cover from anywhere in the county – if he could call upon our services when needed, he would give us a Land Rover ambulance with ambulance service radios and he would maintain and fuel it. This partnership lasted for years.

When the Land Rover started getting old and we all got used to power steering on our cars, most members thought driving the Land Rover was like driving a tank. We then asked South Yorkshire police for one for their motors and we were given an ex-task force personnel carrier. I can say the ambulance service appeared to look after their motors far better than the police because within a few years we bought our first new purpose-built mountain rescue vehicle for carrying personnel and kit, and also doubling as a control unit. I do sometimes think, as a volunteer rescue service, we should ask our colleagues from the other emergency services to help with maintenance and fuelling as well as passing on good second hand motors to us.

In 1996, the team looked at the requirements of a modern mountain rescue service and to put us on a good footing for the next twenty five years we needed headquarters to provide a central base for the co-ordination of single or multi team search and rescue operations in our area.

We were put in touch with Hepworth Building Products PLC who had an old farm house on their land that was in need of repair. For their own reasons, they did not wish to sell the property, so we did a good old mountain rescue deal – what can we get cheap?



THE VERY MODEL OF A MODERN MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE...



Hepworth PLC offered us the old farmhouse building for a nominal £1 per year rent but we had to repair it. Structurally it was sound, but no one had lived in it for years, so we fitted new windows and doors and gave it a good clean up. None of this could have been achieved without the help and support of Hepworth PLC giving us a 25 year renewable lease.

The building is located 360 metres on the north eastern corner of the Peak District giving us cover to the upland areas of the Peak District National Park plus many areas of south and west Yorkshire. We have registered one of the fields to the front of the building with the Civil Aviation Authority as a landing site for the police and RAF and this has been used on many incidents.

The building offers us:-

A control room to base support staff and incident rescue controllers while conducting search and rescue operations. All necessary radio, telephone, computer and reference materials are to hand to ensure efficient and successful rescue.

Two training room's capacity for seating twenty to thirty people when attending team meetings and training evenings.

A briefing room for members to prepare for rescues. It has seating areas out of earshot of the main operation areas, with drying and storage space for change of clothing for members when returning from rescues.

A kitchen and dining room where operations staff can prepare food and drinks for themselves, returning hill parties and waiting relatives.

Toilets and shower facilities for team members, visitors, relatives and casualties.

Car parking space for at least thirty cars for the sole use of MR team members and other emergency services vehicles.

When I see what other teams spend on building headquarters, I know we are very lucky but I do believe if you don't ask, you don't get.

Today I have 35 operational members, giving time and money to mountain rescue just like every other rescue team member in England and Wales. Because of peoples' work and social commitments today, I would hope to get around 25 members on a callout, out of working hours, and a dozen plus in working hours depending on the job. The days have long gone in our area when employers just let people leave work to go on a MR job, I think this is where the government could help us by recognising us as members of mountain rescue and support our employers in giving us time off to attend incidents. I have two SARDA members, Steve Ward and Ken Sloan, who some of you will know. At the moment I only have three female team members. This number goes up and down in the team, because you girls have different commitments to our families than us lads, we would just leave the kids!

Who knows what the next forty plus years will bring the team. I have watched with interest the amalgamation of some Lake District teams in the last few years. Monies to run teams gets harder to find and, with the major changes going on with the other emergency services, who knows who will be running search and rescue in the future? Over the years my team has been through many changes and I think there are still many to come. We all need to be ready for them or we will not survive as an independent service. Maybe as well as these new super police forces, we will have super mountain rescue teams, half the number of teams covering a larger operational area with more members. Now there's a thought to finish on!

Adventuring with Diabetes

Diabetes doesn't mean the end of it for adventurers. Far from it. That was the message Nikki Wallis drove home to delegates at the Diploma in Mountain Medicine group in May. A diabetic herself, Nikki is a keen mountaineer, mountain rescue team member and SARDA dog handler – and currently recovering from the fall which fractured her ankle earlier this year whilst out 'adventuring' on a day off.

Her talk covered key topics surrounding the issues of diabetes in remote locations and the practical and medical issues that people with diabetes, and their healthcare teams, should be aware of and prepare for in advance – especially with regard to diabetes at altitude.

