

mountain rescue

JANUARY 2011

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ISSUE 35



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**WELCOME TO
ISSUE 35**

Mountain Rescue is the membership magazine for mountain and cave rescue in England and Wales.

Contributions should be sent to the editor at the address below. Every care will be taken of materials sent for publication however these are submitted at the sender's risk.

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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

Woodhead MRT members above the Woodhead Pass, on a winter skills training day December 2010.
Photo: Gordon Gibbons

EDITOR'S NOTE: Articles carried in Mountain Rescue do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Mountain Rescue England and Wales. We do not accept responsibility for information supplied in adverts/advertorial.

**mountain
rescue**



'Parrot's feet in oil'

Recent events indicate that, despite our endeavours, we continue to have a problem with communication. The pages of the magazine, publication of the minutes of all meetings on the website, the messaging option (not widely used) and, of course, emails, do not appear to have solved the problem. Team leaders' meetings, inclusion of all teams in the general meetings and ensuring that all regions were represented at five year planning meetings were expected to help but still we have a problem.

Emails, as described in many walks of life, are a mixed blessing and are capable of disseminating wrong information just as effectively as the correct sort and doing so across a wide audience very quickly. Few email exchanges seem to lead to resolution of differences.

What should we do next? An offer was made for MREW officers to visit regions and allow direct exchanges and questions but with one exception this offer was not pursued. The offer still stands, however, should anyone believe it would help. I am willing to attend team meetings and make clear the position of MREW directly to team members, and of course to listen to all of their views. If there are other things we should undertake please let me know.

Why 'Parrot's feet in oil'? Because this started out as 'paracetamol' and, through bad lines of communication, was transposed.

In the past three months there has been a

flurry of meetings and some very positive activity. The SARCALL system, driven by John Hulse, continues to expand both geographically and in its capabilities. The instigation of a national benevolent fund is within weeks and we are indebted to Huw Birrell for all the energy he has expended to make this happen. I have had a series of meetings with a number of MPs, members of the House of Lords and government ministers and there is a renewed drive to support Mountain Rescue. Our move toward bulk purchasing has helped very significantly in these negotiations. The establishment of a volunteers working group within UKSAR in 2010 is beginning to show positive results and will certainly feed back to the rest of UKSAR and the Government the massive commitment made by volunteers working in SAR services.

The Princes' Charity Forum continues to be a valuable scene for Mountain Rescue. Following the most recent meeting a new avenue of fundraising, which would not be accessible on a local basis, has become a real possibility and will help us to continue to support the direction of travel given to us by the forward planning group.

The end of 2010 and the start of 2011 look to every bit as challenging for mountain and cave rescue as any previous year but there is no doubt the challenges will be met and we will move forwards as a wiser and stronger organisation.

David Allan Chairman

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Richard Terrell writes... With the cold weather in and ice tools nice and sharp, can I remind teams to check the operating temperature of their equipment. We are all well aware of the Entonox separation problem but lessons from the Big Freeze at the start of 2010 show that plastic items like stiff neck collars can become brittle and break in low temperatures. It's worth checking these with your suppliers. Petzl has produced guidance on their products, and life spans and information can be found at petzl.com/files/all/technical-notice/Sport/A00000-G_INFOGENER.pdf Please check with the manufacturers of your kit to see if the guidance applies. We recently produced more winter weight casbags. A decision was made, at the last equipment sub, not to mass produce vacmats and casbags due to teams having them in the back room, and we will now produce smaller runs to be more cost effective. Can I also remind teams that a grant given to MREW is available of up to approximately £500 for each team to buy first aid items (such as first aid



bags and specialist first aid/rescue items, not including bandages etc) and rope. As a guide, anything that can be used personally like harnesses, karabiners and plasters cannot be purchased with the grant. To apply, please write to me at the address below on team headed paper, signed by either two committee members or two team officers, including a day time delivery address and details of the item required.

MREW will also pay for load test and service of Bell stretchers. If yours is due write to me, as above, on team headed paper bearing two signatures, requesting a service and including the date due (if known). We will pay for minor repairs but not if you drove your Land Rover over it! I will issue an order number with which you can contact Lyon Equipment to arrange service. All letters should be sent to Richard Terrell, 3 Gelli-Unig Terrace, Pontywaun, Crosskeys, Newport, Gwent NP11 7GF. Finally, Mike Margeson has

some ice saws made out of aircraft material (see above) weighing just 240 grams – available from Mike for £20 plus p&p mmargeson@hotmail.com.

TRAINING NEWS

Mike Margeson writes... National funds have now been agreed for the subsidy of courses. I reported previously that this had been requested by the training committee as a priority matter. We are delighted that all national courses will now receive a 50% subsidy. This will be reviewed at the end of 2011. The team must pay the full cost up front, with the subsidy refunded on completion of the course. The training committee believes this is a very legitimate use of centrally raised funds. We reported in the last magazine of the up and coming new Train the Trainers course and the Media Skills course. These both went well and, having taken part in both days, it was encouraging to see team members from all over the country sharing experience and ideas. There are reports of both courses elsewhere but I'd like to thank Huw Birrell, Al Read and the NEWSAR team for hosting the Train the Trainers day, and Steve Howe, Dave Freeborn and Sally Seed for another highly professional Media Skills day at Police HQ, Preston.

Our plan is to run both courses again next year, and we will run them both on the same day at Hutton



CATHERINE MIDDLETON AND HRH PRINCE WILLIAM OF WALES PHOTO: ©CLARENCE HOUSE

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE WILLIAM OF WALES AND MISS CATHERINE MIDDLETON ARE ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED

November saw the announcement of the engagement of Mountain Rescue England and Wales Patron Prince William to Kate Middleton. The wedding will take place at Westminster Abbey on Friday 29 April 2011. The Prince and Miss Middleton became engaged in October during a private holiday in Kenya. Following the marriage, the couple will live in North Wales, where William will continue to serve with the RAF. Very best wishes to the happy couple!

on Sunday 20 November. This way folk may be able to share travel. If we can put any other courses on this day, we will. Coming up we also have the National Training Day at Plas y Brenin on 7 May. And Mike Marsh will also be running the Party Leader course, probably during May or June – details to follow soon.

ROPE RESCUE GUIDELINES

Many teams gave valuable input to Draft 4 in the run up to the November meeting. The subcommittee managed to review about a third of the final draft and is due to meet in January to focus entirely on completing this important project. I'd like to thank all those who have devoted considerable time and thought to ensure we get these documents in good working order.

BENEVOLENT FUND

Huw Birrel writes... The fund is now well on its way to completion and very much an evolving beast. Having spent many hours talking to the Charity

Commission and various other sources, it seems we have a way forward to establish this: as a trust fund tied into MREW, as opposed to a separate charity allied by articles of association. There are clauses in our constitution which make this possible so as to benefit those partaking of such a scheme. To set up the fund we need three officers – chairman, secretary and treasurer. I already have volunteers for the former and last. As for secretary, anyone with admin skills better than me (a trained wallaby, for example) please step forward. I'm not precious about things and will use anybody's skills or knowledge. I have already circulated a request for a rep from each region for the trust fund committee and these, allied with the officers, will form 'the body of the kirk'. Regional reps are a very valuable commodity insofar as, by the time an application for help is received by the fund, the rep will probably



PADDY GANNON OF DUDDON & FURNESS MRT IS PUT THROUGH HIS PACES BY STEVE HOWE

In the media spotlight by Sally Seed

Ten members of eight different teams met in Preston, on Sunday 21 November, to brush up on their media skills. The full day's training workshop was led by Steve Howe with Dave Freeborn of Viscom Studios (and Patterdale MRT) and Sally Seed of Stoneleigh Communications (and Mountain Rescue). 'This was the second time we'd run the programme for Mountain Rescue,' said Steve, 'and Mike Margeson had confirmed that the content and approach were exactly what team members were looking for: a combination of TV and telephone interviews across a range of subjects with plenty of time to learn from each other as well as from the training team.' Each participant took part in a TV interview and a telephone equivalent and the subjects ranged from equipment for winter conditions and use of funding for flood rescue and emergency service back up to the benefits of a royal Patron and the environmental impact of mountain rescue. 'We'd had genuine local media calls asking for comment from Mountain Rescue regarding the engagement of our patron, HRH Prince William, to Kate Middleton in the week before the training workshop,' said Ogwen MRT member, Chris Lloyd. 'It was easy to make a fairly bland comment about wishing him and his fiancée well. From a training point of view, I am now more aware of planning out what I want to communicate first rather than just relying on the angle and the questions that come from a journalist.' Mike and the training subcommittee plan to make the media training workshop at least an annual event so keep an eye open for dates in 2011 and details on the website.

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APPLY TODAY!

TEAM LEADERS DAY
Places: 60
Date: Saturday 12 February
Rescheduled from December (One day)
Location: JCN Lakeside Cub, Rocester
Contact: Peter Smith
01796 862335
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

MR(E&W) SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING
Places: 100
Date: Saturday 21 May (One day)
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton
Contact: Peter Smith
01796 862335
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

NATIONAL TRAINING DAY
Places: 60
Date: Saturday 7 May (One day)
Location: Plas y Brenin
Contact: Mike Margeson
01229 889721
mmargeson@hotmail.com

Dates for your diary...

NATIONAL TRAINING DAY

PLAS Y BRENIN: SATURDAY, 7 MAY 2011

Mountain Rescue England and Wales is hosting its annual training event from Plas y Brenin, the National Mountaineering Centre, Capel Curig.

TIMETABLE & SESSIONS

10.30am: Start
Main Lecture Theatre
Coffee from 10.00am

10.30-12.30
Morning sessions

12.45-1.30
Lunch break -
bring your own

1.30-3.30
Afternoon sessions

Departure
by 4.00pm latest



Equipment Testing, Use and Misuse

Paul Witheridge
(Lyon Equipment)
and **Bill Batson**
(Both MRT members)

Technical Ropework and Steep Angle Rescue

Ogwen Valley MRO

Medical Workshop

William Lumb

Vehicles and Driving

Daryl Garfield

IT SARMAN and Digital Mapping

Mark Lewis

Water Rescue

Ewan Thomas

We have approx twenty places on each session, and each session will be repeated in the afternoon. To help with planning and logistics we would ask you to email which team members are attending and which sessions they would like to attend.



Please email Richard Prideaux on
richprideaux@gmail.com
or call him on
07799 031128 or 01824 703 121



IMAGES WITH THANKS TO: FROM TOP: KESWICK MRT; CENTRAL BEACONS MRT; DUDDON & FURNESS MRT

NATIONAL NEWS

► from page 4

have some knowledge of the matter, and what could be better than speaking to someone you know, as opposed to an email or long distance call to a relative stranger? Membership would be on a fixed fee, fixed term, each team buying in as a team. If there are sufficient funds at the end of the fixed period I see no reason for not just simply extending the period

of membership at no extra cost to the teams. Once all those teams joining have done so, we can work out a pro rata rate and, if your team has not joined, then why not come on board as an individual. We could also look at the outside sourcing of money for the Fund: why not get National Fundraising on board? I am aware some may see this as diverting money away from MREW but there are other

organisations that may be glad to give specifically to a benevolent fund. I'm aware this might be seen as robbing the coffers of one organisation for another but we can be delicate about it. Initially, the idea of giving money to someone in time of hardship was questioned and it was mooted that this may be done as a loan with contracts drawn etc. The Charity Commission have told us this would not be the best thing as there are

issues with loans, financial regulation and so forth, and is that really benevolence or just money lending? I am hoping we can get everything in order for launch by mid-May as our beloved editor is undertaking the Coast to Coast Walk in aid of the fund. The end of the walk would make a great press opportunity as I sit on the beach, knotted hankie and vest on, awaiting the arrivals. (Champagne ready

chilled, of course! Your Beloved Editor.)
As always, I am happy to answer questions but stress two things. Firstly, this is not a replacement for adequate insurance (if you haven't got it, chase your regions and police forces). And secondly, at this stage nothing's set in stone and I defer to knowledge and experience. Only an email away at huwbirrell@aol.com. Or a phone call 07723575527.



Introducing Woodie, new 'insurance bod'...

Insurance – a word that tends to generate a general misunderstanding amongst the majority who don't work in the insurance industry. Insurance in mountain rescue is no exception and within my team there is general confusion about what each policy covers and why we have to pay out all these premiums every year. I joined Rossendale & Pendle five years ago and, since taking on the role of team treasurer and being involved in trying to co-ordinate our fundraising, I've struggled to get answers to my questions about insurance. I made that

fatal mistake of showing some interest to team leader and National Press Officer, Andy Simpson, and now I find myself in the Mountain Rescue Who's Who as the 'insurance bod', which I presume is a technical MR term. I'm a qualified Chartered Insurer and my 9-5 job is working for Ecclesiastical Insurance as a Technical Claims Handler in the Casualty Claims Unit – which basically means I defend and settle the higher value and more complex personal injury claims made against our customers. On the plus side, I don't wear a grey suit and I know what MR insurance issues concern me personally. What I plan to bring to MR teams is some assistance in dealing with all those questions you ask:

- Are we covered for our main annual fundraising event?
- Do I need to tell our insurers about our blue lights?
- What does our Trustee Indemnity insurance cover?
- Is my rucksack covered?
- What happens if I break my leg on a shout?
- ...and so on.

One area we will be looking at is what fundraising can be done under the MREW Public Liability Policy and how we can make it easier and simpler for you to understand. We plan to produce a regular piece in the magazine, downloadable guidance notes on different areas of insurance and a downloadable presentation, so team trustees can understand what their teams are covered for and what areas they need to look at. They can also fulfil one of their duties by educating their team members. Insurance always seems to be an albatross hanging around our necks. I want to help alleviate this worry so we can get on with doing what we do best – operations, training and fundraising/public relations (the pager has just gone off as I type this on 2 December – can we contact Control Room, possible sighting of a distress signal on Pendle Hill and the temperature outside is minus lots!). Back to the article whilst we await further details – insurance is there for our peace of mind and I will do what I can to help us all achieve that. I expect 2011 to be a busy year but if my involvement will assist you and your team, then it will be worthwhile being known as the 'insurance bod'. The Insurance Group can be contacted on insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk and we'll answer whatever questions we can – just don't all contact me at once!

Postscript from Penny Brockman

As Woodie takes over as National Insurance Officer from Stuart Byatt – thank you Neil! – I'd like to thank Stuart Byatt who recently stepped down from the role. Whilst in post, he was a major player, working with North Wales Police on the national insurance policy, which is now at the evaluation stage. He also took an active role in resolving all the questions from teams, and managing the renewals of the national insurance policies. The operational spec for the tendering process of the National Consolidated Policy for Personal Accident has now been sent out to teams. A number of companies have placed tenders and these are currently being evaluated. If you do have any questions on insurance please remember to use insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk.



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MRS SUSAN AGLIONBY, CHAIR OF THE GRANTS COMMITTEE AND ONE OF THE CUMBRIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION TRUSTEES PRESENTS A CHEQUE TO LAKES TEAM MEMBERS

LAKE DISTRICT

LDSAMRA READINESS FOR 2010 FLOODS?

Richard Warren writes... In the last issue we reported on the Lake District teams' readiness for further flooding in Cumbria and plans to further improve resilience capability. As expected, the Autumn did bring heavy rainfall but the river levels, although high, never got to the unprecedented levels of 2009. Even so, the teams have been busy purchasing additional water rescue equipment and training team members in water awareness, bank side training and technician level training and re-certification.

The total planned expenditure for the twelve Lakes teams is in the region of £140,000 which consists of £38,000 on training, £90,000 on equipment and £12,000 on waterproof radios. Teams had already managed to secure around £25,000 in donations specifically targeted for water rescue but there remained a significant gap in funding. To secure additional funding LDSAMRA applied to the Cumbria Community Foundation for an £85,000 grant to cover equipment and training. We were delighted when our application was approved with £35,500 being made available from the Cumbria flood relief fund. The £35,500 grant was conditional and had to be spent on training with a small part available for equipment essential to training. In our application, one of the points in our favour were our plans to train our own trainers rather than just bringing in external training organisations. The training programme is now well underway. Our next challenge will be to raise funds for the equipment required, primarily additional dry suits, buoyancy aids and other personal protective equipment. The cheque was presented to representatives from four of the Lake District mountain rescue teams by Mrs Susan Aglionby, Chair of the Grants Committee and one of the Cumbria Community Foundation Trustees.



BOMB FIND DURING TRAINING DAY

A recent find by **Duddon & Furness MRT**, during a routine training day, attracted much press interest. On Sunday 21 November, team members were searching for a (notional) seven-year-old autistic child, possibly hiding or unconscious on the open fell side covered in the remains of the summer bracken, at Blawith Knott, one of Alfred Wainwright's 'Outlying Fells of Lakeland'. During the search the newly appointed team doctor, Dr Craig Stangroom, first reported that a vole had appeared in front of him. On closer inspection, and by complete chance, he noticed the tail fins of some sort of bomb sticking out of the ground. The hill party leader happened to be Martin Cooper who joined the team six years ago, after 37 years in the Royal Artillery. He identified the bomb as a two-inch mortar. On closer inspection, it was dated as 1943 and a predicted launch site, about 300m to the south, was indicated where the very clear remains of a trenched platoon position was found. The area had been used during the war to train Home Guard units on dry and live firing exercises and there have been several previous finds of ordnance material.

The find was reported to the police and a Royal Logistic Corps Bomb Disposal Team was tasked from Catterick Camp in Yorkshire to deal with it. As there was no real urgency after 65 years, and to enable the bomb to be dealt with in daylight, the bomb disposal team arrived the following morning and was guided to the site by team members. The site had been subtly marked so as not to attract passers by, it being well away from any path. The bomb was confirmed as high explosive and safely detonated using 8oz of plastic explosive.

Since the aim of the training day had been 'search and radio procedures' the five hill parties were given unusual tasks to create radio traffic and there was, not surprisingly, a certain amount of confusion initially as to whether the call for bomb disposal was for real.

A spin-off has been a significant amount of press and PR interest. Martin Cooper said, 'The story was sent to the daily NW Evening News, but also appeared in their online magazine Cumberland News and Star, BBC Radio Cumbria's website, on grough's 'inside view of the outdoor world', and newspapers in Manchester, Whitehaven and who knows where else. It has provided a useful story of mountain rescue supporting the wider community.'



ABOVE: THE MORTAR FINS
LEFT: MARTIN COOPER STANDING IN ONE OF MANY POSSIBLE FIRING TRENCHES, WITH THE SITE OF THE MORTAR, BLAWITH KNOTT, IN THE BACKGROUND

PICTURES RAISE VALUABLE FUNDS FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

John Williams, Chairman of **Patterdale MRT**, has been donating his beautiful images of the valley for team fundraising for several years, raising thousands of pounds for team funds and also celebrating the best of Ullswater's stunning scenery. Favourites from past years have included shots of the team in action, complete with smoke flares, and a remarkable red squirrel shot that sold

out in its second year. Of this year's five new card designs, two feature local landmarks, Angle Tarn and Cherry Holm Island; there's a stunning shot of fallow deer; and two final images taken on

the same snowy day, just before Christmas last year. The other five images, which have been available for at least a year, feature Ullswater with snow on the peaks in the distance, a Winter Climb, Striding Edge under snow and ice, the East face of Helvellyn in snow and, finally, a misty and frosty image of sheep, Waiting for the Shepherd, an image that has won photographic awards in both Europe and America.

'The cards are always popular with our supporters,' says team member and point of contact for the cards, Jacque Freeborn. 'We make about £5 on each pack of ten and, with over 500 packs sold last year, that's a huge contribution to team funds, especially in the current climate when costs are as high as ever and every pound counts.'

Packs of ten are available priced £7.50 (including p&p) online at www.mountainrescue.org.uk. By the time you read this, Christmas will have passed but, as the cards have no greeting, they are equally useful throughout the year.



TOP: DR VICKI GILMORE OF BUXTON MRT WITH ALDERLEY EDGE LADIES
ABOVE: MARKS AND SPENCER STAFF AND TEAM MEMBERS GATHER OUTSIDE THE BUXTON STORE AS BRANCH MANAGER OWEN DYDE PRESENTS THE CHEQUE TO TEAM MEMBER JOE REES

PEAK DISTRICT

LIONS TRUMP UP FOR NELLIE THE ELEPHANT

It's a well known fact that singing 'Nellie the Elephant packed her trunk' whilst carrying out life saving resuscitation helps with rhythm and timing – a technique championed by **Buxton MRT** team doctor Vicki Gilmore during CPR training of team members. Singing helps control the rate of chest compressions given to a casualty and repeating the first line of the song counts 30 beats at the necessary rate of 100 per minute.

Late last year, Dr Vicki and team member Peter Parker gave a demonstration and talk about mountain rescue to a group from the Macclesfield and District Lions Club. Peter unpacked Resusci Anne from her trunk and Vicki started with her demonstration, convinced it was her rendition of Nellie the Elephant that persuaded the group to make a sizeable donation to the team.

'We think it was probably to stop her singing,' said a team spokesman, 'but, whatever the deciding factor, the Lions generously trumped up to the tune of £500 for the team.'

Still in Cheshire, the magnificent efforts of the ladies of Alderley Edge Methodist Church, mean the team can go ahead with the purchase of new protective clothing for its latest recruits. A series of fundraising events – and another talk by Dr Vicki – raised a total donation of over £480.

And thanks to staff of Marks & Spencer in Buxton the team received a further donation cheque for a whopping £1,850. This is not just fundraising, this is Marks and Spencer fundraising...

Branch manager Owen Dyde said staff had worked hard all summer as part of the company's national '100 Days of Fundraising' campaign, an initiative to encourage all their branches to raise money for local charities. Staff organised all sorts of mini-events, including a sponsored bag pack, but the highlight was a sponsored bike ride for the full length of the Pennine Way – although we probably should say the wet summer was never a problem as the bike didn't actually move: it was an exercise bike firmly rooted to the floor! Team members would like to take the opportunity to thank these, and indeed all their donors, for their efforts.

WOODHEAD TEAM IN MAJOR WINTER RESCUE OPERATION

On the night of Tuesday 30 November, heavy snow fell over South Yorkshire bringing some of the deepest falls since records began in 1882. Anticipating the call to help other emergency services **Woodhead MRT** placed a Land Rover ambulance and crew on standby and it wasn't long before they were needed. On Wednesday morning they were called to assist with the evacuation of over 100 motorists, stranded overnight in their vehicles on a stretch of the A57 between Anston and Worksop.

Team members were first on scene and, after discussions with a lone YAS paramedic and an off duty police officer, were dispatched to reconnoitre the scene of an alleged tunnel collapse, reported by local radio and TV. On arrival it was rapidly noted that the collapse was untrue – the real reason was down to the sheer severity of conditions.

Team member Wayne Thackray said, 'The road had become undrivable with such deep snow and so many vehicles blocking the route through. Our first priority was to get people out of the cold and into a place where we could get them warm.'

So great was the number of stranded drivers, a major incident was called. Other Woodhead members were brought to the scene along with a Land Rover and crew from **Calder Valley SRT** in West Yorkshire and two Land Rover crews from **Edale MRT** in Derbyshire. Woodhead team doctors helped with the set up and running of medical assessment needs at the relief centre. Motorists were taken to South Anston Methodist Church where beds, hot drinks and food were available for them while they waited for a chance to return to their vehicles and clear the road. Whilst the drivers were being recovered, a systematic search of surrounding roads was carried out to find any other trapped motorists. None were found.

As Wednesday evening drew in, the Woodhead team was being tasked by Yorkshire Ambulance Service to assist medics gain access to patients and help in the provision of pre-hospital care. This work has continued through Thursday with Land Rover ambulance WM2 finally standing down at 7.45pm on Thursday, a period of some 30 hours. Currently the complete list of work done by Woodhead members over those two days in December has not been compiled, however it is estimated they helped evacuate 150+ motorists; attended and recovered 15+ stuck vehicles, including an ambulance; transported essential medications to vulnerable people; transported temporary heating to a family who had been without power since Sunday; attended 10+ medical incidents; and delivered police officers home and back into work at snow besieged police stations – something approaching 300 man hours. The team would like to thank all the people of South Anston who so selflessly helped others in need as well as keeping the emergency teams fed and watered; Edale and Calder Valley team members for turning out so promptly to assist in such difficult conditions; and South Yorkshire Police, whose help was vital to ensure we could do our work.

Keep on the go in the snow

Snow came early this year. Fun for the kids but no fun for those of us with tight schedules – bus companies, freighters – and an additional hazard for the emergency services. Unlike the children, the last thing you want to be is either sliding on the stuff or stuck fast with nothing but a thermos for company. It follows that, as in Scandinavia, all commercial and rescue vehicles should carry a set of traction chains.

