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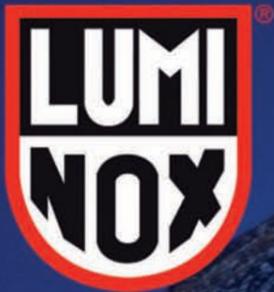
mountain rescue

JULY 2008

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ISSUE 25



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WELCOME TO ISSUE 25

Mountain Rescue is the membership magazine for Mountain Rescue (England & Wales).

Contributions should be sent to the editor at the address below.

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

EDITORIAL

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NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 26

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Editorial copy must be supplied as Word document. Images must be supplied as high resolution (300 dpi) JPEG/EPS/TIFF/PDF

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.

FRONTPAGE

Cornwall Mine Rescue Organisation
Photo courtesy of: CMRO

EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles carried in Mountain Rescue do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales). We do not accept responsibility for information supplied in adverts/advertorial.

mountain
rescue



75 years of mountain rescue

Dates and deadlines, meetings, minutes and record keeping – these are the lot of the secretary balanced with a well deserved pint after a good day on the hills. During 2007 I celebrated the centenary year of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club by ascending all 244 hills listed in my club's book 'The Lakeland Fells'. The club proudly displayed its 100 year heritage with an impressive exhibition at Rheged, alongside 'Everest' the cornerstone of the National Mountaineering Exhibition. Eight years on from Everest 1924 FRCC member Bentley Beetham, whilst 'having tea in the hotel', became involved when Alfred Pigott and others of the Rucksack Club 'came across an injured and unconscious climber while walking over Crib Goch. After some very arduous efforts they carried him down to Pen-y-Pass on a civilian stretcher'.

This and similar incidents highlighted the lack of a suitable mountain stretcher and both clubs were instrumental in forming the Joint Stretcher Committee in 1933 resulting in production of the Thomas Stretcher. The JSC became the First Aid Committee of Mountaineering Clubs which, in due course, became the Mountain Rescue Committee. In June of last year I reported, with some pleasure and satisfaction, that we could celebrate 75 years of mountain rescue with an exhibition when the FRCC agreement terminated. Plans were well advanced when NME abruptly closed its doors at the end of 2007 and remains closed.

Months later a meeting with the owners of Rheged resulted in the allocation of space near the TIC desk. Our exhibition could proceed, albeit somewhat smaller and different in format.

'75 years of MR' is now installed and receiving favourable comments from the visiting public. Several contributors have provided worthwhile material yet the task of transforming it into an attractive exhibition fell mainly to two members with skills beyond their MR background. Designer and creator Chris Sherwin achieved high visual impact with a strong interactive element. Dave Freeborn skilfully produced interesting films for the big screen including reconstructions by casualties who were full of praise for their rescuers. Four panels carry a timeline from 1933 above impressive images of MR in action. Mountain rescue encompasses mountains and wild terrain, caves and mines, dogs, RAF and lowland units. The timeline leads the visitor to two touch-screens and a supply of leaflets encouraging subscription to Basecamp. One touch-screen option shows many of the images featured in 'Mountain Rescue: history and development in the Peak District' by Ian Hurst and Roger Bennett, which chronicles events from 1920 and parallels the development of organised MR elsewhere in the UK. I urge all regions to record for posterity their own heritage up to 2008 in celebration of 75 years of mountain rescue.

Peter Smith Secretary MR(E&W)

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mountain rescue

INSOMNIA CURE?

Her Majesty's Customs and Excise now have some specific information aimed at helping charities. This can be found at www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/vat-charities.htm. Better than chocolate Horlicks!!

VEHICLE EXCISE DUTY EXEMPTION

Current regulations regarding exemption from vehicle excise duty for ambulances state that the vehicle should carry a stretcher in order to be classed as an ambulance. The regulations do not, however, state that the vehicle needs the stretcher to be loaded. On that basis, several teams have registered vehicles as ambulances within the VED regulations because they carry a stretcher, albeit a Bell (or other) stretcher, in two halves. This might be seen as splitting hairs but DVLA in Swansea accept this interpretation of the regulations and have stated so to several local vehicle licensing officers when teams have challenged a refusal. Peter Howells has produced a letter of intent which may or may not be required by the licensing officer. Teams are encouraged to re-license vehicles which carry stretchers in order to

save themselves the financial burden of VED. The regulations are not the same as those applying to exemption from VAT for new vehicles where, crucially, a vehicle must be able to carry a loaded stretcher in order to qualify, in many cases requiring modifications to the vehicle.

EQUIPMENT OFFICER REQUIRED

With the appointment in May of Mike Margeson as training officer, Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) is looking for a new equipment officer. During his time in the post, Mike made major contributions to the running of mountain rescue at all levels and it's anticipated this will continue.

The successful candidate must be able to:-

- demonstrate good knowledge of all the specialist and technical equipment used in MR.
- lead and chair the equipment subcommittee.
- co-ordinate and advise on the development and use of new equipment.
- be responsible for managing the MRC equipment budget.
- oversee the distribution of equipment to teams and be available to teams for advice.
- liaise with the BMC

technical committee.

- act as a point of reference for equipment enquiries from the media.
- meet with other subcommittees, particularly medical, on a regular basis.
- attend meetings of MRC officers and contribute to the wider work of the MRC at national level.
- represent MR at relevant external meetings and events.
- make regular contributions to the MR magazine.
- maintain an equipment area on the website.
- keep links with equipment manufacturers, especially with reference to their presence at conferences and so forth. Details should have been sent out to the teams but for further info, contact Peter Smith 01706 852335 or email secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

MEDICAL GASSES

From Steve Teale, Medical Officer of MRC of Scotland, important information for teams who use Medical Gas Solutions for medical gasses, especially oxygen. 'Recently two oxygen cylinders were returned to MGS for refill by a Scottish MRS. The valve on one of the oxygen cylinders had been subject to a recall, four years earlier. The

recall was triggered by an incident of 'spontaneous ignition' within the valve at the top of the cylinder. MHRA, the governing body for medical equipment, rightly insisted on withdrawal of the valve. At the time there was significant confusion as the old company (Medical Gas Services) had kept no records of where these valves were being used. These valves are only in the older alloy cylinders which many teams have now replaced with ultra-lightweight carbon cylinders. It is difficult to tell which regulator/valve you are looking at, as the type cannot be determined from the serial number.'

Steve has concerns that there may be other teams using this oxygen valve who are unaware of the problem. There are NO problems with BOC cylinders. If you have Medical Gas Solutions oxygen cylinders please take a digital photo of the valve at the top of the cylinder and email to jamie@medicalgassolutions.co.uk. From this photograph he will be able to determine the valve used and organise replacement. Please action urgently as there is potential here for serious injury.

DATES 2008

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT REFRESHER

Places: 30
Date: Tuesday and Wednesday 26/27 August
Location: University of Wales Bangor
Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE 3 Maes Tyddyn To Menai Bridge L59 5BG 01248 716971

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS

Places: 30
Date: Thursday to Saturday 28-30 August
Location: University of Wales Bangor
Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE As above

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

Places: 40
Date: Sunday 31 August to Thursday 4 September
Location: University of Wales Bangor
Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE As above

UK MR CONFERENCE

Places: 250+50 for speakers
Date: 5-7 September
Location: Stirling University
Contact: Peter Howells OBE 01633 254244 plhowells@plhowells.fsnet.co.uk

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

Places: 24
Date: Sunday 12 October
Location: Oldham MRT HQ
Contact: John Edwards 01457 870734 jmemr@fsmail.net

MR(E&W) SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING

Places: 50
Date: Saturday 15 November
Location: Lancs Police HQ Hutton
Contact: Peter Smith 01706 852335 secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

TEAM LEADERS MEETING

Places: 50
Date: Saturday 6 December
Location: Bowland Pennine MRT Base, Garstang
Contact: Peter Smith As above

OFFICER UPDATES in a nutshell...

Richard Warren takes over as LDSAMRA Chair and will also be one of their reps to the MRC... Dave Freeborn has stood down after 13 years as team leader at Patterdale MRT... Jon White is new SWERA rep... Nigel Dawson and Selwyn Keenan are new reps to SWSARA... Dave Bartles-Smith is new NESRA rep... Adrian Woods takes over the chair at ALSAR... Rob Johnson takes over as team leader of Cleveland MRT... and Mike Margeson steps down as MRC Equipment Officer to take up the new post of MRC Training Officer.

Distinguished Service Award goes to Jim Coyle of Cockermouth MRT. It's anticipated Jim will receive the award from Peter Bell at the conference in Stirling.

Birthday honours...

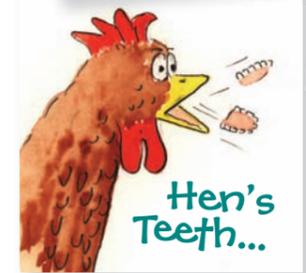
Alfie Ingram MBE... Chairman of the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland and a mountain rescuer since the 1950s, Alfie was awarded the MBE in June. Based in Dundee, he is also team leader of the Tayside team. He received the award for services to mountain rescue in Scotland.

Nicki Lyons MBE... Nicki, of Callington in Cornwall also received the MBE for her work with SARDA and her involvement in mountain rescue operations. She has been a member of Tavistock Dartmoor SRT since 1982.



HONOURS FACT FILE (according to the Times - and they should know!)

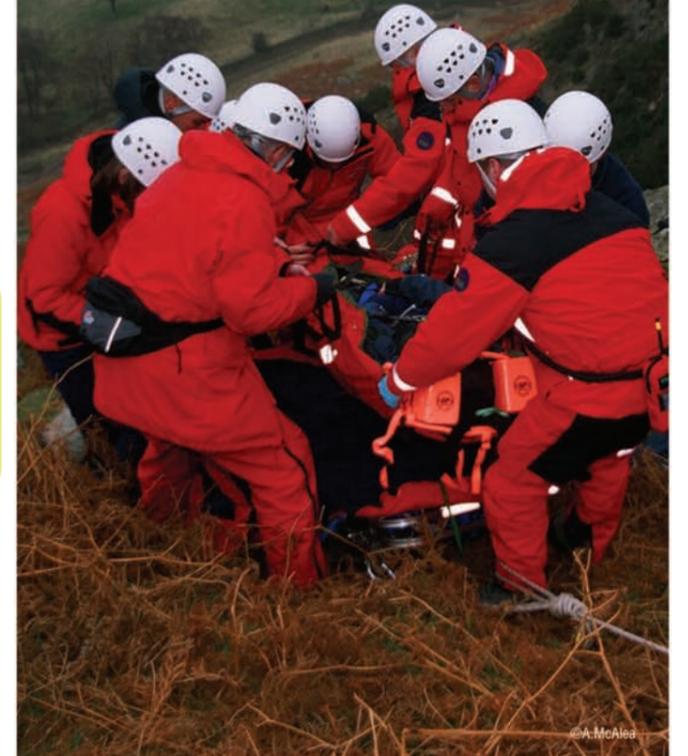
It was John Major who changed the system during his tenure as PM, inviting anyone to write in to Downing Street and nominate a worthy candidate. The suggestion took hold and a fair number of honours are now awarded by this method. The Order of the British Empire has its own hierarchy, beginning with the humble 'member' (MBE), on to 'officer' (OBE), 'commander' (CBE) and 'knight' (KBE).



Fell Walker with Map, Compass and Torch...

Rare sightings

Are you competent to inspect their equipment?



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- How to inspect equipment for use at height
- How to maintain equipment
- How to keep traceability records
- When to retire damaged equipment

*Prior experience of equipment essential. One day PPE inspection course available for those with less experience.



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e work.rescue@lyon.co.uk www.lyon.co.uk

New kit on show at Stirling

News just in... a wide range of mountain rescue compatible products from Mountain Equipment will be on show at the UK MR Conference in Stirling in September. Spearheading the collection will be the brand new Kongur MRS Jacket. Developed from the multi-award winning Kongur Jacket, the new design has been tailored specifically to meet the demands of rescue work. Constructed entirely from the groundbreaking Gore-tex® 3 layer Pro Shell fabric with reinforcement in key areas, plus integrated reflectivity, this looks set to become the definitive shell jacket for mountain rescue teams. The Mountain Equipment stand at the conference is sure to be the centre of attention with a supporting cast of rescue-specific softshell jackets, durable leg wear, gloves and headgear on show, plus a new range of emergency shelters and welded waterproof kit bags. Marketing manager Richard Woodall and team sales manager Martin Dixon will be there to talk through the new products and get your feedback. For more about team sales, contact Martin on 07710 358762.

KONGUR MRS JACKET



Who's who at the MRC...



plus... Neil Roden Basecamp Editor

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Mike Margeson reports... The stretcher service and load test contract with Lyon is being well received by teams. A steady programme of catch up test and service work has been under way. I would urge all teams to check their load test certification and last service recorded schedule.

The Lakes team equipment officers had a regional meeting at the Lyon Training facility at Tebay, arranged by Paul Witheridge of Lyon Work and Rescue and LDSAMRA equipment rep Ray Griffiths. There was a full demonstration of the load test process and service work. Ray had also arranged for a whole collection of stretchers to be brought along for discussion. Lakes teams' stretcher questionnaire returns were also initially discussed. Perhaps the most important issue to come out of the meeting was if you are not using a Bell stretcher, what load test certification and service schedule record do you have?

LIGHTWEIGHT CASBAG TESTING

This project, started by William Lumb and the under ground teams, has been further delayed but construction is now back on track. Every team will still receive a casbag to take part in the test programme. Feedback from this project

to the equipment sub committee will be vital.

STRETCHER QUESTIONNAIRE

This has now passed the extended deadline – after some naming and shaming!! We eventually received 65% return, so thanks to all those who took part. A good number of

teams still made no return or contribution to this important research and development process, a real shame, and a missed opportunity for them! As reported, this data will now be processed and presented at the Stirling Conference, in the magazine and on the equipment area of the website.

MR(E&W) CENTRAL EQUIPMENT BUDGET

I am sorry to have to report that the NHS Trust budget has just been cut by 5k due to some trusts pulling out of funding support. This is not at all surprising, as the equipment sub had just flagged up at the May main meeting that the central equipment budget had

been the same for seventeen years and its purchase value must now be a fraction of the original intention. The equipment group had asked and urged the MRC to consider providing an annual budget to complement the NHS budget and help address the erosion in real terms of the funds available for specialist MR equipment production and development. It was the subcommittee's belief that some of the considerable funds raised by the fundraising groups should be channelled to set up annual budgets for equipment and training subcommittees. We thought the MRC should make available 20k to further support the work of the equipment sub committee.

- Montane
- Arqvia

EQUIPMENT HEALTH CHECK

A few observations as I stand down after eighteen challenging years as your equipment officer. I believe all the indicators are that the equipment subcommittee is alive and kicking and in good health. Why do I say that? Well I only need to consider the projects and jobs the new equipment officer will take on with the members of the sub committee. The vitally important stretcher design and development project and the lightweight casbag trial highlight a couple. It is crucial these two projects are seen through to completion. The budget issue is a key challenge. In many ways the ability of the subcommittee to function and fulfil its purpose depends on resolution of these funding issues. To put this in perspective, I would highlight one of the really important and successful programmes to date – the delivery of vacmats to teams. This has been perhaps the most important innovation in improving the outcomes of casualty care. On a different tack altogether, and in many ways resonating with the importance I place on quality training provisions, are the PPE and FPE courses we have encouraged and developed on a regional and national level, complemented by the rigorous service and load test provision by our new association with Lyon.

EQUIPMENT STILL IN STOCK

At present we have one new Bell Tangent Stretcher for £1000 to a good home!!!! We also have vacmats available for any team needing replacement. I have placed a further reduced order due to budget restraints for further vacmat production.

EQUIPMENT EXHIBITING AT THE STIRLING CONFERENCE

We have great support from our trade partners, despite the credit crunch. Below is the list of those already booked up (and paid!!) to exhibit to date. It's not too late to become an exhibitor – if you have any trade contacts please give them my contact details or ask them to email me at mmargeson@hotmail.com. Those already booked:-

- Safequip
- Snowledge/Polar
- Lyon Equipment
- Keela
- TSL Rescue France
- Paramo and Nixwax
- Super Tracks
- Macpac
- Rescue 3 UK
- DB Outdoors Edelrid
- Burton McCall

I'd like to say a big thank you to my colleagues on the equipment subcommittee, many of who have become good friends over the years. The hard work, support and good counsel has been much appreciated. And we have enjoyed full representation of all the regions in the last few years, which has been most encouraging. In my view, this is a sign of good health, and long may it continue!

The national support group is now in its second year and it is very encouraging to see the first batch of membership renewals coming through. Inevitably not everyone has renewed but our numbers continue to grow with support from a wide range of sources. Summit, the British Mountaineering Council magazine recently ran a feature on the cost of insurance for those who enjoy the mountains outside this country. In response to that, I wrote to the magazine pointing out that mountain rescue in this country is entirely free although obviously it does cost to run the service. I've not seen a copy of the latest Summit but judging by what's come through the door this week they must have put something in their latest issue.

Quite a few BaseCamp members have contacted me recently offering their help in supporting mountain rescue and promoting BaseCamp. This is really useful. As a result of these offers, BaseCamp application forms are now quite widely spread and certainly in places I would not have had time to get to. If you can, please continue to spread the word about mountain rescue. For those who belong to a walking or climbing club please tell them about BaseCamp and try to encourage them to join. Thank you for all your support. **Neil Roden**

BASECAMP

New handbook hot off the press

July sees the launch of a brand new Mountain and Cave Rescue Handbook. Out goes the old format A5 booklet – in comes a chunky new A6 pocket guide to everything hillgoers need to know when striking out for the hills.

'Call Out Mountain Rescue' takes the reader through preparation and route planning, what to take and how to pack it, how best to stay safe in the mountains and what to do if you have an accident. If you do hit trouble, there's a run down of the call out procedure and how to relay the relevant information to the emergency services. There's a potted history of mountain rescue and some useful advice on publications, websites and organisations with which to hone your skills and research your trip before setting out. And there's also a foreword from our patron, HRH Prince William of Wales.

It's written and edited by Judy Whiteside, with contributions from John Ellerton (MRC Medical Officer), Mike Margeson (erstwhile Equipment Officer, now Training Officer) and Ged Feeney (Stats Officer) and Steve Long (MLTE). Wirebound with a heavyweight paper cover, with 150 full colour pages packed with information, it's handy for the rucksack and a must for the outdoor enthusiast.

Retailing at £9.99, it's on offer to teams wishing to boost their own fundraising offering for £7.99 per copy plus post and packing when ordered on official team notepaper. For further details of individual or team sales, contact Judy Whiteside via email at editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

'Essential reading for all British walkers and climbers. Packed with good advice and a great insight into the brilliant work performed by our rescue teams.'

Andy Cave: Mountaineer, author and conference speaker.

'Not only an interesting read but an ideal opportunity for teams to make a little extra cash. These should sell like hot cakes!'

Andy Simpson: MRC Press Officer

For over thirty years, we have produced a handbook which attempted to be all things to all people – progressively more difficult and finally impossible to achieve. This new book is concise and easily portable yet contains a wealth of information covering hill safety, dealing with misfortune, engaging mountain rescue and also gives a useful account of the structure and background of mountain rescue itself. Easily readable and presented in an attractive format, one hopes it will play a part in reducing some of the 'avoidable' incidents of recent years. It certainly deserves to be read by a wide audience, particularly those with limited hill experience and the more casual hill goer. All those involved in its production are to be congratulated on an excellent end product which is destined to be an important part of the mountain rescue 'armoury'.

David Allan: MRC Chairman

'Call Out Mountain Rescue. A Pocket Guide to Safety on the Hill' edited by Judy Whiteside is published by Mountain Rescue (England & Wales). Price £9.99. ISBN 978 0 9501765 8 1. Wirebound paperback. 150 pages.

dear editor

A COMPELLING CASE FOR FUEL TAX EXEMPTION

Four years ago alarm bells started to ring with regard to escalation of fuel prices and the added fear of the government raising the fuel tax, as and when they thought fit to do so. With this in mind the fundraising committee undertook a survey of rescue teams in England and Wales to find out how much fuel they purchase.

The total fuel bill for rescue teams in England and Wales in 2006, amounted to £86,470, which benefited the government in tax to the tune of £42,000.

Further examination of this survey, highlights a much more damning statistic. Between 2002 and 2006, the fuel tax paid by rescue teams to the government amounted to £252,000. In 2007 fuel tax went up yet again, with a further increase expected this year.

In the last eighteen months, and taking into consideration the meteoric rise in fuel prices, I would estimate that fuel consumption has doubled, which in turn has increased the fuel tax paid to the government by rescue teams.

In preparation of this document to the Treasury Minister, we explored the feasibility of rescue teams

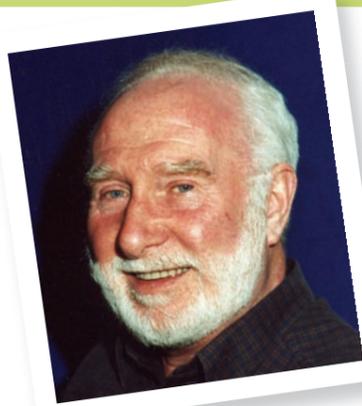
using red diesel as they do in the agricultural industry and selected vehicles in the public sector. We came to the conclusion that this was not viable due to accessibility of this fuel. However, we did suggest and propose that a comparison be made and that rescue teams might purchase ordinary fuel at red diesel prices – which equates to not paying fuel tax.

A seven page presentation document was sent to the Treasury Minister in January 2008 outlining our case why rescue teams should not pay fuel tax. As yet we have not heard from the Minister, but that is not unusual. Certain government departments are not known for speedy replies, though some may say it's bad manners not to acknowledge receipt of a document or letter.

The theme throughout our correspondence with the Minister is that 'the general public donates money to rescue teams to provide an efficient and free, emergency service – and not to line the Chancellor's pocket in immoral taxes.'

Stewart Hulse MBE
National Fundraising Committee

* A meeting has since been scheduled with the Treasury for 15 July



LAKE DISTRICT

JOHN DEMPSTER MBE STEPS DOWN AS CHAIRMAN LDSAMRA

Richard Warren writes... John stepped down as chairman of the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association at the AGM in March this year. Involved in mountain rescue for the past 50 years, he joined the Cockermouth team when he was fifteen years old and continues to be an active member of the team after recently stepping down as their chairman, allowing others to take over the helm. He has been involved with LDSAMRA for 37 years, starting when he took over as the Cockermouth representative in 1971 and has been chairman for fifteen years.

