

# mountain rescue

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**ISSUE 42**

**MOUNTAIN AND CAVE RESCUE IN ENGLAND AND WALES**    **OCTOBER 2012**



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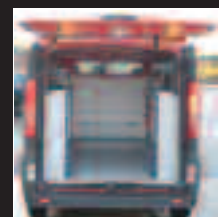
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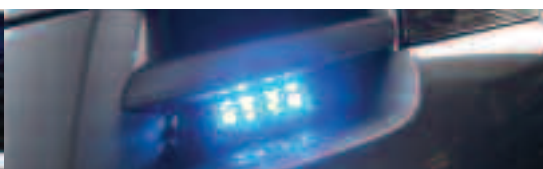
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## WELCOME TO ISSUE 42

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 43

Copy Deadline:  
5 December 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

Cumbria Mine Rescue Unit take part in a photoshoot for Petzl at Hospital level, Coniston Copper Mines. Photo ©Dave Willis courtesy of Petzl.



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



# Word *first* DAVID ALLAN



As I write this we are emerging from one of the best, if not the best, conference held. The amount and quality of information provided was exceptionally good and the venue was a real bonus. The excellence of this event was a fitting tribute to the work that Peter Howells has contributed over the years and sets the bar very high for his successors to clear.

There are many lessons to carry away and expand on, but one of the striking things that ran through most of the weekend was the commonality of challenge and purpose running through all the different mountain and cave rescue bodies that were present. This is a welcome direction of travel at a time when the profile of mountain rescue in the outside world is high. This outside world sees mountain rescue as a single entity and the differences between parts of the organisation are of interest only to us.

Jonathan Hart began his presentation with an observation that resonated loudly with me. He described a recurring anxiety in the dark hours of the early mornings concerning the risk of serious injury, or worse, to team members as a result of a vehicle accident. Discussions at earlier team leaders' meetings have shown that, far from the mountain tops and snow covered slopes, the biggest risk in mountain rescue operations is driving to the incident. A measure of reassurance is now

provided by the work that Daryl Garfield and his group are doing to establish more robust national guidelines on driver training. This will not be easy as for many people driving ability seems to be a hallowed area transcending the ability to climb. We need a resolution to this even if it is not to everyone's liking.

As William Cosby noted: *'I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody'*.

The conference enabled people from all walks of mountain and cave rescue to communicate directly with each other with clear benefit all round. Elsewhere we have not done so well in the area of communication but will be making valiant efforts to correct this, as evidenced by articles elsewhere in the magazine. This problem is by no means unique to mountain and cave rescue. Across the whole spectrum of human endeavour the cry of 'I didn't know' and 'Nobody told me that' are recurring claims. We have access to so many means of contact now that it is more and more difficult to explain or excuse the absence of communication. Putting this right must be one of our top, if not the top, priority in the immediate future. If nothing else it might prevent us falling into the scenario of Franklin Jones: *'Experience is that marvellous thing that enables you to recognise a mistake when you make it again.'* ■

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PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN CRAVEN

## NEW AMBASSADOR FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

John Craven, one of Britain's best-known broadcasters, has agreed to become an 'ambassador' for Mountain Rescue England and Wales, following a chance meeting with national fundraising chairman Mike France. John was a guest at the Audi UK Polo Challenge in May and, once we'd offered him a copy of our first ever annual review, hot off the press, we were pleased to see him clutching it close for the rest of the evening.

John, of course, is a regular on the BBC's 'Countryfile', which highlights environmental and rural issues, celebrating the British countryside on our TV screens every Sunday evening. The programme has often featured mountain rescue, with Llanberis, Duddon and Furness, and Teesdale and Weardale all making an appearance over the last three years.

John recalls having been 'rescued' several times in the course of filming, so knows only too well what it feels like to await your saviours on a cold, unforgiving hillside. One such incident, three or four years ago, involved him pretending to have a broken ankle, halfway up a steep mountainside. He was on his own, his mobile was dead, but someone had managed to get a message to mountain rescue. 'Even though I was pretending,' he explains, 'it was cold and miserable. I was ever so glad to be rescued and then so well handled. They had to make sure my injuries were okay, then transfer me to a stretcher. It was an amazing experience.'

He's been 'rescued' from snow holes too, in Scotland.

*'It is amazing to me that men and women of all ages volunteer to do this.'* John Craven

So why is he happy to become an ambassador? 'In my forty year TV career, I've come across mountain rescue as a news reporter on Newsround, and through Countryfile, and often reflected on the bravery of teams. They're all very much volunteers but where would we be without them? A lot of people would die without them and I have to admire that huge bravery on the part of all the volunteers. It is amazing to me that men and women of all ages volunteer to do this.'

We probably should mention (before you start to ask!) that this doesn't mean John will be available for ribbon-cutting events, or able to overtly advertise or promote mountain rescue on Countryfile (although we hope the BBC will continue to feature us from time to time, of course). What he CAN do is support our work where the opportunity arises, and maybe provide the odd soundbite when we ask. And, however that pans out, it's good to have him on our side! **JW**



'So?' I hear you all cry. 'What's happening in the exciting world of insurance, Woodie?'

Well I write this after getting back from the UK Mountain Rescue Conference in the tropical city of Leeds, where I was asked to go on stage in the exhibition hall. Well it isn't my first time treading the boards, but I usually have a brush – this time I was allocated a spot to run a clinic where delegates could drop in and ask questions. An insurance clinic, that is.

It was a great conference and some interesting questions were asked. I think it's worth repeating a couple of the answers here, so the wider mountain rescue community know the position. One has been covered before, namely that the insurance policies arranged by MREW cover mountain rescue team members and they do NOT cover non-mountain rescue team dog handlers in the various search and rescue dog associations.

The second question concerns Personal Accident insurance for

fundraising events. The national policy arranged by MREW via North Wales Police does cover all mountain rescue activities including fundraising, demonstrations, attending meetings and the commuting aspect. Those teams who are not covered by this policy, because their police force takes out different cover for them, should ask serious questions of the police about exactly what they are covered for – and get proof. You really don't want to find out when a team member has been injured, that their policy doesn't cover that activity.

The MREW website includes a number of documents that I have put there to help teams and team members understand the insurance cover. They can be found in the Members' area under Resources and Insurance – please take a look. There are comments made that communication between different levels of mountain rescue need to improve – well please check out the website!

One of the interesting sessions I

### **DRIVING LICENCE CHANGES** **DARYL GARFIELD**

Changes to the driving licence regulations, which come into force in January 2013, will have significant impact on voluntary organisations, including mountain rescue. Go to the Members area of the website for a full copy of the EC 3rd Directive.

### **EQUIPMENT NEWS** **RICHARD TERRELL** **NHS GRANT**

Can I remind teams that the NHS grant CANNOT

be used to purchase training items and disposable equipment. If you are unsure whether the equipment you wish to apply for is covered, please contact me for clarification — richard@rterrell.orangehome.co.uk.

### **CASBAGS AND VACMATS**

In the last issue, I asked teams their views on the current policy of issuing each team with one vacmat and one casbag every five years, as some teams are asking for two or three. Please feed your team's views to your regional equipment rep

ready for the November meeting. Should we decide to issue more than one every five years, the money will have to come from either the NHS grant, the government grant or other MREW funding streams, so please bear this in mind. All the prototype casbags are now with the regional reps for teams to test. Please fill out and return the questionnaires, as this is the only way we can gauge your views and requirements.

### **PELI DISCOUNT**

We have negotiated a discount with Peli for mountain rescue teams,

## INSURANCE MATTERS

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

attended was Rescue 2020, where LDSAMRA has looked at mountain rescue in the Lake District to see how it can be improved. Bulk purchasing/central purchasing is one area and they make specific reference to centralised vehicle insurance. I was pleased to speak to team leaders from some of the Lakes teams, who thought the scheme I have put in place is a great step forward.

Following on from that, I have had some teams ask whether similar schemes could be arranged for insuring team bases and trustee indemnity policies. If this is a commonly held view across the teams, I'd be very happy to explore the possibility. Please send me an email and let me have your thoughts.

I was disappointed to miss the talk by Ronan Concannon on Developing and Managing a National Insurance Policy, but sadly I was tied up chairing the sessions in another lecture room. But that did give me the opportunity to listen to

Tony Rich, our Legal Counsel who, after 20 years, is stepping down from the role. Tony spoke fondly of his time helping teams with their legal issues and made some points that relate directly to insurance. Essentially, there have been very few instances where he has had to assist teams because of litigation against them. Tony's view is that, based on his experience, our fear of litigation is worse than the actual litigation itself. If we all continue to act sensibly and responsibly, operating safely and managing the risks we face, then I agree wholeheartedly with Tony that we are in a good position for the future.

I will be at the MREW meeting at Lancashire Police HQ at Hutton in mid-November, so please approach me if you have any insurance related questions and I'll do my best to answer them for you.

As always, I am here to help you and your team with any reasonable request about insurance. Please email me via [insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk). ■

for Peli Storm Protective Cases at UK List less 40% and Peli Torches at UK List less 40% discount. For more details and to order, please contact Andy Hill at Peli.

## TRAINING NEWS MIKE MARGESON

I would firstly like to congratulate all those who contributed as speakers and, of course, the organising committee of this year's UK MR conference at Leeds. I can quite honestly say it was one of the best MR conferences I have attended, with a wide range of current topics,

excellent resources and accommodation. I was particularly interested in the presentation by Jonathan Hart, chairman of MRC of Scotland and Stuart Johnston, MRCofS training officer, on their plan for national training programmes, with a considerable annual budget of 65k!! From a training point of view, I am very keen that those who attended the conference return to their own teams and encourage members of the relevance and value of our conferences and that it is relevant and open to any team members.

## NEW MREW SEARCH MANAGEMENT FOUNDATION COURSE

We were incredibly encouraged by the interest in our planning day at Lymm on 15 September. Eighteen members turned out to contribute, with almost every region represented. A full report of the group's findings will be circulated via the training committee. The group worked very hard focusing on what content and syllabus the new weekend Foundation Course should contain. Although I will not head

### PARTY LEADERSHIP

## NOVEMBER 2012

WATHGILL CAMP, DOWNHOLME, RICHMOND, NORTH YORKSHIRE DL11 6AH  
7.00PM, FRIDAY-SUNDAY, 2-4 NOVEMBER 2012

This well established course promotes good practice, reflecting National Training Guidelines, and is applicable to party leadership for all search and rescue teams throughout the British Isles.

Aimed primarily at team members with a minimum three years experience. Thirty places are available for members of search and rescue teams on the basis of 'first come - first served'.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- To encourage the highest standards and best attitudes for search and rescue
- To ensure members are conversant with party leadership skills and knowledge applicable to assessment and consistent approach towards search and rescue
- To consider training undertaken within each members own team
- To enable members to improve their experience, commitment and performance in the skills and qualities of party leadership.



To assist with planning, please return all forms BEFORE Friday 19 October

**Cost: £100 per person.**

Please note travel charges to Mountain Rescue England and Wales. All those in a 10% refund to members of Mountain Rescue England and Wales teams.

To book and for further information, email **Davie Thomson** via [awale72@gmail.com](mailto:awale72@gmail.com) or call **07710 482713**

## MEDIA INTERVIEW SKILLS



LANCASHIRE POLICE HQ, PRESTON,  
10.30AM - 3.30PM, 18 NOVEMBER 2012

A workshop designed specially for Mountain Rescue Teams



**TIMETABLE & SESSIONS**

Phase One Thinking like a journalist.	Phase Four TV and telephone interviews
Phase Two Team protocol.	Phase Five Learning, review and actions.
Phase Three Preparing for an interview.	

### OUTLINE OF THE WORKSHOP



Learn how journalists gather news and compose their story, and prepare to face the cameras, ready for the day you are asked to comment on an incident or survive close scrutiny from a TV or newspaper journalist. This workshop and approach is also beneficial to teams who are actively fundraising and wishing to appeal to a wider audience. Run by Steve Howe, journalist and commentator and assisted by cameraman, Dave Freeborn and Sally Seed, a print media and communications expert. All three are closely involved with mountain rescue and familiar with the demands put on teams and the opportunities that media relations can offer.

Delegate numbers: **Maximum 20, minimum 10**  
 Fee: £200 per person booking (subsequent 50% refund as a national MREW course)  
 Please email **Nike Margeson** on [nmargeson@hotmail.com](mailto:nmargeson@hotmail.com)  
 or call him on **07766 971 477**



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this project up it is a project for the new training officer and training committee to pick up and develop. I am very encouraged, however, by the first steps we have made and a pilot course should now be run sometime in the first half of next year with Bowland Pennine's Smelt Mill HQ suggested as the venue.

## MREW NATIONAL COURSES THIS AUTUMN

We have a number of courses coming up this autumn. I would remind team members that national courses are those that have been recognised by the MREW training committee, which involves both agreement and checking of the course content, and the quality and suitability of its delivery. Booking should be made with the course organiser and accompanied by a letter

of application on headed team paper, signed by two team officials along with a payment cheque made out to MREW. To be eligible for a 50% refund these procedures must have been followed. Refund payment will be made to teams, not individuals. The training committee will be undertaking a review of all MREW recognised courses in 2013.

## SEARCH FOR THE MISSING PERSON MANAGING THE INITIAL RESPONSE 22-23 NOVEMBER

This course is aimed at anyone who might find themselves in charge of the early stages of a missing person incident. Based at Longhirst Conference Centre, it is residential, but a daily rate is available for those who do not wish to stay overnight. The cost is £200 (£175 for MR/SAR

volunteers) including all meals, accommodation and course materials, or £120 per day (£95 for MR/SAR volunteers). For those who wish to travel to the venue on the previous day, B&B is available on the Wednesday night at an extra cost of £75. The course also attracts the MREW training subsidy — MR team members can apply for a 50% refund after the course. See [longhirst.co.uk](http://longhirst.co.uk) for venue details.

## TEAM MEMBER & PARTY LEADER GUIDELINES REVIEW

The training committee have received valuable feedback from teams of the final draft of these documents, to be agreed and adopted at our meeting on 17 November. Of particular debate and discussion has been the level of water experience

team members and party leaders should have as a minimum and whether a party leader should hold a MREW Casualty Care Certificate or not.

These sorts of issues are the job of your training committee to propose and advice. Inevitably, decisions may well not be the desired outcome to some teams. However, these are 'national guidelines' and should, reflect this.

The next training update will be by our new training officer. I wish him/her well and would like to thank all my colleagues and friends in the training committee for all the support, advice and work over the last four years. I believe we have managed to move a number of good training initiatives and projects forward. Lastly, there is a very full agenda on the training group's work schedule — the sign of a healthy organisation.

### PARTY LEADERSHIP

Places: 30  
Date: 2-4 November (2 days)  
Location: Wathgill Camp, Richmond  
Contact: **Davie Thomson**  
07710 462 713  
[swale72@gmail.com](mailto:swale72@gmail.com)

### 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 889 721  
[mmargeson@hotmail.com](mailto:mmargeson@hotmail.com)

### SEARCH FOR THE MISSING PERSON: MANAGING THE INITIAL RESPONSE

Date: Thursday/Friday 22/23 November (Two days)  
Location: Longhirst Conference Centre, Morpeth Northumberland  
Contact: **Dave Perkins**  
**Pete Roberts**  
[conference@searchresearch.org.uk](mailto:conference@searchresearch.org.uk)

### WATER INCIDENT MANAGER COURSE

WIM - LEVEL 5  
Date: Friday-Sunday 9-11 November  
Location: Peak District  
Contact: **Andy Lee**  
[andylee@f2s.com](mailto:andylee@f2s.com)

### NATIONAL WATER CONFERENCE

Date: 19 January (One day)  
Location: Peak District  
Contact: **Andy Lee**  
[nwc@edalemart.co.uk](mailto:nwc@edalemart.co.uk)

## WATER INCIDENT MANAGER COURSE. WIM – LEVEL 5 9-11 NOVEMBER: PEAK DISTRICT

- Recognised MREW qualification.
- Produced for MREW and written for members who may be required to lead or advise at mountain rescue incidents.
- Designed to empower candidates by increasing the skills used for decision-making, whether leading an incident or operating within the command/management structure as an emergency responder.
- The course revolves around lectures and includes tactical exercises and discussions.

- An assessable course, involving candidate projects: prerequisites apply.

For further information, including cost and prerequisites, email **Andy Lee: [andylee@f2s.com](mailto:andylee@f2s.com)**.

*Hosted in the Peak District by a National Faculty consisting of experienced instructors within MR and from statutory organisations. Course fees supported by MREW. All applications reviewed by a panel chaired by Ewan Thomas (National Water Officer).*

## 3RD ANNUAL NATIONAL WATER CONFERENCE SATURDAY, 19 JANUARY 2013: PEAK DISTRICT

### Keynote speaker: Professor Rhona Flin

Confirmed so far:

- Decision-making at the sharp end (Prof Rhona Flin)
- Flood forecasting in mountain rescue (Flood Forecasting Centre)
- Water equipment update — testing and inspection
- Water rescue in MREW: The new plan (Ewan Thomas)
- Water accidents (ROSPA).

Breakout sessions include:

- Managing the patient: A HART perspective
- Decision-making exercises led by command trainers, and many more...
- A look at cases of the year, including a media nightmare and partnership working.

**Cost £30.** For further information, email **[nwc@edalemrt.co.uk](mailto:nwc@edalemrt.co.uk)**.

*Hosted by Edale MRT in conjunction with the MREW Water Rescue Committee.*



## WATER COURSE AND CONFERENCE DETAILS



**com•mu•ni•ca•tion** *n.* 1. the imparting or exchanging of information or news. 2. (**communications**) means of connection between people or places.

ORIGIN late Middle English : from Old French *comunicacion*, from Latin *communicatio(n-)*, from the verb *communicare* 'to share' (see communicate).



## MIKE PARK

# MREW HAS A COMMUNICATION PROBLEM... THOUGHTS FROM THE FACTORY FLOOR

MIKE-PARK@TISCALI.CO.UK

I have just returned from the MREW conference in Leeds, where I listened, learned, was heartened and inspired by a number of speakers and attendees.

I learned of the 'world-class' work both John Hulse and Russ Hore are doing in the development of SARCALL and SARLOC. I was given insight into how our peers view MR from trustee Paul Amos. I was guided around the pitfalls and opportunities in using social media by Abha Thakor, Neil Hayter and John Hall. And I was refueled with learning from Steve Howe, Sally Seed and Dave Freeborn in media training.

I was heartened and impressed by Rory Stewart's depth of knowledge and understanding on how mountain rescue actually works (and this is coming from an MP!!!). He encouraged mountain rescue to develop and adapt but still be it's own entity... don't become like other charities that no longer can do the task they were set up to do as they have wrapped themselves in bureaucracy and 'paid positions' because it was what all the other 'sheep' were doing!

But, as well as listen and learn, I was asked to help with a presentation on 'Rescue 2020. An Appraisal of Mountain Rescue in the Lake District.' This in-depth 'warts and all' study has been carried out by Bob Sharp and Archie Roy. My part was to speak on what the Lakes team's were doing and learning from this report.

The report makes nineteen recommendations for improvement and action. One of the most immediate 'is:—

**Working with Partners:** *There is a lack of knowledge about MREW and a misunderstanding of its overall purpose by team members. We recommend that discussions take place at national, regional and team level to identify the avenues of communication that exist between levels, any weakness and scope for improvement.*

During the presentation I stated that, personally, I feel that Bob and Archie are being kind to MREW with this statement. I would recommend that MREW addresses this communication issue with utmost urgency and effort now.

I made this **pro-active** comment as I feel this issue alone will be the downfall of MREW as I am **still** waiting to see improvements in communications within MREW.

So why did I say this and what justification have I for such a bold statement?

Well, I said it because I believe it to be true. Mountain rescue at a national level is poor at effective communications.

We (MREW) struggle to communicate the national message and decisions effectively to us — the team members. Likewise, we (the team members) struggle to communicate what the 'factory floor' is thinking, approving or disapproving, to us — MREW.

You will notice I use 'we' and 'us' because, unlike our other life (there is one outside mountain rescue!), this isn't work or government — **MREW and team members are one and the same!**

I justify my statement from:—

- The evidence in Rescue 2020 — 279 team members' responses from the Lakes teams generated this recommendation — this is 71% of the Lakes 'factory floor'.
- Communication issues and mistakes are brought up at national meetings, and I consistently see the same issues and mistakes coming back at the next and the next meeting — we are not learning!
- Issues and ill-feeling are being emailed around the country, hidden from the eyes at a national level. I expect this is happening, for a number of reasons — but the consequence of not addressing these issues in a trusted

environment is destructive.

Why am I bothered? And why should you be bothered?

Because we are one and the same — I am just a team member like you. And, like you, I am passionate about mountain rescue and what it means to me.

I just want to get on with the bit I joined 30 years ago to do: help people on the mountains. I really don't want to have to get involved with the back-room stuff. I want that stuff to just happen, but I want it to happen with my general understanding and my general agreement — and I expect that's how most team members look at things?

However — it doesn't!

It might be acceptable to not get too involved in how things happen in work or government — but it is not acceptable for any team member to allow things to drift on by in mountain rescue.

You can't let mountain rescue at a national level be someone else's problem.

You can't not communicate how you want mountain rescue to be now and into the future, because you feel you are:—

- not qualified
- not experienced enough
- not listened to
- not here to do that bit
- haven't got a beard!

You have to make communication work within your MREW because you are:—

- passionate about mountain rescue
- you do have an important opinion
- you can make a difference... that's why you're in mountain rescue in the first place!

In my experience, mountain rescue teams don't work without effective communications. Successful call-outs, need effective

communications from the start to the finish. So why should this not be the case in running MREW?

At the start of this article I mentioned how mountain rescue has team members and supporters who are bringing forward world-class systems and processes to overcome mountain rescue issues.

Surely there has to be a person(s) out there that can do the same for our communication issue?

So now I've put my head above the trench, and said what I thought needed to be said to highlight this issue. Now it's up to you!

● Tell me I've got it all wrong and I should high-tail it back into the Cumbrian fells and stop worrying etc... or words to that effect!

● Or you can tell me how we address this issue, and that you have a solution.

● Or you can ignore it and not communicate with me... which is kind of the nub to the issue... but thanks for reading so far.

Like I said, I've put my head above the trench. I want to solve this issue and I want to solve it now, but I know I can't solve it on my own.

So if you can help or know a person who can, then let's start communicating! ■



Mike Park has been team leader of Cockermouth MRT for five years and a team member for almost thirty.





## SORTING OUT COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS

SALLY SEED

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**A**s someone with ‘communications’ in their business name and a PR role in MREW, Mike’s article rings lots of bells with me and also seems to need a response that comes up with some actions. So, why me?

I used to work in corporate communications (where the words: ‘I’m from HQ and I’m here to help’ sent shivers or raised sniggers but rarely achieve anything else) and I’ve been running my own PR business for nearly nine years with several mountain rescue connections. I’m a bit of an outsider with inside knowledge which I hope means that I can be useful.

### THE STARTING POINT

I think Mike sums it up when he says that MREW and team members are one and the same. This is not ‘us and them’, it’s us and us. I’d add that organisations don’t communicate, people do and communications is about talking, listening, hearing, asking, sharing, telling — not just sending out messages.

And, from experience on the media training sessions, I’d say that members of rescue teams can be brilliant communicators. They rarely resort to waffle, they tend to say what they think (!) and they’re passionate about what they do. However, they also tend to be a bit busy and impatient for immediate change.

### SOME ASSUMPTIONS

Here are a few other assumptions that are relevant to this:—

- We’re all trying to get this right — there is no conspiracy theory going on here but there might be a cock up theory. Don’t assume the worst but allow for the fact that not everyone can be told everything individually.
- If it’s easiest to do the right thing, that’s what we’ll do — so we

need to have communications channels and processes (sorry about slipping into jargon) that are the obvious ones and the easiest ones for us to use.

- We’ll all notice the things that we’re interested in — if there’s a lot of information about (and when isn’t there?) we tend to pick up on the things that are most relevant to us at that time. We don’t spot everything and we don’t remember everything and we don’t always remember to pass everything on that we should.

### SO WHAT’S GOING WRONG?

**1. Too many layers.** As an outsider looking in, I’d say that the hierarchy used for a lot of MREW communications is adding layers and making life difficult for people who are already very busy. So the more that we can use technology to streamline things and go direct, the better. That probably means bypassing regional organisations when the priority is to get a message on email from team to the Exec or from Exec to team. It works with some things (like Mountain Rescue magazine) already and I think it should be the norm.

**2. Not enough push.** I’ve seen a lot of organisations where there is a reliance on the website as a means of sharing information, minutes, decisions, consultations etc. This relies on people looking for something (which assumes that they know it’s there) and pulling out what they need.

This can work really well if people are actively engaged in something together and it’s already a priority

for them BUT, for something more remote, it fails completely. People like to think they’ll be told or asked about whatever’s relevant to them and they consider that to be ‘proper’ communications.

**3. Poor communications is the symptom of a disease.** For me, this is where the Rescue 2020 results come in. Have another look at the first part of that recommendation: ‘There is a lack of knowledge about MREW and a misunderstanding of its overall purpose by team members.’

It may well be that we need better communications but I think there’s a more basic problem here. If we clarify exactly what MREW is (which I assume is in its charitable status documents) and what it isn’t, that might reassure. If we clarify what it does (and why), we then have a framework for communications that puts it in context.

### PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

If we aim to tackle ‘the communications issues’ in one fell swoop (and keep it all nice and vague), we’ll fail. If we’re specific about what’s going wrong, break it down into priorities and tackle them gradually, we have a much better chance of success.

So here are my starters on tackling a few areas so we make some positive changes to the communications quickly (and with thanks to other people in MREW who are already getting moving on these):—

- **Clarify what MREW is about, what it’s for and where its priorities lie.**

Let’s tackle the disease and not the symptoms. If we’re open about the charity’s stated aims and objectives then we know where we stand and members can challenge where the organisation or individuals in it are stepping away from those priorities or where there are gaps in what it should be doing.

- **Use the best tools for the job.**

If we assume that the Members area on the current website isn’t working as a channel for communications then we need to find other ways that work better. Judy is looking at how a closed Group on Facebook might work better for discussions and consultations — lots of teams and individual team members are already using Facebook and a closed Group has the potential to provide an open forum without washing dirty linen in public. If this goes ahead, then the people who are already using Facebook will have a role in helping other members of their team to use it.

- **Keep the communications chains as short as possible.**

If something doesn’t need to go via regions, don’t go via regions. There is always going to be a bit of time delay in cascading information, so using the most direct route will avoid gaps and speed things up for all concerned. And it’s the same for communications from teams to MREW — if it isn’t relevant to the region, go direct and copy someone in at a regional level if it will help.

- **Get to know the people.**

There’s a reason why members of the MREW Executive are named and their contact details and roles included in every issue of Mountain Rescue magazine (page 14). If you have a query about something, you can ask them. If you think you could contribute to something, you know who to contact. And if you think there is something going on (or a black hole) in their area of responsibility, you can find out more. People communicate, not organisations.

- **Tackle at least one thorny issue.**

If we can tackle one real bug

Continued on page 10



# MEETINGS, MESSAGES AND RELATED MATTERS

**DAVID ALLAN CHAIRMAN**  
ALLAN986@BTINTERNET.COM

*'Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as you please.' Mark Twain*

Whilst the second part of this quotation might provide some interesting discussion, it is with the first that we are primarily concerned. Although the officers of MREW have, for some time, tried to improve the means of communication within the organisation there is clearly some way to go before a satisfactory system is in place. It is worth noting that this is not entirely a one-way problem and communications from teams and team members to the officers is also adrift.

