

mountain rescue

OCTOBER 2007

ISSUE 22

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EDITORIAL

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ADVERTISING SALES

Pat Starkie
new telephone 0845 337 4727

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)
Advertising artwork must be supplied, ready prepared on CD or via email as font embedded PDF/EPS/TIFF (300 dpi) or Quark document with all relevant fonts and images.

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

Front page pic

Hard Rock Challenge.
Rich Mayfield on Elder Crack.
Photo: Simon Jacques.

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.

Something old and something new...

At the risk of becoming boring I am returning to two old chestnuts that continue to exercise my thoughts. This magazine is excellent in all aspects bar one. When it was introduced we envisaged it would serve as a venue for letters voicing opinions from all corners of mountain rescue. After a very brief flurry a deafening silence has taken over.

A similar affliction appears to have now attacked the forum pages of the website. Does everyone believe there is nothing to change or discuss? Unlikely. Are people shy of appearing in print? From my experience of MR personnel, equally unlikely. Do you believe no notice will be taken of your views? Most definitely untrue. So is it just lethargy? Or something else? It would be good to know.

Secondly there remain those who believe that the MRC has a close relation to the white elephant family. This is disappointing especially for the officers who have achieved a great deal in recent months. An excellent conference in Lancaster and construction of the next well under way, great progress with fund raising, greater involvement with UKSAR and the groups it spawns, more effective representation to government on issues such as insurance, production of new medical guidelines and a successful medical seminar and, of course, our royal patron. There are many other activities but if there are things you believe we are not doing then refer to the above.

Two new topics for discussion. Firstly there has to date been a tradition of a low profile by MR at and around the time of incidents. This has echoed the views of Sid

Cross who firmly believed that we should not glory in or profit from the misfortunes of others. Not quite as far as Charles Lamb - 'The greatest pleasure I know, is to do a good action by stealth, and have it found out by accident'.

The comments of Nick Owen (Langdale Ambleside MRT) following the Grayrigg train crash show that this philosophy lives on. There have, however, been other voices deploring the lack of publicity and acclaim given to teams at the time of incidents. Is this a widely held view?

There is no doubt that MR needs publicity to raise awareness of our wide skills and capabilities and to further fund raising but this has been done away from the time of incidents. Do we want to change this?

Secondly I think it is true that in general most teams are everything to all men as far as skills and training go. There has, however, been a steady increase in the activities which MR put on offer. This in turn has large implications for training, time and resources. Water related rescue is but one example.

Is it practical, or indeed necessary, to continue with an 'everything to all men' approach. Should we be exploring the feasibility of some teams having a more specialist role to cover some aspects of rescue over a wider geographical area? This will I imagine provoke some interesting thoughts. I hope we might see this discussed at the coming team leaders' meeting as a starting(or possibly finishing) point.

Something borrowed, something blue will have to wait.

David Allan Chairman

Well what a wash out that summer was, eh? And consequently a busy one for one or two areas of the country - notably Sheffield and Gloucester - as the water continued to rise. Whilst the onslaught of sludge across the threshold of Meadowhall temporarily scuppered retail opportunities for the pre-teen daughters of a close friend (H&M and River Island shutters firmly shut) the shopfitters have presumably had a field day. So it could be argued there's a silver lining to any rain cloud.

Last time, I wondered here whether mountain rescue teams were out in Sheffield. It transpired they were out in force and largely unsung in national media terms. Then came the rain in the south west - and another set of friends en route back from Cornwall to Manchester, stuck on the M5 underwater car park for many hours wondering whether they would ever see their home, or even dry land, again. And were there rescue personnel involved alongside the emergency services? Of course there were. Was this obvious in the national media? Er, no. Not really.

So what's to be done? Shouldn't the national body publicise these things (the argument goes) at the point and time of the incident? Shouldn't the teams themselves do this? Shouldn't the media take more interest in us? But then how do they know we're there if we don't tell them we are? And so it goes round in the same old circle. But when

you're wading up to your waist in filthy water, I guess the last thing on your mind might be punching the number of the Daily Firefighter into your fast fading mobile phone and giving them a soundbite. It might even be several hours before you get to the point of picking up a phone. By which time the media have moved on. Sorry. Old news.

Yes, our national Press Officer was made aware of the incident in Gloucester with a phone call some time after 1.00am. But consider this. The Air Ambulance, often accused of pipping mountain rescue to the post with their publicity - bagging the kudos as it were - employ a full time PR agency to crank up their fundraising effort. That said, even they rely on reportable material coming back from the pilots/paramedics on the scene. The RNLI, who apparently banged out press releases every couple of hours during the Gloucester floods, have a couple of dozen or more paid staff working full time to do exactly that.

So yes, we could do with being a little slicker with our PR but there's a limit to just how slick one or two volunteers can be 'in their spare time'. Perhaps, at the risk of sounding controversial, we should think about retaining our own PR agency? A couple of grand a month is considered entry level for this sort of thing. Funny how that puts an entirely different perspective on things.

Judy Whiteside Editor

EQUIPMENT NEWS

The next MRC PPE/FPE Equipment checking course will be held on the 21 October, hosted by Oldham MRT. This highly practical one day course is well focused and targeted by Phil Beard to the needs of all MR team members and not intended just for equipment officers. Many who have already attended the programme have returned to their own teams and regions and set up local or team events. For further details of the course, or to book a place, please contact John Edwards via email on jmemr@fsmail.net or call 01457 870734.

EQUIPMENT CURRENTLY STILL AVAILABLE

We have a number of vacmats in stock with a further run due for production in autumn. We also have three brand new, MRC funded Bell Tangent stretchers, at a cost of only £1000. As the last Bell stretchers ever to be made, I'm amazed they've not been snapped up already.

WEIGHT LOAD TEST

I reported last time that work was in place to secure weight load test and service provision. This is still in progress, insurance costs being the main issue at the moment. I very much hope to be able to have this service in place as soon as possible.

NEW LIGHTWEIGHT CASBAG

Work is underway at Aiguille Equipment to produce the new lightweight bag for field trials by teams.

STRETCHER DEVELOPMENT

This is going to be one of the major challenges for MR over the next few years. The Scottish stretcher programme – with the Katie stretcher developed by Jamie Kean – has entered its next stage, with Roger Daynes of Snow Sled joining the project, bringing all of his sledge building experience. We plan to have a workshop focused on stretcher

design and development at the 2008 conference in Stirling. Please do not wait till then to forward any ideas to me directly or through the equipment subcommittee. This project is a really exciting opportunity for MR. After all, the stretcher is probably the most fundamental piece of equipment we use. It's a fantastic opportunity to combine years of refinement and mountain rescue experience in stretcher development with new materials, production techniques and design ideas. We must be realistic with design; the stretcher must be fit for use anywhere in the mountains; and saleable on a world market, otherwise it will just not get made. I am sure there are many team members with ideas and gems of wisdom, now is the time to pass them on.

WATER SAFETY & RESCUE STUDY

One of the first tasks facing newly appointed Water Officer Ewan Thomas is to compile a national statement of

capability for both water safety and water rescue. He intends to speak to every team leader to gather accurate, current information, find out what support teams might wish from their national body, and chat informally about water issues in general. Many of you will already have been contacted, but if any have slipped through the net, please supply your team leader's details so Ewan can make contact – an email address and telephone number would be great. If your team doesn't have a 'team leader', Ewan would appreciate details of the individual who would be able to talk to him about operational matters. Whilst the details will be compiled into the big picture, there will be no reference to individual teams, so there's no risk your team's practices will be declared to any third party. The study is not intended to be judgmental – simply to establish a clear national picture of current practice and capability. You can contact Ewan on water@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

Use your ID

Petzl's ever popular ID is used as a personal descender and, increasingly, as an element of lowering and hauling systems used for casualty evacuation. Rescue technicians are by nature innovative in the applications an item may be used in, and questioning about its performance. For these users, Petzl and their UK distributors Lyon Equipment Ltd have produced additional technical information to help get the best out of the ID. Petzl clearly confirm it can be used in more challenging applications than just as a device for personal use, answering once and for all questions such as:-

- Can the ID be used in stretcher rescues?
- Can it be used as a belay device for more than one person loads?
- Tests show that even with fall factors of up to 0.3, loads of 250kg can be tolerated by the ID and still allow the device to function to allow recovery of the load.

For further information about use of the ID in rescue, or any other item of technical equipment we supply, please call 015396 26250 or email work.rescue@lyon.co.uk

Go with Quo

Mapyx has launched an enhanced version of QUO: the revolutionary digital mapping software. Outdoors journalist Dave Mycroft, columnist for TGO and routes editor for OUTDOORSmagic, says, 'After years of recommending Memory Map I've changed my opinion.' He goes on to cite key features that make the software stand out from the competition, like the ability to set ascent rates for different angles of slope as opposed to taking an average for the height gain over the course of a route – with the route then assessed every 50 metres for a much more accurate timing. Semi transparent freehand shading gives the ability to mark areas of a map for any purpose (eg. wild camp area). The big bonus is pricing – with Ordnance Survey digital maps at less than half the price the competition charges. 1:50k, 1:25k and detailed aerial photography can be purchased tile by tile or in discounted packs for larger areas. Mapyx has an impressive technical history based on more than 14 years experience in geo-data management and mapping. Quo is based on technology used by government, military and commercial organisations. It was originally developed in association with Mountain Rescue in Slovenia, where the software originates.

www.mapyx.com
* 10% of proceeds go to Mountain Rescue using the promotional code 'MRC'.

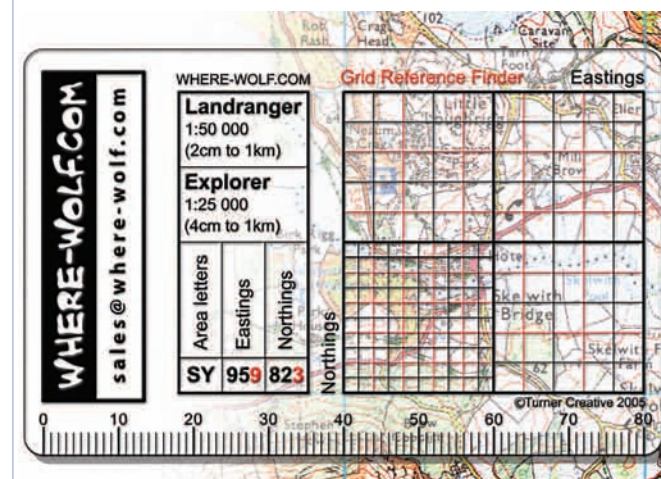
It is really very encouraging the way Basecamp has grown since its launch at the Outdoors Show, back in March. I receive applications each week, often supported by letters praising the work of mountain rescue. It's also interesting to see where the support comes from. A great many of the members come from areas quite a distance from what are the traditional hill walking and climbing areas and I guess these are members who travel to the hills and appreciate the great outdoors. I have also had quite a few letters asking why a supporters group has not been started before. The answer to that is quite simple. Mountain rescue is an entirely voluntary organisation and all those involved are expected to commit to training, equipment maintenance and fundraising as well as going on call outs. Some teams are busier than others but all depend on volunteers to be in the team and the general public to help the team financially.

I decided to launch the supporters group when I stood down as a team chairman in March this year and knew I would have time available to meet this challenge. Six months on, it's great to see what progress made but I'd like to hear from you about what you think about mountain rescue or any experiences you've had involving mountain rescue. In the last issue there was a really interesting article by David Collier, a Basecamp member, about his rescue on Christmas Day 2006. I can be contacted either through the Mountain Rescue website – www.mountain.rescue.org.uk – or by email at neilroden@tiscali.co.uk.

Looking to the future, Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) will again be at the Outdoors Show, 14–16 March 2008. We hope to have more floor space than in previous years and show more of the equipment we use. There will be several experienced mountain rescue people there and, of course, it will be the first anniversary of Basecamp. If you are interested, put the date in your diary and come along to the show. It's a great day out.

Neil Roden

Where-wolf grid ref finder - get one or get lost



The Where-Wolf grid reference finder is a simple to use tool for quickly and accurately giving and locating grid references. Simply place on the map and read your co-ordinates using the handy grid. It's fast, easy and accurate. Used by professionals in the field and as a teaching aid in and out of the classroom, the Where-Wolf is proving a vital bit of kit to all walks of life. Suitable for use on all OS maps and maps with similar scales. Visit www.where-wolf.com for user guides and to buy your Where-Wolf in our secure on-line shop. We offer discounts for large orders and charities. For further details go to www.where-wolf.com. Email enquiries@where-wolf.com or call 01508 481799.

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DATES

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

Places: 24
Date: Sunday 21 October
Location: Oldham MRT HQ
Contact: John Edwards
01457 870734
jmemr@fsmail.net

MR (ENGLAND & WALES) MEETING

Places: 50
Date: Saturday 17 November
Location: Lancs Police HQ
Contact: Peter Smith
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

TEAM LEADERS' MEETING

Places: 50
Date: Saturday 1 December
Location: Keswick MRT base
Contact: Peter Smith. As above.

UK Mountain Rescue Conference

Date: Friday 5 September to Sunday 7 September
Location: University of Stirling, Scotland
Any offers of presentations, please contact David Allan 01229 585 154 or dsaulv@hotmail.com

Team Leaders' meeting topics to date

- Driver training
- Scarborough MRT presentation
- Grayrigg train crash
- Central Beacons MRT presentation
- Water rescue – review of team training by Ewan Thomas
- Discussion on team specialisation
- Two other topics to be confirmed.

So... what has National Fundraising done for you?

In the April issue, we highlighted four sponsorship deals – with Ordnance Survey, Memory Map, Blacks and Burton McCall. Now seems a good time to update you on other achievements of this small but hardworking group. In terms of sponsorship we have, in addition to the above:-

Audi – who had a charity fundraising day which resulted in Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) receiving £25,000.

Goodyear – who have given Mountain Rescue £10,000. This is ring fenced money for the development of GPS and our radios.

Davis Langdon – who provided £2,000 for the production of advertising posters, which should now be distributed throughout the country. It is these posters which have helped raise the awareness of Mountain Rescue and the work teams do.

This increased awareness has led to a number of people approaching us wanting to help raise money. This year alone, people have taken part in events like the London Marathon, the Three Peaks race, a John O'Groats to Land's End cycle and a 500 mile walk across Spain. All these things have helped bring in much needed money and we are grateful to all who have taken part or supported these people.

One of the other challenges taken on to raise money was the Hard Rock Challenge. Back in 1974 a book was published featuring 60 of the hardest rocks climbs throughout the country. In July this year, Richard Mayfield and Mark Stevenson set off to climb all the routes in this book in just five weeks to raise money for mountain rescue nationally. They completed this challenge successfully, finishing in Devon in mid August. See page 30 for Sam Mayfield's account of their effort.

In addition to all this, two more deals have been agreed which will help teams directly. Almost every team has, or wants, a four wheel drive vehicle to help them access casualties and these deals will help teams with their initial purchase.

Land Rover has agreed a 13% discount when buying from the factory.

Toyota has agreed a 16% discount when buying from the factory.

Finally, Basecamp, the national supporters group continues to grow. Annual subscriptions now well exceed £2,000.

Neil Roden



...DON'T BLAME ME. I VOTED FOR A BOAT NOT A NEW LAND ROVER.

LAKE DISTRICT



KESWICK COMMEMORATE SIXTY YEARS OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE
Keswick MRT have produced a DVD 'Call Out – the First 60 Years' to commemorate their 60th anniversary. The DVD celebrates the work of the team, its members, history and origins and the huge changes in skill and experience since their first official rescue in 1947. There are interviews with team members and RAF helicopter crews, an introduction and conclusion by Sir Chris Bonington and the account of a rescue on Sharp Edge, Blencathra – including a very moving interview with the casualty of that rescue, and her partner. There's information on rescue statistics, call outs across the team's history, a copy of the current annual report, a biography of Rusty Westmorland – the driving force behind the formation of the team – and an extract from the Yorkshire Post, dated 26 April 1946, recounting the rescue of Wilfred Noyce. Filmed and produced by Keswick based Fluid Productions Ltd, the DVD which, incidentally also contains a Gift Aid form allowing the team to reclaim income tax donations made to them, is available in many outdoor shops throughout the Lake District, or via the team's website – www.keswickmrt.org.uk.

WINTER TRAINING FRENCH STYLE



MID PENNINE

WINTER SKILLS IN CHAMONIX
With the winter weather of recent years steadfastly refusing to fall obligingly at the weekends, and the increasing difficulties training the team in winter skills, members of **Bowland Pennine MRT** moved their training from the Lakes in February to the French Alps in summer, as Alan Woodhead reports. 'This winter was no exception – very poor with lots of wet and not much snow, forcing us out to Chamonix again!
'June saw a record number of team members – nineteen including two from neighbouring Holme Valley MRT – heading for the sun bathed Chamonix Valley for a touch of the white stuff. Experience ranged from seasoned alpinist through to Alpine virgins. The five days included introductions to ice and snow techniques, crevasse rescue, rope work and alpine ascents, not to mention trying out local food and drink! The plan was for a two day trip up the North Ridge to Mont Blanc summit (4810m) and back via ordinary route and the Bosons glacier.
'After a couple of days training on the Mer de Glâce, Petite Aiguille Verte, Midi Plan, Valley Blanche etc, we geared up and then removed all the things that made the bags too heavy to lift! Changed technical climbing axes for lightweight axes, sharpened crampons and we were ready for the push to the top. We set out in a group of fourteen from the Aiguille du Midi, heading to the Grand Mullets hut, perched high on a rock spur at 3051m. The toilets at the hut are worth a mention as they are a hole and handle (to stop you following it down the cliff!)
'We set out from the hut at 2am, in three groups, seven in total. The rest of the group decided to stay behind at the hut. By sunrise we had climbed most



PETER AND EMMA
PETER WATT. BOWLAND PENNINE
31.07.61 – 27.5.07

On 8 June, members of **Bowland Pennine MRT** gathered to celebrate the life and mark the passing of one of their departed colleagues. Pete Watt, long time team member, incident controller and friend, passed away on the 27 May, following complications after a double lung transplant. An accomplished fell runner, caver and mountaineer, as well as full team member for over 24 years, Pete had been suffering from the increasingly debilitating disease fibrosing alveolitis for a number of years, but throughout all had managed to remain an active team member.
Following diagnosis, Watty toned down his sporting activities and, when he reached a stage where these were no longer possible, rather than give up his mountain rescue and sink into obscurity as many of us would have done, he threw himself into all those rescue team jobs that no one wants, for many years maintaining training records, negotiating access arrangements, completing insurance arrangements etc, as well as maintaining a position as a committed and capable incident controller. Throughout all these activities he proved himself an invaluable team member.
Despite his deteriorating condition, the separation from the fells and mountains he loved so much and the tragic loss of his only child Emma, aged sixteen, under similar circumstances a year before, he never complained or bemoaned his lot in life, perhaps a lesson for us all when we think we are having a bad day. Few will forget the ready smile, the acerbic wit, the seldom missed opportunity to take the mick and the sight of Watty leaning on the front of the Land Rover taking names, calmly sorting out search areas and fell parties while all around descended into chaos; or of hanging round the control vehicle door and offering the greeting, 'Ay-up Watty, how you doing?' to be met with his favourite response, as he peered out from under his baseball cap, 'Shite, but thanks for asking!! Now sod off I'm busy.' Pete leaves behind a wife and a team saddened by their loss, but the richer for having walked a while with such as him.

Simon Harris & Mark Aldridge

MR MOUNTAIN RESCUE RETIRES

David 'Heavy' Whalley (55) MBE BEM has retired from the RAF after 35 years service – almost all of them serving with the RAF MRS. During his career Heavy has been involved in over 1000 mountain, and over 80 aircraft incidents in mountainous areas, he has been a member of the Executive of the Scottish Mountain Rescue Committee for over twenty years, serving three years as chairman and, in 2002 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for Service to Mountain Rescue. The youngest child of a Church of Scotland Minister, Heavy grew up in Ayrshire climbing the hills with his father, brothers and sisters. He joined the RAF in 1971 as a caterer and was posted to Kinloss to serve his first tour. His first application to join the RAF was rejected as, at seven stone, he was considered too light to join. He persevered and in February 1972, after passing the test, he finally joined the team and earned the nickname 'Heavy' that has stayed with him throughout his career. Early that year he had his first experience with tragedy on a search on the five fingered gully on Ben Nevis for a missing French honeymoon couple. Heavy was one of the first on scene and as a very young lad had to cope with not only the tragic death of the woman but also her distraught new husband. That same year, he attended a Viscount crash near Crianlarich with the loss of three airmen, and another incident out climbing with friends. In 1972, he himself narrowly escaped death when he fell 4,000 feet in an avalanche.