Nikki presented photographs of extreme diabetic athletes from all over the world who are dealing with the condition and still participating in their extreme endurance events and mountain expeditions. Such as Mauro Sormani from Italy, who recently came third in the 160km Arctic Circle Ski Race in Greenland, the very recent summit successes on Everest by Will Cross (USA), Gerhard Winkler (Austria) and Josu Feijoo (Spain), and Herbert Hausmann (Germany who completed the gruelling six day 243km Sahara desert marathon in Morocco. Not to mention the numerous lower profile diabetics doing Iron Man triathlons, scuba diving and so on. She described some of the different therapies these individuals use, ranging from real time continuous glucose monitors sending data on blood glucose readings to insulin pumps, to simpler basal/bolus systems – which highlighted that, whilst there are general guidelines and practices, there does not seem to be a consensus 'one fits all' therapy. Everyone is different.

Some of the issue discussed were – travelling with insulin and supplies, keeping blood glucose meters working, the effect of physical activity on blood sugars, pre-existing diabetes complications such as retinopathy/neuritis, the effect of altitude and drugs and the importance of a flexible therapy system enabling the person with diabetes to cope with unpredictable circumstances such as varied food intake, variable exercise, and knowing how to respond to changes before they developed into emergencies.

Nikki's take home message was that there is now a lot of information out there with regard to extreme adventuring with diabetes and, hopefully, the group went away with a raised awareness of the key resources available for both patients and doctors and that this will increase the education surrounding diabetes, physical activity and altitude.

**For more information please visit
www.mountain-mad.org or email
info@mountain-mad.org.**



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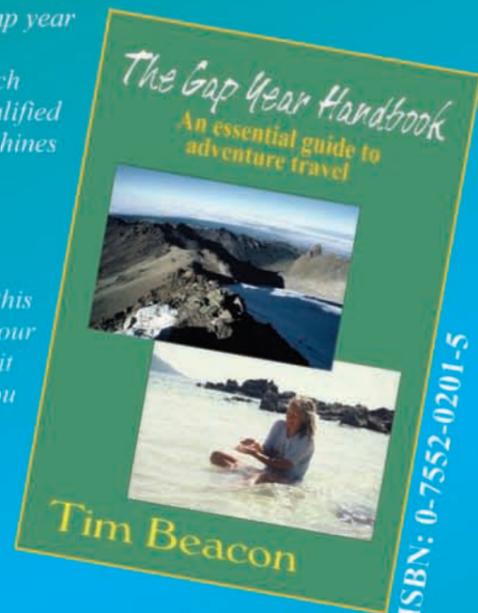
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Mountain Rescue Ireland welcomes funding increase

'This is an absolutely marvellous day for Mountain Rescue in Ireland. We now have the funds to invest in our development and to allow us to plan ahead for the next five years. I have no doubt whatsoever that the casualty on the mountainside will be better served as a result of this grant', said Pat Holland, Chairman of the Irish Mountain Rescue Association on hearing of the increased grants recently announced by Pat 'The Cope' Gallagher, Minister of State for Transport.

The announcement of a €100,000 addition to our existing national total grant of circa €161,000 came after a lobbying campaign of over a year. The campaign started before that with the creation of a consultation paper. This draft paper was presented to the IMRA Executive and important stakeholders several times to build up a broad consensus of support. It was then sent to all relevant state agencies and government ministers. The aim of the paper was to show the need for additional capacity in mountain rescue and how this additional capacity would not only make the service better but also resolve issues about which potential funding bodies were concerned. Parallel with the lobbying campaign was a focused attempt to build relationships with major stakeholders and to find common ground. This was not only to help our chances of getting increased funding but also to provide a better environment for all, especially the casualty.

The first set of lobbying letters was followed by a second which included all positive comments received for the consultation paper. This, plus sympathetic ears in high places, ensured our eventual success. In any funding campaign it is vital to remain positive and politely persistent. While friends can help, the case being made must be valid, well structured, realistic and maturely stated.