The move to open up the general meetings to each individual team is, I believe, largely seen as a successful venture. It has not however reached its full potential for a number of reasons. Not all teams are taking advantage of the new arrangement, and this includes some whose voices were loudest in asking for this arrangement. It was my expectation and hope that teams would arrange for a representative to attend over a number of consecutive meetings to allow for continuity and familiarity with what has been previously been discussed. This has not widely been adopted and leads to backtracking over matters already dealt with. There is also a perception that representatives are there simply to report back. This is not the case. They are expected to play an active role in decision making and to have read all the relevant papers in advance of the meetings.

Whilst observers are welcome at the meetings I believe we need to draw a clearer demarcation between those entitled to vote and speak and those who may do so if circumstances permit. There is no wish to make the meetings exclusive but it would improve things if the official representatives were more easily identifiable.

The meetings are, of course, open to a number of people outside mountain and cave rescue. It has been suggested that there are topics on the agenda, for example regarding fundraising, that should be discussed only in the presence of mountain and cave rescue members. A 'closed' part of the agenda will therefore be up for discussion in November.

In respect of links between MREW management and teams, we are proposing to send all communications to team secretaries, team leaders and team chairmen. In this way it is hoped that gaps in receipt of information will be eliminated. We shall, of course, continue to send the same information to regional officers. All of this is dependent on an up to date mailing list. Keith Gillies, our new assistant secretary has agreed to maintain this, and I would ask that people keep him promptly informed of changes.

Some years back we offered to bring MREW officers to regions to enable team members the opportunity to question and discuss issues directly with officers. Only one region partook of the offer with some very positive results. The offer still stands.

Use of the website in all of its aspects is disappointingly low. We shall be working to make it more accessible but some feedback on why there is so little involvement in, for example, the Members

forum would be helpful. Likewise the calendar is neglected. Although this does not contain information per se it could give a very useful pointer to what is happening across the whole of mountain and cave rescue. Is it too difficult to use or are there other reasons?

We have decided that the use of social media sites should be instigated. The initial purpose will be to use this as a pointer to areas where information, both new and old, can be read.

The team leaders' meeting has been in existence for several years and has been a very useful forum for operational issues to be discussed, experiences shared between teams and fed back to MREW officers. During the past two years, the attendance has fallen quite significantly. At the last meeting, only fourteen MR teams were represented. This has weakened an important forum for communication. I do not know why this has happened. It does not relate to geography in that, as it moves from region to region, there is no change and local teams do not appear in greater numbers. Is it time to change the format or the content of these meetings? Personally, I have viewed these events as perhaps the most valuable influence with the greatest concentration of experience and skill that can be assembled.

The magazine is a very valuable window into mountain and cave rescue across a range of fronts. It has never fulfilled its potential of being a forum for debate as articles have produced little written response. Since the magazine began, there have been a total of ten letters to the editor!

We are committed to improving lines of communication within mountain and cave rescue and prepared to consider anything that will enable us to achieve this. Please contribute any thoughts and suggestions directly to myself or any other mountain or cave rescue officer.

We are not the only body with communication difficulties. I hope that we are not as impossible to follow when we do get in touch as Ofqual's chief regulator who said, in response to questions about English examinations:—

*'There are more unknowns than there is when we've got a stable qualification, or than there are at the end of a qualification. So the unknowns are these, for example: the strength of the correlation between the units which strongly influences, actually, how unit out comes aggregate to these subject outcomes.'*

No, I don't know either. ■

▶ **'Sorting out the communications problem'**  
continued from page 9

bear, that may provide a way of working on other communications issues. My vote would go for money — how it's raised at a national level, why, where it goes and how it's distributed and used.

Suggestions include creating a simple financial report each year (which I assume we need to do for Charity Commissioners anyway), sharing it with teams (and their treasurers) to keep things open and having a three-point action plan to accompany it:—

- What would we like to buy in the next year to improve rescue services and support teams?
- How much can we realistically spend next year as an investment in longer term fundraising (that includes parliamentary events, publications, advertising, events etc)?
- So how much do we need to raise nationally next year?

Communications about money would then be more fact-based and would focus much more on what next and what to do to achieve aims rather than looking back on history.

## CONCLUSION

I'm not sure if the above is what Mike wanted in terms of communications but I hope it has some ideas in it that might be useful — and I'll be at the November MREW meetings if you want to collar me and communicate! ■

*Sally Seed is a print, media and communications expert. For the last few years, along with Dave Freeborn and Steve Howe, she has been involved in the media training of mountain rescue team members across England and Wales.*





## LOST PASSWORD? DO NOT PASS GO... DO NOT COLLECT £200 AND DEFINITELY DON'T TALK TO ANYONE ON THE WAY...

JUDY WHITESIDE **EDITOR**

EDITOR@MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK

**O**kay, so... it's generally agreed that the 'communications' aren't working, and this in an age when more of us are using more means of communication than ever before. Yet, as a regular 'ear' on both sides of the fence, I know how much effort has gone into understanding and implementing new ways the (perceived) 'top' of MREW might communicate better with the 'grassroots' and it's just about equal to the effort employed at grassroots level complaining about the lack of understanding and effort at the 'top'! Clearly, then, we DO have a problem.

I thought it might be useful to share with you how one or two things have developed over the few years that I've been involved with the Publications and Information sub (PISC). I'd been around on the fringes for a couple of years but, in 2001, I was asked to relaunch the MRC News, as it then was. The 'top table' of the time (gosh, they were scary!) were concerned about grumblings from the 'factory floor' that the membership weren't being kept informed. Sound familiar? They wanted a better means of allowing two-way communication. The magazine was never intended as a propaganda vehicle for the Exec, rather it was hoped the membership might also use it to communicate not just back to the Exec, but with each other.

Whilst well received in many quarters, the initial twelve-page, single colour publication met with a fair amount of mistrust. 'It'll never last!' And, I'll be honest, the first couple of years weren't easy. Teasing content out of dyed-in-the-wool 'beardie wierdies' was, at times, a challenge. But then something changed and people started to open up with news and articles. And, so convinced was the Exec of its worth as a means of communication that, even when times were tough financially, they made the mag a priority and have continued to support its growth. The quality of writing is high, thanks to digital photography the imagery has improved tenfold, feedback 'off the record' continues to be positive,

and yet a belief persists in some quarters that it exists as a vehicle for 'them', not 'us', and the number of people who have taken the trouble to engage with it and share their opinions in print (be they critical or complimentary) can be counted on the digits of two hands! The number of times we invite responses and hear nothing... the number of competitions we run (sometimes for very expensive equipment — see page 21) and only receive two entries... I KNOW people read it, so why no written feedback? (The exception to this

Another point worth making is that the magazine is intended for ALL the members. Every issue, your team is sent a quota (quantity as requested by your leadership), to a designated addressee. That person is then responsible for ensuring his or her team members receive the mag, whether they're left in a pile at base or delivered into your hands personally. If this isn't happening, please look at who might better receive your quota so you get to read it (and let me know so I can amend the mailing list).

But back to the 'history' — next up

area, team members must go to the Login at the foot of the left-hand navigation column and follow the instructions to sign up. Once they have submitted their details, an email is automatically sent to whoever is their team's appointed 'approver', asking for confirmation that this person is a bona fide member of whichever team they claim. The approver must then log in to the website using their own password, where they are presented with options to either Delete, Block or Approve. Once approved, the team member

*If there IS a feeling out there that your views will be censored or just plain ignored by 'them', I really do hope that this issue has gone some way to reassuring you this is not the case.*

has been last issue's article on Homeopathy for Travel, which excited strong feeling from some quarters — but more about that elsewhere in the mag.)

If there IS a feeling out there that your views will be censored or just plain ignored by 'them', I really do hope that this issue has gone some way to reassuring you this is not the case. We will always consider publishing any feedback, providing it is constructive, neither inflammatory nor abusive, and whichever side of the fence it falls. I'm not talking about 'washing dirty linen in public' but about healthy debate, where opinions differ but from which greater understanding might come through discussion.

for consideration was the website. It was old-fashioned, rarely updated, only a handful of people were engaging with the forums and there were far too many opinions being expressed there by people outside of mountain rescue. So, a task force set about designing a new site (which, admittedly, in this technological maelstrom we now live in, also now looks a bit dated), which would serve the members better, enable better two-way communication (are you spotting a theme here?) and also improve our public face.

That new site launched three years ago, complete with a content management system and a Members area. To access this

receives an email with their own unique, gobbledegook password, which they are free to change as they wish. If anyone forgets or mislays their password, they simply click on password recovery.

On the other side of the deal, it was agreed that officers take responsibility for uploading stuff to their own areas within the Resources section. To do this, they too require a password (bear with me here, I think it needs explaining!). First though they need to be signed up to the Members area as a team member, as previously noted. Next step is to



# A LOOK AT SOCIAL MEDIA: MAKING IT WORK FOR YOUR TEAM AND ONLINE FUNDRAISING

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Few will have escaped the rapid rise of social media over the last few years. There are now over 42m UK Facebook users, and 18m UK Twitter users. These impressive figures illustrate the huge popularity of social media and have had a huge affect on driving forward how we use the internet and how we access, receive, and share content online.

So how can you, as a mountain rescue team make full use of social media to help you raise funds, whilst avoiding the pitfalls?

Well firstly, you need to understand how social media is not simply a marketing platform, it is a communication channel and needs to be treated as one. In fact, it is a very powerful communication channel, enabling communication *en masse* to target users, and with the added dimension of real time conversation with your audience — and that is critical. It is a conversation you are having with an audience, not just you shouting your message.

In terms of fundraising for your team, you cannot simply expect to be able to set yourself up on Facebook and Twitter and shout about how you need funds, asking people to donate — that simply won't work. You need to create and provide content of interest to your most likely supporters, you need to build a relationship with them and think of them as a marketing team to help you raise funds — you don't just want to talk to them, you want them in turn to then go on and shout about how great you are, and the work you do, to their friends. That will result in a great crowd funding resource for your team.

To start with, decide what social media platforms you would like to be on. There are now over 250 different social media and social networking websites, but do not try to be on all of them! Only set yourselves up on the

ones you have the time and resources to manage — it is better not to be on a social media presence at all, than to be there and not be active. Be more active on less — quality not quantity.

Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube are the first platforms you should consider. Simply because they have the largest audiences and greatest potential for you to connect with people that are interested in supporting mountain rescue.

On Facebook, make sure you set up a Facebook 'Page', not a 'Profile' or a 'Group'. If you set up a profile, it will be removed by Facebook at some point in the future and all your hard work will go to waste. If you set up as a group then you are hugely restricted in what you can do and how you can find and reach people that will be interested in your team and your activities. A Facebook Group can be a good tool for internal communication between team members, but not for promotion and conversation with non-members.

With a Facebook Page you can also make use of countless plugins and applications which will increase the engagement level with your Facebook audience, essentially helping to turn your page into more of a website,

even enabling users to donate to your team from within Facebook itself.

On Twitter, create a profile and make sure you complete all areas of your profile info and profile bio as this can be used to help interested users find you and your Twitter profile. It can also be included easily in relevant search engine results.

Create a Youtube channel for your team which can then also be pulled into display within your Facebook Page. You can post other people's content already on Youtube to display in your Youtube channel, including national mountain rescue video content. However, if you can, try and produce your own video content. It doesn't have to be too polished and professional as viewers are used to watching relatively poor video content on Youtube filmed with smartphones, but try and film short snippets that portray life in the team and what you have been up to.

Which brings us nicely onto content: what should you post? You need to strike a balance between several different types of content that overall presents an overview of what life is like for your mountain rescue team and what you get up to, ranging from training activities, to incidents and call-outs, and everything in-between. Present an overall presentation that your team lives, sleeps and breathes the outdoors in your region, and that you're all about keeping those that want to enjoy the outdoors in your region safe.

Don't just post about rescuing people in major incidents, post preventative news and information that users of the outdoors in your region may be interested in — weather reports, details of activities in the area — together with larger content of relevance and possible interest to people interested in the outdoors.

Decide the 'tone' of your social media presence, and remember it is a great opportunity to display your team's personality. Funny and entertaining is a great stance to take, and tends to make your posts more engaging with your users, but maintain a professional stance and

on the streets in your region, promote any fundraising events you may be having, and promote any other on or offline ways that your audience can give to you.

For probably the first time in your team's history, social media is enabling you to have the chance to build your own online audience, essentially a database of users that have chosen to opt in to receive your content and want to be connected to you. That means that they don't just want to support you by giving to you, they want to broadcast your message and your story, and get other people to give to you. You are building a very powerful and long term crowd funding resource for your team, your own marketing department.

Remember to get the balance right though. Social media is not a place to beg or keep pushing the same message blatantly. All you have to do is to keep a good and consistent mix of content coming through your social media channels and the stories of the daily activities of mountain rescue volunteers, your personalities, your caring for those enjoying the outdoors, and so on, will drive users to want to support you. But how to get an audience?

*Simply, remember it's a communication channel — if you wouldn't stand up on a stage in front of a load of local outdoor users and say it that way, don't say it on Facebook or Twitter that way.*

use comedy where best appropriate, and not when it isn't.

Simply, remember it is a communication channel — if you wouldn't stand up on a stage in front of a load of local outdoor users and say it that way, don't say it on Facebook or Twitter that way. Simply use common sense in communication at all times, even if you don't think people are listing.

Do all this and your audience will then allow you to ask them for money to help fund your activity and, much more importantly, they will help you by telling their friends about you and how you need to raise funds.

You can lever your social media presence to help raise funds in several ways.

You should promote any digital fundraising tools that you may have, such as your Just Giving page. Also, let your audience know if and where you are going to be collecting money

Well, when you first set up your social media presence you should firstly get all the members of your team to join your social media presences, on whichever presences they are members of. They should then be asked to invite all their friends to join it.

Beyond that, make sure that you promote your social media presences wherever you can — add links to your website, publish your Facebook address on any literature that may be seen by the general public, invite them to join you on Facebook or Twitter at every conceivable opportunity. Keep this consistent and your audience will constantly grow.

However, you may have heard some negative talk about social media and how it can cause problems?

Well, there is nothing to be scared of and certainly nothing that should stop you harnessing the benefits of social media, but there are



some simple guidelines, rules, and processes you must put in place in order to ensure you get it right and it remains a great tool for your team.

Firstly, try to have only one or two of your team members that update your social media presences.

This will not only help you to set a consistent tone but also to organise activity so as to ensure that neither too much or too little content is posted.

You should create, and openly publish, a code of practice for both yourselves and your audience members. Let your audience know what is acceptable behaviour and what is not, and ensure that you know what you should publish and when. For example, there is no need to publish precise details of where your current call-out is, and certainly no precise details of any casualties etc, simply post about the activity later on in the day. It will have the same affect as posting it live but avoids any possible implications.

Remain neutral and do not share your own personal opinions. You may share a relevant news story or post for example, and even if your audience then post their opinions in response, do not agree or disagree with any of them, remain neutral in your answers, or simply let the audience talk amongst themselves. No matter what your opinions really are, if you are hosting the conversation you are doing the job of positioning your mountain rescue team as at the heart of relevant topics, without polarising any opinions.

It is also important that your team members understand the power of social media as a communication tool in general. Beyond your team's 'official' presence, many don't think about it, when in fact social media is one of the most powerful communication channels, and a communication channel that is easily

accessed by everyone. A team member could easily post on their personal Facebook Profile that they are on their way to attend a call-out and give the location and even post details of any casualties once they are there. That has nothing to do with your official team social media presences, it is their personal Facebook Profile and they have the freedom to post whatever they want.

Occasionally, people just don't have a powerful a communication channel they now have very easy access to. Point this out to them and most will then understand this and comply. Even people that have done such things in the past wouldn't dream of going on the local radio to say the same thing, they just didn't think of it in the same way. Point this out to them so they do realise it and you are managing the channel.

Expand the 'Code of Practice' for your social media presences to include a policy for your team members specifying what mountain rescue activity they can and can't post about from their personal profiles. Don't ban everything, as you want them to support your activity for fundraising etc, but draw a clear line regarding what they cannot post about. This needs to be clearly and concisely explained and executed.

Social media is happening anyway, people are still there and actively posting what they want to whether you are there or not — much better to be there and involved. Don't be scared! The vast positive elements of working hard to develop your Social Media presence far outweigh the threat of any negative elements. Simply take time to lay down a careful structure now and you'll find that you are easily able to take full advantage of the vast opportunity social media has provided your team, to build your awareness locally and create a long lasting and resourceful fundraising platform. ■

## 'Lost password?... Do not pass go, do not collect £200 and definitely don't talk to anyone on the way...' continued from page 11

email the web editor ([webeditor@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:webeditor@mountain.rescue.org.uk)) for a further password and permissions. Once that's sorted, officers can upload a new resource or edit existing ones at will. Or that's the theory.

Yes, I know... I too have almost lost the will to live... This whole system appears to be causing problems on so many fronts, not least of all the regular forgetting of passwords, confusion with which password does which thing and who the appointed approver is in any particular team (I now have a spreadsheet of who all these people are if you're struggling to know yours). Then there's the whole issue of people not well-versed in matters technological being asked to use a content management system. However simple it might be to the geeks, the 'back end' view of a website has the power to strike fear into even the most intrepid and intelligent amongst us. The consequence is that stuff isn't refreshed and updated regularly enough, so even those members who've remembered their passwords stop going to the Members bit, because (they say) 'it never changes'.

It seems to me that if members won't engage with the Members area of the website, for whatever reason, then the Members area needs to engage with them. It's not the internet per se that's at fault, clearly. Apparently, it's the first thing people 'do' in the morning and the last thing

*However simple it might be to the geeks, the 'back end' view of a website has the power to strike fear into even the most intrepid and intelligent amongst us.*

they do at night. It's in their pockets, their briefcases, their rucksacks and their handbags. It's on the train, in the car, on the hill, in every room in the house, on every available screen...

Enter Facebook! No, not the public-facing, 'look what I did with my mates last night' Facebook, but the 'invitation-only' Closed Group Facebook. For members of mountain and cave rescue teams in England and Wales only. You'll have to ask to join and we'll do our best to check your provenance as a team member. Sure there's still a password required for Facebook, but I reckon you'll probably remember that one! This isn't intended to replace the Members area — more an extension to it. You will still be directed back there from time to time for some downloads and, yes, officers will still be required to keep their bits up to date, but hopefully that won't be a problem now we all know what we're supposed to be doing...

I really hope this added facility will enable better two-way communication (that phrase again) and that information will begin to move more freely.

And for those of you who really, really, really don't want to even THINK about Facebook, we're also looking at how members can subscribe to the bits they want on the Members area, and receive email notifications to alert them to new uploads.

One last point, though... if the conference proves one thing to me every single time, it's that there's no substitute for putting faces to names, and speaking to people face to face. We ALL want this to work better. So pick up the phone, meet for a beer, set up a Skype call, or dial up Facetime. Hear someone's voice, look into their eyes, listen to what they have to say in return. Communicate! ■

Judy Whiteside is editor of Mountain Rescue and has spent an entire professional career in the advertising and marketing communications industry.

PS: To join the closed Facebook group, go to 'Mountain Rescue England and Wales Members' and ask to be added. Please respect that this is for members of MREW teams only.

*John Hall works with global brands and regional social media businesses across the UK. He has helped launch more than 40 affiliate and social media-centric online brands, creating web traffic and monetised online audiences. The PDF of his conference presentation is available from [www.sm4b.co.uk/mountainrescue](http://www.sm4b.co.uk/mountainrescue).*



# 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: KEITH GILLIES**

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

Keith has recently replaced Peter Howells in this role and will be working with the MREW executive to develop a full range of duties. Initial responsibilities will include coordinating our role in the UK MR conferences and supporting the new Board of Trustees.



## **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**

**EMAIL: [vice-chairman@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:vice-chairman@mountain.rescue.org.uk)**

## **STATISTICS: GED FEENEY**

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

## **MAGAZINE: JUDY WHITESIDE**

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

## **CAVE RESCUE: BILL WHITEHOUSE**

**EMAIL: [billrhw@aol.com](mailto:billrhw@aol.com)**





## SITUATION VACANT: MREW LEGAL ADVISER

TONY RICH

Well, after twenty years as Hon Legal Adviser to BCRC and MREW I am packing it in. Not because I want to, but because my new day job is a public service job where I am not allowed to do anything that looks like giving anyone else professional legal advice. And so MREW needs to find a new legal adviser, or advisers (as we may need more than one to deal with the increasingly varied specialisms involved). But what does the legal adviser do and why does it matter for MREW?

Perhaps, of all the technical officer roles in MREW it is the one where, on a daily or weekly basis, the unexpected is most likely to happen as a matter of routine. You could get a call for help from any team, region or fellow officer at any time about just about anything. It matters to MR because it matters to them.

Here are some typical examples, all unusual, though all have happened...

...We've had an accident with the team vehicle, and there are casualties — what do we do now?

...A 'cowboy' SAR team has opened on our patch — how do we stop them stealing our shouts and pinching our fundraising opportunities and sponsors?

...A regular emergency service is going on strike/can't cope and their management want us to help out — can we and are there any legal issues?

...The landlord wants to resurface the track that goes to the team base (and his land) and wants us to pay part of the cost — do we have to?

...The team has been looking at its constitution — should we be incorporated?

...Fundraising have found a new commercial sponsor who has produced an exclusive sponsorship agreement, is it OK to sign?

...Our local Force have produced a Memorandum of Understanding and insist we sign it — should we?

...A team committee member is causing us embarrassment — how do we stop him?

As you can see the work is very varied from a technical perspective, and so both challenging and rewarding. It keeps you on your

professional toes and your finger close to the pulse of MR at all levels. The advice you give has not only got to be technically correct (of course) but it also has to make sound sense from a practical, operational and relationships perspective. So you need to spend a lot of time learning to listen to the pulse of MR, and not just the views in your team or region. But part of the job is proactive too. Can you scan the legal and political horizon and identify coming threats and opportunities? Can you help build an alliance to deal with the threats (such as when an alliance of charities persuaded the Government to successfully challenge proposed changes in EU law that would have made us far more vulnerable if things went wrong on a rescue)? Or can you find a way to help MR exploit new opportunities (such as building on the opportunities for training, funding and better liaison offered by the rethinking of the Civil Contingencies Act)? And part of the job is routine but important: the constant battle to reassure volunteers that it is a myth that we are victims of a compensation culture, sorting out internal disputes, giving appropriate awareness training and briefings and so on.

The nature of the legal challenges facing MR is changing too. When I started, the big fear, and main focus, was 'getting sued' and insurance cover. Back then, it was even technically illegal for the police to fund accident insurance for MR volunteers. MR now has a specialist Insurance Officer who handles the insurance queries that used to take up so much of my time, and a national accident policy (though issues can still arise at short notice).

New issues are always emerging. The Charity Commission's changed focus places an increased premium on better and more transparent governance at all levels. The growing importance of data protection and information law creates new legal issues, especially given the tension between them and the Freedom of Information Act. And how long before it is

suggested to the powers-that-be that MR should also be subject to that Act? How will you head off that threat?

We are operating in a more sophisticated environment with rapidly changing technology and a lot of other bodies taking a much closer interest in our work. This too raises a host of legal issues from Intellectual property topics to commercial partnership and development agreements to Memoranda of Understanding with other services (and making sure these documents say what we need them to say, not just what the other side wants to put in).

And we have seen a growing tendency to criminalise accidents. This means MR is more involved in the investigation and court cases after serious accidents, and more likely to be challenged if we have one ourselves. So a working knowledge of criminal law and procedure is far more important than it was when I started two decades ago.

I suppose it all comes down to foreseeing and managing legal risk proactively to prevent or avoid it where possible and respond effectively to it when it materialises. So that the 'Grunt at the Front' can get on with the operation in hand with the greatest possible support and freedom of action whilst covered by effective protection when it goes wrong, as sooner and later it inevitably will. Because of all the laws, Murphy's Law is the one the legal adviser(s) will have to grapple with most.

So... anyone up for it? ■

*In early October, Tony was appointed as a full time District Judge, but he will remain as an MREW Holding Trustee, a BCRC officer and an operational member of the Midlands CRO. Anyone interested in becoming an Hon Legal Adviser to MREW or BCRC can contact him at home via [anthonyrich@virginmedia.com](mailto:anthonyrich@virginmedia.com) or 0121 249 9292.*

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





## MOUNTAIN RESCUE CARRIES THE OLYMPIC TORCH INTO BUCKINGHAM PALACE

JOHN HULSE **OGWEN VALLEY MRO**

**T**he Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry each selected one of their charities to carry the Olympic Torch in the vicinity of Buckingham Palace on 26 July and I was honoured to be selected to represent Mountain Rescue England and Wales for the Duke of Cambridge. When I first heard of my selection, a myriad of emotions flooded through me, ranging from uncertainty, fear and embarrassment through to elation. Surely there must be others far more appropriate for this role! What an honour!

The next couple of weeks flew by and I carefully began to let people know about this honour. To a person, the response was overwhelmingly supportive and I began to feel a little less worried about representing mountain rescue in the Torch Relay. The London Olympic Organising Committee (LOCOG) made contact and the expected security arrangements with the Palace smoothly proceeded. The plan was for me to receive the flame from a runner from the MapAction charity, of which Prince Harry is a patron. The route to be run for MREW was to be from Buckingham Palace up Constitution Hill to a changeover at Hyde Park Corner.

I was then told that I was to be escorted by the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment. At this point the fear and uncertainty took over from

the elation. This was getting a bit serious!

The day before the run was one of the hottest of the year with perfect blue skies, rather than the normal drizzly, drab grey pallor of this year's Snowdonian summer. London felt vibrant and ready to party. There were Union Flags mixed with the London 2012 Olympic symbols wherever you looked. Big BMWs emblazoned with London 2012 logos sped past traffic queues whisking their cargo through the busy roads.

Taking the opportunity to recce the route, we made our way to the Palace amidst all the preparations for the Olympics. Security was very tight with the military and police highly evident around all the usual landmarks. Police helicopters droned overhead doing figure-8 circuits above the Palace and Mall.

On arriving at the Palace, the usual throng of tourists were taking photos of the beautiful building through the decorative railings. It seemed surreal that the following day, I'd be inside those railings looking out!

Constitution Hill rose, with a gentle gradient by Welsh standards, flanked by trees, heavy with full leaf, for several hundred metres to the magnificent Wellington Memorial at the top. The traffic at the top of the Hill looked so far away. My immediate concern was could I calmly run that distance with all the pressure of the moment and the crowds? Give me Tryfan at night in snow and ice any time. There was only one sane option and that was to run the route to learn the pace, gradient and timing for the section. Practice, practice and more practice has always served me well

on and off the hill. After about six repetitions of the route, together with pacing a contingent of the Household Cavalry up the Hill, I became far more relaxed about the run. Initially I was too focused on completion and found myself racing and looking just ahead at the arch of the Monument. To help combat this excessive focus, I devised the mantra 'Slow, Steady, Smile and Wave!!' repeated over and over again. This was intended to switch my focus from the destination towards enjoying sharing the time with the people who were coming to watch the event.

On one repetition, I started chatting with one of the now-famous London 2012 Games Makers who was helping tourists at the top of the Hill. He told me that thousands of people were expected to be at the Palace for the



# national News

PHOTO: JOHN HULSE (RIGHT) WITH WAI MING-LEE AND THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE AND PRINCE HARRY AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE ©IAN WEST. PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES.

relay. I quietly told him I was running that stage for mountain rescue. He started laughing and told me that many years ago, he had been posted to RAF Valley and flown with 22 Squadron to near the top of Snowdon — what a very small world! He was delighted to meet with the MREW runner and shook my hand wishing me every success for the run and promised to be in the crowd the following day. This left me feeling more humble than ever.

