

# mountain rescue

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ISSUE 41

MOUNTAIN AND CAVERESCUE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

JULY 2012





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## WELCOME TO ISSUE 41

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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### NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 42

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5 September 2012

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

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

### FRONT PAGE

Aberglaslyn MRT Member Will Hordley fires a smoke flare for the helicopter to locate the casualty and assess the windy conditions, high on the Miners Track, Snowdon. 15 May 2012.  
Photo © Mike Gibson  
www.vital-images.co.uk

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**



# first Word

MIKE MARGESON

*Our chairman's first instructions to me, with a wry smile were, 'Well I guess you'd better write a piece for the magazine!'*

Sat at home, watching the Jubilee beacons — on Black Combe, Scafell Pike and a really fantastic beacon on the Old Man of Coniston which I know Coniston MRT members helped make such a success, had me thinking what to say in this piece.

At my interview I was, of course, asked about the future and my vision of priorities. You should also know what I see as important as your new vice chairman. My skills and experience come very much from an operational perspective as an active team leader and full time Mountaineering Instructor in my day job. In over twenty years serving as an MREW officer, I have had no time for regional or national politics. I am always inclined to say what I believe, even knowing that this has often got me into trouble. My focus will therefore be very directed at team and operational grass roots level.

I believe we have made considerable progress in recent years. Having said this, time and time again poor communication has let us all down, leading to suspicion and lack of trust. We need to work hard at all levels to continue to improve our communication.

My view is that we need to continue to develop good

governance and we still have a good deal to do in this area. Of particular concern is that we currently have no in-house system of operational external audit or peer review. Anybody looking in from the outside would be astounded that, in this day and age, we did not have this in place. We have made progress with reviewing, updating and creating new national guidelines, alongside a mountain rescue team capabilities document. I believe we need to develop a process to enable peer audit of each MREW team. Alongside this, we need to grasp the nettle and conduct a review of team membership of MREW. This is long overdue and if this means that some teams do not meet the capabilities, requirements or demonstrable need for a 'mountain rescue team', then so be it. Maybe some teams would be better served by membership of ALSAR or some other organisation.

It is quite clearly a time of significant change for mountain rescue in England and Wales. As your new vice chairman I see my role and responsibility as ensuring continued change and development with a direct link to team and operational needs as an active team leader. ■

## This issue

- 6** Reports from the National Training Day at PyB  
Mike Margeson and other officers
- 24** Wide area search management  
Al Read, Ogwen Valley MRO
- 38** The most advanced piece of kit in your rucksack  
Lyle Brotherton, Tweed Valley MRT
- 44** Sixty years in mountain rescue and counting. An interview with Keswick MRT's Mike and Val Nixon  
Judy Whiteside, Editor
- 50** Strange things happen in the middle of the night  
Steve Johnson, Duddon and Furness MRT
- 53** Homeopathic remedies for your travel kit  
Carey Blanden MARH

### AT A GLANCE

<b>NATIONAL:</b>	<b>4-13</b>
<b>TEAMS:</b>	<b>14-21</b>
<b>INCIDENTS:</b>	<b>26-30</b>
<b>DOGS:</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>SUPPORT:</b>	<b>35-37</b>
<b>NAVIGATION:</b>	<b>38-43</b>
<b>MEDICAL:</b>	<b>50-53</b>
<b>CAVES:</b>	<b>54-59</b>
<b>COMMS:</b>	<b>60-61</b>
<b>SCOTLAND:</b>	<b>62-63</b>



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## VACANCY FOR MREW TRAINING OFFICER

With the appointment of Mike Margeson as vice chairman, the post of national training officer is now available. Self nominations are invited, as are nominations from teams or regions. Applicants must submit two documents — a Mountain Rescue CV and a letter illustrating relevant mountain rescue, professional and personal experience, showing how such experience might be used in fulfilling the role. Applicants will be invited for interview and it is anticipated the new officer will be voted into post at the November meeting. Prospective applicants are welcome to discuss the role with Mike (01229 889721). Nominations should be with Peter Smith by 31 August. For full details of the role and responsibilities, and to submit nominations, contact Peter via [secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk).

## TRAINING NEWS MIKE MARGESON

It's all change at the MREW training subcommittee. I will be chairing my last meeting of the group on the morning of Saturday 17 November, with my successor appointed during the afternoon main meeting. I urge anybody with an interest in training and the future to consider applying for this vacant officer position. I can honestly say that, although initially reluctant to move from my equipment officer post, I have

found my time as training officer both challenging and rewarding.

Huw Birrell has stood down as vice chairman and we've elected Al Read to take over this important role. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Huw for all his work on behalf of the training group.

Selwyn Keenan is also finishing his time on the committee, representing South Wales. Many thanks to him for his support and hard work, most recently coordinating the work on updating the Full Team

Member and Party Leader Guidelines. Final drafts will be circulated to all teams for a last chance for team review and comment with a cut-off date of 28 September. Send feedback to [trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk). We intend to complete the update and ratify these documents for approval by the main meeting in November.

## NATIONAL TRAINING DAY 5 MAY PYB

For a full report of the day

please see pages 6 and 7. The day was a great success, with 160 attending PyB. We'll be back next year and plan to extend the morning and afternoon sessions to two and half hours, starting at 10.00am. Any ideas, thoughts, requests for session content or topics, please get them to us as soon as possible. Many thanks to the many folk who helped make the day such a success and, of course, thanks to MTT and Plas y Brenin for hosting and making us so welcome.

## SO... WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON? QUITE A LOT, ACTUALLY!

See the diary notes above for the dates of the Search Field Skills, Search Planning and Management, and Refresher courses in August at the University of Bangor.

The UK MR Conference will be held at Leeds in September — see page 23 for more details. Places are filling quickly for what looks a good range of topics and speakers, so book now!



The focus in this edition is the vehicle insurance scheme and hopefully you will by now be aware that, at the general meeting in May, the teams unanimously supported the proposal to go ahead with this scheme.

The insurer is RSA and the scheme will be operated by Perkins Slade Insurance Brokers, who also look after our civil liability insurances. As well as offering us a very competitive premium for a policy that meets our particular needs (including blue lights, off-road, trailers, snow chains etc), we also have an excellent existing working relationship with Perkins Slade. I'm sure there will be one or two issues initially that will need to be resolved but, this time next year, I expect the whole scheme to be running smoothly with as many mountain and cave rescue teams involved as possible.

All but two teams are eligible to sign up to the scheme, when their current insurance is due for renewal. The two teams who aren't eligible have never returned the original vehicle survey form and therefore their vehicles and claims history

couldn't be included in the original proposal. If they wish to contact me, even at this late stage, then we can discuss whether it will be possible for them to join.

By the time you read this magazine your team should have received all the necessary information and be in a position to sign up to the scheme if it fits your needs. If you haven't, then please let me know and I will send your team a further copy.

Essentially you need to complete a short proposal form with details of your vehicles and trailers, which you then send to Perkins Slade with a copy of your renewal invitation from your current insurers. They will deal directly with you and answer any questions you may have, only reverting back to me if necessary.

Once on the scheme, you will deal direct with Perkins Slade for any changes to vehicles or trailers, and claims will be notified directly to RSA. The overall scheme itself will be managed by me and I will have renewal terms available for every general meeting in May, ahead of one single renewal for every team on 1 July.

## INSURANCE MATTERS

**NEIL 'WOODIE' WOODHEAD**  
[insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk)

You will hopefully remember from previous magazines that it was hoped that some central funding will be available this year and possible total funding in the future. The premium was so competitive, it has been agreed that the whole scheme will be funded centrally for the first three years and hopefully that is something which will continue as Mountain Rescue continues to build its national fundraising. This is really fantastic news and great evidence of what we can do when we look at central/bulk purchasing, or whatever you wish to call it. I call it teamwork on a grand scale, where we can all benefit.

Many thanks to those who have assisted me, particularly our National Vehicles Officer, Daryl Garfield, and to all the teams for supporting this initiative. The overall saving to mountain rescue will be well in excess of £50,000 a year and the individual saving to your team should be of great benefit in allowing you to use your resources in other ways.

I will be at the UK Mountain Rescue Conference in Leeds in September, where I will be running

an 'insurance clinic' for any questions you have. Insurance may not be a sexy subject like technical rope rescue and helicopters but it does play a big influence into how we operate, and how we may operate in the future. So don't leave me sat on my own — come and say hello, even if you don't have any queries.

Can I also remind you that there are many resources on the website. They can be found in the members' area, under resources and insurance. You can find policy wordings, certificates, guidance notes and a powerpoint presentation to train your team and members. I recently gave the presentation to my team and one or two managed to keep awake until almost the end — I regard that as quite a success in deepest, darkest Rossendale.

As always I am here to help you and your team with any reasonable request about insurance. Please send me an email (details in the byline) and I'll give you what help and assistance I can. ■

programme and contributors agreed by the end of the day. The workshop will be held at Statham Lodge, near Lymm in Cheshire, on 15 September at 10.30am. Book in for the day through [trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk).

**PARTY LEADER  
COURSE**  
**2-4 NOVEMBER 2012**  
**NEW VENUE!**

The course will be hosted by Swaledale MRT at their base at Catterick. We should say a

big thank you to Mike Marsh who is standing down from this role after many years of coordinating this course. For further information and to book, please contact David Thompson (Training Officer, Swaledale MRT) via [swale72@gmail.com](mailto:swale72@gmail.com), mobile 07710 402713 or landline 01765 635389.

**MEDIA SKILLS  
TRAINING COURSE**

This is aimed at any team member who may end up talking to the press, whether

### REFRESHER FOR SEARCH PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Places: 30  
Date: 22-23 August (2 days)  
Location: Bangor University  
Contact: **Dr ASG Jones MBE**  
[asgjones@cix.co.uk](mailto:asgjones@cix.co.uk)  
01248 716971 or 07811 041227  
**or Al Read**  
[al.read@ogwen-rescue.org.uk](mailto:al.read@ogwen-rescue.org.uk)



### SEARCH FIELD SKILLS

Places: 30  
Date: 24-26 August (3 days)  
Location: Bangor University  
Contact: **As above**

### SEARCH PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Places: 30  
Date: 27-31 August (5 days)  
Location: Bangor University  
Contact: **As above**



### UK MR CONFERENCE

Places: 300  
Date: 7-9 September (2 days)  
Location: Leeds University  
Contact: **Peter Howells OBE MStJ**  
01633 254244 or 07836 382029  
[plhowells@plhowells.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:plhowells@plhowells.fsnet.co.uk)

### MREW BUSINESS MEETING AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Places: 100  
Date: Saturday 17 November (One day)  
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton  
Contact: **Peter Smith**  
[secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk)

### MEDIA SKILLS

Places: 30  
Date: Sunday 18 November (One day)  
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton  
Contact: **Mike Margeson**  
01229 889721  
[mmargeson@hotmail.com](mailto:mmargeson@hotmail.com)

### INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY DAY

Places: 100  
Date: Sunday 18 November (One day)  
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton  
Contact: **Iain Nicholson**  
[iain@sardogs.org.uk](mailto:iain@sardogs.org.uk)

## NEW MREW SEARCH MANAGEMENT FOUNDATION COURSE

Al Read and I will be heading up a workshop day, the objective of which is to plan and put together our own MREW Foundation Course. Anyone with an interest in any topic that should be included in such a new course is warmly invited to contribute to this day. If I haven't heard from you, YOU will be hearing from me! The intention is to have a draft

radio, TV or papers, particularly team leaders and deputies, as well as team chairmen or any member of the team taking on its wider PR functions. Once again this year, course tutors are Steve Howe, Sally Seed and Dave Freeborn. The cost is £150. This is an MREW-recognised course and is therefore eligible for 50% refund by MREW on completion. To book, email [trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk)

## EQUIPMENT NEWS RICHARD TERRELL

Over the coming weeks, the regional equipment reps will be receiving the final new casbag for testing. Please complete and return the accompanying questionnaire as soon as possible. The casbag will also be at the conference in Leeds, along with a pile of questionnaires. Can I please remind you of the application process for

**National news continued on page 9**

# NATIONAL TRAINING DAY

## REPORTS AND PHOTOS 2012

HEADER PHOTO: KESWICK MRT. BELOW: DARYL GARFIELD.

It is a clear reflection of the importance we all give to training in mountain rescue these days that 160 team members from 24 teams turned up at PYB for our National Training Day. This day has become MREW flagship training event and our changes to its format and content would appear to be successful. We were lucky, too, to have mostly dry weather for our practical sessions. The day was again structured around six two-hour sessions, provided by our specialist subcommittees. These were in the main delivered or chaired by a national officer, five of whom were present to help support the day.

Thanks also go to Ogwen and NEWSAR for technical rope rescue workshop and the Brecon swiftwater instructors covering for Ewan. I would especially wish to thank MTT and Plas y Brenin for hosting us and, in particular, Gaynor Lewis for her admin support. Richard Prideaux did a fantastic job with bookings, as did Judy with PR and the poster and magazine advertising for the event. Without all this behind the scenes help these types of events just wouldn't happen.

As for next year, it is really important that we keep sessions fresh and relevant, and delivered to the highest possible standard. If you have any topics or ideas, please let your training subcommittee know. Feedback is actively sought. Two changes will be made for next year from feedback already received, both regarding time tabling. Start time will be brought forward from 10.30am to 10.00am and session duration will be extended from two hours to two hours, thirty minutes duration.

**MIKE MARGESON MREW TRAINING OFFICER**



### VEHICLES AND DRIVING WORKSHOP DARYL GARFIELD VEHICLE OFFICER

This year's topic was Road Traffic Collisions or RTCs, and started with a theory session covering the legalities of an RTC and how to comply with the law. Ways of preventing an RTC in the first place were also discussed. This classroom session was then followed by practical scenarios outside. The first of these was a mountain rescue vehicle being involved in an RTC en route to an incident, the second a scenario in which a mountain rescue team come across the scene of a RTC and the subsequent use of the team in fending off to protect the scene. Both scenarios had the group split into smaller groups to discuss what considerations they had to take into account and how to deal with the situation with the practicalities and legalities. Hopefully this session will be run again at this year's UK MR Conference in Leeds.



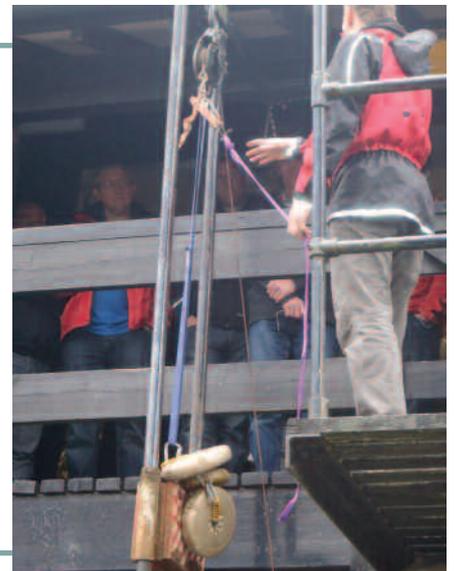
### EQUIPMENT SESSION RICHARD TERRELL EQUIPMENT OFFICER

This year's session concentrated on something different. We all talk about equipment failure but how, in mountain rescue, can we achieve it? A very informative presentation was made by Graham Destroy of DMM and Pete Robertson of Llanberis MRT. The shock loading of slings and their capabilities was explored. This, in good mountain rescue style, was followed by a practical session with an 80kg mass and some snapping of kit all too easily on the weight drop machine at Plas y Brenin.

	Length of Sling	Length of Fall	Open Slings			Eye-to-Eye Rope Slings		
			Dyneema	Nylon	S/Static	Dynamic		
			8mm	11mm	16mm	26mm	11mm	10mm
FF1	120cm	120cm	-	22.4	12.8	-	-	-
FF2	120cm	240cm	-	21.2	17.6	-	-	-
FF1	60cm	60cm	17.8	18.1	11.6	11.8	7.3	5.7
FF2	60cm	120cm	22.5	25.1	15.4	16.3	10.3	7.4
FF1	30cm	30cm	14.8	16.4	10.6	11.0	-	-
FF2	30cm	60cm	22.6	18.7	14.0	-	-	-

■ Sling failure

PHOTOS: RICHARD TERRELL



## MEDICAL WORKSHOP JOHN ELLERTON

The session started with the MREW drug framework — available on the website along with details of how teams can access and get hold of drugs. Then, a review of the primary survey as applied to lower leg injuries and using Krammer wires, Sam splints, improvisation, and vacuum splints to immobilise these injuries. Pain relief techniques such as intranasal diamorphine, fentanyl lozenge, methoxyflurane inhalator and intravenous techniques were discussed.

The practical exercise covered lower leg injuries using old and new splints and improvisation. The main learning point was that, even with trips and slips, possible neck and spinal injuries should always be considered even if only to rule them out.

IMAGE: JOHN ELLERTON



PHOTOS: MIKE MARGESON



## HIGH ANGLE ROPE RESCUE SEMINAR DAVE JONES OVMRO

The MREW introduced some rope rescue guidelines in 2011 so, when OVMRO were asked to deliver the High Angle Rope Rescue Seminar at the National Training Day, it seemed appropriate to use these as the basis for the session. The day was crisp and clear with the car registering only four degrees as I drove to Plas y Brenin. We then ran a morning and afternoon session, which were both very well attended (30 per session) with everyone getting plenty of hands-on experience.

The focus of the session was to explain the ten guidelines which all teams should now be following and including in their own operations. In the guidelines there is no reference to a particular device or pieces of equipment, but rather, for example, the principles of assessing risk, considering the consequence of system failure and reducing risk to the rescuer should a failure occur.

Hopefully everyone who attended the session found it to be thought-provoking and everyone is encouraged to read the guidelines, which are available from the MREW, and then review their own systems.

## WATER SESSION

Ewan Thomas had delegated this session to Brecon swiftwater instructors as he was covering for Mark Lewis and doing the Sarman and IT session.

In particular a search management point score and risk management model was introduced. This allows your teams leadership groups to examine all the relevant factors and information when planning a search near water or rivers, and carry out risk assessment during the planning stage. After discussing the model, the session tried it out in practice.

## IT AND TECHNOLOGY SESSION EWAN THOMAS

The session looked at training and updating folk on the computer and GPS search management tool SARMAN. Some of the many applications and tools the program uses and the ability to link to search management theory and data were demonstrated and discussed.

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your team's share of the NHS grant. All applications must be in writing (not a scanned copy by email) to me, on team headed paper and signed by two team officers. Please include catalogue numbers from suppliers and a daytime delivery address. The amount per team is approx £475.

I would also like views on the issue of casbags and vacmats. Historically, MREW has issued one per team, about every five years. In 2010, in an attempt to be more cost effective, the equipment subcommittee decided we would only issue to teams when they requested one outside the five years but teams are now requesting two or three vacmats/casbags, as they are running multiple vehicles. So... should we continue to

only issue one every five years, with teams paying for any further supplied? Or should we issue as many as teams want? This could either be funded by the NHS grant — in which case the allocation of monies per team will reduce by a few hundred pounds — or we use money from the government grant. Please email me: richard@rterrell.orangehome.co.uk.

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

May's MREW meeting saw five mountain rescuers receive Distinguished Service Awards for their outstanding commitment and dedicated service to mountain rescue. John Ellerton (Patterdale MRT and MREW Medical Officer) was thanked for his

considerable contribution to the medical effectiveness of mountain rescue teams, through his Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue handbook, now in its second edition, the basis for the MREW Casualty Care course and qualification. Mike France (Woodhead MRT and MREW Fundraising Officer), Ray Griffiths (Patterdale MRT) and Mike Margeson (Duddon & Furness MRT, currently MREW Training Officer and now Vice Chairman) were also awarded. The fifth award went to Tom Taylor for his 40 years of mountain rescue service with the RAF and ARCC, and his expertise in communications and emergency satellite location systems.

## FROM MREW VICE CHAIRMAN TO MREW VICE PRESIDENT IN A DAY

Dr Anthony Jones MBE stood down as vice chairman of MREW, in May, after 27 years in the post. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to mountain rescue, his fellow officers surprised him with a bottle of his favourite Clynelish whisky and a specially engraved crystal glass to enjoy it in. Later in the meeting, delegates voted to accept a proposal to introduce a new position of Honorary Vice President and, following an eloquent nomination by Huw Birrell, the meeting voted unanimously to elect Anthony as the first such Honorary Vice President.



## MONTANE DONATES £15000 TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES

David Allan (MREW Chairman) and Neil Roden, along with Eddie Harrison and Dagmar Johnson of Kendal MRT met at Montane's Staveley showroom in May to receive a cheque for £15,000 — a fantastic start to this year's Mountain and Cave Rescue Awareness Weekend!

The donation marks the end of two years of fundraising by the outdoor clothing company. 'We've had a connection with mountain rescue throughout our 20-history,' says Paul Cosgrove, Brand Director with Montane. 'Two years ago, we launched a small range of specialist lightweight clothing at the Outdoor Show in Birmingham, specifically to raise money for MREW. It seemed only fitting to hand over this money to the national mountain rescue organisation as part of its awareness weekend.'

'This kind of national support eases the financial pressure on teams and we welcome it,' says Dagmar Johnson, 'but we are eternally grateful to the local people and businesses who have always supported us.'

David Allan added: 'Without this sort of support for volunteer rescue from companies like Montane — in money and kind — we wouldn't be able to function.'



LEFT TO RIGHT: EDDIE HARRISON (KENDAL MRT), NEIL RODEN (MREW CENTRAL PURCHASING), PAUL COSGROVE (MONTANE), DAVID ALLAN (MREW CHAIRMAN) AND DAGMAR JOHNSON (KENDAL MRT) AT MONTANE'S STAVELEY SHOWROOM IN MAY.

## RUNNING WITH THE BOOTS ON!

Adi Taylor (Kinder MRT) and Dave Howarth (Kendal MRT), pictured before setting off on the London Marathon in April, in support of MREW. Adi, we should mention, ran the course complete with walking boots and rucksack, raising £600 in the process. Dave raised £370.



## BIRTHDAY HONOURS

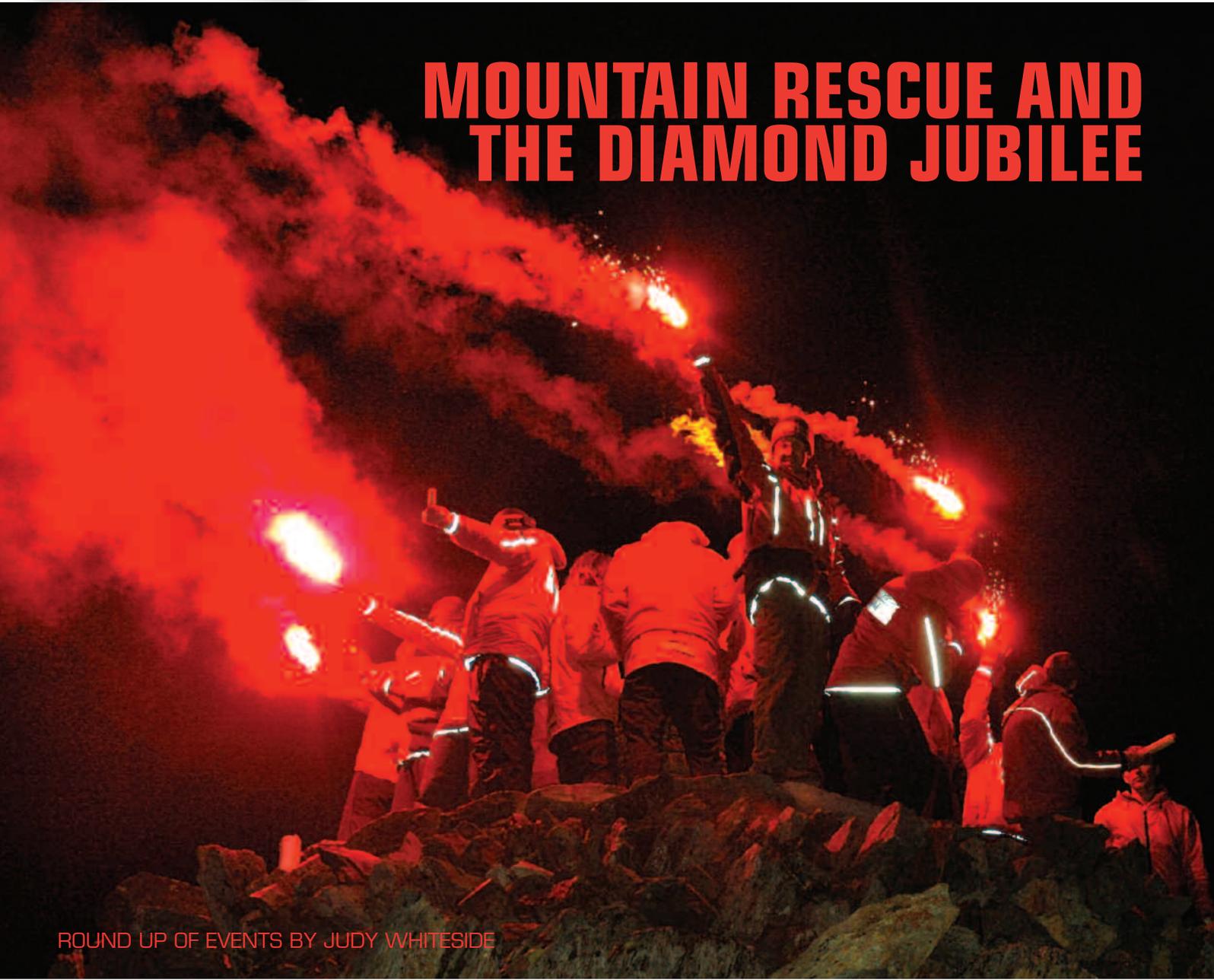
Congratulations to Peter Smith, who was awarded the OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. The award is in recognition of his 40 years service to mountain rescue, including

30 with Calder Valley SRT. Ten years ago, Peter stood down from the team call-out list to take up his current post as MREW Secretary. Congratulations also to Peak District

Chairman, and MREW Central Purchasing officer Neil Roden who was awarded the MBE for his work with HM Revenue and Customs.



# MOUNTAIN RESCUE AND THE DIAMOND JUBILEE



ROUND UP OF EVENTS BY JUDY WHITESIDE

## CHUKKAS AND CHAMPERS WITH THE PRINCE



A drizzly Thursday in May saw Mike France and Judy Whiteside making their way to Chester for the second year running to represent Mountain Rescue England and Wales at the Audi Polo Challenge, alongside SkillForce and the English Schools Swimming Association.

A celebrity-studded VIP guest list included several familiar faces including BBC presenters Charlie Stayt, Louise Minchin and Mike Bushell, ITV's Fred Talbot, comedian John Bishop (sadly not providing his impromptu stand-up this year, having arrived late — a double booking with the

Olympic torch, we later heard) and Countryfile presenter John Craven. There were stars of the big screen too, in Nicholas Hoult (the eponymous boy in the 2002 film *About a Boy*) and Neville Longbottom... er, sorry... Matthew Lewis (best known as one of Harry Potter's Gryffindor pals).

The highlight of the day — besides a champagne reception, the stunning Michelin two-starred dinner and evening entertainment by BRIT award nominee, Pixie Lott — was, of course, the polo game between the Audi Quattro team, with William at Number 4, and Audi Ultra. And it was a nail-

# national News



THE QUEEN'S  
DIAMOND JUBILEE  
BEACONS  
4TH JUNE 2012



**There's been something of a party atmosphere in the world of mountain rescue this last couple of months, what with all the beacon-lighting, concert-going, polo-watching and Olympic flame-carrying going on. And it's produced some stunning images — more often than not fire-related!**

**MAIN SHOT AND INSET:** LLANBERIS TEAM MEMBERS LIGHT UP THE SKY ABOVE SNOWDON, AFTER ACCOMPANYING SOLDIERS FROM WALKING WITH THE WOUNDED TO THE SUMMIT (JOHN GRISDALE).

