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mountain rescue

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ISSUE 27



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WELCOME TO ISSUE 27

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.

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NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 28

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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

Fall Pot
 Photo: Alan Jeffreys

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



Change is not without inconvenience...

It is appropriate that as we leave behind our 75th anniversary year and look forward to the next quarter century we focus on changes. The 'open' meeting in Preston was the beginning of this process.

One of the first issues to be identified on that day is the confusion that has arisen between the terms Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) and the MRC. It became apparent that the MRC designation is now surplus to requirements and will be allowed to wither and die. Future meetings, which have to date been labelled MRC meetings, will become meetings of representatives of MR(E&W).

If we are to move forward in an all inclusive manner as we plan for the coming years then it is imperative that there is a bottom up drive to the process. It is because of this that we hope the AGM in May will approve the proposed constitutional change that will see all teams sending a representative to future meetings.

Changing the format of the meetings will also assist in this process by allowing more time for discussion and debate. At the same time we must provide time for the work of the subcommittees to be considered. The quality and volume of work by these groups has been enormous in recent years.

We will therefore ask all officers to submit reports for circulation one month in advance of the representative meetings. Reports instead of minutes should prove far more valuable as they will contain observations and comment that bald minutes often lack. Matters arising from these reports can then be discussed at the meetings in a well informed manner but the removal of routine information from the agenda will allow more discussion time for pertinent issues.

As long ago as 1588 Richard Hooker wrote 'Change is not without inconvenience, even from worse to better'. I believe that the benefits will outweigh the inconvenience by a large amount. This is of course just the first small step in looking at the way we plan for the future but it is essential to get this bit right to be in a position to effect other changes.

Edmund Burke in 1754 said, 'A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation'. As relevant to our position today as it was 250 years ago.

I have no doubt that there is the will to move forward and the people with the vision and skills to carry the process. Let us ensure that we do not end up with the position of Alphonse Karr when he uttered the words, 'Plus ça change, plus la même chose'.

David Allan Chairman

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mountain rescue

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

Places: 24
Date: Sunday 26 April (One day)
Location: South Wales
Contact: Richard Terrell
07971 191942 richard@terrell.orangehome.co.uk

MR(E&W) AGM + SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING

Places: 60
Date: Saturday 16 May (One day)
Location: Lincs Police HQ, Hutton
Contact: Peter Smith
01706 852335 secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

PARTY LEADER COURSE

Places: 30
Date: Weekend TBA (Two days)
Location: Hebden Bridge
Contact: Mike Marsh 01204 696383
mjm@boltonmrt.org.uk

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT REFRESHER

Places: 30
Date: TBA (Two days)
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Peter Howells OBE MStJ
01633 254244 or 07836 382029
plhowells@plhowells.fsnet.co.uk

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS

Places: 30
Date: TBA (Three days)
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Peter Howells OBE MStJ
As above

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

Places: 40
Date: TBA (Five days)
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Peter Howells OBE MStJ
As above

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

Places: 24
Date: TBA (One day)
Location: Oldham MRT HQ
Contact: John Edwards 01457 870734
tryagain@fsmail.net

MEDICAL SEMINAR

Places: 60
Date: Saturday 7 November (One day)
Location: Charlotte Mason College
Ambleside
Contact: David Allan 01229 585154
allan986@btinternet.com

MR(E&W) SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING

Places: 60
Date: Saturday 21 November (One day)
Location: Lincs Police HQ, Hutton
Contact: Peter Smith
As above

TEAM LEADERS MEETING

Places: 50
Date: Saturday 5 December (One day)
Location: Swaledale MRT HQ, Richmond
Contact: Peter Smith
As above

DATES 2009

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Mike Margeson reports... I should have guessed I'd not escape the equipment officer role quite that easily! The appointment of the new MR(E&W) Equipment Officer, which should have been confirmed at the main meeting in November, had to be postponed for one reason or another. The interviews of three good candidates from different MR regions will take place on 10 January. In the meantime, my thanks to the vice chairman Richard Terrell who ran the November meeting, allowing me to take up my new role as Training Officer. However equipment issues are still proceeding. The new lightweight casbag has been delivered to about half the 54 teams by the time you read this magazine. The remainder are to be delivered as soon as possible.

BUDGET CUT

As predicted, following a £5k budget cut from the health authority, we hit overspend in early December. After discussion with the Executive of MR(E&W) this was made up from central funds to allow the ongoing work of services to stretchers and essential equipment to continue to be funded till the new budget starts at the beginning of April. My last task as equipment officer will be to put forward budget proposals in January for the next financial year. I have been warning for some time that, if we are to continue the work on central and essential equipment development and provision, we will have to provide a working budget. It is my opinion that this type of expenditure is an appropriate use for any funds raised nationally.

PPE/FPE EQUIPMENT CHECKING COURSES

We are looking to rationalise these to four courses in different



Hill Walking Essentials Skills and Techniques for Hill Walking

From the BMC, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and Mountain Leader Training England

Hill Walking Essentials is the fourth title in the extremely popular series of good practice DVDs, written by the experts. Filmed in the Lakes and the Scottish Highlands, the DVD outlines the essential skills and techniques for summer hill walking in the UK. In 2007, mountain rescue teams in England and Wales dealt with 778 incidents, a 23% increase since 2003. As with previous DVDs in the series, Hill Walking Essentials has been produced to educate mountain users, making them aware of the often hostile environment of our uplands, but it will also inspire, with the dramatic beauty of two of the UK's most popular walking areas shown to full effect. The film follows two walkers, Frederlina and Ben, as they plan their days and follow their walks. We see the challenges they face and the decisions they make. In addition to the film, the technical chapters include Navigation, Scrambling, Weather, River Crossings, Mountain Rescue, Ticks and Hazards.

Price: £15.99. ISBN/EAN: 9780903908146. Directors: BMC/MCoS/MLTE. Filmmakers: Slackjaw. Length: 2+ hours.

regions, spread through the year. This will be easier to co-ordinate and mean there are not two courses running close together, and then none for months.

CHARLES CHESTER

Lastly, and very importantly, the equipment subcommittee is looking for somebody to assist and take on the important role as secretary left vacant by Charles Chester. This need not be an equipment specialist and also does not need to be an onerous task. All that's required is attendance at two meetings per year and the taking and producing of the minutes. As chairman, I know how much more effective the meeting and work can be managed if you're not trying to keep a record as well! So if there is anybody who feels they could help support the equipment sub please call for a chat or email me mmargeson@hotmail.com.

TRAINING NEWS

Mike Margeson reports... Training subcommittee meetings are now held on the Saturday morning before the main MR(E&W) meeting. We had invited a number of new members to join the most recent

meeting, the objective to review the way we work and the work in progress. I am happy to report on a positive meeting. The main points of significance are:-
● Bill Batson has agreed to head up a project group putting together ideas and best practice of rope rescue in mountain rescue. It is my vision that we move to develop our own in-house course. This would not be a prescriptive programme but rather a course based on the fundamentals of, and best practice with, key knowledge, and a range of tools for your toolbox for different situations being covered. I envisage this programme finishing with some basic skills assessment and perhaps a short multiple choice general theory paper. All of this is new ground and in due time the project group will report back. In my view, developing our own course is a long time overdue, and it's time we stopped talking in an often misinformed way about 'Rigging for Rescue' and developed our own course, so we can monitor quality control and decide what's in and what's out.
● This leads me on to discussion about 'approved

▶ PAGE 6

Protecting you, protecting them, protecting the environment

When you're out on a mountain, facing the elements, you need to know the gear you're wearing is going to stand up to the most testing conditions you might come across. Nikwax® Waterproofing provides solutions that perform effectively in a multitude of situations while offering you head-to-toe people friendly protection. High performing, environmentally and ethically responsible, Nikwax works for you. So whether you're at work or at leisure, Nikwax provides the reliability you demand, allowing your kit to perform in whatever situation you find yourself.



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Nikwax improves the performance and extends the life of outdoor clothing, footwear and equipment, reducing the consumption of materials and energy needed to replace these items. Fewer things in landfills too! To find out more, play the webquiz and to win a free product, visit www.nikwax.co.uk



Fishing for compliments...

Drinkmaster, manufacturer of Drinkpacs, the single portion drinks for outdoor use, begin the new year with a special offer for all mountain rescue volunteers – order drinks from Drinkmaster up to 15 February and you will receive a 30% discount. Just let Drinkmaster know which team you are with at the time you place your order. Volunteers can also receive a free sample of Drinkpacs by emailing their details to info@drinkmaster.co.uk. Full details are on the Drinkmaster website www.drinkmaster.co.uk.

Drinkmaster provides a range of over 40 single portion hot drinks, all in individual packs that are waterproof and pocket sized. At the Emergency Services Show in November, Drinkpacs were given a unanimous thumbs up by hundreds of attendees who tried them. 'It's always great to make drinks for people who've never tried them,' said Jo Shinner, Drinkmaster's marketing manager. 'They are always surprised at how small Drinkpacs are and how good the drinks taste.'

Drinkmaster has supplied rescue organisations with sealed hot drinks for over 25 years. Tastes have changed over time with Nescafé Cappuccino taking over from tea as the fastest growing variety. 'Back in the 80s we sold more tea than coffee, but now cappuccino and soups are the order of the day.' One thing that hasn't changed is the Drinkpac. The little aluminium packs keep drink ingredients airtight for



up to two years. 'We're thinking of taking along a water tank to store the Drinkpacs in at next year's Emergency Services show. People can fish their own Drinkpac then make their own coffee and see just how waterproof Drinkpacs are!'



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Over 40 years of experiencing mountains on many continents I've used a wide variety of clothing and equipment. Whatever my future in the mountains, I will keep Páramo at the top of my list to stay warm and dry, as it's quite simply the most comfortable all-weather kit on the market.”

Alan Kimber, AMI & IFMGA

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For a Search & Rescue price list, to receive more information or to buy – telephone Páramo's contract sales team on 01892 786446 or email contract.sales@paramo.co.uk www.paramo.co.uk

courses'. The official position is that we do not have any approved courses, we have 'recognised courses', and it is our intention to look at developing clear guidelines of how we go about this process.

● I am also delighted to report that early in 2009, we will be producing a training needs survey and questionnaire, to be sent out to all the teams and regions. This is an important task which will allow us to focus energy at the regional and national level to prioritise the most important training.

● Technology in search management courses. We have identified that the fast changing field of IT and technology is not fully recognised and made use of within our present search management course, and it is important we look to rectify this as quickly as possible. David Allan has asked Iain Nicholson to head up a small group to look into this whole area. Both the short courses from the North East, Roberts and Perkins and the longer Bangor course, can only benefit from this input and update.

● I would like to see a number of new courses provided and trialed. We have talked for ages about having a day for team treasurers and secretaries on admin and records, and

all those areas of running a team that people either avoid or take for granted. There is also an opportunity for training in dealing with the media, particularly for team leaders and deputies.

● See the diary dates on page 4 for details of the courses we will be running in 2009.

I would like to return to my initial comment that the training committee will welcome any new members wishing to contribute. However it is not a talking shop and you will be given jobs to get on with!

MOUNTAINEERING AT DOWNING STREET

David Allan writes... On 8 October, a reception was held at 10 Downing Street for the British Mountaineering Council to meet the Prime Minister. I was invited by the BMC to attend. The meeting was brought to fruition largely by the efforts of John Mann, MP for Sheffield, and the purpose appeared to be to assure the world of mountaineering that it had not been forgotten in the light of the prominence of Olympic Games and the like. In the event, Mr Brown was unable to attend. This was the day on which he was conducting his own expedition to Iceland. He was represented principally by Gerry Sutcliffe, Minister for Sport, and a number of MPs and Lords with an interest in the outdoor

Cave Rescue Conference Derbyshire 8-10 May 2009



The 24th Cave Rescue Conference will be held next May in Derbyshire hosted, on behalf of the British Cave Rescue Council, by the Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation. It will be held at the Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow and in various nearby underground locations. The centre offers bed and breakfast accommodation and some camping. The programme is currently being developed but will include up to the minute consideration of many cave rescue topics and areas of concern. Suggestions for topics to be included are welcome.

Further details will be made available early next year but any queries in the meantime should be directed to the Conference Secretary conferencesecretary@derbyshirecro.org.uk



world. The BMC turned out a full team of the revered and famous. George Band, Ian McNaught-Davis, Joe Brown, Chris Bonington, for example, and Al Phizacklea still on crutches and singing the praises of Duddon & Furness MRT. Charlie Clarke gave an erudite and witty account of the accomplishments and value of British mountaineering across the world. Leo Holding followed with an expression of the personal values as well as those to society of climbing as a pursuit. Gerry Sutcliffe responded by acknowledging these achievements but, if there had been a hope that there might be a pointer to more funds for mountaineering, this was not to be. An enjoyable evening. Perhaps the most notable feature was the fitness and sharpness of the entire guest list, especially the senior citizens of the

climbing world. This in itself was an indicator of the value of the hobby? Pursuit? Or addiction?

TEAM LEADERS DAY, DECEMBER 2008

Judy Whiteside writes... 50+ team leaders and deputies (and other interested parties) met at Bowland Pennine MRT base in Garstang for an interesting and varied day of presentations and discussion. Lindsay Cowen, Emergency Planning Officer for Cumbria County Council, kicked off the day with a comprehensive look at how Cumbria deal with emergency incidents. John Ellerton talked about the MRC Pain Relief Audit, encouraging all teams to participate fully in the two year study. William Lumb gave a fascinating account of the Swaledale team's part in the aftermath of the Catterick helicopter crash. Team members were out on exercise close to the scene of the incident when it happened, so were first on scene and key to a successful – and complex – rescue operation. Mike Margeson presented the results of the stretcher survey carried out in 2008 (key points of which are featured on page 26) and then it was time for an excellent lunch courtesy of Bowland Pennine. Post-lunch, Tom Taylor from ARCCK focused on PLBs. Iain Nicholson talked about the increasing use of trailing dogs in mountain

AND THE GOOD... A GROWING LIST OF SPONSORSHIP DEALS AND OFFERS

It's not all bad news on the fundraising front – there's still a raft of deals on the table for teams and individual team members to take advantage of.

● **Burton McCall** continue their support in

many and varied ways. Besides their **£10,000 per year** cash injection they have supported us at the conference and the NEC Outdoors Show; offered a **Victorinox Swiss Army Knife** to each new Basecamp member signing up at the show last March; held a fundraising event which raised a further **£3,000**; provided a star letter prize in the magazine and, from this issue, launched a **'What Tales Can Your Victorinox Tell?'** feature with the incentive of a SwissChamp XLT as prize. They continue to work with us, thinking up ever more ingenious ways they can provide support at all levels. For 2009, they propose to support us at our events and exhibitions; to continue supporting Basecamp; and to encourage us to consider more promotional opportunities – including the use of celebrities, editorials and competitions.

● **Goodyear** have donated **£10,000 per year** cash; pledged to help to **roll out of GPS** navigational mapping equipment and are providing all teams with Goodyear's market leading 4x4 tyres – **four tyres per year**; further tyres can also be purchased at

5% below web price at Goodyear's online site. **Team members can also order tyres at 5% discount online**, for their own vehicles – a key point which seems to have passed many by. Contact Penny Brockman for further details of how to take advantage of these offers – pennybrockman.co.uk. Goodyear has also launched the **'Goodyear Team of the Year' Award** with the winning team in line for a £2k donation towards much needed equipment.

● **Audi UK** have donated **£50,000** over the last two years, via their annual fundraising polo match between the Audi team and that of our Royal Patron, Prince William.

● **Ordnance Survey** continue to support us through the software and by working with us, the Communities for Local Government and Memory Map to reduce the annual Memory Map licence.

● **Terra Nova** has offered team members a **35% discount** off the retail price of their goods. Contact shopping@terra-nova.co.uk for further details.

● **Leeds Metro University** events management students are

keen to be involved with support and fundraising as part of their degree course. At the time of writing, there are two possible events in the pipeline – a sponsored swim and a zipwire event.

● **Where-wolf.com** donate 10% of the sales of their grid reference finder safety cards to MR.

● **Montane** will support us at the Outdoors Show with an offer to potential Basecamp members.

● **Basecamp** membership goes from strength to strength. Remember, each new Basecamp devotee not only spreads the word about mountain rescue but brings in valuable unrestricted funds.

This isn't an exhaustive list – there are, of course, many retailers, manufacturers, businesses and individuals who continue to support us at local and national level. This was more about what National Fundraising has achieved thus far (and there are many more ideas yet to be confirmed). It had been hoped to raise a modest £90k during 2008 but this now looks to be £30+ over target. Chairman Mike France would like to thank all those who have given their time and energy into bringing these deals and offers to fruition.

Prize draw...



Last issue, we were overwhelmed by the volume of entries to this free competition. So we asked you to send a few words explaining why you didn't get round to entering the first time round and why you really do deserve to receive a free DVD about Everest, courtesy of DemandDVD. We did have some response (I hardly dare quantify exactly how many...)

let's just say I have more fingers on one hand) but thanks to those who did make the effort – Mike Hale, Adi Taylor and Martin Davies (there, I've said it – there were THREE!) An Everest DVD will be winging it's way to you soon.

Here is Mike's excuse... er, story...

I was just sitting down to send an email, asking for a DVD about a quiet time on Everest called 'Beyond the Limit' when my pager went off – party of cavers stuck between the cascades in Sunset Pot. I looked out of the window. It looked like a rain bomb had hit the Dales. A call to the depot and I was told to hang on, there may be another call for ten people stuck in County Pot, and some in Nick Pot, and possibly someone in the Kingsdale Master Cave, and some people down Stream Passage, and a girl who is caving somewhere in the Dales, and some walkers on the Three Peaks, and what about all those people digging beyond the sump in Ireby Fell Caverns. Surely the 'Grand Day Out', organised to send loads of cavers to dig out the Ireby Sump would have been cancelled? But no. 'It was fine when we set off,' they said, and now there were possibly fifty of them stuck beyond the sump. What a night! One of the busiest for the Cave Rescue Organisation so far. Now that's Beyond the Limit. Fortunately no one was hurt, except their pride. It has taken several weeks to clean up all the gear and that is why I have only just got round to writing for that DVD.

APPARENTLY WE'RE THEIR 100TH RESCUE THIS YEAR...



© DAVID ALLAN

LAKE DISTRICT

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!

Richard Warren writes... The Lake District fells made national headlines again on 25/26 October – the weekend of the Original Mountain Marathon (OMM). Run over a weekend forecast for extreme weather, following a week of just plain awful weather, opinion was divided as to whether the event should have started on the Saturday morning or been cancelled.

The organisers had contacted Mark Hodgson several weeks before the event to advise the extremes of the routes and the overnight checkpoints. Exact locations of checkpoints were not provided to the rescue teams before the event – not sure why. All team leaders over whose patch the event would traverse were informed but at no time were teams asked if the event should take place – neither in the days leading up to, nor on the morning of the event. It is not mountain rescue's position to give such advice; we are only there, if needed, if there are casualties. None of the Lake District teams were involved in providing first aid cover or safety cover to the event. (This does raise an interesting point for debate if teams do get involved in marshalling such events.)

Saturday 11.45am Keswick MRT receive the first call for assistance – two people with hypothermia above Rigghead Quarries in Borrowdale. As luck would have it, one of KMRT deputies was working in the area and able to raise the alarm when the informant descended toward Rosthwaite. KMRT had just despatched their first lead vehicle with six on board, when the next call came in – two runners with fractured ankles in Gillercombe and one with head injuries near Sty-Head. At this stage, Keswick team leader called for the assistance of **Penrith MRT** and **Cockermouth MRT** and a discussion with the Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre (ARCC) Kinloss, regarding helicopter availability, resulted in **RAF Leeming MRT** being tasked from their training location for the weekend in Ullswater.

A total of 70 rescuers were operating on the Borrowdale side of the central fells at this stage. Contact with the race organiser was maintained by one of the Keswick team members who lives at Seathwaite with messages being passed back to Keswick base regarding incident locations etc; teams were then tasked to the various locations. A total of eleven casualties were treated by the teams operating in Borrowdale – lower leg injuries, hypothermia and minor head injuries, all probably caused by casualties slipping or by being blown off their feet.

The weather was, as forecast, extreme – high winds and torrential extended periods of rain throughout the morning and afternoon. Mark Hodgson Keswick team leader recalled that he'd been out in some fairly extreme conditions on rescues with the most memorable being on Skiddaw one New Year's Eve. The weather on this OMM day was the most extreme non-winter weather he had experienced. News reports stated that hundreds of competitors were missing overnight, with large-scale searches being undertaken. This was incorrect. No MRTs were involved in searching overnight. Mark Hodgson had already advised that it was too high a risk to put team members out in that weather overnight when the only chance of finding anyone was to trip up over them. An RAF helicopter was brought in at first light on the Sunday to fly the routes, accompanied by members of Cockermouth MRT. All competitors were eventually accounted for by the Sunday afternoon.

Teams were active until about 10.00pm on Saturday. Casualties were evacuated from the hills by the teams, then transported over Honister Pass (now the river Honister) down the Buttermere valley to meet with ambulances at Lorton some ten miles away due to flooding in the Buttermere valley (later compounded by a landslide). Access to and from Seathwaite via Borrowdale had been impossible since mid afternoon, with the rivers bursting their banks in several places. Keswick's lead vehicle



▲ BORROWDALE IN FLOOD

(which had attended the first incident of the day) was trapped behind Castle Crag, Borrowdale by floodwaters that had risen during the rescue. It was parked up on higher ground overnight, all the gear taken from it ready for the next incident, and recovered the next morning.

Keswick team descended to Seathwaite with some of their casualties. The evacuation from Seathwaite at 5.00pm was through water that was bonnet deep on the Land Rovers – the bow waves causing the cars parked either side of the Seathwaite road to float gently outwards allowing a route through! It was during the descent to Seathwaite from Gillercombe (on the north side of Sour Milk Gill as access across the river to Seathwaite was uncertain and descent via the normal track could have resulted in the teams being stranded with their casualty) that Mark Hodgson, via Keswick Control requested that the police call this as a Major Incident and instigate Gold, Silver and Bronze command to deal with what could have been (and was) hundreds of competitors getting off the hill and being unable to either get back to their cars (warm dry clothing, food etc) or to get out of Seathwaite due to the flooding. This 'Major Incident' call was apparently never instigated by the police.

2.15pm Whilst the teams were busy on the Seathwaite side of the mountain, a 999 call came in to Ambulance Control regarding an incident on the Wasdale side. A female competitor in a team of two had been swept away down the swollen Spouthead Gill where it met with Lingmill Beck (Wasdale side of Styhead Pass). **Wasdale MRT** were immediately called out and approximately 20 team members attended. Unprecedented rainfall and high winds had flooded the valleys and swollen the rivers. The missing walker was located on an island in the middle of the raging gill. She was located on a very small island with a number of injuries. A further four walkers and competitors had gone to assist her but were also stranded. Four Wasdale swift water technicians managed to get to the location and two got across to the island using ropes. A Sea King helicopter that had been called in to assist in the search for the lost walker was brought in to winch all seven off the island which was quickly becoming engulfed. The injured and hypothermic female was stretcher winched. All were flown to Whitehaven Hospital. This incident closed at around 6.30pm.

5.00pm Whilst the above rescue was being dealt with a further request came in to assist a female participant from the Dartmoor area who had sustained a shoulder injury and had managed to

get down to the Wasdale Head Hotel but the road ambulance could not get up the valley due to the flooded roads. The team transported the casualty to the ambulance by Land Rover. Two team members involved.

A total of eleven casualties were assisted by the joint efforts of Keswick, Cockermouth, Penrith and RAF Leeming, with a further six requiring the assistance of Wasdale, SARDA and a Sea King helicopter from RAF Valley, Anglesey.

The above rescues related to the OMM. However, there were several more rescues that weekend that were totally unrelated to the marathon but very much related to the severe weather conditions and required significant MRT involvement.

Saturday 4.38pm A family with a five year old child were reported to be trapped on the wrong side of a stream up Rossett Gill. **Langdale Ambleside MRT** were dispatched to recover them, but were informed the family had got down safely while the team were en route. Getting through to the end of the Langdale valley was very difficult, with significant flooding and abandoned vehicles.

5.35pm Kirkby Stephen MRT was called by police to help a Duke of Edinburgh party of five seventeen year old girls stranded in very bad weather high in the Central Howgill Fells. The team had been able to make contact with the girls, one of whom had a minor ankle injury. Nineteen team members responded, including two search dogs. Two fast search groups were deployed to search an area north of The Caif. The girls were located close to their expected position. Their supervisor, who had been missing since 6.30pm, was also found with them, having just reached their position. The group was escorted to safety and the team stood down at midnight. The girls had followed all instructions given by phone and had managed to find some shelter by wrapping a collapsed tent around themselves.