Mountain Rescue Ireland is currently in discussions with our funding agency, the Irish Coastguard (on behalf of the Dept of Transport) with regard to a plan for the expenditure of this additional funding. Elements in the plan include the provision of a Development/Research Officer, funding for national developmental projects such as a training programme and operational matters

as well as funding for the smaller teams.

The number of incidents dealt with by mountain rescue teams in Ireland has steadily increased over the past five years and this is a trend we think will continue into the future with a growing number of individuals becoming involved in outdoor sports in Ireland. This increased grant now gives us the resources to face this growing challenge by supporting the voluntary effort of the teams. Funding for the Development/Research Officer post in 2007 will only be confirmed with the preparation of the Dept of Transport estimates for that year but IMRA is more than hopeful that this position will be continued. In the meantime, IMRA is proceeding with arrangements to fill the post. Its purpose will be to work with the MR teams, the IMRA Executive and Officers and other stakeholders for a better and quality service to those in need of help on the mountains of Ireland. Their main duties and responsibilities will be:

Strategic

1. Working with the teams to fulfil their shared needs and projects.
2. Promoting co-operation and collaborative working among the teams.
3. Working to make IMRA a more effective federation of teams.
4. Working with MR stakeholders to clarify and achieve their needs within MR.

Duties

1. Initiating and facilitating shared projects among the teams (according to the list of tasks agreed by the IMRA executive committee).
2. Initiating and facilitating effective communication between the teams and on their behalf with other stakeholders
3. Researching and sourcing sponsorship for IMRA projects and consulting with the teams and stakeholders.
4. Encouraging and assisting in the development of shared standards and protocols among the teams, on a voluntary basis.
5. Assisting individual teams with their projects, as agreed by the management committee and without neglecting group projects.
6. Attending IMRA and team meetings as directed by the management committee.

7. Visiting teams, listening to and discussing issues.

8. Advising the executive committee in relation to policy development, research and forward planning.

9. Carrying out research projects in relation to mountain rescue

10. Seeking continued funding for the post of Development and Research Officer

Further information on the post can be obtained from imrasecretary@eircom.net. The Development/Research Officer will be guided in their work by priorities set by the teams in a consultation process. Safety, an insurance review, development of training, funding and team development all scored high in the consultation.

The creation of a staff position is a huge development for Mountain Rescue Ireland. It is clear to me that we cannot develop much further either individually or collectively without additional capacity and help. We hope that this development office will bring added value to the teams' efforts and make their job easier. However, it would be fair to say that not all teams are unanimously behind the proposal. One has opposed the move, seeing it, I believe, as a possible threat to team independence and a move to centralisation. While I respect and understand these fears, the majority of teams are behind the proposal or at least are willing to give it a chance. The challenge for the next year is to ensure that this move forward brings real benefits for all teams so that the post is seen as essential by all.

In addition to the new post and other moves forward funded by the increased Government grant IMRA is making progress on other fronts.

- The Gardai (police) have committed publicly to appoint a liaison officer to each team.
- We have produced our first national training manual and have secured funding to produce our second manual.
- The first manual, an induction for new members, has had a successful trial run. The evaluation report included a number of recommendations regarding the creation of national training courses which are now being studied by the teams.

- We now have an agreed policy on lowland search and on helping other services to take on that challenge.

- We have agreed the level of contingency funding which IMRA will hold as a reserve in case of a team emergency (loss of vehicle or similar disaster).

- Our stats report for 2004 has been published and 2005 is on the way.

- Team assessments are continuing.

Pat Holland **Chairman IMRA**

The creation of a staff position is a huge development... it is clear to me that we cannot develop much further, either individually or collectively, without additional capacity and help.

· ADVERTORIAL ·

Surviving the Gap Year

The Outdoor Experience was formed initially to run team building courses for healthcare personnel. This then evolved into other areas such as Travel Health courses for GPs and nurses, as well as Gap Year Survival courses, the success of which prompted the writing of the 'Gap Year Handbook. An Essential Guide to Adventure Travel' which is written with any adventure traveller in mind, whatever the duration of their trip.