The big day arrived and official preparations were gathering pace with newly-erected barriers keeping the tourists a little further back from the Palace, the Household Cavalry rehearsing the route and more helicopters and police clearly visible. The tension in the air was clearly growing. Messages of support from many people involved in different aspects of mountain rescue all over the UK and Ireland were hitting my phone — this was so welcome and encouraging.

The MapAction runner, Ming Lee, and I met LOCOG at a hotel near the Palace and joined a group of 40 young aspiring Olympians who are very strong prospects for the 2016 Rio Games. I got changed into my pure white tracksuit, a polar difference from the usual black and red hill gear. No rucksack, no phone, no radio: I began to feel a bit vulnerable...

The security and protocol briefing was given and we were then herded onto a coach to be taken to the Palace. These young aspiring Olympians were great people with the same sense of humour as MRTs. Their chatter and excitement was a good distraction. Once in the inner courtyard, we were soon joined by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry. They looked tall and stunningly fit in their Team GB kit. Within seconds, the Royals were chatting easily with the group and made us all feel at ease. Prince William and I briefly chatted about rescues on Tryfan. Before this day, my only contact with him had been on the VHF as 'Rescue 122' to his SeaKing, in the security of the more familiar surroundings of the Ogwen Valley. I always thought that if I should meet him, it would be in

the mountains and not on his home territory of Buckingham Palace. We were all on our very best behaviour as I heard there was a very special grandmother in the Palace keeping a careful eye on us.

At the allotted time, the full group of aspiring Olympians, the Royals and me, made our way through to the Palace forecourt. There was a phenomenal roar from the crowds as we appeared. Helicopters and an airship circled overhead, crowds were clinging to the Victoria Monument and a phalanx of press cameramen were enclosed 30m from us. Within minutes, Ming of MapAction appeared through the south gate and steadily walked to the assembled group. The torches were 'kissed' and the flame was now alight on my torch. The weird combination of elation and extreme nervousness rose again, together with the fear of messing up for MR with the eyes of the world on me. There was nearly a 'YouTube' moment when my newly lit torch came uncomfortably close to Prince Harry's hair. Luckily, his Apache pilot reactions noticed the incoming threat and he took rapid evasive action.

I was gently ushered forward by the Police Torch Relay Escort Team leader and started the big walk holding the torch aloft, trying to share the moment with all the crowds and the many people supporting me. The mantra 'Slow, Steady, Smile and Wave!!' kicked in and my grin increased to painful proportions. The crowd noise rose to new levels as I approached the Palace gates. Cameras were everywhere, with people with outstretched hands holding cameras above their heads. Ushered on, I was joined by the 32 members of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment. The crowd noise, helicopters, cacophony of the hooves and regalia added to the celebrations of the crowds, at least ten to fifteen people deep all the way up the hill. To keep up with the 'roughly-toughy', fit, mountain rescue public image, I started a gentle jog up the hill waving and grinning widely to the crowds alongside the barriers. The Cavalry

formed up and we all moved steadily on.

After a few hundred metres, I was brought to a halt to pass the flame to the next runner. It was over far too soon. I was ushered into one of the waiting BMWs and we followed the cortège up the hill and into Hyde Park. The adrenaline rush was subsiding and reality was going to have to return soon as tomorrow would find me returning to the very different, quiet, mist-covered mountains of home.

As often is the case, rescues and MR activities displace planned events. The Ogwen team were called out the evening of this torch relay to deal with a broken leg high on the Gribin ridge, which meant that most team members were unable to see the live coverage of the relay! However, a contingent of Ogwen members, returning from a white water course in the North East, stopped at Tebay services and cheered — much to the bemusement of the other diners — when the torch being carried for MREW appeared on the live BBC broadcast. Amazingly, some footage of the Royal MREW Torch Kiss was briefly featured in the Olympic Opening Ceremony, so MREW managed to be global for a little while.

Back home, after the sheer exhilaration of the previous few days and so many kind messages of support, I found myself on a call-out carrying a big sack of four large hand-lamps to help on the evacuation of a severely injured casualty from Glyder Fach cliff — a totally different sort of torch carrying! Back down to earth with a bump and business-as-usual in the team!

I am exceptionally grateful and honoured to have been selected to carry the torch for Mountain Rescue England and Wales. It is a day that will stay with me forever and I hope that other MR people who carried the torch through their communities felt as honoured as I. It was such a special privilege to be part of that iconic event and I am so proud to be a member of our unique SAR community. Thank you all! ■



The weekend of 7-9 September saw team members from across the UK converging on the Headingley campus of Leeds Metropolitan University for two and a half days of beer and sunshine, networking and friendship forging, not to mention a packed programme of mountain rescue related activities and presentations.

Reports and summaries of just some of the excellent presentations and workshops can be found throughout the mag... and we'll have more in the January issue.



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## MADDIE THE COLLIE RESCUED FROM DRAINAGE CHANNEL: SEPTEMBER

Calder Valley SRT undertook a slightly different rescue in September, when West Yorkshire Police called them to assist with a dog which had fallen into a moorland drainage channel between Thornton Moor Reservoir and Leeming Reservoir, near Oxenhope. The channel was between six and seven feet deep with up to three feet of water at the bottom. Her owners had been on a walk between Ogden reservoir and Oxenhope when Maddie refused to cross a stile, then tried to jump across the channel and fell into it. Because of its depth she was unable to get out and the couple were unable to retrieve her.

Two team members — both search dog handlers — were lowered into the channel to try to persuade the dog that they were there to help. Maddie was none too keen on being helped and made things worse by taking a nip at one of her rescuer's hands. Luckily a rope was then attached to her collar which ensured she could not escape.

After a couple of failed attempts to muzzle her, she was quickly manhandled to safety before she could react, and back into the care of her two very thankful owners. The weather was extremely wet and both Maddie and her owners were transported home to Littleborough by a team member who lived nearby.



## KEEP CALM AND NIKWAX

Feeling hot and clammy on that cliff edge? Do your base layers not smell as fresh as you would like? Don't panic. New Nikwax® BaseFresh® will not only deodorise your technical layers, it will improve their breathability and cooling too.

At Nikwax, we know how important it is for your clothes and equipment to be in top condition. That's why we've created a range of award winning products that waterproof and care for your kit. BaseFresh is the latest addition to the range. Not only will it condition your base layers and dramatically enhance their wicking performance, it will also improve drying times by up to 90% and extend their lifetime. It stops the build up of body odours and maintains freshness for longer so you can be confident while you are climbing. And it's simple to apply. Just add to your washing machine with your regular detergent and enjoy the benefits straight away. Just like the rest of the Nikwax range, BaseFresh has top notch environmental credentials. As the global leader in safe, high performance cleaning and waterproofing solutions for outdoor gear, we have never used fluorocarbons or harmful solvents. All our products are waterbased and non-aerosol.

You can buy and learn much more about Nikwax BaseFresh at [www.nikwax.com/freshUK](http://www.nikwax.com/freshUK).





# incidents

figures

## Apr • May • Jun • 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	3	<b>Yorkshire Dales</b>	
Cockermouth	16	Cleveland	9	Kinder	5	CRO	24
Coniston	5	North of Tyne	6	Oldham	7	Upper Wharfedale	13
Duddon and Furness	9	Northumberland NP	6	Woodhead	3	<i>(Previous quarter: 55)</i>	<b>18</b>
Kendal	14	Swaledale	7	<i>(Previous quarter: 74)</i>	<b>57</b>	<b>Search Dogs</b>	
Keswick	34	Teesdale and Weardale	1	<b>Peninsula</b>		England	11
Kirkby Stephen	1	<i>(Previous quarter: 20)</i>	<b>29</b>	Dartmoor (Ashburton)	3	Wales	8
Lake District MR Sea	2	<b>North Wales</b>		Dartmoor (Okehampton)	3	South Wales	1
Langdale Ambleside	15	Aberglaslyn	8	Dartmoor (Tavistock)	5	<i>(Previous quarter: 29)</i>	<b>20</b>
Patterdale	1	Llanberis	39	Exmoor	3	<b>Non-specialists</b>	6
Penrith	8	North East Wales	4	<i>(Previous quarter: 17)</i>	<b>14</b>	<i>(Previous quarter: 2)</i>	<b>6</b>
Wasdale	12	Ogwen Valley	31	<b>South Wales</b>		<b>RAF Valley</b>	5
<i>(Previous quarter: 108)</i>	<b>117</b>	Snowdonia Nat Park	1	Brecon	30		<b>5</b>
<b>Mid-Pennine</b>		South Snowdonia	4	Central Beacons	14	<b>Total</b>	<b>462</b>
Bolton	20	<i>(Previous quarter: 55)</i>	<b>87</b>	Longtown	5	<i>(Previous quarter: 411)</i>	
Bowland Pennine	13	<b>Peak District</b>		Western Beacons	8		
Calder Valley	10	Buxton	5	<i>(Previous quarter: 44)</i>	<b>57</b>		
Holme Valley	6	Derby	9				
Rossendale & Pendle	3	Edale	25				
<i>(Previous quarter: 43)</i>	<b>52</b>						



### MOUNTAIN RESCUERS SEARCH CITY PARKS AND GOLF COURSE: JULY



Derby MRT were called in early July, to search Markeaton Park, in Derby, for a missing person. Brian Freeman, aged 76, had last been seen the previous week and police had become concerned for his safety. As part of their investigations, they called on the Duffield-based team to carry out a search of the park, close to the missing person's home.

Whilst it is unusual to see mountain rescue personnel deployed in such an urban area, the team's skills were ideally suited to searching the 207 acres that make up one of the most popular parks in the East Midlands.

Twenty-nine team members took part in a five-hour operation which covered the pitch and putt course, the Mundy Play centre and sports pitches as well as woodland paths and trails.

The following evening, a small section of the team continued the search by looking at water courses closer to the city centre that connect to the park, including culverts running underneath

the city. This involved using kayaks and a powered inflatable as well as members on foot searching the bank sides and directly in the water in dry suits. The missing person was not located within the areas searched.

A month later, in August, the team was called for a similar search, within the grounds of Allestree Park and Golf Course, for a 40-year-old missing man.

Twenty-seven team members, supported by two search dogs and a police helicopter, searched this large, densely wooded area throughout the day.

A team spokesman said: 'It was another unusual operation for us, being so close to the city. Unfortunately, on this occasion, a man matching the description of the person we were looking for was found deceased. We would like to pass on our condolences to the friends and family of the deceased man.'





PHOTOS © KESWICK MRT, MIKE FRANCE AND JUDY WHITESIDE

## A SUNNY DAY OF FUN AND LAUGHTER IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

Saturday 7 July saw an opportunity for some of the Lake District mountain rescue teams to host and entertain in a day of excitement and laughter for a group of very special children.



The children involved came from three charities which focus on the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people in difficult circumstances. Centrepoint and Child Bereavement share the patronage of Prince William with Mountain Rescue England and Wales, and Prince Harry is patron of WellChild.

Mike France, Chairman of National Fundraising for Mountain Rescue England and Wales said: 'This is now the fourth year we have held this event, which goes from strength to strength. All the Princes' charities are encouraged to work together, to promote their work and create opportunities for disadvantaged young people.

'The charities involved cover a wide range of ages and capabilities. Centrepoint provides accommodation services for socially excluded homeless young people, WellChild supports children and their families in managing the consequences of serious illness and Child Bereavement supports families who have been affected by the loss of a child, or a child suffering bereavement of a parent or sibling.

'This event provides all of them with the opportunity to see places and undertake activities they have never imagined possible.'

In previous years this wonderful event was held in Patterdale, North Wales and the Peak District but this year it was Keswick team members who were the proud hosts.

Planning had been underway for over a year, to arrange accommodation and a wide selection of activities suitable for all the different age groups and abilities of the children and their families. Despite flooding and torrential rain across most of the country — and fears that the day would be extremely wet for all concerned — the weather in Keswick behaved itself. The skies were blue and the sun shone! All the outdoor activities went ahead as planned and the wet weather alternatives remained on 'standby'!

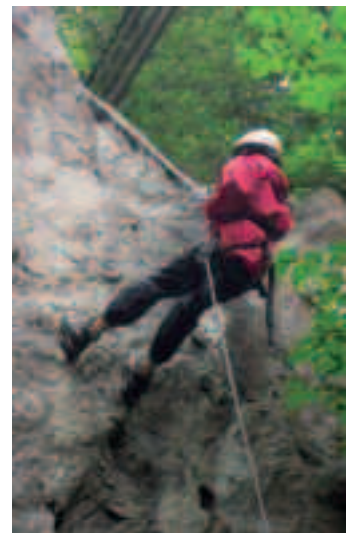
Keswick team members were supported on the day by Cockermouth and Penrith teams who each ran one of the organised activities, with Duddon and Furness team members assisting with transport. The activities included a morning visit to Derwent Island with a trip around the house and gardens for the children and families from WellChild — including a delicious mid-morning snack of tea and scones with jam and cream — followed by a choice between a drive to the top of Latrigg in a mountain rescue vehicle or a session at the Calvert Trust adventure centre in the afternoon. The children from Centrepoint and Child Bereavement each had sessions abseiling and slack-lining, and taking up active roles as MR team members in a simulated rescue and evacuation of a casualty, which included a line search and search dog demonstration.

All the charity attendees, helpers, guests and mountain rescue members, totalling just short of 100 people, met up at Derwentwater Hostel for lunch where they were joined by a Sea King helicopter and crew from RAF 202 Squadron. After a lunch provided by the hostel staff, there was ample opportunity to explore the helicopter, with the crew providing a feast of information about their operations and the types of rescues they undertake, before thrilling onlookers with their dramatic departure and several flyovers.

Comments from the children included 'Abseiling was amazing. I can't believe I did it', 'I really enjoyed going to the Lake District, especially seeing the helicopter', and 'Thank you for a fantastic day', with one WellChild family saying they had felt like Royalty all day and would love to do it all over again.'

The day concluded with still more delicious tea and cakes back at the Keswick base, with certificates and goody-bags presented to all the children and families by Mike Nixon MBE, President of Keswick MRT and LDSAMRA.

Alan Prescott, chairman of Keswick MRT said: 'Organising an event like this depends on the commitment, support and hard work of many people. The glittering prizes are the faces of the children — awe, excitement, smiles and the sound of laughter. One of life's priceless occasions.'



## YOUR SECOND CHANCE TO WIN LEADING INFRARED TECHNOLOGY WORTH £10,000!



In the last issue, Infrared Security Solutions (ISS) pledged to donate a hand-held thermal camera (TIV), worth a generous £10,000, to one fortunate team, in a competition open to all MREW mountain rescue teams. And yet, only two teams (who for now shall remain nameless, but thank you to them for putting fingers to keyboard) have responded. We thought it only fair to extend the opportunity for another issue, so come on... you know you want it!

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 thoughts via email to [editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk) to arrive with me no later than 30 November.

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.

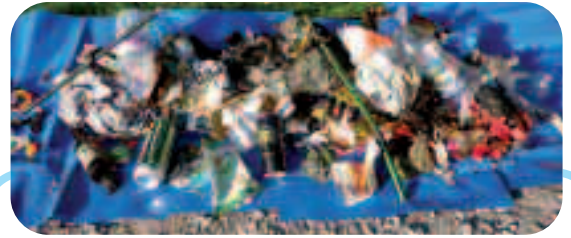
Thermal imagers are sensitive to natural radiation emitted or reflected by all objects, manmade or natural. As this natural radiation is independent from any light, thermal imagers are able to see in conditions where other technologies, including the human eye, cannot. They can see through smoke, mist, 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 make them even more significant and valuable in the search process.

Team members who recently trialled the range of thermal devices, said, '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.'

A second comment, was that having previously used NVG scopes 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 ISS and their products, or to participate in a field trial, contact [sales@iss-thermal.com](mailto:sales@iss-thermal.com).

## CHALLENGERS LEAVE SCAFELL PIKE IN DISGUSTING STATE: SEPTEMBER



In July, concerns were reported that 'fashionable' visitors are turning Scafell Pike into a toilet with huge amounts of litter and even human waste being left on the mountain. Following the arrival of walkers attempting the Three Peaks challenge of Scafell Pike, Ben Nevis and Snowdon in under 24 hours, locals said the area was left in a 'disgusting' state. Following coverage of the issue on the BBC One Show, Adecco Kendal took up the challenge and, in September, a small team went up the Pike to do a litter pick with bags and litter sticks supplied by the Lake District National Park Authority. In one hour they filled four bags of mixed litter and rubbish.

Richard Warren, of Wasdale MRT, said: 'It was really surprising how such a large amount of litter can be collected in such a short time by a small group of committed volunteers. The day was glorious and many walkers who were on the summit were very complimentary to the ladies of Adecco who spent their day on the mountain. The most surprising observation was the number of walkers who had the cheek to ask the girls if they could put their rubbish into the sacks rather than carry it off the mountain themselves. They were, of course, very politely reminded that it was not a paid service and they should remove their own rubbish. The group did not remove any of the human excrement (of which there was plenty), but did 'carefully' remove many tissues and many, many banana skins and orange peel ranging from that day's dropping to many that were blackened and weeks or months old.

'The community thanks Adecco Kendal for taking time to come and clean our mountain, let us hope the message got across to many that day who might have twigged about keeping our countryside and mountain tops clean for the enjoyment of all.

'Respect and support our local communities and remember to leave nothing but light footprints when going out on the fells and take away great memories and especially the litter.'



real rescues





## LAKE DISTRICT

### PENNINE WAY WALK RAISES FUNDS FOR BOTH LAKES AND PEAK TEAMS

In July, brothers James (12) and Josh (16) Martin, accompanied by their mother, Michelle and their Welsh Collie, Myst, set off from Kirk Yetholm to walk the Pennine Way down to Edale, to raise funds for **Buxton MRT** and the twelve teams in the Lake District (one of James's favourite walking areas). James is already well-known in mountain rescue circles, having raised money for the Buxton team with a Coast to Coast walk two years ago. He aspires to one day become a Mountain Leader and join a mountain rescue team, and was the driving force behind the endeavour. Unfortunately, older brother Josh sustained an ankle injury and had to retire after 65 miles, at Greenhead. Although weather conditions made the going tough, James was determined to finish.

Members of **Penrith MRT** met up with James, Michelle and Myst on the summit of Cross Fell, as they passed through the team's area, and accompanied them down to Dufton. **Kirkby**



MEMBERS OF PENRITH TEAM ON GREAT DULL FELL WITH JAMES AND MICHELLE MARTIN

## CARRYING A TORCH AND COMPASS INTO THE MOUNTAINS TAKES ON NEW MEANING

On Sunday 15 July, three Olympic torch bearers with friends and members of **Wasdale MRT** took their torches to the highest point in England, Scafell Pike summit in Wasdale. Karen Greene, Joss Naylor and Angela Brand-Barker were Olympic torch bearers in Flimby on 21 June and thought it would be good to celebrate the forthcoming Olympics in their own special way and raise the profile of mountain rescue by taking the 'spirit of Olympic challenge' to a much higher level. In typical summer weather – cold, windy and shrouded in cloud – 200 people made it onto the Pike that day, and hopefully raised the profile of the team in the process.



WASDALE TEAM MEMBERS DAVE KENNY, IAN WINN, NICK WEST, PAUL CROOK, ROB SCOTT AND CHRIS CRIPPS WITH KAREN, JOSS AND ANGELA.

**Stephen MRT** joined in the fun between Dufton and Middleton in Teesdale, via High Cup. The trio reached Edale, on schedule, in August – congratulations, well done and thank you James, Josh, Michelle and Myst from the Lakes and Buxton – a fantastic achievement.

## MID-PENNINE

### ROCK ON THE THREE PEAKS

Every now and again, something comes along that captures the imagination. The band Sound Driver did just that for **Rossendale & Pendle MRT** by taking two of their favourite things, mountains and rock music then putting them together to create Rock On Top. Already in the record books for playing the world's highest powered gig on Kilimanjaro in 2010, the band carried their equipment up the three Yorkshire Peaks in July and played to a crowd on top of Ingleborough on Saturday afternoon.

They were joined by other bands as they played again in a packed Hill Inn during the evening before continuing to tour around the country. And they

were doing it all to raise money for charity. The band's single, 'Mr Rescue,' is available to download for just 79p from iTunes and every penny goes to the team. You can also catch the video on YouTube: <http://tinyurl.com/8e2s4nm>.

## PENMACRA

### ALL CHANGE IN CORNWALL

There have been several changes 'at the top' at **Cornwall SRT**. June's AGM started with a farewell presentation to founding chairman Andy Brelsford who has decided to move to pastures new after ten years service. Jim Gallienne gave a moving speech before presenting Andy with a scale model of the team's latest Land Rover, Kernow Mobile 2. The AGM continued somewhat off course, with local MP Steve Gilbert presenting sixteen members with their Diamond Jubilee medals, and taking the opportunity to learn more about the team.

Back on track, each being at the end of their two-year tenures, chairman Tim Hughes, vice chairman Pete Jarrett and team leader Jim Gallienne had to

## RESCUE 2020

Richard Warren writes... In the June issue we talked briefly about the work the region had just completed on RESCUE 2020, an appraisal of mountain rescue within the Lake District. Since then, putting aside the rescues, the training and the fundraising, the regions teams and officers have been very much focused on the output of RESCUE 2020, presenting the results of this extremely comprehensive survey and managing some of the inevitable controversial conclusions and recommendations.

There were nine recommendation areas and a total of twenty-nine individual points, grouped into nineteen summarised recommendations for ease of implementation. The majority are for internal work but a number require cooperative working with partner organisations. The region has already made good progress on a number of the more urgent recommendations and will be progressively tackling those remaining over the forthcoming years. The implementation of RESCUE 2020 should not be rushed – it needs to be carefully managed by the teams themselves as they will be the real beneficiaries of the work done. It is, therefore, extremely important that the region does not lose any of its drive and momentum on what we believe will be a key milestone in the development of the region's capabilities and governance. A full article covering RESCUE 2020 appears on page 26, however there is a full summary of the conclusions and recommendations downloadable from the LDSAMRA website.



READ MORE ABOUT THE REPORT'S FINDINGS ON PAGE 26





ANDY BRELSFORD RECEIVES HIS 'THANK YOU' MODEL (SEEN INSET). PHOTO: JAY OPIE

## QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDALS PRESENTATIONS

Teams across England and Wales have continued to receive their Queen's Diamond Jubilee medals, in recognition of their hard work and dedication.

In South Wales, twenty Central Beacons team members received their medals from Dai Harvard MP in June and, in July, the First Minister for Wales, Carwyn Jones, and Richard Lewis, the Assistant Chief Constable of South Wales Police, presented members of Western Beacons MSRT with their medals, during a visit to team HQ.

In the Peak District, nineteen Woodhead team members – boasting an aggregate of 500+ years service, including two with 48 years each – received their medals from the Queen's representative, the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire, David Moody. A host of local dignitaries included Angela Smith MP, Chief Superintendent Andy Brooke of South Yorkshire Police and the Mayor of Penistone, Harry Barron. Founding member and team chairman Barry Gregory MBE said, 'it was a very proud moment for us all. We don't join mountain rescue to be rewarded but it's nice to be recognised for the work we do in the community'.

More than 60 members of Buxton team and Derbyshire CRO received their medals at a joint presentation night, held at the Old Club House, Buxton. The Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, Mr William Tucker, who presented the medals, said, 'Derbyshire is well served by its mountain and cave rescue teams and I was delighted to present Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee Medal to so many well-deserving team members. As a county we owe them all a deep sense of gratitude. They, at times, work in the most difficult of conditions and they are frequently called upon to handle situations which the vast majority of us as citizens would not want to face. I sincerely congratulate and thank them all.'

In Lancashire, medals were presented to fifteen members of Rossendale and Pendle MRT by Asrar UI-Haq, Hub Commander, from Rochdale Police, who the team had assisted during difficult situations last winter. Asrar said, 'It's an honour for me to present these medals to such dedicated men and women who give their own time in pursuit of community service and represent the very best of the British spirit.' Long term service awards were also presented to Mike King (ten years and still smiling) and Bob Brindley (fifteen years).

Further north, in Cumbria, 28 long-serving members of the Kendal team received their medals at an award ceremony held at the Hawkshead Brewery in Staveley. The medals were awarded by Cllr John Willshaw, Mayor of Kendal.



WOODHEAD TEAM MEMBERS WITH THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF SOUTH YORKSHIRE, DAVID MOODY, HIS WIFE SUE, ANGELA SMITH MP, CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT ANDY BROOKE AND THE MAYOR OF PENISTONE, HARRY BARRON. PHOTO: ADRIAN ASHWORTH PHOTOGRAPHY. ADRIANASHWORTH.CO.UK.

stand down from their posts. However, all was not lost, because not five minutes later, all had been re-elected but in new roles with Pete in the chair, Jim as vice chairman, and Tim as team leader.

Tim Hughes said, 'With the coincidence of all three of us coming to the end of our terms of office at once, we felt it a good opportunity to pitch to the membership the chance to swap roles to ones that better fit our skills, experience and commitments. Fortunately, the membership agreed or we'd all be out of a job!'

### DARTMOOR MEMBER 'DEEPLY HONOURED' BY MBE

Richard Thorne has been an active member of **Dartmoor SRT Plymouth** for 41 years. He was nominated for the honour by his team-mates, for his enthusiasm and commitment to mountain rescue. Richard joined search and rescue on Dartmoor at the age of 25. At that time, it was a new organisation and he was sure he wanted to be part of it. 'I came down from London at 21 and used to do a lot of cycling. With the moors on my doorstep,



LONG-TERM DARTMOOR SRT (PLYMOUTH) TEAM MEMBER RICHARD THORNE MBE



ABOVE: BUXTON AND DERBYSHIRE CRO MEDAL RECIPIENTS, WITH THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF DERBYSHIRE, WILLIAM TUCKER OUTSIDE THE OPERA HOUSE, BUXTON. PHOTO: HARRY KNIGHT. TOP RIGHT: ROSSENDALE TEAM MEMBERS. BOTTOM RIGHT: KENDAL TEAM MEMBERS.



MAIN SHOT: ASSEMBLED MEMBERS OF UPPER WHARFEDALE TEAM. INSET: LEFT TO RIGHT: HOWARD DRIVER, LORD CRATHORNE AND PAUL REINSCH.



I started walking and heard about the rescue group. I thought I might have a skill that could be useful to them. They accepted me and I never looked back.'

The highlight of his career, he says, was in 1981, when five air cadets were rescued off the moor after being lost in a blizzard. 'All four teams – that's over 100 members – were looking for them. We were out there for 36 hours but the air cadets were found safe and well on the northern side of the moor. It was one of the toughest rescues I have been involved with.' Now retired, he intends to continue in his volunteering role 'as long as both legs can move forward in the same direction.' As a search manager, he now coordinates rescues. 'The youngsters can move a lot faster than me but I am still out there on the moor, in a big Ford Transit, set up with radios, maps and liaising with team members on the ground. We all have a skill or an expertise we can put to good use, be it in the water or with the ropes or whatever. The Dartmoor team really is a tremendous organisation and I am as enthusiastic about it now as the day I joined.'