6.28pm The Langdale Ambleside team were called out again to rescue a group of three walkers who had become separated when one managed to cross a stream that the others weren't able to. They'd only gone for a 'short walk' because of the weather! They had no torches, so had to stop moving once it went dark. They were eventually located at 3.15am on Sunday morning by Kendal team members who had come to assist, after Langdale Ambleside had been out in atrocious conditions for four hours. The evacuation was made difficult by the speed and volume of water flowing. The training and equipping for swiftwater rescue by both teams has now been used on many occasions, and made these situations safer, if not actually any more comfortable! [This incident has been covered in greater detail in Howard Crook's article on page 24].

Sunday 4.16am The Wasdale team was contacted by Ambulance Control to assist in a medical emergency at the Wasdale Head Hotel. A

ten year old boy staying at the cottages had suffered a severe asthma attack and needed hospitalisation. The roads were flooded even more than the previous afternoon (Wastwater had risen three to four foot and covered the roads with two foot of water.) Three team members, including the team doctor attended, gave medical assistance and transported the boy to the waiting ambulance at Overbeck. The incident closed at around 7.00am with four team members having been involved.

4.30am Langdale Ambleside were requested by police to check a vehicle for occupants that had been stuck in a flood. They were found to be okay and were going to have to sit out and wait for a recovery vehicle when water had subsided. By this time the journey to Langdale involved going to Grasmere first, being the only route where the road was still passable.

8.00pm The Wasdale team was contacted by police to assist eight walkers who had become lost on the Wasdale Screes path below Low Adam Crag. Eight team members attended and managed to locate the group at 8.45pm and walk them back up the Lake path to the road head at Brackenclose – the team were unable to get the vehicle to Brackenclose due to flood waters. Incident closed at 10.00pm. There then ensued the press furore!

LEARNING FROM THE EVENT

On 26 November, a multi-agency debrief was held at Cumbria Police HQ in Penrith. Lakes teams were represented by Mark Hodgson, Keswick team leader and Mike Park, Cockermouth team leader. One of the main outcomes from the debrief was for improvements in communication between the police and the other agencies involved. Mountain rescue was recognised for its significant contribution to both effective communication and the safe evacuation of those injured during the event. A stated



outcome of the multi-agency debrief was issued as a press statement from the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum the same day.

'Following a debate, it was agreed that the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum would establish

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EDELRID 

Swiftwater rescue training

With rescue teams increasingly called to assist in flood and swiftwater rescue situations, proper training is essential to ensure teams can operate in a safe manner in the most demanding conditions. The Gold Standard in this area is the Swiftwater Rescue Technician programme which trains team members to operate alongside other agencies and teams within an agreed protocol, enhances team safety and provides team members with an internationally recognised qualification.

Howie Crook (member of Kendal MSRT) offers swiftwater rescue technician programmes in a very cost effective package. The accelerated three-day programme is tailored to your team, run either in the Lake District or on your home patch. Costs are kept to a minimum and hard pressed volunteers save an extra day of their time over the standard four day programme.

Howie has invested in top of the range Lomo drysuits, so you don't suffer, and Safequip rescue vests which meet the latest standards. He has extensive experience in water rescue having trained police, fire, paramedics, RNLI and MR teams from across Britain, and is also a qualified Mountain Instructor and Kayak Instructor/Assessor with over 20 years of moving water experience. For further info, contact Howie at Re-Think **01539 739050** or email **howardcrook@rethinktraining.co.uk**

outcome of the multi-agency debrief was issued as a press statement from the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum the same day.

Latest news from DMM

ULTRA O SCREWGATE



The product development programme at DMM continues to move on, and there are many more products/projects on our wish list than we can practicably develop at any one time. However we have made good progress with the new products shown last summer for spring 09 deliveries.

The new I Beam Keylock Boa will be delivered early, and all other products are looking good for Spring delivery. One new biner, which may well be of interest to the rescue teams in particular, is the new Ultra O (oval) which comes in all three locking versions, and works well with our range of pulleys which have been selling through very quickly.

The new Belay Master design has shaved some weight off, created a clean nose, worked out a system to hold the plastic clip more securely, and given a better working area for the rope. One of our best selling biners is about to get even better!!

For further details please refer to our website **www.dmmwales.com**. Or, for a catalogue, contact **nikki@dmmwales.com** or **chris@dmmwales.com**.



▶ BOA SCREWGATE



an event list. A risk prioritisation of each event disclosed to us [CLRF] could then be undertaken, and if a multi-agency response is required, the relevant agencies can come together and plan their response accordingly. This will ensure that the communities of Cumbria and the people who visit and work in the county are assured a measured response from all the agencies who serve them.' LDSAMRA teams will, as always, be willing to work alongside the police and other emergency service to ensure the county is adequately covered. The weekend of the 25/26 October 2008 will always be remembered for the worst wet weather conditions the county had experienced for decades and indeed, conditions never experienced before by most team members. However, it will also be remembered for the generosity of those OMM participants and supporters who raised over £10,000 following the event, and the recognition by the organisers of the OMM who donated the £7,000 of prize monies to the Lake District teams as a thank you for being there when needed. Many thanks to Mark Hodgson, Mike Park, Julian Carradice, Michael Saint, Nick Owen and my other mountain rescue colleagues who contributed to this article. Also to Howie Crook who has written the follow up article which addresses the basics of swiftwater rescue.



WHERE-WOLF GRID REFERENCE FINDER

It's over a year since LDSAMRA volunteered to take a lead in the national campaign promoting mountain rescue safety awareness. There have been a number of initiatives taken to address the growing problem of walkers being ill-prepared, ill-equipped and ill-experienced. One possible solution centres on a simple and inexpensive aid for navigation. A small family business in the south of England had already developed a grid reference card to help their friends more accurately calculate grid references/determine their location. In November 2007, the opportunity was taken to work with Where-wolf.com and use the card to encourage walkers to actually go out and buy a map and compass, and learn how to use them. Jenny and Danny Turner, owners of Where-wolf.com, were keen to support mountain rescue and agreed to contribute a significant percentage of sales to Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) and use their product and their website to get all the required messages across. For every special issue card sold, £1 is donated to MR(E&W) – and they have been sending cheques every three months as the cards are sold.

So, twelve months later and where are we (excuse the pun)? Between

December 2007 and the end of October 2008 they have raised £821 for Mountain Rescue (England & Wales). 46% of the cards sold during this period were MR cards, which I think shows that the message is definitely getting through, and people, are making a conscious decision to support this campaign by choosing to pay the extra £1 which goes to mountain rescue. On average, their website has had between 20–50% more site visitors than last year. Some of this of this may be down to their own marketing and link sharing, but the majority of this is undoubtedly due to the growing interest and awareness of Mountain Rescue's campaign. If their overall web sales are taken into account, including ebay sales, plus the freebies they have given, and are continuing to give away, plus the bulk orders from the police, armed forces and organised groups, Jenny and Danny have gone through over 5,000 cards this year. Some of these sales are overseas but 95% are to the UK. Of course, not all visitors to their site buy the grid reference cards, but they are at least being exposed to the mountain rescue safety campaign message. 5,000 is a lot of cards in use, helping those who get themselves lost to use their map and compass as their first pocket to go for, rather than their good old unreliable mobile phone. Jenny and Danny are also putting the little Mountain Rescue Facts cards (which LDSAMRA produced for the 75th Anniversary celebrations) in with every order, although these are now running a bit low, and they might need to consider producing something similar themselves soon!

You can help with the campaign by encouraging your supporters to visit the site, by buying discounted cards directly from Jenny as team merchandise or pro-actively getting your local outdoor shops to display and sell them. Jenny and Danny will definitely not become multimillionaires as a result of your efforts (when I met them in July they came up the Lakes in their old 110 Land Rover, leaving the Ferrari at home) but the numbers of maps, compasses and hopefully torches out there on the fells will increase as the months go by. If you have any questions or comments on this article or indeed any of the Lake District articles, please contact me and I will ensure you receive a response.



TOP: DAVID HUGHES FRONT OF STRETCHER ABOVE: DAVID RECEIVING HIS AWARD FROM DAVID ALLAN

FORTY YEARS IN RESCUE

David Hughes of Duddon & Furness MRT recently celebrated forty years in mountain rescue. Having joined the Millom Fell Rescue Team in May 1968, he eventually became a deputy team leader. Following the creation of the Duddon & Furness team, David continued as an active team member. During his forty years involvement, he has demonstrated a strong and enthusiastic commitment to the team and his cheerful sense of humour has brightened many dark moments. On the 4 November he received a Long Service Award from David Allan, chairman of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales), at a presentation near the team's base in Broughton in Furness.

TEAM LAUNCHES APPEAL FOR MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Patterdale MRT has launched an appeal to raise £15,000 to update their medical equipment. 'Some of the equipment we're using is over fifteen years old,' said Dr Theo Weston, one of the team's doctors, 'and there are now lighter, more robust and more up to date equivalents available. New monitors, defibrillators and pulse oximeters will enable us to make better decisions in already difficult situations.

'We were recently given £1,500, raised by a young boy from Carlisle, Daniel Dalton, as a thank you for the team's role in saving his Dad several years ago,' explained Jacquie Freeborn, chair of the team's fundraising committee. 'It seems fitting to use his donation to launch the new appeal.'

Anyone wanting to arrange a fundraising event or make a donation towards the medical equipment appeal should contact Jacquie at the team's base – Ogilvie House, Patterdale, Cumbria CA11 0PJ or via enquiries@mountainrescue.org.uk.

DR THEO WESTON, JACQUIE FREEBORN AND DR JOHN ELLERTON WITH SOME OF THE OLDER EQUIPMENT THAT NEEDS TO BE REPLACED

MID PENNINE

ROBERT (BOB) CROMPTON WILSON Phil Pogson writes... At the end of August, members of Holme Valley MRT heard with great sadness of the death of their President, Bob Wilson. Bob was born in Huddersfield in 1929 and, on leaving school, joined the family law firm. After serving his National Service, where he rose to the rank of sergeant, he joined the TA, gaining a commission as lieutenant, and later as captain. Bob was an important founder member of the team in 1965, drafting the constitution and being elected the first chairman. After one year, he was also elected to the position of team leader, combining this with chairman, roles he filled for the next seven years. The contribution he made in those formative years cannot be underestimated, and his leadership set a benchmark for his successors to follow. After standing down from these two key positions, Bob maintained a keen interest in the team with freely given legal advice and any other help readily at hand.

BOB WILSON CENTRE – FACING THE CASUALTY, EARLY 1970S



NORTH EAST

NESRA TRAINING WEEKEND

Chris Roberts NESRA Press Officer and Deputy Team Leader Teesdale & Weardale SMRT reports... October saw North East teams come together for their annual training weekend, this year hosted by Swaledale MRT. Saturday's training was centred at Catterick Barracks with the focus on urban search and casualty management and extraction. The army's training village had been made available for this. The scenario for Sunday was an aircraft crash in the hills above Gunnerside in the Yorkshire Dales. Teams had to first locate the crash site, find

and then treat as appropriate the ten passengers on board the fateful flight. The exercise crash-site was located relatively quickly (easily identified as a Land Rover surrounded by casualties) and eight of the ten passengers accounted for. Casualties were then prioritised using a triage system and treated accordingly – casualty care being one of the prime objectives for the weekend's training. Information was that there should have been ten passengers on board the aircraft, so search teams were deployed to find the remaining two passengers. One fatality (in this case a floating dummy) was found half a mile away from the crash

site. Following a highly successful launch of the Kongur MRT jacket at the 75th Anniversary Conference in Stirling, Mountain Equipment have announced that they will soon be producing a women's version.

Women's Specific MRT Jacket in Development at Mountain Equipment

Following a highly successful launch of the Kongur MRT jacket at the 75th Anniversary Conference in Stirling, Mountain Equipment have announced that they will soon be producing a women's version.

The Kongur MRT is a GORE-TEX® Pro Shell jacket developed specifically for mountain rescue use. Based on the multi-award winning Kongur design, the MRT variant features reinforcement in key areas and integrated reflectivity in order to maximise protection and safety for team members. Initially only available in a men's cut, the women's specific version will soon be available.

Mountain Equipment's marketing manager Richard Woodall said, 'We experienced a very positive response to the Kongur MRT jacket at the launch in Stirling, so much so that it was immediately clear there was a strong demand for a women's version to be made available as soon as possible. As a result we have pushed ahead with this development and expect the women's jacket to be available for teams to order by late Spring 2009.'



KONGUR MRT (MEN'S VERSION)

The other good news for teams is that they can now place bulk uniform orders directly with Mountain Equipment – contact Martin Dixon on 07710 358762 or email martin.dixon@mountain-equipment.co.uk



site in the river and had to be recovered by the swiftwater team; the use of the region's swiftwater capability was a key objective in the scenario. The second missing passenger was found by a search dog, alive but injured. The casualty was at the base of a waterfall in an area of very steep ground and would clearly need a stretcher haul system to effect extraction. After assessment by team medics, a technical rescue system had to be set up to recover the casualty to safety.

The operation covered four key areas – search management, casualty care, swiftwater operation and technical rescue. The debriefing at the end of the exercise proved particularly useful as areas that could have been improved were highlighted, but equally so all those that were done very well.

Teams from Swaledale, North of Tyne, Cleveland, and Teesdale and Weardale were involved in the exercise, along with observers from North Yorks police. This sort of exercise is vital practice for teams who will work alongside each other in the event of a major incident.

NORTH WALES

360 TO YOSEMITE 2009

June 2009 will see three team members travel on a round trip to Yosemite to raise funds for **North East Wales SAR, SARDA Wales** and **Llanberis MRT**. By then, all three participants will be 60 years old and will have amassed 120



ROWLAND LAYLAND, DAVE FILDES AND HAROLD BURROWS MBE

years' involvement with UK search and rescue between them. They are looking for sponsors to help fund the trip but, if none are forthcoming, will fund it themselves – and all donations will be split equally between the three teams. Roland Layland (Llanberis/SARDA), Harold Burrows MBE (NEWSAR/SARDA), and Dave Fildes (NEWSAR/SARDA honorary) – intend to tackle Half Dome, a 17 mile hike classed as very strenuous and involving 4800 feet of ascent and 4800 of descent. They may also do the hike to top of El Capitan from Tamarack Flat – a round trip of 16.5 miles and classed as strenuous.

Go to www.360toYosemite.org.uk to make a donation or offer sponsorship. Sponsors will be featured on the site, on sponsorship forms and any special clothing secured. For further details contact Dave Fildes on 0151 645 3392 (day) or 07831 631041 or via email david.fildes1@btinternet.com

PEAK DISTRICT

75 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE FROM BUXTON'S TRIO

Roger Bennett writes... Three members of **Buxton MRT** have been honoured for a combined total of 75 years service. 25 year service



LEFT TO RIGHT: RICHARD DORAN, IAN HURST, BRYAN ALLISON AND NEIL CARRUTHERS

awards were presented to Richard Doran, Bryan Allison and Neil Carruthers at an informal event at the team's base in November. The awards were presented by team chairman Ian Hurst and each member received two certificates – one from the PDMRO, the other from Mountain Rescue (England & Wales). Ian said, 'It's great to have recognition both from the region and the national body, for the work undertaken by these three team members who have consistently supported the team and been available at a moment's notice to go to someone's aid, sometimes in difficult and trying circumstances.'

All three still play a significant role within the team. Richard joined the team after a chance meeting and conversation with a former team leader. Currently team secretary, he also plays an important role in new member induction, particularly with navigation training and assessment. Bryan Allison has undertaken a number of roles during his service including secretary, training officer and vice chair. He leads the base support team and sits on the board of the PDMRO Benevolent Fund. Neil Carruthers has previously been first aid officer, deputy leader and now serves as team leader. He was also appointed as a regional incident controller earlier this year.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN CRISIS!!

This is the headline the media would have had you believe earlier this year. Perhaps I had better explain. At the beginning of this year – around January I believe – 'Coronation Street' ran a storyline involving mountain rescue which in turn, as is often the case, focused media attention upon the real service providers and the resultant telephone call.

'Hello, is that Mick Nield of Oldham mountain rescue? I'm calling on behalf of the Manchester Evening News. Is it true to say that mountain rescue is in crisis due to a critical shortage of willing volunteers, and people are going to die in the mountains as a result?'

The question did not solicit the desired melodramatic response and the enquirer was politely advised that, whilst OMRT was not currently at full strength, this did not impact upon the quality of service offered by the team and gave no cause for concern. How and where the notion that mountain rescue was experiencing recruitment difficulties arose I am not sure, but the comment on behalf of the Oldham team would not sell many newspapers, so the reporter sought alternative sources. An article did appear in the newspaper the following day which contained statements from various people, including comment 'from Mick Nield team leader Oldham Mountain Rescue Team.'

What followed was a media merry-go-round with team members being interviewed live on BBC radio, local radio and even breakfast TV and similar articles appearing in most newspapers, both national and local. The team does understand the important role the media has to play and is appreciative of the support it receives from our local newspaper and a more balanced response/statement was kindly published by the Oldham Evening Chronicle.

The saying 'It is an ill wind which blows without doing someone some good' definitely rang true in the wake of the media interest. On average the team receives something like five or six enquiries a year from persons interested in becoming involved in mountain rescue with perhaps just one or two prepared to make the



OLDHAM MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM'S LATEST RECRUITS IN TRAINING SEPTEMBER 2008

necessary commitment. Within a week, the team received 35 enquiries which increased to more than 40 potential applicants within the month! An induction evening was arranged which was very well attended with the majority of attendees appearing to be suitably impressed and eager to continue. The training programme was accelerated and went into overdrive in an effort to maintain momentum, provide an insight into the world of mountain rescue and reward the interest shown. It's true to say that the training programme could not have coped in isolation within the time span, due to the numbers involved. Success has been due to a combination of the structured training provided within the team, and the enthusiasm of the training group in providing help to each other and passing on skills.

More than ten months have now passed. Many have found the level of commitment required to become a fully active member of OMRT too much and decided that perhaps being involved in mountain rescue conflicts with other interests and

activities. I would like to thank those people for their interest and the courtesy of spending time with the team. The original forty plus applicants have been reduced to sixteen and it gives me great pleasure to announce that all are now listed as active team members available for call. Many have attended a number of incidents already and I am sure they will all serve OMRT and the people of Oldham with distinction and wish them a long and happy career. Congratulations and thanks to all. Crisis? What crisis? Not in Oldham at least.

David Knight
OMRT Training Officer

PS. I was recently asked by a somewhat envious training officer from a neighbouring team if the sudden influx of new people had altered the dynamics of the team. The answer to that question is no. The Oldham team ethos is strong and the calibre of its newest members high. The complexion of the team has not been altered, but enhanced by its newer members.

MALC BOWYER WITH SEARCH DOG CAP

SEARCH DOG CAP MAKES THE GRADE

Buxton MRT welcomed a new addition to its ranks in October, when Search Dog Cap passed his final assessment in the Brecon Beacons National Park. Handler Malcolm Bowyer has been a member of the Buxton team for 30 years and a SARDA handler, instructor and assessor for twenty. Throughout that time he has trained three dogs and attended searches all over the mainland UK.

Malcolm said, 'This latest assessment involved searching five areas of difficult mountain terrain, with each area having to be completed within two hours. This is assessed by both internal and external assessors to ensure a national standard. Several volunteer bodies are placed out in the search areas by the assessors and the dog and handler must then set up the search pattern and display competence of the search team in locating the bodies and ensuring good hill safety techniques in good time. Cap completed these stringent tests in fine style in extremely harsh weather conditions bringing praise and plaudits from all the assessors. Cap is now on the active call-out list and can be called to assist in searches for missing and injured persons for years to come.'



competition



Slidetite have come up with a challenge for you as you while away the long dark hours of January waiting for the pager to buzz or enjoying a quiet post-training pint. And you can win a Bumper Slidetite Kit (see above) into the bargain!

So... how many words can you come up with, using the letters found in the word Slidetite? Words can be two or more letters long, plurals are allowed, proper nouns are not. (20 words – good; 30 words – very good; 50+ words – excellent).

Jot your answers on a postcard – or handy beer mat – or scribble in the space below, and send to the editor at 8 Bridgefoot Close, Boothstown, M28 1UG or via email to editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk with your name and contact details. Closing date for entries is 28 February.

The highest total wins a Bumper Slidetite kit – so, either have a go for yourself or work as a group to win one for your team. NB. In the event of a draw, the first correct entry through the letter/mailbox will be the winner.

And, if you are called out in January, don't forget to take your Slidetite. Designed for the worst of weather conditions it makes quick and easy work of securing loads, and all components can be used without even taking your gloves off. If your team has not yet received a Slidetite sample, email sales@slidetite and they'll pop one in the post.

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See the Blizzard Heat™ video at:-
www.blizzardsurvival.com
01248 600666
info@blizzardsurvival.com



'An amusing footnote to the assessment, was that the assessors failed to see me fall and take a bath in the swollen river at the end of the second day. The only consolation was – I was no wetter when I climbed out than when I fell in!' Cap's successful assessment also makes Malcolm probably one of the oldest search dog handlers in the UK, at the age of 68 years.



TOP: MIKE KNEILL CRO, JOHN PARKER PRESIDENT BRADFORD ROTARY AND HOWARD DRIVER CHAIRMAN UWFRA AT THE FINISH LINE
RIGHT: ONE WE SHOULD HAVE PRINTED EARLIER...
...THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER VISITS UWFRA GRASSINGTON BASE IN SEPTEMBER
(PHOTO: COURTESY OF WINPENNY PHOTOGRAPHY)



SOUTH WEST

DARTMOOR TRAINING WEEKEND

John Parish of Bolton MRT writes... **Dartmoor Rescue Group** holds an annual training event, open to all UK rescue groups, and what a weekend it is – at the Okehampton army training camp, on the edge of the most beautiful moor in the south of England with names like Hangingstone Hill, Devil's Tor and Black Dughill. 160 team members came from Bolton, Oldham, Wiltshire, Cornwall, Exmoor, Hampshire and all four Dartmoor teams, alongside police from Devon and Cornwall, Avon and Somerset, London fire personnel and the Coastguard. Teams arrive throughout Friday evening, meeting up in the bar and, with beer at army prices, talk soon turns to rescues and hill side trauma. Off to bed (late) and the smell of carbolic percolates through the dorms. Saturday breakfast at an ungodly hour, then we head back to the dorms to pick up our hill kit for the day. We are divided into search groups and sent out onto the hill to perform our task, and perform we did. A full day on Dartmoor was just the ticket. It didn't take long for radios to be buzzing with traffic (with those not from Dartmoor trying to understand what was being talked about – dart 0.1, dart 1.2, dart 1.2, dart 0.1, where is dart 1.2, Alfa dart 1.2, dart 0.3...) All

became clear when Dave dart 1.2 Alfa took me by the hand and told me how all four teams work their comms! Soon we had it covered with Oldham and Bolton members tuned in. An RAF Sea King was joined by O99 from Devon and Cornwall Police, to help in the search for a group of eight missing children and two guides. The weather was wet and windy with low cloud and the day long and hard going at times but, by the afternoon, all ten had been found and transported safely off the hill. Back to camp for a nice cold shower and hot food. That evening we gathered in the bar for drinks and a game of skittles. Sunday started much the same with a round robin of four bases out on the hill. With three bases covered, we headed back to camp and a long road ahead. Great weekend!

by the profits from the annual Broughton Game Show. The event, held near Skipton involves many man hours for both teams but its success always brought in considerable income. 2007, however, was a disaster. The enormous preparation work came to nothing with the event cancelled at the last minute due to serious flooding. The only other time the event hadn't been run was during the Foot and Mouth crisis. Bradford Rotary Club, hearing of the shortfall in income for both teams, set about organising a 21 mile sponsored walk through Wharfedale from Buckden down to Bolton Abbey. The entry fee was mainly to pay for the transport taking walkers to the start and the actual money raised was by individuals seeking sponsorship. The teams helped with publicity, saw the walkers set off, and also returned to welcome them all back in. The walk raised over £3,500. Jack Pickup, chairman of CRO and David Dennis of UWFRA attended the Bradford Rotary to receive the cheques, and sang for their supper with a presentation on the work of both teams.

YORKSHIRE DALES

ROTARY TO THE RESCUE

For some 30 years the finances of **Upper Wharfedale FRA** and, more recently, the **Cave Rescue Organisation** have been bolstered



During the summer of 2007, Mark Stevenson and Rich Mayfield, set themselves a challenge – to complete all the rock climbing routes in Ken Wilson's 'Hard Rock'. The boys travelled the length and breadth of the country, with many famous faces joining them on the way. A DVD of their epic struggle to overcome the great British summer and climb all 22,000ft of extreme climbing is in production and will be premiered at the Kendal Mountain Film Fest in November. The Challenge raised more than £8,000 from generous donations, and all profits from the sale of this DVD will be added to the total.

When not setting themselves heavy duty hard rock challenges, Rich (and Sam) run the Orange House Climbing in Spain – venue for the stunning prize on offer. Originally won by John Healy, at the Outdoors Show in March 2008, he has very generously donated it back to mountain rescue. Entry is simple and the winner gets to enjoy five days in the climbing Mecca of Spain. Win it for your team and you could use the holiday for your future fundraising. Email the answer to one simple question to Sam and watch this space!

