

# mountain rescue

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**ISSUE 43**

**MOUNTAIN AND CAVE RESCUE IN ENGLAND AND WALES JANUARY 2013**





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**WELCOME TO  
ISSUE 43**

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.

**EDITORIAL**

Editor: Judy Whiteside  
07836 509 812  
editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk

Publicity Officer: Andy Simpson  
0161 764 0999  
press@mountain.rescue.org.uk

Web: mountain.rescue.org.uk

Advertising Sales: Pat Starkie  
01204 888 151  
pat@vintagechikz.co.uk

**NEXT ISSUE  
ISSUE 44**

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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**

Penrith team members take part in a photoshoot for Petzl. 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.



*first*  
**Word** DAVID ALLAN

I think we can claim with considerable justification that 2012 has been an *annus mirabilis* for mountain and cave rescue in England and Wales.

Throughout the year teams have encountered increasing numbers of incidents on the hills and dealt with them with the usual calm efficiency. A number of the incidents have been challenging in the extreme but have still been met with displays of great competence and commitment. Scattered amongst these have been the usual collection of irritating acts of senseless behaviour by would be hill goers which have also been met with remarkable equanimity. Albert Einstein's observation springs to mind.

*'The difference between stupidity and genius is that genius has its limits.'*

There has also been involvement with the Jubilee celebrations. The award of Jubilee medals, the Jubilee party and culminating in the Olympic Torch being carried aloft on the steps of Buckingham Palace.

Away from the hills, MR skills have been effectively deployed in numerous instances but the search in Mid-Wales will linger on in the memory for a long time. Although the outcome was saddening to all involved the skills and tenacity of MR team members was showcased to a wide audience. It was however disappointing to hear people express

surprise at the extent of MR involvement knowing the number of incidents which have been attended in recent years. Perhaps this was the first occasion when mountain rescue was so easily and universally identified at a glance. Human beings are primarily visual animals and register and record what is seen in the first fifteen seconds above most other information. Would the same impact have been there if the search had been carried out on a warm summer day? Is this an issue we should address?

2013 will, without doubt, bring its own new challenges. It is very likely we will step close to establishing a national driver training programme but gaining universal agreement will certainly require some discussion knowing that *'anyone going slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster is a moron'*.

Virtually all our training to date has focused on technical skills such as casualty care, search management etc. We have not, certainly at regional and national level, looked at the importance of non-technical skills in the performance of teams at the sharp end. This may be of greater significance as there are more occasions when a number of teams are working together. Another challenge perhaps to introduce yet more change.

*'Creativity is the defeat of habit by originality.'*  
A. Koestler ■

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**WATER CONFERENCE**  
Date: Saturday 19 January (One day)  
Location: Wrexham  
Contact: **Andy Lee**  
07802 878666  
nwc@edalemrt.co.uk

**TEAM LEADERS DAY**  
Places: 60  
Date: Saturday 2 February (One day)  
Location: Keswick MRT HQ  
Contact: **Keith Gillies**  
01772 335605 or  
07515-588948  
assistant-secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

**MOUNTAIN AND CAVE RESCUE AWARENESS WEEKEND**  
Date: 4-6 May (Weekend)  
Location: Local to all teams

**NATIONAL TRAINING DAY**  
Places: 60  
Date: Saturday 4 May (One day)  
Location: Plas y Brenin National Mountaineering Centre  
Contact: **Alistair Read**  
07770-834148  
training@mountain.rescue.org.uk

**MREW AGM + BUSINESS MEETING AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS**  
Places: 100  
Date: 18 May (One day)  
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton  
Contact: **Peter Smith**  
01706 852335  
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

**MREW BUSINESS MEETING AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS**  
Places: 100  
Date: 16 November (One day)  
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton  
Contact: **Peter Smith**  
01706 852335  
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk



## INSURANCE MATTERS

**NEIL 'WOODIE' WOODHEAD**  
insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk

The main progress made in 2012 was the vehicle insurance scheme and that continues to be well received. Teams are eligible to sign up when their current policy expires and the premium is funded centrally by Mountain Rescue England and Wales. We've already had the first claim and that will help us to ensure the customer service we receive from the insurer is of a high standard and meets our needs. I will refrain from embarrassing the team who damaged their vehicle just three days after joining the scheme – you know who you are!

It's twelve months since I produced the training presentation, available to download from the website and I have now updated this with recent changes. The presentation should help trustees understand their insurance requirements and also enable them to educate their team members on the subject.

All the guidance notes and documents relating to insurance can also be found on the website – they are in the Members area (Resources>Insurance). These should be used alongside the presentation to guide you through some of the areas.

The national personal accident (PA) policy, funded by various police forces, continues to go from strength to strength. The teams in Northumbria, South Wales and Avon &

Somerset have recently been added to the policy. There are now very few police forces who haven't signed up to this policy. If yours is one of them, I urge you to continue to question them about the cover you have and whether it compares. If you need any help in speaking to them to explain the cover under the national policy, then let me know. For teams covered by the national policy, we will shortly need you to declare numbers of team members ready for renewal – please help us keep admin to a minimum by replying as quickly as you can.

The civil liability policy is also renewing shortly, so please help me once again with completing the declaration required. This will be sent out shortly, if it hasn't already landed in your team's inbox. A copy is, of course, on the website.

Other areas on my radar for 2013 are legal expenses insurance and insurance for mountain rescue bases and contents. More to follow...

It was good to meet many of you again at the November meeting and to answer a few queries for you and your teams. Remember, as always, if you have any queries please just email and I'll give you what help and assistance I can. ■

## INSURANCE Q&As

I thought it would be useful to give you a round up of some of the common and interesting questions teams have asked in 2012, together with the answers. I hope these prove to be of assistance, when considering your own arrangements.

Important: Please note that these refer only to MREW-arranged policies. If you have other policies covering your risks, you will need to approach the relevant insurers.

**Q: Where are all these documents on the MREW website?**

A: When you log in to the Members area of the MREW website, in the green box on the left is the options available to members. One of these is headed Resources and clicking this brings up a list of different areas. One is Insurance and in here you will find various guidance notes, policy wordings, certificates and the presentation.

**Q: How are team members covered when they are signed off work?**

A: The MREW Personal Accident and Liability policies do still cover them as there

isn't a specific exclusion. What both insurers say is that a team MUST risk assess the position on an ongoing basis and ensure that the member is only able to carry out activities they are capable of doing. To support this, it is good practice to insist the team member obtain a letter from their doctor stating that they are fit for their expected duties. This can then be reviewed as and when.

**Q: Are we covered under the Liability Policy for providing 'first aid cover' at country shows and the like?**

A: Yes. If you look at the fundraising guidance notes on the website, insurers have agreed we are covered for providing first aid cover at third party events. You need to act within your training and the casualty care qualification. Medical malpractice is excluded but that refers to medical professionals who will have their own Medical Defence Organisation cover in place.

**Q: Are there any age limits under the MREW Personal Accident and Liability policies?**

A: The liability policy has no age limits. The MREW Personal Accident policy covers up to

age 80 but with some restrictions above 75. See the FAQs in the guidance notes for further details.

**Q: Does the Liability Policy cover us for observing paramedics and A&E nurses, as part of our training?**

A: Insurers have said they are happy to cover this if only team members who have the Mountain Rescue Casualty Care Certificates and are trained first aiders will be the observers and it will only be these members that may be asked to assist with a casualty/patient under the guidance of the nurse or paramedic.

**Q: Does the MREW vehicle insurance scheme policy cover us to move a casualty's personal motor vehicle?**

A: The RSA motor policy wording does offer this level of contingency cover. It does not provide cover if there is any other insurance covering the same liability. Furthermore, the insurers shall not be liable in respect of loss or damage to the vehicle being moved or property within it.

## EQUIPMENT NEWS RICHARD TERRELL

### EQUIPMENT SYMPOSIUM, TEBAY 29 JUNE 2013

We are looking to hold a technical symposium every other year, between conference years. The first of these will be held at Lyon Equipment at Tebay, on 29 June 2013 and this should avoid clashes with other items like the national training day and the Oldham weekend. We are currently looking at 25 places with a small charge of £40-£50 to help cover costs. The aim is to test equipment, and prove or disprove myths about rope

work. The event will be videoed and posted to the Members area for training purposes. We are looking to teams for ideas from which the subcommittee can choose three or four topics to take forward in May.

### NHS GRANT

I've taken a lot of questions lately on the NHS grant and I want to set the record straight. This money is given to MREW to help fund the purchase of certain specialist medical equipment and stretchers. We are not given the money up front but are required to spend it first then claim it back and, each year, MREW is told how much will be allocated. At the end of the

financial year, the MREW Treasurer must submit all invoices for audit and MREW are paid back the money owed. I would like to point out that the money is there for MREW, as a national body, to use and administer and cannot be passed out to teams to administer. If we do not spend the full amount we may not get it next year. I would also like to make it clear that, if necessary, all the money could be spent on vac mats and casbags, as has been done before. I will be putting a list together of qualifying items in the new year as I still get requests that are not allowed. The amount will be less in 2013 as a number of the new style

casbag need to be made and this is funded by the grant.

### CASBAGS AND VACMATS

A number of teams have been asking for multiple vac mats and casbags over the last twelve months, some to sit in base, just in case. One team asked for five of each. To make it fair, I undertook a consultation with the regional reps and, at the equipment subcommittee meeting in November, the following decision was made: if a team is getting a new vehicle, they should include the cost of vac mat and casbag in the kitting out costs. Teams can be issued a maximum of two vac mats and casbags, only if

they prove to me, via their regional rep, that their current ones are at the end of life and beyond repair. Teams can also request them under the Government grant should they need to kit out other vehicles.

Regarding the new casbag, as many of you may know we have made the new design wider and longer for today's casualties. Lakes, Peak District, BCRC, North Wales, North East, PenMacra and Mid Pennine now have the new version and carry bag on trial and Yorkshire Dales, South West England and South Wales will be getting theirs shortly.



### TRAINING INTRODUCING THE NEW MREW TRAINING OFFICER: AL READ

Alistair Read (AI to you) took on the Training Officer role in

November. Many of you will already know AI but, for those who don't, it seemed fair to ask him for a few words about himself by way of an introduction...

'I started mountaineering at school in Germany, with school trips to the Austrian Alps and several expeditions to the UK to walk, scramble and climb in the Lakes and Southern Scotland. In 1980, with a school friend, I walked across Switzerland without dropping much below 2000m on a high level route that was fun and interesting for two 18-year-olds with us washed out of our camp on a couple of occasions and the tent flattened by wind and snow high up at a remote lake in the last week of the walk.

'I came back to the UK to study at Bangor University and spent a lot of weekends in Snowdonia and became involved in mountain rescue early in 1981, assisting with an overnight rescue on the East Face of Tryfan in full winter conditions with the Ogwen Valley team (OVMRO). I continued to go out with the Oggi team after I joined the Navy two years later, although it did add a few extra dimensions being away from home for long periods. The Navy also allowed me to explore different parts of the world including the Karakorum foothills and the mountains of Southern Greece and Sicily. In 1999, I completed OVMRO's team leader training programme and was

appointed as a team leader. I continue to hold this position and, along with my other team leaders, I am evaluated on a three-yearly basis. I was team training officer between 2001-2006 which saw some major changes introduced in the way OVMRO operates, especially in the rope rescue domain with the OVMRO Technical Rope Rescue skills syllabus, introduced after Kirk Mauthner's (Rigging for Rescue) visit in 2004. Within North Wales MRA, I have actively supported training in a number of ways over the years and acted as the regional rep during region-wide severe weather

Continued on  
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Pushing as hard as his body will allow, Nick Bullock approaches the West ridge of Knapjar (6749m) Hinku Valley, Nepal Himalaya.

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# national News

incidents at Tactical (Silver) and Strategic (Gold) levels. 'I was a student on the 1996 Managing Search Operations course (now Search Planning and Management course) run in Bangor and since then have run a number of major searches as well as providing training in the UK and abroad to a range of organisations. I am still active in the design and delivery of the search courses run during August. 'As a member of the MREW training committee I was the lead author on the MREW Rope Rescue Guidelines, developed using a peer-reviewed consensus method that resulted in the guidelines being adopted in May 2011. I also developed and ran the Train the Trainer courses in 2010 and 2011. 'I contributed to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Flood Rescue Concept of Operations document and was responsible for writing a number of sections. I attend the Chief Fire Officers Association National Water Rescue Group meeting and have represented MREW at these meetings. In 2010, I attended a Flood and Water Rescue Master Class in North Carolina, USA run by the CFOA.

'My day job is as business development manager for Outreach Rescue, providers of specialist search and rescue training to members of the emergency services and other responders. This brings me into contact with a wide range of people involved in delivering search and rescue capabilities, be it the RAF SAR Force medical training, members of the Ambulance Service HART, Fire and Rescue Service technical rescue or USAR team members, as well as a range of voluntary responders. I still get hands-on with the training and often spend time in swift water, on ropes and underground, acting as casualty or in the classroom instructing. 'I have also worked as a consultant in the Defence industry and my final post in the Royal Navy was as senior forecaster at the Fleet Weather and Oceanographic Centre. 'I have also been involved in a number of major expeditions including going to the Karakorum in 1993 with the RAF Mountain Rescue Service (50th Anniversary Expedition to Diran) and Denali in 1996 with fellow Ogwen team members – including being tent-bound at 5600m for four nights in -40 degrees and 100mph winds!

'I enjoy ski touring and have completed three trips to Arctic East Greenland exploring a large amount of new ground. In 1998 I went with John Hulse and Russ Hore to the Rigynsbjerg region and conducted the first exploration of the region including nine first ascents. I returned, with John, in 2000 and we skied from the Rigynsbjerg region to the Watkin mountains (a distance of 190km across part of the east Greenland ice cap) and then made the 31st ascent of Gunnsbjerg Fjeld, the highest mountain in the Arctic. We were back again in 2002 and made the first traverse from Gjunsbjerg Fjeld to the Groenau Nunattak (170km of mostly new ground) but I have also ski toured in different parts of the world including Chamonix, the Three Valleys, the Silvretta Alps and Canada. 'I hope I will have a chance to meet team members and people associated with mountain rescue – I'm often travelling around the UK and would welcome opportunities to drop in for chat about training and what MREW can do to help with keeping team members safely operating at the highest skill levels.' ■

## TRAINING NEWS AL READ PARTY LEADER AND TEAM MEMBER GUIDELINES

The new guidelines are now complete and available for download in the Members area (Resources>Training). These have been some months in the making, with the initial consultation process having first been publicised in the July issue, 2011. Teams have had the opportunity to comment throughout the process and there will doubtless be comment yet to be made – email Al via training@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

## LESSONS IN SEARCH

A major consideration for the future is the impact of the search for April Jones and the lessons that can be identified and passed on to the MR community and wider. These should help frame training in a number of areas including consideration of Major Incident Management, as well as longer duration searches, technology and team members' knowledge and skills.

## MOODLE DOODLE

The 5-day Search Planning and Management course has a Moodle website (public domain open source learning software) that is currently supported outside the MREW ICT system. There is potential that some online learning could help reduce pressures on team members' time and provide a wider debate.

## NATIONAL TRAINING DAY: SATURDAY 4 MAY

The format for the last two years has essentially proved successful but key to that is the topics and materials presented. Please can we identify volunteers who are willing to present or lead on subjects suitable for a session or part of a session in the following areas:–

- IT, Communications and Technology
- Vehicles and Driving
- Medical
- Equipment
- Water
- Technical
- Search.

Other subjects and speakers are also very welcome, so if you have anyone in mind, please direct them to me to discuss it further: training@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

## SEARCH MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

September saw reps from teams across England and Wales meet to discuss the current provision of search management training (ie. the two courses available to teams), with the aim of producing an outline for an MREW Foundation Level Search Management course of short duration – two and half days maximum (Friday evening to Sunday afternoon).

The group considered the skills required for a Foundation Course in Search Management aimed at team leaders, deputies and senior team members. Such content and syllabus would not be intended to cover the skills required for a multi-day and/or multi-team protracted major incident where a shift system made up of experienced search managers would be required. Participants were divided into three subgroups to work on specific syllabus content and tasked to report back after an

hour's deliberation. The outcome of the day was that a Foundation Course in Search Management should aim to enable a leader/team member to:–

1. Take First Notice from the police and act on it.
2. Apply what has been learned to organise and carry out an initial search response.
3. Manage the early stages of the search.

Suggested course modules were:–

1. Search foundations
2. Flow process (2A) and Organisation (2B)

3. Information gathering
4. Investigation
5. Misper statistics (5A) and Misper behaviour (5B)
6. Scenarios
7. Pre-plans (7A) and Search plan (7B)
8. Risk management
9. Briefing and debriefing
10. Initial response
11. Evaluation and handover
12. Consolidation.

Meeting chairman Mike Margeson thanked everyone for their impressive work during the day. The next step is to gather a training team

to pilot a Foundation Course in Search Management. It was agreed to assemble a course team capable of delivering the whole course as an entity rather than rely on specialists delivering specific parts of it. The latter approach can be used for later, higher level, continuation courses where it is most appropriate. It is hoped to make use of the Bowland Pennine MRT training resource at Smelt Mill sometime in the first half of 2013 for the initial pilot course.

**com.muni.cation** *n.* 1. the imparting or exchanging of information or news. 2. (communications) means of connection between people or places.

# the COMMUNICATIONS ISSUE



## LOST PASSWORD ETC. PART 2!

JUDY WHITESIDE EDITOR

EDITOR@MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK

**B**it of an update on the progress (and I hope the consensus is that there HAS been progress) of the 'communications issue', including some feedback and a blow by blow guide to retrieving your password and user name for the Members area of the website for the not-so-tech-savvy.

So... since the last issue, much has happened. We have a new Facebook closed group, the Members>Resources area has been tidied up a bit – including new sections for SARCALL and Trustees – with uploads being dated and ordered by date of upload and the most recent at the top, and I continue to encourage/berate (depending on your viewpoint!) Exec members and officers about keeping their 'bits' up to date. New uploads have begun to appear and I've received some very positive feedback about communications in general.

Mike Park's article here and his further request for feedback, through both the Forums and the Facebook group, prompted a broad spectrum of views. Gerald Davison of NEWSAR was one of the first to pop his head above the parapet.

'I'm giving you an instant gut feeling response, which I suspect might be better than spending a long time analysing it to death.

'To put some context around my response I should state that I am a relative newcomer to MR, with just under five years' experience. I have tried to get out a bit and become involved in regional MR bodies and have attended the last two conferences and some MREW general meetings. Outside of MR I work for a company with over 300,000 employees in more than 40 countries which, as you might imagine, brings all sorts of communication challenges.

'I have to say that my initial reaction is that you must be talking about a different organisation than the one I am thinking of. Communication in all organisations can always be improved, but your tone and language implies an

organisation almost on the brink of a catastrophic communication failure, which is very far from my experience.

'In fact, I find it rather refreshing that the national representative body is staffed by people who seem to be well grounded in the challenges faced by individual teams. As you mention, no one is paid, everyone is a volunteer and they all have experience with a team, or teams, that they have belonged to over a prolonged period.

'One comment did give me cause to stop and think: *I really 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.*

'I've heard this type of comment from many people I work with. I would suggest that there is an inherent tension in that statement. People want things to work their way, but don't want to put a lot into making it happen other than a bit of

'I have observed MREW asking for opinions early on in the development of a policy or process. But having absorbed any views I expect them to get on with building something that meets with the MAJORITY of views that are expressed (which I suspect will often be rather few and sparse) and that they also take into account other outside national factors and influences that as individual teams we may not be aware of. By the time it is then presented to you as a plan it is usually getting a bit late in the day to complain.

'In summary, firstly I see plenty of opportunity for communication improvement, but I don't see a crisis. Secondly, if you have very strong views on any subject I suggest people have no choice but to invest the time to stay close to the development of policy.'

To be fair to Mike, his intention (stated in his response to Gerald) was not to imply that a 'catastrophic state' already existed but to highlight the findings of 'Rescue 2020. An Appraisal of Mountain Rescue in the Lake District', in which the majority of participants

readership. Why there remain huge gaps in that readership I have no idea but it would appear that huge numbers of team members simply don't read the magazine. And it's by no means a problem that is limited to the Lakes – they have merely identified it – other regions are equally culpable. I well remember the number of dusty old mags festering unopened, in pigeonholes in Rossendale.

Phil James, of CRO thought the emphasis throughout the magazine on communications an interesting one. 'I worked for 30 years for a Category 1 blue light service, and in that time I can't recall the organisation (or the workforce) ever being happy with the way it 'communicated' – particularly to us, the employees! Similarly morale across the organisation was never 'good', according to (us) the workforce, and yet only rarely did the various teams I worked in feel that local morale and communication was ineffective ie. the teams themselves usually felt motivated and in touch. From this I surmised that humans just don't do wide area communications well,

but small connected groups do – maybe it's a genetic or species thing, who knows?' Good to know it's not all bad news – not all our communication appears to be misfiring and I like to think it's on an upward curve of improvement. A quick recce of Members>Resources shows that several of the folders have now sprung into life, with a variety of new

**'...my initial reaction is that you must be talking about a different organisation... communication in all organisations can always be improved, but your tone and language implies an organisation almost on the brink of a catastrophic communication failure, which is very far from my experience.'**

input at the beginning and a review of the proposal at the end. When the proposals don't turn out how they want they tend to feel they were either ignored or not properly consulted. I have come to the view that if you want things your own way you have to get 'into the weeds' during the decision-making process. Even then, of course, it may not go the way you want.

(team members across the region) stated that they were unaware, or only partly aware, of the key aspects of the work of MREW. From my own point of view as editor, and Publications committee member, this was frustrating news – the magazine, of course, is only one vehicle for information, but it leaves our distribution house every quarter in good faith it will meet its

uploads. That said, some are still woefully silent – a work in progress, clearly.

### Facebook closed members group

There's been a steady interest in the new Facebook group. Good to see people uploading documents and commenting but please, please do bear in mind this is a communication channel not an extension of your personal profile. Interesting point about one or two of those asking to join the group – if you set your security so tightly that nobody can message you, and none of the admins recognises your name, then you won't be allowed to join. As we're not yet possessed of a crystal ball, we do need a clue as to who you are. Then there are those who we message and they never respond. Which rather defeats the purpose of joining a group specifically set up to improve communications. Hint: Check your FB Inbox > Others!

I asked Mike to comment on how he saw progress – or otherwise – since his article. His response was both well-considered and constructive, as expected.

'My article mentioned how MREW has team members and supporters who are bringing forward world-class systems and processes to overcome mountain rescue issues. I asked if there was a person(s) out there that can do the same for our communication issue?'

Judy has risen to this challenge and, by setting up this Facebook Closed Group has gone a long way in my opinion in starting to sort our communications issue. We have another tool (more user friendly and easy to use) and can now get down to the hard part: communicating. We've definitely started!

'My personal thought, is that we need to sustain the initial rush of people engaging through Facebook. Possibly we need a few people posing questions that generate discussion but which people feel comfortable with.

'I get the impression people

are still nervous to be open with their thoughts – lots of people following, but not lots commenting ('liking' would be a start!)

'Maybe a question like 'What are the three best things about MREW? And what are the three worst things?' Likewise, 'What are the three best things about your region? And the three worst?' and 'What are the three best things about your team... and the worst?'

Mike has a good point, we DO need to sustain the interest and encourage people to comment more. I suspect asking people to put in writing, in full view of the MR community, the worst things about their own team might be an ask too far but why not? And there's certainly plenty of complaining about MREW goes on over the beers and bacon butties... so, again, why not? And thanks again Mike, for stirring the waters.

If you aren't already a member of the group, you first need a Facebook profile. Once that's set up, search for 'Mountain Rescue England and Wales Members' and ask to join. Your application will come through to the admins (Neil Hayter and me) for approval. Once we've validated your team membership, you're in.

One thing the Facebook group HAS achieved is an increased interest in the Members area of the website, and an attendant outbreak of 'password amnesia', with the almost-daily requests for assistance in that department testing the patience of our Web Editor on a Short Fuse to the extreme (it's really not his job to hunt down lost passwords). Which is, I think, about where I came in.

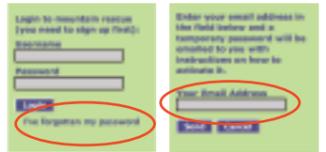
Since the last issue, I have written a complete guide to getting onto and using the Members area of the website, for both team members and team admins. Download it from Members>Resources>website or from the Facebook group. Meanwhile, look right to find out what to do when you forget your password and/or user name. ■

'I get the impression people

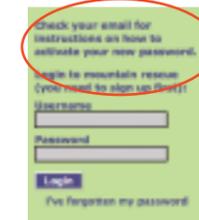
## HOW TO RETRIEVE YOUR FORGOTTEN PASSWORD

So... let's do password first. Presuming you have already signed up as a member in the dim and distant past, follow this process:—

1. Open mountain.rescue.org.uk. Go to the bottom of the left hand navigational column, to the login box. Click on 'I've forgotten my password.' (right).



2. The screen should change to display an email address field. Enter your email address then click 'Send' (far right).



3. You should now see a screen instructing you to check your email (left). NB. If you use a different email address to the one you originally registered with – this WILL NOT WORK as the site will not know who you are! Your team admin can find out the email address listed as 'yours' on the system and you should use this. If you no longer have access to that email address then your team admin can request that your email address be changed via [webeditor@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:webeditor@mountain.rescue.org.uk).

So we can tell the request is genuine, this request must be from the email address the website has for your team admin. Note that if you have not forgotten your password you can log in and change your email address yourself – you only need to email the web editor if you have changed email address AND have forgotten your password. Please do not email the web editor with any other requests – we'd like him to stay on as web editor.



4. The email you receive (right) contains a link, an activation password and also reminds you of your user name. Click on the link.



5. You should now see three fields (left). Enter the activation password supplied in the email, followed by a new password then repeat the new password to confirm. Click 'Activate'.



6. Your new password should now have been activated. You should now see the screen shown below left. Enter your username (as supplied in the email) and your new password (the one you just created) in the fields provided. Click 'Login'. And Bingo!

7. It might also be worth clearing the cache on your computer so there are no rogue passwords loitering there, then resave the new version.

## HOW TO RETRIEVE YOUR FORGOTTEN USER NAME...

If you've forgotten your user name, before rattling off an email to the web editor (see above!) have a go at what you think it might be. If your name's Fred Bloggs, there's a pretty good chance your user name will be a version of Fred Bloggs, say 'FredBloggs'. Failing that, go through the process above. The automated email you receive will remind you of the username connected to the email you supply. You can then reset your password. NB. This can actually be the same as a previous one – I've just tested it!

## BRIDGES, BAIT AND PIGGY BACKS – FUN AND GAMES ON THE MEDIA INTERVIEW SKILLS COURSE

JUDY WHITESIDE **EDITOR**

**T**wenty-four hours after peering down the barrel of the serried ranks of mountain rescue reps (gosh, that was scary!) to deliver what should have been a short explanation of our latest venture into social media and I'm back at Lancs Police HQ for another grilling. It's the Media Interview Skills day, and if I thought That Lot on Saturday were scary, they're not a patch on Steve and Sally! I've been asked to come along to write about the course, but any hopes of sitting on the sidelines with my notepad have long evaporated. It seems I have to join in too.

