

mountain rescue

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ISSUE 44

MOUNTAIN AND CAVE RESCUE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

APRIL 2013





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**WELCOME TO
ISSUE 44**

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

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**NEXT ISSUE
ISSUE 45**

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FRONT PAGE

Winchman lowers from a hovering Sea King over beach crags near RAF Boulmer. Photo © Daryl Garfield

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

**mountain
rescue**




first
Word
DAVID ALLAN

The problem of preventing people getting into difficulties in the hills was revisited at the recent Team Leaders' Day. This has been aired on a number of occasions, primarily from a position of trying to reduce the number of call-outs to busy teams. On this occasion, a new dimension was added. Does mountain rescue have a moral responsibility when it witnesses people repeatedly getting into potentially dangerous situations often in the same 'black spots'?

Earlier discussions have tended to focus on the absence of basic kit — map, compass and torch being the usual culprits. Whilst there is no doubt this is a significant factor, it may be a rather too simplistic approach to the current experience. There is increasing evidence of a lack of rapport with, and understanding of, the outdoor world in general and mountain environments in particular. More than 20 years have passed since Norway identified this problem in a report to IKAR. They began a programme to develop an awareness of, and empathy with, the world of hills and mountains. Unfortunately, there is no means of assessing the effectiveness of this campaign and, as with many preventative programmes, it is carried out as an act of faith.

Not too many years ago most people going into the hills went through a gradual learning process and it was sufficient for Reinhold Messner to state: 'Mountains are not fair or unfair they are just dangerous'.

Climbers accepted this doctrine and learned to assess and deal with the risks. That recognition of risk and the steps to cope with it have, I suspect,

disappeared from the psyche of many people now venturing forth. An aura of complacency about the hills has developed in a population who want their forays to be free from danger of any kind and, unfortunately, have in many instances been led to believe this possible. But, as Ed Viesturs famously said, 'it's a round trip — getting to the summit is optional, getting down is mandatory,' wise words attested by the fact that most incidents occur during descent.

Moving to a wider preventative role would be a big step for us. Besides the difficulty of measuring the degree of success, elsewhere, success has only been achieved by the introduction of rules and laws. It is essential we move in concert with the mountaineering bodies in following a preventative route. Reaching those in need of advice presents challenges in itself. Current evidence suggests that social media is likely to be the means to communicate with those we wish to address.

The identification of accident 'blackspots' has exercised minds on several previous occasions. Does this act as a deterrent or a challenge? The answer is currently unknown. Taking steps to make 'black spots' safer raises enough ethical issues within mountaineering to balance the moral aspect of accidents referred to at the beginning.

There is much to continue discussing and perhaps we can identify ways of measuring effectiveness in a robust manner before we commit time and resources to a new area.

*'Oh! Let us never, never doubt
What nobody is sure about!'* Hillaire Belloc. ■

This **ISSUE**

- 8** 'Must know' information in case of emergency
Lyle Brotherton on who you should call in an emergency situation in the mountain
- 33** The working end of the dog: its nose
Iain Nicholson investigates
- 40** First in a new series: Stop! Briefing
Al Read, MREW Training Officer
- 44** The Vehicles Seminar, the implications of Section 19 and the new Vehicles Package for teams
Daryl Garfield reports on progress to date
- 52** Is it really wetter on the mountain tops?
Geoff Monk of MWIS on rain
- 54** The MR Map Server Project explained
Russ Hore

AT A GLANCE

NATIONAL:	4-6
INCIDENTS:	12-17
TEAMS:	22-33
DOGS:	33-39
TRAINING:	40-41
VEHICLES:	44-47
SEARCH:	51
COMMS:	54-55
MEDICAL:	56-58
CAVES:	60-62

Training

Business

* See page 51 for details of the SARINZ Tracking Courses in September.

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

MREW TECHNICAL SYMPOSIUM
Places: 40
Date: 29 June (One day)
Location: Lyon Equipment, Tebay
Contact: **Richard Terrell**
07971 191942
richard@rterrell.orangehome.co.uk

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS
Date: 16-18 August (Three days)
Location: Bangor

SEARCH MANAGEMENT COURSE
Date: 19-23 November (Five days)
Location: Bangor

SEARCH MANAGEMENT REFRESHER
Date: 24-25 August (Two days)
Location: Bangor

TRAIN THE TRAINERS
Date: 18 November (One day)
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton

MEDIA SKILLS COURSE
Date: 18 November (One day)
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton

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

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

THE PRINCES' CHARITIES DAY
Date: 13 July (One day)
Location: Cleveland MRT, Great Ayton
Contact: **Carl Faulkner**
01287 630886
normanby_head@redcar-cleveland.gov.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

TEAM LEADERS' DAY
Date: January 2014 (One day)
Location: Bowland Pennine MRT HQ

BCRC TECHNICAL DAY
Date: 27 April (One day)

BCRC AGM
Date: 28 April (One day)

Contact for both:
Peter Allwright
01539 654122
secretary@caverescue.org.uk

cave rescue

TRAINING NEWS AL READ

TEAM LEADERS MEETING, KESWICK

The meeting, in February, was well attended by representatives from a large number of teams. All the presentations are available to download from the Members area — Resources > TL Day: Notes — in both .pdf and .ppt format. Topics were wide ranging and of importance to all teams and their members, including lessons learned from the April Jones search, Section 19 and the application for exemptions, data protection

and its impact on teams, local 'hotspots' and incident management. Since the search in Machynlleth, in October 2012, there has been an internal review by the key people involved. Discussion focused on what we should do for the future, in the event of MREW teams being involved with an incident beyond that which a single team or region is capable of supporting. A working group, chaired by Dave Allan, will now look at developing a plan. The wide level of response and support for the search demonstrated that there is a capability we can use. This group will aim to build on the experiences and knowledge gained in

Machynlleth to develop a framework for incident management that is scalable from dealing with our usual incidents to the demands of a 'major incident'.

NATIONAL TRAINING DAY: SATURDAY 4 MAY

Sessions are still being finalised but confirmed sessions include:—

- ICT: Steve Woods from Mappyx
- Technical: Llanberis MRT
- Equipment: Rope testing.

There is a maximum of 120 places available. If you wish to attend, please approach your training officer to make an application on your behalf. Coffee and tea is

provided but please bring a packed lunch. Alternatively, bar snacks are available to buy from PyB. Parking is limited so car sharing would help ease the pressure on space.

SEARCH SKILLS

MREW has been asked to present to the Police National Search Centre CPD seminars in April and May (there is also an equivalent day being supported by Mountain Rescue Scotland). The search field skills and search planning and management course dates have been agreed and this year the courses will again be run from Bangor.

However, next year we are looking to move the courses to a different part of England or Wales. If you know any good locations where we can easily access land for search field skills as well as classrooms and suitable accommodation, please let me know.

MEDIA SKILLS FOR THE SOUTH WEST

We plan to run a media course to cover the South West and South Wales regions as often team members experience considerable difficulty in making the national course in November. More details will follow. ■

Speakers & topics

Mountain Rescue England and Wales TECHNICAL SYMPOSIUM

Lyon Equipment Junction 38, M6 Tebay
29 June 2013

Richard Terrell, MREW Equipment Officer

The pulling force of mountain rescue team members on haul systems
Using the people attending, obtain the force exerted on a static rope and calculate the average.

Bill Batson, Training Manager, Lyon Equipment Work and Rescue

Hauling systems review — forces, facts and fiction
A look at the effects of applying different mechanical advantages on the load and the anchor. How to get it right; how it can go wrong...

Chris Onions, Ogwen Valley MRO

The CMC multi-purpose device and European rope compatibility testing
Using the ropes most commonly used within MREW, the BCCTR drop test method will be used to assess the performance of the MPD.

Supported by
Lyon Equipment Work and Rescue



There are 40 places at a cost of £25 per person.

Please note: The Symposium is limited to one place per team until 30 April, then open booking to the closing date on 1 June. Booking forms will be sent and also available on the Members area of the website.

For further information, email Richard Terrell via richard@rterrell.orangehome.co.uk

RUNNING FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

NEIL 'WOODIE' WOODHEAD

Once again, through its involvement with the Princes' Charities Forum, Mountain Rescue has received five places in the London Marathon. Our runners, from teams across England and Wales, will be running for mountain rescue and raising funds as they tread the 26 miles and 385 yards.

