

ISSN 1756-8749

mountain rescue

JULY 2009

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ISSUE 29



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WELCOME TO ISSUE 29

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

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

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

EDITORIAL

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NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 30

Copy Deadline:
5 September 2009

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.

FRONT PAGE

Photo: Paul Burke

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



It is with some relief that discussions on the new constitution have finally been laid to rest. Deliberations have taken considerably longer than the gestation period of an elephant and there is a need to move on to other matters.

The underlying wish to have greater team involvement has been achieved. I believe concerns that meetings will be large and unproductive will be unfounded but it will be important that people do not arrive with an idea of, 'I have nothing to say but I shall say it anyway'.

The management group is better identified with all MREW officers having equal status and accountability for their area of responsibility. The final version of the trustee group with four MREW officers, the chair of BCRC, three regional chairs and two external appointments provides a good mix. The appendices of member teams, regions and SAR related bodies can now be reviewed annually without invoking changes to the constitution per se.

It would have been surprising, given the nature of mountain rescue, that these changes be universally acclaimed but I do believe we have a better structure to enable us to address the challenges ahead.

The need for a five, possibly ten, year plan has been articulated for some months and a group has been formed specifically for this purpose – essentially a regionally derived group with a small number of MREW officers attached. Several individuals have clearly demonstrated both interest and ability and have been selected as regional representatives with a commitment to the development of MREW. It is important the group remains small in order to meet and achieve a result in a tight time frame.

Neil Roden (Chair PDMRO) has agreed to chair the group. David Bartles-Smith (NESRA; Team Leader TWSRT); Peter Huff (Chair YDRP); Richard Warren (Chair LDSAMRA); Ewan Thomas (SWSARA), as MREW Water Officer, brings additional expertise; John Hulse

(NWMRA; Team Leader OVMRO); Andy Simpson (MPSRO; Team Leader RPMRT), as MREW Press Officer, brings extra information to the group; Jon White (SWERA), as Vice Chair of the medical subcommittee, also brings the advantage of additional specialist information. The MREW officers are Bill Whitehouse, Peter Smith, Penny Brockman and myself. Tony Rich has offered his services to advise on any relevant aspects of the report.

Views are welcome from teams and individuals, either via any of the above or directly to Peter Smith by the 31 July.

Perhaps the group should take as its motto the observation of Oscar Wilde. 'A grapefruit is a lemon that had a chance and took advantage of it.'

One unanimous decision taken in May was to introduce a national benevolent fund. The advantage of a national scheme, as opposed to regional or team funds, is the significantly greater sum of money that will be accrued. It will require a small annual donation from every member of mountain rescue, although this will clearly not be compulsory. There will then be money entirely within the control of MR which can be paid out in the event of hardship or any unforeseen event. It will be immediately available and could therefore be used to tide over the difficult period before a formal insurance policy pays out. We are currently working on the detail and intend to have the scheme operational within the coming months.

There will be a number of challenges to mountain rescue in the coming years, some we recognise and undoubtedly some that we have not yet imagined. The changes will, I believe, equip us to meet all these issues more effectively. Those with misgivings about the changes might look to Sir Thomas Beecham.

'You should try everything once, except incest and folk dancing.'

David Allan Chairman

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PARTY LEADER COURSE

Places: 30
Date: 17-19 July (Weekend)
Location: Hebden Bridge
Contact: Mike Marsh 01204 696383
mjm@boltonmrt.org.uk

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT REFRESHER

Places: 30
Date: Wednesday/Thursday
2/3 September (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: Friday/Saturday/Sunday
4/5/6 September (Three days)
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Peter Howells OBE MSTJ
As above

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

Places: 40
Date: Monday - Friday
7-11 September (Five days)
Location: University of Wales, Bangor
Contact: Peter Howells OBE MSTJ
As above

MEDIA INTERVIEW SKILLS FOR MR TEAMS

Places: 20
Date: 3 October (One day)
Location: Patterdale MRT HQ
Contact: Richard Holmes
r_n_holmes@hotmail.com

FIRST RESPONSE SEARCH MANAGEMENT WEEKEND

Places: 20
Date: 4-6 September (Two days)
Location: Smelt Mill, Bowland Pennine
Training Resource
Contact: Richard Holmes
As above

TRAINING SURVEY

Mike Margeson writes...
You should have seen or received this questionnaire already through your own team or region (and the

questionnaire is reproduced here on pages 31/32 so please take the opportunity to either cut out or photocopy, then fill in and return). We would like

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

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

MEDICAL SYMPOSIUM

Places: 60
Date: Saturday 7 November (One day)
Location: Charlotte Mason College
Ambleside
Contact: Peter Smith 01706 852335
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

PPE/FPE EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY

Places: 24
Date: 1 November (One day)
Location: Swaledale MRT HQ
Contact: Mike Evens

MR(E&W) SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING

Places: 50
Date: Saturday 21 November (One day)
Location: Lancs 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

training calendar

feedback from as many of you as possible - not just training officers or team officials. If there are questions you cannot answer, just leave blank. Bob Sharp from Scottish MR will analyse the data and we can then use this to help with forward planning.



The findings will also be published in the magazine. At the time of writing, we had received only twenty replies, from only nine out of 50+ teams and two regions have not responded at all. Come on folks, the form is mostly tick boxes, takes less than ten minutes to fill in and we want to know your opinions!

TRAINING SUB UPDATES

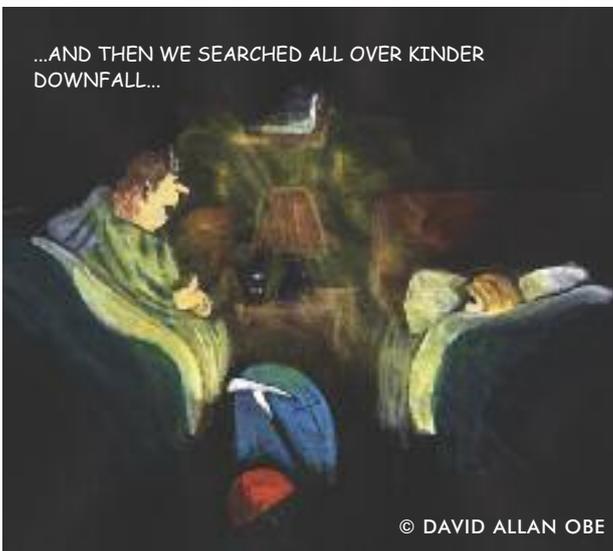
Since the last mag, the training subcommittee has voted in Ken Owens as vice chairman. Ken is chairman of the Lakes training officers group who have been very proactive under his leadership in recent years, so this is strong appointment. Richard Holmes from NESRA has taken on the role of secretary and is already helping with the new course bookings. Many thanks to the outgoing secretary, Peter Howells, for many years hard work in support of the training

subcommittee.

We hope to use the new website, and the training area, as effectively as possible. I would like to see a downloadable library of articles and information to use for training. Likewise, our minutes are available for all to see. Gary Anderson from the Scarborough team has taken the job of editing and developing the training area of the website, so our thanks to him. We now have all regions represented on the subcommittee, including a number of new members. However, the invitation remains open for any MREW member who feels they have a contribution to make.

EQUIPMENT UPDATE

Richard Terrell writes... It's been a busy few months getting to grips with the equipment requests and I am pleased to say I am now on top of it. Can I remind teams that before they send stretchers off for servicing they need to send a request in to me. Also teams should inspect their equipment regularly. Unfortunately MREW are not in a position to pay for repairs, only services. Paul Witheridge of Lyon Equipment has produced a great article on the inspections to be carried out - see page 50.



© DAVID ALLAN OBE

The Emergency Services Show 2009 24/25 November Stoneleigh Park, Coventry

This is the fourth year of the Show - and for anyone involved in mountain rescue, it's an unmissable event. Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) is exhibiting on Stand Number E9 in the Emergency Response Zone so come and support your organisation



Over 300 specialist equipment suppliers in the Exhibition will have the latest technology for the kit you require, with plenty of practical demonstrations taking place. You can also see what equipment is being used by your emergency partners. The challenging nature of today's emergencies make it essential for

SkitoStop for essential insect protection

When you're focused on keeping everyone safe on the mountain, the last thing you need to deal with is the irritation of biting insects. Most effective insect repellents contain DEET which, while being effective, is linked with adverse health effects and can cause irrevocable damage to fabrics and essential equipment with which it comes into contact.



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



Apology

In the last issue, I wrongly credited the article on ACPO and Mountain Rescue to ACC Staff Officer Dyfan Jones. This should have been credited to ACC Ian Shannon, our ACPO representative (see pic). Apologies, both to Ian and Dyfan! *Judy W. Editor*

organisations to work together to ensure a more effective response. The Networking Zone, a focal part of the Exhibition, helps achieve this. It is made up of the Emergency Response Zone and the Blue Light Zone and provides you with access to specific emergency responders, professional, government, voluntary and blue light organisations, offering an unrivalled opportunity to build links with potentially complementary services.

Meanwhile, attending the two day Conference will give you a better understanding of the global emergency response issues and an overview of the challenges ahead. It's an ideal opportunity to network and establish new relationships with likeminded professionals.

Can you afford not to attend? For further information and to register for the Exhibition (which is free to attend) and the Conference, visit www.theemergencyservicesshow2009.com

We look forward to seeing you there!



A match made in heaven...

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Our new technical Summit Hoodie and Fuera Ascent are an exceptionally versatile mid-layer/ windproof combination for worldwide summer alpine and multi-activity use. Combining functionality with flexibility, they're harness, rope and helmet compatible and suitable for temperature extremes of -20° to +20°C.

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- You gain temperature control in all conditions via efficient venting from ultra-effective, easy access two-way torso/ sleeve zips.
- Map-sized pockets, handwarming pockets and secure storage mean items are easily stowed and accessed even during activities.
- The Fuera Ascent features a helmet-friendly adjustable hood with wired visor.

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- EMAIL CONTRACT.SALES@PARAMO.CO.UK
- WWW.PARAMO.CO.UK

New this season!

LAKE DISTRICT

Richard Warren writes... At the March AGM, the region welcomed two new faces, Simeon Leech taking up the position of regional secretary and David George, assistant secretary. Both are members of **Duddon & Furness MRT**. Simeon takes over from Richard Warren of **Wasdale MRT** who has been carrying out both the LDSAMRA chairman and secretary roles for the past year. David has taken over from Will Scott, also from the Duddon and Furness team who decided to stand down after a number of years in this position. The association thanks Will for his contribution over the years.

CUMBRIA'S CHIEF CONSTABLE COMMENDS MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS

Cumbria Constabulary's Chief Constable held an awards evening on Thursday 7 May, to acknowledge the outstanding work carried out by Cumbria's twelve mountain rescue teams.

In recognition of the invaluable 24/7 support the teams provide for the emergency services, Chief Constable Craig Mackey invited representatives from each of the teams to the Salutation Hotel in Ambleside, where they were commended for their dedication and bravery, which has saved many Cumbrian lives. Over 100 people attended the event including over 70 team members from across the region. All twelve teams were represented, including a number of SARDA (Lakes) search dogs and their handlers

Mr Mackey said, 'I am delighted to hold this event in recognition of the tireless work that these teams carry out on a daily basis that has – without doubt – saved countless lives.

'Each and every member gives up their spare time to assist emergency services and brave the most treacherous conditions out on our fells. Their exceptional performance is down to each member's professionalism, goodwill and community spirit and I speak for all officers and staff when I say I am very grateful and proud to work alongside such dedicated professionals.'

A DVD presentation was shown to illustrate the type of incident team members are called to, and the extreme conditions they are able to operate in.

Of course, mountain rescue teams not only assist the police, but also the ambulance and fire and



▲ ABOVE: ALAN PRESCOTT (LEFT) AND MARK HODGSON (RIGHT) EXPLAINING EVENTS TO THE DUKE
LEFT: TEAM MEMBERS ON THE CRAG DURING THE STRETCHER LOWER

rescue services, and are themselves supported by RAF and Royal Navy SAR Flights, RAF MR teams, the North West Air Ambulance, the Great North Air Ambulance and the Coastguard. Representatives from these partner agencies were also invited and thanked for their contributions during the event.

Richard Warren, Chairman of the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA) said, 'It is a great honour for our Lake District teams to be recognised for the work we do supporting both our local communities and the many visitors to the Lake District that we help. Equally important is the recognition of support provided by our families and friends, without which we would struggle to make the commitment required.'

CENTREPOINT AND WELLCHILD INVITED TO THE REGION

As a follow up to last year's 75th Anniversary event on 5 July, where representatives from the Centrepoint charity were invited along to the 'It's a Knockout Competition', LDSAMRA is organising a return occasion for two linked charities, Centrepoint (in their 40th Anniversary year) and WellChild, planned around the countdown to the Olympics weekend of 24–26 July 2009. Cumbria County Council held a similar event last July when an Olympic flag was hoisted on the summit of Scafell Pike, attended by Chris Bonington and other local celebrities and officials.

The event will include a walk along Striding Edge to the summit of Helvellyn, where a Lakes Alive flag will be unfurled. Whilst the young people from Centrepoint are tackling the heights of Helvellyn, a group of children from WellChild will be treated to a day's activities centred on the **Patterdale MRT** rescue base.

Centrepoint gives homeless young people a future whereas WellChild provides specialist medical care and direct support in the home to chronically sick children and their families. Centrepoint shares our Patron Prince William, and Prince Harry is Royal Patron to WellChild.

If you have any questions or comments on this article or indeed any of the Lake District articles or statements made then please contact me and I will ensure that you receive a response.

DUKE OF GLOUCESTER VISITS KESWICK TEAM

On Wednesday 27 May, The Duke of Gloucester met **Keswick MRT** at Woden's face, Borrowdale. The team undertook a simulated crag rescue of two casualties; one casualty requiring evacuation down the crag by means of a horizontal stretcher lower, and the other casualty being rescued using the one-man pick-off technique.

In less than ideal weather conditions the Duke met several members of the team at the foot of the crag, including Mike Nixon and his wife Val, Elly Whiteford and her search dog Mac, and Ben Soffe, where the differing rescue methods were explained. In the one hour visit, the formation and history of the team and its comparison to present day standards and levels of commitment, training and equipment were discussed with the Duke, who was also keen to understand the route to membership for prospective members and the effect on rescues teams generally as a result of almost everyone who now goes onto the fells carrying a mobile phone.

Alan Prescott (chairman) and Mark Hodgson (team leader) explained to the Duke how this year continues to be very busy for the team with 53 rescues undertaken up to 27 May, compared to 33 at the same time last year. Increasingly, the team is dealing with multiple rescues in the same day, regularly now being called to two, and often three and four incidents. Only with the huge commitment of team members and the support they receive from their families and employers can this number of rescues be undertaken.

As members of the team came off the crag the Duke was keen to meet and talk with the rescuers and their casualties before leaving to continue his day of visits.

NORTH WALES

EARLY PIONEER OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN OGWEN VALLEY RECEIVES MBE

Ron James – climber, mountain guide, instructor and rescuer – was named in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his services to mountain rescue. Back in the 1950s and 60s, Ron was instrumental in the early development of a more organised mountain rescue service in North Wales.



▲ MR MACKEY PRESENTED CERTIFICATES TO LDSAMRA AND EACH OF THE LAKES MRTS

We buy one, you get one free...

by Mick Guy

Keswick MRT took delivery of their new personnel carrier/ambulance on 15 June, following some intensive research on what might best suit our needs. There was general agreement in the team that a straightforward replacement for the twelve year old Ford Transit 4x4 was the ideal, but finding a base vehicle with the combination of good ground clearance and 4 wheel drive turned out to be more of a challenge. With the commercial vehicle market in freefall, there are not many new developments in terms of all wheel drive for this size of vehicle. From start to finish of the project, the time span for research, order and build was eighteen months.



MARK HODGSON, KESWICK TEAM LEADER ACCEPTS THE KEYS TO KESWICK'S NEW MERCEDES SPRINTER AMBULANCE FROM ANDREW KINNERSLEY OF CICELEY COMMERCIALS, CARLISLE

Keswick operates with two lead Land Rover 110 vehicles, and the personnel carrier/ambulance. Normally only two team vehicles go to an incident, leaving the second lead vehicle in base available to respond to another incident - which happens on a fairly regular basis!

The choice eventually fell between another Ford, and the Mercedes Sprinter 4 wheel drive. In terms of cost, there was very little in it, but the better availability of the Mercedes demonstrator, and the uncertain delivery position of the Transit at the time seemed to give the Mercedes the edge. It offered better ground clearance but, on the initial test up the Fleetwith Pike Mines track at Honister, the demonstrator's gear ratios felt uncomfortably high for safe descents on slippery uneven ground. After prolonged discussions with Mercedes technical specialists, a version with

higher ratio back axle was provided, and subsequent tests proved that this vehicle had the necessary capabilities for the job. Mercedes also agreed to fit the vehicle with a different tyre combination free of charge.

The vehicle is based on a Mercedes 315 MWB window van, with a 2.2 litre 150bhp engine, and 'smart' 4x4 transmission. The internal layout of the Transit was retained on the 'if it ain't broke, why fix it?' principle. So the ambulance specification mirrors that of the previous vehicle, with space for a Bell Thomas stretcher, nine belted seats, and an updated comprehensive package of communications equipment, GPS tracking, and lighting. The vehicle is fitted with a Clark extending radio mast situated within the vehicle, so that it can act as a relay in some of the more disconnected parts of our area. This vehicle, unlike the last, is fitted with a tow bar so that the team boat can be towed to any swiftwater or lake incident. The livery is based on a combination of our traditional vehicle colour scheme and some additional conspicuity marking.

The converters, Smallwoods of Barnoldswick, the auto-electricians John Young & Co, and the Mercedes agent, Ciceley Commercials of Carlisle, worked well together to fulfil all our requirements.

Keswick takes the view that teams with better resources need to be prepared to support those who have less. So it was always our intention that once we had commissioned the new vehicle and ensured all was working to our satisfaction, our old vehicle would be offered free of charge to any MR team who wanted it. This was the underlying principle behind our previous vehicle change in 2002, where Kintail and Edale teams benefited from our good fortune in being given a sizeable bequest. Similarly we have offered, and continue to provide, free training places to other teams on our training courses (including Rigging for Rescue courses, where we have brought trainers over from Canada). For several years we have also declined our entitlement in the regular share out of funds donated to LDSAMRA.

The information on the retiring Ford Transit was circulated to teams in May. Should there be more than one expression of interest, then we will look at the needs and assets of those who are interested, and make a needs-based decision early in July.



The Women's MRT jacket, highlighted in the April issue, is now available to order. Work has also begun on the development of a waterproof salopette, designed specifically to meet the needs of mountain rescue work, following demand from teams for such a product to compliment the Mountain Equipment MRT jacket. There are no details yet on the specifics of the design, but the company hopes to have the first production run of these available by the end of the year. For team enquiries contact Martin Dixon on **07710 358762** or email **martin.dixon@mountain-equipment.co.uk**



FOR SALE: 1

Kendal MRT is looking to replace one of their Land Rovers and want to offer it to like minded charitable organisations before putting it on the open market. The 1997 Land Rover Defender 2.5Tdi, current mileage 25000, has full service history (3 per year, plus the MOT) and is fully converted for mountain rescue use with a purpose made platform to carry a Bell Stretcher with attendant, plus full MR livery, blues and twos, PA system and cab heater. The vehicle is registered with the DVLA as an 'Ambulance', so is exempt from road fund license. With a little personalisation this is an opportunity to obtain a vehicle ready to go into service. For a full specification, please email John Everett at **johnnev@ktdbroadband.com**



FOR SALE: 2

Duddon & Furness MRT Land Rover 110 Ambulance, 19.5k miles P reg with one careful owner! Fully converted to mountain rescue use to take a Bell stretcher, also fitted with blues and twos, MRT livery, telescopic mast, aluminium roof box (holds Bell

tangent stretcher) and with gear area at rear. New battery. MOT until January 2010 and taxed as an 'Ambulance'. Offers invited around £6,000. For more information contact 01229 716996 **secretary@dfmrt.org.uk**

Chris Lloyd writes... In the late 1950s Ron and his climbing partner, Trefor Jones, decided to set up their own mountaineering school. Whilst searching for suitable properties they came across Ogwen Cottage, the mountaineers' guesthouse. Sadly, they could not afford the property, but the land agent, who was interested in their proposition, offered to become their third partner. So in 1959, Ron James, Trefor Jones and Tony Mason-Hornby opened Ogwen Cottage as a mountaineering school. As a centre of expertise, the school became the focus for suitable people to carry out mountain rescue in the surrounding mountains and Ogwen Cottage mountain rescue team was formed.

By the early 60s, despite hours of dedication, the school was struggling and the death knell rang when their most important customer, Birmingham Education Authority pulled out of regular courses at the Cottage. But then the Authority offered to buy the Cottage for an Outdoor Pursuit Centre, and re-employ the staff. Ron became their senior instructor.

In 1964, with staff now able to enjoy school holidays, off they all went to the Alps for the summer, leaving only the caretaker. Unfortunately, the caretaker suffered severe injuries in a climbing accident and had to be rescued in the old fashioned manner – by a gang of individuals with no knowledge of rescue or teamwork! Upon Ron's return from the Alps, he realised there was a need for a full time group of volunteers who could offer mountain rescue 24/7 and so, in 1965, the

Ogwen Valley MRO was formed, based at Ogwen Cottage – first in an old caravan and then the generator shed, until about 1976.