Canteen brew, Bourbons biscuits and banter prompt a fleeting sense of confidence. Very fleeting. Lurking only just beneath this chatting exterior lies a growing sense of doom.

'So,' opens up Steve Howe, journalist, 'what do we think of journalists?'

The responses are unequivocal: Necessary... Always an agenda... Whatever the costs... Last one who messed with us ended up in prison... (An unfortunate incident during the floods of 2009, when a too-smart-for-her-own-good journalist decided to test the resilience of already stretched mountain rescuers with a hoax call. Not recommended.)

Barely a flinch from Steve, who's no doubt heard it all before. But, as it turns out, this was our first learning point: a five-second interview, with which each of us dealt with easy assurance.

How? 'Subject knowledge, feeling confident, a modicum of social skills, and the innate ability to answer a complete stranger and answer coherently,' explained Steve. We all, it seems, took control of the situation.

### Of course journalists pursue a story...

...they've spotted an angle. And the 'difficult question' is often because they've bothered to do their research. So we need to, too. They may have interviewed someone else first, detrimentally, and this might impact on what they ask you, and it's entirely reasonable to ask a journalist who they've already spoken to.

When it comes to television, they want watchable footage, but it's not your responsibility to fill in the gaps. Say what you need to say, then stop.

Think with a full stop. It's down to the journalist to have the next question ready.

There's some discussion about the things we'd least want to talk about on camera (with a nagging suspicion that these are the very things Mr Howe will grill us on), and general agreement about the 'big ones' – I'll leave it to your imagination what these might be.

### We consider our potential audience

And it's broader than we think: our own families, the casualty's family, fellow team members, employers, other journalists (remember they want an easy time – give a thoughtful, coherent interview and you'll be in their book forever!), fundraisers and givers...

And, much as we might prefer to end up on the cutting room floor, the general idea is to have our message heard. So, no swearing, no ums and ahs, no inappropriate comments, no refusing to answer questions. Oh, and no garbling.

Before we're divided into two groups (radio and TV), like lambs to the slaughter, we're told there's one skill we simply must take from the day: the ability to recognise the 'piggy-back' question – that imperceptible gap in the journalist's

Then we're off to practise. I'm in the radio group first, with Sally. We're each given a typical scenario, then advised to think about our key message and to, somehow, steer the conversation in that direction – something of a challenge in my case. Then it's into the hot seat, on the opposite side of a screen from Sally, ready to take The Call, a half-circle of mountain rescue colleagues hanging on our every word. Their task is to identify the key message the victim... er, interviewee... has been aiming to get across. A troupe of butterflies set about their Strictly routine somewhere beneath my diaphragm (Argentine Tango, if I'm not mistaken). I check the door. Escape is not an option.

### A difficult scenario

Sally has devised a special scenario for me, based on an email encounter, some weeks earlier, with a particularly difficult and agenda-led journalist.

*'A news agency reporter has been frustrated by not being able to get a local team to 'name and shame' a group of walkers who needed rescuing in the middle of the night. The group hadn't planned their trip well, started late, had no torches that worked and were caught out by weather conditions that were clearly forecast that morning. Unable to elicit*

opportunity for me to actually respond. One small victory then, when I manage to interrupt with a query of my own: 'Before we go any further, can you tell me who I am speaking to?' *(Yes! It's no more than a split second, but the time it takes her to respond allows me to gather my thoughts).* It's important to remember we don't yet know the full circumstances of the incident... we prefer to take the pragmatic view... the key thing to take from this is the need to be prepared...' She cranks up the questioning, and her tone, interrupting me at every turn. Why don't we name casualties and missing persons? Surely naming and shaming would mean fewer incidents?

I talk about the fact we work under the auspices of the police, being bound by their guidelines, the need for sensitivity and confidentiality. There may be perfectly good reasons not to name people: the incident might involve a missing child, an elderly person with Alzheimer's, a suicide victim; there may be a potential scene of crime or circumstances the police don't yet want made public; the casualty's family might be unaware of their situation, there could be a fatality involved. *(Heck, the key message...)*

The key thing to take from this is the need to be prepared...' But surely, these people went out unprepared, don't they deserve to be named? *(By now the heart and brain are going ten to the dozen but, incredibly, I still*

***'There's one skill we simply must take from the day: the ability to recognise the 'piggy-back' question – that imperceptible gap in the journalist's line of enquiry which allows you to jump in with your message.'***

line of enquiry which allows you to jump in with your message. It's your chance to get that message across, whatever it might be.

an 'acceptable' response from the team involved, she decides to call you.'

My tormentor launches at a lick, a barrage of enquiry with little

appear to be speaking.) 'The important thing here is the need to be prepared... especially now the nights are drawing in...'

On and on... for what must surely have been at LEAST an hour, Sally's alter ego hacking away at her agenda, me banging on about torches and dark nights and warm, waterproof clothing and maps and compasses and planning your route... then blessed relief as Nice Sally returns and the metaphorical receiver clicks back on its cradle.

### Most important lesson? Just tell the truth!

A brief discussion after each scenario provides learning points for everyone involved, and advice from Sally about how to handle journalists before, during and after your interview. Great to hear how others express what are essentially the same key messages and bag a few useful sound bites – the words 'volunteer' and 'charity' feature heavily throughout the day, alongside 'be prepared' and 'how to call out mountain rescue', but Sally's most important guideline is undoubtedly the simplest: tell the truth! Make sure the facts support what you're saying and never get yourself into a position where you have to lie.

### You know how to whistle, don't you?

And so to lunch, but not before a brief opportunity to see how the morning's 'television group' got on with Steve. We catch their interview playback session which, frankly, does nothing to allay the butterflies, now warming up for their final show dance. Some very amusing footage concerning the use of a whistle though, and its benefits relative to mobile phones!

Then it's our turn with the camera. Steve hands each of us a scenario. Once again, we're asked to consider our key messages and also reminded to watch for that piggyback opportunity. I'm last in line, with 'Winter skills'. I should have smelled a rat sooner but, as each of my group faces the camera, it's absolutely apparent there is really nothing more

to say about winter or, indeed, winter skills.

It starts innocuously enough. 'As editor of Mountain Rescue magazine, what are you doing to prepare your readers for winter?' Of course, MR mag isn't really aimed at the general public (and one hopes its core readership would already have the skills and mountain sense required for a trip to the winter hills) but, despite this, I reiterate (yet again) the importance of training, having the right equipment, being weather aware, and even manage not just a website mention but a plug for the pocket handbook. How easy is this? And then it hits me: that unmistakable smell of rat...

'Okay Judy, I think we've heard enough about winter skills now...' \*crowd sniggers\* '...what would you say are the three biggest issues facing mountain rescue at the moment?'

What?!!! Tumbleweed barrels across the void inside my head. Issues? What bloody issues? Help!!! Sadly, the ground fails to open up beneath my feet and swallow me whole, but it would appear (once again) that the mouth has gone into automatic... on and on it rumbles... yadda yadda yadda...

### All aboard for the white knuckle ride

Suffice to say, the day flashed past in a blur – bit of a white knuckle ride at times but, to be honest that probably had more to do with anticipation than reality. I suspect all of us discovered more information tucked away in our heads than we ever thought possible, which (it transpires) our mouths are capable of calmly enunciating even whilst our brains are performing cartwheels.

Simon Woodhead – who undertook a steep learning curve in media skills during the search in Machynlleth, when he became spokesman for MR – noted that it was far easier to face the cameras on a one-to-one with a television journalist, than the critical eyes of a group of colleagues. It's certainly a daunting experience. That said, there was a real sense of mutual support, of all being in this together. And a LOT of laughter.

The playback and analysis of both

## 10 KEY LEARNING POINTS

**1. Sit alert!** In a telephone interview, you can't see them, they can't see you, but when you take that call, sit forward in your chair with your feet flat on the floor rather than slouching back. You'll be more alert and your voice will be clearer.

**2. Resist the urge to jump into the void.** If you've said all you need to say, stop talking! Think with a full stop.

**3. If the mind has gone blank, stop to gather your thoughts, stay cool and start afresh.** It's okay to ask the interviewer to repeat the question.

**4. Don't do a 'Gordon Brown'.** Off-the-cuff remarks, even when you think you're out of earshot may be eminently quotable. Don't let your guard down.

**5. Don't repeat 'bait' words, loaded words the interviewer might use have used in his/her questioning.** You may be handing them a quote you come to regret!

**6. Use bridges.** If the interview has wandered away from your key messages, use 'bridges' to get it back on course. For example, 'The way I see it is...' or 'That's not the real issue... the real issue is...'

**7. Have no more than two key messages** you'd like to get across and keep those in mind throughout the interview.

**8. Prepare ahead** if at all possible, know your subject and tell the truth.

**9. Maintain eye contact** with the interviewer.

**10. Keep alert for the 'piggy back' question.**

the 'radio' and 'TV' interviews is invaluable. But the learning doesn't just come from listening to the honest and constructive feedback offered by Steve and Sally. Seeing your on-screen self, reacting on-the-spot to varying shades of grilling, and watching and hearing the reactions and words of your fellow participants, is fascinating, nerve-wracking and enlightening in equal parts!

I would encourage any team member – and certainly those in leadership roles – to take the opportunity to benefit from this workshop. As they say on the flyer, *'it's a great opportunity to hone your skills. See how you react in an interview and learn how best to build on your strengths for likely mountain rescue situations'.*

This year has seen the profile of mountain rescue become higher than ever. The events in mid-Wales clearly demonstrated that the media is a hungry beast, in need of constant feeding. Faced with a rolling camera, a furry boom and a journalist with a 24-hour-news habit, saying nothing may not be an option. How much better to be prepared, and have the



KEN BLAKEMAN (KINDER MRT) FACES THE CAMERAS WITH KATY FAWCETT OF ITV'S DAYBREAK DURING THE SEARCH IN MACHYNLLETH © KINDER MRT.

confidence to communicate calmly and coherently?

### The details

The 2012 workshop cost £200 per person, with a 50% refund as a national MREW-supported course, post-workshop (given that the delegate has actually attended). This was the highest attended course to date, with twenty participants from across England, Wales and Ireland. Watch the mag and Facebook for future workshops or contact MREW Training Officer Al Read via training@mountain.rescue.org.uk. ■



STEVE HOWE is a journalist and commentator who has spent much of his working life helping others to improve their performance as communicators. He has been on the receiving end of dozens of media interviews both benign and as tough as they get, on national and local radio, BBC, ITV, Sky, Channel 4 and E4. As a trustee of the Patterdale team he is also very familiar with the workings of mountain rescue and the issues facing the organisation, both locally and nationally.

SALLY SEED is a corporate communicator who enjoys bringing her professional experience in the international business environment to a variety of situations and organisations, including mountain rescue. Sally's mantra – 'finding the right words, using them in the right way and making sure they reach the right people' – neatly sums up this Media Interview Skills workshop. Call it what you will – PR, marketing, copywriting or publicity – it's all about effective communications.



DAVE FREEBORN is a graphic designer and documentary cameraman who has worked with the BBC, Granada and Border Television as well as independent production companies. He's been on the other side of the camera too, during his time as leader of the Patterdale team. He has also directed documentaries and, through his company, Viscom, regularly produces corporate promotional videos.

# 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.



## VICE CHAIRMAN: MIKE MARGESON

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

Will be working on all matters operational and governance for MREW, to support the specialist officers in their roles and providing representation at outside agencies such as UKSAR, the BMC, MRCS and IKAR. His vision is to develop a peer team review process.



## 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.



## ASSISTANT SECRETARY: KEITH GILLIES

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

Works with the MREW executive to develop a full range of duties. Initial responsibilities include representing MREW on the organising committee for the next UK MR conference in Scotland and supporting the new Board of Trustees.



## 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.



## TREASURER: PENNY BROCKMAN

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

Besides ensuring the smooth running of MREW finances, currently working with Neil Roden on the management of the Government grant monies.



## CENTRAL PURCHASING: NEIL RODEN

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

Works with Penny Brockman on the management of the Government grant and continues to develop central purchasing to benefit all teams.



## 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 Mappyx to provide mapping systems. Also sits on the UKSAR Comms working group.



## 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.



## 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. 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)

Continues to work with teams on the national vehicle insurance scheme and also currently looking at legal expenses insurance and cover for team bases.



## 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.



## 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 and advises on corporate identity.



## TRAINING OFFICER: AL READ

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

Currently working on the development of a national search management foundation course and engaging with teams to support and develop training, guidelines and advice for team members at all levels across a range of disciplines.



## 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. Currently engaged with the implications of changes to legislation affecting traffic exemptions for teams.



## 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.

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)

## LEGAL: FIONA BOYLE & ANDREW GILLET

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



# MACHYNLLETH

JOHN HULSE

**O**n the evening of Monday 1 October 2012, in the quiet mid-Wales market town of Machynlleth, a five-year-old girl called April Jones was abducted from near her home. The search was started by the police, the local teams, Aberdyfi MRT and Brecon MRT, and many members of the local community. This marked the start of one of the largest SAR operations in the UK for 20+ years involving many services, agencies and members of 23 mountain and cave rescue teams.

Litigation is currently pending on this case and so exceptional care needs to be taken in how we communicate about this very challenging operation.

The complex operation was run for the first two days from the Brecon mobile control vehicle then, on the Thursday, moved into the Leisure Centre which became the focal point for press attention from around the world. The next day, up to 400 members of the local community were assisting the search operation, alongside an increasing number of teams and SARDA resources. The sheer scale of the operation, the large

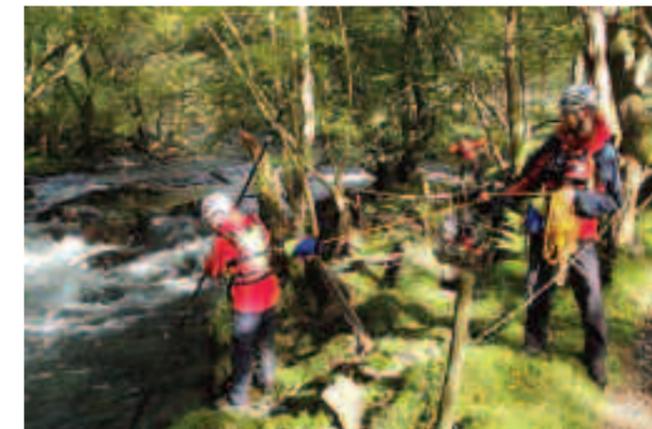


rural area to be searched together with the incessant press attention produced many challenges for the search management team. The Teams tackled numerous specialist search tasks including hill, forest, swift water and cave/mines. Support from many local individuals, companies and farmers from that community added to the search effort. The operation was rapidly joined by members of the Coastguard, RNLI, USAR, RAF Mountain Rescue Service together with large numbers of police officers from around the UK.

During the week, increasing numbers of MR teams from England and Wales supported the search and search management resources expanded to meet the very high demand for search planning, identifying areas, documentation, briefing and debriefing. Close interaction between all the agencies on the search was a critical part of the operation. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, an average of 230 mountain and cave rescue members from Wales and many parts of England took part in the search.

The impact of the search was not confined to Machynlleth. In several mountain rescue regions, teams were organising local 'backfill' to provide cover as partner teams were operational at, or mobilising to Machynlleth. Very generous offers of swiftwater search and related support were made by LDSAMRA teams and also the Scottish teams. This tremendous support from MR regions far from the scene was exceptionally heartening for the search overhead team.

During the involvement of mountain rescue on the search, the level of press attention was unprecedented



PHOTOS: KINDER MRT AND OGWEN VALLEY MRO.

and beyond the experience of almost all people present. Rows of satellite trucks stacked up around the centre with the media filming us, filming the town and filming each other. One recurring image was the sea of red MR jackets that provided the vital level of identification for our members when in the field and back at the Leisure Centre.

The generosity and total support of the entire community at Machynlleth will never be forgotten by those who attended. Managing the many offers of food, help, accommodation etc, was an important and unfamiliar role for the overhead team. It was a truly humbling experience to be there.

A huge amount of team and individual effort went into this difficult incident with some members of the overhead and field teams being operational for most of the six days of the primary search phase.

There were clearly many learning points from this very large scale and complex operation. To capture the views of all those attending, we issued an online survey which was completed by 167 people and then processed by Bob Sharp. We also surveyed members of the overhead team to look at the issues faced in managing and leading the operation for mountain rescue. We hope to be able to share these experiences with

our MR colleagues as soon as possible.

From a purely personal perspective, the key challenges included our ability to rapidly scale up beyond the team-centric model, scalability of the search planning software, interoperability of IT between teams and regions, lack of structured operational communications between MR regions, the challenges of working with entities that did not know our capabilities, pressure from the media to perform and, finally, managing large numbers of resources in a timely manner. I learned a huge amount from this operation and it completely changed my perspective of search and rescue.

To put some numbers to the search, Brecon search managers have identified that the search area covered 72.26km square, with 208 search areas of median size 0.26km square. There were 1,075 'searcher hours' given, with approx 13,400 hours of time. More than 6,000 SARCALL SMS messages were sent supporting the operation, with 2,670 sent on the Saturday.

Our very sincere thanks go to all the members, teams and regions, families and employers who so willingly directly and indirectly supported the operation. Above all, our thoughts go out to the family of April and to the community of Machynlleth. ■

## LAKE DISTRICT

### MOUNTAIN FALL SURVIVOR EMBARKS ON 200 MILE COAST TO COAST CHALLENGE TO THANKS RESCUERS



In October, Joe Beaumont from Windermere, embarked on a grueling 200-mile coast to coast recumbent trike ride in aid of the RAF, West Cumberland Hospital and **Wasdale MRT**. In the last year, he has undergone extensive surgery following his 40-metre fall whilst climbing in a disused quarry in Eskdale, in which he broke nearly every bone on his right side and suffered extreme concussion and nerve damage.

Joe, an experienced climber and professional tree surgeon prior to his fall, remains unable to walk without considerable pain and the physical and psychological challenges persist.

His charity ride began on the east coast at RAF Boulmer, Northumberland where the Sea King SAR helicopter crew who flew him to hospital is based. His challenge ended in West Cumbria, at the Wasdale Head showground where team members were waiting to congratulate him. Joe said: 'I embarked on this challenge in aid of Wasdale MRT, because without them I wouldn't be here. My life

## FORTY YEARS' SERVICE RECOGNITION

**Kendal MSRT** team member Steve Kelley received a well-deserved Long Service Certificate at the team's 2012 AGM, in recognition of his forty years in mountain rescue.

Steve initially joined the [then] Langdale team in 1972, moving to the Kendal team around 1980, and he remains a very active member. Over the years, he has held various positions ranging from vehicle officer and training officer, to deputy team leader and, besides this commitment, he was also a member of the Cave Rescue Organisation.



STEVE KELLEY (LEFT) RECEIVES HIS AWARD FROM KENDAL TEAM LEADER EDDIE HARRISON

was completely turned upside down by my accident. In one moment I went from a typical outdoor enthusiast to being unable to walk. I wanted to say thank you to the team and help ensure they can always be there in times of need.' Joe has raised a total of £2,047 to date.

### KENDAL AND KIRKBY STEPHEN WORK TOGETHER TO SUPPORT OMM EVENT IN THE HOWGILLS

Both teams are pleased to have played a significant supporting role in last year's OMM (Original Mountain Marathon), which took place in the Howgills on the weekend 27-28 October. This challenging outdoor event involves over 2500 competitors in eight different classes. Working in pairs, the teams taking part in the OMM have to navigate between checkpoints in remote mountainous terrain and be self-sufficient for the entire period of the race. The Howgills, a wide band of high fells and deep valleys just to the east of the Lake District, was last used for the event in 1998. Eddie Harrison, team leader of **Kendal MSRT**, is delighted that the Howgills were chosen for the 2012 event: 'It's very pleasing to have such a large number of people visiting such a fabulous group of hills, with many perhaps being introduced to them for the first time. The environment in the Howgills

offers plenty of challenges for a competitive event such as the OMM but, for a normal day out in the hills, they are usually splendidly quiet with stunning views across the Lake District fells, Morecambe Bay and the Eden Valley.'

The Howgills is split between two teams, with the northern part lying in Kirkby Stephen MRT's operational area and the southern part in Kendal's. Given the scale of the event, the two teams made advance plans to work closely throughout the weekend. Kirkby Stephen's base was used as the joint control centre, with Kendal's specialist control vehicle deployed at different locations during each day, to help with communications and the management of any incidents. Neighbouring teams were also briefed in advance and declared themselves available to assist if required.

Arthur Littlefair, team leader of **Kirkby Stephen MRT**, feels that such close cooperation was essential to providing efficient cover for the event: 'Between us we had over 70 team members on standby, in position on the hill or in vehicles at the roadside ready to respond. It made absolute sense to coordinate our personnel and resources so we could reach any incident as quickly as possible, with adequate numbers to deal with casualties and evacuate them if necessary. With 2500 people taking part, there was always the possibility we'd have to call in neighbouring mountain rescue and

search dog teams, and we needed to have a well planned, centralised, way of briefing and using them, should that need arise.'

The 2012 OMM took place in mixed weather, with clear skies for much of Saturday, a cold night and deteriorating conditions, including mist and rain, on Sunday. The teams dealt with two incidents over the weekend. One on the Calf, a hill top within the event area, involving a walker not connected with the race, to which both teams responded. The casualty, suffering from a lower leg injury, was airlifted by air ambulance to Royal Preston Hospital. A second incident was dealt with by Kendal team members in the warmth of the registration building at Sedbergh – a severely hypothermic casualty was treated in the gents' changing room before an ambulance took him to hospital in Lancaster.

### THREE DAYS, THREE BIKES, THREE MOUNTAINS AND THREE OLD MEN

Dale Colclough, Karl Edwards and Mick Ludgate set themselves a fundraising challenge to climb Britain's three highest peaks, cycling between them in just three days in aid of four charities – Hartlepool and District Hospice, the Alzheimer's society, Dinsdale Lodge Residents Fund and **Patterdale MRT**. Having trained for several months they were ready to go on Thursday 5 July.

'We set off up Snowdon at 3.00pm in glorious sunshine and made good time up and down the mountain, back to our support vehicles in two hours 40 minutes. A quick change into bike gear and a meal and we set off in good weather northwards.

'Our journey took us along the A5, then north towards Chester before heading towards Liverpool and the Mersey Tunnel. Reaching Liverpool in the dark, but on quieter roads, we made good time and picked up the A59 towards Preston which we reached around 1.00am on Friday morning.

'We were away again on Friday at 8.00am, our next target the Lake District and Scafell Pike, some 60 miles away. We were confronted with heavy rain for the next four hours and made a navigation error which cost us 1.5 hours – we'd headed along the A59 towards Clitheroe and we should have been on the A6 towards Lancaster!

'The weather did eventually clear and it was dry, albeit very cloudy and windy, when we reached Langdale at 3.30pm. A quick change and more food and we were out onto the fellside to climb Scafell Pike. Conditions were not good but we know the ground well and made good time to the summit. We descended into Borrowdale where our road support met us with the bikes and another meal. It was 7.00pm by now and we still had some riding to do. Our next target was Gretna Green, but we hadn't reckoned on the heavy rain and wind which made cycling dangerous. We decided to call it a day fifteen miles south of Carlisle and head for a warm shower and cosy tent.

'Nice calm weather on Saturday morning lifted our



DALE COLCLOUGH, KARL EDWARDS AND MICK LUDGATE, CYCLING THEIR WAY ROUND THE THREE PEAKS FOR THE PATERDALE TEAM.

spirits and we were back on the bikes at 8.00am with a very long journey ahead. A full day's cycling took us up the B roads into Scotland. We eventually reached the suburbs of Glasgow in the late afternoon and crossed the Clyde via the Erskine bridge. The rain started again, but we battled on to our target – a camp site at the north end of Loch Lomond – which we eventually achieved some 165 miles and 15.5 hours in the saddle later, at 11.30pm. An epic day!

'If we were to meet our target of three days it meant an early start on Sunday and we were up and back on our bikes by 6.00am. Our target now was Fort William but this was 65 miles away and our route took us over Rannock Moor and up and down Glencoe. More horrendous rain meant stopping to put on all the gear we had just to keep warm. Hot porridge supplied at the roadside by our support team hit the spot and helped us on our way. Amazingly, the sun came out as we hit the last stage of our journey down through Glencoe and on to Fort William. We arrived at Glen Nevis at 11.00am giving us just enough time for refuelling before setting off up our final climb. Ben Nevis was shrouded in mist as always but this didn't halt our progress and three very tired but happy 50-year-old guys returned from the summit to our support team where we were greeted with a glass of champagne.

'A fantastic three days with far too many tales to relate here. We were thrilled to have completed the challenge and to have raised a good amount of money for our chosen charities.'

The team's efforts raised £3,110.75 in total, to be split equally between the four charities and the guys would like to thank all those who have donated and their support team who made the journey so much easier.

## NORTH EAST

### SOLDIERS DANCE GANGNAM STYLE TO RAISE SWALEDALE TEAM PROFILE

Fundraising efforts on behalf of one North East team have resulted in a YouTube sensation (294,649 hits at the time of writing), £6,468-and-counting in the bank and raised the bar ever so slightly on the mountain rescue PR front. (No pressure. Really...)

Soldiers from the Headquarters Squadron of 21 Engineer Regiment, currently deployed on operations in Afghanistan, produced their Gangnam Style video parody over a period of three months, filming during periods of downtime and after work. The very entertaining result was launched on an unsuspecting world in early December, aimed at raising the **Swaledale MRT** profile.

'There have been a lot of early starts and late finishes to ensure we could get all of the filming done for the video. We had a lot of fun whilst making it and hopefully people will enjoy watching it and feel compelled to donate to Swaledale,' said Staff Sergeant Russ Hill, who was involved in the video.

All the filming took place within Camp Bastion, at various locations, and the soldiers tried to make it as representative of the different elements involved with the Royal Engineers as possible, whilst adding a bit of humour into the mix.

And why Swaledale? 'We chose Swaledale due to its location in relation to the Garrison back in the UK and the fact that most of the military charities are being inundated with donations,' explains Russ. The video even features a Swaledale team member – Major Stu Cunane is Quartermaster (Technical) at 21 Engineer Regiment and a full team member of the team when he's home. 'I joined Swaledale in May 2010 because I wanted to give something back to the community. I hope that this video helps to raise money for this excellent charity.'

The money raised will be made on the return of the regiment from Op Herrick17, at a location and date to be confirmed. Meanwhile, you can catch it on YouTube – look for 'Afghan Style – 21 Engineer Regiment'. The video was filmed and produced by the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) in Afghanistan. Donations are still welcome, of course, via [www.justgiving.com/raise-the-fleet](http://www.justgiving.com/raise-the-fleet).