To learn more about the Challenge go to hardrockchallenge.blogspot.com

HARD ROCK CHALLENGE



What height in metres in Scafell Pike?
A – 978m B – 987m C – 897m

Answers to sam@theorangehouse.net

- The Prize:**
- 5 days Accommodation
 - 1 Ridge Walk
 - 1 Via Ferrata
 - 1 Gorge Walk
 - 1 Day Easy Rock Climbing

- Included:**
- Accommodation and guiding in Spain
 - All Specialist Gear
 - Professional Guides

competition

Charles Chesters 1936 - 2008

Derby MRT have recently lost a quite remarkable man. Charles joined the Derby Scout Mountain Rescue Team in 1980, going on to take high levels of responsibility within the team. He soon qualified as a full callout member and gradually took on more and more responsibilities within the team. If a job needed doing, and there was a millisecond delay in finding a taker, Charles would offer. He was a walking 'Jobs machine'.

Not just little jobs, not just the 'glamorous' jobs (if such were ever to exist in MR) – but those requiring hours of dedicated commitment. He was also a dedicated fundraiser for the team and could always be relied on to attend every collection day. And he could (and usually would) put all other team members to shame collecting the most money by means of his easy charm and ability to talk to anybody.

He eventually took on the position of equipment officer and attacked every element with gusto and enthusiasm. Even upon retiring from the position and from the team, he remained a dedicated supporter, taking on the role of caretaker for the team garage. He also continued to act as the team's archivist and regularly gave talks in the community regarding the team and its role.

His funeral was an impressive affair, befitting of the man. The service, conducted by the team's own chaplain, was held at Derby Cathedral and an honour guard of MR personnel in team jackets was formed to guide the coffin in. The guard consisted not just of Derby MRT members, but also included members from other teams in the PDMRO, who also



On a positive note, at least Heaven will be well organised when I get there...'

wished to pay their respects. The coffin was delivered by the team Land Rover and carried on a Bell stretcher which Charles had named Mia, after one of his granddaughters. Charles would have found this most appropriate. After a moving and fitting service, with tributes from many family and team members, the coffin was transported to the village of Duffield where another honour guard was formed to guide Charles to his final resting place in Duffield Cemetery.

His extensive efforts on behalf of mountain rescue are well known to many. Those who knew him also knew that this desire to help, irrespective of the effort required, was extended on a personal basis to anyone who needed it. Dave Coss (SARDA and Edale MRT member) who has known and worked with Charles for many years said, 'On a positive note, at least heaven will be well organised when I get there.' Charles was an exceptional man and his passing leaves a very large gap in all of our lives. 28 years service at the level of commitment to the job which Charles had is quite amazing. We will all miss him – but he would want everyone to carry on and develop as a team and as friends.



Jim Eyre

Veteran caver Jim Eyre, who co-wrote a history of the Clapham-based Cave Rescue Organisation, has died aged 83. Mr Eyre, a legend in the world of cave exploration, was a founder member of the Red Rose Cave and Pot Hole Club in 1946 and was an early explorer of the Ease Gill caverns on the Lancashire-Cumbria border, Britain's longest cave system. He became involved in cave rescue and, in 1967, led the team called out to one of Britain's worst caving accidents at Mossdale caverns, beneath the Yorkshire Dales, where six potholers died.

Mr Eyre was also known for his writing and cartoons and two early books – 'It's Only a Game' and 'The Game Goes On' – proved very popular, as did his 1961 autobiography, 'The Cave Explorers'.

Born in Kent, Mr Eyre moved to Lancaster as a child and began exploring caves in 1942. After war service in the Royal Navy, he set up as a self-employed painter and decorator. But his greatest passion remained caving. Over half a century, he travelled the world, establishing an international reputation as an explorer of limestone caves. He tackled all the big caves of Europe, particularly in Greece and Spain, and was on of the first cavers to explore the caves of Asia. He also travelled to Mexico where he descended the world's deepest vertical shafts. Mr Eyre was born on 9 October 1925, and died in hospital in Blackpool on 17 September. He was married twice but had no children.

This obituary was originally used in The Westmorland Gazette.

Phil Haigh

Friends and family have paid tribute to a father of five who dedicated his life to saving disaster victims as a

search and rescue volunteer. Phil Haigh (pictured), from Ingleton, died from a heart attack on Friday during a game of football at the school where he worked, near Leeds. Mr Haigh, who was due to turn 60 in November, was well known for his work with search dogs, and travelled to large scale disasters such as the Lockerbie air crash in 1988 and the Pakistan earthquake in 2005. Following the Lockerbie disaster, he spent time travelling to and from America, comforting relatives who had lost loved ones. Originally from Bradford, and a former member of the RAF, Mr Haigh had five sons – Sam, Tom and Jack, with his wife, Alison – and Ben and Andy from his first marriage to Linda. As well as being a member of the Clapham-based CRO, he was a member of the Upper Wharfedale Fire and Rescue Association and over the years took part in countless life-saving operations. He was also head of geography at Nab Wood School, in Cottingham, and he was playing football with colleagues when he collapsed suddenly. Mr Haigh's funeral took place at St Mary's Church, Ingleton.

This obituary was originally used in The Westmorland Gazette.





SMOOTH RESCUES
 Could I through your magazine pay tribute to the Peak District Mountain Rescue Service?
 On Good Friday a group of eight children and four leaders were walking from Kinder Downfall to Edale Youth Hostel, when our only female leader Sue Thornley dislocated her knee negotiating the peat groughs. The accident happened at about 3.15pm. First aid was administered by a passing doctor and the injured leg immobilised. We tried several methods of carrying Mrs Thornley but after 200 metres decided that a stretcher was needed and that to alert the MRS was the only thing to do as the weather conditions were far from favourable and time was at a premium. I reached Edale at approx 5.00pm and the rescue was put into operation. Two members were despatched to try to make contact and radio link before light failed. I joined the next two rescuers who took up the stretcher and we were back with the injured party by 7.30pm. Sue was already in the special survival bag carried by the services, darkness fell very quickly and she was secured to the stretcher. With just enough people to man the stretcher we started to move across the snow and ice filled groughs, the going was slow and hard, rescuers were sinking thigh deep in peat. Lights were now homing in on us from many directions and in no time at all there must have been over thirty rescuers on the scene from Edale, Kinder and Buxton teams. Working as one with route finders and path lighters, through snow, sleet and rain, the stretcher was transported with regular team changes down the mountain to an awaiting ambulance in Edale at 10.15pm, from where Sue was then taken to Sheffield hospital. We are deeply indebted to MRS volunteers both men and women, we thank them sincerely for safe deliverance of our colleague.
Rex Laithwaite from The Climber June 1986



Kit crit Kongur MRT Jacket

What's in a name? I was 12 years old, it was 1981, and my Dad and I had gone to the local high school for a lecture by the legendary Pete Boardman. Pete, Chris Bonington, Joe Tasker and Al Rouse had just returned from China after ascending, at 7719 metres, the highest unclimbed mountain in the world. I listened, spellbound, as Pete revealed a mountain of great seriousness, an ascent of audacious bravery and a successful war of attrition that eventually gained them the summit against all the odds – pinned down in rudimentary snow coffins for four days, their food all but finished. And yet still they managed to complete a final day's climbing on terrain Bonington later likened to the North Face of the Matterhorn. The mountain was Mount Kongur. Their clothing was supplied by Mountain Equipment.

There's no doubt the Kongur MRT comes from quality stock. The normal Kongur has been a staple part of the ME range for many years and has been wowing reviewers for just as long. It's won Trail's 'Ultimate Waterproof' test several times and is the only jacket ever to score 50/50 in the magazine's history. It has just done it again with 5/5 in November. Graham Thompson said 'no one has come up with anything better'. Another declared it 'the most perfect waterproof jacket I've ever seen for year-round mountain walking and mountaineering.'

From this classic, Mountain Equipment has developed the Kongur MRT. The jacket shares the same cut as the normal Kongur but features beefed up fabrics and other features designed specifically for rescue teams, but also suitable for other professional and private users. This is a fascinating innovation because the development costs of the product must have been substantial and I suspect the potential customer base for it is small. So why bother?

The answer surely lies in a proven commitment to supporting professional users. Long time supporter of the Association of Mountaineering Instructors, the British Mountain Guides Association and regular supporters of mountain rescue teams – this is a company which is truly at the forefront of backing Britain's activists. But while the development of the Kongur MRT is very welcome, the product still has to prove it can perform in the harshest conditions and last the distance rescue after rescue.

The fabrics used are some of the toughest that Gore make – Gore-Tex 3-layer Pro-Shell Ascendor for the torso area, backed up by black 3-layer Pro-Shell Lofoten fabric on the shoulders, down the back of the arms, the top of the hood and around the base. Both fabrics feel extremely durable and, in my extensive use of the jacket, show no sign of wear or damage whatsoever. The Lofoten fabric feels similar to Cordura and I have no doubt it would stand up to the demands of rescue team life. Pro-Shell is Gore's latest fabric innovation and although I haven't noticed any significant improvement in performance over XCR fabrics, it certainly performs well enough.

The Kongur MRT comes in the single colour option of true red and black. The red is bright and will keep you in sight. But it's also worth mentioning I've had lots of very complimentary comments about the jacket's appearance out in the hills. The bright colour is backed up by 3M reflective stripping along the pockets, on the hood, around the cuffs and jacket bottom and down the arms. I'd seen pictures of the jacket front before I received the test model and thought they'd have just put more reflective tape on the back where a rucksack would go. Of course, I completely underestimated the ingenuity of the designers

– the tape on the back is bonded onto the fabrics of the arms and the back panel is sensibly left clear.

The fit of the Kongur MRT is generous. In some ME jackets I need a large, but in this jacket a medium is perfect for my 38-40" chest. The jacket is fairly long, to offer good protection, but this doesn't cause any problems with a climbing harness. It has an effective drawcord system at the base and at lower back height, water resistant underarm pit zips and quick adjust Velcro wrist closures.

One feature that frequently sets Mountain Equipment jackets apart from the competition is their fantastic hood design and the Kongur MRT has their excellent larger helmet-compatible design. This moves easily with the head and has a great adjustment system that allows it to tighten easily around the face while keeping the retracted cord from whipping into your face in strong winds. It also has a volume adjustment and a very substantial visor that is both wired and laminated so it keeps its shape in all weather and forms an arc around the face when you want to maintain your vision while keeping the spindrift out. Simply the best hood I have ever used for UK conditions.

There has been a recent trend of using water resistant zips without storm flaps for the front closure and pockets on jackets. They look great and certainly reduce the bulk at the front of garments, but they just can't keep out the worst of Britain's weather! Some manufacturers have carried on using storm flap systems, but water resistant zips are more weatherproof than standard zips, so the ultimate combination would be water resistant zips with storm flaps. You guessed it! A really bombproof system. The front zip uses a slightly different system of chunky standard YKK 2-way zip covered by a double storm flap with drainage channel. Just as effective and a durable, easy to operate zip. Perfect.

The front pocket is also excellent. Two large chest pockets are accessible while wearing a rucksack and two further map sized pockets sit behind these. You do need to fiddle a bit to slot folded OS maps into the pocket and the pockets do make the front of the jacket feel quite bulky, but it's still a really practical arrangement for this type of jacket.

It's got all the little things you now expect on a quality jacket. Chin guards, chunky zip pull tabs, 2-way system on the front zip and a Velcro retainer to fold the hood back securely. There's no doubt this jacket is very carefully designed. There's even a whistle attached to a lanyard in one of the pockets.

What's wrong with it? Nothing much really! I would have liked a sleeve pocket to keep my compass or Fruitella sweets in, and an inside pocket would have been good too. It's also a little heavier than some jackets due to the durable fabrics used but, at 640 grams, it's still a very reasonable weight considering its features, durability and intended use.

Pulling on this jacket always feel very comforting. You immediately know it will stand up to whatever Mother Nature throws at it and will probably last long enough to pass on to your grandchildren. The Kongur MRT is an excellent jacket for the rescue teams it is designed for and will also suit instructors and other demanding private users. It's an innovative product and I think Mountain Equipment should be applauded for producing it – a progressive product from a progressive company and I really encourage rescue teams to use it. Well done Mountain Equipment.

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.

readingmatters

FIRST AID AND WILDERNESS MEDICINE by Dr Jim Duff & Dr Peter Gormly Review by David Allan BSC FRCS



The authors face a daunting task in providing comprehensive medical advice for such a wide range of conditions in difficult, isolated and inhospitable circumstances. They are to be congratulated on having achieved their goal. The format of the book and its shape and size are very user friendly. The sections on prevention and on altitude problems are exceptionally well thought out and presented. In a book of this type one or two minor criticisms are inevitable. Vomiting of faeces is too rare to be seen and even faeculent vomiting, which may have been intended, is unlikely to be encountered. I would like to see more emphasis on changing conscious levels and less on pupil size in respect of head injuries. By the time pupil changes occur under these circumstances the game will be lost. The advice to discontinue manipulation of fractures if pain is experienced does leave the first aider with nowhere to go. This should perhaps be expanded in future volumes. This book can usefully be read by all those going into inhospitable areas away from immediate medical care. For those venturing further afield it is essential reading. It should be read, re-read and understood before going and then kept in an easily accessible place throughout the trip.

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DIABETIC ATHLETE'S HANDBOOK by Dr Sheri Colberg Ochs Review by Nikki Wallis BSc PGDipl

Written by Dr Sheri Colberg Ochs, an active person with diabetes herself, this book covers all the essential topics surrounding diabetes and exercise. From the basics of different types of energy use during exercise, to the effect of diabetic drugs during exercise; from dealing with the effects and interactions of other medications and supplements, to post exercise balancing of blood sugar levels; from guidelines on blood glucose monitoring to practical management issues when out in the elements. It covers starting out and getting fit with diabetes, conditioning training, prevention of injuries and dealing with diabetes related issues, and addresses the effect of different sports and case studies of what other diabetic athletes are doing, whether they're Type 1 diabetics (using pump therapy or multiple injections) or athletes with Type 2 diabetes (on medications or diet and lifestyle modifications only). It covers a range of outdoor sports including kayaking, scuba diving, rock and ice climbing, snowboarding, dog sledding, mountaineering, mountain biking, skydiving, horse riding, windsurfing, whitewater sports, and many more – with case studies provided by athletes. To have completed a second edition of this book is a fantastic achievement. It still has its limitations, such as specific advice and recommendations regarding for example diabetes (type 1 or type 2) at high altitude and in remote locations where additional specific medical issues arise, but where it lacks in the specific advice or guidelines, it refers readers to contact organisations where they can gain more advice. In summary, an essential textbook for all people with diabetes wanting to partake in exercise, and essential reference for all guides, instructors and outdoor pursuits centres, as it is currently the only book that deals with diabetes relevant issues written in a way that is clear, concise, and understandable"

How to buy: Individuals can email info@mountain-mad.org. Mountains for Active Diabetics are currently selling these books at an almost 10% reduced price of £10.99 plus £2.50 P&P (UK mainland)

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PROTECTED BY INNOVATION #2397

Goodyear To Crown 'Team of The Year'

Goodyear has launched a unique initiative to reward one team with a donation which could quite literally save lives. The 'Team of The Year' title will award one mountain rescue team with £2000 towards essential safety equipment.

Teams have been invited to nominate themselves to qualify for the title and those who entered have been profiled on the safety website mygoodyear.co.uk. The public have since been urged to support their local team by placing their vote in order to see them receive the accolade.

Andy Simpson, Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) Press Officer said, 'This is a fantastic opportunity for us to not only obtain funds towards much needed equipment, but to help educate people on the full repertoire of services their local mountain rescue team provides.'

As part of the partnership, Goodyear has pledged to fund the roll out of GPS navigational equipment to help track those involved in rescues more accurately and provide vital rescue support as quickly as possible. Mountain Rescue will also see its rescue vehicles supplied with Goodyear's market leading 4x4 tyres. And, as the official tyre of the G4 challenge, teams can be assured their vehicles will be well prepared for off road action.

Goodyear's Anna Stanley said, 'As experts in the field of safety and innovation, Goodyear is extremely proud to be supporting a life saving organisation such as Mountain Rescue. By launching this award we hope to draw attention to the fantastic work of mountain rescue and reward one team with an additional donation to be spent on safety equipment. We hope to see the local community showing their support by placing their vote and helping them continue to provide this outstanding service.'

Andy concluded, 'Although teams turn out without any thought of reward or recognition, it is always pleasing to know that a team's contribution is appreciated.'

The teams nominated and featured:-
(at the time of writing)

- Swaledale • Oldham • Ogwen Valley
- Penrith • Rossendale & Pendle
- Central Beacons • Cockermouth
- Edale • Dartmoor

* Voting closed on 5 January 2009



Sponsorship news



Boy operated on at crash scene (but don't try this at home, kids!)

The life of a nine year old boy was hanging by a thread in June 1990. Philip Byrne was spending his holidays with an aunt in Dublin, Ireland. While riding his bicycle to a carnival, he was hit by a car. He was left lying in the road, badly injured – with internal injuries that could have cost him his life. By extraordinary coincidence, a group of surgeons were travelling in a car behind. They operated on the boy on the spot using a Swiss pocket knife and attached a drainage tube for the blood. Philip has these doctors and the Victorinox knife to thank for saving his life. From 'A Friend in Need. True Stories' by Victorinox.

For further information about Victorinox knives, visit victorinox.com or call 0116 234 4644 for details of your nearest stockist.

What tales can your Victorinox tell?

Last year saw the world-famous knives going out to teams across England and Wales, courtesy of sponsors Burton McCall. So what have you done with yours? Tell us your 'true story' (maximum 200 words!) and we'll feature the best one, and reward the writer with a SwissChamp XLT, boasting 50 functions and worth a cool £125. Adored by adventurers and gadget fans the world over, BBC TV wildlife expert Simon King describes the SwissChamp as 'the one essential piece of kit I have with me on all my trips. A classic piece of kit and a complete must have.' So what are you waiting for? Send your story to editor@mountain.rescue.co.uk and watch this space.



ESSENTIAL KIT MOUNTAIN RESCUE VICTORINOX

competition

Mountain Rescue Mile Challenge

Leeds Metropolitan University students are holding a charity swimming event on Wednesday 4 February at the Headingley campus in Becketts Park. Twenty five teams of four swimmers will attempt to swim the 64 lengths of the pool as fast as possible. The fastest will win a prize potentially presented by a member of the country's elite swimming team. Teams from the Leeds universities, and the City of Leeds Swimming Club are expected to take part, with teams from mountain rescue and the emergency services still to be confirmed. The entry fee per team of four is £20 – to be donated to Mountain Rescue (England & Wales). In expectation of great interest in this unique event, spectators will be charged a small entry fee of £2; children under-12 free. Following the races, an auction will be held at the Carnegie Centre with items on offer such as Manchester United signed football shirts. Students Sadie Munro, Jennifer Gammage, Jasmine Downey, Laura Whelan, Olivia Clark and Ed Auden are working in partnership with Mike France, National Fundraising Chairman, to make the event a success.

XScape to the Extreme Zipwire Event

A separate bunch of Leeds Metro students are planning a zipwire event, at the XScape SNOIzone ski slope in Castleford. The chance to zip along the wire will cost just £24 per person and brings Basecamp membership plus entry to a prize-winning, and yet to be determined, competition. Ideas mooted so far include a 'Guess how many balloons you can get in a Land Rover' contest. The students are looking for sponsorship from businesses to cover the cost of the event, the aim that all proceeds will come to Mountain Rescue (England & Wales). They're also looking for the donation of a substantial prize for the competition. Sponsors can expect a mention in any publicity surrounding the event, and a small exhibition within XScape will provide the opportunity to promote their goods and services. 'In an ideal world,' said Emma Buckley, 'we'd hope to raise £18k – the figure achieved by Macmillan with a similar event.' Emma, Rachel Milner, Mel Salter, Yvette Taylor, Molly Robinson, Laurie Pollock, Catherine Kelly and Chris Clayton are working in partnership with Neil Roden, Basecamp organiser, and Andy Simpson, national press officer, on the event.

The aim of both these charitable events is to support the work of mountain rescue teams in England and Wales through the supply of training and equipment.

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BECAUSE NOT ALL TYRES ARE THE SAME

Oh what a fall was there

Alan Jeffreys

There was a definite irony in naming the place Fall Pot. Were they prescient, these 1946 explorers, or was it simply coincidence? Whichever, it certainly touched my life in ways perhaps too deep to describe fully. It was a long time ago now but still there are occasions when I stop and reflect; 'I shouldn't be here; I should have died in Fall Pot.' However else one regards the incident, an inescapable element of the whole affair underlines just what a resilient biological machine the human body is, and just how much punishment can be not only survived but almost ignored, as adrenalin races through brain and limbs in an effort to resolve the crisis.

Anyway: to begin at the beginning. The discovery of Lancaster Hole in 1946 almost by chance led to generations of explorers realizing the largest cave system in the British Isles. Modern students have postulated that the final tally should be well over 100 miles of passages, extending over so vast an area that it has been termed 'The Three Counties System' [below Westmorland, Lancashire and Yorkshire]. Pride of place is a gigantic tunnel, called Montagu East Passage in its early stages, which leads cavers right under the moor, finally opening into the three dimensional maze of Easegill Caverns, providing a scintillating through trip. Huge though it is, this tunnel in reality should be much larger. The floor is composed of a wilderness of mud and massive boulders, so jam-packed that many visitors are unaware they are walking on a false floor for underneath, in places 25 metres below, lies

one of Yorkshire's jewels – the fabulous Main Drain or master cave where the combined Easegill waters eventually swirl away into a downstream sump.

The first place where this waterway can be accessed with ease is Fall Pot, a vast square cut chasm with several negotiable holes through its floor leading to the stream. The roof is barely discernable in the towering gloom. Spray falls lazily from above before feathering away down the most obvious hole, tucked into a corner. In 1948, explorers pursuing their way along a rather foetid crawl in nearby Cow Pot were abruptly confronted with a 46m free hanging ladder climb which landed them on the floor of Fall Pot, adding yet another way in. It was this route that two of us tackled one summer's day.

Actually my caving partner Eric Glen had celebrated his 21st birthday the night before so we were none too cheerful until at least midday. Then we set forth in glorious June sunshine laden with wire ladders and ropes. Having slogged our way through the crawl, getting nicely coated in black gritty mud en route, we arrived at the pitch and rigged our ladders. 'Not for the fainthearted' I think it could be described in those pre-SRT days. Dropping to a small ledge some 10m down, the ladder then snaked languorously into a black void where the nearest wall was, to coin a phrase, 'a hell of a way off!'

Down we both climbed, intent on a good sightseeing tour of the caverns and possibly an exit via Lancaster Hole if friends we had spoken to the night before, delivered on their promise of an exchange.

Our ladder was in fact over-long, the spare length dangling down that obvious hole in the corner. I told Eric I was going to roll up

TOP: LANCASTER ENTRANCE TAKEN 1973 SHOWING TYPICAL GEAR AT THE TIME PHOTO: ALAN JEFFREYS
LEFT: FALL POT. THE HOLE LIES AT THE TOP CORNER. THERE IS A PERSON BESIDE IT FOR SCALE PHOTO: MARK LONNEN



this extra footage in case it snagged while we were de-tackling and walked over to grab a hold of it. At the top of the hole a sloping slab, polished like a Michelangelo sculpture by ages of dripping water, seemed a good place to reach out so I stepped on it...

* * *

I regained consciousness lying in a river. For a moment or two I couldn't even breathe, so heavily winded was I.

I felt I was waking from a curious dream that I had fallen down a shaft. Then the truth dawned: I had fallen down a shaft, and pretty badly too. Every part of my body was aching but I seemed to be mobile so I crawled, then stood wavering, at the edge of what was, of course, the Main Drain river. Ahead of me, some metres off, lay a grim pile of gleaming, jagged limestone blocks and a silvery glimpse of our ladder which, fortuitously, reached the bottom. Hurt though I was, the obvious thing to do was to climb up the ladder out of my prison but this was a problem. Raising both hands I found blood flowing copiously from huge slashes on both. Also my right wrist was a mass of pain.

By now Eric had realised I had vanished. He was put out of his misery by my quavering report, but before he could organise a lifeline I had begun my ascent. By hooking my arms right through the rungs to take weight on the inner elbow I doggedly rose from the depths. All around, sharp black pinnacles and water-worn gullies demonstrated the lethal nature of the place and it was with considerable relief that I struggled over the top and collapsed on the boulder floor.

Both of us considered the position. Clearly, I was in no fit state to climb up a 40 metre free hanging ladder. and to try for far off Easegill when I was bleeding for Britain was a ludicrous idea. There was one glimmer of hope. Perhaps our friends had come down Lancaster Hole, whose 34 metre shaft onto the moor offered a much more pleasant exit. We took stock. My back hurt atrociously, my

hands were still spewing blood and what had been done to my internal organs I hated to imagine. Speed was obviously of the essence. Lancaster Hole, for fit cavers, is only a five to ten minute journey from Fall Pot but it involves a lot of scrabbling over boulders, squirming through crawls and scrambling up small climbs so we made (very) painful progress. An eternity later we arrived at Lancaster with its tiny window of daylight but, arrggh! No ladder!