Ron was a great innovator, organising regular training in rescue and, through his friend Dr Ieuan Jones, in mountain rescue first aid. He looked at rescue in the Alps and brought back a Mariner stretcher, a tragsitz and wire rescue equipment for team use. He saw the potential for RAF helicopters in mountain rescue, and was on the first rescue where the helicopter was used (still in lounge suit having rushed from a meeting!)

He also perfected a technique for releasing jammed knees, stuck in cracks in the rocks. After asking the stricken climber for his sandwiches, Ron would use the butter to lubricate the knee. Then, after setting up a pulley system above the casualty and attaching himself on the end, would jump off, jolting the climber upwards and out of the crack!

Although Ron left Ogwen in the early 70s, he continued to climb and write guidebooks including his book of 200 best rock climbs in North Wales, published in 1970 which became the 'tick book', as climbers tried to complete the list. Even recently, he has published guides to various French rock climbing areas and the Dolomites. He also plays a mean game of golf.

There must be many people who have been rescued by members of Ogwen Cottage or Ogwen Valley mountain rescue teams who owe their gratitude for Ron's inspiration and initiative to mountain rescue.

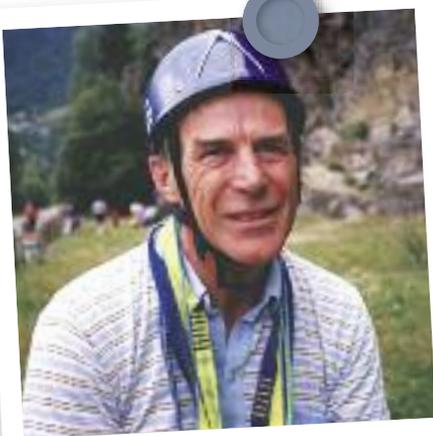
SOUTH WEST

TEAM WADES IN TO HELP BEACHED SEA ANIMALS

A tiny ten day old seal pup beached in the Severn estuary prompted twenty crew members from the **Severn Area RA** to attend a sea mammal training course in April, to learn the vital skills for helping beached whales, dolphins and seals. The British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) reckons there will be more cases of sea mammals losing their way in the estuary, thanks to global warming.



SARA were called to the very distressing rescue of the seal pup last summer. Coxswain Geoff Dawe decided his crew should get professional training to



Chairman David Allan receives OBE for services to mountain rescue

Congratulations to David Allan who was recognised in the Queens Birthday Honours list with an OBE. In our local paper David, modest and self effacing as ever, said he was, 'proud to receive the honour on behalf of mountain rescue in general.' So, what of David the man? Many of you will know him as chairman of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) for the last ten years, but we'll come to that later.

David is the son of a Morecambe trawler skipper and worked his

then Furness team to help with casualty training and act as team doctor.

From the very beginning, David has always had the vision that it was not his role or job to come on the mountain, as this was unrealistic and a waste of his skills. It was his job to make sure that, as a team, we were skilled and competent to do the job ourselves. He set about transforming our training, our expectations and our skills.

I can certainly remember many a

way through medical school crewing on trawlers as far afield as Iceland. In 1975 he took up a post at the North Lonsdale Hospital in Barrow and, as one of the few doctors that was also a climber, he was quickly approached by the

casualty training session debrief with trepidation, as David takes no prisoners during the feedback – all part of his drive to help the team fulfil its operational and effective potential.

Alongside his work with the team he quickly became involved regionally as medical officer for the Lakes, and soon took on the national post of MRC medical officer. It was with this post that he really started to develop our casualty care. We take for granted now John Ellerton's casualty care text, and the very high standard of casualty care that teams provide and aspire to, the foundations of which were laid by David's vision.

At this time he also represented mountain rescue at the IKAR medical commission, part of the International Commission for Alpine Rescue. He was a great advocate of the importance in looking outwards and being fully engaged on the international stage. As a rescue doctor and

surgeon, and an active climber with Alpine experience, he could really contribute within his peer group with legitimacy, bringing back from international meets all sorts of new ideas and ways of working.

Alongside all this David, Sheila and their two children Elizabeth and Simon, have enjoyed time in the Lakeland hills and the Alps, climbing, walking and sailing.

David, as a surgeon talented with his hands, has also found time as an artist to produce a very funny series of Mountain Rescue cartoons which have often been published in this magazine, conference brochures, Christmas cards, and even as a fund raising publication in their own right.

There is no doubt that his full time job as Head of Surgery at Furness General Hospital and his professional contacts have benefited mountain rescue, be it through the annual regional cascare courses, run from the

The new products from DMM cover two main areas – passive protection and locking carabiners.

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by Mike Margeson

hospital, or the vision that our biennial conference was a tremendous platform for medical training and where David has pulled together challenging and inspiring programmes of speakers and specialists.

So, I said we would come back to David our chairman. I remember ten years ago, David consulting with colleagues whether to stand as MRC Chair. I also remember him telling me he had just come back from a long chat with Sid Cross in Langdale who had encouraged him to stand. In issue 19, January 2007, Pat Holland wrote of being a mountain rescue chairman, 'I believe my role as an effective chairman was to bring and support needed change in MR; make strong links with stakeholders; conclude negotiations with government; support and protect MR teams; make IMRA relevant and

necessary; act as mediator and consensus builder; and be a leader with a small 'I'.'

Easy job then!! How many of those boxes has David ticked in the last ten years? When I look at David's achievements, I am sure you will all join me in congratulating him on a richly deserved OBE.



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deal with any future such incidents. 'It was quite a distressing rescue operation. It took us two hours to contact a sea mammal expert in Cornwall who was able to tell us the seal was probably around ten days old. It took eight to nine hours before we could help it back into the water at high tide. We had no idea whether it was injured or stuck, or just scared. It was a very difficult situation to deal with. 'This was when I contacted BDMLR and they immediately said they could offer some training in how to deal with sea mammals. We have had dolphins come down the Severn before and have been told that this will happen more frequently because of climate change.'

Rising sea levels and changed in water temperature affect sea mammals who can become easily disoriented and swim in the wrong direction. The training involved crew members using a two tonne whale in the water, as well as life size dolphins and seals.

'It was a very intensive course,' added Mr Dawe. 'For instance, I didn't realise that a dolphin's skin is very sensitive and if you pull it with your hands you can tear it. Also, you must protect its blow hole because if it gets water in it the animal can drown.'

IMPROVED RESPONSE IN TAUNTON DEANE

Since 1992 Exmoor SRT have been assisting the police in the search for missing and vulnerable persons. This may be walkers or groups of Duke of Edinburgh Award participants, but it is as likely to be elderly people, children or despondents.

The team assist the police over a considerable area, which stretches from Bridgewater in

Somerset via Tiverton and on to the Cornish border at Bude. Therefore a large proportion of the area includes South and West Somerset, including Taunton Deane, Bridgewater and the Quantock Hills.

Team members live all over the operational area, so assistance has always been quick to arrive, however until now both the team's Ambulances have been based in North Devon. In order to enable a quicker response to the Taunton and Bridgewater areas, the team have now acquired a third response vehicle, a Land Rover which is based near Wellington. From this new location, we will be able to assist the Avon

and Somerset Police with all weather search and rescue capability, with more equipment readily available.

Chief Inspector Kevin Instance from Avon and Somerset Police said, 'Avon and Somerset Constabulary hold the work of our volunteer search teams in very high regard. The Exmoor team have a vast amount of local knowledge and a very professional approach to search and rescue. Many people owe their lives to this team. Working alongside the police they make a major contribution to keeping the people of this area safe.'

Team leader Phil Sparks said, 'We have many team members living and working in the Taunton area, and the increased availability of our equipment will improve the efficiency of our searches in West Somerset and Taunton Deane.'

The team is also called to assist the South Western Ambulance Service if they receive a call for assistance to a location that is not accessible by a road ambulance and a helicopter response is either not available or suitable. On recent occasions a Land Rover has been required on the Quantock Hills and its location in Wellington will assist in the team's rapid deployment.

Oldham Training Weekend 2009

The early May Bank Holiday weekend saw about 60-80 people crawling amongst the crags of Uppermill near Oldham, either as instructors or delegates of the Oldham Crag Weekend, organised by Oldham MRT. Delegates ranged from members of local teams to team members from South Wales, North Wales and Southern Ireland, as well as several police officers from the Metropolitan Police force, Thames Valley and Greater Manchester, and a paramedic from Holland (who, incidentally, was German) to give the weekend a truly international flavour. OMRT are great advocates of the



Allp descender and Alpine stretcher, so Friday night was taken up with an introduction to the kit as well as the usual housekeeping bits and bobs, followed by the ubiquitous social session in the pub next door (transport provided by those Oldham team members who'd drawn the short straw for the weekend).

DRG GROUP TRAINING WEEKEND 27-29 NOVEMBER

Following the success of our 2008 event, the **Dartmoor Rescue Group** is now organising the 2009 Group Training Weekend, based at Okehampton Battle Camp, on Dartmoor. The Camp will be open for arrivals from 18:00hrs on Friday 27 November. During the evening there will be briefing sessions for key personnel taking part in the main Saturday search and rescue exercise. The NAAFI will also be open for all to socialise with friends and colleagues from all agencies involved. The main training event, on Saturday, will be a multi-agency search and rescue exercise. This year, the exercise is being planned in conjunction with Devon and Cornwall Police.

Operations will take place across approximately 30 square miles of the northern part of Dartmoor.

The NAAFI will again be the centre of activities on Saturday evening, where the Annual Skittles Challenge will take place. On Sunday, we have planned some 'lighter' training events within Okehampton Camp itself, which will build on the team spirit generated on the Saturday. Booking forms will shortly be sent to teams across the country. However, numbers are limited and we ask that forms are returned promptly to ensure places are available. Initial enquiries can be made through Julian Settrington the Dartmoor Rescue Group's General Secretary at secretary@dartmoor-rescue.org. Make a date in your diary now... and keep an eye out for the booking flyers!



EXMOOR TEAM MEMBERS

by Andy Simpson

Saturday's all-day session was instruction on four scenarios which had been set up in a local quarry: rescue of a cragfast climber with a strop; rescue of a cragfast climber with a knife (not murder but how to clip them into the Allp system and then cut their rope); rescue of an injured climber from a vertical face using a horizontal lower; and rescue of an injured climber using a Tyrolean traverse. Each delegate went over the edge in each scenario, either as casualty or rescuer, so by the time we'd finished everyone was familiar with the kit and techniques ready for Sunday's exercise. As a slight aside, the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police paid a two hour visit both to familiarise himself with the work of mountain rescue and, surprisingly, to ask 'what are your gripes', to which he was treated to a series of polite but, nevertheless, honest verbal batterings by myself (RPMRT), Mick Nield (OMRT) and Geoff Seddon (BMRT). No doubt we'll hear more of the results of that in future. I think he knew what the tone of the day would be when I asked him if he was going anywhere posh after his visit. 'No,' he replied, 'why?' 'Because you're going to get covered in crap going up here,' I said, as we slipped and slid our way up the path to the quarry.

A very good dinner on Saturday evening was followed by another 'training' session in that we all gathered at the OMRT base and were treated to a very hastily-put-together but, nevertheless, funny and professional presentation of photographs taken during the day, followed by another social session in the pub next door. (Strangely, after a knackered day in the quarry, things didn't seem to go on for quite so long as they had the evening before!) Sunday's session was the same series of scenarios, but this time with attitude! We were all driven to the head of Chew Valley and split into our respective groups. This time the exposure was greater and our instructors turned into safety inspectors as we were left to cope with the rescues on our own using the techniques we'd learned the day before, the most spectacular being the Tyrolean traverse, which was now strung out 400 to 500 feet across the valley. From a personal point of view, in-between hob-nobbing with the Chief Constable on the Saturday and disappearing for an hour on an abortive call-out half way through the morning on Sunday, I learned a great deal. Fortunately my diversion on Sunday put me



last in the queue for the Tyrolean traverse which meant that the final run left me firmly planted on terra firma (if that's what you call a 65 degree slope without a rope!) before the exercise was binned at the end of the afternoon.

Whilst not every team in the country uses the Allp the weekend was a great opportunity to see a different system in use with a team and get some of the exposure we're not all used to. It was also an opportunity to see a very well trained team doing something they're passionate about. From the accommodation and food all the way through to the instruction on the hill, everything was incredibly well organised. Even some of the Oldham team's trainees were used to instruct on certain aspects of the course and they, like all the instructors, came across as very clear on what they were teaching, very knowledgeable and easily able to answer any technical questions which arose during the weekend. Maybe this explains why two thirds of those attending were there for the second, third or even the tenth time.

Just Bike event

Adventure experience specialist, Across the Divide, has added a new event to its schedule with the launch of its Just Bike one day challenge taking place on the 3 October at the Coate Water Country Park near Swindon.

Designed for people of all ages and abilities, Just Bike is the perfect event for those in search of a personal challenge whilst helping a charity of choice.

All entrants to Just Bike can choose from two circular routes of 50 or 100k. Each route will lead competitors on an enjoyable circuit around the country lanes and breathtaking scenery surrounding the Coate Water Country Park. Marshal run stations will be placed along all routes to provide refreshments, toilet facilities and medical support.

Just Bike makes raising money for a charity a simple, yet unforgettable experience. Simply pay a small registration fee and Across the Divide will take care of the logistics by providing advice on training and kit, promotional posters and a direct link to each chosen charity on www.just-bike.co.uk leaving all cyclists free to focus on fundraising and training.



DAVID DENNIS WITH NEW TEAM PATRON, THE LORD CRATHORNE HM LORD LIEUTENANT OF NORTH YORKSHIRE

YORKSHIRE DALES

NEW PATRON FOR UPPER WHARFEDALE

Upper Wharfedale FRT has a new Patron in form of The Lord Crathorne HM Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, who has been active in his support for the team for a number of years. His first visit to team HQ in Grassington was on behalf of the Queen to present her Golden Jubilee Award. He later returned to present MRC Long Service Certificates to 52 members, and facilitated the visit of the Duke of Gloucester last year to celebrate the team's 60th Anniversary.

UWFRA Chairman Chris Booth is most pleased at the appointment. 'We have never had a Patron and for Lord Crathorne to accept our invitation is absolutely wonderful. He has done so much for us already and to have his ongoing support is a huge boost to the team. He is an active member of the House of Lords and has become a member of the All Party Parliamentary Committee on Mountain Rescue which clearly demonstrates his belief in mountain rescue as a whole.'

BEST LAID PLANS...

The Upper Wharfedale team and the Yorkshire Air Ambulance are frequently called out on joint rescues in the Dales. As such they have developed a very good working relationship, so it was very pleasing when the Ilkley Round Table organised a sponsored walk along part of the Dales Way to fundraise for both organisations.

David Dennis from UWFRA and Nicky de Whytell from the YAA went along to welcome them back and receive a combined cheque of over £1,700 but also found out that the splendid amount raised could have ended up in negative equity. The walkers found themselves caught up in a flash flood whilst alongside the River Wharfe, up to their chests in the water at one point.

'The irony of the potentially dangerous situation was not lost on them,' said David. 'When they reflected that it could have so easily become a rescue callout that would have cost the two rescue teams more to rescue them than the amount they had set out to raise! Thankfully, all was well but it will certainly be a talking point on their next charity venture - the Ilkley Beer Festival!'



“The best way to learn is from experience.”



The Scenario...

“When you arrive at the scene the sun is setting and the rain clouds are gathering. Two cyclists are slumped against the mountain side with a small group of walkers hovering over them. It’s wet, cold, exposed and with night falling you have to get the cyclists and walkers off the mountain as quickly as possible. You observe that one cyclist has fluctuating consciousness and are concerned about deterioration; shallow and painful breathing, prolonged CRT, cold body temperature, increasing pallor and cyanosis. The other is moderately hypothermic after giving his extra clothing to his friend. He is nauseous, shivering intermittently and suffering from slurred speech and periods of quietness. With an excited and panicky crowd of walkers to control, two effectively disabled patients, and icy rain starting to fall you are in one tricky situation.”



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John Evans



The following is a tribute to John Evans. It is not just my thoughts but those of the team and is collated from various team members' comments.

John Evans, a member of Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation (OVMRO) for over 36 years, tragically died in the Llanberis Pass on 28 April 2009 while descending after completing a climb with his partner Lin.

John was originally from Wrexham, where he joined the Scouts and through them was introduced to the mountains. Whilst staying at Hafod, the Scout hut in the Ogwen Valley, he was introduced to mountain rescue. He became a full member of OVMRO in May 1973. Through the team, John was introduced to the USAF PJs (airborne rescue troops trained to be dropped behind enemy lines to extract downed aircrew). These PJs, who were based in Woodbridge, Suffolk, used Snowdonia for training and became good friends of the team.

John became attracted to the PJ's life and in the early 1980s he left Wales for the USA to join the USAF and qualified as a PJ. He travelled the world with them over the next twelve years or so. Through the PJs he was introduced to the big mountains of Alaska.

Leaving the USAF in the mid 1990s he started as a mountain guide in the Alaskan mountains. Through this, John was introduced to the Denali National Park Service and high altitude mountain rescue on Denali and the surrounding ranges.

John would spend six months of the year in Alaska, much of it at the Denali high altitude camp at 14,000 feet. During the other half of the year he would return to his home in Capel Curig to climb amongst the mountains he loved.

John was never at home for long. He instructed in mountain rescue technical rope work, wilderness first aid and search management, which not only took him around Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland, but as far afield as South Africa and Hong Kong.

Many tributes to John can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/o7ld96>. He leaves two children, his son David (20 years) and daughter Rhiannon (17 years). He loved taking them on mountain adventures from a young age.

Some of the qualifications John achieved include:-

- USAF Para Rescue Man (The ONLY British and certainly Welsh PJ)
- US Army Parachutist, Jump Master
- US Special Forces Underwater Operations School
- Mountaineering and Expedition Guide, 20 Years
- 14 Summits, Mount McKinley, Alaska, 20,320ft.
- Climbing in Wales, Scotland, European Alps, Korea, New Mexico, Colorado and Nepal
- UK National Certificate in Occupational Safety & Health
- UK Advanced Mountaineering First Aid Instructor
- Cave Rescue Instructor
- NAUI Certified Scuba Instructor
- Oil Field Medic and Rescue Instructor, (Algeria, Egypt, Brunei, Russia, Chad, Yemen, Oman, Niger)

I am blessed to have climbed with John in Alaska and Patagonia as well as many climbs in Wales and other areas around the UK. Also instructing first aid with him around the UK and Ireland has been a joy, with John showing his passion for passing on knowledge.

John was a true professional in his fields, a real stalwart and the man to have with you when the going got tough on the mountains. Tributes to John have been received from around the world. He will be missed by all those who knew him. It is a great tragedy that the man who did so much to assist those in trouble in the mountains for 36 years should lose his life at such an early age and on the mountains he loved.

We said goodbye to John at Bangor Crematorium on 7 May 2009 and released him back to the mountains he loved so much. The honour guard at the ceremony was a sight to behold with most team members in team fleeces lining the entrance to the chapel. We estimated over 300 people at the ceremony. A good number retired to John's favourite local, Cobdens, for a few beers and a few more beers after the service. The PJs joined us and older team members sang songs in the corner. The PJs resurrected the age old OVMRO tradition of stripping off in the back bar, running across the A5 with Newcastle Brown in hand, jumping in the river and downing the beer. John would have been proud.

Russ Hore on behalf of OVMRO

David Shields Blyth Wright

Blyth Wright was a great friend of the RAF MRT and helped us on many occasions especially on giving us updates and advice on the Avalanche conditions all over Scotland especially in call outs. He built up the Scottish Avalanche Service into what it is today. He fought against many of the mountaineering fraternity who were against it. He achieved government funding by sheer constant hassle and fighting his corner and made the mountains a little safer by his efforts in educating mountaineers and skiers.

Many will not know that he was part of the famous Corriemulzie climbing club and a great friend of Phillip Tranter of the famous 'Tranter Rounds'. Blyth was with him when he completed the North and South Clunnies (Kintail) in day on the way back from an attempt on the Skye Ridge in winter.

He was always interested in the RAF mountain rescue history, The Big Walks and the troops repeating these incredible hill days.

A great mountaineer and Scottish character, he was buried on a lovely day in the Banchor cemetery, surrounded by his friends. Some of the greats from the past and present of Scottish mountaineering were there to pay respects.

RAF MRS was represented by FS Daz Steatham of RAF Kinloss, and Heavy Whalley.

Dave Heavy Whalley
MBE BEM



Planning the training programme?

by Bob Sharp

In the first part of this series I asked readers to consider some of the reasons why we train and what aims we endeavour to achieve. I suggested there might be a wide variety of purposes not all connected with technical improvement. It's highly likely every team will have its own set of reasons for training and apportion different levels of importance to each one. But, whatever the aims, programme planning and development are common to all teams. Proper planning is vital to ensure training provides a base on which aims can be met. So, how do you devise a training programme? How do you know what to include and how much time to devote to each component? And do you include everything each year?

Answers to these questions will vary from team to team but in arriving at solutions a few common principles should be recognised. I believe these apply to all mountain rescue teams. An obvious starting point is 'use and want'. It's highly likely that training programmes used in past years are pertinent and many topics will be relevant year on year. However, it doesn't follow that because something has been practiced for many years it is necessarily appropriate. A training programme may appear to be 'fit for purpose', but in fact it may underestimate a team's requirements as well as the potential of individual members. There are always better ways to do something and past previous programme should always be looked upon as foundations for improvement.