The Outdoor Experience believes in a positive, motivational and constructive style of teaching. This is reflected in the book which is written in the same style. The aim is to encourage would be adventurers and to give them advice that will enable them to have a

much more worthwhile trip - it is not a doom and gloom book! Every aspect of the adventure is covered in the book, including types of trip, insurance, finance, research, equipment, clothing, travel health, photography, surviving comfortably in a multitude of environments, behaviour and relationship issues, adapting to different cultures, safety and security, transport, different types of activity and how to make the most of them as well as a comprehensive wilderness medicine section written in laymen terms. **Should you wish to discuss any of the above please contact Tim Beacon on 07958 713657.**

THE BRAVEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD...

By **Bob Sharp**

The Scottish hills always present something new. The weather, season, terrain and company often combine in a way which makes the traverse of even the same hill a new and fresh experience. Ben Lomond is no exception to this rule. I have walked up Ben Lomond on many occasions with college students, friends and fellow members of my local rescue team and the hill has always provided a surprise or new experience. For instance, I have waded through the deepest fresh snow and succumbed to the strongest winds I have ever encountered in the Scottish hills. I have played a game of volleyball on the long ridge, worked with radio hams, marshalled charity walks and had the pleasure of introducing many others to the delights of Scottish hillwalking. In addition, I have experienced the arduous and sometimes harrowing task of searching for lost walkers and have carried off the hill many people either ill or injured. August 23rd in year 2000 was an equally interesting and unforgettable day which brought me in contact with a group of people who have been described as 'the bravest people in the world'.

The Milton Mountaineers are a small group of hillwalkers, the majority of whom are blind. Their leader, George Male, a stalwart Englishman in his 70s, delights in bringing together both sighted and blind walkers to organise small-scale expeditions where both can enjoy the hills together. The group was formed some 31 years ago and they meet on a regular basis to climb hills throughout Great Britain. At least once a year they tackle one of the classics such as Ben Nevis or Snowdon. Their goal in 2000 was Ben Lomond and this was a special occasion because the climb was to be filmed by BBC Scotland for showing on their popular, mid-day 'Garden Party' programme.

To assist, the BBC asked if myself and some of my colleagues from the Lomond team would join the group for the day. I was a little surprised at this request because I have little experience of people with disabilities. However, the BBC was keen to involve a number of people who had expert knowledge of the hill. Following long conversations with both George and the producer of the programme, I was left with a fairly clear picture of the day, although a little unsure about how it would unfold and about what our specific responsibilities would be. In the event, my anxieties were to dissolve very quickly and my concerns about how blind walkers would cope with the terrain were to prove quite groundless. In fact, if there were any difficulties at all, it was coping with the eccentricities of the film crew – more later!

The chosen day dawned quiet and still with little or no wind. The ground was wet from previous day's rain but the clouds were broken and promised good weather. As pre-arranged, we all assembled at 9.00am on the pier at Rowardennan – four of us from the rescue team (Angus, Bruce, Dave and myself) together with eight of the Milton Mountaineers and the five film crew. George introduced everyone and together with the producer we discussed the overall plan for the day.

The scene was very tranquil and relaxed. Everyone was busy putting on boots and clothing, helping and chatting to one another and against this backdrop I felt sure the day would be exciting and enjoyable for all. Angus, Bruce, Dave and myself mingled with the walkers and we quickly felt at one with our new found friends and fellow

walkers. Of the five blind walkers, the two girls had travelled from Edinburgh the same morning. I felt quite guilty to know that they had commuted by train, minibus and car already that morning, when I had just rolled out of bed an hour before and had travelled just a short distance. Dorothy and Rosaline turned out to be two real characters, outgoing and buoyant, who kept everyone on our toes all day. Dorothy had been blind from birth and Rosaline had lost her sight when about six years of age. On previous expeditions they had both been cycling, rock climbing and abseiling.

The three men included Duncan, an Aberdonian, who had made the initial contact with the BBC and Alastair, a well-known local hillgoer who had lost his sight only in recent years. It transpired that Alastair was a one of the workers involved in building the first ski chairlift in Glencoe and he enthralled us throughout the day with fascinating stories of climbing and skiing forays in the 40s and 50s.