RUD-Erlau have a range snow chains to suit every requirements. Of these, RUD Matic Classic V and Rotogrip are popular UK market leaders. For those drivers who have little enthusiasm for fitting chains in a blizzard, the Classic V is designed for rapid installation. A short video says it all – check out youtube.com/watch?v=ELIGMKZB_8E. The chain mesh is draped over the tyre and part tensioned, the loose end is gathered up by driving forward a short way, then the chain is fully secured. There is no need to reach blindly into the wheel arch.

What is not discernable from the video is the unique wedge-shaped self-cleaning links which provide for a much smoother ride than conventional snow chains. After use, the chains are stowed in a holdall ready for the next time.

Rotogrip was developed for those who prefer not to leave a warm cab. It's installed permanently within the vehicle's wheel arch and, in the event of ice, snow or slippery off-road conditions, can be deployed at the press of a cap-mounted button. It's that easy. On activation, an arm lowers a flail-like array of chains in front of the drive wheel. The motion of the vehicle's wheels cause the array to rotate on a spindle, dropping a succession of chain strands in front of the wheel. The recently introduced Rotogrip CS fits the confined space of modern wheel arches. Again, a web video will put you in the picture – youtube.com/watch?v=ixRPPajfPPw&NR=1.

In the UK, Classic V, Rotogrip and technical advice are available from RUD Chains Ltd, Unit 10, John Wilson Business Park, Thanet Way, Whitstable, CT5 3QT. Check out www.rud.co.uk or give them a call on 01227 276611 or 07836 276 992, or email Alan Chandler, on alan.chandler@rud.co.uk.



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REGIONAL NEWS

KINDER TEAM OPENS NEW BASE

Kinder MRT's new HQ was officially opened in October by Ted Burton MBE (previously a team member of Kinder, ex-team leader of Buxton MRT and, latterly, a senior controller for all the Peak District teams). A full turn-out of the team, along with invited guests and visitors, ensured a good start to operations at their new home. Funded entirely by donations, the base cost over £42,000 to extend, renovate and kit out. The team is extremely grateful to all their supporters and companies who have donated their time, equipment and money to see this major project to completion.



PENINSULA

MEMORIAL PLAQUES CEREMONY

Over the last ten years, Dartmoor SRT (Plymouth) have mourned the loss of five of their active team members. With these men at the forefront of their minds, an idea for a commemoration ceremony was born during a DSRT training event in the Brecon Beacons. Five team members were walking on Sugarloaf (Mynydd Pen-y-Fâl) and noticed a commemorative plaque erected by the Brecon team – all agreed this would be a fitting idea to take back to Dartmoor. Once home, they set about designing the plaques, and chose the stunning location of Gutter Tor. Permission to erect the plaques was kindly given by Ordinance Survey and the landowner, Lord Roborough, and a date was agreed. On Sunday 26 September, the team unveiled two memorial plaques on the Gutter Tor trig pillar to commemorate the contribution of those five team members. The event began with Howard Otton, team chairman, welcoming all those present, outlining the afternoon's order of service, and offering his own words of remembrance for those named on the plaques. Touching contributions came from team veterans Bob Harrison and Richard Thorne. Bob, who has been in the team for 35 years, reflected on the importance of being in a team, and how well these men had fitted effortlessly into their roles. Richard gave moving and personalised tributes to each of the men's characters and their contributions to the team. Richard himself will be celebrating 40 years active service with DSRT Plymouth in January 2011. A minute's silence was observed, giving everyone time to reflect and to pay their own personal respects to these men. The event was concluded with a short prayer from



A BRAVE MAN... NIGEL ASH BEFORE AND AFTER

HAIR TODAY – GONE TOMORROW

Craig Scollick, Fundraising Officer for Dartmoor SRT (Ashburton) writes... 'Hi Craig and Nigel, it's Kirstin from BBC Radio Devon, just checking you're both ready for our interview'. Contacting BBC Radio Devon to help publicise one of the fundraising events for Dartmoor Search and Rescue (Ashburton) had seemed like a good idea at the time, but now faced with the prospect of a live interview I wasn't so sure! It all started when Nigel Ash, one of our hairier team members, approached me and said 'I'm thinking of getting my hair and beard shaved off to raise money for the team – it ought to be worth at least £500 of sponsorship, what do you think?'. It's a fundraising officer's dream when someone suggests anything which will help raise money for the team. I quickly said it was a brilliant idea. We agreed a date, a location (with a bar for additional courage), created sponsorship forms and arranged a barber. Back to the live interview and in ten minutes it was all over. We'd done some preparatory work and the presenter did a great job asking questions which allowed us to get our message across. People who heard the broadcast said we came over reasonably well, although my Scottish accent caused a little bit of confusion with the Devonian listeners. Next day, much to the amazement and amusement of the onlookers, first Nigel's beard then his hair were removed and in the end his selfless act raised over £700. So what next? Well now we've dipped our toes in the media waters we're hoping to arrange a feature with BBC Radio Devon. You know the sort of thing – the story of a callout, howling winds, scrunching boots, radio traffic and, of course, the rattling of collection tins. In these more trying economic times, we're looking at ways to increase our local profile in the hope it will make that next fundraising event that little bit easier.



ABOVE: MEMBERS OF DARTMOOR SRT PLYMOUTH GATHER AT THE TRIG POINT
RIGHT: CLOSE UP OF THE PLAQUES

Bob Harrison and a few words from Howard Otton inviting relatives and team members to stay and enjoy refreshments. This gave many of the newer team members an opportunity to find out more about the men whose lives they were commemorating. Since the ceremony, all team members agree it has given renewed focus to the aims of the team and reinforced our commitment to working together as a team. Very positive comments have also been received from the relatives of those commemorated, thanking the team for such a moving and fitting ceremony, and giving them the

opportunity to interact with many team members and friends. The memorial plaques are superbly situated with panoramic views of the moors, yet a car park less than 500 metres away makes it easily accessible for all, enabling team members, relatives and friends of those men named, to visit at any time to reflect in solitude and peace.



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ISS would like to thank the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service for their kind permission to use this photograph

Reintroducing thermal imaging technology to search and rescue

A technology that has received only limited attention in the past from the search and rescue fraternity, perhaps due to its previously prohibitively high cost, is that of thermal imaging. This brief article seeks to raise awareness of what has become a more affordable solution and, with the advent of new, more powerful, more robust and smaller devices – a more practical solution.

Thermal imagers are sensitive to natural radiation emitted or reflected by all objects, manmade or natural. As this natural radiation is independent from the sun's light, thermal imagers are able to see in conditions where other technologies, including the human eye cannot. Furthermore, thermal imagers can see through smoke, mist, rain and snow much better than the human eye or other light based sensors.

These capabilities, contained in a lightweight, hand-held device such as that now available from ISS, can provide you with a significant operational improvement.

ISS products also include the TIV family of high performance thermal imagers. These devices have been in daily use throughout the world for a number of years, often in extremely testing conditions where one of their main functions is the detection of individuals attempting unauthorised border crossings. Those people are, of course, trying to remain undetected and yet still they are 'seen' by the thermal imagers employed.

In a search and rescue scenario, where the individuals being sought are most certainly not of the same motivation, we believe the use of our technology will bring an enhanced search and rescue capability to those teams using it and greatly increase the chances and reduce the timescale for a successful operation. A real life example of just such a current application is shown by the photograph opposite of a rescue operation underway in Croatia.

Given its inherent capabilities, there is scope for using a thermal imaging solution in a number of search and rescue scenarios eg. looking for people lost in difficult environments such as the moors or in mountainous terrain, recovery at sea and recovery from underground locations such as caves or potholes.

Members of ISS are currently conducting field trials with a number of UK mountain rescue teams and feedback from these trials will be made available in due course.

Recognising the financial constraints on most organisations in the current economic climate, ISS is also introducing a lease/hire scheme for our equipment for those who might require it. Details of this, and our product range, are available from Rob Reeve or Julie Haslam at ISS, Foxhall Lodge, Foxhall Road, Nottingham NG7 6LH. Telephone: 0115 845 6573.



REGIONAL NEWS



YORKSHIRE DALES

GLASSHOUSES MAN BECOMES YOUNGEST FELL RESCUE CHIEF

Ian Hook, from Glasshouses near Pateley Bridge, has just been appointed the new chairman of the Grassington based **Upper Wharfedale FRA**, the youngest, at 41, in their 62 years history. The team covers Nidderdale as well as Wharfedale, Littondale and parts of Airedale. Ian, a caver, has been an active member of the team for over eleven years and, in addition to attending callouts, became their assistant warden and then warden looking after their HQ and all the equipment. He has been vice chairman for the past five years. The team is the third oldest in the country and one of only three teams – all in the Yorkshire Dales – who perform both surface and underground rescues. Ian, a local builder who has lived in the area all his life is looking forward to the challenge. 'It is such a privilege and honour to have been elected chairman. We have many long serving members – indeed over half have served more than 25 years, with a good number as long as 40 years and more – and as such we have considerable knowledge of the local area and, of course, rescue techniques. My aim is to help increase the number of younger members for us to be able to pass on this expertise in our lifesaving work in the Dales.'

MID PENNINE

CALDER VALLEY ON EMMERDALE

Emmerdale fans will have spotted mountain rescue team members and SARDA dogs in the weeks up to Christmas as members of **Calder Valley SRT** featured in the storyline about Jacob Gallagher going missing and the resulting search and rescue from a derelict house. Filming took place over five days on the Emmerdale 'estate' at Harewood, near Leeds, in early November and team members featured in several instalments of the story during Christmas week.

'It was a lot of work and time commitment to take part,' said Pete Farnell, chairman of the Calder team, 'but I hope the TV exposure over such a busy period – and with so many emotional storylines – will raise the profile of search and rescue with people who wouldn't normally realise how often we help the other emergency services in these sorts of situations.'

There was even a practical advantage to having team members on site, as they were able to help out with real accidents. 'We dealt with two incidents whilst we were filming,' says Pete. 'Early in the morning on day two, just as we were arriving on set, there was a road traffic accident just outside the entrance to Harewood. We administered first aid until an ambulance arrived to a motorcyclist who'd been knocked off his bike.'

'On day four, one of the camera crew injured her back moving cables and, again, we administered first aid until the ambulance arrived!'

Up to fourteen Calder Valley SRT members took part in filming and a couple of them had speaking parts during the rescue, and elsewhere, as the plot developed. Ellie Sherwin and her dog, Pepper, also took part along with Wayne Thackray from Woodhead MRT and his dog, Dodge.

As Pete concludes, 'We're expecting that Pepper and Dodge will probably steal the show.'



TOP: CALDER TEAM MEMBERS, WAYNE AND DODGE, OUTSIDE THE WOOLPACK WITH CHARACTERS ZAK DINGLE (STEVE HALLIWELL), DAVID METCALFE (MATTHEW WOLFENDEN), JUSTIN GALLAGHER (ANDREW LANGTREE), DECLAN MACEY (JASON MERRELS) AND (HAZEL RHODES (PAULINE QUIRKE)

FAR LEFT: WAYNE THACKRAY AND DODGE OUTSIDE THE WOOLPACK LEFT: ELLIE SHERWIN AND PEPPER WITH ERIC POLLARD (CHRIS CHITTELL)





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Diary of an Editor

Luddite at Large *Loosely translated as:*
The Things I Do For Mountain Rescue



Random ramblings: Sometime in November...

Monday: Ring ring. Well Known GPS Company* here. How would you like to test our latest gizmo, give it the Editor's Star of Approval? Three months' free trial. Hmm. Think they must have me confused with a techie. Can't really do that... endorse things, you know... and anyway, never having used a GPS before, might not be the best person for the job. That said, not wanting to let opportunity slip through net, mention forthcoming coast to coast adventure. Maybe they could sponsor me? Oh well... er, we'd have to think about THAT... but if you could just get a review in January issue... Hang on a minute, thought you said three months... deadline for January is early December, that's less than a month away... Really? We'll have it in the post tonight then.

Tuesday: GPS arrives special delivery. Might as well have bells and knobs on. Oh, my apologies. Actually, it does. Calculator. Diary. Alarm clock. Stopwatch. Sunrise, sunset... So far, so Filofax. Finds anything. Nearest petrol station. Hunting. Fishing. Supermarkets. Cinemas. Car keys. Satellites. (I lied about the car keys.)

Read instructions... 'Stand in garden away from metal objects and cars...' Not easy in Greater Manchester. Little arrow still hovering over Southampton... No wait... here I am! Worsley. Wave at the nice satellite.

Two hours later. Okay. Very bored now. Makes no sense to me at all. Every possible button pressed. I like to think I'm pretty intuitive, but...

Five minutes later. Quick Start guide downloaded. Hmm...

Thirty minutes later. 56 page Slightly More Lengthy Start guide downloaded. Nope. Head hurts.

Wednesday: Secret Boyfriend on phone. Think he might be finding this vaguely amusing. Bring it with you. Sure we can sort it out. Seems like a plan. He's a bloke after all. Genetically programmed to commune with gadgets. In his sleep. Or whilst drinking a glass of water. He might even be able to smoke a pipe at the same time.

Thursday. Ping! (That's an email, BTW.) Mr Delegation, the National Press Officer, on line. Can you resend collected artwork for Mountain and Cave Awareness Day poster to printer - can't open pdf their end. This is very strange as artwork exactly same as last year's, just changed the date. Same design. Same software. Same printer even. Open up artwork to 'collect for output'. Hang on a mo... date changed to 2 May for next year... 2010. Oh. My. God. 2010? Arrgh!! Thank all manner of divinities for rescuing me from expensive mistake, amend to 2011, resave and send across.

Afternoon. In Coniston. Notebook and pen poised for project on women in mountain rescue, kindly bestowed on my by El Presidentary Stretcher Case. And it's raining. No, I mean it's raining on a Biblical scale. It's REALLY raining.

Two hours later, leave Coniston heading towards Ambleside, and Kirkstone Pass, then on to Patterdale. Or that was the plan. At least twice, Mini slows to an almost standstill, passing through very wide tracts of floodwater. Not happy. Sally Traffic announces road to Ambleside closed. Parts of the A66 like a river. Great! Now I have to turn round and go back to the motorway, up the M6 and then back in at the top. More to the point, back through those flooded bits...

Ha! And the rest! All the way back to the A590. It's dark. It's pouring off the fells at a rate of knots. It's still raining cats, dogs and probably guinea pigs, hamsters and other small rodents with beady eyes for all I know. The road isn't just a river in parts. It's a blummin river. End of. Four by fours plough through the waters ahead of me creating bow waves as big as, ooh, big bow waves. And nobody knows where I am. I'm alone. I could drown here and no-one would know... Sob.

Promise I'll never make another mistake in my artwork ever again. Just get me out of here... (Don't they know who I am?)

Friday. Undertake sneaky GPS test under own steam so as not to appear too technically dense tomorrow, in front of Secret Boyfriend. By some technological miracle, successfully waymark and save route during three hour wander. Even manage to name it. Thing is, no idea how to do anything with that information now I have it. Embrace my dog-eared map like long lost friend. Realise missed half of walk as spent so long staring at three by two inch plastic screen, stabbing buttons and swearing silently under breath. Ah well.

Saturday. Blue skies. Sunshine. (Rain? What rain?) He's got his. I've got mine. Digital maps engaged. Satellites. Oh. Here I am. Honister. Hello satellite! Right, he says, now hold it in front of you when you walk...

Some time later... nope. Is this actually supposed to enhance my hill experience? Hand it over to the Genetically Programmed One. Watch him pressing buttons and walking along gazing at a lump of black plastic in his hand, intuitively avoiding rocks and mishaps-waiting-to-happen, and it hits me: this exponential growth in call outs to mountain rescue teams over the last two years - wouldn't have anything to do with an exponential rise in sales of GPS devices to the technically dense would it? 'There I was, walking along minding my own business, Mr Mountain Rescue Team Leader, enjoying the view on my three by two LED when...' Just a thought.

Secret Boyfriend bored too now. Lumps of plastic back in respective pockets. Oh look! Wow! I can see the view now! Although I have to admit, the Genetically Programmed One spent some further hours (no really!) later that same evening, dissecting Quick Start and 56 pager. In vain. So. Not just me then.

Must think how to get GPS back to Well Known GPS Company and write a review without writing a review...

Sunday morning. Still in post-GPS shock mode. Brrring! Brrring! (That's the mobile, BTW.) Fundraising Chairman on a Short Fuse. Must be urgent. Good weekend? Er, yes, thank you... Small talk. Must be urgent and bad. Well, I don't want to spoil it but... Yup, it's very bad. Oh my God, has someone died? Have we run out of car stickers? What??

It's the calendar. Pauses for effect. There's no May twenty-second. What?... Just assimilating this information when signal goes. Eventually manage to ring him back, standing on wall at bottom of garden waving phone around. Hope no Sea Kings in area looking for random backlights.

So... you've spotted the deliberate mistake then? You knew? No. Was joking, actually. But who. ON. EARTH. Has gone straight to May twenty-second and noticed it's MISSING? Couple of my team members. Came up and said, Mike, there's a PROBLEM with this calendar... Not actually life threatening then. Nobody died. Just thought you should be aware of it. In case anyone mentions it.

I guess this WAS technically before I made my no-more-mistakes-in-the-artwork pact in the rain so hope don't now drown in plague of locusts en route home. Or beady eyed rodents come to that. And anyway, it transpires I've added in an extra twenty-ninth. So not sure it strictly counts. And I have it on good authority there's calendars out there (not ours, I hasten to add) missing whole Decembers. That's a whole thirty-one days. Should think themselves lucky! Ha!

*Thought it unfair to actually name names here - it's not their fault I don't need to Hunt and Fish. And doubtless there are many Genetically Programmed Ones (blokes) out there nonplussed at my evident lack of technical geekery. But then, contrary to popular wisdom, I CAN read a map.

Judy W, Editor xx

Milly Unleashed

FIRST IN A SERIES OF FOUR SHORT STORIES
BASED ON THE LIFE OF A SEARCH AND RESCUE DOG

by Milly Morning



My first memories as a pup were dominated by feeding times, but it was not the milk I remembered 'cos, I've never really been interested in food even in those early days. It was the humans, lots of them; in fact, to be precise, coach-loads of humans every day, except Saturdays. Smell! Now that was the really big thing! Boy did those humans smell! Now, I know dogs are famous for their sense of smell, so we should be, I understand our 'sniffers' are up to sixty times better than a humans. But honestly, some of them you could almost taste their smell before they got out of the coach.

The big, hairy, fat ones and the thin, bony, wrinkly ones they all smelt more strongly than Old Blaven who lived in the oil drum; (my Mum told me Old Blaven was over eighty in doggie years, and still around, 'cos Farmer Neil had a really soft spot for her). And then there were the wee ones, running about excitedly, poking and squealing and wanting to pick me up all the time. Blimey they smelt real good, hands and faces smeared in sticky sweet stuff.

I can understand if you are a little confused, let me explain – my brothers and sisters and I, were brought up in a field on a farm close to Aviemore. My parents and extended family (there were thirty-six in all at the time!) are what you humans call 'working sheep dogs'.

Some of the lucky ones lived in ram-shackled old cars, wooden boxes, out-houses and even an old suitcase. My siblings and I were born in a field; it was early summer, Mum had a wee wooden box to take us into if we needed shelter, but most of the time we were happy running around the field playing and scrapping with our siblings. Dad, not sure about Dad... it could have been Corrie the wise old Collie/Kelpie cross who lived in the battered old B Reg Cortina, but possibly not... Aonach was another possibility (he was kind of cute!); it was just something about the way he held his nose as he passed by the nursery area on his way to the big field, as though he had a vague interest in us, but it was all a bit beneath him... Mum didn't seem bothered anyway; I remember her saying 'It's typical, the dogs prance around looking all important, but it's the bitches that end up doing all the work'.

There were six of us, three brothers and three sisters. Life was fun. The smelly humans loved us and often seemed more interested in us pups than the 'grown-up' dogs that did the sheep dog demonstrations in the field in front of the farm. We were lavished with affection, cuddled, mauled, played with and crooned over six days a week – I just loved it!

That was the early days. But I knew things

were going to change when Mum started getting kind of snappy and grumpy and short with us. It was time to grow up and move into a bigger world.

One day SHE arrived. I was about six weeks old; she picked me up, poked and prodded and asked Farmer Neil lots of questions about me. I somehow knew this human was different to the rest. I'm going to call her 'SPECIAL HUMAN' from now on, 'cos she seems to have become a big part of my life. She had something in her pocket that squeaked, I heard the humans calling it 'squeaky toy', it sounded exciting! My brothers and sisters didn't think so, most of them shot under the nearest shed and looked out nervously, tails between their legs. But I'd always been a wee bit 'cocky', Mum regularly growled to put me in my place. The excitement of the toy and Special Human jumping around excitedly was too much. Paws akimbo, I was off, chasing the toy which was rolling down the bank, avidly chased by one of my pesky brothers! 'Whey, hey, I got there first... stitch that boy!' I grabbed it with my sharp puppy teeth and braced myself as bro' landed on top of me, trying to grab it. Shaking him off, I proudly ran back to the excited Special Human and dropped it at her feet.

'That's the one!' I heard Special Human say to Farmer Neil. Next thing, I'd been picked up and carried into a shiny blue car, it wasn't at all like Corrie's B Reg Cortina which I'd sneaked into once before. It smelt great! Wow, I was almost bowled over by the pungent smell of a pair of rock boots lying on the floor in the front of the car. In fact the rock boots were just the start of a multitude of fantastic new human smells which engulfed me as I started to explore... The car started moving, slowly at first, down the field and then out of the gate; onto that noisy road I'd always been warned to stay away from by Mum.

Little did I know that the first chapter of my life was over and that I was heading into an exciting new world of mountain rescue...

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A growing number of UK Search and Rescue teams are taking advantage of ViewRanger's free and discounted software and maps for voluntary organisations. The ViewRanger software turns most smartphones into a complete visual mapping and navigation tool using the phones in-built GPS capabilities. Easy to deploy onto Symbian, Android or Apple devices, ViewRanger's sophisticated navigation capabilities and the use of OS mapping on the sharp, clear screen display help search and rescue team members to stay on track in all conditions. Unique features such as ViewRanger's personal tracking 'BuddyBeacon' allows team



members and leaders to view each other's locations on the handset, to improve team working and search coordination. And the creation of a continuous GPS tracklog recording helps with the reporting process once a shout has been stood down. Importantly, all maps are stored on the phone and don't require the mobile network – so ViewRanger can work in the remotest of locations. Furthermore, as the ViewRanger software is used by Retrieva, their dog tracking collar can help SARDA teams to track and follow their search dogs right alongside the team's human participants. The Retrieva tracking collar is robust, weatherproof and has professional functionality that was designed into the technology. The collar has a quick release clip and a radio frequency beacon as additional safety features.



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SEARCH DOG MAC RETIRES

by Ellie Whiteford

Mac, my tri-colour collie was abandoned on a beach on the Solway Firth in Cumbria. Handed to the dog warden, and unclaimed, he was due to be put to sleep. The lady who found him took him in but, when he didn't get on with her dogs, she handed him to Eden Animal Rescue. From there, he went to a foster home, where I first saw him. He was rake thin and suffering from eating rubbish but I fell for his soulful brown eyes and gentle nature. He was thought to be between one and two years old. It took a long time to gain Mac's trust as it became clear he'd been mistreated and was wary of people and feet. That was seven years ago.

Mac made the SARDA Lakes callout list in March 2007 following two years of training and assessments – pretty quick, and even more so for an older dog from an unknown background.

Since then, he's attended over 70 callouts, and located several people, including a particularly notable find of a hypothermic lady in full winter conditions on Skiddaw in January 2009.

I will always remember that night. A party of four stuck near the summit in freezing blizzard conditions, very high winds, poor visibility and getting dark – then we heard there was a fifth person who'd not been seen since lunchtime. Three of us from Keswick team, and Mac, set off to do a sweep search round the summit area. After working our way round the summit, we dropped off the shoulder and down to the fenceline on the northern side – only the very top of the fence was visible above the snow. Part way along the fenceline, we got together to check our

location on the map against the grid reference on my GPS. As we checked our location, I didn't notice Mac had darted off and disappeared. I looked up just in time to see him coming down the slope in front of us. Barking urgently at me, he turned and headed back up the way he had come – telling me he'd found something. I turned and followed as best as I could in the bad weather. Mac came back again and again barking, as I headed up-slope following him into more exposed conditions. Then I saw the orange survival bag on an exposed area of ice and frozen grass – Mac had found the missing fifth person. She was lying with her head and shoulders out of the bag and into the prevailing wind, her gloved hand gripped around a walking pole, her head and shoulders covered in snow. She was alive, but very cold; she could barely speak and was confused, and shaking, suffering from hypothermia. I knelt down to shelter her and

let her rest her head on me while talking to her. Mac shuffled in beside her for shelter. My fellow team members soon arrived and got us into a shelter, which was a struggle to keep down in the wind. Communications were bad to non-existent, though finally we got through to Cockermouth team who came to help us evacuate our casualty. I was very proud of my dog that night.