**TOP LEFT TO RIGHT:** OGWEN BEACON ON CARNEDD FACH, LOOKING ACROSS TOWARDS ANGLESEY (OGWEN VALLEY MRO); LONGTOWN MRT ON SUGAR LOAF MOUNTAIN, ABERGAVENNY (LONGTOWN MRT); PENDLE HILL BEACON (ROSSENDALE & PENDLE MRT); ELECTRONIC BEACONS IN TEESDALE (ANDREW BOTTRILL); BELMONT JUBILEE TOWER (BOLTON MRT).

Over 4,200 beacons blazed across the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Commonwealth and Overseas UK Territories on 4th June. Throughout the UK, members of mountain and cave rescue teams joined in the fun atop their local summits and a few even witnessed the final beacon-lighting in the chain, by Her Majesty The Queen, after a spectacular concert at Buckingham Palace.

The evening also provided an opportunity for mountain rescue to work with another Royal charity, Walking with the Wounded, as seventeen members of Llanberis MRT and SARDA Wales joined a group of soldiers, just returned from an ascent of Everest, to light a beacon at the summit of Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon), at 10.29pm. At 1,085 metres — the highest point in Wales — the beacon was one of four to be lit on the summits of the highest national peaks in Britain.

The joint venture was in support of the Trust set up by Prince Harry, patron of Walking with the Wounded, and the Duke of Cambridge, patron of Mountain Rescue England

and Wales. Members of the Llanberis team accompanied the soldiers, escorting them from Pen y Pass, along the Pyg Track to the summit, and later descending along the path to Llanberis.

Walking with the Wounded's mission is to fund the retraining and re-education of servicemen and women, both veterans and those leaving the Armed Forces. Their '8848 Online Everest Challenge' aimed to raise £8,848 online as the team climbed Everest in May — a pound for every metre height. Llanberis MRT chairman, John Grisdale, said: 'The soldiers are to be congratulated for their efforts on Everest, which was sadly curtailed because of bad weather and dangerous snow conditions. However, their effort with the '8848' fundraising is to be applauded. The historical links between the conquest of Everest in 1953 and Snowdon are well documented at Pen Y Gwryd, the adopted home of the first successful ascent of Everest.'

The Walking with the Wounded participants had been awarded the honour

of lighting the beacon on the summit but, once the official beacon was lit and the celebrations ended, Llanberis team members lit up the night sky even more, with a display of para-flares. 'The intention,' said John, 'was to draw attention to the charity work of all the Welsh mountain rescue teams so the Welsh Dragon will breathe flames once again in support of the celebratory events.'

Whilst the beacon-lighting fun gratified bonfire fetishists everywhere, in the north east of England, there was a different sort of light show. In Teesdale, experienced walkers, used to being in the hills at night, were asked to volunteer to carry electronic flashing beacons up onto hilltops — one of the sites at Kirkcarrion where the jubilee beacon for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was lit in 1897. Teams of two or three people were accompanied up the hills by members of the Teesdale and Weardale team.

We think we can safely say — wherever the beacon, whatever the team involved — a flaming good time was had by all.

biting finish — with Quattro neatly bagging the winning goal during extra time.

This is our fourth year as guests of Audi UK and our sixth charity polo match — with total donations to MREW in the region of £120,000, thanks to our patron, HRH The Duke of Cambridge. We can only

take this opportunity to thank William and, of course, Audi UK, for their continued support.

PHOTO: RICHARD THOMAS AND MALCOLM BORWICK BATTLE IT OUT ON THE POLO FIELD (AUDI UK).

## HULA HOOPS AND GINGER CAKE WITH THE QUEEN

**T**he Bank Holiday Weekend dawned and we were off on the train to London to join mountain and cave rescue colleagues and guests from across England and Wales at Buckingham Palace for The Diamond Jubilee Concert, flags at the ready.

Cave rescue team members quickly made themselves at home underground (of course!) — Emma Porter, of Midlands CRO, gives a good report of their adventures on page 56 — but what

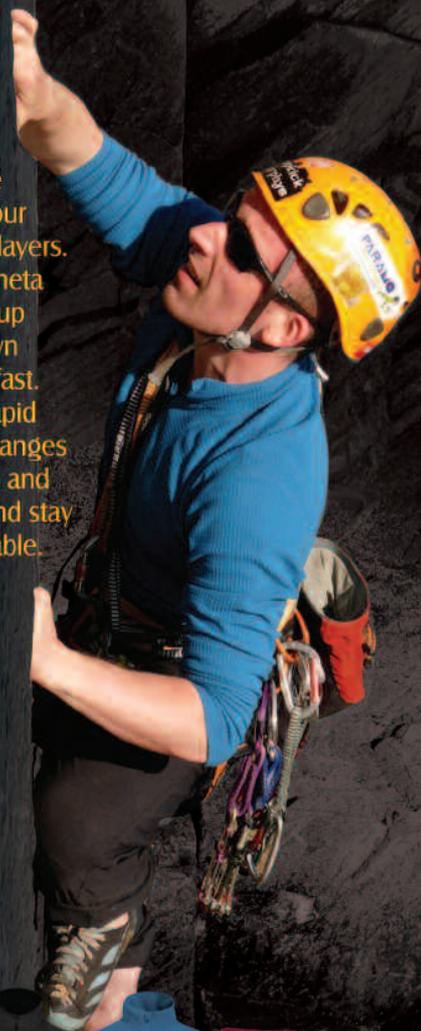


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LEFT: THAT HULA HOOP. RIGHT: TOM JONES AND THE FIREWORK FINALE.

PREVIOUS PAGE: INVITATION, PROGRAMME, OBLIGATORY FLAG AND RAIN PONCHO (JUDY WHITESIDE).

about the rest of us? Well, Sunday afternoon saw a few of our number successfully staking their claims (I'm told at a VERY early hour) to a view of the Royal Flotilla as it cut its way along the Thames under persistently dank clouds and driving rain. So much for flaming June! By the time we arrived, however, the barriers were well and truly up, streets blocked off, not a glimpse of the river to be seen. In fact, you wouldn't even have known there WAS a river in London. The advice from a friendly copper was to 'find a pub and watch it on telly.' Which — no surprises here — we duly did!

By Monday morning, the rain had abated slightly but, by late afternoon, and against all the published odds, the skies turned blue and the sun showed its face. The scene was set for a stunning evening. Having met up with our colleagues and guests at the Westminster Thistle, we made our

way towards Buckingham Palace, raring to join the red, white and blue queue at the designated entrance. Then it was on through 'customs' (airport-style security checks) — where we received our souvenir programme, handy flag and a slab of Jamaican ginger cake — to bag our place, bang in front of the stage, just a dozen or so yards from the action. Fantastic!

Any disappointment at not being seated — or getting our hands on the impressive picnic baskets enjoyed by the Garden Party guests — quickly dissipated thanks, in no small part, to our prime viewing position.

With such an eclectic collection of music, there was something for everyone. The best, for me, had to be Robbie's stunning opener, accompanied by the Band of the Guards Division; Tom Jones (or course); Stevie Wonder; Alfie Boe (whose 'O sole mio' seamlessly morphed from its opera roots, through a certain ice cream commercial — ably supported by an excitable audience — to a hip-swivelling rendition of 'It's now or never' worthy of Elvis himself; and Chinese pianist Lang Lang who, according to Twitter, was inspired to

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# national News

play classical piano after watching an episode of Tom and Jerry. Well, we've all been there.

Oh, and let's not forget the hula-hooping Grace Jones who appears to have defied time and gravity, and put us all to shame with her ability to gyrate and sing her way through an entire song.

And yes, there were a few duds. A great deal has been written since, particularly about the singing capabilities (or lack of them) of one or two of the acts. Sure, the sound was a bit wonky at times, some of the jokes were less than funny, and that Lenny Henry! Cutting old Rolfie and his two little boys off, just as we were getting into the swing of verse two! But this is live music! OUTSIDE! And the buzz of being there, belting out 'Delilah!', sing, sing, singing along with that other bloke from Take That, arms aching from all that frantic flag-waving, singing the National Anthem IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ACTUAL QUEEN, watching said monarch light the final beacon from an impressive hundred-yard distance, by means of a great big diamond detonator, before oohing and aahing and goose-bumping our way through patriotic pyrotechnics!



Now THAT's a good night out!

One of our guests, Sam Fernando of Keela, had this to say: 'The atmosphere was electric with

everybody in high spirits and the feeling of patriotic pride was just incredible. The concert was out of this world, truly a once in a lifetime

event which I will never forget. I think I can sum up the whole experience in one simple word — WOW! So thank you again Mountain Rescue!

## MOUNTAIN RESCUE AND THE OLYMPIC TORCH



A number of team members have been involved in helping the 8,000 Olympic torches on their convoluted tour of Great Britain. In Cornwall, Helen Blackburn was amongst the first, on Saturday 19 May, in the company of Olympic great Duncan Goodhew (see page 15).

In Swaledale, although not directly involved in carrying the actual torch, the team participated in relay celebrations as they passed Aysgarth Falls on Wednesday, 20 June. As this is a regular spot for team swiftwater training, it seemed fitting to entertain and inform the crowds by sending a 'superhero' out on a high line to rescue a casualty, located on the upper waterfall. Steve Clough undertook the task at 12.05pm on 20 June, carrying the 'torch' across the Falls, whilst the real torch passed on the road. All in a day's work!

In Cockermouth, rain did little to deter the crowds turning out to wave team leader Mike Park along Main Street on Thursday 21 June. Mike's nomination story details some of the challenging rescues the team has been involved with during his leadership, including the Cockermouth floods, the West Cumbria shootings and the Keswick school coach crash. A team member for over 28 years, he is a

keen mountaineer and fell runner, recently completing the Bob Graham round of 42 Lake District peaks in 24 hours, starting and finishing in Keswick.

In the Calder Valley, Pete Bradley had the opportunity to apply for a place through his employer, Morrisons Supermarkets. Four places were made available, awarded to employees who invest their time in the local community. Pete won his place through his involvement in mountain rescue and ran in Reedsholme, near Bacup, Lancashire, on Saturday, 23 June. Coca Cola, who sponsored the event, paid for Pete's torch so he could keep it as a memento.

Bolton team member Martin Banks also ran that day, nominated by his family. Despite having been born with a severe congenital heart

defect, Martin's 'this will not beat me attitude' has taken him up Kilimanjaro and a number of peaks



in Nepal. A veteran of ten marathons, he has used his running experience to become a coach to help others reach their marathon goals with great success. Martin ran in the Burnley section.

**LEFT:** SWALEDALE SUPERHERO STEVE CLOUGH NEGOTIATES AYSGARTH FALLS. **ABOVE:** COCKERMOUTH TEAM LEADER MIKE PARK RUNS THROUGH THE TOWN (JOSH STEEL).

## LAKE DISTRICT

### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS FOR A LAKES TRIO

Richard Warren writes... At the MREW meeting in May, Distinguished Service Awards were presented to five colleagues from across the country for their contribution to the service. Three were to individuals from the Lakes: Dr John Ellerton, Mike Margeson and Ray Griffiths. Team members throughout the Lake District congratulate all five in receiving their justly deserved awards, for their outstanding contributions to mountain rescue at local, regional and national level.

John Ellerton is currently a medical officer of **Patterdale MRT**, in addition to the role of MREW Medical Officer which he has held for many years. His first contact with mountain rescue was in 1985 when he came across the Patterdale team, actively engaged on a call-out. John offered his services and his subsequent offer as a doctor was quickly taken up. He became medical officer within a short space of time and began to train a small group in advanced first aid. John was the first to trial and introduce the Propaq patient monitoring machine to mountain rescue.

John is also a member of the Medical Commission of the International Commission for Alpine Rescue. He delivers training courses across the world and has many published papers in medical journals on issues relating to mountain rescue. The Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue handbook, the basis for the Casualty Care certification, is now in its second edition and credit goes to John who took on the majority of the editing and production. Although he is standing down from his national role, John will continue to increase the medical effectiveness at local team level.

Mike Margeson is leader of the **Duddon and Furness MRT**, national training officer and vice chairman. He joined the Furness team nearly 30 years ago, serving as training officer and deputy leader before becoming team leader. Mike was

### IT'S A RUBBISH JOB, AND SOMEONE HAD TO DO IT...

Saturday 17 March saw a dozen members of **Oldham MRT** responding to calls for help from the wider Saddleworth Community. Not your usual call-out but a request to help collect 43 discarded and unsightly car and truck tyres at Denshaw, which had proved inaccessible to the Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council staff. Then it was on to Greenfield, armed with grabbers and bags, to clear the steep canal bank below Chapel Road. In a little over two hours, working in an area between Chapel Road and Oldham Road, they collected more than 45 bags of rubbish, sundry road signs and other detritus which twice filled the British Waterways Transit van — an amazing effort! Grateful thanks have been passed to the team from many local residents, as well as Street Scene Oldham and the Kingfisher public house, whose customers now look out upon a clean and rubbish-free canal side.



actively involved in the protocols and procedures that preceded the merger between his team and neighbouring Millom team following the recommendations of RESCUE 2000 in the early 1990s to merge a number of the Lake District teams.

At national level, Mike served as equipment officer for seventeen years before swapping to his training role. He was instrumental in introducing new ideas and equipment which have cascaded down to teams across the country. New casbags and vacmats saw design and development and are now standard equipment. He also introduced rope rescue guidelines and pushed forward initiatives to improve media skills and look at how trainers can develop their skills and effectiveness.

Ray Griffiths is one of the longest serving members of **Patterdale MRT**, having joined 36 years ago, serving as deputy leader for seventeen years. Ray has moved the team forward in a number of fields, mainly equipment. He took on chairmanship of the LDSAMRA equipment subcommittee in 2006 and has ensured that each of the twelve Lake District teams have been well represented. Following the 2009 floods, Ray was the driving force behind the coordination and gathering of team needs for the

£85,000 application to the Cumbria Community Foundation, an application covering water rescue training, new equipment and improved radio communication. The success of the application, which resulted in a cheque for £35,500, was down to Ray's hard work and benefited the whole region. At national level, he has been an active member of the equipment subcommittee since 2006 and instrumental in getting the Bell stretcher back into production (noting the current difficulties with testing). He has also served with the conference committee. He is well known in national circles, helping maintain excellent working relationships with manufactures and providing a highly professional image of mountain rescue.

## PEAK DISTRICT

### QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDALS FOR 650 YEARS OF SERVICE

At a presentation at Derby Rugby Club in June, members of **Derby MRT** were awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for their voluntary service to mountain rescue. The medals were

## RESCUE 2020

The review of mountain rescue within the Lake District is drawing to its conclusion. It has been written following detailed feedback from every team member within the region, along with feedback from the various statutory bodies that teams and region interface with. The results will have been published by the time this magazine has been issued but, at the time of writing, the results were still unknown to the Lake District teams and wider audience. It is likely a copy of the report will be made available to other regions, and details of the process through which the survey was carried out. The survey, which took some eighteen months to complete, was commissioned by LDSAMRA and undertaken by Bob Sharp and Archie Roy who are both honorary members of Lomond MRT, in Scotland. Both Bob and Archie are highly respected within mountain rescue and outdoor circles, and have devoted most of their lives over this period to producing what is anticipated to be a very comprehensive study. Bob has also held a number of senior roles within the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland. For further information about Rescue 2020, contact Paul Horder paul@theorders.co.uk.



# regional News

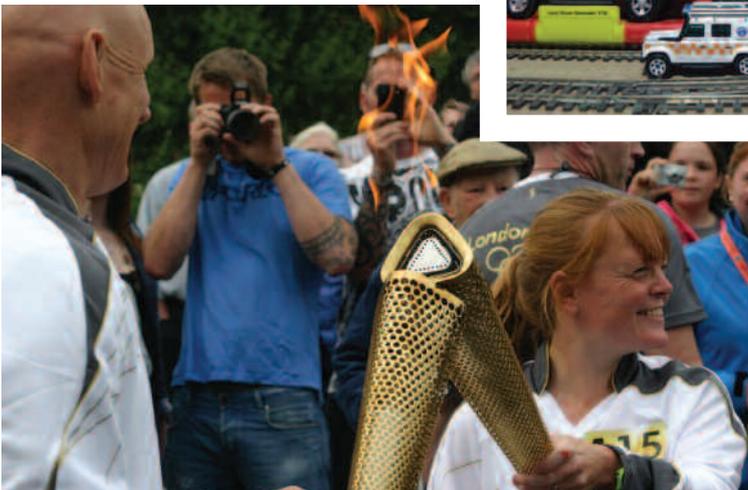


awarded to recognise the work that the members of the voluntary emergency service have put in over the years in support of the wider community. Apart from helping injured and lost walkers, climbers and other hill users, this also includes searching for vulnerable and despondent people in rural areas, assisting the other emergency services, especially in extreme weather conditions and supporting the community far beyond the scope of just outdoor enthusiasts. The Derby team covers an area which spans Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire. The 35 team members who have been with the team for longer than five years were presented with a medal by the Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, William Tucker and in the presence of the Mayor of Derby, Councillor Lisa Higginbottom, the Assistant Chief Constable (Operational Support) of Derbyshire Constabulary, Dee Collins and the President of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation, David Coleman.

## PENMACRA

### CORNWALL TEAM MEMBER FIRST TO HOST THE OLYMPIC TORCH

Team member Helen Blackburn had the honour on Saturday 19 May, of being the first MREW member to run with the Olympic Torch in the UK. Helen, who has been with **Cornwall SRT** for eight years,



was surprised to receive the flame from Olympian Duncan Goodhew in Liskeard, Cornwall. Team members who went to watch her run, commented that she was 'massively excited, and deservedly so' and took the opportunity to pose with Helen and her torch after the run. Team chairman, Tim Hughes, said: 'We are very proud of Helen today, both for her personal achievement in being selected, and that it is a member of Cornwall SRT who has the honour of carrying this very special flame through our county.'

### MODEL LAND ROVERS

While exploring possible ways of marking the Cornwall team's forthcoming ten-year anniversary, the trustees hit upon the idea of anniversary models of Kernow Mobile 2, their latest vehicle acquisition, based at Bodmin in the east of the county. Exhaustive trawling of the internet failed to find a single example of the only known model mountain rescue Land Rover and it was eventually discovered that this model was out of production. Not to be outdone, Tim Hughes started liaising with a model vehicle decals business, advertising in the back pages of MR mag (Model Rail not Mountain Rescue!). The firm was only too willing to run up



LEFT: CORNWALL SRT MEMBER HELEN BLACKBURN RECEIVES THE OLYMPIC FLAME FROM DUNCAN GOODHEW.  
TOP: MODEL LAND ROVERS HIT THE TRACKS

some prototypes for us and the results are fantastic, with many orders being placed by team members.

Available in 1:70, 1:43 and 1:32 scales, these models make great presentational items, or even fundraising items. Further details can be obtained from Tim via [Kernow\\_otter@live.co.uk](mailto:Kernow_otter@live.co.uk).

### LEADING THE WAY

Caroline Young of **Exmoor SRT** writes... On the hottest weekend of the year thus far, you'd be hard pressed to find a bunch of mountain rescuers choosing to stay indoors. However, the promise of a highly valued and relevant course, run by a trio of experts who had travelled all the way from Ireland, meant the fourteen team members happily braved the stifling heat in the hope of learning how to become better leaders.

Representatives from the Exmoor, Cornwall and Wasdale teams gathered at Exmoor's centre for the intensive two-day 'Leadership in Voluntary Emergency Services' course. Our instructors, Pat Holland and Mary Mullins of SEMRA and Diarmaid Scully of Glen of Imaal (Red Cross) MRT, introduced us to the fascinating topic of how leadership styles can influence and inform how we lead at all levels in MR, from operational to executive roles.

The weekend flew by with a blend of theory and practical, all tailored to situations which were all too easy to envisage happening in mountain rescue. The balance between information, coaching and self-driven activities, along with time to reflect on your own leadership roles, made for a powerful mix. The scenarios, for example, dealing with a 'rogue' team member, caused much hilarity — some relishing the play-acting more than others — but got the serious messages across. On other occasions, the modelling (eg. of a coaching session or the drama triangle) gave practical demonstration of the wide range of models of leadership available to us.

The participating teams had interpreted the term 'leader' in all its guises in selecting those who attended. Consequently, representatives on the course included team leaders, deputies, chairmen and women, search party leaders and trustees alike. All agreed that the activities had provided a great deal to think about in terms of their own leadership roles. Some elements were self-affirming, boosting confidence that we were on the right track. At other times there would be a healthy challenge, taking us out of our comfort zone and hopefully helping us develop new approaches to the challenges we will all undoubtedly face in the months and years to come as active members of mountain rescue.

We would like to thank Pat and his team for an excellent and informative weekend. If you would like to find out more, Pat will be speaking at the UK Mountain Rescue Conference in Leeds in September. We can certainly recommend it!



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** ROGER HARTLEY, HELEN PRIESTLEY, DREW PRIESTLEY AND ANDY CROSSLEY OF SCARBOROUGH AND RYEDALE MRT AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

## NORTH EAST PRESENTATION TO JOHN FARNIE

At the AGM of the North East Search and Rescue Association (NESRA), John Farnie was presented with a framed certificate to mark and thank him for his 15+ years service as past regional secretary. The presentation was made by NESRA President, North Yorkshire Police's Assistant Chief Constable, Sue Cross, who was armed with a number of anecdotes to help reflect on John's reign. 'To say that John has an idiosyncratic or laid back approach to administration would be an understatement. Everyone here tonight will remember pregnant pauses in NESRA meetings followed by 'Did we agree that?' or 'Sorry I haven't done that/can't find it etc' all carried-off with aplomb but we also owe him a substantial debt of gratitude for successfully negotiating on our behalf behind the scenes to secure successful outcomes. John has his own particular style and is living proof that minutes of meetings can be humorous, even if they weren't intended to be. John's equanimity and general good humour always worked to NESRA's

## SCARBOROUGH TEAM MEMBERS PARTY AT THE PALACE

No, not the Jubilee weekend, but a slightly more sedate affair in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. 'At the beginning of May', says Roger Hartley, chairman of **Scarborough & Ryedale MRT** 'a very important letter came in the post. The first clue to its importance was when the postman didn't shred it with all the others but knocked on the door and handed it to me in person. At first I thought I was being sued but then I read the envelope — from the Lord Chamberlain's Office. Worse, I'm being sent to the Tower! But, hang on, they don't do that anymore. Do they? No, it was an invitation to the Queen's Garden Party!'

Roger, along with Drew and Helen Priestley and Andy Crossley, went along to represent the team. 'We had a fantastic day, the weather was wonderful and it was just as you would expect a party in the grounds of Buckingham Palace would be. You got the feeling you were part of something special when you stepped through those huge wrought iron gates and turned to see the crowds outside. The Royal Family, headed by Her Majesty the

Queen, wandered through the crowds talking to some as they passed down to the Royal Tent where they took refreshments. There were two military bands taking it in turn to play while the guests drank tea and enjoyed the nibbles.

'It is important to understand that we were there, not as individuals but to represent the massive effort all mountain rescue teams put in to helping people in distress. I hope everyone in the team gets a sense of the pride we felt to be there on the team's behalf.'

## AND MORE GOOD NEWS FOR SCARBOROUGH & RYEDALE...

In June, the People's Postcode Trust — a grant-giving charity funded entirely by the players of People's Postcode Lottery — made a grant of £9000 to the Scarborough team, for the replacement of waterproofs and climbing helmets. The grant has enabled the team to purchase 30 sets of waterproofs and climbing helmets. Team members also heard this month that the team has been conferred the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service for 2012, in recognition of excellence in voluntary activities carried out by groups in the community. The team is one of only 112 voluntary groups to receive the award this year.

The Queen announced the Award in 2002 to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee. Each group is assessed on the benefit it brings to the local community and its standing within that community.



## CLEVELAND OPEN REFURBISHED BASE

In May, past and present members of **Cleveland MRT**, with their friends and families, witnessed team president Lord Crathorne, the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, cutting the ribbon to open the team's refurbished premises on the edge of the North York Moors. Amongst the guests were three of the founding members from the team of 1965. The £200,000 alterations have transformed the base from a 1950s council gritting depot into a state-of-the-art training room and incident control centre along with catering, storage and drying facilities. At the same ceremony, Lord Crathorne presented team member Dave Bunch with a 25-year Long Service Award, and 43 team members with certificates commemorating their award of Diamond Jubilee medals. Cleveland MRT operates in the northern half of the North York Moors. Its 50 members were called out 49 times last year.

**FAR LEFT:** FOUNDER TEAM MEMBERS JOHN MARSDEN, BRYAN SNOWDEN AND KEN OLLIE.

**LEFT:** PROUD TEAM MEMBERS ASSEMBLED WITH LORD CRATHORNE, THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF NORTH YORKSHIRE, IN FRONT OF THE NEWLY REFURBISHED BUILDING. **BELOW:** THE OLD CLEVELAND BASE.



# regional News

Former broadcast journalist Martyn Lewis CBE, chairman of the Voluntary Service Award Committee, said: 'In this Diamond Jubilee Year, the judges have been hugely impressed by the many imaginative ways that volunteers are coming together to help build and sustain the fabric of our society. They are proof that in these difficult times the community spirit is alive and well right across the UK.'

Winners of the award receive a certificate signed by The Queen and a domed glass crystal. The Lord Lieutenant from the local county presents the certificate and the crystal to winning volunteer groups. The award comes on top of invitations to the Royal Garden Party in May and 21 operational members being awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal — a great month for the team!

## SOUTH WALES

### SORE FEET AND SUNBURN ON THE BLACK MOUNTAINS

Over 800 hardy walkers, many of them walking 27 miles, took part in the Big Black Mountains Challenge on Saturday 12 May, helping the **Longtown MRT** to raise approximately half their annual running costs. The event, an annual fixture which attracts walkers from all over the UK and Ireland, couldn't have been held on a better day. After a week of heavy rain and strong winds, and with many wondering if Spring would ever come, the skies cleared for a beautiful cloudless morning. Enjoying their good fortune, walkers were arriving from 6.00am at Llanthony to try one of three mountain challenges. Every year, the event attracts a group of visually impaired walkers from the Royal National College for the Blind. These walkers, aided by local cadets, complete a 16km route involving approximately 800m of ascent. This route is challenging for most, but for most of us the concept of doing such a walk with no vision is unimaginable. For the first time, one of the students was injured, with a suspected (later confirmed) lower leg fracture. Dealing with casualties is everyday stuff for teams, but the incident demonstrated clearly why talking to casualties is vital, both in terms of creating calm assurance but also in communicating what is happening. Given the casualty's visual impairment, this was an acute need — 'scoop and go' wasn't needed and, for the casualty's benefit, would have hindered more than helped, especially given part of the evacuation involved a quad bike. Team leader Mark Nicholls commented: 'We are prepared for the worst weather for these events, but to have perfect walking conditions meant everyone had a fantastic day. It was great to see so many people, including children and those with disabilities, enjoy this beautiful area of the National Park. The event is a logistical challenge, very busy, and we are very grateful to all our volunteers and

local residents for continuing to support us.' Next year's event — should you fancy a challenge — has been confirmed for Saturday 18 May.

### THE QUEEN VISITS MERTHYR TYDFIL

Huw Jones of **Central Beacons MRT** writes... 'Hi Huw, this is Jayne.' The familiar voice of our local mayor's secretary sounded down the phone. The familiarity of both voice and tone was the ongoing result of many years working with the mayor's office on a range of charity events in the borough, however, what came next was quite unexpected. 'The Queen is visiting town on the 26th and your team is invited to be part of the Mayor's presentation.'