Yet these, and other bleak moments such as the Mull of Kintyre Chinook crash and the Lockerbie Pan Am crash – where he admits the scenes confronting him and other rescuers were something he will never forget and took their toll – have never dented his enthusiasm. Mountaineering is his life and he has climbed all of Scotland's Munros seven times and achieved four traverses of the Scottish Highlands, two in winter. He has been on over 30 RAF expeditions from the Alps, Iran, Turkey, India, Nepal and Pakistan and was Base Camp Manager for the RAF MRS ascent of Everest in 2001. Seeing the two team members, Dan Carroll and Rusty Bale make it to the top was a real highlight for him as it was Heavy who first took Rusty, a novice hillwalker at the time, out in the hills when he first joined the team. Heavy has plans to take a year off, possibly in the southern hemisphere and then to write a book on his life on the hills. There's no doubt he will miss it and the team will miss him. 'I have loved the mountains ever since my first hillwalk with my father and the more I have got into it the more I have loved it. The mountain rescue team has a difficult job to do, often in terrible conditions but the elation of finding people alive is fantastic and I'll miss it and I'll definitely miss the troops.'
In a tribute to him, the Officer Commanding the Mountain Rescue Service, Squadron Leader Al Copeland said, 'The RAF Mountain Rescue Service relies heavily upon the professionalism and training of its members, and upon some intangibles, namely character, spirit and drive. Warrant Officer Dave 'Heavy' Whalley possessed these attributes and more, he is an absolute stalwart who has been the force of Mountain Rescue in Scotland for many years, he will be sorely missed.'
In his last two years at Kinloss, Heavy served as a controller at the Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre and, fittingly, his very last job was airlifting a heart transplant to London to save a baby's life. The last call he took before going off shift was to hear that the plane had landed and the heart was on its way to hospital. He was delighted to hear the next day that the baby receiving the heart had gone on to make a full recovery.

Dawn McNiven RAF Kinloss



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of the North Ridge with its six ice pitches behind us. It became a battle against the slowing effects of altitude as we approached 4000m. 'On reaching the Vallot hut, four went on to climb Dome de Goutier at 4200m and three went up the final ridge to the summit which we reached in blue sky, 60km wind and -15 degrees. After a quick photo, we headed back down for beer and medals! The whole route from hut to cable car took fourteen hours, an excellent route well worth considering for anyone heading out this year.'

PARAMO PREMIER RETAILER SPONSOR
ROSSENDALE TEAM KIT

Whalley Warm & Dry have won the prestigious Premier Retailer award for the second time. The win was announced just as **Rossendale & Pendle MRT** members – sponsored by the Whalley, Lancashire based retailer – were trying out their new windshirts on a chilly Boulsworth moor. Congratulations and thanks to WW&D from a warmer, drier team!

NORTH EAST

ICELAND EXCHANGE VISIT

'Ten members of the **Teesdale & Weardale SRT** Youth Section have recently returned from a memorable and exciting exchange with a search and rescue youth team in Iceland,' reports Chris Roberts. 'The ten day visit started with the group being taken on the 'Golden Circuit – the main tourist attractions around the Reykjavik area, which takes in the spectacular Gulfoss waterfall, the



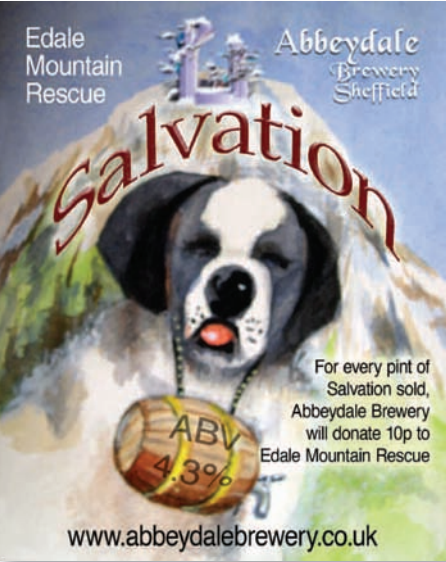
geysers and the site of the ancient parliament. The evening was spent at Grindavik SAR base where the group were treated to a ride over the beachside lava fields in the team's ex NATO all terrain vehicle. Whilst in Reykjavik, the group were shown around ICESAR headquarters, the coastguard helicopter centre and Iceland's oldest rescue team base (a team which boasts two recent Everest climbers). 'The next three days were spent at Gufuskalar – the SAR training centre on a remote peninsular on the West coast. Here the group experienced a session on earthquake search and rescue at Europe's premier training resource. The group were then taken into the lava fields to explore some of the cave systems in the area – this area of caves and volcanoes inspired the writing of 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth' and is where the journey is supposed to have begun. The high point was using a crevasse rescue system to lower and recover the group from a deep cavern which, on exploration revealed the skeletal remains of a family of arctic foxes. Rising to 1500 metres above the training area is the Snaefellsjokull glacier. The group climbed to the top to enjoy the spectacular views, whilst some took the opportunity to practice their winter skills with crampons and ice axes. 'From Gufuskalar the group travelled north to the town of Isafjordur, hometown of the exchange group. Typical of many rescue teams in Iceland, the Isafjordur team are involved in sea as well as land rescue. The first day was spent trying out the team's Zodiacs (inshore rescue boats); some of the time in the boats, but an equal amount of time in the sea – thankfully wearing survival suits which, as many will testify were not quite as waterproof as one might have hoped. 'The Isafjordur team run a lifeboat (purchased from the RNLI) – and it was this vessel that took us on the first leg of a short overnight expedition. During the two hour sailing to the remote, now mainly uninhabited settlement of Grunnavik the group were lucky enough to spot a pair of Minky whales, which was certainly a big high for everyone. 'Once landed at Grunnavik, the party walked to Flaedaryri, another remote settlement and once the home area of one of our host's grandparents. Here we camped and enjoyed a BBQ on the beach. Everyone in the group was impressed by the size and remoteness of the area. From the campsite the view extended to the end of the fjord and up onto the glacier beyond. 'The following morning the lifeboat arrived and the group was picked up and returned to Isafjordur. Our last day in Iceland was spent on the long drive back to Reykjavik – a last chance to take in the awe-inspiring scenery that is Iceland. We had a couple of hours to explore the city of Reykjavik followed by a celebration dinner in one of the city's oldest buildings which, by chance, does a very good dinner! 'The purpose of the exchange was to give the group the opportunity to learn about rescue techniques used by other teams but, more than that, it gave a unique insight into how young

people can work together with a common aim – working in search and rescue. In Iceland it is common for young people to belong to search and rescue teams. In fact, of the 90 odd teams, nearly half encourage involvement of young people from the age of 14. We believe we are unique in the UK in having a youth section. Thanks go to the team members at Isafjordur who made us so welcome and worked so hard putting together such a memorable trip. The exchange programme was made possible by funding from the North Pennines LEADER+ Programme.'

PEAK DISTRICT

SALVATION FOR EDALE

'A grim day in February 2007,' recalls Neil Chapman, 'and I phone Abbeydale brewery regarding an ad for our annual report. A big ad isn't suitable – they don't do vouchers. Disappointment! BUT they want a small ad instead. Great – more money in the team kitty! The phone conversation just gets better though – would we be interested if they brewed us a speciality beer and sold it over the summer, giving us 10p for each pint? After about five seconds of deep deliberation, it was agreed this offer would be a good thing, a very good thing.



'The beer, aptly named Salvation, was officially launched to the public by Joe Simpson of 'Touching the Void' fame on 11 July at the SunFest beer festival, hosted by Abbeydale Brewery at their own real ale pub in Sheffield, The Rising Sun. **Edale MRT** was the nominated charity of the festival, meaning we also benefited from all the unused tokens on the beer festival cards and any loose change people were prepared to donate. 'Now, in my short time with mountain rescue, one thing which has become apparent is the unequivocal dedication of team members to the cause. The beer festival was no different. The hardship suffered by those team members who attended the launch can not be understated – they had to endure blistering heat in the beer garden

with only a selection of fifty real ales to keep them cool. Against all odds they helped to finish the barrel of Salvation in record time, making it the beer of the festival. The biggest sacrifice, however, must be that of the team vehicle driver. A fully signed up CAMRA member, he was counting the days until the beer festival. Unfortunately, his lift home was cancelled at short notice and he was persuaded to drive instead (oh, how we laughed!). The frustration was palpable – standing in a beer tent with over fifty superb guest ales and he was limited to cola – true commitment! Thankfully, the Rising Sun does takeaway so the driver was pacified with a few pints to take home instead. 'The generosity of all those at Abbeydale Brewery (please visit www.abbeydalebrewery.co.uk) – particularly Sue, Patrick and Chris Morton – and Rob, the landlord of the Rising Sun, has been fantastic. They went out of their way to ensure we were given as much publicity on as many nights as possible. They even continued to collect for us well after the festival was finished. In total, the sale of Salvation and donations/loose change from the beer festival raised in excess of £700, all of which goes towards the fitting out of our new rescue centre. The sad news is Salvation has now all gone. The good news is we've been offered a supply of free beer when the new base is officially opened on 6 October.'

CHIEF ON THE BEAT

Derbyshire Chief Constable David Coleman retired at the end of September, after more than 30 years service. Traditionally the outgoing chief always makes a tour of police stations to say farewell to the staff. David did this on foot, visiting every station in the county, walking 159 miles. Through his efforts, he hopes to raise £150,000 to help five local charities – including the **Peak District MRO** of which David is president. Over the years David has done so much to help and support the work of mountain rescue, funding radios, providing blue light driver training and promoting MR work when he can. 'Not many chief constables could be

RETIRING DERBYSHIRE CHIEF CONSTABLE
DAVID COLEMAN WALKS THE WALK



RAFT BUILDING IN THE BRECON BEACONS
PHOTO: CONTEMPORARY MULTIMEDIA DESIGN LTD

found chatting to a team leader in the control vehicle at 2.00am in the morning on their way home from a function!' says PDMRO chairman Mike France. 'A bit of a shock for his officers! And as he is retiring and stopping in the county we thought he would have more time to help us. We believe once a chief constable, always a chief constable and we hope he will still be able to open doors for us if needed and support us with any new legislation that may affect us. 'Along with many of his officers, members from every PDMRO team walked with him at some time over the twelve days and we also used our vehicles to help escort the walkers. The walk set out from Glossop on 23 August with a respectable 17.5 miles to Buxton.

LOCAL MP RESCUED FROM STEEP
MOUNTAINSIDE

Two dozen members of **Buxton MRT** successfully rescued High Peak MP Tom Levitt from a steep mountainside overlooking Edale this summer. The MP had volunteered to be an 'accident victim' in a training exercise for which he then invited sponsorship for the group. Setting off from Mam Nick in the direction of Rushup Edge at 7.30am, Tom was reported missing (for the purpose of the exercise) shortly after 8am. The team's vehicles and equipment were alerted and a search involving three teams of eight walkers and a trained dog set off at 8.30. 'From my position near the top of a very steep slope I could see two of the teams and the dog handler deploying, but they could not see me. They were very thorough in their approach and I was able to listen in to their radio conversations,' said Tom. The first sighting of the missing MP was at about 9.30 after just one brief shower of rain, and contact was made at about 9.50. By 10am a first aid check was being carried out, with Tom pretending to have back pains and a twisted ankle. The situation was made more difficult as the prone MP was sliding slowly down the steep slope and had to be restrained by three people. By 11am, it was time to take the casualty away by stretcher. He was hauled up the mountain in a vacuum bag, splint and neck brace. The stretcher

and its 15-stone occupant were then wheeled or carried back to Mam Nick by three teams of eight bearers before a debriefing, back at the car park, led by team chairman Ian Hurst.

SOUTH WALES

MOUNTAIN RESCUE SUPPORTS
RAILWAY CHILDREN

Western Beacons MSRT assisted Global Challenge UK in June this year, with a fundraising event in the Brecon Beacons, raising a magnificent £17K for The Railway Children. The charity supports street children living alone and at risk on the streets, helping children all over the world, many of whom live in and around railway stations. Last year alone they helped over 24,000 such children. The charity works with over forty partner organisations, with 117 projects worldwide across Africa, Asia, South America and Europe. The role of the rescue team was to man the checkpoints on the first activity of the day. The competitors, armed with grid references, compass and radio, left base camp at 6am to traverse across the Brecon Beacons Horseshoe, taking in the established checkpoints on the way. The team had set up base camps at Bwlch ar y Fan and the top of Pen y Fan the night before. Many competitors had travelled from London, and this was their first experience of the Beacons. One commented that 'the most walking he did was from his flat to the tube.' The first leg of the event was covered by Contemporary Multimedia Design Ltd, who placed a photographer with the team in anticipation of some amazing landscape images of competitors winding their way up and across the ridges. However, this was not to be. Low and dense cloud moved in, reducing visibility at the summit to 20-30 metres and testing the navigational skills of the competitors. All competitors returned to the start by 11am tired, wet and hungry, and planning the next two legs of the day's events – cycling 25 miles around Taf Fechan Forest and local reservoirs, followed by a bit of bonding, with each team making their own raft to sale across the lake!! WBMSRT team leader Jason Price liaised with Global Challenge to ensure all safety precautions

were met and team members were at their checkpoints. Team members were on standby with rescue cover but, despite the deteriorating weather conditions, they were not needed.

SOUTH WEST

HAPPY BIRTHDAY EXMOOR

Exmoor SRT celebrated its fifteenth birthday this month with a display of antics with the theme of 15 to publicise its anniversary. The 30+ strong team has been assisting both Devon & Cornwall and Avon & Somerset police forces over this



▲ NOT TO BE RECOMMENDED WHILST DRIVING...FIFTEEN ON A LAND ROVER

period within their huge operational area, stretching from Bridgewater in the north, through Tiverton in the south and to Bude in the West. The team began as the Devon Search Volunteers in 1992, working out of an old caravan. Over the years, it has grown into its own rescue unit in Barnstaple, with two specially designed rescue vehicles and kit stores in Taunton and Wellington, and been called out 188 times, currently averaging a call every other week. Team leader Phil Sparks said, 'Our callouts are certainly varied. In our time we've rescued a lady with peritonitis from a remote house on the moor when her road was washed away in a storm. We've found numerous

Alzheimer's patients who have wandered off into the countryside from rural nursing homes and reunited children playing hide and seek that's gone wrong'. The team also provide safety cover for numerous events such as The Exmoor Perambulation, Exmoor Challenge and Star Trek.

NEW KIT FOR CORNWALL

Cornwall SRT have just taken stock of their new team clothing from Keela. This replaces the blue buffalo tops and coats kindly donated by Bolton MRT in 2004, and puts the team in the more common colours of red and black. Also in service are new Team Simoco radios, this being the first stage in a project that will see the team able to use GPS tracking similar to the Lakes teams in the near future. Hot of the press is a new moorland safety leaflet that was part funded by Devon and Cornwall police. This will be distributed through events such as the Bodmin Moor Ten Tors and also through visitor centres, and it is hoped it will help get the moorland safety message out there as well as raise the profile of the team. Hopefully this inexpensive approach will also gain a few coffers for the team's planned third vehicle – as the bottom part of the leaflet is a Gift Aid slip! The Base Project is ongoing and it's anticipated there will be some major developments in the next six months, which may see the team a step closer to finally having a place to call home, instead of relying on rented scout huts and the goodwill of local businesses and team members. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, wider news that is not quite regional and nothing to do with SWERA! The Cornwall team and **Dartmoor SRT (Tavistock)** have spearheaded an exciting new trial project with the South West Ambulance Service which will allow the ambulance control room to contact the teams direct in an emergency. Cornwall team leader, Jim Gallienne explained, 'There have always been significant delays in mobilising teams to moorland incidents

involving a known casualty site in the past, due a convoluted system that involved the police control room. This process never even guaranteed a team would be mobilised and, when it did work, would often take between 20 minutes and three hours. Devon and Cornwall Police have fully supported this project and we will be watching very closely over the summer months to see how it works.' Neighbouring teams from Ashburton, Okehampton, Plymouth and Exmoor have also come on board. They will be called through a single 'follow me' type number that diverts calls to whoever the duty controller is. After gathering the details, the appropriate team will be mobilised. It is anticipated that, in the early stages, there will be a couple of calls which may not be appropriate for the teams, but the controllers are happy to provide advice and guidance to the ambulance service and will be reviewing each call.

DRG TRAINING WEEKEND

Dartmoor Rescue Group invite all members of rescue teams to their annual training weekend – set for 16-18 November at Okehampton Battle Camp (SX 595 930) – to share skills and have some fun. This year it is planned to have a major search and rescue exercise on the Saturday, with helicopters from the Royal Navy based at Culdrose and the RAF at Chivenor. On Sunday there will be an orienteering exercise. If you haven't experienced one of their weekends before, you will need to go prepared for two days out on Dartmoor in whatever the weather throws at you. The food is good, the accommodation modern and the company friendly. All for just £10 for SWERA members, £15 for non SWERA members. The camp is a military establishment and on arrival, or while at the event, you should identify yourself as being 'on a Dartmoor Rescue training weekend.' If you would like to join the weekend, contact Phil Hayter on drg.gensec@blueyonder.co.uk for further details.

Unique course allows flexible study for emergency services personnel

September saw the start of a unique course designed specifically for search, rescue, emergency services and public services personnel, in a full-time or voluntary role. The Rescue and Emergency Management Foundation Degree, run by Cornwall College in partnership with the University of Plymouth, has been developed in conjunction with rescue and emergency services groups to provide quality options for continuous professional development and career progression. Ben Spurway, Programme Manager explains, 'The only course of its kind in the country offers rescue services personnel the chance to study in a flexible way, to suit their working environments and career aspirations. There are fourteen modules in total including leadership planning, patient assessment, managing incidents and emergency situations and patient management from hostile environments. Each module can be completed in its own right, or a portfolio of work can be built by completing all relevant modules from the Foundation Degree. Depending on the number of modules completed, emergency services personnel could be awarded with a National Certificate or a Foundation Degree.' Based at Cornwall College's Lusty Glaze beach site in Newquay, the course is structured on a remote learning basis, so is suitable for people employed anywhere in the country. Study will be carried out using a variety of methods including work

based learning, practical workshops and short courses. Some study will need to take place on site at Lusty Glaze. If you would like more information on either of the courses mentioned above please call us on 01209 616161 or email uni@cornwall.ac.uk



NORTH WALES

LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS ON A BIKE

NEWSAR team members Heather Tansley and Ann Parry have just completed a gruelling 1000+ mile cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats on behalf of **North East Wales SRT**. Cycling an average of 70 miles a day, and joined by a friend, Carol Davies, the girls took two weeks to get from one end of the country to the other. After completing last year's challenge, the West Highland Way, Heather and Ann were wandering around a bookshop when they spotted a guide book on the Land's End to John O'Groats cycle ride. They each bought a copy of the book and shortly after agreed to carry out the challenge this year. When Carol heard what they were doing she jumped in feet first and agreed to take part in her first endurance challenge. Training for the trip took twelve months, starting with gentle rides around Flintshire and Wrexham, building up to tackling every hill in the area before heading out on long distance rides to Pembroke (186 miles) and Buxton. On 15 August, the girls travelled down to Cornwall ready to start their mammoth journey on the 17th. Day One was spent trying to get used to cycling as a trio as all training had been done either solo or in pairs. The three girls got through Day Two with relative ease, despite the warnings of its difficulty from both the guide books and people who'd done the challenge themselves. Day Five saw the departure of Carol, who was forced to pull out after aggravating an old knee injury. Carol was devastated to have to give up but felt it was the right thing to do as she was slowing Heather and Ann down. They were sad to see her go and missed her at the very end. On Day Eight, the girls were given an escort through the roadworks on the busy A74, just outside Gretna, as they had missed the No Cycle sign!! For Heather, Days Nine and Ten were quite difficult. Finding it physically tiring, she began to doubt whether she would actually complete the challenge, something which came as a shock for Ann who had never known her to consider giving anything up. With a decision made to try to cut out as many miles as possible, a chat with NEWSAR's training officer and the thought of crossing Rannoch Moor, Heather recovered from her low spirits and started to see that the end of the challenge was in sight. Arriving at John O'Groats on Day Fourteen, you would have thought Heather and Ann would've had enough of their bikes but no! After a short celebration, photos and a hot chocolate, they hopped back on to cycle the extra 15 miles to Dunnet Head, the most northerly point of the island. The so called 'summer' took its toll on the girls with the rain and the wind making cycling difficult on some days but their spirits were lifted by friends joining them for a couple of days cycling and also meeting up at the end of the day. Heather and Ann felt a huge sense of pride and achievement (and relief) in completing this 1000 mile journey but both have said that any future challenges will be on foot in the mountains and not on two wheels along A-roads!

All along the route people stopped to speak to the girls about their cycle challenge and donate money (even when they were trying to spend a penny themselves!). Although we don't have a final total just yet, all the money raised will go towards buying personal issue radios for the team. Full details of the challenge and photos can be found at www.newsar.org.uk.

Becky Waudby



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AUGUST 07



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As a result BELLS have achieved remarkable rescues in remarkable circumstances.