Using the previous year's programme as a starting point may be the team's preferred approach but there's no reason why the team shouldn't take a blank sheet and begin from basics unhindered by the past. Where then do you start? The key is to adopt an 'evidence based' approach. The facts need to be explored – what kinds of rescues are the team involved in, what risks are faced, where do rescues take place, etc – and use these as a basis for deciding what to include in the programme. There are two obvious sources of relevant evidence – risk assessments and operational activity.

Risk assessment

Civilian teams don't come under the Health and Safety at Work Act and, therefore, are not directly subject to the regulations. However, teams invariably comply with the spirit of

ACTIVITY: Mountain search and rescue - off road driving
LOCATION: Mountain and remote areas in Scotland

HAZARD	RISK	AT RISK	CONTROL MEASURES
Bad weather resulting in poor driving conditions	Losing control of vehicle Vehicle becoming stuck Driver becoming lost Collide with object	Team members Casualties Members of the public	Only designated drivers to drive vehicles during operational activities Radios to be fitted to or carried in all vehicles Drivers to drive within their competence level, with due regard to weather conditions and terrain encountered
Driving too fast	Collision with objects Lose control of vehicle	Team members Casualties Members of the public	Only designated drivers to drive vehicles during operational activities Drivers to drive within their competence level, with due regard to weather conditions and terrain encountered

TABLE 2: EXTRACT FROM A TEAM'S RISK ASSESSMENT

members, casualties and any other persons directly involved in the operations of the team is never compromised. Every team should therefore periodically carry out a risk assessment of its activities.

In contrast to civilian rescue teams all police authorities in the UK are required to comply with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) legislation. Further, there is a common law duty of care which lies with the chief constable when civilian personnel are acting under his/her control or discretion. To discharge this duty of care, the chief constable must be satisfied that individual members of the rescue team working on his/her behalf have the necessary equipment and can demonstrate appropriate skills levels. This is another

reason why teams need to establish structured training programmes and carry out a full risk assessment of their activities.

Developing a risk assessment is a reasonably simple (albeit very important) thing to do and the HSE provides clear guidelines for any organisation that needs to do this. Anyone so

interested should go to the website – www.hse.gov/pubns/indg163.pdf. Basically, a team has first to identify the broad categories of activities which involve a degree of risk (eg.

mountain search and rescue in winter conditions) and the hazards within these activities which are likely to take place (eg. avalanches). Many will be specific but there will be common areas across teams. The risks resulting from these hazards have to be identified (eg. injury from falling down a steep snow slope) as well as the persons at risk. Based on these analyses, the control measures required to address each risk and any further action that that may/may not be required have to be described. Finally, the team should continue to examine its risks and update its assessment on a regular basis. Table 1 summarises these steps.

The example given in Table 2 is extracted from one team's risk assessment and shows how it manages the hazards associated with off road driving. Risk assessments like this do not highlight all the topics that might be included in an annual training programme. What they do is focus attention on some of the more critical ones, especially those where safety is paramount. What they do is ensure that nothing obvious – from a safety perspective – is omitted. And, as mentioned before, they serve the important function of informing other agencies – most notably the police – of a team's professional attitude and commitment to safe practice within a nationally accepted framework.

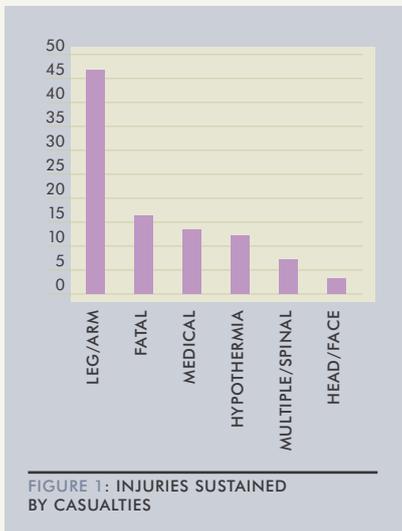
current legislation. Further, they operate within the bounds of accepted mountaineering practices to ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, the safety of team

TABLE 1: FIVE STEPS TO RISK ASSESSMENT (HSE, 2006)

- STEP 1:** Identify the hazards
- STEP 2:** Decide who might be harmed and how
- STEP 3:** Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- STEP 4:** Record the findings and implement them
- STEP 5:** Review the assessment and update if necessary

Operational activities

It makes sense for teams to practice those things they will need on rescues, especially those skills required on a regular basis such as radio communications, search techniques and first aid. But how does a team decide exactly what skills to practice and what knowledge to convey? And what topics within the main categories should be included? For example, what aspects of first aid should it focus on? The answer lies in looking at the evidence. Teams should look carefully at their annual log of rescues and extract the key topics. It may be reasonably obvious without resorting to a precise and detailed appraisal of each and every rescue, but a subjective approach where judgements are based on memory and guesswork can lead to a distorted picture. If some kind of database is established which permits a summary of key variables such as incident location, time of day and injury type then the risks of omitting a topic or exaggerating the importance of others is avoided. Further, if data is accumulated over a period of time (say five years) then the resulting analysis is not only more reliable but it may reveal whether changes are taking place. For example, it's not unusual for a team's 'hot spots' to vary over time, as well as the injuries it deals with. Figure 1 shows the profile of casualty injuries recorded over a ten year period for one particular team. It shows that some are more common than others. This information helped the team shape the kind of first aid training it



undertook.

Balance

At the end of the day an annual training programme should be based on as much objective information as possible. Risk assessments, historical records and trends should all be taken into account. Such information may serve only to confirm what is required but an evidence-based approach could throw up new ideas or suggest a different balance to the way topics are treated. Most important, it guarantees that nothing is omitted and it shows to others (Police, other

teams, funding bodies, etc) that the team takes training seriously and professionally.

An evidence-based approach is an important start but any team also has to make decisions based on the resources at its disposal. So, teams should look to the physical environment in which they operate, their financial situation as well as the existing set of skills within the team. For example, in a particular year a team may invest a lot of money and effort in qualifying several members to a high level of first aid (eg. EMT). It may therefore decide in the following year to reduce general first aid training and invest time in other areas.

Similarly, a team which has never included swift water training in its programme, may decide to expend a disproportionate amount of time on the topic in a given year (in regard to the likelihood of the skills being required) simply to bring everyone up to speed.

It's also vital to look at the skill base within a team. The profile of skills and interests within a team may have an influence on the topics included in a training programme as well as the time devoted to each one and the quality of delivery. If there are members with particular qualifications relevant to mountain rescue work (eg. qualified mountain guide, A&E consultant, Police officer) their expertise could be used to good effect and also offset the costs of employing outside experts. However, there is an important caveat here. It's vital that individual interests do not drive the programme or consume resources detrimental to the team's operational aims. The balance between evidential and individual factors must always be biased to the former, and what is good for the team must always outweigh personal interests.

Programme evaluation

Assumptions shouldn't be made about the effectiveness of a training programme. The programme might appear to have gone well but, as the saying goes, appearances can be deceptive. Teams should establish procedures for assessing whether the programme has achieved its aims. Aspects such as content, methods of delivery, relevance, interest value and differentiation (should all members do the same things?) should all come under scrutiny. How might this be done? Here are a few ideas.

1. Feedback from members can be sought on a regular basis. Suggestions for change are incorporated immediately or kept for an end-of-year appraisal. It's vital to adopt an accepted method for recording feedback (eg. an open

VEHICLES

	Skills/Knowledge Acquired	Date
Driving the vehicle; limits to use; security; use of gears, instruments, switches, diff lock etc.	✓	4 Sept 2006
Load carrying (gear and personnel); equipment stored in vehicle		
Hill road access network; use of keys; logging in/out	✓	1 Feb 2006
Breakdown procedure including wheel replacement; maintenance and cleaning		
Attachment of trailers; securing loads; erection of radio mast; reversing and towing skills	✓	8 Mar 2006

TABLE 3: EXTRACT FROM A TEAM MEMBER'S LOGBOOK

logbook for comments) and team members shouldn't feel reluctant to express their views. Those responsible for team training can analyse the information prior to the start of the next programme.

2. Outside 'experts' such as an experienced member from another team can be employed to carry out a review of the team's practices and procedures. Most educational authorities (eg. secondary schools, universities) adopt systems of external moderation to ensure the maintenance of standards. An added bonus of systems like this is the sharing of good practices across teams. Some teams are moving in this direction.

3. Most teams use external providers to assess certain aspects of their training programme (eg. first aid, swift water rescue). Typically, members are formally assessed on the key skills. There's no logical reason why similar procedures shouldn't apply to other

▶ PAGE 17



Lomond MRT on exercise
©Ian Dawson



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Rescue 3 UK

Rescue 3 (UK) are the country's leading swiftwater and flood rescue training provider, offering world-class training facilities and unequalled expertise in water safety and rescue training.

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Outreach training in Snowdonia

The Outreach Rescue Organisation, based in the Snowdonia National Park, have for over fifteen years, been running a range of rescue courses for the Emergency Services within the UK and overseas. All Outreach courses are delivered by MRT/SAR personnel, including SAR paramedics, with many years of operational and training experience behind them and include rope rescue, water rescue, search and casualty care.

Recently, Outreach were accredited by Edexcel to deliver, in parallel with our Casualty Management in Specialist Rescue course, the First Person On Scene (FPOS) award. This nationally recognised qualification offers progression from basic first aid training and introduces proven life saving techniques such as oxygen therapy, airway adjuncts, C-spine immobilisation, basic life support and Automated Electronic Defibrillation (AED) training.

We deliver the syllabus in both the environment and the situations mountain rescue teams operate in, with a strong emphasis on the practicalities of providing care and safe evacuation. It is aimed specifically at personnel working in relatively remote rescue environments who are responsible for the management and treatment of casualties until hand over to definitive medical care. This four day course will provide rescue personnel with the confidence and ability to deliver treatment for life threatening injury and illness in both an urban and non-urban environment and meets the requirements for NGB awards. For further details, or to talk about this or any of our courses, contact Tony Emsley or Ian Ellis at www.outreach90@aol.com



subjects but there are issues to consider: members might feel uncomfortable if they're assessed on every subject; who would validate the assessment; what methods would be used (written tests, practical tests, interviews, etc.) and how would problems of failure would be handled? And of course there would also be cost and resource implications.

4. Some teams require members to maintain a logbook detailing the skills they have practiced and learned (see sample excerpt in Table 3). Assessment can take the form of simple self monitoring (the individual ticks the box if they feel they can perform the skill) or a more robust form of peer assessment may be used. Recording procedures like this have a number of distinct advantages. They provide a guide to the training that members need to undertake. They act as a reminder to members that the skills and training are necessary to the team's operation. They provide a personal record so that individuals can assess progress and identify areas where additional work may be required. Most important they provide evidence to the team leader about individual and overall team competence.

They also demonstrate to outside agencies that the team operates within a professional context.

Programme delivery

Planning the content of a training programme is important, but so too is the way it is presented. For example, it's no good devising a potentially good programme, which is then delivered ineffectively or by the wrong people.

Training needs to be useful and enjoyable and all members must be motivated to attend training sessions. The next article in this series will take a look at some of the principles that can be adopted to guide delivery.

Outdoor survival kit wins Queen's Award

A British breakthrough in outdoor sports survival kit has won the Queen's Award for Enterprise: Innovation 2009 – the UK's top industrial honour.



Developed and manufactured in Snowdonia, North Wales, Blizzard Survival Bags, Blizzard Survival Blankets and Blizzard Survival Jackets have proved a massive international success with outdoor sports people. The products are made from

Blizzard's unique Reflexcell™ material – a triple layer of metalised polymer foil, which expands to form insulating air pockets as well as reflecting heat. Reflexcell is as warm as a 2-3 season sleeping bag, with a fraction of the weight and bulk. It is also totally windproof, waterproof, tough and reuseable. Arctic tests by the Royal Marines showed the Survival Bag, for example, was up to four times as warm as standard bivvy bags. Blizzard inventor and managing director Derek Ryden said, 'As a mountaineer myself, I originally designed the products to help outdoor sports people survive when they were caught out in bad weather.'

'In the outdoor sports world, Blizzard Survival kit is increasingly standard issue for mountain rescue teams and many more people are carrying it in their packs

in case of emergency.

'We are also breaking into all sorts of new markets across the world, including civilian medicine, emergency preparedness and disaster relief. For example, a single aircraft could deliver thousands of our bags or blankets within hours to the site of an earthquake.'

The company has seen sustained growth for over four years but most dramatically in the last twelve months, where sales have doubled and over 90% of products are exported.

Based in Bethesda, the company has been expanding steadily since it was established in 2001 and now employs 30 people. Derek and members of the workforce will be invited to Buckingham Palace to receive the award in person from Her Majesty the Queen this year.



Mountain rescue team members... they're after our bodies...

Channel 4's 'How to Look Good Naked' is looking for groups of men and women willing to tell them why their body may not be perfect but they are happy with it anyway! If you are a team, society, club, group of friends or work colleagues ready to have a bit of fun with Gok and show us your favourite bits then they want to hear from you. For further information, call **0121 224 8377** or email info.lookgoodnaked@mavericktv.co.uk

And they're also looking for men... Do you feel more David Brent than David Beckham? Do you lack the confidence to take off your shirt in public? Does the thought of hitting the beach in your trunks fill you with dread? Are you desperately in need of some style advice and a good hair cut? If you could do with a confidence boost and a free makeover then contact the How to Look Good Naked Team and get yourself done!!





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*20% shorter after 18,041 miles, 7% shorter after 12,427 miles, 5% shorter after 6,213 miles; Tested against two leading competitors, from February to April 2008 by TÜV SÜD Automotive, tyre size: 225/45R17, Car: VW Golf 2.0 Fsi; Report #76230122-1. **Versus tyres without Smartwear technology.



EDALE MRT – 'TEAM OF THE YEAR' PHOTO: GOODYEAR

Make it snappy!

With this year's weather having provided some of the most striking scenes, one of the nation's best known tyre companies is inviting people to submit their stunning snapshots for a charity calendar.

Mountain Rescue sponsor Goodyear is to produce a special 2010 calendar featuring twelve of the country's most dramatic and beautiful scenes, to increase awareness of mountain rescue and raise much needed funds.

The company, which is also set to roll out GPS navigational equipment to teams across England and Wales, is now appealing for amateur photographers with a love of the outdoors to send in their most impressive pictures and stand a chance at inclusion in the calendar.

Anna Stanley, Goodyear's communications specialist said, 'As experts in safety and innovation, Goodyear is committed to supporting life saving organisations in order to help them maintain their already high standards.'

'We're therefore delighted to be able to support Mountain Rescue by creating this calendar to help raise additional funds for the charity and draw attention to the fantastic work they do.'

Andy Simpson, Mountain Rescue Press Officer said, 'Team members often have access to some of the most breathtaking views, but due to the nature of search and rescue operations, they don't often get the chance to appreciate them.'

'This calendar is a fantastic way to draw people's attention to our organisation and provides people who love the outdoors as much as we do the chance to put their photographic talents to good use. And, while we do have some striking scenes accessible to us in the UK, we also want to remind people of the dangers when out exploring.'

Since launching the partnership deal, many teams have benefited from the provision of Goodyear's 4x4 tyres for their rescue vehicles. Having recently launched a new tyre for the market which offers excellent performance both on and off road, Goodyear's Wrangler AT/SAs will help to ensure that mountain rescue teams, as well as other 4x4 drivers, are well prepared for off road action.

Budding photographers are invited to send in their entries by emailing photography@htpr.co.uk. The deadline for entries is 31 September, and details can be found at www.mygoodyear.co.uk

What tales can your Victorinox tell?

We asked you to write in and tell us your 'true story', promising to feature the best one, and reward the writer with a SwissChamp XLT, boasting 50 functions and worth a cool £125. The lucky winner is Sally Fowler and this is her true Victorinox story.



'Recently I travelled around the world camping in lots of places. I was camping at a small town on the far western coast of Australia, starting to cook my tea, when I realised fuel was coming out of my multi fuel stove. I removed the pump and found the 'O' ring had a chunk missing. 6.00pm at night and tomorrow I was going to Karajini Park camping. (No shops for four days).

'I went to the petrol station, the only place open they had some 'O' rings. The 'O' ring fitted over the pump but was too big on outside diameter and too wide. I got back to my tent and, using my trusted Swiss army knife, spent the next 40 minutes carefully shaving the 'O' ring down to size. It worked perfectly and I left the same carved 'O' ring in my stove for six months until I returned to the UK.'

Swiss Army Knife limited edition

To celebrate its 125th anniversary, Victorinox has produced an exclusive limited edition Retro Soldier's Knife, an original replica of the first knife presented to the Swiss Army by Karl Elsener in 1891. Only 1884 are being made worldwide, with 100 available in the UK.

Born in a workshop in the small village of Ibach, in 1884, to cutler Karl Elsener, the Victorinox Swiss Army Knife has become a world class, iconic tool, universally recognised and beloved.

With classic wooden scales, the limited edition knife features four essential tools – large blade, screwdriver, reamer and a classic can opener, as used by the Swiss Army 125 years ago. The stylish rubberwood presentation box comes complete with certificate of authenticity signed by Carl Elsener Sen and Carl Elsener Jr – a must-have collector's item!

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



ESSENTIAL KIT MOUNTAIN RESCUE



Mountain rescue and police warning signs. Would we do it again?

by Paul Burke, Langdale Ambleside MRT



One of the many press cuttings following the display of warning signs at main access points on the high fells in the Langdale valley...

The Westmorland Gazette: Warning signs to alert Langdale walkers 8:48am Monday 9 February 2009

'WARNING signs have been put up on high fells after ten accidents in just over one week. Langdale and Ambleside Mountain Rescue Team has responded to ten incidents since February 1, in which two people have died and two people have been left with life threatening injuries.

'In a bid to prevent more walkers getting stranded the police and mountain rescue team has put up signs warning of snow and ice at the start of high fells in the Langdale Valley. The mountain rescue team and Cumbria police are urging walkers to make sure they have the correct equipment to make sure that the walk is 'not their last.'

'But despite the warnings, LAMRT were called out at 4.30pm on Saturday when three men got stuck on steep frozen ground at Bright Beck, Great Langdale. A spokesman for the LAMRT said after the rescue: 'They were not equipped for the conditions and seemed surprised by the fact that the snow had refrozen once the sun was off it. Regrettably, the message that we have been trying to get out for several days seems to have fallen on deaf ears.'



The wet and mild winters that we are used to experiencing in Cumbria gave way to fantastic snow and ice this year. On land

above 300m there was hard compacted snow and ice on all footpaths and we were lucky to have many days of crystal clear blue sky to enjoy it.

Unfortunately, as the freak weather attracted keen walkers, in one week we were called to two

fatalities, two reports of people with serious life threatening injuries, several others with broken bones and groups of people who were in grave danger and needed assistance to get off the fells.

In order to prevent such tragedies occurring again, the team worked together to communicate the dangers that faced walkers through a basic sign which gave a clear warning and advice on the appropriate equipment to carry and wear.

We then announced the fact that we were erecting these signs in a press release distributed by Cumbria Police press office. We were trying to get our message out to communities and read by as many people as

possible, preferably targeting your more casual walker with little or no experience.

Did they work? It's always hard to tell. Yes, we were called to two further rescues following the placing out of the posters, but the feedback I received from outdoor shops and information centres in the area was positive. They said that many people were stopping to think about their route and to make sure they were fully and appropriately equipped before venturing onto the high fells.

Were the signs well received? In the main I think they were, although not all people were happy...

One online blogger said, on Monday 9 February:

'Is this the thin end of the wedge? What happens next time when someone slips and falls on a hazard that there hasn't been a warning sign erected for - might they not seek to blame mountain rescue and the police for not putting signs up?'

'If people come walking in the high fells in this weather, then they surely must realise there'll be snow and ice present? So why put up signs?'

The fact of the matter is that walkers were simply not realising the seriousness of the situation and, to put it bluntly, people were dying. Langdale Ambleside, and other teams that were called in to assist, were incredibly stretched. We were all exhausted and thoroughly fed up of eating pie and beans at strange times of the night because we had missed our tea!

The signs were only up for around a week

before the weather changed and the snow gave way to rain.

So the question, 'Would we do it again?' I personally think that we would when faced with a similar situation. The signs took minimal effort to put together and got crucial warning messages out clearly, directly and may well have saved lives.



PHOTOS: PAUL BURKE



We were not trying to be part of the 'nanny state' but rather wanted to open eyes to a very real danger, prompting people to enjoy their day but make sure it wasn't their last.

What's on Offer

Thanks to the sponsors, suppliers and manufacturers who support us.

Macpac Gear Deal

Macpac has long been associated with making gear that lasts, with no compromise on design and materials. Our equipment is renowned for its durability – perfect for the tough use it gets from your team members. As a result we would like to offer your team the following prices for 2009.



Packs	RRP	MR
Pursuit Classic (W, S2, S3)	110	65
Ascent Classic (W, S2, S3)	130	75
Ascent Classic XPD (W, S2, S3)	180	105

Sleeping Bags

Sanctuary 900 XP	320	189
Sanctuary 700 XP	280	165
Sanctuary 500L XP	250	147

Tents

Microlight	200	120
Olympus	370	220
Hemisphere	550	320

Order Process

The order must originate from an officer of the team (Secretary/Equipment Officer) and is for the benefit of team members only. Orders can be made via email jamesathompson@mac.com or by post James Thompson, Macpac UK Agent, 32 Rivelin Park Crescent, Stannington, Sheffield S6 4GF

- Payment to be made with order
- Cheques payable to 'Macpac' – these prices include VAT @ 15%
- Postage will be free for orders over £250 – £10 for orders below

James can also be contacted by phone on **07971 478063**, should you need to discuss any details with him.