Fabulous, I thought. It had been no huge secret that Her Majesty was visiting Merthyr Tydfil and it was obviously going to be a great occasion for the town. For the team to be invited to take part was another opportunity to help with profile and our ongoing work as part of the local community. The only snag? Less than two weeks notice, hmm.

So, with some organising to be done, a pager message went out to see how many members could be available for a Thursday afternoon. Not surprisingly, the chance to see Royalty proved a popular one and I was soon on the phone to the mayor's office confirming our attendance.

The early message was clear: we'd be outdoors (no problem) in picturesque park surroundings at the prominent local attraction of Cyfarthfa Castle, in Merthyr Tydfil. Once The Queen had finished indoors, meeting some schoolchildren, she would move outside and carry out a short walk through 'our' area, comprising the mayor's local charities and support groups. There'd be space for neither a vehicle nor any kit display. Mmm, just us then. That was until the mayor's office confirmed a search dog would be welcome so Mike, our SARDA handler, was able to attend. The intervening week saw a flurry of phone calls and texts to establish a dress code and all involved agreed that our recently acquired MREW Lightline jackets would fit the bill nicely.

The morning of the visit dawned wet with a cool breeze. As The Queen's arrival time grew closer, we watched and smiled as TV cameras, reporters and local press jostled for position in the arrival area while the gathering crowds just grew and grew. Alongside us in the reserved area were members of the local air, navy and army cadets as well as St John Ambulance and numerous school groups. With military precision, at the appointed time the Royal Flight dropped gracefully to land on the grassed area. Minutes later, the Royal limousine pulled up outside the castle main entrance and, to rapturous cheers and applause, The Queen and Prince Philip entered the building.

They emerged sometime later at our end of the building and oversaw a short parade as the military cadets stood alongside us did their bit. It was then that the most esteemed tier of the Royal household

confirmed what we've always observed — that a search dog on parade instantly attracts! The Queen made her way in our direction and, after exchanging smiling glances and nods of welcome, rapidly focused on Corrie, resplendent in her search dog jacket.

After a conversation with Mike about Corrie's age, search experience and training, it was time for The Queen to move on and speak to the next group. As we find so often with these events, it was another case of heavy planning, early arrival and hours of wait, for the moment itself to go by in a flash. However, for Central Beacons MRT it was another instance of established good work and rapport within the local community that allowed us to be part of a high profile event on a local scale.

## SOUTH WEST

### WHEEL ROLLING ON PROJECT LANDY

Tewkesbury's second vehicle acquisition is gathering momentum with fundraising nearly complete and the core vehicle purchased. **SARA Tewkesbury** last week collected a customised search and rescue Land Rover, purchased from **Calder Valley SRT**. The vehicle has now been delivered to SARA's specialist repairer, Liveridge 4x4, for servicing and modifications to ensure its suitability for SARA's multiple rescue roles. 'MRU11' will then go for repaint and livery before going on-the-run in July.

MRU11 was an opportunity that came up while SARA Tewkesbury crew were training with the Calder Valley team during a Mountain Rescue Casualty Care course. They had one to sell, Tewkesbury needed to buy and, thanks to the goodwill of Calder Valley, an affordable price was negotiated. Procuring this vehicle will eventually give SARA Tewkesbury the much-needed extra transport for boats and crew, effectively doubling the turn-out ability of the station. The vehicle will be based alongside other assets at Gloucestershire Water Rescue Centre, based in Tewkesbury. Station Manager at Tewkesbury, Tom Keeling, said: 'We are grateful to all our funders for enabling us to reach this milestone. Project Landy has taken a huge step forward in the last few weeks, and we couldn't have done it without the help of CVSRT who were able to discount the vehicle cost in order to assist another team. They were pleased to see the vehicle continuing to save lives.'

The Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA) is an inshore rescue boat and land search organisation covering the Severn Estuary, upper reaches of the River Severn and the rivers Wye, Bristol Avon, Tewkesbury Avon and Usk. It is the largest independent lifeboat service in the UK, second only to the RNLI, with fourteen operational boats, ten mobile response units, four stations and approximately 150 personnel. Operational SARA stations are located at Beachley, Sharpness,



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Tewkesbury, Wyre Forest. SARA is a designated rescue service for the area, being called primarily via HM Coastguard, the police or fire service. Calder Valley SRT is based in West Yorkshire, in Mytholmroyd, at the centre of the Calder Valley with additional vehicle response posts at Copley in the Lower Valley, and Todmorden in the Upper Valley.

## YORKSHIRE DALES

### RESCUED WALKERS RETURN TO MARK 1,000TH CALL-OUT

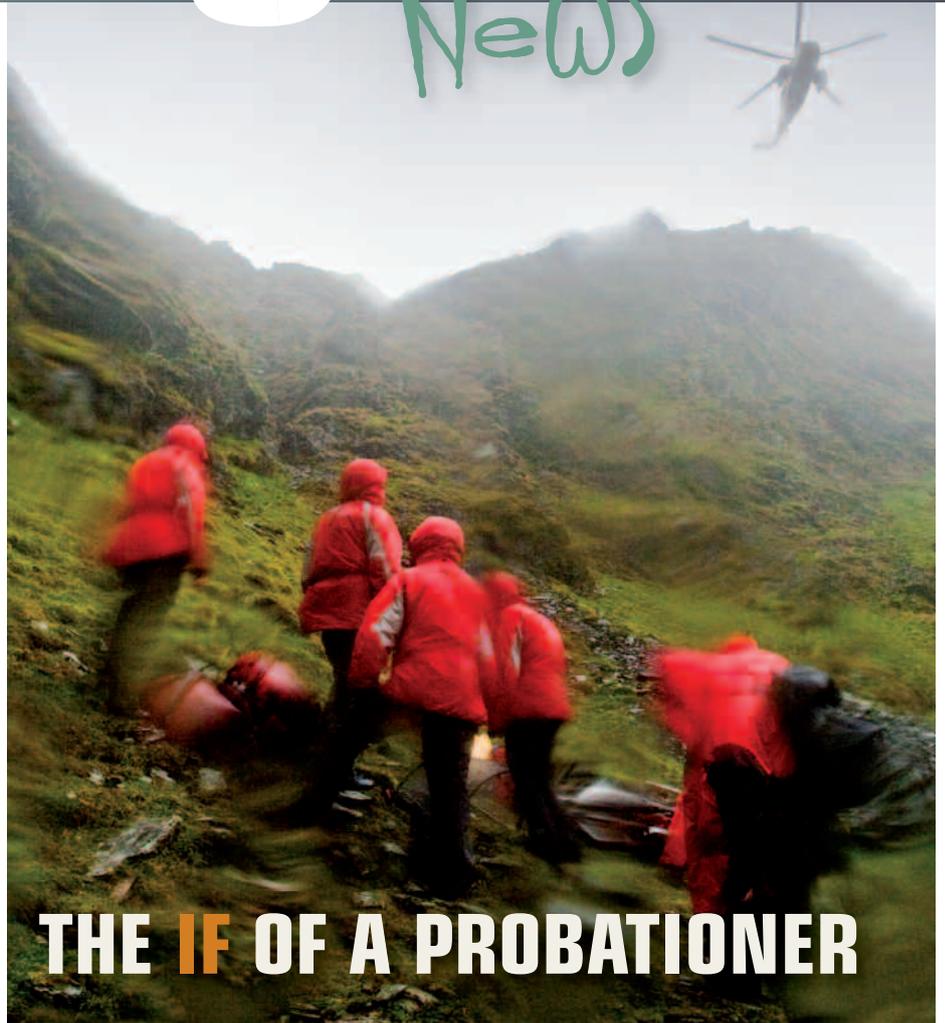
A day out in the Yorkshire Dales turned into a memorable event in more ways than one for two female charity walkers who found themselves entering the record books as the subjects of the thousandth call-out for **Upper Wharfedale FRA**. Caroline Ray and Mary Arber, both from Skipton, had been out on Birks Fell, Buckden, training for the Oxfam Trail 100km, event which runs over two days in the Dales, when they found themselves benighted. The search team found them and escorted them safely back to their car in Buckden.

The team milestone was celebrated by the High Sheriff of North Yorkshire Mrs Alexandra Holford attending the team's base in Grassington and meeting the two women. The High Sheriff also presented the team, and neighbouring **Cave Rescue Organisation**, with her Certificate for Valuable Service to the Community. The award also gave both teams £250.

Commenting on their visit Caroline said: 'It was with great relief that we saw the lights of the rescue team searching for us. It was then rather humbling to later visit their headquarters as their 1,000th call-out. We felt we should keep apologising to them! It was a super event and we salute the team for all they do, and in all weathers. We are so fortunate to have such dedicated and professional people who are all volunteers looking after people in difficulties out in the Dales.' ■



LEFT TO RIGHT: CAROLINE RAY, THE HIGH SHERIFF, MRS ALEXANDRA HOLFORD AND MARY ARBER.  
PHOTO: NIGEL HUTCHINSON UWFA.



## THE IF OF A PROBATIONER

### STEVE ALLEN KESWICK MRT

KMRT definition: **Probā'tioner**

**n:** **1.** aspirant full team member undergoing a year long assessment actively participating on call-outs and training sessions. **2.** somebody to carry the heaviest sack up the hill and back again and be grateful for it.

The call to become a mountain rescue team member can lie dormant within any patron of the fells. Once it finds its voice it can only be answered by first making contact with a team. The process may vary from team to team but, for Keswick, it begins with the completion of an application form. From there, any wannabe rescuers are invited to the base when autumn falls and bestowed with the title of 'pre-probationer.' As autumn then turns to winter, the pre-probationer attends a number of midweek evening training sessions to get the flavour of what the team is all about, which will include being in the front line of a rescue scenario on the hill. The culmination of the pre-probationer period is a day out on the fells, in whatever weather there happens to be, demonstrating navigational skills, fitness levels and comfort in the mountain environment. It is from these participations that a pre-probationer's suitability is established and they will be elevated to the lofty heights of 'probationer' in the new year. And so begins the internship for 365 days.

It is throughout this year as a probationer that aspirant mountain rescuers actively attend call-outs with the team. They are also encouraged to participate on a minimum of 50% of the midweek evening training sessions, as well as being given the opportunity to attend specific training courses. All this is done under the stewardship of the team leader, his deputies and training officers, with the rest of the team acting as mentors.

There is much to learn in this probationary period such as first aid and casualty care

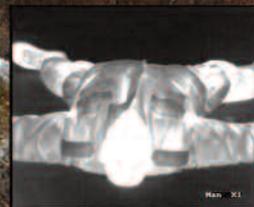
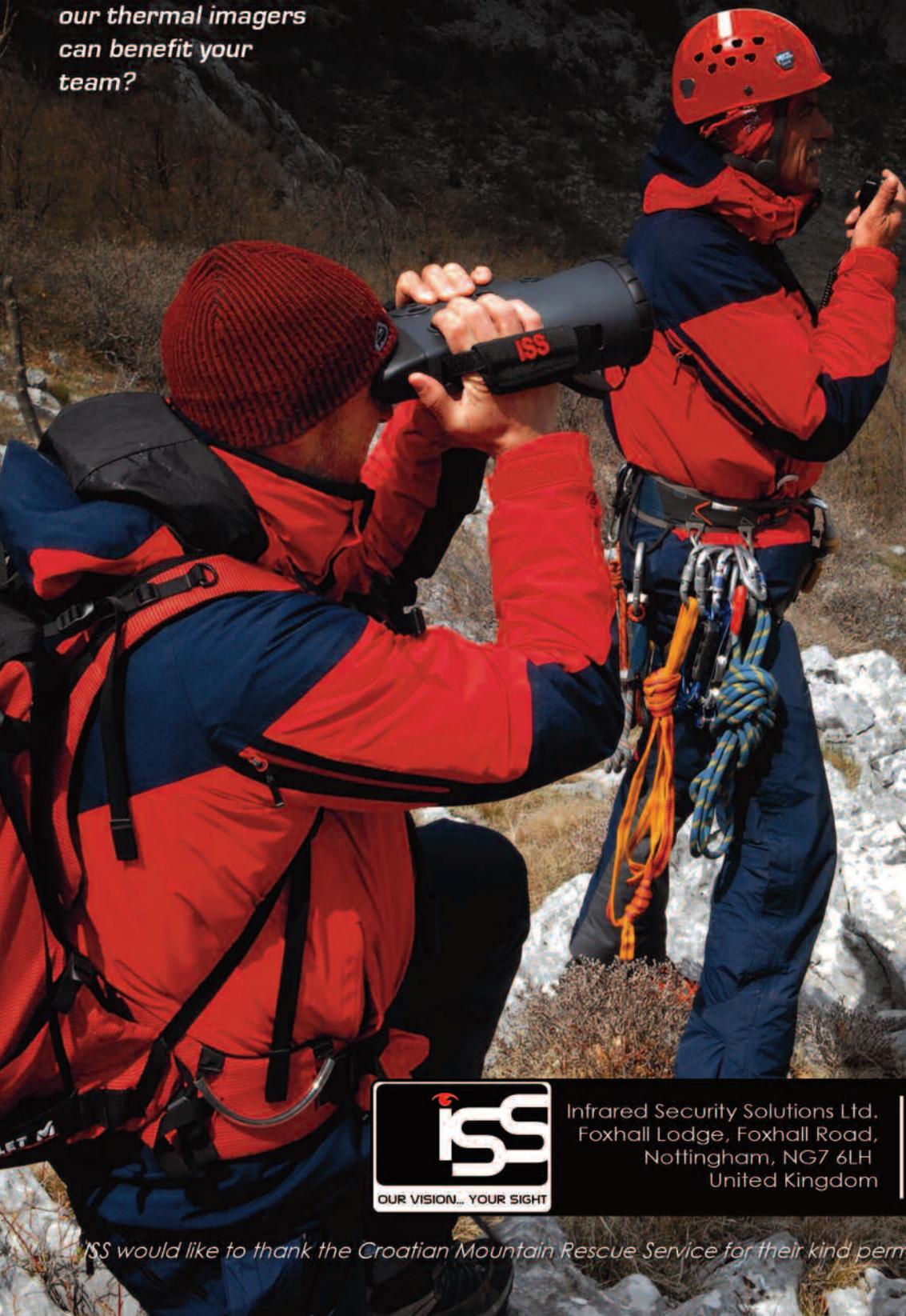
If you just turn the page..

# Do you have the Vision?

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

## WIN LEADING INFRARED TECHNOLOGY WORTH £10,000!

Infrared Security Solutions (ISS) has pledged to donate a hand-held thermal camera (TIV), worth £10,000, to one fortunate team!



All you have to do to win this impressive piece of kit for your team is tell us how YOU think your team's effectiveness would be enhanced by a thermal camera, in just 250-500 words.

**Send your article via email to editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk to arrive with us no later than 31 August.**

Steve Shepperd, CEO at ISS, will have the final decision on the winner. The winning team will be officially presented with the camera by representatives of ISS — a photo opportunity for all concerned and a guaranteed write up here, in Mountain Rescue magazine.

For readers who have missed articles in the last few issues, a brief update. Thermal imagers are sensitive to natural radiation emitted or reflected by all objects, manmade or natural. As this natural radiation is independent from any 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. ISS continues to develop its core range of cameras, whilst also adding functionality which will increase their capabilities and make them even more significant and valuable in the search process.

Two selected quotes from members of a team who recently trialled the range of thermal devices (and subsequently purchased some of the larger, TiV cameras):

'We were impressed by the range of your cameras. We were previously of the view that thermal was limited to a fairly close range, around 100 metres, but found it worked very well at identifying a heat source over a mile away on a hillside.'

'We have used NVG scopes for a number of years which only enhance available light and are of limited use in damp atmospheric conditions. The ISS camera was far superior as it picked out the heat source from a body some considerable distance away, making it stand out against the surroundings.'

To find out more about Infrared Security Solutions and their products, or to participate in a field trial, contact sales@iss-thermal.com. To enter the competition, start writing now and email your entry to editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk.



**KILLIN MRT IN ACTION WITH A TIV AND DURING THE FIELD TRIALS.**

## The If of a probationer continued..

procedures, technical equipment use — checks and rigging, radio protocol and vehicle awareness, to name but a few of the many aspects on the agenda. Then, of course, there are the nigh on fifty names of team members to remember. And it is from these team members and their wealth of knowledge and hard earned experience that the finer details — the myriad of subtle minutiae of rescuing in that particular area — can be learned. As the saying goes: 'Every day is a school day.'

As the probationers come full cycle to winter they will have their feet in two camps as they witness the latest crop of pre-probationers being put through their paces whilst, at the same time, observing the accomplished skills demonstrated by full team members, honed by years of real rescues in real situations. It is also then, of course, that they will find out — as Rudyard Kipling might say — if...?



PHOTOS: KESWICK MRT

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are looking to you to carry the heaviest sack.  
If you can trust yourself  
And be trusted and counted on  
And make allowance for a change of plans.  
If you can make good and timely haste  
To attend to the base when the pager calls  
And not get tired of doing so,  
Even if it is a false alarm,  
Or yet another false alarm,  
And then return home prepared to it all again.

If you can think clear thoughts  
And not cloud your mind with speculation  
Where speculation is not required,  
But remain open and vigilant  
To the possibilities that may not have been foreseen.

If you can respect the fellow man  
Be they lost, or feckless or broken,  
And bring them comfort and guidance and hope,  
To carry them and watch over them  
And bring them to safer ground once more.

If you can create success  
Without letting it inflate beyond proportion,  
And then find loss in the same stride  
Knowing that you have done all that can be done  
And recognise that you have indeed done your best.

If you can turn out in the middle of the night  
When bed embraces you with warm and slumbering charms,  
To put on clothes that have not yet fully dried  
From the last call to arms.

If you can work step in step with mountain men  
Whose hands are your hands  
To breathe their breath  
And stand shoulder to shoulder  
Until the shout is done  
And the last man is off the hill.

If you can commit to all of these things and many more,  
Be they big or small  
And do it all in good faith and humour  
If you can turn out and stand tall with the rest  
To practice and put all those practices to the test.  
To pick up the heaviest sack  
To take it out and bring it back again.  
Then come the end of the year,  
And only then will a probationer become a full team member  
With a hand shake, the odd slap on the back and a well earned beer.

**Footnote from Steve:** This poem was written in response to a request for material for our annual report. It was intended as a probationer's point of view of what is involved in joining a mountain rescue team and came with a preamble that outlined the route to becoming a full team member. Of course, it is a take on Rudyard Kipling's famous poem 'If...' to whom all credit for the original concept should be granted. The man was a creative genius after all. His poem lends itself most aptly to the many 'ifs' of search and rescue and, although written from the point of view of a probationer, its sentiment may speak to all who endeavour to help others in need, whatever that need may be. It's also worth noting that to endeavour to help others is not the sole preserve of men and the same sentiment applies just as equally to the many women who participate in search and rescue activities. Things have changed since Kipling's time and where you read 'men' the term is intended as inclusive of all.



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# UK AND IRISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE CONFERENCE 2012: 7-9 SEPTEMBER

## LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

This year's conference is fast approaching and, if you intend to come along, you need to book now! Peter Howells, conference organiser, asks that you get your forms in by 1 August so we can confirm numbers with the venue.

**Application forms are available on request from Alwyn Hayes via [bookings@mrconference.rescue.org.uk](mailto:bookings@mrconference.rescue.org.uk) or [alwyn124@hotmail.com](mailto:alwyn124@hotmail.com).**

**Cost is a discounted £95 for members of the UK voluntary rescue teams in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Please note: For members of IMRA and ALSAR the cost is £180 for a full weekend delegate and £75 for a day delegate.**

The event takes place at the Headingley site of Leeds Metropolitan University with Keela signed up as a sponsor. They will be providing a free t-shirt to each attendee. And the bar, we are reliably informed, has been advised to stock up on beer!

With the theme of the conference billed as 'Technology in Mountain Rescue' the programme includes a wide range of techie topics, such as 'Personal location beacons' (Tom Taylor), 'SARLOC' (Russ Hore), 'SARCALL — delivering a seamless operation platform' (John Hulse) and 'Fundraising and social media' (Neil Hayter). Help on the hill comes with



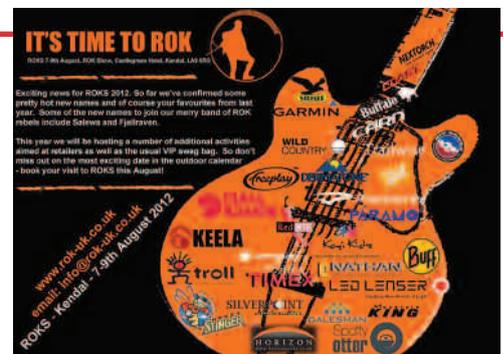
TIM PICTURED ON THE SUMMIT OF EVEREST, MAY 2011 © TIM MOSEDALE

'Map craft' and 'Information technology in mountain rescue' (Lyle Brotherton), 'Mountain weather forecasting' (Geoff Monk of MWIS) and 'Technical mountain rescue — a Scottish perspective' (Jonathan Hart). There's the usual medical thread, of course, comprising lectures such as the intriguingly titled 'Blood is not just thick or thin' (Andy Ashton), 'Pre-hospital care' (John Ambrose) and 'Spinal injuries in mountain casualties' (Ben Hall).

Plus there's all sorts of other stuff to entertain, educate and inform — leadership training, dogs, vehicles, legal issues, public relations, water rescue, avalanches and case studies from our international colleagues. In a nutshell, something for everyone!

Keynote speaker for Saturday morning will be Rory Stewart MP and Saturday night's entertainment will be provided by Tim Mosedale, double Everest summiteer. Based in Keswick, Tim is a climber, instructor and local guide, but more importantly, only the tenth Brit to summit Everest from both sides. He's also a regular visitor to Ama Dablam, having run successful expeditions there for the past nine years. In fact, he's off there again in October so we're lucky to pin him down!

If you have any enquiries regarding conference booking, potential topics or speakers, please contact Peter Howells on 01633 254244 or 07836 382029 or email [plhowells@plhowells.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:plhowells@plhowells.fsnet.co.uk). All that now remains is to get your place booked!



## THE CUMULUS PRO ROCKS ROKS

Calling all mountain and cave rescue, ALSAR and SARDA team members — KEELA would like to invite you to an exclusive, invitation-only event in Kendal this August. It's a unique opportunity to view some of the best outdoor brands around and see first-hand the latest kit, test out the latest toys and maybe splash out with 'VIP mates rates'.

The evening features a talk by Lyle Brotherton entitled 'The use of handheld satnavs (GPS) in mountain rescue emergency management planning.' Lyle (who instructs advanced SAR navigation — and features here on page 38) is author of 'The Ultimate Navigation Manual', researched while working with over 132 teams, in 22 countries. He also advises the UK and US governments on navigational strategy in emergency management planning, and works with international governments post-major disasters, such as the 2010 Pakistan floods. Spaces are limited for this part of the evening — book now so you don't miss out!

ROKS 2012 will also showcase KEELA's new Cumulus Pro Mountain Jacket, the lightest System Dual Protection jacket — a huge addition to the KEELA range. It's been in the pipeline for two years, during which time we sought advice from both mountain rescue teams throughout the UK and Europe. We even ran a competition to discover which features should be incorporated. The end result proves that the wait has been worthwhile — we've produced what we believe is one of the best mountain jackets on the market, well received by team members who have previewed it recently. We're confident it will be a mainstay in our range.



## MARCO TRAILERS AND THE MCA

Continuing a relationship which dates back to 1998, Marco Trailers are designers and manufacturers of specialist information trailers to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Due to its size, ease of handling and ability to be trailed by the MCA's fleet of Ford Focus-sized vehicles, a total of nine Marco X25 2.5 metre exhibition trailers are operated by the MCA.

The brief was to supply exhibition units capable of being trailed by a small family saloon car and, when uncoupled from the towing

vehicle, be easily manoeuvred on varying terrain by not more than one or two MCA volunteers. The trailer had to be quick and easy to set up, carry enough promotional material to display the role of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and also promote safe maritime practice. The final specification included full wrap body graphics, digitally printed graphics panels, flags, headboard, full length brochure display with integral storage and leaflet dispensers. Together with the latest flat screen technology, sound

system and DVD player the MCA X25's attract attention by all means possible. The trailers are used at events throughout the country and are taken to some of the most remote parts of the UK proving that, wherever they go the MCA, via the Marco X25, are sure to be noticed. To find out more, go to [marcotrailers.co.uk](http://marcotrailers.co.uk) or email [rob@marcotrailers.co.uk](mailto:rob@marcotrailers.co.uk).



# WIDE AREA SEARCH MANAGEMENT

## AL READ OGWEN VALLEY MRO

Wide area search is an extended search which will challenge the majority of responding organisations due to the scale and extent of search-related activities, as well as the emerging rescue and recovery effort. In the UK, mountain rescue and lowland rescue teams have significant levels of search management skills that may be called upon to assist with planning and managing a wide area search.

Wide area search activities happen infrequently, but the UK has experienced a number of these events over the years. Pam AM flight 103 was blown up over Lockerbie in 1988 and the associated search was extensive and intensive requiring a lot of effort, extending from southern Scotland into the north east of England.

In more recent times, it has been flood-related incidents that have generated significant wide area search activities. In 2009, Cumbria and Cockermouth in particular was subject to a major search effort. The 2007 floods in the south of the UK also required a major search effort but, thankfully, we've not experienced the mass fatalities associated with Hurricane Katrina, the Haiti earthquake, Queensland floods or the Japanese tsunami.

The experiences of other countries with these wide area searches identify a number of lessons that may stand us in good stead for any future wide area search event, but the general principles of search and its management can still be applied.

The search management principles

of deciding where to look, and then how to look requires some adaption to be effective for the wide area missing persons event, but the underpinning knowledge and skills are found in mountain rescue teams.

### Redefining success

Classical search management is based on achieving success as fast as possible with significant management and field search effort being focused on the missing person. In the wide area search, success may need redefining to encompass the desired outcome of 'find as many people as quickly as possible.'

For many search and rescue teams this will require a significant level of discipline, as the tasks being undertaken may be more about developing an understanding of the search problem rather than solving it for an individual. Ongoing rescue effort may tie up valuable search resources so the search effort requires careful planning and monitoring.

### Categorising missing people

Missing person behaviour and statistical information is a vital consideration for the planning team for normal missing person searches. The statistical data and behaviour traits identified from the collected data over the years has proved to be a reliable planning aid once a missing person has been categorised. The categorisation process helps to understand the vulnerability of missing people.

In wide area searching, there is a much more limited data set, Koester (2008) provides data on many different categories of missing people but they are considered as single individuals or small groups.

In the wide area search, we may be dealing with a large number of different reasons why a person is unaccounted for, but a simple form of categorisation may help to in the overall search management process.

### Missing: unaccounted

This category includes the groups typically associated with:

- Reports of people missing by family and friends.
- Reports from rescue teams tasked to evacuate people but, when the team arrives, the people are not at the expected location.
- People who have self-notified that they are moving to a position of greater safety and but fail to arrive.

### Missing: witnessed

When an event is witnessed and subsequently reported, it needs to be handled appropriately. An example might be a car, seen to be washed away on a ford, which will require some effort to search for the car and its occupants. The scale of these events will typically be relatively small, but there is potential for large scale events that could fall into this category such as a coach full of people being washed away or a train.

### Lost

The lost category for wide scale events would cover the group of people that are relatively safe but are reporting that they are unable to make a recognised point of safety, such as a casualty reception centre, for whatever reason. This category may, with some assistance, be easy to find and relocate, but the urgency level associated with a response may change with time so they will require some management effort to maintain a view of their status.

In this context, the use of categories has a number of different roles including identifying the most vulnerable groups and providing a broad management framework.