Such as from Tower Bridge in London where a PC was able to throw his BELL directly to a suicide victim who would have otherwise have been swept quickly away and caught by the undertow. A throw-bag would not have been of any use because the parapet would have prevented the victim being seen.

Another rescue repeated by the Essex Constabulary in 2005 was achieved by a PC who waded into the sea at Tendring up to his shoulders before throwing the BELL to reach a drunken girl attempting suicide.

A remarkable rescue achieved many years ago was of two men attempting a dual descent of Niagara Falls in a barrel which broke up and stranded them on a small submerged island. A US Coast Guard helicopter failed to be of help because of its down draught and a New York Fire Brigade ladder proved too short to reach them. Ultimately a BELL was found and thrown

and allowed a stronger rope to be hauled in with which they were saved.

These three contrasting rescues highlight how the simple fact that BELLS are so easy to throw to achieve their remarkably long distance allows rescues to be achieved which might not have been achieved if they had not been so easy to use and stow!



QUARTERLY INCIDENT REPORT FOR ENGLAND AND WALES APRIL-JUNE 2007

The following is a listing of the number of incidents attended by MR teams in England and Wales during the period from 01/04/2007 to 30/06/2007. 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	03/04, 08/04, 31/05, 03/06
Coniston	09/04, 15/04, 12/05, 01/06, 02/06, 06/06, 12/06 19/06, 23/06
Duddon & Furness	14/05, 15/06, 24/06
Kendal	02/04, 07/04, 26/04, 13/05, 26/05, 06/06, 09/06 15/06, 16/06
Keswick	03/04, 07/04, 08/04, 15/04, 15/04, 17/04, 19/04 25/04, 28/04, 28/04, 01/05, 11/05, 12/05, 13/05 15/05, 21/05, 22/05, 23/05, 28/05, 30/05 30/05, 30/05, 31/05, 04/06, 07/06, 08/06, 10/06 11/06, 11/06, 16/06
Kirkby Stephen	23/05, 12/06
Langdale Ambleside	02/04, 05/04, 05/04, 09/04, 26/04, 28/04, 03/05 05/05, 08/05, 13/05, 17/05, 23/05, 26/05, 26/05 28/05, 06/06, 08/06, 13/06
Patterdale	11/04, 17/04, 22/04, 22/04, 24/04, 24/04, 25/04 29/04, 30/04, 03/05, 04/05, 14/05, 15/05, 03/06 24/06
Penrith	04/04, 08/04, 25/04, 11/05, 23/05, 30/05
Wasdale	08/04, 16/04, 17/04, 17/04, 25/04, 28/04, 28/04 28/04, 04/05, 07/05, 14/05, 14/05, 26/05, 11/06 14/06, 15/06, 16/06, 17/06, 24/06

Mid-Pennine

Bolton	01/04, 06/04, 06/04, 07/04, 07/04, 29/04, 03/05 04/05, 05/05, 06/05, 12/05, 13/05, 16/05, 23/05 09/06 11/06, 23/06
Bowland Pennine	06/04, 08/04, 19/04, 20/04, 27/04, 05/05, 05/05 25/05, 28/05, 10/06, 14/06, 16/06, 26/06
Calder Valley	04/03
Holme Valley	08/04, 27/05, 30/06
Rossendale & Pendle	01/04, 07/04, 10/04, 13/05, 21/05, 26/05, 27/05 30/05, 02/06, 19/06, 24/06, 26/06

NE England

Cleveland	10/04, 15/05, 09/06, 16/06, 23/06
Northumberland NP	11/04, 20/05, 26/05, 09/06, 16/06, 16/06, 18/06
North of Tyne	11/04, 20/05, 26/05, 09/06, 16/06, 16/06, 18/06
Teesdale & Weardale	06/05, 20/05, 11/06, 16/06, 24/06

North Wales

Aberglaslyn	19/05, 05/06
Llanberis	08/04, 29/04, 02/05, 05/05, 07/05, 09/05, 11/05 12/05, 16/05, 26/05, 05/06, 05/06, 05/06, 08/06 22/06
North East Wales	02/04, 07/04, 21/04, 02/05, 13/05, 20/05, 20/05 27/05, 27/05
Ogwen Valley	05/04, 28/04, 05/05, 06/05, 12/05, 12/05, 21/05 26/05, 29/05, 01/06, 02/06, 10/06, 16/06, 23/06 23/06

Outward Bound Wales	02/04, 02/05
South Snowdonia	05/06, 05/06, 20/06
Snowdonia Nat Park	08/04, 06/05, 07/05, 05/06

Peak District

Buxton	04/04, 17/04, 17/05, 23/05, 10/06, 17/06, 17/06 29/06
Derby	15/04, 28/04, 29/04, 04/05, 05/05, 13/05, 30/05 01/06, 24/06
Edale	04/04, 05/04, 06/04, 11/04, 14/04, 17/04, 26/04 04/05, 05/05, 15/05, 17/05, 20/05, 23/05 25/06
Glossop	27/05
Kinder	01/04, 07/04
Oldham	01/04, 01/04, 03/05, 07/05, 22/05, 23/05, 27/05 09/06, 19/06, 24/06, 29/06
Woodhead	05/04, 27/05, 25/06

South Wales

Brecon	08/04, 20/04, 02/05, 07/05, 11/05, 13/05, 15/05 17/05, 23/05
Western Beacons	20/04, 25/04, 07/05, 13/05, 17/05
Central Beacons	08/04, 20/04, 29/04, 07/05, 13/05, 17/05
Longtown	02/05

South West England

Cornwall	04/04, 12/04, 23/04, 28/04, 06/05, 11/05, 11/05 16/05, 07/06
Dartmoor	23/04, 30/06
Exmoor	19/04, 21/04, 25/04, 11/05, 14/05

Yorkshire Dales

CRO	01/04, 02/04, 07/04, 08/04, 09/04, 15/04, 08/05 18/05, 21/05, 01/06, 03/06, 09/06, 09/06, 20/06 29/06
Upper Wharfedale	15/04, 30/04, 05/05, 14/06

RAF

RAF Valley	02/05, 05/06, 16/06
RAF Leeming	15/05, 16/06

SARDA

SARDA (England)	06/04, 11/04, 21/04, 25/04, 04/05, 11/05, 11/05 20/05, 21/05, 26/05, 27/05, 16/06
SARDA (Lakes)	03/04, 14/05, 12/06, 15/06
SARDA (Wales)	28/04, 02/05
SARDA (South Wales)	25/04, 29/04, 17/05

Non specialists (Non MR)

	20/06
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Coastguard Personnel

	25/04
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Support Mountain Rescue

Now you can support mountain rescue and benefit all the teams in England and Wales. For £24 per year for a single membership, £42 for joint membership you will receive a Supporter's badge, car sticker and four issues of Mountain Rescue Magazine – January, April, July and October – delivered direct to your door.

Interested? Fill in the form below and return to Neil Roden White Cottage, 9 Main Road, Grindleford, Hope Valley, Derbyshire S32 2JN

Yes, I am interested in supporting Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) – please send me details of Support Membership.

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone number	
Email address	

Incident report... the tales behind the stats...

The Peak District, like all other regions within England and Wales provides an essential service, not only to walkers and climbers, but also to our local community. Monday 25 June was one of these occasions.

At 1830hrs, as Woodhead MRT team leader, I was in conversation with South Yorkshire Police re a search that was unfolding for a young lad who had fallen into a swollen river in Sheffield. The police were also concerned with the developments of some local flooding. I informed the police liaison officer the team had a training meeting that evening so if they needed assistance I'd be at HQ. The police needed to review what was developing, if the team was needed for the search and what would be a good RV point. They also needed to look at how else mountain rescue could help with local flooding.

Like most other areas in the UK in June, it never stopped raining. Locally it had rained heavily over the weekend and all day on Monday. When you live in the Pennines it often rains all weekend, so we had no idea what was going on in Sheffield and the surrounding areas, or the scale of what we would see later that night. The month of June was one of the wettest on record in Britain with average rainfall across England more than double the average. It was Sheffield's wettest ever rainfall – it should have been about 72.6mm for the month, South Yorkshire on that Monday got 77mm in 24 hours.

At 19.00hrs Woodhead MRT received a call from Silver Command South Yorkshire Police. In 38 years in mountain rescue I have never had a call from Silver Command! They asked if we could help with the evacuation of residents from an old persons home at Station Street, Deepcar due to flooding.

We all know this is not the normal type of work MR teams would undertake, but a local disaster was unfolding – do I say no? At the conference last year, I listened with interest to the pitfalls Penrith team went through with the Carlisle floods. Did I remember the good advice given to us in the lecture? No, not until my team were washing down kit the next day, and having meaningful discussion about just what we had been asked to do, what we had been standing in last night.

We, like all of you, train and carry equipment such as life jackets and safety lines, to search the side of moving water around lakes and water courses. Dry suits are all personal kit. Should we be committing to this type of work? Should I, as a team leader, be letting my members go into this environment? Should we in the PDMRO have a regional water rescue team (like SARDA) with specialist equipment? Should we have funding from others to buy this specialist kit? Are we are now expected to undertake this work? Or should we walk away – we are mountain rescue not water rescue. If I said yes to these questions and had a swift water team as we saw in July, we could have sent them to help our colleagues in Gloucestershire.

Hundreds of people were trapped in their

homes and offices as floods swept through Sheffield that night in June. More than 1,200 homes were affected. At the peak of the floods, 52 schools were closed affecting 24,000 children. About 1,400 people spent the night in emergency accommodation and large parts of the city were left without power.

Following the Deepcar incident, Woodhead were asked to move to Winn Gardens at Middlewood, Sheffield. It was reported to us that 200 people were trapped in their homes, the water was about 8 feet deep, both the fire service and police underwater teams were on site but needed more help. By now a lot of the landline phones were not working. I had been talking to the police from my mobile but, because of increased usage of the mobile network, at times I couldn't connect to anyone. A local police officer became my contact point from his airways set. He was tasked to stop with me and be my contact to Silver Command. I could see this incident was getting bigger so I changed my role from team leader to Mountain Rescue Incident Controller and called Edale MRT to assist. Because of the mobile phone problems, even that was easier said than done. The fire service had the Winn Gardens job in hand when we arrived. Due to the amount of 999 calls coming in to the rescue services, and the delays in responding, there was a little confusion as to just what was expected of us.

Mountain rescue was now being asked to attend job on job, I asked Edale team to meet me at the Wicker, Ladies Bridge in Sheffield, where we were asked to check that no people were still in the properties. En route to the Wicker, Edale had been flagged down by the public and evacuated a pregnant lady from her home.

Woodhead team had now split, with one of my deputies leading each section, four 4x4 vehicles, including WMRT Mobile Two and eight members moved onto Pennistone Road, Sheffield to help a trapped motorist. A small group were back in Deepcar taking people to the local church, pulling cars out of the water assisting the community where they could. The rest of my team, plus Mobile One, moved to an old people's home at Rotherham, to what would become a six hour operation. They had 42 people trapped in the building, with no lights or heating and the water lapping the beds of the people on the ground floor. One person who had just had a hip operation was airlifted by Sea King to hospital.

Now to our next problem – it took lots of phone calls, the next by me and my equipment officer to find our kit. When we're on the hill we know just where it's gone, bits of ours were going all over South Yorkshire. At one time, we had three airframes picking people up and dropping them at different hospitals and Sheffield airport, we saw a stretcher, cas bag and vacmat disappear into the night sky, only to be found three days later.



Edale MRT were joined by two ex-military drivers from Glossop team. They were asked to move to Bridge Street, for a 70 year old male trapped on the second floor, then retasked from here to assist people trapped at a car dealership on Silverdale Street. They located two persons and evacuated two more from Atlas North Industrial Estate, Brightside. Team members then went to standby at South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Training School ready for the Ulley dam bursting – we were told not 'if it bursts' but 'when it bursts'.

The 4x4 team from Woodhead were asked to recover the body of the young male who had fallen in the water at Millhouse Park. They were stood down from this call to assist four people in a house at Millsands, Sheffield, then went to standby at police HQ at Sheffield airport, in readiness for Ulley dam.

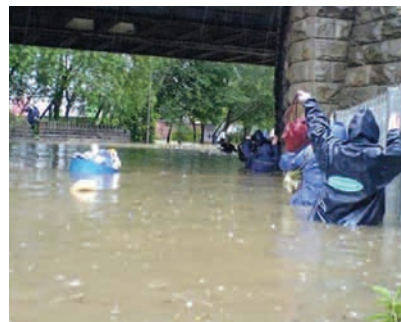
The dam was built in 1874 and holds more than 455,000 cubic metres (100m gallons) of water. It is 14 metres (46ft) deep. Firefighters were trying to drain the reservoir, which is less than a mile from the M1 and near a power station that serves most of Sheffield. A huge operation was undertaken to pump out water from the reservoir and reinforce the embankment.

This call out was a ten hour operation for the Woodhead and Edale teams, with many people helped and rescued. We stood down 05.00am on Tuesday morning, just in time for team members to get home, have a shower and go to work, but this is all part of the service we give to our local community.

I know we will be called again some day to this type of job. I need to answer many of the questions raised so a meeting is planned of the PDMRO team leaders and team members with water experience so we can move this forward. I can see the merit of a skilled water rescue team, with members taken from each of the PDMRO teams, specialist equipment and training for this work. When formed they could move to assist with any inland water incident with the UK if needed. Times have changed for mountain rescue teams.

Mike France

Incident Controller & PDMRO Chairman



On Friday 20 July, members of Avon & Somerset SRT (ASSAR) deployed to assist the emergency services due to serious flooding in Gloucestershire.

Working around water is a new skill for us and team members have recently undergone basic water safety training and been equipped with buoyancy aids, helmet, throw bags and other specialist equipment. We met at the tri-service control centre in Gloucestershire and waited to be deployed. The route to the centre along the M5 was hampered by two localised floods – an insight to what was in store.

The first deployment was to assist with the safe removal of victims seen wading chest deep in a flooded field. We got moving and immediately hit a large flooded section of road. As we passed a stranded vehicle, we could see a distressed pregnant female waving at us. One rescuer checked on her welfare and we towed the vehicle out of the flood with our 4x4.

We were then retasked to check on the occupants of stranded cars on the Gloucestershire ring road. We set out in our vehicles and spent several hours checking and assisting stranded members of the public to safety. One of the units was tasked to assist police in assessing a house cut off by the flood to check on the welfare of an elderly lady.

At about 0200hrs, as the checks of the

vehicles were completed, we were tasked to Tewkesbury following a report of a large number of victims cut off by the flood. Most of the route to the incident was flooded and even the 4x4s had difficulty negotiating the water.

One of our 4x4s made good speed, arrived 30 minutes prior to the others and immediately deployed. As the rest of the team arrived they were tasked to locate a male reported to be hanging from a tree over the floodwater. A joint group of fire and rescue officers, ASSAR members and a unit from the Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA) searched for this male for several hours but were unable to locate him.

A large amount of the flood water covering Tewksbury was being channelled through a small bridge and car park on the Gloucester Road. We stationed members at this point to look for anyone in the water and render help if required.

As we were stood down from this area at about 0630hrs, we received a call that persons were trapped in a car in moving floodwater. We responded and started a search, to find the incident was a result of miscommunications, not surprising at the end of a night where the emergency services took 1800 emergency 999 phone calls, over 1000 people were rescued or relocated through the floodwater and £55,000,000 of damage was caused!

Mike Loveless
Avon & Somerset SRT

South West

The day started as any other would but will stay with me for the rest of my life as truly remarkable.

I left work at 4pm for the twenty minute drive home from Dursley to Gloucester. There was a steady drizzle of rain but I thought nothing of it until I heard the bottom of Tait Hill and part of the A38 was closed due to flooding. Things started to hit home during a frustrating two hour journey along an A38 flooded in several places. And later, with an answerphone message on my mobile from mum saying she was stuck on the M50 and it looked like she was going to be sleeping in the car overnight.

When my phone beeped a text alert – 'STANDBY – the team may be called out later to assist with problems caused by the bad weather in Gloucestershire' – the realisation hit. Something seriously untoward was going on. My first thought was to contact the CROs. If I'd taken two hours to travel 15 miles, how long would it take the rest of the team to come up from Bristol and Cheddar? Was I to be the sole representative of ASSAR and how was I supposed to be any good as a one person team? I got hold of our team leader and

informed him of the road situation – A38 flooded and M5 at a complete standstill. Then I tried another CRO – told him the same thing. I was told we were now active and to get round to Tri-Services in Quedgeley, just round the corner from me.

Q99 was in the air and feeding film footage back in. The major roads into Gloucester were completely blocked, with cars and trucks unable to go anywhere because water was rising so quickly. Fear crept in at this point – I was looking at a major problem and listening to police dealing with requests for help from numerous people trapped in cars with no water or warmth.

I guess there were two major thoughts going through my head. Was my mum going to be okay? How on earth do I get the guys here quicker to help? And then the M5 got closed – now they only had the A38 to go along. At least I could feed info to the team. I had a conversation with one of the policemen who looked like he was in control. Can you give our guys permission to use their blue lights? Eventually I got a yes. All I knew was if they got to me we could get tasked and then at least I could do something. And so the night started.

Peak District

Incident report... the tales behind the stats...

I was tasked to SX – our first response vehicle – with Duncan Massey, one of our CROs and a First Responder. Can you get us to the Forest of Dean? Sort of. Excellent. We have two patients requiring transfer to Gloucester Hospital. Okay, so we can get to the forest but how are we going to get back? No time to think, time to move. Adrenaline surge. Let’s go and help some people.

It was the first time I'd been in a blue light vehicle with lights going and being driven down a motorway at over 100mph. What an experience!! It feels pretty exhilarating sitting in a vehicle driving at that speed but the concentration required is phenomenal. We adopted a two man crew – Dunc driving and me alerting him to any potential drivers pulling out into our lane, and navigating. We had to go back down the M5, across the Severn bridge and back up the coast road to get across to the forest. I have to say, I'm not a fan of driving fast through small twisty roads at the best of times, but being driven at speed through them is even worse. My knuckles had turned white and my hand had cramp from hanging onto the handle for so long and tightly. However, what I did have was complete faith in Dunc's skills as a driver.

We reached the hospital to find a patient transporter and a Land Rover ambulance there, all of us tasked to the same thing! The drive there had made us realise that there was no way we would be taking anyone back to Gloucester Royal Hospital. In the end only one patient was transferred to Newport by the Land Rover ambulance, the other patient remaining at the forest hospital.

What were we going to be tasked to next? The forest – the entire Forest of Dean – we were the only ambulance crew present in the area. That was quite a shock to the system – a first responder and a first aider providing emergency medical cover. I can’t repeat what went through my head at that stage. My overriding concern was that I may have to drive SX. Would I be able to do it? I don’t drive at speed if I can help it but at some point that night I might have to drive it with Dunc providing BLS in the back. Was I going to live up to his expectations of me? Dread was consuming me so I tried to counteract it by keeping occupied. The sirens were refusing to work in the SX, a problem not uncommon to Dunc apparently and due to a loose wire. What if I could fix it? Dunc on the phone to control and me scrabbling around the passenger footwell with cutlery trying to get the sirens working. It must have been quite a sight. But get them working I did!

Our next tasking came in. Can you make your way back to Gloucester. No problem – let’s see if we can clear some roads en route. I felt a surge of relief and pride. We were going to be doing something to help all those stranded people and the bonus for me... I didn’t have to drive!

I navigated us back to the A48, a road we knew had been flooded between our location and Gloucester. There was a sense of bizarre bafflement driving down a road, seeing car after car abandoned. We had to check all of them. Blue lights on, alley lights on, we crawled along making sure no one was in immediate danger or in need of help.

I have no idea how many cars we checked or how many miles I ran but I know every car was checked. People were stuck but everyone I spoke to was grateful I could tell them the road to the forest

was now passable. Such a sense of achievement to deliver the first piece of good news some had heard since leaving their destination. What was hard was having to wake people up but I knew we had to. When you peer into a vehicle and see someone slumped there, you can’t just walk away.

We moved from the A48 to the A40 and continued our work there. Alongside the fire service, we got traffic flowing again, with both east and west bound traffic using the west bound carriageway. As we drove down the road, I was filled with trepidation as people seemed to be driving too fast for the conditions.

We made it back to Silver Control at tri-services and were almost immediately retasked. Reports were coming in of a man stuck in a tree in Tewkesbury, along with a hypothermic man stuck in the supermarket in the same town. Police were also receiving reports of a man stuck up a lamppost at the same location. Three lives at risk and no one able to get to them.

The rest of the team met with us – seven members of our team in total plus a paramedic. We set out, SX with me and Dunc in the lead, as I knew the route to get us to Tewkesbury. Blue lights all the way, my main concern to get us there safely but as speedily as possible. The A38 was closed in several places due to severe flooding and on occasions the bow wave was large enough to reach vehicle bonnets. En route we heard the transit was stuck with the boat. Our Land Rover was tasked to get it sorted and we continued with a convoy of three vehicles. We arrived on scene to be greeted by water flooding the road. What struck me was quite how much water there was – up to the windscreens of the cars parked in a car park in front of us.