### LOCAL BUSINESS TO THE RESCUE

**Scarborough & Ryedale MRT** received a much-needed injection of cash from Pickering-based, Wayside Holiday Park in November. The team needs to raise around £30,000 a year to operate, much of which tends to be raised – as with all teams – through fundraising events and street collections. Wayside has generously agreed to support the team over a three-year period by

## SAVAGE CONDITIONS DEMAND TOUGH SOLUTIONS

Savage conditions demand clothing that can cope with everything that the worst storms throw at it. When the going gets tough in hostile weather, from Scotland to Alaska and Patagonia to Lofoten, synthetic insulation is the only answer. Unaffected by moisture it will keep you not just alive but operating effectively long after down has succumbed to sustained spindrift avalanches, melting snow and driving rain.

Amongst the warmest full function belay jackets on earth the Citadel uses the finest synthetic insulation available, PRIMALOFT® One. Impervious to moisture, it keeps going in the face of saturating semi-frozen icefalls and the differentiated fill ensures maximum warmth with mobility for seconding crux pitches or navigating into the night. With 200g in the body and 170g in the arms and hood the Citadel is fully twice as warm as our legendary performer, the Fitzroy. Designed to throw over all your other layers it is sized large but the proven EXL elasticated lining eliminates cold spots and maximises thermal efficiency however minimal your clothing system.

DRILITE® Loft II is the perfect fabric for this application being super light and quick drying and yet having an impressive 1.5m hydrostatic head. Breathable enough for efficient drying of internal layers but weatherproof enough for the worst winter weather. Our legendary grown-on helmet-compatible hood provides a reassuring refuge from the horrors outside and a wired peak maintains vision of a battling leader in deteriorating conditions.

Chunky moulded zips are easy to operate even with large gloves on and four large pockets provide secure storage for topos, abseil cord and energy gels on the biggest lines. A large internal mesh pocket keeps vital fluids from freezing as well as warming dry gloves as the night draws in around you.



donating an undisclosed sum. Mark Goodson Managing Director of the holiday park commented: 'The Scarborough and Ryedale Mountain Rescue Team provide a vital service to the communities of North and East Yorkshire. It is important they continue to be able to provide high-quality services and I'm proud that Wayside Holiday Park is able to contribute to the future of this essential emergency service.'

Team spokesman Ian Hugill, said: 'We're delighted this local business has recognised the importance



LEFT TO RIGHT: LESLEY BARLOW (A FRESH VIEW MARKETING), MARK GOODSON (WAYSIDE HOLIDAY PARK), PETER HOLTBY (SRMRT), IAN HUGILL (SRMRT), DEBORAH GOODALL (AER8 MARKETING) AND DAVID EDWARDS (SRMRT).

of the service we provide and that they are prepared to provide us with a financial cushion. We still need to raise cash to meet our annual running costs, but the sum from Wayside does give us a little breathing space.'

Still in Scarborough, twenty members of the team recently received the Diamond Jubilee Medal and the team also received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service from Lord Crathorne in a ceremony at their base in Snainton, near Scarborough.

## RENOWNED LANDSCAPE ARTIST SUPPORTS CLEVELAND TEAM

Cleveland MRT received a welcome boost to the team's fundraising in November, from something of an unlikely quarter. Len Tabner, the locally based and internationally renowned landscape artist, has given the rights to print a limited edition of one of his paintings. The arrangement came about as a result of a team member attending a Len Tabner exhibition and seeing a picture of potash miners. Realising that Len Tabner painted outside in all weathers, the artist was approached to see whether he might be persuaded to paint a picture of the team at work,

which could then form the basis for a run of cards to be sold as a fundraiser.

Much to their delight, Tabner made the team an offer which went far beyond the original request: if they would help Len get all his equipment up to a location on the North York Moors, he would paint a picture and then donate the rights to run a limited edition signed print run from the painting. Despite it being the middle of winter, the net result was a five foot by three foot painting of the landscape looking across the moors from the Wainstones towards Roseberry Topping with the glow of the Teesside conurbation as the backdrop.

It is extremely rare for a Len Tabner painting to be available on the market. As a result, those that do reach the market place frequently fetch extremely high prices. Also, very few, if any, of Tabner's original pictures have been made available in print form, other than as illustrations in books and catalogues. The net result of this gift of print rights is therefore likely to make a significant contribution to the team's current appeal to raise funds to replace one of its Land Rovers.

This fundraising initiative received a further boost when landscape photographer Joe Cornish agreed to produce the *giclée* prints for the venture. (The word *giclée* was created by Jack Duganne, a

printmaker working at Nash Editions. He wanted a name for the new type of prints they were producing on the IRIS printer, a large-format, high-resolution industrial pre-press proofing inkjet printer they had adapted for fine art printing. It is based on the French word *gicleur*, meaning 'nozzle'.) This offer was the result of the 'Inspired Landscape' exhibition at the Danby Moors Visitor Centre featuring the work of Tabner and Cornish, alongside Peter Hicks, Gillies Jones and William Tillyer, to celebrate the work of the North York Moors National Park. Cornish's hard work, technical skill and commitment to reproducing Tabner's painting via the camera lens, has resulted in an exact and faithful reproduction. The print captures all the vibrant energy and 'storm of colour' which is the hallmark of Tabner's work.

Team PR officer, Barry Warrington, said: 'We feel particularly privileged given the fact that so little of Tabner's work is available as a fine art print. This gesture, by these two giants of the art world, will clearly have a significant impact on the team's fundraising activity.'

The prints were launched in November, at the Joe Cornish Galleries in Northallerton, displayed alongside the original painting. Greeting cards of the painting are also on sale, kindly donated to the team by Alverton Press who work closely with the Joe Cornish Galleries.



THE SOUTH SNOWDONIA 'WEDDING PRESENT' LAND ROVER, POORLY ENGINE FIXED AND READY TO DO BATTLE, THANKS TO RUSTY NUTS!

evening such a fantastic success.

In other news from South Snowdonia, earlier in 2012, the team took delivery of a Land Rover 110 from Glossop MRT in the continuing 'Royal Wedding present domino effect'. In 2011, Royal patron Prince William and his new bride donated a wedding gift of a Land Rover Defender 110 to Mountain Rescue England and Wales. Following a lottery of potential recipients, that vehicle went to the Patterdale team who, in turn, passed a 110 on to the Glossop team. They then raffled their previous vehicle to mountain rescue teams up and down England and Wales and the South Snowdonia team won.

Unfortunately, shortly afterwards, the Land Rover engine became very ill, in fact terminally ill! So team leader Dafydd Griffiths contacted local Defender specialist, Rusty Nuts 4x4, who fitted a fresh TDi

engine and donated the transplant and fitting time for free. Rusty Nuts 4x4 now carry out a four-weekly safety inspection check on all the team's vehicles which now include a Mercedes Vito kindly donated by North Wales Police.

## HAVE BOAT WILL TRAVEL... ALL THE WAY FROM KESWICK TO ABERGLASLYN

When Keswick MRT reviewed their arrangements for water rescue, following discussions about the necessary training requirements for powered boats, the ripples travelled some way south of the Lake District. The team decided to replace their 3.8m Zodiac craft with a self-baling inflatable raft for flood work, and to negotiate a 24-hour access arrangement with local marinas and outdoor centres for when a craft is needed for a rescue on Derwentwater, Thirlmere or Bassenthwaite. A number of team members will also revalidate their RYA certification of competence with Safety Boats with the marina involved.

The new self-baling raft can be carried within one of the team's Mercedes 4x4 Sprinters, along with six personnel and all the necessary equipment for a water rescue. One consequence of the departure of the old boat and trailer is that all of the team vehicles can now be accommodated within the team garage. In the now long-standing tradition of the Keswick team, the old boat and trailer were offered, after servicing, free of charge to the most deserving team that could make use of them. This turned out to be Aberglaslyn MRT, whose team members Dion Jones and Will Hordley travelled up to Keswick to claim the boat and trailer.

## ALE TAKES THE HIGH ROAD...



Members of the Aberdyfi SRT carried a keg of Cader Ale from the Cader Brewery up the pony path from Ty Nant to the summit of Cader Idris, in late September, cheered on their way by surprised walkers. The reason for the high spirits was to raise funds for a new and much needed team van.

Team member Nick Young, one of the porters, explained the idea. 'A local micro brewery from Dolgellau has created two new ales named after Cader Idris, and some of the proceeds from their launch are going to the team's van fund. To help out, we decided to tap into the event by taking one of their barrels up to the summit. To be honest, some of the team could do with the excise!'

Graeme Rothery, another of the stout band of volunteers, reviewed his day. 'It was quite mild down at the car park but, in the strong wind chasing us to the top, it was bitter. With a fair draught blowing, it took a lot of bottle to get the heavy keg up to the summit cairn, but in the event this thankfully did not prove a bar to our success. If it had been any lager, we might have struggled.'

Once safely back down off the mountain, it was just a short hop for the team to reach the Cross Foxes for a celebratory pint with the brewers, Cwrw Cader.

The team reported their tale thus, tongue firmly in cheek but not everyone, it seems, appreciated its subtle creativity. In

October, although slightly out of kilter with other MR stories in the headlines, the Cambrian News kindly ran the 'barrel carry' story but on this – the one occasion, says Graham O'Hanlon, where the misspellings were intentional – they'd spell-checked it. So Nick Young was newly quoted as suggesting his fellow team members need more 'exercise' rather than 'excise', clearly missing the point on all of those finely crafted beer-puns.

The launch of Idris Bitter and Cader Gold was held at the Red Lion in Dinas Mawddwy in October, during an evening of beer, food and bonhomie.

## NORTH WALES

### CHARITY ART AUCTION BOOSTS COFFERS IN SOUTH SNOWDONIA

A charity art auction in early December, at the Croesor Café Gallery, high in the shadows of the Moelwyn mountain range, proved a great success for South Snowdonia SRT. The evening was organised by Sian Griffiths and Bev Dunne who are both working artists living in Snowdonia.

The call went out to all artists living in the South Snowdonia patch, asking for a donation of a piece of art, be it a painting, print or drawing and one of the first to donate was world-renowned artist and sculptor, David Nash. Once word was out that the auction was to raise funds for a rescue team, artists from further afield began contacting the organisers through a Facebook page set up to advertise the event. Paintings began to arrive from all over North Wales, Mid Wales and England. There was even an offer of two paintings from North America.

In all, 76 pieces of art went under the hammer on the night, raising just over £3,500 for the team. At the end of the evening, senior team member Myfyr Thomas gave a short speech to thank the organisers and to reassure people of the importance of mountain rescue and the vital task of continuous fundraising. The team would like to thank the organisers and artists near and far for the time, effort and donations of art which made the



KESWICK HAND OVER THEIR OLD BOAT AND TRAILER TO ABERGLASLYN LEFT TO RIGHT: SCOTT HENDERSON (KESWICK), MARK HODGSON (KESWICK TEAM LEADER), DION JONES (ABERGLASLYN TEAM LEADER) AND WILL HORDLEY (ABERGLASLYN).



MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN THE 1950s – NOTE THE MOTORBIKE GOGGLES!

## APPRENTICE STILL BACKED BY COMPANY, SIX YEARS AFTER LEAVING

**NEWSAR** member Rich Brady started his career at Qioptiq in 1999, as an Apprentice Optical Craftsman, at their site on St Asaph Business Park. But, despite leaving in 2006, he is still getting help and support from his old employer.

'I joined the team in 2012 and, at a recent training weekend with Bolton MRT, I realised how much more money other teams had at their disposal. I know from my time at Qioptiq that they do adopt charities, so I emailed Michelle and asked if I could come in and tell them a bit more about our local mountain rescue team.'

It seems, Qioptiq didn't need that meeting. Although their main charity has been selected, Michelle Johnson, of their Human Resources department, got back in touch and offered to donate £160 to the team.

'I was really surprised when I read Michelle's email. I know how often businesses get asked for charitable donations, which is why I was only looking for a meeting to let them know a bit more about how we help the region. To be gifted 160 quid straight away was fantastic.'

'What was really nice was that the department which had raised the money, is headed up by Paul Hughes, who was manager of the Glass Shop when I first started my apprenticeship. I hadn't seen him in years.'

Rich was presented a £160 cheque, in front of the Qioptiq facility on St Asaph Business Park with Paul Hughes, team leader in the Assembly Department, and Dean Martin, Senior Assembly Craftsperson. Qioptiq have also hinted that they will continue supporting the team in the future.

'Qioptiq support several local and national charities throughout the year but we are particularly proud to support such a worthy and valuable organisation as NEWSAR, who perform such a vital service to the region,' said Craig Taylor of Qioptiq.



DEAN MARTIN AND PAUL HUGHES OF QIOPTIQ PRESENT THEIR DONATION CHEQUE TO RICH BRADY (CENTRE) OF NEWSAR.

## EEH, THOSE WERE THE DAYS...

### A DIP INTO THE HISTORY BOOKS WITH OLDHAM TEAM'S PHIL BEARD

It was about 1969/70, the Four, or was it Five Inns Hike? We were on standby and based at Crowden Rifle Range. This was a place I had visited many times before, either just passing by, to or from climbing at Laddow Rocks, or with my father at the Lydgate Rifle and Pistol Club, shooting a Lee Enfield .303 on a 500 yard range. This, however, was my first visit on a mountain rescue standby.

At the time I was a member of the 1855 (Royton) Squadron ATC. Mountain Rescue Team. The team was formed around 1950/51 by Squadron Leader Bob Kenworthy MBE as a sub-unit of RAF Stafford MRT. I had joined in November 1968 and the team was led by Bob with a couple of other officers, namely Keith Hulse (RAF navigator), Phil Taylor (motor cycle repair man) and Keith Bell ('Dinger') in attendance.

The team had a short wheelbase Land Rover driven by Dinger. Bob Kenworthy had a 4.2 litre Jaguar and we had two trailers for the kit, tents, stretcher etc. Phil Taylor and a couple of lads were on their motor bikes.

The day was dry, not that it mattered. We all wore the same kit – RAF issue Number Two Blues, which we used to boil wash so they fluffed up – plus a khaki cotton anorak, boots with metal cruds and a brown, scratchy wool balaclava that made your head sweat so much that steam came from your ears. Oh yes, and just in case it snowed, some motor bike goggles.

We were situated behind the range house at Crowden and setting up our base when

Bob decided to get some grub on the stove – a larger version of a Primus camping stove, much larger! It was an RAF issue pump action pressurised 'flame thrower'. The plan was to put petrol in at one end and get a flame and a big noise out the other. We would pump it up until the dial went to the red line and then open the valve, volunteer someone to bravely light a match which was thrown toward the burner, then run as fast as physically possible in the opposite direction. I could have beaten Jesse Owens over the first five yards!

I wasn't overly impressed with this bit of kit so never went near enough to lose my eyelashes. When the flame came out of the burner it was covered by a metal tunnel, on top of which we stood large alloy tureens filled with whatever was desired: soup, beans etc. It would boil them up in two seconds flat, burning everything on the bottom, of course. It usually looked like the campfire scene from Blazing Saddles when we got round to eating.

The task of lighting the cooker was usually taken up by, or volunteered to, Alan Luke. At this point I must tell you that Alan never had a fag out of his mouth and I think it was possibly due to this that, when lighting was about to take place, Keith Bell would shout 'Anybody for Pooh sticks in the brook?' Quite a few people took up this challenge. Ken Luke (Alan's brother who obviously didn't trust him much with the burner!), Roger Hadfield, myself and several others thought we'd get as far away as possible from the

'bomb'. I also remember some members of Oldham Rovers (now OMRT) watching the fiasco with the wee stove whilst sitting behind the hut. We didn't have much chance with the Pooh sticks, Keith Bell always won. He also always cheated.

We didn't get time to eat the grub either before we heard there was a rescue to be done on the Pennine Way on Bleaklow. Someone had reportedly gone down somewhere near Torside Castle. So, off we set, Bob in front with the Jaguar and trailer, a couple of bikes and the rest of us behind in the Land Rover with trailer also in tow. We approached via a track that led to Reaps farm, which is where we had a little drama. Bob ripped the exhaust off his Jag, straight from the flexible manifold pipes. Ken Luke jumped off his motor bike, picked up the pipes and threw them in the trailer, then screamed as his hands had just determined the pipes were hot. Good job he had his bike gloves on.

We set off again up the moor with the Oldham team, eventually found the casualty and stuck him on a stretcher. We carried him up and down, up and down, up and down the groughs and then both sledged and carried him down to the vehicles at Reaps farm before loading him into the Oldham vehicle (from which he fell) and then packed up to leave.

By now, Bob Kenworthy, in his usual stance with arms folded, thumb of his right hand stuck upwards and twirling round as if he were pointing to the medals on his number one, was chatting to a senior policeman. The bobby asked him how he was going to get back to Oldham without an exhaust pipe and silencer on his 4.2 litre Jag, which sounded at this point like a Vulcan bomber. Bob, still with his arms folded, paused for a moment, leaned forward, looked left and right past this senior police officer and said: 'Well, if there's no bobbies knocking about, I might just get away with it.' At which point the copper laughed and said: 'Go on you cheeky bugger, s\*d off!'

It was not long after that Bob got rid of the Jag – it was too low. He replaced it with a brand new H-reg 3-litre Capri, which he obviously couldn't wait to get in a photo (see left). I don't know who is by the trailer but the lad on top of the Land Rover is Ken Luke. Below with the Thomas stretcher, from left to right is Ben Roberts, Yours Truly and Phil Senior. Eehh, those were the days, I was only three years old but tall for my age! Bob Kenworthy is sadly no longer with us but the rest of us are still walking.



BUXTON TEAM VEHICLE READY FOR WINTER.

## PEAK DISTRICT

### BUXTON TEAM GETS READY FOR WINTER...

October saw **Buxton MRT** investing over £2,000 in preparing its three vehicles for winter. In recent years, call-outs in severe snow conditions have increased, prompting the team to equip each vehicle with winter tyres. The tyres for the team's two Transit vehicles were supplied by GK Ford of Chesterfield whilst local dealer, Steve's Tyres, supplied the rugged terrain tyres for the Land Rover. Team chairman, Roger Bennett, said: 'The trustees decided that ensuring our vehicles are safe and able to cope with all conditions is essential. A generous private donation made the investment possible and we consider the money well spent. Keeping our members safe is a priority, whatever the price, but the support of local dealers has kept the costs as low as possible and we send a big thank you to them.'

## FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

When not delivering outdoor instruction in the Peak District, **Buxton MRT** member, Rob Wymer, a qualified UIMLA International Mountain Leader, takes on overseas trekking and mountaineering expeditions for adults and young people. He was leading a group on a trekking holiday covering part of the Annapurna Circuit in western Nepal, when he met Dorje, who had been assigned to him as a sirdar, the person in charge of all the sherpas and porters, and all local matters.

Dorje was born and raised in the Everest region. He has spent his whole life working in the mountaineering and trekking industry, and climbed on many of the 8000m peaks in Nepal and further afield, including the Indian Himalayas. One of his claims to fame is that he worked with Brian Blessed on one of Brian's attempts on Everest. Despite his advancing years, Dorje continues to work, even though his brother was killed in an avalanche a couple of years ago doing similar work.

Rob said: 'I usually take out some old gear of my own to the places I work overseas, and give it to local staff, although weight limits on airline baggage restrict the amount I can take. I had been going through the stocks of Buxton team clothing when I found a new, but ripped, jacket. It had been torn as a result of stitching-on the BMRT badges so was a reject really, but Mountain Equipment gave it to us anyway. Apart from the rip, the jacket was brand new, complete with tags so I did a makeshift repair with some gaffer tape and then checked with the team chairman that it was okay to have our team-badged jacket on the loose. I didn't know who I'd get as my sirdar but they're all deserving causes. I was just lucky to get Dorje!'

## THE RUD I-SOCK: THE ULTIMATE SAFETY PRODUCT THIS WINTER

As the threat of snow and ice looms, it is vital to have top quality safety products. NHS figures for 2009/2010 show that there were 18,570 hospital admissions due to falls involving ice and snow. Now you can be safe and secure on your feet with the innovative RUD I-Sock the latest addition to the RUD Chains winter range. This revolutionary product offers exceptional footing and traction on slippery and icy surfaces. It is lightweight, extremely quick and easy to use and simply straps on to your boot – and it can be worn whilst driving. The I-Sock is suitable for anyone who needs to be secure on their feet in the harsh winter months – the Emergency Services, and the postal and delivery services, to name a few.

The I-Sock is made from a unique combination of textile and metal that offers excellent grip and traction on compact snow, slippery and icy surfaces. The large surface area over the boot ensures your foot gets more traction on snow and icy surfaces.

As well as the I-Sock, RUD has a large product portfolio ranging from the revolutionary automatic snow chain, the ROTOGRIIP (safety at the flip of a switch) – especially popular for the emergency services – to a broad range of snow, rotation forestry and shoe chains.

Be safe and secure this winter – call 01227 276 611, email [Katie.crane@rud.co.uk](mailto:Katie.crane@rud.co.uk) or visit us at [www.rud.co.uk](http://www.rud.co.uk). Or you follow us on Twitter (RUDChainsLtd) or Facebook ([facebook.com/RudChainsLtd](https://www.facebook.com/RudChainsLtd)).



Rob gave the jacket to Dorje at the start of the trek. 'The Sherpas are a very gentle, distinguished and understated people, despite their strength and prowess in mountaineering. With this in mind I chose a quiet time with just the two of us, rather than make a big scene of presenting it. Dorje was obviously very pleased to receive the jacket (I gave him a few other bit and bobs too), and was grateful in a calm and dignified manner. As a sirdar, he has risen to the level where he has a reasonable standard of clothing, but it is very old. I suspect he will cherish and look after his BMRT jacket a whole lot more carefully than I look after mine!' If you have surplus or old outdoor gear and clothing, and wish to donate it to equally deserving recipients, you don't have to get on a plane to do so. It can be easily arranged via Porters' Progress UK ([www.portersprogressuk.org](http://www.portersprogressuk.org)) who support porters in Nepal, and also in Tanzania for those working on Kilimanjaro and Mt Meru.

## MIDHOPE AT WAR AND A £7400 HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND GRANT

**Woodhead MRT** has become one of the first groups in the UK to receive a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) All our Stories grant. The scheme was launched in 2012, in support of BBC Two's *The Great British Story*, to enable community groups to carry out activities that help people explore, share and celebrate their local heritage. The TV programme, presented by historian Michael Wood, inspired thousands to look at history in a different way, through the eyes of ordinary people. It proved a real hit and now Woodhead's 'Midhope at War', is one of hundreds of successful projects around the UK to receive a grant. The moors around Langsett and Midhope made a vital contribution to the Allies' success in World War II, hosting troops from around the world who trained there for the liberation of Europe. Little is written of this small area's large contribution to the world we live in today. Those who lived and trained there are rapidly diminishing but the legacy remains. Following an increasing number of call-outs to unexploded bombs, Woodhead team members decided to research what actually happened on the moors during the war. A subsequent open day at their Langsett Barn base attracted 300 visitors and provided a wealth of previously unrecorded stories. The project will link existing written material and the memories of those still alive, with the physical evidence which can still be seen, to deliver a comprehensive account of what happened. TV presenter and historian Michael Wood, said: 'We British love our history, and no wonder – few nations in the world, if any, have such riches on their doorstep, and so much of it accessible. It is really tremendous that the people of the area have been inspired to get involved to tell their own story and to dig deeper into their own past. 'Having travelled the length and breadth of the British Isles filming *The Great British Story*, I am

certain that fascinating stories will be uncovered which will not only bring to life the excitement of local history, but will illuminate and enrich every community's connection with the national narrative.' Team chairman Barry Gregory said: 'The moors have become so much more accessible since the CRoW Act, we believe it is our duty to record the stories and evidence of those who used them during wartime and to provide a legacy for others to enjoy safely.' Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire and the Humber, said: 'The success of All Our Stories has reinforced the fact we are a nation of storytellers, wanting to explore and dig deeper into our past and discover more about what really matters to us. This is exactly what the grant will do for the Midhope at War project as they embark on a real journey of discovery.'

## PENMACRA

### FAREWELL TO DARTMOOR AFTER THIRTY YEARS

Craig Scollick writes... 'Wednesday 6 October 1982 was a very important day for Rob Illman. It was his first evening with relatively new **Dartmoor Rescue Group**, Ashburton Section. Thirty years (fifteen as team leader), two Jubilee medals, 23 Ten Tors challenge events and 433 call-outs later, Rob decided it was time to retire from the team and start making up for all the family and social events which had been interrupted by call-outs. 'In researching Rob's mountain rescue career, I've been struck by the high regard in which he has been held, not only in our team but in the others across Dartmoor and Exmoor, and by Devon and Cornwall Police. It has been hard to summarise his 30 years but I hope these few words give a flavour of his time with the team. 'Through a love of walking and letterboxing\* on Dartmoor, Rob and a couple of friends thought they'd give something back and joined the Dartmoor team. Back then Goretex was in its infancy – if you could afford it – there was no standard team kit, and radios were the size of a



ROB ILLMAN (RIGHT) RECEIVES HIS 25 YEARS LONG SERVICE AWARD FROM PREVIOUS TEAM CHAIRMAN DAVE UNDERHILL.

garden shed, well maybe not, but they were bulky and very, very heavy. 'When I asked Rob about his longest rescue, he recalled a winter call-out in his early days with the team when a Duke of Edinburgh Award group got lost on a snowy night. After around twelve hours, the group were found by the rescue team and it was down to a SAR Wessex helicopter to airlift them out. After numerous false starts and hanging around in sub-zero temperatures, the group and the rescue team were flown out. Afterwards, Rob's hill party leader asked him why he had kept ferrying people and kit between the cas site and the helicopter. Rob's response was that the warmest place on Dartmoor that night was under the exhaust of a Wessex! 'One of Rob's most memorable Ten Tors challenge events was in 1994 when the May weather turned wintry and eight inches of snow fell on Dartmoor stranding the 2400 teenage participants. The Army organise and marshall the event, with Dartmoor Rescue Group bringing off injured participants, calling in air support or searching for lost groups. A major rescue operation had to be mounted to bring the teenagers safely off the moor. As Ashburton's deputy TL, Rob was in the thick of managing and coordinating a major part of the rescue activities, which made the national press. 'I asked Rob what had been his worst rescue. Rather than name any one in particular he just said that any one when the casualty had died had always been difficult, especially for the casualty's families and friends. 'When asked if he had ever been the victim of any practical jokes he remembered how he had been caught out once during water training. It was the usual exercise, with team members in and out of the wet doing river crossings, throw-bagging etc.