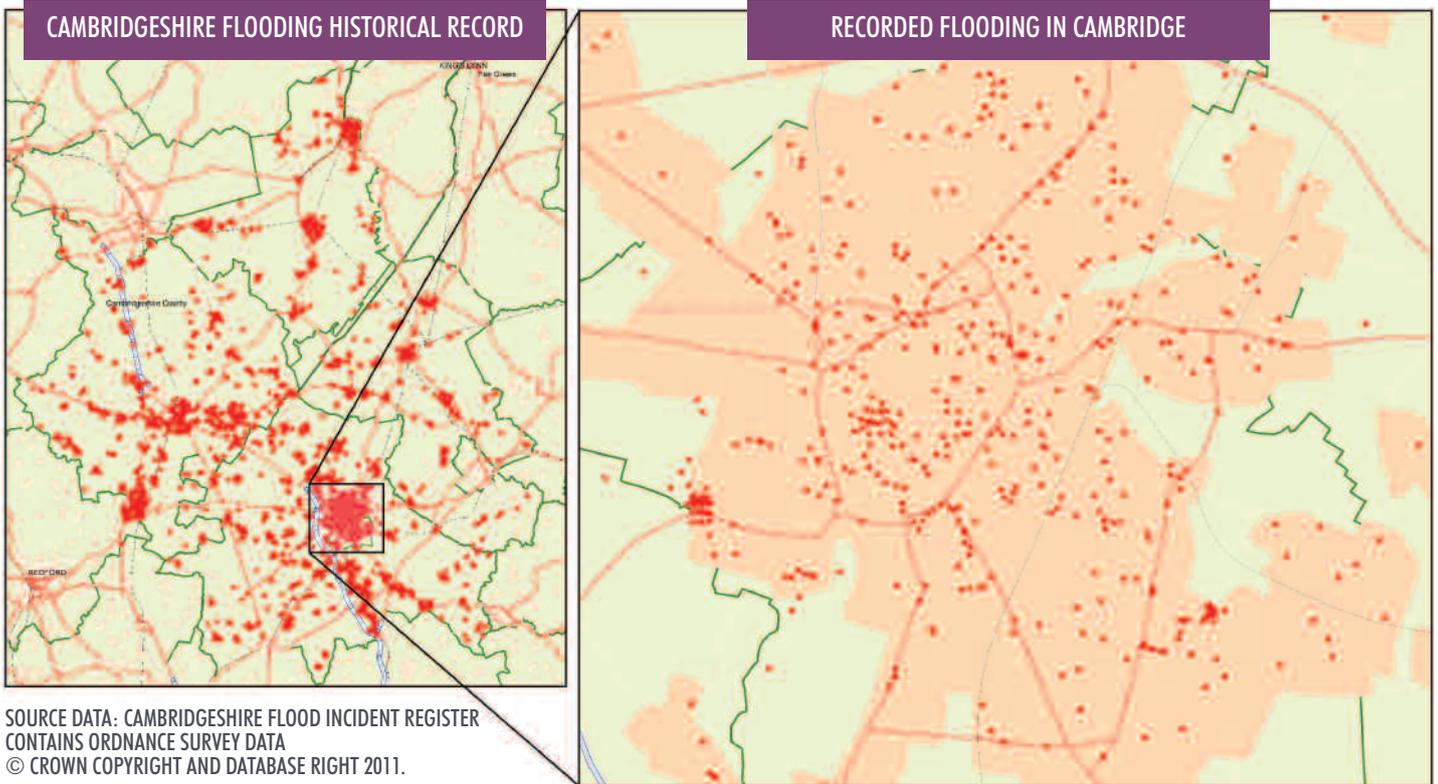
### Determining where to search

Building intelligence about the missing people is vital in determining where to search. Determining where to search in wide area events is going to be a combination of a number of



ABOVE: COCKERMOUTH MRT MEMBERS CHECKING MAIN STREET PROPERTIES DURING THE FLOODS OF NOVEMBER 2009 © COCKERMOUTH MRT. FACING PAGE: HISTORICAL FLOODING IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE – A VALUABLE AID TO SEARCH PLANNING.

# search



different factors, including vulnerability and susceptibility to be affected by the incident.

Historical data, if available, may aid search managers in developing an understanding of areas likely to be affected, this should also take into account any forecast changes (such as the expected movements of flood water). In a flood context, the areas regularly affected by floods are usually well known and, in more extreme circumstances, it is not too difficult to extrapolate and forecast where others will be affected in the near future.

Managing and assessing the reports of missing people will provide an indication of where the need to search might be greater (a clustering of reports may be an indicator of a potential search and rescue issue). The emergency call handling centres will be important to manage this sort of information but, in major incidents, information will also have to be collated from other sources such as rest centres, casualty reception centres and call centres set up to handle enquiries.

Determining where to search may also be helped by identifying areas with higher population densities in the affected area. The chance of success, in terms of finding larger numbers of people, might be associated with

areas of towns or cities where large numbers of people can be found or accounted for and their rescue needs identified. When communication systems such as the public telephone and mobile phone networks are adversely affected, this may be the main method of initially dealing with where to search until teams on the ground provide more detail. This information can often be found from local government

Understanding where vulnerable people are located is about gathering and processing information from a range of sources such as the local authority and its support services, and health trusts, as well as what can be gleaned from reports made by family and friends. However, it may be more efficient in terms of search planning to identify whether there are clusters of vulnerable people (such as in nursing homes or sheltered care).

Another vulnerability consideration in determining where to search is associated with event hazards and the impact of not searching early enough. In the 2007 floods, holiday homes represented a particular risk with an unknown number of people potentially trapped in them by the flood waters around Hereford, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. Significant effort went into checking

holiday home sites using a range of assets, including thermal imaging and responders on the ground doing a door-to-door type search.

Those occupying the holiday homes were at greater risk than people trapped in traditional buildings for a number of reasons: the homes were less structurally sound, with limited height so evacuation upwards was not an option, and these homes were often located next to rivers that were at significant risk of serious flooding with deep water and high flow rates that would make it difficult to manoeuvre around the area.

The impact of the types of buildings may also be a factor in determining where to search. In flood events, single storey builds do not afford escape from the water levels by easily moving upwards. In Carlisle 2005, early rescue effort was required to a number of these sorts of building, compounded by the age-related vulnerability of the group often found living in them. In the 1953 east coast inundation, over 300 people lost their lives, with 24,000 properties affected.

## Using regions to develop a consensus

For longer search operations, using regions to develop a consensus of where to search, is a method of

dealing with the potential complexity of information and data available to a search management overhead group.

The range of factors that need to be considered is very large and complex, but breaking up the affected area into regions and then using a consensus to evaluate where to search first would be a robust, reliable and recordable method.

## Why is it important?

Currently in the UK, there are only limited capabilities to manage the usual missing person search incident. For wide area searching involving larger numbers of missing or lost people, the knowledge and skills required depend heavily on having a good understanding of how to manage a search.

MREW and ALSAR currently have teams with a significant capability that, with some adaptation, could potentially be very effective at assisting in managing major wide area events and incidents. It will make the 's' in 'sAR' larger. Without search, many rescues may not occur at the most opportune moments. ■

## References

Koester, R., 2008, *Lost Person Behavior*, dbz Production, Charlottesville.

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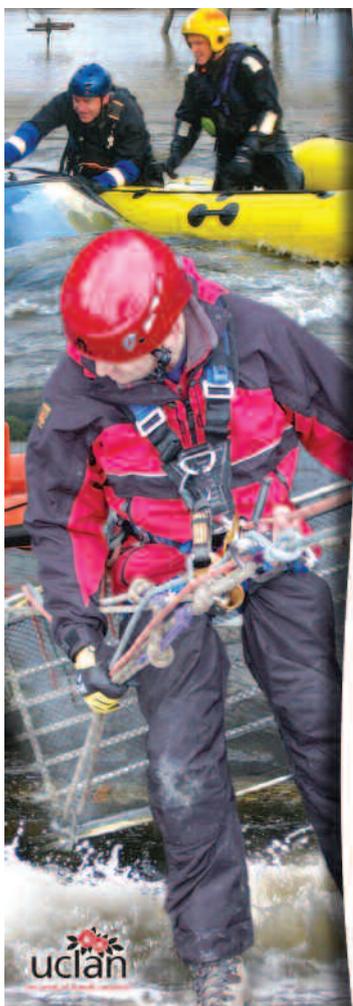
## THE TEENAGER AND THE WOOLLY JUMPER: 20 MAY

Following a day of training exercises and fundraising, Woodhead MRT were called out to rescue a lamb from a remote quarry ledge on the outskirts of Digley, West Yorkshire. The call was made by a concerned member of the public who had noticed the agitated lamb on the ledge whilst out walking.

The call came in at 4.35pm and team members were on scene by 5.00pm. The lamb was duly located, 60 foot up on a precarious ledge, but there was a twist to the tale — a local teenager had noticed the lamb and climbed the rock face to try and help. Unfortunately, the lamb had other ideas and no interest at all in the teenager's help, ultimately evading capture. So, given the wet and slippery location of the ledge and rock face, the teenager was also unable to get down!

Team members erected a technical belay system with one of the team abseiling down on to the ledge from higher up in the quarry. After a tense stand-off, leading to a strategic dance around the ledge, the lamb was captured, secured in a rescue harness and lowered to safety. The team member then climbed the slippery rock face to rescue his second casualty, the teenager, also lowering him to safety. Thankfully, both teenager and lamb were uninjured in the incident.

'It was an unusual call,' writes Woodhead's Scott Roberts. 'We've been called out to incidents like this before but, generally, when we arrive the animal has decided they don't need rescuing after all and moved on. To arrive and find the lamb on the ledge unable to get down, and with a teenage boy sat beside it, was definitely a new one for us. It was a very difficult location to access involving the guys crawling through bramble bushes. As you can imagine, the team member who conducted the rescue has received a bit of stick from the other guys in the team given the nature of the rescue. However, on a serious note, if members of the public do find animals in situations such as this they should not try and rescue the animal themselves but call the emergency services. Had the teenager fallen from that position he could have been seriously injured.'



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PHOTOS: WOODHEAD MRT

# incidents

figures

## Jan • Feb • Mar • 2012

Region and Teams	Incidents	Region and Teams	Incidents	Region and Teams	Incidents	Region and Teams	Incidents
<b>Lake District</b>		<b>North East</b>		Glossop	14	<b>Yorkshire Dales</b>	
Cockermouth	9	Cleveland	8	Kinder	8	CRO	9
Coniston	10	North of Tyne	3	Oldham	15	Upper Wharfedale	9
Duddon and Furness	5	Northumberland NP	3	Woodhead	4		<b>18</b>
Kendal	13	Scarborough and Ryedale	2		<b>74</b>	<b>Search Dogs</b>	
Keswick	23	Swaledale	4	<b>Peninsula</b>		England	10
Kirkby Stephen	1		<b>20</b>	Dartmoor (Ashburton)	8	Wales	10
Lake District MR Sea	3	<b>North Wales</b>		Dartmoor (Okehampton)	1	South Wales	9
Langdale Ambleside	26	Aberglaslyn	7	Dartmoor (Plymouth)	1		<b>29</b>
Penrith	2	Llanberis	18	Dartmoor (Tavistock)	2	<b>Non-specialists</b>	2
Wasdale	16	North East Wales	8	Exmoor	5		<b>2</b>
	<b>108</b>	OB Wales	1		<b>17</b>	<b>Coastguard</b>	1
<b>Mid-Pennine</b>		Ogwen Valley	21	<b>South Wales</b>			<b>1</b>
Bolton	16		<b>55</b>	Brecon	19	<b>Total</b>	<b>411</b>
Bowland Pennine	8	<b>Peak District</b>		Central Beacons	12		
Calder Valley	10	Buxton	6	Longtown	6		
Rossendale & Pendle	6	Derby	5	Western Beacons	7		
Holme Valley	3	Edale	22		<b>44</b>		
	<b>43</b>						



### BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE: 25 MARCH



PHOTO: JOHN GRISDALE

Llanberis MRT had one of their more interesting call-outs in March, during a week that saw them undertaking four technical crag rescues. A climber had fallen on Noah's Warning in the Llanberis Pass getting his arm stuck. Despite nearly an hour of effort from his friends they could not free him so called for help.

Two team members happened to be sat underneath the crag, having been training with SARDA, and they made their way straight up to the unfortunate climber as the

rest of the team followed behind. As the climber had been jamming his way up the crack his feet had cut loose and he ended up dropping, with his hand still in the crack, sinking it nicely up to his wrist.

Pushing and pulling from every angle seemed to have no effect and so those on scene radioed down for lubricants and ice — not an everyday request to a crag job! A stretcher was rigged to provide a working platform for the casualty and main arm-puller to stand on, and ice was applied to the arm to reduce the swelling. Various types of lubrication found their way up to the hill — all applied liberally with little effect.

Plan B was called for: the frantic searching of several team member's sheds in Nant Peris for chisels and lump hammers! At the same time, cave rescue assistance was requested, and explosives and expertise arranged, to be delivered by the police helicopter. Meanwhile, the team doctor comforted the casualty by calling A&E for advice on amputations! The fire service also

arrived with additional drilling equipment and power in the form of a generator.

With the arrival of hammers and chisels, one team member set to work, unsure what would be worse — the wrath of other climbers for damaging a classic route or the wrath of the casualty if the chisel slipped.

After more than three hours, the chisel did the trick and the arm was free. Fortunately only minor chiseling was required deep inside the crack and so the route remains unchanged. The casualty had, by now, been pumped full of pain relief and so very happy in general as he was returned to the ground and flown to hospital for a check up. Talk of a book and movie followed and the casualty was later released from hospital with only minor injuries.

The rescue was a great example of ingenuity under difficult circumstances — and you couldn't train for that! It was also a very good example of several different agencies pulling together for a common goal and a happy ending for all concerned!

# GLEISION COLLIERY, PONTARDAWE SOUTH WALES: 15/16 SEPTEMBER, 2011



## BRIAN JOPLING. WARDEN AND CONTROLLER SMWCRT, EQUIPMENT OFFICER BCRC

At 3.30pm on 16 September, the South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team (formerly the West Brecon and Gwent teams) was called out by the South Wales Fire Service to assist with the response to a working coal mine incident where an inrush of water from old workings had flooded the lower section in which seven miners were working. The incident site is just seven miles from our rescue depot at Penwyllt.

Some of the team were aware of the incident via the media. We'd also had a 'heads up' from Ewan Thomas (Brecon MRT) that we might be called for diver assistance. We are normally called out by the police who were immediately contacted and an incident number obtained.

Knowing that Mines Rescue Limited was on site, it was decided that one of our members (who lives quite close) should go directly to the incident. The team Land Rover was held at Penwyllt (our depot) whilst local members were put on standby and others called out. When it was confirmed that cave divers were required, the Land Rover was stocked with our comprehensive dive rescue kit and the divers called out.

Many agencies were on site and, as our team is not trained, experienced or equipped for rescue from working coal mines (very different conditions to those in which we are normally deployed) the call-out was limited to a support team and cave divers. The support included a team member who is a mining engineer and also knows professionally most of the Mine Rescue staff and the HM Mines Inspector. He also knew one of the three who had escaped the inrush and one of the missing miners. Our specialist was able to discuss the mine plan with a mining surveyor, Mines Rescue and the incident commander and assure himself that the missing miners may have reached higher mine passages, cut off by the flood. The team initially deployed onsite was five, plus two divers, with seventeen members (including four further divers) placed on

standby. A further two divers were called later.

The inrush, it is believed, had breached the working face. Two miners working closer to the entrance escaped into higher levels and got out. A third miner (the manager) came out of an old entrance by a route at the time unknown (he was too ill in hospital to be questioned) about 75 minutes later. Four miners were missing. The alarm was raised about 9.20am.

The fire service attended first and called Mines Rescue Limited who installed more pumps to reduce water levels and conducted searches of the upper levels and old workings. Mines Rescue encountered low oxygen levels and were redeployed with re-breathers. The search reached flood levels at all accessible points with no sign of the missing miners. High level workings above the flood level were inaccessible by any dry route but connected to the area the miners had been working.

At 8.00pm, two cave divers entered the mine to conduct a dry reconnaissance. The length of the flooded section had been reduced by pumping and their opinion was that they could dive. Inter agency briefings were held and it was decided by the Gold incident commander that, if two other divers were present, fully kitted, at the dive base then, after a final check of levels and conditions, a dive would be undertaken. There was a suggestion that hardwire communications between the divers and dive base be used. The divers informed the incident commander that it was standard practice to use a dive line from dive base and that headphones, microphones and wires would compromise the safety of the dive. This was accepted.

At 10.30pm, two more divers were on site and a final check of the pumps and water conditions undertaken by Mines Rescue. At 12.30am (Friday) two divers entered the water, operating on a plan agreed between themselves, the Silver Command, Mines Rescue and HSE.

The dive plan was to proceed with caution through the flooded section, looking for snags and damage to the mine level. Upon reaching an airspace, they were to proceed under air (dive gags in as foul air might be present) to check the first of two side headings without entering, then move up the gently rising 'main' passage to the working heading but not to enter. Finally, they would go to the end of the 'main' passage, some 140m from the dive base. At all times, divers should examine the roof and supports for damage. There would be no attempt to recover or rescue any miners found.

The SMWCRT had the kit on site to supply trapped casualties with all the sustenance required until the pumps cleared the flood water and one of the divers present was an advanced cave rescue first aider. All four divers were equipped with two independent dive sets (two cylinders, two mouth pieces and two contents gauges) several lights and spare line reels. Cave diving procedure follows the 'Thirds' rule: one third in, one third out, one third reserve.

At 1.30am, all divers were back on the surface. The dive length was 30m, in better visibility than expected, in approximately 800mm of water over 800mm of slurry — with a conveyor belt running the whole length of the main passage. The main passage was rising from the shallow 'V' at the deepest point and after wading some 40m in slurry and debris, the body of one missing miner was discovered. The divers moved forward some further 50m to where the working heading branched off. At this point, both the main passage and the working heading were blocked by a jumble of wooden pit props and debris washed in by the inrush and no further progress could be made. Shouting (taking a deep breath, removing the gag, shouting and replacing the gag) and flashing lights drew no response and the divers returned without seeing any further casualties. They were able to report that the main passage was

undamaged and, at the blockage at the junction of the main passage and working heading, the roof supports were in place with no sign of roof collapse. The 700mm-high side passage nearest the dive base, which led to some old workings was not seen — possibly under slurry or behind the damaged conveyor belt.

After a debrief, the cave rescue controller suggested that cave rescue had played its role and that, as Mines Rescue was more than capable, trained and had the right equipment to conduct a search and rescue or recovery when the pumps had cleared the flood, that we should now stand down and this was agreed. By 4.00am, all team members had left the site.

Some twelve hours later, the pumping allowed Mines Rescue to conduct a search. At 6.00pm on Friday, it was announced that all of the missing miners had been found dead. It was now a recovery operation.

This was a first for the SMWCRT. We don't cover working coal mines, have the training, equipment or the remotest wish to do so. Working coal mines, with the associated dangers of explosive gases, fire and foul air, are not caves or abandoned mineral mines. Mines Rescue Limited is extremely competent, well trained and equipped. All of us have the greatest respect for what they do. However, SMWCRT was treated as equals throughout the incident by all agencies. We had that one skill set that the police, Mines Rescue and fire service do not have. All of the agencies worked as a team and there was never any question of any of the agencies quoting HSE rules. All actions were considered and it was generic risk assessment at its best.

The team attended the Gold, Silver and Bronze debriefing in December 2011. We'd had no representation at Gold level during the incident and, indeed, had not even thought about it. However, we were ably represented by Ewan Thomas (BMRT) who knows

the team well and was called because of his recognised expertise in swiftwater rescue. It transpires that it was Ewan who suggested cave rescue involvement to supply specialist divers as neither Mines Rescue, fire or police had suitable teams available.

We have not yet received the final report but, from the debrief itself, it was clear that Silver and Gold commanders had little idea of the skills that cave rescue has or how voluntary teams operate (something we have never found on cave rescue incidents). We were questioned at length about how cave rescue fits into the scheme of things when considering HSE legislation and able to satisfy the Mines Rescue, fire and police. However, the HSE inspector seemed to have some difficulty understanding generic risk assessment and the fact that, as volunteers, our members were there by choice, could (and would) reject any task we thought outside of our skill set, and that our members act by consensus not compulsion. I think the fact that our team members are skilled and experienced enough to make value judgements based on circumstances without recourse to a surface controller, sometimes for hours, was not fully understood. It also became clear that the Gold Commander (from South Wales Police) accepted that to conduct a search dive was the correct thing to do as the chance that miners were trapped was very real and the skills were available.

As a team we haven't worked with Mines Rescue since about 1954, when they assisted on a cave rescue. We're occasionally asked to search (or rescue animals from) disused coal mines as Mines Rescue do not have the remit to cover disused coal mines. During a normal cave rescue the fire service do not become involved unless we have asked for help with pumping or flood control. The police in all three of our areas (Gwent, Dyfed Powys and South Wales) usually have a presence at the start of an

incident and leave us to get on with the job — whilst always ready to respond to requests for assistance. The team is well provided with advanced cave rescue first aiders and has four doctors (who were cavers before qualifying) including a consultant orthopaedic surgeon. One of the most important aspects of cave rescue is the need for all of the team to be capable of looking after themselves in adverse conditions. The team has conducted rescues lasting up to 44 hours — several over 24 hours — and deployed over 200 cave rescuers on one incident. Our present worst case scenario is an accident in a single entrance cave that can take a good caver ten hours to reach the furthest extremities and we have two on our patch!

There was extensive media coverage of the Gleision incident and without editorial control one could only hope that something out of order is not said (or wheedled out) and we think that, on the whole, the press interviews with us and other rescue agencies were presented pretty faithfully, apart from early reports that the cave divers had been turned back due to conditions (they were confusing the search dive with the dry reconnaissance).

To be launched into a multi-agency rescue attempt was a bit of a shock to our corporate system and, to a degree, we were out of our comfort zone as much as the statutory agencies were with us, but we coped. The other agency commanders, with very little knowledge about what and who we are, must be admired in the way we quickly became accepted as fellow professionals, albeit unpaid. There are some new aspects the team will address, hardly surprising in such an unusual (for us) call-out.

A investigation by the police and HM Inspector of Mines is underway. Criminal charges have been laid and, when all investigations are complete, we may learn more about the cause of the inrush. ■

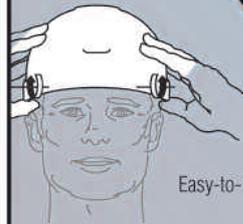


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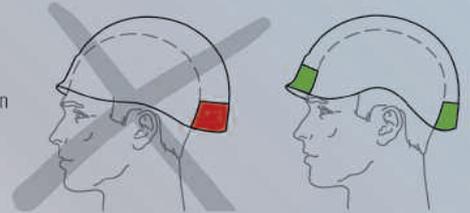


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Key benefit is the speed to fully extend from compact to 17m for the larger pole – fully extended and accurately

deployed in 45 seconds, and fully retracted again in 29



seconds. That's one minute, fourteen seconds for the entire rescue, less if the victim is closer than 17m. The high visibility end section can be seen by the victim, even in lower visibility. Go to [www.reachandrescue.com](http://www.reachandrescue.com) for our demonstration video.

Incredibly versatile and with a large selection of flotation and retrieval attachments available in kits or individually, the pole can be tailored to suit the rescue situation and operated easily by one or two people in all weather conditions, from shoreside or vessel. A failsafe rope ensures the pole sections stay intact if damage occurs during a rescue.



## AMERICAN BULLDOG RESCUE: 7 MAY

A team of twelve rescuers used a stretcher to carry an exhausted ten-stone (64kg) dog to safety down a mountain path after it became trapped in boulders. Jarvis the American Bulldog was on Wastwater Screes when he became stuck and too tired to walk. His owners, two women walkers from Leicestershire, could not lift him from the Lake District beauty spot and called Wasdale MRT, who spent four hours carrying Jarvis to his campsite. Following the incident, team chairman, Richard Warren, warned walkers not to be lured on to mountain paths thinking they are a soft option.

'This particular path had boulders as big as tables and Jarvis had become exhausted and couldn't go any further. Often dogs' legs become trapped in between the gaps and it can be difficult to get through safely.

'The walkers thought the route was a nice easy path, but it has a sting in the tail with big slippery boulders to contend with. They had been walking for some time and Jarvis was immovable and exhausted. The women were also wet as they had tried to get Jarvis to swim. When we got to him he could walk some of the way and the rest we carried him in a makeshift stretcher.'

The women, who were on a tour of national parks, had just climbed over the Screes summit including Irton Pike and Whin Rigg. They saw the path on their map by the side of Wastwater and believed it to be an easy route back to their campsite in Irton. When the pair came across the field of boulders, they tried to get Jarvis to swim around the lake, but he was too tired. Despite his ordeal, Jarvis was reported to be friendly throughout his ordeal. 'It was an unusual challenge', concludes Richard, 'to motivate a ten-stone bulldog without losing an arm or leg!'



## HOW TO FEED 20 HUNGRY PEOPLE ON THE HILL

MIMI DAVIES **OLDHAM MRT**

If you want to feed people that have been on the hill working and getting wet and cold, you need something hot and wholesome. It also needs to be something that can be eaten from a mug and easily warmed up without much attention. The best thing is soup, but it needs to be hearty. Here's my recipe for a hearty, meaty soup for twenty. It is also known as 'YES' soup, because if anyone asks any questions, you just answer 'YES' — Is it vegetarian? Yes. Does it have meat in it? Yes. Will I like it? Yes. And so on...

### Here's what you need:

3 lbs lean ground beef	12 tbsp pearl barley
2 medium onions, chopped	2 tbsp dried basil
6 garlic cloves, chopped	2 tsp dried oregano
small cabbage, chopped	2 tbsp dried parsley
2 x 20 oz tins tomatoes, chopped	2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
4 cups water	Tabasco to taste
6 cans consommé soup	2 tbsp red wine vinegar
2 cans tomato soup	1 tsp sugar
8 carrots, chopped	Salt and pepper
6 celery stalks, chopped	Optional: Parmesan cheese
2 bay leaves	

### Here's what you do:

Sauté the beef, onions and garlic then drain fat (important — if you don't, the soup will have a layer of fat floating on the top. Not very appetising!) Add remaining ingredients and bring to a rolling boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 1-2 hours. If you can make the soup the day before it will help the flavours blend prior to feeding the masses. Happy cooking!

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# WHAT DID THEY EVER DO FOR YOU? the execs

If you've ever wondered who those invisible people were, beavering away on your behalf at national level (or even, dare we say it, doubted their very existence), here's your chance to find out. This is by no means a definitive list but it's a page-worth of key people – and it certainly doesn't mean the ones not detailed further aren't also beavering away on your behalf. The plan is to update this on a regular basis as projects develop so watch this space....



## **CHAIRMAN: DAVID ALLAN**

**EMAIL: [allan986@btinternet.com](mailto:allan986@btinternet.com)**

Represents the interests of mountain rescue to the Government, the emergency services and other SAR organisations and The Princes' Charities Forum. Currently involved with the BMC and MLTE in the development of a national Safety Forum and, with Daryl Garfield, is seeking to establish national guidelines for team vehicle livery.



## **PRESS OFFICER: ANDY SIMPSON**

**EMAIL: [press@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:press@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Represents MREW to the national press, TV and radio, liaises with Clarence House regarding any Royal involvement in MR, supports teams in their own publicity, advises on corporate identity, and works with the fundraising group to further sponsorship deals with companies such as Goodyear – currently helping develop the relationship with Go Outdoors.



## **SECRETARY: PETER SMITH**

**EMAIL: [secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Acts as an interface between teams, regions and the national body, records and produces minutes at MREW meetings and generally deals with reams of admin.



## **MEDICAL: JOHN ELLERTON**

**EMAIL: [medical@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:medical@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Represents the interests of mountain rescue in medical matters to government, the emergency services and ICAR, and maintains the 'morphine' licence. Currently looking at possibilities for updating the Casualty Care handbook and conducts mountain medicine research.