Speaking to police it was evident that life was at immediate risk. In many senses, there was no time to waste. Only three of our team were present – myself, Duncan and Nige. We donned dry suits and other appropriate clothing, PDFs and helmets. Then we stalled. There seemed to be little reason for it. I could feel frustration rising. If the police were correct there was no time to wait for the boat to arrive, we had to get there and get them out.

Dunc gave us the nod and Nige and I were off wading through the water. It was surprising just how much of an undercurrent there was. I certainly knew we couldn’t afford any slips. Dressed in a flying dry suit for a man over six foot tall, my little five foot frame felt a little overwhelmed. What kept me going was that someone needed our help and there was no way I could let the guys down. We were a team. We were people trained to do this when there didn’t seem to be anyone else around that could.

It was with a sense of pride I walked with the other two round to the back of Tewkesbury Abbey. I knew it would be flooded but the amount of water was incredible. The guys repeatedly asked me where the river was and I gave an idea. What I didn’t tell them was it was only an idea – seeing the whole area covered in water I couldn’t decipher quite what was the river and what was just flood water.

We waded through the water shouting out to see if anyone would respond. Then we heard it. An extremely faint cry for help. As faint as it was, that was it, it was all we needed to gain an idea of location. I knew we didn’t have long to get to the casualty. The voice was so weak, all I could think

was getting them out of the tree and swimming with them to safety. And when I say swimming, I mean it. By this stage, my feet were no longer touching the bottom of the flood plain. I knew I could go no further without endangering my life or that of my team mates having to rescue me. Nige accompanied me back and then went back to help Dunc search the clump of trees. In the meantime, I continued to search where I could, continually checking my team mates. Don’t know what I’d have done if something happened to my guys. They were my team. Keeping my eyes on them and making sure they were safe was somehow my reassurance to myself that what we were doing wasn’t as dangerous as it really was.

We were joined by two guys from the fire service. Our faint whisper had been completely lost. They said they had a loudhailer so I suggested we use it. We picked up on some whistling and followed the direction it was coming from. The fire guys asked if a boat would be useful. Ours was en route but stuck so, if they could access one quicker, we could definitely use it in this area. So, they radioed to SARA for attendance. We continued to move towards the next clump of trees.

Next the fire guys asked would a helo be useful. A sweep of the area would be amazing but, at this stage my heart was beginning to sink. Our voice and whistle hadn’t been heard. I guess if we’d had direct comms with the helo that would have been the first thing we’d have done on reaching the flood plain. Radioed through to them and got them on scene. The only way we could have searched any more effectively would have been to put our own lives at risk.

We continued making our way round the back of the abbey when the fire crew decided they had to pull back. Over waist depth, they couldn’t go any further. I daren’t tell them I was on the verge of swimming.

We left the water and returned to our trucks. The person in the tree hadn’t been found and I felt absolutely gutted. RAF Sea Kings began to circle the area and we decided to re-enter the water. Just along from our entry point was a car park and caravan site. Maybe our person had been swept in there. Then all three of us saw something bobbing in front of the bridge. Panic raced through my body. Please don’t let that be a person. We picked up speed. Dunc got there first. It was a basketball. I can’t tell you how that felt – there isn’t a word to adequately explain the emotion flooding my body.

We progressed to searching the cars. By now my flight suit was half full of water and I was wading through water just above my knees. For me that was the worst height the water could be and I was really struggling. Fatigue and low blood sugar were beginning to get the better of me. And probably the other two as well.

We got out of the water and Dunc insisted I get back into normal clothes. Fortunately, one of the local residents brought us tea and offered us use of their flat. I can’t stand sugar in any hot drinks but that night I couldn’t get enough. On my return, the guys went back in once more before calling it a day. SARA had arrived with a boat and two Sea Kings were circling. There was little else we could do. I checked the guys were fine and chatted with the other five who’d managed to reach our location.

The radio crackled into life and Alan wound up

handling a priority call about two premature babies. It was all slightly crazy – several radios and phones going at once, trying to talk to paramedics, helicopters and hospitals. In the end, it worked and they managed to get to babies and mum.

That was it, relief flooded through. The sun had risen and it was the end of a very long night of exhausting work. Wrong! The police summoned us. Cries for help heard on the other side of Tewkesbury, from some cars trapped in water.

Duncan and I set off again in the SX. The bow wave was incredible, over the bonnet of our four wheel drive. And then disaster. The engine cut out. All I could hear was water lapping against the doors. We were going nowhere and quickly. After wading and swimming in the water, I was now stuck in a vehicle. We tried to restart and, after a couple of failed attempts, it limped back into life.

We made it through the water and out the other side, crossing Tewkesbury and through two more floods, only to hit the biggest one. I was lost, although I didn’t admit it and so spoke to some locals who directed us to Mitton, the area we were heading for.

Turned out the area was right in front of the fire station and a local bridge had collapsed. I looked at a torrent of water and just felt extreme trepidation. Incredibly, this seemed more dangerous that what we’d done earlier. The worst part for me was I no longer had my water gear. It had all be packed into the boat. I radioed through to the rest of the team to advise them we were on location. They were stuck the other side of Tewkesbury by impassible floodwater. I looked at Duncan. There was no choice. He had to go in alone.

I’ve never felt so many emotions at once. Fear and terror flooded through me. I felt physically sick to the pit of my stomach as Duncan started to wade in. If something happened, there was nothing I could do. I knew I had to stay calm, not only because there were members of the public around but if something did happen I needed a clear enough head to deal with it.

I inched my way into the floodwater far enough to monitor Duncan’s progress, but close enough to the vehicle that I could hear the radios. All I could do was watch. After what seemed like an eternity, the fire brigade came on scene, returning from one of their call outs. I was called over to ask what on earth was going on. It appeared the cars had been searched at 1am and we were to stand down. With great relief, I called Duncan back and we made our way back to HQ at tri-services.

It was the longest and most tiring night of my life. All of us were thoroughly exhausted, mentally and physically. We were told because the helicopters had gotten to our search area, six people had been rescued from the trees.

It’s great to know that in some way you’ve helped people in the area, especially

for me as this is where I’ve spent most of my life. We worked tirelessly from 7.30pm Friday night to about 9am Saturday with no break other than a cup of tea brought out by a complete stranger. I look back on that night and say I gave it everything I had and more.

The thing I take away from this is that our team has great spirit. We all looked after each other. We have complete faith in each other’s abilities and complete trust in each other. If I ever have to go through anything like this again – and believe me when I say I hope I don’t – I wouldn’t look for anyone else than the guys I worked with that night. Sitting here writing this, I realise how different things could have been. I don’t know if the others feel it but there’s an unwritten bond now between me and Duncan and Nigel. I would 100% trust them with my life completely, utterly and with no questions asked.

Helen Moss
Avon & Somerset SRT

Helen and I were together the entire night, and ended up doing a seventeen hour shift, driving over 260 miles, mostly under blue lights and through flood water. I was personally in the water for eleven hours and we were credited with over 100 rescues. As an Ambulance Rescue Responder I have 35 medical emergencies against my call sign (Foxtrot Romeo 35). SX is the team ‘multi-role response vehicle’ – call sign Sceptre X-ray Charlie.

We subsequently received a letter of thanks and appreciation from Tim Lynch, Chief Executive of the Great Western Ambulance Service for the ‘outstanding contribution’ made by our organisation to help the people of Gloucestershire, and to support the ambulance service, during the floods.

‘The dedication and professionalism of all involved was outstanding. Without the exceptional partnership and co-operation of so many agencies, voluntary, emergency services, community organisations, government, armed forces – plus countless individuals and commercial organisations – the plight of many would have been so much worse.

‘It was heartening to see how well everyone worked together during a major incident. The teamwork and commitment of all was exceptional. Let us hope that the skills demonstrated during this major incident will not need further testing in the near future. However, if they are, I am personally confident that the combined response will be equally exemplary.’

Duncan Massey
Avon & Somerset SRT

Flood training

This summer has seen a number of very high profile flood incidents, affecting large areas of the UK. These follow on from the floods affecting Carlisle and the Conwy Valley in 2004. Mountain rescue teams have made significant contribution to the incident response, with members working alongside other emergency response workers.

Multi-agency responses to major incidents seem to be increasing, aided by legislation such as the Civil Contingency Act 2004 and, as a result, volunteers are working more frequently alongside statutory emergency service personnel. The effectiveness of multi-agency work is, however, limited due to responders not understanding each other’s capabilities. For example, for a significant number of teams, swift water has been a type of rescue they respond to and have a significant body of experienced personnel fully equipped to deal with water related incidents.

Teams often bring with them a range of extras that can be very useful in flood events. Blue light vehicles ease access to areas, MR comms systems can easily be established at various locations and team members often have a wide range skills, be it medical, search or rescue, that can be applied in difficult access or remote locations. The most useful teams are those that put the groundwork in ahead of any incident, learnt what each participating agency can contribute, established good liaisons with key people and trained together. We may not be able to sort the incident out as a single agency but by working together we can very significantly enhance how we respond and this can only be for the benefit of the real people we are there to assist.

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Incident report... the tales behind the stats...

Catterick helicopter crash Wednesday 8 August 2007.

I arrived at scene of crash at approx 2116 by chance, having left Swaledale MRT (SMRT) on standby for deployment after being passed by blue light police cars responding to the incident. With a team radio in my vehicle, I followed the police to provide a situation report. By this time the area in front of the wrecked airframe was littered with casualties having been extricated by troops on the ground. One fire appliance was in attendance, along with one Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) ambulance and one Rapid Response vehicle. A SMRT colleague (Military Nurse) had reached the scene 1-2 minutes before me and was starting the trauma sieve. I confirmed with him the approximate number of casualties and realised extra help and evacuation was required. At this point we knew of one fatality, one unconscious casualty and the rest were talking/screaming.

At this point I withdrew to my vehicle and at 2120 radioed SMRT control declaring a major incident with multiple casualties, requested two RAF rescue helicopters and SMRT deployment. Then I tried to draw breath, put on my yellow jacket, picked up a pen and paper and returned to the casualty site to continue/complete the trauma sieve and establish communication with the Ambulance Incident Officer (AIO). I started to tour the individual casualties to collect names and more details as to possible injuries, along with trying to confirm the total number.

The two most seriously injured casualties each had a YAS paramedic/EMT in attendance so as SMRT deployed its casualty carers (EMT + Drugs) they were sent to other sites. In conjunction with assistance from 2* military personnel the trauma sort was completed and I decided evacuation priority and destination. There was at this point a brief discussion with the AIO to explain progress to date and agreement was reached that further YAS assets would be deployed to the P2 casualties and that the majority of these could be evacuated by road as soon as possible. In part this was a deliberate decision to manage new YAS arrivals who may have wanted to look after the more seriously injured and lead to reassessment, delay and potential confusion/altered priorities.

At this point it was getting dark, so I asked SMRT control for individual casualties to be flagged out as they were wearing DPM in rough grass. By now I had the arrival time of the first helicopter so toured all the casualty sites checking on resource requirements and explaining the order of evacuation. The fire and rescue service offered oxygen, Paraguard stretchers, lighting and first aiders. These I requested to be held off the appliance in a forward location, with the oxygen and lighting being distributed to all casualties. A decision

had to be made on which two casualties the vacuum mattresses were applied, along with deciding that sending for the further three vac mats through the security cordon to our team base eight miles away (round trip) would delay the lifts and add little to overall care.

From this point until the third lift departed approx 2300, I toured the dwindling list of casualties still on scene, pronounced death on the two fatalities and then gave I/M analgesia for one of the P2 casualties with bilateral fracture upper arms. The paramedics had tried cannulation but he was screaming in agony with any movement of his upper limbs. After ascertaining that they carried Naloxone, I administered 10mg Diamorphine I/M into his gluteal muscle (80kg male, in significant pain, no respiratory distress).

SMRT stood down at 2310 and then assisted RAF Leeming MRT, who had just arrived, to search for a possible fourth crew member with our search dog and then line search the field for any wreckage. I left the scene for bed at 0145.

During the incident I was clearly part of the SMRT response, and not a passing/responding BASICS doctor. My overriding imperative was appropriate critical intervention and packaging for rapid evacuation. Only two casualties required airway assistance (simple adjuncts) and there were enough paramedic/advanced EMT standard personnel for each casualty. two Sea King helicopters inbound, the first arriving at 2205. With prior experience the decision to send the 5*P1 to James Cook University Hospital (JCUH) was straightforward (20 minute fly time), and it made sense to send two *P2 to Northallerton and one to Darlington (NEAS crew). The final P1/2 was supposed to go to JCUH but the RAF in their wisdom took him and the P3 to Newcastle.

The priority/dispatch has proved accurate with four P1s still inpatients at JCUH (the other sadly has died), with only one of the P2 still in hospital (bilat arm #-otherwise well). The two vac mats went on the correct casualties, as did both traction splints. The pre hospital assessment has generally proved accurate with a small traumatic pneumothorax and a splenic injury being missed (both in P1 casualties). All five P1s had left the scene by 22.30. This was a little delayed due to RAF operational issues.

I delegated liaison with the hospitals to the AIO but there was a failure of communication and SJUH were expecting 10*P1 rather than the five that finally arrived. Whilst in a fluorescent jacket it was not clearly marked, nor did I wear a green Doctor helmet (middle of a field). A larger notepad/clipboard would also have been useful, but on arrival at the scene the imperative was the triage sieve, then calling in SMRT and the helicopters and finally getting back and establishing an

effective Medical/Rescue Command. As SMRT has generally in the past been excluded from multi agency planning/training effective liaison was a challenge to establish, and an odd ego may well have been bruised – but only very gently.

Dr William Lumb Swaledale MRT

The role of Swaledale MRT in the helicopter crash at Catterick Garrison.

Team members were completing an evening exercise in the vicinity of the crash site and responded by informal North Yorkshire Police (NYP) request. Given the confusion in roles undertaken on the night it seems sensible to list in detail our involvement, assisting other agencies in any review of events. This list is felt to be accurate but a full Significant Event Review will be issued in the near future.

- SMRT alerted at approx 2110 when 999 responding NYP cars passed our training location, stopping briefly to alert us to events.
- SMRT trauma nurse and doctor arrived on scene at approx 2116, performing a trauma sieve and establishing Medical Command.
- SMRT Medical Command requested two Sea Kings at 2120 via SMRT Exercise Control to the crash location, declared a major incident with multiple casualties and requested team deployment at the site.
- SMRT Medical Command established comms with the Ambulance Incident Officer (AIO) at 2125.
- SMRT Rescue Silver Command established at 2130, meeting with NYP Silver Command.
- SMRT deployed another doctor, two advanced cas carers (EMT + level), one cas carer (EMT level) and further first aid trained team members at 2135.
- SMRT Medical Command in conjunction with unidentified army personnel (*2) conducted trauma sort and prioritisation of evacuation plus identification, marking and location.
- SMRT provided the triage labelling system.
- SMRT Rescue Command established ETA for 2* Sea King Rescue Helicopters, passing information to Medical Command.
- SMRT Medical Command made decisions on final priority classification and route of evacuation for each casualty to definitive care.
- SMRT Medical Command tasked Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) resources via AIO, and detailed the absolute numbers of various priority casualties and confirming despatch destinations and method of transport.
- SMRT Rescue Command established Helicopter Landing Zone (HLZ) and ensured ease of access, established radio contact with inbound helicopters and marshalled the HLZ.
- SMRT Medical Command liaised with North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service in deployment of fire service resources and personnel.
- SMRT personnel supervised packaging of all P1 casualties, providing traction splints * 2 and vacuum mattresses * 2.

Dr William Lumb Swaledale MRT

North East

Keeping it real

Jonathan Hart on the technical rope rescue debate

Over the last few years there has been much discussion within Scottish MR about the methods of 'technical' rope rescue emanating from the North American rescue scene and from the UK based industrial rope access community. If the Lochaber MRT (LMRT) is anything to go by, there must be many discussions and arguments over the use of different types of mechanical devices – whether to use prussiks, which knots to tie and all the various debates about twin, double and single rope systems. All of these debates are reinforced or substantiated by a range of different types of supporting evidence that vary from an array of stringent laboratory testing procedures to purely subjective opinion – 'We've always done it like this so why change?'



LOCHABER MRT AND GLEN COE MRT IN A JOINT TRAINING EXERCISE ON THE RIVER ETIVE. TWIN AND DOUBLE ROPE SYSTEMS WERE EMPLOYED ALONG WITH A VARIETY OF FRICTION DEVICES INCLUDING PRUSSIKS, PETZL ID AND PETZL STOP.

Definitions

These are my own definitions. The differences between the three systems are very important to understand with regard to how they are rigged and the different effects and loadings on anchors, etc.

Single rope

One rope in use, no back up or additional belay line.

Twin rope

Two ropes in use, one as a main line (taking the whole load) the other as a back up belay line in case of main line failure.

Double rope

Two ropes in use, both sharing the main load. Each rope acts as the back up for the other.

At times it seems these arguments simply go round and round, with conflicting supportive data resulting in no firm conclusions. Discussion of this kind (sometimes quite passionate) can be very good for the Scottish mountain rescue scene as long as each new idea is assessed on its merits and introduced at local team level only after it has been thoroughly tested and practised. Scottish MRTs should always be looking at new ways of solving problems and adding to their own experience base so they can safely and quickly deal with the issues at hand in real, call out situations. Generally, there is a lot to learn from 'new' approaches.

However, recently I have been increasingly concerned for the Scottish MR scene in that many influences appear to be driven by the industrial/commercial sector and by the Health and Safety Executive's 'Working at Height Legislation'. The background of real mountain rescues seems to have played a minor role. Add to this the increasingly litigious community in which we all now live, means the Scottish MR community is coming under increasing pressure to switch its rope systems to a standard twin rope approach and to train team members in the use of one standard rope system to the exclusion of many others.

For example, the RAF and some English/Welsh MRTs have now adopted the Canadian system using twin prussiks and a caving lowering device. Whilst I recognise that some teams may wish to 'standardise' their training regime for reasons of member availability/skill level or to be able to provide a common standard for administrative reasons, my concerns stem from the fact that not all the scenarios Scottish MRTs face are more safely tackled with two ropes than one. To adopt a rope rescue regime within a team where only one method is taught and used by team members exclusively means a deskilling of the team's overall capabilities.

Surely a more appropriate approach is to train team members in a variety of techniques and give all team members the ability to adapt to any particular situation? The key issue for team leaders is to make sure that very experienced team members manage the actual incident, on scene, and decide on the most appropriate solution to the problem presenting itself. This is particularly relevant when single rope rescue techniques need to be employed in a rescue scenario.

Now before the rope access community and other folk write in saying I am unconcerned for the health and safety of rescue team members and eschew only single rope techniques, let me assure readers that that is most definitely not the case. For low level crags (eg. Polldubh) and accessible crags with shorter lowers (up to 50m) where all the necessary kit can be easily carried in, I would be the first to adopt a two rope system in preference over a single rope technique. In fact, I would prefer the use of two ropes in the majority of steep terrain incidents we attend. However, at 1000 metres on a Scottish mountain at night in a raging blizzard, with the need to manhandle all equipment for six miles into the site, a single rope technique that relies on an experienced and competent



KEEPING IT SIMPLE ALLOWS YOU TO WORK IN THESE CONDITIONS. LOCHABER MRT ON AONACH MOR RESCUE OF A CRAGFAST CLIMBER.



GRAND CANYON RESCUE TEAM IN ACTION ON A 400FT LOWER TO A CRAGFAST TOURIST. TWIN ROPE SYSTEM, TRAVERSE 540 BELAY DEVICE ON THE BACKUP LINE, TWIN 8MM PRUSSIK MINDING PULLEY AND BRAKE BAR ON THE MAIN LINE. THE CASUALTY WAS RAISED USING A 5:1 PULLEY SYSTEM.

mountaineer being lowered over a corniced edge, really comes into its own.

In these difficult rescues there is a trade off between speed, availability of skilled personnel, the ability to manage multiple knot passes and the availability of equipment. Often, there may not be enough rope for a two rope system. In addition, the second rope can generate hazards from above by creating rock or screefall. Additional systems mean additional personnel and these resources may be unavailable – team members may not get to the rescue scene due to adverse conditions, they may be sick or exhausted, the helicopters won't fly and so on. The experienced team member in charge of the incident needs to choose the most appropriate rescue system, given the circumstances the team is faced with. By adopting one standard approach to all rope rescues, the options become limited as the team's experience in alternative approaches is reduced. In addition to whether or not there is enough rope.