By now I was finished, so I lay down on a flat ledge. Eric bravely volunteered to free climb our Fall Pot ladder (no mean feat without the reassurance of our double line) and get some help. Time passed interminably slowly for me but my semi-conscious state was suddenly jerked back alert when I heard a distinct whump! Oh my God, I thought, Eric's fallen off the ladder – now we're really in trouble. If he had, there is in fact little likelihood that any sound would have penetrated as far as Lancaster but in my distress I failed to appreciate that. This was without doubt the lowest point. I was shivering – with shock as well as cold – hurting and immobile. Death seemed very close.

More time past. As my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom I picked out features in the shaft above – the remains of a rigid iron ladder and shattering leaning against the wall, mute evidence of a one-time easier way out; drips of water rhythmically splattering onto rusting corrugated iron fragments littering the floor. Daylight seeping past the closed steel trapdoor to mock my immobile state. All my efforts to reduce my journey out of the cave seemed hopeless and futile. I was alone, abandoned and worse, no one apart from Eric even knew I was there. Lying flat out on a ledge, I was not particularly uncomfortable, but even shivering hurt as my back protested at each tiny movement. Opportunities for self pity, anger and recrimination multiplied as febrile thoughts rambled around my brain. Occasionally I cried out loud 'Come on! Someone; anyone! Come on!' I began to fantasise that another party of cavers would throw open the lid, descend and discover me but cold reality told me it was now late afternoon, too far into Sunday to expect people to begin a fresh trip. Time past.

Then suddenly, mercifully, joyously, there was a clang far above and proper sunlight poured into the shaft. Voices called down and the chinking of a ladder being lowered told me my ordeal was over. Words cannot adequately reflect the emotional relief that flooded through me. My spirits rose like – like boiling milk in a saucepan. From a sorry lump of pitiful remorse I became again an operational human being, in command of my own destiny. Life could start again.

I croaked up a greeting and shortly afterwards two or three cavers came down to assess my condition. I knew them all. They were friends and colleagues who, it turned out, had been firing explosives in a distant part of Cow Pot – this was the 'whump' I had heard – and who were alerted by Eric after his epic solo climb up Fall Pot. A Neil Robertson stretcher fetched from a

nearby club house was lowered and I was manoeuvred into an upright position and strapped in like a mummy. I tried to maintain a jokey attitude but being suddenly stood vertical after such an enforced lie-down made me feel dizzy and sick. Mistaking my reaction for something more serious, rescuer Ian Plant yelled up to the haulers and instantly I was off the ground and rising up the shaft. By the time I reached the dazzling nirvana of the entrance hatch my head and stomach had settled and I was quite cheerful again. As I emerged from the hole the bearded features of Harry Long regarded me with long-suffering sarcasm. 'You great Scottish git', were his words of encouragement.

Eventually bundled into an ambulance, I endured a tortuous journey to Kendal where the following was discovered (once they had cut off my wet suit – under protest; such things are valuable!): One broken wrist, scaphoid and lunate. One wedge fracture of the spine. Deep lacerations to both hands. Internal bleeding. Yet with all these injuries I still managed to remain semi-mobile which hugely reduced ensuing rescue operations. The lesson for me is: if a casualty can move, then move. Every step nearer an entrance saves time whereas merely sitting down to wait for help could make matters worse.

I took a long time to repair. The scaphoid fracture lingered for a year, culminating in a bone graft because the bone failed to knit (avascular necrosis). Eventually however, an opportunity arose to revisit Lancaster Hole and examine the scene of the crime. I took a survey tape and carefully measured the depth of the hole in Fall Pot. From the spot where I slid off the soapy textured slab to the pile of breakdown at the bottom was a vertical 42' 6" (13 metres). From this point, I was astonished to discover that it was five or six metres horizontally to the edge of the river; I must have bounced and rolled all that way before regaining consciousness. Although I have no memory of it, I must have tried to grab the walls on the way down, hence the lacerations, and subsequently landed in a sitting position explaining both wrist and back injuries. But, lucky or what?

To survive such a fall is little short of miraculous, which is why I sometimes wonder if all my life since that time has been an illusion – I really didn't live through it, I shouldn't have lived through it, but here I am. Several lessons were hammered home for future caving trips, or indeed any kind of adventure activity.

(1) Always leave a message as to where you have gone and roughly when you should return. (2) Caving with less than four people is not entirely recommended (although I continue to offend in this, sometimes caving solo which has at least once been extremely traumatic). (3) As stated above, if a casualty can move toward an entrance without making matters worse, do so. Every metre gained is a bonus for all concerned. (4) Caves are much harder than I am and break less easily! Still, onwards and upwards...



Personal Locator Beacons - the next generation

Paul Hardin from ACR Electronics gave a presentation on the virtues of the next generation PLB for land use. Since their inception PLBs have saved 24,500 lives (maritime and aviation) and there is a growing demand for their use on land. The new generation identifies the user and gets around the problems of accidental activation by means of a simple phone call. The system now gives out a far more powerful signal which will work even where normal GPS signal is patchy and allows for pinpointing when rescuers (with a detector) are getting close to a casualty. Unless I missed something I'm still not convinced that they won't cause problems for MR. The system requires activation by the casualty (not possible if they're unconscious), accidental activation generates a phone call to the casualty's telephone (not much use if they have no signal or no-one is at home to take the call), if the PLB is sold but not re-registered it's no use to the new user. Nevertheless, I think the system is coming whether we like it or not so, hopefully, these problems will be ironed out before they become too popular. www.acrelectronics.com





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QUARTERLY INCIDENT REPORT FOR ENGLAND AND WALES JULY-SEPTEMBER 2008

The following is a listing of the number of incidents attended by MR teams in England and Wales during the period from 01/07/2008 to 30/09/2008. 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.

| Region | Incident Dates |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Lake District | |
| Cockermouth | 06/07, 07/07, 08/07, 11/07, 12/07, 12/07, 16/07, 08/08, 11/08, 19/08, 23/08, 29/08, 29/08, 06/09 |
| Coniston | 08/07, 16/07, 23/07, 03/08, 11/08, 11/08, 12/08, 23/08, 11/09, 14/09, 21/09 |
| Duddon & Furness | 05/07, 16/07, 18/07, 10/08, 18/08, 30/09 |
| Kendal | 03/07, 06/07, 15/07, 16/07, 21/07, 03/08, 04/08, 13/09, 13/09, 14/09, 28/09, 30/09 |
| Keswick | 01/07, 03/07, 06/07, 06/07, 06/07, 08/07, 19/07, 25/07, 29/07, 31/07, 01/08, 10/08, 13/08, 20/08, 23/08, 23/08, 25/08, 27/08, 27/08, 29/08, 04/09, 06/09, 06/09, 08/09, 11/09, 20/09 |
| Kirkby Stephen | 14/07, 04/08, 10/08, 07/09, 23/09, 30/09 |
| Langdale Ambleside | 03/07, 14/07, 15/07, 16/07, 19/07, 20/07, 22/07, 22/07, 22/07, 25/07, 26/07, 26/07, 26/07, 03/08, 03/08, 04/08, 09/08, 10/08, 15/08, 16/08, 17/08, 18/08, 19/08, 25/08, 30/08, 13/09, 13/09, 18/09, 20/09, 30/09 |
| Patterdale | 06/07, 11/07, 13/07, 16/07, 24/07, 06/08, 07/08, 07/08, 08/08, 08/08, 10/08, 16/08, 18/08, 19/08, 20/08, 21/08, 22/08, 24/08, 27/08, 29/08, 18/09, 28/09 |
| Penrith | 11/07, 12/07, 20/07, 27/07, 28/07, 02/08, 08/08, 10/08, 19/08, 26/08, 14/09, 18/09, 21/09, 23/09, 28/09 |
| Wasdale | 03/07, 03/07, 05/07, 11/07, 12/07, 19/07, 20/07, 20/07, 20/07, 30/07, 09/08, 27/08, 30/08, 06/09, 08/09, 11/09, 16/09, 21/09 |
| Mid-Pennine | |
| Bolton | 19/07, 20/07, 22/07, 23/07, 03/08, 09/08, 09/08, 10/08, 10/08, 10/08, 19/08, 22/08, 25/08, 29/08, 01/09 |
| Bowland Pennine | 01/07, 06/07, 16/07, 16/07, 17/07, 08/08, 13/08, 11/09, 28/09 |
| Calder Valley | 30/07, 16/08, 16/08, 19/08, 24/08, 29/08, 10/09 |
| Holme Valley | 30/08 |
| Rossendale & Pendle | 19/08, 16/09 |
| NE England | |
| Cleveland | 11/07, 24/07, 27/07, 29/07, 01/08, 14/08, 15/08, 06/09, 12/09, 20/09 |
| Northumberland NP | 06/07 |
| North of Tyne | 06/07 |
| Scarborough & Ryedale | 13/07, 19/07, 27/07, 29/07, 02/08, 05/08, 17/08, 19/08, 27/08, 07/09, 17/09, 27/09, 28/09 |
| Swaledale | 04/08, 09/08, 14/08, 15/08, 19/08, 27/08, 06/09, 23/09 |
| Teesdale & Weardale | 05/07, 03/08, 14/08, 14/08, 23/09, 27/09, 30/09 |
| North Wales | |
| Aberglaslyn | 03/07, 06/07, 17/07, 01/08, 17/08, 24/08 |
| Llanberis | 05/07, 06/07, 12/07, 18/07, 21/07, 21/07, 26/07, 26/07, 27/07, 28/07, 28/07, 04/08, 08/08, 11/08 |
| South Wales | |
| Brecon | 07/07, 08/07, 15/07, 16/07, 17/07, 17/07, 18/07, 07/08, 28/07, 09/08, 16/08, 17/08 |
| Western Beacons | 08/07, 15/07, 16/07, 17/08 |
| Central Beacons | 08/07, 15/07, 16/07, 17/07, 17/07, 09/08, 17/08, 25/08 |
| Longtown | 15/07, 20/07, 25/08 |
| South West England | |
| Cornwall | 05/07, 24/07, 24/07 |
| Dartmoor | 18/08, 30/08, 02/09, 26/09 |
| Exmoor | 04/07, 05/07, 19/07, 28/07, 08/09 |
| Yorkshire Dales | |
| CRO | 02/07, 15/07, 21/07, 30/07, 08/09, 15/09 |
| Upper Wharfedale | 01/07, 03/07, 30/07, 19/08, 24/08, 10/09, 27/09 |
| RAF | |
| RAF Valley | 04/08, 29/09 |
| RAF Leeming | 20/09 |
| SARDA | |
| SARDA (England) | 15/07, 16/07, 19/07, 28/07, 03/08, 03/08, 08/08, 13/08, 21/08, 10/09, 27/09, 30/09 |
| SARDA (Lakes) | 17/07, 22/07, 22/07, 08/08, 09/08, 10/08, 13/08, 13/09, 23/09, 30/09 |
| SARDA (Wales) | 16/07, 17/07, 17/07, 17/07, 04/08, 06/08, 16/08, 08/08, 13/08, 06/09, 11/09 |
| SARDA (South Wales) | 07/07, 15/07, 16/07, 25/08 |
| Non specialists (Non MR) | 19/07, 24/08, 16/09 |

Support Mountain Rescue Join BaseCamp...

Now you can support mountain rescue and benefit all the teams in England and Wales. For £24 per year for a single membership, £42 for joint membership you will receive a Supporter's badge, car sticker and four issues of Mountain Rescue Magazine - January, April, July and October - delivered direct to your door. **Interested? Fill in the form below and return to Neil Roden, BaseCamp, White Cottage, 9 Main Road, Grindleford, Hope Valley, Derbyshire S32 2JN.**

Please send me details of BaseCamp membership.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

OMM Race weekend

25 October 2008: the wildest day ever? Possibly...

Let's be honest...there were no surprises when it rained. We all knew it was coming. It was just a matter of preparation and accepting responsibility for your actions. Having been aware of severe weather warnings for the day and, more significantly, actual severe weather that was occurring, we had already made contingency plans for the day, involving extra precautions for team members, and had even discussed the possibility that a response may not even be possible, or need to be delayed, in the event of a callout.

16.40. A family, with a five year old child, were reported as trapped on the wrong side of a stream up Rossett Gill. The team was dispatched to recover them, but were informed that they had got down safely, while we were en route, by a team member who had arrived in advance in his own transport (rumours that this was a boat have yet to be confirmed). Getting through to the end of the Langdale valley was very difficult, with significant flooding and abandoned vehicles. We reunited them with their car, just before it floated away from where it was parked. Return home.

18.28... dinner midway through cooking... our paggers went off again. A group of four

became split up when one managed to cross a stream that the others weren't able to. Three had not returned. They had only gone for a 'short walk' because of the weather! They had no torches, so would have to stop moving once it went dark. A telephone interview with the informant said that they had gone into Oxendale, crossed the bridge and up to Red Tarn. This was their short, bad weather walk. They had crossed one stream, encountered another that they couldn't cross, so returned back to the first stream. The problem was that this had swollen significantly in a short time and only one of them could cross. The others decided to go back up to try and find a place to cross, but hadn't returned. The woman who had crossed returned to their hotel and waited until it went dark, then called for help. Team members searched Oxendale, Browney Gill and through from Three Shires Stone, past Red Tarn before joining the others in Oxendale. Based on the initial information this was where they had to be... we were a little puzzled, so called in at the hotel and interviewed the woman again. It was about midnight. This time she let slip an additional piece of information that she hadn't revealed in earlier conversations. She mentioned passing (not crossing) another bridge on her walk out. This should have been the one they used to access Browney Gill, so if she'd

passed it they couldn't have crossed it! (still with me?). Cold, wet, and having been on the go for a few hours we called Kendal MRT to assist with checking the additional areas that this new information opened up as possibilities.

It transpired that we had been within a very short distance of the group, on the other side of a raging torrent. They had no torch or whistle, so had been unable to attract our attention, and we had been unable to see or hear them without.

Meanwhile... in another valley not far away, Wasdale MRT received a call informing them that a female competitor had been swept down river at a location below Sty Head, where the group had tried to cross the swollen beck of Spout Head Gill. On arriving in the valley, we found the worst flooding ever seen in over forty years and torrents of water where there aren't normally even streams. We drove through some deep water just to get to the Head. When the informant turned up we were told that she'd last been seen in the river and was believed to be still in the water. At this, we took the view that she would almost certainly be dead already. However, a small group of swift water technicians were immediately dispatched to the location. Others were tasked to search downstream strainers, and a helicopter was requested to assist with the search from the air.

The river was raging, with rocks rattling downstream and there was virtually no chance of surviving in it, even kitted out in swiftwater gear. The group of technicians were therefore very surprised but pleased to find the female casualty had in fact been washed onto a small group of rocks in mid flow, fairly close to where she'd apparently fallen in. Four other competitors had reached her within a few minutes of the accident and were assisting by keeping her warm. However, water levels were clearly rising and the island would be threatened before too long, potentially washing all five into unsurvivable recirculating stoppers about 30m downstream of where they were.

Two swiftwater technicians used a tension diagonal to get across and start casualty care and a helicopter (from RAF Valley) arrived shortly after. The helicopter was able to winch the casualty, all four companions and the two Wasdale members off the rocks and all were taken off to the West Cumberland Hospital.

We left some damaged tents pinned down with boulders on the island and intended to recover that kit the following day. It had all been

washed away! We only just got ourselves back out of the valley, driving through bonnet deep water for a very long way!

About midnight tucked up safely in bed... beep... beep... beep... bee...

Kendal team were called to assist Langdale Ambleside MRT in the search for three walkers who had been reported missing by their companion, who turned back early due to the appalling conditions.

Due to the nature of the conditions we travelled in convoy to ensure that if a vehicle got stuck we could recover it with the others. On arrival team leader Andy divided the team to ensure our trained swiftwater rescue guys were divided around the team and placed where they could offer the most help, again briefing before we left to wear BAs and carry throwlines and no river crossings unless life was at risk.

Casualties were found pretty quickly by Kes, Les's dog, sheltering in the bed of a ghyll that had risen to the point which made fording hazardous. They took to ground at approximately 16.00. It was almost 04.00 by the time we reached them so, without shelter and in torrential rain, they were pretty cold, mildly hypothermic and clearly relieved to see us! We now had the minor problem that, having located the casualties, we lay on one side of the ghyll with them on the other. Quick inspection revealed why they were pinned down, the ghyll being very steep; certainly if you lost your footing there was a distinct possibility of being swept downstream which wouldn't have been good, particularly in the dark!

In hindsight at that point it would have been good to bring all those present together to work out a plan and have a clear safety briefing. Clearly things were stable, they were okay (ish) but going to be pretty damn cold so we could take things nice and steady.

We inspected the ghyll* to establish if we could cross and found an area of shallow water where I felt I could cross safely using a throwline as safety rope. Do we tie in or not? I decided not to as standard protocol and set downstream backup. Again, in hindsight, rather than throwline these should have been livebait style with their critical role.

I chose to cross without my rucksack which could be brought over on a line later. While crossing, I was strongly aware of the situation and happy to turn back at any moment if it felt too risky. However things were pretty straightforward. Having crossed and assessed our mildly hypothermic casualties we sent over a shelter and got some food and hot drink to them, followed later by a light to help keep spirits up, and some spare clothes. There was no point in sending more personnel over as it simply exposed people to more risk. Communications proved difficult, speaking over the water was impossible even though the ghyll was probably only five metres across. Even with the radio I had to move away from the river to hear any transmissions, without a radio we'd have been a bit buggered!

Having stabilised things we decided to go real slow, swiftwater rescue PPE allowed us to further protect our team members and evacuate the casualties one at a time using a live bait



technique with them wearing buoyancy aids and the live bait person in full PPE. By the time this was organised, the level in the ghyll had dropped considerably.

So, things may have taken a bit longer but I feel we carried out an effective and safe rescue. Things have moved on a long way. Not so long ago people would have been acting in a very different way and, with developments in training and PPE, we are able to operate far more safely and professionally minimising any risks to all concerned.

However, with this training and resources we may find ourselves deploying in more hazardous situations. There's a couple of stories of well run rescues in serious situations but also we all know of times when we got it wrong. I've been there... people on their own next to raging rivers at night, folk with no PPE, not even a buoyancy aid, in serious river situations and so on. So, a few basics...

Leadership
From our team, Andy provided real leadership by briefing everyone before they deployed regarding wearing buoyancy aids and in this case slowing the process down so we could operate in a considered and safe manner. There's no margin for error in these environments. Personal leadership also means voicing your opinion, saying 'I'm not happy about this' rather than going along with things. Kaz, a SARDA member from Penrith recently commandeered two fire officers to provide her back up while on a river search. To me this is someone actively taking responsibility for their personal safety and an act of leadership.

Preparation
Increasingly, teams are investing in training and equipment. In the situations above we were able to deploy people with both the right kit and knowledge of how to use it. Now it's one thing to have the kit but another thing to ensure it gets used! For us at Kendal two key factors were critical in getting things right. Firstly, rather than just rushing out of the door, a briefing before we were dispatched allowing folk to add their thoughts and secondly, being proactive. Keith had the foresight to add in the swiftwater rescue suits in addition to buoyancy

aids, these were held at a forward location to be dispatched as needed.

Searching safely
I've got to mention this because we get it badly wrong so many times! Key elements are **having the right kit and briefing**. Certainly no one should ever find themselves on operations next to a river without a buoyancy aid, or being deployed on their own. Never... ever... got it? Good! **Briefing** – if you're deployed, spend five minutes discussing roles and how you're going to operate. One really good method is to have one searcher in PPE supported by a colleague who carries the searcher's spare kit and acts as comms. This second person is well away from the water, wearing a buoyancy aid and carrying a throwline. This lead pair is in turn backed up by two folk, again in buoyancy aids and equipped with throwlines. In effect, in this scenario three folk are supporting one searcher (drop me a email if it doesn't make sense!).

Thanks to Nick Owen and Julian Carridge for their help with this article.

* Ghyll, Cumbrian for a steep beck. Hmm... Beck, Cumbrian for a stream!