## **TREASURER: PENNY BROCKMAN**

**EMAIL: [treasurer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

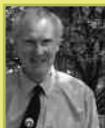
Besides ensuring the smooth running of MREW finances, is currently working with Insurance Officer Neil Woodhead, the insurers and police authorities to thrash out better deals for us in insurance, and with the fundraising group and Tony Rich to secure sponsorship deals to benefit team members.



## **VEHICLES: DARYL GARFIELD**

**EMAIL: [vehicles@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:vehicles@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

All things vehicle oriented including liaising with the police, Department of Transport and other relevant bodies. So... driver competency guidelines, fleet insurance, blues and twos, vehicle livery...



## **PRESIDENT: PETER BELL**

**EMAIL: [president@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:president@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Demonstrates wholehearted support for mountain rescue, attending national meetings and acting as an ambassador outside the organisation. Whilst there is a requirement for him to remain apart from day-to-day business, he thoroughly enjoys engaging in the technical discussions.



## **TRAINING/VICE CHAIRMAN: MIKE MARGESON**

**EMAIL: [trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Instrumental in creating the MREW Rope Rescue Guidelines and successfully re-establishing a national training day at Plas y Brenin. Recently elected to the post of MREW Vice Chairman.



## **ASSISTANT SECRETARY: PETER HOWELLS**

**EMAIL: [assistant-secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:assistant-secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Organises MREW search/management courses, represents us on the Youth United National Committee and co-ordinates our role in the UK MR conferences – currently working with Leeds Metropolitan University for 2012, and also working with Peter Smith on the Queen's Diamond Jubilee initiatives.



## **CENTRAL PURCHASING: NEIL RODEN**

**EMAIL: [purchasing@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:purchasing@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Currently oversees Basecamp, the national support members' group and continues act as liaison between MREW and Go Outdoors, developing ideas for future fundraising and gear testing.



## **FUNDRAISING: MIKE FRANCE**

**EMAIL: [nationalfundraising@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:nationalfundraising@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Chairs the fundraising group to develop revenue and PR opportunities and further sponsorship deals with a variety of companies including developing the relationship with Go Outdoors. Also acts as the link with the Princes' charities.



## **INSURANCE: NEIL 'WOODIE' WOODHEAD**

**EMAIL: [insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Currently working on the national vehicle insurance scheme.



## **WATER: EWAN THOMAS**

**EMAIL: [water@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:water@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Liaises with DEFRA and the fire service in the development of guidelines for water rescue, training and best practice. Currently creating a central register of water resources.



## **EQUIPMENT: RICHARD TERRELL**

**EMAIL: [equipmentofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:equipmentofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Looks at all things equipment, reviewing, researching and liaising with suppliers and manufacturers and is currently involved in development of the new stretcher project.



## **COMMS: MARK LEWIS**

**EMAIL: [communications@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:communications@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

Aims to develop better comms technology for MR, most notably working with Mapyx to provide mapping systems. Also sits on the UKSAR Comms working group.

**Plus...**

## **VICE PRESIDENT: TONY JONES**

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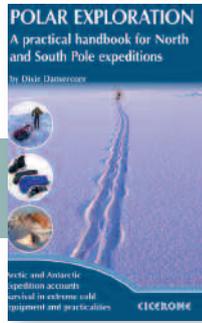
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# NEW FROM CICERONE

## POLAR EXPLORATION: A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK FOR NORTH AND SOUTH POLE EXPEDITIONS

by Dixie Dansercoer



If you fancy exploring further afield, this comprehensive guidebook is full of amazing experiences, knowledge and in-depth explanations and descriptions of journeys to the North and South Poles — everything you need to plan and enjoy the experience of a lifetime. Belgian native Dixie Dansercoer is an unstoppable outdoorsman and extreme sports lover who revels in the beauty and serenity of the polar landscapes. His enthusiasm and respect for their frozen environments shines through. Polar travel is becoming more and more accessible, with the number of people travelling to the ends of the earth as tourists rising fast. This book allows you to follow in the historic footsteps of the courageous few who journeyed to the poles with the sole purpose of exploration. For newcomers, it will aid the necessarily slow immersion into this complex world of survival. Returning explorers, will find plenty of information on equipment, techniques and experiences to compare and contrast with your own. Making the most of your time in these wild, empty lands requires many months of mental and physical preparation, and hugely detailed levels of planning — polar expeditions are truly life-changing but they do have the potential to be life-threatening for the ill-prepared. This guide provides all the information you need to ensure your journey is as safe and carefully planned as it is memorable and inspirational. Dansercoer has joined, led and guided polar expeditions since 1993, accumulating in-depth knowledge and close-up experiences of both of the globe's extremities.

'Polar Exploration. A Practical Handbook for North and South Pole Expeditions' by Dixie Dansercoer is published by Cicerone Press. [www.cicerone.co.uk](http://www.cicerone.co.uk). Price £15.95. ISBN: 9781852846657.

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## SARDA WALES ROB JOHNSON

# News

# dogs



In March, SARDA Wales had a great weekend for its Spring assessment. All four dogs up for assessment passed and the weather was glorious. Congratulations to Kev and Nop who passed their Lowland Novice, Steve and Boris who qualified as a

novice trailing team and Rich and Scout who passed their Novice Mountain. Skye and I also passed Novice Mountain. Many thanks to the whole team of assessors, caterers, bodies, handlers who all made the weekend possible. Two new dogs on the call-out list and

two new mountain dogs — great stuff!

Only a week or so later Kev and Nop had their first find on their first search together on our sixteenth call-out of the year so far.

At our AGM in April we had a change in officers, so well done

to Helen Howe who became the new chairman, Shelley Coyle who is now secretary and Rich Beech, who has taken on the role of training officer. Here's to the next twelve months!



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As co-founder of **GO Outdoors** I am delighted that we are working in partnership with the mountain rescue to raise funds and awareness for these selfless men and women.

**John Graham**

CEO & Co-Founder, **GO Outdoors**

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For a full range of suppliers and sponsors go to the members area [mountain.rescue.org.uk](http://mountain.rescue.org.uk).



## Take The Outside Track and support mountain rescue

Folk band The Outside Track — whose work is billed as a 'stunning synthesis of Canadian, Irish and Scottish music' — have released a charity single, 'The Mountain Road', to support four charities in Ireland, Scotland and Canada. Ailie Robertson, the band's singer explains why they chose to support mountain rescue: 'We're supporting both Scottish Mountain Rescue and Mountain Rescue England and Wales. The teams offer a world class, front line, voluntary search and rescue service, available any hour, any day and any weather and, given the title of the single, supporting this important work was an easy choice!'

The other two charities are the Tim Horton Children's Foundation — a non-profit organisation committed to providing a fun-filled camp environment for children from economically disadvantaged homes — and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Ireland's oldest and most well known children's charity. The final verse of 'The Mountain Road' portrays a happy, loving Irish family, so this charity is a fitting choice.

The proceeds from the single will be split between the charities, after a 15% commission to iTunes for the sale of each track. It's just 99p to download from iTunes or amazon.com.



# FACEBOOK TALES

Some of the stories that got you chatting last quarter...

...Favourite story had to be about Oldham search dog Bob who went missing in June whilst out walking with a friend of his handler Mick Neild. The Border Collie sparked an online appeal when he ran off following an unfortunate encounter with a cat, and neighbouring Calder Valley team members also volunteered to join with Oldham in a search of the area. Twitter feeds and Facebook updates went mad as news of Bob's disappearance was shared across the ether. Happily, the 'misdog' turned up safe and well. When rescuers responded to a call from a 'kindly benefactor' they discovered Bob had befriended the gentleman and was to be found 'lording it up' on a sofa in the man's garage, being fed. A big thank you to all who joined in the search.

...In early May, Patterdale team members spent four hours looking for a missing hillwalker who had already hitch-hiked back to his hotel. His friend had reported him missing in good faith having waited two hours for him at the summit of Hartsop Dodd, before making his way back to his car at Cow Bridge near Hartsop. He then waited another two hours before phoning the police and reporting his friend missing. A couple of comments left on Groug, following the news item, revealed more about the need for further public education about MR and mountain walking in general — references to taxpayers' money being wasted (a persistent belief that we are funded by the taxpayer. Indeed, PAID by the taxpayer) and querying the sense of the missing man for not using his mobile phone to inform his friend of his departure from the hill (mobile phone signals are notoriously unreliable — as anyone who has visited the Patterdale area will be well aware). They were quickly corrected by subsequent quotes from those in the know!

....And in April, the tragic story of a 77-year-old man who died while out with mother — aged 107 — in Snowdonia. He collapsed and died in a parked car close to the Ogwen Valley MRO base. Three members of the team used a defibrillator and oxygen to try to revive the man, who was from Caernarfon. His mother was taken to the rescue base to be comforted. Very sad. **JW**

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## MOUNTAIN & CAVE RESCUE BENEVOLENT FUND UPDATE

JUDY WHITESIDE  
BENEVOLENT FUND SECRETARY

Things may have appeared to be a bit quiet on the Benevolent Fund front, with teams and regions keen to hear news of when, how much and how — but, behind the scenes, both Shirley Priestley (Treasurer) and I have been peddling away as fast as the legal wheels will allow.

The final amendments to the Declaration of Trust were made in June and this document is now winging its way round the Fund's executive trustees for signing.

Once this is done — hopefully by early July — the next stage is to apply for charitable status. Whilst this is not guaranteed, even with the efforts that have gone into the Declaration thus far, we do have on our side an opening balance of over £10,000 (thanks to the initial funds raised through the Twirlies on Tour Coast to Coast walk last year, plus a generous contribution by MREW of £7,000) plus confirmed pledges from at least two regions and several teams to date. We are continuing to engage the legal services and support of Jamie Partington at Challinors, much of which has been provided pro bono. So, a big thank you to him and fingers crossed!

Once we have charitable status, and the registered charity number that comes with that, it will be all systems go — the bank account can become operational, fundraising facilities such as JustGiving and eBay charity giving can be set up but, more importantly, we can go out to the teams and members with information.

The plan is to produce a Frequently Asked Questions pack which we hope will cover every query you might have about the Fund, how it will operate, who is running it, the level of benevolence we can offer and how to make a claim. This will be distributed amongst the teams and available to download from the website, along with claim forms.

We now have an almost full complement of regional trustees — only SWERA is not represented, so if anyone in the south west fancies coming along to represent your region on the Benevolent Fund committee, please contact me (I'll be wearing my Benevolent Fund secretary's hat) via judy.whiteside@zen.co.uk. There's been a real buzz at our two meetings thus far, a real will to get things moving and make this work, and I feel sure all the regional trustees will be relaying the enthusiasm they've shown at those meetings, back to you at team level.

Finally, a big thank you to anyone out there who is already raising funds for us — Tim Jarvis for one (see his story opposite), is undertaking quite a challenge in aid of the Benevolent Fund and his own team, Longtown MRT. Thanks Tim and good luck!

Hopefully, we will have plenty to update by the October issue but, in the meantime, if you have any queries about the Fund — or any suggestions for inclusion in the FAQ pack — feel free to drop me an email: judy.whiteside@zen.co.uk.

## GIVE TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE BY TEXT MSGE

You can now donate to Mountain Rescue England and Wales via text message.

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*Teams wishing to buy the teddies in quantity — or anything else for that matter — for team fundraising, please contact Gail for details of discounted rates and other merchandise available.*



## HER NAME IS LOLA...

**TIM JARVIS**  
**LONGTOWN MRT**

**Y**ou have to be careful what you wish for. As a result of a slightly foggy meeting with the team doctor at a Christmas party, and a long period of training, I've recently become a new full member of Longtown MRT. I wished it stopped there, but no-one else is keen on getting wet, so now they've now conned me into being the water safety officer as well. It'll be base manager next. Wetsuits are one thing, but to ensure the biscuits are right is quite another.

But I digress. I didn't know a huge amount about the team before joining but I have always felt destined to join mountain rescue as my father and uncle were in the RAF St Athan team in the late-1970s and early-1980s and this inspired me to make that tentative approach.

As a teacher, outdoor instructor and (in another life) a soldier, I am confident in stating that I am no pushover in terms of confidence, strength or competence in the outdoors. However, none of this prepared me for membership of the team and, in those first days as a probationary member, I was completely bowled over by the commitment and professionalism of the full team members — the medical knowledge, the calm confidence dealing with casualties and the competence in rigging crag rescues are all sterling examples of the qualities these team members possessed.

These were qualities I didn't think I would ever possess myself. ('He still doesn't,' another team member and 'friend' helpfully comments on reading this).

I was hugely impressed and inspired from these first days on the team and I remain equally so today, so much so that I felt I had to

put something back, and thus began my love affair with Lola and a serious bit of fundraising.

If she was a showgirl, she'd be less trouble. Really, she would. I've just got married, and that was less stressful than trying to take a rusty vehicle on a major fundraising expedition.

Inspired by the efforts of 1955, when a team from Oxford and Cambridge universities completed the famous first overland expedition, I will be taking our 1974 Series 3 Land Rover on a 2000-mile, 12-day circumnavigation of the United Kingdom, visiting each of the National Parks.

My hope is that, by meeting with each of the National Park warden teams, local search and rescue teams and the media, as well as holding collections at each stop, we can raise funds to support the voluntary work of Longtown MRT but — more importantly perhaps — raise the general profile for Mountain Rescue England and Wales and for the newly created Mountain and Cave Rescue Benevolent Fund.

I must confess, this project was never going to be easy — the roads may be less arduous these days, but the mechanicals won't be. My best friend and mechanic/chief-

adviser Tom told me quite clearly: 'Don't buy from eBay, don't buy without looking at it, don't buy a non-runner and don't buy one with holes in the chassis'.

So I bought Lola after viewing her in the dark, on a rainy winter night, without a torch. She was a non-runner and it turned out she had a reasonable hole in the chassis too!

Alongside the mechanical challenges, I've been on a steep learning curve with regards to sponsorship within the charity sector. Donations are hard to come by, and this perhaps highlights another reason why national presence and advocacy within MREW is so important — it's much harder as a lone voice.

However, like most things, perseverance pays off and we've managed to gain support from a number of organisations, including a significant amount of support from a walker who passed the team on a training exercise, but also turned out to be the CEO of an IT company who loved the old Land Rover I was using. I learnt a useful lesson — if you don't ask, you don't get, so it pays to talk to those on the hill.

Lola is now running. She passed her MOT in January and delivered my bride to our wedding in

February. One-by-one small issues were resolved and, once the binding brakes have been sorted, we are ready for our first distance test runs before we set-off for real in July.

I have detailed the progress that the rebuild and the expedition has made on our blog — <http://firstbritishoverland.blog.com> — and on Twitter: @FBOexpedition. Letters have gone out to all the MR teams on our journey and the expedition schedule is set up.

The tour begins with visits to Exmoor and Dartmoor, before heading for the New Forest and South Downs then north to the Broads, North York Moors, Northumberland, the Cairngorms, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs. Then it's back across the border to the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales, the Peak District and finally into Wales for Snowdonia and the Pembrokeshire Coast before arriving home in the Brecon Beacons.

By the time you read this we'll be on our way and I'd love to meet other Landy enthusiasts en route so keep an eye on the blog and come and say hello! ■

# THE MOST ADVANCED PIECE OF KIT IN YOUR RUCKSACK!



**LYLE BROTHERTON**

**T**hey say that all good science is based upon originals from nature, so the latest ‘must have’ fabrics share many of their properties with natural fabrics, such as wool. And some would argue these have never been surpassed. Many of us today are caught up with the marvel of GNSS (Global Satellite Navigation Systems), such as GPS and GLONASS. Ironically, it was celestial navigation, the oldest of all navigational techniques, that paved the way for our use of our handheld satnavs, where we now launch our own celestial bodies to navigate by. Yet the most popular tool to determine north and the 360 degrees of the azimuth is the magnetic compass, and the science upon which it is based is truly remarkable. Magnetic compasses are cheap, durable, dependable and require no power source, plus they are very simple to use. But how many of us really understand how they work?

# navigation

1

## HOW IT WORKS

You could not write the script better for a science fiction thriller than this — 4.5 billion years ago, from the accumulation of a massive nebula of exploded stars, Earth was created and the final un-burnable stellar nuclear ash, containing the heavy particles of iron, nickel and cobalt sank to the core of the Earth.

These three elements are very special, as the electrons in their outer shell spin creating magnetic moments that are not cancelled, which is why they are called ferromagnetic.

Since this time the Earth's core has remained molten, due to heat from ongoing radioactive decay, and the motion of these molten iron alloys in the Earth's causes convection currents, flowing in the outer core that generate a massive magnetic field

extending thousands of kilometres into space, and it is this magnetic field that we use to navigate!

In fact this field, called the magnetosphere from above the ionosphere, is vital to life, as it protects the ozone layer from the solar wind, which in turn protects the Earth from dangerous radiation. Plus it protects us from solar storms that would make our compass needles go haywire.

Essentially there are several giant (dipole) magnets inside the Earth's molten core, which produce more than 90% of the Earth's magnetic field, the rest coming from electrical currents flowing within the Earth's crust and in the ionised upper atmosphere.

Remember all those experiments at school with iron filings, paper and a magnet? Knew I should have listened!



Understanding the why, tends to help us translate knowledge into a useful activity. In this article, we are going to look at the simple baseplate compass and:

- Understand how it works.
- Dispel some compass myths.
- Put theory into best practice.

2

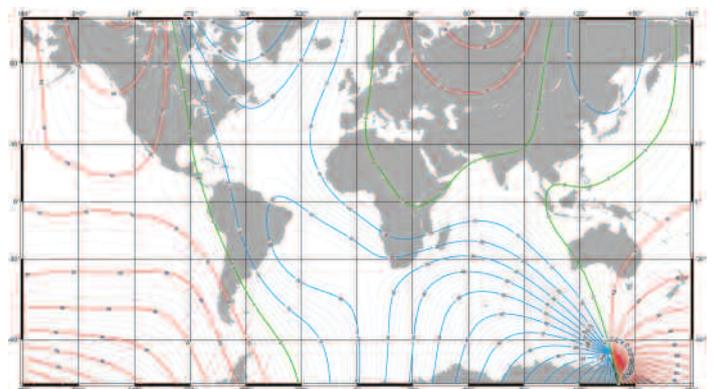
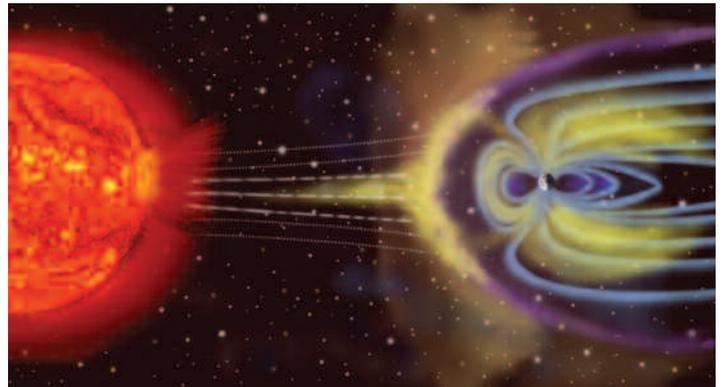
## DISPELLING THE COMPASS MYTHS

● **The magnetic needle in a compass points to magnetic north!**

No it does not! The magnetic needle of a compass aligns itself with the Earth's local magnetic field and not to any single point.

This field varies enormously across the Earth in intensity and orientation, and the compass actually points to the sum of the effects of these giant magnets at your location.

In other words, it aligns itself with the magnetic lines of force and we can measure these lines. They are called isogonic lines.



- The isogonic lines connect points of equal declination, just as contour lines connect equal altitude, in other words, anywhere along this line the magnetic declination is be the same.
- The lines are spaced at 2° intervals, with Red representing East declination and Blue representing West declination.

● **The magnetic needle is attracted to the magnetic north pole.**

**No, it is not!** Thinking about it, if it were the case, the magnetic strength of the Magnetic North Pole would have to be so strong as to attract a little compass needle to it from Great Britain, that the North Pole would no longer be accessible because of the vast quantities of iron pots and pans deposited there!

● **Magnetic north is near True North!**

**No, it is not!** It is actually a whopping 11° off True North — the axis about which the Earth spins and all lines of longitude meet. This means that the north and south geographic poles and the north and south magnetic poles are not located in the same place.

● **The Magnetic North Pole will always be in the north!**

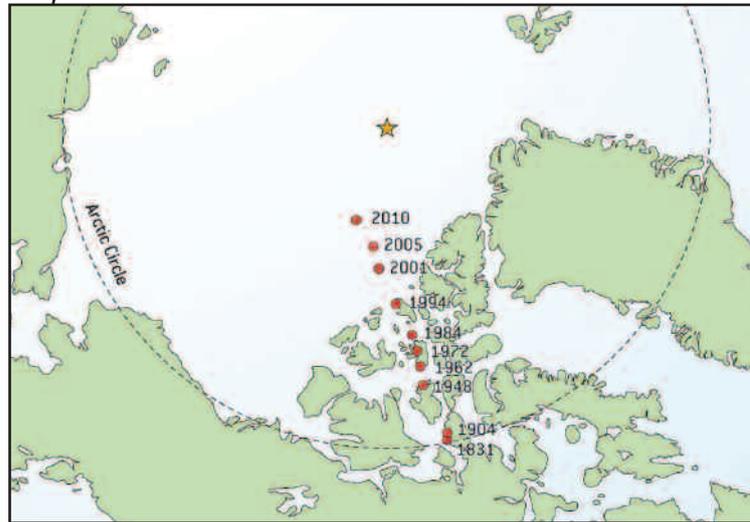
**No, it will not!** The Earth's magnetic field has reversed, where a compass needle will point south instead of north, several times over the millennia. Reversals occur at apparently random intervals ranging from less than 100,000 years to as much as 50 million years. The last time this happened was about 750,000 years ago.

● **There are only three North's, being Magnetic, True and Grid.**

**No, there is a fourth north!** The North Geomagnetic Pole is the north end of the axis of the magnetosphere (the geomagnetic field that surrounds the Earth) and that extends into space. It is the centre of the region in which the Northern Lights or Aurora Borealis can be seen.

● **Magnetic north is the Magnetic North of the Earth's giant magnet.**

**No, it is not!** Essentially the needle in a compass is a bar magnet,



● **The North Pole is static!**

**No, it is not!** Because the Earth's magma is a swirling molten mass, Magnetic North is currently heading towards Russia at 65km per year!

Magnetic pole drift

with a north pole at one end and south pole at the other. The north end of this needle can only be attracted to the South Pole of another magnet, in this case the Earth's, so the North Pole is actually a south pole magnet!

● **We correct our compasses for Magnetic Declination!**

**No, we do not!** We (I also used to make this mistake) tend to use, as mountain navigators, the term magnetic declination or magnetic variation (which is a synonym) when correcting a grid reference taken from a map to a compass, and vice versa. Actually this describes the angle between True North and the horizontal trace of the local magnetic field and it is not the value we need to use in Great Britain when working with the British National Grid, as used on Ordnance Survey and Harvey's Maps.

True North tends to be mainly on global mapping systems, which project large areas of the curved surface of the earth on to flat surfaces. However, the level of spatial distortion caused by this, across relatively small areas of the Earth such as the British Isles, can be significant. As a result, we (and many other countries) have developed our own local rectangular grid systems to reduce this degree of

distortion. Consequently the north meridian lines on OS and Harvey maps do not point to True North, they instead point to Grid North.

The only north-south grid line that actually points to True North is the one which coincides with the longitude meridian 358°, making Grid North west of True North to the left of this line and east of Grid North to the right.

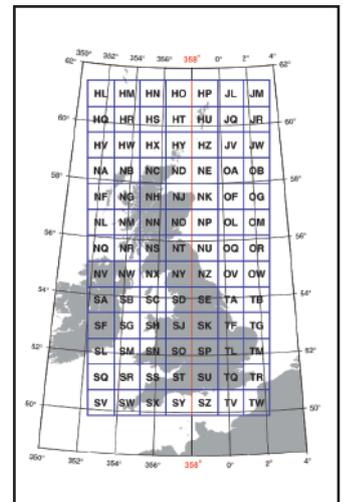
So we need to adjust for the angular difference between Grid North and Magnetic North when converting between magnetic and grid bearings.

This is called **GRID MAGNETIC ANGLE** or **GMA**.

● **This is difficult to take in!**

**No, it is not!** When you think about it, it's just common sense, which is often not that common unless you think about it.

The great news is that for us to calculate what adjustments we need and where for Grid Magnetic Angle, these have all been computed by the British Geological Survey and the US National Geophysical Data Center, to create the World Magnetic Model, and it is this information that is displayed on the bottom of our OS and Harvey's maps.



British National Grid Lines of Longitude: In the diagram above, the blue lines represent British National Grid Line, the black lines represent Lines of Longitude.

# navigation

## PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

3

There are three 'D's we must take into account when using a compass: Declination, Deviation and Dip.

### Declination

It is easy to forget to account for the difference between Grid North and Magnetic North (GMA), especially when the value is very low — such as in Penzance, where it is almost zero (0°24' west of Grid North) — and so insignificant that we don't need to account for it when converting between magnetic and grid bearings.

Yet if you travel to the other side of England, to Lowestoft, it is 3°46' west of Grid North. Not correcting for this difference will add significant error into our navigation.

In places such as the USA this effect is dramatic — the magnetic declination on Mount Rainier, Washington State, in the far west of the country is 16°E, whereas in Portland, Maine, on the east coast, it is 16°W. If a compass were adjusted on Mount Rainier and then used in Portland without being adjusted, the error would be 32°!

As our GMA is currently west in the UK, we 'Add for Mag and Rid for Grid' and we must simultaneously take account of the annual rate of change.

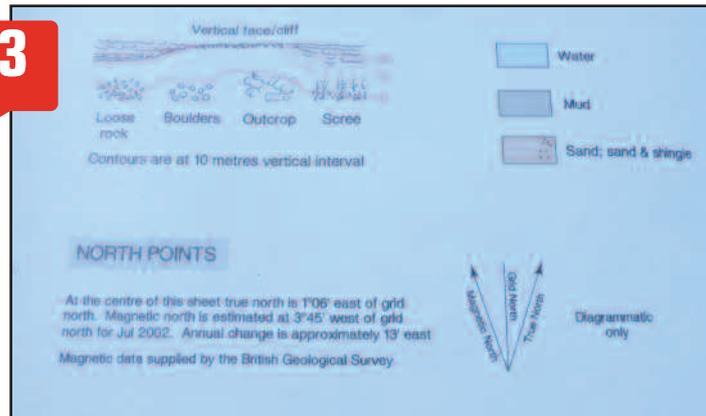
The image above is from a team map currently in use where, in 2002 the GMA is stated as 3°45' with an annual rate of change 10' east. As today's date is 2012 we need to multiply the annual rate of change by 10 — so  $10 \times 13' = 2^\circ 10'$ .

Therefore,  $3^\circ 45' - 2^\circ 10' = 1^\circ 35'$  is the actual amount we need to correct our compass by.

Always check the stated Grid Magnetic angle on your map, correct it for the time elapsed since it was published and if it is 1° or more, correct for it.

### Deviation

There are natural and manmade influences which can cause the compass needle to move away from Magnetic North.



### Natural environmental

Some areas, such as the Cuillin Ridge on the Isle of Skye in Scotland, or Ross Island in McMurdo Sound, off the coast of Antarctica, contain large, local iron ore deposits that make the compass readings inaccurate.

### Man-made environmental

Local features that are visible, such as wire fences, railway lines, overhead high-voltage cables, and those which are not visible, including underground pipelines, bunkers, silos and spoil heaps, can all cause magnetic deviation.

### Man-made personal

Steel wristwatches, metal-rimmed glasses, pocket knives, belt buckles or bras (if underpinned with wire) can all cause your compass needle to deviate.