The debate within the LMRT has been going on for quite some time. However, we are fortunate as a team to have many highly experienced people who have been involved in numerous rescue rope lowers/raises completed under a range of different types of terrain and in different weather conditions. The team provides training opportunities in a range of systems and does not standardise the approach to any particular incident. Instead, we try to provide team members with the basic building blocks for any incident and the confidence to adapt to a range of different scenarios. The problem with this approach is how to keep all team members competent in a range of methods when each member's time is limited, and particularly when the team is so busy with rescues.

The only answer is to provide as many training opportunities as possible and always to actively encourage team members to keep their specific skills up to speed and current. The golden rule has to be to keep all systems as simple as possible and to use equipment that team members are familiar with in their day to day climbing and mountaineering recreational activities. Lochaber also encourages team members to carry only items of equipment they are very familiar with and know how to operate regardless of the conditions they may encounter.

There is a small (but still very real) risk a rescue system will fail. Questions will be asked about how the team chose the system in place on the day of the incident. This is an area where I feel all teams can improve. How many teams in Scotland have carried out their own in house system testing or formally assessed the merits of the various techniques they use? Remember you are the experts in your area. If you have evidence reinforcing the choice of any particular method of rescue system, then you are well on the way to guarding team members of any potential action against you. This

need not be an exhaustive process and can be managed simply by team members.

Lastly, it is known that when systems fail they do so through human error and not equipment failure. Surely then, good quality, regular, in-house training in a variety of simple rope rescue systems, which give team members the confidence to tackle any situation is the best way forward and not a reliance on any single system be it twin, double or single rope!



PREPARING CASUALTY FOR DIFFICULT LOWER OUT OF FIVE FINGER GULLY. STEEP, LOOSE TERRAIN WITH A HIGH RISK OF EXPOSURE TO FALLING ROCK. A SINGLE ROPE SYSTEM WAS USED ON THE FOLLOWING SEVEN LOWERS IN ORDER FOR THE TEAM TO EVACUATE THE CASUALTY AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE WITH A MINIMUM EXPOSURE OF RISK TO TEAM MEMBERS. USING A MORE COMPLEX SYSTEM IN THIS TYPE OF TERRAIN SLOWS DOWN THE EVACUATION AND INCREASES THE RISK OF FALL ONTO TEAM MEMBERS AND CASUALTY ALIKE. SPEED AND EFFICIENCY ARE KEY.



SETTING UP THE NEXT ANCHOR, MID-LOWER OF CASUALTY FROM FIVE FINGER GULLY. VERY FEW SUITABLE ANCHORS AND VERY LOOSE TERRAIN MEANT USING A COMPLEX DOUBLE OR TWIN ROPE SYSTEM WOULD HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED THE HAZARD TO TEAM MEMBERS DURING THE RESCUE. ALL PHOTOS: JONATHAN HART

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Before Neil Moss

Bill Whitehouse on cave rescue before 1959

In the last issue there was an article by Dave Webb on the making of his excellent film about the 1959 attempts to rescue Neil Moss from Peak Cavern in Derbyshire. The Neil Moss tragedy was a momentous event which had a huge impact on the nation at the time. Even now, nearly fifty years later, at any of our street collections or similar events, at least one member of the public will come up to say how they remember 'when that chap got stuck in Peak Cavern'. Indeed, so great has been the effect that many people seem to imagine that cave rescues in Derbyshire – even caving in Derbyshire – started with Neil Moss. This isn't true, of course.

In fact underground accidents in the Peak District must have been fairly regular occurrences ever since man settled in the area. It's only in recent centuries that chroniclers (or the press) have been around to record them.

▲ SPEEDWELL CAVERN SOME TIME BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR. BIG MOUSTACHES AND HEROIC POSES SEEM TO HAVE BEEN A CAVING REQUIREMENT IN THOSE DAYS! THE BOAT WOULD HAVE CONTAINED ALL MANNER OF PSEUDO SCIENTIFIC JUNK SO THEY COULD PRETEND THEY WERE DOING SERIOUS RESEARCH INSTEAD OF JUST ENJOYING THEMSELVES

▼ ELDON HOLE



About the earliest recorded example of a Derbyshire caving accident took place in the late 1500s when the Earl of Leicester, an early outdoor pursuits enthusiast, graciously consented to have one of his servants lowered down Eldon Hole to see what was there. The appointed speleonaut, one George Bradley, was duly lowered down in a basket while his companions dropped rocks to frighten off the devils known to lurk there. We are told he was lowered a distance of 200 ells (an ell was about 1.25 yards) which is about 750 feet. Today the Eldon entrance shaft is 200 feet deep so their estimate was generous – even allowing for 500 subsequent years of people filling it up by lobbing rocks down to 'see how deep it is'.

Anyway, when George was pulled back up again he was found to be suffering from something they described as a 'distempered brain' which I can only assume must be an Elizabethan term for serious concussion or severe mental breakdown. Either would have been understandable. It is recorded that poor George died eight days after his adventure without revealing what he had seen, which must have vexed the Earl no end.

Another recorded incident occurred in 1773 when a party of visitors in Peak Cavern were being shown the Buxton Water Sump. Suddenly and without warning, one of the party, a Mr Day, plunged into the sump and vanished. The guide, no doubt concerned about his anticipated tip, reached as far as he could into the sump and managed to grab Day's arm and drag him out. Mr Day, the report continues, 'was speechless for some

time' and then being as daft as some cave divers today he announced he wanted another go. His companions decided they'd had enough excitement for one day and stopped him. As far as I know, this is both the first recorded cave dive and first recorded sump rescue. To complete the saga, I should add that the intrepid Mr Day's next project was to visit the bottom of Plymouth harbour in a barrel. Unfortunately, his visit turned into a permanent one.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many accidents are recorded as having occurred in Derbyshire lead mines – such as the unpleasant demise of William Wragg who in 1764 was working in Outlands Head Mine at Bradwell. It seems he got his thumb caught while attaching a kibble (or ore bucket) onto the winding rope and was drawn up the shaft. All went comparatively well until he was close to the shaft top when his thumb came off, or if you want to be pedantic, he came off his thumb.

To bring us to the latter part of the nineteenth century, there was in 1879 an incident in Black Engine Mine under Hucklow Edge that has passed into local folklore as Dennis Bagshawe's Entombment. There's even a jolly little song about it. The unfortunate Bagshawe found himself trapped both in and behind a fall of rock and he remained there for seven days while local lead miners, hampered by bad air and the threat of further falls courageously worked to free him. In the end they were successful, in spite of having the surface end of the operation hampered by around 2000 rubbernecking

sightseers, sideshows and all the trimmings.

Actually this was only one of a number of similar incidents in the late 1800s. One trapped miner who was also a lay preacher, exhorted his toiling rescuers for several days by singing psalms at them and quoting at length from the bible. I'm not too sure what effect that would have on rescue teams today, but it seems to have worked for him.

During the lead mining era in Derbyshire there had always been a large number of local men used to working in the mines and caves and they were always available to turn out and help in an underground emergency. But by the end of the nineteenth century lead mining in the area was all but finished and the numbers of active miners had dwindled to a handful.

About the same time, though, there was in the Kindyr Club and a few other bodies a growing interest in the area's caves and abandoned mines. In the years up to the first war quite a lot of what was, in effect, re-exploration took place and, in spite of dramatic accounts of events like underground shipwrecks in Peak Cavern (in what can only have been about two feet of water), they seem to have been carried out relatively free of serious incident.

The First World War put a stop to the work of these pioneers but after the war a new generation of cavers gradually emerged and underground exploration was restarted.

Many old lead mines and known caves were re-explored and interest grew in searching for and opening up new caves and passages. Like today, this met with limited success only but gradually the amount of underground passage accessible to cavers increased – for example Oxlow Cavern (a former lead mine) was reopened in the 1920s and in 1934 the Derbyshire Pennine Club dug out the entrance to Nettle Pot. The number of serious cavers involved in this work was still very small and the frequency of the expeditions they could mount was limited by travel difficulties and the logistics of getting sufficient cavers with enough free time to a cave entrance, together with their masses of bulky rope ladders and other kit.

In those areas that people could easily get to on a day trip out, for example Alderley Edge and Matlock, the caves and mines received much more attention, often from casual ill-equipped and ill-informed visitors many of whom were much luckier than they really deserved to be.

However, some weren't so lucky and throughout the interwar period there was a constant trickle of accidents in these areas, including a number of fatalities. In 1929, two youths entered West Mine at Alderley and got lost. The mine was searched without success and their bodies were only discovered by chance when other explorers stumbled on them some months later.

Fortunately most of the systems where accidents occurred in this period were either short or relatively easy and rescues, searches and body recoveries could be carried out by policemen, firemen, ambulancemen, miners and local people some of whom showed remarkable courage and resourcefulness.

The organised caving clubs, who generally operated in larger numbers and with better experience and equipment seemed during this period to have been able to handle any difficulties they encountered themselves (although they too seem to have been lucky).

After the second world war interest in caving increased, often from ex-servicemen finding the return to civilian life rather lacking in excitement. A number of new clubs formed in the towns round the Peak District and membership of the existing ones increased.

Accidents started to occur again and club cavers started to get involved. Two examples illustrate the sort of thing that was beginning to happen.

In 1947, British Speleological Association members who were working in a mine on Eldon Hill were on hand to rescue four youths who had descended Eldon Hole by rope hand over hand only to discover that gravity is mono-directional. If the BSA hadn't been in the area, the youths would have been marooned for very much longer and the consequences could have been very serious indeed.

And then there was an incident which occurred in 1951. Two cavers from Nottingham University went down Lathkill Head Cave on a Sunday afternoon and got lost. When they failed to return home that night Nottingham police were informed. The following morning they contacted the Derbyshire police and the university authorities.

An ad hoc rescue team formed from the university mountaineering society set out for the cave which was some fifty miles (and then at least two hours) away and at the same time two Derbyshire bobbies were detailed to search those parts of the caves in Lathkill Dale that they could.

On Monday afternoon, some 26 hours after entering, the two cavers finally managed to find the correct passage and they met one of the policemen in the cave close to the

entrance. They then subsequently met the rescue team somewhere on the road to Bakewell.

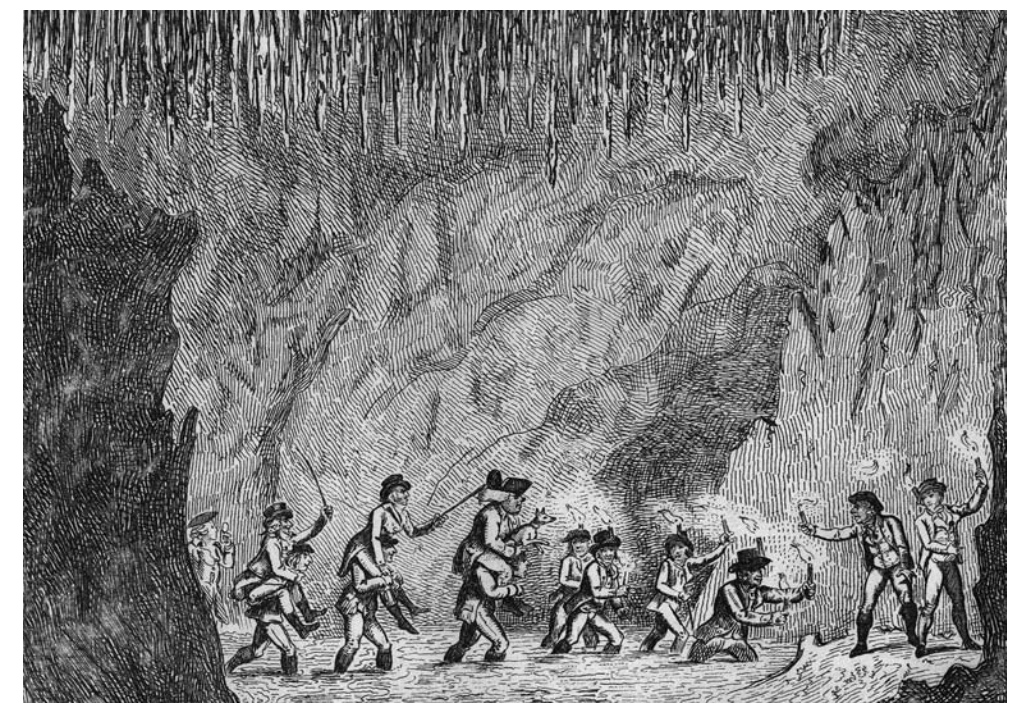
It was incidents like these, together with the knowledge of happenings in other caving areas (particularly the two serious Pen y Ghent accidents in the Dales in 1951) that started certain Peak District cavers thinking. If anything serious happened in Derbyshire there were very few locally resident cavers, there was no system of calling them (or more distant cavers) to help, no system to organise and control them when they did turn out, no equipment for them to use and no training for them in rescue techniques.

Early in 1952, Roy Midwinter, the secretary of the Stoke on Trent Pothole Club, wrote to all clubs suggesting that Derbyshire cavers should set up a cave rescue organisation and he invited club representatives to a meeting in May to discuss the idea. He then had to go abroad, but the meeting took place and John Plowes of the Orpheus Caving Club was appointed secretary and charged with carrying out preliminary work and calling a second consolidating meeting later in the year. That meeting was held on 18 October and was attended by 53 cavers representing most clubs active in Derbyshire and also many individuals. (I think that's probably the most we've ever had at any meeting!)

The day after the meeting, a first rescue practice was held in Peak Cavern and this was to be the pattern in the early years – one rescue practice a year, the day after the AGM. One year it turned into the real thing when three team members got lost in Giants Hole. The press loved that one – most embarrassing!

The initial callout system that was set up in the first couple of years was a simple card index of the names and addresses of individual cavers, copies of which were kept

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



▲ FROM AN ENGRAVING IN 1797 SHOWING TOURISTS – 'THE GENTRY' – ON THEIR WAY TO BUXTON WATER SUMP IN PEAK CAVERN, WHERE MR DAY MADE HIS HEROIC/STUPID DIVE IN 1773 (ONLY 24 YEARS EARLIER)

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For more information call Kate Walder on 02392 659128

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

in a number of Peak District police stations. Its maintenance was difficult and patchy and it was usually badly out of date.

By present day standards and requirements the original DCRO was woefully inadequate and its response time was incredibly slow because few members lived nearer to the caves than Sheffield, Manchester, Nottingham or Derby, few of them were on the phone and hardly any of them had transport. Also DCRO had no money to buy equipment of its own and had to rely on the member clubs to supply just about everything.

Even so it was a thousand per cent better than the complete vacuum that had existed before and, being realistic, it was probably all that was possible or could be seen as justifiable at the time. After all, it has to be remembered that caving in Derbyshire in those days was very different – there were still only a few cavers and very much less accessible cave passage to play in. There were in fact very few known systems of any size. Only small and relatively easy parts of Giants Hole, Oxlow Caverns, Carlsark Cavern and Lathkill Head Cave were known and many other now popular caves including much of Peak/Speedwell system were totally unknown.

In the first few years incidents involving DCRO repeated the pattern of the interwar years with mostly easy rescues in the Matlock and Alderley Edge areas.

Typical was DCRO's first ever callout by the police in November of 1952 when a party of four teenagers got lost in Devonshire Cavern at Matlock after their lights failed. Fortunately it was not a difficult rescue, only involving a couple of team members going

down, finding the missing cavers and guiding them out, but it did reveal some very real problems with the callout.

Apart from a couple of individuals, the nearest available group of DCRO rescuers lived at the time in and around Derby, nearly twenty miles away. Some of them got the call, but none of them possessed transport so the police were asked to help. There was no police vehicle in Derby at the time (policemen mostly used feet or bicycles in those days) and a van had to be summoned nearly ten miles from Long Eaton. By the time it had met up with the rescuers and their equipment in Derby the incident was over.

Afterwards it was suggested in all seriousness by the Derby rescuers that as the police were unable to provide transport, then the best and most reliable way to turn out on a rescue was by public transport, which to be fair was more plentiful in those days!

The twelve callouts that occurred in DCRO's first seven years were all relatively minor incidents and involved only small numbers of rescuers. The system set up in 1952 coped adequately with the demands placed on it and to most members there must have seemed little need and less incentive to expend time and resources in developing the organisation further. Better to get on with real caving instead – after all, there was more to go at with each passing year – Giants Hole was now fully open for business after the breakthrough at the Backwash Pool sump, the way to New Carlsark had recently been opened, the exploration of Knotlow Cavern had started and serious efforts to further extend Peak Cavern were under way.

And it was whilst pushing an interesting lead in Peak Cavern that Neil Moss got into difficulties and nothing was the same again.

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Polo, Pimms and a Prince of Wales

Judy Whiteside on a thoroughly spiffing day out

There's a six foot plus hunk in a black suit walking up my garden path, on what must be the first rain free morning since Noah was a lad, and a silver Audi A8, with its sweet smelling black leather interior and darkened rear windows, parked across the end of my drive, putting one diminutive mucky green Clio and one rufty tufty 4x4 (belonging to my fellow mountain rescuer) firmly in the shade.



MIKE FRANCE RECEIVES A DONATION PLEDGE FROM JEREMY HICKS, AUDI UK
PHOTO: AUDI UK

So this is it then. The moment. No going back now. No last minute excuses. Sorry I have a major fundraiser to organise. Sorry my team mates need me. I couldn't possibly join you for champers, chat about chukkas, mix with the stars, shake hands with royalty. I have butties to make. Malt loaf to slice. Walkers to register. Su Doku to wrestle.

It's Saturday 7 July. A day that should have been the culmination of ten month's graft organising my own team's two biggest fundraising events – the Rossendale Way in a Day and Halfway walks – the day I get to cast off the headless chicken mantle (as the operational team take over) and sit back to enjoy the craic. But not today. Today I'm off to Coworth Park, Ascot for polo and Pimms.

The 5th Audi Polo Challenge is to be in the presence of Prince William, whose patronage of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) was announced in May. Myself and Mike France, chairman of the National Fundraising Group, have been invited to join in the fun and represent Mountain Rescue, one of three charities supported by the Challenge.

According to the programme, guests at this small, exclusive gathering will be warmly welcomed with a relaxed champagne tea before an exciting 19 goal polo match with Prince William's 'Umbogo' team (Swahili for buffalo, I believe) taking on the Audi team, as some of the best players in the world battle for victory.

After the match, and the presentation of prizes to the winning team and donation pledges to the charities, there will be pre-dinner drinks before a relaxed but informal seated dinner by the Masterchef himself, John Torode. Then, as the sun sets, entertainment will be provided by acclaimed 'electronic violinist to the stars' Linzi Stoppard, followed by music from Rick Parfitt Jnr, son of the legendary Status Quo guitarist and a rock star in his own right.

Not exactly your everyday tale of mountain rescue folk and, as we set off up the road – resisting the temptation to wave in a regal manner at the neighbours – it's with more than a little trepidation. Setting aside for one moment the impending honour of presentation to Prince William himself, or that

of being entrusted to represent and speak for mountain rescue on such an occasion, and in such company, but – and pardon me here for going all girly on you – not having attended a polo match before (and the only point of reference anybody seemed to be able to chuck at me being Julia Roberts in Pretty Woman) the thought of what I might or might not wear had quite frankly been driving me insane. I mean, it's okay for you blokes (apologies to my female readers but humour me) – casual suit, open neck shirt, ditch the boots for something a little more elegant, double lick and a promise in the hair and face department and Bingo! you're done. Oh for such searing simplicity!

Anyway, too late for all that now. The deed is done. We settle into the back seat of our chauffeur driven Audi, chatting about the weather and matters mountain rescue, and mugging up on polo – thanks to a very useful A-Z produced by the Hurlingham Polo Association, the governing body of polo in the UK, Ireland and many other countries throughout the world. And yes, Mike did suggest there might be a hint of the anorak about my printing this out by way of background information for the journey. But let's just say I wasn't the only person in the car reading it.

And so, I can tell you, for instance, that a chukka is a period of play lasting seven minutes plus thirty seconds of overtime. That polo players return to the field for each chukka with a fresh pony. And that the word 'chukka' comes for the Indian word for circle or round.

That there is a three minute rest period between chukkas, with a half time interval of five minutes. That a polo mallet can range in length from 48 to 54 inches, according to the height of pony played, and comprises a shaft of bamboo cane and a hard wood head. Although plastic composite shafts are increasingly common.

That a divot is a piece of turf kicked up by a pony's hoof and, perhaps unsurprisingly, that queasy is 'the feeling a polo player had just before a fall'.

And now you know as much as I.

Three hours or so later and we arrive at the venue. Far, far, far too early.

'I s'pose someone has to be first,' says Mike.

'Yes,' says I. 'But we're an hour and a half first!'

So we drop in at a local pub to pass some time and powder our noses. Metaphorically. And then it's back in the car and off to catch a glimpse of another life.