Goodyear tyres

Goodyear have pledged to supply a maximum of FOUR free 4x4 tyres to each of the mountain and cave rescue teams during each year of their partnership agreement, for those tyres that require replacement through wear and tear. This applies to tyres only and teams must pay for any charges for valves, balance and fitting.

How? Teams should first notify Penny Brockman with the team name and address, the name and contact details of the person responsible, details of the vehicles officially used by the team (make and reg no, tyre size (including

speed rating) and the terrain on which each vehicle is likely to be used.

Additional Tyres

Any additional tyres needed by teams may (subject to availability) be bought online from www.hiqonline.co.uk at 5% off the price specified from time to time.

Team Member Purchases

Team members can also purchase tyres for their own vehicles (subject to availability) online from www.hiqonline.co.uk at 5% off the price specified from time to time.

Keeping rescue teams dry

Cleaning and proofing specialist Granger's is aiming to help mountain rescue volunteers stay warm and dry this year by donating products to teams across the country.

MR team members have to brave the worst weather the UK can throw at them, and it's vital they are well-equipped and stay comfortable – otherwise they run the risk of becoming casualties themselves.

Using Granger's products will make sure that MRT gear stays in as-new condition, so it works better for longer.

Mountain rescue representatives at the May meeting in Preston were greeted by box on box of Granger's goodies, piled high in the foyer of



the main lecture theatre, ready to be divvied up between the teams. These were duly dished out and no doubt already in good use! Thank you Granger's.

'Because we've introduced new packaging recently we had a quantity of older stock available,' says Hamish Ogilvie from Granger's. 'It seemed the perfect solution to help our mountain rescue teams look after their gear.'

SAR Products

SAR Products is pleased to offer any mountain rescue team (except Oldham MRT and Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) who purchase equipment from SAR directly) 25% discount – at the end of the year, MR(E&W) will receive 10% of all MR sales. *The deal does not include the Pro Alp as we only sell this at trade, but this may change in time.



For further information, go to

www.sar-products.com or contact Lee Allport, Product Manager, Specialist Access & Rescue Products Ltd.

T: **+44 (0)1457 873400** F: **+44 (0)1457 872373**
M: **07793 816627**

Any queries in relation to the above, please contact Penny Brockman via email – treasurer@mountain.rescue.org.uk

or telephone 01633 254244 or mobile 07775 851737.

Or Andy Simpson via email – andy@andrewsimpsonadvertising.co.uk or telephone 0161 764 0999 or mobile 07836 717021.



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QUARTERLY INCIDENT REPORT FOR ENGLAND AND WALES JANUARY-MARCH 2009

The following is a listing of the number of incidents attended by MR teams in England and Wales during the period from 01/01/2009 to 31/03/2009. It is grouped by region and shows the date (day/month) the incident began. It is not comprehensive as many incidents have yet to be reported.

Lake District

Cockermouth	02/01, 20/01, 23/01, 08/02, 22/02, 22/02, 28/02 01/03, 03/03, 31/03
Coniston	24/01, 01/02, 07/02, 12/02, 17/02, 28/03, 28/03
Duddon & Furness	01/01, 31/01, 04/02, 17/02, 12/03, 13/03, 22/03
Kendal	02/01, 11/01, 20/01, 21/01, 31/01, 01/02, 01/02 01/02, 03/02, 04/02, 14/02, 16/02, 24/02, 10/03 22/03
Keswick	01/01, 01/01, 02/01, 02/01, 06/01, 09/01, 09/01 20/01, 23/01, 23/01, 23/01, 24/01, 03/02, 04/02 08/02, 10/02, 19/02, 27/02, 06/03, 07/03, 09/03 14/03, 15/03, 18/03, 22/03, 29/03, 29/03
Kirkby Stephen	19/01, 19/01, 02/02, 02/02, 03/02, 05/02, 14/03 14/03, 15/03
Langdale Ambleside	01/01, 03/01, 03/01, 06/01, 10/01, 10/01, 11/01 20/01, 25/01, 31/01, 31/01, 01/02, 01/02, 01/02 01/02, 03/02, 03/02, 04/02, 04/02, 04/02, 06/02 07/02, 15/02, 15/02, 20/02, 20/02, 20/02, 28/02 28/02, 01/03, 17/03, 21/03, 25/03
Patterdale	05/01, 08/01, 09/01, 20/01, 20/01, 25/01, 31/01 05/02, 07/02, 07/02, 08/02, 08/02, 15/02, 17/02 22/02, 28/02, 08/03, 26/03, 29/03
Penrith	17/01, 19/01, 19/01, 20/01, 07/02
Wasdale	02/01, 04/02, 03/03, 06/03

Mid-Pennine

Bolton	01/01, 04/01, 05/01, 11/01, 17/01, 18/01, 30/01 01/02, 05/02, 08/02, 14/02, 23/02, 23/02, 15/03 21/03, 23/03
Bowland Pennine	01/01, 01/01, 05/01, 01/02, 04/02, 23/02, 16/03
Calder Valley	05/01, 19/01, 03/02, 08/02, 10/02, 23/02, 01/03 30/03
Holme Valley	19/01, 04/03
Rossendale & Pendle	23/02

NE England

Cleveland	06/01, 19/01, 25/01, 08/02, 12/02, 20/02, 23/02 14/03
North of Tyne	25/01, 14/03
Scarborough & Ryedale	20/02
Swaledale	19/01, 25/01, 14/03, 18/03, 26/03
Teesdale & Weardale	19/01, 25/01, 14/03, 15/03

North Wales

Aberglaslyn	10/01, 10/01, 01/02, 11/02, 01/03, 28/03
Llanberis	01/01, 06/01, 08/01, 10/01, 10/01, 10/01, 17/01 24/01, 26/01, 01/02, 02/02, 07/02, 07/02, 10/02 11/02, 21/02, 21/02, 28/02, 01/03, 04/03, 29/03
North East Wales	17/01, 18/01, 18/01, 27/01, 12/02
Ogwen Valley	02/01, 03/01, 03/01, 08/01, 10/01, 10/01, 10/01 18/01, 01/02, 07/02, 07/02, 10/02, 21/02, 25/02, 28/02, 05/03, 06/03, 18/03, 21/03, 28/03
Outward Bound Wales	01/01, 25/01, 21/03
South Snowdonia	01/01, 28/03

Peak District

Buxton	03/01, 04/01, 09/01, 09/01, 11/01, 11/01, 14/01 25/01, 07/02, 20/02, 21/02, 03/03, 11/03, 28/03
Derby	01/01, 04/01, 17/01, 19/01, 21/01, 03/02, 14/02 16/03
Edale	02/01, 03/01, 04/01, 09/01, 09/01, 10/01, 11/01 14/01, 07/02, 20/02, 21/02, 03/03, 06/03, 07/03 11/03, 18/03
Glossop	1/01, 24/01, 25/01, 26/01, 02/02
Kinder	03/01, 07/03
Oldham	04/01, 19/01, 19/01, 20/01, 02/02, 03/02, 04/02 04/02, 06/02, 08/02, 10/02, 04/03, 05/03, 28/03
Woodhead	02/01, 19/01, 24/01, 25/01, 01/02, 04/03

South Wales

Brecon	04/01, 08/01, 11/01, 21/01, 21/01, 28/01, 29/01 01/02, 11/02, 15/02, 20/02, 22/02, 22/02, 28/02 01/03, 07/03, 10/03, 22/03, 22/03, 29/03, 31/03
Western Beacons	29/01, 22/02, 01/03, 02/03, 10/03, 22/03, 31/03
Central Beacons	21/01, 29/01, 19/02, 22/02, 02/03, 10/03, 22/03
Longtown	21/01, 01/03, 07/03

South West England

Avon & Somerset	18/03
Cornwall	01/01, 18/01, 19/01, 03/02, 03/02, 05/02, 06/02 07/02, 13/02, 24/02, 07/03, 09/03, 11/03
Dartmoor	03/02, 24/02, 09/03, 17/03
Exmoor	02/01, 12/01, 09/02, 01/03, 17/03, 18/03, 20/03

Yorkshire Dales

CRO	01/01, 01/01, 11/01, 25/01, 27/01, 31/01, 04/02 14/02, 24/02, 08/03, 28/03
Upper Wharfedale	06/01, 11/01, 18/01, 19/01, 28/01, 29/01, 29/01 03/02

RAF

RAF Valley	10/01, 10/01, 10/01, 01/02, 02/02, 11/02, 21/02
RAF Leeming	11/01

SARDA

England	01/01, 04/01, 05/01, 19/01, 19/01, 19/01, 27/01 29/01, 04/02, 04/02, 14/03, 28/03
Lakes	09/01, 19/01, 19/01, 20/01, 04/02, 15/02, 24/02, 10/03, 17/03, 22/03
Wales	11/01, 17/01, 20/01, 24/01, 27/01, 01/02, 12/02 23/02, 28/02, 10/03, 17/03, 22/03
South Wales	04/01, 08/01, 28/01, 15/02, 19/02, 22/02, 02/03 10/03, 22/03, 31/03
Southern Scotland	20/01, 04/02

Non specialists (Non MR)

	10/01, 28/02
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Wasdale MRT: Tuesday 12 May 2009: Rescue No 25. Walker tries to ascend Napes Needle but fails

The following is the incident log of the rescue followed by an account written by one of the climbers who effected this rescue. The account accurately describes the events surrounding the incident both before the rescue team was called, and whilst team members were en route. It also clearly epitomises the ethos of mountain rescue – fellow mountaineers, climbers and walkers who go to the aid of others in need of help. Well done to these two real heroes of the day. [The team have kindly received permission from the author to reproduce his email for the benefit of others].

Log Extract:

Request from police to attend an incident on Napes Needle – male reported cragfast. Limited call out made but whilst making their way up the fell, the elderly male walker was rescued by two climbers who were climbing Needle Ridge at the time. The cragfast walker had ascended the gully, failed to bear left onto the dress circle and was stuck on the crag 45m above safe ground. The climbers went back down for him and lowered him back down the crag on a climbing rope. Although rescued by the climbers, the appearance of the Wasdale team at the bottom of the mountain was very reassuring to the two climbers effecting the rescue (this information has been provided by the climbers as the team were stood down, as soon as the crag fast walker was off the Napes) [NY 20957 10022].

THE NAPES, TAKEN BY A WALKER A WEEK LATER ON SPHINX RIDGE, JUST ALONG FROM WHERE THE INCIDENT HAPPENED – THAT RESCUE REQUIRED HELICOPTER EVACUATION AND HOSPITALISATION



We had had no intention of climbing the Needle. The plan was to do Needles Ridge and, if it had gone well, to look at Eagles Nest Ridge Direct. It was three years since I had led on rock and the challenge of the Needle was insufficient for us with our grand mountaineering route plans. But plans never survive the first instance of contact and we found ourselves being magnetically drawn to the base of the Needle, and the casual look up the worn crack led to comments about 'I reckon that will go...'

It did. In the cold wind, and in the May shade, I climbed the Needle without grace, skill or competence and enjoyed myself hugely in the process. The last few moves from the mantleshelf tortured my mind as I battled with the conflict of carrying on to glory, or shuffling back to safety but suffering ignominious defeat at the hands of a VD+. What hope for an MVS if one couldn't complete the Needle?

As it was, my friend and I basked in glory on top of the Needle, retreated with a modicum of style (thanks to the excellent advice on the Needlesport website – thanks Steve) to the base, where we picked up our sacks and made our way to the start of Needle Ridge. The Needle had, however, taken its first casualty. I was not up for too much excitement after the mental struggle I had gone through to do that four metres which constitutes the second pitch of the Needle. Instead, my friend racked up and set up, happy to lead the entire route.

The Ridge is a wonderful climb. Never too difficult, it soars up behind the Needle offering climbers like ourselves endless enjoyment on

perfect holds, positions and views. The wind ensured we never got too bored – it found its way through our thick fleeces and thermals and keeping warm was a constant struggle.

We weren't the only people out that day. As Ali led the third pitch, a person began to shuffle their way up Needle Gully below us. His attire was curious – he had on wellington boots and a shoulder bag – but his confidence put us to shame. Without seemingly having any concern about the difficulty, he clambered, climbed, thrutched his way to the point where he was level with me. Difficult moves were overcome by

or was this someone very, very lost. Either way, I couldn't watch. This person was on the edge literally and metaphorically, and a slip was going to be horrific. I tried to concentrate on my leader but Ali, whatever his predicament at the sharp end of the rope, was infinitely safer than the person twenty metres away from me at the back of the gully.

The voice that reached me was remarkably calm. 'I think I'm in a bit of a pickle.'

The relief that provided me was immense. I could at least stop the situation worsening.

'Is there a way out of this?' he asked. 'I'm not

His attire was curious... he had on wellington boots and a shoulder bag, but his confidence put us to shame.

the simple expedient of throwing his bag up to the next big clump of grass and then hauling himself hand over hand on the tussocks until he and the bag were reunited.

This was not good for my fragile state of mind. The conflict in my mind arose again – was this someone who knew the crag intimately (perhaps he was a botanist collecting samples?)

sure I can get down that bit again.'

'I don't think you can get up the gully,' I replied, 'but you can't attempt to reverse that section. Give me a minute, get yourself safe, and I'll just have a word with my climbing partner.'

Ali and I had made the decision earlier in the day that we didn't want to take mobiles with us

Lake District

but we were not totally luddite in our attitude to communications as Ali had brought his walkie-talkies with him. I had never used them before, but the ability to have a technical conversation in high winds with my climbing partner 30m above was a complete novelty.

'Ali, I've got a problem. There's a guy in the gully to my left, about my height, who can't go up or down. I'm not sure what we can do.'

Together we went through the options. Ali wasn't prepared to downclimb the pitch. He was too high to allow me to lower him to the man to make the man safe and, if I climbed to Ali's height, we wouldn't be able to lower the rope to the man as he was off line.

We made a plan. I would climb to Ali, put Ali on the rope and lower him into the gully. Ali would then traverse to the man, set up a belay, and then in turn lower the man as far as he could. As we only had one 60m rope, if it wasn't long enough, there would be three of us stuck in a line stretching over 60m. This was undesirable.

I surprised myself at still having a semblance of calmness when I spoke to the man. 'If you have a mobile, I would recommend that you dial 999, ask for 'Mountain Rescue', and explain that you are in Needle Gully and are cragfast. If you can get a signal, you will be able to make a 999 call. Tell them there are two climbers with you, but that we may not be able to complete the rescue as we only have rope.'

I climbed quickly to join Ali, and we set up the belay. It was not a joyous moment. For a start, belays on mountain routes are there for decoration only – you never expect to have to use them for proper. Here we were looking again at the gear, double, triple checking each piece of protection. What was the direction of loading? How much weight would I be taking on my harness? How would we stop Ali swinging if he fell?

Ali did one last check and started down the gully side. The system loaded and I started lowering him slowly down the steep choss and grass, over the small outcrops until he was level with the man. He then placed a piece of protection (which he called 'bobbins' for its security – I think it involved putting a sling on a blade of grass) and began the traverse to the man.

A call on the radio told me he was with the man. More bobbins protection had been placed so the two were marginally protected. If it failed, they were in for a big fall and swing. The man explained to Ali that he had meant to go to the Dress Circle but he hadn't noticed the Climbers' Traverse going left and he had carried up the back of the gully.

From my view point, I could see the

mountain rescue team Land Rover at Wasdale Head. The reassurance this provided was enormous. We were no longer on our own. If it didn't work out, they were there to watch us and would be able to effect a more competent rescue than our own. Our confidence was boosted immediately.

Ali put the man into a sling and, from his dubious belay, took the last few metres of rope from my end of the pile and lowered the man down the gully for 15 metres. As the rope ran out, the man was put back onto safer terrain.

We signalled to the MRT that we were now okay and, as Ali climbed the grot back up again, the Wasdale team set off again to their real lives.

Self-doubt racked us for the final pitches. Should we have done the rescue without calling out MRT? Had we over-reacted? Was the team really there to act in a mother hen role?

It is perhaps the biggest decision I have had to take in the hills. Normally, I think for myself and, on the more difficult things, I argue with my climbing partner. But this was different. There was someone else who was having the predicament. There was no guarantee we could help and, if it went wrong, we could have found ourselves being challenged more than the Needle had done earlier.

Perhaps, if my climbing partner and I were better, we would have been able to confidently rescue the man and let be the MRT for the day. If we had had 2 x 50m ropes, we probably wouldn't even have thought of calling them either. As it was, we had to judge our equipment, our skills and our safety and the simple answer was that a rescue by ourselves would be putting us at our limit. Knowing that the MRT was there, that it was equipped to sort out the incident and any further developments quickly, gave us the confidence to do what we did.

The sound of the wailing siren, the flashing lights in the valley – the team dropped everything to help us all on the hill and our thanks are with them.

All credit for the rescue should be directed to my climbing partner who actually had the courage to descend the gully on a single rope and, at 45m run out, effect a rescue at a very poor angle of rope. A fall or failed gear would have resulted in a unpleasant fall and swing for the pair of them. My best wishes to the team and my continued thanks to all for their commitment to climbers such as myself.

Oliver Bratton and Ali Morris

www.wasdale-mountain-rescue.org.uk



Peaks

Buxton MRT: Saturday 9 May 2009: Rescue No 20. Climbing accident on Chee Tor, Chee Dale

Chee Dale lies about six miles East of Buxton in the Peak District National Park. It is a very narrow limestone valley with vertical limestone cliffs on either side, some thickly wooded, with the River Wye running through it. The area is very popular with walkers, climbers, picnickers and fisherman, with major car parks provided at both ends.

A three hour epic rescue started with two separate 999 calls to the police and ambulance services at 13.40hrs on Saturday 9 May reporting that a climber had fallen fifteen metres from Chee Tor into the River Wye in Chee Dale. An ambulance, a paramedic car, the Derbyshire,



A BUXTON TEAM MEMBER USES SMOKE FLARES TO INDICATE WIND DIRECTION ON THE VALLEY FLOOR

Leicestershire & Rutland Air Ambulance, and a crew from Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service at Buxton, were all called together with Buxton MRT.

The local knowledge of the rescue team proved vital in quickly assessing the best access route into the remote and

very steep sided valley and all resources were soon concentrated on an approach from Wormhill. The casualty, a 26 year old male from Sheffield, had suffered back injuries and an initial assessment dictated that a vertical lift by helicopter would be the best mode of evacuation. An RAF Sea King with winching



AIR AMBULANCE FINALLY ON THE ISLAND WHERE THE CASUALTY CAN BE LOADED

capability was requested and soon en route from RAF Valley on Anglesey, flying time about 50 minutes. Whilst waiting for the RAF, the casualty was being treated by air ambulance and rescue team doctors and was soon on a stretcher ready for lift out.

The arrival of a Sea King helicopter normally signals a quick evacuation but, after several practice approaches, the RAF pilot declared the situation too dangerous to perform a direct lift out from the narrow wooded valley as this could have proved dangerous for the large aircraft, the several rescue services personnel dealing with the casualty below Chee Tor and other walkers and climbers in the area. Rising to the challenge, the air ambulance crew decided to make a second attempt with the aim of landing on a small island in the middle of the river.

Whilst the aerial tactics were being reconsidered the fire and rescue service devised a back-up plan to use an inflatable raft to float the casualty across the river. The raft was requested from Buxton fire station and a second appliance crew from Chapel en le Frith was also dispatched to Wormhill.

However, with a stunning display of skill, the air ambulance pilot manoeuvred his aircraft carefully down the valley and finally landed on the island. Rescue team members were able to quickly load the casualty into the helicopter but fate attempted to deal one last blow when the aircraft wheel began to sink in soft ground, preventing take-off. Some fast digging by firefighters soon freed the wheel and finally the casualty was on his way to Sheffield's Northern General Hospital some three hours after the incident had occurred.

This was a multi-agency rescue with five emergency services working together and included three crews from Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service, an East Midlands ambulance and an East Midlands paramedic car, the four man crew of an RAF Sea King Search & Rescue helicopter, three crew from the Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance, based at East Midlands Airport, and eighteen members of Buxton Mountain Rescue Team. All agencies were working together for the benefit of the casualty.

We understand the casualty was in hospital for two weeks. He had sustained a fracture to his spine and residual nerve damage and is now at home recuperating.

Roger Bennett and Ian Hurst

www.buxtonmountainrescue.org.uk

BASECAMP SUPPORT



Graham and Sonya complete the BUPA Great Manchester Run to raise £300 for mountain rescue teams across England and Wales



Graham Skinner and Sonya Frankland completed the BUPA Great Manchester Run on Sunday 17 May.

The 32 year old couple, originally from London but now based in Cumbria, decided to sign up for the run after eating far too much over Christmas and thinking it would be the perfect challenge to get fit. An outdoor instructor, and keen mountain biker, kayaker, walker and climber, Graham relocated to Cumbria some years ago to complete an Outdoor Studies degree. Sonya, who works for the Lake District National Park Authority, moved to Kendal in 2005 after visiting on weekends for three years.

The couple enjoy walking in the hills and find a day walking is a really good way to exercise Blue, their border collie, who Sonya readily admits is fitter than the pair of them! Both Sonya and Graham have completed their Mountain Leader Summer Training and so far have not had to contact mountain rescue – if they ever do at least they will be in credit! – but, given their shared love of the outdoors and the inspiration of the Cumbrian mountains, supporting Mountain Rescue seemed a natural choice of charity.

Their training built up slowly. Graham

regularly ran with Blue, Sonya even did some training while visiting friends and family in London, running around the Serpentine in Hyde Park.

They left Kendal at 8.00am on race day, arriving in Manchester at 9.30am.