Howie Crook Kendal MRT



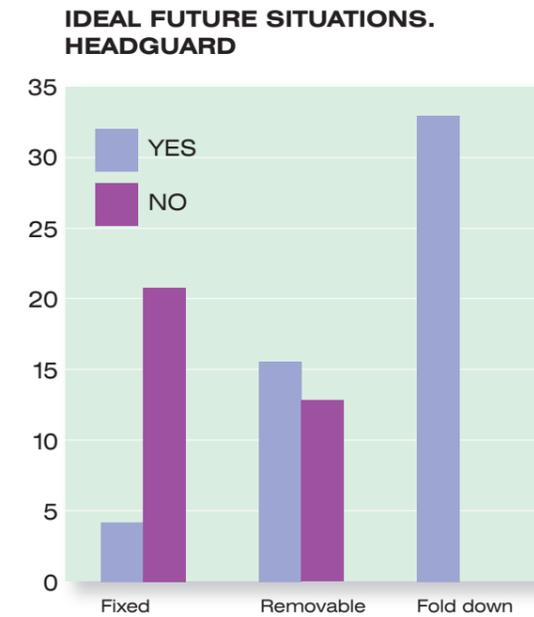
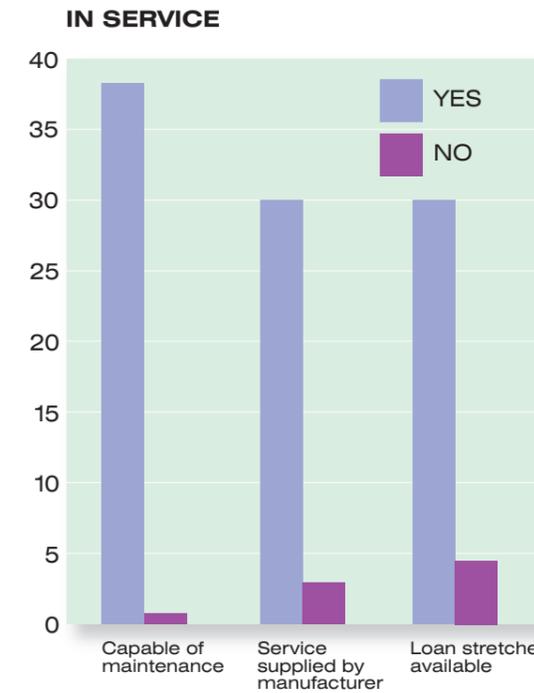
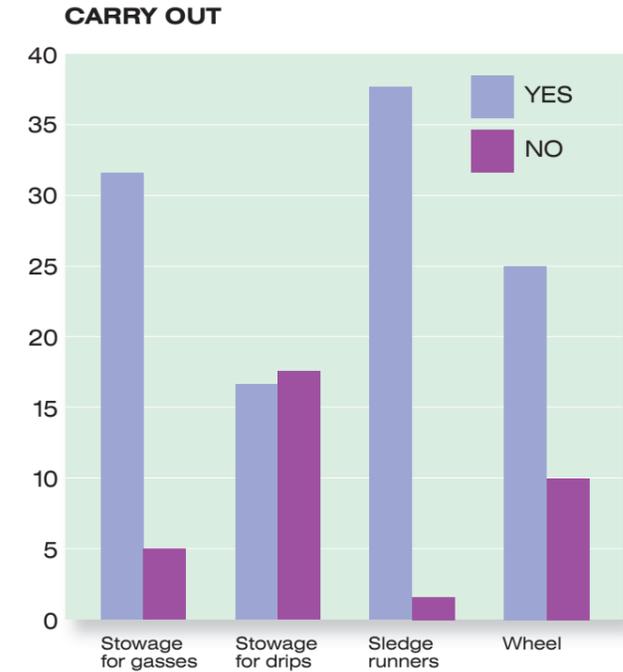
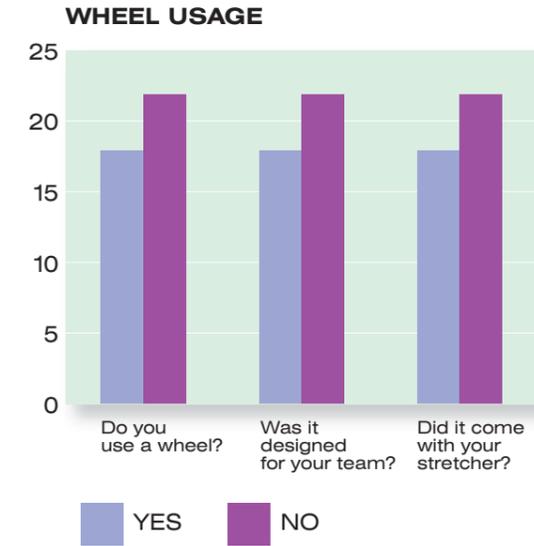
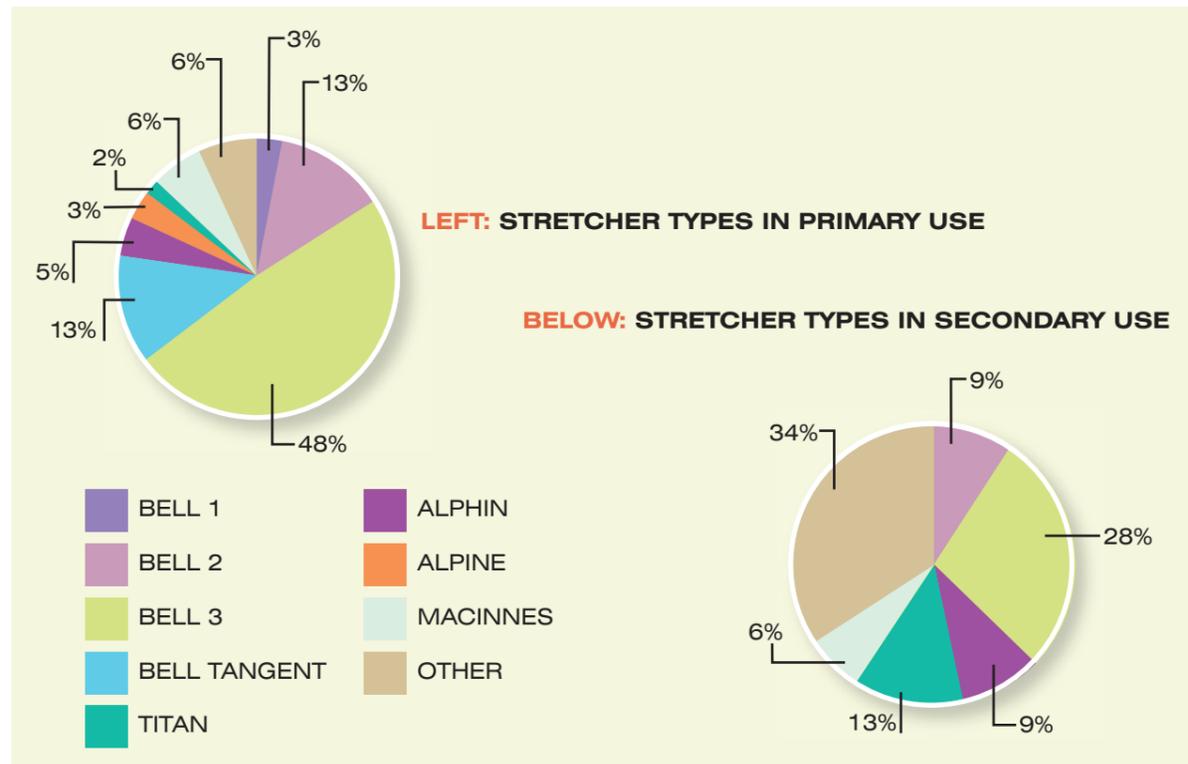
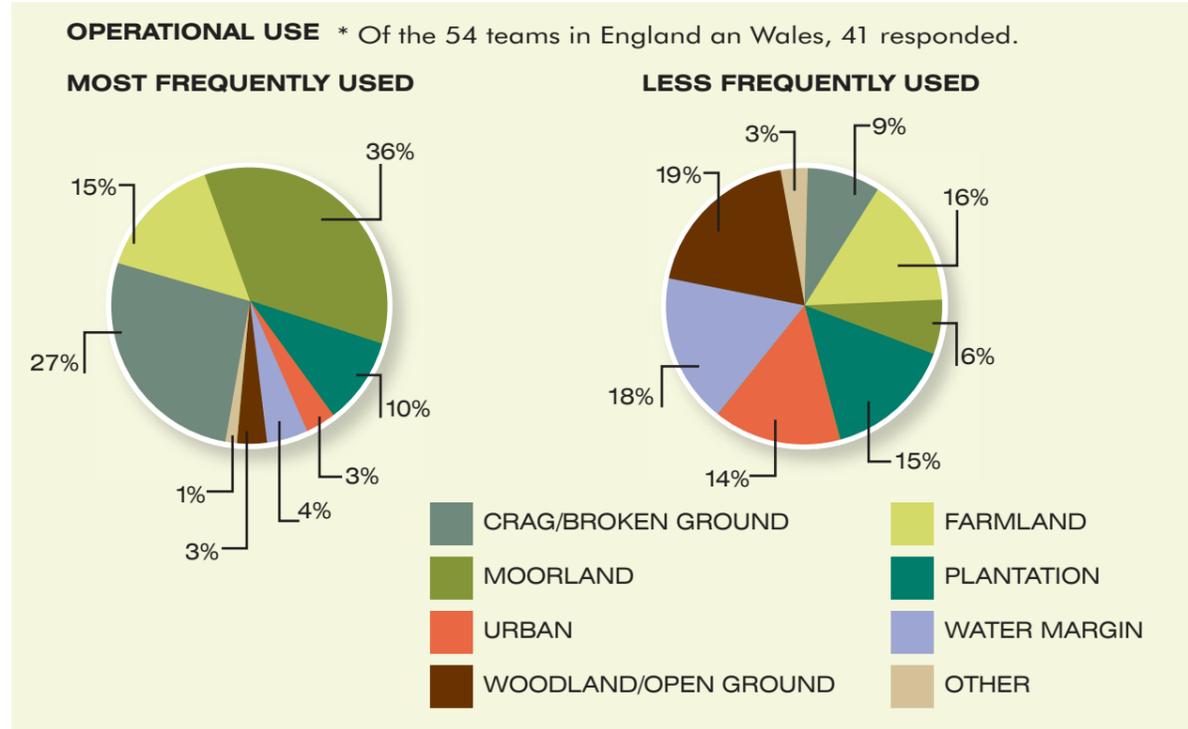
PLEASE NOTE THE IMAGES HERE ARE NOT OF THE OMM WEEKEND BUT OF GENERIC SWIFTWATER RESCUE SITUATIONS

Howie Crook runs swiftwater rescue courses for rescue teams and other groups. He can be contacted on 01539 739050 or via email at howardcrook@rethinktraining.co.uk

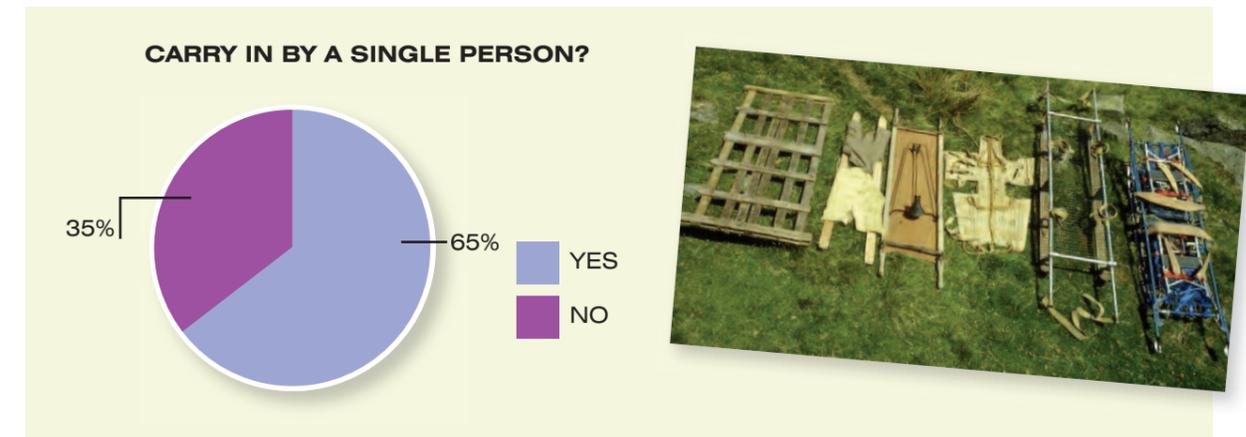


Stretcher update

Key points from the Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) Equipment Subcommittee questionnaire, presented at the Conference by **Mike Margeson** and **Richard Terrell** with graphics and stats by **Gavin Hole**



Illustrations by **Judy Whiteside**, based on original Powerpoint presentation.

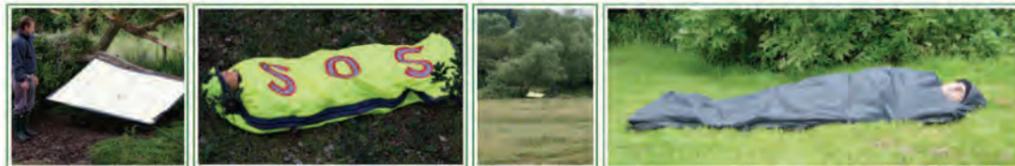


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The 5S™ is an indispensable and practical, multi-use survival tool that incorporates a SHELTER, a high visibility SIGNALLING panel, a waterproof SLEEPING SYSTEM, and an improvised STRETCHER. When turned inside out the waterproof 5S™ provides essential survival equipment that offers protection against the three main causes of hypothermia: COLD, WET AND WIND. The 5S™ also protects against direct light in tropical or desert environments, and provides the user with a rescue bag that can be seen from distances in excess of 1 km over open terrain, e.g. desert or moorland.

The 5S™'s Multi-Climate Use

An indispensable survival tool in emergencies when displaying the high visibility panel uppermost, the 5S™ is equally useful for non-emergency, daily use. With the high visibility panel reversed, the 5S™ can be used to provide overhead SHELTER from sun, snow and rain. Folded and zipped, the shelter creates a SLEEPING SYSTEM for use when temperatures drop at night, and is reversible for high visibility.



The 5S™'s Shelter & Signalling Systems

In an emergency the SLEEPING SYSTEM, fully unzipped and displaying the yellow high visibility material uppermost, can be used as a combined SHELTER and SIGNALLING SYSTEM. The yellow material will enable rescue teams to find your location more easily while at the same time provide you with shelter from the elements. The Signalling panel also incorporates a reflective 3M band and the letters 'SOS' to further assist rescuers working at night with search lamps. *(The yellow material should only be used uppermost in cases of emergency requiring rescue.)*



The 5S™'s Sleeping System

The 5S™ can be used in any environment as a regular sleeping bag. The SLEEPING SYSTEM's waterproof bag and integrated hood offer protection from the elements. In emergencies the sleeping bag's reversible, high visibility material acts as a rescue or distress signal.



The 5S™'s Stretcher System

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Additional Improved Survival Use of the 5S™

In a survival situation, the 5S™ can be used as a 'water catchment' by opening the SLEEPING SYSTEM into SURVIVAL SHELTER mode, and securing the corners of the 5S™ to strong points (rocks, branches, cord) in order to collect rain water to purify and drink.

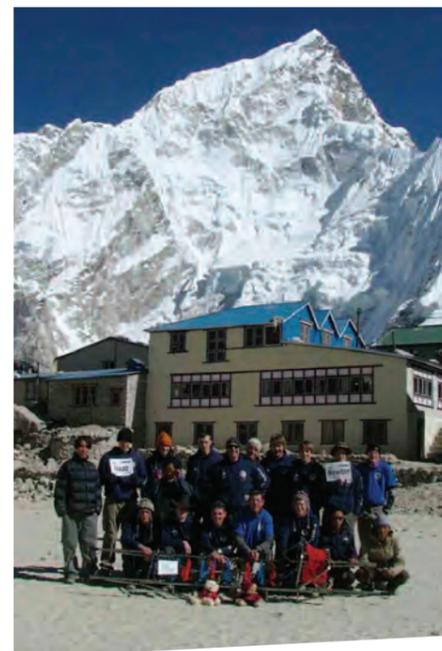


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Perfect timing for rescue equipment

Paul Robley of Duddon & Furness MRT and Community Action Nepal on a successful mission

For those of you with memories better than mine, you need to cast your minds back to issue 13 (July 2005) to recall an article I submitted about rescue equipment bound for Nepal.



PUPILS AND TEACHERS FROM THE KING'S SCHOOL GRANTHAM WITH THE 170KG OF EQUIPMENT BOUND FOR NEPAL PHOTOS: KEVIN ADAMS

meeting with Kevin Adams (the teacher who was brave enough to take on this challenge) at the Outdoors Show in Birmingham and it looked as though I was going to get my garage back!

On 22 October, the party of thirteen boys from King's School, Grantham 'pooled' their luggage allowance and set off, with 170kg of mountain rescue equipment, bound for Nepal.

Once in Kathmandu Kevin and the boys met up with a CAN representative and handed over most of the equipment for distribution.

However, (for reasons best known to themselves) they decided to take one of the Bell stretchers all the way to CAN's newest rescue post at Gorak Shep (5164m) the last settlement before Everest Base Camp.

Mike Margeson had been a great help in gathering together several much-needed stretchers, casbags and vacmats to send to a project being funded by Community Action Nepal (CAN). The porter shelter and rescue post at Machhermo (4500m) was the first dedicated centre of its kind at this altitude. Some of the equipment Mike secured was to help equip the shelter for emergency aid, not just for the trekking community but also the long suffering porters and Sherpas. Now all it remained for me to do was to get the gear out there... not as easy as it may sound.

We managed to get a stretcher and a few small items out to Nepal fairly quickly with a friend but the rest remained in my garage for almost three years! I tried several agencies working in Nepal, the RAF and even the Ghurkhas but kept drawing a blank. I was even beginning to think I should set up my own rescue team with the equipment I had stored.

Then in December last year, following a chance conversation with my old college lecturer, it looked like there may be light at the end of the tunnel. A friend of hers runs a trekking company and he was taking a party of sixth form students to Everest Base Camp in October this year.

Many phone calls and emails later, and a

have already raised over £4000 for Community Action Nepal – see justgiving.com/kings08ebc. Thanks also go to Terry Crosby (Travel and Trek) for organising the trip and of course our own Mike Margeson. Along with the rest of the Duddon & Furness MRT, Mike showed undying enthusiasm and effort in helping to finally give this project a happy ending.

It may have taken three years to get this equipment where it is vitally needed but it is reassuring to know it came to good use so quickly upon its arrival.



ABOVE TOP: TRANSPORTING THE STRETCHER 'ISAAC NEWTON' TO GORAK SHEP

ABOVE: ARMY GAZELLE HELICOPTER EVACUATING CASUALTY PHOTOS: KEVIN ADAMS

Should we search at night?

Keswick MRT leader **Mark Hodgson** asks the question

Team leader of Keswick MRT for fifteen years, having joined the team in 1972, I've seen some 1200 rescues as leader – probably attending 750+ of those – with something like a total of 1400 (a guess) attended over my 36 years with the team. I chair a group of three team leaders liaising between the Lakes District teams, Police, RAF, the Air Ambulance, Ambulance Control and the Coastguard at six monthly meetings. And I also led the same group that agreed protocols with the Police, ARCC and the Ambulance Service. This is a very personal viewpoint but a question I feel we all need to ask.

So, searching at night – not the most glamorous of topics but here goes! Soap fans may recall episodes of Coronation Street earlier in 2008, when characters Liam and Maria went off for a walk in the Lake District, without the benefit of map, compass or torch – indeed, any other equipment (Liam being of the opinion he didn't need such things). They became lost. Argued. Night fell. Liam fell. Maria (miraculously) made it down to the village and called out mountain rescue. Enter Keswick team members and their fictional 'team leader'. Several hours spent wandering over the fells, as Maria is urged to recall any redeeming features of the landscape (dramatic tension mounting) and Liam was saved.

I wonder how many of the calls we get to searches start out like this one did? No doubt many more than we ever hear about. The Keswick team, apart from appearing on screen, became involved with Coronation Street in an effort to reinforce our safety message and, of course, to generate some useful publicity.

During 2007, the team received 115 calls for help, undertaking 90 rescues and on standby alert for the remainder. 22 of these 25 alerts related to people reported 'overdue' and could easily have been called as searches, expending resources and effort prior to the 'missing' walkers walking back down under their own steam.

According to the Lakes 2007 Annual Report, there were 425 rescues carried out, across ten team areas, including 52 searches. Of these 52, 100 people were lost, 70 benighted, some both. Looking through the list – and bear in mind this is my interpretation – search was not needed in 30 of these as the mispers were met very soon after team members were mobilised. However, of the remaining 22 searches, sixteen of these may also not have been required either, as their incident logs report 'no maps, compasses, torches, experience' or any combination of the four! This leaves just six out of 52 (12%) where we were actually needed. That's a lot of wasted effort. These figures, incidentally, don't include the talk-downs.

What would this interpolate to nationally? How much wasted effort by teams? The above dissection has the benefit of the wonderful science of hindsight, an option we don't have at the time any decision to search is made.

The only way to make that decision is to gather as much information as possible.

Most informants tell us mispers are experienced and well equipped – but is this just what they want us to hear? Many informants don't know the route the missing persons have undertaken – if we're lucky they'll at least know where they started. Most go on to insist that the person must have had an accident – they are 'too experienced to have got themselves lost'!

How many of those reported missing don't have map and compass or know how to use them? Many don't have torches yet it's hardly rocket science that it's going to go dark at some stage in the day!

In one incident, a lone female walker descending from Scafell Pike to Seathwaite got lost. She met up with a lone male walker who told her he knew the way – 'follow me...' They then commenced to walk directly from the summit of Great End in a beeline for Seathwaite, descended some 25% of the way and not surprisingly became stuck and called us. It was dark, they had no torches but they asked. (While we were still in Keswick!)

Many will likely have GPS or satnav in their car to get them to their starting point, but don't feel the need to carry maps and have no idea how to navigate on the hill. Is this 'experienced'?

Group size may affect our decision whether to turn out – bigger groups we tend to have heard about any accident. We're more likely to search for lone walkers and youngsters, and medical criteria will be a factor – but again, is this exaggerated by informants? For example, 'he had a heart bypass ten years ago so must have a heart problem...'

The weather will also affect our decision. If it's bad, our best chance might be to trip over them – more difficult if they are sheltering away from the path – and the fact is we might only be able to search paths at night. There's the risk to team members to be considered and it takes time to get team members into the relevant search areas. If there are only three or four hours left until light, should we just wait and see?

If someone has been missing two days, what's the point of turning out team members in the dark and putting them at risk in extreme weather? An example from the Keswick team was a young student who had been missing

for 48 hours – reported after 36 hours on a Thursday evening at 9.00pm. I refused to send the team out because the weather was atrocious – heavy rain and storm force winds even at valley level. We did go out at first light the following morning. His body was found by SAR helicopter at the bottom of a gully, within an hour of the search commencing. He'd been blown off either close to the start of his route, or at the finish so, even by the time he was reported missing, there was nothing any of us could do to help him.

Resources for searches are sometimes a problem. Most Keswick team central fells searches involve us calling out our neighbouring teams from Wasdale and Langdale Ambleside for assistance. At times, it's not easy to get team members out for night searches. Is this partly due to a backlash against the number of times we do go out and are not really needed? The converse to this is that many team members don't find it easy to get out of work, so there is more availability at night. We need to balance the demands we make on our team members.

We regularly call SARDA Lakes, with support from SARDA England and Scotland if needed, but it takes time for the search dogs and handlers to get into the search areas if they have to travel from far afield. That said, perhaps a possible solution would be to just use dogs plus a navigator at night? Many night searches end up with the dogs going through areas already covered by other team members before the dogs could get in there – this is very inefficient.

If the weather is bad, our only certain coverage is the paths – and we'll be lucky if they're on the path. If it's blowy, we're unlikely to hear them, or they us. We occasionally use RAF helicopters with FLIR – and they are always keen to come and help – the criteria for a helicopter search always used to be based on a 'life at threat'.

So, it's a difficult decision for the team leader to make. And if we have decided not to go, I then spend the rest of the night lying awake wondering whether I've made the correct choice – so no sleep anyway!

22 of our 25 alerts were 'wait and sees' that fizzled out, with some of the searches also fizzling out soon after they started. On one recent occasion, two people were reported missing en route from Scafell Pike to Seathwaite. It was about 1.00am, in early

summer. I called Julian Carradice, team leader of Wasdale MRT, to discuss... it would take two hours to get team members out of bed and up high... by then it would be starting to get light again... would they walk in? Surely they would?

They didn't. However, out on the hill the two mispers had realised they'd got it badly wrong and decided to sit it out for the night. They had no mobile phone but some equipment so were fine. We were called at 9.30am to go for one of them who had twisted a knee the previous night going down to Little Narrowcove, having made the most common navigation error on the route from Scafell Pike to Seathwaite. They were no worse for their experience but did need a carry down. Admirably, they'd managed to get themselves to the footbridge below Styhead tarn before some passing walkers made the call for them.

Just because it's cold and dark, and in the fells, it doesn't mean our mispers are at high risk. Given the choice between being lost in the fells or in a city centre, I know where I'd rather spend the night!

We have four team members who are also full time self-employed instructors and guides. They are willing to give up their time to go on searches, as are most team members, but are we at the stage when we should be offering mobile phone mispers the use of these instructors as guides at an enhanced night time rate? Teams could take a commission!

Basilage is a common sight abroad. Should we be using it more here? I certainly wouldn't object to it from Scafell Pike, to Seathwaite, Wasdale and Langdale. But can you imagine the arguments? Not traditional! Nanny state! Remember the fuss about the guide posts on Ben Nevis. And all this fuss would be made by people tucked up in bed while we search! We also have bolts for belays for stretcher lowers from Sharp Edge, but the less said about them the better... Basilage would certainly reduce the number of night searches and save us hundreds of hours – and that has to be good.

All I am suggesting, in posing the question whether we search at night, is that we don't have to rush out to every search requested, because we won't respond as well when we really are needed. Do we have common criteria for decision making? Are the criteria we use the correct ones? Sometimes we get it wrong. We've all done this and no doubt will continue to do so but these cases are a very small minority.

I do know however that, had we spent two nights searching when not needed just before a period of six very serious rescues in five days which occurred late last summer, then we may not have been able to respond as well to these incidents as we did. What do you think?

Frendo Spur

Rob Johnson and Alec Roberts

The Frendo Spur is a magnificent classic mixed route in the French Alps above the world famous town of Chamonix. It is approximately 1200m long and sits on the North Face of the Aiguille du Midi in the Mont Blanc massif. It was September and a friend and I had decided to have a week based around Chamonix doing some climbing on whatever was in the best condition.

We had several routes that we wanted to have a look at and the Frendo Spur was at the top of the list. We only had five days so needed to be lucky with the weather. On top of that, neither of us had climbed a 1000m North Face route before.

We arrived late Monday night, grabbed a forecast that promised two and a half days of good weather with a storm coming in on the third, and slept the sleep of the nervous excited climber.

After some judicious packing the following morning we set off from the valley floor for an acclimatisation walk to the Aiguille de Plan where the route starts. As we wound our way up through the trees, no doubt to the bemusement of those in the cable car above our heads, I had time to reflect on the fun that we had ahead of us. How would the route-finding go, what would the rock section be like in big boots, how big would the bivvy ledge be, would we be warm enough, what about stonefall, would there be other people on the route, what would the condition of the snow

arête be like on the second day? Despite the never ending questions running through my mind it felt great to be out, savouring the last of the summer sunshine and the scent of the alpine woodland we were pulling up through.

Alec had a tradition from previous trips to maintain, a Coke at the Aiguille de

Plan, so we joined the cable car visitors and sat at the foot of our route, eating apple tart and pizza and sipping our drinks in the afternoon sunshine. We could trace the line of the route and were surprised to see that the lower snow slope shown in the guide book had long gone, replaced with a shattered rock ramp.

We bivvied at the foot of the route and enjoyed a beautiful sunset and cloud inversion over Chamonix. We started off the next morning after sunrise and climbed the rock section. The weather was pretty cold with temperatures of -2° at the Aiguille de Plan dropping to -12° at the top of the route, so we had a big dilemma as to what boots to wear. In the end we both plumped for

plastics and wore Scarpa Omegas which would be great for the snow and ice, keep our tootsies warm but not be so great on the rock sections. (In reality we had only limited choice due to baggage restrictions on the flight and, of course, money!) A recent dump of snow meant there was plenty of the white stuff about and it all felt quite wintry. We moved unroped for the first section of the climb but the difficulties gradually increased, so we moved together as much as possible with the rope and pitched the difficult sections.

As we moved higher, the climbing got steadily harder. We had a quick breather below the guidebook crux and I then made my way up the steep crack, glad to pull out of it at the top and know that the worst was behind us. Not much further on, I lead off on a polished traverse ledge to the right, which lead into an awkward corner. The protection was good but the climbing felt hard, harder than anything else we had climbed on the route, and it was with a fair amount of grunting that I reached the belay. As I brought Alec up, I admired the ice halo around the sun, beautiful but worrying as a harbinger of bad weather.

We finished the first day late afternoon and brewed up at the bivvy site before settling down for a restless night's sleep, waking up what felt like every five minutes to check that the impending storm had not arrived yet. The following morning saw another three hours of climbing to the top. We moved together up a beautiful snow arête whilst the sun came up before pitching a traverse on good snow ice below the summit rognon. We turned the rognon on the right hand side and enjoyed several pitches of good quality snow and water ice to the summit. The guidebook described these as being Scottish Grade III and there was certainly nothing harder than that.