## SOUTH WALES

### FIRST MINISTER VISITS SOUTH WALES

The First Minister for Wales, Carwyn Jones, visited **Western Beacons MSRT** headquarters in Bridgend, in July, to present team members with their Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medals. Also present were **Central Beacons MRT** and **South & Mid-Wales CRT** and Richard Lewis,



LEFT TO RIGHT: SHARRON PRICE, DEPUTY TEAM LEADER, CARWYN JONES, FIRST MINISTER FOR WALES AND NICK MCALLISTER, TEAM LEADER

the Assistant Chief Constable of South Wales Police, who presented some of the medals.

'The work carried out by these rescue teams certainly deserves to be recognised,' said Mr Jones. During his 40-minute visit, he had the opportunity to view the medical equipment and vehicles and talk with team members. His greatest surprise was that the team has been based in his home town for 29 years, without his being aware of its existence! Team Leader Nick McAllister said, 'We are honoured to receive these medals and very pleased that the First Minister has recognised the valuable support we provide the police and ambulance services'.

## JUBILEE MEDALS

Should Jubilee medal recipients wish to have two medals fixed together on a single pin as is the norm, then Upper Wharfedale FRA has a discount deal for you. The team has negotiated a reduced price for all MR teams with the Worcestershire Medal Service Company which also includes buying miniatures – traditionally used instead of the full medals at formal dinners etc, and even medal ribbons.

It is not a costly exercise and all you need do is contact the company and quote 'Mountain Rescue account number 100756'. Payment will be 'pay as you go'. The discount applies to individual members not just teams but it would make sense to perhaps send in a bulk order to cut down on postage. Special Delivery is recommended.

For interest, the company won the contract to make the medals, even beating the Royal Mint in the process! Contact Jenny Wall on 01527 835375 or via [www.worcomedals.com](http://www.worcomedals.com) or David Glynn Dennis on 01943 875608 or [davidglynnndennis@aol.com](mailto:davidglynnndennis@aol.com).

## YORKSHIRE DALES

### AND STILL MORE MEDALS...

**Upper Wharfedale FRA** members received their Jubilee medals from patron Lord Crathorne, at the Wharfedale Rugby Club in Grassington, and two members of the team found themselves further honoured when they were called forward to receive 50-year service certificates. The team now has six serving members with this remarkable award. Howard Driver, is an ex-chairman of the association. As well as attending call-outs over five decades, he has also been the warden at their headquarters in Grassington. His wife Carolyn is also a long serving member of the team and she completed a family double when she also received the Jubilee medal. Paul Reinsch is part of the Reinsch family who have all given many years of service to the team. His parents, two brothers and a niece have also served with great distinction.

## VIEWRANGER ADDS FEATURES IN RESPONSE TO SAR TEAM FEEDBACK

With over 70 SAR teams now using ViewRanger in the UK, Ireland, USA and Canada, we are keen to make the product as effective as possible. For example, our latest Apple iOS version (3.3.0) includes a 'night vision' feature, added specifically in response to SAR team feedback. It's something that has been already available on Symbian devices. The feature redraws the screen in red to protect dark adaptation. We hope to be adding this to our app for Android devices in the near future.

The latest Apple iOS version also includes new GPS power saving modes that will extend battery life significantly, whilst still using key features like track recording and BuddyBeacon location sharing, as – unlike Symbian and Android devices – there is not the option to switch to a spare battery for iPhones.

The GB Ordnance has recently issued an update to its mapping at both 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 scales. We are currently in the process of contacting all teams participating in the VSAR programme to arrange delivery of this new map data to your registered devices.

Finally, we'd like to welcome the Scarborough & Ryedale and Kinder teams, the latest MREW members to join the VSAR programme. If you or your team are interested to find out more about ViewRanger or join the VSAR programme, see [www.viewranger.co.uk/SAR](http://www.viewranger.co.uk/SAR) or email Craig via [craig@viewranger.com](mailto:craig@viewranger.com).







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## PENRITH AND COMRU TEAMS GET THE 'PETZL' TREATMENT

PAUL WITHERIDGE & DARYL GARFIELD



© DAVE WILLIS

We all flick through the gear brochures for the big manufacturers and look with envy at the fantastic images of climbers, mountaineers and cavers at the peak of their game, doing what they do best in fabulous locations — up on the summit of Manaslu in the Himalayas, mid-pitch on the Spitzkoppe Namibia, deep underground in the Akemabis cave, Mexico...

So, it was a bit of a surprise to say the least when the team got a call out of the blue asking if we'd be interested in taking part in a photo shoot for next year's Petzl international catalogues.

The first question that sprang to mind was, why us? None of the team are climbing 8c+ and, beautiful as Haweswater is, it's not the Mer de Glace.

Apparently Petzl were well aware of the voluntary work of UK mountain rescue teams and the enthusiasm, professionalism and dedication their members show was something that they applauded and wanted to promote. As the company's UK distributor, Lyon Equipment, is based in Cumbria, Petzl approached them and asked if contact could be made with a local team who might like to become involved.

As Penrith MRT covered the fells they see from their training centre windows, they thought it right to ask us first. And, after ten seconds of debate, the answer went back: yes!

Shooting deadlines were tight for Petzl and, rather than bringing over a large contingent from France, they linked up with well-known outdoor photographer Dave Willis, who conveniently lives in Shap and knows our area very well. Contact was made with Dave and dates and times were

fixed. Lyon would come along to provide input on what Petzl were hoping to see in the images and would also arrange safety cover for Dave whilst on the hill, giving us one less thing to look after.

The day came and the Lakes provided weather that could, at its most charitable, be described as 'challenging'. Petzl were looking for photographs that showed teams in realistic situations and they certainly got them! Rain, low cloud and a biting wind bordering on gale force greeted us the instant we stepped out of the vehicles, and continued without let up through the day.

By the time we'd walked in to the crag, although still dry on the inside, most people looked like they had gone for a quick dip in the lake. Setting up the scenario was every bit as challenging as a real shout, with ropes thrown down the crag being blown back up just as quickly. Yours truly (Daryl) played the part of casualty and the grimace of pain you see on my face is real enough — caused by water trickling down between my shoulder blades and exiting out at the ankle!

For those who have never done anything like this the process of taking catalogue images is nothing like grabbing snaps on the hoof. Lighting needs to be monitored, adjusted and adjusted again. People positioned, personal and team rigging checked for technical accuracy and the best camera angle found. It was only as the light began to fade that Dave signalled he had all the shots he wanted and a tired, damp team could finally pack up and head back to the vehicles.

Was it worth the effort?

Well, Petzl kindly donated a box of helmets, harnesses and lighting to the team as a thank you and have offered us use of key images to assist the team's own publicity efforts. The first of the images has now appeared on the Petzl website which is raising the profile of both UK mountain rescue and Penrith MRT globally.

Not a bad return for a wet day on the hill!

NB. The following day, Cumbria Mine Rescue Unit, which comprises members of LDSAMRA and BCRC, underwent the same process at Hospital level, Coniston Copper Mines. You can see the evidence of that photoshoot on the front cover.



© DAVE WILLIS





PHOTO: KESWICK MRT

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT BY RICHARD WARREN, CHAIRMAN, LDSAMRA

**R**ESCUE 2020 was commissioned as a forward-looking appraisal of the mountain rescue service in Cumbria and is based on feedback from team members and partner organisations. The study was carried out by Bob Sharp PhD FRGS and Archie Roy OBE on behalf of the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA). Bob and Archie are extremely well qualified to undertake such a review, with a combined experience in mountain rescue of over 60 years, plus backgrounds in research and report writing (Bob) and direction of a large diverse organisation (Archie).

The aim was to carry out a comprehensive review of mountain rescue provision in the Lake District with a view to identifying existing good practices, as well as issues for further development. To achieve this aim, two objectives were identified, namely:—

- To ascertain the view of all team members regarding the structure and function of current provision, as well as future provision.
- To ascertain the views of partner organisations regarding existing provisions, how they believe it might operate in the future and what future developments (if any) might impact on the service.

RESCUE 2020 is a follow up to a very successful RESCUE 2000 survey carried out in 1992. No responsible organisation, not least an emergency service, can possibly operate in this day and age without routinely examining and reviewing the service which it provides. The statistics for the appraisal are quite staggering. Twenty months, sixteen visits to the Lake District totalling 5000 miles, meeting and talking to countless mountain rescuers, supporting agencies and MPs, plus endless hours analysing results and preparing the report.

### RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

The researchers wanted to avoid sampling limitations so adopted a consensus marking system starting with a blank sheet of paper. A twin

phase approach of both quantitative and qualitative methods resulted in the interviews being used to create the questionnaire.

A comprehensive list of partner organisations was identified, including the ARCC, Cumbria Constabulary, Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service, Cumbria Local Resilience Forum, Cumbria Tourist Board, Cumbria SAR, the Great North Air Ambulance, HM Coastguard, the Lake District National Park Authority, LDSAMRA, local MPs, the MCA, Mountain Rescue England and Wales, North West Ambulance Service and the North West Air Ambulance Service (who declined the invitation to contribute).

Semi-structured interviews took place, between one to two hours long, with individual partner organisations and all mountain rescue teams, comprising a team leader plus two other team members. Apart from one or two cases, interviews were on a one-to-one basis and confidentiality of all information has been maintained throughout. No individual can be identified from the data collected, although the results for each team as a whole compared to the regional average could be identified.

The interview findings informed the questionnaire which had six sections and 184 questions (both open and closed). The six sections covered:—

- Workload and recruitment
- Funding and insurance
- Operations and training

- Corporate image
- Working with other organisations
- Future developments.

A pilot group completed the questionnaires in order to validate the process. This was followed by every team member being asked to complete the questionnaire. Of the 392 questionnaires issued, there was a 71% return rate — extremely good compared to most employee surveys!

### DATA COLLECTED AND FINDINGS

There were 50 interview transcripts and a database of 50,000 items along with hundreds of comments. The accumulated evidence led to nine major 'recommendation' areas consisting nineteen groupings from twenty-nine individual recommendations. Action is required of the teams, LDSAMRA, MREW and others.

The report highlights areas where there is strong evidence of good practice and suggested where it could be shared:—

- Inter-team cooperation and mutual support including training
- Corporate approach was seen by many members as very important.

It also points to where change may be necessary:—

- Enhanced governance procedures
- Monitoring, recording and

assessment of competency

- Distribution and usage of funding
- Greater collaboration between teams.

Positive findings included:—

- Mountain rescue provision in the Lake District is highly effective, competent and fit for purpose
- Mountain rescue enjoys the confidence and support of its communities
- Despite recent increases in workload, mountain rescue performs extremely well
- The voluntary ethic is very strong with an impressive display of professionalism and dedication
- Cooperation and effort of troops on the ground
- Jobs are always carried out successfully with the best interests of the casualty and their friends and relatives a top priority
- Team members are very proud of their versatile capability, high skill level, speed of response and ability to work seamlessly with other agencies.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The reviewers developed and reported very detailed conclusions and recommendations, underpinned by supporting explanation and context. Full details on the findings and recommendations can be viewed and downloaded from [ldsamra.org.uk](http://ldsamra.org.uk).

# RESCUE 2020

## AN APPRAISAL OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN THE LAKE DISTRICT



### WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Speedier deployment to off-road incidents (minimising delays); addressing the problems associated with inappropriate tasking of assets by partner organisations; increased training with partner organisations to improve mutual awareness, understanding capabilities and increase levels of mutual trust; addressing a lack of knowledge about MREW and a misunderstanding of its overall purpose by team members. Discussions are needed at national, regional and team level to identify the avenues of communication that exist between levels, any weakness and scope for improvement.

### TEAM COLLABORATION

Adjacent teams working together in operations and training. Learning from each other/supporting each other.

### FUNDING AND INSURANCE

Conduct a review of how funds coming into the regions are allocated and spent; investigate the benefits of central purchasing/bulk purchasing and insurance at national level (eg. fleet insurance).

### COMPETENCY AND GOVERNANCE

Greater weight to be placed on monitoring, recording and assessment of core competencies and enhance overall governance procedures and processes.

### CORPORATENESS

Identify the major features of a corporate approach and consider possible improvement, noting that corporateness is not how we look (corporate image) but how we function as a group.

### WORKLOAD AND RECRUITMENT

Consideration of mountain safety campaigns; combining resources of adjacent teams; recruitment and succession planning.

### TEAM KNOWLEDGE

Improve knowledge on post-traumatic stress disorder and counselling provision within teams and region; mentoring of team members over effectiveness and transparency.

### CALL-OUT PROCEDURES

Improve call-out arrangement to reduce response times, increase attendance and review any issues of selectivity. Consider a dedicated emergency telephone number to improve call-out arrangements.

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEAMS

Each team to review its own response to the questionnaire compared to the region's overall response, with a view to possible changes and improvements in operation.

The report was presented to the twelve LDSAMRA teams on 20 June, and followed by meetings with team members and interested partner organisations prior to the national press release on 2 July.

The majority of the recommendations can be progressed internally but a number require cooperative working with partner organisations. The region has already made good progress on some of the more urgent points and will be progressively tackling the remaining recommendations over the coming years. The implementation of RESCUE 2020 should not be rushed; it needs to be carefully managed by the teams themselves as they will be the real beneficiaries of the work done. It is, therefore, extremely important that the region does not lose any of its drive and momentum on what we believe will be a key milestone in the development of the regions capabilities and governance.

Cumbria's Chief Constable, Stuart Hyde, said: 'The Lake District mountain rescue teams provide an exceptionally professional but totally free service to both our communities and to the many thousands of visitors that take to the hills. Without their support and commitment we, as the primary agency responsible for land based search and rescue, would be hard pressed to step into their boots.'

'I have followed the development of mountain rescue and was particularly pleased when I heard that the region had decided to take a hard look at itself in order to improve the quality of the service in the face of increasing demands. Not just inwardly but also seeking the views of interfacing

organisations and emergency service partners.

'The courage to question and challenge your own performance as an organisation is something that many organisations shy away from. To invite feedback from partner organisations — some where tensions already exist — demonstrates a real desire to improve. I have read the output from RESCUE 2020 and will watch the next stage, tackling and implementing the recommendations with great interest. My officers work extremely closely with Cumbria's mountain rescue teams and I am sure that the end result, however long it might take, will be a very good result for Cumbria.'

Cumbria's MPs are highly supportive of mountain rescue. Like many of the regions, our local MPs are extremely strong supporters of mountain rescue and ensure our efforts are recognised in both Whitehall and our local communities. Rory Stewart, MP for Penrith and the Borders, is chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for mountain rescue and, although having only been elected since 2010, is well known within the corridors of power for his forthright approach to dealing with issues. Another of our strong local and national supporters is Tim Farron, MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale.

Both have been fully briefed by LDSAMRA on the recommendations of RESCUE 2020 and both have indicated their willingness to provide support in whatever capacity they can. They viewed the initiative and output from the study as a significant step forward in the development of the existing first-class rescue service in the Lake District. Particularly as the scope of our service expands beyond that of pure mountain rescue, a consequence of resilience and our ability to meet its demands.

At the recent MREW conference, Rory delivered a supportive and motivating address. Many of the positive points he made about mountain rescue nationally were equally relevant to the conclusions of the RESCUE 2020 appraisal. One point made that was very relevant to issues relating to the need for improved understanding and awareness by our partners, was an

invitation for mountain rescue teams to showcase their professionalism and capability in the Houses of Parliament in 2013. He made the point that mountain rescue is one of only a very few truly great acts of public service, that the public loved volunteers and MR were true volunteers, unpaid professionals providing a totally free service to our communities. This ethos allows everyone to roam free. To this end Rory cautioned mountain rescue not to become over corporate, as local identity and ownership is essential to maintain community-based services.

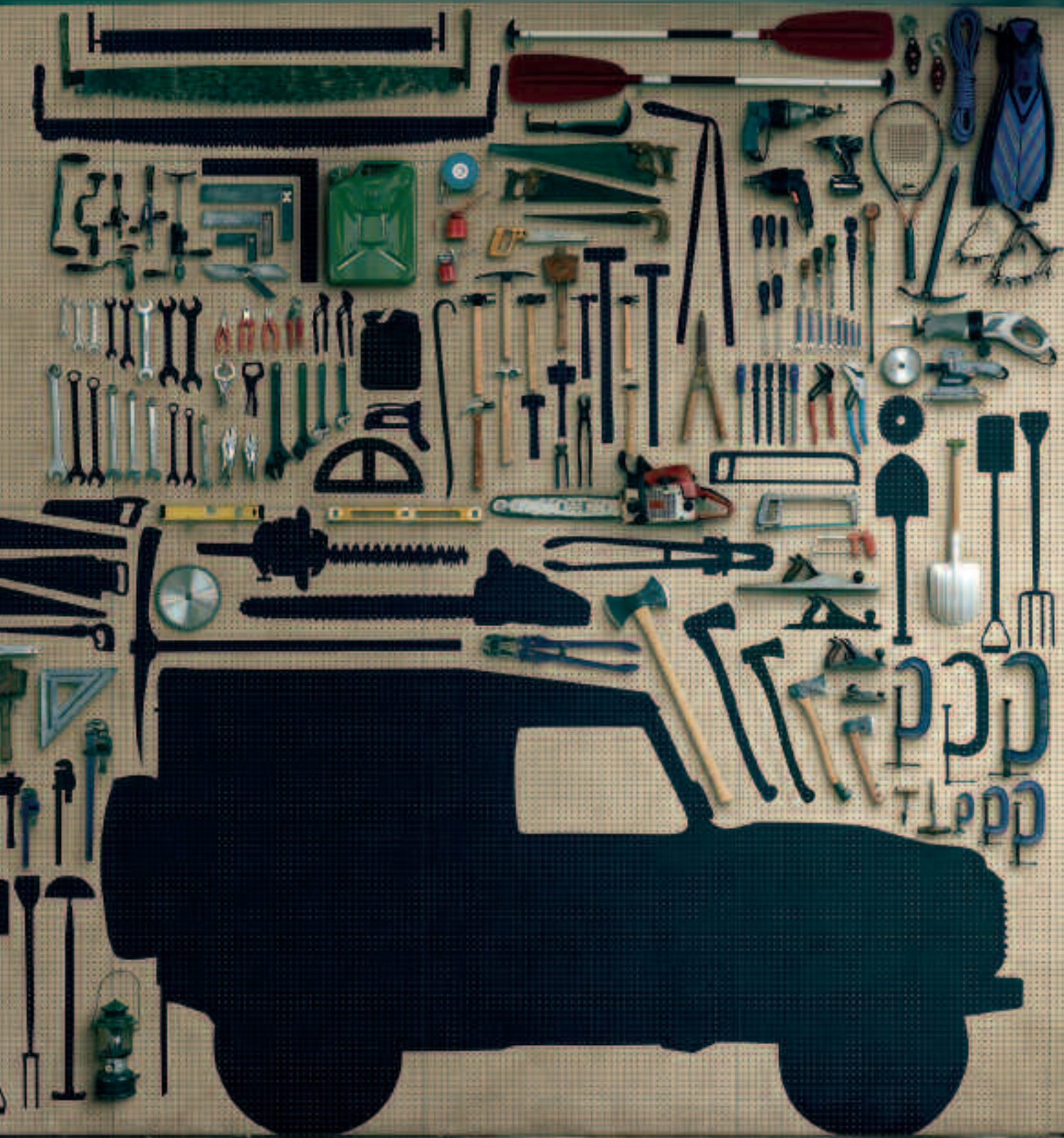


RORY STEWART MP

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The RESCUE 2020 project could not have been completed without the input of many people. Key to the success of the project has been the work of the LDSAMRA RESCUE 2020 steering group consisting of Paul Holder, Nick Owen and Andy Dell from the Lakes teams. However, without the incredible commitment and hard work of Bob Sharp PHD FRGS and Archie Roy OBE, invited to develop and manage the process of data collection and the eventual authoring of the report, we would not be where we are today. As a region we are indebted to their efforts particularly as they both gave their time freely. The final report itself has a really good look and feel and this is very much down to Judy Whiteside, Editor of Mountain Rescue Magazine who designed its layout. There are a limited number of spare copies of the full report available upon request to paul@theholders.co.uk (all-in price £10.00 for MR teams or £20.00 non MR including P&P costs). For regulars to the online shop, it's also available there (credit card-friendly!) — check out [www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/shop/books/rescue-2020.html](http://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/shop/books/rescue-2020.html).





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# THE NATIONAL BLUE LIGHT USERS CONFERENCE 2012

## DARYL GARFIELD MREW VEHICLES OFFICER

The much talked about Section 19 has gone through several government departments and is currently with the Regulation Approval Committee. Mountain rescue has been included and the consultation document should be out late September/October, although this has slipped once or twice already. It is possible the consultation may include other exemptions along with speed.

A very interesting and informative talk from Edward Handley about changes to driving licences and licence categories due to EC 3rd Directive (2006/126/EC) which comes into effect on 19 January 2013. Changes include the paper licence being abolished (it's not yet decided how they will record the provisional entitlement or endorsements), and also that the old paper licences (around 14 million) will be withdrawn and it will be compulsory that all licences become photocards. These changes could have serious implications for drivers and teams alike.

I have uploaded information to the Members area of the website (go to Resources, then Vehicles), including information on minibus use by voluntary drivers, and post-1997 licence holders who may not hold a D1 licence but may still drive minibuses as long as several criteria are met.

The benefits of training with in-vehicle technical training aids, otherwise known as CCTV data recording systems, were also discussed. The use of these systems goes far beyond training – including benefits to driver and team on any journey including call-outs – to not only prove what happened in the event of an RTC, but also for their positive effect on team member driving! There are many systems, ranging from basic plug and play, with one or two cameras that record onto a memory card and provide telemetry data from a GPS and G-sensors within the unit, through to fully integrated systems with up to eight cameras tied into the speedo, indicators, brakes and emergency lights, recording onto a hard drive. Systems range from £100 to £5000.

Regarding insurance, there were a couple of interesting

snippets from a presentation on RTCs and their subsequent investigation. If you are involved in an RTC and there is any form of CCTV recording, anyone recorded on the footage has the right to see and ask for a copy of the images, which the organisation must provide within 40 days and charge a maximum of £10 (this is set by parliament). This is from the Information Commissioners Office – see <http://tinyurl.com/47ao87o>.

Also mentioned was the importance of making sure the instructor/trainer providing driver training holds current Professional Indemnity Insurance, as there can be problems with insurance claims for the driver if they are involved in an RTC and are injured.

An interesting presentation from a Squadron Leader, Officer in Charge of Human Performance Training Squadron at RAF Cranwell who talked about the re-evaluation of their pilot training programme to increase their pass rate. He gave the Conference Keynote Address and talked about similarities between pilot training and emergency response driver training in some of the skill sets and mind processing. He talked about how the training of mechanical skills must be consistently high under performance and assessment, and the mental skills used/required were even more similar. They looked into what 'Airmanship' was and eventually came up with a definition 'The art of operating the aircraft'. This could easily transfer to driving. 'The art of driving the vehicle,' maybe? Skills were broken down into a Matrix of Airmanship including:—

- Situational awareness (internal and external)
- Mental performance (situational analysis, flexibility)
- Decisiveness (decision making, quality of, actioning)
- Communication (formation, external agencies)
- Resource management (systems management, cockpit – internal, crew/formation – external)
- Spare mental capacity.

Several of these are transferable and as much a part of driving as they are flying an aircraft. I wonder if I could get a flight in a Eurofighter Typhoon... just for research purposes, obviously!!!

A presentation by Caroline Hicks, the National Enforcement and Compliance Manager for VOSA, cleared up a slight grey area regarding EC Driver Hours and call-outs. This concerned cases where professional drivers operate under driver hours and tachograph rules, and whether being called out during their daily or weekly rest periods would interrupt them. The answer lies within the statement, 'Freely able to dispose of their time as they choose'.

So, are those of our team members who are professional vocational licence holders breaking the law if they attend a call-out whilst they are on, and interrupt, a daily or weekly rest period without the complex use of split hours, reduced rest periods or compensated en-bloc hours? Advice from Caroline is that, if team members are able to choose whether to attend the call-out or not and even if they attend, are free to choose that they can leave at any time (unlike other on-call agencies), then that would meet the 'Freely able to dispose of their time as they choose' statement. This is much better than a 'they'll never know' approach, but it would still be down to the driver to self-assess that they were fit for their duties if attending a call-out.

A presentation on Roadcraft by the Police Foundation, which some say is the police driver's bible, although it is equally applicable to all emergency response drivers and anyone wanting to improve their driving skill. The new edition will be fully revised, updated and relaunched in November/December 2013 and will reflect the latest legal, technological, economic, behavioural and environmental changes and be in line with Driving Standards Agency (DSA) and European standards. The DVD will be released sometime in 2014/15 with a hazard perception and other tools being developed for the future. It will also be fully digitised and future-proofed for use as apps, e-books and online.

It was a great conference, giving a chance to liaise with many different people and organisations, gathering a wealth of information which I hope you have found useful. ■



Victory Design Ltd has been established in the sign and graphics market for 25 years, supplying various products to the industry. Over the past few years we have become a market leader in the supply of Chapter 8 kits and emergency vehicle kits, including vehicle livery into the highways sector.

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Ben Peachey of Severn Area Rescue Association recently had some kits for his team's fleet of vehicles (see image below) and was overwhelmed by the turnaround and quality of the kits provided stating, 'he would use Victory Design again for further vehicle kits and would recommend Victory to supply to other stations'.

For further information please speak to a vehicle kit expert on 01246 570570 where Victory will be more than happy to help with your vehicle requirements.



# LLANBERIS MRT TECHNICAL RIGGING

PETE ROBERTSON & ROB JOHNSON **LLANBERIS MRT**

**L**lanberis MRT (LLMRT) gave a demonstration of their technical rigging system at the conference in September. This article is not intended to give a prescribed method of rigging – as a team we believe in a flexible approach. This is a simple rigging system that we find works well for us in a variety of situations and we present this article as a way of sharing ideas and knowledge to supplement the presentation given at the conference.



## About the team and our patch

Llanberis MRT is based in mountainous terrain and hence a high percentage of our incidents involve some form of rigging, be it a simple back rope on sloping ground or full rigging on mountain crags, some of which are over 300 metres in height.

The team is very lucky to have a large number of team members who are MIA, MIC and Guide level, along with professional people working for various PPE manufacturing companies. In addition to this, we have strict entry requirements that dictate that members are experienced summer and winter climbers.

Within the team, we actively encourage team members to question the systems we use, suggest alternatives and, wherever possible, we will run a series of tests or seek advice from other agencies to prove or disprove new suggestions and ideas.

## Rigging for Rescue and LLMRT

Some years ago, as with most other teams, our rigging systems were based on climbing kit and improvised rescue and, whilst this had worked, we were very aware of the limitations and potential weaknesses of both equipment and the system.

At around this time, Rigging for Rescue (RFR) was being looked at and a number of team members attended various courses and came back very impressed by the system and the rigorous investigation the system had gone through to prove it. As such, RFR was adopted, with the necessary equipment purchased and training undertaken.

A couple of years on, a few of us felt there were certain improvements we could make to the system to make it more suitable to the terrain we work in and these concerns were raised.

Our main concern was: What would

happen with a main line failure? The RFR system used a main line and a safety line and, in the event of a main line failure causing a total load rope at best or a slack rope at worst, what would happen?

## Main line with backup vs two loaded lines

We conducted a series of tests doing a mainline failure with 100m of rope (Beal 11mm low stretch) paid out, with a main line failure with a stretcher plus casualty plus barrow boy plus equipment, so amounting to 200kg. This resulted in elongation of the backup rope of 7m (7%). We repeated the test with a more realistic figure of 250kg and this resulted in elongation of the backup rope of 9.2m (9.2%).