At the end of the session he was getting a bit chilly as he wasn't wearing a wet suit. One of the organisers asked him if he'd get back in the water and help him collect equipment from the far bank. Noticing that the organiser was only wearing hill clothing and he too was going to get cold, Rob agreed to help. On the way back through the cold water the organiser started to chortle, then giggle, then burst out laughing. Rob asked him what was funny, then the organiser showed Rob the wetsuit which he was wearing under his hill walking clothes. Rob didn't volunteer again! 'Rob's most satisfying moment came in the autumn of 2011 when, after 35 years, the team finally found a permanent home courtesy of the monks of Buckfast Abbey (for the building) and hundreds of hours of effort by Rob and other team members (for the fit out). 'He has developed life-long friendships over the years. Testament to these was the attendance of 200 people at his MR retirement event in a local village hall. Shortly before Rob retired from the team he became engaged to a fellow team member. Typically, no sooner had he popped the question, he received a call from Devon and Cornwall Police and, within 30 minutes, Rob and his new fiancée were off on a call-out with the rest of the team.' Richard Walker, team chairman adds: 'Whilst many people give a large chunk of their time to MR, few give up so much, for so long as Rob Illman. His energy and commitment has been no small contributor to making our team strong, confident, and fit for the task. However, this isn't really why we'll miss him. As team leader for many years, he has embodied our ethos and set our values. He is a strong and sometimes outspoken man, but is always motivated by the welfare of others. He is deeply principled and caring. It is rare to find someone who can intuitively balance the goals of a task against the needs of individuals in a team with such finesse or kindness. I think we all feel honoured to call him our friend and colleague. This is why we'll miss him on the hill.'

## SOUTH WEST

### BUSY TIME FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE WATER RESCUE CENTRE

The volunteer crew of **Severn Area Rescue Association** (Tewkesbury Rescue Station) returned to their day-jobs on Thursday, 29 November after eight days of call-outs for flood rescue and response that saw the team attend in excess of twenty flood related incidents, including the rescue or evacuation of some residents and their pets. SARA Tewkesbury is based at Gloucestershire Water Rescue Centre alongside Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service. Together the team's unique partnership has seen a fast, efficient and



TOP: FLOODING IN TEWKESBURY. ABOVE: AL DAY (CALDER VALLEY) HANDS OVER THE LAND ROVER TO TOM KEELING (SARA TEWKESBURY).

professional response to flooding across Gloucestershire, evidenced by the numerous incidents attended and the ability to provide continuous response for extended periods. In August 2012, a joint team from the centre won a national water rescue challenge, being crowned UK Number One. Thanks to shared training standards, equipment and cohabitation, both teams based at Gloucestershire Water Rescue Centre have developed their core skills, and only fourteen months on from starting this project have shown the benefits projects like this can bring to the local community and further afield.

### PROJECT LANDY COMPLETED

SARA Tewkesbury have announced the completion of their 'Project Landy'. The appeal, to fund a second specialist vehicle, began in December 2011 with a target of £20,000. This was raised within six months and 'SARA Mobile 11' was duly launched at an open day in September 2012, with Councillor Philip Surman, Tewkesbury Borough Mayor as guest of honour. The core vehicle was acquired from **Calder Valley SRT** and converted for SARA use by Liveridge 4x4. SARA are grateful to CVSRT, who heavily discounted the vehicle but were pleased to see the vehicle being retained for rescue, and also to Liveridge 4x4 for the extensive modification at below-cost price. In 2007, SARA rescued company MD Chris Howard's father from floods in

Tewkesbury and Chris was eager to express his thanks. Project lead and station manager, Tom Keeling, said: 'We are humbled by the support we have been shown both locally and on a wider scale. While the majority of the funding came from Tewkesbury Borough Council, we are equally grateful to the various parish councils, local residents and charitable trusts that also realised the importance of this and donated funds, despite the current economic climate. This is a real achievement and will enable us to better serve the communities we support.'

### MIDLANDS CAVE TEAM SHOW ROPES

With an increasing emphasis on joint cooperation, members of **Midlands CRO** visited the impressive headquarters of SARA Tewkesbury in early November to provide some ropework training to team members. Mike Clayton, Secretary of MCRO, provided the classroom based training, covering subjects such as the construction of rope to knots. This was followed by practical sessions in the rain, looking at basic lowering and hauling systems. Plans are in place for SARA Tewkesbury to provide basic training to Midlands CRO in land search.



MEMBERS OF MIDLANDS CRO OUTSIDE THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE WATER RESCUE CENTRE.

Well, who knew?!

\* **The practice of 'Letterboxing'** combines elements of orienteering, art and puzzle solving, according to the Wikipedia. Letterboxers hide small, weatherproof boxes in publicly accessible places and distribute clues to finding the box either in some sort of printed format, online or by word of mouth. Individual letterboxes typically contain a notebook and a rubber stamp. Finders make an imprint of the letterbox's stamp, either on their personal notebook or on a postcard, and leave an impression of their personal stamp on the letterbox's 'Visitors' Book' — as proof of having found the box and letting other letterboxers know who has visited.

# FANCY A MARATHON OR FOUR? TEAM WORK AT ITS BEST WITH THE KENDAL RESCUE ROUND

**EDDIE HARRISON KENDAL MRT**

**T**he Kendal Mountain Festival is recognised as one of the best festivals in Europe. Our team has always had a presence in the form of a small display stand but our profile greatly increased in November 2012 when my deputy Kath Jackson dreamt up a mad idea of circumnavigating the team's boundary in 24 hours – after all it's only 112 miles! Support was great, even local Kendal wine bar 'Burgandy's' produced a beer named after the event – Rescue Round (of course) – and very nice it was too.

I distinctly remember in the early days of this event being mentioned one phrase, in an email from Kath: 'This was a great daydream but through too much dreaming out loud I find myself committed to making it a reality!' I'll leave the rest to Kath and Dave to explain...

## KATH'S STORY

The Kendal Rescue Round began life as a daydream of a personal challenge. As I sat enjoying a pint at the end of Kendal Mountain Festival 2011, the team fundraising officer and I were mulling over how it had gone on the team stand and how inspiring some of the talks and films were. I threw an idea out about how we should bring more of Kendal's mountains to the Kendal Mountain Festival; maybe Kendal's version of the Bob Graham.

As I told more people, and more people liked it and the idea

developed. I began to see the potential as a boost for team funds and awareness rather than just a test of my endurance and sanity. November is a foolish time for a 24-hour challenge – it's dark for 15/24 hours and the likelihood of weather-related issues is high – but by linking to the Kendal Mountain Festival, not only did we guarantee ourselves an audience, we linked into one of their priorities of improving local engagement.

Getting a promise of a place in the KMF programme was the point at which I was committed but the process of turning the daydream into reality was far from over. Now I needed other people to get on board and boy did they! My initial email got a lot of 'Are you mad?' but, if so, base officer Tinka and deputy Dave were equally so because they wanted to do it too!

Offers of support for the different legs trickled in, some keen as

mustard, some slightly shy... 'I want to help but don't know if I'll be any use.' And the questions started. What if...? Have you thought about...? What can I do to help...? Working full time and struggling to fit in enough physical training, organising the support element was beginning to feel overwhelming so I was relieved when our vehicle officer Tony (aka Mr Logistics) offered to take on the role of getting the right amount of support and kit to the right places at the right times. I was staggered by how well he executed that role!

Press releases, organising a stand at the KMF Adventure Sports Village, sorting how the tracking would work and what we were going to show it on, keeping the fundraising page high in the publicity and keeping our increasing number of Facebook fans updated all slotted in around some really, really happy days training on the hill/road/lake.

After all the work and the nerves and doubts, the Round was everything I could've hoped. From the mad start in front of the KMF Endurance Night crowd and a cheering team, through a buzzing bike ride that felt like flying and a long night on the hills with a great bunch of friends to a morning at Shap summit, eating bacon butties from Big Nige! From the pain of the last 30 kilometre foot section which was lightened immeasurably by the laughter of sharing it with a great support team (and weather which was, for November, frankly, miraculously good) and the hectic transitions, full of faces and questions and stuff to do, to the tranquility of paddling into a darkening Windermere with just the splash of two paddles. From a fatigued, cold and fretful bike ride to the triumph of the top of the Scout Scar road to, finally, the overwhelming greeting of friends and strangers at the finish, 24 hours and seven minutes after the start!

So we achieved what we set out

to – we got two team members through a tough physical challenge, showing off our area to the KMF audiences, we increased our fundraising from the festival weekend substantially and we got mountain rescue much higher visibility at KMF too. Brilliant!

But if you asked me what was the most rewarding part, it would be the response of my Kendal Team mates. Before, during and after the Round everyone displayed one of the best, most focused and closest team responses I've been privileged to be involved with. Whilst the outcome may have been much less important than during a call-out, the feeling was the same. No one and everyone was vital to success. I'm proud of how we made this event happen, just as I'm proud of how KMSRT operate on the day to day tasks.

I kind of decided this was a one time only event, it was pretty special! But buy me a beer, give me a moment to daydream and we'll see how the next idea shapes up!

## DAVE'S STORY

When Kath came up with the idea of doing the Round I was keen to get involved. Not knowing what Kath had planned, whether she would do the whole round on her own and just have a few people on each leg to help out with kit and navigation or wanted someone to do the whole round with her, I said I would help out in any way and would love to do the whole round with her. I knew she didn't want loads of people on the hill at the same time and was excited about the whole thing when she agreed that Tinka and I would accompany her in the challenge.

I think I had the easy bit, do some training and get fit whilst all around me lots of logistical stuff and meetings were going on. Tony had been drafted in to sort out the logistics of the event, movement of kit, the transitions and get together a

band of willing volunteers to help out on the day/night, Kath had already put a tremendous amount of work on the route, talking to various people from the Film Festival and Viewranger who were tracking our route, between all this managing to get in some training. Tony was busy with his logistics and Kath was still having meetings.

Unfortunately, Tinka became ill and had to drop out, a sad day for the team but a wise decision on her part, so that left just Kath and me. I brought Fern (my trainee search dog) along to help out with the training but it soon became clear she wasn't that much help, she spent more time under Kath's feet than pacing her along, she couldn't ride a bike and is no good in a kayak either.

Before long the day was almost upon us, we didn't realise how big this thing was and how many people were involved until we had our briefing from Tony the last Monday evening before the event. It was like a team training night, base was full of Tony's band of merry helpers, all there with their notebooks out and asking loads of questions.

Then the day arrived. Meet at base 6.00pm for a final kit check then off to the Dojo (Kendal's Judo Centre). What could be simpler? Tony had everything under control, what could possible go wrong? Kath's and my phone bleep at the same time, she looks at hers and says we've got a call-out, we all laugh and look at each other apart from Kath who heads into the control room to call the police. I look at my phone – she's not joking, we have a call-out: a missing elderly lady gone out for a walk with her dog at lunchtime and not returned home. We now had a bit of a dilemma, do we do what we are there for and go look for the lady or go on the Rescue Round?

After some quick reorganisation and a bit of persuading, Kath, Tony and I, and a few supporters, head off to the Dojo to at least start out and see how far we could get around with very limited support. We did at least know there were plenty of people out on the hill looking for the missing person and we could abort our attempt if they needed us. Good news, though: the Lady was soon found alive and well and, after a brief introduction on stage at the start of the Film Festival Endurance evening we were ready for the off, adrenalin flowing and blood pumping.

Some time later, with heavy and tired legs, we faced our final hurdle – the steep ascent up from the village of Brigsteer – but once over

this we flew down into Kendal and back to the Dojo. What a sight! So many red MR jackets cheering and clapping us home! A totally emotional ending to an amazing journey, but it didn't end there – we were back on the stage in front of another packed Film Festival audience to receive more applause and some bubbly.

There were so many people in the audience but it wasn't this that struck me, it was all the team members in their red jackets stood at the back who stood out in the crowd, so many people who had supported us over the last 24 hours – what a team! For me it wasn't about two people doing a crazy marathon event, it was about raising the profile of the team, letting the public know what we do and raising a bit of money at the same time. I believe we proved again how important it is to work as a team and get the job done!

For me I must say the highlight was the paddle down the lake on a quite moonlit night with nobody around to force another jelly baby on you or check if you'd eaten in the last five minutes. Would I do it again? Yes. Am I going to do it again? Probably not! Am I going to do something else? Watch this space! See you all at a crazy endurance event near you soon.

Kath and Dave have so far raised £615 but donations are still welcome through their fundraising page at [www.charitychoice.co.uk/fundraiser/kendal-rescue-round/kendal-rescue-round](http://www.charitychoice.co.uk/fundraiser/kendal-rescue-round/kendal-rescue-round).

*You may be interested to hear that Kath is currently undertaking a challenge of a different sort, in the South Atlantic crewing a 31-foot yacht named 'Patches' in the Governor's Cup race from Cape Town to St Helena.*

*You can follow her progress at [www.governorscup.co.za/race-live](http://www.governorscup.co.za/race-live). She will be spending the next six months doing voluntary conservation work on the island and the team hope to see her back in time for the summer (if we ever have one).* ■



TOP: KENDAL TEAM DEPUTIES DAVE HOWARTH AND KATH JACKSON – MAD AS A BOX OF FROGS!  
ABOVE: THE KENDAL RESCUE ROUND.  
RIGHT: DAVE HOWARTH (RIGHT) ACCOMPANIED BY GRAHAM PATTEN (LAKELAND TRAILS), APPROACHING HARTER FELL.



Outdoors GPS navigation app ViewRanger is now used on the smartphones and tablets of over 80 SAR teams within MREW and other bodies in Scotland, Ireland, USA, Canada and Germany. Normally used to assist with team coordination, navigation and data recording, it has recently been used to help with fundraising too, as Craig Wareham, CEO at ViewRanger explains. 'When the Kendal team asked for assistance with tracking and communication during their Kendal Rescue Round event, we were happy to oblige. The BuddyBeacon location sharing service, which allows teams to view their progress on the hills is equally applicable to allowing an audience of sponsors to remotely follow an event in real time.'

Kendal's Kath Jackson and Dave Howarth set themselves the endurance challenge of circumnavigating their 175km area boundary in under 24 hours by foot, bike and kayak. Using ViewRanger, they were able to show their progress on a big screen back at the festival and on their website.

To find out more about ViewRanger or join the VSAR programme, see [www.viewranger.com/SAR](http://www.viewranger.com/SAR) or contact [craig@viewranger.com](mailto:craig@viewranger.com).



## DUDDON AND FURNESS TEAM MEMBER IN CHANNEL SWIM

They clearly like a challenge in the Lake District! News also came, in December, from Jacqui Young, of Duddon and Furness MRT, who completed a relay swim across the English Channel in August, for Diabetes UK. She would like to thank everyone who supported her – doubtless a few mountain rescuers were pressed into service!



DUDDON AND FURNESS TEAM MEMBER JACQUI YOUNG ARRIVES ON FRENCH SOIL FOR DIABETES UK.

It took 16 hours and 35 minutes and Jacqui was the one who landed on French soil at 12.35am in the dark. 'We were met by some French party goers who were a bit confused about where we had come from but still offered us a glass of red wine!

'There were six boats from Diabetes UK and we raised over £60,000.' She's not sure what the next challenge will be but hopes to keep up the swimming, possibly attempting the full length of Windermere next!

## LONDON MARATHON 2013 FOR MREW

Keeping with the challenge theme... Mountain Rescue England and Wales will have a presence at the Virgin London Marathon once again this year, courtesy of the Princes' Charities Forum. Our involvement with the forum, through our Royal patron, Prince William, first brought us an allocation of places in 2012 with Dave Howarth (see story left) amongst the runners.

This year's runners, representing and raising funds for MREW, will be Neil Roden (Edale MRT), Jon Jones (Derby MRT), Steve Rose (Dartmoor MRT), Steve Westwood (Calder Valley MRT) and Huw Jones (Central Beacons MRT). Good luck to them all!

The event takes place on 21 April and you can follow every black toe nail of their training progress on Facebook. Just search for 'MountainRescueRunsTheLondonMarathon'. You can also donate via Virgin Money at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com> – look for the page of the same name. We look forward to hearing how they all fare.



ABOVE: KATH JACKSON, SECOND FROM LEFT, WITH HER FELLOW CREW MEMBERS ABOARD PATCHES.

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# TRACKING IN THE UK

IAIN NICHOLSON **BOWLAND PENNINE MRT**

**T**racking has always been seen as something of a 'dark art' in the UK, and generally regarded not viable for SAR use due to the population density and the weather!

For a few years, Bowland Pennine's Simon Harris has been looking into the viability of tracking in typical SAR scenarios and terrain and its usefulness to incidents, based on his experiences of navigating for dog handlers and an interest in search management. It was generally considered that the viability was there, and discussions with Lancashire Police had generated interest from their search-trained personnel.

The next question was how to progress it without reinventing the wheel. The answer was to import the expertise in the form of Ross Gordon and Tony Wells from SARINZ (Search and Rescue Institute New Zealand) to get a group from the UK educated to a foundation level on which to build skills. The vision was that the tracking programme was to be a two to three-year project, with skills being built up over that time to try and reach a level where those involved could be assessed as being operational – quite a commitment, the effort needed to make the 'tracking grade' of those in New Zealand being compared to that of training a search dog, so this was a reasonable timescale in the view of Ross and Tony.

September brought a group covering MR teams from throughout England and Wales, along with members of Lancashire Police, to the first weekend at Bowland Pennine's Smelt Mill for a baptism in tracking, Kiwi-style!

Weekend One was to be the SARINZ 'Track and Clue Awareness' course – the foundation undertaken by all SAR members in New Zealand. After being issued with a 'tracking stick', the group was straight into the first exercise, with people trying to

identify fifteen unique characteristics of the ground within ten centimetres of a pole in the garden. Quite a sight!

Saturday was as intensive, with a good mixture of field and classroom based sessions, each building new skills, such as working a camp fire site for clues and starting to move onto short tracks which, if followed successfully, led to a sweet stash! The importance and many uses of the 'tracking stick' for working foot prints, 'top sign' and 'bottom sign' disturbance was all demonstrated and practiced, with a myriad of new abbreviations and tracking words flowing in the participants vocabulary. The evening's conversation was peppered with discussion on 'top sign' and 'lighthouse' and other new words.

After five days rest, the group reconvened for the second weekend, based on the SARINZ 'Sign Cutting and Ageing' course. So the aim was to take the skills to the next level, and then build on them. Sign cutting is all about finding the sign, and once found, establishing the corresponding direction of travel. It's essentially the ability to locate a track from a clue site, decision point or general location, or reacquire it if lost.

The first thing, was to set up an 'ageing' site. Being able to estimate the age of a clue, be it a footprint, apple or other, is an essential part of the tracking skill set. This enables the tracker to differentiate old and new tracks, and even estimate their age.

A number of 'ageing' sites were constructed around Smelt Mill, each with a footprint on the ground, a broken vegetable or piece of fruit, with a bite out of the other side, and a broken piece of vegetation.

These were revisited over the weekend to observe and log the changes in the clues laid by each group, and they were very marked over the time.

One of the most commonplace Last Seen items is the misper's car, so time was spent learning to 'process' the car and its immediate

surroundings. All were surprised by the information Ross could extract from the site around the car, and once again it was all linked back to the fundamentals. The afternoon was spent in the Langden Valley processing cars and following short trails (once again the sweet rewards were plentiful when found!) and the evening was spent night tracking, which provided the contrast in night and day sign cutting and tracking.

Sunday began with a high spirited session on differentiating human toilet signs, thought this didn't progress to a practical field session for once! This was followed by an attempt by Ross to teach the team the Haka, which failed miserably for most, with flailing arms around the room! The finale was a tracking exercise through varied ground, which stretched the skills of those on the course, but also reinforced that tracking across a multitude of surfaces is possible with a good degree of success.

What does the future hold? The current plan is that Ross and Tony will be back in the UK in late 2013 to run further training for the 2012 team, who are spending the intervening twelve months developing the skills they have learned on the initial courses. Ross and Tony set the expectation that 100 hours of training should be logged by their next visit, so it's no mean feat to get to that point prior to the 2013 training. The aim for 2013 is that there will be another 'foundation' course run to bring another group in to the tracking field and keep the momentum running.

Thanks must go to Tony and Ross for their instruction over the two weekends on what must have been the most remote SARINZ course held to date! And, finally, thanks to Simon Harris for the vast organisation effort to bring his vision of tracking in the UK to fruition, and for subsidising the course for all participants substantially through As-Tec-Chemicals. ■



FROM TOP: IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS ROUND THE POLE; WORKING A CAMP FIRE SITE FOR CLUES; LOOKING FOR THE SWEET STASH; DIFFERENTIATING TRACKS; CHECKING OUT THE AGEING SITES; TAKING CLUES FROM ROUND THE MISPER'S CAR; TRACKING ACROSS DIFFERENT SURFACES.



# Why was Páramo chosen for The Coldest Journey?



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Páramo: Taking you further in comfort

## NIKWAX SUPPORTS GREENPEACE ON PFC POLLUTION

Greenpeace recently called for a ban on all PFCs (fluorocarbon chemicals) in the outdoor industry. Nikwax aftercare products have NEVER contained PFCs because we share Greenpeace's concern that these chemicals pose a risk to people's health and the environment. PFCs are widely used to provide water repellency on fabrics, but they never fully break down in the environment and have been linked to cancers, reduced fertility and damaged immune systems in children.

Some aftercare brands argue that moving from one type of PFC called C8, to a slightly different version called C6 is the solution. Greenpeace's report makes it clear that isn't good enough and all PFCs present an unacceptable risk. Nikwax fully supports this assertion.

Commenting on the report, our founder Nick Brown, said: 'Greenpeace's report highlights a really important issue in our industry. At Nikwax we recognised the risks early on, and have spent the last decade developing PFC-free alternatives. This report will encourage the wider industry that it's time to deal with these chemicals once and for all.'

Nikwax's position on PFCs is just one part of our efforts to address environmental impacts. For details about how we think and act, visit [www.nikwax.com/environment](http://www.nikwax.com/environment).



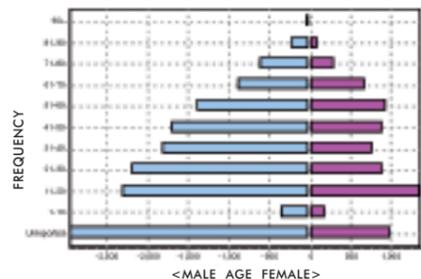
## POLICEMEN MIGHT BE LOOKING YOUNGER... BUT OUR CUSTOMERS ARE GETTING OLDER!

GED FEENEY

**S**ad though it may seem, I have been developing a graphing tool to accompany the current version of the Incident reporting software. It contains many of the usual summaries and analyses you often see at MR and similar conferences. However, there are a few new ones that readers may find interesting. These may well form the theme of future articles.

One of the many items of information requested when reporting an MR incident is the age of the person(s) involved. These are known as 'subjects' because they are the subjects of the incident, not because they are subjected to our medical treatments. These computer records go back as far as 1995 (I am trying to back-date as much data as I can, but this is as far as I have so far reached).

FIGURE 1: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS (N= 21972)  
DATE RANGE: 1.1.1995 TO 21.10.2012



# incidents figures

## Jul • Aug • Sept • 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>		Kinder	4	<b>Yorkshire Dales</b>	
Cockermouth	20	Cleveland	12	Oldham	12	CRO	17
Coniston	18	North of Tyne	2	Woodhead	2	Upper Wharfedale	8
Duddon and Furness	7	Northumberland NP	2	(Previous quarter: 57)	<b>79</b>	(Previous quarter: 18)	<b>25</b>
Kendal	14	Scarborough & Ryedale	10	<b>Peninsula</b>		<b>Search Dogs</b>	
Keswick	25	Swaledale	9	Dartmoor (Ashburton)	1	England	14
Kirkby Stephen	1	Teesdale and Weardale	1	Dartmoor (Okehampton)	4	Wales	8
Lake District MR Sea	5	(Previous quarter: 29)	<b>36</b>	Dartmoor (Tavistock)	12	South Wales	5
Langdale Ambleside	14	<b>North Wales</b>		(Previous quarter: 14)	<b>17</b>	(Previous quarter: 20)	<b>27</b>
Patterdale	1	Aberglaslyn	12	<b>South Wales</b>		<b>Non-specialists</b>	1
Penrith	6	Llanberis	35	Brecon	17	(Previous quarter: 6)	<b>1</b>
Wasdale	15	North East Wales	1	Central Beacons	13	<b>RAF Valley</b>	5
(Previous quarter: 117)	<b>126</b>	Ogwen Valley	28	Longtown	3	(Previous quarter: 5)	<b>5</b>
<b>Mid-Pennine</b>		South Snowdonia	7	Western Beacons	9	<b>Total</b>	<b>485</b>
Bolton	13	(Previous quarter: 87)	<b>83</b>	(Previous quarter: 57)	<b>42</b>	(Previous quarter: 462)	
Bowland Pennine	14	<b>Peak District</b>		<b>Border</b>	1		
Calder Valley	9	Buxton	10		<b>1</b>		
Holme Valley	5	Derby	20				
Rossendale & Pendle	2	Edale	31				
(Previous quarter: 52)	<b>43</b>						

The chart of age distributions (Figure 1) shows the preponderance in our clientele of males over females. There are similarities: both genders appear in their greatest numbers in the age range 11-20. However, the dissimilarities are perhaps more striking: the male distribution tails off uniformly as the subjects get older, where the female has another large grouping centred on the 51-60 age group. This graph is a standard tool but it only reinforces the experience of all MRTs for incidents attended.

My attention was drawn to the next series of graphs. They plot the average age of subjects for each year. This is quite a considerable amount of data (notice the n = 21,972 in Figure 1). The data set contains nearly 22,000 subjects, of which about 19,000 have recorded ages. For the sake of calculating the averages,

those whose age was unreported, have been ignored. Plotting each average (mean) against the year has produced an unexpected pattern.

First impressions indicate a perceptible rise in the ages from left to right. Further work has been able to show the trend of this behaviour. The resulting line is called a 'trendline' and has been derived mathematically from the data shown. In addition, the trendline has been extended to project into next year – this is almost a forecast of what is expected to happen next year, should this trend continue. The graph (Figure 2) shows the data for eighteen years, starting at approximately 35 years of age; the trendline is predicting an average age of 42.2 years for 2013. This is a rise of 7.2 years in eighteen years.

The difficult question is posed: 'What is causing this rise in the average age of people requiring MR assistance?' A number of possible explanations for this behaviour are possible.

- The 'young' are better prepared, have the latest gadgets, have better navigation skills, are more alert to danger, etc and hence avoid the need for assistance.
- The 'old' are becoming more reliant on the services of MRTs, not as well prepared, have poorer navigation skills, cannot get to grips with technology, become easily distracted when their attention should be on other matters.
- The number of elderly persons is on the

increase and their access to leisure activities is far greater than the hard-working young.

• Fewer young people are taking to the hills for their recreation.

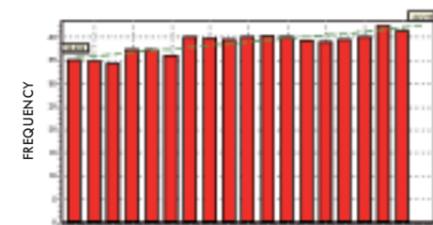
The answer probably lies within both the last two ideas. But, are they any further patterns hidden in this data? Rather than reproduce lots of other graphs, these can be summarised as follows:—

From a regional perspective, the differences are stark over the same 18-year period.