In March, we were invited to attend a training day at Twickenham, courtesy of the RFU Injured Players Foundation. Huw Jones (Central Beacons MRT) and Neil Roden (Edale MRT) joined other select runners supporting charities from the Princes' Charities Forum, for an entertaining and educational day at the home of English rugby.

Representing MREW, I was lucky enough to lead one of the groups around the stadium as we visited the players' gym, the President's Suite, the away dressing room (ready to accept the Italian team the

following week), the England dressing room, the players' tunnel and the hallowed turf. Yes, I'm an England fan and would be back the following Sunday for the Italy match!

The first session centred around training plans and injury prevention. We had the benefit of knowledge from Rob Head and Mel Lynch who train the army. We then learnt from Matt Lovell that chips are not the perfect food for marathon running! Matt is a top sports nutritionalist and he gave us a fascinating insight into the science behind healthy eating and how it can help

support a healthy lifestyle — and successful marathon run. Despite the science, I still think Matt would want to devour a plate full of chips and half a gallon of ale after a long search on the Kinder plateau!!

The third session was from the Injured Players Foundation and we were given some tips on fundraising and increasing the profile of your charity. We did learn that more people have a catastrophic injury walking than playing rugby. We got that answer wrong, but Neil Roden and I were in the winning group in our quiz on rugby —

which probably goes to show how little we know about mountain rescue.

The final session was around the pitch and both Huw and Neil flew the mountain rescue flag, as they trained their bodies to understand what pace they need to run at. It was a fascinating session and representatives from all the charities clearly gained so much from it. I just hope our runners can keep off the chips and maintain a steady pace — to make sure they reach the finish line on 21 April. Of course, I will be there to greet and remind them that they are,

in fact, insane. But of course we all are — you have to be, if you want to be in mountain rescue!

Our runners are: Huw Jones (Central Beacons), Jon Jones (Derby), Neil Roden (Edale), Steve Rose (Dartmoor Plymouth) and Steve Westwood (Calder Valley). Good luck guys!

Special thanks to Ian Jenkinson, Dr Mike England and everyone else involved, for all their hard work in putting together a really useful and knowledgeable day for all the runners supporting the Princes' Charities Forum members.



LYON EQUIPMENT WORK AND RESCUE AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE WORKING TOGETHER

MIKE MARGESON DUDDON & FURNESS MRT

Optimising technical rope rescue training in winter can often be a real challenge, with the weather making the learning environment far from ideal. One of our team deputies, Tracey Binks, managed to arrange a full day exclusive use of the Lyon Work and Rescue training school at Tebay. Twenty-five team members made use of this fantastic purpose-built resource.

We divided into a number of work stations with opportunity to practise a range of skills under the careful watch of experienced team trainers. The Lyon training school is so well set up for this type of training with platforms, traverses and ropes with knots to pass and lots of opportunity to practise ups and downs and teach or revise personal skills.

The training centre also

provides the opportunity for your team to practise stretcher rescues with a number of full-weight, 85kg life-like mannequins to use with your stretcher. We had the opportunity to try out various hoists and lowers with our stretcher, using 3:1 and 5:1 pulley systems and practise our mirrored rope system with our MPD rescue belay devices.

As you know, Lyon are responsible for load test

certification and service contracts for our Bell stretchers. The first of the new MREW stretchers had recently arrived for testing. It looked good and has subsequently passed its load tests.

As a team we have imported North American standard low stretch ropes, made by New England ropes, which have much less stretch than European low stretch ropes. We left

some samples for testing against European standard ropes, using Lyon's testing facilities. The results were quickly returned — the outcome that we will continue to use our New England ropes and not the ropes tested.

Our day at Lyon allowed us to get so much done and I would fully recommend it to any team. Paul Witheridge, general manager of Lyon Work and

Rescue training centre, helped facilitate the day. Paul, who is also a leader with COMRU and a Penrith team member, gave up the whole day and even helped with some of the instruction. We would like to say a big, big thank you to all at Lyon, and Paul in particular, for a really useful training opportunity.

national News



INSURANCE MATTERS

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

Was it really twelve months ago I was working hard getting the vehicle insurance scheme set up? The majority of teams have now signed up to the scheme as their policies came round for renewal. I hear nothing but praise from around England and Wales for the work we did in getting this scheme up, running and funded for you. It has been real evidence of the savings (over 50%!) that can be made when we arrange matters centrally for you and your team. The scheme will be renewed on 1 July and every team should then receive their renewal documents direct from the brokers.

The national personal accident (PA) policy, funded by various police forces, has also been renewed with fantastic ongoing assistance from our friends at North Wales Police. For those that are relatively new to mountain rescue, this policy was a major move forward in ensuring there was a consistent approach, cover and benefits across the teams — historically it had been something of a lottery, depending on which

police force you were called by, as to what financial assistance — if any — would be there for you if you suffered an accident whilst carrying out a mountain or cave rescue activity. We now have 38 mountain rescue teams, three specific cave rescue teams and two search dog associations listed on the policy.

The civil liability policies have also been renewed. One major change this year is that the cover has been increased from £10m to £15m in total. It is extremely unlikely that the extra £5m will be required, but there is a possibility, for example with a catastrophic failure on a crag that results in serious injuries to more than one person. Again, extra protection for a nominal cost.

It is important that the annual declaration is completed by all teams, as I need to sign one declaration stating that no team is aware of an incident that may give rise to a claim. The request goes out to your team at the start of the year through your region and it is always a case of me having to

chase around as deadline approaches. Many of you respond promptly as ever and I really appreciate that. Others need a prompt — but some of you need a number of prompts from various angles.

Please remember that the liability cover is provided by MREW to cover all our mountain and cave rescue teams, and search dog associations. It is funded centrally and you have nothing to pay from your team. So you get free insurance. I wonder how quickly you would respond if we decided that only those teams that returned the declaration were covered? Would that encourage you to do so promptly next year? Food for thought.

I can't emphasise enough the need to report incidents as they occur in line with the notification guidelines that our insurers have given us. Breaching this could result in the liability insurance cover not responding in the event of a claim — and then the burden would lie firmly and squarely with your team's trustees or directors. I would encourage all teams to have procedures in

place to deal with incidents where members of the public or team members are injured — one of which is prompt notification to the insurers via myself.

Can I also remind you that you MUST undertake appropriate risk assessments and a full audit paper trail must exist to confirm this. You MUST retain these details on your files for a minimum of three years. This applies to training, demonstrations and fundraising activities. You should also have generic risk assessments in place for rescue activities such as crag rescue, water rescue and the like.

On a rescue, we are all very good at dynamic risk assessment — it comes with the territory — but you must do written risk assessments and retain these to ensure appropriate cover in the event of a claim.

Trustee indemnity insurance is a much misunderstood form of cover and many teams have taken this out to protect their trustees. Our civil liability policy does include cover for basic Directors and Officers Liability (D&O), so make

sure you aren't paying for insurance you don't need. Speak to the broker who arranges your trustee indemnity cover.

By the time this magazine finds you, I'm hoping to have completed a house move that is taking too much of my time! Once I have, the other areas I have already begun to look into are a national trustee indemnity policy with all the bells and whistles, a national legal expenses insurance policy and insurance for mountain rescue bases and contents. I will circulate a survey to see what insurance needs you have along these lines and whether you are interested in us trying to make more savings with centralised purchasing/bulk buying — call it what you will.

I will be at the May meeting if any of you have any questions. As always, if you have any queries please just email and I'll give you what assistance I can. There are those who say I am approachable, knowledgeable and extremely understanding — and then there are those who know me! ■

VIEWRANGER NOW INTEGRATED WITH MRMAP

Building on their commitment to supporting the SAR community, ViewRanger has integrated their BuddyBeacon tracking service with MRMap, which means that team members equipped with ViewRanger on their smartphones can now be tracked live* on a PC using MRMap software. (*mobile data connection required).

Craig Wareham, CEO at ViewRanger explains: 'This work has been done specifically in response to requests from teams that use ViewRanger. I'm delighted with the positive feedback I've received so far. I think this demonstrates that, along with initiatives like making 'night vision' mode available on Apple and Android devices, we are fully

committed to engaging with and supporting SAR teams to get maximum benefit from our service.' He added that 'VSAR programme members will shortly be receiving more information about a major product update coming soon.'