As we climb the steps to the decking and an impressive marquee – a sea of billowing white, ribbons and roses – black clad staff glide through the crowd dispensing tomorrow's headache. Champagne by Ruinart (magnums ever poised for top up), water by Hildon (still or sparkling), orange spritzer, Pimms and Mimosa. And then, as the celebrity guests arrive and mingle, comes the 'tea', courtesy of Smiths of Smithfield. Prawn and salmon pinwheels, cucumber and cress mayonnaise sandwiches, the most delicate pastrami on rye (with just a hint of dill pickle) I have ever clapped eyes on, two sorts of tartlets – tomato and crab with horseradish – bite size (and very moreish) patisserie – macaroons, orange mandalines, teenie chocolate tarts and the dinkiest little scones with jam and clotted cream. Yep, it's official. I have died and gone to heaven.

But back to the polo. Audi launched this annual charity fixture in 2003, when the Prince of Wales was a regular team member before his retirement from polo in 2005. The match stepped up a gear last year, featuring a high handicap line up led by Prince William. As well as raising thousands for charity, the fixture showcases the brightest British talent on one of the UK's finest polo grounds.

There are two charities represented here beside ourselves. Give Them a Sporting Chance aims to give people with disabilities and carers, regardless of age, the opportunity to turn their sporting and recreational dream into reality. Some of the sporting chances they have engineered so far include activities and aspirations as diverse as milking a cow, driving with Nigel Mansell around a Grand Prix circuit, learning to ride and sailing in a Tall Ship. The Household Cavalry Operational Casualties Fund helps those who are injured whilst on operational duty – for example in Afghanistan – and their families.

The PA strikes up and our commentator sets off at a canter. On the field we have two teams of four players plus two umpires. In the black and white stripes, the Audi team. George Hanbury – keen shot, skier, fisherman and full time polo player, including last winter in Argentina. Roddy Williams – every inch the handsome polo player, England International. Nacho Gonzalez – don't let the name deceive you, British through and through, and Britain's highest ranked arena polo player. James

Harper or 'Harps' – another International, with eight winters in Dubai to his credit.

And over to the red team. In the yellow hat, it's Satnam Dhillon – pure polo stock, semi professional, the only British player to pursue a parallel career away from the polo field. Malcolm Borwick – England team member and golf fanatic (handicap six). Fred Mannix – Canada's best player, veteran of the Audi Polo Challenge, last year he flew in for just 36 hours to play here at Coworth Park. And, of course, Prince William – he and his brother from a long and distinguished line of players, his grandfather amongst the finest post-war, his father a regular on the UK high goal circuit for over ten years.

They will ride their 'machines' single-handed – their right hand holding the stick – as they brake, accelerate and turn at will, galloping flank to flank at speeds of up to 40 mph across an area the size of three football pitches. Their sole aim to drive a small white ball – forwards, backwards, under the pony's neck or tail – through goalposts set just eight yards apart. Behind the posts stand the goal judges, their eagle eyes pinned to that three and a half inch flash of white as the thunder of hooves bears down upon them. Nerves of steel, or what?

And so, the game begins. The teams line up in two rows, with the players in order – 1, 2, 3 and 4 – facing the umpire in the centre of the field. There are two mounted umpires on the field and a referee standing on the sidelines. One of the umpires bowls the ball in hard between the two teams and they're off.

...macaroons, orange mandalines, teenie chocolate tarts and the dinkiest little scones with jam and clotted cream. Yep, it's official. I have died and gone to heaven....

Turf flies fast and furious. Our commentator breaks his canter and kicks into a gallop. Confusion for we novice spectators as ends are changed after each goal scored and the game restarts from the middle of the ground with a throw in. (So neither team benefits from a wind advantage and both have equal opportunity to start with the ball on their right side.)

Two chukkas over in a flash. We top up with champagne (as directed!) and totter onto the green stuff to fulfil our half time task. The treading in of divots is, apparently, the duty of all spectators. Although my colleague in the casual suit took a bit of convincing. (And, frankly, what with the rigours of treading turf and the heel-chewing decking, I'm not sure my shoes will ever recover.)

Then it's on to a nail-biting finale with the Audi team narrowly beaten by Prince William's Umbogo. The sporty bit done, it's time for the presentation. The players step up to take their prizes and then it's Mike's turn in the limelight. As our fellow guests look on, Jeremy Hicks of Audi UK presents him with a letter, pledging their charitable donation, and then Mike has a one minute slot to speak about mountain rescue before we are presented to Prince William.

'Would you believe,' he asks, 'that mountain rescue team members were out in Sheffield during the floods last week, helping in the rescue effort?'

'Would you believe that mountain rescue team members were at the Virgin rail crash in Cumbria? At Boscastle? At Lockerbie?'

'We don't just come to the aid of those who fall over in the mountains. Missing children searches, old people and Alzheimer's searches, civil disasters... mountain rescue team members are there. Working with the emergency services and offering their voluntary service to those who need us. Twenty four seven.'

His words struck a chord. As the excitement of the day melts with the pre-dinner Martinis, more than a few guests make a point of shaking our hands and commending Mike's words. Few realise how diverse our work can be and Mike could speak from the heart that members of his own team were out in force during the Sheffield floods – an event which was still featuring prominently in the news several days on.

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The wireless casualty

Alasdair Mort PhD student
Centre for Rural Health, University of Aberdeen

This article describes a research project taking place at the Centre for Rural Health in Inverness, a department of the University of Aberdeen (www.abdn.ac.uk/crh). Funding is provided by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the University of Aberdeen Sixth Century Fund. The project is undertaken by Alasdair Mort, together with Professor David Godden (director of the Centre for Rural Health) and Dr Stephen Watt of the Department of Environmental and Occupational Medicine at the University of Aberdeen. A key technology partner in the project is the Centre for the Integration of Medicine and Innovative Technology in Boston, Massachusetts.

Mobile phones; Wi-Fi with your cappuccino at the airport; wireless internet access in our homes (and sometimes through our unencrypted neighbours); sharing files from a mobile phone or playing a games console remotely using Bluetooth; infrared communication between laptops; satellite telephones; TETRA for the Emergency Services and GPS receivers... is this the death knell for the common data cable and is there no end to the applications for wireless technology?

Without wires we can communicate on the move and are no longer tied down to hardware. It also means life is more clutter-free, so no more tripping over the modem cable at home... just the power cord instead. These features have been put to good use in the world of healthcare for storing physiologic data from humans on the move, but the monitoring of physiologic variables wirelessly is not a new concept. For example, heart rate has been recorded using electrodes in chest bands for a number of years, albeit using radio over a short distance from the chest to a watch. So, what has changed?

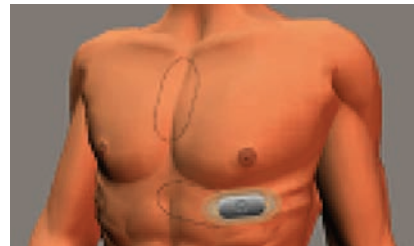
The move is to the transmission of data over longer distances and the application of such technology in more demanding environments. No longer is heart rate data transferred solely from chest strap to watch but, in the Tour de France, also onto the internet along with rider cadence and power output so viewers can watch live the struggles and strains of selected cyclists. It is also used by NASA to monitor astronauts during space-flight and extravehicular activity. But perhaps the most interesting development has been the real time analysis of several physiologic variables simultaneously using a new generation of software. An alert is then sent to the carer if variables stray outside a 'normal' physiologic range. So we are now witnessing 'intelligent' physiologic monitors that not only record data but also make an attempt to alert when something has gone awry.

One of the key drivers has been the requirement for such technology in military

scenarios, notably the ability for a Commander to assess the health status of their troops remotely. Analysing soldiers' physiology may improve triage and could mean an enhanced combat effectiveness if limited medical resources are allocated with greater precision. The United States Army Future Force Warrior system sees soldiers' heart rate and respiratory rate monitored using a 'life signs detection system' that is 'wear-and-forget'. Data is then fed back intermittently to medics and analysed using a 'health state assessment' algorithm, providing an indication of soldier well-being. As technology develops we may eventually see 'smart' material that has sensors woven into fabric to detect rips/tears, or water bottles that monitor fluid intake to allow estimation of the level of hydration.

Military technology has been adapted for use in a more traditional healthcare environment in response to busy hospital emergency departments in the US. The Centre for the Integration of Medicine and Innovative Technology (www.cimit.org – Boston, MA), knowledge partners in the project, co-developed a wireless physiologic 'patch' monitor for use in triage in collaboration with the US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine2 (USARIEM). Such a system could be used to monitor patients whilst they wait for treatment, and if a deterioration is detected they will move up the waiting list. An illustration of this technology is shown in Figure 1. This makes use of a low power, low data rate, personal area network, which is similar to Bluetooth. However, unlike

FIGURE 1 ARTIST'S DRAWING OF THE PHYSIOLOGIC MONITORING ADHESIVE PATCH, DEVELOPED BY CIMIT AND USARIEM 2



Bluetooth the sensor does not have to be 'on' all the time, taking advantage of a 'sleep' mode to save energy and extend battery life.

Could technology of this kind be designed specifically for use during remote and rural rescue? Would a physiologic 'patch' sensor slipped under a casualty's clothing, which allows monitoring without stopping and unwrapping, reduce the time spent on the hillside or time underground and prevent further exposure? Also, if a deterioration in health can be detected earlier might this enable quicker treatment? Finally, would this information be of interest to paramedics and hospitals receiving the casualty, if it could be handed over on a secure memory card or even sent ahead of the ambulance/helicopter? Or, will the kit stay in the rucksack if it's -10, blowing a gale and the team can't see a thing? Other applications for such technology might include the precautionary monitoring of mountaineers' or cavers' physiology during their activities. An alert could then be produced if their physiology strayed outside 'normal' limits, which may be a useful additional tool for rescue.

In his book 'High Technology Medicine: Benefits and Burdens', Professor Bryan Jennett tells us that, 'although it is possible to acquire more information about bodily processes there is no guarantee that these data will lead to benefit; it may not therefore be justified to acquire it even if doing so involves only a harmless technical procedure.' Our mobile phones are nothing without power and our wireless internet nothing without a strong enough signal. And how often has a reliance upon new technology such as GPS come at the expense of tried and tested methods like the map and compass, sometimes with disastrous consequences? Therefore we must exert caution when attempting to integrate a device within a new context.

The aim of this project is to explore the potential of novel physiologic monitors during rescue from remote and rural areas, of which mountain and cave rescue are important

components. Before adopting any new technology we must first assess its feasibility in a scientific manner. The first task is to describe the rescue environment including its organisation and the nature of injuries sustained by casualties. This forms a process of reverse engineering whereby the data collected will assist in the integration of the technology. eg. the effect of cold on battery life, the time patches will adhere to wet skin, operating equipment with gloves on and performance under low light conditions. From initial conversations with rescue personnel the message repeated time and time again is that technology must be simple to use, robust, reliable and the information output clear and unambiguous. Rescue data is currently being retrieved from UK and Irish Mountain Rescue councils and we are indebted to their support thus far.

A very important part of the project will be speaking to the rescuers, ie. the experts. If this technology is to be used by them, then it is vitally important to gain their views at an early stage. This will most likely take the shape of focus groups, discussing roles, thoughts on the ideal features of a rescue-specific physiologic monitor, and general opinions on the use of technology during rescue. Of course, input from team members is welcome at any stage as this will help greatly to understand the environment in which they operate. Thanks go out to all within UK search and rescue for their invaluable support thus far. This project was presented at the England & Wales Mountain and Cave Medical Rescue Symposium in Ambleside in April. It was fantastic to receive very informative feedback at this event and also to hear important considerations for the integration of technology into the rescue scenario. The research will also be presented at the Mountain & Wilderness Medicine World Congress in Aviemore in October.

'The Wireless Casualty' is certainly a novel concept, one that has potential in a mountain and cave rescue environment and in the general healthcare of those in remote and rural areas. It benefits from having already been tested to military specifications and some supporting data is already in place. So, we are not starting from scratch, but rather are at the beginning of the journey for devices of this kind as far as remote and rural rescue is concerned. We hope to bring you updates regarding the progress of this project, together with results. Meanwhile, if you have any comments or suggestions then please contact the author. We would be very happy to hear from you.

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fourteen year old boy who had fallen in the water at Millhouse Park. Mike himself had received the call just moments into his evening meal, after a long day at the office. And it was 5.00am the next morning before his team were stood down, tired and wet. Just in time for work.

Back at Coworth, we find ourselves sharing our crisp white linen and Masterchef prepared meal with the guys from 'Ok!', who have been snapping away all day. Of course, hovering as we are somewhere down the Z-list, we didn't make it into the subsequent two page spread. But at least we know we were there.

And if you really want to know, we set off with a cold collation of gazpachos with langoustines, grilled prawns and scallops on marinated fennel and herb salad, crab on toast with pea, broad bean salad and mint and boards of English ham and salami, washed down with a selection of whites. Followed by a choice of rare beef fillet, roast halibut or herb cannelloni, with a choice of reds. Rounded off with a crystal clear raspberry champagne jelly, with Turkish Delight on the side. Oh and more champagne.

As the unmistakable sound of the electric violin reverberates into the evening air, we retire to the decking to watch the sun set mauve and pink behind the trees. Then it's back to the A8 and a gentle cruise up the motorway back to Manchester. The perfect end to a perfect day.

Heart felt thanks to Jeremy Hicks and Audi – and Kaulai and her team, who organised the day – for inviting us to share in the fun and, of course, their generous donation. So wrapped up were we in our nervous anticipation, it was some time after the presentation before either of us thought to open the envelope. On behalf of all our colleagues in mountain rescue, thank you.

Martini anyone?



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Hard Rock

Challenge



▲ MAIN PICTURE: HOW WINDY?
INSET: ONLY DAY OF SUNSHINE AT
GOGARTH ON THE BIG GROOVE
PHOTOS: HARD ROCK COLLECTION

Sam Mayfield on a mission completed

On Friday, 13 July Mark Stevenson and Rich Mayfield set out to climb every route in Ken Wilson's classic 'Hard Rock' in just five weeks to support the Army Mountaineering Association 50th Anniversary and raise money for mountain rescue in the UK. Mission accomplished, at the time of writing they had raised over £10,000 for mountain rescue and, with the DVD, book and lecture tour to come, the money is set to grow.

Mark Stevenson is a good friend of ours. He came to visit us for the fourth time in the year to climb the sunny limestone near our base, The Orange House Activity Centre, just 6km from the beaches of the Costa Blanca and the village of Finestrat. 'How do you fancy climbing all the routes in Hard Rock this summer?' he asked. Unfortunately for Rich, before he had time to think, I said, 'Yes, that should be a change from the Alps'. Poor Rich! I quickly worked out that, between the last big booking at The Orange House and my son playing cricket for Spain in the European Championships we had five weeks. If Mark could make that window, we were on. So much for a relaxing summer!

We secured sponsorship from DMM for the hardware, North Face for clothing, Evolv for shoes and UKC for the internet coverage. Official photographers came on board in the shape of David Simmonite and Mike Robertson. The whole thing was beginning to

seem real! Planning the route around Britain was the next task.

It made sense to start at one end of the country and finish at the other. However, that didn't take into consideration access issues or bird bans. Berry Head and Gogarth are only climbable in August and Cheddar Gorge is not climbable at all in the summer. The first of the 'please help' emails went to Martin Crocker regarding Cheddar. He kindly put a word in for us with Cheddar Gorge & Caves and the man from the caves said yes! So thanks to Hugh and Martin for their involvement.

The British weather during April gave us hope – such a shame it was so short lived! In June, it started to go terribly wrong, as it rained and rained. People kept saying, 'That's okay... it means you'll have a great summer...' Mmm.

We'd arranged to spend the night before the challenge in Cheddar Gorge car park. An

impromptu party was in full swing (twelve people squeezed into Chery!) when we had a knock on the door! Panic set in when we saw the police uniform! We all had to laugh when the chap said, 'Good luck guys, I'm part of the local MR team and will keep my eye on your progress'. A good omen we all thought.

Day one and it was raining, but we were soon to get used to that! The press began to arrive and it all got a bit scary. It suddenly dawned on me that this was really going to happen. Two members from the local rescue team came to show support and we even had one of our guys jumping on and off the tourist bus with a collection bucket. The army film cameras started to roll and the boys started to climb. At that point I turn away as I can't stand to watch Rich when he's on the rock.

The weather forecast for the next day wasn't good anywhere in the whole of Britain so we made the decision to head north. All the way north. Aaron was a quick on and off the

island, completed in the rain. Then a long drive to Carmore. No access to the private estate made for a twelve hour day, another tick though, and an amazing camp spot by the side of a loch.

The next day allowed for a supermarket stop on Skye. Losing Simon for an hour meant a rush for the ferry across to Harris, to discover we only had a standby ticket. I quickly made Rich grab our film camera and dashed into the office to find the port manager. 'Nothing I can do I am afraid, but we will try our best'. With no other crossings that day, I gave the guys an option, go over as foot passengers and let the Harris Trust guy take you up to the foot of the crag, or wait here with me and we all go over in the morning. Equipment was dumped all over the car park as the guys literally stuffed everything they might need into rucksacks. I was still working on the port manager and when, after about an hour, he moved us up the front of the standby queue, I was quietly confident we'd get on. I was right. Just at the last minute he waved us on the boat!

The Scoop was ticked in only two days, pegs braking, an average of five hours per pitch, cold and damp made it a route to remember. A night on an amazing white beach helped the boys to relax a little. The Great Prow on Skye was done on the way back down, also in record time allowing us a quick drive down to Glen Coe for the first of the routes with Dave Simmonite pointing a camera at the boys.

Swastika went first, then Shibboleth, with Dave freezing on a rope. The Clachaigh Inn was our rendezvous. Much later than expected, a very cold and wet group returned for the first beer of the trip. The following day was Yo Yo and Carnivore, another late night return to the Clachaigh and another nervous few hours for me.

Rain stopped play the next day and we decided to head up for The Old Man. We set up camp at the Stromness campsite, which I can say is the best view from any campsite in Britain, we even had our own piper standing looking out to sea on our arrival.

The following morning we couldn't even see in front of our faces and, during the quick trip across to Hoy on the small ferry, conditions didn't improve. Taxi waiting and then the hour walk to the cliff top where we were greeted with an amazing view – just the top of The Old Man peeping through the cloud. I set up camp with my little tent on the cliff top keeping the camera inside to stop it getting wet. 'Wake up Sam, quick, you might just see us as the cloud is clearing,' came over the radio.

Twelve ticked and a drive back to Glen Coe. Little did we know it was to be a short trip as the rain stopped the boys whilst trying to do Trapeze – the descent path was a waterfall. The boys hit rock bottom. 'Drive us south Sam', came the plea. I really feared the trip was in jeopardy, but didn't say anything at the time. How many climbers can say they set off to climb in Glen Coe and ended up ticking a route at Malham Cove, which was a to be

the first of two very quick days ticking Yorkshire and The Peak? The daily average went to six routes and the boys had smiles on their faces again.

Right, now off to the Lakes. The weather held, although that didn't help Rich who got the shakes on a scary Extol. Central Pillar, Ichabod, Central Buttress and Gormanghast. Phew! Another great day. Wasdale team leader Julian joined them and marched them up to do Engineers Slab. Sir Chris joined them on Praying Mantis and Alan Hinkes put the gear in on North Crag Eliminate. Another night in the pub was on the cards. We headed down to Wales in a much more positive state, half the routes ticked.

Again the weather was against us and after one day in the sun on The Groove and then The Big Groove, the next day we had horrendous conditions for Gogarth, and Dream of White Horses with Gaz Parry was ticked in a Force 8 gale! Dave Simmonite and I were nearly blown off the cliff top! I had a horrible feeling we were on the move again and I was right.

The next day we decide to give Scotland a second bash. The Needle in the Cairngorms was fun – Rich had to remove his helmet and rucksack to squeeze through the top and after a roast beef dinner we prepared for the long walk in to Loch Du for King Rat and Goliath. Help was at hand in the shape of Balmoral Ranger arranged by team member Colin Munroe. I only wish when the boys arrived at the bottom of the crag they could have actually seen it. Back they came wet and miserable, which meant another long and complete walk in the next day.

Glen Coe here we come, third time and a score to settle. Sun greets them for Trapeze this time and things are looking good. The Bat goes easily and we even have time for a beer in a loch side pub before we give Wales its second shot.

Final leg and hope is in the air, shame the British weather doesn't agree. It's raining and the forecast isn't looking good. 'Boys we have to be out of here by Tuesday or it's all over,' says Simon, after studying the charts. Vector is up first but a quick change of mind and they dash up Diagonal, then Vector and a phone call from me sat outside Pete's Eats gets them walking up to Cloggy. Great Wall was supposed to be the one, but as it looked very wet they took the decision to go up White Slab instead. Why I do not know as it starts to get dark and the cloud came back down the crag.

The rain came down so heavy in the night we all woke feeling rather subdued. Another Pete's Eats breakfast and off they went. The Grooves was up first and then back up to Cloggy. I was hiding in V12 this time when the call came in saying read out the description from

the guide book as we have left it in the van. They topped out, then quickly ran up Vember and back down for another meal at Pete's.