The first meeting he attended was of the Lake District Mountain Accident Association chaired by Stephen Derbyshire. At that time there were two separate bodies, the other being the Search Panel. This was formed in the mid 60s following a large scale search in the Lakes. The police asked for volunteers. Hundreds responded and the police realised they didn't really know how to handle such a large scale search so it was decided to form a search panel with representatives from all the teams. The panel was chaired by Colonel Rusty Westmorland and had all the founders of mountain rescue within the Lake District – George Fisher, Sid Cross, Dr Ogilvy and Jim Cameron. The two bodies continued into the early 1980s. The last panel search he remembered was for the French girl Veronique Marr who was eventually found in Wasdale. The committees were then reorganised by Joe Boothroyd and Paul Horder, and LDSAMRA was formed.

John's greatest achievement was in the development of the LDSAMRA personal accident insurance, which is now being adopted as a model for other forces and teams in England and Wales. At the time he took over as chairman, the insurance was primarily through Cumbria police and the Cumbria County Council insurance scheme and, when this collapsed, it was followed by a police contingency fund. Around twelve years ago the government changed the funding of the police and they no longer had the comfort of a contingency fund and therefore had problems insuring the teams. John met with the Chief Constable at that time and through hard negotiation managed to

secure a substantial donation from Cumbria police, which would be index linked and allow LDSAMRA to take out its own insurance. The policy has worked well for the past twelve years and there have been a number of claims successfully settled. John believed this should also be adopted by MR(E&W), the regions initially taking out their own insurances then having a national one.

He has been an excellent regional chair and ambassador for mountain rescue and will be missed. However he hasn't been allowed to completely disappear – at the June meeting he was elected vice president and awarded Distinguished Service. He has been succeeded by Richard Warren.

REDUCING THE NUMBERS OF CALLOUTS

In previous issues we have reported on the a significant increase in the numbers of callouts involving walkers entering onto the Lakeland fells ill-prepared, ill-equipped and lacking experience.

There does not appear to be a drop in the numbers of callouts – and what we are classing as avoidable rescues – despite the publicity and media attention. Two initiatives have been launched since the last report. Cumbria Tourism have supported the Lake District teams by helping produce a six minute public awareness video which addresses the issues that appear to have created the rise in incidents – lack of preparation, inadequate clothing and equipment, insufficient experience and over ambition. The video has been posted to YouTube and also Cumbria Tourism's Go Lakes website.

A further development has been the partnership between LDSAMRA and the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA). After a very supportive meeting with Richard Leafe, LDNPA Chief Executive, the authority agreed to put out a joint press statement, flagging the growing problem and encouraging the public to financially support the teams. The safety video is also playing on their website. The video can be viewed online – <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=pimlM3ZmYIE> – and is also showing at the MR(E&W) exhibition at Rhedeg, which opened to the public at the end of May, running through until the end of the year. We are continuing to monitor the situation carefully and take advantage of opportunities to drum the messages home.

Events 2008

Tuesday 15 July, 22 July, 29 July, 5 August, 12 August, 19 August, 26 August 2008 at 8.30pm

Cockermouth MRS Slide Shows

Come and watch a presentation by members of Cockermouth MRS. See how they operate, what is involved in getting a rescue started and how much training they do. A search and rescue dog may be in attendance on certain dates. Team merchandise will also be on sale. Phone Derek Tunstall on 07841370644 or 01946 861051. For further info see cockermouthmrt.org.uk

Sunday 14 September 2008 Pennine Bridleway Mountain Bike Challenge

Cycle the 47 mile Mary Townley Loop, taking in some of the best scenery and off road biking the South Pennines have to offer. Riders must be 18+ years, 16 if accompanied by an adult. Entry £15 (£18 on the day). All proceeds to Rossendale & Pendle MRS. For further details contact Robert Stokes on penninemtbchallenge@hotmail.co.uk

Saturday 27 September 2008 Nine Edges Endurance

A 20 mile off road event over rough moorland and along gritstone edges, with about 600 metres height gain. Some navigational ability required. You choose whether you walk, run or climb the route, a traverse from Fairholmes to the Robin Hood pub near Baslow. Transport back to the start provided free. Entry £20 includes T-shirt and pint (or soft drink). All proceeds to Edale MRS with the option to raise further sponsor money for the team. For further details go to nineedges.co.uk

Saturday 20 September 2008 Sleepwalker

Sets off at 20:00hrs from Talybont on Usk. Entries £16 online at runnerworld.co.uk or northridgeadventure.co.uk

MID PENNINE

THREE HONOURED AFTER CENTURY OF SERVICE TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Bowland Pennine MRT has recently honoured three of its longest serving members with honorary life membership. Between them they have served the team and the people and communities of Lancashire collectively for 105 years. Keith Gillies of Bamber Bridge has served for 36 years, Paul Durham of Chorley for 34 years and Bob Scoltock, also of Chorley, for 35 years.



▲ LEFT TO RIGHT: KEITH GILLIES, PAUL DURHAM AND BOB SCOLTOCK

The awards are made in respect of the length of service each has made in addition to exceptional contributions to particular aspects of the team's work. Keith has served for many years as chairman



of the team's Smelt Mill committee. Smelt Mill is the team's HQ outside Dunsop Bridge, which for many years has doubled as a training centre for outdoor pursuits. Organised groups can use the residential facilities for week and weekend courses to gain enjoyment of the great outdoors and learn of the service mountain rescue volunteers provide the recognised emergency services. Bob has served as deputy team leader as well as assisting Keith as the financial controller of Smelt Mill's resources. Paul has also served as deputy team leader and more recently as fundraising officer, raising over £170,000 for the team's new operating centre in Garstang and a new incident control vehicle.

BOWLAND PENNINE VISITS BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Bowland Pennine MRT recently accepted an invitation to an evening reception at Buckingham Palace in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh, to celebrate the fifth anniversary of The Queen's Awards for Voluntary Services. The team was awarded the QAVS in 2005 – only one of three that year in Lancashire – for services to the community. The awards scheme commenced in 2003 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee, the fiftieth year of her reign. Team leader Phil O'Brien and Paul Durham were nominated to represent the team. Paul takes up the story with an important moral at the end of it.

'Due to work commitments we decided to drive down and back in the day – a round trip of 450 miles. To make the journey as comfortable as possible we traveled casual with the suits hung in the back of the car. Upon arrival we had time to kill, so we parked up and took in a few of the sights around Trafalgar Square. When it was time to get suited and booted, to my surprise Phil promptly stripped to his boxers in full view of everyone strolling along Pall Mall, not to mention the hundreds of security cameras and a confused grey suited chauffeur in the black limo in the next parking bay. He bemoaned his misfortune there were so few females in MR!! We've all done it, stripped in a public place – to gear up ready for action on the hill but in the middle of our capital is a different matter. At least I sat in the car and concealed my modesty.

'Driving up to the gates, we were stopped by police who searched the car for concealed explosives. The expression on the faces of the Japanese tourists outside the gates as they realised they were witnessing someone who was actually going to go inside the place was a flash picture in itself. After driving into the courtyard past a regiment of armed officers, we were guided to park up by a policeman looking more like Rambo than Rambo himself. As we got out, I was told to leave the car open with the keys on the dash. I asked if it was safe to do that in the middle of London. The officer politely smiled but his only response was to glance around the inner sanctum of heraldry as he sauntered off. I sensed 'trouble at t'mill' involving two lowly MR volunteers from Lancashire let loose in central London amidst the higher echelons of society. 'We'd been notified that mobiles and cameras were



MIKE NIXON MBE 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

In early spring 1951 Mike Nixon, team member of Keswick MRT, climbed Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis in late winter conditions, aged 25. All he remembers of that trip was Tower Gap and the camaraderie of his climbing partners Gunter Franz, Pip Richardson and Des Oliver. All four were members of Keswick Mountaineering Club and soon after became members of the Keswick team.

On Saturday 31 May 2008 Mike Nixon MBE, team member and president of Keswick MRT, and president of LDSAMRA did it again – this time to celebrate his 80th birthday. Organised by Mike's son Chris, team leader of Kintail MRT, Mike, Chris and twelve members of the Keswick team climbed Tower Ridge in absolute perfect conditions.

Leaving the North Face car park, the group ascended via Allt a'Mhuilinn to the CIC hut, where the on tap liquid refreshment was most welcoming. The party split up here, with the fourteen climbers continuing to the Ridge, while another twelve – family members, friends and non-climbers – walked via halfway lochan and up the zig-zags to the summit. Mike's wife Val, his daughter-in-law Janice and his grandchildren Louise, Donald and Alasdair all walked to the top of Ben Nevis. Climbing in groups of two or three in perfect conditions (t-shirts the whole way!) the route took five hours



▲ TOP: MIKE NIXON ABOVE: ON THE EASTERN TRAVERSE, LEFT TO RIGHT CHRIS NIXON, MIKE'S SON AND LEADER OF KINTAIL MRT, MIKE, AND SIMON HODGSON, DEPUTY KESWICK MRT

to complete with regular refreshment stops, including stops for application and re-application of sun cream! As with all rescue teams the banter throughout was non-stop. A few of the more technical and exposed sections of the 600m route were protected with a fixed rope and prussicks, including Tower Gap, with the teams still roped but moving together over the remainder of the route. By the time the climbers had reached the Eastern Traverse, the non-climbing group were on the summit, watching progress through binoculars and to the accompaniment of someone on the summit with a very large drum. Walkers on the summit commenting on the 'they must be mad' climbing party were amazed to be told that one of the climbers was in fact 80! The whole party reunited on the summit, still in t-shirts, for further refreshments and a photo call, before returning via the zig-zags, halfway lochan and Allt a'Mhuilinn, with views as far as Mull, Skye, Schiadhion and beyond. An onward journey to Dornie resulted in more birthday celebrations going on into the early hours...

Mike Nixon has been a member of Keswick MRT for over 50 years. He was team leader for fifteen years, following George Fisher into the role, and was awarded the MBE for his services to mountain rescue in 1993. As many people will know, Mike has been instrumental in development of the Keswick team and mountain rescue generally. What most people won't know is that Mike is still a regular on many rescues every year. In 2007 he attended 31 rescues out of the 90 full team callouts undertaken by the team and has been on 1150 rescues in the 25 years since 1983, from when accurate records are available. He has been on many hundreds more prior to 1983. Mike doesn't ask for and doesn't receive any concession while on rescues, as he doesn't need them. He will regularly be seen carrying large sacs of gear up the hill and carrying the stretcher on the descents. Apparently to every rule there is an exception – we certainly have one here!

Mark Hodgson Team Leader Keswick MRT



▲ THE END OF A VERY FINE DAY. EVERYONE IN THE PICTURE IS ON THE SUMMIT



PHIL O'BRIEN AND PAUL DURHAM AT THE PALACE

not permitted inside and unusually we used our commonsense and left our pagers in the car as well. As we sauntered towards the main entrance, we contemplated the scenario of a call out bleep whilst inside the palace and the likelihood of us returning to a vehicle modified by a controlled explosion as a result of a constant and uncharacteristic bleeping coming from within a Ford Mondeo.

'Once inside we were guided through the red carpeted halls to a long gallery where all the guests – 400 of us – were to congregate. With liveried courtiers everywhere it wasn't long before both of us had a flute of champagne in our hands. Well do as the Romans do, as the saying goes.

'Phil astounded me with his knowledge of pictures, portraits and artists as he scanned the walls. At one point he was in deep discussion with a member of the household staff. We passed the time chatting politely with other guests about our respective charities and how long we'd done it – you know the usual stuff – and picking at canapés. We've got one of those on our new control vehicle, so I new what I was talking about!

'Finally the doors opened and at the end of the hall stood the Queen and the Duke. Gulp, sharp intake of breath, oh s**t, here we go. Give me a cas site on the highest peak for miles around in the middle of a thunderstorm any day, I thought. For the next ten minutes we shuffled forward getting ever nearer, practicing my curtsy, touching my forelocks,

straightening my tie, all the normal nervous twitchy stuff. Thinking of what I could say to the premier family in the country without embarrassing myself was difficult. The mention of Prince William as our patron would be a good start. Finally it was my turn, I gave the courtier the card with my details written on it, who gave it to another one, then another one and finally one of them whispered my name into the Queen's ear.

'I stepped forward, bowed my head, raised my hand towards hers, a quick up and down waggle and those immortal two words, 'Your Majesty'. Next was the Duke. Now I had to do some quick thinking, first it was 'Your Majesty' then it was... I couldn't remember. Houston we have a problem. As the courtier was still reading out our full title – thank heaven for the length of it – it gave me a split second to remember, aha, 'Your Royal Highness'. Cracked it. The hand shot out again, quick waggle twice this time. In the same time it takes Boris Becker to father another offspring, it was over but none the less memorable and intimidating for it, it was an honour.

'Once everyone had been presented, the Queen and the Duke, along with the Duke of Kent, wandered amongst us for the next hour politely chatting. We had a good conversation with the Duke of Kent, whilst out of the corner of my eye I could see the Duke of Edinburgh getting closer and closer. As my nerves reached defcom 4, he made a beeline for us. Anything could happen in the next half minute as the saying goes. I broke the ice with a polite, 'Hello sir'. So far so good. The next five minutes were spent discussing the merits of the DofE awards and all things outdoor pursuits. The following morning, the Duke was to present 800 gold awards to young people in Kensington Palace. So that was us. Nothing more to do but sidle off back up the M6. But what do you do before starting a long journey? Visit the loo. I can now say I've sat on the throne in Buckingham Palace!!!!

'At the end of a treasured evening in the presence of Her Majesty and His Royal Highness, I feel truly honoured to have represented my team and wish to thank them for the nomination. Amidst many memories of the event one notable observation will stay with me. That was the interest – despite the passion displayed by everyone that evening in

support of their charities and the work they individually and collectively contribute – in the work of two lads from Lancashire who just happen to represent a mountain rescue team. Almost to a man (and woman), when they saw our name badges, they wanted to know all about our work. Even when I turned the tables and politely asked about their work, it was only the briefest of diversions before they turned it around once again to the work of mountain rescue. Many of us are aware of the strength of support we enjoy in the minds of the general public and that support and respect was echoed throughout Buckingham Palace that evening.

'Whatever we do collectively and individually to modernise, change or evolve as a service, we must never lose sight of the support we enjoy across society as a whole, from the most humble to the great and good, and work tirelessly to maintain the standard we've achieved and do nothing to jeopardise it.'

NORTH EAST

NEWS FROM CLEVELAND

Sid Bolland writes... 'Cleveland SRT now has a new team leader in Rob Johnson. A well respected team member, Rob has been with the team for fifteen years during which time he has held several posts including equipment officer, committee member and editor of the team's newsletter. He will be taking over from Carl Faulkner who, due to new work commitments has reluctantly decided to stand down. Carl has been a popular leader with whom it has been a pleasure to work.

'Our biggest project at the moment is the team base refurbishment. We are in negotiations with our local authority to purchase the building we have been leasing for the last 25 years, and will be putting a lot into fundraising to bring our HQ up to the standard it should be.

'I also have to announce the retirement from the team of one of our former members, Bryan Snowden, after 41 years loyal and dedicated service. Bryan, amongst others, started the team way back in 1965 and has made it a lifelong work – as team member, secretary, callout officer, chairman, support officer and vice president. He has been awarded the Distinguished Service Award, the Queen's Award for 25 years service and recently the 40 year service award.

Over the years he has helped develop very good relations with all other professional services whilst instilling confidence in these authorities concerning the ability of our team. Thanks to Bryan's efforts we are held in very high regard by all. Over the last couple of years he has been an active supporter and fundraiser, helping to raise much needed funds. Bryan will never be forgotten for the contribution he has made to the team and MR in general. We wish him a long and happy retirement and many thanks from all the team.

'On a sadder note, I have to announce the passing of two very valuable team members Brian Raw and Dr Tony Leach. Brian Raw, another founding father of the team, passed away in mid-October, after a



HELEN AND DAVE WITH NEW RESUSCI ANNIE

long and courageous fight against asbestosis. The team was officially born at a meeting in Fryup in December 1965. Although instigated by Dick Bell, the NY Moors National Park Warden, it was the foresight, courage and determination of that small band of mainly volunteer wardens to take up the challenge to create an emergency search and rescue service on the moors.

'Brian's passion for the outdoor life was developed through scouting where his leadership qualities led him to found the 7th Redcar scout troop – a troop that quickly gained an excellent reputation for outdoor pursuit activities. His love of the moors took him into voluntary wardening and onwards to Cleveland SRT. Work took him away from the area in 1972 but, like most former members, he never lost contact entirely. He always attended our ten year anniversaries, the most recent being the 40th in 2005. Those of us who follow in the footsteps owe a debt of gratitude to Brian and his colleagues for creating the team and its ethos – no mean task at a time when there was little in the way of guidance, help or technical equipment. Starting with a blank sheet of paper must have been very difficult. Imagine the difficulties of suggesting to the police that, as you had formed a rescue team, they should now delegate their authority to you.

'Brian's ashes were scattered at Trough House, a regular and favourite venue for the team in the early days. His wife Hazel, and his son, were accompanied by another founder member, Ken Olley. Later in the day on High Green, Great Ayton, Hazel presented the team with a cheque for £1000 from donations in lieu of flowers – a very generous and deserved tribute to a great guy. When we start work on the base refurbishment, one of the rooms will be named and furnished in Brian's honour.

'Dr Tony Leach has been selfless in his support of the team over many years. He joined Cleveland in 1974 and served as one of our first medical officers from 1975 to 1978, laying the foundations of our now very strong medical background. This includes several advanced cas carers and many team members who hold the basic cas care certificate, together with a lot of medical equipment enabling us to deal with what is thrown at us on the hill. We also do a lot of in house teaching, and have strong contacts with other medical agencies much of which was built on Tony's example. Tony had to leave the team in 1979 when he took a job out of the area, but kept in touch as an active associate. At each Survival you would see him helping at one of the checkpoints. In 2002, now retired, he moved back to Great Ayton and became a 'Support not

on call' member which involves him in much background work for the team. He helped with our medical courses and with the examining of them, always seeking to help rather than criticise. Many practices were attended where Tony was employed as a driver or body. Nothing was too much trouble for Tony, and always with humour, calmness and friendship. We will miss one of life's 'best of men'.

A minute's silence was observed and Tony's wife Helen and family presented the team with a cheque for £1000 donations in lieu of flowers. We have replaced our Resusci Annie in his memory'.

PEAK DISTRICT

DR EMMA GRANDRIDGE

In April, members of **Oldham MRS** heard with great sadness of the sudden death of 31 year old Emma, a team member since 1993. Emma joined the team as a student, and followed a path through medical training and a variety of jobs in her

subsequent medical career in acute medical trauma care, establishing herself as an excellent field trauma doctor and educator. She was looking forward to her new job on the cruise liners where the free



time between cruises would allow her to concentrate on developing the training further as well as being available for any mountain rescue incidents during the gaps. The Oldham team 'Bulletin' speaks of team members being 'particularly fond of her combination of knowledge, care, fun and friendliness. Always keen and enthusiastic, she brought a new dynamism to the teaching of first aid and cas care to team members. Her work in A&E meant she had a wide range of hands-on experience to bring to training sessions. It was obvious to all that, when dealing with a real casualty, she was completely in control, no matter what the surroundings. A great loss to the team.'

KINDER IN THE PUBLIC EYE!

Sally Barnett writes... 'Since taking over the role of **Kinder MRT** Press Officer in January, mine and their feet haven't touched the floor. I wanted to raise awareness of the team locally and nationally, so started to promote the team in any way I could think of. In January, we organised a filmmaker to join us for the day. The edited piece was sent to Channel 5 'Your News' and finally aired in March (www.fivetvonline.tv/news.php?news=232). Natasha Kaplinsky was keen to follow up the piece later in the year to see if the video helped us. Next up, I contacted a relative – Hayley Cavill – at BBC Radio Manchester. We arranged for her to join us for the day and see what being in a mountain

NEW VEHICLE NORTH OF TYNE

Kevin White **North of Tyne SRT** writes... 'After more than ten years running our V8 rescue Land Rover, it was decided to look at a cheaper and more efficient vehicle. Quite a challenge, as the V8 had served us well, and seen many callouts in as many different weather and terrain conditions. The sheer power of this vehicle enabled it to cruise along effortlessly. I suppose the down side was the 15 miles per gallon, meaning our hard raised cash would soon disappear. After many discussions, it was agreed we would stick to a Land Rover, and we began fundraising for a new customised 110 Defender. After loads of letter writing, donations and events, we finally raised enough money to place an order directly with Land Rover. Our vehicle officer, Bradley Wilson, negotiated a good price of around £19,000 and we finally got ourselves a brand new white Defender 110 station wagon. We had to wait a little longer for a white vehicle but, in the meantime, Bradley had to find someone to carry out the customising to turn it into a rescue vehicle. MMB International, in Macclesfield was contacted and, after much consultation between Bradley and Mary O'Toole from MMB, a design drawn up. This involved having a forward facing bench seat made in the middle, with a rear cage behind to contain all our equipment safely in the event of an accident. The cage opened down across the rear bench which enabled our stretcher, with casualty on board, to be slid through the rear door and across the bench, and be secured safely for transporting. All the radios were fitted along with our light bars and sirens. We had a roof rack made and fitted, to enable extra luggage to be transported, as well as being able to use the roof as a platform. The total cost for conversion and materials, was around £13,000 and the work undertaken was to a very high and professional standard which could not be faulted. In the end we were the first team in the country to get the new 110 rescue Land Rover, and to date it has performed very well. Fuel economy is very impressive, the power and cruising speed allows this vehicle to be used to its best ability. Off road it has performed really well, and with the right choice of tyres goes anywhere the V8 could go. Our area covers nearly 2000 square miles, with a great diversity of terrains, from the urban cities to the rugged cheviots and coast lines. The ability to carry personnel safely and speedily to an incident, as well as the luggage capacity, makes this a very good all round vehicle, and to date our team are very pleased with the end result.





▲ HAYLEY CAVILL INTERVIEWS KEN BLAKEMAN

rescue team entails. Hayley was put into a team with Ken Blakeman, our chairman and interviewed various members of the team. A few weeks later the interviews and clips were played on Radio Manchester for a week. Ken and Colin Barnett went into the studio to do a follow up and were interviewed live on air. The response from listeners was tremendous. Everyone involved was touched by the commitment and hard work of team members.