The adoption of ViewRanger as a tool for navigation, team coordination and data recording has now reached more than 80% of England and Wales teams (around 1500 licenses), with Holme Valley and Swaledale amongst the latest to join. If you or your team are interested to find out more about ViewRanger or join the VSAR programme see www.viewranger.co.uk/SAR or contact Craig via craig@viewranger.com.



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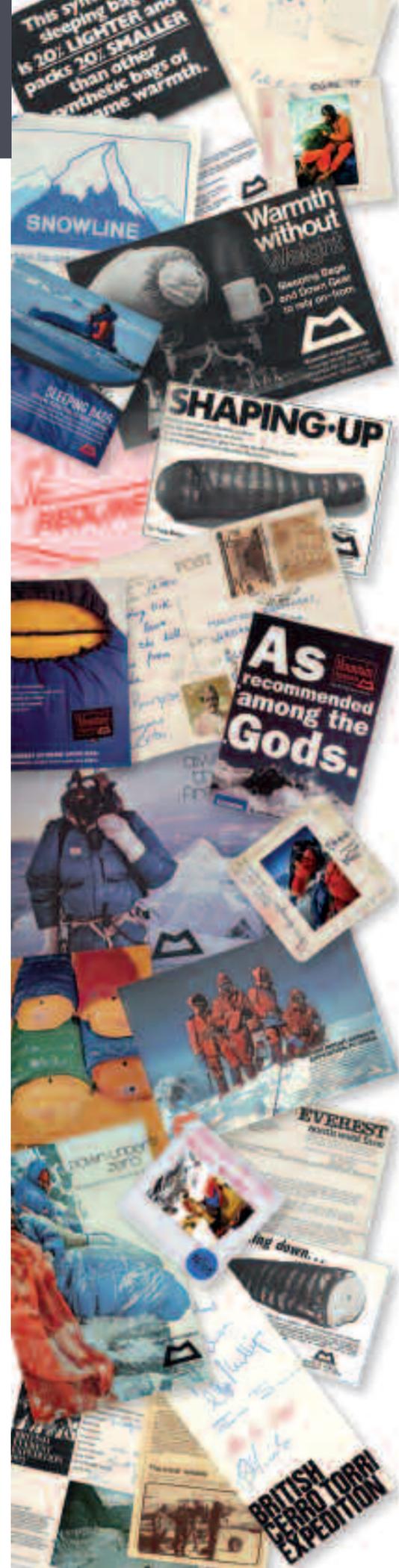


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We learn as much, if not more, from post-incident analysis, especially interviews with casualties. To this end, I was recently interviewing two young women who had become trapped on a slope whilst skiing off-piste on the French/Swiss border. Despite an avalanche warning of 4 out of 5 following a 130cm snowfall, the skiers had ventured off-piste.

The call to REGA (Swiss Mountain Rescue) came in from some local skiers who were returning late in the day from a day's skiing. They were on a facing mountainside in France and had seen one of the women signalling. They contacted the district PGHM (French Mountain Rescue) who in turn alerted their Swiss counterparts, REGA. By the time the Swiss Eurocopter AS350 Ecureuil arrived, they had been trapped for 7+ hours and one of them was severely hypothermic and in shock, the other had early onset hypothermia. They were both competent skiers and they had triggered a small powder avalanche. (The French PGHM estimate that nine out of ten avalanche accidents are triggered by the skier when off-piste). The avalanche was not deep enough to bury them, however, they were both badly bruised and one had her leg broken. This was the first link in a chain of errors that led to one of them coming very close to dying from hypothermia — if not eventually both of them.

The second link was that although both women had mobile phones they

did not know what number to dial for the emergency services in Switzerland. Added to this, their mobile screen showed no signal. They carried no other form of communication.

The third was that only one had been wearing a rucksack that contained drinking water, spare hats, gloves and cereal bars and this had been lost during the fall.

Yet, had the girls been aware of two simple facts about using a mobile phone to contact the emergency services, the outcome would have been a great deal better.

To confirm these 'facts' I arranged for the team to fly me back into the locus, prior to which I completed a lot of Swiss paperwork so that test calls

In Switzerland and France you call the emergency service direct. It is not guaranteed you will speak to a trained operator — although they will be a member of that particular service.

In these countries it is difficult for visitors to know exactly which number to call. In addition, their emergency services have slightly different roles to the ones we are used to in the UK (see box below).

Switzerland and France are not alone in having emergency numbers unique to their country — in an A-Z of countries, from America's 911 to Zambia's 991, different countries use different numbers.

Twenty years ago the European Union pioneered the standardisation of 112 as a common emergency



Had the girls been aware of two simple facts about using a mobile phone to contact the emergency services, the outcome would have been a great deal better.

could be made to the emergency services.

In the UK, calls to emergency services are initially answered by trained staff at BT in their dedicated OACs (Operator Assistance Centres). These then connect the caller to the local or regional ECC (Emergency Control Centre) of whichever service they require: Police, Fire and Rescue, Ambulance or Coastguard.

telephone number that can be dialled, free of charge, from any telephone or any mobile phone in order to reach emergency services under a Universal Service Directive 2002/22/EC. Dialling 112 anywhere in the European Union and candidate countries for accession will connect you to the Emergency Services.

'MUST KNOW' INFORMATION



WORDS AND IMAGES:

LYLE BROTHERTON

Why is it that some people involved in an incident can fail, or take so long, to contact the emergency services? Speed is critical in obtaining assistance after an accident, yet many people are unaware of key facts and knowledge that will significantly improve their chances of getting through to the emergency services.

UK EQUIVALENT	SWITZERLAND	TEL	FRANCE	TEL
Mountain Rescue	REGA	1414 1415	PGHM Les Pelotons de Gendarmerie de Haute Montagne Number varies by region, Example given Chamonix	04 50 53 16 89
Police	Polizei	117	Police Nationale or Gendarmerie — this number connects you with the nearest of these two police forces for emergencies	17
Ambulance	Sanität	144	SAMU — Service d'Aide Médicale Urgente Medical emergency/road traffic accidents/ambulance	15
Fire & Rescue Service	Feuerwehr	118	Les Sapeurs Pompier Fires PLUS medical emergencies, including traffic and domestic accidents	18

emergency

IN CASE OF

THERE IS MUCH MORE TO 112 THAN AT FIRST MEETS THE EYE!

When an emergency call is made from a mobile phone, dialling 112, it initiates a unique call initiation sequence, unlike any other call from a mobile phone. A normal voice call from a mobile phone is handled by your network provider and if your carrier does not have a signal you cannot initiate the call.

However, when a 112 call is made from a mobile phone and your network is not available, it searches for the next network with the strongest signal and latches (technical term 'camps') onto it to connect you. Camping is similar to Roaming, yet without Full Access — **the mobile's number is not transmitted nor can the phone's location be determined.** Officially, 112 works in the 80 countries that have signed up to the convention. In reality, it works in more than 200, from America to Zambia. This is because the 112 call initiation sequence works on any GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) and GSM is the ubiquitous standard for cellular networks.

Best practice is to always use 112 to contact the emergency services, including here in the UK, as you then become familiar with a procedure that you can initiate across most of the world.

There are other additional important features to 112:—

- The 'call' is prioritised by the network, so in times of heavy traffic and congestion on the network the call can override this traffic.



A voice call must always be your first choice. However, if you are unable to get through, you can text the emergency services as this stands a very good chance of getting through.

- All modern handsets are pre-programmed with 112 (and 911) which can even be dialled without knowing the PIN number for the individual phone if it is locked.

- With the most popular smart phones, including the Blackberry, Galaxy and the iPhone, 112 calls can be made even if the SIM card is missing.

- You can SMS text 112 in the UK.

This last feature, the ability to send an emergency SMS, is especially important for us as mountaineers, as frequently if we do have any mobile phone signal in the mountains, at best it can be patchy and intermittent.

A voice call **must always** be your first choice. However, if you are unable to get through you can text the emergency services as this stands a

very good chance of getting through.

The reason it is able to do this is because as long as a mobile phone is switched on, even when not in use, the mobile phone is constantly sending and receiving information

with the base station (cellular mast) using a pathway called a Control Channel. The timings of these communications varies, from every minute, to several minutes, where the mobile phone and the base station exchange a data packet, primarily so that the mobile network knows which cell your mobile phone is in so, as you move around, it switches you to different base stations.