We were concerned this would almost certainly lead to injury to the barrow boy or casualty or both. This made us look at the advantages of two lines equally loaded.

We repeated the tests with two equally loaded lines with the result that rope elongation was halved. This meant we only had rope elongation of 3% or 3m for 200kg and 3.7% or 3.7m for 250kg elongation resulting from one of the ropes failing, a much more favourable result.

## Mechanical devices and the ability to hoist and lower

The next step was to look at the devices used to control the descent and ascent of the load and we

realised that if we could find the correct device we could use identical systems on each rope, with the ability to change from ascent to descent whenever required.

A number of devices were considered and they all had to comply to the same requirements, be able to lower and act as an auto lock on ascent, pass the whistle test, be able to work with loads up to 250k, in the event of a failure to generate no more than 6kn and to be able to continue being used after a failure of one of the lines.

After some months and extensive research and testing, we discovered the Petzl ID and, after further research and testing, along with training of the team, these went into operational in February 2005.

Since this date, we have used the ID extensively on incidents that are now in the hundreds with no problems or incidents to report.

The beauty of the system is its simplicity to change from lowering to hoisting, this is especially appreciated on edge transitions, pitch transitions and snatch rescues.

## The system

On a crag rescue, we use two loaded ropes to lower or hoist. Each rope is set up with an identical system which we will describe here. (On easy angled terrain we might use one rope and therefore one set up).

We will not go into detail discussing belays as this will be unique to each incident, but it has to be said that, whatever belays are created, they

TOP: LLIWEDD AND THE TRINITY FACE OF SNOWDON, TWO OF OUR BIGGER CRAGS.  
INSET: PLAYING WITH NEW IDEAS IN WINTER!  
BELOW: MAIN LINE WITH BACKUP VS TWO LOADED LINES.





have to be of 'unquestionable quality', there is little point in having minimum strength requirements on the equipment if the belays are poor.

All ropes from your belay are brought to a focal point and this point should be on as flat ground as possible, and it has to be a safe working environment. In an ideal world it needs to be at least four metres from the crag edge to provide a working platform for the casualty, stretcher and edge transition but also for when raising a load.

### Procedure for lowering

1. Attach the ID to the belay and attach a separate braking karabiner above.
2. Load your lowering rope or ropes into your ID.
3. Create a single attachment point on the stretcher using a bridle.
4. Attach the rope to the stretchers single attachment point. We use an Alpine Butterfly or an Overhand Knot. When tying the knot, a long tail should be left to then be used as an additional safety attachment for the casualty and the barrow boy. (We use one tail for the casualty and the other tail from the other rope for the barrow boy).
5. Before lowering commences, a shunt, pulley and karabiner should be made available for each rope.
6. It is vital that a degree of control is now created at the lowering station with an ID controller on each ID, accompanied by an assistant to pay out or take in the rope as required.
7. Assign a pitch coordinator who ideally has sight of both the lowering station and the load and will take control of radio communications with the load.
8. In addition to this, you need three people on each rope to act as haulers in the event of a raise (this gives a total of eleven people).

You are now ready to lower and so, on the command of the pitch captain, the load is lowered over the edge and the ID operators lower in tandem sharing the load between the two IDs or total load if using a single line.

If at any time the load needs to stop, it is a simple procedure to use the control hand in conjunction with the control lever on the IDs to stop.

### Raising the load

1. Attach the shunt as low on the load rope or ropes as the working platform allows, attach the karabiner to it along with the pulley and run the free rope from the ID through the pulley.
2. Now position the handle of the ID to point down the load rope or in the 'belay' position as stated on the body of the ID and you now have a 3:1

pulley system which will easily operate with three people. It is not advisable to use more than three people on the hauling party as unacceptable loads could be generated. In this set up, the ID operator does nothing except observe the ID as its operation is now automatic and, whenever the hauling rope is released, the ID will prevent the rope from paying out.

### Returning to lowering

In the event of the load now needing to be lowered again, all that is required is to put the ID handle into the 'lock' position, remove the shunt and pulley and place the control rope back into its additional belay karabiner. Return the ID handle to its 'descent' position and proceed to lower the load under control.

The transition from lower to raise takes under a minute and the same is true for the transition from raise to lower.

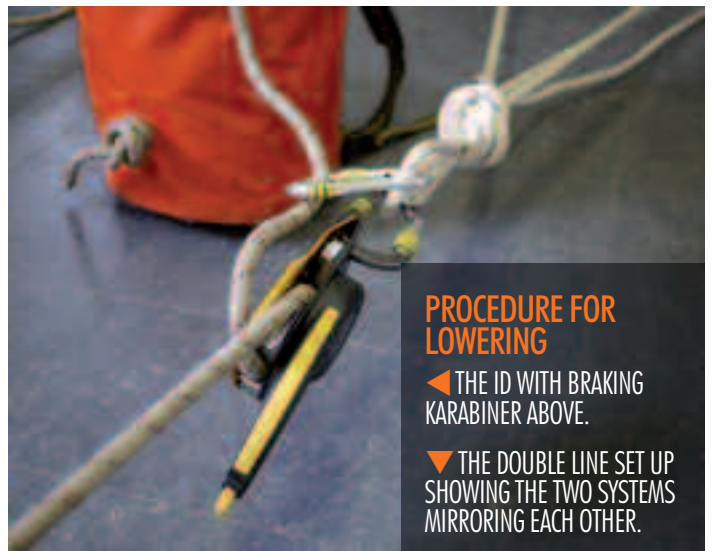
The main advantage of the ease of this transition is it enables you to lower a stretcher and barrow boy to a casualty on a ledge and, once the casualty is loaded, you can eliminate any edge transition or a potential situation of shock loading when the total load is suddenly applied to the rope by changing the system from lowering to raising and lifting the load a couple of metres and then transferring back to lower to proceed to the base of the crag. By doing this you eliminate one of the most risky parts of the lower.

### Other equipment thoughts

We have, over time, created our own requirements to the equipment in the system with all of the items having a minimum breaking load of 30Kn, the karabiners actually having a stated strength of 32Kn and all the slings are rated at 30Kn. We do accept that nuts and hexes do not have this strength but, if we are using these, we look towards having multiple placements that add up to greater than this.

We were also aware from experience that, when doing a long raise in bad weather or at night, it is easy to get the load hooked under an edge or a knot caught in a crack. In this case it is extremely easy to continue to haul, resulting in a huge amount of tension being created within the system. Once again, this was another reason why we opted for the IDs. If this happens, it is a simple process to lower the load and, if a dramatic amount of tension is introduced, the IDs will allow some slippage at around 6Kn.

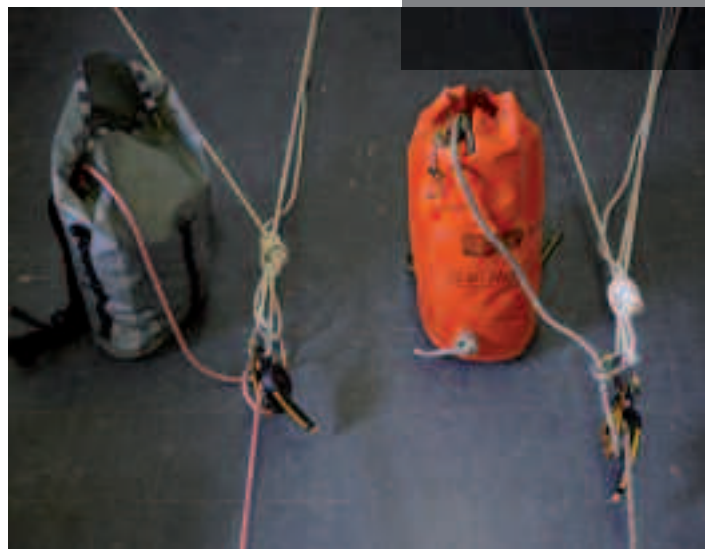
In addition to this, we chose shunts as our rope grab as once again these



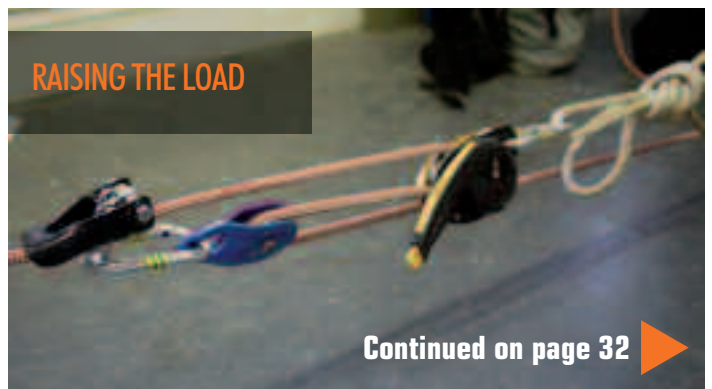
#### PROCEDURE FOR LOWERING

◀ THE ID WITH BRAKING KARABINER ABOVE.

▼ THE DOUBLE LINE SET UP SHOWING THE TWO SYSTEMS MIRRORING EACH OTHER.



◀ BARROW BOY HEADING OVER THE EDGE WITH THE STRETCHER.



#### RAISING THE LOAD

Continued on page 32 ▶



**'Llanberis MRT technical rigging' continued from page 31**

slip at around 5Kn (depending upon the rope choice and condition) so limiting the potential over application of force to the system.

As we stated at the beginning of the article, this is the system Llanberis MRT use at the moment but we are always willing to look at possible changes if new equipment is created or sourced that is more suitable and we feel that this is willingness to be self-critical is probably one of our system's great strengths. ■



▶ **PLAYING WITH A SINGLE LINE VERSION OF THE SYSTEM IN TRAINING.**



*Pete Robinson (far left) is a member of North Wales CRO and Llanberis MRT, with 30 years experience in mountain and cave rescue. He is also a rep and trainer with Lyon Equipment. Rob Johnson MIC (left), is a full time instructor and mountain guide, and a Llanberis team member. They would like to thank their fellow team members for their contribution to their team approach.*

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# MOUNTAIN WEATHER FORECASTING

GEOFF MONK MWIS

**I**t is now ten years since what has become the Mountain Weather Information Service was conceived, although at that stage, there was little idea of where it would all lead. A few years earlier, I had been prised out of the Meteorological Office to take forward the forecasting capability of a small independent company base in SW Scotland, originally set up as 'WeatherWatchers'. There was a belief that forecasts via the internet were very much the future, although not much optimism at that time as to how the forecast content might be funded.

We experimented with forecasts for the UK using only the internet, including some mountain forecasts. I was able to use my interest in mountain weather, and specific expertise in local forecasting to provide what I hoped would be useful forecasts. I was excited in the level of feedback from these forecasts.

In 2002, I followed various leads in trying to assess the need of improved mountain forecasts in Scotland. I dropped a survey to a very limited number of key people in the mountain user community along the West Coast, from Torridon southwards and later that year met the late Blyth Wright, of the Scottish Avalanche Information Service, and Professor Des Smith, who had for some time chaired a trust involved in the provision of mountain forecasts. He spoke of the difficulty of getting any funding related to mountain weather forecasts.

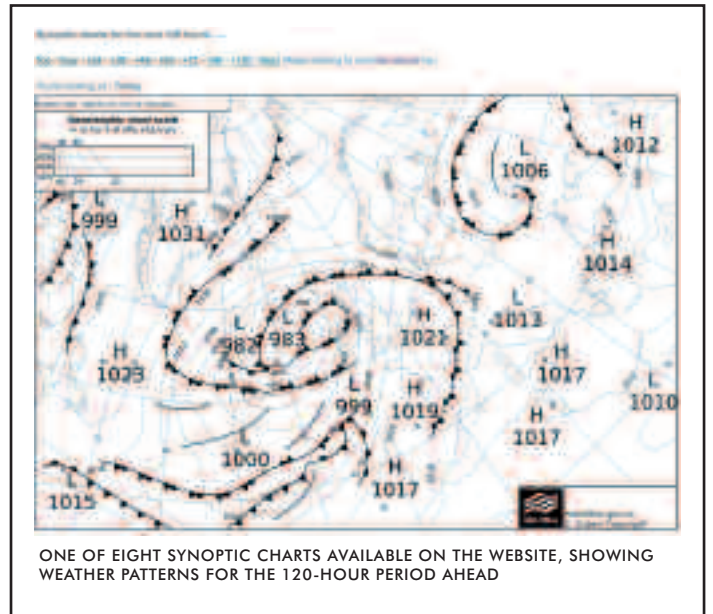
The survey result was interesting — I received more sheets of paper back through the post than I had delivered. It had obviously been passed on. Although very limited in terms of sample size, despite the usual differences of opinion seen in any survey results, some opinions came through loud and clear. In terms of forecasts, wind must come first. Frequently, initial decisions — particularly in the wintertime — are made on wind speed. Put simply, gales exclude many high level routes. What also came through was the need for an easily accessible clear forecast service for up to three days ahead.

Using the email addresses provided by the survey respondents, and gaining a few more along the way, trial forecasts were then sent out for an area of the West Highlands from Torridon, south to Glencoe. I asked for, and received plenty of feedback. Slowly but surely, from that beginning, the Mountain Weather Information Service was born. Indeed, it quickly became apparent, even before any

funding was thought about, that credibility had to be gained — which could only be achieved by providing a long forecast trial. After further discussions with Blyth Wright, the name Mountain Weather Information Service was born, and slowly the service evolved to what it is now.

Forecasts use weather forecast information from all the model data available. These range from models of the whole globe such as run by the Met Office, to increasingly very detailed forecasts from models with a horizontal grid length of 2km covering only Britain, for example, provided by the University based Weather Forecasting and Research Model. However, even this fine scale modelling fails to account for the complex topography of the West Highland of Scotland or the Lake District, although does mirror major plateau areas such as the Monadhliath and the northern Pennines. Forecaster skill comes in when (as often occurs) there are subtle differences in the forecasts produced between the models. Experience is used to discount, or put as a low likelihood certain forecast outcomes. In that sense, MWIS forecasts are probabilistic in nature. This is different to almost all weather on the internet where graphics and automated text are simply those from the latest run of the particular model. Yet we believe it is vital, particularly in mountain forecasts to use this 'ensemble technique', since a minority forecast of say a severe storm is important to mention on the basis of mountain safety, and will often be referred to as 'small risk of...'

Forecaster skill also comes in when improving what the model can achieve because of its smoothing of topography. Low cloud will often be taken too far across a mountain range, when forecaster knowledge would suggest a transition to higher cloud bases will take place fairly sharply, often near known geographical boundaries. There are



also wind speed aspects where, when speeds increase quickly from sea level, and then drop again above perhaps 900m, very turbulent winds can result in places, the wind running down into valleys. The most famous of these in Britain is the Helm wind where easterly winds blow over the Pennine ridge near Cross Fell and into the Eden valley. Motorists know about this from extreme gusts on occasion on the Cumbrian section of the A66 (Penrith to Scotch Corner).

The variation of weather across Britain, due to both the complicated coastline and mountain topography often leads to fascinating differences in weather within quite a short distance — providing a challenge to the forecaster and sometimes frustration but also options for the mountaineer. In the next few issues, beginning with more discussion on wind, we will look at local weather across the mountains of Britain. ■



*Geoff Monk has been working with MWIS since its inception ten years ago. He is also Vice President Scotland of the Royal Meteorological Society. MWIS currently produces forecasts for eight different mountain areas of the UK as an aid to mountain safety. All the forecasts are available seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.*

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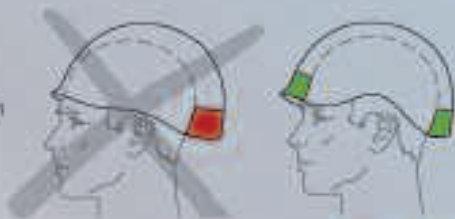


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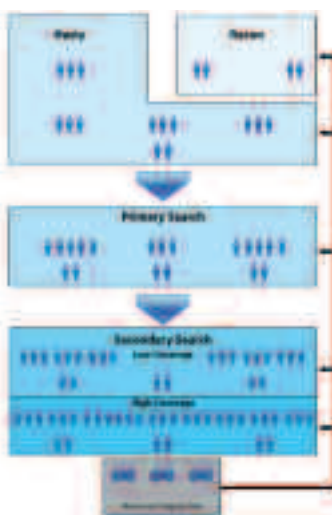
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# WIDE AREA SEARCH MANAGEMENT: PART TWO

## AL READ OGWEN VALLEY MRO

In the previous article, we considered the issues of where to search in wide area incidents. Once this has been decided, the next consideration is how to search. In terms of wide area searches, a number of strategies can be considered, ranging from fast moving small search teams to large, well equipped teams working systematically through all the area to find detailed evidence or difficult to locate victims.

An awareness of these strategies will help search managers plan the type and level of activity being considered and aid in briefing search team members.



USAR WIDE AREA SEARCH

that fall into a primary search category.

The other end of the search spectrum is one where a considerable effort is expended in searching a small area, often seen when police conduct evidence searches along streets. These types of searches are high coverage and will be very slow and methodical. The main aim is not to necessarily find a live person but to collect evidence. Once the search is completed, no further searching is expected to be conducted.

A similar range of search strategies exist within wide area search activities as part of a larger incident.

### Wide area search strategies

SAR team members will often have a range of experiences relating to search. For missing person incidents, we commonly use hasty searches early in an incident and scale up to conducting area search type activities

### Reconnaissance search (recon)

A recon search is primarily aimed at gather information and intelligence about an affected area. It is intended to be a quick process and in terms of search, it is about gather information about a range of issues including:  
? Scale of the incident — how much of an area is affected, how many

# search

people are affected.

? Severity of the incident — the level of impact on an area, how badly affected.

? The types of incidents internal to the area.

? Hazard assessment for operations.

In terms of rescue, these would be limited to directing walking casualties to locations where they can be assisted, but bear in mind they can also be a valuable source of reconnaissance information about the affected area.

These types of searches may be conducted on the ground but this may seriously hamper the ability for the search team to make progress unless there is sufficient support to deal with

## Hasty search

The main aim of hasty search is to:

? Find easy to locate victims and direct to further support.

? Identify locations where victims are trapped and require rescue.

? Build a more detail picture of the affected area.

Teams involved with hasty tasks may conduct simple rescues of victims to enable them to be evacuated by other teams. If more complex rescues are required, the team should be detailing the location and providing that information back to the incident command team, where additional rescue resources can be tasked to perform it.

## Primary search

This is the main type of search conducted during any major incident during the response phase. In this phase of searching, teams will be making efforts to find victims and casualties that are more difficult to locate. In a flood or disaster context, this would typically be the search effort associated with entry into buildings (if safe to do so) to look for people that are in the building but are able to respond and easy to find. Easy to enter rooms would have visual scans with some debris movement to identify injured or trapped people who are unable to help themselves.

Technical expertise may be required to support general search such as using USAR search equipment in builds, swiftwater rescue teams in searching large areas of standing water, helicopters conducting

methodical aerial search over larger areas, boat teams searching deeper water locations.

Information gathering about locations that were difficult to access would be recorded and be added to outstanding tasks list. In the event of finding casualties, rescue teams would be brought in to support the search team in extrication efforts, but the management team needs to ensure that the primary search effort does continue.

## Secondary (low coverage)

Secondary searches would typically be conducted later in any response phase. It is highly likely that secondary search will require a large number of resources, often with high levels of expertise to work systematically through the identified tasks.

At this level, detailed search activity is conducted to achieve a thorough search, typically house entry is made, with room by room searching, movement of debris and detailed searches made of difficult to access locations. In countryside areas, detailed searches of areas with difficult terrain would be undertaken, with revisiting of other segments. Time spent searching would usually be high and the number of resources involved expected to be large.

A considerable effort would be required to maintain search records, with suitable processes in place to handle any evidence or items found.

## Secondary (high coverage)

In these types of searches, considerable effort is expended in achieving high coverage, it requires a lot of time spent conducting the search, with a large number of search resources. Once these searches are complete there will be no further search effort expended except where investigative activities are required to support specific tasks.

Typically this would be conducted during the recovery phase of a major incident and the main tasks would be around victim location, identification and recovery. Debris is fully cleared away for disposal, buildings considered as being fully searched if rooms are empty and entry points sealed. In open areas, evidence of

locations that are visited is retained (GPS track logs, photographs, field reports etc) and there is a high level of confidence associated with detection (ie. the coverage and POD is high).

Detailed search records should be made, these may be key to follow up investigations justifying why search activity was finally considered as complete.

## In-field search tactics

Each of the different types of search will require a range of different tactics to be used to be most effective. Good teams deployed into the search area will often be able to use a range of different tactics to help maintain high levels of search effectiveness.

Equipment needs to support the search teams and, in more detailed searches, specialist equipment may be used to increase searcher safety as well as improve the level of detection. As an example, pole cameras used to view into spaces and voids.

## Planning considerations Search team capabilities

The different phases of wide area search will require different capabilities within search teams. In the early stages of search, the ability to move through, across and around an area is important. Speed of advance is a key capability but not at the expense of team safety.

Recon and hasty search teams need to be mobile in the environment. Detailed secondary search may require specialist skills to access locations or move heavy debris and this will be slow.

The briefings are vital in terms of ensuring that the teams understand what is expected of them. It is easy to forget what is the primary aim of the task. To help search teams achieve what is required, the overhead teams need to build rescue capacity behind them.

## Rescue requirements and building capacity

All the search strategies rely on building a rescue capability to help with casualties and victims. Other capabilities may also be required to

assist with the over head team including:—

? Casualty management

? Evidence and exhibit handling

? Disaster victim identification

? Mass casualty

? Mass fatality.

Unless considered, it will be difficult for the search teams to continue to be effective in their primary tasks and they will be drawn into reactive actions.

## Information management

Wide area search will generate a considerable amount of information and full records will be required to ensure the value of the search is not wasted. Researching an area is wasted effort but may happen if poor records are kept. As an example, buildings are approached from different sides and, unless properly identified in the records, they be searched on more than one occasion because of entry via the front door or the back door.

Information collected in the field needs further assessment and a suitable organisation may need to be established to assess and manage it effectively.

## Sustainability

Wide area searches are a significant drain on all responding agencies and consideration needs to be made on how to sustain the search effort. Six to eight hours of search effort is usually tiring and searcher effectiveness rapidly decays with time spent searching.

In some environments, the work levels are so high that searches will be short duration periods of activities and these will require larger numbers of responders to continue the search effort.

The search management team will also need replacing at regular intervals so they do not become ineffective through fatigue.

## Summary

Wide area is difficult and the pressures put on searchers can be immense. Good search management methods will help to ensure that success is understood and that teams are fully aware of what is required of them. ■





**MAIN PIC:** RESCUE 122 EMERGES FROM THE FOG AND LANDS 28 OCTOBER 2012 ©CHIEF CONSTABLE PSNI 2012.

**INSET:** THE POINT OF IMPACT ON BATTY WALL, SHANLIEVE MOUNTAIN WITH DEBRIS FROM THE POLICE AIRCRAFT TAIL IN THE FOREGROUND AND THE FUSELAGE JUST VISIBLE OVER THE WALL ©CHIEF CONSTABLE PSNI.

## HELICOPTER CRASHES ON SHANLIEVE

MARK ROBERTS PSNI

**On 23 October 2010, at approximately 3.00pm, police in Northern Ireland received reports of a possible air crash in the Mourne Mountains, from hill walkers in the area of Pierces Castle on the west of the range.**

Weather conditions were poor, with low visibility which prevented SAR air assets from deploying to the scene. Nevertheless, the walkers who made the original report, and a number of the first responders at the scene, managed to make their way to the crash site on Shanlieve within an hour.

On arrival they found the remains of an Augusta helicopter which had been carrying a pilot and two passengers home from a shooting trip earlier in the day in Enniskillen. Tragically, all three had died instantly.

During the opening stages of the response, Mourne MRT and the Police SRT were tasked to the scene, and instrumental in providing initial advice and guidance to statutory emergency responders at both the incident control point and on the hill.

Very early on it became clear the first priority was to account for all those who had gone to the site and ensure that the scene itself was secured for the investigation which would follow, and to enable the recovery of the deceased to take place in a dignified and appropriate manner.

During the first evening, police resources replaced the Mourne team members on the hill and a cordon was put in place. Overnight, a clear search plan was agreed and, in light of the terrain and the route which had to be taken on foot to reach the scene, a decision was made to use both statutory and voluntary resources on site and, where possible, fly resources and equipment up to the area.

The incident occurred on the

western face of Shanlieve at approx 2000 feet, just below the summit of the mountain on steep terrain.

On Sunday 24 October, a wide range of resources attended the scene including air accident investigators. Following discussions between the teams present, it was agreed that Mourne would support the police by providing safety cover and searching the scene perimeter.

During the days which followed the slow processes of investigation were carried out in conditions which varied from warm and clear to gale force winds and below zero temperatures.

On Thursday 28 October, a number of flights were undertaken by Police 61, a Twin Squirrel operated by the PSNI from the incident control point to the top of Shanlieve. During the last shuttle of the morning, the pilot lost control of the helicopter whilst manoeuvring at low speed in quite strong wind conditions. The helicopter struck the ground, and subsequently a stone wall, and disintegrated.

Initially, those present on the hilltop were able to assist the four survivors – of which I was one – from the wreckage, and into the shelter of a tent, where we were given first aid whilst a second rescue operation was commenced.

Again statutory and voluntary agencies worked together, as conditions deteriorated, to enable a rescue response to take place. In the initial stages there was frequent disbelief that such an incident could occur twice in the same place. Once

again Mourne team members and the police team set off up the face of Shanlieve to the unknowns of an air crash scene.

As a member of a search and rescue team, the last thing I had anticipated was becoming the subject of a rescue, especially one in which my life was literally in the hands of those I train with. Having suffered a significant head injury my level of consciousness varied and one of the key learning points for me is that what we are taught in first aid 'that the casualty can hear you even if you think they are unconscious' is absolutely true.

After just under three hours the familiar thud of the rotors of Rescue 122 could be heard through the mist, emerging at the same time as the first members of the Mourne team and we were quickly evacuated to a local hospital.

In considering the events of that week I think we all learned a lot of lessons, amongst which I would highlight:—

i. Consider, before an incident takes place, the limits of which you are prepared to expose volunteers to significant trauma and in what circumstances.

ii. Be aware that providing a multi-agency response in a mountain or remote environment is complex and requires the integration of competent voluntary capabilities throughout the process.

iii. Always ensure you have sufficient capacity and capability to deal with

not just the 'knowns' but also the 'unknowns' and the possible consequences of your chosen plan.

iv. Be very aware of what you say around the casualty and, where at all possible make provision for someone to remain talking to them and reassuring them even in the most harsh circumstance.

v. Make sure there are appropriate arrangements in place for debriefing and counselling to support individuals exposed to trauma.

During the Coroner's inquest into the first air crash, attention was drawn to the competent and professional manner in which the investigation into the incident had taken place. This success was in no small part due to the partnership between the statutory and voluntary agencies who worked tirelessly together.

As I outlined in my portion of the presentation, I will forever be indebted to the RAF, the Mourne MRT and the PSNI body recovery and search and rescue teams for what they did on that fateful day and the manner in which they carried out the tasks, well aware of the risks to themselves in doing so.

Finally, it would be wrong to close without once again extending the deepest sympathies of all involved to the families of Charles Stisted, Ian Wooldridge and Anthony Smith who perished in the first incident. ■

*Mark Roberts (PSNI), Martin McMullan (Mourne MRT) and Colin Ferguson (PSNI) each spoke of their involvement with the incident – Martin from the team POV, Colin about the police response to both incidents and Mark about his experience as a survivor of the second crash.*

We six (three MR members, three normal people) set out from St Jean, having seen the gate from which walkers — pilgrims — arrive from all over Europe. Some last minute gear purchases and we headed up the steep hill from the town. We stayed in a hostel up the hill that night, with a fine French four-course meal and introductions to faces, the French couple, the four Belgian lads, we would become friends with.