It's an extremely strong bond that develops between dog and handler to be able to work in all conditions. Mac has been a pleasure to work with – hardly any commands needed. He knew the job and I will miss seeing him on the hunt, searching the fell for that human scent.

Although Mac has worked just less than four years, he is now suffering from arthritis and is probably older than we first thought. He has been a great search dog, my best friend and has earned his rest and place by the fire.



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SARDA WALES NEWS

by Helen Howe

Four handlers and dogs passed SARDA Wales assessments in Autumn: Sally Almond and Spin at Full Mountain Grade; Jim Macgregor and Star from the Isle of Man SARDA; Simon Worth and Poppy at Novice Lowland; and Helen Howe (Morton) and Cluanie at Novice Mountain Search Dog.

It's Helen's third search dog, with Cluanie following the proud tradition of Skye and Linnhe before her. 'I'm really proud of her,' said Helen. 'She was amazing. In fact, it was me who let the side down! We failed our first area and then came back to pass all the rest. My nerves were horrendous. It definitely doesn't get easier with each dog!!' Helen's first dog, Skye, graded in 1995 with SARDA England, followed by Linnhe in 2001.



Satmap launch software upgrade

Satmap, manufacturer of the Active 10 GPS unit, launched an important software upgrade. Version 1.5 (free download on satmap.co.uk) offers new features designed in cooperation with rescue teams, to offer even more functionality during call-outs and post-search analysis. New menu options allow the marking and customising of rescue team maps through additional overlays called OOs (Objects of Interest). These include waypoints, areas, lines, and grids and help define, visualise and calculate the size of search and incident areas and locations. The Active 10 now also offers the possibility to import information containing text and images. Missing persons' photos/medical records as well as checklists, manuals and other crucial information can easily be transferred from a computer to any number of GPS units.

A crucial existing feature is the Hibernate Mode, (select main menu > settings > advanced power control > hibernate timeout) which offers an extreme power saving setting that, when activated, will maintain satellite lock for a maximum of 16 hours and display your position immediately, at the press of a button. Used in combination with the LiPol rechargeable battery up to 120 hours of power is possible. The Active 10 PRO bundle includes both LiPol rechargeable battery and AA batteries, and the switch from one to the other is simple and provides a reliable back-up power source.

The Red Filter screen setting prevents glare and protects night vision, while keeping the map details clear, making this GPS unit the best tool for night operations (select main menu > settings > backlight > red filter).

The brand new ProSHIELD, silicon rubber case increases the IP65 rating of the unit to IP67 (allowing water immersion) enabling it to withstand extreme weather conditions. The Active 10 is used by teams in Austria, Switzerland and across the UK.



BUFF PRIZE DRAW WINNERS...

Last issue, we had five Dog Buffs – worth £7.50 each – to give away. But, far from an avalanche of entries, a mere two trickled through the ether. Well, one through the wire, the other came snail mail. So... (apologies to the two who made the effort) we're carrying it over for another issue.

To quote Buff®: 'For many years Buff enthusiasts have told us their four-legged friends like to wear Buff headwear too so now we've made something specifically for them! Half the length of Original Buff with a stripe of 3M Scotchlite retro reflective material on either side for additional safety.'

Now I know a lot of our readers have doggie friends. Some even have multiple doggie friends. All you have to do is pop your name and address on an email to me at editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk – first five out of the hat win a Dog Buff! Come on, you know your furry friend will love you (even more) for it! JW



John Coombs's article last month about lost dogs requested readers' experiences – as per letter below. John is continuing to gather information about this so, if you have a story about a dog lost – and subsequently found – please let us know.

Dear Judy/John

I found the article on lost dogs very interesting and informative. Had I known of the facts encompassed in the article it would have avoided some anxiety several years previously, as the following account will explain.

Sheila and I had completed an ascent of Harter Fell (from Seathwaite) and were returning down the Duddon Valley with Toby our yellow Labrador who was four years old at that time. I elected to boulder hop down the river bed with the intention of using a good photo opportunity. Sheila considered there was a significant risk of ending up in the river instead of on the boulders and chose the path down the west bank of the river. To begin with Toby happily splashed down the river with his usual delight in all things involving water. After a few minutes however he disappeared up the west bank in search of Sheila. This came

as no real surprise as I reluctantly have to admit that, in the final call, he was more Sheila's dog than mine.

Some two miles down the valley we met. No dog. We had no idea where he would be and a high level of anxiety became the order of the day. He had been along this valley a number of times but never following exactly the same course. I set off back up the track meeting no one on the way. When I reached the point at which Sheila and I had parted there was a very disgruntled looking dog sitting by the side of the path. He was clearly pleased to be united again but tempered this with a disdainful look that took a little time and a number of biscuits to assuage. He had sat waiting for approximately one and a half hours. Had I been aware of the information John has provided my trip back up the path would have been considerably less fraught.

David Allan

The 2011 Llanberis Mountain Film Festival takes place 18-20 March with Mountain Equipment as the supporting sponsor. There'll be a veritable smorgasbord of events, including showcasing film-making talent in the competition and a selection from the Banff World Tour, inspirational lectures, the famous 'George and Noel's Quiz' and an auction by the local mountain rescue team. There'll also be plenty to do for the youngsters over the weekend, thanks to Sprayway, along with a photo competition. Keep an eye on www.llanmff.co.uk to see how the programme develops and ticket details.



18th - 20th March 2011



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Compared to the average performance of 4 leading competitor tyres in the segment Tested by TÜV SÜD Automotive in March 2009; Tyre Size: 205/55R16; Car: VW Golf; Report #76236753. Tyres are responsible for an average of 20% of a car's fuel consumption. A 13% tyre related fuel consumption reduction results in a overall fuel economy of 1.9%*

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- Reflects 90% of your body heat
- Taped seams
- Windproof
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The Emergency Bivvy weighs just 108g (3.8oz) and comes in a handy stuff sack, so you won't even notice it in your pack. Ideal for a wide range of outdoor activities including hiking, climbing and mountain biking, the Bivvy reflects 90% of your body's heat. So, if you are forced to spend an unexpected night in the outdoors, this could be the only thing between surviving and not.

Paul Warman and a friend survived for 56 hours on Bugaboo Spire in Canada, awaiting rescue in an Adventure Medical Kits Heatsheets Bivvy, sliced in half to cover them both! In Paul's own words...

'As a climber who tends to be a bit on the cheap side, I had seen your bivvies before the climb and thought they were too expensive. Following my experience on Bugaboo Spire, I don't even let friends go out without an Adventure Medical Kits Emergency Bivvy on trips. If they complain about the price, I calmly pose the question: 'How much is your life worth?' and then slap a new one in their hands. Because there is no doubt the durability of the silver ones just doesn't hold up.'

For more information, visit adventuremedicalkits.com or call Burton McCall on 0116 234 4644 for your nearest stockist.



Goodyear tyres: discounts for teams and team members

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

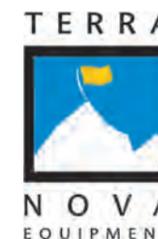
Team members can also purchase tyres for their own vehicles (subject to availability) online from

www.hiqonline.co.uk at 5% off the price specified from time to time.

Any queries in relation to the above, please contact the Treasurer Penny Brockman via email – treasurer@mountain.rescue.org.uk or telephone 01633 254244 or mobile 07775 851737.

Or the Publicity Officer Andy Simpson via email – press@mountain.rescue.org.uk or telephone 0161 764 0999 or mobile 07836 717021.

For a full range of suppliers and sponsors go to the members area of mountain.rescue.org.uk.



Sponsorship news

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We will be pleased to answer any of your queries or demonstrate our systems.



Supporting Mountain Rescue

It's No Yolk As EGG AND SPOON RACERS Scramble Up Snowdon

In October, a bunch of students, led by Ben Davenport, determined to 'do something different' to celebrate Ben's birthday. The challenge? Not just to climb Snowdon, but to climb it eggs and spoons in hand. Now anyone who's ever run an egg and spoon race will recall the frustration as egg inevitably parted company with spoon somewhere along the 100 metre distance of a flat playing field. This egg and spoon balancing act was to be carried out along 7.5km, taking in 960 metres of ascent!

But, surprisingly, the day went well, as Ben explains. 'We set off at 9.00am from Llanberis, the day after my twenty-first, with 30 eggs, thirteen people, a soft toy

squirrel named Rufus and and owl called Owl. They had small eggs and spoons, and were allowed adhesives, unlike anyone else. I had the Hat of Shame (a giant birthday cake-shaped hat with a pink brim and foam candles on top, that sang Happy Birthday when anyone hit it. So you can guess what happened there! The egg and spoon race started and we quickly separated into smaller groups. At first, it didn't seem too difficult – the weather was fantastic at the base – then we reached the stile, which proved to be amusing, followed by the increasing windspeed and decreasing visibility as we climbed.

Towards the summit, the gusts reached 55mph and I

had to have Becky tied to myself with slings and karabiners to stop her being blown away. 'In order to keep the egg on the spoons at this point you had to use your spare hand as a windshield. As you can imagine, we got some really funny looks and had some really good conversations with passersby. 'On the last few hundred metres before the summit, I overheard someone on their mobile – something along the lines of: "I've just made it to the top of Snowdon... and there's people up there with egg and spoons... and it's reeeeeeeally windy!"

'We also bumped into some guys from mountain rescue and had a good chat with them. All in all, it was a great day out – and a very

sober, but memorable, twenty-first birthday.' And, if you're wondering how they managed to summit eggs-intact, well they weren't so much hard boiled as wooden – and vividly decorated, we hear, by the Beavers from 6th Congleton Scouts. Ben reports dropping his egg 67 times; someone else dropped theirs 80ish times; and, of the 30 wooden eggs that set off up that hill, only one was missing in action. So far, the Egg and Spooners had raised just shy of £500. Their justgiving page is still up and running, so if you want to donate, wish Ben a belated happy birthday or even commend their madcap challenge, go to www.justgiving.com/snowdoneggandspoon.

Twirlies on Tour: Your Editor and Gail GO COAST TO COAST for MOUNTAIN RESCUE

It started innocently enough. Fresh from my first long distance walk – 26.5 miles of the Rossendale Way since you ask, and 'fresh' probably isn't the BEST word to describe it – and wrecklessly unable to resist the opportunity to brag, I posted something to Facebook. Quick as a flash came the responses. 'Coast to Coast next year then?' You. Are. Joking. Came the general response from moi. But too late... the seed was planted, the gauntlet thrown... and that flippin' thought would not go away. Then, somewhere along the way, fellow Rossendale team mate Gail also got tangled in the web.

So here we are, Twirlies on Tour (for explanation of the chosen tour title, I'm afraid you'll have to press me for verbal anecdote!) crossing the country, from St Bees to Robin Hood's Bay in aid of Mountain Rescue England and Wales. We'll be taking a couple of weeks to accomplish it and, no, we won't be carrying tents and sleep mats (thank God for Sherpa Van!) but languishing in B&Bs and enjoying the walk.

We leave St Bees on Monday, 2 May (which, by spooky coincidence, is Mountain and Cave Awareness Day!) arriving in Robin Hood's Bay on Saturday 14 May. Along the route we'll be cheered on and supported (well that's my hope anyway!) by mountain rescue colleagues whose patches we cross – Wasdale, Cockermouth,

Keswick, Patterdale, Langdale Ambleside, Penrith, Kirkby Stephen, Swaledale (three stops in their patch!), Cleveland and Scarborough teams have all agreed to join in the fun. And, who knows, we might be joined by a couple of celebrities along the way...*

Páramo have kindly offered to sponsor us with a Velez Adventure Smock each, so big thank you to them. And, when we popped up to Whalley Warm and Dry in Whalley, Lancashire, to pick up said jackets, they too offered to sponsor us in the form of Páramo base and midlayers, so thanks also to them. Coordinating kit! Wow!

We're aiming to raise £5000 (ambitious I know but, hey, if you don't aim for the stars...) which we hope will go a good way towards launching the proposed Mountain Rescue Benevolent Fund. We wanted to know our efforts were going towards a specific project. So why choose the Fund?

Well, as we can't say often enough, mountain rescue team members are all volunteers. They give of their time, and often their pockets, to help those who are injured or lost in the hills and mountains – often in the most appalling conditions, at the most inhospitable times of the day or night. They save lives.

But what happens when the rescuer is injured rescuing the injured? What happens when the rescuer dies saving



another's life? Quite possibly immediate hardship to the family while 'things' get sorted. The Benevolent Fund aims to bridge that gap and help those picking up the pieces after accident or injury whilst on a callout. We know from hard experience this is needed, but it's a tough one to explain and raise money for – supporters (and team members) generally prefer to look at the positives of what we do and this isn't a cheerful one. So Gail and I will be twirling our way across England on a mission.

If you'd like to spur us on with a donation go to justgiving.com/twirliesontour and make our day. And tell your friends too – five grand may be a big sum but it will make a big difference.

And now, if you'll excuse me, I have maps to read and a compass to polish... **JW**

* Indeed, none other than Sir Chris Bonington will be joining us en route...

Facebook fan count: 1294

Some of the stories that got you chatting last quarter...
...in December, Aberglaslyn MRT found a new base, thanks to contractors working on a nearby bypass. The team had to leave its rented premises, a converted agricultural shed, a year ago and since then have had nowhere to meet or store equipment. But a vacant cabin at the Porthmadog bypass site has now been handed over to them by contractors Jones Bros and Balfour Beatty. Great news...
...this year's Wainwright Society calendar was featured in November, as proceeds will be going to teams in the Lakes and Pennine areas. (Check out www.wainwright.org.uk/calendar/index.html). Fingers crossed sales have gone as well as hoped...

...the same month, a walker died and a woman was critically ill after they were attacked by a bull. The pair were gored by the animal while walking along a public footpath in Stanford on Soar, a mile north-east of Loughborough, by no means mountain country. Which underlined the fact you don't have to be hanging from a rope to get injured in the countryside...

...a comment from one reader that he'd enjoyed the last magazine (thank you!) prompted comment about the number of ads for snow chains... understandable for a balmy-ish October evening but, given the weather since, we rather think they might have been entirely appropriate. If not actually prophetic!

...and, oh dear, my wording when reporting of the withdrawal of the Lakeland zipwire almost started a fight. Bring me that wooden spoon...

That said, Facebook seems to be working for us, provoking thought, opinion, anger and amusement in equal measure, even firing book and calendar sales – so keep those comments coming! **JW**

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THE OUTDOOR LEISURE SHOW

25-27 February 2011
NEC Birmingham

The Outdoor Leisure Show will offer you the latest kit, advice and inspiration for your next adventure in the great outdoors.

- Compare the **LATEST** outdoor products, gadgets, clothing and footwear from the leading manufacturers
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- Be inspired by **ADVENTURERS** and personalities as they share their great outdoor experiences
- Get **ADVICE** from the leading organizations, clubs and media
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*When booking before 22-2-2011, a £1.50 transaction fee applies.

YOUR GREAT ESCAPE



Supporting Mountain Rescue

Meet Mountain Rescue at
THE OUTDOOR LEISURE SHOW
25-27 February: NEC Birmingham

YOU
COULD
WIN.....



Given last year's success at The Outdoors Show, when the crowds were kept entertained by our stunning display team (they told me to say that), and the buzz on the stand was the best ever (not to mention the sound of coins rattling into buckets), we were disappointed to hear the whole thing was moving to London. Just as we were getting into our stride! Four days in January (five if you count set-up day), slap in the middle of what promises to be a busy time of year for mountain rescue, if the weather forecasters are to be believed, is a big commitment to time and energy to ask a bunch of volunteers to make. Then there was the cost. But should we really be there... would London and the South attract sufficient interest in – and, more to the point, support for mountain rescue – to warrant our presence there...



or might it be a repeat of that disastrous five days at the Boat and Caravan Outdoor Show in 2009, when half a dozen of us slowly lost the will to live as our Invisibility Cloaks went into overdrive... the discussion batted around for quite some time.

Crack crag rescue display team returns, this year with our very own zipwire...

Then came news of this new show, to be staged at the NEC – so that's where we're off. And this year, we're not just bringing our crack display team, we're upping the ante with a zipwire. We're also planning to bring along a bit more kit this time so you'll have the chance to see how things work. So come along and have a go, throw some change into the pot, pick up the second edition of Call Out Mountain Rescue, buy a badge, enter the Victorinox raffle Backpack, join Basecamp (and be in with a chance of winning a Victorinox Swiss Tool Spirit – thanks to sponsors Burton McCall) or just chat a bit about mountain rescue.



And, if our presence alone isn't enough to inspire you to make the trip, we hear the show has attracted top, award-winning outdoor clothing and camping manufacturers as well.

Yeomans Outdoor Leisure, one of the UK's leading independent camping and outdoor retailers supplying tents, camping equipment and outdoor clothing is there. Páramo and Keela, both firm favourites with mountain rescue teams, will be showcasing their outdoor clothing ranges. Alpkit will also be on hand with an extensive range of outdoor gear including equipment for climbing, trekking, camping and mountaineering; lightweight goose

down sleeping bags, bouldering mats and crash pads, equipment for trekking and camping such as self-inflating camping mats (sleeping mats), lightweight titanium camping gear, and down clothing. And we hear there's all sorts of activities and talks going on too.

Taking place in Hall 9, at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, alongside the 50th Boat and Caravan Show, The Outdoor Leisure Show is set to attract 20,000 outdoor enthusiasts (they say), in addition to those with an interest in outdoor pursuits from the Boat and Caravan Show. Doors open at 10.00am until 6.00pm on Friday 25 February. We look forward to seeing you there!

PS to team members...

Roy Henderson, and the Keswick team, have led the organisation and staging of this display for the last couple of years, ably assisted by colleagues from Cockermouth and Penrith. And a sterling job they've been doing. But the plan is to open this out for other teams to take up the reins for future events.

So, if you're a mountain rescue team member and fancy getting involved, this is an ideal opportunity for you to get hands-on experience of what's involved. If you fancy coming along and joining the 'team' for half a day (sorry, but you WILL have to pay your own way there – shoestring budget and all that) please contact editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk, with a note of which day you're available, and I will pass your details on to Roy to make arrangements. **JW**

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JOIN BASECAMP AT THE SHOW and win this Victorinox Swiss Tool Spirit worth £90!*



*Entrants must be over the age of 18. Winners will be announced in next issue of Mountain Rescue.



Supporting Mountain Rescue

Keswick to Barrow CHARITY AWARDS



Thanks to the committee of the Keswick to Barrow Walk for the £650 donation to Mountain Rescue from the proceeds of the 2010 event.

If you fancy doing the walk in 2011 and raising funds for Mountain Rescue England and Wales along the way, it's on Saturday 7 May. 'It's an opportunity,' says Bill Bright, Treasurer of the Keswick to Barrow Walk, 'to generate more funding, but also the opportunity to fulfil a lifelong ambition whilst passing through some of England's finest countryside.'

Over the course of 2010, a fantastic £199k has been distributed to 217 charities and good causes, plus bonus Gift Aid packages totalling over £34,000. The total raised by the K2B since 1967 now stands at £1,842,546 – well on track for their next target of £2 million by the 45th event this year.

For more information about the walk, go to www.keswick2barrow.co.uk.

New to justgiving...

Jen and Noam plan an overland expedition around the world, setting off in April in a Land Rover Disco, to raise money for Mountain Rescue. Their target is £6000.

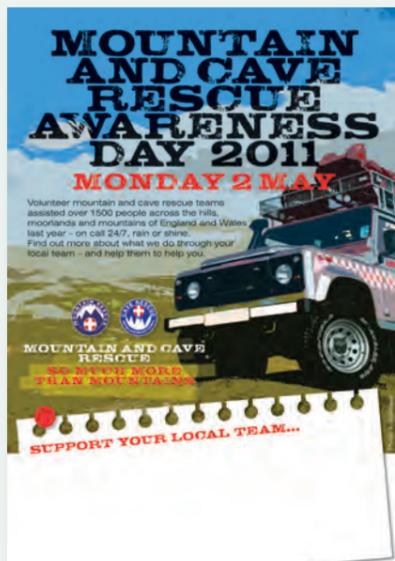
They'll be taking two years to travel the Alps, the Dalmatian Coast, Turkey, Russia (including Siberia), Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Japan, South Korea, South East Asia, India, Nepal, Australia, NZ, and the Pan American highway (Chile-Canada) featuring high altitude highlights such as Mt Elberus, Altai Region, the Dolomites, Annapurna, and Bam-i-dunya (visas permitting). We're exhausted just reading about it, but good luck to them on their travels! You can find out more and follow their progress on www.landroveroverland.co.uk.

...and an update...

Tom Lancaster and Jonny Briggs are on course to race each other up the height of Everest – that's 8,848m – in one stretch, on an indoor climbing wall. This equates to 595 times up the 15m wall. 'It's an attempt to do something amazing to remember a dear friend who was killed in the mountains over Christmas, last year' explains Tom.

The Longest Climb will take place at The British Leisure Show in Windsor, March 11-13. To date, they've raised

£1342 (£1569 including Gift Aid) only a small percentage of the £30,000 they're hoping to split between three charities: Amnesty International, HeartUK and Mountain Rescue England and Wales. But they have high hopes – so give them your support. You can follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/thelongestclimb.



DON'T FORGET MOUNTAIN AND CAVE AWARENESS DAY MONDAY 2 MAY!

At this stage, we have little advance information about what the various teams will be doing to celebrate this, the second national 'Flag Day' for mountain and cave rescue (apart from my own plan to set off on a 192 mile walk, that is. Did I mention that?) Feel sure plans must be in the making, so watch this space for more news in the next issue. **JW**



© DAVID ALLAN

You know my wife thinks we're crackers...

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by joining Basecamp. Single membership is £24 per year (minimum), joint membership £42 (minimum). In return you will receive a lapel or cloth badge, a car sticker and a copy of the mag each quarter.

For more information go to www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/basecamp or fill in this form and send to Neil and Lorraine Roden at White Cottage, 9 Main Road, Grindleford, Hope Valley S32 2JN.

Name

Address

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Email



Cloud free mountains: above inversions



by Geoff Monk
Mountain Weather Information Service

When entering the mountain areas of Britain, we often observe deteriorating weather. Yet, occasionally, we are treated to the complete opposite – low cloud and fog is left behind in the valleys as we go up a mountain pass or, more often, walk up out of cloud.



The cloud top is often almost flat over vast distances (the top varying only 100m or so) and above the cloud, the air almost perfectly clear. The satellite picture, of Scotland on 12 October 2010, shows low cloud and fog through the Central Belt of Scotland and also extending from the east up the glens of eastern Scotland. Higher hills are above the cloud. More commonly views such as this occur in winter.

Generally the top of the cloud in inversion, the ground remains frozen solid! This occurs due to a combination of two reasons. Foremost, under clear skies, during the predominantly dark winter period, the ground radiates heat away, becoming several degrees colder than the air just a few feet above. This is enhanced when the air is very dry (very low humidity) so that on a clear relatively calm night, the minimum

Celsius in the clear air above the inversion, the ground remains frozen solid! This occurs due to a combination of two reasons. Foremost, under clear skies, during the predominantly dark winter period, the ground radiates heat away, becoming several degrees colder than the air just a few feet above. This is enhanced when the air is very dry (very low humidity) so that on a clear relatively calm night, the minimum

temperature will be lower when humidity is very low. Thus, above the inversion, although the air temperature may be above freezing point, the ground continues to radiate heat away, keeping its temperature below freezing point. Partial, if any thawing occurs only on south facing slopes receiving the weak winter sun.

Inversions are most commonly formed as high pressure develops. Typically air within the high slowly descends, and as it does, slowly warms and also dries out (due to the fact that warm air can hold more water vapour than cold air). In Britain, areas of high pressure often develop following cold northerly winds. Unfortunately, due to the warm seas around Britain, thermals develop over the sea, and shower clouds form. The top of the shower clouds, representing the tops of the thermals, reach the base of the descending air and act so as to slow its progress downwards (and also sharpen the inversion). In Britain, this often limits the height to which inversions descend, with many inversions remaining just above the height of the highest Scottish Munros. The exact height to which inversions drop is not easy to forecast.