This Control Channel is also used by the mobile phone for the call setup. When someone tries to call a mobile phone, the base station sends a message over the Control Channel that tells the mobile phone to play its ringtone. The base station gives the mobile phone a pair of voice channel frequencies in the Traffic Channel to use for the call. The bandwidth in the Traffic Channel is frequently near capacity and when there is very heavy demand can become overloaded, whereas the bandwidth in the Control Channel is seldom ever employed to capacity. This is one of the reasons that during London 7/7, regular voice calls were unable to get through whereas many texts did.

Originally, the emergencySMS text relay service was developed for people with hearing loss or speech impediments, however, in November 2010, OFCOM extended this service

to hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, to assist in areas where mobile reception is poor.

BT is currently undertaking a massive project to replace the decade-old emergency telephony platform, to cope with anticipated demand for this service in addition to newer technologies such as VoIP. The project is due to complete in April 2014.

YOU MUST BE REGISTERED WITH THE EMERGENCYSMS TEXT RELAY SERVICE BEFORE YOU CAN USE IT

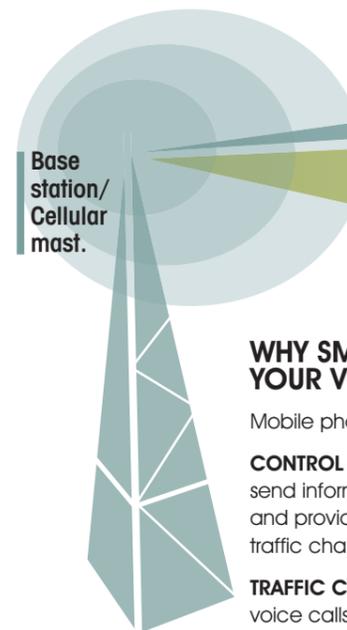
To register, text REGISTER to 112 and follow the automated instructions texted back to you from the emergencySMS service. I recommend creating a draft text message which in an emergency you then only need to complete the details of the incident.

In an emergency, do not assume that your message has been received until the emergencySMS text relay service sends a text message back to you. If you don't get a reply within three minutes, try again or find other ways of getting help.

Interestingly, many other countries already have a text message service for contacting the emergency services, often for people with hearing difficulties or speech impediments, whilst others have already implemented 112 texting. In Holland and Germany, you can already text 112, in France they are trialling 114 and in the Philippines they use 117. So before travelling it is best to check the emergency SMS number with each specific country.

Again, I recommend you create a draft text for foreign travel, for example in France:—

'J'ai besoin de Police/Incendies/Ambulance/Secours en Montagne. Ma location est X. X personnes sont blessées. Je m'appelle X Mobile X.'



Base station/ Cellular mast.

WHY SMS TEXTS CAN GET THROUGH WHEN YOUR VOICE CALLS CAN'T

Mobile phone networks divide the bandwidth (microwave frequency) into two channels:— **CONTROL** and **TRAFFIC**.

CONTROL CHANNELS are used to send information about call setups and provide information about the traffic channel such as how busy it is.

TRAFFIC CHANNELS are used for voice calls. Traffic channels have

much more bandwidth than control channels, however, with so many mobile phone users this channel frequently operates at near capacity.

SMS TEXTS are sent via the control channel, which has lots of capacity,

SMS texts go through the Control Channel and are very short in duration.

All voice calls go through the Traffic Channel and are relatively long in duration.



A short video, called 'The Secrets of using 112 on a mobile phone in an emergency/accident' details most of this information and can be viewed on YouTube at: <http://bit.ly/VJncU5>

PRIORITY MOBILES FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

112 calls were able to connect during London 7/7, albeit in this instance taking an unprecedented 45 seconds to answer compared to the usual 5 seconds. This is because in the UK a system called MTPAS' allows the mobile telephone networks to restrict access in designated cells. There are 16 levels of access (called Flag-bits) and the general public users have numbers in the range 0–9. During an emergency, some or all access classes in the range 0–9 are disabled, whereas 112/999 calls are allocated Flag-bits 10-11 and the likelihood of not being able to get through is very remote. ■

'MTPAS (Mobile Telecommunications Privileged Access Scheme) was launched by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) in September 2009. Like its forerunner, the ACCOLC scheme, it is intended to preserve access to the mobile networks by those engaged in an emergency response when network capacity is under pressure. Privileged access is achieved by the installation of a special SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) card in the telephone handset. These special SIMs are only available to Category 1 and 2 responder organisations and partners of Category 1 responders, who have a requirement to be in communication with them when performing a front line role in the response phase of an emergency, this includes Mountain Rescue. Individual MRTs should liaise with their respective police force to apply for these SIMs.'

EXPERT TIPS

→ If in the mountains you do not connect on your first attempt, it may be that there is only one cellular mast and your head is blocking the signals to/from it. Make the call again with the handset on the other ear or rotate your body by 180°.

→ When a 112 call has connected using 'camping', do not hang up on the operator as they will not be able to call you back. To conserve battery life, BEFORE you make the call, switch off GPS/Wi-Fi etc. and any apps that are running, then reduce the screen backlight to minimum.

→ Do not allow the phone to get cold as battery life is severely diminished. Keep it warm with your hands.

→ When skiing abroad, ask for the local number for mountain rescue at the chairlift and enter it into your phone.

→ The SMS message should not contain more than 160 characters to ensure the details are all contained in one text packet.



LYLE BROTHERTON IS AUTHOR OF THE ULTIMATE NAVIGATION MANUAL: ALL THE TECHNIQUES YOU NEED TO BECOME AN EXPERT NAVIGATOR

Published by Collins: www.harpercollins.co.uk
ISBN: 978-0-00-742460-3. £14.99.

Suggested draft SMS text:—

'I need Police/Fire/Ambulance/Mountain Rescue. My location is X. X people are hurt. My name is X. Mobile number X.'



A CRACKING EXPERIENCE

SHEILA BOWKER TELLS THE STORY OF HER RESCUE BY KIRKBY STEPHEN TEAM

real rescues



The Kirkby Stephen team in action © David Stewart. INSET: Sheila Bowker.

We'd stood a while, admiring Cautley Holme Beck as it cascaded down the high, vertical camber in the series of stepped waterfalls known as Cautley Spout. We were well togged up against the frosty conditions, and had manoeuvred round the frozen puddles littering the path before the climb up to the Spout had really got going. It was cloudless, and the low-slung sun had unseasonal warmth as it peeped round the shoulder of Cautley Crag. Being a Saturday, we'd anticipated sharing this stunning landscape with others. But we were alone, and had just spoken about the surprise of having it to ourselves when, seconds later, we'd have given anything to be surrounded by hoards of helpful walkers. For, as we set off back down the grassy slope, the warming sun had sneakily turned the hard, frosty grass into damp, slippery grass, and, whoosh, my right foot slipped and shot up in the air, leaving me no option but to fall 'down the Spout'.

It all happened so quickly. Back and bottom hit the ground with a thump, my left leg somewhere underneath. First concern was for the SLR camera I'd been carrying round my neck, as it hit the ground half a second after me. But, as a pain in my left leg accelerated alarmingly, I realised something else might also be broken. Aagh, so that was the crack I heard.

We made a couple of very painful attempts at getting me upright, but keeping me upright and walking proved out of the question. There was no choice but to stay put and shout 'Help!'

into the mobile phone.

A signal was sought and I was left with my thoughts of how this sort of thing couldn't be happening to me — I wasn't long out of nappies before I climbed my first mountain — although I admit most of the way I sat on my Dad's shoulders. Waves of embarrassment, humiliation and disablement washed through me, constantly interrupted by the excruciating pain coming from my left ankle.

With the wonders of the mobile, 'Help' was fairly easily summoned, grid references agreed, details of my injuries supplied, and when I overheard that, 'yes, there is a reasonably level area just below us', I thought wow, my dreams of a helicopter ride were about to come true. I would have faked a coma at the very minimum to fulfil the dream, but 'Help' decided a suspected leg fracture wasn't serious enough to warrant such excitement. Rather, the burly guys and girls from Kirkby Stephen MRT would be scrambled instead.

Luck comes in doses sometimes and it was a joy to see four walkers coming up the hill towards us. My painful expression told the story, and yes, they had a pack of pain-killing anti-inflammatories, which certainly took the edge off the pain.