'We were in the pink wave,' explains Sonya, 'which was the last to start, so we had a lot of waiting with nothing but bin bags to try and keep us warm.'

'The final wave was full of people raising money for charity and a lot of people were walking before we even hit one kilometre. This was a bit frustrating as we aimed to run the whole thing.'

'When we reached 7k, the rain started which gave us a great excuse to run through the showers on the course. We finished the race in full rain and, as soon as we stopped running, the wind and rain felt very cold. Luckily in the after-race goodie bag we had silver blankets to wear.'

Sonya already has her next challenge lined up and will be taking part in the Great North Swim across Lake Windermere in September.

Thanks to both of you and good luck with your future efforts!!



Basecamp winners



At the NEC in March, newly signed Basecamp members were entered into a prize draw, as an added incentive. Mountain Equipment had kindly offered a pair of Kongur MRT jackets as first prize and, as second prize, we had a Swiss Army knife signed by Everest summiteer Jake Meyer and kindly donated by Victorinox. Jackets winners were Thomas Jerrold of Newport and Keith Perry of Northumberland. The 'Jake Meyer' knife went out to Daniel McLynn.

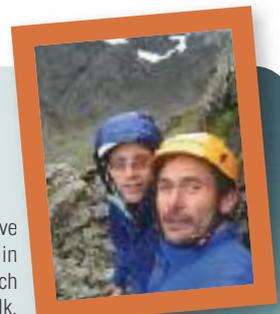
Orange House winner

First correct answer out of the hat to win five days accommodation at the Orange House in Spain, courtesy of Hard Rock Challengers Rich and Sam Mayfield, and including a ridge walk, a via ferrata, a gorge walk and one day's easy rock climbing, is Gail Todd of Rossendale. The answer to the question 'What height in metres in Scafell Pike?' is 978m.

During the summer of 2007, Mark Stevenson and Rich Mayfield completed all the rock climbing routes in Ken Wilson's 'Hard Rock', to raise more than £8,000 for Mountain Rescue. A DVD of their epic struggle to overcome the great British summer and climb all 22,000ft of extreme climbing will be premiered at the Kendal Mountain Film Fest in November.

The boys are also doing a UK tour this year with a slide show, to keep on raising money. Rich – with his wife Sam – is also going back to The Orkneys, as Sam missed out climbing The Old Man of Hoy last time and it's on her list. They hope to have an article in Climber Magazine, with a link so people can still donate.

To learn more about the Challenge go to **hardrockchallenge.blogspot.com**
And for a great climbing holiday to Spain, check out **www.theorangehouse.net**



Mountain Logbook winners



Thanks to the many readers who took the time to enter this competition – this product clearly touches a spot because the response was unprecedented! Three lucky winners will see their Mountain Logbooks dropping onto the doormat any day now but, for those of you who haven't won, the book is available through the Mountain Sense website – **www.mountainsense.co.uk** – at £7.99 plus postage and packing.

The logbook was launched to help promote mountain safety, in the wake of a huge upsurge of accidents in the Lake District hills and beyond. So, if you're a Basecamp member, or even a rescue team member who wants to keep a record of their travels, and help spread the safety message, check out the website – I feel sure the guys will be delighted to hear from you!

Likewise, if you're a business or individual just itching to sponsor the campaign. For further information, or to offer sponsorship, you can contact Chris Gillyon or Chris Harling via email at **info@mountainsense.co.uk**

Winners of the Mountain Logbooks were Mike Stockdale of Bungay, Julia Woods from Dorset, and Chris Vout from County Durham. The answers, of course, were as follows...

- Q. What three things should you always carry on the hill?
A. a) Map, compass, torch.
- Q. How would you call out Mountain Rescue?
A. b) Dial 999, ask for 'Police' then 'Mountain Rescue'.
- Q. Mountain rescue teams operate in seven geographical regions across England and Wales. In which region is the Keswick team based?
A. Lake District.

Find Basecamp on Facebook!

We set up the Page for Basecamp in May and already it's gathering 'fans' fast! The idea was to help us promote support membership – and generate more centrally raised funds – but it would seem we also have a growing fanbase of mountain rescue team members.



The page is already doing its job, with enquiries for the handbook, the magazine and Basecamp subscriptions on the increase – this week we had two new members from across the pond, one in British Columbia the other in leafy New England – and it's great to see people interacting with it daily.

The page is updated regularly by magazine editor, Judy Whiteside, with news bites and comment on developments in mountain rescue from around the country and beyond, but we welcome your input with posts and uploads – be it links, stories, photos or videos. In short, all things mountain rescue. We're aiming at a faster moving and slightly more chatty version of the magazine.

So, if you're not already a Facebook aficionado, then get yourself a profile, and show your support by 'becoming a fan'. Help us to generate awareness and spread the word about mountain rescue.

Facebook is a registered trademark of Facebook, Inc.





FARMER'S WORKHORSE



YACHTSMAN'S CRUISER



ROADIE'S



CLOCKMAKER'S CARRIAGE



MOUNTAIN RESCUER'S ROCK



HUNTSMAN'S



CHIROPODIST'S TOW



DOG HANDLER'S COMPANION



RALLY TEAM'S



MEDIC'S LIFESAVER



ASTRONOMER'S SPACE WAGON



FITNESS CENTRE'S

DEFENDER 110 UTILITY WAGON The new 5 seat commercial vehicle. One size fits all.

THIS VEHICLE MEETS REQUIREMENTS TO BE CLASSIFIED AS A COMMERCIAL VEHICLE FOR TAX PURPOSES. RANGE OF FUEL ECONOMY FIGURES FOR DEFENDER DRIVE RESPONSIBLY ON AND OFF-ROAD.



LOAD LUGGER



GROCER'S JAM JAR



GAMEKEEPER'S RETRIEVER



RIDE



SECURITY FIRM'S STRONGROOM



SPORTSMAN'S HOLDALL



WHEELS



FIVE-A-SIDE TEAM'S 5-SEATER



SCAFFOLDER'S SUPPORT



WEIGHTLIFTER



PLUMBER'S MATE



RAILWAYMAN'S STATION WAGON



GO BEYOND

RANGE MPG (L/100KM): URBAN 20.8(13.6)-22.6 (12.5), EXTRA URBAN 29.2(9.7)-32.9(8.6), COMBINED 25.5(11.1)-26.8(10.0), CO₂ EMISSIONS 266-295G/KM

Fred Barlow BEM finally hangs up his mountain rescue boots by Peter Smith

In March Fred Barlow BEM wrote to the Mountain Rescue Secretary Peter Smith.

'It is with regret that I have to resign as one of the MRC Trustees. I have had many health problems over the last four years with an old head injury. Although I have not attended recent meetings of MREW, I have kept up to date with our regional reps.

'I have had a wonderful 62 years involvement with mountain rescue, cave rescue and sea cliff rescue. I am now aged 87 and it is time to hang up my boots. Please convey my best wishes to all Mountain Rescue committee members. I hope that I might meet them again at a conference in the future.'

He signed off as 'Fredric o' the moors'.

Fred's long involvement with search and rescue began in May 1946. He joined a surf and cliff rescue team in Bude after he met a group of surfers on the beach. He had begun surfing following injuries to his knees as it was suggested sea bathing would assist in the treatment and he became a

proficient swimmer. His rock climbing experience came from his training as an Army Commando at Achnacarry, Scotland, the original training base for the very first Army Commandos and then Royal Marine Commandos.

It seems that at this time there were lots of calls for surf and cliff rescue as large numbers were going on holiday following the war and many regularly got stuck on the cliffs or got into difficulties in the water.

His job at that time (for a gas company) frequently took him further down into Cornwall and there he became involved with a mine rescue team in Cornwall, which led to becoming a member of Devon Cave Rescue for twenty years.

Fred was also involved with the National Park as a voluntary warden ranger and, as such, was frequently on Dartmoor. He teamed up with a Dr Jones, an Okehampton GP, and following a number of incidents of missing persons on the moor, the two of them worked together to form a

permanent rescue team for Dartmoor. A meeting of interested parties was called in Tavistock, a group of volunteers gathered, and Dartmoor Rescue Group was formed.

In 1969 a second DRG section was formed in Okehampton under Fred's guidance. The section's first Controller, he went on to have a close involvement with the Ten Tors event and was closely involved in the planning and operations for many years as a member of the Ten Tors committee, a post he still holds on an honorary basis.

Involvement with DRG led to contact with the Mountain Rescue Committee, and Fred became a representative for the South West. The South West England Rescue Association was formed in 1978 when the MRC decided it needed a separate region due to the number of teams being formed in the area. Fred was instrumental in the setting up of SWERA and became a long-serving member of the committee, still serving as SWERA's vice president.

His substantial contribution to



FRED BARLOW SECOND FROM LEFT

mountain rescue was recognised in 1988 when he became the 29th recipient of the Distinguished Service Award.

These many years of personal devotion to search and rescue were marked with the presentation from Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) of its first-ever Long Service Award to recognise a career of 60 years. Fred received the Certificate from Colonel Alan Hooper RM Rtd, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Devon, at a SWERA presentation meeting on the 10 March 2007, at Devon & Cornwall Police HQ.

From all in mountain rescue, we thank you Fred, for being such a stalwart and dedicated member.



kitcrit

Aquasak and Inline Filter from Pure Hydration

Last year, at the Emergency Services Show in Stoneleigh, we got chatting to Helen Boyle from Pure Hydration and agreed to trial two Aquasaks and Inline Filters on behalf of mountain rescue.

A few days later the package arrived. Nick and I were intrigued to know how good the system was. The Aquasak and filter came as a complete kit and contained everything we would ever need. When we took the filters out of

the box, for some reason we were expecting something a little more hi-tech looking, but it turned out to be a pretty basic looking, but effective cylinder of plastic.

The assembly was very simple in itself. All we had to do now was to wait for a callout to try it.

The filter is also compatible with other leading brands of hydration packs, including Camelbak, Platypus and Source, and can be purchased separately, enabling you to install it into your own system if you so wish.

The filter will purify up to 350 litres of water, dependent on the water quality, and is said to remove bacteria such as E-coli, parasites such as Cryptosporidium and viruses such as Polio Type One, to name but a few.

The whole idea of being able to refill a hydration pack from almost any water source is very appealing and extremely useful when out on the hills, particularly in the mountain rescue environment.

As seasoned mountain rescuers, we have always been taught to be self sufficient in many ways but there is nothing worse than running out of drinking water, whilst on exercise or during an actual job.

We have used the filters and Aquasak on quite a few live incidents and exercises and found it very beneficial.

In times before, when leaving work for a callout, if we did not fill our reservoirs there would be concerns. Especially if you are not one of those on the team who can leave

water in their reservoir for three weeks! No more concerns though.

Whilst conducting a search in a River Valley bottom, the term 'water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink' no longer applied and we were able to fill the hydration systems from the river and continue on the search. There was no funny aftertaste or any substantial issues with the system. We must admit to being a bit sceptical on the initial fill though – however we both took a sip of water at the same time!

This is an invaluable item of kit for travellers going abroad on adventure holidays to Third World countries, as well as those who love to roam closer to home. Aquasak Inline Filters should become part of every mountain rescuer's hill kit, to save having to carry extra bottles of water, which take up room in your sack, and would also help the environment by reducing the amount of plastic bottles used and unfortunately left on the hill.

Nick Collins + Richard J Paskel
Western Beacons MSRT
For further information, go to
www.purehydration.co.uk

Training Survey Questionnaire



INTRODUCTION

We would like as wide selection of mountain rescue personnel to contribute to this survey, not just team training officers or leaders. It is vital we receive a maximum return to validate the data and have maximum impact across the whole of mountain rescue in England and Wales. The results would enable us to focus efforts on the provision of a national training programme which meets the needs of all MRTs. A key aim is to identify examples of good practice and share across regions and teams.

The survey findings will be published in Mountain Rescue magazine and used by the training committee to help focus planning of future training opportunities.

Please return completed form to:-
 Mike Margeson, MR(E&W) Training Officer, 8 Long Row, Marshside, Kirkby in Furness, Cumbria LA17 7UP. Email mmargeson@hotmail.com

PERSONAL DETAILS

Region	Team	Position
Email (optional)		

TEAM LEVEL

1. Who is responsible for arranging and programming team training?

Team Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Executive Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="text"/>
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2. How often does your team train?

Evenings per month:	One	<input type="checkbox"/>	Two	<input type="checkbox"/>	More frequently (specify)	<input type="text"/>
Weekend days per year:	One	<input type="checkbox"/>	Two	<input type="checkbox"/>	More frequently (specify)	<input type="text"/>

3. Does the team record individual team member training? Yes No

4. State what methods you use to record your training eg. electronic file, written log book.

5. Does your team have a training budget? Yes No

6. Who decides on what this is spent and how?

7. Who delivers and runs the training in your team?

Team members	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Team Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="text"/>
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Outside agencies (specify)

8. Does the team review/assess and training and its delivery? Yes No

If Yes, please give details.

9. Have you ever had an external review of training? Yes No

If Yes, please give details.

REGIONAL LEVEL

10. Does your team take part in regional training? Yes No Occasionally

11. Does your region have a regional training committee? Yes No

12. If so, what elements do you consider most important?

13. What are your thoughts about including the following training topics in a regional training plan? Tick as appropriate.

	Not included	Possibly included	Definitely included		Not included	Possibly included	Definitely included
Helicopter Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swiftwater Rescue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Search Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rope Rescue Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal Winter Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue Light/Off road Driving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard CasCare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advanced Medical Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admin/Bookkeeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PR/Media/Marketing Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Civil Contingencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equipment FPE/PPE Checking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Snippet from Sailing Today

The following snippet from *Sailing Today* June 2009, by Colin Jarman might ring a few bells. At least we know it's not just us!

SELF HELP

I've become increasingly worried that people taking up recreational boating are assuming that, like the AA or RAC, the RNLI will come and get them if they're in trouble. While I'm sure that sea schools try to teach self-reliance, there are far too many lifeboats launched to people whose lives are in little or no danger, but who have run into problems – engine failure, grounding.

What I'm trying to say is that we should be calling for lifeboat help as a last resort not as first aid. It's not fair on crews and it depletes the Institution's funds. It also does nothing to improve our seamanship.

It's worrying too that perceptions are easily altered by some callouts. A boat with four people aboard that is pulled off a mud bank because they called for help may be reported, if not actually recorded, as 'four rescued from stranded yacht' when actually all that was saved was a cold anxious wait for the tide. A wait that could have seen four chastened souls a good deal wiser.

My worry over such reports – whether in newspapers or on TV – is their potential for misinterpretation and misuse by legislators to prove how dangerous boating is and how much better it would be if everyone who went afloat were forced to do this that and the other, including the mandatory wearing of life jackets, licensing and regular 'safety checks.'



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



MEMORIES OF YESTERYEAR..

As is now well known, it is now 75 years since it was agreed that something must be done to deal with the increasing number of accidents to fell walkers and climbers, inspiring a group of esteemed gentlemen from the leading climbing clubs to form a committee to provide first aid kit and stretcher at key points in the Lake District. Later, in 1947, the Keswick (originally Borrowdale) and Coniston teams took shape, led by Rusty Westmorland and Jim Cameron respectively. The enthusiasm of those early pioneers sowed the seeds for the rescue teams we have today.

I was a member of mountain rescue for two thirds of the 75 years. I'd like to share some of my lighter hearted memories of that period!

- The Keswick team was called to a fatal accident on Great End over the Christmas holiday. Members assembled at the HQ – then Keswick police station – climbed into the team 'ambulance' (an open-topped Ford Pickup), and departed for Seathwaite. Some of the team had been celebrating Christmas, so were a bit light headed, but the elements encountered sitting in the truck soon cleared their heads (it was snowing with an icy wind). Because this was a fatality, the police had to see the cause of the incident before removal of the victims. The police inspector was not a mountaineer, or even a fell walker, so he arrived at the foot of Great End in full police uniform, with wellies on his feet – and a team member each side of him to stop him falling over. He quickly made his assessment, and returned to Seathwaite declaring he would never go on the fells again!

Note – the next police inspector for Keswick became a team member, whilst his brother, also an inspector, helped to form the Kendal rescue team.

- Following reports of a missing fell walker, 'somewhere above Seathwaite', the team searched Sty Head Pass as far as Wasdale, arriving at the Wastwater Hotel at two in the morning. The light was on in the kitchen so the team leader knocked, and they all went in [to the empty kitchen!] for a breather. There was a cooked ham on the table and members were soon nibbling bits off, when I walked the landlord – the late Wilson Pharoph – wearing his pyjamas. 'Oh, it's you lot!' he said. 'Shut the door when you leave!' as he turned and walked back out the door. After refreshments, the team returned to Seathwaite. One of the team members was, at that time, working as an instructor at Glaramara Outdoor Centre, so we were invited there for breakfast. Whilst he was having a shower [the rest of] the team invited themselves into his room for a brew. Now this particular team member had caught the eye of some young ladies on holiday there. There was a knock on the door. The young ladies had brought their hero a small bottle of whisky. The lads said they would give it to him. But before you could say 'Call out,' the contents of the bottle were emptied into the cups of tea. So, when our hero returned from his shower and was given an empty bottle, he was somewhat miffed!

Note – during this search, grappling irons were used to drag Sty Head tarn. The missing person was found 18 months later in a gully above Taylor Gill.

- Whilst sitting on the summit of High Man, Pillar Rock, with a young lady who worked at George Fisher, a whirring sound was heard. 'What was that?' asked the young lady. 'Someone's fallen off!' I replied. We made our way down, with my companion on a tight rope, as she had become panicky. At the foot of High Man, a group of climbers were standing round a figure on the ground. One said, 'Ah, Des... he's broken his leg.' They were all good climbers but not first aiders. The injured man had a broken femur and a dislocated shoulder. Also, his wife – as his second – had rope burns to her hands. I [always] carried a small first aid kit, plus ampoules of morphine and a small bottle of brandy. This liquid had been issued by the team doctor with instructions to give to people with broken limbs (along with the morphine!). After immobilising the leg and shoulder, I injected the morphine and gave him a liberal sip of brandy. After a while, the moaning stopped and he started laughing and joking – thanks to the cocktail of morphine and brandy. The stretcher arrived, brought from Wasdale, and the injured man was carried down to the ambulance in Ennerdale, with others looking after the lady with the injured hands. Then the young lady and I had to return to Honister, to my car. When I got her home, we were met by a VERY irate father. It was now 11pm – and he slammed the door in my face before I could explain why we were late.

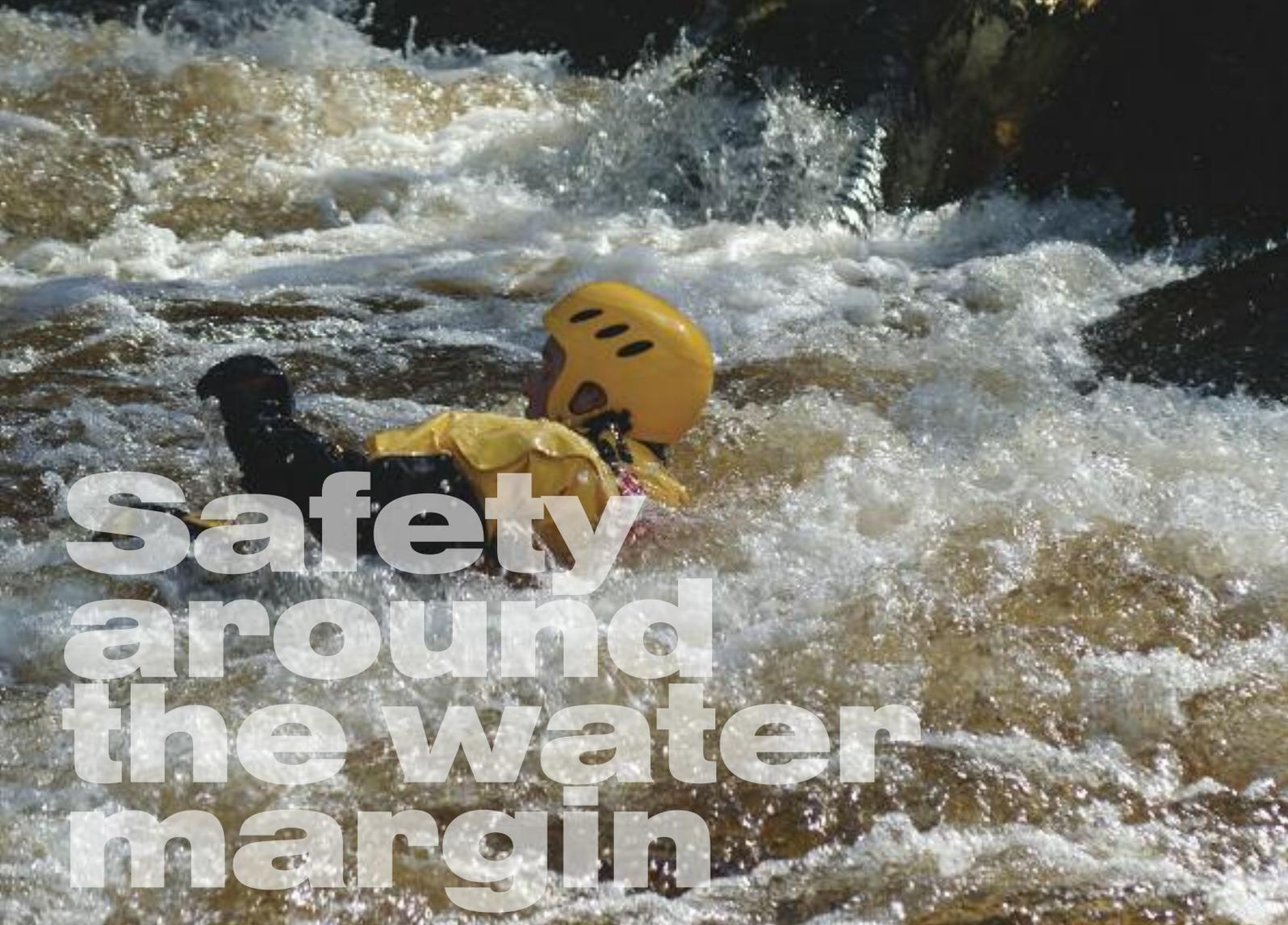
Note – the injured climber made a full recovery and the young lady eventually married a lad from the RAF mountain rescue. The method of injecting morphine and giving brandy was later discontinued! (Pity!)