We unroped at the top and then made our way up the final snow arête to the Aiguille de Midi summit station to order one of everything on the menu, before taking the cable car back down to the valley. The storm arrived as we sat and drank our cold beer.

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Why do people get lost?

MRC Statistics Officer Ged Feeny looks at the statistics

I have been a member of Penrith MRT for 29 years, its team leader for 25 years, and statistician for Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) for eleven years. During this time I have had to develop an interest in lost or missing persons; I have been involved in training search managers and providing planning information to search managers, this latter point the result of starting a database at the UK SAR Conference in 2000. This database is called 'Missing Person Behaviour Data' and contains records of searches for missing persons attended by MRTs throughout the UK, Northern Ireland and Eire. There are currently over a 1000 records, but it still represents only a fraction of the search operations undertaken by teams in these countries.

Pete Roberts, Dave Perkins and I have produced summary information from this database since 2000 with the intention of providing search managers with reliable, local and current information about how missing persons have behaved in the past. It has received acceptance in many areas of mountain rescue and is in use in some teams. I am also aware that the information is being used outside for MR by other search management practitioners.

Like you, I have to 'earn a crust'; my role as a software consultant necessitates a lot of travelling. For years, I have relied on my ability to read maps, form a mental picture of the route and to drive with that picture in mind. It has been my experience that this process has been helped by remembering key features on the route as a way of checking whether I am still 'on track' or not. For instance, many routes go pass churches and named pubs in towns or power stations, water-towers and other landmarks in the countryside.

Lately I have started to use a car satnav and have generally been pleased with the outcome. However, ten days ago I had to go to Liverpool for work and arrived in the city in the dark. The message 'You have reached your destination' sounded and no sign of the hotel. I had used the postcode as the destination information but was suspicious when I entered the code into the device. Right, I was lost.

I knew that the school I had to visit the following day was in the same block as the hotel but in adjacent corners, facing Queens Drive. So, I entered the postcode of the school into Tom-Tom and off I went. The next time the success sounded, sure enough, I was outside the school and it was not difficult to then navigate visually to the hotel. A few chapters from the bible and bed!

The art of 'knowing where you are and how to get to somewhere else' is essentially information processing; good navigation helps you to avoid becoming lost. If the information you have is incorrect, what chance do you have? If you fail to collect updating information as you move, you will become lost. If you fail to interpret the information that is either taken with you or gather on the way, then again you will become lost. In addition to this, there is a belief that some people have a natural ability to orientate themselves. Is this just another way of saying these people are efficient information processors but in an unconscious way?

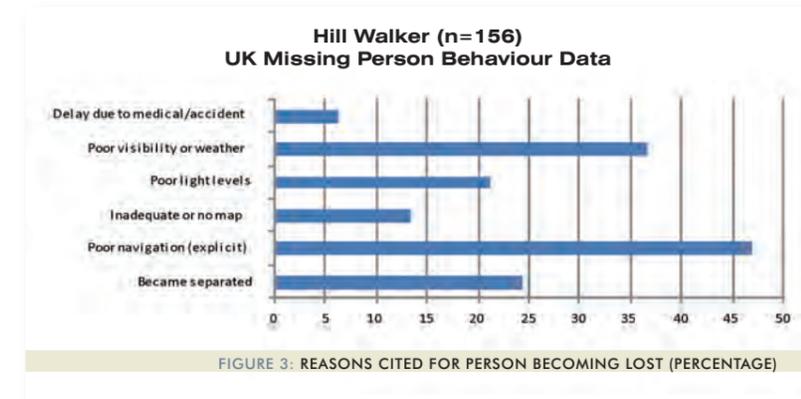
These ideas arose during and following a conversation in very broken English with a Japanese professor of Informatics, Chiaki Aoyama of the University of Kansai. Among his many roles, he is currently researching people's ability to process information within the context of navigation. He argued strongly that good navigation means effective data processing; the corollary was that there are

| Group | No Searches |
|----------------|-------------|
| Alone | 140 |
| Small (2 to 5) | 254 |
| Other | 128 |
| Total | 522 |

many and varied events that can interfere with navigation. I was sufficiently interested to dig deeper and to place these ideas in our context, in this country.

Straight away, we must ask the question, 'But what is the point?' I strongly believe that having the correct and pertinent information during the initial phase of a search operation is essential for the whole search operation, regardless of the duration of the search. The picture formed during the first phase of a search operation is very persistent; when fresh information becomes available, I have noticed a tendency for managers and searchers to hold on to earlier, discredited data. This could lead to wasted effort and a delayed conclusion. Having correct information at the start will avoid this possibility. Thus this will have benefit for search managers. It may also provide evidence for educators preparing people for the outdoors.

Therefore I have changed the brief I received for this article into 'What factors



contributed to someone becoming 'lost'? My own search was now beginning, namely collecting evidence in support of any ideas. The original plan was to examine the existing Incident Reports¹, and to extract information relating to a definite category of incidents, namely Hill Walkers reported missing or overdue that required a search operation. What did I find and why did it prove unproductive?

Between January 2003 and December 2007, there were 522 incidents classified as searches for hill walkers in England and Wales. For analysis purposes, these have fallen into three distinct categories based on party size (see panel).

I concentrated on the solo hill walker, attempting to establish how many were actually lost. The important thing to remember here is the evidence comes from the Incident Report. How the incident was initiated will give a clue to the cause. Take the statistics in Figure 1.

Approximately three in ten searches for solo hill walkers were initiated by the person themselves. This number represents those that are truly 'lost' by their own admission, whereas the other may have been delayed but never 'lost'. The overlap, labelled 'both', represents those incidents initiated both by the missing person and those expecting their arrival.

Looking at the report narrative in greater detail reveals the possible reasons for the persons becoming lost or overdue (Figure 2).

With the exception of 'navigation error', all these contributory factors have been verified by the reporting MRT. Clearly the interesting facts are that one in four reported poor visibility, ie. hill fog or low cloud and three in twenty were caught out by the onset of darkness. Both these are key aims to locating your whereabouts. I have heard many tales of navigation error in very windy conditions; the analysis here tends to support the thesis that environmental factors are significant contributors to poor navigation. On the face of it, 'no map' and 'no compass' seem quite minor contributors; however, this does not take into account those incidents where this fact was not reported. Remember we can only analyse that which has been reported!

At this point further work using this

source of data was suspended. It is clear that the data is unreliable because of the lack of consistency among the incident reports; namely, lack of mention of a factor cannot be interpreted that this was not a contributor in the incident. I know from my own experience there are times when search managers do not get to see and talk to the search subject on conclusion of the search. In summary therefore, incident reports have proved a poor source for answering the question 'Why do people get lost?'

The second approach was to examine the data stored in the Missing Person Behaviour database². As was mentioned earlier, this has been running since 2000 but does not contain all the instances where persons were reported lost or missing. Taking the same category as before, namely Hill Walker, we arrive at Figure 3.

Even though the earlier analysis did not extend the parties reported missing, it is clear that becoming 'lost' is a regular result of parties becoming separated; the proportion is significant at one in four. It is clear from the high proportion of 'poor navigation' returns that the reliability of the data is very different from the earlier work and parallels the anecdotal evidence from search managers. Likewise, the result that one in three incidents seem to be related to poor weather and/or visibility conditions is strong evidence for including this factor in further work. By the same token, the fact that poor light levels occurred in one in five incidents has to be worth further investigation.

The failure of these two data sets to give a clear answer to our question at first appeared worrying. Team leaders and their deputies devote a lot of time to document their incidents but, with the data we have, I have been unable to answer a simple question. But I have alluded to the possible reason for these data source failing to provide sensible answers. The one person who can answer these questions rarely contributes to any of these reports. If they do, their contribution is secondhand, possibly 'watered-down' or simplified. This is quite

natural but it did point the way to gaining a definitive answer – ask the search subjects themselves!

The method adopted was as follows

- From the incident database, identify those search subjects in the category of Hill Walker reported as 'overdue' or 'lost'. This produced 150 incidents, but some involved more than one person, so one subject was chosen at random from such an incident.
- From this subset of records, identify those with a useable postal address. This meant that the subset was now whittled down to 75 records.
- Each of these people was sent a letter of explanation, a short questionnaire and a stamped addressed envelope. From this 30, replies were received and formed the basis of subsequent analysis.

Observations

Chart 1. How would you describe your intended walk?

- With the vast majority assessed, the difficulty of the walk at 'average or above'. No one seems to have under-estimated the difficulty of the walk.
- This assessment must be treated carefully as it has been made retrospectively (this statement is also true of the next three questions). By shifting the assessment downward by one, it may be fairer to say 50% under-estimated the difficulty of the trip.

Chart 2. How would you describe your hill walking experience?

- Note the similarity of the responses between this and the next question; the respondents may be guilty of equating the two skills as being the same.
- Taken at face value, these figures are counter-intuitive. You would normally expect the inexperienced to become lost but this is not borne out by these figures.

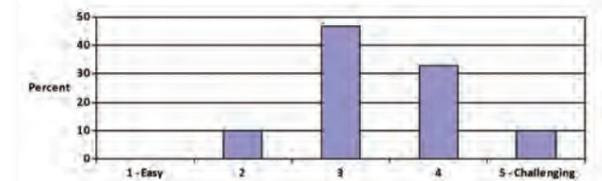


CHART 1: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR INTENDED WALK?

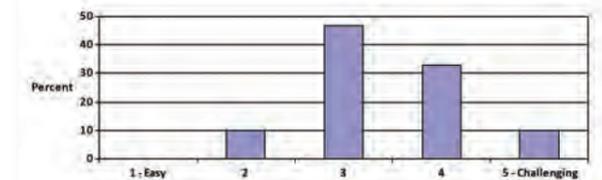


CHART 2: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR HILL WALKING EXPERIENCE?

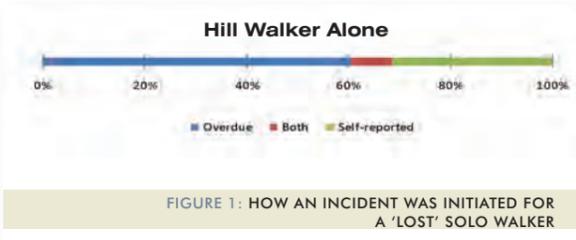


FIGURE 1: HOW AN INCIDENT WAS INITIATED FOR A 'LOST' SOLO WALKER

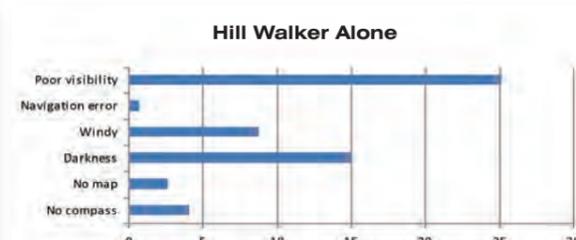


FIGURE 2: REASONS CITED FOR BEING LOST OR OVERDUE (AS PERCENTAGE OF 140)

Chart 3. How would you describe your navigational skills?

- More than with question two, we must suspect these as over-estimates of ability because of the outcome of their expeditions.
- Adjusted downward by one, means that nearly 3 in 5 persons had below average navigation skills.

Chart 4. How well did you know the area of your walk?

- Nobody is perfect!
- This lends weight to the idea that lack of local knowledge places additional burdens on navigation skills, which in these cases were found wanting.

Chart 5. Before you became 'lost', which of the following factors affected your ability to navigate?

- It is clear that climatic factors significantly affect navigation. Even considering any exaggeration by the inexperienced, this is still worthy of note.
- We must not forget that 'rainy weather' is directly linked to a later question on levels of visibility.
- It is fair to conclude that Hunger and Thirst figured very rarely as a contributor. Perhaps one message is getting through!
- The two remaining items appear related.

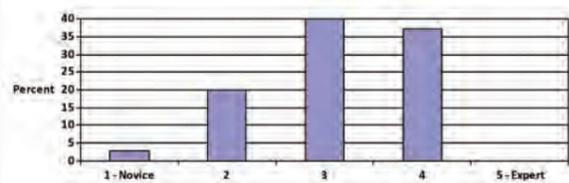


CHART 3: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR NAVIGATIONAL SKILLS?

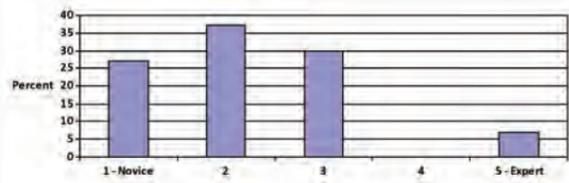


CHART 4: HOW WELL DID YOU KNOW THE AREA OF YOUR WALK?

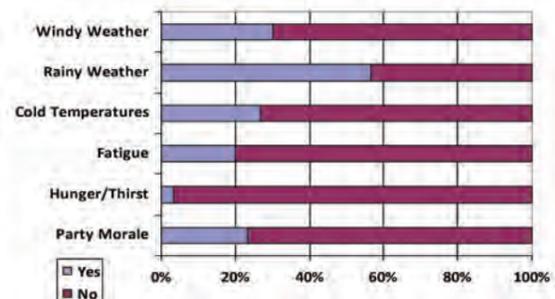


CHART 5: BEFORE YOU BECAME 'LOST', WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS AFFECTED YOUR ABILITY TO NAVIGATE?

Anecdotally, Fatigue is often a precursor to lower personal morale which again affects party morale

Chart 6. Prior to becoming 'lost' were you generally following...?

- The fact that the respondents recognised these features as key to successful navigation lends support to the belief they may have misread the information they were giving.
- It is understandable that Paths/Tracks showed similar to Geographical Features as these are often associated, paths follow ridges or drainage lies. But is the same not true for many drystone walls and fences?

Chart 7. At the time you were reported 'lost', were you using...?

- It is clearly worrying that 1 in 5 admitted to not having a map. Of the remainder, we have no estimate of the quality of the maps in use.
- Also, given the lack of visibility (see later), it is of great concern that just over half admitted to using a compass. Again, the evidence of their becoming lost points to their poor use of this essential tool.
- Regarding GPS, even possession does not guarantee mastery; a child may have a violin but are they musical?!

Chart 8. At the time you were reported 'lost', what was the visibility like?

- The cynic in me says 'is this excuse time?'
- Clearly this confirms the common belief that movement in poor visibility requires good navigation skills.
- It is possible to link this information and

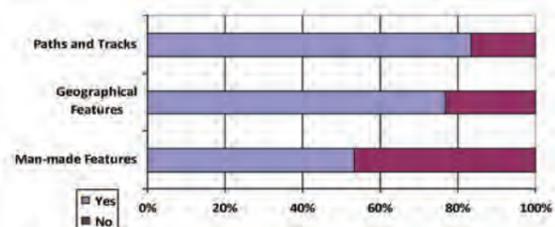


CHART 6: PRIOR TO BECOMING 'LOST', WERE YOU GENERALLY FOLLOWING...?

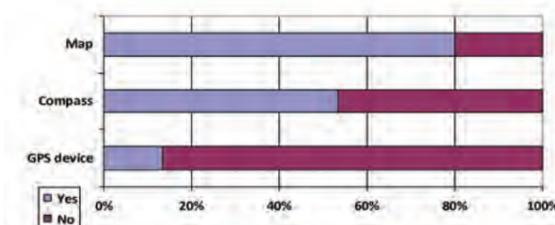


CHART 7: AT THE TIME YOU WERE REPORTED 'LOST', WERE YOU USING...?

the fact that they became lost with the level of preparation and the choice of route. The choice of route in those weather conditions probably made it certain they would become lost.

Chart 9. At the time you were reported 'lost', what was the light level like?

- I repeat my cynical view above.
- Again it seems self-evident that with poor light levels, good navigation skills are essential for safe completion of most high-level routes.
- And again, as with visibility, prior knowledge of sunset times together with effective party monitoring during the trip could have avoided the late finish.

Chart 10. How was the navigation managed?

- These categories are not mutually exclusive. Both management models could have been adopted at different times during the passage of the walk.
- Not convinced this factor, autocratic or democratic, is influential.

Chart 11. Do you intend to get help to improve?

- It is encouraging that there is evidence that these respondents have acknowledged their navigation skills were inadequate. This lends support to the re-assessment of information in Chart 3.
- The opposite is however true for hill walking experience; I would have expected this recognition that a key feature of hill walking is the preparation that goes into a walk. Here I am thinking about weather forecasts and sunset times, key factors governing my ability to navigate with my current skill level.

Conclusions

This is a simple exercise that can be replicated by any team. What it has shown is consistent with the beliefs of many in MR. These can be summarised as follows:-

1. Navigation is key skill in hill walking.
2. When hill walking, you must always be actively navigating at all times.
3. Navigation is the results of combining skill, map and compass.
4. Navigation and adequate planning will greatly reduce the chance of 'getting lost'.

Mountain rescue needs to continue broadcasting this message and educators must keep navigation at the top of their list of priorities.

¹ For every incident attended by MRTs in England and Wales, an Incident Report is completed and sent to the Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) Statistics Officer. This database will be the source of information for the original plan.

² At the same time as completing an Incident Report, mountain rescue team leaders or their deputies are encouraged to complete a second data collection sheet. This gathers data specific to a missing subject; it collects data that may be helpful to search managers searching for similar type of missing persons.

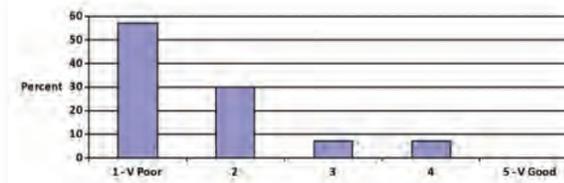


CHART 8: AT THE TIME YOU WERE REPORTED 'LOST', WHAT WAS THE VISIBILITY LIKE?

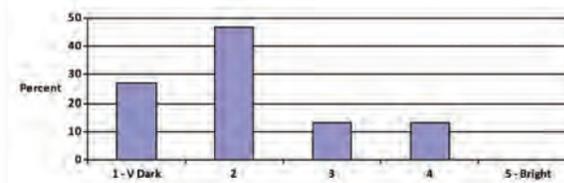


CHART 9: AT THE TIME YOU WERE REPORTED 'LOST', WHAT WAS THE LIGHT LEVEL LIKE?

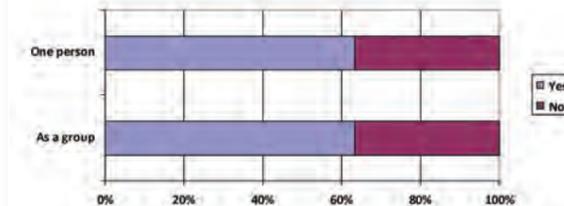


CHART 10: HOW WAS THE NAVIGATION MANAGED?

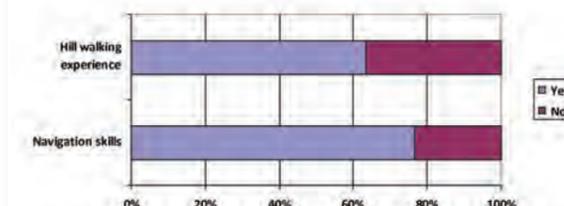


CHART 11: DO YOU INTEND TO GET HELP TO IMPROVE?

Lynx lightbar - latest addition to Venta's range

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Mountain rescue, why bother?

By Gordon Waddell (From Mountaincraft Summer 1967)

Men of mountain rescue are endowed by the general public with an aura of self sacrifice and heroism. Many and wonderful are said to be their motives. Yet when met face to face they are found to be no more no less than ordinary men. Few of them pause to ponder why they do what they do. The onlooker tends to imagine that they possess an all abounding love of their fellow man. Much is made of the dangers they may face and their supposed lack of care for self preservation.

The cynic may think that these are men seeking adventure or excitement. He may suppose that glory and fame are their reward. Few realise that there is never monetary gain - all are volunteers, including the men of the RAF teams. Those who have been on an actual rescue know that all these supposed motives are untrue. There is little pleasure, excitement or glory to be found. Few rescuers talk later about their experiences, however great the hero worship they might receive. Instead of material gain there is frequently loss of time, earnings and equipment. Most rescues involve long, weary hours of hard work with few moments of drama or danger. Enthusiasm soon dies when each black mass turns out to be only a rock and not what the imagination fancied it might be. After long frustrating hours in cold, wet, dark and windy places it is difficult to feel love for the victim who caused the outing. Especially is this so when, as so often happens, the accident was due to gross carelessness or stupidity. Why then do they go?

On every rescue they are sustained by the thought that somewhere out there a hurt but living human creature is waiting their help. This hope is secretly sustained even when logic indicates that it is no longer possible to save life. When a body is found the heart goes out to the team, the purpose is lost, and the carry becomes a soul destroying, mechanical task.

It is sometimes felt that 'there, but for the grace of God, go I'. This is often said to be a good reason for going out, as a kind of insurance against the day when others will come for you. 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.' Logical though this may be, none of us really believe it. Accidents always happen to 'someone else', and I will never need to be rescued.

When an injured mountaineer is found, and when he is brought safely down, his rescuers cannot help but feel a deep satisfaction. Inwardly they know they have achieved something which can only be described in such trite words as 'right' and 'good'. They feel better men for having proved themselves able to do something above themselves. This perhaps is their reward - nothing material, not even what others may say or think, but what they have humbly learned it has been in their power to do.

Lloyd Douglas, in his book 'Magnificent Obsession', depicts a man who helped others but insisted on secrecy. When a doctor wished to repay his loan this man refused to accept, saying that 'I've used it all up myself'. Perhaps this may be applied to the men of mountain rescue; as they give and do unto others, they themselves receive their reward. They may not consciously heed, or even appreciate the existence of this ideal. If they do, it is a debt which they never expect to be repaid, because 'they have used it all up themselves.' Material reward or public acclaim could only obscure this more nebulous, so much more valuable, inner reward.



Round the world and back again

Calder Valley team member **Fiona Wright** took a break from work and mountain rescue to race round the world

So I'm back home in Hebden Bridge after spending the best part of a year and a scary amount of money sailing round the world. One of those 'One day I'll climb Everest/sail round the world/do the Paris-Dakar rally' sort of things. And I did it, me that had never sailed before 2005. I started with a Fastnet campaign and within six months had sold my house, quit my job and signed up for the Global Challenge. Challenge Business went bust, but that dream of crewing on a round the world yacht race just wouldn't go away so I signed up for the Clipper race instead. Clipper was supposed to be the easy option – downwind, flat boat sailing... Yeah, right.

The Clipper boats are speed machines compared to the Challenge yachts, perfect for surfing big waves with the wind behind you, but not at all good for slamming into big seas going upwind. You were never sure of the landing and, when the boat belly-flopped, everything shook and anyone trying to sleep was lifted inches off their bunk.

One of the challenges about ocean racing is self-sufficiency. You only have the skills and equipment on the boat. My rescue team experience was the most useful training I had for the race. 1,000 miles from land, there's no 24 hour plumber you can call out when the heads (toilet) gets blocked, one of the crew just has to pull on the rubber gloves and get busy with a screwdriver until you find and solve the problem. Ditto temperamental computers, engine, water maker, generator, cooker, sewing machine (for repairing sails,

not running up ball gowns) and that most essential piece of racing equipment – the stereo. We did meet up with other boats in the fleet, sometimes to help them (oxygen transfer to Glasgow on Leg 3, pizza delivery to Singapore and Jamaica on the way into Qingdao) and sometimes because we needed their help (diesel from Singapore and Nova Scotia on the way to Panama). The fleet looked after each other, that was a pretty special feeling.

We did four-hour watches on H&H, with two-hour 'dog watches' either side of midday to swap over the shifts. That meant unless you were on mother watch, you never had more than about three hours sleep at a time, and frequently less. We all took a turn at mother watch. Everyone learnt how to make bread – with no fridge or freezer on the boats fresh bread every day was one of the perks.

However, cooking for fifteen in a tiny galley with only two working gas rings and everything usually on a slant, if not jumping about as well, was never easy. I was the boat first aider and did video filming, editing and uploading to the website. We took turns to write blogs and take photos. I planned menus and bought food on four legs out of seven. For legs two to five I carried out rig checks and repairs at sea and in port. You wouldn't believe how hard it is even to change a bulb mid-ocean when it's taking all your strength to avoid being flung into the mast by the boat moving in three different dimensions at once. It says a lot that the legs I enjoyed the most were the hardest physically, not only ones we won. Life revolved around food, sleep and watches; sunset and dawn, moonlight and stars the recompense for utter exhaustion most of the time.

It was definitely a race; ten matched yachts each with amateur crew from all walks of life, the skippers the only professional sailors. Crew ranged in age from 17-70, about seven people on each boat going round the world and the rest doing one or more legs. The way Danny ran Hull & Humber meant that most things we weren't happy about got changed. When you're trapped with fifteen people in a very small space that makes a big difference. We pulled together, looked after each other and developed that mutual respect from going through hard times together.