The wait for 'Help' seemed ages, but it was probably no more than an hour before a speck appeared, down in the distance. We watched it gradually transform into a guy riding a mountain bike, till the gradient steepened and bike

riding was no longer an option. When we saw him drop the bike and begin running the last few hundred yards, we knew 'Help' had arrived in the form of Fraser, a team member who lived just over the next hill. Puffing like Thomas the Tank Engine, sweat coursing down his face, Fraser appeared in more discomfort than me until he got his breath back. Such gallantry, I felt completely humbled that another person would go to such lengths for me, a stranger.

As Fraser assessed my situation and ensured I was as warm and comfy as possible, another larger speck was approaching in the form of a mountain rescue Land Rover. It got as far up the hill as possible before disgorging its numerous occupants. They were all wearing red jackets so it seemed like the hillside was swarming with post boxes all moving in my direction. Then they were all round me; if I'd had a letter to post I wouldn't have known which one to use!

John took charge with just the right quantity of kindly-spoken assertiveness that one obeyed without question, even putting on my hideous red speckled bobble-hat when he reminded me how much body heat escapes through our heads. There were fourteen chaps and one lady in the team, and all attentive beyond belief. Each one had a specific responsibility, so the chap in charge of pain-killing tablets asked if I'd like some, the one carrying the cylinder of oxygen asked would I like some of that, and a third asked if I'd like another jacket. I wasn't cold (thanks to the hideous bobble-hat) and the pain was almost bearable (thanks to the tablets) so, feeling rather ungrateful, I refused every offering. It turned out that all their call-outs so far this year had been false alarms of some type, so they were relishing having a real casualty to fuss over. After my third 'no, thank you', the lady rescuer looked at the heavens and said, 'Come on guys, she's a woman', to which I responded, 'Exactly, we're women, we

cope!' They laughed, but you could tell they were expecting further feminine grumbles about which gender does the childbirth thing.

Next came the bondage, as I was gently man-handled into a cosy green snuggle suit which, topped with my red speckled bobble-hat, made me look like a reclining Christmas tree. Then my bad leg strapped to the good one, arms strapped to my sides, I was strapped onto a stretcher.

With four either side, they began tobogganing me down the grassy slope, amidst jokes of letting go and seeing who reaches the bottom first. When they came to rocks or uneven ground, they lifted the stretcher and carried me. I was hoisted in through the back doors of the Land Rover and John, still diligent and caring, crouched in beside me. Jason drove us down and apologised for every bit of unsteady movement and, as we inevitably slid through streams and bumped over rocks, the lovely man was constantly saying 'sorry'.

Progress smoothed when we reached the lane, where an NHS ambulance was waiting. Extricated from the Land Rover, I was freed from my bondage and said 'goodbye and a million thanks' to what now felt like a bunch of great buddies. The ambulance took me to hospital where x-rays proved the fibula was indeed broken so, for the first time in my life, I was in plaster and stumbling around on crutches.

The Westmorland Gazette later described me as an 'experienced, well equipped walker', so all those years on my Dad's shoulders had paid off!

I can honestly say those fourteen team members were kindness and caring to a fault and totally professional in all they did. And the camera still works, thank goodness!

This article first appeared in *Cumbria Magazine*, October 2012. Sheila Bowker is a professional writer and photographer of the countryside, based in the Yorkshire Dales.

incidents

figures

Oct • Nov • Dec • 2012

Region and Teams	Incidents	Region and Teams	Incidents	Region and Teams	Incidents	Region and Teams	Incidents
Lake District		North East		Peak District		Yorkshire Dales	
Cockermouth	13	Cleveland	9	Buxton	20	CRO	3
Coniston	15	North of Tyne	3	Derby	8	Upper Wharfedale	10
Duddon and Furness	8	Northumberland NP	2	Edale	21	(Previous quarter: 25)	13
Kendal	12	Scarborough & Ryedale	9	Glossop	3	Search Dogs	
Keswick	21	Swaledale	5	Kinder	12	Lakes	6
Kirkby Stephen	5	Teesdale and Weardale	1	Oldham	16	England	9
Langdale Ambleside	18	(Previous quarter: 36)	29	Woodhead	4	Wales	1
Patterdale	9			(Previous quarter: 79)	84	South Wales	7
Penrith	11	North Wales				(Previous quarter: 20)	23
Wasdale	16	Aberdyfi	2	Peninsula			
(Previous quarter: 126)	128	Aberglaslyn	7	Dartmoor (Tavistock)	2	Non-specialists	4
		Llanberis	11	(Previous quarter: 17)	2	(Previous quarter: 1)	4
Mid-Pennine		North East Wales	4				
Bolton	16	North Wales CRO	1	South Wales			
Bowland Pennine	5	Ogwen Valley	25	Brecon	12	RAF	
Calder Valley	19	South Snowdonia	4	Central Beacons	8	Leeming	3
Holme Valley	3	(Previous quarter: 83)	54	Longtown	6	Valley	5
Rossendale & Pendle	3			South & Mid Wales CRO	1	(Previous quarter: 5)	8
(Previous quarter: 43)	46			Western Beacons	4	Total	422
				(Previous quarter: 42)	31	(Previous quarter: 485)	

WINTER CONTINUED TO SHOW ITS TEETH IN MARCH

HYPOTHERMIC WALKERS – POORLY EQUIPPED AND WITHOUT ADEQUATE CLOTHING – STUCK IN DEEP SNOW ON SNOWDON: MARCH



Clip from the Llanberis MRT film © Llanberis MRT.

Llanberis team members deployed on foot to assist two walkers stuck on steep snow without crampons and ice axe, on 23 March. The woman and her 17-year old son were suffering from hypothermia after losing their way.

The team was alerted around 9.35am by a walker who came across the pair after stopping to help them above Clogwyn Coch and twelve team members went to their aid. A team spokesman said: 'The mother and son left Pen y Pass intending to go to Snowdon's summit via Pyg Track.

'They encountered snow and ice from the intersection of the Pyg Track and the Miners' Track but continued to the summit of Snowdon despite slipping and sliding. They then decided to

descend via the Llanberis Path but quickly became disorientated by wind and cold and felt unable to go on.

'A passing walker who was properly equipped for the conditions stopped to help them and called for assistance from the team.'

A Sea King from RAF Valley airlifted some of the rescuers to the base of the cloud at Clogwyn Station on the Snowdon Mountain Railway. From there they continued on foot to the site above the 150m-high crags of Clogwyn Coch.

Team member Rob Johnson created a short film of the rescue — viewable on YouTube and through the team's Facebook page — which leaves viewers in no doubt about the conditions on

the mountain, described as 'truly awful', with winds of more than 70mph, blown spindrift and snow and ice underfoot.

The incident came as a stark reminder that winter still held the mountains in its grip and anyone heading for the upper reaches needs to carry an ice axe and crampons and be able to use them. Walkers need appropriate clothing, along with food and warm drinks.

People should also recognise their limitations and be prepared to turn back in good time if necessary.

The incident in North Wales followed a similar story in the south, the day before, when walkers had to be rescued from icy mountains in the Brecon Beacons (see page 17).

SWIFTWATER TEAMS CALLED TO TRAPPED CANOEIST: JANUARY

Life has been busy this last few months, for Swaledale team members, what with snow, snow, and more snow, then meltwater floods and more snow, but one particularly tragic incident involved a canoeist who died after getting into difficulties in the fast-flowing, freezing water. The man became trapped under a tree in the river Arkle sparking a large-scale rescue effort involving fire crews, an RAF Sea King, an air ambulance, and both mountain rescue and fire service swiftwater teams.

Twenty-one team members took part in the rescue effort, working closely with firefighters to fix a line to the man's canoe and free him from the water but, sadly, he was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital.

real rescues

TEAM SKILLS COME IN HANDY: NOVEMBER

A story which proves that mountain rescue training sometimes comes in handy beyond team call-outs. The skills are eminently transferable, as Buxton trainee, Shelley Smith, discovered when she came across a road traffic accident at Fenny Bentley.

As Shelley arrived at the scene, all the occupants of one vehicle — mum, dad and daughter Claire — were out of the car and the driver of the second vehicle was uninjured. The father was already being attended to by another first aider who had witnessed the crash. Following a brief discussion with him, Shelley provided a sleeping bag and pillow to keep the father warm and comfortable on the road.