- In the early 1960s I acted as a volunteer ski mountaineering instructor at Glenmore Lodge. One night, a mountaineering instructor plus two students failed to return. The warden (later Principal) was the late Eric Langmuir. He organised search parties and, with two others, I was sent to Coire Lochain and up Lurchers Meadow to the summit of Cairn Lochan, then down the Fiancailli of Coire an Sneachda. It was snowy and very cold. We checked Jean's hut – then a bothy in the Coire – and plodded through deep snow to the summit. We were in touch with the Lodge by Pye Portable radios. Ours was receiving calls from base but my replies were not acknowledged, which was a bit of a puzzle until we realised that the transmitter on my radio was frozen. Despite breathing on it, it just froze up again. Then I had brainwave and shoved the transmitter down my trousers as far as my crotch – the warmest part of my anatomy! The transmitter thawed out but the side effects were very unpleasant!

Note – the missing group came in at first light, having spent the night in one of the emergency huts (Coire Raibairt) – since removed.

Des Oliver

dear editor



Safety around the water margin

by Howie Crook

In terms of safety around the water margin, I've for a long time had two major areas of concern. In the last issue (number 28, April 2009) we looked at one of these, searching around the water margin; hopefully putting forwards some useful ideas. This article seeks to address the other, an area we face on a regular basis while out on the hill – river crossings. Both these areas are now practically addressed in the new one day bank team training programme developed by Mountain Rescue's water safety panel.

Picture this situation drawn from a true MR story. Out searching in the rain all night to get called off at three in the morning, your group

stumbles down the valley keen to get home, you've got work in the morning, God only knows how you're gonna get up for that. You stagger across various becks getting deeper as you descend, and push on marching down to get to the vehicle parked at the head of the valley. You get to another river, obviously more powerful and fortunately as a group you stop in your tracks.

John decides to test it out, he takes his rucksack off as he doesn't fancy ending up swimming with it and leaves it with you. He makes fairly good progress although the river is looking considerably more powerful than the others you've crossed. As you stand there playing your torches on him you see him start to struggle to keep footing, the water is now forming a bow wave off his thighs. You feel completely helpless as he starts to lose balance, the last few metres look desperate as he just manages to keep

upright and makes it to the other side. He looks back obviously shaken and gives you the unmistakable signal – no way folks, that was a bloody close call.

By shouting, you just manage to establish that you will meet him back at the van which now means a long detour. As you march along, boots full of water, the seriousness of the situation and how stupid you were dawns on you. That could have so easily of been a really, really bad do. Now John, soaked to the skin faces a long walk on his own, to make matters worse you've got to carry his bag!

All ended well on this occasion but this, as I work with teams from across the UK, is becoming a very familiar story.

So, what's the solution?

I believe the first port of call is attitudinal. I also believe this is the key aspect that keeps us safe in all MR situations. An ability to be tuned into and realistically assess risk on the move at all times, even when you've been out on the hill for hours, soaking wet and just want



THIS PIECE OF INOCUOUS WATER WAS MARGINALLY POSSIBLE TO CROSS ON YOUR OWN AT ANKLE DEPTH DUE TO THE NATURE OF THE BOTTOM PHOTO: HOWIE CROOK ▲



LINE ASTERN USING A PADDLE FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT, MOVE ONE AT A TIME AND KEEP IN LINE WITH THE CURRENT. PHOTO: HOWIE CROOK ▲

to get home. With this come the ability to influence your teammates to make the right decisions. Commonly this firstly involves **stopping the clock and raising awareness** of your concerns. 'Guys I'm really not happy about this' might well act to stop people in their tracks and rethink their actions.

When you've slowed things up, the next step is to **assess the situation and look at options**. In high spate conditions this might just have to be a long, long walk or a long wait. In less extreme conditions a search up and downstream may reveal an area of shallow water with less gradient and hence little power. If you choose to cross, think carefully about the consequence of someone losing their footing and going in the water, **if there's any chance they will end up swimming, don't cross at this point**.

If you do decide to cross, undo your rucksack belt and hang it over one shoulder. With a liner the rucksack will float, but you don't want it floating with you underneath! Keep your boots on, they protect your feet and help you gain grip on the bottom.

You might be able to find additional support from a branch or your walking poles making

you more stable and acting as a depth gauge as you cross. If it gets too deep or powerful don't push it, return to where you started and rethink your options. Anything above the knee in moving water can be very powerful, in some areas the most innocuous water at ankle depth is impossible to cross with the bottom feeling like walking on greased marbles. **Constantly assess your stability, and don't get drawn into hazard**.

Crossing on your own can be bad news, in the picture below about one in three people managed to cross this piece of water on their own. By adopting a 'line astern' position all groups made the crossing comfortably and as a large wedge it became very easy for all concerned.

Line astern using a paddle for additional support, move one at a time and keep in line with the current.

When crossing in a group formation it helps to place your 'pie eaters' in pole position upstream to break the flow and act as an anchor. As you make your way across **always be prepared to turn back**, if you fall over you're all potentially in for a soaking, don't forget the nature of



THE GIANT WEDGE, VERY STABLE BUT EXPOSES LOTS OF PEOPLE PHOTO: HOWIE CROOK ▲

the water should be that you may fall over but you wouldn't get swept away or end up swimming. **Have a leader** to co-ordinate for each group, good communication is vital and **move one at a time** to ensure mutual stability.

The main formations are a triangle formation and line astern, get out there and practice on a safe piece of water with the right PPE, certainly wearing buoyancy aids and helmets.

I've not looked at the use of ropes in this short article as there are inherent dangers involved and quite often we don't have one when out on a search. If the current is that powerful that you're wanting a rope to



TRIANGLE OF SUPPORT – ENSURE YOU ONLY MOVE ONE AT A TIME PHOTO: HOWIE CROOK ▲

safeguard being swept away, then you're in the wrong place.

River crossing techniques and water margin searches are included in the new one day bankside support training programme, along with the use of throwlines, defensive swimming and a stack of other stuff. The programme has been piloted and received very good feedback. For further details, drop me an email (see address below).

Howie Crook sits on the MR Water Safety Panel and likes writing articles and running swiftwater training courses! Thanks to Ewan Thomas for sharing ideas on search patterns. Email Howie at howardcrook@rethinktraining.co.uk to get examples of SMEAC which you can print out.

National fundraising continues to pay dividends

by Mike France

Over the last two years, the national fundraising group has come a long way. We work very closely with Andy Simpson, our press officer and chairman of the publications subcommittee (PISC), and Judy Whiteside, editor of Mountain Rescue magazine.

In our budget for 2008, we were hoping for a fundraising income of around £90,000. In fact, our income was around £120,000, achieved through the hard work of both the National Fundraising and PISC groups.

Many of our achievements are, or have been previously, highlighted in the magazine – Goodyear's 'Team of the Year' and, more recently, their photography competition aimed at creating a distinctive mountain rescue calendar; Burton McCall's continued support at the outdoor shows, through sponsorship and incentives to join Basecamp courtesy of brands such as Victorinox, Maglite and Mountain Equipment; Leeds Metro

students organising a variety of events to raise funds... the list goes on. But there are other points which deserve a mention.

By the end of the year, we had 320 members – a number which continues to grow upwards, now approaching 500 members and still counting. Thanks go to Neil Roden, but especially to his wife Lorraine, for their efforts with Basecamp. This project has created a lot of admin – both material and digital!

As detailed in the last issue, the Boat, Caravan and Outdoor Show in February proved to be a great disappointment. The organisers, who had initially convinced us of the worthiness of this venture (it being slightly outside our 'comfort zone'), subsequently reported that footfall was down 10% on the previous year. At least it wasn't entirely personal – other groups at the show were also disappointed. Hot on the heels of that event came the Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show in

March – a much more successful, and enjoyable, few days! Some £3,600 was grossed over the weekend, including new Basecamp subscriptions. We're now looking forward to and planning the show for next year, with plans to put on a crag rescue display.

Through Just Giving there were 47 events over 2008, raising £28,400 for our organisation. Eve Burton looks after this side of things and replies to all emails from people wishing to fundraise for Mountain Rescue and, following the first contact, this income is fairly automatic. So far this year, some £2,7180 has been received with a further 22 events in the pipeline. Anyone wishing to organise an event and raise money for mountain rescue should contact Eve via email on eveburton@chinley25.fsnet.co.uk.

There has been a suggestion that we designate a Mountain and Cave Rescue Day – a 'Flag Day' if you like – where teams across the countries

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would fundraise on the same day, under the same banner. This is set to start on May Bank Holiday 2010. PISC will organise national press and media coverage and it will be up to individual teams to talk to their own local papers. This could prove to be a great fundraiser all round.

A major part of fundraising and marketing is not just about knowing what we do today, but where we come from and what we've done in the past. It has often been suggested that there must be a lot of historic knowledge held by some retired members, and our older members (I guess I'm one of these!) so we plan to make an effort to record this information and create an archive of incidents. Pat France has agreed to lead this exercise.

Finally – would you like a job? Would you like to be part of the national fundraising team? We need a Contracts Manager. Much of what we do now involves talking to companies and setting up contracts with them for sponsorship agreements and suchlike. At the moment, this falls on Penny Brockman as treasurer, and Tony Rich, as our legal adviser, and there are only 24 hours in every day!

If you have skills to bring to this and would like to help, please email me on nationalfundraising@mountain.rescue.org.uk. (Incidentally, salary = 0: satisfaction = guaranteed!)

Finally, a big thank you to my fundraising team for everything they've achieved over the last year.

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Alpha 6 is also supplied with a bicycle and helmet attachments. The beam length and breadth are the same on all three, and can all be simply attached and detached by using a buckle on the headband, bicycle or helmet attachment. Less head movement, increased control, better balance and more speed. Alpha Intelligent Light, rrp £199.99–299.99 For stockists, or to buy online, please call 01506 406277 or visit www.silva.se

Mobile phones and mountain rescue

by Mark Lewis

It has been widely published that Ofcom is working with Mobile Network Operators (MNO), to investigate the possibility of allowing mobile phones access to networks, other than that to which the phone is subscribed, in an emergency for 999/112 calls. Following a meeting with Ofcom, this article explains both the current status and the proposed alternative now being investigated.

Mobile phone making 999/112 calls when out of coverage of own network

● How does it function now?

At present, if you have no service from your UK provider you are not able to call any numbers, even 999 or 112 – contrary to what we might have believed. Many years ago, if you dialled 999 your phone would have roamed to some of the other available networks, but this function was turned off, as it was found that emergency operators did not receive the CLI (Calling Line Identification). So there was no way of tracing any hoax calls.

Although if you have a non-UK SIM card in your phone it will still, today, roam to other available UK networks, so allowing 999/112 calls. This, I

understand, is what one social services department in Wales actually does, so as to help guard the safety of their members of staff.

● Ofcom's Intentions

By the end of 2009 it is intended that if you have no service via your own subscribed network provider, but dial a 999/112 call you will be able to make the 999/112 call via an alternative network provider. The alternative providers being, Vodafone, O2, T-Mobile, Orange or Three. This is providing you do have network coverage from any one of these alternative networks at the time. This method is proven already in many European countries where it is available and used currently.

Possibility of returning a call To 999/112 caller

● How does it function now?

It is not possible for the emergency services to recontact the informant. I have voiced our concerns from a mountain rescue perspective as there are many reasons why we may need to phone the informant back – medical update, location finding, advising them of our intentions for reassurance etc.

This concern has been raised also on many occasions at UKSAR meetings and has already been forwarded to the 999 Liaison Committee.

The full version of the Ofcom consultation on 999 roaming is available at:

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/access/>

Food for thought...

GPS faces shutdown

US government officials have said that GPS could begin to deteriorate in 2010, resulting in regular blackouts, or even transmitting inaccurate positions.

A government study claims that mismanagement and a lack of investment may cause some of the crucial GPS satellites to fail as soon as next year.

A brief dip into eponymous medical terms 4

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

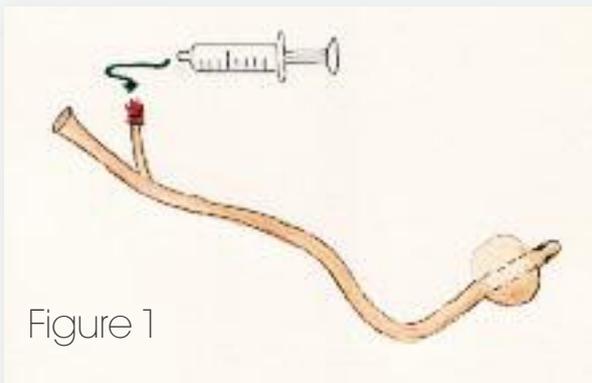


Figure 1

Foley Catheter

The Foley catheter was first introduced in 1930. Its primary purpose was as a bladder drainage catheter. The development of a double lumen tube enables a balloon to be inflated at the end of the tube and thus retaining the catheter in place (Figure 1).

The catheter is now produced in a wide range of sizes of tube diameter and balloon volume, the latter running from 5ml to 30ml.

It soon became apparent that the device has many more applications than as a simple bladder drainage device. It can be effectively used as a chest drain with the balloon serving to anchor it in place. The balloon can also be employed to exert pressure and thus to control bleeding in confined spaces. The small sized catheters have been deployed to control severe nasal bleeding and can be inflated within a large blood vessel to act as a safe 'tourniquet'.

The concept of using a balloon device has been widely extended to the removal of blood clots, stones etc from various organs.

Dr Frederick Foley worked as a general surgeon at Boston Massachusetts hospital.

Gamgee

Gamgee was the first absorbent surgical dressing to be produced. It took its name from Dr Joseph Samson Gamgee who described the dressing in the Lancet in 1880. Two layers of absorbent gauze were used to surround a centre of cotton wool. This was an enormous step forwards in the management of wounds leaking fluids as well as in the treatment of bleeding wounds.

The term Gamgee became a trademark in 1911. During the First World War, the cotton wool was replaced with dried sphagnum moss as an absorbent because of the shortage of cotton. The dressing has effectively been in use with little modification for well over 100 years.

An interesting link with 'Lord of the Rings'

exists. Sam Gamgee was taken from the dressing and, of course, Sam's wife is Rose Cotton!

Dr Gamgee was born in 1824 in Italy but practised his medicine as a surgeon in Birmingham. He shared lodgings with Joseph Lister the first proponent of aseptic surgery. Joseph Gamgee also founded the Birmingham hospital Saturday fund. This collected the Saturday overtime earnings of various groups of workers to ensure that medical care was available when needed.

This was very clearly a talented medical family. One of his brothers was Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at the Royal Institute in London and the other was Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at the Dick College of Veterinary Medicine in Edinburgh.

Geudal Airway

This is another breakthrough piece of medical equipment that has stood the test of time. It was introduced by Dr Arthur Geudel in 1933.

It is a simple airway allowing control, especially of the tongue in unconscious patients (Figure 2).

Apart from refinement of the materials used in its manufacture the design is effectively unchanged. In use it is important to match the size of airway to the patient and to insert it at 90 degrees to its working position.

Dr Geudel was a United States anaesthetist who also first recognised and described the stages of anaesthesia using ether

whilst serving with the US expeditionary force in France in WW1. He went on to publish the stages of anaesthesia in 1937:-

- Stage1: Analgesia
- Stage2: Excitement
- Stage 3: Surgical anaesthesia in 1-4 planes
- Stage 4: Respiratory arrest and death

Heimlich Manoeuvre

Alternatively known as 'abdominal thrusts', the Heimlich manoeuvre has become well established as the method of choice for treating airway obstruction due to inhaled foreign bodies in adults (Figure 3).

Prior to 1980, the advice for this clinical situation was to begin with 'back blows' and then to resort to abdominal compression if the 'back blows' failed.

In 1974 Dr Henry Jay Heimlich wrote an article in Emergency Medicine called 'Pop goes the café coronary' in which he asserted that abdominal thrusts were superior to back blows. He subsequently convinced the American Red Cross of this and renamed the abdominal thrust as the Heimlich Manoeuvre.

In recent years, a fascinating story has emerged. Firstly the American Red Cross have reviewed the evidence that Heimlich provided and have queried its veracity. In 2006 the term Heimlich was removed and the term 'abdominal thrust' was reintroduced. In addition the advice reverted to the earlier guidelines of 5 back blows to be followed by abdominal thrusts if the back blows failed to resolve the problem. There is also on going work comparing the efficacy of 'chest thrusts' against abdominal thrusts.

Peter Heimlich, the son of Henry Jay, has meanwhile been running a campaign alleging



Figure 2

Steroplast Healthcare

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Figure 3



that his father's work has been fraudulent and not original. There is certainly some evidence that the whole idea of abdominal thrusts was introduced by a Dr Ed Patrick, a one time colleague of Dr Heimlich.

At one stage Heimlich advocated the use of his manoeuvre for the treatment of drowning but this was quite rapidly shown to be wrong. He also achieved a certain amount of notoriety for advocating infection with malaria as a means of treating HIV infection. Investigation revealed little or no scientific basis for this approach.

In 1963 Heimlich also described the Heimlich valve as a means of producing one way drainage on a chest drain. Although this remains in use there have been questions about the originality of his idea.

Dr Henry Jay Heimlich was born in 1920 in Delaware. He attended Cornell University where his claim to fame was as the drum major in the marching band! Perhaps an early indicator of his liking for the limelight. He practised as a surgeon for a number of years but gave this up when he was no longer able to obtain medico-legal insurance following a number of 'incidents'. He then appeared to embark on a career of 'medical discovery'.

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Medical Symposium
 7 November 2009
 Charlotte Mason College
 Ambleside.
 Programme

10:00

Fracture dislocation of the ankle

Mr Mike Greene FRCS • A&E Consultant; Team Doctor Wasdale MRT

10:30

Cold water drowning

Prof Mike Tipton PhD • Prof Physiology Southampton University; Medical Adviser RNLI

11:30 Coffee

11:45

Analgesia study

Dr John Ellerton MB ChB MRCGP • Medical Officer MREW; Team Doctor Patterdale MRT

12:00

Problems presented by the elderly

Dr Jill Cook MRCGP • Consultant in Elderly Medicine

12:30

Trauma deaths in North Wales

Dr Linda Dykes • A&E Consultant

13:00 Lunch

14:00

CasCare training in the RNLI

Paul Savage • Clinical lead/training manager

14:30

Routes of drug administration

Dr John Williams FFA • Consultant Anaesthetist

15:00

Current thoughts on airways

Dr Karen Greene FFA • Consultant anaesthetist

15:30 Tea

15:45

Pathology of long falls

Dr Theo Weston MRCGP • Team Doctor Patterdale MRT; Doctor with the Great North Air Ambulance

16:30 Discussion

17:00 Finish

Course fee £30.00 Bookings to Peter Smith Secretary Mountain Rescue 01706-852335 or email secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

View from the ED trolley: fractured olecranon

Dr Henry Guly

Like so many accidents, it was stupid. I had climbed a mountain and had done the steep, dangerous bits and was walking back to the road when I tripped over a stone, my left (luckily non-dominant elbow) being the first to hit the ground. On assessing the damage, the elbow was painful. Passive movements were between approximately 10° and 110°, which was good news but the crepitus that accompanied it was not, and neither was the gap at the upper end of the ulna.

An x-ray in a minor injuries unit confirmed the fracture, which was treated in a backslab until I could get home and have it fixed.

Learning started early. Long arm plasters are heavy; reef knots slip on the cheap disposable broad arm slings and the modern tendency to secure the corner of a sling with tape rather than a pin is useless.

The first night is the most awkward, especially if you are on your own or in a hotel far from home. Living one-handed is a challenge; removing my shirt required bending down to hook the collar under a door handle so that the sleeve slipped down my arm when I stood up. Tearing toilet paper required stabilisation of the roll with my knee, and putting toothpaste onto a toothbrush was a two stage technique. My first purchase was shoes that did up with Velcro and the second was some cheap shirts whose arms could be cut off to go over the plaster.

Sleep was organised by delaying bedtime until I felt shattered; analgesia and the careful arrangement of extra pillows to rest the plaster on. I would wake once or twice but initially at least, I got a reasonable night's sleep.

Post-operatively, I had a cylinder but these have their own problems. Cylinders slip and wrist movements are restricted by pressure on the ulna styloid by the sharp edge. A cylinder allows more function but a plaster that includes the wrist is more comfortable. I had never previously realised the pleasure that a new plaster could bring.

Return of function is not linear. On one occasion I carried a water jug to the meal table but an hour later, while trying to dry up, I was unable to hold a cup securely enough to dry it. The lifting strength returned early, but pushing, eg. opening a door, or even stabilising a loaf of bread with my left hand so I could cut it with my right, remained painful for weeks.

The pain from the fracture was not as bad as I expected. I have always taught the value of plaster for pain relief and this was so, but in fact the broad arm sling provided 90% of the analgesia from the plaster/sling combination at rest. Apart from when told to take analgesia by bossy nurses, I only took pain relief at night.