Lake District	8.3 years increase	Peak District	7.3 years increase
Mid Pennine	24.3 years increase	South Wales	12.3 years increase
North Wales	10.5 years increase	York Dales	2.9 years increase
NE England	13.8 years increase		

It is interesting to note the large value for Mid Pennine. This could be explained by the anomalous effect of type of workload that dominates this region and this may also be true of NE England and South Wales. However, this cannot be the case with the other areas that cover large areas of national parks. Finally, there must be something very special about the water in the Yorkshire Dales keeping all visitors and locals young in mind and body. Look out for visits from the manufacturers of anti-aging products!

FIGURE 2: AVERAGE AGE OF SUBJECTS  
DATE RANGE: 1.1.1995 TO 21.10.2012



## RESCUE FROM THE HIGH LEVEL TRAVERSE, PILLAR: OCTOBER



### MARK TRODDEN TELLS THE STORY FROM THE CASUALTY'S COMPANIONS' POINT OF VIEW

Late on Saturday afternoon, 27 October, at approx. 5.10pm, my friend Andy slipped on ice whilst crossing the slab between Pillar Rock and Robinsons Cairn on the High Level (Climbers/Shamrock) Traverse on the way to Looking Stead in the Lake District. Although he didn't slip over the edge (we managed to grab his waist belt quicker than a rat up a drainpipe) he cracked his head as he fell.

Initially, we hoped he hadn't been too badly hurt and, after a few minutes contemplating how close he'd been to going to the big mountain in the sky, we continued. But, as we progressed along the traverse, his gait became more and more unsure, the pain in his head increased, and he vomited. Getting him and the rest of the group (there were four of us) to a 'safe spot', it became obvious he'd been concussed and we'd need to get him off as soon as possible. Light was fading fast and we knew a storm was on its way in.

We got him 'wrapped and bagged' and tried for mobile signal on either of the two phones we were carrying – to no avail. I went along the traverse for a further ten minutes trying for signal but still nothing – it was obvious we'd have to go higher to get signal. So, together with another member of the group, I made for the ridge heading up to Pillar, knowing I'd have line of sight to Wasdale Head and if we still couldn't get signal we could drop down to the hotel in the valley. Our other team member was tasked with ensuring Andy was kept warm and awake.

By this time light was fading fast,

the temperature was dropping like a stone and the wind was picking up. It was especially noted that the condition on the traverse was getting worse by the minute with more and more ice appearing (the traverse is on the shaded north face of Pillar).

Eventually, we crested the ridge, managed to get intermittent signal with both mobiles, and, at about 6.30pm, got a call through to the police with a request to alert mountain rescue. After giving all the required details regarding the accident and the group, we were asked to remain in position so a member of the assigned team could contact us for confirmation of details. By this time, light was gone and a fair nasty sleet was blowing at us.

About fifteen minutes after our call to the police went through, we received a call from Chris Cookson of Cockerthorpe MRT, who asked for confirmation of the location of the casualty, nature of the accident, and group details. I also advised him we'd have to move back to Andy's location, out of signal, as it had started to blow a hooley and we needed to get into warm kit.

The move back was a tad horrendous – the sleet wasn't just covering the route of the traverse, which can be hard enough to follow in daylight, it was covering the ice that was on it making it a bit of a nasty return. It took nearly 45 minutes to cover less than a kilometre but we got back to the casualty and his minder safely and, after checking that both were correctly protected from the storm, proceeded to get ourselves into cold weather kit. Meanwhile, it transpired that Andy

had vomited further three times.

We were surprised, just about five minutes later, to hear the sirens of the Cockerthorpe MRT vehicles coming along the track from Ennerdale, and even more surprised to see the headlights of the first two team members arrive about 200 metres along the traverse only about thirty or forty minutes after that, having ascended some 400m or so over difficult terrain and a distance of 1.5 to 2km from the track. Those guys can shift!

One team member quickly got to grips with assessing Andy's injury and condition whilst another deployed what has to be the biggest bothy bag I have ever seen over all of us and then proceeded to fill out an incident report. During this time, Chris was liaising with RAF Valley, guiding in the SAR Sea King whose beating rotor blades we heard just five minutes later.

Very quickly the helicopter was in hover dangerously close to the rock face and, minutes later, an RAF Medic appeared under the bothy bag to assess Andy's condition for winching aboard the Sea King. Whilst all this was going on, members of CMRT were assessing the best location to winch Andy from (winching from the traverse was impossible) and the pilot of the Sea King was doing a sterling job maintaining the helicopter in a stationary hover whilst all the time being buffeted by strong winds and having his visibility severely reduced by the sleet. Luckily, we were located above a spot from which it was safe to winch him aboard and, after less than thirty minutes from the team's arrival on scene, Andy

was being winched aboard the Sea King and on his way to the West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven.

The three of us remaining were fully kitted and well prepared to remain on the traverse in our bags until first light before moving to our original intended destination, the south side of the River Lisa near to the Black Sail Youth Hostel. However, the team kindly offered to take us via Land Rover along the valley to Black Sail, if we accompanied them off the mountainside to where their vehicles were parked. Who were we to refuse? So, we dropped down to the team vehicle (Note: they were attentive to our needs all the way down, carrying Andy's rather heavy pack and even swapping one of our group's packs for a much lighter piece of kit when he took a bit of a tumble on the wet slope) and, once the team had de-kitted and loaded up, we were being transported to Black Sail.

Noting that we looked a bit dehydrated and famished, they offered us Lucozade and snacks from their 'stash-box' in the Land Rover and, once we arrived at Black Sail spoke to the guardians, Martin and Suzy, and blagged us a bed for the night! Not only that, they said they'd take Andy's kit back to their base in Cockerthorpe for us to pick up the next day, so we wouldn't have to cart it all the way back to our cars, parked in Langdale. We could not have been treated with greater consideration and kindness!

Sitting by the burner in Black Sail's main room, mugs of steaming tea in hand we regaled Martin, Suzy, and the others in the room with our story (everyone at Black Sail had been observing the proceedings on the mountainside, beer in hand, as they unfolded) before bedding down for the night.

Next morning, after a cracking full English breakfast, Martin kindly got hold of the hospital for us so

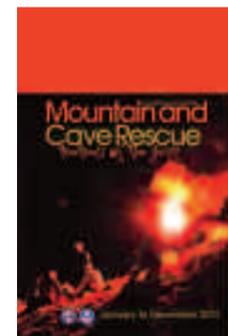
we could find out how Andy was doing. Ironically, he was on Pillar ward! The ward nurse assured us he was comfortable, so we kitted up and prepared for our return to the cars.

A very soggy eight-hour yomp later, buffeted by wind all the way, we arrived at Langdale. Then it was on to Whitehaven, via Cockerthorpe base, to visit Andy. We found him dozing on his bed, with a nice sizable lump on the right of his head and a line in the back of his hand. He confirmed that, after having had a CRT scan and having been examined by the consultant, he had, indeed, been badly concussed. Apparently, when being questioned on his arrival at the hospital, he couldn't recall the year or date, his home address or his home 'phone number, but was recovering well by the time we got there.

On behalf of Andy, I would like to extend my most sincere thanks and gratitude to all those involved in the call-out. Andy recovered well and was soon back at work and we're going to mercilessly rib him about the difference between dry rock and iced rock for months to come!

Seriously, though, the excess weight of pack he was carrying, and the unnecessary amount of clothing he was wearing, were undoubtedly contributory to his accident insofar that at a critical moment he switched off due to his being possibly overtired and dehydrated.

This is not a new issue but up until now he's ignored my requests to get rid of the luxuries and lighten his load (for example, his winter sleeping bag is a full four-times the weight and volume of Tracey's and mine, which is ridiculous). This incident has been a wake-up call for him and he realises how close a call it was. So, I've agreed with him that we will address these issues over the winter months and hopefully as a result of the incident a more 'hill-savvy' Andy will emerge.



## DOES YOUR TEAM HAVE ANY HOT SPOTS ON YOUR PATCH? ANNUAL REVIEW 2013



### SALLY SEED

We'll be putting together another MREW Annual Review in the new year and we're planning an article about black spots, hot spots and regular rescue or search locations across England and Wales. We can use the stats (thanks, Ged) for some of the usual suspects such as Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Helvellyn but we know there are plenty of other names and places that crop

up all too frequently in your incident reports.

For instance, the Derby team regularly has to rescue visitors from the stepping stones beneath Thorpe Cloud in Dovedale and Coniston MRT has a web page dedicated to the easy wrong turning and navigation nightmare that is Great How.

- Do you have similar common locations for rescues or wrong turnings?
- Would you like us to feature them in the Annual Review 2013?

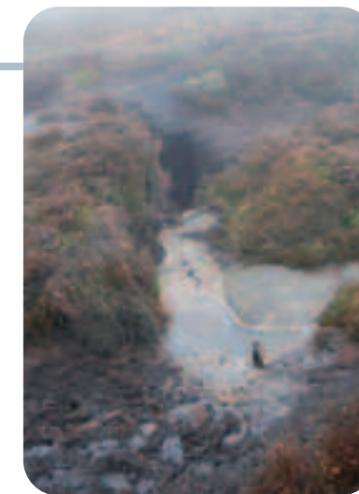
If so, please get in touch with Judy Whiteside (editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk) or Sally Seed (sally.seed@btconnect.com) or via the Facebook group. If you let us know before the end of January (if possible), we'll see what we can do about warning the public in the review and making something of this story for the broader media.

## READY AND WAITING TO SWALLOW THE UNWARY: OCTOBER

Towards the end of what we now hear was the second wettest year ever recorded, Buxton MRT warned hill walkers using the high Peak District moorlands about the dangers of peat bogs. In a six-week period leading up to October, the team were aware of three incidents involving hill walkers trapped in peat bogs. One incident, on Saturday, 28 October, occurred as one of their team members was walking between Rushop Edge and Brown Knoll. An elderly gentleman walked into a bog and was soon up to his waist in the brown sticky, stinking, glue-like peat bog. Fortunately, he managed to extricate himself. He was very wet but otherwise unharmed.

An additional concern was walkers suffering hypothermia brought on by wet clothing and energy expended in fighting to remove themselves from the bog. All three incidents resulted in the walkers becoming trapped and thankfully released without harm.

The peat bogs on Kinder Scout and surrounding moorlands are a familiar hazard to regular users, often providing a challenge in terms of navigating them safely. However, 2012 was different. Following extensive rainfall the bogs were particularly wet and waiting for the unwary walker to stray into them. Walkers must be vigilant and keep a wary eye open for the peat bogs and avoid them if you can.



## THE LUCKIEST SHEEP IN WEST CUMBRIA: DECEMBER



Witness the luckiest sheep in West Cumbria, as reported on the Wasdale MRT Facebook page in December. The fortunate animal was swept into a group of Swiftwater Rescue Technicians from Wasdale MRT, doing a spot of training on the River Derwent, and duly retrieved from the water. Graphic demonstration, were it needed of the reason you need up-stream 'spotters'!

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## APPS FOR SARCALL

JON WHITELEY

**N**ow that SARCALL has become firmly established across a wide variety of mountain and cave rescue teams, with users coming from MREW, BCRC, MRC of Scotland and Mountain Rescue Ireland, the SARCALL team has received numerous requests for an App to make the usage simple and straightforward.

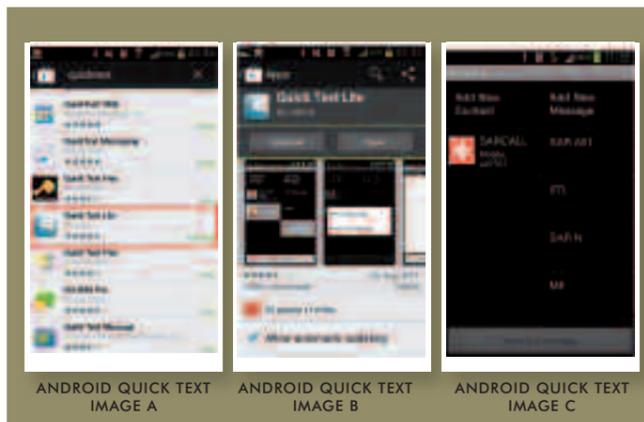
Whilst the development team undertake to listen to users and take into account wherever possible the requests, the App is not something that's coming on stream (yet!!). However, all is not lost, because the Apps market is bursting with useful and not-so-useful Apps as users of Android or IOS equipment know. A number of users have been using a few of these and below is a synopsis of some you might find useful.

### A quick method of confirming your availability, for Android and IOS users

For team leaders and team members who use the SMS Response tool within SARCALL, Quick Text Lite may be of use. The App is free and Android users can find it in the Google Play Store, whilst IOS users will find Quick Text free in their App Store. The Quick

Text App only requires four finger taps of the screen to be able to send a pre-formatted message and one of these finger taps is to open the App. The set up is very easy and intuitive. There are a number of similar Apps in the marketplace, but this one seems to do the job very nicely. This particular one has been used extensively by Cockermouth MRT and comes highly recommended.

To find and download it, Android users should just type 'quicktext' into Google Play and they will be presented an extensive list. Select 'Quick Text Lite' (see Android Image A), then install the App (see Android Image B). Android Image C shows the interface screen of Quick Text. Firstly add a contact, in this case the SARCALL response number on the left-hand side of the screen, and this number is drawn from the phone's address book. The right-hand side of the screen is where the user creates a number of text templates. To use the App, the user selects the contact from the left half of the screen, with one tap of the finger, then selects the message to send from the right half of the screen. Both these selections are then highlighted and only then does the 'Send Text Message' bar at the bottom of the screen become highlighted. One more tap on this section of screen means the message is sent. The sent message is stored in your normal SMS client.



### IOS users will find their version in their App Store

For the IOS user there's a similar App which does exactly the same thing. This is 'Texting123', available from the App store for 69p. The App works in much the same way as the Quick Text App described and the layout is intuitive for the user. The upper 'roller' stores the names and contacts and the lower roller the templates. When both the appropriate selections have been made, the user clicks on the bar in the middle to send the message (see Apple Image A). In setting the App up, the user simply selects the edit screen and creates a range of quick messages (see Apple Image B). Contacts are added by selecting from the contacts list stored in the address book. (see Apple Image C).

Under test, both these Apps do the job and, in terms of the SARCALL response tool, makes the sending of notification of attendance to a call-out a very quick and easy task.

### What about when you're tucked up in your bed or at the opera?

With the importance of SARCALL and the reliance that team members place on it to alert them to a call-out, Apps once again come to the rescue for those who at times have to have their phones on silent. This could be because they're in a meeting, asleep or just have their phones on silent – who knows, they might be at the opera...

For this, I use 'smsAlert' (find it in the Google Play Store or at <http://jansouza.com/smsAlert>). This links very simply with an App that, for me personally, triggers my phone to go into silent mode automatically at 23:00 and wakes itself in the morning at 07:00 (Jules, bless her, gets just a little annoyed with the chirps of emails etc throughout the night). For this automatic sleep/wake, I use a Profile Scheduler created by

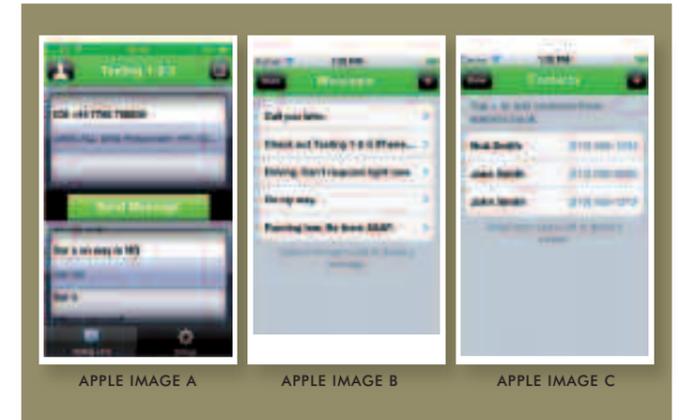
'developersinfo.com' and, again, available in the Google Play store. There are numerous similar Apps for Android and IOS users.

For the Android user 'smsAlert' triggers a phone into an extra loud mode and brings a phone out of silent mode, wherever you are... (it may not be the most attractive App available in term of looks, but it works and at 2.00am that's what you want!!) The App is available in the Google Play Store (see Android smsAlert Image A and B) and monitors the phone's incoming SMSs for either specific numbers or key words.

The users of SARCALL will be aware that when an SMS is sent and received on their phones, there is no number associated with the SMS. What they get is the source address word 'SARCALL' as the header of the message (some teams may have opted for a different source address (eg. DevonCRO)). On most phones it is usually impossible to store the word 'SARCALL' in the number section of contacts. So with 'smsAlert' the user can store the word 'SARCALL' as a key word (see Android smsAlert Image C and D) and then associate one of three ring tones – these are all loud and certainly will wake you at 2.00am and usually the rest of the house, too.

It is possible to have multiple alerts so team leaders may have one trigger and ring tone for incoming messages from the police, another for incoming alert if the message is sent from the team. The volume can be adjusted within the App and a vibrate function is available. When the trigger word or number is recognised, the App triggers (see Android smsAlert Image E) the selected ring tone sounds and only stops ringing when the 'dismiss' button is pressed. Be warned that if you're using this or any similar App in a place such as the cinema or the theatre and you get a call-out, everyone will know about it, so I suggest you turn your phone OFF...

In the Android market, there are a



variety of other Apps available similar to 'smsAlert'. However, not all seem to work with the different operating systems of Android (Ice Cream Sandwich/Jelly Bean etc, etc), a few to name are: Fire Alert, Emergency Text Alert, SMS (Text) Pager, Klaxon Oncall Pager and Alarm Box, to name

a few. There do seem to be a lot with German as the language, not much good if you only speak 'Devon'....

For the IOS user, the search is on for a similar App. If anyone finds one, please let us know via [sarcall\\_admin@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:sarcall_admin@mountain.rescue.org.uk).





## 'MOBILE 4 FROM MOBILE 2. WE'VE HAD A BIT OF A TUMBLE...'

### LANGDALE AMBLESIDE MRT

**A** routine training session for Langdale Ambleside MRT went very wrong on Saturday 29 September. Three of our four Land Rovers left our base in Ambleside, for our annual reconnaissance of fell-access points. Unfortunately, only two came back again. The third – Mobile 2 – spent most of the following 24 hours in the bottom of Tongue Ghyll after a supporting wall collapsed, sending part of the track, and the Land Rover, into a steep gully.

Mercifully, none of the three occupants was hurt. However, the incident did serve as a reminder of the dangers of off-road driving. This article, written at the suggestion of Daryl Garfield, MREW Vehicles Officer, looks at what happened and the reasons why the consequences weren't a great deal worse.

#### What happened?

Every year, the team devotes one of its training sessions to visiting the less frequently used fell access points in its area.

On this occasion, Mobile 2, with three full team members on board,

had been to the top of Tongue Ghyll Force (behind Broadrayne Farm, north of Grasmere). It was returning to the A591 when the edge of the track gave way. Despite frantic attempts to pull the nearside front wheel away from the drop, the vehicle was dragged off the bridleway, causing it to roll three times down the steep bank before coming to rest on its side against trees at the bottom of the ghyll. As one of the occupants put it, 'I kept watching the same bag appear on my lap, then on the ceiling, then on my lap, over and over again'.

After clearing themselves of injuries, the occupants (shaken, in every

sense) were able to evacuate the vehicle by opening a front offside window, climb back up the bank to the track, and radio for assistance. The call was picked up by Mobile 4, which was at the other end of Grasmere village, and within a few minutes additional team members were removing what contents they could from the stricken vehicle and returning everyone to our base in Ambleside.

There were many nerve-steadying cups of tea, and several phone calls. The police were informed about the incident, neighbouring teams were advised that we were a vehicle down,

we worked with the National Trust to put boons into the watercourse, warned the Environment Agency about the pollution risk (which fortunately didn't materialise), and our insurers confidently told us they would have us back on the road in no time. ('We'll send a van round. Just one question: What's a ghyll?')

Each of the three team members involved were asked straightaway to produce a written account of the incident while it was fresh in their minds; these formed part of an internal 'critical incident' review held at our next monthly committee meeting, three days later. Meanwhile,

a questions-and-answers statement was prepared in anticipation of press enquiries, although in the event, there weren't any. This was done in-house, although an offer of help from MREW was gratefully received. A request was also sent to all team members to pass any external enquiries to the team's approved spokespersons, and not to make comments or circulate photographs about the incident on social networking sites in case they compromised our insurance claim.

Team members then returned to the scene with police tape and warning signs, alerted nearby residents, and awaited the arrival of a recovery team. A plan was hatched, and the following morning, Mobile 2 was recovered by Ainsworths of Ulverston, with the assistance of a specialist winching tractor, one of our vehicles, and a lot of winch cable. Remarkably, it was able to make it back to the road under its own steam, from where it was taken to Lakeland Land Rover for assessment and repair.

Subsequent inspection of the scene suggested that one of the slate blocks supporting the track had 'popped' under the vehicle's weight, causing the entire wall to fail. Although the track is used only infrequently by the team, it also provides agricultural and industrial access (to the Thirlmere Pipeline), and we attributed the cause to the recent wet weather. The hazard wouldn't have been spotted by checking the route on foot prior to committing, although that is our practice when on unfamiliar terrain. However, we have since learned that a utilities vehicle also came off the track a few years ago – in the same place and for the same reason, although not with such a dramatic outcome – something that we had not previously been aware of.

#### Observations and learning points

The following points arose from a critical incident review held on Tuesday 2 October.

##### 1. Roll bars are essential.

Don't skimp! Land Rovers in particular have notoriously weak roofs. When we replaced ours in 2008, we chose high-gauge metal internal and external roll bars, and we have since been told that this was one of the best decisions we've made. To put it bluntly, had we not done so, this article might have been an obituary.

##### 2. Keeping seatbelts fastened.

Seatbelts are legally required anyway on any off-road track that has been designated as a Byway Open to All Traffic (we have several in our area) and they are always advisable. Each of the occupants involved in this incident was wearing a seatbelt, in line with our driving policy, and this too prevented serious injury or worse.

##### 3. Keeping large and heavy items out of the cab.

Fortunately, the contents of Mobile 2 are stowed in the back behind a cage, some also secured with karabiners, and the only loose items were the occupants' small personal sacks. But as a result of this incident we have turned this existing practice into a formal policy. We are fitting our people-carrier with a dog guard for the same reason.

Even a small bottle of water could cause serious injury if it was ricocheting around a confined space, so the same is certainly true of other passengers! Another reason why everyone should be belted in.

##### 4. Having an emergency hamper.

Obviously, this is one accessory that does belong in the cab, but firmly secured to a mounted holster in an accessible place. One wasn't needed in this instance, but it easily could have been.

##### 5. Knowing our limitations.

The recovery of Mobile 2 was put in the complete control of an outside recovery team with specialist expertise. It was not an occasion to self-rescue! The same is true of winching in general. Our vehicles are fitted with winching units, but they are only used in the right circumstances and when the appropriate skills and experience are available.

##### 6. Making prompt contact with the insurers.

Ours were notified within three hours of the incident, and as soon as all the relevant details had been collated. We were also able to get their consent to use our preferred repairers.

#### In summary...

This was a genuine accident. There is no suggestion of driver error and our policies governing driving, driver training and vehicle specification have not been found wanting. Indeed, they may well have saved lives. However, the incident and subsequent review reinforced the need for many of the practices we already had in place, and in the case of point 3, led us to make quite a major change to the management of our vehicles.



#### A happy ending?

The relief we all felt that there were no fatal or serious injuries is indescribable. However, in addition, we are also pleased to be able to report that Mobile 2 is repairable. Crucially, the roll bars protected the chassis from damage, and we look forward to having it back in service soon. The repair costs will be covered by our insurance, with the exception of a £100 excess.

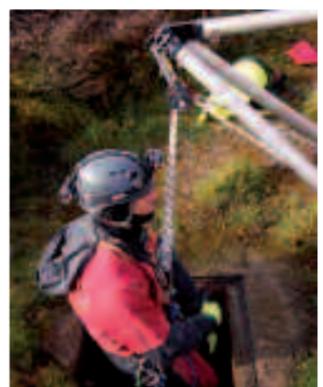
Meanwhile the bridleway is now officially beyond use, to us and everyone else, and the landowner is working with the National Park Authority in the hope it might be repaired. ■

ABOVE: SOME OF THE KIT USED; FINALLY, ON THE WAY TO THE MENDERS.

BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: SOME OF THE DAMAGE; THE RECOVERY STARTS; HAULING; THE TRACTOR, THE ROAD COLLAPSE; FINAL STEP



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BCRC CONFERENCE



Ingleborough Hall proved an inspirational venue, with accommodation for all and with provision for all the meals required. There were separate rooms and lecture theatres to accommodate all our needs. Further, we had contingency plans for the practical sessions if the weather on Saturday meant we could not go onto Leck Fell as planned.

MAIN SHOT: THE 'FUN' BIT - RESCUE RACE WITH ADDED WATER IVAN YOUNG. INSET: PITCH HAULING JOE MELLOR ABOVE: TESTING OUT THE LARKIN FRAME FILIP FILIPOVIC.

Following a presentation on the work of CRO and the official opening by Bill Quinton (CRO chairman), Bill Whitehouse (BCRC chairman) provided a brief summary of the BCRC. This concluded with the presentation of Certificates of Appreciation to Brian Jopling and John Cordingley, who retired as equipment and diving officer respectively at this year's BCRC AGM after many, many years of service.

This was followed by Martin Holdroyd extolling the current Vietnam developments and what might be achieved in the coming years. Then we adjourned to the bar.

## Pitch hauling 1:1

The team from CRO had pre-rigged the entrance pitch to Gavel Pot. The aim of the session was to haul a

stretcher and casualty out whilst a barrow boy accompanied the stretcher on a separate rope.

CRO members described their rigging method and there seemed to be a consensus that most teams would approach the scenario in a similar manner. The main difference between teams appeared to be whether two different coloured ropes are used rather than two white ones. The haul was achieved using a 3:1 pulley system on the haul rope. The pitch haul rope was deviated along the traverse to allow all present to assist via a pulley at the pitch head.

A second rope was attached to the stretcher to act as a back-up rope and this was belayed through a Grigri from the pitch head bolts.

Due to the rub point on the lip, a long releasable deviation was set up



on the haul rope from across the shakehole. This was controlled by another CRO member and apprentice.

This simple technique was successful in recovering the stretcher and casualty from the hole without any drama and the hardest part of the exercise was the stretcher carry back up to the fell along the narrow path.

## Pitch hauling 2:1

Both hauling sessions took place in Gavel Pot and prove to be popular. Both sides of the rock bridge in the open shake hole were used with a 2:1 assist of an injured caver using the left hand entrance, whilst the open pot to the right was used to evacuate a casualty on a Neil Robertson stretcher using a direct haul.