Mother and daughter were obviously shaken. Both were reassured and asked to sit down on the pavement. Following an assessment, it appeared that Claire had sustained a significant injury and was complaining of severe neck pain so, to alleviate the pain and prevent further injury, her head, neck and back were supported until the ambulance service arrived. It was later confirmed she had sustained a fractured spine in two places and Shelley's actions had undoubtedly prevented any paralysis or worse.

The team later presented Shelley with a Certificate of Special Achievement in recognition of the brilliant job she did that day.

Geoff Sumner, Buxton MRT First Aid Manager presents her 'Certificate of Special Achievement' to Shelley Smith during team training.



The casualty was just right of centre of the photo... halfway up and halfway down the rough ground, just left of the long scree-filled gully. Pen yr Olewen summit is off to the right of the photo. Nant Ffrancon is down below and Bethesda is to the left. Carnedd Dafydd is the summit behind, with Yr Elen in the shadow in the distance.

12-HOUR RESCUE OPERATION IN SNOWDONIA FOLLOWING WALKER'S NAVIGATION ERROR: MARCH

A solo walker was 'lucky to be alive', after losing his way and becoming stuck on the steep slopes of Pen yr Olewen. The call-out to the 978m (3,209ft) peak came at dusk, with sporadic mists in the valley, low cloud covering the hills and a poor forecast. Ogwen's Chris Lloyd, describes the area as 'this great rocky lump at the southern tip of the Carneddau which drops steeply into the Ogwen Valley. It often catches out the unwary and they get daunted by the steep descent. Not even the goats go here, only the ravens and birds of prey!'

Further information was gained via the man's mobile phone — he had a GPS and was able to pinpoint his location, high up on the steep loose gullies above Braich Ty Du. Three team members were deployed from the A5 road, halfway down the Nant Ffrancon towards Bethesda, with a spotter parked in a car on the old road in the shadow of Foel-goch. Between the sporadic clouds of swirling mists, the spotter could see the faint light of a mobile phone screen through his binoculars. He directed the hasty party up the steep loose screes and heather-covered boulder fields to the foot of the gully. Meanwhile, a second party of four was deployed, carrying 250m of rope and rescue equipment. The hasty party could get within 30 vertical metres of the walker but the very poor rock conditions, running water and darkness, prevented direct access.

'They moved to an adjacent line, but once again conditions prevented access. The second party decide to gain the ridge line by traversing this awful ground, wary of the high risk of a broken ankle or so. The whole group of seven then shanked up the north ridge of Pen yr Ole Wen high above the Nant Ffrancon.

'In a bitter breeze, attempts were made to descend well over 200m to locate the walker but, despite attempts to attract his attention with horns and shouting, there was no response. Mist had now closed in and the spotter could no longer see the man, so the team requested help from RAF Valley.

'There had been enough breaks in the cloud cover for this to be the good option. However, during the 30 minutes that the Sea King was in the area, the cloud closed in making any chance of getting close to the incident site impossible. So, lengthy descents down gully lines continued until a find was made at about 2 o'clock on Saturday morning.

'The two rescuers down the crag were able to assist the lone walker back up to the five team members on the ridge. The man, cold and exhausted, told how a navigation error towards the end of this north-south traverse of the Carneddau, encouraged him to cut down this loose gully. He had taken a 100ft slide, without injury but now, in cloud and dusk and without torch, he decided to seek assistance.'

The party returned via the long north ridge towards Bethesda, until able to cut down the Priests' Path to the A5. But the story didn't end there. Once the formalities were completed, by 6.00am, it was too late (or too early) for the man to book into Idwal Cottage Youth Hostel, where he had intended to spend the Friday night, so he was provided with accommodation at Oggie Base. After a few hours of sleep, he set off for Pen y Pass via Capel Curig, along the Old Road, with advice to call at a well known climbers' shop in Capel Curig and purchase a good headtorch!

Sadly, within an hour of his departure, team members were called by North Wales Police to recover a body hanging from a tree near Penrhyn Castle, while other team members continued with their four-day swiftwater rescue technician training course. All in 24 hours of being a mountain rescue team member!

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MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS AND MEDIA SPECULATION

The tally of deaths this winter in the Scottish mountains has prompted energetic calls from the media that 'something should be done'. During February, both BBC Radio Scotland and Newsnight Scotland debated the merits of regulating hill-going, and restricting access during periods of poor conditions.

Dave 'Heavy' Whalley — who served with RAF Mountain Rescue for 36 years — had a few things to say about 'media sensationalism' in his regular blog...*

It's several weeks now since four climbers were lost in an avalanche in Glen Coe. Such young lives, full of hope and direction. It's hard to comprehend that someone can be so alive one second then gone the next. The news in February of three dead in an avalanche in the Cairngorms, despite great efforts by the helicopters, rescue teams, search dogs and hospitals was all so very hard to take in. Unfortunately, the media are quick to jump on the bandwagon of mountain accidents — and the recent 'Call Kaye' programme on BBC Radio Scotland was no exception — with calls for mandatory insurance and restricting access to the hills.

Every accident is a tragedy and no one knows that more than me, after nearly 40 years of talking to families who have lost loved ones. During that time, I too have lost more than ten great friends to the mountains. Last year, I fell in the Cairngorms helping a walker who was stuck on the goat track and was very lucky to get away with a few broken ribs — accidents can happen to anyone and, even after all these years in the mountains, I learn new skills every winter. Despite the media hype, we must try to answer our critics with facts — saying nothing allows speculation and the so-called 'experts' to criticise our great sport.

The questions posed by the BBC programmes were: Are Scottish mountains worth the risk? Are people putting themselves in too much danger for a hobby? Our hills, climbs and crags attract people from all over the world, with mountaineers proud of our stunning scenery and the 'most enlightened access laws in the world' but should more be done to control walking in Scotland and to help keep people safe, should there be more education for climbers, or is the risk part of the thrill?

The main protagonist in the alarmist 'something must be done' camp was Dorothy Grace Elder, a respected journalist and ex-politician who took no prisoners with her poorly-informed views. She called for restricted access to the mountains, citing risk to the rescuers and many other sensation-grabbing headlines. Unfortunately, the programme was seriously flawed by poor research,



with repeated use — both by Elder and presenter Kaye Adams — of the figure of '52 deaths in the mountains in 2011', the basis of Elder's entire position. But, as a past statistician for the

Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland I knew it was incorrect — for the simple reason that it contains many non-mountaineering fatalities.

There were actually 21 mountaineering fatalities in 2011 — every one a tragedy, yes, but the other 31 fatalities were non-mountaineering incidents that happened to be attended by mountain rescue teams. As we all know, these can cover a wide range of scenarios where the casualty or missing person is not involved in climbing, scrambling or hill walking. It is important to understand that this category relates to the activity that the casualty or missing person was involved in when the incident occurred, not the type of terrain or height above sea level. Non-mountaineering incidents may still require the skills, resources and capability of a mountain rescue team to deal with. They may take place in poor weather, on a mountainside, in a cave or in terrain only accessible using climbing techniques. Non-mountaineering incidents may be searches, rescues or both, and include water sports (kayaking, fishing and swimming), fell running, triathlon, mountain biking, pony trekking, hanggliding, parapenting and paragliding, aircraft crashes, people reported missing from residential/nursing homes and hospitals, work-related incidents such as forestry and game-keeping, and assistance given to individuals, local communities or emergency services during severe weather.

Now, if Kaye Adams or Dorothy Grace Elder had actually read the Scottish Mountain Rescue report for 2011 then they would have found all that out. The 2011 figures and report are on the Scottish Mountain Rescue website, and well worth a look — but do read it all before passing judgement please!

Also available on the website is a 30-year study of Scottish Avalanche Incidents 1980-2009 by Bob Sharp and me. Though there's extreme variability from one year to the next, the linear trend shows that the number of avalanche incidents attended by mountain rescue, the number of people who die or are injured, and the number of people involved in avalanches each year are all declining. Despite the recent media hype, it can actually be argued with some



Mountaineering is a wonderful sport, especially in winter, but there is always risk and, unfortunately, accidents happen. We must try to keep these to a minimum, but also keep a sense of perspective.

* Follow Heavy's blog on <http://heavywhalley.wordpress.com/>

confidence that people who walk and climb in Scotland are much better equipped and informed than they were twenty or thirty years ago. As a result, they are better prepared for dealing with a wide variety of mountain hazards both in summer and winter, including avalanche risk.