More seriously, electrical equipment that contains magnetic induction coils, can permanently reverse a compass needle's polarity so, when travelling in a vehicle, make sure your compass is not in your pocket next to a door speaker, windscreen wiper motor or team radio. Even some mobile phones, with powerful speakers, can exert the same effect.

If you suspect compass deviation:

1. Take a bearing on your map from your known location to a feature you can also see on the land.
2. Correct the bearing for MGA.
3. Take a compass bearing from where you are to the actual feature.
4. Your readings should differ by no more than  $\pm 3^\circ$  maximum. If they do, repeat the technique using another feature to eliminate human error.

An online calculator for MGA anywhere in the UK can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/cl614kq>.

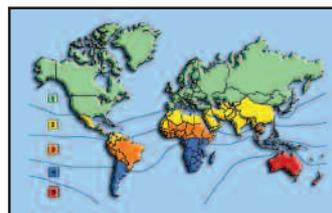
### Dip

Also called inclination, dip is the angle that a magnetic needle makes with the horizontal plane at any specific location. The magnetic inclination is 0° at the magnetic equator and 90° at each of the magnetic poles. Because of this a compass designed for the northern hemisphere will 'stick' in the southern hemisphere and vice versa.

Depending on where in the world you are, any standard compass you purchase generally has its needle balanced only for that region. For example, compasses sold in New Zealand will only be most effective in New Zealand and Australia. This is why compass manufacturers, such as Silva, produce compasses for different areas of the world, banded into five zones.

Manufacturers, such as Suunto have developed some global compasses (M3 Baseplate Global), which effectively negate this problem so you can use the same compass all over the world, but they cost more money to buy.

### Your compass — the most sophisticated piece of kit in your rucksack!



International Magnetic Compass zones.

## SATMAP XPEDITION

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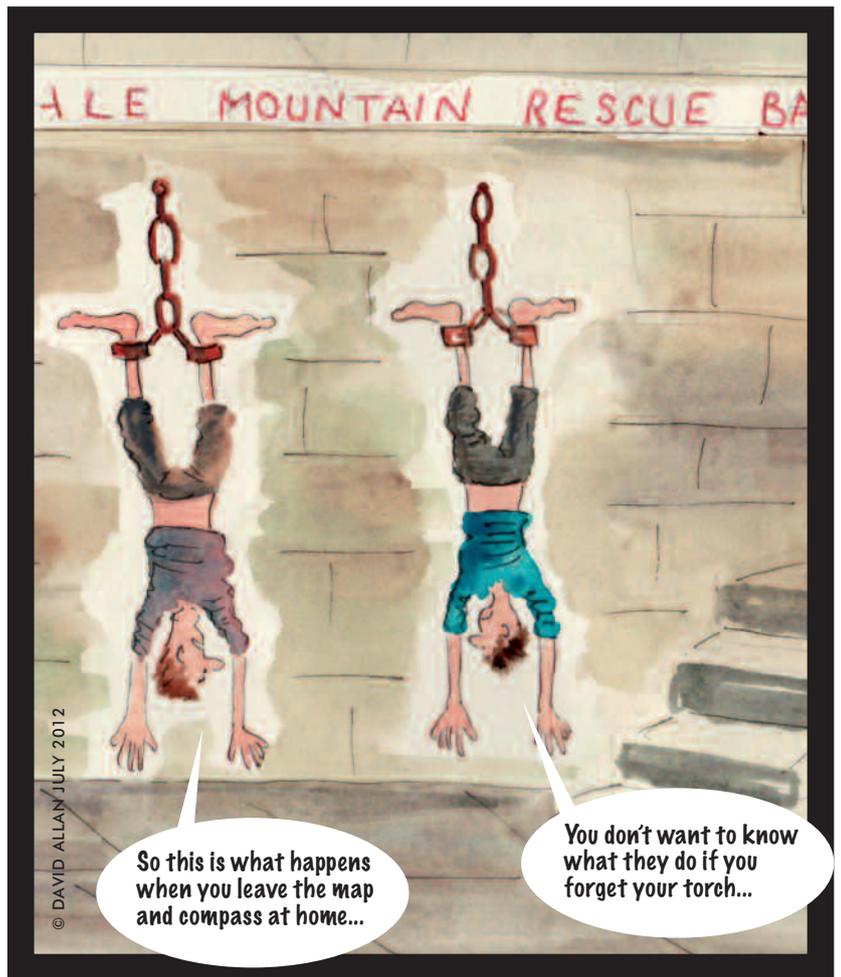
# APP-PLY HERE FOR VIEWRANGER SAR PROGRAMME

The adoption of ViewRanger amongst MREW teams continues with the addition of Brecon MRT and Coniston MRT, the latest teams to join the ViewRanger VSAR Programme.

Coniston are the sixth team from LDSAMRA to join, whilst the addition of Brecon MRT means that all but one team from the SWSARA are utilising the VSAR Programme to access smartphone based navigation tools to assist in their work. Almost three-quarters of the mountain rescue teams in England and Wales have now joined up.

ViewRanger is a highly featured, specialist outdoor GPS navigation app and, because it runs on the most widely used smartphones, it's easy and cost effective to deploy. The VSAR programme is the company's initiative to support accredited rescue organisations in England, Wales and beyond. It provides mountain rescue teams, lowland search teams, search dog teams, and other search and rescue groups with access to ViewRanger's GPS navigation, tracking and BuddyBeacon location-sharing facilities, along with detailed Ordnance Survey mapping.

If you or your team are interested in finding out more about ViewRanger, or wish to join the VSAR programme see [www.viewranger.co.uk/SAR](http://www.viewranger.co.uk/SAR) or contact [craig@viewranger.com](mailto:craig@viewranger.com).



## POP AND GO KNICKERS FOR GIRLS ON THE GO

Okay chaps, this is one for the girls! It's about knickers. Aurora Tyas, travelling on a night bus in Peru, looked down at the filthy floor of the toilet cubicle and shuddered in horror. How she was going to change her knickers? The filthy, unsanitary conditions were all totally uncondusive to dropping anything on the floor let alone trying to change her underwear as the vehicle swayed from side to side. It may well be an experience you can relate to.



Back in the UK, Aurora set about finding a solution and the resulting product — Pop&Go Knickers — went down a storm at its first outing

at a recent outdoor adventure show. Aurora has her own take on why this invention is such a hit.

'I've timed it,' she says. 'Balancing on your shoes, trousers in one hand, and trying to change your underwear with the other takes nearly two minutes, even in a stable environment. Factor in a dirty toilet floor, trying to keep your possessions safe and a moving vehicle, and you're going to end up sweatiier and more stressed than when you started. With Pop&Go Knickers you can complete the whole procedure in 40 seconds while standing up, or about 59 if sitting on a seat (and being discreet) and you don't come out of it feeling filthier than when you started.'

The knickers are made from high quality cotton that is breathable, hygienic and long-lasting. These are not disposables — they come with their own pouch so you can keep a clean pair in your bag and, once you've changed, store the dirty pair in there, too. There are two styles — a thong and a brief — in sizes 8-16. To find out more about Pop&Go, check out [www.popandgoknickers.com](http://www.popandgoknickers.com).

### FESTIVAL



### TRAVELLING

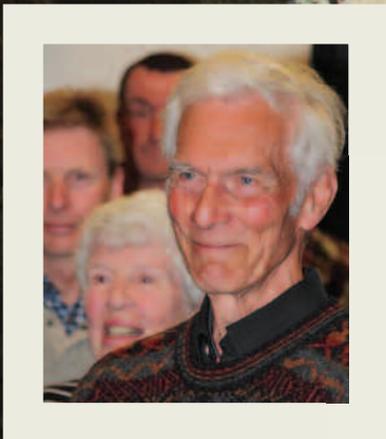


### EVERYDAY



# 60 YEARS IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE...

WORDS: JUDY WHITESIDE  
IMAGES: KESWICK MRT



**MIKE AND VAL NIXON  
KESWICK MRT**



It's a beautifully sunny Lake District morning, clear blue sky over the mountains but still a chill in the air. There's a sense Spring is lurking somewhere round the next bend in the road, but it's not quite here yet. Mike and Val Nixon open the door to their home, just a few moments walk from the centre of Keswick, and they're looking somewhat nervous. Am I really that scary? (Don't answer that!)

It turns out — as we bond over tea and shortbread biscuits — that they were a little anxious about this whole 'interview' thing. As it happens, I share their anxiety. It's not every day you get to meet a couple who, let's face it, have been around in mountain rescue for a very long time — sixty years in fact — right back to the days of Rusty Westmorland, the first documented leader of the Keswick team.

In no time at all, however, the conversation is meandering back and forth through those sixty, eventful years and, two hours later, I suspect I've only just scratched the surface.

Mike joined the Keswick team in 1952, a year after its title change from the 'Borrowdale Mountain Rescue Team' and it was something of a baptism of fire, with his first official call-out on Christmas night that year.

'My landlady knocked on the door: It's mountain rescue for you. Two young men missing on Great End. It appeared they had traversed off and were trying to abseil down. They were wearing smooth-soled shoes and it was thick snow. There were four of them climbing in two ropes of two. The top two shouted down, thinking the other two were still coming up but there was no response, so they went back to their digs in Borrowdale, assuming their companions had

already done so. When there was no sign of them there either, they called the team.

'A small party of ten team members went ahead and found the two bodies lying at the bottom. The rope was beside them but not tied to them. The rest of us set off down the Borrowdale valley in the back of a pick-up truck, then flogged up the hill with a police inspector — he had to see the bodies. He said he'd never do it again!

'We had to unbend them to get them on the stretcher, they'd frozen so hard. It was pretty gruesome.

'I remember driving back into the market square in Keswick, 9.00am Boxing Day morning, the bodies covered in sheets. The Blencathra Hunt was just setting off as we arrived.

'It was tough for a first call. We were all pretty raw and young then. But we all have them, the gruesome rescues, we just get on with it. We're not callous. We're just climbers — we go rescue other climbers and we like to think, if we fell off, similar people would come and rescue us.'

It's rare to hear much about women in mountain rescue in those early days. Teams were fiercely male. Even George Fisher, Keswick team leader from 1956 through to 1981 — a period many would consider the most 'liberating' for women in general —

'wouldn't have girls on the call-out list.' But, lest there's any doubt, Mike quickly makes clear that the team 'now has five very competent and valued women on the list' and, today, I'm under strict instructions to interview both Mike and Val.

There's a lovely shot in 'Call Out', the George Bott book which details Keswick's first fifty years. Rusty Westmorland stands hands in pockets, every inch the army captain and 'in festive mood' as the caption has it (although how you would know that is unclear). He is clearly delivering some sort of speech as Val sits, diminutive, next to him. 'Val Nixon listens attentively' continues the caption. And doubtless she did, although she was far from shrinking violet, more essential cog in the wheel — not to mention invaluable support to her husband's commitment to disappear on rescues at any time of the day or night.

In fact, Mike and Val joined the team together. As members of the Keswick Mountaineering Club, it was a natural thing to do. Mike was working with the Forestry Commission, felling trees at the time. Val became secretary of the team, only resigning the post when she fell pregnant in 1963. She was also the first secretary of the Lake District Accident Panel (now

LDSAMRA) from the mid-1950s.

'We must praise our wives,' Mike says, firmly. 'They have to put up with a lot.' It's a sentiment he repeats often.

Val recalls how mountain rescue, despite the lack of mobile phones and pagers, had a way of invading every possible social occasion. There really was no hiding place. 'We'd be in the cinema in Keswick, watching a film, and up would pop a notice on the screen: 'Call out!' There'd be a rustle of seats and people would leave.

'Often, they'd drive round the town in the team vehicle, sounding the horn. Lots of the lads didn't even have a phone [and we're talking landlines here] so we had a buddy system. And you weren't allowed to join in the first place unless you lived within a certain area.'

Rusty Westmorland, by all accounts, was fiercely autocratic. What was it like being part of the team under him? Mike can't actually recall Rusty ever going out on a call-out — although both Mike and Val admit their memories are a little hazy on some points and there IS another image in 'Call Out' of a steep stretcher lower with Rusty as the barrow-boy, apparently on a training day on Kern Knotts. We know it is he because of the Austrian hat, still firmly set at its jaunty angle.

TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: RUSTY WESTMORLAND, MIKE NIXON, GUNTHER FRANZ, DES OLIVER, GEORGE FISHER, DICK FISHER, GEORGE WITHINGTON, FRED BANTOCK AND BOBBY KELLY. FACING PAGE, MAIN PICTURE: BACK COVER OF THE GEORGE FISHER CATALOGUE, SOME TIME IN THE 1970s. INSET: MIKE AND VAL AT MIKE'S SURPRISE 60TH CELEBRATION.

Mountain rescue has always collected interesting characters, perhaps more so in the early days — or maybe that's just the nature of climbers. Mike tells a story of his friend and climbing partner, Gunther Franz, a fellow member of the KMC and a year younger than Mike, at 22.

'We did many climbs together. He was a keen climber, very strong. Had a fascinating life — born in Yorkshire but, just before the war, his grandparents took him back to their home land, which was Germany where he was obliged to join the Hitler Youth. At the end of the war, he came back here because he had an English passport. Of course, we still had National Service so it wasn't long before he was called up to serve in the English army and promptly posted back to Germany, to work as an interpreter!

'Sadly, he was killed on Central Buttress. He'd just gone for a job at Eskdale Outward Bound School. The Chief Instructor, Desmond Birch, took him out for a climb — a classic in those days. He'd done it before. He was leading the final pitch when he went off route slightly and tried to reverse. Des held him for a few seconds, badly burning his back and hand, before the rope snapped and Gunther fell 400 feet. That was in 1953, so we only had a year climbing together.'

But we've gone off at a tangent here (one of many!) and I'm keen to know whether Colonel Westmorland was as tough as the history books tell. Legend has it he was ever the ex-soldier, smartly dressed, boots polished, neatly trimmed moustache. That Austrian hat. George Bott has him as 'executive head' of the team for 27 years.

'At times,' he writes, 'the colonel overruled the climber: he could be autocratic and authoritarian, cherishing the idea of running the team on army lines.'

At the AGM in 1950, he had proposed that the team leader should be designated 'Captain', a suggestion which — as one might imagine even then — did not go down at all well. It was quietly abandoned. This, of course, was two years before Mike and Val joined the team, so perhaps by then Rusty had, indeed, become a pussycat. Whatever, I am unable to draw anything from them other than the fact he was a 'nice bloke'. I gather too he was not unpopular with the ladies.

But back to Mike and Val, about whom there is much to tell. Born in 1928 — so 84 this year — Mike began life in Malaya where his father managed a rubber estate in Batu Caves, seven miles north of the capital city Kuala Lumpur. It's a famous spot, a sacred place for the Hindus in Malaysia. The three main caves and a

number of smaller ones, made of limestone, were discovered in 1892 and are the focus for the annual Thaipusam festival, celebrating Subramaniam, the son of Shiva.

The sacred nature of the place proved scant protection to its British inhabitants, come the Second World War, however. Thanks to the intervention of the Japanese and the Fall of Singapore, family life as he knew it came to an end when eight-year-old Mike found himself bundled back 'home' to England to stay with two aunts. His parents were later captured by the invading army and sent to Changi Prison where they remained for the duration of the war. The Japanese detained about 3,000 civilians in Changi — intended to house only 600 prisoners — and as many as 50,000 Allied soldiers at Selarang Barracks, close by the prison, in the most inhumane circumstances imaginable. Many died. The end of the war was timely for his parents — any longer, believes Mike, and they would not have survived. His father emerged a very poorly man. Returning to England, he found it hard to settle back into English life. They returned to Malaya, and took out citizenship there, but his mother never settled. Ultimately, she returned to England, and Mike's father stayed in Malaya.

The deprivations of war aside, maybe we — and Keswick MRT — have the Japanese to thank for Mike's enduring love of the mountains. The aunts — 'two splendid women' — lived in Brampton and, by all accounts, provided a happy home for their young ward. Mike attended Lime House and St Bees, and it was here he started climbing on the likes of Pillar. That and 'chasing girls from the girls school in Seascale' although, he says, he never managed to catch them, something I find hard to believe given what must, even then, have been dashing good looks!

He went up his first hill — Great Gable — aged ten, with one of the masters at Lime House, who took Mike and three other boys off for a week in the hills.

Despite a long life spent in deepest Cumbria, the Nixon family were actually a Border Reiver tribe and his father a Yorkshireman. Val, too — despite a Keswick-born mother — has Yorkshire blood, on her father's side. Born in Pately Bridge, the family moved back to Keswick, to her grandfather's home (the house in which Mike and Val still live) when her mother set up a business in the town. Val and her elder sister also worked in the business.

Val's love of the mountains is no less strong than her husband's. She's 'done a bit' of climbing but is more interested in walking the hills. Currently undertaking her third round of Wainwright's, since she was 65, she

plans to top her final one — most likely Wetherlam — by her eightieth birthday in July. I am suitably impressed. No, scratch that — I am inspired! THREE times! A brief discussion about the merits of 'doing them properly' (ie. filling in the logbook), and I mention my recent acquisition of a Munro guide and a vague intention to see how far I get ticking those off. Turns out Val is not just a triple Wainwrightist, but also a 'Compleatist', topping out her last Munro just three years ago.

All these challenges are undertaken as a couple. Married in 1959, since first meeting, they've always climbed and walked together. Although Mike has done more climbing, his experience is mainly in the UK with little interest in bagging foreign peaks. Just after the war, he travelled to Norway and then to Switzerland, with the KMC. 'We were meant to climb the Matterhorn, but it snowed heavily so we didn't'. And that was that.

One memorable trip, in 1951, saw Mike climbing Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis, in late winter conditions, with his friend Gunther, Pip Richardson and Des Oliver. On 31 May, 2008 he did it again 'in absolutely perfect conditions' and accompanied by twelve members of the Keswick team, this time to celebrate his eightieth birthday.

'The party left the North Face car park,' explains Mark Hodgson, current team leader, 'to ascend via the Allt a' Mhullinn to the CIV hut. At this point, we split into two, with fourteen climbers continuing to the ridge whilst another twelve family members [including Val], friends and non-climbers walked up the zigzags to the summit.

'Climbing in groups of two or three — in t-shirts all the way — it took five hours to summit, with regular refreshment stops.'

By the time the climbers reached the Eastern Traverse, the non-climbing group were on the summit, watching progress through binoculars and someone on the summit was banging a very large drum.

Back in the valley, I'm told the birthday celebrations continued into the wee small hours of the morning. And, somehow, I'm not surprised. Mike's appreciation of Guinness is legendary.

As we're speaking of climbing, I probably should say at this point — although it's skipping on a little — that Mike hugely underplays his climbing achievements. It's only later, when I'm frantically taking notes at a surprise celebration at Derwent Hill Outdoor Centre in Portinscale, that I start to see a bigger picture.

Roy Henderson recalls his own first rescue with the team, as a young nineteen-year-old, on Sharp Edge.

'There were more team members up there than harnesses so Mike made sure everyone was okay then launched off the edge using only his rope — arms outstretched in a classic abseil.'

I later find this technique, also called The Duffer, described in 'Rock Climbing', by Stan Wroe, published in 1979. 'This barbaric style is no longer used,' he starts, 'and a good thing too! The climber prepares to abseil by standing astride the ropes, passing these under one thigh, across the front of his body and over the opposite shoulder. If the ropes pass over the right shoulder, they are held by the left hand behind the back and vice versa. Braking action is achieved by the friction of the rope against the climber's clothing and, when this is worn through, painfully against his skin!'

As a still-impressionable Roy discovered, some weeks later, when he attempted to emulate Mike's nonchalant ease, down Warden's Face — sustaining a sizeable rope burn on his arm which took some years to fade!

Mike and Val have clearly been blessed with good health and formidable stamina. I can't help wishing all their generation could be so vibrant, so alive. How many sat in their respective chairs at the tender age of 40-something and declared themselves 'old', before proceeding to spend the next thirty or forty years of their lives proving this to be exactly the case. Could we not somehow bottle this 'Nixon energy' for the beneficial use of armchair-dwellers everywhere?

Mike's birthday trip up the Ben was organised by his son, Chris, team leader of Kintail MRT in Scotland. Mountain rescue runs deep in this family. Nearer home, Val's nephew, Mark Hodgson — 'my sister's son' — has been team leader since Mike stepped down in 1993, and Mark's brother, Simon, is one of the team's deputy leaders. I'm intrigued to investigate this 'dynastic' tendency and whether we can expect it to travel down through another generation yet. The grandsons (Chris's two), I'm told 'don't do walking', but that might have more to do with their current leaning towards team sports. I later learn, however, that Donald Nixon was one of two teenagers, in November 2010, to achieve the highest level of the John Muir Award, an environmental awards scheme focused on wild places, undertaking caving, wild camping and orienteering as well as snorkelling, beach cleaning and night-time bat walking in the some pretty wild places.

Chris, I'm also informed, was often taken walking by his hill-loving parents, but 'moaned all the way round', a fact he confirms when I meet

him. Although he did love to be taken scrambling and easy climbing. His interest developed when he joined the Forestry Commission (like father, like son!) in the Kintail area. He joined the local team, and later served as deputy for a couple of years before being voted in as leader and, despite having never joined the Keswick ranks, he has accompanied the team on many call-outs.

On the other side of the family, with neither parent a walker, Mark was drawn into mountain rescue through the Scouts, aged sixteen. A requirement to join a local voluntary organisation, in order to achieve his Chief Scouts Award, sent Mark along to Uncle Mike, and it wasn't too long before Land Rover-washing and gear-sorting led to going along on a rescue. Younger brother Simon 'fell into' the team a few years later. He works in town, handy for call-outs. Even before becoming deputy, he found himself armed with a BT pager, and the 'first call'. And the rest is history. No contenders yet amongst the younger Hodgsons for team membership but maybe time will tell.

I doubt, when the Nixons joined this still embryonic team (a mere nine call-outs a year until 1958, when it rocketed to 42!), that they imagined for one moment they would be key players in the history and development of mountain rescue. Just to put things into context, in a world where post-war austerity measures were still in force, the nation mourned the death of George VI, whilst marvelling at the beauty of the young princess who became Queen whilst on safari in Kenya. Gene Kelly tap-danced his way through a downpour in a musical comedy which tells how the coming of sound upset the stars of the silent movie era [note to fans of *The Artist*: it's been done before!].

The first scheduled Comet airliner left London airport for Johannesburg with 36 passengers on board. Evita died. A freak flood roared through the Devon village of Lynmouth, taking with it more than thirty lives, including three boy scouts and the village postie. The 'worst train crash in Britain since 1915' killed 112 in a three-train pile up. The US tested the first hydrogen bomb in the Pacific. Derek Bentley was set to hang for the murder of a policeman. Oh, and thirteen-year-old Jimmy Boyd first wowed the radio waves with his number one hit 'I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus'.

It would be another seven years before 'teenagers' were invented, thanks to the Teddy Boys and Cliff Richard, eight years before JFK became president, eleven until his untimely death. The world had yet to discover the Beatles, the summit of Everest, space travel, miners' strikes,

the contraceptive pill, colour television, mobile phones, Steve Jobs, the internet, GPS tracking and search and rescue dogs.

No, far from setting out to make history, Mike and Val were simply doing what they loved — still the mark of mountain rescuers everywhere — but what a different world it was. Equipment was meagre and inadequate. Team members relied on their own ropes, their own 'waterproof' clothing, their own rucksacks and torches. Once they had sped to the police station, on foot or by bike, a sophisticated range of transport options included Dixon's laundry van, Young's lorry, the Motor Company's pick up truck and an ex-London cab. In 'Call Out', Des Oliver describes the dire journeys undertaken in this vehicle, which had faulty gears. 'One member of the team would sit on the luggage platform, with a stone ready to be jammed under a wheel if the gear jumped out. The driver, usually George Fisher, would give a shout of 'Bale out!' and the rest of the passengers were out of the back of the taxi in seconds.' Mike remembers team members regularly being trampled in the rush to clamber out.

In 1954 though, a Humber Snipe shooting-brake, priced £145, came into service. With seating for eleven team members, it did good service for a number of years — the envy of neighbouring Cocker-mouth team members (although they DID have a Rolls Royce).

In fact, the idea for that particular team (with which there is still clearly a good working relationship, oiled by a huge dollop of banter and good-natured rivalry) was largely nurtured by Mike. There was a time when Keswick team covered virtually the whole of the Lakes and the intention was to ease pressure on 'overworked' team members. Rusty Westmorland, the Fisher brothers and Mike attended a public meeting in Cocker-mouth, in 1953, at which the area was divided between the two teams. The Cocker-mouth team was born.

Jim Coyle recalls well how much the teams owe each other. Jim took on leadership of Cocker-mouth in 1969, following a tragic accident during a team exercise on Low Crag in Buttermere, in which two team members were killed and two severely injured — one of them Jim himself, who suffered a broken arm and ribs. He took the opportunity, at Derwent Hill, to thank Mike — and the late George Fisher — for their role in the subsequent rescue.

'The thing that sticks out was them. They were just there for us. They dealt with it.'

Jim and Mike go back a long way, to the late-1950s. 'When I started climbing, we'd all pile into Fisher's



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: THE MUCH COVETED COCKERMOUTH TEAM ROLLS ROYCE; IAN WALLACE AND MIKE IN THE SNOW; MIKE ON THE HILL, HELPING TAKE CARE OF THE CASUALTY; KESWICK TEAM MEMBERS UNDER MIKE'S LEADERSHIP; MIKE IN 'MALE MODEL' MODE FOR THE GEORGE FISHER CATALOGUE, SOME TIME IN THE 1970S.



TOP: CHRIS NIXON, MIKE NIXON AND SIMON HODGSON AT THE SUMMIT OF BEN NEVIS. ABOVE: FAMILY AND TEAM MEMBERS CELEBRATING MIKE'S 80TH BIRTHDAY TRIP UP THE MOUNTAIN.

shop on Lake Road and that's where I met Mike. We'd climb together and the friendship got stronger and stronger.

'Then we started the dogs together. Hamish [MacInnes] sent one down from Glencoe for me. Then Mike got one — Ling. We trained them with Spam [tinned meat]. In those days, training dogs using food was pretty much frowned upon, but it worked for us! We called them the 'Spam dogs'.

'One day, we were on a winter dog training weekend in Thirlspot. We'd climbed up Helvellyn — I remember wading up through the deep snow. It was a white-out and we missed a cornice. A couple of the dogs went straight through. One of them turned up, without his teeth and a broken jaw, but there was no sign of Ling. Mike was heartbroken.

'Next day, the Patterdale lads went up from Dunmail and, amazingly, they found her — still okay.'

Mike did about ten years as a dog handler with Yellow Labrador Ling, retiring her at thirteen. Val was a regularly dogsbody for fifteen years — in fact, they both were before they had Ling — sometimes a daunting experience, stuck up in the heather, waiting but, says Val, 'The dogs always came.'

Mike remembers one successful find. A young couple had gone to ground, we originally thought on Great End but it turned out to be Eel Crag. We searched all through the week — team members and others — but found nothing. There was a dog course the following weekend, so all the dog handlers said 'Right, we'll search.'

'We were going along the plateau when Ling started digging in deep snow, her tail in the air. Dug up a rucksack. So we started to dig down and there was the body. I always claimed there was a sandwich in that rucksack!'

Mike took over the team leadership from George Fisher in 1981 and continued in the post for twelve years. En route to the top, he'd acted as the team's first transport officer and then quartermaster and deputy leader, although he admits he was never one for committee meetings, preferring to be at the sharp end. Despite describing himself as an 'interim team leader, until someone else came through', he certainly made his mark. To say that he is held in high regard is an understatement. I don't think I have ever heard the words 'awe' and 'awesome' used quite so often — and not in a flip, down-with-the-kids way

but the real meaning of the word.