The pictures shown here, with filaments of fog and low cloud only in the valleys is more typical of Alpine conditions, where away from the influence of the sea, inversions often descend to just above the valleys in winter.

This article first appeared in The AMI Magazine. For more information about MWIS go to www.mwis.org.uk

FIGURE 1 (LEFT): MODIS IMAGE 1110GMT 12 OCTOBER 2010 COURTESY MODIS RAPID RESPONSE SYSTEM
FIGURE 2 (TOP): LOOKING SOUTHWEST ALONG LOCH LINNHE FROM TRIG HILL (ABOVE DRUMARBIN, SOUTH OF FORT WILLIAM) AT SUNSET 27 DECEMBER 2008 COURTESY CALUM MACCOLL

Rescue at Dragonniere de Gaud, Ardeche Gorge, France: October 2010

by Bill Whitehouse
with John Volanthen and
Rick Stanton



The area around the Ardeche Gorge to the Northwest of Marseille is one of France's many caving regions. In the gorge itself are many caves and one of these is the Dragonniere de Gaud. This cave can be followed for only about one hundred metres before its continuation is completely flooded. Cave divers have been gradually pushing the limit of exploration in this flooded passage or sump and, by the beginning of October this year, one of France's leading cave divers, Eric Establie, had pushed on alone beyond the previous limit of 775 metres in, to reach 1040 metres from the start of the sump. At this point the passage was trending upwards quite steeply and, although still 42 metres underwater, it was considered highly likely it would continue upwards until dry passage above water level was reached.

Diving beyond the first part requires the use of **rebreathers, mixed gases and lengthy decompression stops** — a technical challenge **BEYOND ALL BUT A HANDFUL OF CAVE DIVERS WORLDWIDE**

The sump is not only long but also very deep – minus 87 metres at its deepest point – and with considerable variations in depth. Diving beyond the first part requires the use of rebreathers, mixed gases and lengthy decompression stops – a technical challenge beyond all but a handful of cave divers worldwide.

On Sunday 3 October Eric set out on a dive, intending to pass his earlier limit and continue onwards, hoping to reach the end of the sump and gain access to unexplored dry passages beyond. He was well equipped with two scooters (small torpedo-like devices able to tow a diver), two rebreathers, ample supplies of breathing gas and plenty of diving line to safely mark his route in and out of new territory.

When he did not return after what was planned to be a dive lasting over seven hours, his support diver went some way into the sump hoping to meet him at a decompression stop. When this did not happen he returned to the surface and raised the alarm.

The French cave rescue – Speleo Secours Français (SSF) – quickly realised they had a big problem. An experienced and well-equipped diver had dived to a place beyond the skills of most other divers to reach. However, based on what was known of the

sump and the local geology there was, they believed, a high chance that he had found a place above water to await help. Their problem was how to deliver that help.

On Sunday evening, Olivier Lanet, the SSF Chargé de Mission for diving operations, telephoned Rick Stanton in the UK and asked if he and other suitably experienced UK divers might be prepared to assist. At this stage the request was an unofficial diver-to-diver 'pre-alert.' Any formal decision to request help from outside France would be unlikely until Monday morning.

A similar request had been acted on in 2006 when two British cave divers, together with Heyphone underground to surface comms equipment, had been sent out to Plurdal in Norway to assist in the recovery of a Norwegian cave diver missing in another long and deep sump. That exercise had been quite a learning experience and was followed by some pre-planning for a similar call should one occur – and now it had.

One of the decisions following the Norwegian incident concluded that the selection of divers to go on any team should be a decision made only by divers. The pick list for a team suitable for this incident was very small and the decision was quickly

TOP LEFT: DIVERS AND KIT BEING PICKED UP AT NIMES AIRPORT BY THE FRENCH FIRE SERVICE. BOTTOM LEFT: DIVERS SITTING IN BOAT WAITING TO BE FERRIED ACROSS THE RIVER TO THE CAVE, JOHN ON THE LEFT AND RICK ON RIGHT.

RIGHT: JOHN ABOUT TO DIVE WITH CHARLIE ON RIGHT.

reached. Two divers with the necessary advanced skills (Rick and John Volanthen) would be the ones to go together with a third diver (Charlie Reid-Henry) as technical support and interpreter.

After deciding who should go, Rick rang Bill Whitehouse (BCRC chairman) for help in dealing with the logistics of the operation.

While waiting for a formal call for help, there was plenty that could be done. The divers needed time to prepare their own caving and diving gear and then Rick and Charlie needed to drive from their homes in Coventry and Dorchester to John's home in Bristol. There they would be able to study together any information about the sump, provided from France, and finally decide and check over what they needed to take with them.

The divers reckoned they'd be ready to travel from Bristol early on Monday evening and their initial plan was to drive down to the Ardeche – a distance of about 850 miles including the Channel Tunnel. Allowing for rest and preparation, the earliest they could be ready to dive would be late on Wednesday – three days after Eric became overdue.

This was really too long. Assuming Eric had reached safety underground on Sunday, he would be marooned in a hostile environment, possibly injured and/or with damaged diving kit and certainly without food or other supplies. If British divers did end up being needed, because local resources were not available, a rapid reaction to a call for help would be critical.

Consequently, just after midnight, Bill rang the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) at Kinloss and asked if they might be able to help. The initial response was not encouraging but he was asked to make contact again later that Monday morning when perhaps more information had been received from France.

About 03.00, Olivier Lanet emailed Bill to say French divers had been down to minus 50 metres in the sump hoping to find Eric on the way out at one of the decompression stages. He was not there and SSF were now reevaluating their options. Bill outlined the plan to get Rick and John over to the Ardeche but that it needed a formal government to government request for help to make things

happen. An email at 08.20 stated that another dive was projected later in the day to the deepest part of the sump (about 500 metres in), and confirmed that SSF were talking to the authorities their end about making a formal request for help.

Now that it was confirmed the divers were definitely needed Bill went back to the ARCC and spoke to duty controller Robbie Roberts who, as luck has it, is not only a caver but also one with cave diving experience. Bill explained that a formal request for assistance was in the offing and there was a real urgency in getting the divers and their equipment over to France as soon as possible. He asked whether the team could be flown across the channel for the French to then deal with their onward transport to the Ardeche. Following many more conversations and exchanges of information Robbie, the ARCC and the RAF came up trumps. A Sea King, from Chivenor in Devon, was put on standby to fly later in the day to Bristol airport and pick up the team and their kit. The RAF also agreed to fly their filled diving cylinders of pre-mixed gases which would save valuable time in avoiding the need to mix gases and fill cylinders on site. They would then be flown over to Cherbourg airport where the French would assume responsibility for them. But, for any of this to actually take place, a formal request for help between governments was still required.

It wasn't certain what route such a request should take. During the 2006 Norwegian incident, Bill had first tried the Foreign Office and learned that matters concerning foreigners in foreign holes was not something in their job description. However, on learning that the police had overall responsibility for search and rescue in both countries they had suggested a request be made by the Norwegian police to Interpol in Oslo to go to Interpol in London and then to the responsible ACPO officer.

This had worked then so, assuming the situation would be the same now between the UK and France, Bill contacted Neil Thomas, DCC Ian Shannon's ACPO staff officer in North Wales. As the day progressed Neil checked with the Foreign Office to confirm their stance was the same and then conferred with Interpol in London to ensure any request would be



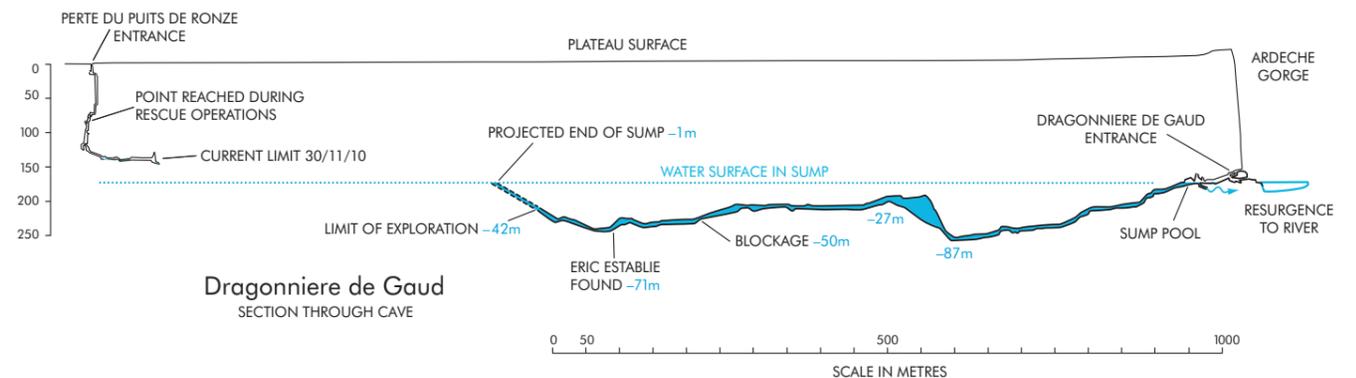
This was worrying. Time was slipping away if the divers were to fly on **MONDAY**

intercepted and passed on to him with the minimum of delay.

As the day progressed, other matters such as insurance cover were researched and resolved (the British Caving Association cavers' holiday insurance turned out to be the best!). The Sea King was standing by, the aircrew had been given estimates of load weight, the ARCC had arranged diplomatic clearance for flying to Cherbourg (where the airport would stay open late if necessary), the divers were on their way to Bristol and at Bristol airport arrangements were in hand to deal quickly with them when they arrived. ACPO and Interpol were ready to action a request which, by early afternoon, had still not been received. This was worrying. Time was slipping away if the divers were to fly at all on Monday. This was made clear in emails to the SSF who were themselves urging the French authorities to speed up a request but they were reluctant to do so until learning the results of the planned dive to 500 metres which had been delayed and was not due to take place until mid-afternoon and be completed until after 18.00.

However the SSF prevailed and about 14.30 the request was made – but not in the way expected this side of the Channel.

The French Government made their request via the European Commission Monitoring and Information Centre for Civil Protection (MIC). This is a continually monitored EU emergency communications system on which any participating state can post a request for emergency assistance. It is designed for use





LEFT: THE EARLY DAYS OF THE RONZE DIG. THE PINNED SHEET IS TO PREVENT LOOSE MATERIAL FALLING INTO DIGGERS BELOW

and flew to Mulhouse to pick up three Swiss divers and their equipment, before flying them all south to deposit them at 03.00 on the edge of an otherwise very closed Nîmes airport. The divers unloaded and sat with their mass of kit, wondering what was to happen next but, after only a short wait, a convoy of fire service vehicles arrived to ferry them the last fifty or so miles to the base of operations. Here they were briefed and the decision made that the British team should dive first because they were the most prepared with charged cylinders (which had by now caught up with them) and a prepacked dry tube containing a 'beyond sump' rescue kit, comprising bolting kit, hauling gear, stove, food, repair kit, first aid, heat packs and other useful bits.

So, after a short rest and a meal they prepared their gear and were ferried across the river to the cave shortly before noon, intending to dive as far as possible or until Eric was found.

They kitted up and entered the sump to find visibility of about one metre due to suspended sediment in the water. French divers who had been to the lowest point of the sump (-87 m) had reported that visibility seemed to improve beyond but, when Rick and John passed that point, they found the reverse to be true. Visibility from thereon was, in fact, much poorer.

They pressed on. About 775 metres into the sump, John descended a silty gravel slope to find the diving line laid by Eric going through a very low arch. He made an unsuccessful attempt to squeeze through and, just as visibility reduced to zero, he caught sight of a diving scooter in the hole. Visibility was now so poor that, when Rick encountered John's legs he thought at first that he had found the missing diver. Both made further unsuccessful attempts to pass the constriction and after conferring by wet notes they concluded that it was impossible. John was able to pull the abandoned scooter out of the hole to take out for examination and then they made their way back through the sump in atrocious visibility as their activity had stirred up even more silt.

Returning through the sump took over four hours because of the need for decompression stops on the way before they could safely surface. They reported what they had found and their conclusion that the constriction had been caused by a collapse of gravel and silt from the slope preceding it. They described their attempts to force through and their conclusion that trying to dig through would be not only horrendously dangerous but almost certainly impossible. Any excavated material would merely gravitate back into the hole and digging attempts might well also precipitate further collapses on the unstable slope.

Disappointment at the outcome of the dive was universal. However, the fact that Eric's scooter had been found was taken by the SSF as a sign he'd deliberately left it there to indicate he had survived the collapse and gone further into the sump to find refuge above water level.

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Due to the extreme visibility problem it was decided no diving could usefully or safely be carried out until the sediment had been given time to settle out, so it was not until Thursday that a second team of one Swiss and one Italian dived to the constriction. Their inspection in improved visibility confirmed what John and Rick had found.

Further diving was cancelled and French cave rescue teams turned their attention elsewhere. On the plateau above the gorge in a vineyard about 1800 metres away from the cave entrance there was an impenetrable sinkhole (Perte du Puits de Ronze) that, in wet weather, took a considerable stream proved by dye testing to connect with the underground river resurging in the gorge. A massive operation commenced here, initially using mechanical diggers, but soon falling back to standard cavers' digging techniques to remove the fill, break rocks and widen constrictions. Teams operated round the clock, gradually working their way down breaking through choke points and descending a number of clear vertical pitches revealed by their digging. But it was slow work and a clear breakthrough enabling them to get down the nearly 180 metres to the water level of the sump eluded them.

Thought was also being given to the possibility of boring a hole down to the constriction in the sump and then removing the blocking silt and gravel by pumping - clearly a long shot. There was still considerable optimism that a well-equipped cave diver of Eric's experience stood a good chance of survival had he been able to continue beyond his earlier limit of exploration and ascend to an air bell or dry passage.

Consequently, John and Rick were asked to dive again to the constriction taking a radio location device with them to determine the exact location of the blockage relative to the surface. They were also asked to take a metal detector to determine whether any more of Eric's diving gear was buried in the silt near the collapse. They dived on Saturday, and with some concerns over the effect the magnetic field generated by the location device might have on their dive computers they operated the device successfully. Visibility was much better (relatively!) and Rick was able to see further into the constriction where he spotted a diving cylinder.

He was also able to find and inspect the entrance to a narrow passage above the collapse which might possibly bypass it. However, it was extremely small and to attempt it with the back mounted diving gear they were using was out of the question.

They returned to the surface and reported their findings, suggesting that an attempt on the passage above the collapse might be possible using sidemount rebreathers. This was agreed and the following day (Sunday) the two Swiss and Italian divers ferried additional diving cylinders into the sump ready for the attempt. They also pushed the

Eric Establie's death is a tragic loss of one of the WORLD'S LEADING CAVE DIVERS

dry tube containing supplies as far into the constriction as possible as there was a view that Eric might be returning periodically to the far side and therefore able to retrieve it.

If Rick and John were able to bypass the constriction, and if they did find Eric alive, they would need help and additional equipment to effect what would be a very difficult rescue. The only other available person with the necessary equipment and experience was another British diver, Jason Mallinson. Jason was already half expecting to be called and after being contacted on Saturday evening he was able to be ready to leave home in Huddersfield later that night.

In view of the amount of kit he had to take, and as he would not be required to dive until early the following week, he elected to drive down to the Ardeche in his own vehicle. After being met on the M1 to receive some specialist equipment, ferried over to the rendezvous from the Derbyshire CRO store in Buxton, he carried on and arrived on site in France on Sunday evening after an almost non-stop drive.

On Monday, Rick and John dived to the blockage for an attempt on the possible bypass. Rick entered the passage first and managed to get through. John followed, positioning the guide line for a safe return. The squeeze, whilst not tight by UK standards, was complicated by the visibility suddenly dropping to zero and the fact it opened into a rift only negotiable in exactly the right place and at exactly the right height - a real problem in nil visibility. Once the way through the bypass had been successfully reconnoitred and lined, they returned to collect scooters, the dry tube of supplies and rescue kit. They then passed through the squeeze a second time and continued the dive, intending to pass the previous limit of exploration and carry on upwards in the hope of finding Eric unharmed.

However, about 140 metres beyond the blockage, at a depth of 70 metres below water surface and just before the passage started to rise, they encountered Eric's body. Recovering and transporting him back through the squeeze would not have been possible, so Rick and John had to content themselves with recovering Eric's dive computer for analysis by the French authorities.

His discovery was a shattering disappointment to all involved as hopes had remained high Eric had managed to find refuge above water level. All reluctantly agreed that attempts to recover him through the sump could not be justified and the operation was wound down to the French

divers (assisted by Jason) recovering equipment left in the sump.

That night John felt unwell and in the morning, as a precaution, he was taken to Marseilles with possible decompression sickness for a spell in a decompression chamber. This meant that flying home was out of the question so, after a full debriefing by the French authorities, they packed their gear and were driven to St Malo by the French fire service to catch the ferry back to Poole.

This brought to an end the help from the UK but not an end to SSF operations. French cavers were determined to find another way of recovering Eric's body and they restarted work in the Perte du Puits de Ronze sink with the intention of pushing on with excavations until they reached the other end of the sump underground and from where a diving recovery might prove possible.

At the time Rick and John found Eric's body, cave rescuers had excavated down to a depth of about 75 metres. A subsequent public appeal was made by the Federation Française de Speleologie and the SSF for donations to support the continuation of digging operations. This appeal raised in excess of sixty thousand euros and the work continues. Teams of cavers from all over France are involved and have now reached a depth below plateau surface of nearly 150 metres. Work is currently held up with some flooded passages still some 30 metres vertically and possibly 500 metres horizontally from the projected end of the sump. Pumps have been installed to help try to clear the passage but winter weather may soon cause further delays until next Spring.

Exactly what happened on Eric's dive may never be known. An initial analysis of his dive computer apparently revealed he had passed the point where the collapse later occurred and continued beyond his previous limit of exploration following a rising passage to a point only one metre below water surface. He then returned to encounter the blockage on his way out.

Eric Establie's death is a tragic loss of one of the world's leading cave divers. He will be greatly missed and the sympathy of cavers everywhere will be with his family and friends. Speleo Secours Français and the French authorities mounted a huge and enormously efficient rescue operation and did everything possible in the hope that Eric had survived his dive on 3 October and had found a safe place in the cave above water. We all know, though, that even the best efforts are sometimes unsuccessful. Sadly, this was one of those occasions.

Latest from DMM

Life is never simple or lacking challenges here at DMM, and the last quarter has been no exception! The steady stream of new products in the system continue to be tweaked, finalised and launched into the market. Our product development programme is ambitious and rightly so. Nowadays no project is simple, and getting from Concept through design, prototyping,

testing, tooling up to production throws up many challenges. However we have added weight to our product development team, and now have a wealth of knowledge and areas of expertise spread between three members, Dave Noddings, Graham Desroy, and Rob Wilson.

ISPO will be a relatively quiet show for us, but come the summer, and Friedrichshafen Show in July, we are hoping to have a large

selection of goodies to show.

But for now, the much awaited Pinto Pullies are just making their first appearance and the end user is beginning to understand that the very clever designs are not just confined to use in arborism where the pulley was born. The amazing hot forged sideplates and clipping holes are so well formed that they are very textile friendly and offer many more attachment options making the Pinto about the most versatile small pulley you can buy.

For details on all products check out dmmwales.com or for the Pinto http://dmmprofessional.com/downloads/DMM_Pinto_Flyer.pdf



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SARMAN - making it work for cave rescue

by Piers Hallihan South and Mid Wales CRT

When we first heard about SARMAN, the reaction in many cave rescue teams was usually a variation on 'OK, it's great for MR teams but what use is it going to be underground?'

Our first use of SARMAN in an exercise, just a week after the launch and training day, appeared to back this up. The only bits we were using were the Asset Manager and the Logs, effectively duplicating our existing manual logs. The benefit of being able to see the location of surface comms teams on the map was overshadowed by the hassle of then cross-checking the grid reference against the cave survey on the wall of the hut to ensure the Heyphone was actually in the right place. I brought the laptop home from that exercise determined to make it work for us.

The solution was simple (in theory). All we had to do was combine the cave survey with the OS map. The practice turned out to be a little less easy. Traditional surveys tend to be rather large expanses of paper stuck to the walls of caving clubs, not particularly easy to turn into a calibrated image file, suitable for import into Mappyx Quo. The way forward appeared to be by way of digital survey technology.

After some experimentation with Survox and Aven, we managed to come up with a way of transforming the 3D survey files into workable, calibrated images which could then be overlaid onto the maps in Quo. Once we had these images for the major caves in our patch, SARMAN started to become the useful tool it was designed to be.

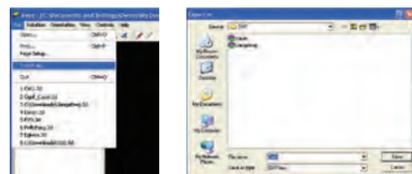
As was stressed, many times, by Ewan and the Mappyx guys up in Preston, SARMAN does not remove any of the decision-making power from the controllers but, by having a visualisation of the cave along with all the map information right there on the screen, the controllers job has suddenly become much easier. In fact, after the recent Goodyear sponsored joint exercise, one of our experienced controllers reported that 'once we have enough people trained up, we wouldn't need the manual systems at all.'

Getting the information shared between two, totally incompatible, programs is still a little on the clunky side. For anyone who wants to reproduce it, here's the method we're using (assuming you already have access to Survox and the relevant data).

Whilst I can't claim to be an expert on any of the software used in this process, I'll do my best to help where I can. Post a query on the SARMAN area of the MREW forum if you get stuck.

1 Open up your chosen survey in Aven and check you have 'proper' grid references. Some surveyors started with the entrance being 0,0 rather than the true grid reference which adds an extra layer of calculation into this process.

With the 3D file open, go to File > Export as then, on the following screen, in 'Save as' type, select 'DXF Files'.



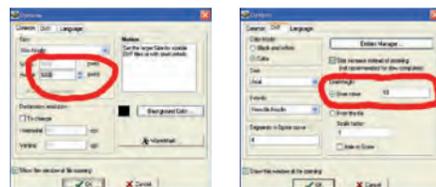
2 Leave the survey open in Aven, we'll need it later.

For import into Quo, we need an image file so the DXF needs converting. There's a number of programs available to do this but I use Able Graphic Manager. It's a free download although you will need to register it if you can't get all your surveys done in the first 30 days!

Opening your DXF file in Able will bring up an options box. You can experiment with these settings but the ones shown below seem to work best for us.

In the 'Common' tab, a maximum dimension of 5000 pixels in any axis creates a scalable file that doesn't lose definition when you zoom. Much bigger and you get a memory-hungry overlay that slows the whole system down.

Also, in the 'DXF' tab, a line weight of 10 pixels means you can still see the cave when you zoom out for an overview. Much thicker and you end up with an amorphous blob with all the passages merging together.



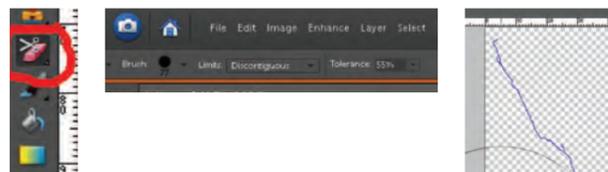
3 Once you've set these options, click OK to open the file. Then click File > Save as and this time select 'Portable Network Graphics (PNG)' in 'Save as' type.

Now we've got an image. Unfortunately, Able doesn't have a transparent background option so we need to do that manually.

Open your .png file in a graphics editor. I use Photoshop Elements but there's plenty to choose from (GIMP is free and has many of the same features).

In Photoshop, select the 'Background Eraser' tool then set the parameters as follows: Brush size 70ish, Limits - Discontiguous and Tolerance about 50 - 60%. Then, being careful not to select any of the cave itself, simply delete the background, leaving the line of the survey behind.

Then save the PNG file again and close the editor.

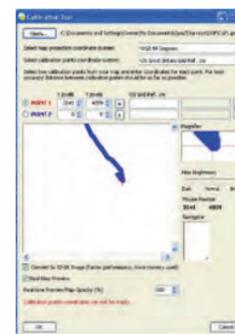


4 Open Mappyx Quo, click on the 'Explorer' Button then on the 'Loaded Maps' Tab. Finally click the 'Calibration Tool'.



5 With the Calibration Tool now open, click the 'Open' button and find your PNG image saved earlier. Once you've opened the image, work down the form top to bottom.

Ensure both the 'projection coordinate system' and the 'calibration coordinate system' are set to 'OS Great Britain Grid Ref 1m,' then click the button next to 'Point 1'.