'A visit then to High Peak Radio to record a Helpline in April and an interview on the local news section asking for donations to the team. From this I contacted a local businessman who had heard our plea. He knew how much we needed to raise for a new base and that running from a garage in a pub car park wasn't the ideal spot. So, thanks to him, we commissioned a new banner to be used for fairs and shows which really do promote the team.

'Television beckoned again when Channel M joined us to video a team member. They wanted to emphasise that we are all volunteers, doing this 24/7 and 365 days a week and all have families too. This fantastic fifteen minute video was shown twice and a link made to our Just Giving page. There are further plans for Channel M to join us at a future fundraiser in October.

'Finally, the newest ventures include new stitched polo shirts to wear at press and publicity events, articles for the Derbyshire Times and Daily Express, and Julia Bradbury joining us for a day out. So let's hope the team can go from strength to strength and raise our profile with all this.'

SOUTH WALES

PRINCE WILLIAM VISITS CENTRAL BEACONS

In what was his first official engagement with Mountain Rescue (England & Wales), Prince William visited **Central Beacons MRS** in May. Andy Simpson reports. 'A very sunny but

tense morning followed what had been a tense few weeks, as police sniffer dogs and various men in ubiquitous dark suits scoured the base for contraband of whatever type. Fortunately, the dogs didn't manage to sniff out the drugs or helicopter flares on the vehicles so the visit went ahead, with the arrival of the Prince at about 1pm. Various dignitaries were lined up outside the base including the local MP, the chief executive of the county council, the Lord Lieutenant, oh and a couple of MR 'dignitaries', Tony Jones, Peter Howells and myself. 'Peter showed Prince William around the team's control vehicle before escorting him into the base where he met team members and spent time talking about the kit and their MR work. He also took time out to talk to one of the team's neighbours, a very elderly lady who had met the Prince's great, great grandmother when she was 'in service' in London during the 1930s. As she commented, 'This is amazing, I was cooking chips in my kitchen ten minutes ago!' Let's just hope she turned the pan off before she came out.

'An informal lunch took place with the Prince spending time talking to those assembled 'upstairs' and taking a great interest in ordinary team members. Having been briefed early on to address the Prince as 'Sir', it was pleasantly surprising how at ease everyone was made to feel. Lunch was followed by a foray into a local quarry

where a stretcher lowering exercise had been set up. Prince William was escorted to the top of the quarry by Richard Terrell and, quite literally, shown the ropes. He then assisted in lowering the casualty and barrowboy, in full view of and to the delight of the assembled press pack, lining the top of the quarry like something out of Zulu.

'In total the visit lasted something in the order of two and a half hours with Prince William asking if he could go on a callout next time. You can just see it, can't you. 'Excuse me Mr Casualty but I've just brought the future King to help carry you off!' 'I think it's true to say that all involved, including Prince William and his entourage, enjoyed the day immensely. What came across very strongly was the Prince's genuine interest and commitment to mountain rescue and those involved in it. Hopefully this will be the first of many successful visits.'

▼ PRINCE WILLIAM UNVEILS A PLAQUE COMMEMORATING HIS VISIT TO CENTRAL BEACONS
BELOW: CENTRAL BEACONS TEAM MEMBERS, TONY JONES AND ANDY SIMPSON WITH THE PRINCE



Emergency Services Show - bigger and better than ever

The Emergency Services Show is back in November for the third time, having established itself as the definitive multi-agency event. For the exhibitor it provides the perfect showcase to reach all target customers under one roof. For the visitor it's a time effective way of sourcing all the latest equipment, from communications to PPE. An extensive outside exhibition will display vehicles and equipment, including decontamination response units, boats and air shelters and a unique Emergency Response

Zone will enable organisations that offer specialist services to highlight their role in responding to an emergency. New for 2008 is the Blue Light Zone, which brings together all the police, fire and ambulance services into a dedicated area, promoting interagency cooperation. The exhibition is FREE to attend, including the Emergency Response Zone and the Blue Light Zone. See theemergencyservicesshow2008.com for details and updates as they happen.



25TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEAM LEADER'S DEATH

As part of the 75th Anniversary, **Western Beacons MSRT** (formally Bridgend MRS) thought it fitting to celebrate the anniversary of the death of former team leader Mike (Nog) Rudall. Thirty team members, past and present, joined Mike's brothers and representatives from SARDA, Central Beacons and Brecon teams in a memorial walk to the summit of Pen Y Fan on Saturday 3 May 2008. At the summit, team leader Jason Price said a few words before laying a sheaf of flowers and ex-team leader David Lewis read emails from those who could not attend before observing a minute's silence as a gesture of respect to the fallen hero. The team then left Pen y Fan for the mountain

centre near Libanus to lay more flowers at the memorial stone commemorating Mike's death. It was on 1 May 1983 that Mike Rudall courageously gave his life in the rescue of an injured scout on Pen y Fan. 886 metres up the highest mountain in South Wales, the weather conditions were described as atrocious with strong winds and snow falling. The conditions during the memorial walk could not have been more different with sunshine bringing excellent visibility across the entire beacons. Three venture scouts had fallen off the north face of Pen y Fan, and one of them - Martin Leather - broke a leg. Mike had descended to the scout when a rock fall crashed down the face. Mike threw his own body across the scout to shield him from the falling rocks and was struck himself by a large rock that killed him almost instantly. The rescue of the scouts and the recovery of Mike's body took over 36 hours, and involved more than fifty mountain rescue personnel and an RAF helicopter. Mike had been one of the founder members of the Bridgend team in 1965. He left the team in 1972 but later returned in 1980 and became team leader.

SOUTH WEST

25 YEARS AWARDS

Rob Illman and Rob Dixon, both members of **Dartmoor SRT** (Ashburton), were presented with their 25 years certificates at the team AGM by team chairman Dave Underhill. Another member, Alec Collyer, received his 25 years service award at the recent 40th anniversary DRG dinner in Plymouth. Rob Dixon said, 'I joined Ashburton Section in January 1982. In those days, we had about thirty members or less, half what we have



▲ DAVE UNDERHILL WITH ROB DIXON (ABOVE) AND ROB ILLMAN (BELOW)
PHOTOS: BARBARA HALL & TIM HEMING

now. We used our own vehicles, search control was in someone's car, but this was upgraded to a very small campervan. Radios were huge, about the size of two bricks and, at 11lbs, weighed a bit more! There were usually only three working at any time so communication was often difficult. We trained twice a month - now it's every week, with occasional exercises at weekends. We were often out all night. Technology has come on hugely, with computers, three specialist vehicles, much better and more plentiful radios, and we can do a much better job'.

Rob Illman, Ashburton team controller said, 'Over the past 25 years, I have seen the team grow and develop into a highly trained professional organisation which is well respected by the other emergency services. I am very proud to be able to continue with the team in my role as controller, which I've done for the past ten years'.

Skitostop. Mizzie protection with built in forest conservation

When you're busy pushing the boundaries of human endeavour, the irritation posed by mosquitoes and other biting insects is something can well do without! Until now, outdoor services enthusiasts have used repellents containing DEET which, although effective, is associated with adverse health affects and can cause irrevocable damage to rucksacks, tents, clothing and essential equipment should it leak.

Now celebrating its 30th year and firmly established as the world's leading manufacturer of cleaning and waterproofing solutions to protect and restore outdoor gear to 'as new' condition, Nikwax has created SkitoStop™. The effectiveness of this new DEET free personal protection range in repelling mosquitoes and other biting insects has already been proven by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine but its five leading edge formulations also deliver other benefits, including UV protection, bite relief, after sun conditioning and a product to repel biting insects from tents and mosquito nets.

SkitoStop™ reflects Nikwax's commitment to the natural environment through its environmentally safe, biodegradable, water-based formulations. In fact, 2% of every sale will be donated to the World Land Trust, an organisation dedicated to the protection of the world's tropical forests and other threatened habitats. The SkitoStop™ range comprises Sun Screen with SPF20 protection and effective insect repellency, After Sun to cool and moisturise sun stressed skin, Insect Repellent, Bite Relief Gel and Spray-On Insect Control for Fabrics.

For more information, call Nikwax on **01892 786400** visit www.nikwax.com or purchase online at www.waterproofing-world.co.uk



By professionals for professionals

Amongst the exhibitors at the conference in Stirling will be local specialist rescue equipment company **Safequip**. Formed by individuals who have worked in the specialist rescue market for many years, they have established themselves as a well respected major supplier to many emergency services departments throughout the UK - with special emphasis on fire, water and height rescue disciplines.

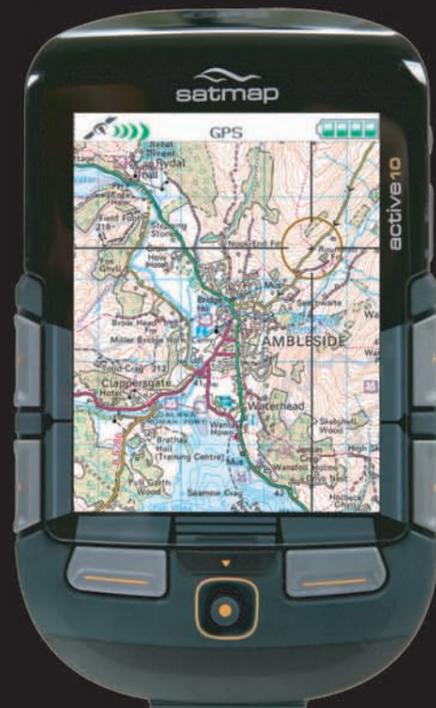
They will be bringing along their equipment, experience, and expertise in supplying rescue equipment for professional use. 'We believe we are well placed to understand your needs and always aim to achieve quality, dependability, 'best value' and control of your lifetime costs! One of the latest additions to our product portfolio is the Streamlight range of lighting. Streamlight have been leading the way for over thirty years and are recognised around the world as the specialist manufacturer of premium lighting solutions for the professional user. We look forward to meeting you in September where we will introduce you to our product portfolio. Safequip... we won't fail you'.



Does your GPS display real OS maps?



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DOGS



▲ ROGER PICKUP WITH BEINN AND IAN HIGGINBOTHAM WITH VINNY

NEW SEARCH DOGS FOR SARDA LAKES...

SARDA Lakes were able to grade two new search dogs on the same day in March, something which doesn't happen very often due to the stringent way search dogs are assessed. Each dog and handler must pass

eight days of assessment over a period of four months, which tests the consistency and resilience of the team. Any failure leads to days being added, until the standard of consistency has been reached, and this may mean the team end up doing ten, twelve or even sixteen days of assessment. Even then, they will be reviewed every six months to ensure they continue to meet the necessary standard. Whilst this regime may seem challenging, it ensures that the dogs going on the hill are up to the mark, and there is no shortage of new dogs and handlers coming forward.

The first to finish in Patterdale was Roger Pickup, from Langdale Ambleside MRT who graded with his collie Beinn. This is Roger's second dog, following on from his successful Search Dog Paddy, who passed away suddenly two and a half years ago, having completed 100 searches and making six finds.

An hour later, Ian Higginbotham from Kendal MRT also made the grade with his German shepherd Vinny. Vinny is Ian's first search dog, and the first German shepherd to grade with the Association for some years. As LAMRT and Kendal often work together on searches, the two will be as much together on callouts as they were on assessment – a useful asset to teams in the mid and south Lakes areas particularly, where there has been a shortage for a while.

It's worth noting that Roger and Beinn were called out by LAMRT on the way home from assessment, to search for a couple missing on Fairfield! Ian and Vinny had to wait another week before they did their first job at Coniston, where Dave Watt's search dog, Dynamite, located the body of a suicide. Since then there have been another ten jobs to keep them from getting bored!

SARDA Lakes instructors and assessors continue to be in great demand by foreign search dog associations, with recent requests for instruction from Iceland (twice), Norway and the Czech Republic being met. The Association benefits from having a really devoted team of bodies who attend every training weekend to act as victims for the dogs. These folk are absolutely invaluable, not just because they smell, but also because they can put a great deal of useful input into the training process. Unfortunately we've found this transfer of information can only take place whilst sitting in pubs drinking beer, after the day's training is over. However, it is something which everyone endures with good grace – can't think how!

Mick Guy SARDA Lakes Training Officer

...AND FOR SARDA ENGLAND

SARDA England held their annual grading assessment in some of the most demanding areas of the Lake District. Dogs and handlers from as far apart as Dartmoor and Northumberland gathered at Derwentwater YHA in Borrowdale to be assessed in a gruelling three day test of their abilities.



▲ ALAN HILL WITH SONNY, ELLIE SHERWIN WITH PEPPER AND JONO O'DOCHERTY WITH NUT

This year's assessment was particularly difficult for the bodies thanks to appalling rain and high winds on two of the three days in the mountains. Dogs and handlers were assessed doing two searches each day, lasting around two hours each. Handlers have to be competent in covering their designated area as there is no room for error where someone's life is at stake in the real scenario of a search for a missing person. This tests a dog handler's navigation skills as well as the dog's wind scenting abilities.

A search dog is capable of covering the same area as twenty humans in the same time and can search environments which might be difficult for searchers to easily access such as forests, ravines and crags. The successful handlers this time were Alan Hill from Dartmoor with his golden Labrador Sonny, Ellie Sherwin from Calder Valley with her Border Collie Pepper, and Jono O'Docherty from Teesdale and Kirkby Stephen teams with his black Labrador Nut.

Sponsorship for SARDA England has recently been secured from Trophy Pet Foods who will be supplying handlers with high quality food for the graded search dogs and trainees alike.

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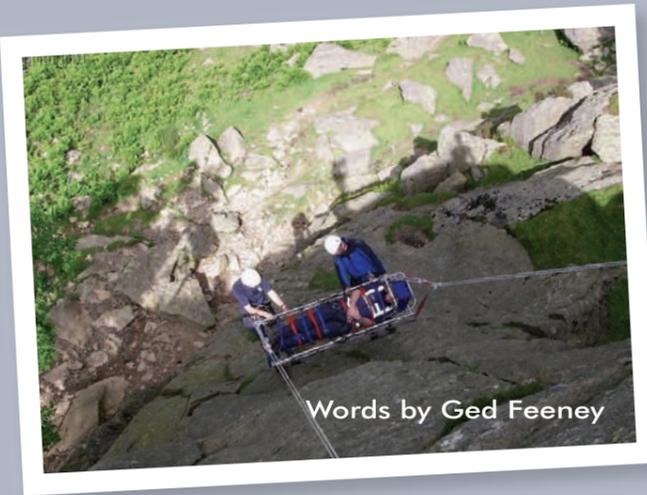
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Words by Ged Feeney

team profile: Penrith

In many respects, Penrith MRS is no different to any other team in the UK. We are a bunch of amateurs who try to provide a 'professional' service to people in difficulty. We try not to take ourselves too seriously and yet bring a mixture of effective action and humour that reassures the people we help and hopefully puts them at their ease.

The team has 38 operational members, with a working maximum of forty. At the time of writing, this figure includes four probationary members. Five team members are also members of COMRU (Cumbria Ore Mines Rescue Unit) and one member is a SARDA dog handler. We are blessed with two enthusiastic doctors and an air ambulance paramedic. 31 of the members have just requalified in the Casualty Care qualification, which is testament to the training and commitment of members and doctors!

The team's premises are located in the market town of Penrith, close to the junction of the M6 and A66, the crossroads of Cumbria. We moved into our purpose-built base in 1990 after spending many years in a converted stable in the centre of the old town. The building is adjacent to the ambulance and fire stations and the local hospital, operating a daytime minor injuries department. Cumbria Police HQ is only a short distance away.

Lying in the north east corner of the county, Penrith MRS covers the largest geographic area of any team in Cumbria with an area of approximately 2500 sq km. It extends from the Scottish Borders, down the North Pennines and then across to the Lake District Eastern Fells, including Haweswater, the flooded valley created by Manchester Corporation in the 1930s. Some of the features of the area include the High Street range with its complex of ridges and valleys, Shap Fells through which crosses the Coast to Coast footpath, Cross Fell the highest point of the Pennine range over which passes the Pennine Way, and the featureless area known as the 'Debatable Lands', the area between the Scottish borders and the Lake District, and at its heart is the Eden Valley, which includes Carlisle and an enormous number of small communities.

As with all Lakeland teams, we are

alerted by Cumbria police control room staff. This contact is usually made to the team leader or one of the three deputies, depending on their availability. Once a decision is made, team members are alerted by a pager message – nature of the call, location (grid ref) and an RV for those members 'going direct'. Most members meet at base where three vehicles can be dispatched. Base is usually manned to co-ordinate communications, but rescues are controlled at the site of the incident by a member of the leadership.

Searches are often managed from base but local premises (village halls, local schools, etc) are commandeered to keep the overhead team close to the dispatching area. Over the years, we have developed systems and assets to enable us to operate efficiently and independently of base.

Since the foot and mouth epidemic in 2001, the team has an average annual call out figure of 29 calls, ranging from 19 to 42 per year. By late May 2008 we had logged 23 for the current year.

It is fair to say that more than ten years ago, there were quiet and busy times. Winter weather usually meant a steady stream of callouts to popular areas for snow and ice climbing. These days any perceived patterns have evaporated – busy summer months are still present, related to the tourist season. However, based in a less frequented corner of the Lakes, 'busy periods' are relative!

We have very good relationships with the other emergency services, especially at tactical level. The team has been favoured with membership from all three statutory services. Some years ago, one of our women members was 'stolen' by a winchman from an RAF SAR helicopter – we have never let him forget it! Most of the fire crews in our area are retained, and whilst contact is limited, working practices are common and 'all mucking in' is the order of the day. We have an excellent relationship with the Great North Air Ambulance (G-NAA) as well as Cumbria Ambulance Service.



At the strategic level, the team worked very effectively with all emergency services during the Carlisle flooding in January 2005. Representation at 'Gold' enabled MR to provide a non-institutional way of thinking at this level. This sometimes produced sharp intakes of breath but contributed to a unity of purpose.

When prospective members apply to join, they complete an application form. Often prospective team members have far wider experiences, some with formal and even professional mountain qualifications. It would be fair to say that current membership within PMRT has a very broad cross section whose combined hill experience is very considerable and whose local knowledge is encyclopedic. If it is clear from the information provided that they do not have a broad experience of hill walking in this area, in all conditions and times of the day and night, then they are advised to gain more experience. Besides bullet proof competency on the hill, the most important 'look-for' for us is that probationers demonstrate they are team players – not necessarily a usual mountaineering trait – and want to bring something different to their pastime that joining a MRS can offer. But motivations for joining are different for each member.

Prospective members complete an induction programme (as detailed in MR Mag Issue 16 April 2006). Three separate days introduce the new member to all the basic aspects of MR and gives the leadership the opportunity to see the members in the mountain rescue environment. A probationary period of 12 months follows in which they participate in the normal team training. This three year rolling programme gives all members the opportunity to reinforce their existing skills and knowledge or to enhance it.

The fundraising aspects of the team are

co-ordinated by a committee member, usually an enthusiast and often a newish member (they always fall for this one!). All fundraising activity has been documented for some years, so the processes are very easy to pick up. PMRT relies heavily upon all team members helping with street collections with well over 60% of its annual running costs come from these team efforts. Special projects are however conducted by a working group. From my contact with other teams, our practice seems common to many MR teams.

The team works well with its neighbouring teams at all levels. Our training programme includes at least three joint practices each year, within the county but also with colleagues in County Durham and Scotland. This joint training has stood the team in good stead many times over the past few years. We routinely assist Patterdale MRS during busy periods, especially holiday times. A number of large scale and high-profile searches in the area have benefited from joint training and reinforce our view of the strength of mutual support within mountain rescue.

Like other MR teams, Penrith faces a number of challenges in the coming years. There is an identified gap in the membership of age/experience mix. There are plenty of older members who have been involved for many years and a lot of newer members of various ages with very little experience of MR, but a lot of hill experience. However, there are fewer younger members with, as yet, sufficient experience to guarantee the continued development of the team. Don't get me wrong, the Penrith team will continue, but the evolutionary process would be markedly easier if there was a broader spread of membership age/ MR experience in the team.

It is not a legacy I would like to inherit... but thinking back 25 years, this is what I found was the case when I became leader!

CAVENEWS



Brian Boardman

These days Brian runs the CRO control room at Clapham on incidents, as well as looking after collecting boxes and dealing with expenses claims. But he's crammed a lot into his fifty years with the team – at different times (and sometimes at the same time) he was local SJAB instructor, BCRC secretary, CRO secretary, underground controller, duty controller, depot warden and always a prolific fundraiser. He received the MRC Distinguished Service Award in November 1991 and is famous (or is that infamous?) for 'charming' sheep and lambs out of awkward holes, when more 'conventional' methods would simply have sent them further in. It may have been a standing joke, but it worked! Well done, Brian and thank you!

FIFTY YEARS CELEBRATED – WITH A RESCUE!

Four o'clock, one Sunday afternoon in May, saw exactly the fiftieth anniversary of Brian Boardman's first callout as a member of the **Cave Rescue Organisation**. The chairman's speech was made, the bottle of bubbly presented, the knife poised to cut the celebratory cake... and the phone rang. Not a caver falling ten metres in Alum Pot when his lifeline broke, as fifty years ago, but a surface call to a climber who had fallen at Malham Cove, fracturing her lower leg. She was still roped up and on 'the balcony', a good ten metres up the cove face. A team was sent from Clapham and the injured climber carried to a waiting air ambulance. Brian ran the CRO control room. That was the second of three callouts in a week.

The first was just before 5am on Sunday, a brief search of Ingleborough for a 61 year old walker, from Norfolk, missing from a Long Distance Walkers' Association overnight event. He was found at the summit shelter by two CRO members, just a few minutes before the arrival of a Sea King from RAF Leconfield. The helicopter carried the gentleman and CRO members back to Clapham, in time for breakfast.

On Tuesday, a climber, in her early thirties and from Glasgow was at the top of a pitch on Gimmer Crag, in Langdale, at about noon, when she leaned forward to fix a belay and jammed her knee in a crack. After two hours of attempting to lift her clear, her companions sent for help. Langdale Ambleside and Kendal mountain rescue teams were called out, but sent for CRO, with its rock removal equipment. An RAF helicopter flew members and equipment up to the top of Gimmer Crag, from where they abseiled down to the climber. She was freed after the removal of a small amount of rock and, remarkably for someone stuck in the same position for over seven hours, was able to abseil down to the base of the crag then walk unaided down the valley.