This is not a macho downplaying of my pain because I did experience pain but of a very different sort. Three days post-operatively, the bruising appeared. Proximally it peeped above the top of the plaster and distally extended to the bases of my nails and was accompanied by hand swelling. On the fourth day when I woke, my fingers were stiff and I stretched them. About five seconds later, I got a severe pain in my hand. This lasted an hour and a half, but as my mind was occupied by getting dressed and breakfasted, it did not unduly bother me. The pain then wore off. That night I awoke and unconsciously stretched my fingers and exactly the same thing happened. I had severe burning pain in the palm and dorsum of my hand but, laying in bed, trying to sleep and with nothing to distract me, the pain was almost unbearable so I got up. Analgesia did not touch it but it was eased by icepacks and, again, it went within an hour and a half and so I could go back to bed and to sleep.

For nearly two weeks, I would take an icepack to bed to apply at the first sign of pain, but still had to get up to read for up to 90 minutes every night (and had pain every morning). I have never previously encountered a similar problem and neither had two colleagues I consulted. Neither came up with a diagnosis, although both suggested a neurological cause.

To me, it felt as if fibres (fibrin? collagen?) were being laid down in this bruised, oedematous hand and my stretching was snapping them and I was getting an inflammatory reaction to that. I declined amitriptyline at night and within ten days the pain was easing. In just over two weeks it had gone. I do not believe I am unique and even if only a small proportion of patients get similar problems, I (and my colleagues) must have seen the problem without recognising it dozens of times. Why is this? I am sure that it is because we cannot recognise what we do not know. If it had a name (perhaps transient

post-trauma, oedema-related pain), we would know about it, perhaps ask about it and even research how to manage it. Or is it because we do not listen to what our patients are telling us – we are too busy telling them about the fracture?

I returned to work eight days post-op. The arm might not work but the brain did (apart from the shortage of sleep) and I could interview, teach and attend meetings. I soon progressed to doing the ward round and clinics (the cause of much amusement to patients), although I could not do practical procedures or examinations requiring two hands) examining knees, percussing the chest, feeling for enlarged spleen or kidneys).

On removing the plaster, function slowly returned and the measurement of this is much more important than measuring the range of movement. The main functional limitations depend on how closely you can approximate the hand to the face and neck. When first out of plaster, I could only feed myself by holding a fork at the very end but reasonably soon I could get my hand to my mouth. Flexing the elbow enough to do up a top button took just over two weeks.

Although movements returned fairly quickly, I was surprised how long the elbow remained swollen, there was pitting oedema over the olecranon for three months. Interestingly, all five nails on the left hand developed a transverse ridge that slowly grew out.

The metalwork was removed after six months and although I still lack 10° of extension, function is perfect.

So, what have I learned? Centralisation of major services may be essential but minor injury units play a very valuable role. Processes can be improved – did I really need to be asked six times what medication I was taking and did I get any allergies? Does it really need to take five hours to get a take-home analgesia from the pharmacy?

I suspect that the majority of the problems I faced are applicable to most people with similar injuries. Healthcare professionals should be in a position to advise on likely problems and solutions. Perhaps expert patients should contribute to our textbooks?

Emerg Med J 2009; 26:48-49;
doi:10.1136/emj.2007.054957

Suspected decompression illness in divers

General advice for cave rescue teams and doctors – April 2009

Decompression illness is a serious condition for which an immediate response may have to include recompression in a specialised pressure chamber. It does not necessarily indicate any bad practice on the part of the casualty. The main cause is gas bubbles forming in the bloodstream during or after ascent. Even if symptoms appear to be mild or confusing do not hesitate to follow the advice below if decompression illness is suspected.

Some of the following symptoms and signs may be present:

CNS Central Nervous System

Numbness
Pins and needles
Girdle pain
Paralysis
Headache
Profound exhaustion
Vertigo
Loss of consciousness
Poor co-ordination
Inability to pass urine
Speech difficulties etc

Joints

The main symptom is pain (particularly in shoulder, elbow, knee, hip, wrist or hand) although absence of pain is of no diagnostic significance.

Skin

Itching, rashes or mottling

Heart and lung

Chest pain
Shortness of breath
Irritating cough
Heartbeat irregularities

Gastrointestinal tract

Nausea
Loss of appetite
Vomiting
Cramping pains
Diarrhoea

The following procedure should begin immediately to minimise the danger of death or permanent paralysis.

- A rescue team doctor must be called to the scene (if possible one with diving experience).

- Before seeking specialist advice compile as much as possible of the following information:–

- Your name, location and a contact telephone number
- Name of casualty
- Location of casualty
- Symptoms and signs present and time of onset
- Details of dive(s) before onset of symptoms (depths, times, gases breathed, multiple dives etc)
- Name and address of doctor attending the casualty

First aid measures (both in the cave and during transport to chamber)

- **Oxygen** administered via a sealed oronasal mask if possible. The sooner oxygen inhalation is begun, the more unlikely the casualty will be to suffer permanent harm. (Note: symptoms may worsen briefly but should soon improve)

- **Fluids** – provided orally (1 litre per hour eg. fruit juice, but avoid drinks containing caffeine) or if necessary intravenously. However **DO NOT** give fluids if

the casualty is unable to pass urine (unless catheterisation is possible).

- **Despatch to a chamber** – move casualty in a horizontal position where possible. The casualty must NOT be allowed to exert themselves. Arrange the fastest means of transporting the casualty from the

cave entrance to the recompression chamber. This will normally be by helicopter, which must fly as low as possible or the casualty is likely to deteriorate. If the casualty was wearing a submersible dive computer this should be sent with them, as the chamber operator can download valuable information from it.

Note: analgesics should be avoided unless advice from an expert in diving medicine is available (as they mask symptoms, thus making subsequent treatment and monitoring more difficult).

It is particularly important never to administer Entonox or other nitrous oxide based analgesics as these may cause symptoms to worsen or initiate symptoms in an otherwise unaffected diver.

The three main first aid measures (oxygen,

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(or in Scotland call Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
0845 408 6008)

(For various reasons it is preferable for the initial contact to be made by a doctor if possible.)

A useful source of general information on diving emergencies is the British Hyperbaric Association website:–

<http://www.hyperbaric.org.uk/>

fluids, despatch to a chamber) can best be remembered by cavers as 'OFD'

- If the casualty was diving with someone else who did similar dives, bear in mind that they may also develop symptoms of decompression illness.

- It is possible that the diving team involved

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Thanks to the PureLink connectors, the Pure Hydration Inline Filter easily clips into the Aquasak in seconds, allowing the user to choose when they want their water purified. If the water comes from a safe source, simply unclip the filter, prolonging its life for when you really need it. If you do need state of the art purification, clip the filter into the Aquasak and you're good to go.

It kills viruses and bacteria, removes larger pathogens including Cryptosporidium and Giardia, bad tastes and odours, chemicals, heavy metals and sediment. Its tough ABS shell and small size means it will easily fit in a pocket when not in use. With its capability of purifying up to 350 litres, it means the user is self sufficient for longer – with no need for bottled water.

Which means fewer plastic bottles in landfill – and that's good news for all of us! For more information, contact Helen Boyle helen.boyle@purehydration.co.uk or visit purehydration.co.uk



See Kit Crit page 30



in the incident may be equipped and prepared to perform 'In Water Recompression' – a technique sometimes used in remote locations. This involves the affected diver redescending into the water to enable oxygen rich gas mixtures to be breathed at pressure, thus simulating treatment in a conventional recompression chamber. This may be successful and in certain circumstances may be the preferred option, as treatment is immediate. Cave rescuers and attending doctors should be aware of this option and liaise with the divers involved as the situation they are presented with develops, also in consultation with the experts (see telephone contacts above).

● Decompression illness is not the only malady which can affect divers. Symptoms of other conditions may overlap with those of decompression illness; accurate diagnosis may only be possible by a doctor experienced in diving medicine. Some of the treatments required for these other conditions are also similar to that for decompression illness. In general the advice above applies to most types of post dive problems.

Information prepared by John Cordingley, BCRC Diving Officer. The involvement of Dr A P Glanvill, R W Stanton, S Marsh, D Brock and Dr Phil Bryson (British Hyperbaric Association) is gratefully acknowledged. The above is necessarily only a summary for rescue teams and medical practitioners with no diving knowledge. The main intention is to raise awareness of the potentially serious and urgent nature of diving emergencies and to encourage an appropriately rapid response. It cannot replace advice from a diving medical expert, which is available via the contacts listed above.



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Life saving equipment - it's in the bag!



Whatever they carry, the bags you use to transport life-saving equipment must be fit for purpose and protect both the kit they hold and the safety of the carrier. And this may require a tailor-made solution, rather than off the peg. In a nutshell, a kit bag should protect the tools it carries, be easy to access by the user, be tough and weatherproof, have a smooth, snag-proof exterior, be safe for the user to manually carry and have good weight distribution.

For example, working with the fire services Judi Collins, managing director of emergency bag manufacturer Proflight, says, 'We take notes of the specifications, which include how many tools fire personnel want to carry in a bag; which tools need to be accessed first; which bits go with which; weight and size ratios of the individual bits of kit; and any potential or actual problems likely to be encountered when attending an incident.'

Work is currently underway for Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service, to produce a bag suitable for ascending high rise buildings – restrictive and difficult places to work, not dissimilar to the steep crag face. Having the right bag is incredibly important to the emergency services and using a bag that has not been designed for purpose can add unnecessary time to the rescue of a life.

To find out more call **01246 240009** or email judi@proflightbag.co.uk

Shrimp shells save climber's life

by Ian Bunting, Eddale MRT

Over the first weekend in April we hosted and ran a national course in Trauma and Casualty Care, as reported in previous issues. Delegates came from all around the country and even further a field, with two people coming from Germany. Likewise we managed to enrol guest speakers/lecturers from far and wide.

One of the innovative ideas we looked at was a product that helps stem bleeding. 'Celux' is made from a material extracted from shrimp shells and was developed for use by the military. The material promotes the body's natural clotting mechanisms, allowing serious wounds to be treated before the patient reaches hospital. As a result of the course and dealings with the manufacturers, our medical officer Dr Steve Rowe decided it would be a good idea for us to trial the use of the material. This was just as well given the incident we attended on Easter Saturday.

At around 6.00pm, we were called out to reports of a fallen climber on Stanage Edge. We responded quickly, arriving at the roadside only moments after the ambulance service. The first team members to arrive were Steve Rowe and James Stubley, a paramedic for the Yorkshire Ambulance Service. They were met by climbers who had come down to the road to meet us.

It became apparent that the chap was quite

badly injured having fallen from the top of the crag. Climbers were stabilising his neck and padding out a wound to the side of his abdomen. He also had a very bad open wrist fracture. The abdomen wound was examined, very quickly as it turned out, and found to be hosing blood. The wound and the bleeding had been caused by a vertical shear fracture of the pelvis that had cut through to the outside.

Everyone was now fully aware that the climber was very, very poorly and unless the bleeding could be stemmed and him transported to hospital quickly there was a very real chance he could bleed to death in front of us. Fortunately Steve had the Celux – which he used. And it worked.

The rest of the team performed in the calm, quick, efficient manner that is the norm, including use of a SAM pelvic splint. This and the close working with the air ambulance meant the climber was in hospital very quickly. Once there he was immediately given five pints of blood and whisked off to theatre. Thankfully he survived the ordeal but will spend a long time recuperating, particularly from his wrist injury. As far as the Celux goes this is the first time we are aware it has been used by mountain rescue in the UK.



The most important bit about this job for me wasn't the Celux but the people and processes that saved this young man's life – getting there quickly, diagnosing and treating him quickly, and quick evacuation to hospital. All carried out by team members easily recognisable in their shiny jackets and helmets. What is not as easily recognised, but equally important, is the work carried out by friends and supporters of mountain rescue teams up and down the country. Without people helping us either raise the funds or donating to the teams we cannot continue to buy the shiny new bits of kit and equipment we use to save people's lives.

So on behalf of EMRT's Casualty 23/2009, and all the others we help, thank you for your support.

Not just for skiers...

We have become well known in the outdoor community for practical, realistic and relevant training for the mountain and outdoor environment, our aim to train people to be safe, confident first aiders. We work with the reality of the mountainous and outdoor environment, utilising outdoor scenarios for practical hands-on learning. Here is an account of the level of experience and training our trainers have.

Jeff is a ski patroller, member of Glencoe MRT and one of our trainers. We train all levels of first aid from the basics up to EMT level, which many believe to be one above the Casualty Care course. The 5 March 2005 proved to be 'one of those days' – some good weather on the hill, skiers enjoying themselves and some of the best ice climbing conditions for a good while.

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

Jeff and the two climbers arranged a belay and put a rope into the hole allowing Jeff to abseil in to assess the casualty. The findings were radioed to patrol base allowing us to respond with appropriate equipment. The history of the incident was that Pete, the now injured climber, was ascending the snow slope to have a look for the start of the route. While descending to his companions he noticed a small slot in the snow and

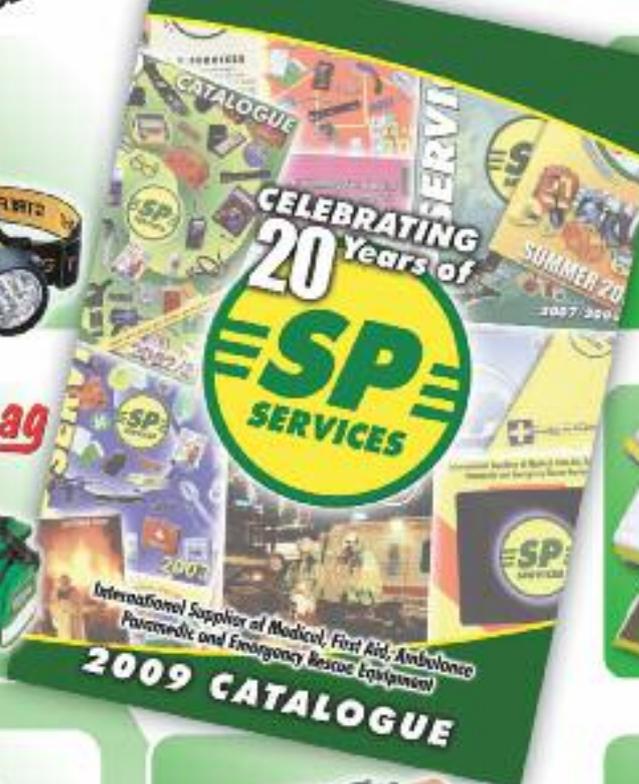
prepared to jump over it. The slot was in a 2m wide snow bridge, which promptly collapsed as he landed!

During the fall Pete's right crampon caught on the crevasse wall, breaking his lower leg. By chance Pete's companions were looking at the view and missed his unintentional descent into the snow pack. Shouting failed to attract attention so, doing a 'Joe Simpson', Pete dragged himself onto the nearby snow bridge, tied some krabs and ice screws onto a piece of line and managed to throw the weighted line out of the hole thus alerting his companions.

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

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





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Edale MRT CasCare/Trauma Weekend

by James Stubbley

April 2009 once again saw Edale MRT host its Casualty Care Trauma/Medical Weekend, this year for the third year in succession and, as before, open to teams across England and Wales.

Enthusiastic team members from Bowland Pennine, Upper Wharfedale, Duddon & Furness, Llanberis, Ogwen Valley, and Swaledale teams joined with Peak District team members from Buxton, Glossop, Kinder, Oldham and Woodhead along with Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation, at the Edale team base to learn new, and revise existing, casualty care skills.

Alongside England and Wales team members, we welcomed for the second year two members of the Bergwacht Blautal team in Germany, and three members from Borders SRT.

This year, instructors and speakers from the the Edale team were accompanied by Harold Burrows, of North East Wales SRT, members of both Derby and Glossop MRTs, BASICS (British Association for Immediate Care) representatives and the returning Simon Royston, a trauma and orthopaedic consultant from the Northern General Hospital, Sheffield.

A slight change in format consisted of short lectures and presentations, followed by a rotation of skills stations in both the morning and afternoon periods. The material presented continued to be based on Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS), Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee (JRCALC) and Casualty Care guidelines and with a mix of doctors, A&E nurses, paramedics and experienced team members delivering the information. Those teaching drew from their considerable experience in mountain rescue, as well as from their professional medical backgrounds.

For some the weekend commenced on the Friday evening with members of several teams making the journey early – allowing true mountain rescue tradition to continue as members were fed and watered in one of the local hostleries! Fortunately for most, Edale MRT had two non-drinkers on hand to assist with free transport.

As the evening went on discussions were exchanged regarding differing team's practices and it wasn't long before the banter commenced. Despite representatives from several teams, when unexpectedly called upon, members can always be relied on to pull together. This joint MRT effort was indeed successful in winning the local quiz night!

The morning programme of Day One consisted of lectures and skill stations on the anatomy and physiology of A and B cervical spine and then the assessment and management of airway and breathing. The afternoon saw lectures and skill stations covering circulation, including a presentation and demonstrations on developments in haemorrhage control, mainly tourniquets and hemostatic agents.

An after-dinner presentation from Ben Cooper, an A&E charge nurse/ENP, and member of the Edale team, focused on his work in Antarctica. Following which, members enjoyed the task of beating 180 pints of donated alcohol from three local breweries. As the task began, so too the bouldering challenge and the competition was on – a fine display, it must be said, from the Ogwen Valley team!

As many retired to their accommodation, still the inter-team banter continued, mainly now between

members of Edale and Oldham teams, along with Borders. As the night drew to a close for most, one attendee's experience extended slightly further than the rest with a trip to the local accident and emergency department, with what was eventually diagnosed as a badly sprained ankle. In true fashion, on returning to the team base it was the early hours (0400hrs) before everyone was asleep. On a positive note we had a real casualty for the next day's splinting workshops!

Bleary eyed, the Sunday morning programme consisted of lectures and skill stations on hypothermia, medical causes of unconsciousness, head injuries and spinal immobilisation and handling. The afternoon included splinting, and group discussion on dealing with post traumatic stress in mountain rescue, vaccinations and an opportunity to share incident experiences.

Once more members, deemed the course a major success, and this now seems to have become an annual opportunity for members from teams across the two countries – and beyond – to come together, share ideas and socialise. At the request of those attending, we plan to run the same weekend in 2010, on the 17/18 April. You are cordially invited to join us for an informative, friendly and hands on weekend.



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17/18 APRIL 2010

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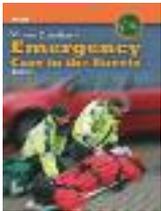
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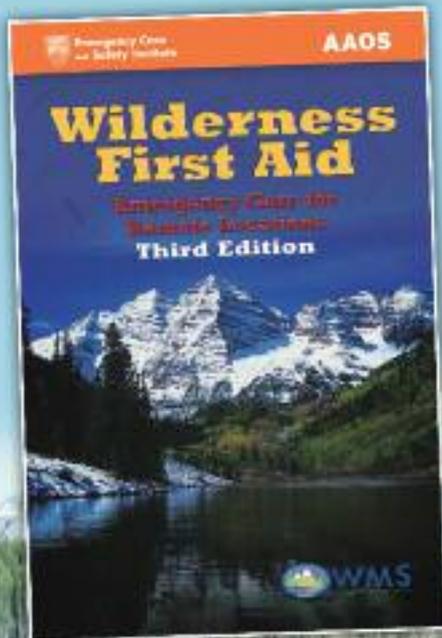
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SARAIID searches for new members

by Gary Francis

When you hear about a major disaster somewhere in the world or see the devastation and suffering on the TV or news – do you ever think, 'I wish I could be there and help?' Well now is your chance to get off the sofa and to see if you have got what it really takes. Search and Rescue Assistance in Disasters (SARAIID) is searching for the right people and it could be you!



Search and Rescue Assistance in Disasters (SARAIID) is a UK Registered Charity (No. 1101593) and NGO. We provide teams of trained specialist urban search and rescue technicians to any country free of charge, upon request for assistance. We specialise in the location and extraction of live victims and casualties from collapsed buildings or structures primarily following an earthquake. All of our members are unpaid volunteers and come from all walks of life.

We are currently recruiting new volunteer members and would specifically like to hear from people interested in joining who are qualified or training in the following specialist fields:-

- Medical – Doctors/Paramedics/Nurses
- Structural Engineers
- Hazardous Materials Officers.

We are looking for people to join in two ways: either those that wish to join team and go through training as Urban Search and Rescue Technician and to become an Operational Member; or those with the specialist skills we require to undergo some basic training with the operational team which will then enable you to join a 'pool' of specialists that we can call upon to be attached to team when operationally deployed overseas.

All SARAIID members train for one weekend

per month for eighteen months before undergoing a five day operational evaluation exercise to assess if they are ready to join the operational team.

Members bring with them many differing skills from their varied professions and learn many more skills during our monthly training sessions and exercises. However, the most valuable asset a member must have is the ability to work as part of a close knit team. Team members will undoubtedly find themselves in potentially dangerous situations; therefore the need for complete trust between team members is of paramount importance. Team members will on occasion quite literally trust one another with their lives.

Depth of experience

Although SARAIID is a relatively new organisation it has a depth of experience in its membership. Its members have over about the past twelve years provided search and rescue

and humanitarian assistance during many overseas disasters deployments to some of the world's worst contemporary natural disasters.

As an organisation, we are dedicated to trying to save the lives of innocent victims of disaster whether natural or man made, as well as trying to relieve human suffering and distress anywhere in the world resulting from any disaster, and providing humanitarian assistance around the world regardless of colour, race, religion or political persuasion.