6 Using the navigation areas, find and select an easily identifiable point on your survey then Alt+Tab back into Aven and hover the mouse over the same point. The lower set of figures shown on the left hand side of the screen relates to Grid Reference.

Copy this grid reference into the first empty box in the Calibration Tool, remembering to insert the Letter code for the grid square, in our case 'SO'.



7 Click the 'Point 2' button and repeat the process for a second point. The further apart the two points are, the more accurate the projection will be.

Click on 'OK'. This creates a calibration file, meaning that next time you want to overlay this image, it calibrates automatically.

In the Explorer, double click on your newly imported file to centre the map, then close the Explorer down. Your calibrated image will now display at all zoom levels. Here we see Ogof Craig-y-Ffynon overlaid onto the 1:25000 OS map.



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Sunday 28 November: Incident No 146 Tuesday 14 December: Incident No156

by Nick Owen

Approx 4.00pm: We received a call for help, stating that a woman had been found 'unconscious and unresponsive' at Bowfell Links.

This became Bowfell summit as various witnesses and an informant were quizzed... it also became apparent that drugs, alcohol and vomit were present in large quantities, so a suicide attempt was clearly the most likely scenario. Various levels of consciousness were described by different descending witnesses, as were various locations! It was obvious it was going to be a long, long night.

At the time of receiving the call a helicopter was requested for the evacuation, but had to turn back after encountering dangerous weather. Kendal MRT was requested to assist and Coniston MRT was considered but it was obvious we had enough people attending at that stage. As rapid evacuation as possible would be required... not dead until warm and dead was the key expression and a fatality seemed a very likely outcome.

Our casualty was reached at 18:40 and confirmed as breathing, semi-conscious, and in need of airway support. It was snowing hard at this point, but not too windy. Team members on scene became five and treatment was started to try and stabilise the woman. Some of the medication was identified via a radio call to base and some quick thinking by Marie to contact NATIONAL POISONS HELPLINE...

at this point two doses of naloxone were administered in close succession. The needle froze on both occasions, requiring some unsterile defrosting... less said about that, the better... Naloxone was injected IM straight through clothing... no point in exposing any flesh ... slight raising of conscious level but no reduction of pin-point pupils... airway was in need of constant support with jaw thrust, administered with admirable enthusiasm and competence by Graham.

On the occasions that the casualty's consciousness rose, so did her resistance to help. She constantly questioned who we were, why we were doing what we were doing, how she'd been found and she let it be known she had every intention of dying where she was... she wasn't going to be given that choice at that stage!

An under-sized NP airway was eventually inserted successfully, despite a raised conscious level at the time. All attempts to fit the 'correct' sized airway failed. Some damage was done to nasal area, evidenced by small amounts of blood. She tolerated this regardless of consciousness for the whole descent... initially she was placed on her back, because she was resistant to any other position and this was regarded as acceptable due to seemingly vomited 'empty'... she subsequently wriggled on to her side of her own free will...

A second request to get a Sea King was made but was unavailable due to weather conditions. With visibility getting better we were hopeful, but

conditions at their base were also a problem.

We set off from the summit, short-handed but in need of making some downward progress. More LAMRT joined us on back rope and navigation. Ground consisted of rocks, frozen turf, old snow and new snow of variable depth and was very difficult to negotiate. It stopped snowing but spindrift became a problem when the wind picked up for a while instead.

Our casualty was monitored closely for consciousness, and observations were taken every 20 to 30 minutes, although recording was difficult. It was not a good night for paperwork! By this time Graham and Mark had built something of a rapport with 2010's most uncooperative casualty.

We tried to make the evacuation seamless by hot-swapping carriers, only stopping to make further observations. Despite the obvious prolonged carry, it was considered that every second counted... some furious 'driving' of the stretcher by Michael helped with this and instilled a sense of urgency in any flagging carriers... Approximately eleven litres of oxygen were used, 3 x 3 litre and 2 x 1 litre... no further naloxone was administered because general observation and conscious level suggested it wasn't required. At one point she offered to walk... still with NP airway in place! Increased resistance to being helped occurred on many of the occasions of raised consciousness.

Another request for helicopter to White Stones on The Band was made but again weather determined otherwise. It clearly wasn't a night for flying!!

With LAMRT and Kendal MRT all together now, some inventive navigation got us down a helter skelter route in to Oxendale, avoiding the steeper rocky section at the Band lower section, and out of the worse of the weather.

The multi-faceted aspects of this rescue were also beginning to drop into place while the two teams were doing battle with the elements. Our casualty's car had been identified, parked in the valley at Rossett Bridge and was broken into by police on the basis that there was a note on the front seat. The single sentence on the note clearly indicated a serious suicide attempt – this info was passed to the cas site. It simply stated, 'I have committed suicide.' Her bags were searched for further drug information but nothing was found. Ironically, given where she went, she left a bag of Fox's glacier mints in the car!! Even in the most desperate circumstance, irony and humour, black or otherwise, is never far away...

Having already bagged a couple of ambulance assists while we were having our epic on the fell, our Mobile 3 was reached at about 22:50, parked by then in Oxendale, and our casualty was handed over to a paramedic who had been transported up the valley, and whisked off to Ambleside to be transferred to a county ambulance. Mobile 3 followed as far as Bannerigg, the last troublesome hill en route to hospital to make sure the ambulance got away. We were then able to get back to base for one more ambulance assist before we finally got to go home.

It was massive effort by everyone... very slick and professional... a very difficult medical condition to manage in fairly shitty weather... a number of injuries were sustained by team members ranging from crampon piercings, bruises, blisters, severe hot aches, sprains and strains but everyone mucked in brilliantly, and some of our newer team members acquitted themselves excellently, and took home a few 'learning points'... as well as the 'old hands'... nobody needed directing and there was very little 'leading' to be done... everyone did what they saw needed doing...

As team leader, it's times like these that make you proud of your team. DTLs back at base managed that aspect of the evening. Constant chasing for helicopters, handling ambulance assists and then getting our ambulance up into Oxendale along a track blanked out by snow. Without Phil and Roge, I am nothing... without a great team, the same... and without help from our colleagues at Kendal MRT life would be complicated as well. This was rescue 146 of the year and, at nine hours duration, was one of the longer ones... a proper rescue, in shitty weather with a serious life-threatening condition to deal with, and not a helicopter in sight!

Oh yeah... and pies and smiles back at base!! A simple pasty and some beans can be a taste of honey after a prolonged rescue.

Only problem remaining was how was I going to drive my car home through the snow, having driven in there in snow-free conditions? I wonder how many day trippers were caught out that day?

Sadly this wasn't the end... Our casualty was released from hospital after an overnight stay. She was adamant she was going to go ahead with her desire to end her life at the next available opportunity. She had been diagnosed with cancer and had made an informed choice.

On Wednesday 1 December she was reported missing again. Her car was located in Ambleside, and she was tracked in to Rothay Park by Search Dog Mij , drafted in from Bowland Pennine MRT. On Thursday 2nd, there were a couple of decent sightings of a woman matching her description, although these were all from the Tuesday 30 November. Searches of Loughrigg and Great Rigg were made on Saturday 4 December by SARDA, Bowland Pennine and Duddon & Furness MRTs. Conditions were not great, with poor visibility, even poorer conditions underfoot and considerable avalanche risk on certain aspects. Nothing was found. At the time of writing Gwenda Merriott remains unaccounted for...

PS: On Monday 13 December, a bag was found by walkers near Stone Arthur. On reaching Grasmere, they realised it belonged to Gwenda Merriott. It was handed in to police, and we organised a search of the area. At around 10:15, a woman's body was located. She was found in an area we'd previously had difficulty searching due to snow cover. Twelve team members and SARDA were involved in recovering her body to Ambleside.

QUARTERLY INCIDENT REPORT FOR ENGLAND AND WALES JULY-SEPTEMBER 2010

The following is a listing of the number of incidents attended by MR teams in England and Wales during the period from 01/07/2010 to 30/09/2010. 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	10/07, 03/07, 04/07, 18/07, 18/07, 19/07, 20/07, 21/07
	23/07, 24/07, 27/07, 28/07, 01/08, 01/08, 16/08, 19/08
	19/08, 21/08, 17/07, 25/07, 18/09, 02/07, 30/08, 01/09
Coniston	15/07, 16/07, 29/07, 31/07, 07/08, 12/08, 12/08, 15/08
	17/08, 05/09, 15/09, 18/09
Duddon & Furness	01/07, 31/07, 31/07, 24/09, 16/07, 16/07
Kendal	01/07, 11/07, 20/07, 24/07, 27/07, 09/08, 13/08, 21/08
	11/09, 08/09, 18/09, 24/09, 26/09
Keswick	06/07, 07/07, 07/07, 10/07, 10/07, 10/07, 15/07, 17/07
	24/07, 26/07, 29/07, 01/08, 05/08, 05/08, 08/08, 09/08
	11/08, 12/08, 15/08, 15/08, 18/08, 18/08, 18/08, 22/08
	25/08, 27/08, 29/08, 31/08, 02/09, 17/07, 25/07, 31/07
	06/09, 09/09, 12/09, 14/09, 14/09, 18/09, 23/09, 18/09
	25/09, 27/09
Kirkby Stephen	22/07, 24/07, 20/08, 21/08, 29/08, 18/08
Langdale Ambleside	01/07, 05/07, 08/07, 10/07, 10/07, 11/07, 17/07, 20/07
	23/07, 24/07, 24/07, 25/07, 26/07, 27/07, 27/07, 28/07
	29/07, 31/07, 31/07, 04/08, 06/08, 08/08, 08/08, 08/08
	08/08, 09/08, 09/08, 12/08, 13/08, 18/08, 21/08, 24/08
	25/08, 26/08, 29/08, 29/08, 05/09, 25/07, 06/09, 08/09
	11/09, 12/09, 15/09, 17/09, 18/09, 18/09, 18/09, 19/09
	21/09, 24/09, 24/09, 24/09, 30/09
Patterdale	08/09, 12/09, 18/09, 19/09, 02/07, 03/07, 10/07, 20/07
	27/07, 25/07, 06/08, 06/08, 21/08, 29/08, 31/08, 03/09
	03/09, 04/09, 05/09, 05/09, 07/09, 08/09, 12/09, 14/09
	15/09, 26/09
Penrith	01/07, 18/07, 06/09, 18/08, 11/09, 11/09, 12/09, 23/09
	24/09, 31/08
Wasdale	24/07, 01/08, 17/07, 17/07, 20/07, 25/07, 26/07, 31/07
	31/07, 31/07, 03/07, 03/08, 03/08, 04/08, 16/08, 22/08
	05/09, 18/09

Mid-Pennine

Bolton	11/08, 14/07, 28/07, 07/08, 14/08, 01/09, 02/09, 07/09
	08/09, 11/09, 15/09, 01/09, 24/09
Bowland Pennine	01/07, 23/09, 05/07, 26/07, 26/07, 28/07, 14/08, 29/08
	01/09, 04/09, 12/09, 24/09, 25/09
Calder Valley	23/07, 25/07, 31/07, 01/08, 10/08, 18/08
Rossendale & Pendle	26/07, 11/08, 04/09, 05/09, 09/09, 28/07, 02/09

NE England

Cleveland	01/07, 05/07, 24/07, 09/08, 22/08, 26/08, 28/08, 04/09
North of Tyne	20/07, 30/07, 13/08
Northumberland NP	20/07, 30/07, 13/08, 04/09
Scarborough & District	05/07, 09/08
Swaledale	24/07, 19/08, 22/08, 22/08, 29/08
Teesdale & Weardale	29/08

North Wales

Aberglaslyn	14/07, 16/07, 24/07, 28/07, 07/07, 13/08, 21/08, 25/07
Llanberis	01/07, 03/07, 04/07, 05/07, 11/07, 28/07, 03/08, 09/08
	01/08, 12/08, 19/07, 20/07, 15/08, 18/08, 06/07, 13/07
	24/07, 13/08, 17/08, 02/09, 05/09, 21/08, 07/09, 14/09
	15/09, 17/09, 18/09, 18/09, 21/09, 22/09, 27/09, 07/09
	27/09
North East Wales	24/07, 31/07, 04/09, 23/09
Ogwen Valley	03/07, 03/07, 05/07, 07/07, 15/07, 24/07, 24/07, 26/07
	27/07, 31/07, 28/07, 01/08, 03/08, 04/08, 05/08, 06/08
	07/08, 07/08, 09/08, 10/08, 11/08, 12/08, 15/08, 15/08

	22/08, 22/08, 24/08, 24/08, 24/08, 27/08, 28/08, 30/08
	05/09, 10/09, 15/09, 18/09, 22/09, 22/09, 28/09, 15/09
OB Wales	07/07, 10/07, 13/07, 25/07, 01/08, 21/08, 29/08, 19/08
	07/09, 13/09
Snowdonia Nat Park	15/08

Peak District

Buxton	01/07, 16/08, 03/07, 07/07, 17/07, 17/07, 05/08, 06/08
	19/08, 24/08, 01/09, 04/09, 19/09
Derby	16/08, 16/08, 23/08, 29/08, 19/08, 19/09, 04/09, 07/09
	18/09
Edale	01/07, 02/07, 14/07, 04/08, 03/07, 07/07, 10/07, 11/07
	17/07, 17/07, 17/07, 25/07, 27/07, 01/08, 04/08, 05/08
	06/08, 19/08, 19/08, 19/08, 24/08, 29/08, 30/08, 01/09
	04/09, 12/09, 12/09, 18/09
Glossop	02/07, 07/07, 04/08, 16/08, 04/08, 08/07, 27/07, 08/08
	20/08, 05/09, 21/08, 18/09, 24/09, 25/09, 05/09, 17/09
Kinder	07/07, 11/08, 16/08, 16/08, 08/07, 04/09, 18/09, 19/09
	24/09, 25/09
Oldham	25/07, 01/08, 05/08, 11/08, 11/08, 15/08, 21/08, 21/08
	04/09, 04/09, 09/09, 25/09
Woodhead	02/07, 14/07, 04/08, 16/08, 04/08, 19/08, 05/09

Peninsula

Cornwall	08/07, 15/07, 24/07, 21/08, 22/08, 27/08, 03/09
Dartmoor (Tavistock)	10/07, 30/07, 28/08
Exmoor	02/07

South Wales

Brecon	04/07, 06/07, 07/07, 08/07, 09/07, 11/07, 14/07, 26/07
	01/08, 15/08, 19/08, 01/08, 09/08, 08/08, 20/08, 21/08
	27/08, 28/08, 30/08, 31/08, 29/08, 01/09, 10/09, 12/09
	19/09, 19/09
Western Beacons	04/07, 07/07, 09/07, 26/07, 01/08, 15/08, 19/08, 30/08
	01/09, 10/09
Central Beacons	04/07, 07/07, 08/07, 09/07, 26/07, 04/07, 01/08, 06/08
	15/08, 19/08, 28/08, 30/08, 29/08, 21/08, 10/09

Yorkshire Dales

CRO	02/07, 04/07, 28/07, 28/07, 30/07, 31/07, 01/08, 06/08
	15/08, 15/08, 18/08, 21/08, 28/08, 04/09, 08/09, 15/09
	20/09, 21/09, 05/09
Upper Wharfedale	06/08, 20/09, 15/07, 18/07, 26/07, 30/07, 01/08, 24/08
	01/09, 08/09

SARDA

England	02/07, 28/07, 01/08, 06/08, 04/08, 24/07, 18/08, 11/08
	16/08, 27/07, 04/08, 21/08, 08/09, 09/09, 14/07, 28/07
	20/09, 30/07, 24/08, 04/09, 05/09, 31/08, 08/09
Lakes	01/07, 01/07, 24/07, 22/07, 01/08, 05/08, 18/08, 17/07
	12/09, 18/09, 18/09, 24/09, 24/09
Wales	05/07, 14/07, 15/07, 24/07, 12/08, 10/09, 14/07, 24/08
	24/08, 21/08, 23/09, 05/07, 25/07
South Wales	09/07, 14/07, 04/07, 06/08, 15/08, 09/08, 28/08, 29/08
	19/08, 21/08, 01/09

RAF

Valley	28/07, 12/08
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Non-specialists

	12/08
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Snippets from the Journals

PREHOSPITAL SPINAL IMMOBILISATION

Issues related to spinal immobilisation continue to be a source of controversy. Spine immobilisation is often a part of the current prehospital treatment for patients with penetrating injuries to the head, neck and torso. A large retrospective study from the USA concludes that placing spinal precautions wastes precious time that could be spent transporting patients to definitive treatment centres. Patients who underwent immobilisation were more than twice as likely to die. It has been previously postulated that penetrating injury is unlikely to cause spinal instability without causing complete spinal injury and that such complete injuries would cause irreversible

neurological consequences regardless of spinal immobilisation. **J Trauma 2010; 68:115-21**

JUST ONE DROP

A single hypotensive blood pressure reading during a trauma call is often overlooked or attributed to movement artefact or faulty equipment. Is a single hypotensive recording significant? A prospective observational study hypothesised that a single hypotensive reading during trauma resuscitation signifies the presence of severe injuries that warrant immediate attention. Their results confirmed that a single systolic blood pressure reading of less than 105 mm Hg is associated with injuries that often require immediate operative or endoscopic treatment and

surgical intensive care admission. Patients were more than 12 times as likely to undergo urgent therapeutic intervention than those with all readings over 105 mm Hg. **J Trauma 2010; 68:1289-95**

VIEWING THE BODY AFTER TRAUMA

The decision of bereaved relatives on whether or not to view the body following sudden and traumatic death varies greatly between individuals. It is influenced by many factors. This decision is more difficult in cases which the bodies are disfigured by the manner of death, a group that healthcare professionals are often reluctant to let relatives view. Reasons to see the body range from needing confirmation of

death, to needing to make sure the deceased is 'OK', or a sense of duty. Reasons not to include preferring to remember the victim as they were when alive. A study by the Department of Primary Health Care in Oxford investigated the response individuals had to seeing or not seeing their deceased relatives. It concludes that while not all relatives wish to see the body, very few of the ones who did regretted it, and many found it helpful for the grieving process. Overall, it seems that relatives should be given an informed choice and if they wish to view the body, should be prepared beforehand for what they will see. **BMJ 2010; 340:c2032**

Understanding Drugs A Plain English Guide for use in mountain rescue

by Les Gordon Langdale Ambleside MRT

The idea for this book came from actual or potential drug-related issues arising in rescues. It is intended to be an easily understandable reference for non-medical MR personnel to use when they encounter a casualty who is taking any sort of medication.

Drugs can affect rescue events in many ways. They may contribute to the clinical problem eg. insulin driving blood sugar down or warfarin increasing bleeding. In casualties with a chronic health problem, symptoms may start to re-emerge if, having been delayed on the hills, the person does not receive their medicines at the right time, or they have forgotten to take their medication with them.

Drugs can significantly affect the casualty's ability to deal with physical trauma eg. atenolol prevents the heart from beating faster in response to blood loss. Many drugs can alter physiological parameters so that something measured by the MR team that appears to be abnormal, is in fact just a consequence of the medication. For example, a slow heart rate is 'normal' in people who take atenolol. Finally, medicines may influence what drugs the team can safely deliver.

The book has several sections. There are descriptions of many drug types eg. anticoagulants, and information about a few common, and some not-so-common, medical conditions that require drug treatment and could be encountered on the hills eg. asthma,

epilepsy. Some of the drug types and medical conditions included are admittedly rare but it was felt to be worthwhile including them because using MREW-approved drugs in these cases is not straightforward. Although some casualties know the names of their medicines, rescuers will not understand the practical implications of the answer unless they have appropriate training.

To help overcome this problem, there is an A-to-Z list of about 2500 drugs that a casualty who is fit enough to be out on the mountains could be taking, together with an explanation of what type of drug it is and what the consequences are for the rescue and for MR drug use. This is not a complete drug list. Many drugs will not affect the rescue in any way (eg. skin creams), whilst some can only be given in a hospital. These have therefore not been included. The A-to-Z list is updated every six months when a new issue of the British National Formulary is published.

There are a number of sections that will be rarely used but could be of value if needed. These are on the use of MREW-approved drugs in patients with kidney failure, and in women who are pregnant or are breast feeding. There is also a section on the possible problems one could encounter if dealing with a drug addict because these people can be very difficult to manage - even to the point of putting

the rescuers at risk, if the person becomes very aggressive. Also for rescuer safety, there is an indication in the A-to-Z list if the patient is taking a drug that is used to treat a communicable disease eg. hepatitis. Finally, there is a list of international websites that provide information about drugs and some guidance on how to identify a drug if you have the tablet or capsule. The need for these arose from a rescue of an American lady who was taking a drug that was not listed in the British National Formulary, and from another rescue that was an attempted suicide.

It is important to remember that this book is not a replacement for guidance issued by team doctors and by MREW on the drugs approved for use by mountain rescue teams. These authorities always have the final say. At about 170 A5-size pages, it is now too big to carry on the mountains.

However, it is produced in pdf format and can be used on a computer at the MR Base, or on a smart phone. The intention is to put a copy on the MREW website for free download. I hope that people will find it useful. I would be very grateful for any constructive feedback at all, particularly if there are any errors or sections that are confusing, so that future editions will provide more relevant information and in a more useable format.

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Medical Special-FX courtesy of Face of Art

COOL RUNNINGS: HEAT STROKE IN COOL CONDITIONS

Heat stroke is rare and usually occurs in warm conditions. Untreated, the mortality rate may be as high as 80%. This paper reports six runners from two road-running events who developed heat stroke despite cool conditions and who improved quickly with immediate treatment. The first race was a charity half marathon around central London. An estimated 7500 runners completed the race. Three runners collapsed and were brought to the race medical centre adjacent to the finishing line. They were diagnosed with heat stroke and treated within minutes of the collapse by the medical team. Air temperature at the start of the race was 14°C. One casualty made a rapid improvement with treatment and was discharged within 90 min. The other two runners were initially treated at the race medical centre then transferred to the local hospital for ongoing treatment. One was subsequently admitted to ITU and discharged a few days later and the other was discharged from the emergency department having made a rapid improvement.

The second race was a charity event with 21,000 runners completing a 10 mile circuit. Three runners were treated by the same team, again within minutes of collapse. Air temperatures over the period of the race were between 5°C and 9°C. All three runners were subsequently transferred to the emergency department of the local hospital but were discharged from there within a few hours. They were treated with intravenous fluids and had fans and cold water applied to the skin to aid cooling.

The report concludes that progress of the disease is primarily related to the initial care provided – usually involving rapid cooling and management of the haemodynamic instability. Both can easily be provided at the scene which may allow the casualty to return to normal quickly and even not require hospital treatment.

Immersing the casualty in iced water appears to be the gold standard for temperature

Best BETs from the Manchester Royal Infirmary

Best Evidence Topics (BETs) summarise the evidence pertaining to particular clinical questions. They are not systematic reviews but contain the best highest level evidence that can practically be obtained by busy practising clinicians.

USE OF THE TRENDELENBURG POSITION TO IMPROVE HAEMODYNAMICS DURING HYPOVOLAEMIC SHOCK

A 28 year old man with a gunshot wound to the leg presents at the emergency department in hypovolaemic shock. Among other things, you place the patient in the Trendelenburg position, with the body tilted so that the feet are higher than the head. You wonder if this position actually improves haemodynamics. Two hundred and ninety-four papers were found, of which five were considered relevant to the question.

The Trendelenburg position was originally described by Friedrich Trendelenburg as a method of improving the surgical field view during laparotomy. It was suggested as a method of improving cardiac output in patients with shock during the First World War by Walter Cannon, although he later decided it was not beneficial. The theory was that gravity would aid the venous return of blood to the central circulation and improve cardiac output. Despite any evidence of benefit, and the fact that its original propagator rescinded his recommendation, the idea has remained popular, perhaps because the idea appears to be logical in a purely mechanical sense. The Trendelenburg position is advocated for hypotensive patients secondary to a wide selection of drug overdoses on the UK Poisons Information Service website, and most first aid texts advocate leg elevation for patients who have fainted.

Several studies were found that examined the cardiovascular effect of a downward head-tilt position in patients with a compromised vascular system. The studies all involved small numbers of patients who had hypotension due to a variety of aetiologies and all have some methodological flaws. The one thing that all the included studies have in common is the failure to demonstrate any benefit of the Trendelenburg position on cardiac output. There is some suggestion it may even have a detrimental effect apparent on returning the patients to a supine position.

Emerg Med J 2010; 27:877-878

Clinical bottom line

There is no evidence of benefit for patients with hypotension and this practice is not recommended.

reduction – not a practical option in the field, but simple measures as ice packs and fanning can be used. The authors sought to raise awareness of heat stroke and the fact that it can occur in colder conditions than was previously thought. Urgent reduction in temperature is crucial, and having immediate access to medical care is therefore vital.