Luck was with us the following day, it was clear and sunny and the views over the Pyrenees were only spectacular. We marched on in great good humour and down into Roncesvalles for an afternoon beer. The new albergue is very impressive (a sign by the door says 'No tourists, only pilgrims') and we found the facilities good and our second meal very satisfactory. We met two Galway girls and an elderly gent from Cork, and we would see them again along the way. And so each day started with a walk, breakfast in a café or a picnic by the roadside, a thought for the day and walking on to that night's bed with lots of talking — some serious, some hilarious — with other pilgrims.

Long marches in the rain and the sun, endless miles when the town at the end of the day seemed no closer, sobering crosses to dead walkers beside the path, long discussions about silly things, mad moments of dancing in the fields, long silences. Churches of all sizes and shapes. Food, good pilgrim meals in an atmosphere of camaraderie, fruit, wine, even a huge lump of chocolate that walked with us for several days.

Albergues from the small and hospitable to the large and churchy (we slept in a reused Jesuit seminary in Pamplona) to the palatial. The hotel basement in Punta la Reina, an absolutely beautiful meal in the hotel above, a hilarious night with the Belgian boys in the bar and a sleep interrupted by a noise like an artillery gun in the night when some large individual jumped down from their bunk and hit the false floor with a huge hollow thud, waking everyone up with a collective chorus of (in many languages) 'Jesus! What was that?'

In Estella we cracked and decided a stay in a hotel was necessary. We found a small one in the town and, after some negotiation, got rooms. The girls were not happy with the standard of housekeeping, none of us impressed with the party noises outside all night. One drunken Spaniard howled like a wolf outside our windows. I thought briefly about impaling him with a walking pole thrown from a window but, luckily for him, he moved on. A dormitory would have been quieter and cheaper!

In Pamplona, of course — having an author among us — we had to go to Hemingway's café and drink an absolutely beautiful wine and later had a lovely meal with an American pilgrim, on her first day out. Back to the albergue where national stereotypes were confirmed with all nations other than the Irish already in their beds.

Our mountain rescue skills were needed only once when one of our party had a painful knee. First aid was rendered on site. An attempt to commandeer a lad in a white van giving out flyers for an albergue failed when he disappeared home in a torrential rainstorm. The casualty was walked to the next bar where an advance party had booked a taxi. Our call-out mechanism for this emergency transport was the efficient barmaid. Having a casualty waiting in the bar for a taxi is so much better than on the hillside waiting for a helicopter. The rescue party can even get food and drink while waiting!

We finished up in Logrono and bussed back to Bilbao. A night in a good hotel, a good meal, a wander around the sights of the Guggenheim finished off another Camino adventure. Each of us brought home strong memories of the Way and especially of the people we had met

along it, from the baby in the buggy to the retirees, all living life to the full.

So now a few weeks have passed. My first reaction of 'Wow that was hard work!' is fading and the achievements are clearer. Our group walked the Way, and got good stuff from it. They, each in their own way, were affected by it and became pilgrims, whatever that means to them. Some have already booked flights to continue the Way by themselves. That is a huge validation for me as a coach, seeing people setting off themselves after my work of introducing them to this rich experience.

So in a way, while the trip was all about bringing a group, stretching myself in coaching, it was more about the traditional skills of leadership and my aspirations for the trip. But then in a way isn't that where all coaching starts: with oneself?

And the future? Well maybe to do the Way again with a group. Maybe to add an extra element with discussions about the lessons of the Camino for leadership. Maybe again to involve external learners, a way to create funds for mountain rescue perhaps? A way to start an income stream for MR using our undoubted talents and experience? Could we have an MR walk on the Camino, with MR staff, a



ABOVE: PONFERRADA  
BELOW: A VIEW OF THE MOUNTAINS — WHO COULD FAIL TO BE INSPIRED?  
PHOTOS: JIMMY BARRY

leader and first aider, representing MR well and bringing a group of paying clients, discussing their leadership and learning lessons from the Way? Time will tell but in the meanwhile Buen Camino! With thanks to the five pilgrims who trusted me. ■

*Pat Holland has been a member of SEMRA and Mountain Rescue Ireland since the late-80s, in a number of roles. His current enthusiasms are hill walking and coaching people to do the Camino del Santiago.*

**It seemed like a great idea, a place where all previous experience and lives combined: to bring a group to walk in Spain, coaching overlying a foundation of hill walking, mountain rescue, a past career of archaeology and medieval history and all on the Camino, that beloved linear space of time out, relaxation and space to think! As always, reality was harder, involved lots of other people and issues but, to be fair, was very good.**



## COACHING ON THE CAMINO

### PAT HOLLAND



# facebook finds

It's been an eventful three months out there in cyberspace, what with missing plaques in Upper Wharfedale, walkers straightening their own dislocated ankles, Olympic torches up hills and down the Mall, and diamond rings generously landing in collection buckets, but a prevailing theme has definitely been maps. Or rather the lack of them...

...In September, we had the GPS shoes with LED lights, specially designed to guide you home, which prompted speculation about the implications of a lost signal on the Cat's Back in Herefordshire, and caused one dog handler to consider throwing in the towel with immediate effect. The brainchild of London designer, Dominic Wilcox, the shoes have red lights which show the direction the wearer should walk, combined with a 'progress bar' that shows how far they have to go. A GPS sensor is built into the shoes, with an antenna that pops up at the back, and a mobile phone-style battery. The shoes (spookily) communicate with each other as the wearer walks, and will guide the wearer home from any distance. You'll be pleased to hear there are currently no plans to bring them into full production, although the prototype is now fully working. Only a matter of time then...

...And, also in September, and speaking of being guided home, a new scheme on Cadair Idris that uses six figure grid references to inform hillgoers of their whereabouts, resulted in the successful rescue of three lost walkers. Similar plaques were installed on Snowdon in June through the Mountainsafe Partnership, aimed at increasing safety on the hills of the Snowdonia National Park. Lost persons on the hill can check out the nearest gate or stile post and let the rescue team know where they are. It seems the three walkers, in this instance, were travelling without a map although 'luckily for them, they had located one of the markers...' Only one comment posted here, dismayed that the trio 'couldn't use a 'grid reference' map'... no further comment required, perhaps?

...The award for 'most dismaying story of the quarter' (and most persistent lack of map-usage), however, must go to the father (variously described as 73 and 75) and two daughters, who stubbornly defied common sense and the advice of mountain rescuers, by continuing on their ill-prepared Coast to Coast walk, in early September. Members of the Cockerthorpe and Keswick teams, and Lakes search dog handlers, first encountered the pair, very late one Friday evening, when they were reported overdue. An estimated 150 man-hours went into the search that evening, with one

team member suffering a broken ankle in the process (which, I might add, has seriously scuppered his plans to ski this coming season!). The three walkers were relying on a guidebook rather than maps and had strayed a way off the route, finally being located at Gatesgarth Farm in Buttermere, with team members getting back to their beds in the very early hours of Saturday morning.

Given strong advice that they should give up their challenge, you would think this might have been heeded. But no... the following night, members of Keswick (again) and Langdale Ambleside teams were called when the walkers once again failed to make their destination after leaving Borrowdale, this time being found by a search dog, before being helped off the hill. Besides a bad case of bloody-mindedness, the gentleman had also sustained a lower leg injury. Another late night out for team members, with a published warning that 'mountain rescue teams to the east: beware!!' We have no evidence whether the three continued their defiant tramp across England — maybe they DID finally, heed advice and give it up. One can only hope so.

...And if you think lack of map sense is peculiar to land-based adventurers — or even people being rescued twice in quick succession — think again! As one comment, posted to the above story, pointed out: we are not alone. September's issue of 'Sailing Today' reported a solo sailor, rescued on two occasions in the same month, both times being found without GPS, VHF, proper charts or navigational and safety equipment of any sort. The RNLI first received a report from the wind farm workboat ECC Opal, that they had been approached by a man on his 19-foot yacht, asking 'Which way to Hull?' The yachtsman had been sailing out of Great Yarmouth in search of his destination and was subsequently taken under tow back to Yarmouth by the RNLI.

Clearly, however, he was undeterred in his mission to sail his newly-acquired vessel to Hull. Less than a week later, he was picked up again by the coastguard, this time grounded on the approach to Wells, Norfolk. Once again, he was without navigational or safety equipment and attempting to make the trip using only a road atlas for directions! And presumably no tide tables in evidence, either. As the lifeboat coxswain put it (with massive understatement but demonstrating ALL of our frustration, when it comes to commenting on matters such as these in the press): 'I'm trying to find a printable way of putting it — I think the man was completely foolhardy, really.'

He continued: 'It is absolutely unacceptable for people to go out to sea without basic navigational equipment. He is putting his own life at risk and wasting the time and resources of the RNLI.'

Hear hear from the hills... **JW**



Feedback from the conference seemed largely to centre on, frankly, unbridled lust for the array of team vehicles parked up in front of the James Graham building for the duration of the conference weekend. When the question was asked on Facebook, 'What were the highlights of YOUR weekend?' only one comment was posted: 'The look of love that appeared in our vehicle officer's eyes when he laid his eyes on the Toyota parked outside...'

However, thanks to Twitter, some feedback from Alan Pewsey, of Dartmoor SRT: 'This was my first conference as a relatively new member of the 'bearded ones' since earning my team jacket in April this year. I am very proud to be part of a SAR team and the conference really did show how many wonderfully enthusiastic and skilled people there are in teams nationwide, who do such a wonderful job in their communities as volunteers. Everybody also seems to be so welcoming with plenty of chat and experience-sharing throughout the conference and into the evenings.'

I have a keen interest in social media and found the lectures on the subject both reassuring that I am heading in the right direction, as well as informative of new ideas and best practice around the country. We can all learn so much from each other and it's nice to see that MR teams don't have the same sort of reluctance in skill and resource sharing that some of the agencies we work with do.

Coupled with the other lectures I attended covering SARCALL and SARLOC, rope work and skills, and the headline speakers of Heavy and Lyle, it was an immensely enjoyable experience I shall look forward to returning to in two years time.

The conference just whetted the appetite and it has invigorated me into learning more. I returned to my team full of ideas and enthusiasm. Watch out the committee!!!

...a pretty good summing up, we thought!



[www.facebook.com/  
MountainRescue.MREW](http://www.facebook.com/MountainRescue.MREW)

From [www.gosanangelo.com](http://www.gosanangelo.com):

## COCKROACHES LEARN SEARCH AND RESCUE

'In 1916, Don Marquis of The New York Evening Sun began including in his daily column regular dispatches from Archy, a cockroach who sneaked into the office at night and wrote satiric commentary on the issues of the day by jumping up and down on the keys of Marquis' typewriter.

'The column ran for ten years but survived, along with Archy's feline sidekick, Mehitabel, as a comic strip, in anthologies and later as a Broadway musical. Marquis, it turns out, may have been well ahead of his day in formulating cockroaches with useful talents.

'Scientists at North Carolina State, according to CBS News in Charlotte, have developed a miniature electronic backpack with a microcontroller to employ cockroaches to search out victims trapped in collapsed buildings and other disaster areas not immediately accessible by humans.

'Cockroaches, as anybody knows who has ever been afflicted with them, can squeeze through the tiniest cracks, skitter up vertical surfaces and seem largely immune to the normal methods of insect dissuasion. These Madagascar hissing cockroaches, to be exact, seem amenable to being directed by wireless signals directed at their sensory organs. They're up to the task of lugging around a tiny pack containing a circuit board, a microcontroller, a receiver, assorted electrodes and a lithium-ion battery.

'Trapped deep in a collapsed building might be the only circumstance under which a human being who is not an entomologist would be happy to see a cockroach, even one who hisses. And following the example of Marquis and Archy, they might be able to teach the cockroach to text message.'

From <http://austriantimes.at>:

## CLIMBER SURVIVES CREVASSE FALL BY EATING CHOCOLATE AND GLACIER WATER

In August, a Bavarian climber survived six days stuck in a crevasse on the Tyrolean Schrankogel, in the Stubai Alps, by eating a square of chocolate a day and drinking glacier water. The 70-year-old man from Schmidmühlen in Bavaria, Germany escaped with light injuries but was suffering from hypothermia and exhaustion. He was airlifted to hospital in Innsbruck where, according to reports, the only thing he wanted was 'a nice pint of good Bavarian beer.'

Volker Wenzel, a doctor at the hospital said: 'He had a lot of training behind him, he was very well equipped and able to organise himself well in the situation. He waited patiently, sometimes sitting, sometimes standing. He knew if he went off to sleep he may never wake up. He had a bar of chocolate in his backpack, of which he ate one square a day, and he drank the glacier water.'

The man said he never gave up hope he would be rescued and would see his family again.

Franz Santer from the mountain rescue team in Gries im Sellrain, who coordinated the rescue said: 'The rescue went well. We got the man out of the crevasse with a rope pulley. He had fallen between ten and fifteen metres into the crevasse. He was resting on a ledge. In the crevasse, it is a bit warmer than above the ground as it is protected from wind.'

The man had set off on his own, six days before, and was walking to the Amberger Hütte when the accident occurred, at around 3000 metres above sea level. Other climbers heard screams and shouts for help and raised the alarm.

## MOUNTAIN & CAVE RESCUE BENEVOLENT FUND UPDATE

### JUDY WHITESIDE BENEVOLENT FUND SECRETARY

At the risk of these updates appearing somewhat repetitive, here's the latest... it continues to be a work-in-progress. We've done the paperwork, signed the declarations and engaged the services of a legal representative... in short, we've done just about everything we can do to make it happen. The papers are now with the Charity Commission and we're awaiting confirmation from them that we can have charity status and the charity number to go with it. Until then, we can only wait...

From <http://rorystewart.co.uk>

## RORY STEWART TAKES TO THE HILLS

Rory Stewart spent part of his summer recess out walking with mountain rescue team members in Cumbria — following the launch of Rescue 2020 and ahead of his keynote speech at the UK MR Conference in Leeds.

He spent a morning climbing Helvellyn with Matt Cox and Dan Farley from Patterdale MRT and, a week later, walked seven miles by Bassenthwaite with Mike Park, team leader of Cockermouth MRT. Rory took the opportunity to discuss the findings of Rescue 2020, and ways mountain rescue might work more closely with air ambulance and other emergency services — a subject Rory raised in a parliamentary debate before recess. A brief meeting with members of Keswick MRT focused on developments in communications technology.

Rory said: 'It has been wonderful to walk out onto the fells with some of our mountain rescue team leaders, and get a better sense of the excellent work they do and the issues they are facing. I am committed to getting the best possible deal for our mountain rescue teams across the UK — particularly in terms of cooperation, not only between teams, but with our other emergency services such as the air ambulance. I would also like to explore using new technology such as 4G mobile broadband to make mountain rescue operations more effective.'

From [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

## STAG PARTY CLIMB SNOWDON IN THEIR PJs

Llanberis MRT chairman, John Grisdale, urged walkers to be better prepared after a stag party tackled Snowdon wearing just pyjamas and trainers in July, in an 'horrific' storm — just one of a series of incidents which saw the team called out to assist often poorly equipped groups.

The stag party walked up the mountain 'in the middle of what turned out to be quite an horrific storm of thunder, lightning, very, very heavy rain and quite strong winds.' The group was advised to quit their attempt, but continued on anyway.

'Had something happened, even a very trivial thing like a twisted knee or a broken ankle, they would've been seriously cold, miserable, wet and, potentially, in need of mountain rescue.'

Nothing further was heard so it seems the pyjama party made it back home to their slippers in one piece. Hmmm.



## REACH AND RESCUE POLE FOR OPERATOR SAFETY

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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.

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Go to [www.reachandrescue.com](http://www.reachandrescue.com) for our demonstration video.



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## PREPLANNING THE RESPONSE TO A RIVER INCIDENT

**EWAN THOMAS MREW WATER OFFICER**

**T**he River Usk passes through Brecon. It drains the slopes of the Brecon Beacons and Mynydd Epynt with an average flow of about 20 cubic metres per second. The river is 20 metres wide and passes beneath a single bridge in the town. For some unknown reason over the last few years or so, seven individuals have fallen into the Usk from, or in the vicinity of, this bridge of which five were fatalities.

Brecon MRT has had a formal water training system in place since the late 1990s and has responded to these searches at the request of the police. These incidents, together with many more to which the team has responded, underline the uncomfortable fact that water responders are actually very unlikely to affect outcome. Those found alive have self-rescued, the fatalities failed to do so. This is the reality of water

work — we are almost, without exception, working for the families of the deceased.

Whilst all of the searches have been resolved with finds, a critical and truthful examination of past responses revealed opportunities for the response to be more effective if carefully planned. An initial review of past responses identified that several aspects might be improved. There are no surprises here and I'm sure team

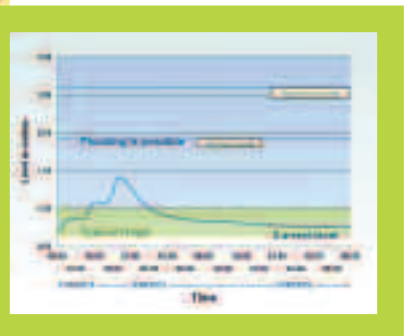
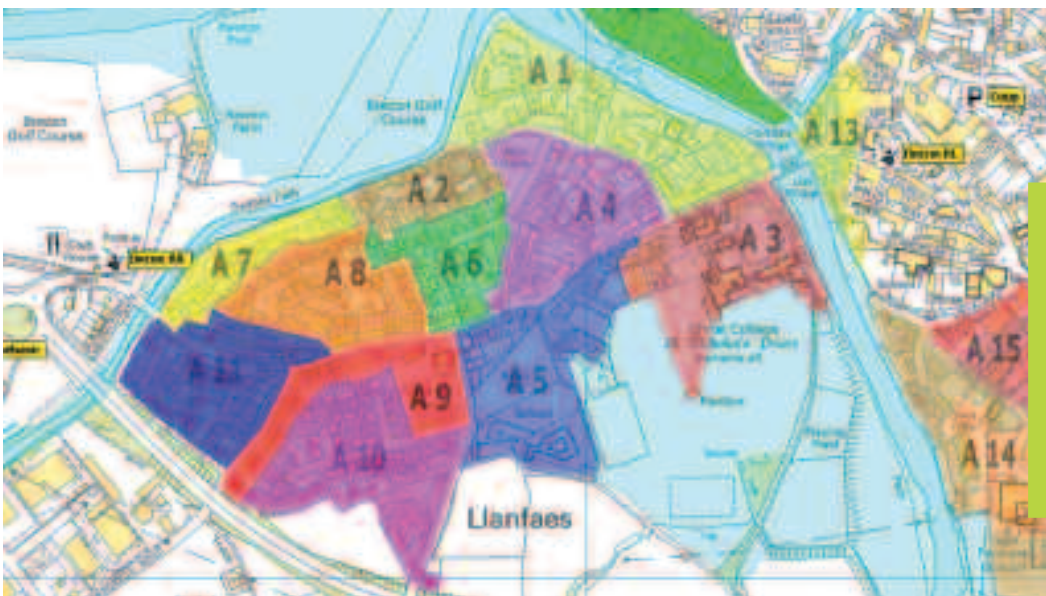
members will recognise these form core mountain rescue duties. They are not unique to the water environment and include speed of deployment after arrival on site, communications between responding agencies and search tactics.

Capturing the very many facets that collectively can contribute to improved effectiveness is not easy and requires long periods of thought and discussion. Somebody (me in this

case) then has to sit down to commit to paper. The result of the process is a document, the 'pre-plan'. Don't be fooled into thinking it is the document that is the objective. The objective is to think carefully and thoughtfully with your fellow responders, the paperwork is simply a useful means of remembering and communicating this.

The pre-plan commences by considering the tasks that will be required during the response and the capability, training and equipment of those selected for the tasks, based upon the awareness, bank and water levels. It also identifies the many critically important tasks undertaken by those with awareness level training that are not deployed to the waterside. The Brecon team works closely with the fire service which has two boats locally as well as an SRT capability, and the FRS assets also form an integral part of the pre-plan.

Understanding the river is of great importance and using a combination



Continued on page 43



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



## 'Preplanning the response to a river incident' continued from page 41

of flow modelling and Environment Agency on-line live data, we have been able to plot the speed of water surges down the river. Using on-line real time Met data, we also now understand the relationship between rainfall on the surrounding hills and river levels. Putting this together, with real time access to on-line data from our control vehicle, we are able to make good predictions about the rise and fall of water levels (and risks) when personnel are to be, or are, deployed.

A review of past incidents is also included in the plan as it reveals a distribution of finds that is quite enlightening, and confirms the common-sense thinking that live casualties are found close to the point of immersion, whilst fatalities travel a much greater distance (four of the seven travelling 11km, to be left at almost exactly the same spot). As our first objective is to affect outcome, it follows that our water tactics are likely to be different soon after immersion from those some time after immersion.

The greatest benefit from pre-planning is a careful consideration of the tactics that can be used at different phases of the response. A useful way of thinking about tactics is to first divide the response into phases. In the initial phase, the casualty may have self-rescued close to the POI or may still be in the water and alive. This demands the most urgent response and seconds really could count. There is no time in such incidents to sit and plan carefully, an almost automatic set of actions should be taken to maximise the chances of success. Because this phase is considering the water as a search area, boats (both FRS power boats and the team's paddling team) are essential elements, as are aircraft and dogs.

As time passes, the chances of self-rescue and survival drop. Professor Mike Tipton's talks emphasise the debilitating effect of cold shock and this points to relatively short survivability in UK rivers. For this reason the second phase starts at about 90 minutes after immersion. At this point, the possibility of affecting outcome in the water is very low, but the needs of a self-rescues casualty may still be urgent. In Phase 2, the water margin maintains its urgency

but the urgency in the water diminishes. Phase 2 is also a longer search area — throughout phase 1 the river has been flowing and the possible search area has been lengthening accordingly. This is the main use of the river velocity modelling — to predict the downstream containment on the incident.

After eight hours or so have passed, the tasks along the water margin should have been completed and a thorough search will have been made of an extensive stretch, with high priority areas perhaps covered twice or more. This then is the start of the third phase, marked by a lower urgency response, perhaps multiple searches as river levels fall and very much coordinated to be evenings, weekends etc, to better suit the volunteers.

Phase 3, therefore, is the time beyond eight hours and, in our case, has lasted up to three weeks before a successful find was made. River levels, availability of responders, pressures from the police and family are all considerations and these fall into what we might consider to be conventional search management.

The pre-plan also includes a section on flood response. A part of the stretch is liable to flood and approximately 300 properties are at risk at the edge of Brecon. In order to speed up that initial response a pre-planned search plan has been made as a blank template for use in SARMAN. Any response is therefore simply a case of assigning assets to follow preprogrammed tasks. The plan concludes with a comms plan, covering intrateam, interteam, interagency radio and phone communications together with a consideration of suitable RV with mobile data availability.

I would strongly advocate that teams that make a response to water incidents takes the time to develop a pre-plan to a familiar stretch of water. Having done this, it is then easy to expand the scope to other watercourses, as a large part of the document will remain the same. Remembering that no plan has ever survived first contact with the enemy, expect that your plan will be revised but don't be disheartened, it's the planning that important, not the plan. ■



As MREW Water Officer, Ewan Thomas liaises with DEFRA and the fire service in the development of guidelines for water rescue, training and best practice. He is currently creating a central register of water resources.

# MIDLANDS CRO: UNDERGROUND AND UP THE WALL

## EMMA PORTER

With Devon CRO using Kent's Cavern and Gloucestershire CRG heading to Clearwell Caverns, Midlands CRO decided to venture underground for their medal presentation too but chose to arrive in style by underground electric canal boat into the Dudley Limestone Mines.

Access into this local tourist attraction was kindly hosted by the volunteers of Dudley Canal Trust. Members, family and friends of MCRO medal recipients were taken through to the huge Singing Cavern by canal boat where Paul Taylor, chairman of Gloucestershire CRG, gave a speech and presented the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medals.

A special 50 year long service certificate, provided by the British Cave Rescue Council, was presented to John Smith,



PAUL TAYLOR PRESENTS JOHN SMITH WITH HIS 50 YEAR LONG SERVICE CERTIFICATE.

BELOW: MEMBERS OF MIDLANDS CRO AT GO OUTDOORS, ERDINGTON

one of the founders of MCRO and Dudley Caving Club, as recognition of his dedication to cave rescue and caving. John has played a pivotal role in local underground exploration and rescue and many team members at the presentation were there because of John's drive, enthusiasm and time he has spent in nurturing new members. The Singing Cavern itself was a very apt location in which to present John's award, as nearby is

a now-filled in shaft which in the 1960s saw the tragic death of a young lad who fell into the shaft. John said a few words about how one simple factor of finding the boy's watch at the bottom of the shaft had a paramount effect on the rest of his life and had they not found it, the whole story could have been so much different. Although John is now standing down from the underground side of rescue, he still intends to remain an active team member and supporter of MCRO.

Following on from our successful day in April at GO Outdoors Coventry, Midlands CRO was invited to promote awareness of mountain and cave rescue at the recently opened GO Outdoors Erdington.

The seven members assisted enthusiastic young climbers on the climbing wall, encouraged would-be cavers through the Dudley Caving Club 'squeeze box' and explained the role of cave rescue through displays, DVD presentations and chatting to GO Outdoors customers. Thanks to the management and staff of GO Outdoors Erdington.







# SNIFF, SNIFF.. STARTING TO TRAIL CONTINUED...

**IAIN NICHOLSON**

**In the last article, in April, we looked at the early stages of training a trailing dog, essentially teaching the dog to discriminate. So, what next?**



After spending the time on the discrimination stages, we have a dog that can tell scents apart — be it human or otherwise — and indicate on that scent. What we now aim to do is to use that discrimination ability, indication and the dog's natural hunting ability to follow the correct person. As with the discrimination stages, this is broken down into a number of training stages, building the skill set and knowledge of both dog and handler in a controlled manner, and still maintaining the principle of errorless learning.

So, how do we start? You'll not be surprised if I say 'simply'! Starting trailing is essentially teaching the dog a new game, and we want to ensure we get it correct.

So, we take one dogsbody and get them to walk in a straight line into the wind. This will lay a short trail in a nice straight line, with the trail known to the handler. We now take the dog and handler fifteen metres to the side of the trail, so they will be approaching at right angles.

Dogs are taught to hunt for scent with the line on their collar, and the handler will work the dog toward the trail, the dog will begin to pick up the scent, and indicate its presence. As we're now moving from finding the scent to following the trail, the handler will clip the line on to the dog's working harness, and the dog will turn 90 degrees onto the trail (remember we approached it from the side) and the handler will allow the dog to work the trail, and get the reward when it gets to the dogsbody! Woof!

It's important to remember that this is a new game for the dog (and handler), so it will take a number of repetitions to become competent at each stage before moving to the next. From reading the above, you'll be aware that the setup of each exercise is important and must be thought through (errorless learning) to be successful.

With time and repetition, the dog will soon become confident in the new 'game' of finding people. Essentially,

we've joined the game of finding scent from the early stages, and bolted on a new part — following the scent to the person.

As confidence builds, we progress through a number of stages, varying and extending the basics of this exercise.

Essentially, by varying the angle of the wind in relation to the trail layer, we can ensure that the dog is exposed to the trail of scent before it would encounter the 'track', which is the footprints and crushed vegetation where the person has walked. By following the trail, this confirms to us that the dog is using scent to follow the person and not the track.