MRO BECOMES MCR

The **Mendip Rescue Organization** (MRO) with a 'z' was formed in 1936 and the name has served us well ever since. Or has it? Historically, cavers visiting Mendip knew who the MRO were and directly associated it with cave rescue, but times change. In the early days, the MRO was called out by contacting the local bobby at Wells police station. This knowledgeable chap knew the cave rescue wardens personally and called them out accordingly. Traditionalist or not we all have to

acknowledge that many factors have changed. Cave rescue is now called using 999 – no local bobby, unmanned police stations, communication centres operated by civilians, cavers who do not know where they are unless the sat nav/GPS is working, not to mention the proliferation of mobile phones. For many cavers increased mobility has reduced exposure to caving huts and local hostels – traditionally places where caving news is communicated.

The MRO itself has always been modest, not shouting about the mishaps of its customers or its activities and not promoting its name outside of the indigenous caving community. But, to cut a long story short, the name needs to reflect what we do. We cannot afford any ambiguity or obstacle to ensuring communication room staff, other emergency services or anybody using search engines and such to access information about our services and call out procedures. For these reasons the MRO is changing its name to simply 'Mendip Cave Rescue' (MCR) – so, it does what it says on the tin. Everything else remains unchanged. The principle that cave rescue, cavers and the MCR will continue to remain autonomous and funded from within the caving community will remain paramount.

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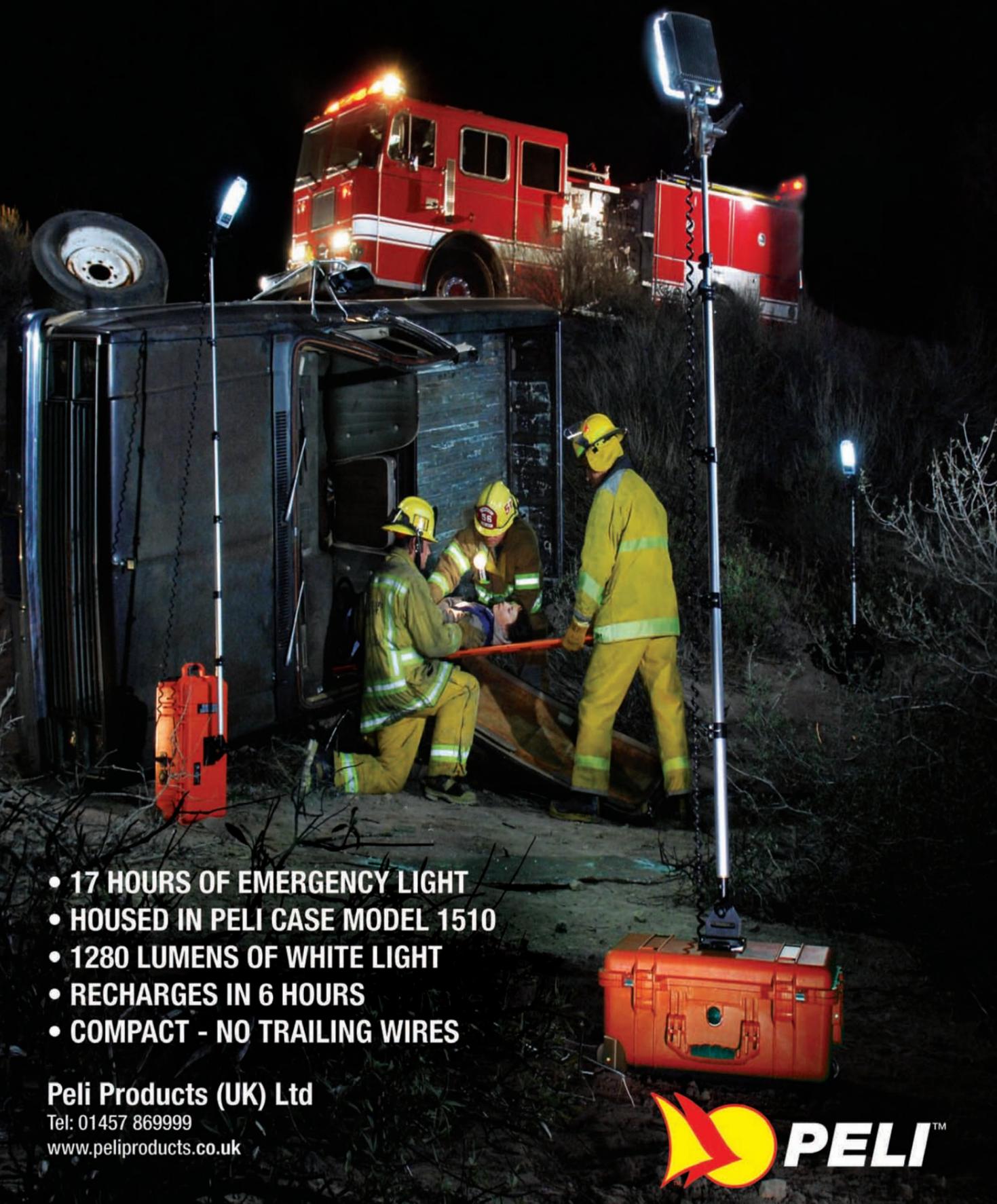


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CasCare Trauma/Medical Weekend

April saw Edale MRS host its second CasCare training session, opened up to all teams from England and Wales. Enthusiastic team members from Bowland Pennine, Cornwall, CRO, Exmoor, Kinder and Llanberis teams joined members of Edale at their new base in the Peak District to learn new and revise existing casualty care skills. In fact it became 'International', through a contact made by two Edale team whilst on holiday in Germany. Three members of Bergwacht Blautal, a small mountain rescue team from near Ulm (roughly half way between Stuttgart and Munich) in the south of the country came along to join in the fun (www.bergwacht-blautal.de).

Instructors and speakers were mainly provided by Edale, along with Nikki Wallis of Llanberis MRS and Diabetes UK, and Simon Royston, trauma and orthopaedic consultant from the Northern General Hospital, Sheffield.

Days took the format of lectures and discussions in the morning, followed by skills stations in the afternoon. The material presented was based on Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS), Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee (JRCALC) and Cas Care guidelines, with a mix of doctors, A&E nurses, paramedics and experienced team members delivering the information. Those teaching drew from their considerable experience in mountain rescue, as well as their professional medical backgrounds.

For some, the weekend commenced on the Friday evening with Exmoor team members making the journey early, in true mountain rescue tradition. They were fed and watered in one of the local hostels. Unfortunately after a rather adventurous five hour cross country route by 125cc motorbike, our Llanberis MRS member was too late for alcohol! An interesting debate between two cave rescue team members about what was officially a cave and what was a mine provided good entertainment to all.

Saturday morning consisted of lectures on Assessment and Management of Airway, Breathing and Circulation in MR, Head Injuries, Fractures and Analgesia. The afternoon saw skill stations on Airway and Adjuncts, Primary Survey, Fracture immobilisation and Spinal Immobilisation using various methods, allowing all participants to get their hands on kit and be guided through various practical skills.

Evening entertainment was laid on at another local establishment. The excellent lasagne was followed by an after dinner presentation from Jeremy Windsor, one of the lead doctors on the recently televised Everest Extreme expedition.

A bleary eyed, Sunday morning programme consisted of lectures on Asthma, Anaphylaxis, Angina and Heart Attack, Fitting and Diabetes followed by an afternoon of 'round robin.'

Attending members deemed the course a major success. It's a rare opportunity for members from teams across the country to come together, share ideas and socialise and it is our intention to run the same weekend during 2009.

'Having completed many courses over my MR career, there is no comparison to being trained and lectured to by practicing professionals. Excellent course and thank you.'

'Brilliant course, relevant delivery. Excellent lectures by really knowledgeable people.'

CasCare Trauma/Medical Weekend Peak District 4/5 April 2009

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Email training@edalemrt.co.uk to book your place. Payment will be required prior the course.

SUSPENSION TRAUMA

With the current world wide obsession within the rope access industry and our own Health and Safety Executive, I was not surprised to see an article on 'Suspension Trauma' or 'Harness Induced Pathology' in the April 2008 issue number 24 of Mountain Rescue. I would, however, like to stress Steve Giles' most important final comment that 'the chance of coming across a suspension trauma is slim and it is only a potential risk'. Indeed there is an increasing feeling within the medical world that the evidence for this syndrome even existing is small (Ref: Discussion at JOSMAR mountain medicine symposium, Helmsdal, Norway April 2008 and discussion at Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh Faculty of Prehospital Care study day Selly Oak Hospital Birmingham 18 April 2008).

An extensive review of the literature has shown no evidence of any deaths from suspension trauma in any climbers in the UK since the introduction of the Whillans sit harness. The original articles on this topic were from the USA and were based on subjects wearing parachute harnesses and early papers in German may have lost a lot of detail in translation. In another review of literature for rope access no deaths have been identified as being purely due to possible suspension trauma without other confounding factors such as alcohol and/or trauma.

In his article, Steve Giles refers to potentially fatal toxins but gives no idea what these toxins are. Surgeons frequently restrict the flow of blood for over an hour to the legs to facilitate operations with no adverse effects. It is unlikely a modern harness will significantly reduce

venous blood flow from the legs. The comparison with crush syndrome has no basis. I have yet to hear any logical explanation for possible pathology of this condition and until that is available it is dangerous to speculate on treatment options. There is no evidence for any specific intravenous fluid options.

If suspension trauma does exist in any form it is possible it is related to the high suspension point in industrial harnesses and might be made worse by the current practice of using a rear attachment point to facilitate working by reducing clutter near the arms.

I can assure readers that more detailed research is currently underway in the UK and that pre-hospital trauma specialists are in discussion with the Health and Safety Executive. I am sure reason will prevail. Until the outcome of this work is known I would stress the need to continue to care for a casualty as we always have and to disregard the current teaching on 'suspension trauma'. Get them off the crag as quickly and as safely possible. The first medical priorities remain the airway and resuscitation if needed and do not hesitate to lie the patient down if this is required. Do not be misled by the multitude of unreviewed articles on the internet based on speculation.

Yours faithfully,

Dr David Hillebrandt Hon Medical Adviser to the BMC & Vice President UIAA Medcom
Mr David Whitmore

Team Member Derby MRS & London Ambulance Service Medical Directorate Paramedic

dear editor



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Significant event form

Why should MRTs fill in this significant event form? We are all in the business of assisting persons in distress on/in the mountains and caves. Part of that help is in the form of medical care which we aim to provide to the best possible standard in what may well be a challenging environmental situation. There have been instances in the past where the spread of best practice or the identification of problems has taken longer than it could have. It is also important to ensure that those team members who give up valuable time to train in medical matters are supported to the highest standard with access to best practice whenever needed.

To that end a simple no blame 'as-anonymous-as-you-like-it' form has been devised which mirrors best practice within the NHS. Experience has shown that this form can be filled in within minutes and rarely expands to more than one side of A4. It concentrates on the key issues and assists individuals/teams to examine critically what they did, why and what (if anything) is to be learned. It is important to understand that a significant event can be just as easily excellence in care as any perceived failings.

The no blame bit is important. We all at times could do some things better. Individual competence in part comes from the ability to recognise this fact and a willingness to discuss and learn. Teams and organisations must allow mature reflection to take place to remain safe and competent. Litigation and overall medical risk is much less of an issue when such a culture exists. It is also essential that we demonstrate a maturity of process and thinking in our medical care to avoid external agencies from trying to do this for us.

Significant medical events could include a major incident or triage situation, adverse drug reaction, use of a defibrillator, perceived excellence of care, liaison issues with other healthcare agencies or worsening of an injury/death whilst in the care of a MRS. A significant event review is always helpful and usually supportive of individuals involved.

This is an anonymous system designed to advance as appropriate the cause of medical care by MR(E&W) and assists development of best practice along with improving the medical education that can be offered by enhancing knowledge and identifying any issues to sort. Please use it. Information will be collated and issued in an anonymous standardised report format with comments/guidance periodically. **Dr William Lumb**

In a nutshell, the proposed form details the date of cold debrief, general qualifications of those present at the event, the date of the event, what happened and why and the learning outcomes and subsequent action plan. For the form and further information, email Dr William Lumb on medical@caverescue.org.uk.

BASICS Scotland
6th Annual Conference/AGM
Hilton Coylumbridge, Aviemore
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Theme:
It can't happen here!

This conference will bring the shared experiences of incidents that took services by surprise and the story behind their response. All medical and nursing personnel, emergency services, rescue teams and voluntary organisations will at some point be involved in dealing with an incident they thought would never happen. How would you and your organisation cope? This conference is an opportunity to discuss these issues. Accompanying the meeting will be a wide selection of outdoor displays and exhibits. The conference is aimed to be family friendly and, for delegates and their families there will be a 'Scottish flavour' evening buffet dinner and ceilidh.

Cost: £30 per person for day delegate rate.

For further details contact John Pritchard, BASICS Scotland, Sandpiper House, Aberuthven Enterprise Park, Main Road, Aberuthven PH3 1EL. 01764 663671 or 0997 7146309.

Makes you think...

Emergency medicine snippets from the Emergency Medicine Journal May 2008 Vol 25 No 5

Tap Water...

In an era when saving money is key, comes a suggestion to use simple tap water to clean wounds rather than sterile saline. The evidence suggests that using tap water to cleanse acute wounds in adults does not increase infection. Interestingly, however, there is also no strong evidence to suggest that cleansing wounds per se promotes healing or reduces infection (Cochrane Database Syst Rev 2008;1:CD003861).

Land and air ambulance accident rates during emergency retrieval...

The retrieval of critically ill patients is frequently done in difficult circumstances and often under considerable time pressure, conditions which bring a finite risk of serious injury or death. This paper in EMJ reports for the first

time on data on accidents and casualties involving ambulance vehicles and air ambulances in Great Britain between 1999 and 2004. Although rare, these have resulted in serious injury or death, more often than not when lights and sirens are in use. In the US, the collision rate for road transportation is 5/10,000 responses. Death rate amongst emergency medical personnel stands at 12.7/100,000 workers, 14.2/100,000 for the police and 16.5/100,000 for fire fighters. For aeromedical helicopter flight transports between 1992 and 2002, the death rate was 1.69/100,000 flight hours. There's scant statistical information available here, as there is no central register. The authors sought to investigate the incidence of accidents and death during ambulance and flight retrievals, based on information available from the Department of Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority. During the six year period, there were 2026

accidents involving vehicles classified as having an ambulance body type, 38 of which were fatal and 204 serious. The number of casualties from accidents involving vehicles classified as having an ambulance type body, including fatalities in other vehicles, totalled 3472 of which there were 40 fatalities and 288 were serious. There were five deaths involving fixed wing aircraft, in a single accident involving a medical student, doctor, nurse and two crew members. There were no deaths during helicopter transport for the same period but, although aeromedical transport occurs less frequently than road transport, the total number of hours flown by air ambulances was not available to the CAA. The general risk of death during non-medical flights on the types of aircraft used by retrieval services indicated an accident rate, per million flight hours, of 11.9 on fixed wing and 3.4 on helicopter twin turbine.

The study concludes that retrieval can be a dangerous task for both healthcare workers and the public at large. Precise figures were not possible, given the limited data recorded by government bodies - information such as the total hours driven and flown would give a better estimate of the overall risk. However, there is no registry of how many hours are spent on retrieval. The majority of fatalities involved road journeys. In 2005, 671 pedestrians were killed in road accidents in Great Britain - 21% of all deaths from road accidents. The total number of deaths in road accidents was 3201. Given the small number of aeromedical retrievals within Great Britain, there should have been no fatalities within the study period. This left the authors concerned that flight retrieval might be a greater risk than is generally appreciated (Emerg Med J 2008; 25:300-302).

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Lightning strikes

Judy Whiteside on the wrath of the gods



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It's held us in thrall since our ancestors huddled trembling in their caves – the ink-blackened skies above them gashed unceremoniously apart by supernatural light – and wondered quite how much anger their Maker could vent. Or the Devil. The ancient Greeks believed it a weapon of the Gods, the Incas a punishment for not being a good, co-operative citizen. My granny reckoned it was God moving the furniture. It's even been speculated that the heavenly flash that signalled the biblical transformation of Saul of Taurus, as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus to persecute the Christians, was actually just plain old lightning.

note:

The medical content here, regarding the nature and treatment of injuries associated with lightning, is taken from 'Lightning injuries: prevention and on-site treatment in mountains and remote areas. Official guidelines of the International Commission for Mountain Emergency Medicine and the Medical Commission of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (ICAR and UIAA MEDCOM)' published by Ken Zafren et al, in Resuscitation [65 (2005) 369-372] and presented by Ken Zafren at ICAR.

I approached Ken for an article on the subject – having viewed his excellent powerpoint presentation on the subject – but as an emergency physician in Anchorage, Alaska, Medical Director of the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group, chair of the Medical Committee of the Mountain Rescue Association and vice-chair of ICAR MEDCOM, he is a very busy man. He has kindly allowed me to use his paper as the basis for this article and was happy to review it for accuracy.

It's held us in thrall since our ancestors huddled trembling in their caves – the ink-blackened skies above them gashed unceremoniously apart by supernatural light – and wondered quite how much anger their Maker could vent. Or the Devil. The ancient Greeks believed it a weapon of the Gods, the Incas a punishment for not being a good, co-operative citizen. My granny reckoned it was God moving the furniture. It's even been speculated the heavenly flash that signalled the biblical transformation of Saul of Taurus, as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus to persecute the Christians, was actually just plain old lightning.

I guess we'll never know. But, leaving aside for a moment the wrath of God or the workings of Satan, what we do know is that lightning is dangerous, claiming the lives of about 1000 people worldwide every year. In Britain alone, between 30 and 60 people are struck each year – of which, on average, three may be killed.

According to TORRO, the Tornado and Storm Research Organisation, there are about 300,000 ground strikes by lightning every year in Britain. On average (based on a ten year period) this means someone is struck once every 100,000 strikes. A 'thunderstorm day' may produce up to 10,000 ground strikes,

although one exceptional day in 1994 produced 85,000 ground strikes.

According to the Met Office, the chances of being struck by lightning are about one in three million – higher than your chances with the Lotto jackpot (one in fourteen!). Most fatalities are the result of immediate cardiorespiratory arrest. Those who are merely stunned or lose consciousness without cardiorespiratory arrest are unlikely to die. Nevertheless, lightning is a major hazard for anyone engaged in outdoor activities, especially climbers and mountaineers, who may find it particularly difficult to find a protected place in the wild.

Lightning fatalities have been recorded on death certificates in England and Wales since 1852. During that time, there has been a marked reduction in lightning-attributed deaths, even though the population has increased threefold. This may be down to fewer people working in the outdoors, especially in farming, coupled with a better awareness of the dangers of lightning. Weather prediction and thunderstorm warnings are far more accurate and readily accessible, thanks to the internet, and ambulances – and their crews – are better equipped to reach and deal promptly with someone struck by lightning.

The farmers and quarrymen may have reduced in number, but it's an acknowledged fact that more and more people are now venturing off the beaten track and into the mountains for fun – no doubt encouraged by the number of high profile adventurers currently exploring the hills in the company of a handy film crew! Not to mention the odd storyline on Corrie. So, the chances are that human lightning strike may well be something mountain rescue team members have to deal with. In fact, some already have.

In May 2004, Killin MRS dealt with an incident in which forty year old Derek Hunter was struck by lightning as he neared the 3,500 foot peak of Ben Oss, near Tyndrum in Stirlingshire. The injured man was airlifted by Royal Navy helicopter but died en route to hospital. According to The Courier, 'Mr Hunter's climbing companion tried to call the emergency services on his mobile phone but the storm had already put the mobile phone mast at Tyndrum out of action. It was two hours before he was able to make his way off the hill to raise the alarm.'

Alfie Ingram, of the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland, told me that lightning strikes on the mountains are rare but not unknown. He guesstimates Scottish teams probably deal with a lightning strike every five years or so.

'The incident on Ben Oss was down to the man's walking pole acting as a lightning conductor,' said Alfie. 'In fact, shortly after that, there was another interesting case in the 'Arrochar Alps' involving a couple of climbers sheltering from a thunderstorm. One of them took out his steel flask, poured a cup of tea and passed it to his mate. It appeared that lightning struck the cup and basically fried both guys on the side facing the cup.'

'They made it home – it would have been the Arrochar team involved with that one – but the guy who'd been holding the cup didn't feel too well so took himself off to Edinburgh Infirmary where doctors confirmed he had been struck by lightning.'

Checking with Ged Feeney, Stats Officer for England and Wales, there would appear to be fewer reports of teams dealing with lightning strike south of Hadrian's Wall. The Holme Valley team were alerted in 2006, with a report of four walkers struck by lightning in a severe thunderstorm. Two team members were dispatched to conduct a binocular search of the area and conduct a preliminary investigation but it proved to be a false alarm.

In the early afternoon of January 1998, twenty two team members from Langdale Ambleside were involved in the recovery and treatment of three walkers – all with 'good equipment good footwear, good clothing and good experience' – who were struck by lightning while descending The Band in Great Langdale. The weather was described as 'rain, misty, lightning', the ground as 'damp'. All three casualties received injuries ranging from shock and temporary paralysis to burns and temporary loss of consciousness.

Stewart Hulse recalls arriving at the

scene to find utter devastation. 'It appeared the lightning had travelled along the wall hitting whatever lay in its path. It's not an easy sight to come across, when you see the damage lightning can do, and all three were absolutely petrified, in deep shock. In fact, they were quite lucky as there were a couple of animals – sheep and, I seem to remember, a cow – lying dead in the field.'

'Besides dealing with the trauma, you also have concerns for your own welfare at the back of your mind. The thunderstorm may have passed, but you still wonder whether the lightning might return and strike you too.'

'I remember another incident, some years before that, behind River Head Farm in Easedale. This gentleman was dead. He'd been sheltering under a tree when lightning struck. It's an experience you don't forget – the metal cross he was wearing had burnt itself into his chest, he looked as though he'd been battered black and blue, his clothes torn and burnt and, of course, the smell of burning.'