Heavy rain through the night made Slanting Slab a difficult job and, after over an hour on the first pitch, Rich backed off and we thought it was all over. Great Bow combination went with little trouble and back up Slanting. Mark was the star and after a careful first pitch our confidence returned. Cloggy was over!

Cenotaph, then Dwm, which gave Rich his personal tick, Mousetrap with Silvia Fitzpatrick and Glenda Huxtor meant we could say goodbye to Wales and make the final journey south.

Team members greeted us for breakfast at Bosigran and the final southern routes went like clockwork, with Ken Palmer as the last celebrity climber. We even had a little sunshine to help us through.

This has been the most amazing summer. It's given us so many places to revisit – with more time to enjoy it would be good! The people we've met and the support we've seen, both through comments left on the blog, and mountain rescue team members meeting us at the crags, will never be forgotten. I feel honoured to have been part of this BIG challenge.

Go to www.hardrockchallenge.org.uk if you want to read more about the Challenge.

You can meet the team at the Kendal Mountain Film Festival 12.30pm on Sunday 18 November in the Malt Room. Why not pop in and say 'Hi!'



▲ CLASSIC SHOT FROM THE BOOK
PHOTOS: HARD ROCK COLLECTION

Check out www.theorangehouse.net for more information about The Orange House. On behalf of Mountain Rescue, a big thanks to Sam, Rich and Mark and company for their efforts.

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Fatal Incident Protocol

Chris Lloyd Ogwen Valley MRO

Following a couple of high profile fatalities involving young scouts on the mountains, North Wales Police realised that little evidence was gathered at the scene for the Coroner's Court and the Criminal Court. North Wales Police directed that the volunteers of MRTs would remain with the deceased until a police officer could attend to act as Coroner's Officer. This was not a practical proposition for volunteers who might have spent all weekend on a search and, having made a find in the early hours of Monday morning, to be told to stay put until a policeman could make his way up sometime mid morning. The solution was to train members of the mountain rescue teams in a Fatal Incident Protocol.

Six courses have been run so far. These weekend courses have trained Mountain Rescue, Cave Rescue, SARDA, Fire Service and RAF personnel in evidence gathering. In addition, North Wales Police have furnished each MRT with all the necessary equipment. This kit includes the blue POLICE cordon tape, numbered marker flags, pens, tags and bags of all sizes, a SLR camera and a video camera.

Whenever there is a sudden death, the police are trained to assume 'murder' until proved otherwise. Whilst murder is a pre-meditated action, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and cruelty are all criminal offences. But even if the case isn't regarded for Criminal Proceedings, it may be for Civil Proceedings. Here there will be a plaintiff and respondent, expert witnesses, a balance of probability. The outcome may be financial penalties or imprisonment. With so much at stake, it's important that as much evidence as possible is gathered for an accurate judgement.

The weekend started in the classroom with a talk on Forensic Awareness and Crime Scene Management. Like first aid, there is a Golden Hour. However, like a lot of these ideals, they rarely fit into the mountain rescue scenario. Also like first aid, the priority is to 'preserve life'. The priority is my life then that of the casualty. If there are 'no signs of life' or even cases where the casualty is unlikely to survive, we must put the Fatal Incident Protocol into practice. First 'preserve the scene'. Cordon off the scene and restrict entry. Then 'secure evidence'. This may be failed climbing gear or scuff marks in the ground. Identify the victim and then identify any suspects. Record everything. Record who goes into the cordon and when. Get everybody to follow the same route to the casualty. Preserve evidence and minimise contamination. Photograph everything to

do with the incident (North Wales Police provide plenty of film). Take three shots of all evidence, one overall location shot, one close up and one detailed shot. Record what it is, where it was found and comment on condition. It may be damaged kit or equipment.

Make a sketch of the whole scene. Record where pieces of evidence are found. Do not move evidence until the whole area is thoroughly searched and a probable scenario established. Evidence can vary from 'the body' to small specks of blood, a cigarette butt, climbing equipment, a fallen rock, a scuff or slide mark, damaged vegetation etc. Where evidence cannot be moved, photograph it from every angle with a scale. Where it can be moved, photograph it first, then with great care, lift and place in one of the numerous bags. Seal the bag and fill in the details on the tag. One piece of evidence per bag. Consider the evidence and how to preserve it. A used drinks can will leak out those last few drops into the polythene bag and thus destroying fingerprint evidence. But don't throw away those last drops before bagging. They may be vital evidence too. So preserve them in a container. Again carefully label.

All the evidence bags must be sealed and gathered together. They should be supervised at all times and when handed to another party, details recorded on the bags.

This session was followed by a talk on photography and how to use the issued cameras. No excuses here, set everything to automatic and off we click.

After a morning in the lecture room, it was time to get out into the field. Three areas were set up. One area we were instructed to search for a dozen objects. The second area was to record and recover various objects. The third was to examine a scene

where a body lay at the foot of a small crag.

After an intensive day of training, we all went home to consider what we had learned, have some supper and enjoy Saturday night... All those except the Ogwen troops who were called out at 1900 hrs for what was to develop into the real thing.

By 05.00hrs on Sunday morning, the body was at the hospital, the relatives had left our base, the Land Rovers were garaged and metres of rope were hanging up to dry.

By 09.00 we were all back in the classroom to discuss case studies. Two members of North Wales Police, both of Ogwen MRT, gave detailed accounts of actual incidents.

Often the best form of learning is the practical 'hands on' so it was out onto the local crag where a scenario had been set up. There was 'dead Fred' half way up a crag. There were loads of issues such as access, abilities of the participants, cas evacuation, preserving the scene, identifying evidence, photographing and recording. For the Ogwen troops there was also the practical but this had real blood! Whilst a reasonable attempt had been made to instigate the Fatal Incident Protocol the previous night, darkness, low cloud and the need to preserve lives (our lives) meant a revisit was required.

By the end of the afternoon the two groups came back together at Plas y Brenin for debrief, a critique and a presentation of certificates by the Assistant Chief Constable.

Whilst the Fatal Incident Protocol is only enforced in North Wales at present, many police forces have been interested in its concept. You might find yourselves extending your mountain rescue expertise to gathering evidence for the police and coronor.

Venta launches Protec 1300 control for recovery, emergency and rescue vehicles

Venta, a leading supplier of vehicle warning equipment, has launched the Protec 1300 microprocessor based controller, a state-of-the-art system that combines a top quality digital light control system, siren generator and headlight flasher in one compact unit that can fit under the passenger seat. Suitable for a wide range of vehicles including specialist highway services, vehicle recovery and emergency and rescue services, the Protec 1300 enables considerable savings to be made in outlay and time spent installing. The simple to use keypad includes an inbuilt microphone, two siren buttons and six buttons for controlling the output terminals. Through this the operator can select a wide range of standard and programmable functions.

The Protec's flashing outputs have selectable flash patterns that eliminate the need for separate flasher modules. The four-tone siren, equipped with air horn and PA functions, operates up to two speakers with ratings of 100VA/11 ohms. The siren's ring tone can be changed via the vehicle's horn control, which together with the handbrake, can also be used to cancel the signal. Other key features include a beep alert to acquaint the driver that the functions are

operating, a fully backlit keypad and programmable master button that can also programme the siren.

A new innovation from Venta, the versatile Protec 1300 control system and siren generator has been EMC tested and is backed by Venta's 30 years of experience in providing technological solutions. The control system is also available without siren functions as the Protec 1350. The Protec 1300 is a further addition to Venta's expanding product range, which includes beacons, strobe light heads and stand-alone messaging systems. The company is also a specialist in the latest LED lighting offering a range of grille and covert lights and fully flexible lightbars. Further information: 01962 884444.



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In this example, the response of the medical and rescue teams is immediately challenged by both awkward access and poor weather. One person can easily carry up to five LESS stretchers to the scene allowing emergency teams to work optimally.

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Go to www.furtech.co.uk for more information and a gallery of images of our products. **Plus, 5% of profits go to mountain rescue.**



Report on ICAR course on wilderness searching with dogs

Leogang, Austria 7–10 June 2007 **Les Telford**

Three members of SARDA Lakes – callout co-ordinator Chris Francis and dog handlers Mike Blakey and Les Telford – were recently invited to attend an ICAR (International Commission on Alpine Rescue) course on wilderness searching with dogs based in Leogang, Austria alongside dog handlers from Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Tyrol and Switzerland.

The course was prompted by the realisation that callouts in wilderness areas of the Alps are generally becoming more and more important in terms of numbers compared with the number of callouts to search for avalanche victims. The intention was to give the organisations present the opportunity to demonstrate their searching methods and working methods with their dogs.

On Friday, we saw demonstrations by Croatian, Slovenian and German handlers of training and working methods, with particular emphasis on the method of indicating a find. Most dogs indicate (as ours do) by barking, though one German dog (also a police dog) used a bringsel, a silent method of indication in the form of a tubular object suspended from the collar. On locating a person, the dog takes the bringsel in its mouth and returns to the handler.



▲ CROATION HANDLER WITH DOG

A South Tyrolean handler then demonstrated the use of a bloodhound to trail a missing person. This is similar to the popular conception of how a search dog works, ie. sniffing a scent item specific to the missing person and then searching for that person only. It can be used, for example, to show that a reported sighting of a missing person was incorrect if the dog fails to indicate at the location in question. We then followed the dog

and handler along a 4km trail, set the previous evening from the mountain car park, along footpaths, through fields and a wood then along roads until the dog found the missing person in the middle of a village.

The two South Tyrolean bloodhounds usually operate in conjunction with a 'conventional' air-scenting dog as their experience shows that the trailing dog often experiences more difficulty as it gets closer to the missing person, at which point the air-scenting dog can take over. The potential application when searching for vulnerable or despondent people in particular is clear. At the very least this gives the search managers an initial direction of travel, allowing the search area to be narrowed down and search resources to be concentrated. SARDA Wales currently has two trailing dogs.

Saturday called for a very early start in beautiful weather for the two-hour walk up to the Passauer Hütte at just over 2000m. After a pause for cold beers at 9.30am, we watched one South Tyrolean and two Austrian handlers carry out a line search with their dogs on relatively open ground. All three missing persons were found, and in each case the dogs stayed barking with the missing persons until the handlers reached them. In the prevailing conditions (daylight, little wind) this indication method worked. However, what if there had been thick clag, a howling gale and rain hammering on the handler's hood – the sort of conditions UK dog handlers are usually faced with? The handler could end up having to search for the dog, which seems rather perverse and inefficient!

After dinner there were opportunities to discuss – in English and/or German – operational methods in response to presentations by those who, like ourselves, had not taken their dogs to the course. Interestingly, our own presentation, which included some video shot in extremely windy conditions to demonstrate our indication method, provoked a great deal of interest and animated discussion, particularly our insistence on the dog returning to the handler to indicate by barking. A number of those present asked for copies to demonstrate to their own organisations why they too should use this indication method!

Another issue of great interest was real time GPS tracking via radio mics. Surprisingly to us, not all handlers present used a GPS so the developments we are seeing in the Lakes were a real eye-opener to our continental colleagues.

The final session before departure after lunch was spent drawing up recommendations to be submitted to the ICAR Avalanche Rescue commission at the conference in Pontresina, Switzerland in October. It was agreed to hold another such course in two years and again concentrate on wilderness rather than avalanche searching.



▲ GERMAN MOUNTAIN RESCUE SEARCH DOG TAG

Spin training in Scotland



Sally Armond on training a novice search dog

Last winter, Howell's School in Denbigh sponsored Spin, the trainee search dog, to attend a winter search and rescue training week in Scotland with her owner, Sally Armond, who works as full time Head of IT at the school.

Spin is a one year old Border Collie with 'very pointy ears', who joined SARDA Wales last summer. Spin has successfully passed strict tests to show she is obedient and doesn't chase livestock and has now begun the demanding task of training as a search dog team with Sally, in all weather conditions and on all terrains.

Spin's intensive training in Scotland comprised mainly of developing her skills in using air scent to search for dogsbodies on the mountainside. Dogsbodies are often the unsung heroes of SARDA – live volunteers who hide out on the mountainside in all weathers to be sniffed out by a search dog and act as casualties for the purpose of preparing dogs and handlers to search effectively in the event of a real emergency.

Daily training was carried out under the watchful eye of Harold Burrows, chairman of SARDA Wales and a highly experienced dog handler. With his guidance, Sally learned to employ different search strategies to cover mixed ground and interpret wind direction to maximise the chance of Spin's nose intercepting the air scent of any potential casualty.

All SARDA dogs must achieve one goal – to find a body. Once Sally starts her search 'game', Spin becomes totally focused on the job at hand. When she picks up the scent of a body she runs in to them, gives them a big friendly lick and then dashes back to Sally to 'speak' to her with a volley of barks. Once this occurs, Sally instructs her dog to show her where the body is and Spin tirelessly runs between the casualty and Sally, until Sally arrives at the body. This is Spin's favourite part

as the reward for the find is a vigorous game with a squeaky toy and a tasty dog snack.

At night or in bad weather, the power of the dog's nose comes into its own and it is easy to see why the dogs play such an important role in search and rescue. For example, Sally and Spin will eventually be able to search a mountainside within two hours, that would otherwise take thirty people around four or five hours to search. An impressive feat by anyone's standards! This speed of searching is often key to a positive outcome.

Following a full day's training on the hill, Spin was fed and put to bed, whilst Sally attended various workshops and seminars late into the evening. These covered topics as diverse as dog first aid, air crash protocol through to an overview of GPS radio tracking devices used by other mountain rescue services.

When not search training, Sally took Spin winter mountaineering in Glen Coe and the Cairngorms. Spin was not at all daunted by steep Grade 1 and 2 snow and ice, her claws like built in crampons firmly attaching her to the mountainside. She also thoroughly enjoyed snowholing – sleeping in caves dug out of deep snow to shelter from severe weather.

Whilst in the Cairngorms, Spin met up with Millie, a four-legged colleague from SARDA Scotland and her handler, Heather Morning, for some RAF Sea King helicopter familiarisation. Understandably, dogs are not that keen on entering and leaving helicopters as the tips of the blades rotate at supersonic speed, which has to be quite unpleasant for a

dog's sensitive hearing. However, the search dogs need regular opportunities to experience helicopters in action as they are frequently used for airlifting search teams and casualties in the mountains. Spin took it all in her stride – with her ears well pinned down!

With this great start to their search career, Spin and Sally have to pass through a number of rigorous training stages, and it's hoped they will be on the call-out list for lowland/urban searches in and around North Wales within the next twelve months, advancing to become a full mountain search dog team within two years.

'Juggling a full time job with the commitment required to train a dog to this level requires a great deal of support from those around the dog handlers,' says Harold Burrows. 'The support Howell's School have given Spin and Sally has been invaluable in progressing both dog and handler into an impressive working team.'

If you wish to make any donations, please send to the Treasurer, Phil Benson, Tydd Yn Canol, Pantir, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 4EG. Website: www.sardawales.org.uk.

SARDA Wales is a small, very well regarded specialist component of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales), staffed entirely by unpaid volunteers to provide a search and rescue service primarily in North Wales, but available for deployment anywhere in the UK. SARDA Wales average around five searches per month at present and has also assisted in many large scale incidents including air disasters. They are called out primarily by the police, and mountain rescue teams.

Monopolies in the mountains

Gareth Harvey on whether a unified mountain rescue service would improve or just create more paperwork?

Mountain rescue was born from a culture of mountaineers rescuing fellow mountaineers, dragging anybody else they could find along the way to help. Much has changed over the last eighty years. Long gone are the days when the nearest five bar gate would be used as a stretcher but that early mentality still exists. In most cases this is a positive. Members have the same dedication and passion for helping those in need on the hill, but is such a localised service still the best way in the 21st century? In an era which has seen the demise of local business and the domination of the high street by global brands, is it time for mountain rescue to embrace the changing economic climate or are we just seeking change for change sake?

Standard business theory is that competition is good for consumers. Where two or more businesses compete against each other they're forced to look at ways to be more efficient in order to reduce costs and maximise profits, yet this fails to work in the charity sector. Where two charities with the same objective compete against each other, all they really do is increase their costs. Each has its own admin costs and must invest in fundraising. If the two charities merged they would save costs but, more importantly, their fundraising would become more effective, because generally their fundraising material is competing against each other.

It's argued these problems don't occur because volunteers perform the admin duties while local teams only raise funds from their own area. They don't compete against each other. But I would suggest the current system is still inefficient.

Rescue teams may not compete against each other to raise funds, but the result is that a large proportion of the UK is neglected, as not all the UK is covered by mountain rescue. The RNLI, in a similar position to mountain rescue, has a more co-ordinated approach to fundraising. So schools in the middle of Birmingham, 100 miles from the coast, raise thousands of pounds for them. They send their marketing literature all over the UK, raising more funds from inland areas than coastal ones. Although the volunteers who undertake their team's fundraising do a great job, they are not experts and are restricted by the amount of time they can spend. The RNLI don't face these restrictions as they employ experts in fundraising and the results they achieve speak for themselves; in 2005 the RNLI brand was valued at £49.1M and they were ranked fourth in a league table of voluntary donations.

By centrally co-ordinating fundraising, funds are divided up as they are needed throughout the country. Remote stations in the north of Scotland get the funding they need not just those based on the south coast of England where tourist numbers, and consequently donations, are often highest. It can be argued this point is particularly relevant to MR. Although the busiest teams generally receive more donations, all teams have some costs that need to be met. Ropes need replacing and vehicles servicing. Some teams may be in the fortunate position of

having already raised enough money to cover the next three years operating costs and consequently lessen their promotional activity. Others may be desperately trying to raise enough funds to purchase a new Land Rover. If we adopted an approach similar to the RNLI, funds could be diverted where they are needed.

Many people within MR oppose the idea of a centrally co-ordinated service and believe the comparison with the RNLI is unfair. It's argued that the nature of mountain rescue is so different across the regions that one body could not co-ordinate it. In research, many advocates of the current system claim 'sea is the same anywhere around the UK' whereas the nature of the majority of rescue operations in Snowdonia are very different to those on Dartmoor. They point out that cave rescue is another area requiring different skills. If one organisation managed mountain rescue, they would be unable to co-ordinate both mountain and cave rescue. Yet I'd propose that the RNLI performs the same type of work around the UK coast is a myth. The work they do on the beaches on the south coast, rescuing surfers and paddlers is worlds apart from the rescues carried out 150 miles into the North Sea helping Scottish fishermen. They've had no problem managing the two very different operations and in some respect MR teams across the country have successfully managed this difference.

If a merger was to occur people often fear it would become a bureaucratic machine and point to the money that would be wasted employing members of staff which could be used purchasing useful equipment. I agree that to work successfully extra managers and admin staff would be required but I believe the organisation would be more efficient. Large charities are very complicated businesses and require skilful management. By employing an expert to manage the organisation they achieve a greater efficiency.

Another fear is that mountain rescue would become a centralised machine, neglecting the views and opinions of local volunteers but there is no reason why this should happen – all charities recognise that without an army of volunteers they simply could not operate. Even if mountain rescue became centralised there'd still be a need for people to go out 'rattling collection tins' and others to work on the hill. Only the managerial

structure would change and just because decisions are not always taken at the local level, this should not lead to more arguments between teams and 'head office'. Providing there is effective two-way communication and both sides listen to each other there should be no more arguments than those that already occur within teams! Who could currently name a team without arguments?

Other voluntary search and rescue organisations are facing similar decisions to mountain rescue. Although the RNLI is the most well known lifeboat service in the UK it's not the only one. Currently we have nearly 50 independent lifeboat stations, in the process of assessing how to achieve greater efficiency. Although they do not want to merge, they recognise that the RNLI has a vast advantage when it comes to purchasing new equipment and fundraising. They are investigating the possibility of purchasing equipment together because the greater the number of units purchased the lower the unit cost will be. They have already received substantial discounts from 'Gecko', a helmet provider. However there are lots of barriers making this increasingly challenging. As each station is independent they all have different suppliers and consequently cannot purchase in large enough volume to achieve large discounts. It is only through standardisation that the true benefits can be achieved and this is something the independent lifeboat stations do not want to lose. In the end though how much will really change?

The current system has worked successfully for the last eighty years but that's not to say it couldn't be improved. Businesses have shareholders demanding greater profits and this forces them to improve efficiency. Charities do not have this pressure but do have a responsibility to their donors to use their money in the best possible way. A merger could be one way to achieve this.

Our equipment and knowledge has evolved greatly over the last half century. Isn't it time our organisational structure evolved as well? I appreciate this may be a controversial viewpoint but any comments, positive or negative would be welcomed, as I am currently researching the topic for my MBA (Masters of Business Administration). Please contact me on gareth.harvey@bangor.ac.uk. Thank you.