George suggested that we might each like to accompany one of our blind colleagues and stay with that person all day. Bruce and I paired up with Dorothy, whilst Angus and Dave joined Rosaline. Dorothy made it clear to Bruce and myself how she wished us to help. Her preference was to link arms on either side (although it was by no means necessary to have two helpers) when the path was wide enough to accommodate three people and to adopt a front and rear position when the path was too narrow. The other groups adopted a similar procedure although, as the day unfolded, everyone's techniques changed according to the terrain. My initial concerns about how to act as a guide were quite unfounded. I had expected to give a running commentary describing the ground's features, but quickly realised it was totally unnecessary. Throughout the day, Dorothy and the others marched ahead taking everything in their stride, quite unconscious of any uncertainty or unevenness ahead. In fact, both Dorothy and Rosaline kept up a rapid-fire conversation which had the rest of us marvelling at their uncanny ability to move rapidly across broken ground whilst maintaining a non-stop discourse. My colleague Bruce – who is a master at the art of conversation (he blethers quite a lot!) – was fascinated and quite envious at this display of skill which contrasted quite markedly with his

frequent stumbles and spills! It was intriguing to watch how our new friends dealt with irregularities in the path. Dorothy adopted a slightly higher leg raise which allowed her to glide over most of the rocks and bumps. Only occasionally did she need to be prompted. It was also interesting to watch Dorothy follow Bruce when the path was too narrow for three people. On these occasions she held lightly onto Bruce's sac and followed in his footsteps. In fact, most of the time she placed her feet exactly where Bruce placed his feet, apparently doing this by feeling the movements of his rucksac.

As the walk progressed, our efforts to help proved quite incidental and attention focused on either conversation with our friends or the endeavours of the film crew.

Filming began right from the lochside and involved a series of takes at suitable locations. The producer was particularly keen to tease out why blind people seek the challenge of hillwalking and what difficulties they encounter. Duncan was quite clear and had no difficulty answering this question. He saw hillwalking as an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and to appreciate first hand the smells and sounds of the countryside. He didn't miss seeing the hills because his companion always painted for him a rich picture in words of the landscape, weather and activities around him. Furthermore, he didn't feel that hillwalking required any particular skill or an attitude of mind. As long as one had the urge to get on and accomplish the task, it did not matter what it was because it would always be achieved. Duncan also emphasised the companionship and camaraderie fostered thorough hillwalking and the opportunity it provided to meet new and different people. It was very heartening to hear him talk in such a positive way and to appreciate that he enjoyed the challenges and beauty of the hills in no lesser way than everyone else.

Listening to Duncan and the others took our attention away from the actual technicalities of filming but we were painfully reminded from time to time. It was essential for the crew to repeat a section several times whilst the cameraman experimented with different angles and lenses or to give the interviewer an opportunity to rephrase questions etc.. Sometimes I wondered if they really knew how tiring it is to backtrack or how



TEAM MEMBERS AND WALKERS GETTING ORGANISED BY LOCH LOMOND AT THE START OF THE DAY

frustrating it is to break continuity in one's walking pattern. This was to be a recurring feature throughout the day and in many ways it contributed to the very long time spent on the hill (eleven hours in total).

Our friends, however, were quite unruffled by the long delays caused by our more technically minded colleagues. However, it was clear they had a job to do and I must say I was quite impressed at their fortitude and determination to carry so much equipment up the mountain. Before the final rise, one or two of the crew began to struggle and we offered to carry some of the gear although the cameraman wouldn't part with his fancy camera. He obviously wished to be relieved of its weight, but he muttered something about cost and insurance so we left him to struggle valiantly alone.

The summit was shrouded in mist and a cold breeze might normally have dampened spirits and forced a hasty retreat, but the Milton Mountaineers were not deterred. Led by their leader George, the entire group surrounded the trig point and gave a couple of renditions of the Milton Mountaineers song. For me it was a happy, but very moving and poignant experience. I think we all felt extremely humble at our friends' achievement, for even though we had taken our time and broken the walk into small sections, we had still climbed a good 3000ft and walked a distance of three miles or so over mixed terrain. Many others would find this an arduous task, but to do it without sight is a remarkable accomplishment. And to do it with good humour and splendid conversation all the way, without even a hint of a tumble is quite extraordinary.