Emerg Med J 2010; 27:387-388

EXERTIONAL HEAT ILLNESS IN HALF MARATHON RUNNERS: EXPERIENCES OF THE GREAT NORTH RUN

Large numbers of competitors in the Great North Run are affected every year by this potentially fatal condition. This article discussed the patient demographics, presentation and treatment of large numbers of patients with a simple, effective regime. Defined as a core temperature of >40°C, ten minutes after the cessation of exercise, the

condition covers a broad range of clinical conditions from minor heat cramps and symptoms of lethargy to severe heat exhaustion, multiple organ failure and death. The BUPA Great North Run is the world's largest half marathon with over 54,000 entrants annually. The GNR medical team has extensive experience in managing hyperthermic athletes using a simple but effective system. The GNR is open to adult runners of all standards. The course is roughly west to east and, due to the time of year held and geographical location, maximum temperatures rarely peak above 18°C. Entrants receive pre-event information on health, training and circumstances in which they should not run. New runners and those with existing medical conditions are advised to take advice from their GP.

The proportion of heat illness to runners is the highest in all UK half

marathons which may be for a variety of reasons. The course follows the same direction as the prevailing wind. Its evaporative and cooling effects are therefore diminished, compounded by the 'mass effect' created by the large numbers of entrants, resulting in a packed course and reduced airflow between the runners. The majority of patients with hyperthermia were not fun runners nor elite runners, but well-prepared club runners, who possibly overexert themselves trying to achieve a personal best, overheat, lose decision-making ability and the situation deteriorates.

During the course of a half marathon, runners have insufficient time to drink enough water to become hyponatraemic, which limits their metabolic derangement and perhaps facilitates the rapid recovery times.

Most collapses occur within the last 2km of the race, so the Field Hospital is situated at the finish line. On arrival, runners are immediately triaged by paramedics using a system based on major incident medical management and support (MIMMS). Teams are arranged to receive large numbers of patients in rapid succession, each team consisting of six medical and nursing personnel overseeing three trolleys, set out in a star formation with the heads together. This allows for the accommodation of patients admitted in sequence in different stages of treatment.

As water is involved in cooling, electrical equipment is minimal and patient monitoring is based on clinical examination and mercury rectal thermometers, the most accurate measure of core temperature in the prehospital setting. Three resuscitation bays are equipped to an emergency department standard for patients that do not respond rapidly to initial treatment or require additional support.

A physiotherapy team treat the severe muscle cramps that can develop in the lower limbs.

Management involves an 'airway, breathing, circulation' approach, insertion of large bore intravenous cannula and venous blood sampling; infusion of saline, the removal of clothing and copious tepid sponging.

Cooling ceases at 39°C to avoid 'overshoot' – this phase usually takes 30 mins. Patients rarely need more than 2000ml of intravenous fluids to replace their depleted volume. Obs continue until the GCS returns to 15 and cardiorespiratory parameters are within normal limits. If recovery is not complete within two hours, hospital admission is arranged.

Most patients are discharged to the recovery area within 60 mins of arrival and discharged home, accompanied, within two hours. The authors found the above method to be simple, safe and effective, minimising the need for A&E attendance and easily reproducible with minimal resources in the prehospital environment.

Emerg Med J 2010; 27:866-867

999 text service will assist hillwalkers and climbers

Mobile phone reception in the mountains is notoriously elusive, and often non-existent. Not something you want to discover when you've had an accident. But now, thanks to a new service, if you are involved in an incident on the hill and need to call assistance but cannot make voice calls, you can contact the 999 emergency services using a short messaging service (SMS) text from your mobile phone.

The service was originally set up in 2009 for people who are hard of hearing or have a speech impediment. The service has been successful in helping identify crime and enabling emergency calls to be made when otherwise contact would have been difficult or impossible for the people involved.

The service will now assist those needing emergency assistance in the hills when mobile reception is poor and there is not enough signal to make a voice call. The benefit is that a text message can be composed and sent in a single operation. You should specify 'Police-Mountain Rescue' when sending the text, and include information about your location, nature of the incident and those involved.

You will only be able to use this service if you have registered with emergency SMS first, so register now: don't wait for an emergency. To register, text the word 'register' to 999. You will get a reply – then follow the instructions you are sent. This should only take about two minutes of your time and could save your life! For more information about emergency SMS, go to www.emergencysms.org.uk

999 A Potted History

Who'd have dreamed, back in 1928 – when Edgar Pryor fell from his stance at Laddow Rocks, in the accident said to sow the seeds of our modern mountain rescue service – that communications would have developed quite as they have. Telephones, back then, were very much a luxury, still the reserve of the better-off. Nor was there a dedicated emergency service number you could dial up, secure in the knowledge that precisely the help you needed was immediately at hand. Suffer an accident in the mountains then and you were dependent on your mate, or a willing onlooker, hot-footing it back down the hill to the nearest farm or public house to raise the alarm. Such communication as there was took the form of messages relayed back and forth between the scene of the accident and the nearest doctor.

Fast forward to the twenty-first century, and here we all are (well, a great majority of us, anyway), walking around with tiny telephony tucked in our pockets, endlessly connected to our photo collection, blogging and tweeting our every move, the soundtrack of our life buzzing through our earbuds. And now, in the event of an accident, we can even call for help on our mobile phones when there's insufficient signal to make a voice call. They'll be delivering holographic rescue team members next...

Since 1927, dialling '0' and asking the operator for police, fire or ambulance had been the recommended method in an emergency. It was ten years before the 999 service was introduced, initially in the London area and later nationally – prompted, apparently, by an enraged letter to The Times. When fire swept through a house in Wimpole Street, in November 1935, killing five women, Norman MacDonald, a dentist living in the house opposite, tried to call the fire brigade for help. He was so enraged at being held in a queue by the telephone exchange, he wrote to the paper, prompting a huge public outcry.

The Government set up the Belgrave Committee to look into the problem of operators' identifying emergency telephone calls. The Committee concluded there should be one number throughout the country to alert the emergency services, and that this should be easy to remember and dial in the dark or thick smoke. It was suggested an end number was used so it could be found easily by touch. At a time when there were only three million home phones, it was also important emergency calls could be made from the coin-operated public telephones – without inserting any money. These call boxes already allowed the '0' to be dialled without inserting money so they could easily be customised to dial '9' without the need for cash. '111' was rejected because it could be triggered by faulty equipment or lines rubbing together. And digits '2' to '8' were in use elsewhere in the UK as the initial digits for subscribers' telephone numbers. So '999' it was.

According to The Times, 'On 30 June 1937, the Assistant Postmaster General, Sir Walter Womersley, told the House of Commons that the new emergency service would be trialled in London. For reasons now lost to history, MPs burst out laughing at the announcement that the number would be 999 (perhaps because, amid the gathering storm of war, it sounded like a German saying "no" three times).'

The Times did, however, approve of the new number. 'Being one third as big again as the Number of the Beast, it has its sinister significance', it declared. 'All cannot be well with him who dials 999. Moreover, the figure 9 would be pretty easy for the quaking finger to find on the dial in a dark room where the householder, shivering in his pyjamas, is hoping that the exchange will hear him before the burglar does.'

Glasgow became the second city to have the service in 1938 and, within ten years, it had been extended to all major towns and cities. In the early days, red lights and klaxons would signal an incoming emergency call, despite fears the noise would be excessively stressful for the telephonists. The first week of service saw 1000 calls; by 1950, the number of 999 calls had reached 80,000 a year; and, by May 2010, BT was receiving 30 million emergency calls a year. The first mobile call to 999 was in 1986. In line with a European Directive, the number 112 was introduced in the UK in 1993. So... where to next? Pass me that holocamera Obi-Wan Kenobi, you're my only hope... **JW**

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

TEES BARRAGE WHITE WATER COURSE AND RESCUE 3 (UK) JOIN FORCES

The Tees Barrage White Water Course is well underway with construction and due to be open to the public in early 2011. With the major development and investment of £4.6m, it will boast a new short course – 95 metres in length with a drop of 3.7m – making it one of the steepest channels in the world. This is being developed not only with kayaking and rafting in mind, but as a specialist rescue training centre for emergency services to work in and around swift-moving water, with a strong emphasis in flooding in urban environments.

Rescue 3 (UK), the country's leading provider of internationally recognised rescue training, is now working in partnership with Tees Active Ltd, the operators of the Tees Barrage White Water Course, to put the new course on the international map and make it a centre of excellence for rescue training. On opening of the new facility Rescue 3 (UK) in the North East will start training personnel from agencies across the UK and strives to hold an international water safety conference within the first twelve months.

Some key features of the new short course are:

- Guaranteed controllable water flows, with 24 hour operation possible
- Exclusive use for visiting groups and fire crews
- Water quality tested weekly to EU Bathing Standards
- Real vehicle rescue
- Classroom facilities on site
- State of the art equipment
- PPE hire
- Accommodation and catering

With fantastic road, rail and air links, the white water course is an ideal venue for agencies wishing to train for the first time with Rescue 3 (UK) or utilising their own Rescue 3 trained instructors.

For more information regarding rescue training at the Tees Barrage White Water Course please contact Simon White on 01642 528688 or via email at simon.white@teesactive.co.uk.



For information on Rescue 3 (UK) please contact Rescue 3 (UK): 01678 522035 or email info@rescue3.co.uk

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Professional Driver Training is in collaboration with Lantra Awards to meet the nationally recognised standards of PUWER – the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The staff at LRENY have a long history of supporting local rescue organisations and are delighted to be able to continue to do so.



For more information about Land Rover Experience call 0844 848 4459 or email info@lre3.co.uk. Or check out our website at landroverexperience.uk.com

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Wish you were there?

MOUNTAIN NIRVANA

COME ON - FEEL VA-NOISE!

by Andy Hodges

I have been a member of Dartmoor SRT (Tavistock) for over sixteen years. As a teacher, one of the perks of the job is plenty of opportunity to escape to the Alps each year and, a few years ago, my wife and I stumbled upon a valley that appeared lost in time.

Approaching over the Col de l'Iseran from Val d'Iserre, the first village we encountered was Bonneval sur Arc at 1800m. The glaciers and summits loomed over the stone built village, voted one of the most beautiful in France. The road descending the valley opened up to reveal flower-smothered meadows, Beaufort cows munching away and more rustic charm than you could shake a baguette at.

We were 'scoping' the Haute Maurienne area as we'd decided to buy a ski flat in the valley and wanted to see what was on offer in the summer. Passing the French national biathlon ski team's camp confirmed our suspicion that this was a hidden gem for the mountain connoisseur. We made our base in the small campsite in Termignon and visited the national park visitor centre. Our first impressions were being confirmed all the time. There were mountain bike trails; the huge mountain overlooking the village turned out to be Dent Parrachée, the summit at 3697m was 2400m above the village square but barely 5km from where we stood! The surrounding mountains had the appearance of a hybrid of the best of Scotland and the Alps.

The local guidebook had very brief descriptions, typically 30 to 40 words in French and alas there was no other book to help. After a particularly challenging ascent (read 'a marriage-

threatening epic') of what ought to have been little more than a rough walk, plans were laid to write and self publish an English guidebook.

Six years, hundreds of kilometres walked and thousands of metres ascended later, 'Mountain Adventures in the Maurienne' is coming to the shops. Published by Cicerone, this guidebook will be a first as it includes walking, mountaineering, rock climbing, via ferrata, mountain biking and trekking. A selection box for chocolate box-lid country.

The area is a delight for mid-range multi-discipline enthusiasts. It has plenty to offer the family adventure and is probably one of the best places to make the transition from British Mountaineer to Alpinist. Many long routes abound graded PD+ or below. A great number need no glacial travel yet glaciers abound and can be tackled at gentle gradients to reach summits with astounding views. Refuges are plenty and the food is fabulous. Via Ferrata routes are cropping up all the time and offer the thrill seeker a range of adrenalin packed days out. Hannibal is believed to have crossed the Alps from the valley and the remains of Alpine troops' dugouts along rocky scrambling ridges defy belief.

So, where first? The two coveted summits of the valley are Dent Parrachée and Pointe de Mean Martin. These can both be tackled without treading on a glacier, they both reach high enough into the thinner air to make you breathless just sitting on the summit. Pointe de Mean Martin is reached from the lovely Refuge de la Femma and its resident marmots living nearby. An hour or two on the

balcony will be amply rewarded with their antics. The walk-in is a pleasant couple of hours from the car park (a free shuttle bus from Termignon can also be used) leaving plenty of time to view the summit and the marmots before 'summit day'. Those eager to up their summit tally can make the walk in a full day by ascending the Pointe de Lanseria (2900m) en route before descending a wild valley to join the access path to the refuge. Advice is freely given in the hut for both options to Pointe de Mean Martin. The first is to take the straightforward path to the col en route to Refuge du Fond des Fours. From here the route becomes decidedly more scrambly and a couple of hours of rough rock will see you at the summit marvelling at the view. Mont Blanc - yep, Grand Paradiso? Tick. Is that the Matterhorn? Binoculars will certainly be useful. For those with glacier skills the summit can be reached via the Glacier des Roches Blanches, a wet glacier in its upper reaches before following a rocky ridge to the summit. For the very fit the summit can be reached from the car park in a day, it's about 30km and 1500m ascent. Expect an eleven hour day for this epic route! Got more time on your hands? Extend the route with a night at the Fond des Fours refuge then complete the sublime Leissières traverse, four summit over 3000m joined by a ridge to challenge Aonach Eagach finishing at Col de l'Iseran and an afternoon descent to Bonneval sur Arc and the bus back down the valley.

The crowning glory must be the magnificent Dent Parrachée. A 2400m

pyramid towering over the valley, this mountain is featured on countless postcards in the local shops. Its grandeur is probably best appreciated from the road ascending the Col du Mont Cenis as the mountain forms a perfect backdrop. Now, to the mountain itself. The Voie Normal is a rocky route involving steep and exposed ground which doesn't lend itself to many running belays. That said it is not beyond the regular scrambler comfortable on Crib Goch or Aonach Eagach. A short afternoon walk (two easy hours) into one of the numerous refuges nestled below the start of the route allows climbers a chance to relax before the backpackers arrive, the GR5 passes through here so booking ahead is vital. An early start and straightforward walk past a huge bastion of rock, Le Grand Chatelard, which has many multi-pitch routes for the climber, sees a long scree slope to be ascended. Passing to the right of a rock rib is important as we encountered a group cragfast on its left flank. The PGHM helicopter duly arrived and within minutes the hapless hikers were whisked away dangling beneath. Once the col is reached the fun begins! The ridge to the summit is steep and exposed but the rock is generally sound and the route worn enough to make navigation simple. Once the lower top of Pointes de Fournache is reached, an almost level summit ridge is all that is left. This holds snow all year round and whilst it is simple enough to cross, a slip would undoubtedly be fatal. Crampons and a light axe are

indispensible. Then all of a sudden it's all over! The cairn is reached and for the first time it is possible to see down to Termignon at your feet, albeit 1.5 vertical miles below!

For a full-on adventure (if you are very quick moving or prepared for a very long day) the col can be reached via the Arête de Leche, another PD graded scramble.

Not too keen on high exposure? Follow Hannibal's route to peer down into Italy or explore the summit fort at Mont Froid built in the 1800s when the valley was under constant threat of invasion. Both walks are a comfortable five hours. Not long enough? How about a five day hut to hut tour? There are plenty of options.

Add in more cheese than you thought possible (Termignon has two cheese shops and only one grocer's!), a strong Italian influence on cuisine, locally sourced Gamay wine and you'll be sure to have a jolly holiday!

Renowned as a ski touring region, the area has year round appeal. The huts are open for the touring season and there are lots of single day options to be tackled. Mont Froid is a popular summit to reach from the top ski lifts of the Termignon ski area whilst the Femma refuge and its surroundings sit in the unspoilt national park free of lifts and noise. Bring your snowshoes to explore the woods!

Footnote: Andy is willing to do free talks to support fellow MR teams when he is on holiday in UK mountain regions.

National Park Laws

- * All rubbish must be carried out; rubbish may not be left at the refuges.
- * Dogs are not permitted at all
- * No flying (including paragliders)
- * No mountain biking is permitted (with only one route exception)
- * No fires are permitted

How to get there

From Calais, the journey will take around ten hours, going via Reims to Dijon and onwards to Chambéry. It's motorway all the way to Modane, 16km from Termignon. The TGV from Paris is a shade under four hours to Modane where buses or a taxi can complete the journey. Turin is the nearest airport offering year round flights, Geneva and Lyon are other options as is Chambéry in the winter.

Maps and guidebooks

Mountain Adventures in the Maurienne by Andy Hodges is available on pre-order from Amazon, publication date is 15 May 2011.

The definitive guidebooks for the valley are by local guide Patrick Col and cover hundreds of routes, there is an Alpinism guide, a walking one, a topostyle climbing guide and a winter skiing/touring/snowshoeing one.

Cicerone also publish a ski touring guidebook and a Tour of the Vanoise trek guidebook.

The 1:50 000 map (Carte de Randonnées A3: Alps Vanoise) is widely available in shops and supermarkets and is adequate for most needs. The tourist information offices sell a good MTB map for a couple of euros. 1:25 000 maps are also widely available locally.

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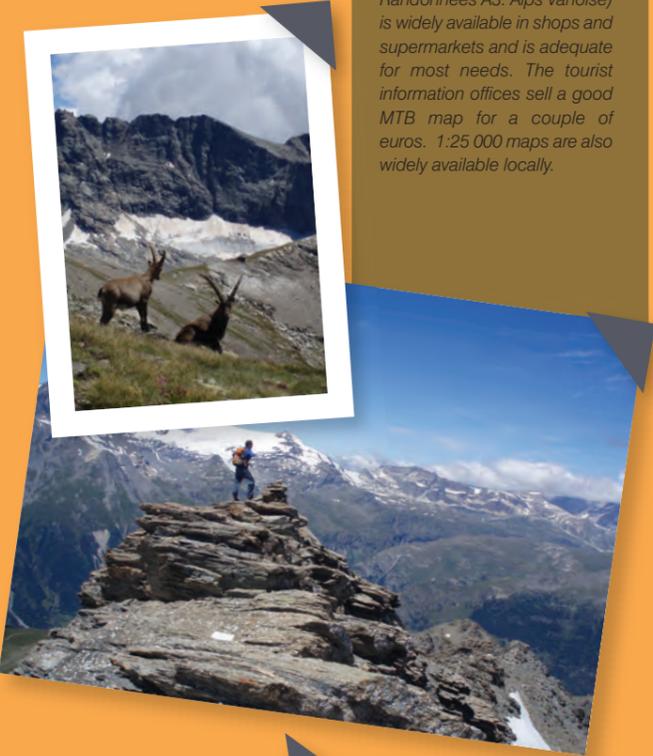
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Ski-mojo - what is it?

Endorsed by one of the world's leading ski coaches and one of the world's leading ski physicians, and recently announced as the 'Number One Ski Gadget' on Channel Five's The Gadget Show, ski-mojo was described by presenter Jason Bradbury as, 'Something every skier should own - ski-mojo. It's an exoskeleton for skiers. Using an intricate system of springs it helps to support my body weight taking 33% of the strain out of my knees and my thighs. Wearing this takes away the aching legs and knees so you can stay out for longer without getting tired and make the most of your holiday. It also makes you a better skier, improving your stability over bumps and holding you in the proper posture. This thing is amazing - I've been skiing on it for ages. It's like having your own personal ski instructor holding you up as you go along. I love it.'

While the manufacturers quite rightly do not claim that it will make you a better skier, they do say you will ski better, as it effectively works as:-

- Power steering - you still need the skill to ski, it just means it takes less physical effort
 - Shock absorbers - it smoothes out the bumps and jolts and keeps your skis in better contact with the snow.
- And the reason you've probably not seen one on the slopes? It's normally worn discreetly under your skiwear, so no-one knows the secret of your improved performance - unless you tell them about it. To find out more go to www.skiallday.co.uk



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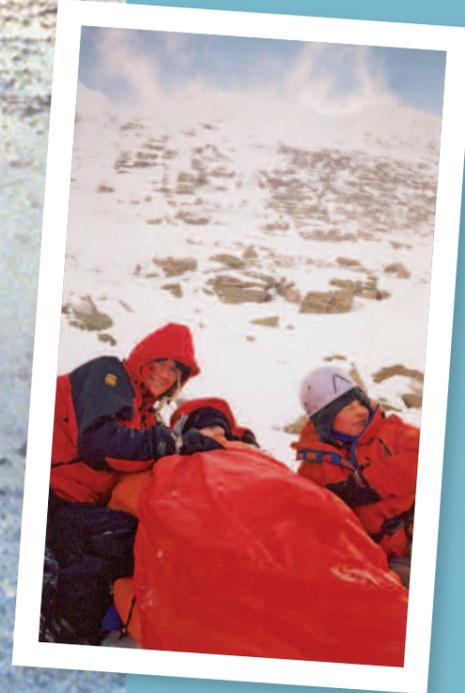
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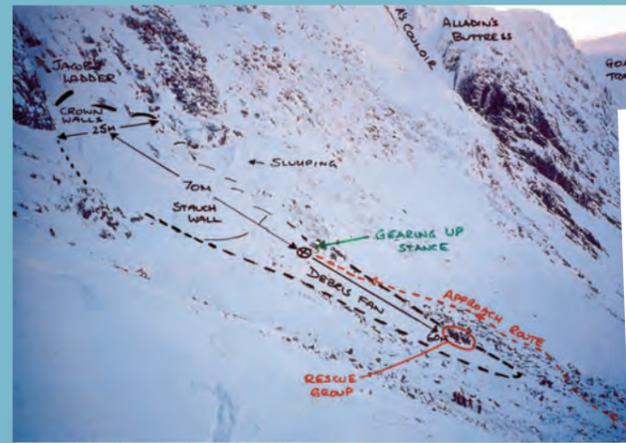


by David 'Monty' Monteith

The 7th January 2003 dawned cold and crisp in the Cairngorms; it was a blue sky, high pressure day. My plan was to take my eldest son Alasdair on his first winter route in the winter tyros' paradise, Coire an t Sneachda. We'd already climbed a lot together in summer, the pinnacle of our experience so far being an ascent of Centurion the previous September, and we had spent lots of days in the winter mountains developing axe and crampons skills and looking at the special demands of navigating in the white stuff. The choice for Alasdair's introduction to winter climbing was Jacob's Ladder.



THE RESCUE PARTY ON SITE



AVALANCHE REPORT 6 JANUARY 2003 FORECAST 7 JANUARY 2003

NORTHERN CAIRNGORMS AVALANCHE HAZARD 1500 HRS MON 6/1/03

There have been clear skies over an inversion in the Strath. Southerly winds have deposited significant accumulations into the top of the North aspect slopes in the Northern Corries: downslope distribution has also increased. There is a steep temperature gradient in the upper snowpack. Shears were noted above the old crust. The avalanche hazard is Considerable. (Category 3).

AVALANCHE HAZARD OUTLOOK TUE 7/1/03

There will be no new snow but wind transport will continue mainly on to North aspects above 1000 metres. The nature of the slab is quite variable in these areas. Some pockets of this slab on steep unsupported terrain will have only fair stability. Facet development will occur in the upper snowpack due to continuing cold temperatures. This will over time weaken the snowpack. The avalanche hazard will be Moderate (Category 2).

CLIMBING CONDITIONS

SNOW DISTRIBUTION: Still large areas of deep fresh snow, these can be slow going on foot.

ICING: Forming nicely in water courses.

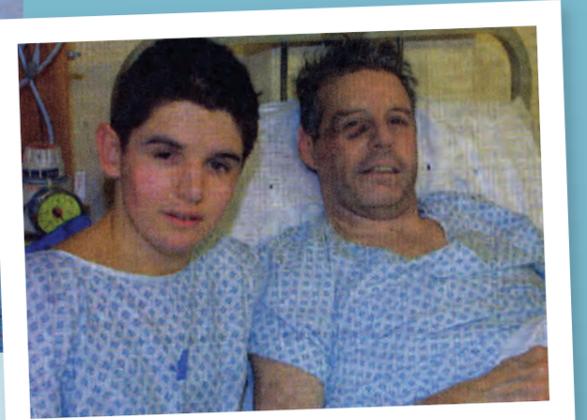
COMMENT: Ideal conditions for looking at the interesting forms of snow crystal in the snowpack.