Long-standing Keswick team member and fellow dog handler, Ian Wallace, summed it up perfectly: 'You'd follow the guy anywhere, he gives you such a good feeling. He's just an awesome man.'

'He rarely said anything as team leader,' adds Roy Henderson. 'But when he did, everyone stopped and did exactly as he said. That style of leadership is a rare talent.'

Mark Hodgson confesses Mike was 'a really daunting bloke to take over from — he did it so well. Never any fuss. Just quiet encouragement. Gave people the authority to make decisions. But it was great to know he was next door [they still live in adjoining houses] when I needed him!'

Simon recalls being on call-outs as deputy, glancing across at Mike to see whether he approved of decisions made. Or not. A simple nod or shake of the head would suffice.

Under his gentle yet firm leadership, the team developed and thrived, undaunted by a fast-changing world. Since standing down as leader he has continued his quiet guidance and sound counsel as team president. In fact, all twelve teams in the Lake District benefit from his wisdom in his additional role as LDSAMRA president.

His most memorable, most difficult rescue was New Year's Eve, 2000, when two walkers got stuck on Skiddaw. As they climbed, conditions had grown worse until there was a gale force wind blowing and visibility was very poor.

'We were being blown off our feet on the way up and had to crawl over the top. We found the two men and literally had to rugby scrum them down. I think they were the worst conditions I've ever been in.'

Then he recalls another one, in the mid-1970s, on Esk Hawes, with Ian Wallace and his dog. They stayed out all day and night, and half the following day in a howling gale — screaming at each other inside their bivvi bags to make themselves heard. In the event, the couple were found dead, sitting with their rucksacks full of gear on top of Scafell Pike.

So how much do Mike and Val think things have changed? 'Oh, beyond recognition,' says Mike, 'but the people are the same. The commitment, the reason for doing it, the love of the hills, the challenge — especially on a foul night. The kick you get out of helping people.'

But he admits it's more like a business these days, there's so much money involved and the teams need money to pay for training and equipment — even the less busy ones.

'Keswick is fortunate but I do worry about government money coming in. I hope it doesn't bring strings which cause problems in years to come. I'd

prefer to see mountain rescue go on as it is.

'We're never short of volunteers. We did start to worry whether we could cope, when the figures went up to 140-plus but we got other teams in to give a hand. As long as you can do that, and know when to do it, you're okay.'

Val reminds me how much things have changed, too, for women in the team. In those early days as secretary, she wasn't 'allowed to have an opinion — just wrote down what the men said.' Only later did she realise how unfair that was because she was a 'mountain person' too.

Leaving mountain rescue aside, though, what's all this about him being a male model? Needless to say, he is modest about this too but Val goes off to find the evidence, source of much humour amongst the grandchildren, apparently. And there it is — page on page of 1970s black and white Mikes: Mike in 'Greenland' anorak, Mike in 'Greenland' parka, Mike in oiled Egyptian cotton, Mike in 'wet look garment', Mike in 'famous Norwegian fisherman's sweater'... I particularly like the 'Fisher hire' line, which appears to owe more to Gauntanamo Bay than Borrowdale.

Mike worked for 27 years at Fishers, and would be roped in to photo shoots — unpaid — for all sorts of magazines and catalogues during that time.

And the vintage cars? Where do they fit in? 'That's why they put me in charge of transport,' he jokes. 'I had Morgan three-wheelers. Took one to Skye once and broke down going over the top to Glen Brittle. Just left it there at the side of the road and went climbing for a week! Of course, it was an open topped car. Got back there to find all the leather bits had been chewed. Whilst I was stood looking at it, the library van went past. 'Cows ate it,' said the man. I got it rewired and shoved it down the road to a garage.'

'Had a couple of Alvis 1250s too, and a three-litre Bentley — but I had to sell that for £250, to get married, dammit! Should've kept it!' he adds, glancing across at Val with a twinkle in his eye.

In 1993, Mike was awarded the MBE and he holds Distinguished Service Awards from both MREW and LDSAMRA. He received the first ever MREW Long Service Award for fifty years — necessitating the creation of a new award, over and above those for 25 and 40 years — and this year he raised the bar yet again with a '60 years' certificate, awarded at the team dinner by David Allan, MREW chairman. Since its birth in 1947, the Keswick team has carried out around 3000 rescues [see right]. It is pretty safe to say Mike has attended well in excess of 2500 of those — and he continues to do so, with the fitness

and stamina of a far younger man. The likes of Mike might never be seen again in our current mountain rescue service.

'I can't ever imagine giving up,' quotes the 'Cumberland and Westmorland Herald', in May 2003 and, nine years on, that shows no signs of becoming less true.

'His commitment and selfless sacrifice in the pursuit of those in distress on the Lake District fells has been an inspiration to all those who have worked with him,' runs the citation for Mike's sixtieth award. 'He seems to have a sixth sense, an empathy with the feelings and needs of casualties and team members, making him a guardian angel for us all.

'Mike's phenomenal contribution continues to be an inspiration and model to many current and aspiring mountain rescue team members. We are truly indebted to Mike and the unstinting support of his wife, Val, without whom we would simply never have become the team we are today.'

There's no doubt Mike has helped shape not just the Keswick team but also all the teams around him and much of that has rubbed off nationally too. Truly remarkable.

And now here I am at the Derwent Hill, on Sunday 1 April, pen and paper at the ready and hoping, somehow, to do it all justice. As far as Mike is concerned, he is engaged in a belated Mother's Day get-together for the family, with everyone in on the secret but he. It says a great deal about the team's and the family's conspiratorial capabilities that it was only as the wheels turned into the car park that he became at all suspicious!

By the time he and Val walk through the door, the entire Keswick team and a few honoured guests are gathered, drinks in hand. Drink, I should add, catered in some part thanks to Sue at the Keswick Brewery, who supplied a barrel of Thirst Session for the do. Once the excitement had settled, Mark said a few words of welcome before inviting anyone to speak who wished. Most of these I have woven into the story thus far, apart from one.

Donald Angus recalled a particular occasion, out with Mike on a search, when neither of them had eaten much all day. A little rummaging round the rucksacks and Mike came up trumps with the ubiquitous Mars Bar — two years old — at the bottom of his sack. Without a wrapper. Goopy, sticky, and covered in crap. Tough mountain men to the last (or maybe just blummin' hungry!) they dragged that goo into two halves and ate the lot. 'And we're still here!'

They certainly are. And long may that be the case. For, as Paul Cheshire so succinctly put it, before we all dived into the excellent buffet, 'In summary Mike, you ARE a legend.' Nuff said. ■

# JUNE SEES 3000TH RESCUE FOR KESWICK

## The 49-strong Keswick team created another piece of mountain rescue history in early June, when they undertook their 3000th rescue since the commencement of accurate records of rescues.

A 36-year-old man had slipped and dislocated his kneecap whilst walking on Causey Pike. Team members treated the casualty at the scene and stretchered him to an air ambulance. The rescue was just one of three call-outs that day. Other calls involved a female walker who had slipped and sustained a lower leg injury, near the memorial on

organisation. Where else would you find an organisation where its members will work all night (often in horrendous conditions) to help an injured or lost casualty, then go to work the next morning and, if called upon to do so, do it again the next night? Several team members have individually attended over 1000 rescues and the team base is 'littered' with 25 and 40-year long-service awards. Mike Nixon's 60-year active involvement with mountain rescue, is a record unlikely to be surpassed by anyone, anywhere.

Team members are often called to non-mountain incidents too, including the devastating floods that hit Keswick in 2005 and 2009 and the aftermath of the Cockermouth floods, utilising skills developed and learned for swiftwater river rescue; local searches around the town for missing people; the A66 school coach crash; fell fires; winter weather support to the ambulance service; post-incident assistance following the West Cumbria shootings; and lake rescues on both water and ice.

Since 1947, the advancement in techniques and equipment has been exponential. From Tilley lamps and borrowed vehicles, the team now has a fleet of four specialist vehicles, a boat and an ice-rescue sledge. Radios boast GPS-enabled microphones, enabling real-time display on computer mapping back in base of every team member's position. Internet links can be sent to missing walkers which, if they have smartphones, will display their position on the same computer mapping, saving many hours searching. Team members are equipped with the very best personal equipment, catering for activity at any time of day or night, in any weather, and a purpose-built rescue base (one of the first in the country), opened in 1996. The list goes on and on.

The continuing message from Keswick MRT to everyone enjoying themselves in the hills and mountains of the Lake District is to go prepared! Take the right equipment and know how to use it, plan your journey and let someone know where you're going and — most importantly — enjoy your times in the hills. If you are unfortunate enough to need the services of Keswick, or any other mountain rescue team, dial 999, ask for Cumbria Police and ask them for Mountain Rescue. For more information about Keswick MRT, please visit [keswickmrt.org.uk](http://keswickmrt.org.uk).

*'Where else would you find an organisation where its members will work all night (often in horrendous conditions) to help an injured or lost casualty, then go to work the next morning and, if called upon to do so, do it again the next night?'*

**Mark Hodgson**

the path to Skiddaw, and a further call to assist a female walker returning from Sty Head.

Formed in 1947 after the difficult rescue of renowned Everest mountaineer Wilfred Noyce, Keswick MRT was the first civilian mountain rescue team in the UK. From the early years, where annual totals of rescues were between ten and twenty, the team now deals with a hugely increased and varied workload. Record years to date have been 2009 and 2010 with 136 and 144 rescues respectively and these numbers don't include the many alert calls that don't develop into a call-out — overdue walker alerts, lights on the fells and so on. In 2011, numbers returned the 'normality' of 94 rescues, but still the third busiest year ever. These 3000 rescues have sadly involved over 260 fatalities.

To demonstrate the continuing rise in rescues, the first 1500 spanned 47 years to 1994, the second 1500 took just nineteen years. Bearing in mind that team members train once a week — every week — and the additional input to equipment repair and replacement, vehicle maintenance, fundraising, running what is effectively a small business, involvement in regional and national liaison and planning, this would be a heavy workload for a full time service, never mind a totally voluntary

## The latest addition to the Keswick fleet is a Mercedes 4x4 163bhp Sprinter Ambulance/Personnel carrier.

Alongside the two TD5 Land Rovers and the existing Sprinter, the new vehicle means 28 team members can be transported at any one time. In the event of two simultaneous call-outs, a Land Rover and a Sprinter can be despatched to each one, providing personnel and equipment-carrying, and ambulance capability in each package. By keeping with the same vehicle configurations, training and maintenance costs are minimised.

The latest Sprinter was supplied and converted by the North Wales Commissioning Centre, at a substantially lower cost (circa £14,500 lower) over the previous Sprinter, and benefiting from a new type of safety floor, which adds considerable strength and security for the benefit of passengers and stretcher-borne patient. As a police-commissioned vehicle, it complies with all current legislation and the standard of workmanship is excellent. The vehicle has the new conspicuity markings to heighten visibility, and even has the name of the team in large lettering on the roof so it can be identified by air assets. The current Sprinter has briefly gone to the NW Commissioning Centre for a conspicuity upgrade and installation of the same safety floor.



# STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT!

STEVE JOHNSON **DUDDON & FURNESS MRT**

**It's 2.30am and I can hear the rain on the outside of my tent. I make a quick hot chocolate before sorting the kit I need. Once out of the tent, I appreciate that the rain is keeping the midges away — or is that simply the time, and the fact it's still dark?**



Once packed, I get my medical bag, add in a few items of personal kit (stove and food!) and I'm ready. Andy points out the incline we're going to ascend — very steep, very wet and very Welsh slate (ie. slippery when wet)! The first of many inclines on the way up into the remains of a now unworked mine.

But then the killer, that strange thing, as well as personal and medical kit I'm going to be carrying a kayak! Yes, a kayak (inflatable Seyvlor) into a mine on a wet dark hillside.

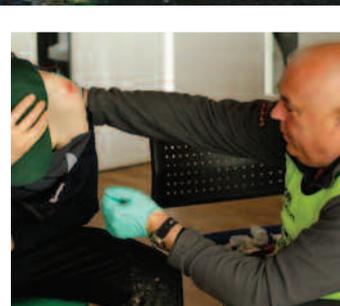
This was my introduction to the world of adventure racing. I'm supporting the Open 24, a multi-stage

race in North Wales which started at 6.00am the day before, when I stood on an Anglesey beach checking competitor's safety gear prior to them swimming through a choppy sea, in order to start the first stage — coastering! There then followed miles of mountain biking, orienteering, kayaking and mountain running before they arrive at the mine entrance above Penmachno.

So, back to the mine and four of us, myself, Andy (deputy leader DFMRT), Sim (secretary LDSAMRA), and another volunteer slog up the old mine workings with our packs, tech gear and kayaks, then along a forest

track to an entrance to one of the old mine levels where we're met by two mine guides (who organise trips for stag parties). We're all led into the mine where we discover flooded passages and the reason for the kayaks — a flooded cavern. At this point, Andy and Sim start to inflate the kayaks which will be used by the competitors as they navigate around the flooded level, 'underground orienteering'.

One of the guides turns to me and says: 'You're the medic, you can come with us, we're going to another level where we think it's a bit more dangerous and the competitors may



fall!' Great, just what I wanted to hear!

We go along a different passage, traversing the small lake, arriving at a steep tunnel with a waterfall coming down it. 'It's up there,' they say and I'm led up the incline to a small rest cave. 'You stay here — the first competitors should be here in about an hour.' And that was it until the first of the tired competitors, cursing loudly as they trip and stumble in the water, start filing down past me, looking amazed that someone is sat in the dark waiting for them.

So what is this all about? Despite, or maybe because of, a long background in pre-hospital care, firstly in the Army, then on contracts around the world, including with the UN and charities in Kosovo, Angola and Lao PDR, I've always had a concern at how skills are maintained, updated, perfected. I started in mountain rescue in 1982, fortunate to receive initial cascade training thanks to Iuean Jones at Bangor, and am now a member of the Duddon and Furness team where we are lucky to have a strong commitment to training — as you'd expect with Mike Margeson, MREW Training Officer, as our team leader and Dave Allan, MREW



TOP: OPEN 24 MINE ENTRANCE; OPEN 24 MINE KAYAK. OTHER IMAGES: A BUSY 24 HOURS' WORK!

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR OR COURTESY OF DAVE MACFARLANE (PLANET FEAR) OR JAMES KIRBY (WWW.JAMESKIRBY.ME.UK).



chairman, as one of our doctors. When you look at the average team and see the number of call-outs, training sessions and casualties each deals with, it's often the same people at every incident, the same people who get to the casualty first, the same ones keen to take a lead. So where does that leave the average team member, one of the few responding to a midday, midweek call-out who suddenly finds they are the cascarer?

In our team we devote much training time to cascare with a number of full cascare training days each year. Every incident practice has a casualty, there are consolidation evenings designed to build knowledge and practice skills and a full two-day course at the local hospital which members of teams within LDSAMRA can attend prior to taking the Casualty Care exam, many attending every year, not just when the certificate is due to expire.

Whilst there are obvious pressures on our time, I'm sure many teams find attendance for helicopter training or crag sessions is mysteriously better supported than cascare and yet every incident has the potential to involve a casualty, even to ourselves, in road accidents, slips carrying stretchers, in bad weather, whatever. It doesn't matter how slick your ropework, when you last flew, or how good you are with a throwline if, once you have a casualty, you don't know what to do next. So if something happened to the person at the side of you on a night time search, could you cope? What if something happened to you? Are there team members whose skills seem less-practised? Would you want them treating you?

In addition to standard team training there are lots of opportunities to develop and maintain skills. There's the excellent

Edale MRT Trauma and Acute Medicine weekend (now an MREW course so central funding may be available), the MREW Ambleside Medical Symposium (next one in Autumn 2013), and the NESRA Advanced Cascare course as well as other commercially available courses.

## Can you find what you need, when you need it? How do you know?

Many teams provide the opportunity to help in the local community such as at fell races, mountain bike and other events. While sometimes it may be difficult for members to justify the time for these — especially in busy teams and those with extensive training calendars — volunteering on adventure races and other events provides good opportunities to practise skills. Some of these are simple, such as asking people the right questions to make a diagnosis or identifying how best to structure your personal first aid kit so that you can find what you need without scattering the contents across the hillside. Others are more complex, such as assessing whether the person can be treated to enable them to make their way to the finish, or do you need to withdraw them from a race which has so far cost them a year's training and a £500 entry fee? All ideal skills for helping you learn to make and defend decisions.

Three years of supporting events

has meant helping people with fractures such as collarbones and ribs (mountain biking), lower legs (falls), elbows (canyoning and gorge walking) and a whole range of wounds, as well as medical problems from asthma to hypothermia, allergies to SVT (induced by the caffeine in sports drinks), even one case of suspected pneumonia. All this is experience which helps when that next SARCALL or pager message comes through.

I believe we all have a duty of care to each other and to maintain rescue casualties to be as skilled as possible. As someone once said to me: 'If you don't aspire to be good at what you do, then you are accepting mediocrity.' And, if I'm the one taking a tumble (which I have) the last thing I want is someone who is 'accepting'. So how are you maintaining your cascare skills? ■

*Steve Johnson is a member of Duddon and Furness MRT and UK-MED, the International Emergency Trauma Group funded by the Department for International Development to respond to disasters. He is a researcher in the Faculty of Health and Well-being at the University of Cumbria and keeps his skills up to date by supporting adventure races and teaching outdoor and remote area first aid (for Casualty Care, ITC and others). He maintains long-held qualifications through BASP and the RCS (Edin) Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Practitioner programme.*

## HELP ON THE HILLS FOR DIABETICS

DR ANDREW TAYLOR  
OLDHAM MRT

At the suggestion of our North West Ambulance Service (NWS) paramedic, I decided to hone my cadging powers and seek support, in the form of donated test equipment, from Nova BioMedical, a company that makes blood sugar testing kits. NWS recognises our pretty considerable ambulance-support role, by supplying the Oldham team with several replacement consumables (if in stock). As this could include the testing strips for a Nova BioMedical testing device, it seemed reasonable for us to have those machines in our Casualty Care kits.

Previously we had relied on a varying series of free sample kits from a range of companies. This had led us into having several different machines and a degree of confusion as to how each one actually worked — not good when you want a result in a crisis. Not good either when all the different testing strips need replacing — they aren't cheap to buy and not very long in the shelf-life department.

They could push the team into spending a lot of money on strips, most of which never get used. Standardisation, therefore, sounded like a good idea — reduced confusion, reduced training requirement and free supplies. A win-win-win situation! All we needed was the right machine. One call to the nice lady at Nova BioMedical and the wheels were set in motion. Three machines arrived in the post, followed by an email offering training. On the duly agreed date, Sue from the training division of Nova arrived at the garage, fell in love with search dog Bob, and gave us an explanatory talk on the StatStrip Express, followed by a demonstration of what is a very simple and reliable way of measuring a blood sugar level on the hill. Thank you Sue and thanks to Nova BioMedical for your generous support.

[novabiomedical.com](http://novabiomedical.com)

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'These bags address a growing need for improved infection control,' said Gary Wilson, of Speedings. 'As a family company we pride ourselves on personal attention, quality, reliability and service. Our ability to manufacture products in both large and small quantities is of huge benefit to our customers.'

'Our consultancy and design service allows us to take a customer's ideas and convert them into detailed product design. We manufacture from our factory in Sunderland and oversee the complete process so the customer gets exactly what they want.'

The bag's smooth exterior surfaces are easily washed and wiped clean using a stream of warm water and any residual contamination is killed off by the bag itself. Malcom Woods of North East Ambulance Service said, 'The AntiBacBag range is a major leap forward in meeting infection control standards. We were so impressed, we've replaced every bag on every ambulance across the service with Speedings AntiBacBags made to our exacting requirements.'

For more information on Speedings' AntiBacBag range of infection control bags, visit [www.speedingsltd.co.uk](http://www.speedingsltd.co.uk), call 0191 523 9933 or email [gary@speedingsltd.co.uk](mailto:gary@speedingsltd.co.uk).



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## HOMEOPATHY FOR TRAVEL

CAREY BLANDEN

**Planning a trip somewhere this year? Well, no matter how far afield your travels take you, why not plan to pack a homeopathic first aid kit alongside your other medical essentials, to help you on your way should aches, pains, sunburn and biting beasties take their toll. What you put in it depends on your destination but here are a few suggestions.**

### ARNICA

Arnica, the remedy for physical shock and trauma, is suitable for use, wherever you're headed. If you fall over, wrench muscles or hurt yourself in any way, this is the remedy for you. It can also be used for insomnia when away from home.

### SOL

If you are going to a hot destination, Sol is a useful remedy. First made in 1893, it was created by passing the rays of the sun through a prism, and then made into a homeopathic remedy. You can use it as a preventative – take one Sol 200 every morning. Take common sense precautions: wear a sun hat, cover your arms and legs, and put sun lotion on your nose and cheeks but, if you get sunburnt, Sol is a suitable remedy to expedite your recovery.

### INSECT BITES

Insect Bites is a useful remedy for areas where this is a problem – for example, in Scotland to combat the effects of midges. It's a combination remedy, containing five different

remedies connected with bites and stings so it has a wide spectrum of uses. Take one tablet every morning and, if you get bitten, you can increase the frequency of the doses.

### ARSENICUM ALBUM

Norovirus is a condition that can ruin your holiday. It's not a new problem and has been around for decades, but it has come into prominence because it spreads swiftly through the passengers and staff on cruise ships, and other situations where there are many people in a small area, including restaurants, hotels and dormitories.

Norovirus is a contagious disease that can spread due to lack of sterilisation when washing up after group meals, general sterilisation when doing the cleaning, and hygiene in the premises involved. The symptoms are diarrhoea and sickness so my suggestion is that you always take Arsenicum Album 200 with you when you travel. You can take up to seven doses on the first day, and then three or four doses a day until the condition improves. Avoid communal meals

and drink only bottled water (no food) for 24 hours until the condition has cleared from your system. Carry antibacterial gel or wipes with you and use them frequently.

### COCA

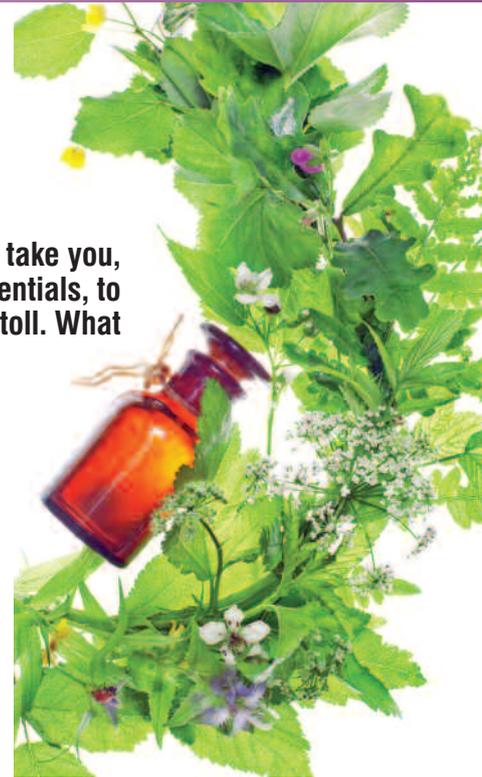
The 'mountaineers' remedy', Coca can be used for high altitudes, altitude sickness and associated symptoms including exhaustion, palpitations, anxiety and insomnia. It's also useful for symptoms caused by flying, and headaches at high altitudes.

### COCCULUS

Cocculus is a remedy for preventing or treating jetlag and has been shown to be useful for people travelling round the world.

### CARBO VEGETALIS

Carbo Vegetalis is made from charcoal. The old homeopaths knew it affectionately as the 'corpse reviver', and this is the remedy to be used for treating hypothermia.



Select your remedies to complement any medicines which your doctor or pharmacist may have prescribed for you. To find a registered homeopath in your area of the UK have a look at the website [www.findahomeopath.org](http://www.findahomeopath.org). ■

**CAREY BLANDEN MARH IS A REGISTERED HOMEOPATH, BASED IN COCKERMOUTH, CUMBRIA AT THE NORTH LAKES CLINIC. TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT CALL 01900 821122. CAREY.BLANDEN@VIRGIN.NET.**

IMAGE: MADEIRA POSTOLIT (DREAMSTIME.COM)

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## SYSTEM NICOLA: UPDATE APRIL

**T**he selected date had been noted and, as might have been predicted, the early burst of summer weather had broken just before. We awoke to a cold and very frosty morning in the Shepton Mallet club hut in the Mendips. Members of Devon, Cornwall, Mendip, Gloucester and Midlands cave rescue teams were represented.

**PETE ALLWRIGHT**  
BCRC/CRO  
**GRAHAM TAYLOR**  
SYSTEM NICOLA  
**JON WHITELEY**  
BCRC/DEVON CRO

All duly assembled and briefed, the underground party set off down Swildon's, aiming for Sump 1 and this was duly reached in swift time. The surface set had been configured earlier and was awaiting the underground set-up. The start-up warble was duly heard and voice communications quickly established using the hand microphones. This was not initially as clear as expected for two reasons — firstly, an issue with feedback from the loop aerial circuit into the microphone and, secondly, the nature of the chamber near the sump providing a natural echo.

Changing to the Bluetooth headset underground improved this, but was still not as clear as required. Concern has been expressed about bottom-end Bluetooth headsets and this test confirmed these reservations. It was believed a better headset with a boom microphone, incorporating noise cancelling properties, would reduce the effects of the echo in the chamber.

Notwithstanding, the signal strength was excellent and, allowing for the echo, the quality was clear. On the surface, the Bluetooth headset was a little quiet, but increasing the volume on the headset improved this.

Nicola 3 is constructed in a box some 130 x 80 x 35 mm and it is expected to be waterproofed. To aid this, the number of holes through the box is being kept to a

minimum. The microphone connector is of robust construction and, when the mic is connected, the unit powers up. A blanking plug may need to be considered, to enable only the Bluetooth headset to be used without the mic connected.

On the whole, the testing was successful. The problem with the feedback into the hand microphone has been identified and a fix is available.

A problem with the quality of the transmitted signal resulting in the distortion needs a little more work to identify and fix. Several team representatives present again expressed concerns over the aerials, in particular the length and diameter of wire. This will be addressed in the next prototypes.

It is now agreed that version 'C' of the prototypes will be built. In the meantime, there will be some testing in France, and further development of the Bluetooth programming. We expect there will be yet more testing and more results over the summer period.

As we progress the testing over summer, we will develop a clearer picture of Bluetooth headset performance with the aim of providing guidance to users.

Consideration is also being given to the method of connecting external batteries as this is regarded as an important feature for the units. ■

**YORKSHIRE DALES  
RESCUE PANEL  
& BRITISH CAVE  
RESCUE COUNCIL**

**25TH BCRC  
CAVE RESCUE  
CONFERENCE  
12-14  
OCTOBER 2012**

On behalf of the British Cave Rescue Council, the Yorkshire Dales Rescue Panel (YDRP) will be hosting the 25th National Cave Rescue Conference on the weekend 12-14 October. The conference will be based around Ingleborough Hall in Clapham, North Yorkshire, the location of the Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO) headquarters. Accommodation is available in Ingleborough Hall and a booking form is available at the BCRC website. Also available is the first draft agenda for the weekend. If you have any suggestions or proposals for workshops or lectures would you please contact the organising secretary, Graham Hughes via [hughesg01@hotmail.com](mailto:hughesg01@hotmail.com) in the first instance.

**PLUS**

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19-21 OCTOBER IN  
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*...? busy period  
for some cavers!*

## GCRG DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDAL PRESENTATION

PAUL TAYLOR

**I** have to say at the outset that I can't take the credit for the idea of holding a medal presentation underground. That must go to Jon Whiteley of Devon CRO who told me they were planning theirs for Kent's Cavern and asked what we were doing in Gloucester CRG?