Both scenarios involved rigging an

awkward access on exposed muddy ledges to reach the pitch heads and traverse lines were fixed to ensure safe access. For the 2:1 system the casualty was placed in a 'baby-bouncer' lifting harness with the haul point directly above the pitch. The haul line was run through a second pulley attached with a releasable hitch. Given the awkward access at the top of the pitch, the haul ropes were then deviated through a second pulley, allowing the haul to follow the path back to the rock bridge. This ensured that the hauling team were able to move back along reasonable ground whilst being attached to the traverse line for safety. Once the casualty had reached the pitch head, the pulley was released and the casualty transferred to the traverse line for evacuation.

Hauling the Neil Rob up the open shaft proved to be a bit problematic as the haul needed deviating just below the top of the pitch. The first group managed this by deviating from an in-situ stake whilst subsequent groups used a very long line deviation from trees on the opposite side of the shaft which could be released more easily as the stretcher approached the pitch head.

All the teams found the exercises interesting and realistic. Perhaps most useful were the discussions that took place during the exercises as alternative approaches used by different teams were considered.

## Shoring and damming

An unusual topic for a CRO conference but Jim Davis quickly justified its inclusion by outlining the problems caused, all too frequently, by flooding – a situation more likely to increase than decrease. Two issues were addressed: (a) diverting streams away from entrances and (b) creating pools deep enough to allow fire service pumps to operate efficiently.

We were presented with various pieces of kit such as scaffolding, planks, sand bags, polythene and canvas sheeting, along with tools to modify them, and invited to build a temporary dam/diversion. The weight of ponded water requires good

scaffold bracing, and siting such a structure needs careful consideration. It helps to have good local knowledge of water flow behaviour over and under the ground to avoid transferring problems to a different part of the cave system.

Within half an hour each group managed to construct a very effective dam, diverting water down an alternative channel. All were suitably impressed by the relevance of the exercise and the hands-on approach.

Due to time pressures, the business of shoring was not examined in detail, but touched on in discussion. Clearing collapses is a specialised task and it was strongly recommended that this type of work be delegated to diggers with the knowledge, experience and skills.

## The Larkin Frame

Bill Batson, of Lyon Equipment, greeted us warmly and went straight to the point. The frame resembles two bi-pods whose poles were joined at the right angle at the bottom and the tops connected with an additional bar. The whole thing, placed by a small cave entrance, was secured by an adjustable rope (grillon) attached to the bar on the one side and two ground anchors on the other. The main and secondary, which also stabilised the frame by means of pulleys, were attached to the same anchors with IDs.

We were told it worked on the principle of an ordinary bi-pod but with considerable advantages:—

- All parts of the frame were well-linked and, apart from the two anchors and two rescuers stabilising it at its bottom, no other safety measures were necessary.
- In its final stage, it worked like a see-saw which was much safer than an ordinary bi-pod. It looked solid and safe to use.
- Its full size reach was 2.5 metres (we worked at 1.2 metres version) and it could hold 400kg.
- It did not swing sideways unless improper traction direction applied.

Bill encouraged us to try it ourselves. One of us operated the grillon, two the IDs, two more put their feet on the two plates attached to the bottom of the frame not to let it move.

# caves



LEFT: FIRST, BUILD YOUR DAM IVAN YOUNG. BELOW: PROVIDING THE 'FOUL AIR' IVAN YOUNG.



One of us was lowered down the pit a dozen metres or so and hauled up again. When the karabiner connecting the ropes to the 'casualty' was about to touch the pulley on the extended end of the frame, the whole thing was swung towards us and safely landed on the other end of the frame. The casualty was safely moved away from the cave entrance.

Greg Michalek, Polish Mountain and Cave Rescue GPR

## Foul air

Foul air has been a popular topic during the last few years for cave rescue training, and this year's BCRC conference was no exception. This session fully utilised the unique facilities of Ingleborough Hall, with its secret tunnel and ice house to demonstrate force ventilation techniques. The secret tunnel was filled with dramatic orange smoke to demonstrate the possible usage and development of portable/battery powered air-moving equipment.

A team from the Dales has been experimenting with air-moving equipment, which was demonstrated. This, or similar equipment, may prove a useful tool for cave rescue.

## Communications

Pete Allwright took us through the development of the Nicola Mk III radio. Aspects discussed included the proposed capacitive aerials, use of Bluetooth headsets and the proposed key pad to enable sending text messages. Following a quick briefing session in the comfort of a tent, with some discussion regarding the conflict between the benefits offered by modern technological advances and the need to maintain simplicity and ease of use, we

headed outside to set up the Nicola III. After establishing that the radio worked well on the surface, a team headed into the entrance of Lost John's to set up both the Nicola III and a Heyphone. The Heyphone unfortunately completely failed to work and helped confirm the urgent need for the availability of replacement radios. Excellent clear comms were established with the Nicola III between the underground and surface locations using both the handheld microphone and the Bluetooth headset.

Continued on page 36



ABOVE: KAT HAWKINS ON THE SURFACE RADIO STEVE FINCH.  
INSET: STRETCHER HANDLING JOE MELLOR.

The next prototype (version C) is expected to be available for testing by teams early next year. Assuming all is well this will be the preproduction version, with production currently planned for Spring 2013.

Pete confirmed that although the radios are to be Bluetooth enabled, they will be supplied as standard with a handheld microphone, with an option to purchase Bluetooth headsets. Another point worth noting is that, although the Nicola III will have lots of extra functionality, it can be used simply as a Heyphone replacement and will be fully compatible with the existing Heyphones.

Clearly a lot of dedicated time and effort has gone into the development of the Nicola III radio and the next prototype is eagerly awaited.

## The 'fun' bit

Daytime sessions ended with the 'fun' bit: a cave rescue race down Clapham Beck. Water levels were not too high allowing the event to go ahead but participants were guaranteed to get wet in the well designed assault course. In the event, any actual record of the winners seems to have disappeared, but it seems an ad hoc team comprising volunteers from a number of different teams, were the winners.

Saturday evening entertainment came from local band The Swarm, offering Blues with a 'sting'. The bar throughout was run mostly by the Holmes family – three generations helped through Friday and Saturday



overlooked, ways of improving the experience of a casualty.

The experiences of those present in administering the various drugs available in previous incidents were shared and Entonox and morphine were identified as being particularly valuable in what are sometimes lengthy and frequently awkward rescues from caves and mines. Some teams administer morphine intramuscularly and others intra-nasally, a perceived advantage of the latter being a significant improvement in the speed with which the effects of the drug are noticeable in a cold casualty. The presence at the workshop of delegates from outside the UK who do not have access to morphine (or, in some cases, Entonox) served to emphasise to those of us based in the UK the value of the privilege we hold in being permitted to use these drugs.

Also identified as an important resource for those involved in cave and mine rescue in the UK was access to the Casualty Care qualification combining, as it does, a comprehensive and relevant syllabus (including the administration of morphine) with the discipline of written and practical exams.

By 10.00am we were all better informed about the importance to casualties – and therefore to rescuers – of pain relief in all its forms, had all managed to keep our breakfasts where they belonged and were looking forward to watching Bill Batson break things with his Lyon Equipment testing rig.

## Stretchers

Various cave rescue stretchers were available for this item. CRO still use the Neil Robertson frame-mounted stretcher when conditions allow. This

may be very old technology but does provide the casualty with good protection in the conditions found in Yorkshire caves.

Alternatives examined included Troll and JARE stretchers. These are considerably lighter and may have spinal splints as part of the equipment.

The demonstration showed an example of the hauling methods used underground including the Z-rigging mechanics.

## Equipment testing

Bill Batson was ably assisted by Ian Watson in fitting a short tape sling into the test rig before loading it to breaking point. This new, undamaged sling finally failed at a point well beyond that stated by the manufacturer (Lyon Equipment).

This 'control test' was followed by damaging a similar sling in various ways and comparing the breaking point. Damage such as a cut in the sling was shown to fail in proportion to the damage incurred whereas an abraded sling failed at low breaking strain not obviously indicated by the apparent damage. Other tests included subjecting the sling to heat to show similar failings.

An instructive session – damage to equipment can be insidious and requires all to be diligent since lives will depend on correct inspection and maintenance.

## Desktop exercise

Led by Tom Redfern, of CRO, the aim was to compare and contrast the operational priorities of a cave rescue controller. A scenario was set that a caver had undertaken a solo caving trip through the Lancaster-Easegill system. The session last two hours during which time additional information was released and a number of 'time outs' were taken to allow the participants to exchange how they manage various aspects of a call-out in their own area – there were many similarities, although a number of differences are evident.

Continued on  
page 39

## LAND ROVER MOVES SOUTH FROM KENDAL TO DEVON

JON WHITELEY

**A**s Rescue Controller of Devon Cave Rescue Organisation (DCRO) I have always found the benefit of attending the national meetings at Preston to be twofold: firstly, we're there to learn and offer opinions and be part of forming and maintaining the framework of the national organisation and, secondly, the networking between teams – which some might say is more important. I usually find there is never enough time to chat with all the people I'd like too.

This networking has paid dividends for DCRO and now takes the team into the next stage of its evolution and development. This occurred during a short break at the May 2012 business meeting, shortly after the vehicle insurance agenda item. Keith Pittman, deputy chairman of the Kendal team commented to Roger King and I that the scheme would be of benefit to all teams, especially a small team like DCRO. My response was simple: 'It's not going to make any difference – we don't own a vehicle and never have.'

Keith mentioned that Kendal were likely to be replacing their

oldest vehicle, an R-registered Land Rover 110 Defender and asked if we were interested. We swapped business cards and went on with the business meeting. This was the start of many conversations and emails. Roger and I visited Kendal's base in October, following the BCRC Conference. Team leader Eddie Harrison attended the conference on the Sunday and travelled over from Kendal to Clapham in the vehicle so Roger had a chance to test drive it back over to Kendal.

The Land Rover had been bought by Kendal from new and converted as an MR ambulance, including capacity to carry a casualty on a Bell stretcher (in some comfort!). Over the years, it has seen many rescues, training exercises and fundraising activity.

In December, the vehicle headed south, perhaps its longest journey yet, to become the first vehicle DCRO have owned. And, by the way, it is now living close to its sister vehicle, which Dartmoor Rescue Group (Plymouth) purchased from Kendal a couple of years ago. To the lads and lasses of Kendal MSRT, thanks from all at Devon Cave Rescue Organisation, we appreciate your support.



JON WHITELEY (LEFT) AND ROGER KING (SECOND FROM RIGHT) TAKE DELIVERY OF THE KENDAL VEHICLE FROM KEITH PITMAN, TONY WOMACK AND EDDIE HARRISON.



## DIAMONDS IN THE CAVE

Devon CRO received fantastic support from Kents Cavern, the well known show cave in Torquay, and the location for their recent medal ceremony in an evening that showcased the work of the team to partners and VIP guests and demonstrated the longstanding relationship between the two organisations.

The presentation of 23 medals was made by the Lord Lieutenant of Devon Mr Eric Dancer, who was thrilled to present in such a unique location. He enjoyed a tour of the cave, along with Paul Netherton, ACC Devon and Cornwall Police, Trevor Stratford, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Devon and Somerset FRS, John Salisbury, of West Country Ambulance, Roger Stringer of Torbay Council and Bill and Dorothy Whitehouse, representing BCRC and MREW. Members of neighbouring teams also attended, alongside Andrew Pollard and Matt Robinson from the local Go Outdoors stores.

The evening began with a tour of the cave and a demonstration of various aspects of the team's equipment and associated techniques, before guests met in the final chamber of the cave for a glass of wine and, with images projected high on the wall of the cave, a welcome from Brian Johnson, chairman of DCRO. During the medal presentation, it was noted that twelve team members had also received the Golden Jubilee medal. Bill Whitehouse presented the first ever BCRC long service awards to Mike Bond (40 years), Alec Collyer (25 years), Brian Johnson (25 years), David Millin (25 years), Alastair Neill (25 years) and Jon Whiteley (25 years).

## ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY AWARD FOR CAVING TRAGEDY RESCUERS

In October, Rick Stanton and John Volanthen, members of the BCRC overseas diving team, went to Buckingham Palace to receive Royal Humane Society Bronze Medals and certificates from HRH Princess Alexandra (RHS President) for the part they played in the attempt to rescue Eric Establie from the Dragonniere cave in the Ardeche, France, as previously reported in the magazine. The citation on the certificate read:-

*For having, between 3 and 14 October 2010, at very great personal risk, courageously assisted in attempting to save the life of a man who had been diving alone in the extreme conditions of the flooded passage of Dragonniere de Gard, Ardeche Gorge, Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, France, where it is thought a collapse of gravel and silt had blocked his return to the surface.'*

Rick Stanton has also been made an MBE in the New Year Honours List for 'services to local government' as a firefighter with West Midlands FRS.



RICK AND JOHN WITH THEIR CERTIFICATES.



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Continued from page 36

### Coroner

Geoff Fell, HM Deputy Coroner for North Yorkshire Western District gave in a light-hearted presentation that initially didn't really convey the seriousness of the situation you could find yourself in! The primary objective of a Coroner is to present a simply understood story to the victim's family of what happened, without apportioning blame and where the verdict is accidental death!

Many inquests are straightforward and undramatic, if a little nerve-wracking for those unaccustomed to courts and families are often genuinely appreciative of the explanations given by witnesses. If only it was always that simple...

What happens if YOU are involved as a rescuer of a victim? You may be asked by the Coroner's Officer, usually a police officer, to make a statement.

● Be precise and factual, keeping your eye on the evidence.

- Do NOT attempt to convey your personal feelings.
  - If you were switched on enough to take photos at the time these maybe helpful.
  - Usually, a police photographer will attend... but, in that regard, a fatality underground is clearly a situation best dealt with by a team member.
  - The coroner is likely to get very upset if these photos appear elsewhere before the inquest.
  - The Coroner may want to attend the site to better understand what happened.
  - Use simple language as far as possible – if describing technical concepts, do not answer in terms that only those with a special knowledge will understand.
  - Eventually, everyone in the court, particularly the family, must comprehend your evidence.
- If you are asked to attend an inquest:—

- Your testimony will usually be based on your statement made sometime previously. The coroner will question you on that report.
- It could be that some months pass by between the statement and the court appearance.
- It's usually a good idea to read and refresh yourself about that statement before attending court.
- Answer questions loudly and clearly.
- If answers are being written down (often the case), watch the coroner's pen and proceed when appropriate.
- Keep answers short, sharp and to the point – but don't speak too quickly.
- Be precise and factual.
- Do not refer to a written report submitted to the coroner, eg. 'As I said in my report' – the case will be decided on evidence actually heard.
- Do not stray outside of your field of knowledge – if you don't know the answer, say so.

- Don't rely on memory to give an answer if there is a written record available.
  - It is generally better to direct an answer to the coroner rather than an advocate or other person asking questions. This is less adversarial and helps to diffuse the situation when tensions are mounting.
  - Any answer given must be correct. Having to backtrack later is embarrassing, does incalculable harm to credit, and leaves the rest of the evidence given in doubt.
- A Powerpoint version of Geof's presentation is available from the BCRC via <http://tinyurl.com/bjfmnoy>.
- A full copy of the report, including comment from MREW Chairman David Allan, BCRC Chairman Bill Whitehouse and Greg Michalek of Polish Mountain and Cave Rescue GOPR is available at <http://tinyurl.com/abe39w4>.*

## talkback Microdrones for navigation



I READ WITH INTEREST the article 'a new asset for MR?' in issue 42. This letter is just to let you know it has been tried before here in Cockermouth. For ten years, I have been flying still and video cameras on my radio controlled model aircraft using cameras I modified to take pictures when the 'retract undercarriage' switch was pressed. I have flown from many hills and summits in the Lakes as well as taking them when out climbing (I have even carried one up Jack's Rake). Occasionally models have been taken on MR practices – look at the Flycam page on [www.toymuseum.co.uk](http://www.toymuseum.co.uk) to see some pictures and the results.

Rod Moore, Cockermouth MRT

## REMINDER: SECTION 19 (EXEMPTIONS) OF THE ROAD SAFETY ACT 2006

The consultation paper has finally been released and the papers relating to this have been issued to teams by Daryl. Those who are responsible for vehicles and driving within teams have been invited to attend a seminar on 20 January. At the time of going to print, the venue for this meeting was not confirmed, and may well have happened by the time you read this. That said, further to the seminar itself, please take the time to read and respond to the papers, before the stated deadline of the end of February. Understanding is needed by all teams that other teams have very different areas to cover and, whilst some would find exemptions helpful, others don't have a traffic light or 'keep left' bollard in sight. There will not be another opportunity for legislation change for a number of years, so it is vital we engage with the process now.

## EC 3RD DIRECTIVE CHANGES TO THE UK DRIVING LICENCE

The amendments to driving licence legislation – which could have a significant impact on businesses and voluntary organisations – come into force on 19 January. You can download the full document from the Members area of the website – Members>Resources>Vehicles – and also from the Facebook Members Group.

## ALSO ON THE MEMBERS AREA: COMPATIBILITY TESTING OF 8mm MAMMUT CORDAGE WITH STERLING HIGH TENACITY POLYESTER 11mm ROPE FOR TECHNICAL ROPE OPERATIONS

This is a comprehensive report from Ogwen Valley MRO, of belay competence testing and slow pull prusik behaviour evaluation, carried out at Lyon Work and Rescue in June 2011. Unfortunately, we don't have the space to reproduce in full here but you can download the report from Members>Resources>Equipment.

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## WIDE AREA SEARCH MANAGEMENT: PART THREE

### AL READ OGWEN VALLEY MRO

This article builds on the previous wide area search management articles but deals primarily with the situational awareness and information management associated with a major wide area search. There will obviously be lessons to draw from recent events where mountain rescue was a key responders.

#### Situational awareness

During any wide area event, including search, the perception of what is out there needs to be developed and understood, and future changes need to be anticipated and plans developed.

Gaining situational awareness for wide area searches will be the result of a number of factors including:-

- Reports from organisations, agencies and people supporting the incident.
- The resources currently engaged, their capabilities and how they are dealing with any tasks.
- The feedback from activities that have been undertaken.
- Systems, data and processes required to handle this information
- Methods to analyse, evaluate and visualise the information.
- The ability to turn information into useable intelligence to help inform future activities and actions.

#### Missing person reports

Information to support search is collected from a wide range of sources. Missing person reports will potentially be made by a range of people to different organisations. Casualty clearing points, survivor reception centres, hospital documentation teams, rest centres, family and friend centres, police casualty bureaux all receive people who have been forced to move away from the search area. Information about those who are present is required to be collected as well as

reports of missing people. Investigative activities need to be conducted to reconcile the names of those at the different centres and the outstanding or unaccounted names. Family and friends will often be a key source of information about unaccounted people and the reported names need to be checked against casualty lists.

In Boscastle, 2004, sixteen people were unaccounted for overnight after the flash floods. This led to a large search effort the following day to check buildings and cars that had been washed away. The flood had dissected the village and records were difficult to reconcile from both sides of the flooding, especially since there had been a large number of visitors.

#### Field activities

Understanding the capability of the search teams can assist in determining the reliability of the information being reported back to control.

Information collected in the field needs further assessment and will be needed to assess and managed effectively. Reports made back to search control from the field should be captured, evaluated and then processed as required to support the search.

Some field reports may trigger other actions, such as despatching a small team to investigate further, carry out specific rescue tasks or collect evidence items. These field activities may also generate data needs to be logged and evaluated.

#### Systems, data and processes

Collecting information and found items (which are potential evidence) during wide area searches will need a small team. A debrief process that collects and logs information, data and found items will need to be considered early in the search plan.

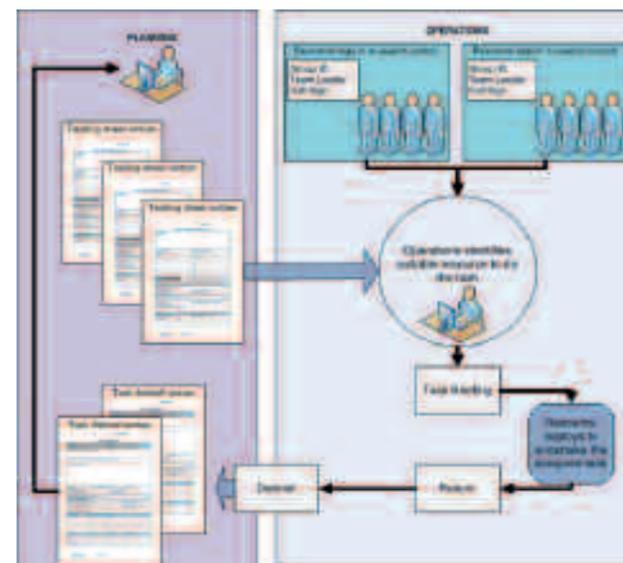
As a team returns from its field search, they will often have information that can be collected using a verbal or written debrief.

If GPS track logs have been captured by team members then these will need downloading, renaming to a suitable file name and saving to a suitable secure location. If objects have been found in the field these need logging and, in many cases, it would be prudent to treat them as evidence or exhibits until their validity has been evaluated by someone.

Creating an exhibit log with detailed records relating to the item and the location it was found and who it was passed onto can help avoid future difficulties if it proves to



DETAILED GPS TRACKS FROM A SEARCH ALLOWS FOR EFFICIENT EVALUATION OF THE SEARCH EFFORT!



THE BRIEFING AND TASKING CYCLE NEEDS TO BE SCALABLE ACROSS ALL PARTICIPANTS.

be relevant. In a multiple missing persons event, the greater the detail relating to finds that can be captured, the better the probabilities of achieving success quickly.

Underpinning these systems and process is also a wealth of related data that may be required to support current operations. Geographic data is a prime example of what we often take for granted but once we are without it then the tasks become much harder. Wide area search that pulls in a large number of responders will often bring in people who will arrive with supporting local data (eg. they do not have the map of the area). The management team should consider what data is required and how it can be turned into useful products to support field activities as well as incident management products.

#### Analyse, evaluate and visualise

The ability to analyse and evaluate information is key to helping the search plan. In some cases data visualisation will assist with this process. For example, visualising the GPS track data will often provide a much better insight to the track taken by a search team member than a verbal debrief – it also considerably shortens the process if the searchers and the debrief can see and discuss the path. The path

can then have annotations made and other data can be added such as digital photographs.

#### Develop future tasks

Planning for any wide activity search should focus on a number of areas including the ongoing search planning for tasks, resources required to support the plan, information management needs and the resources required to help with the incident management.

Planning is part of a cyclical process (see diagram above) and, without the establishment of this process, information will easily be overlooked and not be available to act upon. It will take a suitably experienced team to turn a wide range of information and reports into clearly focused objectives and tasks.

#### 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, unless it is aimed at increasing the coverage, but may happen if information gathering is incomplete and poor records kept.

As an example, buildings can be approached from different sides and unless properly identified in the

records they be searched on one than one accession because of entry via the front door or the back door. The value of in-field marking can help reduce duplication of effort but, unless the building is approached from a similar direction, the building marking will not always be obvious and teams may search it again.

There are a number of methods that can be used to help reduce the duplication of effort, but it fundamentally distils down to having a precise location (such as a ten-figure grid reference) and notes about the activity that was carried out, including date, time, team and resume of activity conducted.

This data need to be recorded into the information management system, validated and then reviewed to determine where any actions fall out of the report or whether it can be held on file.

Any actions need to be captured and fed back up to a planning team who then have to integrate it into future activities. There should be suitable systems in place to help the planning team capture and update any briefing materials, such as providing annotated maps that shows the previous search party routes.

Information management is key to being able to look back at a later date, to refresh or evaluate the search or the tasks which have been conducted. If records are not filed or stored properly, further tasks may be required to recover the ground already searched.

#### Summary

The information management requirements for a major wide area search are potentially immense. They require people and resources to meet the increasing demand and a clear scalable capability to properly support the searchers in the field and others that have a vested interest in the outcome of the search.

Developing good systems, having efficient record keeping and the means to visualise the data and information, will enhance the efficiency of any operation significantly. ■

### WELSH AUDIT OFFICE REPORT: CIVIL RESILIENCE IN WALES 2012

On 6 Dec 2012, the Welsh Audit Office published a report that examined the organisations involved in responding to civil emergencies. In total, eight recommendations were made, of which two are of particular interest to voluntary agencies and mountain and cave rescue in particular.

**Recommendation 7:** We recommend that Category One responders, through the Wales Resilience Partnership Team, ensure sufficient representation from, and communication with, all organisations with a substantive role in resilience or in emergency response.

**Recommendation 8:** We recommend that the organisations developing resilience and managing emergencies should formally recognise the potential contribution of the voluntary sector, and that the voluntary sector should become an integrated part of the emergency plans produced by Category One responders.

Within Wales the formation of the Wales Water Inland Rescue Group has already assisted with integration of the voluntary sector and there is now the potential for further engagement with Local Resilience Fora and Category One responders.

To download the report, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/aros2cs> (in English) or (in Welsh) <http://tinyurl.com/a9w6bn8>.

# DATA PROTECTION & MOUNTAIN RESCUE

FIONA BOYLE

## WHAT IS DATA PROTECTION?

This is the law that governs what can and can't be done with personal information. Personal information might be held as electronic or manual data. The law governs the ways personal information may be obtained, the ways organisations can use personal information, when organisations can transfer personal information to other organisations, and security obligations for storage and transfer of personal information.

### THE LAW USES SPECIFIC TERMS:

**Personal data:** electronic or manual information which identifies a living individual. For example members', donors or casualties names, addresses, emails, images, bank details etc.

**Processing:** anything and everything that can be done with personal data, including obtaining, storing, copying, filing or sending it.

**Data controller:** a person or organisation that controls the processing of personal data ie individual teams.

**Data subject:** an individual person who is the subject of any relevant personal data.

**Registration:** every data controller (there a few exceptions) must inform the Information Commissioner's Office ICO of its details and what it is doing in general terms. This is referred to as notification.

## THERE ARE EIGHT DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES

The law sets out eight data protection principles which constitute the obligations of any organisation to their data subjects. Data controllers must comply with the eight enforceable principles which are:—

1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully.
2. Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified

purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.

3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive.

4. Personal data shall be accurate and where necessary, kept up to date.

5. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary.

6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data

subjects under the Act. For example, to be informed by any data controller whether it is processing data concerning him/her, and to be given a copy of such data; to prevent processing likely to cause damage or distress; and to require the national regulator to investigate the activities of any data controller.

7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.

8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area unless that country ensures an adequate level of protection.

## PRACTICAL ISSUES

Data protection laws are detailed and not always clear regarding minimum requirements. Although complex, they are there to provide a framework within which information can be shared safely, not prevent it. Hence the huge number of Data Protection Advice businesses! As the administrator of the law, the Information Commissioner's view is important but guidance from the Commissioner's Office is not legally binding and the courts will interpret the legislation in their own way. This means it is useful to make a distinction between minimum

compliance and best practice. It's always going to be safer to follow best practice where possible to give confidence to those of us dealing with data and to preserve the good reputation of teams.

The main categories of data that teams will keep relate to members, supporters and casualties. As long as the general data protection principles are complied with, there should be no problems with members' data. Supporters are also fairly straightforward though teams should be careful to comply with restrictions on unsolicited contact. The most complex area relates to casualty details.