The fleet left Liverpool in a storm and H&H won the short race to La Rochelle, but we were tired, disorganised and unlucky with the wind on the way to Salvadore in Brazil. Sitting about in the doldrums does wonders for your suntan but is agonising racing. I hated that leg. I wanted to be on any other boat except Hull & Humber; I didn't like being shouted and sworn at by my skipper, didn't know most of the other crew and wasn't doing what I wanted to on the boat. I was bitterly disappointed and wondered what on earth I'd let myself in for. We eventually crawled into Salvadore – the first time I'd been outside Western Europe. Such a contrast: semi-derelict buildings still occupied; beautiful churches; cobbled, narrow streets in the old town. I was fascinated by the kids on rollerblades in the cash and carry, not so fascinated by trying to identify provisions with no Portuguese. One boat (not us!) bought what they thought was bread mix and it turned out to be choux pastry so they had no bread on the second leg.

Three days into Leg 2 we had to med-evac Sam with suspected appendicitis. That left only eleven crew for a 4,000 mile ocean crossing. We restarted racing 130 miles behind the fleet and kept overtaking boats. It was brilliant; days at a time surfing down big waves with the heavyweight spinnaker up. We didn't see another boat for weeks until the Cape of Good Hope, then the first vessel we saw was the leaders, New York Clipper. Game on!

We played cat and mouse with them up the African coast for three days, with beaches, reefs and cliffs on one side, the Aiguillez

Current two miles the other way and one of the best displays of wildlife that we saw all year. We'd broken one of our spinnaker poles in the South Atlantic, so had to gybe by 'dipping' the pole round the inside of the inner forestay instead of putting up a second pole as normal. Tactically it was brilliant, New York were watching us through binoculars and kept missing our preparations. The wind was very shifty so we had lots of sail changes; our record was six spinnaker drops in one watch. Every time you drop those massive sails they have to be spread out down below, rolled, tied with wool and then repacked ready for hoisting. We crossed the line into Durban 7 minutes ahead of New York. But, because we restarted from where we'd dropped Sam off, we incurred a four hour time penalty. Three other boats finished within four hours, so we went from 1st to 4th place for that leg.

The Durban welcome was the best on the race, the Zulu king shook a spear in our faces then gave us beer before the local yacht clubs cooked us an all-night breakfast. I escaped from working on the boat for two days and went to the Drakensburg Mountains, going up the Sani Pass into Lesotho. Drinking Glühwein in the highest pub in Africa talking to someone from the Dartmoor Rescue Group was a surreal moment.

Leg 3 was another long ocean crossing, Durban to Fremantle in Western Australia. Our route took us far enough south to cross the 40 degree latitude into the Southern Ocean. We were equally scared and excited about big waves, high winds and hitting the top boat speeds but it never happened – there was a huge high pressure system and we spent days floating about praying for wind. Christmas in Australia was very strange; for the first few months of the race I only registered the time ashore, so it didn't feel like it could possibly be Christmas already when we'd only left Liverpool three weeks ago.

There were two parallel universes, the sailing and the stopovers. On the boat, you remembered the previous sailing legs and, on land, the previous stopovers. Australia was where we took the boats out of the water, scraped off the anti-foul then filled and repainted the hulls below the waterline. We got Fred back but lost Sam again.

Race 5 started on New Year's Day, which put a damper on New Year's Eve celebrations, but that race to Singapore was the most civilised sailing of all. The scenery was as spectacularly good as the sailing. There were some alarming encounters with fishermen. H&H was lucky, we didn't get any nets tangled around the keel like some of the other boats. The most relaxing deep clean of the whole race was in Nongsa Bay, Batam in Indonesia: Four days in a tropical paradise. The fleet

wasn't happy until all ten boats (the family) were in, which usually meant nine boats waiting for Jamaica. All too soon we had to leave paradise and cross the marine equivalent of the M25 into the Keppel Marina.

We had a spectacular welcome, with tugs firing water cannon, dancing dragons and a government minister shaking hands with all the crews. It was in Singapore I realised that arriving somewhere on a yacht at any time of the day or night, being given cold beer and posing for photos before we got a shower had become normal. I had difficulty remembering my land address; my home was a 68 foot orange yacht, although it was so smelly after three or four weeks racing I couldn't wait to get off it.

From the most civilised sailing to the least – eighteen days of beating into the wind from Singapore to Qingdao, with a six day storm off the coast of Taiwan. I wasn't scared so much as angry because it felt like the boat



was trying to kill us, my crewmates were getting hurt and things kept breaking. As the air temperature dropped, we had so many sheets (ropes) snap it became routine: tack the boat to transfer the load to the intact line then send me up to the clew (on the low side) to untie or cut off the broken sheet and tie on a new one. We had a sheet snap, the inner forestay break and a section of rigging all go in one watch, it was quite a worry as to what would break next.

And it just got colder and colder, so cold that we only spent twenty minutes at a time on deck – with white sails up we only needed two or three people on watch. Just as well with half



TOP: VIEW FROM UP THE MAST AT SEA
ABOVE: H&H CELEBRATING IN HAWAII
OPPOSITE PAGE: REPLACING SHEETS ON THE WAY TO QINGDAO
PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FIONA WRIGHT AND FELLOW CREW MEMBERS

Driving mountain rescue team vehicles

Chris Lloyd Ogwen Valley MRO

So you think you're a good driver? Okay, average. You are one of the members who drives the team vehicles delivering your team mates to call outs. Consider this...

The pager or SMS alerts you to a call out. A walker with a suspected broken ankle has telephoned requesting assistance. Members to report to base ASAP.

After a quick change into hill kit, you throw the rucksack into the back of the car and reverse out of the drive. What are you thinking about? Details of the call out? Will enough troops turn up? Will you be there to be on the first team vehicle or be late and end up making tea and sorting kit? Have you upset the family by leaving home just before the children's bedtime and it was your turn to read the story?

The car in front delays your progress. You think 'Get out of my way. Can't you see I'm in a hurry?' The other driver thinks, 'Does he think an orange and white check badge gives him the right to push me off the road?' You get an opportunity to overtake and progress quickly to the base.

'Great, one of the first troops.' You abandon the car, grab your sack and rush in. The team leader throws you the Land Rover keys and tells you to get the vehicle ready for departure in five minutes. You throw your sack in along with the other specified kit. Team members jump in and you are ready for the off. 'All aboard? Let's go... Shut the back door!' Blues and twos help you progress through the busy town traffic with responsive drivers pulling in out of your way. Though there is one elderly driver who seems unaware of the team vehicle. He suddenly stops in his tracks. You hit the anchors too, with the sound of jeers from your team mates in the back.

You have to reverse a touch before you can start to pass this stationary car. A nervous driver comes in the other direction. You hold your ground, not wanting to force them off the road. You beckon them towards you. They panic and decide to mount the pavement and graze some street furniture whilst passing you. 'Stupid fool. Don't they know the width of their car?' On you go trying to make up for lost time. The Pelican crossing turns red and the pedestrian starts to cross. She recognises the team vehicle, steps back and waves you through. At last an open stretch of road. 30, 40, 50mph up to the last roundabout. Down through the gears and braking hard. Your blues and twos give you a clear crossing. Accelerate hard, up through the gears, 50mph and past the National Speed Limit signs into the country. 60... 70mph before the roads

begin to bend and dip. A section of double white lines. The car in front slows to 30mph allowing you to overtake. Base is calling you on the radio for a sitrep. The road becomes more twisty and hilly. Down through the gears, double de-clutching as if you were driving an old truck. Accelerating like Lewis Hamilton with arms outstretched and leaning into the corners, you make up time. A bit of Riverdance with your feet over the pedals as you 'clog and anchor' your way along the roads. You shoot into the car park, much to the relief of the casualty who has been watching your blues lights speed up the valley. As your nauseous team mates kit up and throw up, you are asked to sit in the back seat of the police car that has followed you on your multi-law breaking drive.

Hopefully only a few of you might not see anything wrong with this account. Most of you could fill a very large postcard with the answers. I suspect many of you know a driver like this in your team.

Unlike the paid professional emergency services, mountain rescue does not come under the strict arm of the law in many aspects of our activities. The Law affects our controlled drugs and our use of radios. To a degree we self regulate our first aid. Our search management, technical rope rescue and swiftwater rescue is not regulated. We regularly train in these activities either using team expertise and standards or national and international techniques. We keep records and we review or training regularly insisting that members maintain standards.

Driving on the public highway is regulated and you are required to pass a test. For most of us, this is the last official training we did. Now, several years later (and several revisions of the Highway Code), you are driving a vehicle full of your friends.

Here in North Wales our nationally renowned Chief Constable, Richard Brunstrom, is aware of the abuse of speed on the roads on North Wales and the carnage it can cause. North Wales police have a driving school which is used by many police forces in England and Wales. After all, we do have some fine open and fast country roads for them to practice. Speak to any biker. Just like the Fatal Incident Protocol, with which you might be familiar, North Wales police are now



LEFT TO RIGHT: CHRIS LLOYD, ROGER JONES (VOICE OF OGWEN), COLIN AVERY, DEPUTY CHIEF DRIVING INSTRUCTOR FOR NORTH WALES POLICE, AND JED STONE

looking at Driver Training and assessment for mountain rescue team members who drive team vehicles.

Three of us have just spent a very wet week of intense driving through North Wales in a team Land Rover under the strict supervision of the Deputy Chief Driving Instructor, Colin Avery. We would spend nearly an hour at the wheel and then a couple of hours sitting in the back before taking to the wheel again. Sitting in the back was no rest. Passengers were quizzed about the drive and were asked to assess the driver. Colin has a photographic type memory recording every metre of the drive. 'What didn't he do on the third roundabout?' 'What gear should he have used when...?' 'Where was the double bend sign incorrect?'

And then there were the other questions. 'When can you breach double white lines?' 'How should you progress through traffic using blues and twos?' 'Can you exceed speed limits or pass red traffic lights?'

Team leaders or transport officers should consider who drives team vehicles. Does the driver have a license for the minibus? Unlike the older licenses, many new ones cover fewer groups. Anyone with just an 'automatic' license? What does your vehicle insurance really cover? Drivers with points? Rapid response and blue light driving? Off road driving? Any limits on passenger numbers?

How often are the vehicles serviced and by whom? Is there a record and where is it kept? How often is the vehicle checked for fluids, lights, tyres, bodywork etc? By whom? And are there records? Is there any control on who drives team vehicles? Do drivers have any specific training or just a spin around the block? Do drivers have any official driving assessment or response driver training?

All awkward questions which could leave teams, officers and members open to criticism and even prosecution. Perhaps teams and/or regions should consider official training before the long arm of the Law does.

Finally, thanks to North Wales police, their driving school and Colin Avery for a very intense, tiring and eye-opening week of training.



This month's **Star Letter** wins a Mag-Lite 2D Cell courtesy of Burton McCall



CONISTON AND COUNTRYFILE

Thought I'd pen my thoughts regarding the BBC Countryfile article about 75 years of MR. The programme commenced with John Craven interviewing a person representing Coniston MRT (I take it he was a senior member of the team). John asked if there was a need for any funding from Government, in view of the vast amounts of finance needed to run a rescue team (all relative of course). The reply was that there was no need whatsoever and it should be kept to what exists now in the way of charitable donations etc. It was expressed that government funding may well interfere with the running of mountain rescue.

The question I would like to pose to this person is just where the hell has he been for the last few years? People have worked their socks off trying to obtain some form of governmental assistance similar to what has happened in Scotland. This is ongoing and there has not been the slightest hint of any government department putting in their oars. I feel he not only slighted all other mountain rescue teams outside the Lakes, but a golden opportunity has gone in seeking government assistance. It will be viewed that if the Coniston team are happy with the way things are, then let things be. He could have been briefed with such facts as that MR in general saves the Government circa £6.5 million pounds which would have to be paid for directly, if mountain rescue volunteers were unavailable. He could have said all Scottish teams each receive £20,000 on average. He could have said it would have saved mountain rescue personnel countless hours from standing on street corners with their shaky tins. He has done an injustice to all other teams throughout England and Wales.

Dave Marsh Secretary NSARDA

* Why not write in with your views and win the Star Letter prize in the next issue?

NB. Coniston MRT were given the opportunity to respond to this letter but decided not to comment.

Judy Whiteside Editor

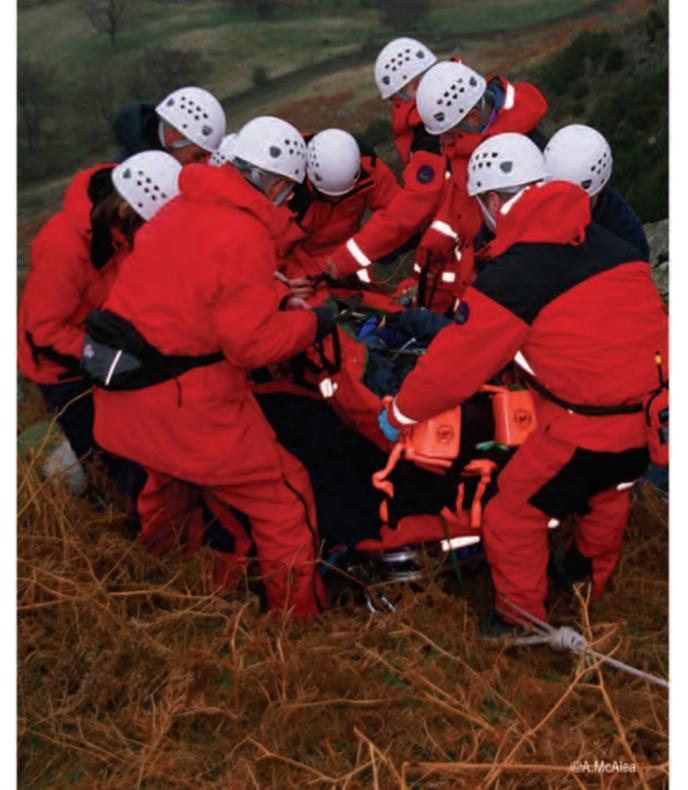
Dear editor



What is IKAR?

The International Kommission for Alpine Rescue, founded in 1948, promotes progress in mountain rescue, not only for the people in serious difficulties in the mountains but also for the safety of the mountain rescuers themselves. What began with eleven member organisations from five alpine countries, now has sixty member organisations from 31 countries around the world. If each mountain rescue organisation had to take experiences from operations and figure out all technical and material improvements themselves, it would take decades to reach the current knowledge level of IKAR. 'Actual mountain rescuers' (as IKAR describes them on their website) meet every year - under the banners of the four commissions of Terrestrial Rescue, Air Rescue, Avalanche Rescue and Alpine Medicine - to review developments in equipment and technology, and discuss the lessons learned from various key rescues and incidents. Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) continues to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge, leading the field in many of the aspects covered. To find out more, go to www.ikar-cisa.org

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Who's who?

Judy Whiteside talks to Andy Simpson
National Press Officer

How many rescue team members, I wonder – obviously excluding all those sun bronzed rugged types who spend their working life 'on the hill' as mountain instructors or guides – can claim to have first hand experience of mountain rescue outside the UK? And I don't mean suddenly rediscovering God as you find yourself on the receiving end of a white knuckle bloodwagon ride down the piste. No, I mean setting off up the Breithorn, in Switzerland, in anticipation of a blue skied, snowy ridge walk; your heart sinking as all around you dissolves into blizzard in the blink of an eye; then coming across an injured climber (and his, apparently thus far ineffectual, guide) and having the presence of mind to take control of the situation.

There would be many who, in the presence of a Swiss Mountain Guide, might bow to his (assumed) greater experience and skill. Not to mention imagine that the casualty was already in good hands, the situation under control. But instinctively, Andy Simpson, on his first solo trip to the Alps in 1998, knew there was something wrong. The German climber, in his mid-fifties, had fallen and broken his leg whilst descending with the guide. Thanks to the weather, the helicopter was unable to reach them. Radio comms seemed to be a problem. They were waiting for a snowmobile to come and collect them, but had been for some time. Meanwhile, no pain relief, no shelter, no first aid, no TLC offered.

'I don't know if it was the state of the casualty, or whether my training had actually sunk in, but this chap looked to me like he was in danger of dying from his broken leg.

'He'd been sat in the storm for almost an hour, dressed in the same clothes he'd been climbing in despite, I learned later, having a rucksack full of spare clothing. And every time the wind got up, the spindrift sandblasted any

exposed skin leaving him rocking back and forth in agony.'

Without further ado the man was dressed in Andy's spare clothing, his leg splinted with an ice axe, and – with a little help from fellow climbers (echoes of our ad hoc roots here) – was being slid down the hill inside a big orange bivvi bag.

'I don't know whether it really made much difference but he looked a hell of a lot better now that something positive was happening. And I felt a lot better for having done something rather than leaving it to his inanimate guide!'

It wasn't Andy's first experience of mountain rescue, having been a member of Rossendale and Pendle MRT for a good five years. But it served as a marker in a mountain rescue career that has gone from timid trainee – 'bored with drinking on a Wednesday evening, thinking there must be more to life than this, getting to that age when I wanted to put something back' – to involvement at all levels. Team secretary, team leader, regional publications rep, national press officer, chairman of the publications subcommittee

and, more recently, an integral part of the fundraising committee.

He joined the team with long term friend (and current team chairman) Graham Dalley, in reponse to an article in their local paper, still labouring under the popular misconception that mountain rescue teams only rescue walkers and mountaineers. Ironic that, as Press Officer he now spends most of his time disabusing the public of this same notion. And that's still a tough job despite MR involvement in a whole range of incidents over the last ten years – from floods and swiftwater, through train and air crashes, burning moorland and snowbound motorists, to missing children and older vulnerables, and the hunt for evidence in murder enquiries. But Andy tells a good story, to which anyone who has shared a pint or two with him will attest (tired of drinking on a Wednesday evening? I don't think so!) and he has a way of winning people over.

And he can walk the walk too. He remembers his first call out, still as an operational trainee. The previous day, he'd been out all day, completing the Rossendale Way in a Day, the 46 mile challenge his team run every year as a fundraiser. He'd gone straight out to a mate's barbie and then, as if he hadn't done enough of it, he walked home. So when the team leader called at 7.00am the following day and asked whether he could walk, it was a perfectly reasonable question. A walker had gone missing on Pendle and the team needed more bodies on the hill. Having dutifully tested his ability to put one foot in front of the other (however painfully) and found himself able, he was in his car and off to the callout. Perhaps fortunately for Andy, the guy turned up before there was too much walking involved.

Since making it to full team member, he's been involved in many high profile incidents in the North West area – many in collaboration with other teams, surely a great grounding for a team leader. It's allowed him to step back from what can sometimes become a parochial and insular view at team level, to see the 'bigger picture' nationally – and internationally.

Taking over as team leader in 2006 was a

nerve-racking step. Dave Barrington had held the post for 17 years – they were very big boots to fill! How did he feel? 'Nervous, clueless, and determined to give ownership of the team to team members.'

His first instinct was to delegate many of the tasks which had previously been the preserve of the team leader. Some changes brought immediate results; others, he admits, were perhaps 'too much, too soon.' But people have grown into their tasks.

'It's a work in progress. I believe we can see light at the end of the tunnel. Just so long as no one moves the tunnel end!!'

As to that bigger picture, a professional life spent in advertising and marketing has undoubtedly steered his role as press officer and PISC chairman, through an understanding of the value of PR. 'I do believe we hide our light under a bushel and if we're to improve our image – and bolster our fundraising capability – we need to shout about it more. The Press is still a powerful way of doing that, but we also need to make full use of all our other media – not least of all the website and this magazine.'

Besides the obvious buzz of a job well done, involvement in MR has brought the odd privilege – some might say perk! – such as the opportunity to meet The Queen. Following the London Tube bombings in July 2005, he was invited to Buckingham Palace as part of a small mountain rescue delegation, to attend an evening reception for all the emergency services, following the presentation of bravery awards. Despite the several hundred people present, Andy and his colleagues (and about fifty others) were ushered into a separate room where, once Her Majesty had shaken the hands of those in the 'official line' she moved on via our humble press officer.

But the job comes with its problems too. 'One of my frustrations as chair of PISC – and I suspect I speak for all the subcommittees – is that, at committee level, we've moved away from regional towards skill based representation. We have a great number of people, highly skilled at what they do, prepared to dedicate huge amounts of time over and above their team commitments, for the national cause. Yet still there are gaps. We ask for people to fill them – at meeting after meeting, sometimes. But we struggle.

'A recent example is the website. We've been asking repeatedly, through as many channels as we could, for someone to step forward and take on the job of web editor. And then a dire situation took a turn for the worse when our webmaster also announced his intention to quit. Up to the plate stepped Adam Hearn and Ben Carter – more than able and willing to help – who are now making inroads into a revamped website, alongside Dave Freeborn, and wondering why they weren't approached earlier. So why did it take three years to get the message through that we needed someone?'

There's clearly a breakdown in communication which needs addressing and, from someone whose bread and butter is in the communications business, that's not an admission Andy makes lightly.

'I feel sure all the skills we need as an

organisation are out there in the regions – we just need to find a way of winking them out!'

But then, he's as ready to confess to the cock-ups as the successes. Lapsing only a little into anecdote mode, he cites an ill-fated trip to Cairngorm with three other team members, about ten years ago, ostensibly to do a bit of winter training. It's a classic example of how easy it is to become complacent (stupid, even) despite the most expert of company.

'The icicles were coming off the weather stations horizontally but it had cleared a little, so we took a bearing, put the compasses in our pockets and set off. Walking straight into a white out. Couple of hours in, compasses still firmly in pockets, we couldn't understand why we had no idea where we were. A quick look at the map and we'd convinced ourselves that Loch Avon was a flooded Pools of Dee and made the rest of the landscape fit. We eventually got down to the Loch, took some more bearings and realised we were miles away from where we should be. Fortunately, we headed towards the Fords of Avon bothy, recognised where we were and made our escape in one piece.

'The thing was we should never have got ourselves into what could have been a very sticky situation. One of the party was a reasonably expert micro navigator, another an ex-forces SAR – and we all should have known better. How many times do we tell folk to keep their map and compass handy, and know how to use them!'

As to the future, he believes the remit for mountain rescue teams across the country must become wider than the current public perception, if we are to survive as an organisation. Especially since the developments in the emergency services and contingency planning following 9/11 and, more recently, 7/7.

'We need to evolve or be left behind. As it is, we have teams at both ends of the spectrum. At one extreme we have those who increasingly deal with a wide range of community needs, both on the hill and in an urban environment. At the other end we have those who eschew the nursing home searches and bin lid lifting, preferring to remain truer to their mountain rescue roots. But wherever teams currently fit on that spectrum, I feel sure we'll all move towards a more community based rescue service. And I hope I can continue to play my part in that evolution for many years to come.'

This year saw Andy in Chamonix, at the annual IKAR conference (International Kommission for Alpine Rescue) – a welcome opportunity to expand his understanding of mountain rescue, soak up some ideas and get to work on his international networking skills. And drink beer.

Which sort of brings us back to the Breithorn where, despite his eventual near-vertical bloodwagon exit from the mountain, the injured man made a full recovery and remained hugely grateful to his 'heroic' British friend. History doesn't record the fate of his guide but one can only hope, for the sake of his clients, that his customer care package has improved.



Mont Blanc du Tacul - Avalanche 24 August 2008

Mountain rescue in France is the responsibility of the mayor of the town where it's needed although, in practical terms, it is organised by the Fire Service and Gendarmerie who can also call on Civil Defence for assistance.

At 3am, a mountain guide reported he had seen 30-40 headtorches disappear at 3600m in what was later described as a very quiet avalanche on the north west face of Mont Blanc du Tacul. Apparently a serac fall higher up had caused a slab avalanche which caught the climbers who had recently left the area of the refuge, at the start of their ascent of the main Mont Blanc summit. The guides were asked to act as first responders and set about the task of searching the avalanche site, which spanned an area 2km long and dropped 1500m, looking for surface clues such as boots, backpacks and other debris. At 4.30am a fire service helicopter arrived at the scene from Annisee, having overcome initial questions as to whether or not helicopters would be able to fly in the area due to the weather. Between 4.30 and 6.40am survivors of the avalanche began to emerge from the debris, some injured, and were immediately evacuated to Chamonix for treatment. Five helicopters were deployed altogether, including two from Italy, and the search began from the helicopters using avalanche beacons to detect the missing. Ground based searching was discounted as there was felt to be a substantial risk of further serac falls and avalanche. For the same reason, the number of people on scene was restricted to fifty. At the same time, investigations began into how many people were actually missing. Thirty-seven breakfasts had been eaten at the refuge so, starting with that number and deducting the number of people already evacuated, the rescue controllers decided that ten people were unaccounted for. The number of beacons responding in the search area indicated that seven or eight people were buried in the avalanche and two Italian climbers were found to have made their own way off the mountain and returned home, leaving eight missing. They are still missing. The search was called off, with the full support of the victims' families and the mountain community, at 4pm. Subsequent media enquiries asked why the search had been called off so soon and the answer was that conditions were too dangerous for rescuers and that, by that time, anyone still buried would be beyond saving anyway. Two bodies have since been recovered from below the seracs and on-going DNA tests are being carried out to identify them. The rest will be recovered as and when they surface from the avalanche.