Tragic though mountain deaths are, every week we lose so many to drink and drugs in the UK. Yet it seems to be an accepted fact that this happens, day in, day out. The Government is pushing for a fit society, and to get people out for the health benefits involved, yet we had to spend an hour on a programme defending our sport!

I was very impressed by the answers on the programme from Cameron MacNeish, John Allen (ex-Cairngorm team leader), Heather Morning (Mountaineering Council of Scotland) and various other members of the public. All put forward a compelling case and helped state the case for more education and training but also the element of risk that is inevitable in the mountains.

To me, one death is one too many, and we must do what we can to educate and train people to enjoy the risk of a day in the mountains. We already do a lot to assist in mountain safety and education. The Mountain Weather Information Service (MWIS) and SportsScotland Avalanche Information Service (SAIS) provide detailed, mountain-specific information for anyone venturing into the hills, and the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and the BMC work hard to reinforce the safety message.

We should not take our eyes off the ball and all those who provide a joined-up approach to mountain safety and education should keep up the great work. Now is not the time to relax — we must keep pushing new methods and ideas to get mountain safety across to the hill-going public.

My thoughts are with all those families and rescuers involved in the recent tragedies. Please be careful in the mountains, read and use all the tools available in assessing conditions and be aware that normally easier areas can still hold considerable dangers. Mountaineering is a wonderful sport, especially in winter, but there is always risk and unfortunately accidents do happen. We must try to keep these to a minimum, but also keep a sense of perspective. ■

TEAMS BATTLE BLIZZARDS FOR STRANDED BROTHERS: MARCH

Members of three South Wales teams battled night-time blizzards to rescue two brothers who got into difficulties attempting South Wales's highest mountain.

The boys had set off to walk to the summit of Pen y Fan, but as the weather worsened, one of them suffered an injury and they called 999. Members of Brecon, Central Beacons and Longtown teams were alerted about 3.15pm. The brothers said they were stranded 600m (2,000ft) above Llanfrynach, south-east of Brecon.



Due to the weather, neither the air ambulance nor the RAF were able to fly. Sixteen rescuers set off in worsening conditions, as rain turned to snow and visibility dropped to less than 40 metres. It soon became clear the walkers had misjudged their position but, thanks to SARLOC technology, they were found sheltering in a tent, and suffering from hypothermia.

Team members carried them through peat hags and waist-deep snow, preferring not to use the path which is on the edge of a precipice, with a very real risk of going over the edge. By 10.00pm, an RAF Sea King was able to fly in and winch the boys aboard.

This particularly challenging rescue lasted almost eleven hours, most of which was spent by the team members battling the poor conditions.

...AND SNOW BRINGS CHAOS TO ROADS ACROSS UK: MARCH

Elsewhere, the late-March snow brought chaos to the roads, with teams across England and Wales being called in to help in atrocious conditions. In Cumbria, on Friday 22 March, team

reached their location at 8:00am on Saturday morning, but the pair still faced 'a challenging walk to safety.' They had been following satnav instructions and become stuck on the remote and narrow moorland road at the southern end of the Berwyn range. An attempt to reach them by 4x4 had failed because of extensive drifting on parts of the road.



Team members set out at 04:30am, in what were described as 'very testing driving conditions', with the aim of reaching the pair after dawn. The rescue party made its way as far as possible up the road before proceeding on foot. High winds had created drifts above head height and engulfing the entire road. Once found, the pair were provided with clothing to walk off the moorland, arriving in Bala around 10:30am.

Elsewhere, teams were busy delivering food parcels, transporting patients for dialysis appointments and digging out army vehicles (!) amongst many other things. Let's hope Spring has arrived by the time you read this!

Near Bala in Wales, a couple were trapped in their car in a snow drift for eighteen hours. Aberdyfi team members

Ogwen Valley MRO

Annual Scottish Winter Training weekend: February

A number of England and Wales teams and, of course, the search dog associations, now undertake winter training in the unique environment of the Scottish mountains — all the better to hone their skills. Ogwen Valley team members were also north of the Border in February, initially unaware of the avalanche tragedy unfolding close by, as **Chris Lloyd** reports.

Seven members of OVMRO and one member of Llanberis MRT were staying at Badaguish complex between Aviemore and Glen More. Weather conditions were poor all weekend and so was the risk of avalanche. The three professional instructors from OVMRO tried to make the most of conditions though thoughts of a Winter route or a walk on the plateau, remained just as thoughts.

On the Sunday, in swirling mists and high winds, the team trained in winter techniques in the lower aspects of Coire an t-Sneachda. Such was the weather, the avalanche on Jacob's Ladder was unbeknown to them. They completed their day and returned to Badaguish for the final evening for the weekend.

It was only early on the Monday morning when one

of the team leaders was in conversation with SARDA members who were also staying at the complex, that he became aware of the incident. The report was of one casualty who had fallen and survived, a party of five somewhere on the plateau and one missing.

The team leader immediately volunteered the services of this small contingent from Snowdonia to assist Cairngorm MRT but

with the proviso that they had a long drive back that afternoon. The offer was accepted. An area to the North of Sneachda was to be searched in the belief that if one man had survived the fall, the second might have done too and be walking north, down hill.

At the morning's briefing, team members first thought that this was all part of the final day's exercise. They were soon corrected as the plan

was made. The team carried out a series of line searches from about 8.00am till after lunch, without success. It was around about then that Helen Morning's search dog made the find in the Coire. Team members returned to their vehicles and set off for the long drive back to Snowdonia. The OVMRO team leader called at Cairngorm Base to report on their search and that all troops were off the hill.

WHAT DID THEY EVER DO FOR YOU?

the exec:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STATISTICS: GED FEENEY

EMAIL: statistics@mountain.rescue.org.uk

MAGAZINE: JUDY WHITESIDE

EMAIL: editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk

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EMAIL: billrhw@aol.com

LEGAL: FIONA BOYLE & ANDREW GILLET

EMAIL: legal@mountain.rescue.org.uk

REPORT ON THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE IRELAND CONFERENCE 2013



Neil Roden and Bill Whitehouse travelled to the village of Doolin on the south west coast of Ireland, over the weekend of 25th to 27th January to represent Mountain Rescue England and Wales at this annual conference, hosted by SARDA. Neil reports here.

This annual conference brings together all the MR teams in Ireland from both north and south of the border. That in itself highlights one of the challenges facing mountain rescue in Ireland — they have to work with two separate jurisdictions.

The initial impression was that mountain teams work very closely with cave rescue teams and the Coast Guard. In fact, in the Doolin area, most search and rescue work is carried out by either cave rescue or the Coast Guard. The Cliffs of Moher are very close by and reach a height of just over 700 feet but the rescues tend to be at the bottom rather than actually on the crag and it is a regular spot for the Coast Guard to visit.

This report aims to capture the key points of the conference, which was opened by Seamus Bradley, followed by an address by Senator Martin Conway. There was then a presentation on the working of SARDA in Ireland.

The first workshop, about suspension trauma, was presented by Dr Jason van Der Velde from MEDICO Cork. Basically MEDICO Cork (aka the National Maritime Telemedical Assistance Service) is a team of doctors from the Emergency Department of Cork University Hospital who are available 24/7/365 to give medical advice, originally to seafarers and people on offshore islands but now also to rescuers including mountain and cave rescue, and the Coast Guard, amongst many others.

The bottom line, as far as suspension trauma is concerned, is that you are very unlikely to meet it in the mountain or cave rescue environment. If someone is likely to be in a harness for a long time, fitting loops allowing the wearer to stretch or flex his legs reduces the risk of suspension trauma. Equally, pushing away from a wall has the same effect. In short, movement of the lower limbs helps.

One thing that came out of the workshop was that teams in Northern Ireland were no longer allowed to use morphine. The 'right' to use morphine has been transferred from mountain rescue teams to HART. Something for us to keep an eye on.

The second workshop was around medical matters. MREW Casualty Care is now recognised by IMRA as the standard for team members to attain. A lot of importance was given to governance of paperwork and records. This is necessary to comply with the requirements of the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) which appear somewhat complicated and very restrictive. MR team members in Ireland are allowed to use only a very limited range of drugs and even medical practitioners have serious insurance problems if they wish to use their skills as volunteers.