## MEMBERS

Even a straightforward call-out list constitutes personal data, add to that application forms from new members, members detailed contact information and perhaps other information relevant to insurance policies, driving licences or CRB checks and there is a great deal to think about even in this relatively less complex category. Physical and technological security measures are needed to control access to data and prevent loss, damage and unlawful use. Most teams will comply with these through existing procedures, for example: secure access to buildings, equipment and files, password-restricted access to databases and information systems and virus protection software etc.

Teams should only keep information relating to current team members and

those members should have consented to the ways in which the information will be used. Team call-out lists, if they have telephone numbers, emails etc, and all other personal data should be updated annually or bi-annually. A simple check at each AGM might do the trick. New members should be asked to give their permission for all uses of their details ideally in writing, perhaps on their application form. Those leaving the team each year should have their details removed unless they indicate they are happy for it to be kept (maybe so that they can be invited to future events).

All teams have websites and want to make them interesting and useful. This means that personal data may be displayed via message boards and chat rooms or teams might publish personal contact details of some of their members. Some teams may want to include photographs and some biographical details about members. Any such personal information can only be included on a website with the consent of the members in question. Contact details should only be on a members' area which is password protected. Contacts for the public should be generic eg. treasurer@?MRT.org.uk. It is sensible to impose restrictions on the use of the data and ensure everyone is clear about the uses that are permitted.

Images of people are covered by the Data Protection Act, and so is information about people which is derived from images – for example, vehicle registration numbers. Teams using CCTV will need to comply with the law regardless of the number of cameras or how sophisticated the equipment is. One aspect of this to note is that teams must let people know that they are in an area where CCTV surveillance is being carried out – a notice on a wall will do. (Full details of the requirements are set out in Appendix 2 of the CCTV Code of Practice on the ICO website.)

## SUPPORTERS

Teams should ensure that supporters and donors whose data is kept on record have been informed of all uses to which their data will be put. The ICO also recommends that any donor information is kept only for a minimum period of time, usually just long enough for accounting/audit purposes for the financial year in question.

A message such as the following could be used where appropriate: 'Your donation will be recorded for audit purposes and retained on our

donor database. If you do not wish to have your details stored on our donor database – please tick here.'

Consent of individuals must be obtained before they are contacted again for fundraising or, in fact, any new purpose. Any unsolicited 'marketing' emails etc, can only be sent to those who have 'opted-in' ie. by the individual ticking a box to signify that he/she wants that kind of contact. Statements inviting donors to 'become a friend of XMRT and receive an annual report each year' are good if they allow supporters to opt in to further contacts and make clear who to email should they change their minds and wish to stop.

Obviously access to personal data on donor databases should be restricted, often only the treasurer will have access but, even then, a password should also be used.

A complete clear out – of paper and electronic details at the end of the financial year of all details apart from those who've specifically said they want further contacts is best practice.

But this doesn't stop teams using information about donations to inform their practices on fundraising – information on how many people are giving via which means and how much is fine to keep as long as it is not personalised.

## CASUALTIES

Teams record and use personal information about casualties or missing persons in order to do their job. Information will also be passed on to medical professionals to enable them to give optimum definitive care. The information held about casualties will be of a highly personal nature and will therefore usually be classified as sensitive personal data so additional requirements apply.

Advice from the ICO for charities holding sensitive personal data has been summarised in five main points which are broadly:—

1. Tell people what you are doing with their data and who it will be shared with. This is a legal requirement. In general, explicit consent will need to be obtained to process sensitive personal data. However, it may be difficult or impossible to obtain such consent in some cases. Where a casualty gives information recorded on the casualty card the fact that they have volunteered the information may be taken as consent. Where another member of a casualty's party gives the information, this will often be covered by an exemption which relates to use to protect their vital

interests. This kind of information should only be seen by those who need to see it. As this could be any team member on a given rescue, all members should be aware of the need to deal carefully with this kind of information.

For many years, Ged Feeney has been undertaking invaluable statistical work using incident details from rescue teams. Currently details of incidents sent by teams to Ged for these research purposes give the option of including names, addresses and other personal information about casualties. Ged is currently working on replacement software that will omit these details and require only the gender, age and town of residence. With this in mind teams may wish to omit further personal details from their current incident reports to follow best practice.

It almost certainly goes without saying that any information given to the press or posted on websites, facebook etc. should contain no information capable of identifying casualties unless they have given prior written consent.

Of course, we like to keep and display letters of thanks, telling us how wonderful we were – that is fine, as long as we follow the same rules. No personal details without explicit consent.

2. Train relevant members on how to store and handle personal data.

3. Use strong passwords to protect data, including upper and lower-case letters, one digit and, ideally, a symbol.

4. Encrypt all portable devices such as laptops and memory sticks. The ICO has reported giving three warnings to charities this year for breaches of data protection, although none incurred a fine. The breaches involved loss of data on memory sticks and laptops.

5. Keep personal data only for as long as it is needed and then delete or destroy it.

How long is this? There is a view that teams do not really need to actually record full names and addresses, telephone numbers etc at all. Treatment and drugs given are by far the most important details needed both for our own records and for medical professionals. If questions arise later they will be about what was done, not the personal details of the casualty, so one might take the view that as long as each record is clearly identifiable (maybe by police log number) teams can best meet their data protection responsibilities by not

recording personal details at all. If personal details are recorded, teams should consider carefully how long they should be kept, bearing in mind the question of casualty consent and of security (have you ever misplaced a Cas Card?)

For missing persons, who obviously can't give consent, we are able to use personal data because of the reasons we are searching for them, life is at stake. Once a search is over though, it is again best practice to delete the personal information we have about them. This applies to team call-out logs and also to information given out to team members or other teams involved on photocopied sheets which should not be put in a bin.

## REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

In theory, an individual can ask a team to tell them if it holds personal data relating to them and, if so, to provide a description, the purposes for which the data are being processed and the identity of recipients to whom the data may have been disclosed. Generally, the individual is also entitled to receive a copy of the relevant personal data. This kind of request could come from an ex-member who left in difficult circumstances, a previous donor or a casualty.

If your team is asked to provide this kind of information, you have 40 days to provide it. Only certain data is covered by the request and it would not include for example every note or record of meeting minutes that concerned the person in question. Help is available from the ICO. As requests might relate to legal proceedings it would be prudent to check the identity of the person requesting and the reason for the request before complying. If in any doubt seek advice!

## NOTIFICATION TO THE ICO – DOES MY TEAM NEED TO REGISTER?

It is best practice to register for all teams and you should definitely register if your team uses CCTV.

Notification is fairly straightforward. It can be done via the ICO website at <http://www.ico.gov.uk/> using an online form. There are various options to choose from regarding the purposes for which data will be used. If you are

Continued on page 45



# BE ACTIVELY BRILLIANT

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Continued from page 43

completing the form online, the most appropriate seems to be to use the template for 'local charity' then add a section (which is an option for all forms) dealing with 'healthcare and administration'. Approximately ten teams are already on the register and you can search the register to find out what categories they have opted for.

The fee is £35 per annum and if you are able to set up a direct debit the notification can be renewed automatically every year. There is a requirement to let the ICO know about any relevant changes.

### FINALLY.. ARE THERE ANY OBLIGATIONS ON TEAM TRUSTEES?

Trustees should have a working knowledge of the different types of personal data held by a team, the types of processing that are carried out, and the measures in place to protect the data and comply with the legislation. It probably makes sense for one of them to take responsibility for thinking about data security, maybe the treasurer or membership secretary. ■



*Fiona Boyle is a qualified solicitor but has taught law for most of her career, firstly at the University of Northumbria and currently at the University of Cumbria. She is a member and trustee of Keswick MRT where her partner Chris is also a deputy leader. Fiona is available to give legal advice*

*to members and is currently reviewing the obligations on teams regarding data protection. She is sharing the role of MREW Legal Adviser with Andrew Gillett.*

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# Life online

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

## SPARKY THE COLLIE SURVIVES SIXTEEN DAYS IN THE WILD

Scottish mountain rescuers had to abseil down to rescue Sparky at the Grey Mare's Tail gorge near Moffat, more than a fortnight after it was reported missing. His owner had lost all trace of Sparky after the dog raced off to chase goats. Repeated attempts to find him failed until reports began to arrive, sixteen days later, that the collie was stranded on a ledge in the area. Moffat team members abseiled down the gorge to help carry the missing dog to safety.

The family had given up hope of finding Sparky alive, thinking he must have fallen into the burn. 'We pinned a note up with my contact details, more in hope than expectation, said his owner, Steve. 'Sixteen days later I had a call from someone who'd seen a dog with a red collar matching Sparky's description on a ledge on the other side of the burn in an inaccessible place.

'Seven team members arrived in their Land Rovers. They had to cross the burn, work their way down to the point above Sparky and then abseil down almost into the gorge, into the spray more or less from the waterfall. I couldn't have asked them to be any more professional or skilful in their work.'

Sparky was understandably 'quiet and subdued' after the incident and had lost a lot of weight but vets believed he would be fine despite his ordeal. One very lucky dog!

# facebook finds

It was a busy festive season on Facebook, with several teams across England and Wales reporting sometimes protracted missing person call-outs...

...Boxing Day and, sadly, there appear to be people out there with far too much time on their hands. Longtown team members spent hours combing a Gwent mountainside, in appalling weather conditions, looking for a missing man, only to find the emergency call was a hoax. Fortunately, the team received no other call-outs that day but the hoaxer could have seriously delayed their response to a genuine emergency. According to the police, the maximum punishment for wasting police time is six months in prison – and there were certainly those on FB suggesting this would be appropriate. It wouldn't be the first time a hoaxer has wound up in court for messing with mountain rescue. Sadly, though, first we have to catch 'em.

...This was in stark contrast to the day before and a search in North Wales. North East Wales team members and a couple of SARDA Wales handlers spent ten hours,

from just after midnight on Christmas Eve, searching treacherous areas around the Clwydian hills and Moel Famau for a missing man, in deteriorating conditions, driving wind and rain. The man was later found safe and well and team members could return to their families, somewhat wet and bedraggled no doubt, but as DTL Richard Prideaux said: 'This was a genuine call because there was concern for his safety. It's what we do.'

...And Cockermonth team members saw in their new year searching for a missing woman in the Workington area. The lady was found safe by team members just before 2.00am on New Year's Day.

...On a different note, twenty Scarborough and Ryedale team members started their new year with a four-legged rescue. Just after noon on New Year's Day, an injured dog was reported having fallen from cliffs near Yewtree Scar. The team vet (yes, really – is this unique?) sedated and treated the dog before evacuation in the Land Rover to a vets practice in Pickering. A very appreciative owner thanked them later with 'You did a top job', which I reckon sums up mountain rescue. You did a top job. Yep. That'll do. JW



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

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The morton EUV bolt-on pod comes complete with roof storage facility and rear access ladder. The roof can be floored to provide weather protection. The pod has four upper and lower side access panels as well as full opening back door making the EUV pod very accessible from all angles. The EUV pod can be tailor-made to suit individual requirements.

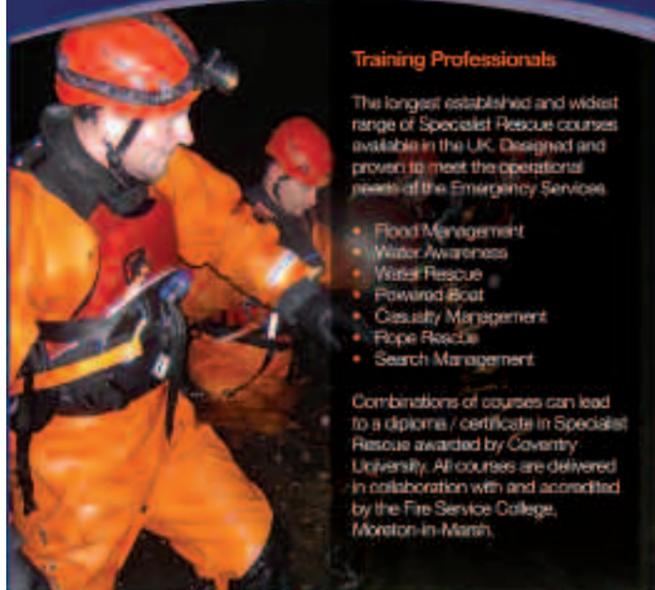
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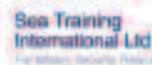
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# water

## WATER RESCUE AND LEPTOSPIROSIS

HOWIE CROOK

**W**e've seen a recent transformation in the way mountain rescue teams operate around water margin. Most now have very high operating standards, good levels of protective equipment and regular training. But, as we continue to train, it's important to recognise the danger of waterborne hazards, recognising that it's not uncommon for people to fall ill after water-based training. Fortunately most conditions are self limiting, yet there are potentially some more serious infections.

Leptospirosis is a serious bacterial infection carried by mammals and passed to humans via their urine. The disease is commonly linked to rats, but other hosts include livestock. Lepto is a bi-phasic illness, flu-like symptoms are followed by a recovery phase. If the disease progresses into the second more severe phase (Weil's Disease) it can lead to multi-organ failure. Early diagnosis and swift treatment with antibiotics are essential.

Recorded cases of Leptospirosis are rare, averaging around 45<sup>5</sup> cases people year in the UK. However, a literature review suggests significant under diagnosis<sup>4</sup>. Many doctors will never see a case within their career, so it might well be off their radar if you present to them with flu-like symptoms. Some populations are at a significantly higher risk, if you regularly train in our rivers, you and your colleagues fall into this category.

As someone that's spent a fair bit of time around the water, and has recently experienced it first hand, take it from me it's not nice! I also personally know three other people who have contracted it, another swiftwater instructor and two kayakers, two of which had to take a year off work to recover.

Leptospirosis can be contracted by swallowing contaminated water or through entry into the body via the mucous membranes/cuts. Sensible precautions when undertaking outdoor water based training involve:—

- Cleaning our hands with alcohol gel before eating and drinking.
- Wearing full PPE such as a drysuits and gloves.
- Cover cuts with waterproof plasters.
- Showering as soon as practicable following training.

Be vigilant, if you hear of people falling ill following training, advise them to explain their concerns to their doctor. You might find it helpful to issue cards similar to those used by organisations such the environment agency workers to assist doctors in a diagnosis. You can find printable, credit card sized copies at the following link: <http://www.water-rescue.co.uk/resources/leptospirosis/>

**To the Doctor**

The card holder's work may expose him/her to the danger of leptospirosis (either *L. icterohaemorrhagiae* or *L. hardjo*). Early diagnosis and treatment are vital in Weil's Disease as jaundice is often absent in the early stages. The illness in *L. hardjo* may also be greatly shortened by appropriate antibiotic treatment. (Your local Public Health Laboratory Service or hospital consultant microbiologist should be able to offer advice and serological testing.)

(Source HSE Leptospirosis leaflet)

Further information can be found at:—

1. HSE Leptospirosis Leaflet <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg84.pdf>
2. Patient.co.uk <http://www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/40000444/>
3. Leptospirosis Information Centre <http://www.leptospirosis.org>
4. <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Leptospira+icterohaemorrhagiae>
5. <http://www.rospa.com/leisuresafety/adviceandinformation/watersafety/weils-disease.aspx>

Safe training!

### REACH AND RESCUE POLE IMPROVES OPERATOR SAFETY

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quick release bag. The flotation buoy attaches to the top section – decide which accessory suits the incident and attach it to the pole using the snap-on, easy release head section. Then point the pole toward the victim, release the first clamp on the first section, extend the section and close the clamps, repeating until desired distance is reached. The pole retracts in reverse order.

A quick-connect detachable carabiner (Carago) facilitates rescue of suspended victims in harnesses, making Reach and Rescue Pole Kits a versatile multipurpose piece of kit.

Key benefit is the speed to fully extend from compact to 17m for the larger pole – fully extended and accurately deployed in 45 seconds, and fully retracted again in 29 seconds. That's one minute, fourteen seconds for the entire rescue, less if the victim is closer than 17m. The high visibility end section can be seen by the victim, even in lower visibility.

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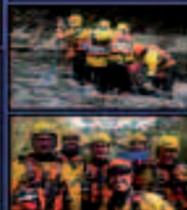
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- Working at Height & Rescue
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## WHITE WATER AND VAUXHALL CORSAS

DAVE WORRALL

It wasn't a very promising start! Chris Onions and John Carrie were busy phoning around the various delegates to warn them of a traffic incident on the M56 that was causing huge delays. We were trying to get away early to avoid the snarl ups around Manchester and were now busy trying to work out how to avoid the Chester area and the inevitable pile up of traffic avoiding the blocked motorway. In the end, it added at least an hour to our journey time but eventually we hit the clear roads and made our way to Stockton on Tees.



Now Stockton on Tees may not seem like the most obvious place to hold a course on 'Rescue from Vehicles in Water' but it turned out to be a superb facility, purpose-built for swiftwater training and rescue.

Our arrival at the Tees Barrage International White Water Centre on Tuesday night was early enough that we were still able to grab a meal and put the tent up before it went dark. Nestled in a green oasis in the middle of a heavily industrialised town, this was surreal and slightly unnerving. Eventually, other delegates arrived with various stories of delays and frustrations on the way to the course with little left to do but put up tents and get as reasonable a night's kip as we could.

### Day one

Wednesday morning found us in the classroom at the centre with Chris Onions providing an outline of the course with the important reminders of the hierarchy of safety: Me, the team and then the casualty. It sounds harsh I know but fast-flowing water is no place to compromise on safety and an early reminder of safety issues was an important place to start. All the people on the course had experience of the swiftwater environment and all had attended similar courses in the past. This made for a very swift and

dynamic learning environment, with everyone having a clear understanding about what was expected of them and what to do in given circumstances. With the planning session and briefing out of the way, the next step was PPE.

Next door to the classroom was a store with all the necessary equipment: Woolly Bears, dry suits, footwear, buoyancy aids, helmets and, because of the environment, gloves. I had forgotten quite how restrictive the various layers were and, combined with the need to swim, I felt distinctly clumsy. However, swimming was next on the schedule and without hesitation Chris led us to the side of the long course. We buddied up and whilst one swam the other person gave direction and encouragement to swim hard into the eddies and break outs. It was at this point I wished I had spent some time practising swimming harder than I would normally do.

This was followed by more swimming (this time defensive) with throw line rescues, with careful thought given to where to pull the swimmers in to and making sure they didn't disappear over the next rapid! So, having gone through some basics of water rescue, we went to look at the Corsa.

Sitting on the floor of the short course, the Corsa minus engine (so as not to contaminate the water) was firmly secured to the concrete floor with wires and bolts. We familiarised ourselves with the layout – you know doors, boot, sunroof etc – and checked to see if the radio worked. Again the emphasis was on a hierarchy of techniques depending on our assessment of the conditions and strength of flow of the water. However, the unbreakable rule was DO NOT STAND IN FRONT OF THE CAR.

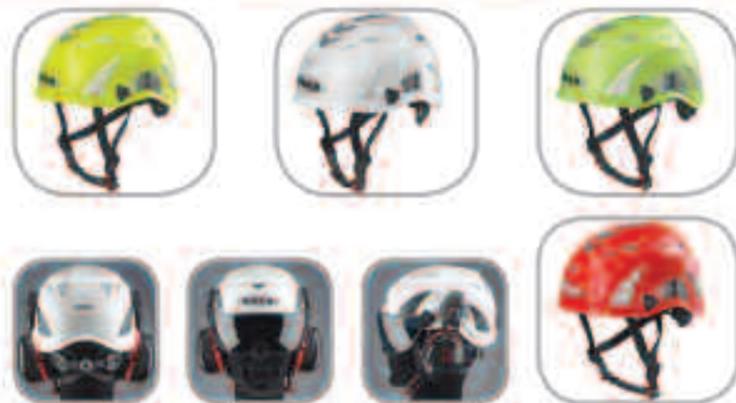
First up was going to be wading out to the vehicle. Chris asked for the water to be turned on to three cumecs (cubic metres per second) and, within a very short space of time, there was a substantial flow of water streaming past the Corsa. A casualty was placed inside the vehicle and for this level of rescue we were to wade out in formation, supporting each other and subsequently the casualty.

This was followed by more swimming (this time defensive) with throw line rescues, with careful thought given to where to pull the swimmers in to and making sure they didn't disappear over the next rapid! So, having gone through some basics of water rescue, we went to look at the Corsa.

Once out of the vehicle, we did a formation shuffle back to the side and safe ground. This technique was fine given the moderate flow but once the rate went up to four or five cumecs you had to question whether this was safe for all concerned. So concluded the end of day one, a debrief back in the classroom and then something to eat and some beers. Or, that's what we were all hoping for.

Chris, however, had other ideas. Food was part of the plan and we had an impromptu barbecue on our patch of land. The sting in the tail was that Chris was planning an ex in the dark. Thoughts of beers were banished and we kitted up in our PPE for a final round of swimming. At night time, lighting and identification is vital and we added cylumes and head torches to our PPE. We were lit up like Blackpool illuminations and must have been a very strange sight.

The water in the main course was in full flow and the rescue technique this time was 'live bait'. This is where the rescuer enters the water to catch the casualty as they are being swept past. A line then brings them back into a



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Continued  
from page 49

convenient eddy. This can be leaping into the water from a convenient spot but in this evening's exercise it was a case of using our knowledge of the water conditions to move out as near to the eddy line as possible and then swimming hard to catch the casualty as they are swept past. A very valuable technique with the added variation of using the water to help us achieve the rescue.

Now we could have some beers.

### Day two

Day two was going to be much more about the Corsa and a variety of techniques to rescue people from it. So, it was back into the PPE and carry all the necessary kit, including the rescue sled, ropes and ladders, to the side of the short course.

The Tees Barrage is a very popular venue for all sorts of reasons. The canoeists are there in plenty and the long course has plenty of people taking part in rafting sessions. What was somewhat bizarre was the spectators who would stop for long periods and watch us carry out the rescues. It is a great place for viewing all sorts of interesting activities and we did feel a little bit as though we were part of some free show.

Back to the Corsa and before we let any water into the channel, we had an exercise of immobilising a casualty with a KED board and then trying to remove them from the passenger seat of the vehicle. Even getting it into place was a nightmare and it seemed as though trying to fit any form of neck/spine immobilisation was a difficult operation. We did eventually get the KED onto our willing volunteer and the feedback was that overall it felt very smooth although I have to say it didn't look like it. It did highlight how difficult the process was and was useful to practise.

Cumecs please and the rush of water on the bonnet of the Corsa. The next stage was setting up a tension diagonal line. This was set up relatively quickly and the rescuer was sent across to help the

casualty in the Corsa put on a buoyancy aid and clip into the line to slide down the line to the far side. Simple but effective and we were able to practise this with a number of the delegates.

We then moved on to the rescue sled with a four-line tether allowing us to position (in theory) the sled alongside the car. The sled with rescuer on board provides a useful platform to rescue people from, but thought needs to be given to how to get the person out of the car. Opening car doors with a rescue sled alongside may not be an option. In this case the boot was used or a sunroof could offer an option. Whichever way, careful positioning of the sled needs to be considered before you commit to the rescue. Similarly, we practised with a two line tether as its not always possible to reach both banks of the river.

Finally, we strapped a ladder to the raft and, with rescuers standing in the water, used the ladder to position the rescue sled in place. Again the positioning of the ladder and how it was strapped to the sled made a difference to what we were able to do. You need to get the sled in as close as possible to the person you want to rescue.

For the people on the course, because we all had a degree of skill in swiftwater rescue, we were able to discuss the merits and practical issues of the various techniques we had tried. Rescuing from swiftwater isn't a one-size-fits-all – you need to have a variety of different techniques at your disposal for all eventualities. There isn't necessarily a right or wrong and each case has to be judged on its own circumstances. Adaptability is the name of the game here.

The course provided by Rescue 3 (UK) fulfilled its brief to perfection and we went away armed with refreshed skills and a whole set of new skills related to vehicles in water. It was a very intense two days with both physical effort and mental stamina required. Next time I shall practice my swimming before I go. ■



## TONY JONES: 50 YEARS AND MORE IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE

### ALFIE INGRAM SUMS IT UP

In a world where people are increasingly mobile and seem to change jobs, homes and interests with remarkable rapidity, mountain rescue stands out in that the dedication given to the service by many volunteers is notable for its longevity. Despite this, there will one or two whose length of involvement is quite exceptional, and none more so than that of Dr ASG Jones MBE, better known throughout the MR world as 'Tony'.

Giving an overview of his 50 years plus involvement in mountain rescue in forty minutes was undoubtedly something of a challenge, but Tony has never been one to balk at a challenge and admirably transfixed his audience through a series of personal recollections of incidents and events encountered throughout his MR career to date. Illustrated with irreplaceable images which occasionally featured a familiar bearded figure – as always with

a pipe firmly clenched between teeth – there was much to muse over, and this opportunity came at the end of the slides when Tony generously invited questions. That the time for these was limited was unfortunate, for forthright questions brought the expected even more forthright replies from which there was much to benefit from. A tour de force from one of the great forces in mountain rescue.

## RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE FOR ANDY ANDREWS

### PETER BELL MREW PRESIDENT

During all helicopter-based rescue operations, on land and at sea, the contribution that the radio operators at ARCC make is outstanding. These operators work 24/7/365 to provide that essential 'human' link between military SAR aircraft and the SAR Coordination Centre.

For many years, Andy's strong voice has been an integral part of this link. His voice carried a well-disguised but enduring sense of polite humour. Andy worked from Edinburgh Rescue before this control centre was moved up to RAF Kinloss and throughout, his voice continued to permeate the 'ether' at HF frequencies.

I had the privilege of presenting Andy Andrews with an award to acknowledge his outstanding contribution to land and sea search and rescue, of which mountain rescue is a part and to acknowledge similar contributions made by all the HF wireless operators at ARCC.

This particular occasion was selected to make this award because Andy recently retired from his post on medical grounds. He now lives in a house having a 'front window' view looking over Nairn harbour, across the firth and up to the highlands in the distance... when the mist and rain clears that is!

On behalf of all mountain rescue teams, be they RAF or civilian, I thank the operators at ARCC, and in particular Andy Andrews, for the unfailing 'voice' they provide, all day and all night, between ARCC and SAR Helicopters.



ANDY ANDREWS (LEFT) WITH MREW PRESIDENT PETER BELL.

## LESSONS FROM THE PAST

LYLE BROTHERTON



1

### RADIAL ARMS

1. Face the direction (bearing) you are going to travel and reach out with your arm as if you were going to grab hold of the sun and hold this position for a couple of seconds. This helps imprint your orientation to the sun.

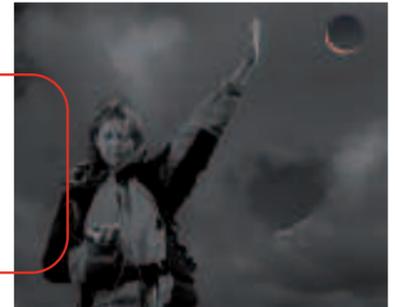
2. Lower your arm and move forward, keeping in mind where the sun should be in relation to you.