A spot of trawling through the BBC archives did turn up more than a few close shaves. One climber in Langdale was still on the rock when a thunderstorm started. 'Within seconds, the crag was streaming with water. I decided to climb down via a narrow groove in the rock face, which was also acting as a drainpipe. Suddenly, flash, bang, as lightning struck the hillside, and I felt a shock zip all over me. Surprisingly I stayed on the rock.'

Another climber, on Bow Fell in June 1974, reported sheltering under a rock struck by lightning and feeling nauseous as a shock wave stood his hair on end.

More dramatic, ten years ago and somewhat further afield – the Democratic Republic of Congo to be precise – local football fans saw all eleven of their Bena Tshadi team killed at a stroke during a bit of a needle match. Visitors Basanga were drawing 1-1 when lightning struck, burning thirty of the spectators at the same time. Curiously, the athletes from Basanga escaped unscathed, prompting claims of witchcraft and magic.

So, what is lightning, if not the angry grumbling of a vengeful God? In a nutshell, lightning is an electrical discharge during a thunderstorm. When cold air moves in and meets moist air, the warm air rises rapidly forming cumulonimbus 'thunder' clouds. During the thunderstorm, water droplets and

ice crystals in the clouds rub and bump together pulled around by the strong currents of air, creating static electrical charges – which tend to negative at the bottom of the cloud, positive at the top. Opposites attract and, when the negative charge at the base of the cloud reaches a certain strength, the energy is released, passing through the air to another point that has an opposite charge – such as the Earth.

This 'leader stroke' travels quickly towards the Earth, in steps of 100 metres. As it nears the ground, the strong electrical field it creates releases a huge amount of energy and very high temperatures – hotter than the surface of the sun. The return 'main stroke' – back up to the cloud – produces the lightning flash. As the enormous burst of heat is released, the air around it rapidly expands and falls back onto itself – the sounds we hear as thunder.

The mechanism of injury

Lightning produces massive current impulse of very short duration and there are different mechanisms of injury. A direct strike on a person in the open may prove fatal but, more often, current splashes from a tree or other object, or from a person standing nearby.

In June last year, a 37 year old dentist from New England was jogging along and into a thunderstorm, whilst listening to his iPod, when lightning hit an adjacent tree. The man was thrown some eight feet from the tree and sustained second degree burns where the iPod had been strapped to his chest and up the sides of his neck, and to his leg. It ruptured his eardrums, dislocated the small bones in his ear that transmit sound waves and broke the man's jaw in four places.

As this tale demonstrates, contact injury can also occur if a person is touching an object that is splashed by lightning. So iPods and mobile phones, ice axes and walking poles, but also the fixtures and fittings of climbing routes such as metal ladders and cables are all fair game.

When lightning hits the ground, the current spreads out. If one point of contact is farther from the strike than the other, it creates a voltage difference and a current will flow across the body between the two points.

...two women were killed when their underwired bras acted as conductors. The coroner reckoned it was 'a tragic case, a pure act of God.'

The lightning shock wave – or the muscle contractions caused by the current – may also cause blunt injury. Mountaineers may lose their balance and fall, or be knocked off their stance when climbing.

Prevention Shelter

The good news is that lightning injuries are largely avoidable with proper care. It goes without saying that anyone venturing into the hills should be aware of the weather forecast for the locality, and always keep one eye on the sky for any changes. Thunderstorms with lightning in the mountains occur mainly during the summer months in the late afternoon and at night.

Although lightning is associated with cumulonimbus clouds, it can travel as many as ten miles in front of a thunderstorm (hence the '30-30 rule') – often appearing amidst a clear blue sky, with not a clap of thunder within earshot. So, many of those who have been struck by lightning literally do not know what has hit them.

The beginning and end of a storm are the most dangerous. The 30-30 Rule states that the greatest danger of being struck is when flash-to-thunder time is less than 30 seconds, and in the 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder.

The best place to shelter during a storm is in a hut or mountain refuge, away from doors and windows. Small open huts are vulnerable to side flashes. Large caves and valleys are protective, but small caves, overhangs and wet stream beds may be more dangerous than open areas. If lightning hits the ground, the charge spreads out and the ground current can still cause injury as it

passes up and down the victim's legs, especially if there is surface water or the ground is wet.

In the Andes, a group of travellers along the mountain paths were blown off the metal legged stools they were sitting on as they sheltered from the storm in a tent. The lightning had struck the ground and travelled through the surface water down the mountainside to meet them.

In fact, you are not safe in any expanse of water, as lightning energy can be transferred to you so, if a storm is brewing, the advice is to get out of the pool, lake or sea as quickly as you can.

Returning to tents for a moment, whereas these may once have been a complete no-no, with metal support poles acting as lightning conductors, these are no longer as common a feature in modern tents. Being in a tent without metal poles is equivalent to being in the open, but much more comfortable.

Safe spots

In the mountains, stay off ridges and summits, avoid power lines and ski lifts, and single trees – a piece of advice not necessarily confined to the mountains. In 1999, two women were killed by a bolt of lightning in Hyde Park, when their underwired bras acted as conductors. (Is there nothing sacred?) The coroner reckoned it was 'a tragic case, a pure act of God.' The two women had been sheltering under a tree in the park during a thunderstorm. Pathologist Dr Iain West said both women had been left with burn marks on their chests from the electrical current that passed through their bodies. Death would have been instant.

The so called 'safe triangle' is where the safe distance from the wall equals the height

of the wall – to avoid the risk of ground currents, you should keep a distance of at least 1m from the wall. In the forest, a low area with small trees is safer than a clearing.

In the open

Crouch with feet or knees together to minimise the ground current and keep contact to the ground as small as possible, sitting on a dry pack, mat or rope. Do not lie flat.

Metal is a very efficient lightning conductor, and any conductor carried above shoulder level brings a greater chance of a direct hit. So put away any metal objects and bear in mind that walking poles strapped to the rucksack, skis, ice axe or radio antenna all increase your vulnerability.

Radios, MP3 type players, and mobile phones should be stored in the centre of your rucksack. A fifteen year old girl was confined to a wheelchair in 2006, when she was struck by lightning while talking on her phone in a large London park during stormy weather. According to a letter to the British Medical Journal, the girl had no recollection of the incident because she suffered asystolic cardiac arrest. She was successfully resuscitated but continues to suffer 'complex physical, cognitive and emotional problems as well as a persistent perforation of the left tympanic membrane with associated conductive hearing loss on the side she was holding the mobile phone.'

To prevent the risk of blunt trauma, climbers should remain belayed and attached to a safety rope, especially when abseiling, and not remove their helmet. On via ferrata, move as quickly as is possible away from wire ropes and metal ladders.

The classic warning of imminent lightning strike is the crackling noise and visible glow of 'St Elmo's fire'. Many witnesses report their hair 'standing on end' as the storm goes over. One contributor to the BBC research had a lucky escape when chasing a tornadic super cell. 'The main updraft was very clearly visible with clear blue sky behind. We all remarked how electrified the air felt. Suddenly, a huge lightning strike shot out of the back of the updraft into the clear air and hit ground about a mile away. It was spectacular. I caught this on camera and when I played it back later, you could see a 'streamer' (a current travelling up from people, objects or the ground that connects with the lightning bolt) a few yards from my location. If this had connected with the charge from the cloud, I don't think I'd have been here now.'

Alfie Ingram told me many people also mention noticing that their ice axe had started to 'sing' as the storm approached.

If a group of people is exposed, they should stay apart to reduce the number injured by

ground current and side flashes between them. Organisers of events in mountainous areas are advised to have a lightning safety policy, with the authority to postpone or stop the event according to the 30-30 Rule.

Injuries due to lightning

Direct lightning injuries are caused by high voltage heat production and explosive force. The most important cause of death is cardiorespiratory arrest produced by ventricular defibrillation or asystole. In fact, respiratory arrest may be protracted, due to the paralysis of the medullary respiratory centre, and lead to secondary cardiac arrest from hypoxia. A lightning strike may stop the heart by myocardial depolarisation, but spontaneous return of cardiac activity is the rule in this case if the casualty is kept ventilated.

Lightning often causes its victims to jump – as the charge contracts the muscles of the body. Others have been thrown several feet or knocked off their stance, causing a catalogue of potential injuries – head injuries, burns, blood abnormalities, fractures, amnesia and loss of consciousness, seizures, contusions, ruptured eardrums resulting in hearing loss and tinnitus, blindness, sleep disorders, headaches, confusion, tingling and numbness. And, occasionally, death. Whilst the neurological symptoms – such as blindness and deafness, and paralysis of the extremities – tend to be temporary, possibly only lasting a matter of hours, they are no less terrifying to the casualty, who may require ample TLC and reassurance.

Burns can be direct or indirect and may be linear or punctuate. A common feature of lightning injury is the 'feathering' skin markings caused by electron showers. This is not a burn but is diagnostic of lightning injury. Due to the very short duration of the flashover, where the lightning charge flows over the body, most burns are usually partial thickness (first and second degree) in contrast to an electrical injury. However, entry and exit burns, which are full thickness, may also occur.

Differential diagnosis

Diagnosis is easy when there are thunderstorms and witnesses. If victims are found later, especially on sunny days without thunder, the diagnosis may not be clear. Casualties with linear or punctuate burns or feathering should be treated as victims of lightning strike.

Risk assessment and management during rescue operations

If the area where the victim is located is at high risk with a continuing thunderstorm, any evacuation should be postponed. Rescuers need to decide whether the

evacuation of the casualty to an area of lesser risk is warranted. In this case, victims should be moved as rapidly as possible to minimise exposure to lightning.

Air rescuers can be at high risk – airborne helicopters can be struck by lightning with disastrous results, and anyone standing outside a grounded aircraft is vulnerable to strike.

Assessment of the casualty and on-site treatment

- Cardiopulmonary activity should be assessed at the site of the accident.
- Emergency care begins with ABC – airway, breathing and circulation.
- If necessary, use basic life support and advanced life support according to international standards.
- Use a defib if necessary.
- Casualty may benefit from prolonged resuscitation efforts.
- Monitor with an ECG and pulse oximeter throughout.
- Spinal immobilisation may be required during evacuation and treatment.
- Neurological assessment is vital – the normal signs of brain death (pupils fixed and dilated) do not apply.
- The amount of external damage does not predict the severity of internal injuries – serious consequences such as seizures may be delayed for several hours.
- All patients should be transferred to hospital and admitted for observation even if they appear well.

Special triage consideration

A single lightning bolt can strike two or more people at once if they stay in a group. Unlike other triage situations with trauma casualties, where victims presenting with vital signs are given priority for emergency treatment and patients in cardiorespiratory arrest are delayed, the rule in lightning strikes is to 'resuscitate the apparently dead first'.

The normal rules for trauma do not apply to non-breathing lightning victims. Ventilatory support is often all that's required. If rescue breathing is not administered until spontaneous respiration resumes, death is likely from hypoxia and secondary cardiac arrhythmia.

Sources

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- BBC News • British Standards • Guinness Book of World Records • Myths, Miracles and Mirages by Mary Ann Cooper MD • National Meteorological Library • Storm Highway Weather Library • The Courier • The Met Office • The Scotsman • The Tornado and Storm Research Organisation • Wikipedia

Facts...

- Lightning can strike up to ten miles away from the storm that created it.
- Lightning bolts can travel 60 miles and the longest are found at the squall line of a storm.
- On average, there are about 1800 thunderstorms raging at any one time around the world.
- A lightning bolt travels at about 14,000mph bringing 300,000 volts of electricity to the ground in a few milliseconds and heating up the air to 30,000 °C. That's five times hotter than the surface of the sun.
- Because lightning is seen and thunder heard, lightning travels at the speed of light and thunder at the speed of sound. Each second between the two represents 300m distance from the thunderstorm.
- The sound of thunder is made by heated air expanding very rapidly and causing sound waves. Thunder rumbles because you get sound waves coming from different parts of the storm.

many as 48 times in one day, and the British Standards rate the possibility of a lightning strike to a structure or building, such as a small church, as about 1:500 per year in the UK.

And repeated strikes are by no means confined to inanimate objects. US Park Ranger Roy Cleveland Sullivan (otherwise known as the Human Lightning Rod) survived seven separate lightning strikes, between 1942 and 1977, in a variety of locations, variously having his hair set alight, losing a big toe nail and eyebrows, and suffering injuries to his arms, legs, chest and stomach.

And mythology...

• Thor was the Norse god of thunder, son of Odin and Jord and one of the most powerful gods, the protector of both gods and humans against the forces of evil. The Norse believed that, during a thunderstorm, this red haired, red bearded powerhouse rode through the heavens on his chariot, pulled by the quirkily named goats Tanngrisni (Gap Tooth) and Tanngnost (Tooth Grinder). Lightning flashed wherever he threw his hammer – which, once thrown, magically returned to its owner.

• Over in Greece, it was Zeus throwing his weight around. Portrayed as a bearded, middle aged man with a youthful figure, the supreme ruler of Mount Olympus began life as a weather god, controlling thunder, lightning and rain. As Theocritus wrote, circa 265 BC, 'sometimes Zeus is clear, sometimes he rains'.

• And in Ancient Rome, Jupiter ruled the skies. Worshiped as the god of thunder and lightning he protected his people in battle and was the 'giver of victory.' During peacetime he was the god of justice and morality.

Myths...

- It's dangerous to touch a lightning victim. Not true. People who are struck do not carry an electrical charge so don't hang back. The quicker they receive the necessary medical attention after being struck, the better.
- Lightning never strikes the same place twice. Not true. Lightning can strike any location more than once. In fact, it's almost inevitable. A strike to any location does nothing to change the electrical activity in the storm above, which will produce another strike as soon as it 'recharges'. The previously hit location is just as fair game for the next discharge as any other spot. According to the National Meteorological Library, the Empire State Building in New York has been struck by lightning as

top tips:

- Head for shelter as soon as you see distant lightning or hear thunder. Lightning often precedes rain – so don't wait for the rain to come before taking action.
- Avoid water, high ground and open spaces.
- Avoid metal objects such as electric wires and machinery and bear in mind that walking poles strapped to rucksacks can act as handy lightning conductors!
- Avoid sheltering under trees, crags and ridges.
- If one of your party is struck by lightning make everyone safe, administer first aid and call for help as soon as possible. Injured people do not carry an electric charge.

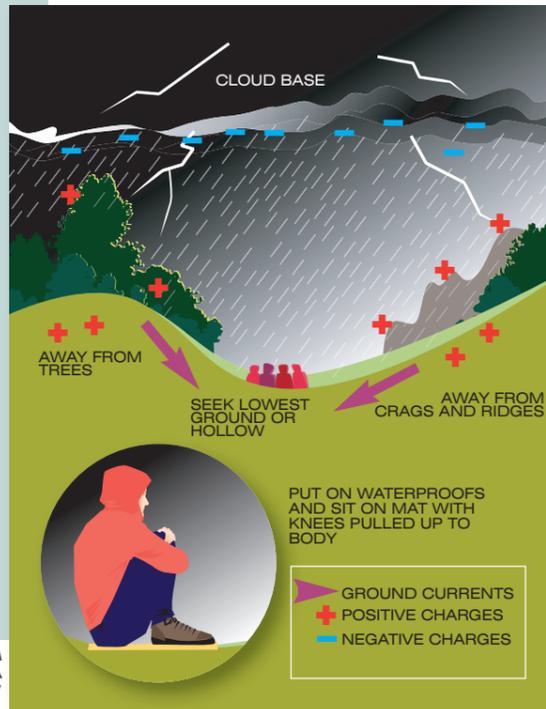


ILLUSTRATION: JUDY WHITESIDE FROM 'CALL OUT MOUNTAIN RESCUE. A POCKET GUIDE TO SAFETY ON THE HILL'

Mental illness in mountain rescue

Jessica Stam Kirkby Stephen MRT

It's said that one in four people will suffer from some sort of mental health problem during their lifetime. Statistics suggest that increasing numbers of callouts involve what is classed as a vulnerable adult suffering from mental illness. Not including Alzheimer's, callouts for 'despondents' usually refer to people suffering from mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia or one of a variety of personality disorders. The very term 'personality disorder' immediately conjures images of psychotic criminals, but in fact only a tiny fraction of people diagnosed with personality disorders could be considered a risk to others – they are more likely to be a risk to themselves. Many of those who are considered a risk to others are being treated in secure care settings – unfortunately it's the odd exception who slips through the system and makes the headlines in our newspapers.

Many people have some experience of the most common mental illnesses of depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and schizophrenia, either as a patient or carer but few know much about personality disorders or other less common mental disorders. A personality disorder is characterised by a pervasive pattern of thinking (often from a negative viewpoint), deep-rooted feelings (often very anxious and highly emotional, although this may not be visibly obvious) and a way of behaving that is essentially problematic and which may have profound effects on the ability to live a 'normal' lifestyle. Often people with personality disorders experience severe depression, anxiety, social phobia, impulsiveness, compulsiveness, obsession and mania as symptoms of their disorder. Their patterns of thinking are so ingrained they may be unaware that their behaviour is irrational or that they are ill, and fluctuations in mood are common. However, they may only display severe symptoms for short sporadic periods (a 'crisis', often following a trigger) and can, with effective treatment and support, lead relatively stable lifestyles.

The stigma surrounding mental illness is well publicised but sadly still very evident in everyday life. We refer to people as nutters for doing something different to normal expectations, we label people as manic for being giddy and excitable, we describe people whose behaviour or beliefs are eccentric as being loonies or mental. For those of us who do suffer from mental illness, such labels and descriptions make us fear the reaction of others if we admit to our illnesses. People diagnosed with mental illness therefore spend their lives living in fear of being misjudged and labelled and become adept at hiding their illness, either through developing a mask to hide behind or by withdrawing from prejudicial society, neither of which are beneficial as they serve simply to reinforce the irrational thinking and behavioural patterns.

It is only through the courage of public

figures such as Stephen Fry and Spike Milligan, who have spoken publicly about their experiences of mental illness, that people are able to see the person behind the label and gain an insight into such illnesses. Few knew much about Bipolar Disorder prior to Stephen Fry's television programmes about his experience of mental illness but the programmes went a long way to educating society about this disorder, formerly known as manic-depression. Such people raise the profile of how mental illness can affect even the most confident and capable individuals.

Not everyone suffering from the symptoms of mental illness has a specific disorder. In some cases, a depressive episode may be triggered by a period of anxiety (work related stress, for example), or by a traumatic event, bereavement or lifestyle stressors (redundancy, eviction, bankruptcy, divorce). With support and treatment, people can recover and may never have another depressive episode again. For some, depressive episodes can be recurrent over years, each lasting several weeks or months, and the recurrence intervals can vary from several times a year to once every few years. Often those affected are on the margins of society, through isolation, poverty or disadvantaged by poor education and other social problems which may be a consequence of, or exacerbated by, their illness. Some may not realise they are suffering symptoms of illness and blame themselves for their circumstances. With so many of us affected by one or more of the above triggers, maybe we should think 'There, but for the grace of God, go I.'

When we look back at the origins of MR, teams developed as a result of local climbers and walkers prepared to rescue other local people, often friends, developing that team spirit of which we are so proud. We are careful not to judge those we rescue, even though we may personally feel they were unprepared, uneducated or badly equipped. Why then do we sometimes pass judgement on those whose illness causes them to make illogical decisions and display irrational behaviour,

treating their need to get away from a distressing situation by seeking an escape in the hills, as a 'cry for help'? Of course, it's a cry for help, in the same way as someone who has had the misfortune to break a leg whilst descending after a climb calls out MR as a cry for help. Why is a cry for help from someone with a mental illness seen to be attention seeking behaviour and condemned as such? Is it not a sad reflection on today's society that sufferers of mental illness feel the only way they can access the help they need to treat their illness is by making a dramatic gesture which cannot be ignored?

Sadly in many cases, despite their illness being made evident by such incidents, the treatment they need is simply not available on the NHS and, once the immediate crisis is overcome and they are no longer considered to be a risk to themselves, they are left to cope as best they can with their everyday mental anguish. Another trigger, another crisis, and the cycle repeats itself. Surely our lack of understanding and education surrounding mental illness goes against everything MR stands for and fights for – the independence to help anyone who needs our help, regardless of circumstance, illness or injury, culture or frequency of need.

And who am I to make these criticisms? Well, as someone who has suffered from episodic mental illness for most of my adult life, and possibly since childhood, I'm sure I've been labelled as a nutter, loony, manic and mad woman by people who are MR members. Over the years, since I was first diagnosed as suffering from severe clinical depression, I've had various other diagnoses including personality and other mental disorders. I may never have a definitive diagnosis but that doesn't really matter as, whatever the disorder, the symptoms are the same.

My depressive episodes are extremely disabling and usually mean I am unable to work for weeks or months at a time and am reduced to survival mode simply getting through one day at a time, unable to look after myself or even speak to other people. My self-confidence and self-esteem are non-existent

when I am at my worst and I believe I am totally useless at everything. I am unable to believe anything that anyone says otherwise. My anxiety causes me to withdraw from all social interaction, resulting in my spending whole weeks without any human contact, unable to leave my house to even buy a pint of milk. Even when not in crisis, my anxiety can cause problems such as nausea and vomiting before a stressful event, migraine and a reluctance to take part in social activities. I have learned ways of dealing with my anxieties so it is not immediately evident to others, and so that I can lead a fairly 'normal' lifestyle but sometimes the effort required to do this takes its toll and leaves me mentally and physical drained. My biggest fear is that people will see me at my worst and assume I am like that all the time.

And yet, despite this, over the years I have gained a degree in business studies with French and Russian, and a number of other professional qualifications including the military equivalent of ML, SPSS, served with the British Army in Northern Ireland and Berlin, and held down full time jobs as a youth and community worker, outdoor instructor and project manager. I was a founding member of my local community first responder team, have been a member of my MR team for four years and am a parish councillor. I don't say all this to blow my own trumpet or to elicit sympathy but to demonstrate that, even with severe and recurrent mental illness, people can achieve and contribute to society.

Having recently undergone casualty care retraining, I was unfortunately not able to sit the written exam due to illness – I believed I was stupid and incapable and that my fellow team members would laugh at me if I failed. With hindsight, I can see my beliefs were irrational but at the time they were very real to me. Studying the cas care book has made me realise how little reference there is to mental illness either in the book or in the syllabus. I suspect there are many MR members who would at best feel uncomfortable dealing with a casualty displaying symptoms of mental illness and, at worst would actively avoid doing so, out of fear and ignorance. I also believe it may be difficult for team members to recognise symptoms of mental distress and therefore label casualties as 'awkward, difficult and hostile or attention seeking' when in fact they may be highly anxious, scared and defensive.