The group remained on the summit perhaps longer than I would have liked but again the producer was keen to obtain a good selection of

shots. We stopped once more along the summit ridge whilst the girls were interviewed and asked questions about their aspirations. It was very blustery and essential to remain close behind the rocks out of the wind and this gave us a good opportunity to see the film crew in action. We huddled together – forced to hush constantly like a disobedient group of children – as the interviewer asked Rosaline and Dorothy a number of searching questions. Some were repeated until he and the producer were happy with the answers. There was one question, however, which Dorothy and Rosaline were determined to answer in only one way. When asked if there had been any problems during the day they replied the only difficulty had been the long delays and number of stops caused by the film crew! They stuck to their guns on this one and it was only after the third or fourth take that the producer 'gave in' to their honesty.

We finally began the descent proper but our friendly producer insisted on the way down that we climb back up the hill a few hundred feet so the cameraman could take a good shot of the setting sun. The incident almost resulted in mutiny but, with a promise of free lager and sandwiches on return to Rowardennan we managed a compromise solution.

With the filming behind us and the crew having left us via the Blairvockie track we moved into top gear and sped the last leg from the tree line down to the car park. It was great fun gliding down the grassy slopes at top speed. The girls were euphoric and the pace certainly halted their conversation for a short time! We had a few rests – one when Bruce attempted an impromptu front somersault into a muddy bank – but we still completed the descent in less time than normal.

Back at the vehicles we had a brief chat and

made plans to meet once again. The day had been very tiring but, exceptionally rewarding for everyone. It was a salient experience for me and a day I will never forget for many years. It had revealed to me that blind people are no less able than sighted people and that their disability is more than matched by resolve, skill and resourcefulness. Myself and my colleagues now look forward to joining the Milton Mountaineers on their next venture – Ben Nevis in winter! And we have no doubts this will be just as successful as the romp up Ben Lomond.

ROSALINE (CENTRE) AND DOROTHY (RIGHT) ENJOYING LUNCH ON THE SUMMIT OF BEN LOMOND



SKI OR DIE – CANADIAN STYLE

By Bob Sharp



The quicker I moved across the lake, the higher the icy water crept and the faster it filtered through my boots. This didn't matter because I was lost in a sea of sensations – speed, movement, brilliant sun, cool air and blue sky. At least it didn't matter until I met the tell-tale signs of spring – CRACKS! Not tiny splits in the ice, but wide ones stretching as far as I could see. And they were everywhere. Panic stations. Here I was, over half a mile from the nearest bank and about to face death by drowning – alone and 5000 miles from home. At least I would die with my skis on! I gathered unknown reserves of strength and skill and skated at breakneck speed across the cracks and through the melt water to the nearest bank. I made it, without falling, in a matter of seconds. But the panic was really unnecessary. The ice was not scheduled to break up for at least another month and it was over five feet deep. Perceived risk can be very real on occasions! But this is the end point of my tale. Let me begin on day one.

A brief sabbatical at Laurentian University in Northern Ontario was designed to combine academic and practical elements. I was scheduled to teach a statistics course to sports students, do some research and also sample the delights of Canadian skiing. Initially, I had planned to join students on an alpine course but quickly changed to cross country skiing when I learned of the possibilities. The university is renown for its excellence in this sport. Two members of staff are the Canadian men's and women's Master's champions and several students are world class performers. The city of Sudbury boasts over a

1000 miles of prepared track and the University manages much of this. In addition, the numerous lakes adjacent to the university and surrounding the city provide endless opportunities for freestyle skiing. For readers who are unsure, cross country skiing embodies three broad categories, viz touring/telemarking, freestyle and classic. The first category is a broad one and involves a variety of skills and different types of equipment designed to allow one to move fairly speedily over rough and sometimes mountainous terrain. As many will know, this type of skiing is becoming more and more popular in Scotland. In Canada, ski touring is less important compared to classic and freestyle. Classic technique involves skiing along specially prepared tracks, using lightweight equipment and clothing. Tracks vary according to the degree of uphill/downhill and are usually located in woodland or forest with occasional lake sections. Freestyle is a recent variation of the sport (within the past 20 years) and involves the use of very lightweight skis and boots and the application of a variety of skating techniques. It is possible to freestyle over most terrain – up and down – but for racing and recreational purposes, prepared areas adjacent to classic tracks are normally used. Many forest routes allow choice of both classic and freestyle techniques, depending on the individual's interest and skill.