3. Because the sun moves across the sky, every ten minutes reset your Radial Arm.

4. If the sun is behind you, use your shadow. Reach out and hold your arm parallel with your shadow and hold this position for a couple of seconds.

5. Working inside woods, you can use your own shadow plus those of the tree trunks to orient yourself.

6. For night-time celestial navigation, Radial Arms can be performed in exactly the same way as during the day, only using the moon.



In reality, a Radial Arm can be any static object which is clearly visible and gives you a reference to the cardinals of the compass.

Tall communications towers, visible both during the day and at night with their flashing aircraft warning lights make excellent Radial Arms, as do prominent mountain peaks silhouetted against the day sky or moon lit night.

The prevailing wind direction gives us a good Radial Arm. Wind direction often changes frequently over the period of a day and is subject to micro-changes in direction, moving from gullies to ridges etc. However there are permanent signs of the prevailing wind's direction, usually trees and shrubs whose branches are bent to shape by the directional wind.



IMAGES: VAUGHAN JUDGE & LYLE BROTHERTON.

**H**ow many of us have started to key a calculation into a desktop calculator, only to realise that it is far quicker and easier to do the sum in our head? Karl Marx said: 'The production of too many useful things results in too many useless people' and it is a trap we can all easily fall into, relying upon technology and disregarding the basics of what we already know.

In 1200BC the Phoenicians, who lived on the Lebanese coast in the ancient cities of Biblos, Sidon and Tyre, had only a narrow strip of fertile coastal land to live on and could only look outwards across the sea for any hope of development. It was from here that man commenced his epic 3500 km navigation westwards, to Tangiers on the north African coast, using the first comprehensive direction finding system: celestial navigation.

Three thousand years later, celestial navigation is still an essential component of course-plotting used by all mariners, based on the earth's constant and predictable relationships with the sun, moon, stars and planets. There

are some very sophisticated techniques requiring the use of specialist equipment such as sextants and astronomical almanacs, yet equally there are very simple, easy to learn techniques which require no useful things!

Military Special Forces routinely employ celestial navigational techniques, as electronic equipment can be detected by the enemy. Even the luminous glow of a compass can be seen from a distance using NVG.

Many of us as mountaineers have let these skills slip and yet their application in mountain rescue can help us focus on the job in hand: searching, safely reaching and evacuating a casualty.

An essential component of safe navigation is an awareness of orientation in relation to the cardinals (N, E, S, W) of the compass. The magnetic compass is, of course, the main way to achieve this, and yet there are many occasions, such as for a SAR dog handler who needs to concentrate on directing their dog, instead of taking their compass out of their pocket and checking their direction of travel, or when we are carrying a stretcher, that it is better to concentrate on the job in hand.

Here are three of the most basic and straightforward celestial navigational techniques you can learn.



2

### ESTIMATING TIME TO SUNSET

Searching during daylight is far preferable to that at night time and knowing the time of sunset for the area you are navigating allows you estimate how many daylight hours you have left, plus you can get back to control before it gets dark. To estimate when the sun will disappear behind a hill, ridge or horizon:

1. Hold both your hands at arm's length, palms facing you and fingers horizontal.

2. Line up the bottom of the sun with the top of the upper finger with one hand, and the other hand lined up to the bottom of the other hand.

3. Count the number of fingers to the horizon. Every finger is about fifteen mins of daylight left before sunset. You can estimate up to two hours before sunset with this method using both hands.

### FINDING DIRECTION FROM ANY STAR

It is good practice to get into the habit of always knowing your reference in relation to the cardinals, even when taking a break.

If your view of the sky is limited and you are unable to see the northern circumpolar constellations (in particular The Plough or Cassiopeia) you can still find direction by choosing any bright star mid-sky and noting its position relative to a peak, or the horizon. After ten minutes note in which direction the star has moved:-

- Up - in the east • Down - in the west • Left - in the north • Right - in the south

This technique is not hemisphere-dependant and it works exactly the same in both hemispheres.

3



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# from The Journals

Summarised by **DAVID ALLAN**

## HEATSTROKE

It is agreed that rapid diagnosis and prompt cooling is the optimum management for patients suffering from heatstroke. The best method of cooling has however not been so clearly identified. A study of all the relevant papers currently available has demonstrated that whole-body immersion in ice-water is the most effective. These papers are applicable only to adult patients and the objections raised on the grounds of induced vasoconstriction and shivering appear groundless. In conscious patients the procedure, however, may be unpleasant to the point of being intolerable. Obviously this technique is not applicable to most out-of-hospital situations but what was also recognised was the effectiveness of using helicopter down-draught coupled with water cooling in rescue situations and this could be of great value in a mountain rescue setting.

## DISTRACTING INJURIES

The traditional view which advocates assuming cervical spine injury in all cases of 'distracting injury' in alert (GCS 14 or 15) patients is challenged by a recent study. The sensitivity of clinical examination of the cervical spine was 99% in this study suggesting that this alone is

sufficient to exclude a significant injury of the cervical spine.

## SLOW PEDESTRIANS

Those who have been engaged in assisting elderly walkers from the hills late in the day may be interested to learn that 84% of men and 93% of women over the age of 65 years were shown, in a sample study, to have a walking speed which is slower than that required to use a pedestrian crossing safely!

## RISKS AND THE MEDIA

We are all well aware of the media attention given to the very small number of deaths in the hills. This focus easily creates a skewed impression of the risks involved in hill going pursuits. The statistics for England and Wales from the coroner's figures for deaths, other than natural causes, in 2009 provide a striking example of this bias. During that year there were nineteen deaths recorded in mountain rescue incidents.

- These were part of:
- 6135 deaths due to accident or misadventure
  - 2538 deaths due to road accidents
  - 33300 deaths due to suicide
  - 619 deaths from homicide
  - 566 deaths due to drug abuse

Clearly we have more to fear from ourselves and our cars than from the mountains.

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# medical

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## Spinal injuries in mountain casualties

WE WOULD LIKE to comment on the short report written by David Allan in the last Mountain Rescue magazine following some reports of confusion that have arisen since its publication.

The report was based on a presentation given by Major Ben Hall at the MR conference this year. He used data from a study, by the Bangor Mountain Medicine Project team, which collects data from all mountain casualties brought to Bangor Hospital Emergency Department by MR and/or RAF SAR since 2004. The Bangor team is led by Dr Linda Dykes (consultant in Emergency Medicine) and now has

data, including hospital diagnosis, on over 900 mountain casualties.

In summary, the Bangor data showed the following:-

- 8% of all mountain trauma casualties (excluding those with isolated lower limb injuries) had a spinal fracture (51 out of 630 casualties).

- One quarter of these casualties had an unstable spinal fracture (ie. 2% of all trauma casualties) and hence were at risk from spinal cord damage.
- Half of those 2% were dead when rescuers arrived.

- The overall risk of an unstable spinal injury in casualties found alive came to ~1%.

- There was only one case of actual spinal cord injury.

We acknowledge the limited evidence for spinal immobilisation but current national guidelines support the use of full spinal immobilisation<sup>1</sup> if a spinal injury is suspected, given the mechanism of injury. Some services<sup>2</sup> use a set of rules – if all criteria are satisfied transport is allowed without spinal immobilisation. In some circumstances, less than full spinal immobilisation is reasonable:-

1. Where environmental considerations preclude the safe use of such techniques and devices. This may include inclement

weather and/or a dangerous or difficult location.

2. Where a time-critical injury necessitates rapid extrication/evacuation and/or rapid intervention, and to provide full spinal immobilisation would delay or prevent this, then a more pragmatic approach to spinal care is appropriate. This does not necessarily mean that we provide no spinal care, but that more limited spinal care may be appropriate. The rescuer must decide the relative risks in each individual circumstance.

We hope this clarifies the presented data and current UK recommendations for spinal care in trauma. We would like to thank Dr

Linda Dykes for her help with this letter and for the considerable work that is required to manage the Bangor Mountain Medicine Project.

We would welcome any further comment or discussion.

**Neil Sambridge, Steve Rowe, Martin Gorman**

<sup>1</sup> Full spinal immobilisation: cervical collar, head blocks, head tape or straps and secured to an appropriate device eg. scoop stretcher, spinal board or vacuum mattress in association with an appropriate manoeuvre to move the patient into or onto the device eg limited log roll with scoop, full log roll, straight lift or slide

<sup>2</sup> UK Ambulance Service clinical practice guidelines (JRCALC 2006).

AS A NON-MEDIC I had heard with interest about the survey that had been carried out in North Wales with regards to spinal injuries. Not that I have any urge to don a gown and stethoscope but because my team, Edale, attends between 20 and 30 climbing accidents a year.

Unless you lie on your side and look down the length of Stanage, which would equate to a 4800m high crag, then we have nothing that compares with the areas in North Wales where the study was based. As such, we don't see many falls that exceed six metres but, as we all know, it's not the falling but the landing that hurts. We also see a lot of other high impact injuries: crashed paragliders, mountain bikers, horse riders and the like. The common factor, of course, is the potential for spinal injury of some

description.

As with many teams and other organisations, we treat for potential spinal injuries based on symptoms, history and mechanism of injury. The way we treat is also dictated by the surroundings and any other conditions. Spinal immobilisation is not top of the list if the cas isn't breathing or in cardiac arrest. Likewise if they are dangling by their toe nails on a chossy limestone crag, the priority is to get them and rescuers to a place of (relative) safety before we start looking at splinting and the likes in detail.

In the last issue, David Allan quotes the survey stating that 'in virtually all cases injury occurs at the time of the accident and not as a result of subsequent events. Therefore taking precautions to prevent a two centimetre movement seems disproportionate.'

What isn't stated is how many of the subjects received spinal immobilisation and were packaged accordingly for their evacuation and journey to hospital, I suspect a fair few if not all. Would those figures read differently if they were bounced off the hill without any thought to collars, vac mats, Keds, long boards or whatever means of immobilisation the team prefers? There is also no mention of distracting injuries. How many times do we come across people that are more concerned about a painful leg injury that masks anything else that is wrong? How much more of a hardship is it to package someone to protect them against any potential spinal injuries? I would suggest it isn't.

Unless teams are carrying MRI scanners, I would advocate a cautious approach to spinal injury at all times. I can confidently say

that, by adopting this approach, Edale has not been responsible for worsening a single casualty's spinal injury by the way we have dealt with them. The risk of vertebrae damage may be low at 1 in 84, unless of course you happen to be the one, in which case your point of view may change. So how would you like to be treated and handled if you came a cropper off your local crag or mountain route? We have never done a formal survey or follow up of our customers. However, due to the strong links we have with the hospitals they are sent too, more often than not we get a report on the actual injuries.

**Ian Bunting, Edale MRT**

## HUMAN FACTORS: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

ANDY ASHTON

In this short article I will describe what 'human factors' are and how they apply to mountain rescue. A simple definition is that human factors are 'the cognitive and social skills which complement workers' technical skills.' Human factors are all the other stuff – not how good a climber you are, not how well you set up a belay or put in a drip but the stuff that makes some teams work well, some work less well.

The study of Human Factors began in aviation but has since spread into medicine and into mountain rescue. In the early days of aviation, life was dangerous. Planes often had mechanical failures and crashed. However, planes got more reliable, but crashes kept happening. Often the cause was 'pilot error'. People realised that it was how the crew were performing together and as individuals that was crucial, so – through the flight voice recorder – they began to study how people were interacting when things were going wrong (and right).

Other incidents such as the Three Mile Island nuclear meltdown (1978), the Piper Alpha disaster (1988) and the shooting down of an Iranian Airbus by the USS Vincennes in 1989 also fed into the study. People found that by introducing some simple training about human factors to aircrew, they were able to reduce crash rates by up to 50%.

In 1992, an anaesthetist in the US tried transferring these same skills to doctors and, in 2010 in the UK, the Anaesthetic Non Technical Skills (NTS) manual was published. Human factors are an important way to try to reduce medical error. As health workers are all human, they all make mistakes. One estimate is that up to 10% of all patients admitted to an NHS hospital suffer some kind of preventable harm.

Human factors have been studied in mountain rescues and mountain environments. The FACETS checklist outlines the human factors which increase your risk of being in an avalanche, such as bumping into some friends in the hills, or, interestingly, having an expert in your group.

The skills of human factors are neatly summarised using the Emergency Medicine NTS format (see diagram above).

### Situational awareness

Your brain is constantly bombarded with information, too much for your conscious mind to deal with, so it filters out what it thinks you don't need. The more stressed about a task you get, the more tightly it filters. When there has been a loss of situational awareness, people say 'we didn't realise that... had happened' or 'I suddenly noticed that...'. Situational awareness in mountain rescue is defined (by Charley Shimanski) as:—

1. Perception of the relevant information.
2. Comprehension and interpretation of the relevant information.
3. Projection into the future.

For example:—

1. I notice cloud base is falling.
2. It's going to rain.
3. In a few hours it's going to be hard to cross the river.

Sometimes, the unconscious mind is aware of something but the conscious mind is too preoccupied to notice it. This can lead to a sensation of 'something not being right'. The advice is 'trust your gut feel', as many times people have reported this feeling prior to something going wrong. On the other hand, when we're under-stressed, we are not focused enough. A great many mountain rescue accidents occur while people are eating their sandwiches.

### MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

Maintenance of standards  
Workload management  
Supervision and feedback

### DECISION MAKING

Option generation  
Selecting and communicating options  
Outcome review

Shimanski puts together seven factors that reduce situational awareness:—

1. Insufficient or poorly communicated information
2. Fatigue and stress
3. Task underload
4. Task overload
5. Group mindset
6. A 'Press on regardless' Philosophy
7. Degrading operating conditions.

### Decision making

Recent work, especially by the military, has led to the understanding of 'natural decision making', which is the process by which we take real-time decisions in stressful situations.

What happens is this:—

- You discover a situation which needs prompt action.
- You assess the degree of risk and the time available.
- If it is a high risk situation and you have little time, you do something which has worked for you before in a similar situation.

This is called 'recognition primed' or 'intuitive' decision making. Interestingly, the more experienced you are, the more time you feel you have to deal with a given situation.

If there is enough time, you apply one of three kinds of decision:—

- Rule based (eg. following a

### TEAMWORK AND COOPERATION

Team building  
Quality of communication  
Authority and assertiveness

### SITUATION AWARENESS

Gathering information  
Anticipating  
Updating the team

defined protocol like the ALS protocol.

- Choice decision (generate some options and decide between them).
- Creative solution (think up some completely new way of solving the problem).

### Communication

Everyone thinks they are a great communicator, yet poor communication is frequently a factor in serious incidents. Say, for example, you don't know the name of everyone in your team, so you say 'can someone get me a guedel airway?' This is more likely to fail than 'John, can you get me a guedel airway'. In our hospital we have, for our trauma team, stickers saying things like 'Anaesthetist' and 'Team Leader'. We stick these on the front of our aprons and write our names on them too, so we all know exactly who is who.

Communication can also fail when there is a high authority gradient, which is when there is a very senior and a very junior team member working together. Sometimes the junior is too afraid to point out an error the senior has made, or thinks that they must know what they are doing so says nothing. A method has been developed by Besco to help team juniors express their concerns.

It's called the 'PACE model of Graded Assertiveness':—

### Probe

Are you sure this is the right track?

### Alert

Tom, I'm pretty we should have gone left back there.

### Challenge

Are you going to have a look at the map? I think we've gone wrong.

### Emergency

Stop! If we carry on down this path we are going to fall down the waterfall.

We teach this to our nurses so, if they have told a doctor something once and the doctor ignores it, they are empowered to say it again without feeling they are being rude or pushy.

### Teamworking

A team can be defined as 'two or more people working with a common goal.' Teaching teamworking is not the same as training a particular team of people. You are training people to work well in an ad hoc team. There are certain skills required of a team member:—

- Individual proficiency (you've got to know what you're doing).
- Clear, concise communication.
- Task motivation (you've got to care about what you're doing).
- Collective orientation (you've got to all know what you're each doing).
- Shared goal and mission (you need all to be trying to do the same thing).

In addition, high performing teams have the following attributes:—

- Shared understanding of task and roles.
- Team leadership.
- Team self belief.
- Anticipation.
- Flexibility.
- Efficient implicit communication.
- Monitoring own performance – correcting weaknesses.

Nothing makes me happier, when I turn to ask for the chest drain set, to see the nurse has already seen that one is needed and has got the set out. Magic!

### Recommended reading

- Rhona Flin *Safety at the Sharp End*  
Charley Shimanski – *Accidents in Mountain Rescue operations*  
[http://www.montereysar.org/SARMembersDocs/AMRO\\_rev08.pdf](http://www.montereysar.org/SARMembersDocs/AMRO_rev08.pdf)  
Charley Shimanski – *Risks in Mountain Rescue*  
[http://www.montereysar.org/SARMembersDocs/RISKS\\_rev08.pdf](http://www.montereysar.org/SARMembersDocs/RISKS_rev08.pdf)  
Charley Shimanski – *Situational Awareness in Mountain Rescue*  
[http://www.itronline.org/PapersFolder/2005/Shimanski2005\\_ITRSPaper\\_Situational.pdf](http://www.itronline.org/PapersFolder/2005/Shimanski2005_ITRSPaper_Situational.pdf)

### Recommended viewing (YouTube)

Just a routine operation (the Elaine Bromily video).  
Test your awareness (various situational awareness tests).

### Acknowledgments

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Many thanks to members of the College of Emergency Medicine Simulation Committee for their help and support. ■



Andy Ashton is a Consultant in Emergency Medicine in Liverpool and is a member of the College of Emergency Medicine Simulation Committee. He is involved in mountain rescue teaching and assessing and can occasionally be seen stumbling about in the hills.

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## REPORT BY ANDY SIMPSON & PAUL HORDER

### PIG TRAILS HALTED

The European Resuscitation Council study into hypothermia and avalanche survivability, using live (but sedated) pigs, has been stopped.

The study was only one third of the way through but scientists have received 32,000 complaints, including death threats and hate mail, from members of the public.

Nevertheless, the findings to date showed that for each 1°C reduction in body temperature there was a 7% reduction in demand for oxygen, and that a pig survived for 30 minutes in an air pocket of only two litres.

### PROBLEMS WITH AVALANCHE TRANSCIVERS

Theo Maurer, of the Swiss Alpine Rescue Service highlighted a major problem with transceivers – that rescuers can forget to check whether or not they have been switched from 'receive' to 'transmit' once a search has been completed, making them potential victims once their work is done at an avalanche site.

There also seems to be some confusion as to whether searchers should make their own decisions about when to switch from receive to transmit or wait for their controller to make that decision and inform them. Maurer recalled an avalanche search where rescuers were caught in an 'after mini-avalanche' as they were leaving the scene. At this point no-one knew who had switched their transceiver to transmit and who hadn't. Other problems were caused by the variety of transceivers being carried. He is now calling for standardisation of transceiver so rescuers only have one variety to worry about.

### THE MANASLU AVALANCHE

The speaker, Jacek Jawien GORP, from Poland, had only returned from the Himalaya a couple of days before this lecture, from what was described as one of the most disastrous Himalayan expeditions for many years.

Many expeditions in September had moved to Manaslu from elsewhere in Nepal due to poor conditions. This mountain has two seasons: Spring, which is considered dangerous, and Autumn, regarded by many as both better and safer.

For ease of access, the glacier had been rigged and appeared to be very safe. There had been some snowfall in September but only a couple of inches at Base Camp. By contrast, during the previous spring, expeditions had met with extensive snow and very poor conditions. In September, there were quite a few climbers in the area (around 200) which posed potential problems for the fixed rigging with traffic jams occurring at busy times.

Nevertheless, at Camp 1 snowfall was light and everyone felt safe. The weather forecast from Europe made it clear that heavy snow and high winds were due so the climbers moved to Camp 3 during the good weather. The group was made up of Sherpas, experienced and inexperienced climbers and the terrain looked fairly calm when people arrived at Camp 3.

At 5.00am on 23 September, a serac of unknown size near the top of the mountain broke off and caused a significant avalanche,

which fell from around 6000 metres, directly above Camps 2 and 3. The avalanche carried 25 tents away at Camp 3, and part of Camp 2 was also swept away. Thirty-five people had been avalanched. There were eight fatalities, ten injured climbers and eight with minor injuries. Three were missing.

Only Sherpas were around to begin the initial rescue and they found that all tents and climbers had either been buried in snow or had been swept into a crevasse lower down. Simrik Air was the only helicopter company who tried to affect a rescue, but only after the guides had agreed to pay for the flights. Many people were able to self-rescue or the death toll would have been even higher.

The Sherpas at Camp 1 requested a meeting with their clients to discuss whether or not to go up the mountain to begin rescues, fearful that they would be forced to establish camps in areas which had just avalanched. They reached a compromise in that they agreed to take some action: a group of Sherpas and clients would check the area out before committing anyone else to the high part of the mountain.

Early conclusions drawn from this incident:—

- A professional, well-organised helicopter service needs to be established in the Himalaya. Most people are insured for rescue but local helicopter companies don't seem to want to move until someone at the scene agrees to pay their bill.

- It seems that less than 1% of Himalayan climbers carry transceivers. Use of these devices may have saved some lives although no-one was wearing one at this incident.

- Avalanche probes were only used to check where tents were to be pitched rather than for searching for and rescuing victims.

- A central rescue system needs to be established in the Himalaya.

### AVALANCHE BALLOONS: A PILOT STUDY

Presented by Marec Biskupic, of Slovakia. Avalanche balloons aren't new but these days they come in three different shapes.

The original idea came from chamois hunters in the Alps who used to carry an animal on their shoulders and who, when involved in an avalanche, remained less buried than their companions who weren't carrying a chamois.

An avalanche was triggered in Slovakia to catch three 80kg dummies, each wearing one of the three common types of balloon. Had the dummies been humans they would have sustained significant injury although each one remained fairly close to the surface of the avalanche and would have been visible to any rescuers immediately after the event.

Questions were asked of the speaker as to the scientific validity of the test he had just presented and he was at pains to point out that this was a simple field test which didn't take account of variable snow conditions. Nor was there an unbagged dummy to measure the bagged dummies against. He did, however, hope this would stimulate further research in to the effectiveness of the various types of air bag. His team is now looking for data from around the world to measure the effectiveness of airbags of different shapes.



ROGER PAYNE, BRITISH MOUNTAIN GUIDE, WHO DIED IN THE AVALANCHE ON MOUNT MAUDIT  
PHOTO: JON WIGG, COURTESY OF THE BMC.

### MONT BLANC AVALANCHE

At 5.00am, on 12 July 2012, 23 climbers, including the former general secretary of the BMC and mountain guide Roger Payne, were avalanched when a serac broke off on Mont Maudit.

Nine climbers were killed outright, seven injured and seven escaped. For a short while there was some uncertainty as to the whereabouts of four climbers who had managed to get themselves down. Forty rescuers were involved in an eleven-hour rescue. There were also 25 gendarmes on duty as route-patrolling was required, as well as crowd and media control. Three helicopters made 30 flights to ferry rescue resources up and down the mountain. As has become usual in cases like this, additional pressure was placed on the rescue organisers who were taking many phone calls from the media.

### VIRTUAL (REMOTE) SEARCH PLANNING

This session, presented by Dan Hourihan of the MRA, didn't really teach us anything about search planning other than that it can be done from a much greater distance than we normally do – in this case 500 miles away from the search. The interesting bit was the use of Google Earth Pro to plan the search.

The basic premises will be familiar to most team leaders and search planners: initial SAR ops are based on limited planning/searching data available at the start of a search; of data available a certain percentage will be wrong; planning effort is not a priority in most initial operations; and chaos will be a component of initial operations.

Case study: 16-year-old male. Healthy, no mental issues. Particular interest in extreme hiking (like Bear Grylls). Always went alone, mainly because his friends didn't want to go, the boy wasn't necessarily a 'loner'. 100+ °F temp. Goal was to hike from home (Henderson NV) to Colorado River. Hike was fifteen miles then swim across Colorado River. LKP was near the river at 7.00pm, texted his Mum to say he could see the river, was very tired but asked her to

meet him at 10.00pm at Hoover Dam. She waited until 11.00pm then called police. Helicopter search to 3.00am. Search resumed at 7.00am, nothing found.

The walk plan was made available to searchers who pinged his phone to establish where he was when he texted (3.5 miles from river). The search continued on the Arizona side of the river. Dan Hourihan called police about the search, three days after it started (he was 500 miles away and not initially contacted). Notified that the boy was in sight of river when he texted with difficult terrain to cover to reach river. Dan used Google software to 'fly' the proposed route. The logical way walker would go was flown and the point where he would see the river was identified. This was based on info available and a small area was identified where he would have to descend. This info was sent to searchers who continued to search the Arizona side of river.

The following morning, the identified search area was searched and the boy was found very quickly. He was dehydrated but showed no visible injuries. Cause of death was unknown but this was probably dehydration.

The planner had used Google Earth Pro to 'fly' the route, the theory being that it was possible to evaluate the terrain from height. The system enabled a remote 'search' and information was then supplied to the scene within 40 mins. The final conclusion was that virtual search planning can be done with minimal tools (ie. a computer) and can then be emailed/texted/telephoned to searchers.

### NEW IKAR COMMISSION

In a country of vast open spaces but a relatively small population, the Swedes have for many years spent a great deal of time and energy educating their own people and visitors in accident prevention relating to outdoor activities.

As a result, whilst they acknowledge that there is a lot to learn, they have become experts in the field and would now like to establish an IKAR commission specifically to deal with Safety and Accident Prevention. The fledgling commission has been given the green light for a couple of years as a trial and will be led by Per Olof Wikberg. The next meeting of this commission will take place in spring 2013 where members will consider topics to work with in the area of accident prevention. Fifteen countries, including England and Wales, immediately signed up to the commission and it is hoped it will become a permanent fixture in the IKAR organisation.



### DYNEEMA ROPE UPDATE

You may remember that in 2006, with great fanfare, Dyneema rope was presented to the world.

At the time it wasn't actually rated for any particular use but almost seven years later it has been certified for use in MR in Bavaria. (ISO9001 certificate). All splices are now rated for 1000 kilos and any that are put into the rope need to be done by trained operators and notes put under the plastic cover to that effect.

In order to safely use Dyneema, all personnel have to go through a three-day training course beforehand. However, the rope cannot be used for lowering because it is more slippery than normal. Its melting point is only 140°C and damage can show above 70°C. Also, very few knots can be used on Dyneema.

Bavarian Mountain Rescue has been using the rope for some years and 1200 rescuers are now trained in its safe use. However, I still believe there is no place for this rope in UK MR as the training required in order to use it safely, and the inherent fragility of the rope, will present too many problems for volunteer members who will probably not have the human or financial resources required to maintain a safe system.



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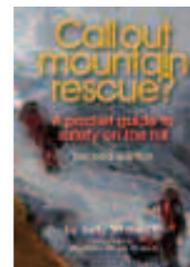
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