The excellent article by Dr Henry Guly in the October 2006 edition of Mountain Rescue magazine was a welcome recognition of these issues and it is encouraging that some teams have started to challenge the stigma by educating their members about mental illness, its symptoms, likely behaviours and best treatment methods when a casualty suffering from mental illness is found. Above all, maybe this proactive acceptance of and non-discriminatory practice towards anyone displaying symptoms of mental illness by such teams will go a long way in helping despondent individuals in their long term recovery.

Footnote: I would like to thank both my own team for their understanding with regards my illness and for giving me the opportunity to be an equal and valid team member despite my absences from training and callouts from time to time, and my GP (our team doctor) for his support and constructive criticism of this article.



PHOTOS © AUDI UK



Anyone for Polo?

Judy Whiteside treads the divots

I could most definitely get used to this, I thought, as the man in the black suit parked up the Audi and strode manfully up my garden path, 'I'm taking you to a Royal event' oozing from every pore. And damn! Once again, not a blummin neighbour in sight! Still it was early. And raining! A drizzly Sunday morning in May, and I was definitely reconsidering my footwear for the day.

Mike France and I were fortunate enough to represent Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) for a second time at the Audi Polo Challenge at Coworth Park, Ascot – in the presence of Prince William and Prince Harry. I think I can speak for Mike as well when I say we felt much more comfortable about the whole thing this year. For one thing, as a polo novice last year, I agonised for weeks about how best to interpret the dress code, only to discover on the day that 'smart' has, shall we say, a broader interpretation than I had imagined. Jeans and pashmimas (albeit extremely stylish ones!) seemed to blend effortlessly with taffeta and killer heels – and everything in between. So this year, Mike had ditched the suit for something a little more 'him' and I had reverted to the trousers and silk top option. And this time round, there was no frantic mugging up on the rules of polo in the Audi on the way down the M1 and no handwringing about what might be expected of us, worried we'd be out of our depth, not wanting to let the side down. No, this was going to be fun.

Audi launched their Polo Challenge in 2003, with the Prince of Wales as a regular team member. When he retired from polo, Prince William took over the reins and this year, fresh from his tour of duty in Afghanistan, Prince Harry joined his brother on the field. The fixture raises thousands of pounds for charity and for the last two years – and thanks to our patron Prince William – Mountain Rescue has been one of the nominated charities. So, besides having a jolly good day out, we were there to receive a donation pledge from Audi UK.

Once at Coworth Park, champagne in hand, we settled in for a bit of celebrity watching before the fast moving polo match (which Prince William's team won by a whisker, again). Then it was time for the presentation of prizes, and donations to the two charities – ourselves and Valleys Kids – and Mike's one minute slot. Last year he'd focused on the Sheffield floods (still very much in the news at the time and a personal involvement for him) and the Grayrigg train crash – both far from the public perception of 'mountain rescue'. So what to say this year?

How about some statistics? How about, 'In 2007 mountain rescue teams in England and Wales were called out 1172 times. In these calls we assisted 1418 people – including 66 fatalities. That's an average of more than three calls every day with an average of four people per rescue. Not bad for a group of volunteers giving up weekends or leaving work to help these people. So what are these calls made up of?' (sub-text, what on earth does this have to do with the assembled crowd?).

'We are always there to help people lost or injured in the high moorland and mountains, but we are also there to support our local community, you the public and our colleagues in the emergency services. Take the case of Shannon Mathews, the missing nine year old from Dewsbury, West Yorkshire. The media tell you over 200 officers were out searching. I can tell you,' asserts Mike, in his no-nonsense Yorkshire brogue, 'half of these were mountain rescue.'

'Last week my team was called out to a missing 44 year old who'd just had a heart bypass. He'd been told by his doctor to get out and walk, so off he went to his local golf course. Now, golf courses aren't easy to search in the dark with their copses of trees, their water courses and rough. The only easy bit is the green!' Ripple of laughter across the decking. 'If mountain rescue hadn't turned out over thirty volunteers to search this area, who else would? Not the police. They don't have thirty spare bobbies! I'm not even sure,' says Mike, as the assembled throng rises to the punchline, 'if my local force even has thirty bobbies. And the moral of the story is... don't listen to health advice from your doctor!' Much applause and laughter, the opportunity to chat with both the Princes and then 'Phew! Now we can have a Martini!'

And so, as the sun went down (yes it did appear somewhere south of Birmingham) we retired to savour a delicious dinner, devised by Masterchef John Torode, followed by live music (and a bit of bopping by yours truly) from The Feeling, winners of last year's Ivor Novello 'Songwriters of the Year'.

Keeping us company for most of the day was Denise Lord from Valleys Kids, who is clearly as passionate about her charity as we are about mountain rescue. It was a delight to exchange banter, sample the Martini and quell the nerves together, and we wish them well with their future efforts! Once again, a big thank you to Jeremy Hicks and Audi UK for their hospitality and, of course, their substantial donation to national mountain rescue. And to Prince William and Prince Harry for choosing us – alongside Valleys Kids – as their charity for the day.

Valleys Kids works with disadvantaged children and families in the valleys of South Wales, helping people to help themselves. Their vision is a celebration of the achievement of individuals who, through trying different activities and having different experiences, broaden their horizons and achieve their potential. To find out more, go to www.valleyskids.org

Are you **tick** alert?

Second only to mosquitoes for carrying disease to humans, these little blighters bring with them Lyme disease and Tick Borne Encephalitis (TBE), potentially fatal and endemic in 27 countries in mainland Europe. **Lisa McGauley** from Tick Alert takes a look at the problem.



The world's leading experts on tick disease say the risk of being bitten by an infected tick is greater, as tick populations are growing and spreading due to a combination of milder winters and more rainfall producing the perfect conditions for them to thrive. Although the primary habitats for ticks are forests, grassland, moors and riverbanks, they can survive up to 1,500 metres above sea level. So hill walkers, trekkers and climbers are not only at an increased risk from bites just as any outdoor enthusiast spending time in the countryside, the fact is that even when exploring modest peaks or in low-lying areas en route to more challenging ascents they will find themselves in tick territory.

The tick season starts in March and ends in November. Ticks live in the soil and emerge to climb tall grass, shrubs, bushes and low level tree branches up to a height of 20cm-70cm in search of a blood host. They attach when people or animals brush past and look for an area of soft skin to insert their feeding organ and suck blood, which is when disease is transmitted.

Ticks can attach themselves almost anywhere on the body, but prefer creases like the armpit, groin and back of the knee. It's advisable to check regularly, especially if you've been out in rural areas. Victims do not feel the bite because the tick also injects a toxin that anaesthetises the bite area.



The primary illnesses to be aware of are Lyme disease in the UK and Tick Borne

Encephalitis (TBE), which is potentially fatal and currently endemic in 27 countries in mainland Europe. These include many established and new destinations for outdoor activities and adventure sports.

Tick Borne Encephalitis (TBE) is a viral disease that attacks the nervous system and can result in serious meningitis, brain inflammation and death. One in every 100 cases of TBE is fatal. TBE incubation is 6-14 days and at first can cause increased temperature, headaches, fever, cough and sniffles, symptoms indicative of the common cold. A second phase can lead to neck stiffness, severe headaches, photophobia (intolerance to light), delirium and paralysis. There is no specific treatment for TBE.

The most common symptom of Lyme disease is a rash consisting of red spots, which gradually spreads from the site of the tick bite. Some patients also develop an influenza-like illness. More serious in the months after infection can be nervous system symptoms including facial palsy (paralysis), viral type meningitis and nerve inflammation that may lead to pain, disturbance of sensation or clumsiness of movement. Encephalitis (swelling of the brain) is a rare complication. Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics.

The world's experts on tick disease say the number of cases of TBE requiring hospital treatment in Europe rose to 13,000 last year, a 30% increase on 2006. Every year in the UK up to 3,000 people suffer a tick infection and the Health Protection Agency reports that the number of laboratory confirmed cases of Lyme disease in England and Wales almost trebled to 768 in 2006. Scotland alone has seen a tenfold increase over the last decade with 177 cases reported in 2006.

Professor Michael Kunze, of the Medical University Vienna, Austria and a leading expert in the prevention of TBE said, 'Every contact with grass or bushes is potentially dangerous.'

Wendy Fox, chair of tick disease charity BADA-UK said, 'Because tick borne diseases can produce a bewildering variety of signs and symptoms, they are difficult to diagnose. Ticks can be as small as a poppy seed and difficult to see. Their bites are painless and many people are unaware they have been bitten.'

'This is why it is very important to take the correct precautions when visiting tick habitats. The number of cases of tick-borne disease has been rising for some years now and much

more needs to be done to make people in Britain aware of them.'

Lyme disease areas of the UK

Exmoor, the New Forest, the South Downs, parts of Wiltshire and Berkshire, Theford Forest, the Lake District, Yorkshire Moors and the Scottish Highlands.

TBE endemic countries

Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine.



How to remove a tick...

Using a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, grasp the tick firmly and as close to your skin as possible. In a steady motion, pull the tick's body away directly outwards without jerking or twisting. Make sure you get the head out.

How to protect against tick bites...

- Use an insect repellent that is effective against ticks.
- Cover up exposed areas of skin and tuck trousers into socks.
- Check yourself regularly and remove any found as soon as possible.
- Avoid unpasteurised milk which may be infected with the TBE virus in endemic regions.



Got a tick? Get rid of it with a Lasso!

The Tick Alert article highlights the growing problem of TBE and Lyme disease carried by ticks, both here and abroad. A key factor in infection prevention is to remove the tick early – as the disease may not be transferred for 24 hours after the insect attaches itself. Removal by hand is not often effective and there are several specialised devices on the market now.

The Trix remover is unique, and actually closes the needle-like hypostome (the tick's feeding parts) during removal of the tick, minimising the back flow of any infected stomach contents. No other tick remover works in this way. It works like a lasso and is fast and easy to attach to even the smallest of nymph ticks. Users report that the Trix is more reliable and easier to use than either tweezers or hooks, particularly for use in ears, thick fur and other difficult to reach places.

Manufactured in Sweden and CE marked by the Medical Products Agency, and complete with a ten year warranty, the Trix is available online from misotrading.co.uk for just £6.99, and at other selected retailers.



prize draw

We have twelve Trix Removers to give away FREE. All you have to do is answer the question, 'What disease that affects humans do ticks carry?' Answers via email to editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk. First twelve in the mailbox get the Trix!

Trialling new emergency equipment

Promove UK Ltd is looking for mountain rescue teams willing to trial an innovative emergency evacuation device. The sling, called Promove, is designed for moving and handling incapacitated or disabled, including bariatric persons in emergency situations. It is lightweight, compact and comes in its own bag.

Promove can be used to assist in the safe handling of casualties, allowing them to be moved without delay, without being manhandled, and with the least risk to the rescuers. It is easily placed beneath an incapacitated person, whether lying on the ground, seated against a rock face or restricted in a tight space and provides good support, forming a bucket shaped seat, giving a sense of security to the casualty when being moved. With the strategically placed grasping handles to the front and rear, evacuation immediately becomes controlled. Additional extension handles allow a minimum of two, or maximum of eight, operatives to assist with the procedure thus distributing the load between as many rescuers as possible.

If you would like to trial this new equipment for one month and can provide an evaluation report to the company, please call 01970 820 893 for your free trial or email enquiries@promove.uk.com

For further details, contact Dr Huw Thomas or Dana Thomas on 01970 820893 or email huw@promove.uk.com or dana@promove.uk.com.



Hypo-Fit Syrup 74.5%

Hypo-Fit® syrup 74.5% was developed in 2004 by a pharmacist in the Netherlands, who now manufactures it and makes it available in many countries of the EC and Russia. Composed of three natural sugars (glucose, fructose and sucrose), water and flavouring, there are three flavours – orange, tropical and mint – with a fourth flavour – lemon – due to be added later this year. As there are no preservatives or gelling agents, it is registered with the Vegan Society.

Although Hypo-Fit® is available on prescription for people with diabetes, we have found the product equally effective for professional sportsmen and mountaineers. Mountain rescue teams, Llanberis in particular, are using Hypo-Fit® regularly, to give those they rescue the extra energy they need to climb down.

Together with other products, Hypo-Fit® is available from Arctic Medical Ltd. For more information visit www.arcticmedical.co.uk. Remember – you may not need it yourself but someone else may.

dear editor

TEN TORS

Many thanks for publishing my report, from last year's Ten Tors, in its entirety. Just a couple of points. Your title has the event as fundraising for us. It most assuredly is not. The Ten Tors expeditions have been running for nearly half a century and are entirely organised and controlled by the army for the benefit of school children in the south west. Each year 2400 kids, 400 teams of six, step up to the challenge of spending a weekend on the moor and navigating themselves around a variety of 35, 45 and 55 mile routes, each taking in Ten Tors with checkpoints manned by the military. DRG (Plymouth) alongside the other three MR teams on the moor, spend the weekend maintaining a watching brief and assisting in the retrieval of teams who fail to turn up at their next allotted check point. Last year was spectacularly unusual, as a result of unexpectedly high water levels in all the major and minor rivers the event was called off and we were tasked with rescuing all those teams that were traversing the centre of the southern Moor.

Finally your title was otherwise prescient. We are fundraising at the moment. Our control vehicle is reaching the end of its useful life. So if any of your readers have some spare funds I know of a team that would be very grateful for them!

Nigel Stainer
Chairman, DSRT (Plymouth)

Congratulations to the UK Mountain Rescue Teams

for 75 years of saving lives in wild places.



As the UK's leading wild land conservation organisation we also need your help. Iconic wild lands such as Ben Nevis, the Red Cuillin on the Isle of Skye, Ladar Bheinn in Knoydart, are already safeguarded by the John Muir Trust. Wild land continues to be under threat.

We need new members now to help protect wild land, strengthen our campaigning voice, and inspire people about wild places.

Become a guardian of wild places. Join the John Muir Trust.

www.jmt.org 0131 554 0114 membership@jmt.org

Bla Bheinn, Isle of Skye, protected by the John Muir Trust, photo by Ken Patterson
Charity No. SC002061 Company No. SC081620

Who's who?

Judy Whiteside talks to Mike Margeson, newly appointed MRC Training Officer



It's as well really that, thanks to the geographical distance between us, my interview with Mike was conducted over the telephone. Otherwise, I have a sense he'd be kitted up and ready to go, fidgeting on the sofa or pacing the four corners of the room, itching to escape once more to his spiritual home. And get something done. Mike lives and breathes the mountains. And whether he's rigging up for rescue, down a cave or paddling up a river, bagging another peak ('feeding the rat', as his wife Rachael implores him to do from time to time, doubtless when he's pacing that floor) or simply 'defragging' (another bit of Mike-speak) on a fellside somewhere he's heart and soul into it.

A glance at the CV tells you he's spent a lifetime honing his skills, feeding his drive to know, see and experience as much as possible, exploring his own boundaries – inspiring others, in turn, to do the same.

If Destiny had planned a life in the mountains for Mike, she couldn't have made a better start. Adopted by an Irish mother and a Canadian father from Trail BC in the central Rockies (coincidentally just 100 miles from Kirk Mauthner, friend and Rigging for Rescue instructor) Mike was brought up in Norway in his very early years and then spent much of his childhood shuttling back and forth across the Atlantic between east coast Canada and the UK, before his parents settled in flattest Norfolk. Destiny still had it sussed though, in the form of an inspirational teacher who climbed. By his A-level year, climbing had 'taken over from everything'. Rucksack slung on shoulder, he fired up the motorbike and headed for his first outdoor job in Cumbria – where he's stayed.

As a mature student at Charlotte Mason College, he was fortunate enough to study under Colin Mortlock, great outdoor philosopher and educationalist, who believed in the development of self-reliance through journeying in the mountains. It's a principle Mike adheres to today, both personally and in his work as a mountain instructor. 'The outdoors is a passionately powerful tool in any direction,' he asserts.

Mike has bagged qualifications with the same determination he's bagged peaks. BA degree, Advanced Certificate in Outdoor Education, Mountain Instructor Certificate and International Mountain Leader Carnet, kayaks and canoes, RYA dinghies and sports boats, Cave Leader, Duke of Edinburgh Gold, Rigging for Rescue, casualty care, equipment checking and counselling. In fact, he's spent most of his working life ploughing his earnings back into his education. Having worked his way through various posts in outdoor instruction, including a long spell as Head of Mountaineering and Land Activities at YMCA National Centre Lakeside, he currently juggles an impressive list of responsibilities – advising various educational activity centres, acting as occasional expert witness for the BMC, and working part time as both professional officer for the Association of Mountaineering Instructors and as an occasional inspector with Adventure Activities Licensing Authority – with running his own courses and expeditions.

Oh and not forgetting mountain rescue!

So what got him into MR? 'In the early days, I wasn't interested at all. My first experience was while climbing one August bank holiday on Heron Crag in Langstath Borrowdale – a teenager fell from above, shot past me screaming and hit the ground. I whistled and whistled for help. We abseiled to the bottom. He was still moaning and groaning and alive, just – and I tried to resuscitate him. The Keswick team were already out on a job so they were 50 minutes to arrive on scene. Mike Nixon came running up the fellside and George and Jenny Gates did their cascade stuff. As I watched the team move the lad from the Thomas to a Neil Robertson stretcher to winch into the small Wessex door, he lost the battle for life. Two members of the team walked back down with us, chatting. We were staying in Rosthwaite so they invited us to the pub for a pint later. They insisted we went out and climbed the next day, any easy route would do. If not for that I might never have climbed again.'

Along the way inspiration came from Eric 'Spider' Penman – 'a top climber at the time' and Langdale team leader – and later Tom Redfern also then TL of Langdale, who coached and encouraged Mike on to his Winter ML and then MIC. For a time, Mike resisted Tom's insistence and encouragement to join his local Furness team and then, when he did he almost walked out – unimpressed by his first experiences. But he stuck with it. Within a short time he was training officer, two years later deputy TL and on to team leader. He has been joint team leader of the Duddon and Furness MRS since Furness merged with Millom in 2002, and leader since his friend and fellow long standing team leader Peter Jackson stood down at the start of 2008.

'I was lucky enough to be involved with the Rescue 2000 research project with Paul Horder, Bill Paterson, Steve Howe and Wally Kaye, looking at where Lake District mountain rescue would be in 2000. It was a fantastically interesting process, talking to teams about what they did and working with far more worldly and experienced people. It gave me a platform to do some of the things I've done.'

Such as his 'expert witness work'. Three years ago, the BMC decided to set up a list of experts to deal with difficult legal cases and claims involving mountain accidents. Needless to say, it seemed another goal worth attaining. Following an initial training course –

looking at the law, how you present yourself in court, writing reports and practising cross-examination with real barristers – Mike was one of twenty chosen, all with slightly different backgrounds.

'It can be difficult,' he admits, 'because you might actually be involved either with the person making the claim or the organisation making the defence. I get one or two cases a year. But there's a lot of report writing so – to be good, sharp and fresh – not doing it too often is a good thing!' Mike also believes the experience he's gained from the international rescue community as one of our IKAR reps has helped develop his knowledge and ideas on MR techniques and priorities.

In his spare time, Mike has climbed across the world, although nowadays he readily admits it's more about experiencing wilderness and the country. 'That's not to say', he quickly adds, lest I get the remotest idea he might be losing his fire, 'I don't still have a burning desire and a long tick list of climbs I want to do!'

In fact, next June he's off to remotest Bolivia for a month. 'We're flying in to 4000 metres at La Paz so that'll be a bit of a shock! But it's a real adventure and expedition – what I really think the mountains are about.'

I tell you much of this because, having been national equipment officer for the last seventeen years, Mike was appointed training officer in May and if anyone can inject real drive and enthusiasm into the new post, it's him. He feels he's left the equipment sub in good health. In the last few years, they've chalked up lots of vacmats, the new casbag, equipment checking and rigging for rescue courses, the beginnings of a new stretcher and the Lyon load test and servicing contract. There are big challenges ahead with the projects on the table, coupled with the need for a centrally funded budget thanks to the recent NHS Trust cut. 'Leaving equipment was a big thing for me. Much of my energy and life has been invested in moving projects forward. But I'm passionate about both.'

As for training, his plan is to encourage some new blood into the fold – though he's keen to acknowledge the achievements of the committee to date and, notably, the work Tony Jones has done. 'My biggest hope is for new courses – and the funding to take care of them – ideas from the regions, developing new things... I want to see it buzz...' And he's off. Itching to get started.

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www.mountain-equipment.co.uk



Stuck knee incident

Langdale Ambleside MRT. Incident number 30. 6 May 2008 at 14.36hrs. Gibson Knott, Grasmere.

crag, and set to work, but quickly confirmed that she was very stuck. Plan A – washing up liquid – failed.

I've been caving a couple of times, but it's never really been my thing. Maybe it was because a trip through Bar Pot a few years ago nearly ended in disaster when a fourteen stone companion let go of an electron ladder from about ten feet above, while I was holding on to the bottom and landed on top of me, badly wounding us both. This made me realise that an accident underground is a serious thing. I've read a couple tales of underground entrapments and although we've never worked with CRO before, I had an idea of what they may be capable of. By 4.30pm the previous rescue had been satisfactorily concluded and those taking part were requested to assist on Gimmer. Lights, drinks, food and spare clothing were arranged. What had started as a warm sunny day was turning into a cool evening.

Plan B was kicked into action. At about 4.50pm a phone call to Tom Redfern confirmed that 'rock removal' was something they could do. They would set off immediately. Time was passing and darkness was now only three hours away.

At 5.10pm a helicopter was requested via the police, and was confirmed as en route from Boulmer. This would be used to get the CRO team members and their equipment up high as quickly as possible. Although strictly not 'life threatening' and the circulation still intact, there was no certainty this would remain the case. Time was pressing. Their equipment included a high-lift jack, and 'plugs and feather', a modern version of an old mining method, and 'some back-up stuff in a second vehicle'. Clearly, dark arts were going to be practiced.

As a back up (Plan C), a request was made to Theo Weston, a Patterdale MRT doctor. If CRO failed, then rendering the poor woman unconscious was the next probable course of action. And doing this in daylight seemed preferable to waiting for darkness!

CRO went to work, and in a relatively short time our victim was freed. By now it was 7.55pm. Time flies! Theo Weston was contacted and stood down. I couldn't tell if he was disappointed or relieved! Or both.