There had been the usual early season promise of a good winter with a heavy snowfall at the end of the previous October. In fact my log book records an ascent of The Messenger on the Mess of Potage on 26 October 2002! However the early snow had soon gone or been transformed to nevé in the nooks and crannies of the corries. Fresh snow fell on this old base in early January 2003, an extensive covering, which gave us a fairly strenuous walk into Sneachda that morning, as the gentle but keen easterly wind filled in the previous day's tracks. However, the avalanche hazard was '2', so we trudged up the approach path anticipating a good day.

An alarm bell rang when we met two climbers walking out – too much fresh snow and spindrift was their verdict. This was countered by another early riser exiting the corrie who had soloed Aladdin's Mirror Direct and seen two skiers descend the Couloir. Things can't be that bad then! We continued

apace, following a deepening trench as we closed with the cliff and selected the right-hand of two beaten tracks through the soft snow. Up ahead, several climbers were approaching the base of Jacob's so I slowed down to see where they might go; they split and prepared to go left onto the Mess of Potage. We reached a platform prepared by the previous day's teams and prepared to gear up.

In the eerie half light of an orthopaedic ward in the wee small hours you have a lot of time to think things through. Embedded freeze frame memories flashed through my mind: the crump as the avalanche released; the focused image of tons of snow breaking into slab above us; the cry 'run right' as I tried to steer us out of its path; the seemingly gentle push as the snow reached us, rapidly turning into a chaotic, tumbling motion; the blood on the snow when we finally stopped; the friendly banter with our rescuers as we waited for the Sea King to ferry stretchers to the



DAVID AND ALASDAIR RECOVERING AT RAIGMORE

rescue site; the hypnotic slow motion of the spiralling stretcher and the raw power of the Sea King's rotor above as I was winched up. All of this impregnated with huge relief that we had survived albeit with bruises, breaks and scrapes; I had not been the agent of my son's death.

Through an amazing set of circumstances we later gained a detailed insight into what had happened. Basically, we were caught by a build up of windslab over soft snow on the scarp slope just below the entrance to Jacob's Ladder. When it released it swept the accumulated powder down onto us. We were gearing up on the edge of what became the debris fan and just missed getting out of its path. Unfortunately it took us onto rocks below, hence the scrapes and bumps!

Our luck held in the form of a Glenmore Lodge party, the group we had seen climbing towards Jacob's Ladder. Within minutes, one of the Lodge staff was on the radio back to Glenmore and the soothing tones of Tim Walker penetrated the static in reply; the helicopter was scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth after only fifteen minutes. Two SAIS forecasters were up on Windy Col assessing the snow and they also swept down on skis to assist, capturing the scene on

camera as they descended.

The SAIS forecasters later passed on the snow profile for the day, which clearly shows a very weak layer at 20cms, the windslab above and soft snow beneath on the old snow base – the snow that had fallen the previous October, by January it was a perfect sliding surface. There was also a temperature unconformity at about 12cms, reflecting the windblown snow being brought in on a cold SE wind. Despite the avalanche hazard being 2 the build up of windslab on the scarp slope on top of the very soft powder was significant.

Two weeks later, during a pre-arranged visit to the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre at RAF Kinloss, we were able to view the archived plot of the rescue. It took less than two hours from avalanche to landing on at Raigmore prior to being admitted to A&E. We also visited the SAIS office to discuss the event and later met with them and some of our rescuers in the Bridge Inn to say thank you. The conclusion was that the wind had subtly changed overnight, loading the particular aspect by Jacob's Ladder but there was no obvious cause to the release, it was just spontaneous.

▶ page 47



SPEY VALLEY 7 JANUARY 2003

Avalanche in Swiss Alps kills four skiers and rescue doctor: More still missing

Theo Maurer, Training Officer, Swiss Alpine Rescue

This was the headline the day after a major avalanche in the Bernese Oberland on 3 January 2010. Initial reports came in to say that one person, carrying a beacon, had been buried and another six or seven had survived the avalanche. Two helicopters were immediately despatched to the area carrying rescuers, dogs and a doctor. When they arrived, they found the buried person had been dug out already. Then a second avalanche hit the same place which buried everyone including the rescuers.

The helicopters on scene called in more personnel who arrived just in time to see another avalanche triggered by climbers to the south west of the original two. Now rescuers didn't know how many people were buried. Rescuers at the scene were now working to their full capacity with their priority being to excavate, from down as far as three metres, treat and triage the casualties. Consideration was given to which hospital to send the casualties, dependent on their injuries, and in an effort not to overwhelm one hospital.

Passing hikers were enlisted by the rescue teams enabling nine people to be recovered quite quickly, although only four survived. At 4.00pm a decision was taken to abandon the search, as the number of people missing was unknown and the safety of rescuers was felt to be compromised. At 7.00pm a press conference was held although the media wanted answers to questions which were, as yet, unknown. Further investigation revealed that three people were still missing.

On Monday morning it was still felt that the risk of avalanche was high so safety blasting of the area took place before further rescue attempts could be made.



Intense pressure from the media resulted in formal media liaison being set up through REGA (the helicopter service) HQ control and at the local rescue station. The level of press interest took everyone by surprise but at least the formal channels now kept the media away from rescue personnel. By Tuesday the weather had improved sufficiently to allow rescues to begin.

The media weren't allowed to visit the scene directly but were flown over by REGA and given pictures for publication. Within minutes of the discovery of the three missing persons the media was informed and, fickle as they are,

immediately lost interest now there was no-one else outstanding.

The main conclusion drawn from this incident was that an inordinate amount of time was spent dealing with the media, initially on an ad hoc basis with all sorts of personnel involved and distracted by the massive interest in the incident, and later through formal channels set up after the first day. Training needs to be undertaken in anticipation of this kind of incident so that a system is in place which both satisfies media interest and allows rescuers to get on with their job.

SNIPPETS from around THE WORLD



Manuel Genswein from Meilen, Switzerland suggested that the safety of avalanche rescuers may be compromised

by their beacons and those of the victims, which have been blamed for triggering further avalanches. He's suggested that beacons could go into 'sleep' mode which is then de-

activated by inactivity, such as when someone is injured. One disadvantage is that lost but moving persons wouldn't be sending a signal. Further developments to follow as 'sleep' mode doesn't currently exist on beacons.

Walter Wuerti from the Austrian Rescue Service suggested that risk of injury due

to avalanche can be greatly reduced

by suitable training, a number of preliminary checks, and taking a guide with you on the hill. Guided groups are better prepared, equipped and organised, and they are much better at crisis management – which could account for why 99.99% of days out take place without fatality.



Accident Prevention: Sweden

Per Olov Wikberg and Kent Herrstrom. National Mountain Safety Council of Sweden

Beautiful as it may be, Sweden has relatively few roads, very long distances, arctic weather, lots of darkness and very high winds. Add to the above, fifty isolated shelter huts, thousands of skiers and snowboarders and, as the relative newcomers to winter sport, 150,000 motorised snowsledders, and you have the potential for an awful lot of mountain rescue activity. The Swede's answer to that came in the 1970s with the formation of the National Mountain Safety Council (NMSC). The Swedish mountain rescue service existed prior to the seventies but, due to the high number of accidents occurring at the time, it was felt by government that the best way to address the problem was by accident prevention.

Now eighteen authorities make up the NMSC which spends its time using target group analysis to ensure the right people are getting the message. New guiding standards for snowmobile guides have been established as well as standards for snowmobile hire companies. Mobile phone coverage has been increased and, in 2011, a new avalanche forecast project goes live. The Swedish mantra seems to be that better educated visitors equals fewer accidents and fewer accidents make happier visitors.

Certification and accreditation versus operational capability

Andres Bardill of the Swiss Alpine Rescue Service asked 'at what point do you not deploy rescuers without certification or accreditation?'

This question now has resonance in MR throughout the world given that many countries have now had regulations placed on them that weren't there previously, both on professional (paid) rescue services and the voluntary sector. Whilst this doesn't yet affect MR in the UK it's probably still worth considering a few of the following: Who should be certified?

- What should be certified?
 - What certificates have practical relevance?
 - Can availability and level of training be linked?
 - At what point do certificates become mission critical from a legal point of view?
 - What level of professionalism should we aspire to?
- In Switzerland, Andres thinks avalanche rescuers should be professionals but adds that the service will also need certificated volunteers. In the UK the question of professionalism (paid service) doesn't arise but there must be a constant nagging in the back of most team leaders' minds about the

work we are asked to do, weighed against our ability to prove our competence in a court of law, but primarily driven by our desire to ensure our team members are protected to the highest degree in the environment we place them. In conclusion, Andres suggests we do everything we can to ensure the future of our rescue services; work towards a professional service (I presume he means from a competence point of view); certificate where appropriate according to national characteristics; and not limit ourselves by legal boundaries.

Avalanche Rescue

Stefan Schaaqe, Bergwacht Schwarzwald (South Germany)

The area covered by Stefan and his team is made up of relatively low level, flat slopes with an average snowfall of around 1.5 metres over winter.

Because of the prevailing wind conditions the lee sides of the hills collect snow on the 35-45 degree slopes and this can accumulate to depths of up to four metres in places, attracting ski mountaineers, boarders and snow shoers in large numbers to the area. Despite the fact that there are several avalanches per year, and a lot of media interest when one happens, awareness of the dangers is very low. This is thought to be because the avalanches themselves are not particularly serious by comparison to other areas and don't tend to cause many injuries or deaths. Nor is there an avalanche bulletin issued by the authorities.

As a result most people don't carry beacons or shovels and, to make matters worse, the mobile phone reception in the area is very poor. Nevertheless, there are enough incidents to justify the team's existence and the 1200 members are trained to the following levels:

- Basic: for all team members and undertaken over a 2-3 year period which includes 80 hours of medical training and 75 hours of rescue and helicopter training
- Further: which includes beacon searching, working with dogs and avalanche probing
- Leader: which includes Skiwacht training, delivered by Bergwacht Bayern.

The organisation comprises 1200 rescuers, three office workers and ten full time winter employees, and attends 1000 incidents per year, 120 of which are attended by any one of the five helicopters available.

Rescues are normally undertaken by an initial party of two to four people carrying 20 mins worth of oxygen, ABS, shovel, probes, heatpacks and a Recco locator, although the average arrival time at the incident site is 90 minutes. This is then scaled up as appropriate with further equipment being brought in, rescue undertaken and all accounted for back at base. Media liaison is also an important part of a callout, in an effort to raise awareness of the dangers inherent in winter sport.



SNIPPETS from around THE WORLD

Andreas Ekengren of ResQU ab (Sweden) asked how we can make 95% of people who go on the hill carry a rescue beacon.

Under normal circumstances we can't but he reported on something called the HEPKIE project which aims to pinpoint a mobile telephone once a rescuer comes within 30 metres of it. The system is useable without mobile network coverage and just relies on the telephone being switched on in order for it to be found. The project is currently developing and testing helicopter and portable base stations.

To view the 2010 IKAR video go to vimeo.com/17619502. Many of the practical workshops are shown, along with a full explanation of Dyneema rope and its capabilities.



For the latest pictures of the Icelandic SAR services in action visit: siggi.photoshelter.com/gallery/Search-and-Rescue/G0000mOuYweFg5V4/

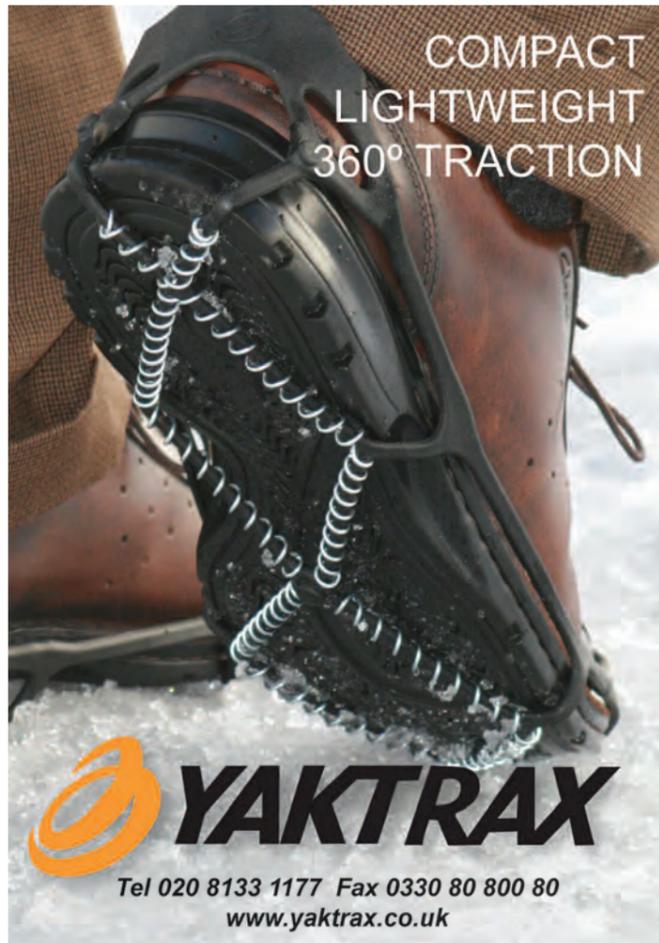
One of the more bizarre aspects of the experience was the media interest. When we landed at Raigmore a battery of press photographers were waiting to snap our arrival. I was barraged by requests for interviews and, after a hospital manager negotiated a delay to inform next of kin, we were interviewed by local TV and news reporters. The next day we were also major news across both tabloid and broadsheet national newspapers. For once they wanted a good news story!

Within a week Alasdair was running in his school cross country race. I was back on the hill in mid-March after eight weeks recovering from a cracked hip and twelve stitches in my head. It was a salutary lesson that, despite checking weather forecasts and avalanche information, and being aware on the approach, you can still get caught out. This time we were lucky.

Learning points

- Eke out every detail from the avalanche forecast.
- Beware pockets of slab accumulating on avalanche prone angles above you.
- Check below as well as above – the run out is important!
- Subtle changes in wind direction lead to a greater build up of slab on slightly different slope aspects.
- It's worthwhile trying to get out of the way of the main bulk of the avalanche.
- Try to avoid being buried.
- If you are going to get avalanched try to do it in the vicinity of folk who know how to put a rescue together.
- SAR helicopters in the UK are second to none.
- Have a plan of what to say to the press.
- Location, location, location! Had I bought the 2nd edition of 'A Chance In a Million' I could have read a similar tale by Bob Barton (page 111). I now own a copy!

David 'Monty' Monteith is an MIC and IML with 40 years experience of mountaineering. An instructor for 30 years, working in outdoor centres, and two schools with comprehensive outdoor programmes. He took early retirement in 2007 to enjoy more time in the mountains and to work freelance. He has climbed in the Alps, Kenya, the Antarctic, the Atlas Mountains, Norway and New Zealand, and across the British Isles. He is based on the Moray coast in NE Scotland. montymic@eastofedenmts.co.uk www.eastofedenmts.co.uk



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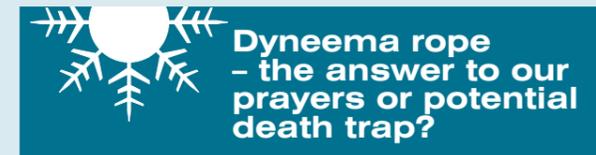


continued...

Sepp Braudner of the Austrian Mountain Rescue Service reported on Hang Glider Rescue

Hang gliding accidents account for around 2-3 deaths per year in Austria – about one death for every 3-5000 flights. Dependent on the type of hang glider being used, they can reach fairly high speeds with many, as you'd expect, falling to the ground. Quite a high number get tangled in trees, which is where the specialist rescue team comes in. Pilots themselves are usually only protected by their helmet, some pressure protection around the body and, in some models of hang glider, an airbag, leaving them very vulnerable to leg and arm injuries. Part of the pre-plan is to find out what type of hang glider has crashed, exactly where it is and what the weather is like at the crash site. Obvious, you might think, but this does require the pilot to be carrying communications equipment including GPS and, preferably, to have a ground

support crew who can be questioned on-scene. This may enable the rescuers to contact the pilot in order to prevent any attempt at self rescue. Additionally, if the rescue crew know what kind of hang glider it is they can prepare in advance for securing the aircraft to the trees it's crashed into and know which straps can be cut and/or released without causing the pilot to fall to the ground. Occasionally a hang glider may become stuck between two trees but this is rare. More often than not a rescuer has to climb the tree, using crampons or spikes on their boots and a sling, secure the hang glider and then fix up a belay so the whole thing can be lowered to the ground. If a vertical lower isn't possible due to undergrowth, an anchor to the side may be used to bring the hang glider down at an angle.



Dyneema rope
- the answer to our prayers or potential death trap?

Very early in the Terrestrial Commission, the perennial subject of Dyneema rope was aired. When it first appeared, Dyneema was hailed as incredibly strong, very lightweight (100m of 8mm rope weighs only 4kg); it floats, has only 1% stretch and is resistant to acid/alkali/UV/ petroleum. The rope itself is high module polyethylene, not to be confused with Kevlar (high module polyamide). Much has been written on the subject and tests are still ongoing but, at present, it would appear the only safe, and certified, application for Dyneema rope is as a static line, providing a very lightweight alternative to steel cable slung under a helicopter. As part of a multiple evacuation rescue system it can take a load of up to 800kg, allowing several people to be rescued at once.

As soon as you introduce a high speed winch into the system you also introduce the potential for heat build up. Dyneema is only to be used in temperatures below 50°C

before it starts to deteriorate very rapidly. Above 75°C it becomes unusable, but the worrying thing is, it will look fine. Any visual check will pass without comment but, not only will the rope have deteriorated, it will be positively dangerous to use.

The rope is easily contaminated by fine particles of grit, not always apparent to the naked eye. In addition, whilst it floats and will not soak up water, water does become trapped between the fibres and takes a long time to dry out. I don't know what the technical difference is but, one way or the other, the rope holds water after immersion or exposure to wet conditions, increasing the weight of it as you'd expect.

Dyneema rope is very difficult to knot and doesn't retain its strength unless it's done in a particular way. If it isn't done that way, the loss of strength is massive compared to other ropes, thereby introducing a potentially catastrophic element into simple human error.

Finally, for those who might be tempted to splice a Dyneema rope – don't unless you know exactly what you're doing (and you have the correct tools) or, better still, send it back to the manufacturer, it's that tricky. Up to 30% of the breaking load is lost when the rope is spliced incorrectly.

As someone who doesn't know the technical ins and outs of rope, but who uses them on a reasonably regular basis, I would be scared stiff of touching Dyneema. It appears to have the same failings as ordinary rope but is nowhere near as forgiving if it's even slightly abused. Add to that the fact that it keeps its failings well hidden and you have a recipe for disaster for most ordinary team members. By the manufacturer's own admission, Dyneema rope is not certifiable as a rope generally for use in climbing or rescue. No doubt the next IKAR meeting will be treated to a lecture on how things have developed in the last twelve months and there will be some improvements. In the meantime, you'd be better off taking butchers' string on the hill – at least you'd know that was going to snap!

SNIPPETS from around THE WORLD

Hermann Brugger reported on a controversial piece of work involving live pigs and avalanche survival. The study produced the result that a buried avalanche victim may survive for up to 90 minutes, provided they have a patent airway and

an air pocket. If hypoxia takes hold, there is much less chance of recovery than from hypothermia. Obvious if you think about it, but had to be proved. The controversy surrounded the way the research was actually carried out – with live pigs buried in snow!

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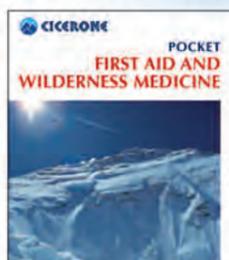
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STUFF Book

WINTER CLIMBS BEN NEVIS AND GLEN COE

by Mike Pescod

Review by Mike Margeson



Following on eight years since Alan Kimber's last guide, this seventh edition by IFMGA Guide Mike Pescod is a truly masterful piece of work. Not only do we have included all the new routes, but also fantastic photo topos of each route crag and buttress. Interestingly Mike refers to this as a not entirely new idea as Hamish MacInnes included this technique in some of his 1970s guides. Even if you're a seasoned Ben and Glen Coe climber, these photo diagrams are going to provide aided information. The guide is also packed with advice on route choice and conditions, avalanche rescue and safety information. For the first time the newly developed crags of Stob Coire nan Laoigh and Mullach nan Coirean are also included. Lastly, this excellent new edition has bucked the trend of guide books getting so big and fat you don't want to pop them in the top of your sack any more.

Winter Climbs Ben Nevis and Glen Coe by Mike Pescod is published by Cicerone Press. www.cicerone.co.uk ISBN: 978-1-85284-620-6. Price £16.95.

HOW TO CLIMB HARDER A PRACTICAL MANUAL

By Mark Reeves

Review by Mike Margeson



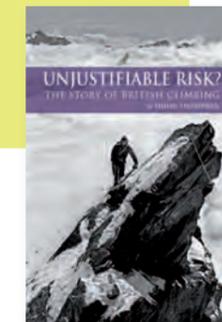
The subtitle of this climbing manual describes it as essential knowledge for rock climbers of all abilities. Well, does it deliver the goods? This book is jammed full of top tips and ideas, and it is quite clear that Mark has a real interest in teaching and coaching, with comprehensive chapters on strength development, fitness and endurance training. I found the chapter entitled Mind Games particularly interesting and useful. This sort of text you can pick up and dip into the subject area required with ease. It is well presented with clear diagrams and illustrations. Certainly one to add to your Must Have list!

How to climb harder: A practical manual by Mark Reeves is published by Pesda Press. www.pesdapress.com. ISBN: 978-1-906-11-6. Price £15.99.

UNJUSTIFIABLE RISK: THE STORY OF BRITISH CLIMBING

by Simon Thompson

Review by Mike Margeson



This Boardman Tasker Prize short-listed publication is quite honestly a staggering piece of research work in its own right. We are taken through climbing history from what the author refers to as the Golden Age, then Silver, to the Iron Age; the start of the use of the first pitons up to the present day. The author explores the social, cultural and ethical changes in British Climbing. Along the way he raises as many questions as he offers answers or opinions. I found myself at times being rushed from one fact or bit of information to the next and wanted to slow down and have a topic or idea developed in a bit more depth. Alongside the wealth of background history of nearly 200 years of climbing Simon Thompson concludes with a chapter entitled 'Because it's there', where he poses the big question: Why do we climb? This was a suitably enjoyable finish to the book. There are any number of books on the history of climbing and this certainly meets the bench mark and will not disappoint.

Unjustifiable risk, the story of British climbing by Simon Thompson is published by Cicerone Press. www.cicerone.co.uk. ISBN 978-1-85284-627. Price £20.

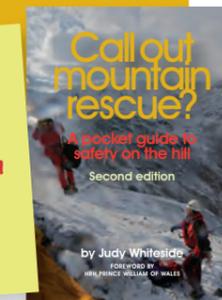
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New Mountain Safety Forum for ENGLAND AND WALES

by David Allan

In Scotland, a Mountain Safety Forum has been in place since 1988. The group is led by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and has proved to be an effective body in advising a number of parties, including government, on mountain safety issues.

After some preliminary discussions and an exploratory meeting, I am pleased to report that the BMC is taking the lead in establishing a similar forum to serve England and Wales. Initially the group will be quite small but will expand to involve other organisations as its role develops.

The members of the forum at this stage are:-

- Chairman: Rab Carrington** (President BMC)
- Secretary: Jon Garside** (BMC)
- Elfyn Jones** (BMC and Llanberis MRT)
- David Allan** (Mountain Rescue)
- Mike Margeson** (Mountain Rescue)
- Martin Doyle** (Plas y Brenin)
- John Cousins** (Mountain Leader Training)
- Pete Stacey** (Mountain Leader Training)

Ian Shannon
(ACPO Rep to Mountain Rescue England and Wales)

Perhaps the most important aspect of this groups work will be to ensure that any messages about safety will be made in a context of preserving the ethos of freedom in the hills. This is of particular relevance in any dealings with government and similar bodies.

Effort will be put into finding ways of reaching the hill goers who do not appear to read or take note of any of the information currently available either from the BMC or from Mountain Rescue. With this in mind we hope to recruit a media specialist to advise on the best means to get our messages across to a wider public.

Current Mountain Rescue figures would suggest that approximately 25% of incidents could have been avoided with prior planning and information and it is hoped that eventually some impact may be made in this area.

We have worked successfully with the BMC on isolated safety issues in the past. The wearing of helmets being a good example when, following the joint publicity, a significant reduction in head injuries in climbing falls was recorded.

Suggestions of things that the forum should pursue will be welcomed.