Forthcoming Events

15-23 February 2008
Fort William Film Festival

On the night of Sunday 17 February, Lochaber MRT are hosting a celebration of Scottish mountain rescue history. Watch this space for further details. www.mountainfilmfestival.co.uk

April 2008

Allendale Challenge

One of the toughest challenge walks around – 25 miles covering some of the finest peat bogs in the North Pennines. For further details go to www.northoftyneseachandrescue.org.uk

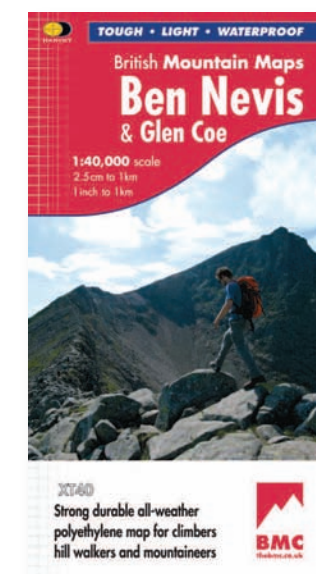
Saturday July 5 2008

Rossendale Way in a Day

A challenging 46 mile circular walk around the beautiful Rossendale valley. Also a Halfway linear walk of 22 miles. All proceeds to Rossendale & Pendle MRT. For further details contact Tim Richardson on tim.richardson@hotmail.co.uk

British Map Company Wins International Award

The latest addition to the British Mountain Map series is a real heavyweight. Ben Nevis and Glen Coe is the first Scottish title in this successful and innovative range. Printing on XT40



makes it tough, durable and 100% waterproof. This all-weather map for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers includes major safety features – mountain incident advice and a section on navigation on Ben Nevis with detailed summit enlargement. This is a serious map for a serious mountain.

The map uses colour shading for easy identification of hills and valleys and was produced in co-operation with the BMC, the MC of Scotland and the British Geological Survey, who provided the colourful geological map on the back. Next time you have to go out on the 'Mountain with its head in the clouds', keep yours clear with this ultimate piece of lightweight and compact safety equipment.

For more information go to www.harveymaps.co.uk

Up you climbing skills with Cicerone

October sees the launch of two key climbing skills handbooks published by Cicerone. 'Sport Climbing' is designed for those starting out in the sport, as well as climbers more experienced at clipping bolts on routes. 'Rock Climbing' covers all the basic technical skills needed, and would be useful for beginners and more experienced climbers who'd like to increase their technical knowledge on both single – and multi-pitch routes.

Sport and rock climbing have become phenomenally popular in recent years. These new guides will be welcomed by the ever-increasing numbers of people taking part in these sports, and help them to take part safely and with confidence.

The author, Pete Hill is one of the UK's top climbing instructors and is a holder of the MIC award, the highest UK instructional qualification. Cicerone has a growing range of techniques books and mini-guides, covering essentials such as mountain weather, first aid, avalanche awareness and other mountain skills. Check out their website for further details www.cicerone.co.uk or contact 01539 562069.

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Reek Sunday

Paul Whiting (IMRA). Dave Fahy (Mayo MRT)
Peter Jordan (Mayo MRT)

Brief history

The mountain itself is renowned for its Patrician Pilgrimage in honour of St Patrick's fast on the mountain for forty days in 441AD, and the custom has been faithfully handed down from generation to generation. On Reek Sunday, the last Sunday in July, over 25,000 pilgrims visit the Reek. Individuals and groups come from all over the world and include pilgrims, hill climbers, historians, archaeologists and nature lovers.

The tradition of pilgrimage to this holy mountain stretches back over 5000 years from the Stone Age to the present day without interruption.

History of mountain rescue involvement at this event

In 1943, Westport Order of Malta Ambulance Corps was founded initially to provide first aid services to the pilgrims who climbed this mountain. The National Pilgrimage Day (last Sunday in July) was solely an Order of Malta Ambulance Corps operation with

them at this event, Mayo team being one. As the Westport Order of Malta Ambulance Corps and Mayo Mountain Rescue partnership got stronger the Mayo MRT was asked would they arrange all mountain rescue services required at this event. It was from this request that the Mayo team requested assistance from all mountain rescue teams within Ireland (approx 10 years ago). And thus it has become an operation at which most mountain rescue teams participate.

Mountain rescue involvement

- Mountain rescue involvement has grown at this event.
- Most teams in Ireland participate with between 120 and 130 personnel involved.
- A dedicated rescue base has been established for this event.
- A temporary helicopter landing zone and support services have been established the past two years as Air Corps have provided assistance to the rescue services.
- Teams gain good experience with dealing with first aid and cas care.

public. It is also an excellent training and operational event.

This year's event

Reek Sunday is considered a national operation by the Irish Mountain Rescue Association. Unlike the vast majority of traditional call outs where the teams are called out after the incident, this is the only one we can plan for in advance.

There are many advantages to this. One of them is that it allows the hosting Mayo MRT to invite other MR teams to attend. This year we had over 130 mountain rescue personnel on the mountain in three shifts – 3:00am, 8:00am and noon. The 130 personnel came from ten of the twelve teams in IMRA. There were also members attending from the Irish Cave Rescue Organisation (ICRO) and the Arrochar MRT from Scotland.

Mayo did a fantastic job of setting up a temporary mountain rescue base on the back-side of Croagh Patrick consisting of:-

- * A portable cabin acting as radio and control centre and a second cabin as the briefing room.
- * A mess tent serving food and drinks for the rescue personnel from 3.00am to 6.00pm. The tent and food were provided by Mayo MRT and the tent staffed by Civil Defence personnel.
- * Parking for the official team vehicles.
- * A temporary landing zone for the helicopter support provided by the crews of the Air Corps Alouette helicopters. Reek Sunday 2007 was the last official operation for the Alouettes before their retirement this September.

On the mountain, Mayo MRT also provided a tent for the teams to store gear. This was opposite the upper medical post and helicopter landing zone on the flat, halfway up the mountain. The upper medical post was staffed by the local Order of Malta unit. Other Order of Malta units

provided coverage on the lower part of the mountain, while the MR teams provided coverage on the path between the upper medical post and the oratory on the summit.

So here were the points of interest for 2007:-

- * It's estimated that between 20,000 to 25,000 pilgrims climbed Croagh Patrick.
- * There were fifty medical treatments carried on the day by MR teams and the Order of Malta ranging from treating blisters to responding to a heart attack.

* 15 of the 50 incidents were handled through the MR base; 23 were treated in the upper medical post (on the flat at the half-way point); 19 were treated in the lower medical post (at the base of Croagh Patrick in Murrisk village); and the rest were treated on the hill.

- * 5 people needed to be carried down by stretcher by MR teams to the upper medical post.
- * Mayo MRT were the last team off the mountain, descending from the summit at 18:30.

* It was the last official operation for the Air Corps Alouettes.

Reports from those attending were that they were very happy with the day. IMRA would like to thank the Mayo MRT for hosting another great national operation and would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Garda, Order of Malta, Civil Defence and the Air Corps Alouette crews for their ongoing support and partnership.

For more information about mountain rescue in Ireland, please visit www.mountainrescue.ie



CROWDS ON THE REEK JULY 2007
PHOTO: PETER JORDAN MAYO MRT

Bob Fitzsimmons (1947-2007)

On Sunday 29 July, members of Mourne MRT gathered with family and friends of the late Bob Fitzsimmons to say a last goodbye to a friend and fellow member of the team. Bob Fitzsimmons, who had been in the team for nineteen years, passed away whilst walking on Ben Nevis in Scotland with another member of the team.

Bob was a family man with interests in motorbikes, but mostly in hill walking and climbing, and was an ambassador for the team and mountain rescue in Northern Ireland. He attended courses and conferences on behalf of the team and shared the knowledge he gained with team members on his return. He joined the team in 1988, became a full team member a year later and developed into a well trained, dependable member, always striving to learn more and to work at it until he was happy he knew it well. Bob worked in the team to help with training and served on the committee and as secretary, in which post he brought a little something special to the meetings and the minutes!

Over the years, recognition of Bob's service was acknowledged by the Northern Ireland Cliff, Cave and Mountain Rescue Coordinating committee with a long service award. In February of this year, the team awarded him a service award and, in 2002, Her Majesty the Queen included Bob in the Jubilee awards medal list for voluntary service.

Always having mountain rescue at heart, Bob was responsible for a number of team members joining up after a chance meeting with him on one of his many walks in the hills. It was on one of his walks on the Ben, on the 29 June, that he collapsed and died from a heart attack. His body was recovered from the mountain by the Lochaber team.

A service of remembrance was held in the Church of the Ascension at Doagh and the large gathering of friends and colleagues from the area and the rescue services (Fire & Rescue, Coastguard, PSNI, MR teams, the Northern Ireland Co-ordinating Committee and IMRA) present showed the esteem in which Bob was held in the rescue and local community. His body was cremated and team and family members gathered in the Mournes for a short service and to scatter Bob's ashes in the mountains he loved so much. He leaves three children and his widow Ann. Our thoughts and good wishes go out to them in their time of grief.

Ed Kilgore MBE Chairman. Mourne MRT



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Drying your own expedition food isn't a secret art but there's an excellent book on the subject called 'Backpack Gourmet' by Linda Frederick Yaffe. To get a free copy of this book with an Excalibur AND a 10% Mountain Rescue Reader discount, enter the promotional code MR01 at checkout when ordering online at www.ukjuicers.com. Or quote the code when you call 01904 757070.



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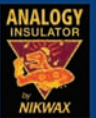
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National blue light users conference

In 1997, the idea of an independent conference looking at the similarities and dissimilarities between driver training – between the different services and different authorities in the same services – was born. Designed as a ‘one-off’, attracting 120 delegates from across the services, it quickly became apparent the delegates believed there was a demand for much greater debate. It has run annually since currently boasting attendance in excess of 200 (limited only by the venue) with delegates and speakers from home and abroad sharing their experiences.

The conference is not operated by a particular service, or a particular authority, but by an independent road safety organisation (not lobbyists). It has no political pressure or political agenda to meet. This independence ensures delegates and speakers can speak freely and voice their real opinions.

An example of the current lack of consistency that continues to exist is that, whilst police, fire and ambulance vehicles are exempt from adherence to the speed limits, the mines rescue service, bomb disposal teams, mountain rescue services, the National Blood service, Human Tissue for Transplant services, lifeboat service, and the Marine Coastguard service, whilst all providing life saving services are not permitted to exceed speed limits and are subject to all other road regulations. And, to add to the confusion, the National Blood service are permitted to cross red traffic lights and pass the other side of ‘pass this side’ signs.

In the 21st century UK, all the emergency services deserve a set of simpler regulations that determines exactly what is an emergency service, the exemptions that what should be allowed to claim, and a minimum national standard of response driving applicable to all. There was unlikely to be any change to this situation, until the lawmakers and government (at ministerial level), consolidated or adjusted the existing various acts and legislation, or created fresh legislation, to introduce maybe an ‘Emergency Services Act’ that simply and equitably defines:–

Who can hold emergency service status?

Why services should be considered for emergency

status including moral and ethical issues.

What training the drivers and instructors must receive? And more importantly by whom!

When and where these services can use any exemptions, these should be basically the same for all. **How** the exemptions can be used.

At the 2007 conference – at which I’m pleased to say there were a number of members of mountain rescue teams – a presentation was made by a member of the committee charged with looking at the issues surrounding the driving and training of drivers for the emergency services, which indicated it is now entirely possible that these anomalies will be dispelled by the enactment of sections of the Road Safety Act 2006, and that rules and regulations for the training of drivers and driving instructors in the emergency service field will be introduced in the near future.

Other issues

A trend that appears to have impacted on the emergency services is the greater use of non-uniformed or civilian instructors, some of whom are conducting response driving instruction having never performed this task ‘for real’ and for whom the base qualification is ADI. It was right and proper that the ADI regulations, brought in to protect the public from unscrupulous driving instructors, are in place. However, this was never designed to include (in my opinion) the plethora of areas that the DSA and some driving instructor trade associations are now trying to make it fit, including that of response level driving.

There is an argument that having attained the licence acquisition requirements skills, specialised coaching is needed to vary those skills and adapt their application into what are non-normal or exceptional circumstances.

Police, fire, ambulance

There are national guidelines and standards, which should ensure all police fire and ambulance drivers are trained to the same standard, but there are anomalies in delivery of the same messages and interpretations of how, why and where. This is not the fault of the individual schools, but more the lack of commitment and backing of senior officers, who have over the years reduced the concept of

police advanced drivers being something to aspire to. Coupled to this is the lack of ‘lead by example’ by emergency service drivers who display, in some cases, habits and attitudes not in the best interest of on-road safety and law compliance.

This entire situation is not aided by the concept of wrapping emergency service drivers in cotton wool for fear of what might happen, in terms of litigation and criticism by do-gooders. This concept has the danger of producing a society in which police pursuit of criminals, and the saving of life will become all but defunct.

Other services

As to the other emergency services, any driver training either costs too much and is therefore non-existent at worst, or based upon primary emergency services training that lacks consistency and standardised interpretation delivery.

Of course, it could be argued they do not need it, as they have none of the exemptions afforded to the primary services. Hopefully, these concerns will also be addressed by the graduated implementation of Road Safety Act 2006.

The voluntary sector is probably where the greatest need exists, but the least effort is being applied, due to financial constraints or lack of awareness. However, another presentation by a mountain rescue team member showed what can be achieved by co-operation with a local police force’s driving school support. It may have been helpful that this member is also a local police officer and, whilst we should applaud this, we must bear in mind that not all mountain rescue teams enjoy this level of support. This was achieved by an individual’s commitment but it should be inspiring to other teams.

An additional concern is the number of private driving schools who offer driver training for emergency services, whose owners and instructors have no experience of the needs and requirements to meet the physical and mental demands of response level driving, but see this area as an extension of their business or a great way to break the normal driving rules.

Bob Jackson

For details on next year's conference contact Bob Jackson on 0121 745 3004.

Free Volunteer Training Courses 2008

Glenmore Lodge is very proud to be associated with the training of instructors, leaders and coaches in the volunteer sector for many years. They are a fundamental part of the outdoor adventure education world. Our strong recognition for their role is about to be acknowledged in our venture with Grangers who have joined the Lodge family as sponsors. Because there is only so much proofing they can give us, we have decided to use the financial contribution towards places on training and assessment courses for those of you in the volunteer sector.

If you would like to apply for a free training or assessment course for summer/winter mountain leader, trail cycle leader or mountain bike leader then go to the Glenmore Lodge website. Follow the link to Free Volunteer Courses, download an application form and send it to us here at Glenmore Lodge.

Dates – All applications must be in by 30 November 2007. All courses to be taken up by 30 November 2008.

Pre-Requisites – You must be a volunteer in any club or group and show the training/assessment will benefit others in that club or group.

Download an application form from our website **www.glenmorelodge.org.uk**



The Emergency Services Show 2007

The Emergency Services Show, at Stoneleigh Park in Coventry 28-29 November, is taking on a new prominence as the year unfolds. 2007 has proven an extreme year in so many ways for the emergency services in the UK.

There is the ongoing threat of terrorism and, additionally, services have had to meet the challenges posed by critical incidents on land, air, sea and in cyberspace. If organisations are to communicate and work together effectively, it makes sense to bring them together at an event such as this. There is a free exhibition dedicated to meeting the needs of the industry, and a high profile conference which encourages the sharing of knowledge and experience.

The conference programme is being scheduled to reflect what is happening at grass roots level. Subjects for 2007 include:–

Department for Communities & Local Government – ‘The Benefits of the Resilience Programme for Emergency Planners’ – focusing on the use of New Dimension equipment in June’s flooding situation in the North of England, and linking in the benefits of Firelink and FiReControl in providing support for further improving FRS communications.

The Met Office – ‘The Impact of Climate Change on Emergency Responders’ – exploring the current thinking regarding climate change and severe weather, and highlighting some of the issues that may face emergency responders in the future.

Department of Health – ‘Hazardous Area Response Teams’ – discussing the latest developments of HART, the specially trained paramedics who are able to enter the ‘Hot Zone’ of an incident, working with the FRS, police and Health Protection Agency.

Continuity Forum – ‘Building People into Business Continuity’ – the human aspect of business continuity through flu pandemic.

EDF Energy Networks – ‘Keeping the Lights On.’

Health Protection Agency – ‘Litvinenko Poisoning.’

Multi-agency collaboration in practice

The desperate sights witnessed during the recent phenomenal June weather – with flood devastation, tornadoes and



evacuations – once again has demonstrated a situation where swift decisive action is required from multiple organisations to ensure the safeguarding of people and property.

Services have been pushed to the limit in a

massive rescue operation which simply could not have been achieved so effectively without co-ordinated planning and interlocking implementation. The organisations involved – in addition to fire, police and ambulance – included the Highways Agency, the Environment Agency, the Met Office, the RAF, RNLI, utility companies, railway networks and so the list goes on.

The exhibition is free to attend but it’s recommended that visitors pre-register. For programme updates and to pre-register visit **www.theemergencyservicesshow2007.com**

Stoneleigh Park in Coventry is easily accessible:–

- By Car – a short drive from several motorways including M1, M40, M42, M45, M6 and M9, and there is free parking on site.
- By Rail – courtesy coaches will be running frequently from Coventry railway station (15 minutes away).
- By Air – a short distance from both Birmingham International airport and Coventry airport.

Team Simoco scales new heights with MRMap

Team Simoco has partnered with LDSAMRA to develop MRMap, a GPS tracking system that will play a vital role in ensuring the safety of walkers and rescuers in the Lake District. GPS-equipped radios from Team Simoco and MRMap software are set to monitor the position of rescuers providing comprehensive coverage even in the remotest of mountain terrain. Lightweight, robust and ruggedised, the radios will prove invaluable equipment to the mountain rescue team, with the GPS functionality ensuring team members can be easily and accurately located. MRMap logs team members as they attend callouts so their positions can be tracked in real time, enabling the team and emergency services to accurately track rescue operations and ensure timely assistance if required.

Andy Gamble of Team Simoco said, ‘The most obvious advantage, and probably the most important, is that base operators can be in no doubt of the safety of the team members on the hill. Managing searches is easier when you can actually see symbols representing search groups moving across the computer screen.

‘A key benefit is that there is a general reduction in radio traffic, as all transmissions are made through the GPS system. This keeps the network free for other emergency communications.’

Langdale Ambleside MRT will also use the system to help triangulate the position of torchless benighted casualties who can sometimes see team members’ lights and give bearings towards them. This well-practised routine will be more efficient when the positions of team members can be accurately seen on the screen.

This pioneering approach is being looked at by mountain rescue teams across the UK and we’ve already had many orders secured. Team Simoco is continuing to work with LDSAMRA to harness new technologies and is committed to developing the best possible communication networks to support the life-saving work they do. To find out more about MRMap and our latest GPS handsets, call 01332375500

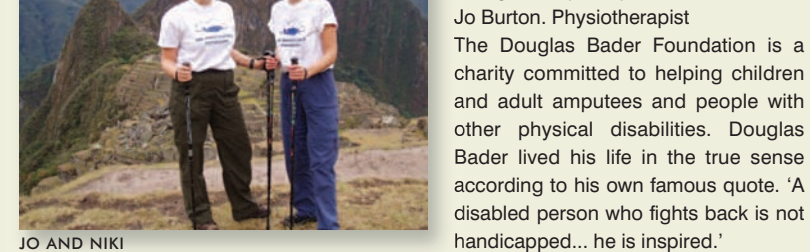


Douglas Bader Foundation International Challenges

The charity has been running these challenges for seven years and has attracted both able bodied participants and amputees to take part.

‘I took part in Hike Peru as patients I see everyday would benefit from the funds being raised. It was also a personal challenge to raise the money and physically get myself fit for the hike. Raising the money was my biggest concern but once committed to the challenge you get on with it, I was surprised how generous people were. Retrospectively I felt a huge sense of achievement but what made the challenge was seeing one member of the group, a

transibial amputee, complete the hike, it pushed him physically to the limit at times but I am sure the experience has changed his perception of his abilities.’



JO AND NIKI

Funds are needed to support:–

The Limb Loss Information Centre – a central resource/information website for amputees, their families, friends, carers and healthcare professionals.

The National Help Bureau – a newly created multi-channel information service for people with limb loss and their carers, offering advice, support and sign-posting for individuals in of guidance.

Bader CHAMPS (CHildren AMPuteeS) which introduces disabled youngsters to sports and the benefits of physical fitness when facing difficulties in the life that they will inevitably meet. Furthermore it provides help and support for their families, friends and carers.

The Douglas Bader Grant Scheme provides support for the pursuance of achievements by those with disabilities. This ‘get on with your life’ initiative has assisted countless disabled individuals and groups throughout the UK to achieve a variety of goals within the areas of education, the arts, sport and recreation.

For details about how to take part in the next challenge (Hike Jordan 5-12 October 2008) contact Emma on 01303 862 996. Email e.getliffe@btinternet.com or visit www.douglasbaderfoundation.com

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