So it was all back to Lowfold for sausage butties, pies and toast for thirty. You'd have thought you couldn't buy food east of Windermere! Two mealtimes had passed us by.

Remarkably, our casualty was able to abseil off the crag and walk down. She had spent in excess of eight hours trapped. She suffered only bruising and grazing, and the loss of her trouser leg. I don't think anyone was brave enough to mention toilet requirements. After an early morning shopping trip to the gear mecca that is Ambleside for new trousers, she was out climbing again – in Keswick's patch.

Thanks to Kendal MRT, for backing us up so effectively, as they often do, and also to CRO without whose help, we'd probably still be there.

There was a Plan D, but that's a secret.

Nick Owen Langdale Ambleside MRT

Some days are just more complicated than others. It's not uncommon for us to deal with two incidents simultaneously, and jammed knees and feet are not something we've never encountered before. Past experience suggests they usually escape just as or before we arrive! We've had several people stuck on Gimmer before. They have usually self-rescued while we're en route. This time things turned out different.

At 2pm LAMRT were paged by Cumbria police. I seem to remember the dispatcher saying something like 'we've got a good one for you!' A woman, climbing with a small group, had got her knee jammed on the belay stance halfway up 'A Route' on Gimmer. A quick phone call to the informant confirmed everything the police had said, adding that they'd tried to get the woman's knee free themselves, including setting up a mini hoist. After an hour and a half of trying, all they had managed to do was inflict immense pain on the poor victim. The team was paged with the details, RV Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel. We set off with the usual kit, supplemented by a litre of washing up liquid. It's a fair haul of to the top of the crag, and 35 minutes later and before anyone got there, we got the inevitable second call. This time a woman had sustained a knee injury on Gibson Knott. A couple of team members arriving late to the first call were sent off to start this off and that was followed up with a phone call to Kendal MRS for assistance. It would all be resolved in a couple of hours.

Fortunately the woman had good circulation. Her knee was trapped by the bony sides, and she was able to shift position and weight to maintain some degree of comfort. A team member was lowered down the

QUARTERLY INCIDENT REPORT FOR ENGLAND AND WALES JANUARY-MARCH 2008

The following is a listing of the number of incidents attended by MR teams in England and Wales during the period from 01/01/2008 to 31/03/2008. 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	16/02, 16/02
Coniston	11/01, 19/01, 19/01, 27/01, 03/02, 12/02, 12/02
	23/02, 09/03, 15/03, 23/03
Kendal	29/01, 15/02, 17/02, 28/02, 10/03, 23/03, 24/03
	30/03, 31/03
Keswick	01/01, 05/01, 07/01, 16/01, 27/01, 29/01, 02/02
	02/02, 16/02, 19/02, 19/02, 01/03, 08/03
Kirkby Stephen	29/01, 01/02
Langdale Ambleside	19/01, 27/01, 28/01, 29/01, 02/02, 08/02, 17/02
	18/02, 01/03, 10/03, 12/03, 15/03, 16/03, 23/03
	23/03, 23/03, 23/03, 24/03, 25/03, 31/03
Patterdale	25/03
Penrith	04/01, 23/01, 23/01, 29/01, 23/03
Wasdale	01/01, 19/01, 28/01, 02/02, 02/02, 08/02, 16/02
	16/02, 01/03, 01/03, 02/03, 15/03, 19/03, 23/03
	26/03

Mid-Pennine

Bolton	01/01, 20/01, 27/01, 03/02, 08/02, 10/02, 21/02
	22/02, 25/02, 12/03
Bowland Pennine	11/01, 11/01, 12/01, 16/01, 27/01, 10/02, 29/02
	04/03, 12/03, 29/03, 31/03
Calder Valley	02/02, 24/02, 05/03, 15/03, 23/03, 28/03
Holme Valley	28/03
Rossendale & Pendle	02/01, 11/01, 25/01, 31/01, 02/02, 05/02, 09/02
	09/02, 16/02, 17/02, 12/03

NE England

Cleveland	03/01, 06/01, 10/02, 16/02, 02/03, 26/03, 29/03
Northumberland NP	19/01, 03/02, 05/02, 19/02, 24/02, 20/03, 27/03
	28/03
North of Tyne	03/02, 05/02, 19/02, 24/02, 27/03
Swaledale	01/02, 03/02
Teesdale & Weardale	07/01, 17/01, 19/01, 01/02, 03/02

North Wales

Aberglaslyn	16/01, 20/01, 02/03
Llanberis	04/01, 04/01, 11/01, 12/01, 12/01, 27/01, 14/02
	14/02, 20/02, 11/03, 15/03, 17/03
North East Wales	05/01, 16/01, 02/02, 09/02, 19/02
OB Wales	20/01, 26/01, 29/01, 31/01, 21/02
Ogwen Valley	11/01, 14/01, 02/02, 06/02, 10/02, 16/02, 16/02
	5/03, 08/03, 11/03, 16/03, 16/03, 17/03, 30/03
Snowdonia Nat Park	17/03
South Snowdonia	05/01, 16/01, 20/01, 10/02, 02/03

Peak District

Buxton	01/01, 12/01, 15/01, 24/01, 27/01, 03/02, 28/02
	02/03
Derby	15/01, 29/01
Edale	01/01, 12/01, 13/01, 15/01, 24/01, 27/01, 29/01
	10/02, 16/02, 28/02, 02/03
Kinder	12/01, 03/02, 12/02, 25/03
Oldham	06/01, 19/01, 26/02, 02/03, 23/03
Woodhead	29/01, 03/02, 24/02

South Wales

Brecon	04/01, 08/01, 08/01, 10/01, 26/01, 09/02, 11/02
	11/02, 11/02, 18/02, 23/02, 24/02, 08/03, 15/03
	15/03, 20/03, 21/03, 21/03, 24/03, 24/03, 25/03
	29/03
Western Beacons	04/01, 08/01, 23/01, 26/01, 27/01, 09/02, 11/02
	23/02, 06/03, 15/03, 15/03, 21/03, 21/03, 24/03
	24/03, 29/03
Central Beacons	01/01, 04/01, 06/01, 10/01, 12/01, 23/01, 25/01
	26/01, 27/01, 08/02, 09/02, 09/02, 11/02, 11/02
	11/02, 18/02, 23/02, 24/02, 28/02, 06/03, 15/03
	15/03, 21/03, 21/03, 24/03, 24/03, 29/03
Longtown	09/02, 11/02, 11/02, 11/02, 20/03, 24/03, 24/03

South West England

Cornwall	01/01, 02/01, 16/01, 18/01, 19/01, 21/01, 03/02
	06/02, 16/02, 26/02, 23/03, 30/03
Dartmoor	12/03, 29/03
Exmoor	05/02, 15/02, 11/03
Severn Area	01/01

Yorkshire Dales

CRO	05/01, 18/01, 08/02, 13/02, 05/03, 12/03
Upper Wharfedale	06/02, 09/02, 18/02, 27/02, 15/03, 23/03, 30/03

RAF

RAF Valley	11/03
RAF Leeming	27/02

SARDA

SARDA (England)	01/01, 05/01, 11/01, 16/01, 15/01, 29/01
	24/02, 29/02, 23/03, 25/03
SARDA (Lakes)	28/01, 29/01, 02/02, 02/02, 08/02, 25/03
SARDA (Wales)	11/01, 11/01, 16/01, 11/01, 14/01, 16/01, 23/01
	25/01, 02/02, 02/02, 09/02, 14/02, 19/02, 11/03
	25/03
SARDA (South Wales)	01/01, 04/01, 10/01, 23/01, 27/01, 09/02, 11/02
	18/02, 28/02, 06/03, 20/03
SARDA (Scotland)	29/01

Non specialists (Non MR)

	16/01, 16/02, 02/03, 05/03, 17/03
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Lake District

River Deep, Mountain High

Internationally Recognised Rescue Training

Located in the heart of the Snowdonia National Park, Rescue 3 (UK) offers unequalled expertise in swiftwater/flood and rope rescue training combined with world-class training facilities.



Rescue 3 (UK)'s training courses are an intensive mix of classroom and river-based sessions which are becoming accepted as the standard within the UK Fire Service, with the police and ambulance service following this lead. Additionally Rescue 3 (UK) has trained personnel from Mountain Rescue Teams, Air Ambulance, Maritime & Coastguard Agency, RNLI and numerous other NGOs.

Rescue 3 (UK) are based at The National Whitewater Centre on the banks of the River Tryweryn, which



offers unique training facilities including a dedicated, specifically modified swiftwater training site and rope rescue venues, dam-controlled water flows, fully-equipped five classroom training centre and extensive personal protective equipment and technical equipment stores.



In addition the centre enjoys strong links with two local hotels and full board, en-suite accommodation is available if required. Alternatively there are numerous bunkhouses, campsites, B&Bs and hostels in the local area to choose from.

To-date Rescue 3 (UK) have trained over 4000 personnel from the Emergency Services, Rescue Teams and Outdoor Centres. Their new partnership with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) means that a number of their courses now carry University certification, which provides a route into Higher Education through vocational training.

This is an exciting development within the field of technical training and Rescue 3 (UK) will be promoting their new university programmes, including a Foundation Certificate in Swiftwater & Rope Rescue, at the 2008 UK Mountain Rescue Conference.



For more information about Rescue 3 (UK) and their courses, visit them at the 2008 UK Mountain Rescue Conference in Stirling in September.

Rescue 3(UK)
The National Whitewater Centre
Frongoch, Bala
Gwynedd, LL23 7NU

Tel: 01678 522035 Fax: 01678 521158
E-mail: info@rescue3.co.uk



www.rescue3.co.uk



Swiftwater rescue technician programmes

As weather patterns become more unpredictable and flooding incidents such as Carlisle, Boscastle and the massive floods of last summer become more common, many teams are looking at training their members to operate safely in flood and swiftwater environments.

The leading provider of swiftwater training within the UK, Rescue 3 is recognised by all emergency agencies. The Gold Standard is the Technician Qualification, training team members to operate alongside other agencies and teams within an agreed protocol, enhancing team safety and awareness and providing team members with an internationally recognised qualification.

Rescue 3 certification is now being offered by Howard Crook of Kendal MSRT in a very cost effective package. Howard is offering an accelerated three day programme which can either be run in the Lake District or on your home patch. He keeps costs down to a minimum by utilising your own PPE, which means you get to train in the kit you would be wearing in a call out (teams that don't have PPE have always managed to borrow from surrounding bases). The obvious advantage of an intense three day programme over the now standard four is that hard pressed volunteers save an extra day of their time and, by bringing the training to you, costs on travel and accommodation are kept to a minimum.

Howard has extensive experience in water rescue having trained police, fire, paramedics, RNLI and MR teams from across Britain, and he is also a qualified Mountain Instructor and Kayak Instructor/Assessor with over twenty years of moving water experience. For further info, call Howard at ReThink on 01539 739050 or drop him an email to howardcrook@rethinktraining.co.uk



Cave Rescue Poland

OK that's a good idea, some caving in Hungary and a bit of a holiday. Then came the invite to Poland to spend a few days there before flying on to Budapest. That was a bit of a mistake! Air fares from Manchester to Krakow £42.45, Krakow to Budapest £120, Budapest to Manchester £37.50, spot the difference. We (being Pete Allwright, Secretary of BCRC and Roy Holmes Chairman of CRO, both also members of DHSS) decided flying to Budapest via Manchester would be a bit of a waste of time, so we paid up and moaned.

On Thursday 10 May we were winging our way to Krakow, to be whisked to Cieszyn by Greg Michalek (of the Polish rescue organisation GOPR) where he kindly put up with us in his flat until the 14th before flying to Budapest.

On the 11th a visit was made to the main area mountain rescue depot at Szczyrk, where deputy Tomasz Jano showed us around and filled us in on the 1000 or so rescues they'd done in the past year. Their rescue service is (partially) state funded, not like ours. I thought CRO had a lot of gear but at least it was good to see they use Land Rovers. The three quad bikes were a good idea, especially the one with the trailer/stretcher on the back. I couldn't see a lot of use for the three snowmobiles in Yorkshire. It must be said though that 90 odd % of their work is rescuing skiers with broken legs.

Later that day we went up Mount Czantoria in Ustron by chairlift and had a pleasant stroll to the nearby summit where we admired the views from the top of a tower. In the evening we prepared our gear for the Saturday caving trip.

For the underground experience we were joined by Rysiek Glowacki, another member of GOPR. This was the best bit in Poland with a through trip in Czarna (Black) Cave in the Western Tatra Mountains. The unfortunate 5am start was soon forgotten as we began the 1½ hour trek up a bloody big mountain, complete

with snow on top, to just above the tree line. Picking our way straight up a 300 metre climb through all the trees was very tiresome but we eventually arrived at the cave.

Now a pull through trip in Yorkshire is reasonably straight forward. You start at the top, pull your ropes after you and come out at the bottom inevitably much nearer your car than when you entered the cave. Not so here. The 1½ mile through trip consisted of abseils, traverses and climbs in relatively large galleries to emerge the other side of the mountain much higher than when we went in and now above the snow line.

As the trip approached the end, a rather tricky situation arose – the planned route out was sumped!

There was some concern over alternate routes and whether we'd have to make our way back through the cave (even though because of the pull-through we could not return the whole way) and whether indeed we would need a rescue callout. Various alternate routes were tried and finally Greg found a route out after some two hours of searching.

The trip had lasted some eight hours and the last three metres reminded us of our caves in Dentdale, tight with black mud obviously put there to make us feel at home. Some 18 hours after leaving the flat we were safely back.

Roy got up first on sunny Sunday morning as if he hadn't done anything the day before! Tough lads these Yorkshire cave rescuers. That day we went to Wisla and took another chairlift to Mount Stozek and walked along the border ridge which separates Poland from the Czech Republic. We ate lunch on Mount Stecówka and later had a garden party with Jarek Gutek (another GPOR member) in the evening. The time we spent in Poland, same as two

years ago, we never saw any rain. We were assured it did rain sometimes.

The half-hour flight to Budapest was a bit of a farce having to cram a reasonably good meal down before the plane landed. (So that's what the extra money was for, the most expensive meal I've had in years!)

Arriving in Budapest we were transported to Szeml_hegy Cave where we met friends old and new, and waited for the rest of the



delegates to arrive. By 11pm we'd started the three hour coach ride to Aggtelek where we were to spend the next five days. The presentations were a bit boring but the caving was pleasantly different as most of the caves are fed by hot springs. The long through trip we did was in Baradla Cave but, being in full caving gear and encountering made up paths and part of the way accompanied by about 40 school kids complete with hand torches made us feel a little overdressed for the occasion.

One other notable cave was Kossuth Cave where on the official trip we had to traverse along a fixed steel wire held in place just under water with another wire fixed to the wall, all very safe. We had another trip into this cave, a bit of an unofficial one, and had good fun swimming along and ducking underneath the wires. The water temperature was about 13°C, which made a good experience. All in all a good week and a half of holiday.

Greg Michalek GOPR
Roy Holmes CRO

Happy Anniversary from Glenmore Lodge

This year Glenmore Lodge is celebrating its 60th anniversary. Since its beginnings in 1948, the Lodge has been involved in mountain rescue. We are very proud that the staff and facilities can contribute to such an essential part of the adventure world and would like to officially congratulate mountain rescue teams everywhere on their 75th anniversary. The work of the instructors at the Lodge takes them to many wild and inhospitable places around Scotland, however there is one area they know better than any other – the Cairngorms. This combination of skills, experience and local knowledge creates a unique asset to mountain rescue within the Cairngorm area. We work very

closely with the Cairngorm MRS and RAF 202 Squadron SAR. Glenmore Lodge is frequently used by both these teams as a base for communications and refuelling.

As the National Outdoor Training Centre, we run rescue training courses and offer advice for individuals and teams in all aspects of mountain and swiftwater Rescue. Shaun Roberts, head of the Rescue Department would be happy to talk to those who need customised courses or individuals who need advice on which of our courses would be most appropriate to their needs. For further information please call us on 01479 861256 or visit our website www.glenmorelodge.org.uk

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viewingmatters

EVEREST BEYOND THE LIMIT 3 DVD BOXED SET FROM DEMAND DVD

Review by Andy Simpson

Have you heard the one about the transplant patient, the double amputee and the bloke with a metal spine going up Everest? Unbelievably this isn't a joke, just a selection of the climbers from a group of twelve amateurs attempting to reach the highest summit in the world during May 2006. Presented as a series of 45 minute episodes, Everest Beyond the Limit gives a real sense of what it's like to climb Everest and those at base camp, organising the logistics and worrying about everyone's mental and physical state.

Not everyone made it to the top but this story will leave you in no doubt as to why people turn back when tantalisingly close to the summit and the sheer endurance required to get anywhere close. It also deals with the dilemma of whether or not to walk past other dying climbers whilst on the way up or down Everest, the subject of much discussion at sea level but experienced by only a few at the sharp end.

The series was produced by a crew of 17 and some of the photography leaves you dumbfounded at how much extra effort the crew had to put in to get the shots. Much of the footage was taken using helmet-cams attached to the Sherpas and, again, it leaves you staggered as to their stamina and overwhelming sense of responsibility when you see them cajoling and encouraging their clients in the middle of what is a life or death situation for all of them. An object lesson in team work, both for the crew and the climbers, and well worth a look!

Produced by Demand DVD. Cat No DEMDVD003. Bar Code 506016245003 2. Running time 300 min. Price £24.99.

Also available from Demand DVD 'The Deadliest Climb' 4 DVD Box Set. 'The closest view of what it's really like to climb Everest, reminiscent of Touching the Void and Into Thin Air.' And 'Bear Grylls - Mission Everest' DVD. 'Follow Bear Grylls and Gilo Cardozo as they prepare to fly over the summit of Everest.'

prize draw

DemandDVD have supplied three of each of the titles featuring in the advertising (right) to give away FREE to lucky readers. Just pop your name and address details on an email to editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk and the first nine in the mailbox get a DVD each.

Sleepwalker teaches self reliance

I know of one individual who has called mountain rescue, not once but twice, because it got cloudy and they could neither see the whole path to the valley nor use a compass. A far cry from memories of helping our schoolteacher 'Ted' Norrish (King Henry VIII, Coventry) down to a wild campsite with a sprained ankle, then being despatched with other small boys from the head of Glen Nevis with instructions to bring a lift or taxi. As fourth formers in the 70s we were allowed in pairs to run the annual night orienteering event, held over fourteen miles in Shropshire or Derbyshire. It was reminiscing about this that led to the 20 mile 'Sleepwalker' Night Race, now in its second year, with the usual impetus of 'nobody else is doing it so I better had!'

A chance encounter with Peter Howells - very supportive in getting the idea off the ground - means we enjoy professional safety cover courtesy of Central Beacons MRT and SARDA. For our part, we're happy to make a small contribution to the work of mountain rescue and hope our race goes some way to encourage the next generation of self-reliant hillgoers!

Duncan Clark leads North Ridge Adventure and also enjoys trail running, completing the West Highland Way in 27 hours 59 minutes. SLEEPWALKER 2008 starts at 20:00hrs on 20 September from Talybont on Usk. Entries £16 online at runnerworld.co.uk or at northridgeadventure.co.uk.



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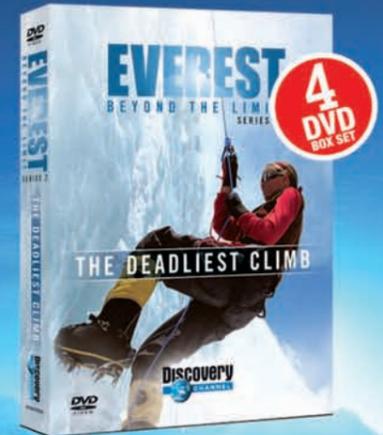
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PHOTO © PAUL LEWIS

Mountain food the Ramsey way

Paul Lewis takes his own brand of cuisine to the hills

I'm at 30,000 ft over the Channel in a Ryan Air sky bucket trying to write some pearls of wisdom about mountain food. My friends are recounting tales of their past mountain menu disasters and it makes disturbing listening. Mark had it topped with his seven day Lake District backpacking trip carrying a tin of Irish stew and a boil in the can syrup sponge for each day until Vic confessed to having cycled across the Atlas Mountains eating only boiled rice every day – for 32 days!

Now dieticians everywhere might read this and weep but in my humble opinion there is one key feature of Mark and Vic's menu that is worth its salt in the mountains... simplicity. If you watch a few episodes of 'Ramsey's Kitchen Nightmares' you'll see the gourmet god (or should that be gourmet gob!) constantly telling the brow beaten restaurateurs to 'SIMPLIFY THEIR F*****G MENUS!' Well, I'm advocating taking mountain food to the ultimate in simplicity by only taking one choice for breakfast and evening meal and a limited selection of day food – Gordon would be so proud!

Having said that, please don't be fooled into thinking I got to this point without serious research. In true Hester Blumenthal style I've eaten everything from powdered egg (yuk!) to sesame snacks (yum!), from dehydrated broccoli (yuk!) to Indian barfi (yum!). At the end of the day it boils down to one simple fact – for a mountain menu simplicity rules.

But before we talk food it's important to get a few other things out of the way.

Preparation

In line with modern ultra light backpacking methods, I use the single pan, ziplock bag, lightweight stove, insulating sleeve and plastic spoon approach. The stove I use varies on the seasons and activity but will

currently be selected from a 'white box' meths stove, MSR pocket rocket, MSR wind pro or MSR whisperlite. The spoon is a simple lexan plastic model. The pan is an MSR titanium kettle with a homemade aluminium foil lid to replace the original (I use this kettle both for heating water and as a mug). Finally, the insulating sleeve is a piece of aluminiumised bubble wrap (available as radiator insulation from DIY shops) that's been duct taped into a ziplock sized envelope shape with a piece of stick on Velcro to hold it closed. You can leave this sleeve behind if you're really trying to shed weight but it does keep your food warmer for longer.

The aim of the whole system is to only need to heat water and therefore create no mess. At home I mix all the ingredients into good quality ziplock bags (I also 'double bag' the food bags and tape them into small parcels to stop them bursting) then all I need to do is add hot water to the bag, place it in the insulating sleeve and leave it for a minute – then the food will be ready to eat. Eat it from the ziplock and hey presto – no washing up.