A History of the World in 100 Objects... featuring Paramo



News from Paramo in October, that their British Antarctic Survey clothing (Aspira Smock and Salopettes) had featured in Radio 4's fascinating series 'A History of the World in 100 objects'. And the revealing of the '100th object' on the Today programme caused plenty of intrigue and discussion. Extraordinarily, the Paramo kit – one of five contenders – was noted for its ability to allow men to live and work in one of the Earth's most inhospitable environments, vital work at the forefront of environmental and climate change assessment and understanding. An extract from the BBC website reads...

I'd like to start today by going back to the very first episodes of A History of the World in 100 objects in which Neil MacGregor described a two million year-old stone chopping tool and an almost two million year-old stone handaxe.

Those series stalwarts who've tuned in since the very beginning will know that objects such as these formed the revolutionary technology that enabled our earliest ancestors to live in the changing environments in which they found themselves. Even two million years ago it was already becoming apparent the things we make would allow us to adapt, explore and thrive pretty much anywhere on our planet.

Fast-forward a little and the next object (or objects) on our list of contenders for the 100th spot in our tale finds us – for the first time in human history – exploring, living and working in the last place on earth to be colonised by us.

It's a set of clothing designed to be worn in Antarctica. Clothing? A coat and some furry boots? The 100th object? Really? Well, I'm assured that if you tried to go for a walk on or around the South Pole without this lot you'd likely be dead within, say, one hour.

As anyone tuning into Radio 4 will have heard, British Museum curator Barrie Cook explained how these clothes make it possible for humans to live in a place we simply couldn't have covered at any other stage in the story Neil MacGregor has been telling.

But there are more reasons why these articles of clothing are appropriate representatives of our times. They're almost exclusively

put together using man-made materials that could only be produced using the technology of the twenty-first century.

They were also constructed in different places around the world (Colombia, Canada, France, and... er... Devon). This, of course, tells of the globalised world in which we now live – in some ways it's a marvel this united nations of outerware can be put together from shops right here in Britain – but it also tells of our own age of exploration.

We're used to stories of Captain Cook, of Ernest Shackleton, whose daring deeds have grown into the stuff of legend, but these clothes represent the twenty-first century equivalent of what they – and our two million year-old ancestors – did. This is us reaching the frontier of our world and making things to help us live there. Indeed the only reason we can live there is because of the very human characteristic of making, using and depending on 'things'.

But why would we want to live there? Well, this is another part of the story. Antarctica is quite literally at the forefront of environmental and climate change. We need these clothes so we can study this place and come to understand the processes that will surely define humanity's next chapter. This object will help us write that.




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JUSTGIVING CAMPAIGN FOR LAKE DISTRICT MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS

Christmas saw the launch of an eBusinessCumbria's JustGiving Campaign, which gives supporters the opportunity to donate to Lakes teams throughout the year.

The Lake District and Eden Valley Messenger, who launched the appeal through their weekly eBusiness newsletter, regularly report on accidents and emergencies where the rescue teams are called out.

The launch news item underlines the fact it's increasingly not just walkers and climbers who need rescuing. Over the past twelve months or so, besides dealing with a huge increase in 'standard' callouts, mountain rescue teams from across the county have also been called in to assist at the Keswick coach crash, the Derrick Bird shootings, and the floods and, prior to that, the Grayrigg rail crash. They are frequently called to search for missing people in the towns as well as the countryside and, as severe weather conditions cause havoc across the entire country, they're increasingly deployed to help medical teams get through the snow to reach their patients.

If you would like to support Lake District teams in this way, go to justgiving.com/TheMessenger. To subscribe to The Eden Messenger's free weekly email newsletter, go to <http://edenvalleymessenger.com>.



LEFT: VIEW NE FROM THE DRUMOCHTER HILLS, SHOWING THE CAIRNGORMS RISING ABOVE THE SO-CALLED 'TABLE-LAND' OF THE HIGHLANDS

Shaping the mountain landscapes of Scotland: The landscape before the Ice Age

by John Gordon

The second article in this series outlines the development of Scotland's mountains before the onset of the Ice Age and sets the scene for the arrival of the glaciers. It continues the theme of taking a long-term view of the evolution of the Scottish landscape, peering back into the 'abyss of time' in the words of John Playfair. Processes of mountain uplift, weathering and erosion operating over many millions of years shaped the pre-glacial mountain topography that later influenced the Ice Age glaciers and in turn was modified by them. Many of the elements of this older pre-glacial topography are still evident in the landscape today, although they are often overlooked as the eye is more immediately attracted by the dramatic features of the glaciated corries and glens.

Shaping the Pre-glacial Landscape

There is ongoing debate in geological circles about the extent to which the present landscape is inherited from the end of the Caledonian Orogeny, from the time in the Middle Devonian when the great range of

mountains elevated during the earlier continental collisions in the Ordovician and Silurian had been largely levelled by the forces of erosion. The debate principally concerns the nature of later uplift (whether driven by tectonics or climatically controlled erosion), the amount of post-Devonian erosion and the

extent to which the Highlands may or may not have been covered by later sedimentary rocks (from Carboniferous to Cretaceous times) that have subsequently been removed.

However, it is clear that the basic skeleton of the landscape was established by the end of the Caledonian events in the Middle Devonian, about 400 million years ago (Table 1). By this time, the kilometres high Caledonian mountains had been vastly reduced through the removal of immense amounts of rock by erosion during the previous 70 million years or so. According to one interpretation, the Eastern Highlands are largely an exhumed landscape that is essentially inherited from this

TABLE 1. GEOLOGICAL TIMELINE AND SUMMARY OF THE GEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

Geological period	Age (millions of years ago)	Main events and environments
Quaternary	~2.6–0	Repeated growth and decay of glaciers; formation of glacial and postglacial landforms.
Neogene	23–~2.6	Phases of uplift and erosion. Weathering continued under warm temperate conditions. Climate cooling intensified after ~3 million years ago.
Palaeogene	66–23	Opening of the northern North Atlantic Ocean; extensive volcanic activity in western Scotland; deep chemical weathering initially under humid subtropical climate. Differential uplift and erosion, with stripping of weathered rock and formation of etch plains. The Highlands were re-established as an upland area.
Cretaceous	146–66	Warm, shallow seas covered much of Scotland, apart from the Highlands and Southern Uplands.
Jurassic	202–146	The Highlands were an upland area of reduced relief, with rivers draining to deltas in the North Sea basin. Deposition in shallow seas around the margins of the uplands. Rifting and formation of the North Sea basin.
Triassic	251–202	Hot, semi-arid deserts around the margins of the Highlands.
Permian	299–251	Hot, arid deserts around the margins of the Highlands.
Carboniferous	359–299	Scotland drifted north into equatorial latitudes. Tropical forests, intermittent shallow shelf seas and deltas were present in the subsiding Midland Valley. Associated volcanic activity. Coal formed in low lying coastal swamps. Continued erosion of the Caledonian mountains.
Devonian	416–359	Erosion of the Caledonian mountains and formation of large alluvial fans in hot, semi-arid conditions. Large inland lake basins formed in north-eastern Scotland (Banffshire to Orkney). Volcanic activity in the Midland Valley and marginal areas.
Silurian	444–416	The Iapetus Ocean closed as Baltica, then Avalonia, collided with Laurentia. Uplift and erosion of the Caledonian mountains continued. Moine sediments folded and metamorphosed. The Moine Thrust formed. Volcanic activity and granite intrusions in the Highlands and volcanic activity in the Midland Valley. Main folding of Southern upland rocks.
Ordovician	488–444	The Iapetus Ocean was closing rapidly. Limestones formed on the shelf of a warm shallow sea in NW Scotland; greywackes and shales were deposited to the south (Southern Uplands). The Midland Valley Arc collided with Laurentia. Uplift of the Caledonian mountains accompanied by metamorphism and folding of the Dalradian sediments and intrusion of gabbros and granites in the Grampian Highlands.
Cambrian	542–488	Sandstones, then limestones deposited in warm shallow shelf seas in NW Scotland; the Iapetus Ocean reached its maximum extent.
	1000–542	~800–500 Ma Dalradian sediments deposited in marine basins, mainly on continental margin; glaciations; opening of the Iapetus Ocean.
		~1000–875 Ma Moine sediments deposited mainly in shallow seas.
	1600–1000	~1200–950 Ma Torridonian sandstones formed from sediments eroded from the Grenvillian mountains on the Laurentian plate and deposited in alluvial, fluvial and lacustrine environments on its continental margin.
	~3800–1600	Formation of Lewisian Gneiss Complex by metamorphism of older igneous and subsidiary sedimentary rocks; formation of igneous intrusions.
	4500	Formation of the Earth.



post-Caledonian land surface. The Highlands probably remained as an upland block, but around their margins there were repeated episodes of subsidence and uplift. Sediments deposited in subsiding basins, particularly in the Hebrides, were subsequently eroded during later periods of uplift. Remnants include the Jurassic and Cretaceous sedimentary rocks of Skye. However, it remains unclear to what extent, if at all, the Highlands were submerged and covered by younger, post-Devonian sediments that have since been eroded without leaving any trace of their former presence.

By the end of the Cretaceous (66 million years ago), there is agreement that cumulative erosion had reduced the Scottish landmass to a landscape of generally low relief. This was a time of high global sea level, and much of Scotland, apart possibly from parts of the

VIEW NW FROM NEAR THE SUMMIT OF LOCHNAGAR, SHOWING THE GLACIAL TROUGH OF THE DEE INCISED INTO AN OLDER PRE-GLACIAL SURFACE. BEYOND, THE LAND RISES TO THE HIGH PLATEAUX AND ROUNDED SUMMITS OF THE CAIRNGORMS

Highlands and Southern Uplands, is believed to have been submerged beneath a shallow tropical shelf-sea. Later uplift of the landmass of Scotland, by as much as 1km or more, accompanied the volcanic activity along the western seaboard during the Palaeogene. Uplift also occurred during the Neogene. The uplift seems to have varied between different crustal blocks across Scotland, but overall it was greatest in the west and involved regional tilting of the landmass to the east, although this was not uniform. Widespread erosion and dissection of the upland landscape by rivers accompanied the uplift, particularly in the west, initiating the present contrasts in landscape between the west and the east that were later emphasised by glacial erosion. The

most intense erosion occurred on the Palaeogene volcanoes on Skye, Rum, Mull, Ardnamurchan and Arran. These volcanoes were rapidly lowered, exposing the igneous intrusions that formed their roots which originally lay about 2km below the ground surface. The vast lava flows from the fissure eruptions on Mull, Eigg and Skye, too, were eroded and fragmented. Their remnants now form the distinctive stepped 'trap' landscapes of western Mull and northern Skye.

Apart from the ancient foreland of NW Scotland, the overall SW-NE topographic grain of much of the Highland landscape is inherited from the forces imposed on the rocks by the



WEATHERED GRANITE BEDROCK ON THE MÒINE MHÒR, CAIRNGORMS, HAS SURVIVED GLACIATION

continental collisions during the Caledonian Orogeny. Differential erosion exploited the weaker rocks and emphasised the underlying structural grain of the landscape. The present valleys and drainage patterns partly reflect this geological inheritance and are partly superimposed across it. The greater uplift in the west and tilting of the landmass to the east led to the location of the main pre-glacial watershed in the West Highlands, with longer easterly directed rivers and short, steep westerly directed ones.

In the Cairngorms, the overall form of the massif and the precursors of the present glens probably date back to the time when the granite mass was unroofed during the Devonian. Weathering and erosion exploited lines of weakness in the granite, forming the major glens that were deepened much later by glacial erosion. Major straths, such as the Spey and the Dee, are also pre-glacial features that follow ancient structural lineations in the bedrock.

Mountains, palaeosurfaces, rotted rock and tors

Mountaineers and geologists have long observed that one of the most striking topographic features of the Highlands is the presence of extensive plateau surfaces in the east and a general accordance of summits at around the 3000-foot level in the west. Thus Archibald Geikie in 1901 wrote about the 'table-land' of the Highlands and the 'long level line of the Highland hill-tops' (Photo 1). In fact, there is no single summit plateau but rather a staircase of broadly level or gently sloping plateaus at different altitudes. These 'tablelands' are particularly clear in the Glen Clova-Glen Esk area, the Cairngorms, the Drumochter Hills and the Monadhliath. They represent old land surfaces, or 'palaeosurfaces'. They are best preserved

today in the Eastern Highlands and NE Scotland, extending inland in a series of steps from the coast to the Cairngorms (Photo 2).

Some of the surfaces may have been formed by tectonic uplift, tilting, weathering and limited erosion of a low-relief landscape graded to sea level during the Palaeogene and Neogene. However, the assumption that such palaeosurfaces can largely be preserved during uplift has been contested by some geologists who believe that the landscape is simply the product of progressive reduction in topography following the end of the Caledonian Orogeny, driven principally by climatic rather than tectonic controls on erosion. According to this latter interpretation, during periods of more extreme climate (eg. high rainfall and glaciation), erosion was more intense, resulting in increased isostatic uplift (due to the removal of the overlying rock burden) and hence more erosion.

The palaeosurfaces were probably etched into the landscape during prolonged periods of chemical weathering which is most effective under hot, humid climate conditions. Such conditions are believed to have existed in Scotland in pre-glacial times, when the climate was generally warmer and wetter than today, similar to present subtropical climates in parts of western or southern Africa. Under these conditions, the surface layers of the bedrock were deeply weathered through chemical alteration of constituent minerals, such as micas and feldspars, under hot-humid conditions during the Palaeogene, and later under temperate-humid conditions during the Neogene. The chemical weathering rotted the rock to depths of several tens of metres as water penetrated down into cracks and joints. Some pockets of this weathered, disintegrated rock have survived subsequent erosion and glaciation in the Cairngorms and on the Gaick plateau (Photo 3), and there are more extensive and thicker occurrences on lower

ground in Buchan. Uplift tilted the surfaces, and slope processes and river erosion stripped the mantles of weathered rock. As erosion progressed, the surfaces were lowered and extended over long periods of time, producing the present stepped relief. Such stepped relief is also a feature of the Scandinavian mountains.

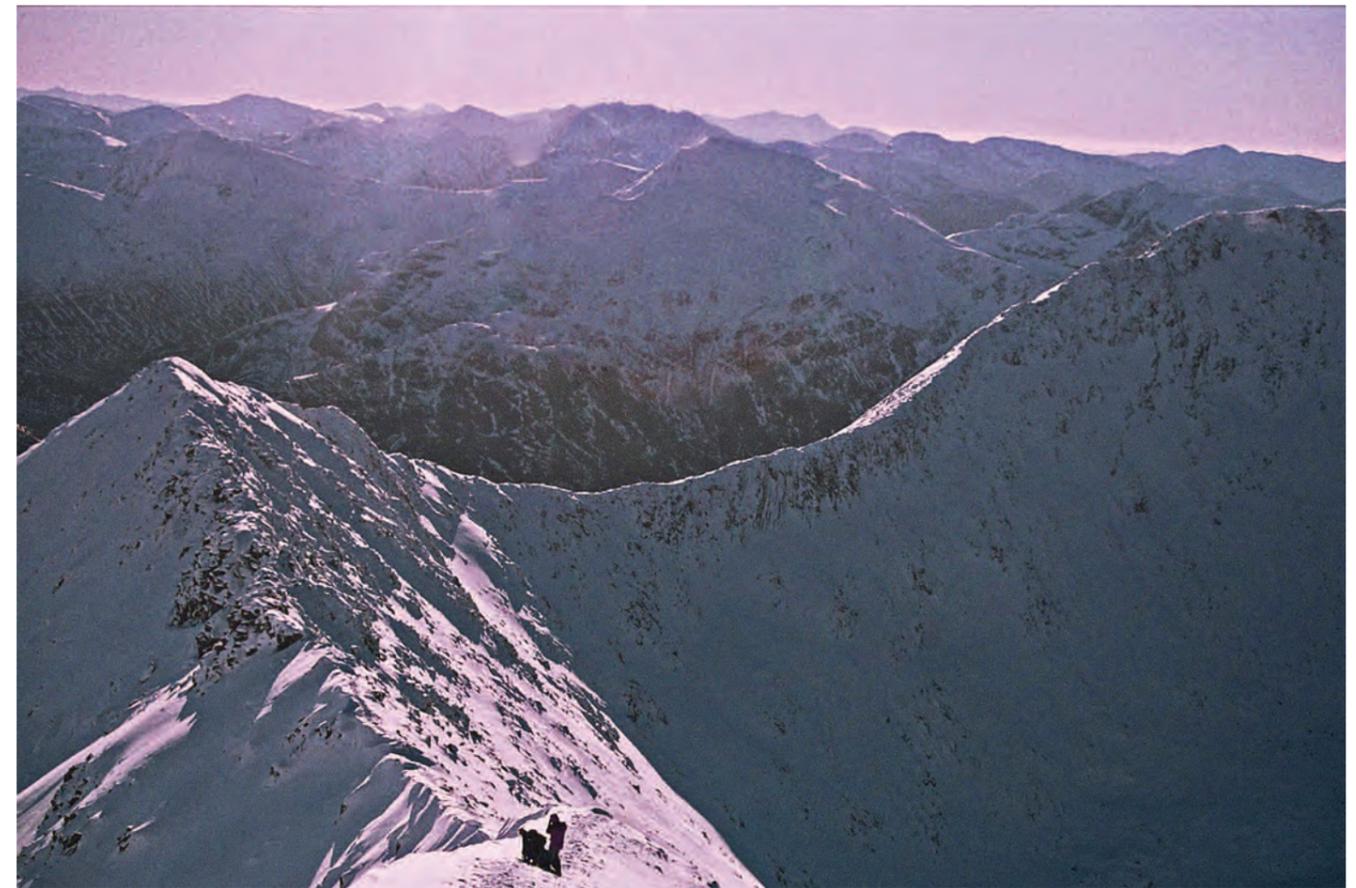
Because uplift and erosion (tectonic and/or climate-driven) were generally greater in the west than in the east, the pre-glacial landscape there was more heavily dissected by the rivers and later by more intensive glaciation. This has resulted in ranges of long, sweeping ridges, and isolated mountains in the north, compared with the more massive eastern mountains with extensive palaeosurfaces. The remarkable accordance of summits in the Northern and Western Highlands at around the 3000-foot level (Photo 4) may occur because relief lowering by pre-glacial weathering and erosion, and later by glacial and periglacial (frost) processes, was able to keep pace with uplift.

Differential weathering and stripping of the weathered rock also produced tors (Photo 5). These rocky towers are typical of the granites of the eastern Highlands (e.g. the Cairngorms, Lochnagar, Bennachie and Ben Rinnes). Although traditionally interpreted as relics of a deeply weathered pre-glacial landscape, the present forms probably result from weathering during relatively warmer phases of the Early Quaternary. They represent bodies of locally more resistant rock that emerged as upstanding landforms when the surrounding weathered rock was stripped by erosion. In the Cairngorms, some have survived relatively intact through at least the last glaciation; others have been moulded by the glaciers; and yet others have been reduced to scattered heaps of boulders. The effects of pre-glacial weathering and stripping of the weathered rock are also seen in the occurrence of large topographic basins. A good example is Rannoch Moor which is underlain by less resistant granite than the rocks of the adjacent mountains.

A further element of the pre-glacial landscape is the presence of scarp slopes which form the edges of many mountain massifs. In some cases, these are associated with faults, as along the southern flank of the Ochils east of Stirling and along the Highland edge of Strathmore. Elsewhere, they represent slope retreat, as along the flanks of the heavily dissected line of mountains stretching north of Ullapool, which now appear as a series of isolated hills, or 'inselbergs', representing the last resistant remnants of what was once a vast cover of Torridonian sandstone.

Conclusion

The great diversity of mountain landscapes and landforms seen in Scotland today reflects the interactions between the geological foundations, long-term changes in global



VIEW SOUTH FROM CARN MÒR DEARG SHOWING THE ACCORDANCE OF SUMMIT HEIGHTS IN THE WEST HIGHLANDS. RELIEF LOWERING BY WEATHERING AND EROSION WAS ABLE TO KEEP PACE WITH UPLIFT

climate and the processes of weathering and erosion operating over many millions of years. The broad outlines of the landscape were produced by geological and tectonic controls, and strongly influenced by the Caledonian Orogeny described in the first article. Over many millions of years, differential weathering and erosion have exploited lines of weakness and variations in rock resistance, emphasising the inherent structural grain that is now apparent in the topography in many areas, inherited principally from the Caledonian Orogeny. It seems likely that the land surface at the end of the Caledonian Orogeny, although it may have been repeatedly buried, at least peripherally, to varying extents by later rocks and then re-exhumed, has exerted a fundamental influence on the form of the present mountain landscape of the Central and Eastern Highlands. The mountains of the Western and Northern Highlands and the Hebrides appear to have undergone greater erosion, uplift, and levelling, and consequently are much less related to the form of the land surface at the end of the Caledonian events. Here, too, the influence of post-Caledonian events is clearly evident in the form of later sedimentary cover rocks and volcanic activity.

Over the last 50 million years, there has been a progressive cooling of the global climate following an 'optimum' in the Palaeogene. This cooling intensified about 3 million years ago, leading into the Ice Age in Scotland. Thus, at the onset of the Ice Age, the main elements of the present mountain landscape were already



in place. Although glaciation and postglacial processes have added much to the detail, as revealed in the next articles, the legacy of the underlying geological structure and pre-glacial landforms is still evident today. The mountains do indeed bear on their fronts the memorials of change from the long distant past.

TORS ON BEN AVON IN THE CAIRNGORMS. ALTHOUGH ORIGINALLY INTERPRETED AS PRE-GLACIAL LANDFORMS, RECENT RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT THE PRESENT TORS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE TRULY PRE-GLACIAL REMNANTS. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS STILL REMARKABLE THAT THE SUMMITS OF THE OLDEST SURVIVING TORS WERE FIRST EXHUMED AROUND A MILLION YEARS AGO. PROBABLY, REPEATED SHALLOW CHEMICAL WEATHERING OF THE GRANITE DURING Milder PHASES EARLY IN THE ICE AGE, COMBINED WITH REMOVAL OF THE WEATHERED MATERIAL, HAS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT PART IN THEIR SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT

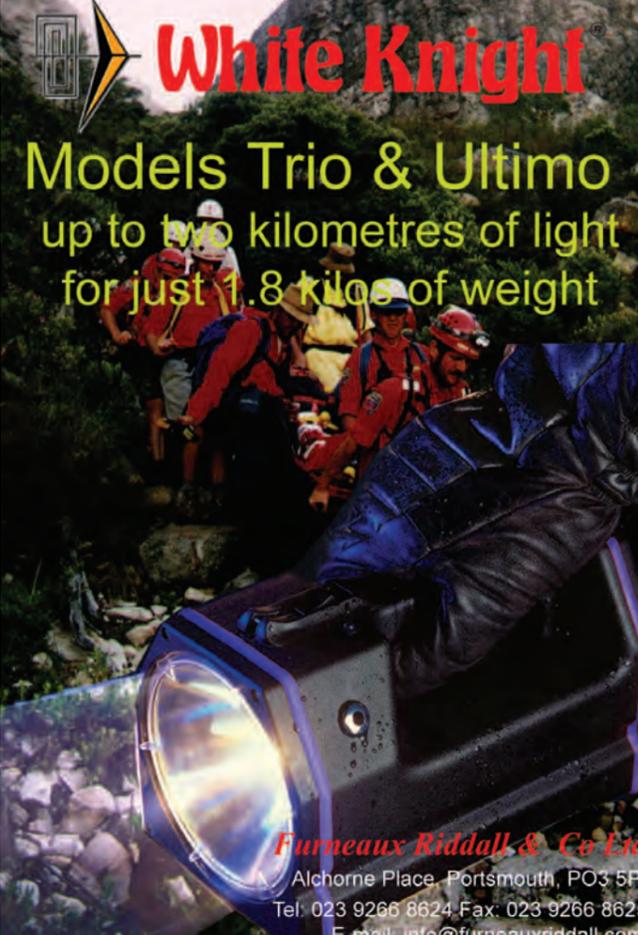


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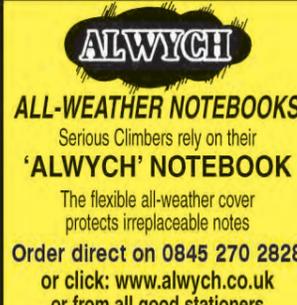
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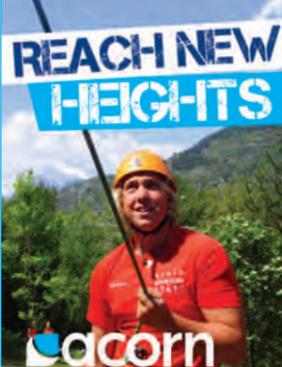
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