I attended my first class in typical British fashion wearing tie, sports jacket and lace up shoes, not expecting to ski. I was wrong! Following a quick but informative introduction, we (15 second year students – mostly French

speaking, plus me) moved to the outdoor centre to be geared-up. Here, we were measured for both classic and freestyle equipment (freestyle uses longer poles but shorter skis and no wax) and given brief instruction on waxing. Tuesday mornings were devoted to classic and Thursday mornings to freestyle. The first morning was rather tense. I had taken a course with Blyth Wright at Glenmore Lodge many years before and had skied off and on since, but here in Canada I was breaking new ground. I was very apprehensive about the skill level of my fellow students. Would they be stars or just beginners like me? All was revealed very quickly as Shirley (my instructor for the course – and Canadian number one) and her helpers put the group through its paces. Each session through the course followed a typical instructional pattern – warm up, demonstration of a new skill, student attempt at whole skill, practice of parts, feedback, practice of whole skill etc. As someone who has a academic interest in skill acquisition I was very keen to see how this approach (the Canadian Ski Association method) worked. I think it worked very well.

The first day was enjoyable, helped by the excellent weather and snow conditions, as well as the realisation that my technique compared favourably with others. As the course unfolded, I became used to the pattern: Tuesday – classic and Thursday – freestyle. Each day the sun shone and the snow remained in excellent condition. Every day was very physical, particularly the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



Shewee inventor wins prestigious award

The portable urinating device for women on the go, as featured in the last issue – and, it has to be said, a frequent source of heated and often ribald discussion amongst one team in particular (I did warn the more squeamish men amongst you not to read the article... but did you listen? Ed.) – has helped entrepreneur Samantha Fountain win 'Silver Award' from British Female Inventor and Innovation Network (BFIIIN).

Shewee is an ergonomically designed, moulded plastic device that allows women to urinate while standing up and without removing clothes. It comes in a hygienic resealable pouch and by holding against the crotch directs urine away from the body and can be used in situations where squatting is impractical, difficult or potentially embarrassing, or anywhere toilets are unhygienic or not always readily available – an essential item for every active woman including those who travel, ski, run, hike, cycle, sail, those in the armed forces, pilots, rock climbers and many, many more.

Shewee is just under seven inches long, is lightweight enough to be carried in a rucksack or pocket and can be easily washed or sterilised. It is made with a smooth liquid repellent coating to ensure cleanliness and hygiene at all times and, whether Shewee is used with or without a container, it prevents drips, splashes and bare bottoms. Samantha hopes Shewee will become as indispensable as the penknife or first aid kit for women on the go.

'It struck me how much easier it was for a guy to go to the toilet in a place where there were no facilities or nowhere to squat behind', explains 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'.

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However this is by no means our sole business, we provide residential adventurous activity programmes for both adults and children. These include special interest expeditions and adventurous activities to Europe. In particular to Crete, where we have developed an extensive network of contacts over fifteen years, most of these people are close friends that we climb, fly and kayak with. These relationships enable us to deliver a unique insight to the real country that many tour operators simply don't have access to.

Other aspects of our work involve young people who are socially disadvantaged or are having difficulties in school. We have found that over recent years many organisations have come to recognise the value of employing adventurous activities to enable young people to develop their self esteem and self worth. A high level of self esteem has long been recognised as key, in the positive emotional and behavioural development of young people. Recent studies undertaken by ourselves with young people preparing to take SATS tests have also shown that a healthy level of self esteem has a strong correlation to academic achievement. We have subsequently been able to design specific programmes of activities to target the development of self esteem. In the future we plan to develop our operations in Europe and a specialised centre in North Wales for instructor training.



Polly Murray, Adventurer, Tiso sponsored athlete

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Doug Scott CBE
The First Briton to Climb Mount Everest

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

freestyle days which seriously challenged weak leg muscles. The classic days, which often involved a 5k tour were relaxed by comparison. My enthusiasm grew very quickly until I began to practice every day, some evenings and weekends. Shin splints came and went and my skill level grew to a point where, unknown to me, I had become a reasonably accomplished member of the group!