Timing

My mum used to relate that old motto 'breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and eat dinner like a pauper' whenever I asked for second helpings of the evening meal (which

was everyday). But, looking back, she did have a point (even though we were sitting in the kitchen rather than on a windswept mountain bivvy!). Eating a big meal at the end of a mountain day is a bad option as you are usually dehydrated, which suppresses your appetite and makes it hard to force down a big meal. Also, forcing your body to digest food while you sleep may affect the quality of your rest and will suppress your appetite at breakfast time. You really need to leave at least three hours between eating your meal and sleeping to allow digestion – but who is going to sit around waiting that long after you've slogged around the mountains all day and every cell in your aching body is crying out for sleep!

What you really need to do is eat an 'über' breakfast to kick start you in the morning and fuel your body and brain for all the activity and decisions you will need to make. It will also aid the rehydration process if you have a moisture rich meal.

Then, over the course of the day, try to keep blood sugar levels topped up by grazing. This will keep you fuelled up with energy and will help prevent the sugar crash which can affect performance (and may affect crucial decision making) at the end of a long day. Top the day off with a reasonable size evening meal and plenty of liquid.

Hydration

I'm sure you know that water's very important – but not everyone's aware quite how much it can affect performance. A drop in body moisture content of only 3% will severely affect co-ordination, endurance and the ability to think clearly. When you consider that when you are active you can lose up to two and half litres of water an hour you can see that keeping hydrated is very important. Unfortunately, most climbers don't carry anywhere near enough liquid with them just because it would be too much weight. It does help if you 'super-hydrate' by drinking as much as you can before you start the day's activities and make sure you rehydrate as much as you can at the end of the day. In between, just drink as much as possible and consider that it's really a false economy to not take enough water, as you will quickly lose performance.

It's also worth considering what you drink. When you're travelling light, boiling water for tea uses a lot of fuel (as well as tea acting as a diuretic). My solution is to only drink water during the day and flavoured energy drinks in the morning and evening. These can be made by heating water until hot rather than boiling which conserves a lot of fuel. There are loads on the market and they come in three broad types; energy drinks, rehydration drinks and recovery drinks. I'm currently addicted to High Five orange 'energy source' which is very drinkable but I doubt you'll go far wrong with any of them. I guess you could take a variety of types to suit different times of day (energy for brekkie, rehydration at the end of the day etc) but that doesn't suit our Ramsey style menu as there are too many options!

Okay then... that's enough techno babble (and thanks for bearing with me!) It's food time!

Brekkie

Oats rule! But don't even consider your 15 minute simmer porridge oats here. The secret is those 'oat-so-simple' type products that can be cooked by just adding boiling water. These beauties come in several flavours and can be made even better by adding fruit and nuts, choccy chips, yoghurt coated peanuts and raisins or a handful of those oat crunch type cereals.

Mix in some dried milk powder at home and all you need to do is add hot water, mix and leave for a minute in your insulating sleeve. Oats are great as they release their energy slowly over the morning and this stuff tastes yummy so it's very palatable when you wake up groggy and grumpy.

It's worth waking early enough to take a bit of time over breakfast so you aren't rushing straight into a day's exertion as soon as you finish – a surefire way to lose all those precious calories half way up the first pitch!

It's also worth bearing in mind that the

oat feast I've just described is best suited to a tent, hut or snow hole breakfast. If you're bivvying on a long route you probably just want to get up and go. In this case, breakfast will be most likely to consist of a few energy bars and as much liquid as you can stomach. If you heat up some water and add your energy source powder to it the night before you can sleep with it in your sleeping bag and it will be a reasonable temperature to drink in the morning. A caffeinated energy gel at this time also works well if you can face it. The beauty of this breakfast is that it can be eaten from the warmth of your sleeping bag too!

Lunch

What I carry for day food depends on what I'm doing but when I'm climbing or mountaineering I don't usually stop for lunch. Instead I 'graze' by eating a small amount at regular intervals. For this approach there are lots of obvious options such as peanuts, dried fruits, flapjack and a host of other 'mainstream' items and they all do the job. For my money malt loaf and Snickers bars are hard to beat for energy content, palatability and value. There are also some less obvious choices that are worth discussing in a bit more detail.

Purpose made 'energy bars' are now very widely available and, despite being fairly expensive, they are great for providing a gradual energy release well suited to mountain sports. The best way to find ones which suit you is to try them out but I really like the chocolate covered High Five sports bars, SIS go bars and Harvest Power Bars. When they first came out I also got hopelessly addicted to the original berry flavoured Power Bars but I got put off them after one winter's day when I got one out of my rucksack and found it frozen solid. Although a combination of sucking and licking gradually provided a few calories it was a long and hungry day! The king of energy bars is undoubtedly the 'Clif Bar'. These puppies fuel you well and taste gorgeous but unfortunately they only seem to be available in the States at the moment. Take a spare suitcase to bring some back on your next trip to Yosemite.

Energy gels are also useful but I've never really got on with them. Despite exotic names like tropical they all seem to just taste like a dodgy laboratory creation (that's a polite description!) which makes eating them a real chore. It is worth carrying a couple as an energy boost at the end of a long day and the ones with caffeine in can help give a mental boost to flagging concentration too.

Finally, my friend Phill introduced me to carrying a little stock of sweets on long days out. They are a great pick-me-up and whenever I climb with him he always has some and invariably greets me with one as I flop exhaustedly onto the belay ledge. The best option is something like boiled sweets because sucking them takes a while and gives you something to take your mind off the

boredom of belay duty. Having said that, those Lucozade Sport glucose tablets are a yummy alternative but they are so nice you'll get through a packet in no time.

Evening Meal

After a long day you really want a tasty meal that you can look forward too. It also needs to be easy to prepare and energy rich – bring on the humble noodle! But this wouldn't be a Ramsey worthy article without some serious menu meddling.

First, all noodles are not created equally. For me Super Noodles are the perfect bivvy food because they will cook just by adding very hot water to them (doesn't need to be boiling) and the portions are generous. So, step one is to break some of these up into a ziplock bag.

Next, add some good quality thick soup powder such as Cup-a-Soup to the bag (minestrone and cream of vegetable are my favourites). Now you have a tasty sauce to go with your noodles that will work far better than the dodgy little flavour sachets that come with them.

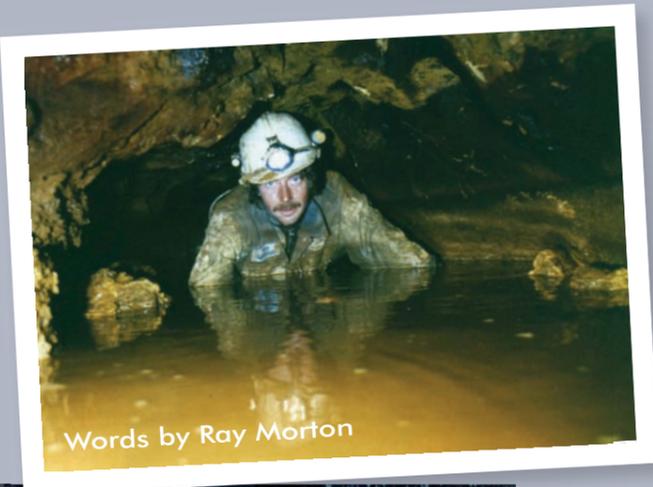
After that you can add extras if you want. Dried croutons are great. Pine nuts have a lot of calories. A couple of those little snack size cheeses or some pepperami can be carried separately to slice into the bag. Even a few of those mini butter portions you get in cafes can be added to boost the fat content of your meal. If you can carry it, a chunk of bread goes really well with this meal and helps mop up the liquid at the bottom of the bag.

And of course preparation couldn't be simpler. All you need to do is add the hot water to the ziplock bag, leave in your insulating sleeve for a minute and you're done. I tend to add plenty of water to create a sort of noodly soup that's very easy to eat and tastes great whilst also helping to rehydrate you. Oh yes. And peanut M&Ms for dessert – perfect.

The beauty of this menu is you can vary the flavour and additions to the breakfast, alter the day food by changing the types of snack food and alter the evening meal by changing the soup and adding different things to it but it's still all based around one choice for each course. So there we go. I did promise one menu to rule them all. It doesn't get any simpler than that does it Gordon?

Paul Lewis began his climbing career on the gritstone edges of the Peak District 25 years ago. Since then his passion for climbing and adventure sports has led him all over the world – but he still claims a fine day on 'the grit' is always his top choice!

Paul is a mountaineering instructor and owner of mountain adventure and training specialists Peak Mountaineering, based in the north west of England. Find out more at peakmountaineering.com or contact Paul and his team on 0161 440 7065.



Words by Ray Morton



TOP: SIMON ON A RECCY. NOTE THE TIDE MARK
BELOW: THE END OF A DIFFICULT STRETCHER HAUL

team profile: cornwall mine rescue organisation

Our team has a unique skills base drawn from all aspects of the mining profession including miners, mine surveyors, engineers, mining and tunnelling consultants, a mine research company director, and explosives engineers, to mention but a few.

We enjoy a great deal of support from Camborne School of Mines whose students have raised money from their rag week which has bought us vital equipment.

In return we have always welcomed students into our team to give them a working experience of abandoned mines, and an insight into the hazards and difficulties of underground rescue This can also be added to a student's practical CV.

There are many aspects of our work which present us with some unique problems and hazards not encountered in any other environment. Geological hazards such as cross-courses, (sections of soft ground) that have been mined through and are notoriously difficult to support, faults and crush zones, again sections of sometimes very unstable ground that have been subject to past geological movement. Some of these features can range from a few inches wide to several hundred yards and more. It must be borne in mind when entering abandoned mines, that they are not naturally formed spaces such as caves, but have been carved out by miners who really just needed to have the ground open long enough for them to extract the minerals before moving on. In the majority of cases this was only a matter of a few years.

Most of the accessible mines in the county have been abandoned for upwards of a hundred, and in some cases 300 plus, years. The stability of these mines changes constantly, and the gradual weakening and

collapse of large unsupported chambers, sometimes only ten metres below the surface, is fairly commonplace. It takes many years to be competent enough to 'read' the rock in a mine and to identify and instantly assess any potential risks, many of which are subtle enough to be easily overlooked by the inexperienced. This has to be a rolling assessment – as you progress through the mine, the nature of the geology can change dramatically within the space of a few feet.

The one hazard that affects us more than any other is acid water, a common feature of most metalliferous mines. With pH values in the range of 4.5 at best to pH 2 at worst (and common). The damage it can do to a brand new karabiner needs to be seen to be believed. This problem also extends to our ropes, slings and harnesses. Fortunately, most ropes are Perlon based and have good resistance to weak acids. Harnesses however need to be polyester and the choice is limited indeed so, if you're thinking of choosing a nice comfy one, forget it. This acid problem alone can set limits on where we can train without compromising valuable kit every time we do so.

Cuts and skin abrasions can get very quickly infected with this water, which is basically sulphuric acid, and can contain varying quantities of other materials such as copper and zinc sulphates. A splash of this stuff in your eye can feel like lemon juice. This alien environment often forces us to adopt practices which can sometimes seem at odds

UNLOADING THE KIT ▼



Early in 1987 some members of the Camborne School of Mines put forward a proposal to local police suggesting the need for and the setting up of a mine rescue team to cover the large number of abandoned mines in west Cornwall.

The police duly discussed this proposal with the other emergency services and, on the 8 July 1987, a meeting was called between the police, fire service, coastguard and two members of Camborne School of Mines. The request to form a rescue team was formally granted and the West Cornwall Mine Rescue Group was born. After two years of rigorous practicing, training and fundraising we became fully operational in 1990.

Today we are the Cornwall Mine Rescue Organisation and cover all the mining areas from Land's End to the Devon border with a twenty to thirty mile crossover area shared with Devon Cave Rescue Organisation.

Based at King Edward Mine, Troon near Camborne, and with over 3,000 known shafts on our patch, we are centrally placed for most of the major mining areas and can generally be at most locations within an hour.

with convention, but where time is of the essence, safety and simplicity are paramount for a speedy extraction.

As explorers, regular visits to these sites keep our databases up to date and feedback from other underground explorers keeps us informed of any changes within the mines or of people we need to be aware of, such as visitors from outside the county and newcomers to the hobby.

The internet alone now has numerous sites which provide an excellent forum for like minded explorers to exchange information and post pictures and reports. The flip side of this can tempt the uninitiated into buying a torch to go 'exploring' and jumping into the nearest hole unaware of the potential for personal injury. In January this year, we met a group of three lads underground equipped with only two torches between them. They were dressed in summer shorts, t-shirt and trainers and no head protection of any kind.

We invited them to tag along with us on the premise that we would show them around the mine, and kitted the third guy with one of our spare lamps. Once out, we made it clear to them just what the dangers were and that we had 'shown them around' only to keep an eye on them. They now have helmets and lamps and regularly accompany us on underground trips.

The team have exclusive access to databases of plans and documents both in commercial and private hands, many of which form parts of personal historical collections and are never seen in the public domain.

The team has worked hard over the years since 1987 and been recognised for their work, when twelve members with more than ten years service were awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002, presented by RSPCA Chief Inspector Les Sutton MBE.

The following year we were called on by Inspector Sutton to attend an incident at Godrevy Head near Hayle, where two Jack Russell terriers had fallen sixty foot into a crevice on the cliff edge. The rescue was particularly difficult due to the narrowness of the cleft (nine inches at its narrowest) and drilling equipment had to be brought in before we could get rescuers to the dogs. The whole incident took five days to bring to a successful conclusion, for both dogs and owner, and we were indebted to the two coastguard teams that gave us surface assistance, and Southwest Water for a very long fibre optic flexicam that was lowered down to determine the location of the two dogs.

All teams were commended by the RSPCA and awarded certificates of merit and CMRO received the RSPCA Silver Gallantry Medal for animal life saving. The team received a great deal of press coverage as a result and public support since has been very good indeed.

We regularly give public awareness talks



TOP: ACCESS TO SOME WORKINGS CAN PROVE TRICKY AT BEST...
MIDDLE: ... AND SOME CAN BE TIDE DEPENDENT
BELOW: 1400 FEET OF WATER

to clubs, schools, historical societies, cub scouts and the national organisation of Woman's Institutes, all of whom have been very supportive. Our public displays and demonstrations are very popular at shows and fairs and raise funds by voluntary donation.

In 1996 the team was called to a meeting with the police and we were briefed and put on standby for extracting/evicting the A30 Honiton bypass protesters, who had dug a network of tunnels under the site and were hindering progress and endangering themselves in the process. Fortunately, this standoff between police and protesters was brought to a satisfactory conclusion without need for anyone to venture underground.

We maintain close ties with the Marine Coastguard Agency and participate in joint exercises with their cliff rescue teams. The Duchy of Cornwall still own the mineral rights to many mines in the county and in return for status reports we have been allowed to use many of the mines for training purposes.

We have at times offered advice to farmers and landowners who may have shafts or mine workings on their property, and we can provide them with detailed surveys where access to workings is possible. Our surveyors and engineers can also give advice about shaft capping and land reinstatement after subsidence. This also furnishes our database with valuable information for the future.

We have recently had enquiries from an

offshore international mining company who are interested in utilising our team in the very near future to provide cover for their prospecting and sampling teams within Cornwall.

We are proud to be members of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) and the British Cave Rescue Council and take this opportunity to offer all the constituent teams our best regards.

What's in your kit bag... and can you carry it with the team kit?



John Whittle considers the options

One of the less published topics in MR is what do you put in your rucksack? Last year, at a Wednesday night training session Penrith team members were asked to produce our sacks for 'inspection'. As we sat in small groups each of us, in turn, emptied our sacks explaining and justifying to the others what we had in there and why we had made that decision. It was quite a revelation. For a start, the weights varied from 'Not too bad' to the eye bulging 'What the hell have you got in there!?' Beyond the obvious basics, my fellow team members clearly had quite a range of different ideas on what necessitates 'personal kit'.

Defining personal kit it easy, it's what is needed to be safe and (reasonably) comfortable. It lives in a rucksack in the boot of my car along with team GoreTex® shell (notepad and soft pencil in pocket plus medical gloves, spare windproof gloves and hat), boots (two pairs in the winter; a fell pair and a winter crampon stiff pair), socks, various alternative clothes (Montane windproof fleece, thick gloves, windproof balaclava etc), a complete set of maps for the patch, ice axe, crampons, walking poles, spare food and bottled water. The boot of my average sized car is always 2/3 full.

Fellow team members' car packing arrangements vary widely. Some have carefully packed kit in small storage boxes, others like me are slightly less organised.

Others seem to use the deep-litter system. However, what about their sacks?

Rucksack choice varied only a little. No one used less than 35lt while some were just over 60lt. Most were not elaborately designed or framed. Simple 45lt+ designs were the most common. Waterproofing of rucksacks was via either an outer cover and/or an inner waterproof dry bag.

Personal kit inspection revealed some common denominators. All carried a KISU, team medical kit, VHF, carabineer and 4m sling (for attaching kit to MR personnel during a helicopter lift), survival bag, LED headlights with spare batteries, spare compass and whistle. Most had a GPS and spare batteries and some sort of mat. Spare food and some drink were also on the common denominator

list, though hot summer duties saw the water bag/drinking tube design favoured. Rapidly prepared hot drinks were more favoured in the winter.

Climbing harnesses were not carried at the time, as our SOP was that team crag safety kit only should be used. More recently, that has now been rescinded and now many carry their own harness, a couple of prussick loops and maybe another long sling and crab. Helmets remain a team issue item.

Spare clothing varied, unsurprisingly, as individual call outs dictated what exactly would be needed. Most carried a fleece of some kind with the option to add the team GoreTex® salopettes, gaiters and the mighty Montane windproof top if necessary. These were usually carried in car boots ready for

selection for action.

Individual ideas on food and drink varied little. All carried high energy foods with low bulk and long sell by dates, while most agreed that long searches demanded extra food such as sandwiches, fruit etc. (The 24 hour Esso garage opposite base can do a surprising roaring trade at unsocial hours!) Drinks tended to be last minute additions and ranged from high-energy isotonic drinks to fruit cordial. Heroic, high-speed hot drink making at home or at base was the usual tactic for more extended or colder incidents.

Most had evolved (or were evolving) a 'crash bag' tactic. Within their rucksack they had a large bum bag stuffed with essentials that could be whipped out and put around the waist if the carry was too much. It was here the variations started to show as individual priorities and inventiveness got into gear. Rather than double up, the bum bag was where many of the stock items such as spare food, compass, GPS, whistle etc were stored. Bum bags also held combinations of light sticks, space blankets, knives, permanent marker pens, spare batteries, personal strobes, flares, string, sweets, medical gloves, another hat and pair of gloves, smaller medical kits, most commonly used maps (with weather proof film), spare glasses and even sun glasses and sun protection (in Cumbria!).

Other ideas included a small pair of binoculars, SAM splints, ski goggles, digital cameras, lip salve, wet wipes and even spare VHF and mobile phone batteries.

The rucksack top pocket, for most, held a hat, gloves, scarf, team fluorescent waistcoat plus other small items. These did not include car keys, house keys or wallets as many top pockets have a nasty habit of dumping these small, vital items on some lonely hill in the dark. Black hats and gloves had an equally nasty way of dropping out and not being seen again in the gloom.

Lifting each other's sacks suggested the lightest were coming in at about 10kg (22lb) while some were well above. At this session none of us had fluids, sandwiches etc nor ice axe, crampons the spare clothing out of the boot of the car nor a helmet and harness. It would be reasonable to suppose that 14-16kg (30-35lb) would be a usual total winter pack weight, and less heavy in summer.

While preparing this article I stood on my bathroom scales fully kitted with mobile phone in jacket pocket, food and drink and my spare clothing in my rucksack plus crampons and ice axe. My weight was 19kg (42lb) more than my undressed weight, and I carry one of the lighter packs.

So, it's very dark and nasty. You've made it to base in reasonable order, and you are on your way. From the information coming through it's not an unusual incident. Lower body trauma with, for you, 350m of ascent across fell and scree to get to the reported location, the weather is not so

good and going to get worse, no helicopter and no track to get a Mobile higher and nearer. So it's get in quick, get them sorted and get them out. Five of you in the first Land Rover discuss your tactics. The stretcher will need to go up sooner of later and the medical bag plus gas bag, casbag and splint bag/vacmat? Agreed. You can radio down for anything more as Mobile 2 will be arriving shortly.

You bundle out of the warmth of Solihull's finest into the night as the team kit and personal kit is heaved out the back. The radio feeds more information and the milling around slowly starts to drop into some sort of order. You reach for your share of the team kit, and glance at your own rucksack. Here in the thick of the action, one of your early possible decisions becomes whether to go against one of the basics. Generations, including you, have had it drilled into them they should always carry a map, compass, spare clothing, food, first aid kit, whistle and torch, and here you are with years of experience about to walk away from the relative safety of the vehicle and it crosses your mind not to take your own basics.

Half a Penrith stretcher weighs 15kg (32lb) without helicopter strops and where exactly are you going to put your sack that will inevitably add another cumbersome, out of balance 15kg? And you are wearing clothes with probably more in the pockets than normal.

The bum bag strategy offers a compromise, though it's no substitute as it can never carry the clothing required for a long wait, and MR often has long waits.

Stuff the pockets of your jacket? Again, it will help but doesn't offer an all circumstances solution and will take up time as you trans-ship your bits and pieces.

Try and carry two loads, one on each shoulder with a total payload of 34kg over the bathroom scales weight? Take a calculated risk? Travel fast and light and be out of it before anything goes wrong? OK, a possible plan in better circumstances, but not every time and certainly not here on some benighted hillside in poor weather.

We all find ourselves with this problem to solve, and it's one that needs excellent personal organisation, experience and a cool mind.

Some teams have moved to a strategy of a team supplied personal kit bag, that's carefully and densely packed and gets put in the top of one of the team equipment sacks. Will this be a good idea, or a formula to finish up with your kit somewhere else? It will be really useful to find out if this idea works well as it may offer a solution or it may just create another question.

We have all stood there looking at what needs to be done and we have all asked the same question. It's one of the dilemmas of MR and touches one of our cardinal rules – stay safe.

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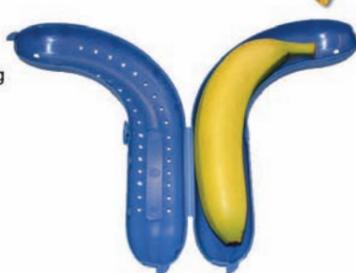
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