SARAIID is funded solely by public or commercial donations and is on call 24 hours a day, 364 days a year, always ready to provide a professionally trained urban search and rescue and disaster response team of specialist personnel, free of charge to any country in need of assistance. We receive absolutely no government funding.

No government funding

SARAIID is registered with and recognised by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) which is a global network of more than 80 countries and disaster response organisations under the United Nations umbrella. INSARAG deals with urban search and rescue (USAR) related issues and aims at establishing standards for international USAR



teams and methodology for international coordination in earthquake response. Members of INSARAG are both earthquake prone and responding countries and organisations.

If you are interested and would like to find out more please contact:

Gary Francis – Assistant National Director & Team Leader

E-mail: gary.francis@saraid.co.uk

Tel: 01953 718 732 Mob: 07803 196 181

www.saraid.co.uk

Facebook: Friends of SARAIID

Or come along and see us at The Emergency Services Show 2009 Stoneleigh Park, Coventry 24-25 November (Stand E29 in the Emergency Response Zone).

Article courtesy of Emergency Service Times

Stretchers

by Paul Witheridge,
Lyon Equipment

A recent discussion at a regional MRT equipment officers meet showed that although teams' kit inspectors are generally doing a good job keeping an eye on Bell stretchers, there is a little uncertainty about stretcher frames and their lifetime, common areas of damage, key wear points and wear limits. Having done a significant amount of servicing and proof loading testing of Bell stretchers (which have been used and abused in all terrains) we have a number of observations that we feel are worth passing on.

Lifetime

Unlike most other equipment teams use, the Bell stretcher does not have to be replaced automatically after ten years!

However, if your team is still using an original blue painted mild steel framed Mk 1 then it's time for a change. Repainting the outside of the frame will make the stretcher look smart but it will not make it any stronger. These frames can be subject to internal corrosion from either water ingress or condensation. As all Mk1s are a good few years old, the effects of such corrosion could by now be quite significant.

If your Bell stretcher has a stainless steel

an issue with stainless steel in typical mountain environments, although if you are on the coast or leave your stretcher on the roof of the Land Rover parked next to a chemical plant regular, thorough cleaning is strongly recommended.

Structural damage

The Bell frame design is immensely strong and allows the stretcher to be used as a working platform. Damage is generally caused by dropping a stretcher half from the roof of a vehicle onto the ground, or by running over it. Frames showing any noticeable bend, deformation or damage of any individual tube should be withdrawn from service and returned for an inspection and load test. Some repairs are possible but serious deformation will usually result in the stretcher being scrapped.

Joint movement

When the stretcher is assembled the two halves should be neatly aligned at the joint with no significant step. Over time, or after large forces have been applied some movement can occur at the joint. This can be caused by damage to the locking pins, ovality of the pin holes or bending of the connecting tabs on each centre bar.

The step formed can significantly accelerate wear of the bottom 'runner', especially on the

Tangent stretchers where the material is a thinner section to start with.

If your team does a lot of stretcher sledging during evacuations, then this is an area you



should keep an eye on. Excessive misalignment, thinning of the material, deformation or splitting at the corners of the runner will require attention to the runner and the joint.

Runner wear

As the pattern of use changes and more teams sledge we have seen an increase in the wear and damage to runners. The thickness of box section tube used for the frames was



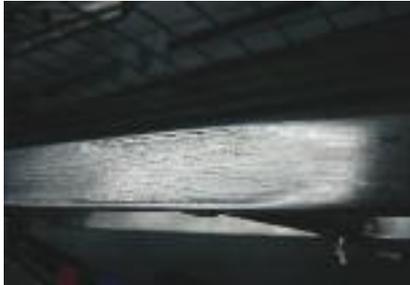
main frame then you can relax a little. The stainless steel frame designs underwent accelerated ageing tests and have a theoretical 'life' of over 400 years, assuming no damage or wear. Corrosion is much less of



Bell Stretchers will no longer approve load testing of original Mk1s and, without a valid load test certificate, teams should not be using them. Whatever the model, stainless steel main frame stretchers can still be sent in for service and load testing.

always a compromise between strength, weight and longevity.

Wear occurs not on the centre face of the box as expected but just in from the corners. Why? Well the face of the box flexes inwards slightly when a load is applied. The stiffened corners cannot flex as much and so take the brunt of the contact. Ultimately if not attended to, the material will fail and the centre face becomes detached, leaving a weak U-section with razor sharp edges.



Comment from users over the years saw the option of a line of sacrificial weld of a harder material on the runner face. This does slow down wear but will not eliminate the problem.

Team equipment inspectors should regularly check runner lower faces for signs of 'dishing', splitting or flex when pressure is applied with the ball of the thumb.

If any of the above are noted the stretcher should be withdrawn from service and sent for inspection and possible repair.

The options for repair depend on the severity of damage and whether the user fits accessories to the stretcher.

- For those who use winter snow skids or wheels which attach directly to the runner with clamps or where the box section has split over a wide area the complete bottom runner box sections are replaced with thicker box section of the same external size.



- For those who do not use accessories the existing runner is reinforced with a 'sacrificial' strip of stainless steel with addition weld facing applied.



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And there shall come water out of the rock*

by Alan Jeffreys

Weather can have a profound effect on mountain rescue – indeed it is the cause of many but, at the end of the day, if it gets too bad you can always call a halt and wait for improvement. Underground things are much more serious: serious and simple simultaneously. If bad weather strikes you either live or die – no avoidance.

Of course the prime factor in all this is water. UK cave systems are the product of flowing water, either pre or post glacial. For cavers, there is an irresistible appeal in exploring 'active' stream passages that is simply absent in abandoned caves, and thereby hangs a threat.

There are three primary reasons for cave floods – catastrophic storms, persistent, long term rainfall or sudden snow melt. Sensible precautions, particularly taking heed of the weather forecast, will greatly reduce any risk but – accidents will happen. They have happened to me. It has been my bad luck and great good fortune to have experienced major floods underground. On each occasion there were spacious caverns to retreat to, unlike the six potholers drowned in Mossdale Caverns in 1967. I say good fortune: in my opinion every aspirant caver should experience what we did one fateful day in 1970. What transpired was an awesome, frightening ordeal that, if nothing else, taught me humility and respect toward the natural world and its terrible forces.

It was a warm, sunny day and a nine-strong party planned to bottom the 160 metre deep Penyghent Pot on Penyghent Mountain in the Yorkshire Dales with a view to two of the team carrying out exploratory dives in the terminal sump. A weather forecast sheet displayed at Horton in Ribblesdale gave encouragement so we trudged up the hill and began our descent. A party of highly experienced cavers will move with speedy efficiency and we were soon gathered at the sump, a somewhat sinister elongated pool with vertical rock walls. The divers got to work, revealing a steep underwater shaft of some fifteen metres and a more level continuation for 35 metres, where they called a halt.

Well satisfied with our efforts, we packed up and began an equally fast return to daylight. Penyghent Pot is characterised by a series of short pitches, some effectively free climbable, which at depth intersect an altogether more threatening passage where a large river inlet from nearby Hunt Pot heavily augments the flow of water into the sump. In fact, Penyghent itself should be classified the inlet into the lower system. One after another these climbs were passed, a growing collection of rolled wire ladders, ropes and diving equipment being passed from hand to hand.

Above the fifth pitch, a straight narrow canyon leads into the only large chamber where a 40 metre ladder hung from its lofty heights. Three of us, including myself, were passing through the rift when water began cascading onto our heads, seemingly from a solid rock ceiling. Puzzled and a bit worried we emerged into the chamber, perhaps thirty metres long, to where we could see our wire ladder. As we crossed the floor a maelstrom of water crashed and pulsed down the shaft, totally obscuring the ladder even when we stood a couple of metres from it. Hammering spray lashed over the entire chamber, the floor vanished under a metre of peat-stained, fast flowing water and visibility vanished. Knowing that the entrance series of the cave comprised a long hands and knees canal with flat-out crawling sections, it was realised this area must be completely submerged. We were trapped!

The best we could do was huddle together on a tiny ledge some 15 cms wide, just above floor level and out of range of the fearsome waterfall. The experience was Biblical both in scale and effect. Malevolent forces pulverised the cavern with stinging torrents, generating gusts of wind chilling us through neoprene wetsuits. The noise was quite unbelievable, a devilish, pulverising pandemonium that cowed and deafened us; our trembling was not just because of the cold. Water seemed to gush from every side, even places we would have sworn were solid rock! So great was the violence unleashed around us that

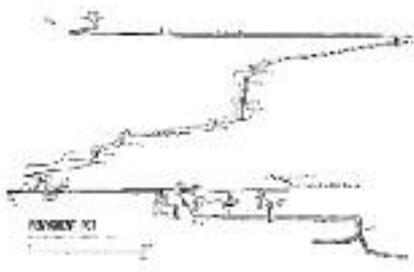
the very walls of the cave vibrated. If we needed any proof of the overwhelming 'forces of nature' this was it. In these circumstances, you, as a mere human being, realise just how insignificant a thing you really are, how hollow your presumptions of 'going anywhere, doing anything'.

...if Mother Nature decides to turn on us, we very rapidly realise how helpless we really are.

After several hours one of our number who had been behind us appeared to announce the rest of the party had located a dry place to sit out the floods so we returned with him to a ledge high above the boiling streamway. Here we sat or lay, placing markers to observe any fluctuation in level. Eventually, after several more hours, matters appeared to be improving so I climbed back up the short ladder to take a look at the main chamber – only to meet two members of the Cave Rescue Organisation lately come down to find us.

Greatly cheered by this evidence that the entrance crawl was open, we manhandled all our gear into the chamber and assisted by some eighteen cavers who had responded to the callout (although there was some grumbling about humping tackle rather than victims, they graciously agreed to it, since we as a party were still in excellent condition despite our ordeal) we were all back on the surface by 2am.

Over the inevitable debrief several things came to light. First – and perhaps most important – the weather forecast we had consulted referred to the day before; it had not been changed when we read it, otherwise it is possible we would have changed our plans. Secondly, the cause of the flooding was a freak thunderstorm which burst specifically over Penyghent, dropping one inch of rain in an hour. Our 'reference' on the surface, alarmed at the sudden downfall



PENYGHENT SURVEY:
AN ELEVATION SHOWING THE POTHOLE
FROM SURFACE TO FINAL SUMP

Finding Flash

by John Coombs

which, on ground baked hard by sunshine, was running away underground with alacrity, walked over to the pothole entrance, only to find a swirling lake where there should have been a short climb. Definitely a rescue call! It later emerged that in nearby Ingleton there was no hint of rain, just wall to wall sunshine. Fortunately, the storm ended as abruptly as it had begun, allowing the CRO to successfully divert the stream away from the entrance and gain access to the canal.

This is why I say every caver should experience such an event at least once in their caving career. Mankind may be arrogant, imagining brain over brawn is a recipe for overcoming any obstacle, but if Mother Nature decides to turn on us, we very rapidly realise how helpless we really are. Flippant attitudes to trips down super severe cave systems will eventually end in tears unless we exercise a true humility toward places where we journey under sufferance. Caving should be as much a spiritual as a physical experience, laced with care and common sense. Let us by all means enjoy this alien world but maintain an attitude of due reverence.

However without doubt the most serious aspect of the affair was the huge quantity of water that must have hosed out of the Hunt Pot inlet. Had we been dilatory in our exit or spent more time at the sump, there is little doubt we should all have been swept away, probably never to be seen again. My abiding memory of the incident was a sobering comment from Controller Brian Boardman, once we had all surfaced safely.

'Aye, that were a near do! D'you know, it's three years to the day since Mossdale?'

*Exodus 12:9

The traditional way mountain rescue team members start with a search dog is to buy a pup. Generally we stick to pure bred dogs of one sort or another – collies, labs, Springer spaniels or German Shepherd dogs – that way you stand the best chance of predicting what the pup will be like when it grows up. Pups can be tested and a good one selected from the litter. Another way to predict the characteristics of the grown up dog is to assess the parents – particularly the mother – she will have the greatest influence on the pup's temperament.

The focused hunting instincts, the drive to find people, and the concentration to work with their handlers for hours at a time, are what make SARDA search dogs reliable. Unfortunately these characteristics, combined with physical fitness, are not present in all dogs. However carefully the pup is selected, reared and trained, some young dogs turn out to be unsuitable for the work or just don't have the right relationship with their handler.

Very few of our dogs are ready for operations until they are two years old, so it can take a long time for handlers to make a decision to stop training an unsuitable dog. SARDA

Qualities of a potential search dog

• *Healthy and agile with good conformation and physical stamina* • *Friendly with people and other dogs* • *Trainable and intelligent* • *Has a good nose* • *Confident and not spooked by loud noises* • *Most important: the young dog must be very keen indeed on playing with toys and people – this is where the 'drive to find' comes from*

trainees are volunteers so the decision to stop training is theirs alone. Tragically this is always a desperate step to take, as the young dog will have already built a really strong bond with its family. The alternative is to start with an adolescent or young adult dog.

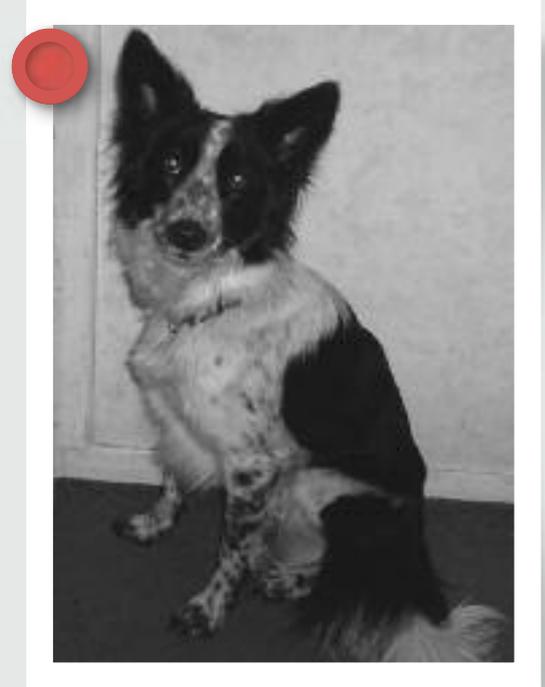
What you see is what you get but gift dogs often come with bad habits. The big advantage of starting with a pup is that it can be reared to be stock steady and ignore game. On the other hand you can assess the suitability of an adolescent dog quickly, start training straight away and get it ready for operations in about a year.

The majority of police and service dogs are gift dogs, and are taken at six months to two years old. This makes financial sense for them as the training process is much shorter – about four months.

September 2008: My operational dog, Biscuit, was seven years old in December, and nearing the end of her working life, so I was quite interested when a message was sent to the SARDA email group offering a one year old border collie bitch for training as a search dog. Alex Lyons and Matt Robertson, experienced handlers from Dartmoor, had been successful with adolescent gift dogs. Matt as a police dog trainer was able to guide me in assessing the young dog. If it worked I could save a lot of time. So I went over to Warrington to see her.

October 2008: The family wanted to re-home the dog because their work circumstances had changed. They had a two year old boy, and not enough time to exercise her. Also she would chew things up, so had to be kept in a cage in the house.

When I arrived, Flash – a tall, lean prick-eared collie bitch – was waiting at the back garden gate with an old



Alsatian. She barked at me. I found she was friendly, once introduced, and watched her play with the other bitch and the child on the garden. Then Hannah (not her real name), Flash's owner, and I took her for a walk along some residential streets to some woods. She seemed confident and not phased by loud noises.

I had noticed that she liked to possess toys and to chase and fetch a ball which she would drop to be thrown again. So I played with her, and the fourth throw I sent into a patch of brambles and nettles. Flash didn't do very well with finding it, but wouldn't come out until she had – nearly five minutes – and then ran off with it! That was about right – another box ticked.

Now for the 'spooky test'. I put my hood up to shade my face and appeared out of the trees in the creepiest way I could in front of Hannah and her dog. Flash reacted with an alarmed bark but moved in front to investigate and then greeted me once she realised I was harmless. A tall man with a wide brimmed hat is best for this test, but I think it worked with me because the dog sensed that I am a bit potty. Her reaction was about right. I would not have been too impressed if she had been aggressive, run away or gone behind her handler.

On the way back I held the lead, she quickly learned not to pull me and socialised well with a couple of dogs we met. On our return I gave her the once over, examining her teeth and all the places dominant and touchy dogs might object to. She was very tolerant – unusual for a collie bitch. I left Flash with her family and, in spite of my strange antics earlier, Hannah agreed to me having the option – take her for a couple of weeks' trial.

My gut feeling as an experienced (old?) dog handler was that this bright and confident 15 month old collie bitch might do the job. Flash was bombed out to the point of obsession on playing with a tennis ball – so Matt advised I should take her for trial, subject to vetting. My main

▶ PAGE 55

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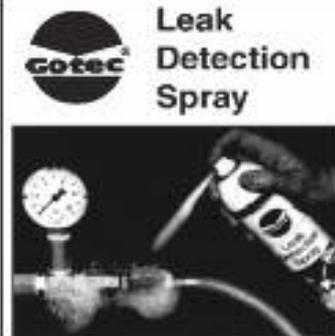
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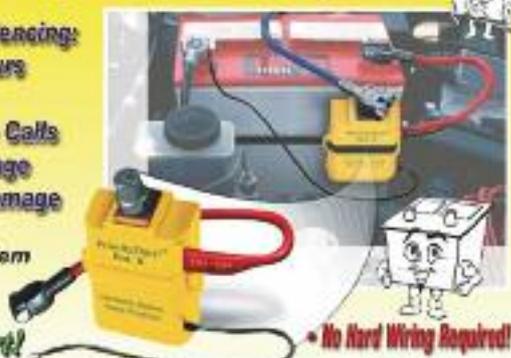
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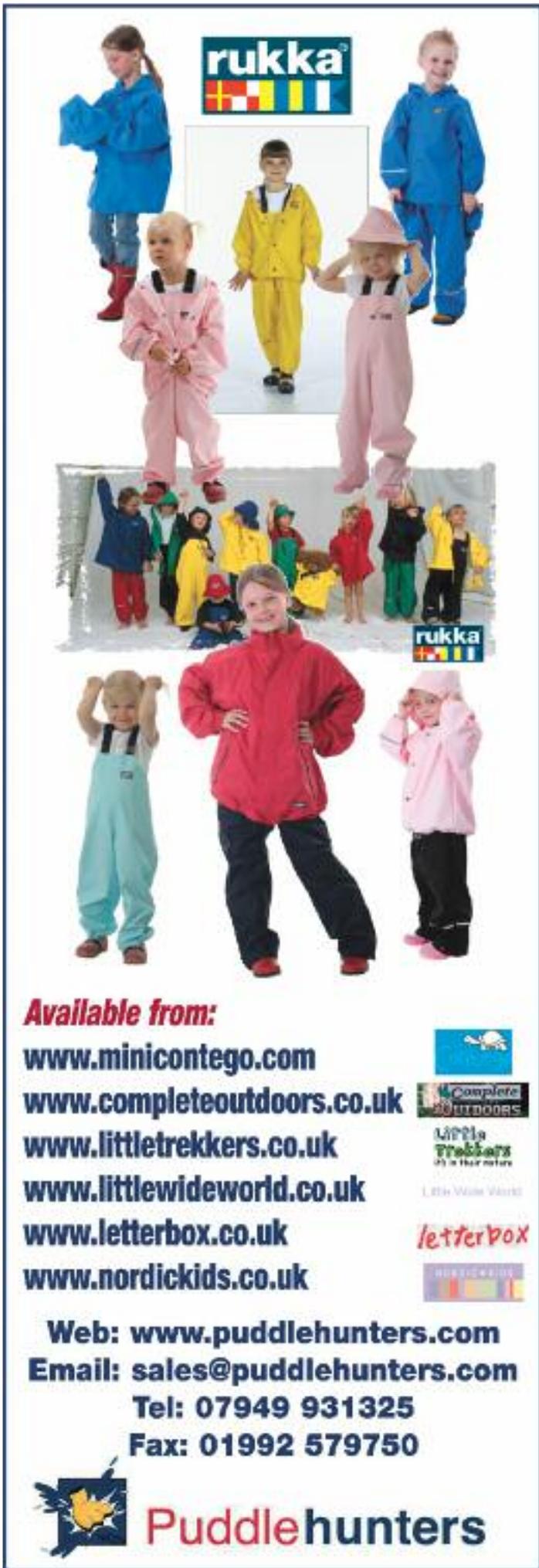
reservations at this stage were that she was bit 'cow hocked', didn't use her nose to look for the ball, and had obviously been left to her own devices to play with other dogs.

We are fortunate to have a vet in the Edale team, Caroline Sharich who, as well as understanding the requirements of a search dog, has recent experience of service dogs from tours of duty as a territorial soldier in Afghanistan.

One issue was that Flash is very thin – down to nervous energy but the cow hocked problem would be likely to resolve as muscle built up. Caroline was impressed with her temperament and energy. Verdict – 'You have to give her a try John', which was exactly what Edale team leader Ian Bunting said after we played some search games the next Sunday.

I managed to talk to the breeder (a farmer from Buxworth with a good reputation who sells lots of pups). He told me that Flash's mother had a friendly temperament, and did not have a season until she was two. He did not test his litters for collie eye syndrome so Caroline arranged for a free eye test, which she passed.

Flash did her two week trial with the Coombs tribe and the Edale team and was found guilty of being a potential search dog and is still with us, but it wasn't without canine entertainment – more in the next article 'A Focus for Flash'.



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