Clearwell Caves — a tourist iron mine in the Forest of Dean — instantly came to mind as a very suitable location and, as it is owned by cavers, we have a good relationship with them. They immediately said yes and a date was set for the evening of June 14th.

With part of the mine known as Barbecue Churn, many parties and events have been held in the past and it would prove to be very suitable. During the weeks that followed, invitations were sent out to all of the GCRG medal recipients, with four guests contacted to undertake the presentation.

For the night of the event the chamber was transformed with a static display of GCRG equipment and display boards, laptop projector and screen, lectern, tables and chairs and also the all-important food and, even more important, drink.

Ninety people attended, including 48 recipients' family and friends, GCRG guests and distinguished guests.

An excellent mix of light-hearted humour blended well with the more

serious aspects of the evening dealing with the presentation of the medals and the heartfelt words of support that were given. How many events have you been to where one of your guests (the Assistant Chief Constable) was employed to move the table and lectern when a light failed? All joined in whole-heartedly with the proceedings and everybody was extremely complimentary about the location. It had made the event.

It's fair to say there is only one word that describes the evening: 'Fantastic!' And thanks are extended to all who took part and organised the event. It will go down in the history of the group and be remembered for a very long time.

Special thanks to Richard Berry (Assistant Chief Constable Gloucestershire Constabulary), Jon Hall (Chief Fire Officer Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service), Ceri Evans (Deputy Lord Lieutenant Gloucestershire) and Tony Forster HSE (Mines Inspector) who undertook the presentation of the medals. The current Deputy Gaveler, Daniel Howell, and John Harvey, who held the same post for the previous years, and was also a medal recipient, were also in attendance.

The support of all of the staff at Clearwell Caves contributed to the success of the evening and thanks also go to Jonathan and Ray Wright for making the caves available to us for this very special and unique event.



LEFT TO RIGHT: TONY FORSTER (HSE MINES INSPECTOR), RICHARD BERRY (ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONSTABULARY), PAUL TAYLOR (CHAIRMAN GCRG), NICKY BAILEY (EQUIPMENT OFFICER, GCRG), PETE TURIER (SECRETARY, GCRG), CERI EVANS (DEPUTY LORD LIEUTENANT OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE) AND JON HALL (CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, GLOUCESTERSHIRE FRIS). PHOTO: CHRIS HOWES FRPS



## CO-OP SUPPORTS CRO

ALASTAIR TURNER

The Co-op's decision to step in and support the Cave Rescue Organisation as their charity of choice couldn't have come at a better time. The year's major fundraising event for the team, the Broughton Game Show, has had to be cancelled so any extra revenue generated will go along way towards keeping people safe and able to enjoy the spectacular scenery throughout the year.

Speaking on behalf of the Co-op, Sheila Brown, manager of the Ingleton store, just a few miles away from the CRO's depot, had this to say: 'This was a personal choice for me and I am happy we were able to make cave rescue our charity for the year. We expect to raise a lot of money and, because of my personal connections with the organisation, it's a great time to be doing something as they are losing out on some funds this year.'

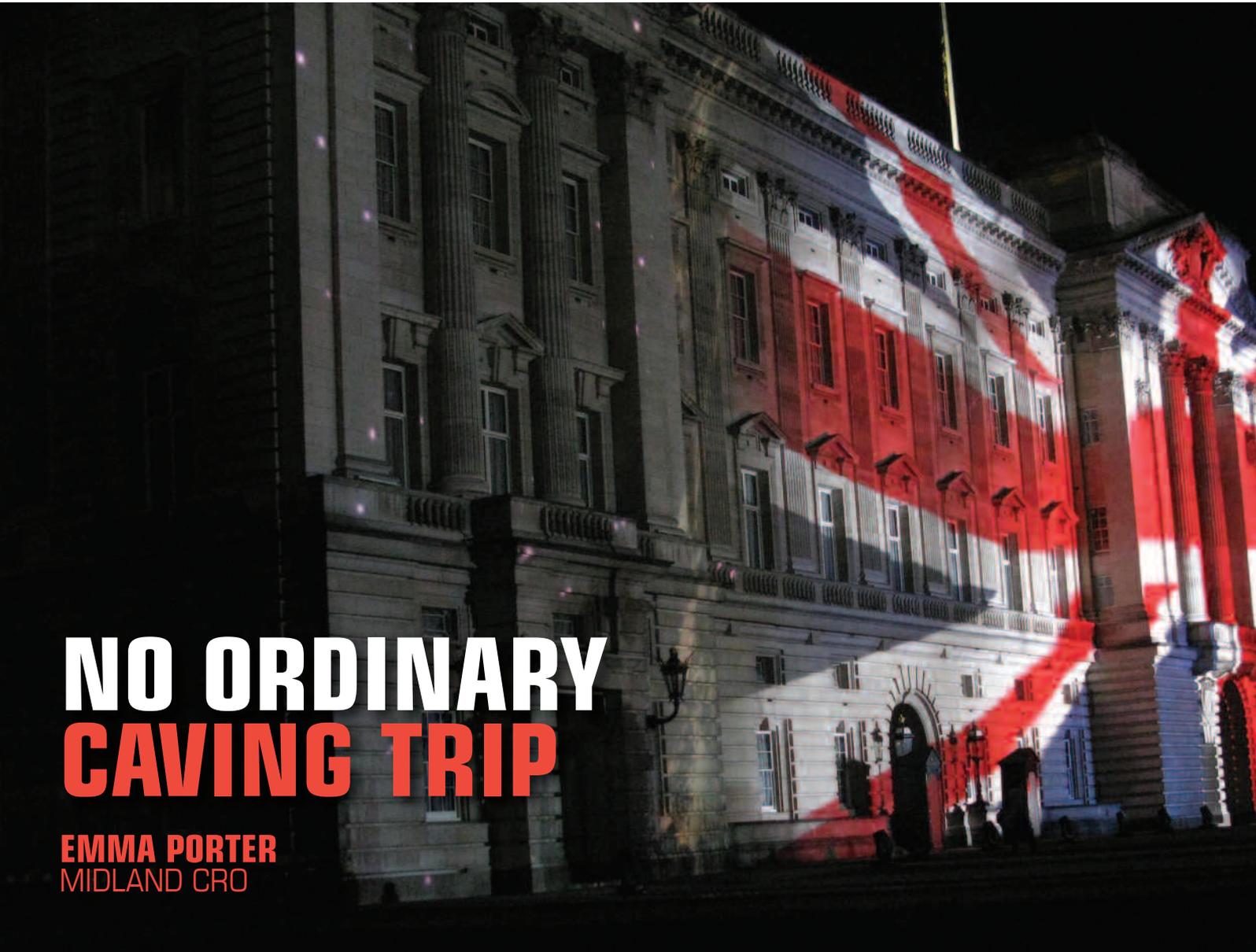
'A lot of our customers are visitors to the area and they may well need the help of CRO if they get into trouble, whether that is in a cave or out walking. We want to help make people aware of the work cave rescue do and the funds required. It's also interesting that, even in hard times like these, our customers are willing to give to charity and we are seeing just how much money can be raised with our in-store collection tins.'

The collection tin may not be the only revenue stream, however, with quizzes and other fundraising ideas in the pipeline. The Co-op's community-based projects have helped raise money for a wide range of worthwhile charitable causes and, over the last ten years, the members of the Co-op have donated over £7 million, making a real difference to communities and charities all over the country.

Speaking on behalf of CRO, chairman Bill Quinton said: 'This is really great news. We'd all like to thank Sheila and her staff for making us their charity of the year. Ingleton Co-op has always been helpful in the past and our collecting tin there has been well supported, but this is taking that extra step to help keep our mountain and cave rescue service running well. We need to raise over £30,000 every year to keep equipment and off-road ambulances replaced and in tip top condition, so Sheila's special effort is very much appreciated.'

LEFT TO RIGHT: NICOLE HEATON, SHEILA BROWN, DAVID SEDGWICK, AMY LIS AND MALCOLM LINFORD.

More cave rescue news on next page



# NO ORDINARY CAVING TRIP

**EMMA PORTER**  
MIDLAND CRO

**A** blur of red jackets descended out of daylight to tackle the infamous through trip. Down and down underground, defying obstacles, negotiating in and out of side passages and oxbows, only stopping to admire the beautifully curved roofs of the tunnels, chasing the draughts, through a complex network of passages to eventually emerge... at Embankment!

This was to be no ordinary weekend. Along with a large number of other charities, representatives from MREW and BCRC were extremely privileged to receive tickets to the Queen's Jubilee Concert in London. Those from cave rescue comprised of mainly current and ex-BCRC officers, representing six different teams from England and Wales.

London was simply alive and buzzing. Despite the weather being very much against us on the Sunday, we donned woolly hats and gloves and braved a long, damp wait at the side of the Thames to view the

passing flotilla. Armed with free periscopes and aided by large screens scattered all along the river banks, we caught glimpses of the water world spectacle.

On the Monday, after a pleasant walk up London's peak, Primrose Hill, for an impressive view of the city and then through canal tunnels complete with stalactites, we survived another underground through trip of the tube. With our MREW colleagues, we headed down to Buckingham Palace towards a sea of Union Jacks, and onwards through the 'airline' security at the gates. There were people everywhere, jostling, squeezing past,

as far as the eye could see down the Mall, and the atmosphere was electric. Eventually, the concert started — act after act, military, comedians, musicians and then the Royal Family. The finale was a fitting tribute, with The Queen lighting the last worldwide beacon, heralding the start of a spectacular firework display and ending with a fluttering Union Jack projected onto Buckingham Palace itself.

Our long weekend ended with a visit to the Scott exhibition at the Natural History Museum. His expedition to Antarctica makes our caving expeditions pale into



## MIDLANDS CRO GO OUTDOORS IN COVENTRY

**KELVIN LAKE  
& EMMA PORTER**

April saw six members of Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation team at GO Outdoors in Coventry for the day to raise awareness of mountain and cave rescue. The team took along some of its rescue equipment, including a display of photographs, articles and cartoons, and a laptop and projector continuously showing some of our caving activities and rescue techniques.

Although most of our spare time is taken up with underground activities, all six of us go climbing from time to time, and part of the remit for the day was to run the climbing wall. This proved a huge success with children, adults and MCRO members alike! And the store benefited from having the wall continuously manned by three team members, leaving staff to concentrate on equipment sales.

Not content with merely introducing GO Outdoors customers to climbing, we took along the infamous Dudley Caving Club 'squeeze box'. Participants squeezed their way through the artificial flat-out crawl with the height of the squeeze box being reduced on each round and, fortunately, MCRO's rescue skills were not required on this occasion.

Many thanks to the staff for making us feel welcome and giving us the opportunity to raise our profile within the store and thanks to Go Outdoors for their ongoing support.



insignificance in terms of the duration, commitment, scientific work, hardships and courage. Inspiration for us all!

This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for those fortunate enough to represent cave rescue in London and we took the decision to wear our respective team polo shirts and Mountain Equipment jackets. This attracted a huge amount of interest from members of the public everywhere we went, stopping to chat, asking us questions and recounting their caving experiences. And if you look very carefully at the footage of the Jubilee Concert you can actually see the jackets! ■

More cave rescue news on  
page 59

## UPDATE FROM DMM

There are a multitude of products across our recreational climbing range and also the whole Professional section too.

Sometimes we are guilty of not promoting certain products as we think that our customers are already aware of them. The ANSI gate is a classic case in question.

This locking mechanism was developed for the North American market to match the demands of the rigours of working at height. However, the implications for any application where you require an added safety margin are huge. These gates will withstand a force of 16 Kn in any direction applied for one minute and when released they will still function. So if you are looking for an option for very critical anchors or attachments this could very well be your answer.

Finally, look out at the beginning of July, when we unveil the new range of products at the summer shows. There will be a big variety of product, both metal and fabric. First showing will be 12 July at Outdoor in Friedrichshaven. As always go to our website for full details:

[www.dmmwales.com](http://www.dmmwales.com).



  
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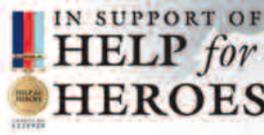
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# caves

## BCRC TECHNICAL TRAINING DAY 21-22 APRIL

JON WHITELEY

**T**he weekend of the 21-22 April saw a meeting of delegates from twelve of the fifteen cave rescue teams come together for the first BCRC Technical Training Day and the BCRC AGM.



The Saturday saw forty members meet at Derbyshire CRO's new base, at the newly built Buxton Fire Station. The Derbyshire team, along with Buxton MRT, now have shared access to a fantastic facility.

The morning comprised two main sessions, one looking at the newly issued gas monitors, agreeing procedures and usage. This session was assisted by Nigel Stubbs of Able Safety Solutions, the original suppliers of the monitors. The monitors also received their first certificated calibration, something that needs to be undertaken on a six-monthly basis. The other session was an update on the new Nicola Mk III radios gave teams a chance to see the units close up, the results of the

last two testing sessions were discussed at length.

The afternoon session allowed members to drop into various sessions. The fire station crew introduced delegates to the 'smoke house' and the 'house that catches fire with you in the room' — scary or what? The BCRC teams are not planning on getting involved in fire fighting, but it did give delegates the opportunity to try out BA equipment which fitted in line with the issues of foul air in caves and mines. Delegates also examined the possible usage and development of portable/battery powered air-moving equipment and there was also a session on the recently introduced SARCALL SMS Response tool.

The British Cave Rescue Council AGM was held at Derbyshire Police headquarters on the Sunday. Present were BCRC officers and representatives from twelve of the fifteen member teams, Mountain Rescue England and Wales and the Association of Chief Police Officers. The meeting saw some changes of officers with the retirement of Brian Jopling as equipment officer, John Cordingley as diving officer and Bob Cork as vice chairman. None of the retiring officers were present but the meeting expressed their appreciation for the valuable service all had given especially Brian, who has completed eighteen years in post, and John, with an amazing 27 years.

Mike Clayton of Midlands CRO was elected as equipment officer, and Chris Jewell of NWCRO as diving officer. Emma Porter, of Midlands CRO, was elected to the new post of assistant secretary. The position of vice chairman was left vacant.

12-14 October will see the 25th BCRC Cave Rescue Conference. The weekend is being organised by the Cave Rescue Organisation, in Clapham. Accommodation is available at Ingleborough Hall and details and a booking form are available from the BCRC Conference Secretary Graham Hughes [hughesg01@hotmail.com](mailto:hughesg01@hotmail.com).

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## THE POSSIBLE FUTURE OF SARLOC... AND OTHER THINGS

### RUSS HORE

#### SARLOC

More and more teams are using SARLOC in the UK and it seems like every week I get a request from outside the UK for more information. My aim is to keep it as simple to use as I can, but there are some changes I would like to make.

At the moment, teams append an identifier to the end of the SARLOC URL, which currently needs to be a valid MRMap radio ID for the missing person's location to appear in MRMap. The problem with this is the radio IDs are fixed and, once a misper has the URL, they could abuse it by 'showing their mates down the pub' how it works. As it stands at the moment, each time SARLOC gets a fix it adds a record to the MRMap database.

To prevent this I have developed a system whereby users (MR teams) can request a 'token' from SARLOC. The token takes the form of a random string of characters (eg. 'HGbt6H') which is sent to the misper instead of an MRMap radio ID. When the team requests the token, it also tell SARLOC which team they are and what radio ID to associate with the token. Thus, when SARLOC gets the misper's location it 'knows' what radio ID to put in the MRMap database but teams do not need to disclose a radio ID to the misper. The HUGE benefit of this is that the token will be valid for a certain amount of time — by default four hours, but this can be changed when the token is requested.

When the token is requested, the team can also optionally supply a mobile phone number, or numbers, to which SARLOC will send the misper's location information. The benefit here is that if a team has no internet access, they can still receive the misper's location.

Along with mobile phone number(s), teams can also optionally supply an email address to which to send the details.

Now if all this sounds like too much work for teams to do, it can all be automated.

#### SARCALL integration with SARLOC

One possible solution would be for the team to send a text message to SARCALL passing the misper's mobile phone number, a mobile to send the location to, and an email if required. SARCALL would pass this information to SARLOC and it would use SARCALL as a software 'mobile phone' to send the SARLOC link with a token to the misper and send the resulting location to the team's mobile phone.

So, in practice, all the teams would need to do is have a template SMS message stored on their phone, add the misper's mobile number and send the text to SARCALL. SARLOC would do the rest.

#### Team's website integration with SARLOC

If you have access to an email to SMS gateway you could automate the whole process from your own web site. Ask Russ for details.

#### MRMAP WEB BASED CONFIGURATION FILE EDITOR

Currently each MRMap user has a local configuration file (mrmmap.ini) that contains all the configuration details for MRMap. The problem is keeping all team's 'mrmmap.ini' files in sync so, when a team changes who has one of its radios, all other teams get the change. Dave Binks and I have a plan, which we are still developing but the rough idea is as follows:

The team's local copy of the 'mrmmap.ini' file will no longer be edited by the team but will be downloaded from the MRMap web site. Any changes to the file will be carried out using a password protected web page.

Teams will only see their own 'private' radios but will be able to specify 'public' details. The purpose for this is many teams assign a real person's name to a radio in the 'mrmmap.ini' file for their own use, but publish a copy with the names

removed and just numbers. So the base op may see 'OGGI Russ Hore' but all other teams would see 'OGGI 6.'

To make things easier, the web page would allow 'groups' of radios to be defined. A radio would only be a member of one 'group' (a group being 'First aiders' for example) and editing of a group will be possible. So all 'First aiders' could be changed from 'Red trails' to 'Green trails' without having to change each first aider's entry.

When a team starts MRMap it would check if it has internet connectivity and download a fresh copy of 'mrmmap.ini' to the local machine. MRMap will now use that local copy. If internet connectivity is not available, MRMap will use the existing local copy of 'mrmmap.ini'.

The web-based editor is available for test and comments. Contact Russ or Dave for more details. As this project is still in the development phase we welcome ideas to make things easier for teams.

#### MREW MAP SERVER

I hope we're all aware of the availability of online mapping such as Google Earth/Maps, Bing Maps, OpenSpace, and the free map data available from the OS (OpenData).

These facilities are extremely powerful tools but there is a catch. If you want to use them to display 'sensitive' data, such as SARLOC hits, the terms of use for the free systems generally do not allow the use of the system behind a password protected web page.

The cost of a license to allow you to password protect the map data is considerable (£5k-£10k per year) and only allows you access to the map data the provider has access to.

When you use a system like Google Maps you are only really talking to a bit of software that 'knows' how to retrieve pictures (map tiles) from a map server, amongst other things. Work is well underway to deploy a map server for MREW use only.

There are huge amounts of free data available to the public that could be served up with a map server. The Environment Agency publishes flood-warning data; Ordnance Survey has their OpenData program, location of mine shafts, caves, etc. Operational data such as keyholders for gates could be served up — click on the gate on the map and the phone number of the key holder pops up.

These can all be served up from a map server in a standard format. In fact, any data that can have a location attached to it can be delivered in a standard format as a layer.

In simple terms, a user can ask a map server: 'Give me a map centred on this lat/long containing the following layers: StreetView, contours, flood plane data' and the map server works out which tiles to return.

When this is up and running, systems such as SARLOC will make use of it, allowing SARLOC hits to be displayed on a variety of maps: 1:25k, StreetView, etc.

If you have any questions about SARLOC, or any of the above developments, please get in touch with Russ (sarloc@russ-hore.co.uk).

Well, who knew?!

The word 'Bluetooth' was first coined in the 1990s but its origins go back way further. Several centuries further, in fact. It is said to be named after King Harald Bluetooth (910-985), who was credited with uniting Denmark and Norway, and was coined because Bluetooth technology unifies the telecommunications and computing industries.

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## JOHN MUIR TRUST REMOVE ABSEIL POSTS FROM THE BEN

The John Muir Trust, the charity which owns most of the summit of Britain's highest mountain, has explained why it removed a series of posts that helped walkers and climbers navigate routes off the hill. The decision to remove abseil posts from the summit of Ben Nevis was taken after a six-month public consultation. Posts above Coire Leis and a vandalised one at the top of Number Four Gully will be replaced by more durable stone cairns, to aid navigation in winter.

The Trust worked with the Mountaineering Council of Scotland to decide the best course of action. A window of good weather at the end of May allowed the MCofS to mobilise a group of volunteers, along with members of the RAF Kinloss MRT, to remove the posts. The Number Four Gully marker will be reinstated as a 1.5m cairn with 'No 4' incised on the cap stone — hopefully more stable, and less prone to vandalism and maintenance in the future. Work will begin to build the cairns as soon as possible over the next couple of months.

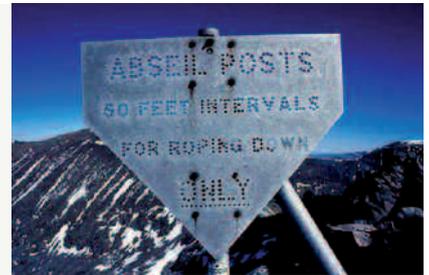


PHOTO: ALAN KIMBER

## JUBILEE BEACONS LIGHT UP SCOTLAND'S MOUNTAINS



THE QUEEN'S  
DIAMOND JUBILEE  
BEACONS  
4TH JUNE 2012

A number of Scotland's mountain rescue teams — including RAF and Royal Navy personnel — got involved in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in June, which saw beacons being lit atop the UK's highest peaks.

Members of RAF Kinloss MRT joined a 52-man team of injured service personnel in the climb to the summit of Ben Nevis. The beacon was lit by David Timmins, previously a lance corporal in the Royal Logistic Corps, from East Renfrewshire, who lost an eye and suffered paralysis when he was caught in an IED explosion in Helmand Province in Afghanistan in 2009. He had been signed out of the army because of his injuries only the previous week so this was, he claimed, his 'last chance to do something with the army.'

Over on Loudon Hill, in the Irvine Valley, a Royal Navy Sea King helicopter from HMS Gannet assisted in the proceedings, helping to ferry the necessarily vast quantities of wood across the valley and up the steep hill. The crew of the Sea King were in for a busy day as they were also set to fly on to Argyll to help with a Jubilee beacon there. A spokeswoman for HMS Gannet said: 'We do this sort of thing alongside mountain rescue teams as an exercise as part of their training schedule. It's also nice that we can help.'

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- Dymock Trench - OCHS Team Leader
- UK MRC Conference - Leeds
- Ben Nevis Abseil Photo Memorial
- Sponsors and Store News - SE
- Shipping
- Inland Mountain Rescue Centre

## NEW WEBSITE FOR SCOTLAND

The MRC of Scotland's new website is up and running at:  
**[mountainrescuescotland.org](http://mountainrescuescotland.org)**

Under the banner 'Scottish Mountain Rescue. Any hour, any day, any weather' it is easily navigable and attractive, packed with information about mountain rescue in Scotland, safety advice, news and stories from those who have been rescued. You can even download the quarterly 'Scottish Mountain Rescue' magazine (formerly known as 'Casbag').

## RAMBLERS CALL FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE SUPPORT BY SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

In a debate on Wednesday 13 June, in the Scottish Parliament, Ramblers Scotland called for the Scottish Parliament to confirm its support for the volunteer mountain rescue teams in Scotland. Ramblers Director for Scotland said: 'At a time of public sector reform and public sector funding cuts, it is vital that the Scottish Parliament recognises the role of volunteers in Scotland's mountain rescue services, and also recognises the need to maintain volunteer commitment and sound liaison arrangements with the police as the single police service is established.'

The discussion comes at a time of major changes in Scotland with regard to police and fire reform as well as the whole independence agenda, all of which will have consequences for Scottish MR. The concern is that voluntarism will continue to be the core characteristic of the service, and that public sector reform — notably the creation of a single police force — will continue to support this volunteer base and enable it to thrive alongside appropriate public sector financial support.

In their briefing notes, Ramblers Scotland also reference occasional calls for greater regulation in the use of mountain areas, including requirements for insurance cover for those who go into mountain areas. Their hope was that the Parliament would resist any such moves on the basis that insurance cover for mountain users could undermine the commitment of mountain rescue personnel to provide free, volunteer support and ultimately erode the cornerstone of the present service. The need to have insurance in place before visiting the mountains might also deter many people from taking healthy exercise and enjoying the experience of the mountain environment.

## FATAL ACCIDENT INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF MARGARET ALLISON HUME

April saw the publication of a report by Steven Torrie into the issues raised by the fatal accident inquiry into the Allison Hume incident at Galston Mine, in 2008. It makes key reading for Scottish mountain rescue teams in terms of understanding how the Scottish fire and rescue service will be taking forward the findings from the fatal accident inquiry but will no doubt also be of great interest to readers south of the Border.

Margaret Allison Hume was pronounced dead at Kilmarnock at 7.40am on 26 July 2008, having been extracted from a collapsed mine shaft, attached to a decommissioned colliery known as Goatfoot Colliery, situated at Barrwood Gate, Galston. She died following a prolonged period at the base of the mine shaft into which she had stepped shortly before or after midnight on 25 July.

It took five to six hours for Mrs Hume to be uplifted from the shaft, from the time of arrival of Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service and she had probably been in the shaft for about two hours before their arrival. By the time she was brought to the surface at 7.42am she was profoundly hypothermic. Her core body temperature was 24°C, (13° below normal) and she was in a critical physical condition having suffered a pneumothorax, broken ribs and a broken sternum.

The inquiry arose from circumstances where the Lord Advocate considered it expedient and in the public interest. She petitioned the Sheriff Court for a warrant on the grounds that the death of Mrs Hume was sudden, or suspicious, or unexplained, or had occurred in circumstances which had given rise to serious public concern. The inquiry examined the circumstances of her fall and the rescue effort to save her.

Sheriff Leslie found that the death of Margaret Allison Hume may have been avoided

had the following reasonable precautions been taken:

- Early identification by the police and Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Services of the stability of the mine shaft and surrounding area.
- Early assessment of Mrs Hume's medical condition, and appraisal of the likely dangers of a prolonged stay in cold and wet conditions.
- A thorough understanding of the capability and properties of line rescue equipment known as 'safe working at height' equipment, and the level of training of fire fighters in the use of that equipment.
- A rigorous and thorough risk assessment by the fire and rescue service balancing the conditions of the terrain with the condition of the deceased and the passage of time to have prevailed over restrictive Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service Corporate Policy.

Defects in the system of working which contributed to the death, or the accident resulting in the death of Margaret Allison Hume:

- Inadequate knowledge by the fire and rescue service and police of the range of potential rescue resources available to assist in a rescue operation and consequent failure to communicate with these resources.
- Lack of understanding and familiarity by rescue personnel of the potential for use of the differing medical and rescue equipment supplied to the rescue and emergency

services.

- Lack of multi-ability training for emergency services personnel, and in particular lack of advanced first aid training among fire and rescue service personnel and lack of rope access capability amongst fire and rescue and paramedical personnel.
- Over-reliance on delegation of rescue functions by Strathclyde Fire Rescue Service.
- Inadequate pre-planning for mine and mine shaft rescue.

Other facts relative to the circumstances of the death or the accident leading to the death:

- There should be continuous assessment of emergency and rescue resources by all rescue and emergency agencies and the capabilities of these resources regularly communicated throughout senior and junior management of each agency.

Sheriff Leslie acknowledged Alexander Dunn's bravery and selflessness in volunteering to provide succour to Mrs Hume as she lay at the bottom of the collapsed mineshaft. He also acknowledged the very considerable effort made by Andrew Parker of Strathclyde Police MRT who, with Dunn, brought Mrs Hume to the surface.

They were supported by colleagues from Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service, Strathclyde MRT and Scottish Ambulance paramedics and all, despite their frustrations and anxieties, endeavoured to do their best in very difficult circumstances to rescue and save Mrs Hume.

Sheriff Leslie extended the sympathies of the inquiry to Mrs Hume's family who 'acted with great dignity and stoicism in the face of some very harrowing evidence.' ■



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