What helped was the ease of it all. To ski, all I had to do was step out from the main building, walk across the road and put on the skis. Within minutes I would be on a track with access to miles and miles of prepared trails. Blue skies, no wind, beautiful wilderness scenery and not a single person in sight! I slipped into this mode every day and indulged myself in the sounds and sights of Canada. I quickly exhausted all the trails, but repeated them on numerous occasions. I soon became very adept at choosing waxes and improvements in technique gathered momentum. To succeed in any form of skiing there is little substitute for 'miles.' Good coaching too is indispensable and I was fortunate to receive advice from several excellent teachers. Over the weeks I took part in several ski 'loppets' (timed events over different distances, but with a recreational focus) even finishing first in one 5k event. I also helped supervise a 'Jackrabbit' (young learner) session as well as an event in the national ski calendar.

Through all of this, my interest in freestyle skiing grew to a point where I found it essential to ski every day. Towards the end of my stay I was introduced to the thrill of skiing on the lakes. From that moment, many hours were spent skiing at incredible speeds across great expanses of snow covered ice. On cold days (-10°C) the fine snow surface allowed speeds up to 20mph. Technically, these conditions proved very flattering and made for excellent practice. In 24 years of alpine skiing, I don't think there has been a single day when conditions have been as good. In Scotland, ice, rain, wind, cloud and queues are always waiting to destroy ones rhythm.

I skied many lakes, exploring islands en route and stopped to sun myself on hot rocks occasionally. One day in early March was an absolute scorcher. I lay facing the sun on a large expanse of rock and contemplated home. It was just possible to visualise my colleagues in Glasgow facing another dreich, cold day! Such morbid thoughts were easily dispelled and I took off on another leg to the next island. Trips wearing only shorts and T-shirt were a pleasure which words cannot describe. It is impossible to verbalise the thrill of gliding in perfect balance with coordinated skating and poling actions. All of this against a perfect backdrop of snow, blue sky and a myriad silver birch trees. Words can't paint such pictures or describe the pleasure of physical exertion and rhythmical movement. Pain melted easily and my senses filled with emotions. As with climbing, I found myself in perfect harmony with the environment.

March passed very quickly and then, with about a week to go, a high pressure system signalled a rapid and fatal rise in temperature. In a single day, the average high rose from -10° to +10°, so within a week all the trails disappeared and the lakes began to thaw. I scratched around for a couple of days hoping the sport would last, but it was time to hang up the skis and boots for good. My foray across the broken ice was a rather sad end to what had been one of the most enjoyable sporting experiences of my life. Walking away from the lake that day was not unlike saying goodbye forever to a good friend.

A pity the sport cannot be bottled and taken back to Scotland – a fortune could be made. It's a superb sport with so much to offer – easy to learn, no ski pass to purchase. No smell of diesel oil, competition and recreational elements, a sport for all ages, family-oriented. This year is now done, but I plan to return again when the snow is deep, the trails are set and the lakes are frozen once more.

First published in SNSC Newsletter, September, 1993

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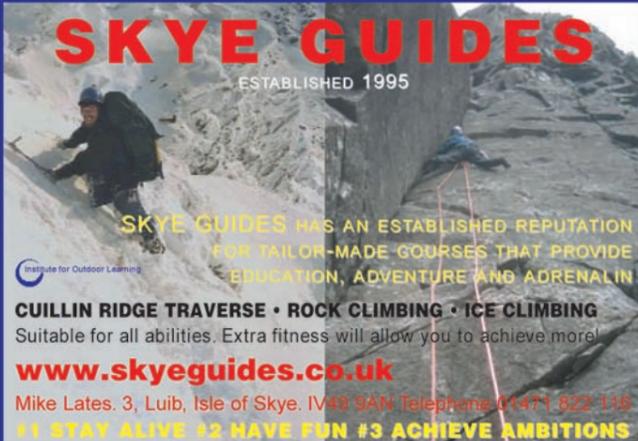
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