The biggest challenges faced by the rescue community were the personal safety of rescuers and the difficulty of keeping other climbers out of the area whilst the avalanche risk increased during the day, as the temperature rose. Rubberneckers in aircraft also added to the pressure. These problems were exacerbated by questions over when to stop the search, the logistics of evacuating multiple casualties and the fact that many of the victims weren't carrying avalanche transceivers.



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Snippets from the Journals

PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIB

Resuscitation attempts are more successful when automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are used on-site by lay community first responders. This is the finding of the National Defibrillator Programme prompting public access defibrillation in the UK, which analysed results from 1530 resuscitation attempts. Differences in outcome appear to reflect many factors, including whether the arrest was witnessed and bystander cardiopulmonary resuscitation performed, the nature of the presenting rhythm, the age and comorbidities of the patient and the time delay between collapse and the start of cardiopulmonary resuscitation or defibrillation. (*Resuscitation* 2008; 78: 275-80).

PREHOSPITAL VASOPRESSIN PLUS ADRENALINE

According to the 2005 International Consensus on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care Science, there is insufficient evidence to support or refute the use of vasopressin either on its own or in combination with adrenaline (epinephrine) in cardiopulmonary resuscitation. A multicentre French study analysed data on 2894 patients who had suffered out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in order to investigate this further.

Patients were randomised to receive either the combination of the two drugs or adrenaline alone. There was no significant difference in terms of survival to hospital admission, return of spontaneous circulation, or survival to hospital discharge. It would appear that adrenaline continues as vasopressor of choice for the treatment of cardiac arrest. (*N Engl J Med* 2008; 359: 22-30)

MANAGEMENT OF PENETRATING NECK INJURY, A STRUCTURED LITERATURE REVIEW

Penetrating injuries with no neurological signs do not need a cervical collar. A collar may obscure bleeding and compromise the airway. Clinical examination is as accurate as radiological imaging in identifying major blood vessel injury. (*Dept. Emergency Medicine, Nashville, Tennessee. Emerg Med J* November 2008 Vol 25).

PACEMAKER PROHIBITED ON THE PISTE

Most European ski resorts no longer use photographic identity as evidence of a valid lift pass. Due to technological advances, the new hands-free pass, which works by electronic recognition, has intervened. Unfortunately, these external electromagnetic influences (EMI) may affect conventional pacemakers. Thus, any keen

skier with a pacemaker would be disappointed to see a warning attached to the ski lift turnstiles stating 'No Pacemakers'. Interaction of an EMI with a pacemaker is a rare but possible serious experience. The results may range from a minor rhythm disturbance to a terminal event. Fortunately, most modern pacemakers have a 'noise' mode into which they switch when confusing signals are encountered. This noise mode reverts to a generic heartbeat pacing that is sustained until the confusing signal is removed. The real worry is that the only warning is on the turnstile at the base of the slope and the possibility of pacemaker interference is not widely advertised upon purchase of a lift pass. (*Emerg Med J* October 2008 Vol 25 No 10).

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FROM IKAR: 3
Report by Andy Simpson

Avalanche Balloon System

Jean Michelle Schmitt

The avalanche balloon system is an airbag system, reputedly discovered by an alpine hunter who regularly found himself in avalanches. This particular hunter always survived because he was carrying a dead deer around his neck which kept him on or close to the top of the snow given that larger particles stay nearer the top of avalanche debris. The modern equivalent is an airbag which inflates around the victim, hopefully ensuring that they stay on top of the snow rather than buried beneath it. The airbags can be self inflated via a pyrotechnic trigger and will always work, even if the batteries powering the 'release community' system have failed. The 'release community' feature allows for all members of a ski party to be electronically linked so that if an avalanche occurs one person in the group can activate everyone's airbags provided they are in range. Range can be increased by the use of repeaters within the group. The system also incorporates a cut-out facility which blocks activation of the bags in safety critical situations such as inside a helicopter or on a ski lift. Lone skiers have to rely on their own ability to inflate the airbag. The Swiss Federal Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research, in Davos, now keep records of all accidents involving the airbag system and, so far, have recorded 200 cases. Of these, 180 balloons inflated leaving twenty which didn't. Four were technical failures and sixteen were attributed to human error which included forgetting to pull the release handle in time.

www.slfr.ch/praevention/lawinenunfaelle/unfallstatistik/unfallstatistik-en.pdf

SUSPENSION INJURY

Your readers may be interested to note a major change in the Health & Safety Executive's First Aid Guidelines for people suffering from prolonged suspension. It is easily viewed at www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/harness.htm dated September 2008.

It's always healthy to keep rethinking and reviewing accepted doctrine. I am sure that this new advice is sound. I still await a confirmed explanation for this possible phenomena but think John Ellerton's explanation of 'blood pooling' in his excellent book 'Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue' may have some relevance. My personal feeling is that unidentified 'toxins' are not relevant.

Dr David Hillebrandt

dear editor



medical stuff



A brief dip into eponymous medical terms 2

David Allan continues his examination of what's in a name

Alzheimer's Disease

Often referred to as pre-senile dementia this is a degenerative organic mental disease. It results in progressive atrophy of the frontal and occipital lobes of the brain. Some 5% of the under 65 population are affected. This rises to 20% in the over 80 age group. Women are twice as likely as men to develop the condition.

Cerebral vascular disease is believed to be at the root of the disease and there are a number of predisposing factors, namely obesity, cigarettes, high alcohol consumption, hypertension, diabetes and severe head injury.

The symptoms largely affect the mental state of the patient. Those which bring the condition into frequent contact with mountain rescue teams are unpredictable behaviour with a tendency to wander aimlessly, confusion of time and place, recent memory loss and muddled reasoning. Others include depression, anxiety, restlessness, and self neglect. Loss of speech and difficulty walking may eventually occur. Most patients die from pneumonia, heart attack or a stroke. Although a number of treatments are being evaluated there is currently no cure for the disease.

The disease takes its name from Aloysius Alzheimer, a German psychiatrist and neuropathologist, who is generally regarded as the founding father of neuropathology. Born in 1864 in Markbreit, Bavaria he studied medicine in Wirzburg. A 51 year old patient came under his care in 1901 and exhibited the above symptoms. When she died in 1906 he carried out the post mortem and identified the changes in the brain typical of the disease. In 1910 one of his colleagues attached the name of Alzheimer to the condition.

Alzheimer was able to pursue a very extensive research programme, apparently as the result of being financially supported by his wife. He made important discoveries in the study of vascular disease in the brain and in the neurological manifestations of syphilis.

His laboratory motto remains relevant today, 'Excessive reservations and paralysing despondency have not helped the sciences to advance nor are they helping them to advance, but rather a healthy optimism that cheerfully searches for new ways to understand as it is convinced that it will be possible to find them'.

Battle's Sign

This is an important clinical sign in the management of head injuries. It consists of bruising over the mastoid behind the ear. (Figure 1). It requires careful inspection to detect in the early stages and is easily obscured by hair etc.

It results from and indicates a fracture of the base of the skull (Figure 2). A fracture of this nature is only produced by a blow of considerable violence to the head. It is therefore a confirmation of a serious head injury.

William Henry Battle was born in Lincoln in 1855 and lived until 1936. He became a surgeon at both St Thomas's and the Royal Free hospitals in London.

In addition to leaving his name with this sign he described an incision for removing the appendix and an operation to deal with a femoral hernia.

Bell's Palsy

This condition is an affliction of the Vllth cranial nerve which supplies the muscles of the face. If the nerve is not working properly the muscles are paralysed resulting in drooping of that half of the mouth with an inability to smile. Closure of the eye is compromised and in severe cases is impossible (Figure 3).

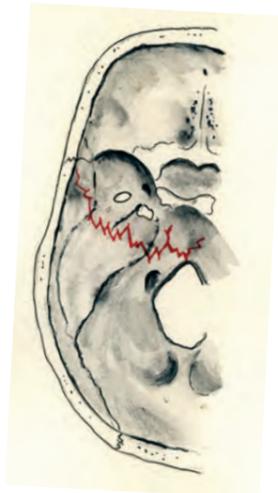
Most cases are due to a virus infection or to auto-immune disease. It may however develop from exposure of the face to severe cold and is occasionally encountered as a complication of a head injury if the nerve is involved in a fracture of the skull. Rarely is it encountered as a result of wounds where the nerve is divided by a weapon.

Except in the cases where the nerve is damaged by trauma most patients recover, albeit over a long period.

Sir Charles Bell was an outstanding Scottish anatomist and surgeon who lived from 1774 to 1842. His brother, John Bell, was



Figure 1



BASE OF SKULL INTERNAL VIEW LEFT SIDE
Figure 2

also an accomplished surgeon and artist. John

was present at the battle of Waterloo on 15 June 1815, and it is recorded that he 'operated on the wounded until his clothes were stiff from blood'.

The success of both brothers took them to the Middlesex hospital in London and thereafter they were banned from returning to their native Edinburgh to practise surgery!



Figure 3

Bennett's Fracture

A fracture, or fracture dislocation, at the base of the thumb which involves the metacarpo-phalangeal joint (Figure 4), this injury is produced by a longitudinal blow to the thumb with the thumb partly flexed. The usual mechanism of injury is from a fall onto the thumb or from a blow delivered by the hand. The alternative name for the injury is 'Boxer's fracture'. The injury is associated with immediate considerable pain and loss of use with the rapid development of bruising and swelling. Loss of use of the thumb will make gripping with the hand impossible. Immediate treatment requires simple padding and splinting to provide a degree of comfort.

If the fracture has little displacement it can be reduced and held in plaster but those with greater displacement require surgical reduction and pinning of the fracture. For an injury involving a joint there is surprisingly little long term arthritis but some loss of mobility of the thumb is common. The injury almost always affects the dominant hand.

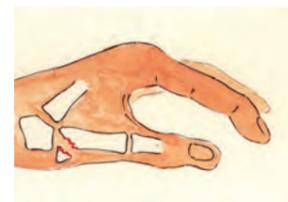


Figure 4

Edward Halloran Bennett was an Irish surgeon born in Cork in 1837. He studied medicine and then became a surgeon at Trinity College in Dublin. He described the fracture after sustaining the injury himself in a fall from his horse in 1882. He is also credited with carrying out innovative surgery for children with rickets and for introducing antiseptics into surgery in Ireland. He died in Dublin in 1907.

...to be continued...

USE OF DRUGS OUTSIDE PRODUCT LICENCE

The expansion of the MR Controlled Drug licence to products other than morphine is very welcome. It has, however, led to some confusion between the 'MR Licence' and the 'Product Licence'. The MR licence allows teams to possess controlled drugs and not be breaking the law. It does not deal with the use of the drugs. Product licences, or more correctly Marketing Authorisations (MA) are issued by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The MA is intended to guarantee the quality, safety and efficacy of medicinal products and states the indication, dose, route of administration and age group of patients for which the drug may be used. To some extent, it places liability on the MA holder, the manufacturer, for adverse effects arising from the use of their product, provided that use is within the licence. If a drug is prescribed outside any of the criteria of the product licence eg. different age group or route of administration, then it is described as 'off-label' prescribing. Prescribing medicines in this way increases the prescriber's responsibility and liability. The prescriber should be able to justify the use of the medicine off licence, be competent in using the medicine in that situation, have a greater knowledge of

the drug's pharmacology, and have evidence for its use and safety in that group of patients.

Best practice is that the use of the drug off-label is explained to the patient, including an explanation of the implications of off-label use, as part of the consent process. This may not always be appropriate on the hillside. Among the new drugs being discussed the use of IV Morphine is within market authorisation; use of intranasal Diamorphine and buccal Midazolam are both off-label due to the route of administration; use of Fentanyl lozenges is also off licence as the indication 'acute pain' is not covered by the licence (which only deals with chronic cancer pain).

In the MR context, even though a casualty carer is working within agreed national or local protocols, if they make the decision to administer the drug then they are the prescriber of the drug. Prescribing off-label puts an increased burden on both them and their training to ensure that they are not putting themselves, their team and the casualty at risk. This needs to be considered by any teams looking to expand their use of opiates beyond morphine.

Dr Phil Hughes MB ChB DCH MRCGP

Phil's points are absolutely correct. If any harm is caused by drug administration, questions should be asked and, rightly, these could be from a wide range of authorities. The harm can be the result of a single factor or an accumulation of many errors or mistakes. If the errors are large and foreseeable, the error may amount to (for example) negligence or, in the extreme, manslaughter. Drugs are no different from any other procedure or equipment that we use. Catastrophic failure of a stretcher could lead to similar claims. Using a drug within its licence does not protect you from using it wrongly but when a drug is used off-label the onus is placed firmly on the administrator and the system that allowed the drug to be used.

Studies have shown that about 1 in 5 drugs are given off-label; that harm is more likely to occur and that in 7 out of 10 cases there is no evidence that the drug would have been helpful. Why are so many drugs used off-label? One reason is that when a new drug is given a licence the drug company has to collect strong evidence that the drug is effective and safe. This is very expensive but made less so by restricting the types of patient tested. As

a consequence, many drugs are not licensed for children. If a new use for the drug comes along, it is rarely worth the drug company going back and getting the licence extended.

Most doctors are forced into taking a pragmatic view, if not their ability to help patients would be compromised. They weigh up: the evidence; the risk and benefits, and alternatives for the patient; the safeguards that can be put in place and what their colleagues are doing, and then prescribe on an individual basis. This has been done for the newer drugs used in pain management that Phil has outlined above. BUT that is only part of the process - training, supervision and audit of rescuers using these drugs is CRITICAL. Consider buying a novel abseil device; OK you read the product literature and then go out to try it. I bet that you don't go straight to Malham cove and abseil over the edge! And, if your friend shows you a different way of using it - off-label - hopefully you think again. Remember breaking open screw-gate karabiners on abseiling when people experimented with a different harness attachment. Be safe!

Dr John Ellerton MRC Medical Officer

dear editor

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Brains versus brawn - hazards in haul systems

Richard Terrell and Malcolm Walker Central Beacons MRT

During a weekend training session in July 2008, a 70m vertical stretcher lower and haul was carried out on the Gower cliffs in South Wales. During the final stages of the lift a prussic on the haul system failed by slippage. The result was significant damage to both the prussic and main rope, which could have caused a failure of the main rope system and a fall onto the safety system. This report highlights some factors behind why it slipped, so measures can be taken to avoid it occurring again.

System set up

The team uses a block-and-tackle haul system attached to the main rope via a single 3-wrap prussic. The system is designed so that the prussic will slip to prevent damage from over-tensioning of the main rope. The main rope is then taken through tandem prussics and a prussic minding pulley (PMP) so that the load of the stretcher and attendant can be held whilst the haul system is reset (See figure 1). An independent safety line system is also attached to the stretcher and attendant (not illustrated).

observers. During the haul, the three-person hauling group experienced some difficulty due to ground friction and a fourth person was added to enable a smooth pull.

The haul progressed until the stretcher became caught on some small ledges approximately 1.5 metres below the top of the cliff. The system was reset and, as the group started to pull again, the haul required progressively more force. The haul group decided to stop as they suspected something was wrong. Unfortunately, this decision was overruled and a fifth person was told to join.

An eye witness account stated that, 'We carried on successfully for a while until the rope came to what felt like a natural stop. Very difficult to move without over-exerting. X asked for a reset but was overruled and we were told to do one last pull, before a reset was done. We had to pull really hard to move it, it didn't feel right, and the result was the puff of smoke.'

The puff of smoke referred to was the prussic slipping approximately 400mm and melting on to the haul rope. The integrity of the rope was assessed as being intact, a new prussic was put into the system and the haul continued after the stretcher was released from where it had caught on the rock. When the stretcher was released it lifted about 75mm due to the stretch in the rope.

An independent safety system utilising a 540 rescue belay was in place but was not triggered.

Figure 2 shows the haul rope and the dark colour to the right is where the prussic slipped. Figure 3 shows the prussic with damage where it melted on to the rope.

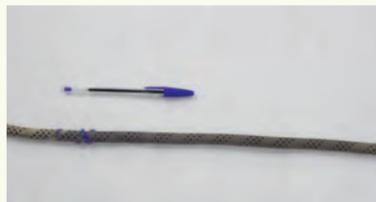


FIGURE 2: HAUL ROPE WITH DAMAGED SECTION



FIGURE 3: DAMAGED PRUSSIC

The Maths

The team generally follows the recommendation that the number of people in the hauling group multiplied by the mechanical advantage should not exceed 12. The mechanical advantage of the system is 4:1 and therefore the recommended hauling group is a maximum of three persons. At the time of the prussic failure during the exercise the hauling group consisted of five persons.

It is possible to compare the forces in the system during a haul by the recommended three persons and the forces in the system during a haul by five persons.

To estimate the force that can be applied by each rescuer we can use the 'Rope in Motion' research for Kirk Mauthner of Rigging for Rescue in Canada which concluded that an average rescuer can pull 41lbs (21kg).¹

System forces with hauling group of 3 persons (maximum recommend)

Convert average 1 person hauling load (21kg) to kilo Newtons (kN):

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= 21\text{kg} \times 9.81 \\
 &= 206\text{N} \\
 &= 0.206\text{kN}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Average 3 person hauling force:} \\
 &= 3 \times 0.206\text{ kN} \\
 &= 0.618\text{ kN}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Total force in system:} \\
 &= \text{Average 3 person} \\
 &\quad \text{hauling force} \\
 &\times \text{Mechanical advantage} \\
 &\quad \text{of system} \\
 &= 0.618\text{ kN} \times 4 \\
 &= 2.472\text{ kN}
 \end{aligned}$$

System forces with a hauling group of 5 persons

We can work out the forces within the system as was at the time of failure.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Average 5 person hauling force:} \\
 &= 5 \times 0.206\text{ kN} \\
 &= 1.03\text{kN}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Total force in system:} \\
 &= \text{Average 5 person} \\
 &\quad \text{hauling force} \\
 &\times \text{Mechanical advantage} \\
 &\quad \text{of system} \\
 &= 1.03\text{ kN} \times 4 \\
 &= 4.12\text{ kN}
 \end{aligned}$$

This is greater than allowed in the 10:1 Safety Factor ie. $4.12 \times 10 = 41.2\text{ kN}$.

These calculations do not take into account any forces due to friction. The friction over the edge can give a greater resistance than the load of the stretcher.

Conclusion and Learning Points

There are a number of factors that contributed to this incident:-

- After the reset the information was not passed to the stretcher attendant that the haul was starting again, therefore they could not confirm if they started to move.
- The haul team knew something was wrong yet listened to the instruction to carry on.
- The edge person was not paying attention to the stretcher as it approached the top and therefore did not see it jam and call a stop.
- A senior party leader was not next to the haul system to call a stop.
- The single prussic worked as a slipping clutch and protected the rope and slings from damage.
- The haul was the last exercise of the training weekend and some people just wanted to go home.

To prevent this happening in the future the following actions have been identified.

- The team will be undergoing more training in mechanical advantage and haul systems.
- All party leaders and trainees will have further instruction in the mechanism of haul systems.
- The edge-person must be vigilant and be an experienced team member.
- Communication must be improved between haul team and stretcher attendant.
- Senior party leaders on such exercises must be stood next to trainee party leaders at all times and must step in if potentially dangerous problems arise.

References

¹Gripping Ability on Rope in Motion, Kirk and Katie Mauthner, 1994.

the crew injured. The only warm, dry place on the boat was the inside of my sleeping bag. Then after all the storms and battering, the wind dropped and the race was cut short to ensure we could get to Qingdao on time. After motoring for 600 miles in the freezing cold, we had to mooch about for another sixteen hours outside the harbour because we arrived early evening.

The Chinese red carpet welcome was only available 9am-5pm. With it being the Chinese New Year there was a nightly barrage of fireworks and I felt like I'd had a winter all of a sudden. Qingdao used the Clipper race as a warm-up for the Olympics and the prize-giving was spectacular. I was still doing most of our rig work, now generally in about five layers, which detracted slightly from the Lara Croft impersonation with knives and tools tied onto my harness. The UK had receded far into the distance, Barnsley getting to the semi-finals of the FA cup was more newsworthy to us than any politics.

The fleet was becalmed after trying to leave Qingdao, we anchored up to avoid being dragged backwards by the tide and had two inches of snow overnight! The Pacific soon behaved like the very big ocean it is with big waves and strong winds for the next month. Most boats took it slightly easy from Qingdao to Honolulu but we were short-handed again, with Fred away to recover from frostbite.

For me that was the hardest leg, but the best. I kept waiting for things to calm down after the usual mad first 48 hours but they never did. The weather was so changeable and the winds so strong that we destroyed our midweight

then heavyweight spinnakers in quick succession after a Chinese gybe that had people hanging off winches amidships as the boat went right over sideways.

We spent the following week trying to repair the spinnakers but could only save the heavyweight. We kept ahead of everyone until the race was stopped when Durban was dismantled, shortly followed by Western Australia. We motored the rest of the way to Hawaii with our own rig getting slacker by the day.

Because of the rig repairs and waiting for WA and Durban to get to Hawaii, the whole fleet had an extra two weeks there - nice, but expensive. It also meant the Panama, Jamaica and New York stops were cut to just a couple of days each. The racing got harder as we had less recovery time. When the winds dropped, races were cut short to ensure we met deadlines, so we spent endless days motoring instead of sailing. Hull and Humber won the highly tactical leg to Panama, and the light airs float-off into Jamaica, but coming 8th into New York with New York Clipper breaking the home port curse and winning cost us the overall lead. We tried hard in the grey North Atlantic fog to Nova Scotia then across the pond to Cork but couldn't beat them again.

I don't have space to talk about Santa Cruz, the Panama Canal, gentlemanly 'Le Mans' race starts, dolphins, whales and flying fish. Would I do it again? Yes. It was an amazing adventure and that's what I wanted. The trouble with adventures is they're neither comfortable nor predictable! And they have to end.

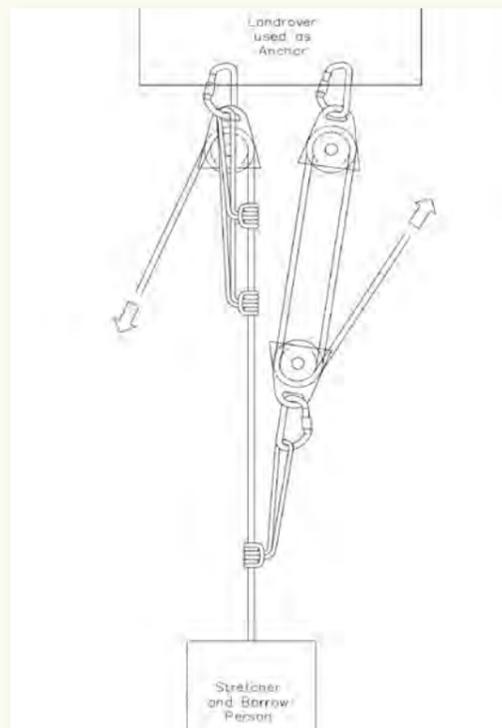


FIGURE 1: HAUL SET-UP (INDEPENDENT SAFETY BACK-UP SYSTEM NOT SHOWN)

The Incident

In order to gain experience, trainee party leaders were in charge during the exercise and experienced party leaders were acting as

observers. During the haul, the three-person hauling group experienced some difficulty due to ground friction and a fourth person was added to enable a smooth pull.

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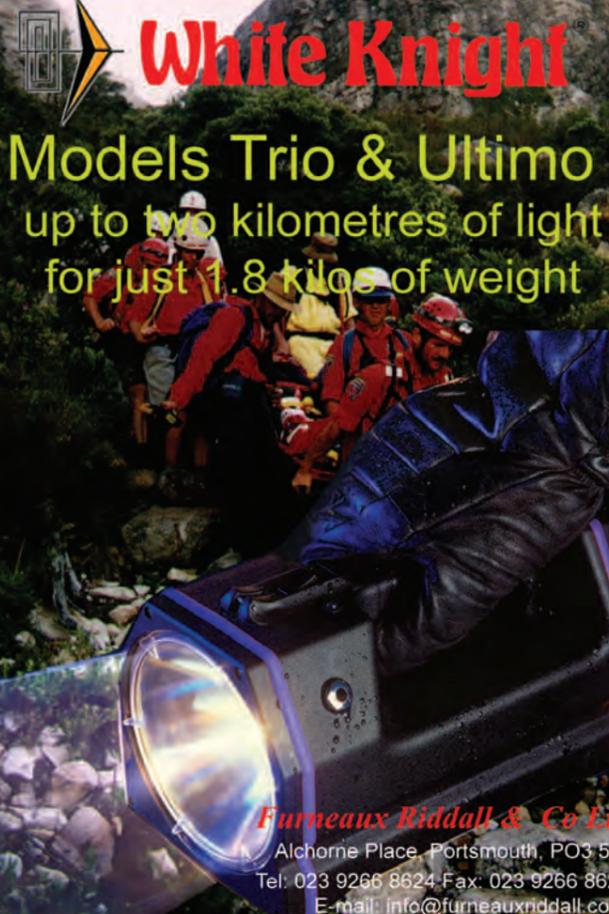
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