Varying the wind direction in relation to the trail layer also alters the scent pattern of the trail layer, and we can use this in specific exercises to start to build the dog's ability to decide the direction of travel of the person. This may take time, but the aim is to build the dog's confidence to make the decision independently of the handler. In these exercises, it is important to allow time for the dog to ascertain correct direction of scent. From the earlier article, you may remember that it takes two to three seconds each sniff of scent to assimilate a picture, which may take twenty sniffs, so a dog taking sixty seconds to make a

decision is not uncommon at this stage in its training.

So, after moving through a number of stages in this area, where are we now? We have a dog that can discriminate, find a scent trail, and follow it over a short distance to the trail layer. Basically, looking at it from a skill set perspective, we've added some complexity and thinking to the game for the dog and handler, which keeps the interest and drive moving in what the dog sees as a big enjoyable game — remember this must be fun!

In the next article we will look at progressing the skills and experience in following trails as the dog team starts to build and expand their trailing experience and skill set. We will introduce trailing in urban, rural and 'wild and remote places', all with the aim of having a trailing dog team ready for assessment!

Please note that this article just touches on the training exercises at a high level. There are many pitfalls that can be easily introduced in these exercises. Hence, they are always taught by an experienced trailing dog handler to ensure the desired training objective is achieved and that both dog and handler are competent at each stage before progressing on to the next. ■



**MAIN PIC AND INSET:** DARYL GARFIELD PUTS DRAM THROUGH HIS PACES ©DARYL GARFIELD. **ABOVE:** KAZ FRITH WITH ANGUS AND DOTTIE. **RIGHT:** DEREK HAMMOND AND ELSA.



## NEW TRAILBLAZERS!

With the interest in trailing growing, it's always good to see some new recruits from organisations that are starting to take the discipline on.

SARDA England formally accepted Trailing as a discipline at their AGM earlier this year, and it's good to see the first dog starting its training — meet Derek and Elsa (a cocker spaniel) from UWFRA.

And, in the Lake District, we have a familiar face with a new dog! Kaz Frith has taken on Angus, a lively collie cross labrador from Tom Middlemas, to train as a trailing dog. Many of you will know of Kaz's exploits with her open area dog Dottie. This is the second trainee trailing dog in the Lakes, with Kaz's partner Daryl currently training Dram.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE DOGS by Bob Sharp and Bill Jennison



*'The most significant SARDA book ever published in the UK. For anyone considering training up a search and rescue dog anywhere in the world, this book is a 'must read.' It is brilliantly put together, entertaining and yet very informative. Even for those just interested in dogs, it contains a lot of knowledge and they will gain a unique insight into doggy psychology from this book.'* Sky Dog.

Just one of many positive reviews since the book was published in September, some even from humans...

Priced at £25 and boasting 234 full colour pages, it's available now from our online shop — [www.mountain.rescue.org.uk](http://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk). Buy it there and you'll be supporting mountain rescue at the same time.

## LAKES DOGS NEWS ELLY WHITEFORD

Three new search dog teams have joined the call-out list in the Lakes this year. In early January, Christyne Judge of Coniston MRT and her tricolour collie bitch Bute passed their final assessment in wild conditions on the training weekend in Langdale. The winds were gale force with heavy rain showers making hard going for the team tasked with searching an area from Mickleden valley bottom to below Great Slab on Bowfell. The team worked for three hours and successfully found the body hidden on the hillside. They were presented with the legendary green dog tag in the Old Dungeon Gyll. Bute is Christyne's second search dog, her first collie Skye retired a few years ago.

Ian Higginbotham, a member of Kendal MRT, and his young German Shepherd bitch Keppie were the second team to make the grade, passing a gruelling four-hour assessment in Brown Cove, below Catstycam on Helvellyn, on a cold, windy day in March. Keppie is the second German Shepherd Ian has trained as a search dog, the first being a much loved giant called Vinney. As well as being a dog handler, Ian is also equipment officer for the association.

Our latest recruit is Mike Blakey and his tricolour collie bitch Moss, who passed their long mountain day assessment in Combe Ghyll in Borrowdale on a hot day with little wind in April. Following this, the team just had to pass one final area and a night search on the training course in the Howgills in April to achieve full graded team status. Mike and Moss received the green tag at about 11pm, following the successful night search. Although there were few there to congratulate him, it was drinks all round following training the next day!

Moss is the second search dog Mike has trained, the first being a red collie called Comet. Mike is a deputy team leader of Patterdale MRT and is now training officer for the Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** CHRYSTINE JUDGE AND BUTE; MICK GUY WITH IAN AND KEPPIE; MIKE BLAKEY AND MOSS.



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# THE DROWNED VICTIM SEARCH DOG

NEIL POWELL

The Drowned Victim Search Dog, (DVSD) like any search dog, requires not only a very good sense of smell, but a high 'play drive' and an equally high 'hunt drive'. Play drive refers to the dog wanting to chase a ball or toss it around, just as long as its handler will cooperate, whilst 'hunt drive', is about the dog being prepared to independently search for a 'lost' toy as long as it takes to find it and never to expect the handler to intervene.

If it is decided to train a dog to locate drowned victims, it should never be dual-trained to find live people as well. Why? Because, when searching a lake or a river, DVSDs will often have to work through the scent of other volunteer searchers who are either on the shore or on other boats. This clearly has the potential to cause the dual-trained dog major confusion. That said, a dog which has only been trained to find live people, could still be used to search for someone who has died up to approximately 36 hours earlier, but its indication of a find, will almost certainly be different from normal. If the time goes beyond 36 hours, however, most 'live-trained' dogs would not recognise the body as human and would not indicate should they find it. These figures are, of course, anecdotal but based on my personal experience over 30 years and that of other seasoned search dog handlers and, while there are always exceptions, I have found it to be a reasonable guideline.

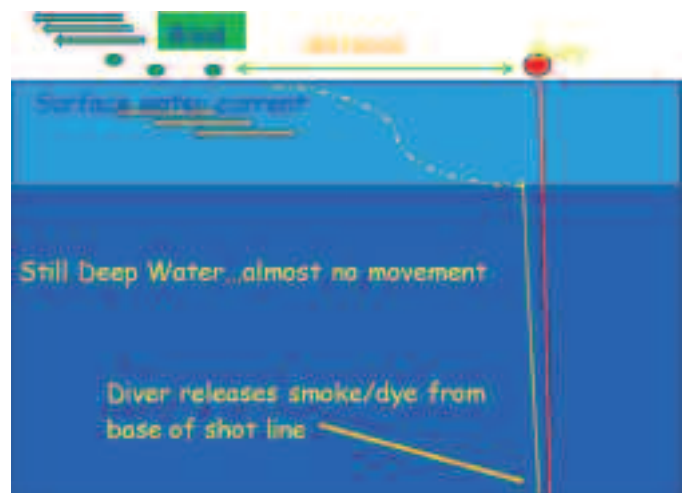
As to actually training the dog to locate the scent of decay, that is no different to training a dog to search for drugs or explosives. They all require the dog to be imprinted with a particular odour and that process is achieved by the use of accurately timed and appropriate reward, both of which are designed to convince the dog that searching is one hugely enjoyable game. The actual scent I use is that of piglets, because the use of human tissue for training a dog is forbidden in the UK and Ireland and pig tissue has been found to be quite similar. I use piglets which have died soon after

birth due to the sow having rolled on top of them, crushing them. However their use is strictly regulated in Northern Ireland by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. That said, I know of one commercial company which produces a scent they claim mimics the scent of a drowned victim and can be used in training dogs. However, it is my experience that this artificial scent is of limited value in teaching a drowned victim search dog because the company is reluctant to say what stage of decomposition their product replicates. They maintain that this information is a trade secret.

Once the dog has learned to search for the scent of a dead victim on land, it will then have to do it whilst working from a boat, usually a small inflatable type. The gasses that are produced during the process of decomposition, rise to the surface in an amount dependent on factors like

water temperature, the stomach contents of the deceased, thermoclines (a barrier between warm water and colder water), water currents and, of course, surface wind. The skill of the handler will now be tested to the full because he or she must learn to look for subtle changes in the dog's body language which will precede a full blown indication when the dog detects that the body is close. These tiny changes are the signal to the handler to delicately direct the movement of the boat, to give best advantage to the dog as he or she tries to home in on the scent emerging from the water.

The gas rising from a drowned victim may encounter strong sub-surface currents or tidal movements, not to mention, thermoclines. The effect of a thermocline is to prevent the rise of gas and so it runs along under the thermocline until it finds a break in the barrier. It can then





surface and be blown along by the wind as normal. The problem, however, is that the point where the scent breaks surface may be some distance from where the body is lying. That is why I recommend that repeat searches be done early in the morning or late in the evening and, indeed, over a couple of days.

The following is a simple experiment to show how the rising scent can be deflected in certain conditions:

Assuming that all there is to go on is a large expanse of water and no certainty as to where the missing person was last seen, I begin a search as far downwind as possible and then drive the boat carrying the dog, at right angles to the wind direction. At some point, this strategy will result in the dog passing through the scent which is blowing down wind.

In light winds, the scent cone will expand as it blows along and produce an enormous target for the dog to locate. In strong winds, the cone will be much narrower and more difficult to find. An added problem in strong winds is the turbulence of wave action which will disrupt the scent flow and cause wave slap, which has the obvious disadvantage of soaking the dog and putting it off its work. I therefore recommend that searches with a dog on a boat, are not carried

out in wind strengths above three mph.

In suitable conditions, I have found it best to drive at an angle which is directly across wind and then move up 50 to 100 metres and recross the body of water. If at some point the dog gives an indication, I note identifying landmarks and then drive away up wind. I then follow a series of manoeuvres which cross and recross the wind, using legs of approximately 50 metres. If and when the dog indicates again, I can assume the body scent is emerging from the water somewhere 50 metres from my current position.

The search then becomes the responsibility of the dive team and theirs is an even more difficult job. Frequently they operate in conditions of almost zero visibility and they also have to contend with the fact that bodies can exhibit any one of three types of buoyancy:—

- ? Negative, where they lie on the bottom.
- ? Positive, which sees them float to the surface.
- ? Neutral, where they float somewhere between the bottom and the surface.

In the neutral situation, it is quite conceivable that a diver could swim right beneath a body, completely unaware he has done so.

So what are the advantages of a

Drowned Victim Search Dog?

- ? They reduce a large search area to a manageable one.
- ? They can save unnecessary delay in locating the victim.
- ? Early location and recovery aids the grieving/healing process.
- ? They help reduce the costs incurred by reducing the numbers involved in the search operation.

The disadvantages are:—

- ? They can indicate well away from the body location because of thermoclines, currents, poor wind conditions.
- ? Any indication by the dog, can be interpreted by relatives or helpers as a definite location and so prematurely raise expectations.
- ? They may be unable to find scent for a variety of reasons which can, in turn, put serious pressure on the

handler who is expected to produce results. This additional pressure may cause him to make mistakes.

- ? A dog may need to return to an area over two or three days to pinpoint the location.
- ? Divers may fail to find the body where the dog has indicated and so undermine confidence in the dog's ability.

In conclusion, the Drowned Victim Search Dog, whilst only a tool in the box, is nevertheless, the most effective means for discovering a submerged body available to us, provided they have been accredited according to the NSARDA standards for Drowned Victim Search Dogs, (which is ACPO recognised). ■

ABOVE: NEIL POWELL'S WATER SEARCH DOG FERN AT THE READY ON LOUGH NEAGH. PHOTO: NEIL POWELL.



*Neil Powell has been a SARDA dog handler since 1973. He has trained search dogs for mountains, water, collapsed structures, explosives, trailing, hidden optical discs, drugs and illegal food. He is also author of 'Search Dogs and Me'.*



# A NEW ASSET FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE?



**A** few weeks ago I was working on a military base, where I often encounter police firearms officers, in training. Yet on this occasion they were flying UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) through a simulated urban environment, and I used my interest in satnav navigation as an excuse to speak to them about these tiny aircraft.



**LYLE BROTHERTON**



MAIN PIC: SAR MICRODRONE. INSET: POLICE MICRODRONE. ABOVE: PREDATOR.

We have all become familiar with the Predator Drones we see on our TV screens, being used by the US Military both for reconnaissance, and as strike weapons, targeting insurgents and senior Taliban and Al Qaeda commanders.

However, the aircraft being flown this day were armed with nothing more than a video camera for aerial surveillance, and were miniaturised VTOL (Vertical Take Off and Landing) aircraft, called 'microdrones', that weigh a maximum of 25kg, have several rotors, like helicopter rotors and are usually powered by batteries.

UAVs are nothing new. Their first documented use was as far back as 1858 when Frenchman Felix Tournachon, took the world's first aerial photographs, using a camera with a timing delay attached to a hot-air balloon, of his native city of Paris. Five years later, the first military application of a UAV was patented by an American,

Charles Perley, for use in the American Civil War. He designed another hot-air balloon, this time to carry a bomb in a basket which had an opening base. A timing mechanism opened this hinged base, and at the same time ignited the bomb's fuse as it tumbled out. The problem was, that was when the wind changed!

As with many inventions, the greatest innovations with the technology happen during war time. In WWI, UAV hydrogen reconnaissance balloons were introduced and later, in WWII, a major advance occurred with the launching of the infamous Doodlebug. Since these world wars, the USA in particular has spent a great deal of money continuing to develop UAVs.

However, the use of UAVs has, until very recently, been blighted. A high-profile failure of the integration of UAVs in police operations occurred with Merseyside Police, who had taken delivery of one fitted with CCTV, only to

# navigation

then discover that the force needed an Air Operators License from the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) to fly within 50m of people and within 150m of buildings. A few months later the UAV mysteriously fell into the River Mersey without trace — I hear a conspiracy story coming on...

Aside from current legislation, which our government has already indicated it will review in light of the capabilities afforded by modern UAVs, the principal problem with UAVs has been accurate navigation.

These aircraft not only need to know exactly where their position is AGL (Above Ground Level) but also their precise altitude. Enter stage left GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite Systems) combined with sophisticated inertial systems for measuring motion, position and orientation.

Initially, only the American GNSS (called GPS) was available, today it now includes the Russian GNSS (called GLONASS) and in the next few years the European GNSS (Galileo).

Added to this, SBAS (Satellite Based Augmentation Systems) which improve the accuracy of the GNSS signals, such as EGNOS (European Navigational Overlay System) and which is already up and running, improving the accuracy of both GPS and GLONASS in Europe.

The pinpoint accuracy that GNSS affords, this technology further offers four exceptional navigational features:—

## 1: WAYPOINTS

This is a location, defined as a set of coordinates that identifies a point in physical space, which is recorded and stored on the UAVs on-board satnav. The on-board satnav can navigate to any given waypoint, in a straight line, from anywhere in the world.

MAIN PIC: X650V4PRO1.  
BELOW: MERSEYSIDE POLICE.



## 2: ROUTES

A series of waypoints that are joined together to create a route (path). These can be created using digital mapping software, such as Google Earth or Anquet.

## 3: TRACKS

A 'breadcrumb' trail, a record of exactly where the UAV has flown. This track can be used to fly the aircraft back along exactly the same path it flew out on — this is called Trackback.

## 4: COMBINED ALTITUDE

The UAV's satnav measures its height AGL using GNSS and barometric air pressure. It then correlates the two using a complex algorithm, providing excellent altitude accuracy.

The combination of these features in modern Microdrones gives them remarkable capabilities:—

## RTH (RETURN TO HOME)

The microdrone's satnav automatically waypoints its take-off position and can be commanded at

any time to fly back to it. Once the RTH button is pressed by the operator, the microdrone climbs vertically to a predefined altitude, and then travels in a straight path back to its take-off waypoint, where, when directly over it, it descends vertically to land. RTH can also employ the Trackback feature, to bring the UAV back along same path and elevation that it flew out on.

## PH (POSITION HOLD, SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS TARGET LOCK)

This allows the Microdrone to hover in exactly the same position without the user needing to use any flight controls.

## DPH (DYNAMIC POSITION HOLD)

This allows the operator to steer a microdrone, using remote control where the microdrone compensates for wind speed. In other words, if the operator selects 'move forward' and the wind direction is from the right the microdrone automatically compensates for this and moves straight forward.

## AH (AUTONOMOUS FLIGHT)

Uploading a route, created in a digital mapping program such as Google Earth, the microdrone flies this route without any further user input.

Added to this, a precise record is created of exactly where the microdrone's position was at any given time and date; this information is recorded in its Track. Combined with a GNSS enabled camera that records exactly where and when each frame/picture was captured, a unique log is created of the events it records.

Effectively, microdrones have all the capabilities, except casualty extraction, of conventional helicopters and are able to deliver much more. They are tiny in comparison to a helicopter, create a negligible downdraught and can access small confined areas at very low altitudes, but by far their biggest advantage is that they cost a small fraction of what a conventional helicopter costs to both purchase, and to operate.

They have already been deployed to assist in civil emergencies, such as immediately after Hurricane Katrina





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TOP: MD4-1000. MIDDLE: SR200A.

had hit the eastern US coast, microdrones, which were equipped with stabilised video cameras, allowed the incident controllers to quickly assess the damage, and target specific areas for detailed investigation, where they could fly very low, often in confined spaces and hover. The Japanese government also used microdrones, equipped with radiation sensors, infrared thermometers and video cameras, to access the damage at the Fukushima nuclear facility. In the UK, West Midlands Fire Service has one used by their Fire Department's Technical Rescue Unit.

The surprising thing about this technology is just how affordable it is becoming.

£2500 buys you a remarkable entry level Microdrone, such as the OFM-650 V4 Professional from [onlyflyingmachines.com](http://onlyflyingmachines.com), which can carry up to 0.75Kg of payload and has a flight endurance of 20 minutes. A camera/video camera can be attached and they can be controlled in real-time, via the internet and even from a smartphone. Ingenious features such as 'follow-me', where the device flies behind a person carrying a mobile phone it is connected to, and 3D Google Earth Map-based Autonomous Navigation are available for this level of spend.

£15,000 will get you a professional microdrone (ready to fly), such as the Microdrone md4-1000 from German manufacturer, [microdrones.com](http://microdrones.com), that can carry 1.3Kg payload, with a flight endurance of an hour and a half and are controlled in real-time both via remote control and or automatically using its on-board satnav software, flying in wind speeds of up to 55kmph.

£90,000 buys the high-end specification top models, like the SR

SR200A from [rotomotion.com](http://rotomotion.com). These have 4-stroke fuel injected engines, 18kg of payload capacity, five hours of flight endurance, 50Km telemetry range, live video feed and a 2500m operating ceiling.

Added to this, the payload can be anything — infrared cameras for searching difficult terrain in the dark, high-power LED search lights, where the microdrone is set to DPH and can be employed to illuminate the entire locus or, simply using a video camera, fly over a hazardous incident, such as an air crash site or up alongside a cliff face to search nooks and crannies for casualties.

The current economic recession is creating pressure on all aspects of everyday life, including mountain rescue and, in common with many other charitable organisations, fundraising is, understandably, becoming more difficult. Added to this, reductions in police staffing, fire and rescue service cuts, and the decrease in both the number and size of RAF MRTs, along with RAF and Navy assets, namely helicopters, is an added challenge to teams.

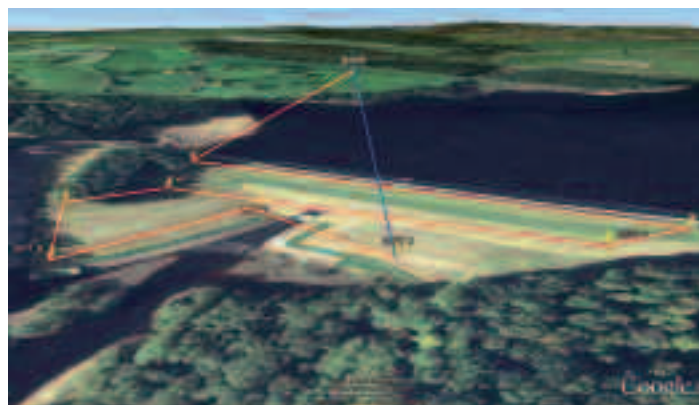
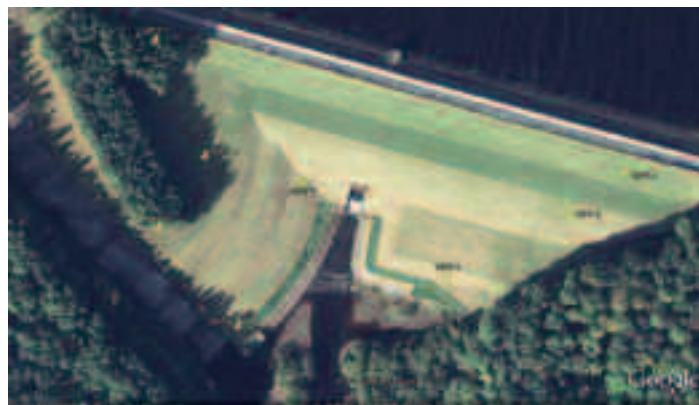
Inevitably MR teams are having to adapt and explore other resources, so when a request for a helicopter from ARCC is not always available, other strategies are employed. For casualty extractions this usually involves long walks with stretcher straps cutting into your shoulder.

Yet we also frequently use helicopters as part of the search process, and this resource too is coming under the same continued pressure.

Microdrones, equipped with high-resolution photo, video, thermography, or other sensor systems, simplify the job of aerial reconnaissance significantly and are exceptionally cost-effective. Utilising the on-board satnav and a digital mapping program, such as Google Earth, a search manager can define which area is to be searched and then task the microdrone to do this automatically.

Is now the time that mountain rescue needs to start to seriously investigate the use of microdrones in SAR? ■

BELOW: FEWSTON WAYPOINTS, THEN FEWSTON FLIGHT PATH ANNOTATED 'STEEP GRASSY BANK OF DAM ON RESERVOIR. RED LINE IS FLIGHT PATH (ROUTE) AND BLUE LINE IS RTH (RETURN TO HOME)'.



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# AIR AMBULANCES AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE

AL DAY

**T**he last 15 years has seen a proliferation of air ambulances appearing throughout Great Britain and Ireland. In England and Wales these aircraft are, like mountain rescue teams, autonomous charities funded mainly by voluntary contributions.

With the increasing uptake of outdoor pursuits, combined with a general public misunderstanding of the remit (or even existence) of mountain rescue teams in the upland areas of the UK and Ireland, air ambulances are increasingly being tasked into what would have traditionally been the territory of MR teams.

In his conference presentation, the Calder Valley team leader and Helimed Paramedic Al Day set about dispelling some of the myths around air ambulance operations in the hills by answering some of the questions commonly posed by mountain rescue team members.

## What use are air ambulances in mountain rescue scenarios?

Helimed aircraft are able to deliver highly skilled clinicians and medical equipment to remote locations very quickly. With cruising speeds of between 200 and 280 kilometres per hour, and the ability to travel in a straight line, there are few places in the UK that are more than 45 minutes flight away from an existing air ambulance operating base.

The paramedics and doctors who work on air ambulances are predominantly very experienced highly skilled clinicians. Their experience of trauma in particular is likely to be second to none outside of a war zone! It is worth remembering, however, that they will be less familiar with mountain problems such as exhaustion hypothermia.

As well as the clinical benefits, air ambulances are clearly useful for evacuating casualties in upland areas. The Yorkshire aircraft have been requested by local teams on many occasions in order to negate the need for a long stretcher carry — which both benefits the casualty and releases the rescue team.

## How are Helimed aircraft tasked?

The way in which air ambulances are tasked varies from region to region, however for simplicity this can be broken down into two different methods of operation.

1. Self tasking where the aircrew/dispatcher can select which emergencies to attend, based on the dispatch information which has been passed to ambulance control by the person who called 999. Further

information may be sought before launching the aircraft by ringing the caller back or speaking to the attending ambulance resource.

2. Requested Tasking where the attendance of an air ambulance at an incident can be requested by ambulances resources or other agencies such as mountain/cave rescue teams. Any such requests will be considered by the aircrew, but will not always result in the dispatch of an aircraft.

## What are the different types of Helimed mission?

In the mountain rescue context, there are two types of flight.

1. Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS). Most Helimed missions fall into this category. When there is a life threatening injury or illness, the aircraft is able to claim some exemptions from the normal rules of aviation. These mainly apply to take off and landing, and low flying.

2. Air Ambulance missions involving less critical patients where the aircraft needs to abide by the normal aviation laws for rotary winged aircraft.

## Why do mountain rescue teams have difficulty communicating with air ambulances?

As with any aircraft, radio communications with air ambulances should be restricted to essential messages only. The aircrew are likely to be monitoring around five or six different radios.

Under current UK SAR arrangements, contact with all air rescue assets en route to scene should be made initially using the Emergency Calling Channel (ECC), often labelled as 62 Alpha. However, there are some air ambulances that are not equipped to transmit and receive on this channel, so it is worth checking with your local air support unit. The FM radio sets fitted to the aircraft will not work once the aircraft has landed. This, in conjunction with a relatively short range and the aircraft's speed, means there will only be a very short window in which communicating on the ECC is possible. (Normally in the final five minutes or so of flight).

Most Helimed aircraft will be equipped with at least one Airwaves

# medical



(Tetra) radio, however, this is likely to be the main means of communication between the aircraft and its dispatcher. Mountain rescue teams are therefore discouraged from speaking directly to air ambulances via Airwaves unless absolutely essential.

Often the best way of sending and receiving information regarding a Helimed aircraft will be via the dispatcher at the air base or ambulance control. They will have access to all the pertinent information regarding the emergency, as well as being in regular contact with the aircraft, and I would advise all teams to familiarise themselves with the contact details (especially ISSI numbers) for their local Airdesk.

Within Yorkshire, our Dedicated Air Desk (DAD) looks after all air assets tasked to emergencies for the ambulance service and our local MR teams have found it to be an extremely valuable resource.

## What do teams need to consider when preparing a landing site?

Rescue teams are often requested to secure a landing site for incoming aircraft. In order to prepare an appropriate site, it is worth remembering the six 'S's'.

1. Size: The minimum size for a LZ is twice the rotor diameter during the day and four times at night. The rotor diameters of air ambulances in the UK range from about 10-13 metres. However, with interoperability between units and the use of different type loan aircraft, you may not get what you were expecting. I would recommend a site of at least 25 metres diameter (30m if expecting an AW109/139).

2. Shape: Needs to be uniform and roughly round or rectangular.

3. Slope: Needs to be relatively uniform with a maximum angle of ten degrees. (Some air ambulances are, on paper, capable of landing on

slopes greater than ten degrees, however, few pilots would be comfortable with a LZ this steep).

4. Surround: The area immediately surrounding the landing site needs to be free of tall obstacles such as trees, pylons, wires, cliffs, etc. This is especially important on the approach (where the wind is blowing towards) and the overshoot (where the wind is blowing from).

5. Surface: Needs to be reasonably firm and free of debris which could be blown into the rotors, engines, or over the casualty site.

6. Smoke: Although not essential for landing an aircraft, few pilots will refuse the offer of a smoke which gives wind speed and direction and positively identifies the LZ. It should be held by the marshall or thrown to the corner of the LZ so as not to obscure it.

## How do team members approach an aircraft?

Under normal circumstances a Helimed aircraft arriving on scene would send one of the aircrew out to liaise with the team before they approached the aircraft. If you had spoken to the aircrew and been given clearance to approach with the rotors running, the helicopter should always be approached from the 10 o'clock or 2 o'clock position, and only when given a positive thumbs-up by the pilot or front seat aircrew. The thumbs-up should then be returned before approaching the aircraft. Avoid any ground which is higher than the aircraft's skids or wheels on approach.

Helicopters should never be approached during start up or shut down as the rotors can sail up and down by several feet.

When it comes to loading a casualty, different aircraft load from different directions so it's worth familiarising yourself with your local air ambulance.

*Hot Loading* — loading a casualty with the rotors running — should only be attempted under the direct supervision of the aircrew. It is important to be familiar with this procedure before attempting it and to be in and out of the disc in a swift but controlled manner. Hot loading should never be attempted with a rear loading aircraft such as the Bolkow 105.

## Can air ambulances operate at night and in bad weather?

The operational abilities of Helimed aircraft varies from type to type and is also subject to whether the aircraft is visual or instrument flight rated. However, irrespective of what instruments it has, no helicopter will land on a landing site it cannot see.

A number of air ambulances are moving towards night time HEMS operations currently. The first step is night-time recovery where the aircraft lands on scene before dark but can then fly the casualty to a lit hospital helipad and recover to base after dark.

It may be worth noting that, in the US where HEMS is many times more risky than the UK, the majority of accidents are at night.

## Why do air ambulances sometimes bypass the nearest A&E hospital?

One of the benefits of air evacuation is the facility to fly critical patients to the most appropriate care facility quickly and directly. This is particularly important following the introduction of Regional Major Trauma Centres (MTCs) and primary angioplasty centres for the treatment of myocardial infarction.

It can also be useful to fly patients direct to other specialist units such as

burns units and ECMO centres for severe hypothermia.

## How can teams improve relationships with their local air ambulance?

As with many aspects of mountain rescue work, communication is the key. If you have had an issue with a Helimed aircraft, ring the unit after the job and discuss the problem. It may well be there is more to the job than you realise, and the aircrew are — like you — only trying to do what's best for the casualty at the end of the day.

Getting to know your local aircrew and air ambulance aircraft will make it easier to work with them. Arrange for your team to visit your local Air Support Unit, meet the crew and look around the aircraft.

Arrange joint training. Invite Aircrew and even the aircraft to attend training exercises. In Yorkshire, all our new aircrew paramedics take part in a joint training day with two of the local MR teams. This allows the new staff to appreciate the skills and capabilities of the teams, gets the local team members used to working with the aircraft and builds a rapport between the aircrew and the team members.

As mountain rescuers, we have to accept that air ambulances are here to stay. Complaining about Helimed aircraft straying into our territory and evacuating casualties who would traditionally have been dealt with by MR teams is a waste of time. Clearly air ambulances are never going to replace mountain rescue teams, but we have to understand, communicate and work with them so that our casualties get the best treatment, combined with swift and safe evacuation to the most appropriate definitive care. ■



*Al Day is a Paramedic Practitioner and team leader with his local team, Calder Valley MRT. He has worked with aircrew on the Yorkshire Air Ambulance for over three years and also lectures at Huddersfield University. [al.day@btinternet.com](mailto:al.day@btinternet.com)*





# medical

from the  
journals

## SPINAL INJURIES IN MOUNTAIN CASUALTIES DAVID ALLAN

Another excellent study from Linda Dykes' department in North Wales, was presented by Ben Hall, on Saturday afternoon.

One hundred and sixty-eight cases have been collected where a long fall (> 6m) had occurred and a possibility of spinal injury existed. In only two instances was a vertebral fracture present (both stable) and in no cases did injuries to the spinal cord occur. It is estimated that the risk of cord injury is in the region of 0.15%. It was also pointed out that, in virtually all cases where cord injury occurs, it does so at the time of injury and not as a result of subsequent events. Following a long fall, taking steps to prevent a 2cm movement of the head seems entirely disproportionate.

A culture of immobilising all falls with cervical collars and spinal boards has developed over recent years. This has largely been based on a 'best to be on the safe side' philosophy rather than on hard evidence. It is important to recognise that a small but definite number of deaths and complications have arisen from the deployment of cervical collars.

The present study strongly indicates that spinal immobilisation should be carried out only for positive indications rather than as a routine precaution. In conscious casualties with no spinal pain or other symptoms there is little justification, and especially so if the process delays or interferes with evacuation and other treatment.

This does not apply to the use of a vacuum mattress deployed as a means of general immobilisation and, importantly, of providing the most comfortable 'packaging' of casualties for transport off the hill.

## TEACHING BASIC LIFE SUPPORT

An interesting study is reported in a recent copy of the Emergency Medical Journal. The introduction of CPR in 1960 has, without doubt, saved thousands of lives and, if more people were trained in BLS, there would undoubtedly be many more lives saved.

This study was undertaken to determine whether a more effective way of teaching BLS could lead to more of the population being trained. It does, however, also have resonance for all those already receiving and delivering instruction in BLS.

A comparison of the skill acquisition and retention was made between two groups. The first were taught in the traditional manner of teaching, in small groups, by an instructor with a manikin.

The second group were given an individual DVD plus a simple manikin (eg. Mini-Anne, Laerdal Medical).

Both groups were tested on their skills immediately after training and at 3.5 months.

There was no significant difference between the two groups and it is suggested that a DVD training course without an instructor is the more efficient way of delivering training.

**Emerg Med J 2012;29:587-589**

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MREW will be exhibiting in The Emergency Response Zone, which features exhibitors from fire and rescue, police, ambulance, government and voluntary organisations from around the UK, demonstrating the capabilities of partnering agencies and the voluntary sector. The Show offers organisations, such as yours, an opportunity to network with other emergency professionals, build on existing and future relationships and to make them aware of the services that you can provide. It's the ideal opportunity for you to meet with like-minded individuals to discuss your role in emergencies and to learn about developments in equipment and services.



A range suppliers are exhibiting at the show including DMM International, Lyon Equipment, Keela International/Illasco, Peli Products, Paramo and Mammut

To register for your free visitor pass or to learn more about attending The Emergency Services Show 2012, please visit [www.emergencyuk.com](http://www.emergencyuk.com). We will also be hosting a number of discussions on LinkedIn, running up to and during the event. To join in with relevant industry news discussions involving emergency planning, response or recovery, please join The Emergency Services Show LinkedIn Group.

## CATCH DMM AT THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW

Get an exclusive viewing of the brand new Axis Swivels at the Emergency Services show in November (stand 199). The Axis Swivel inspires confidence from the word go – ideal for rigging purposes, rescue and hauling loads. Heat-treated aluminium gives excellent strength to weight ratio, the smooth ball bearings ensure extra efficiency and the curves provide a rope friendly surface. Axis Swivel weighs in at only 117g with a breaking strength 36KN and the large at 184g with a breaking strength of 50KN.



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# Diary of an Editor

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

## Homeopathy in the medical section?! Uh oh...

Oh dear! It would seem I'm in trouble. (And apologies to those of you who've turned to this page expecting the usual bemused ramblings but, this time, it's serious). The decision to publish an article on homeopathy within the 'Medical' section of our July issue didn't go down at all well with three of our readers. 'Homeopathy in the Medical section? Page 53, July 2012? Really!?' asked Nick Owen, team leader of Langdale Ambleside MRT, before fulminating at length that if mountain rescue wishes to be 'taken as seriously as it deserves (cutting edge pre-hospital care in a difficult environment) then there is absolutely no room for this nonsense.' This was followed, in September, by a seemingly concerted response from two Edale team doctors, Steve Rowe and Neil Sambridge.

Now, given the currently very hot topic of communications, I'm delighted to receive some feedback. Any feedback. Although initially stunned that this particular article provoked quite such heated reactions, further correspondence with the good doctors, and Carey Blenden, the article's author – and a straw poll of my own friends and mountain rescue colleagues – has demonstrated three things: communication is a two-way street, there are always two sides (at least!) to any argument and (coming back to the topic in hand) homeopathy is highly valued and, indeed, an integral part of daily life in many quarters, whatever its detractors might say. So, in the interests of balance, and respect for opinion on all sides of the debate, I'd like to share the feedback, and my thoughts, here.

With intriguing synchronicity, the same weekend the doctors' emails landed in my inbox, The Times Saturday 'Feedback' column was tackling similar issues – albeit not the same subject matter. Apparently, John Walter, who founded that esteemed publication, wrote in his manifesto that a newspaper should be like a 'well covered table' with 'something suited to every palate' and that varied diet of opinion is still a staple.

Personally, I've always liked the assertion by John Reith, the BBC's founding father, that his organisation should 'educate, inform and entertain', now burned into their mission statement. Add to all the above 'inspire debate' and there you have it: my own, personal recipe for Mountain Rescue magazine. Not everything we publish will be to everyone's taste, not everything will be strictly mountain rescue-related and, contrary to what might be believed, not everything is the 'official line'. A disclaimer on page three quite clearly states that 'articles carried in Mountain Rescue do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Mountain Rescue England and Wales.'

I stand by my decision to publish an article, quite clearly labeled 'Homeopathy for travel', which at no point suggested that anything included there should form part of or replace casualty care in the mountain rescue environment. I'd hazard a guess that a greater number of readers spent their summer holidays entertaining the kids on family holidays than battling the elements at altitude. However, a 'shocked and disappointed,' Dr Rowe emailed that 'as a qualified medical doctor, and a member of a mountain rescue team' he was surprised that this article was published.

He continued: 'Whilst the article states Arnica, the remedy for physical shock and trauma, is advocated for any kind of trauma, I'm afraid I'd have to advocate an ABC approach with appropriate treatment of airway obstruction with cervical spine control, assessment of breathing with the addition of supplemental oxygen and assessment of circulation with treatment of haemorrhage and appropriate splintage of the pelvis or long bone fractures.'

'Whilst coca may be advocated as the mountaineers' remedy, standard medical advice for altitude sickness would include a rapid descent and assessment and treatment of pulmonary or cerebral oedema along current ICAR guidelines. Also, whilst I'm sure these leaves which contain cocaine may make you feel better at altitude, would you really trust yourself to tie your best knots whilst under the influence?'

'I know MREW is working hard to develop evidence based best practice guidelines for the treatment of severe hypothermia. We have perhaps missed a trick by not including carbonyl vegetalis, made from charcoal... and affectionately known as the corpse reviver...'

'Whilst I appreciate that we should be all-encompassing and embrace holistic treatments, I think that by peddling homeopathic treatments for which there is no scientific evidence base, we are doing our readers a disservice.'

Both questioned whether it was necessary to include Carey's contact details at the end of the article and whether there was a fee involved. Well, yes, to the first – to demonstrate the writer's provenance, and this being no more than occurs with other contributors, new and old, when such details are available – and no to the fee bit.

Dr Sambridge thought the article 'a poor editorial choice,' (Ouch!) continuing that 'homeopathy has no place in the care of any patient whether in the mountains or down a cave (on indeed in hospital or the community). There is no scientific evidence that homeopathy works and to publish such an article is misleading at best and dangerous at worst.'

Whilst conceding that 'some herbal remedies are useful and indeed form the active ingredient of some drugs,' he adds that 'homeopathy is supported by no evidence at all' and asked that I 'retract the article or at the very least publish a disclaimer that homeopathy has no scientific basis.'

Over on Facebook, and offline, a straw poll on the subject (exclusively responded to, I might add, by mountain rescue pals) prompted passion on all fronts (leaving aside the wag who queried whether Guinness might count!) from 'better than a GP any day and 'been using homeopathy since late-60s', through 'too whacky for me' and 'my Mrs (a medical professional) supports the use of homeopathic, alternative and complementary therapies alongside conventional methods in the treatment of some illnesses', to the mistaken belief that a leather-bound Bible and nothing else would do in the succession of your remedy...

Which brings me to Carey herself, who supplied the article, at my request. I include her response in full:—

'Thank you for asking me to respond to the emails you have received concerning my article published in the last edition of Mountain Rescue.'

'My article was entitled 'Homeopathy for Travel' and was first published in the Cockermouth Post. It was aimed at individuals and suggested remedies they might consider taking with them when travelling in this country and abroad. It was borne out of requests for information on homeopathy from clients intending to travel this summer.'

'At no point did I, nor do I, advocate, explicitly or implicitly, the use of homeopathy for trauma casualties in the care of mountain rescue teams.'

'As a homeopath I have successfully treated clients from all walks of life, including the families of doctors, nurses, pharmacists and mountain rescue personnel.'

'I am not surprised to read the responses of team doctors, given the recent concerted effort by the Establishment to discredit homeopathy but, equally, there are many doctors who are qualified in homeopathy. There are four homeopathic hospitals in UK, in London, Bristol, Liverpool and Glasgow. Treatment is available on the NHS at all of these hospitals, on referral of the patient's own GP. There are qualified veterinary practitioners who use homeopathy with effect on animals under their care. And, of course, there are eminent mountaineers currently based here in the Lakes who have used remedies on major expeditions over the past 30-40+ years.'

'Your readers might be interested in hearing of a report on the effectiveness of



# STUFF Book

IMAGE: NADEZDA POSTOLIT (DREAMSTIME.COM)

homeopathy, produced for the Swiss Government and recently made available in an English translation (Bonhoff, Gudim, and Mathiessen Peter F. Homeopathy in Healthcare: Effectiveness, Appropriateness, Safety, Costs. Goslar, Germany: Springer, 2011). This in-depth report represents the most comprehensive evaluation of homeopathy ever produced for a government. The report's conclusions consistently confirm the effectiveness and cost efficiency of homeopathy as a treatment option, and has led the Swiss Government to include reimbursement for homeopathic treatment within Switzerland's National Health Insurance scheme. The report evaluated evidence gained from randomised controlled trials (RCTs), outcomes-based studies, physiochemical research, animal studies, botanical studies and in vitro studies using human cells. The Swiss Government considered the results of the survey to demonstrate conclusively that homeopathy works, homeopathy is a safe, gentle healthcare option, and homeopathic treatment is cost-efficient.

'I would advocate that the sceptics try homeopathy before condemning it. It is one of several alternatives to allopathic medicines and it may suit them as individuals because there are no toxic side effects.'

'Yours sincerely, Carey Blanden. Member of the Alliance of Registered Homeopaths'

Further correspondence with the doctors – not to mention Mr Owen's opening expression of dismay – revealed a concern, not just with homeopathy per se, but with my inclusion of the piece under a 'medical' header. Well, I admit not a great deal of thought had gone into the implications of that particular placement beforehand (unlike the many, many shufflings and repositionings I generally perform when putting together the jigsaw of components that constitute any single issue of the magazine, to best please readers, contributors, advertisers and my own designer-eye), but the responses prompted me to dig further (when in a hole, and all that...).

My Concise Oxford has 'medical' as the 'art of medicine in general or as opposed to surgery'. Turning to 'medicine' then, I find 'the art of restoring and preserving health, esp. by means of remedial substances and regulation of diet etc,' qualified further with 'substance, esp. one taken internally, used in this...'

Despite this, you can rest assured that any future such articles will sit firmly under a 'Health' banner, or maybe even 'Body and Soul'. And, just to clarify, I always seek to publish articles written by those who, either through professional or life experience, are qualified to speak about the subject matter in hand. And, of course, I would be delighted to include more evidence-based articles (medical or otherwise), whichever header they fall beneath.

*Judy W xx*

## WALKING THE CORBETTS, VOLUME 1 by Brian Johnson

Review by Peter Grayson DF MRT

As the name suggests, this book is part of a two-volume walkers' guide to the Scottish mountains between 2500 and 3000 feet high. The author states that it is aimed at the walker who wants the most interesting route rather than the shortest one and that, consequently, the guide is as much about exploring the glens as it is about climbing the peaks. It appears to be well researched, describing 95 routes, each starting from the road or railway station and visiting one or two Corbett summits. Detailed route descriptions are backed up with information about local accommodation and other amenities, to enable holiday planning based on these walks. The routes vary in length enormously, some too long for most people to do in a day, and the author emphasises that these are not winter routes but should be tackled when free of snow. The guide achieves Cicerone's usual high standard of presentation, with helpful maps and plenty of photographs to whet the appetite.

'Walking the Corbetts Volume 1' by Brian Johnson is published by Cicerone. [www.cicerone.co.uk](http://www.cicerone.co.uk). Pages 340. Price £16.95. ISBN: 978-1-85284-652-7.



## GREAT MOUNTAIN DAYS IN SCOTLAND. 50 CLASSIC HILLWALKING CHALLENGES by Dan Bailey

Review by Mike Margeson

Dan Bailey's Fifty Classic Hillwalking Challenges quite clearly demonstrates his passion for the mountains and wild places of Scotland. It is a well put together, illustrated and researched guide. His selection covers the whole of Scotland and the islands and it is refreshing that, unlike some guides, it is not obsessed with ticking every Munro or Corbett summit but rather focuses on what I would call a mountaineer's natural line or journey. The minimum route length is set at 20k and upwards, most are envisaged as day challenges with a few longer routes spread over two days with a bivi camp or bothy night on route to enrich the adventure.

I do have to sound a public health warning though, that some of Dan's ideas of a grand day out are not for the faint-hearted. I will just give an example the traverse of Liathach followed by the traverse of Beinn Alligin finishing off by walking round the back of Liathach to your start point. This is a mere 28.5km and 2750m of ascent. Dan gives a time of thirteen hours — a very big day considering the nature of some of the challenging terrain! The guide is well organised with photos and maps and host of vital and useful information such as local transport, accommodation as well as bivi sites and bothies. You might well need them! There are also important seasonal notes as well as safety, access and legal information. All in all, a very useful resource for anybody seeking ideas or planning their next big day in the Scottish mountains.

'Great Mountain Days. 50 Classic Hillwalking Challenges' by Dan Bailey is published by Cicerone. [www.cicerone.co.uk](http://www.cicerone.co.uk). 272 pages. Price £17.99. ISBN 978-1-85284-612-1.





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## SARLOC: THE FUTURE RUSS HORE

I write this on my return from the superb UK MR Conference. It was nice to catch up with old (and some not so old) friends and I enjoyed presenting my thoughts, to those who attended my talk on the Sunday morning, about where SARLOC is heading in the future. For those that couldn't make it, what follows is where I plan to take SARLOC over the next few weeks.

### Web-based MRMap.ini

I have mentioned before, Dave's and my wish to make updating the MRMap.ini file easier and that we are developing a web interface. All the MRMap.ini details will be held in a database on the MRMap website. MRMap will periodically download a new MRMap.ini file from the website for local use thus not requiring a persistent internet connection.

One of the benefits of this approach is the details in the MRMap.ini online database will be available to other applications running on the MRMEW ICT servers. Thus, SARLOC can identify what you have designated as your SARLOC radio IDs from your team ID every time you request an activation. This will help the next development of SARLOC, the 'token-based system.'

### Token-based system

Currently the URL sent to the 'LostPer' contains a valid MRMap radio ID. The problem with this is it could be open to abuse once a LostPer becomes a 'FoundPer' and sits in the pub showing his mates how he was 'found'. This could result in unwanted entries in MRMap.

The token system will not send a radio ID to the LostPer but a random string of characters (eg. 'S4hUk4'),

which will be valid for a set period of time (minutes, hours, days etc). Once the MisPer is a FoundPer any SARLOC hits for that token will be ignored.

SARLOC currently has an interface to allow you to request a token, which you could then manually add to the SARLOC URL and send to the LostPer.

Manually requesting the token and editing the URL is not really a satisfactory way forward given the random nature of the token and the transcribing errors that may ensue.

I am currently building a web page interface to allow you to request a SARLOC activation. MREW have kindly provided me with a WorldText account from which SARLOC can send text messages.

This is a work in progress but should be available shortly. The interface will look something like this:—

1. Given the online MRMap.ini database, when you tell SARLOC your team ID, it can retrieve your SARLOC radio ID(s). SARLOC will generate the token and store an association between it and your radio ID.
2. You provide the LostPer's mobile number.
3. You optionally provide a 'team' mobile. When SARLOC gets the location of the LostPer it can text the location to this mobile number.
4. If you provide an email address,



AT THE END OF MY TALK, I SHOWED WHERE WE MAY BE IN A YEAR'S (OR MORE) TIME WITH AN AUGMENTED REALITY IPAD APPLICATION. IT DOES NOT EXIST (YET) BUT MAY FIRE SOME INTEREST!

SARLOC will send the location to this address.

5. The valid time of the token can be selected. If 'ever' is selected the token will remain active until it is deactivated, which will be carried out from another admin web page.

6. When the button is clicked, SARLOC will send the SMS to the LostPer, updates MRMap and optionally sends the details back via SMS/email.

BUT what if you have no Internet connection?

### SARLOC SMS activation

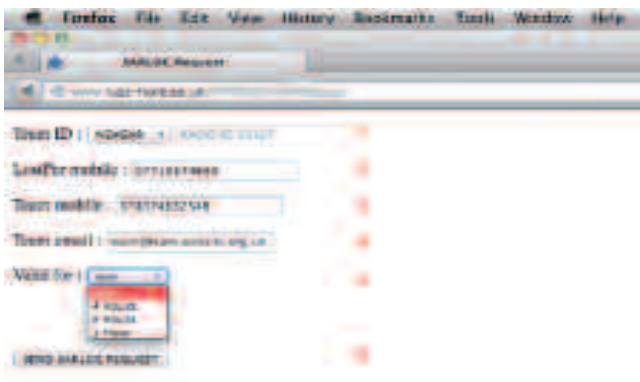
I am currently testing a method of requesting a SARLOC activation via SMS. If you have no internet connection you will be able to send an SMS to a defined phone number to activate SARLOC. Your SMS to SARLOC will contain the mobile number for the LostPer, a team ID and possibly other items. SARLOC will then send the request to the LostPer

and send you a text message back when it gets the location. By the time you read this I hope to have this in the hands of the testers.

As always, if you have any questions please contact me on sarloc@russ-hore.co.uk. ?



An IT professional, Russ Hore is currently exploring how IT can help MR from a GIS point of view. He is responsible for developing the SARLOC system.





## SARCALL WORLD WIDE

PAUL TAYLOR **GCRG**

The last few issues have seen a number of articles on the SARCALL Bulk SMS System now being used by a growing number of UK teams.

Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group (GCRG) went live with it in August of 2011. I can honestly say we've not looked back and would certainly not want to return to our old method of being called out by telephone or pagers, or have to revert to making all those initial phone calls to activate the group members once notified of an incident. The old lists have not been thrown away yet but kept in the background, just in case.

Some of our wardens raised the question: How do we know who is responding to an incident when we set up a message and send it out, whether it be to place the members on standby or to attend an incident?

Initially, it was only possible for this to be confirmed by group members phoning back in to the wardens and letting them know. So, although the first part had been speeded up, the second half was back to jammed-up phones as everybody tried to call in at the same time and the information written down. Now, with the addition of SARCALL Response, a warden's phone need not be completely blocked up with calls and texts.

A simple text to the SARCALL Response number by the group members and all the wardens, via their computers or smartphones, can see a developing picture of the availability or non-availability of the members — with 'non-available'

equally as important as the 'available'. And time and resources are not wasted making contact with people who have clearly indicated they are not available for whatever reason.

The system is user-friendly enough that, as an incident progresses, someone who has earlier indicated that they are unavailable but subsequently finds that they can now attend, can easily indicate this. A follow up text sees them move out of the Red Zone (not available) into either the Yellow Zone (limited availability) or Green Zone (available). The original message is removed to avoid confusion. No extra work for the wardens yet they are able to see the latest information wherever they are, given access to the internet.

To help GCRG members remember what to do in the event of a SARCALL Response being requested, a credit card-sized information sheet has been produced showing the response number and the message information they need to use in their reply.

The system is also used to remind members about training exercises and even during exercises, to demonstrate how messages are received, how they are presented within the system, and also the value of this information to the wardens in the event of a real incident, in planning how to deal with the incident and who is available to take part.

The overall response and interest from group members has been excellent and the introduction of SARCALL as a whole has had a great

effect on general enthusiasm — a wholehearted thumbs up!

During early July, four GCRG members were out of the UK taking part in a caving expedition to Montenegro and as such would not be able to respond to any incidents. To ensure they did not receive any texts or calls during this period, and in turn disturb family members left behind, the group's SARCALL administrator carried out the very simple action of unticking their boxes for the groups they were all allocated to within SARCALL. This can be undertaken directly within the system and easily reversed when renewed availability is advised, and can be applied for any length of time from a single day to many months.

During the expedition a Test Group message was sent by the administrator to one member's mobile phone and a SARCALL Response made. The phone in question was set to receive email notification.

Although it was known that the four were unavailable, the opportunity was taken to send in a message to the SARCALL Response, subsequently confirmed as received back in the UK. Possibly the farthest response made and confirming that, no matter where you are in the world, if you receive a message, then take the time to respond! The warden who initiated the text in the first place may not be aware you are not available.

At the end of the expedition, the party took the opportunity to enjoy a well earned rest and a few beers by

stopping off to visit a caving friend in Slovenia. A member of the Slovenian Cave Rescue, she confirmed that they were contacted by pagers when required to attend an incident. Not wishing to waste an opportunity, a full demonstration, including sending a message to the GCRG Test Group, was undertaken.

Within seconds, my own mobile responded with receipt of an email. A follow up SARCALL Response was sent and soon seen on the computer screen along with those from other members of the Test Group.

I was as impressed with the results as Tanja and this concluded a very successful demonstration, which we believe to have been the first to an overseas cave rescue team. Although she is not a controller, her overall impression was that it's a very good system and we are working with her to prepare a presentation so she can fully demonstrate the system to other members of her team.

When GCRG first saw SARCALL we knew it was good but we now know it is EXCELLENT and a fantastic testimony to the time and effort put in by John Hulse and Jon Whiteley.

I reiterate what I have said before. If you've not had a look at SARCALL yet, please make a point of doing so — you will not be disappointed. Don't hesitate to contact us via [chairman@gcr.org.uk](mailto:chairman@gcr.org.uk) as we will be only too happy to help with any questions or queries you might have and, of course, John and Jon are also only too pleased to help you out. ■

## NEW PRODUCTS FOR THE OUTDOOR SECTOR FROM GARMIN

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Garmin also support Garmin GB Discoverer OS mapping on a range of their units. This is merged together with Navtec road data for turn-by-turn capabilities, even on the OS map screen, making finding your way to the search area simple and efficient. MREW or MRCoS teams can get access to this mapping under the Public Sector Mapping Agreement, greatly reducing the costs.

Garmin units are now being widely used by mountain rescue and police forces throughout the UK and have been tested to integrate with most mapping software used by such organisations and are recommended by search and rescue teams, police forces and outdoor professionals worldwide.

At the forefront of technology, Garmin has also launched the Fenix, a fully integrated GPS watch with 10-figure grid references, tracklogs, waypoints, sight and go and many more features. Its self calibrating 3-Axis compass, barometric altimeter and ANT+ wireless transfer, mean it is compatible with all the other units in the ranges. It is also waterproof to 50 metres and, when in GPS

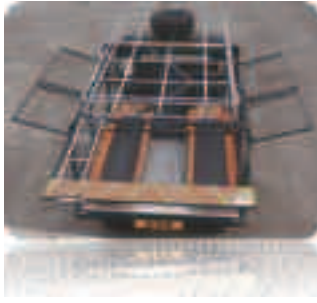
mode, can have up to 50 hours of battery life. Fenix gives you the freedom to keep your hands free on the hill, but a quick glance at your wrist and you have your location and altitude ready to make any navigation or location decisions.



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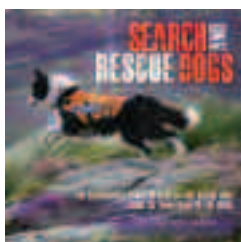
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