IMRA — now called Mountain Rescue Ireland (MRI) — has agreed to host IKAR in 2015. The shortlist was either them or Bulgaria but MRI decided to go for it following a separate meeting of team leaders. We spent some time explaining the concerns we had in England and Wales before deciding we, ourselves, could not take the conference that same year. MRI are keen to host IKAR in 2015 because it will be the 50th anniversary of organised mountain rescue in Ireland. It seems they have the backing of the Irish Tourist Board and anticipate significant other government support.

Accreditation was a huge topic and, in fairness, it wasn't given sufficient time. MRI engaged with Mountain Rescue Scotland to look at standards across all teams in Ireland. The key reasons were about setting own standards and quality assurance that we were doing a good job and not just on someone's say so, that the police pay our insurance and it is

therefore reasonable for them to know what we can do and it offers a good opportunity for networking. Generally speaking, there were no real objections to the principle of accreditation but there was concern expressed about how often it should take place. Currently it is envisaged at every three years. The accreditation process is well documented and involves an independent reviewer (currently from Mountain Rescue Scotland) visiting a team with an MRI observer to go through the governance of the team.

It shouldn't change anything a team does and should not impact very much at all. If a team has its admin in order, as most teams will have, then there really is nothing to be concerned about. Joe Dowdall is currently leading on this for MRI. His own team, based in Fermanagh, is to be assessed in November this year and Joe would be happy for a representative to accompany that visit. Following the visit, a report is compiled of any recommendations which would cover things like technical capability, PPE, vehicles, comms etc, etc. The team leader from SEMRA has said he will send a copy of the report he received for his team. It is not all bad — a recommendation previously highlighted the need for new or better

radios which resulted in the police giving teams twenty thousand pounds-worth of new equipment. There was a feeling that being able to show that your team has been independently reviewed helps with future funding streams. Those who have been through it thought it was a real benefit.

There were concurrent workshops on SARCALL and Irish Coast Guard helicopters which we were unable to attend. Appreciation for the help and support on SARCALL provided by John Hulse and Jon Whiteley was made known to us on more than one occasion.

The above were the really interesting points to come out of the morning session. The afternoon was given over to the AGM, after which Harold Burrows gave a talk on SARDA training and the leader of the volunteer Doolin Coast Guard Cliff Rescue Team gave a riveting account of some of the rescues and recoveries they had carried out on the Cliffs of Moher.

On the Sunday morning, we were able to inspect some of the equipment used by the Coastguard cliff rescue team and the Irish Cave Rescue Organisation whose Southern base is in Doolin. ■



WE THINK CAVE RESCUE COULD USE YOU...



LIKE TURNING THE TITANIC... AND STILL WE RUMBLE ON...

JUDY WHITESIDE EDITOR@MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK

Since Mike Park threw down a 'communication' gauntlet to Mountain Rescue England and Wales in September last year, said gauntlet has remained on MREW's virtual desk, a stark reminder that there's still plenty to be done to improve things. There's no denying some things have changed but, from where I'm sitting, it does feel a little like turning the Titanic at times — and we all know what happened to her. So where are we up to?

Since September, there appears to have been an increase in traffic to the Members area, with an influx of team members registering. And the Resources area is definitely picking up, with information being posted more regularly — although I admit there remain one or two exceptions. And no, I don't know how to resolve that either.

The Facebook group now has 338 members — which is probably ten percent of team membership, but still less than a quarter of those on the Members area. I suspect most of the group are active in the Members area anyway — but the benefit of Facebook for regular users is its accessibility, with news dropping conveniently into the inbox on whatever device you favour.

The odd complaint has meandered along the grapevine about the very fact we're using Facebook to communicate at all. I suspect there's still a feeling out there that social media is populated by trivia (which, of course, as grown-ups we would never do... heaven forbid we have any fun in mountain rescue) but it seems to me that the majority of postings on the closed group are measured and informed. There's been a fair bit of networking on there and some positive examples of it working for everyone's benefit.

Keith Gillies's post about the Team Leaders' Day being closed to further attendees, with only 20 teams represented, caused a bit of a furore. But the good thing was the immediateness of this information and the consequence that a new venue was hastily found elsewhere in Keswick. Result, I'd say. Would

this have happened had we relied on the traditional channels and the rumour-mill?

Then there was the guarded request from Tim Wood, of Cleveland team, about some sort of presentation he could use to inform his team members exactly what MREW does for them. As a member of the Publications group, I agreed he had a point — and, as the only thing I could find was a



...it seems to me that the majority of postings on the closed group are measured and informed. There's been a fair bit of networking on there and some positive examples of it working for everyone's benefit.

rather dated Powerpoint, I set about rewriting and designing this. The resulting PDF and PPT versions were posted to the Members area and the Facebook group, two weeks later. And I've dated it as '2013', in an effort to maintain the pressure on myself to update it annually — remind me if I forget! So, if you'd like to know what MREW ever did/does for you, take a

look. It surprised me — hopefully it will you too. You can find it under Resources>Publications.

I asked the 'official' channel — AKA Peter Smith — to confirm how information is sent out and it transpires this too is a work in progress. Peter explains:—

'Currently I send information to regional secretaries with a request to circulate to teams. The regional secretaries are happy with that

arrangement. It then rests with the team to inform members. Some teams cascade the information to all members, some are selective about what is passed on and to whom. Items that appear to have no immediate impact upon teams may disappear into a black hole. Items that requires an immediate response are sometimes ignored, resulting in reminders. Much

depends upon the awareness and diligence of the recipient.

'That recipient within the team may be the secretary, chairman or leader (or a combination thereof) and that arrangement is between the team and the region.'

'It's easy for me to maintain a list of contacts for the regional secretaries as they number only ten (including cave rescue) and tend to be in post for several years. They tend to inform me about pending retirements and successors. Some teams can be remiss about such matters.

'We now plan to introduce a second strand of distribution which will result in items also being sent to three contacts per team namely secretary, chairman and leader.'

An up-to-date contact list is currently being prepared, so expect the system to change (at least from the MREW end of the arrangement) some time soon. Clearly, the onus will still be on those along the length of the 'cascade' to do just that and pass the information on — and on those team members who feel they're being excluded, to exert pressure on their leaders to have that information delivered.

Back to the Facebook vs website debate, if you really would rather stick pins in your eyes than set up a

NEW TO THE MEMBERS AREA:

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Thanks to those who provided very prompt and constructive feedback, which was incorporated into the finished guidelines.

SARLOC USER MANUAL

A complete guide to using the SARLOC system, by Russ Hore — a confidential document for internal consumption only.

MOTOR INSURANCE POLICY AND FAQs

All you need to know about the motor insurance arranged by MREW with RSA, by Neil 'Woodie' Woodhead.

TEAM LEADERS' DAY PRESENTATIONS

All the presentations from the day in .pdf and .ppt format. An overview of the Mid-Wales search, Major incidents, accident black spots, information security, and the implications to mountain and cave rescue of Section 19 — it's all here.

OFF THE RECORD

Off the record reports from the MREW Management meetings by Judy Whiteside.

GETTING STARTED WITH SARCALL

An explanation of the steps required for a team to use SARCALL, this document also takes the user through the process of creating a World-Text account and creating appropriate groups for receiving SMS messages.

Facebook profile, the Members area and the forums are still functioning and available to use.

A quick check, as I write, tells me there have been at least 30 uploads to Resources in the last two months, and a considerable number of new forum posts about a diversity of topics. Several of these have been posted on the forums and Facebook, so people ARE using both mediums. The point of setting up the Facebook group was so the two would work in tandem — the one enhancing, rather than replacing, the other — and that appears to be the case.

Trouble is, despite our best efforts to communicate through as many channels as are humanly available to us, still there are rumblings that 'only half the members know what is going on.' Yet, when Daryl Garfield asked teams to respond regarding potential changes to the law relating to vehicles and exemptions, he reported that 'despite information going out via regional secretaries, regional vehicle reps, team vehicles officers, Facebook and team carrier pigeon (or team bat for cave teams)' there were still teams and team members who 'knew nothing about it'. In the event, by the time of Daryl's

presentation at the Team Leaders' Day — with the date for the mountain and cave rescue response to the Speed Limit Exemption consultation (section 19) fast approaching, only 22 out of 57 mountain and cave rescue teams had responded. I don't know where the blockages are but I don't think that one can really be laid at MREW's door.

If anyone out there has any ideas how else we can improve the channels of communication, please let me know so I can continue to pester those who can make the change. And when I say 'we', I don't just mean MREW — we all play a part in communication.

A guide to the Members area, for team members and admins, is available from Resources>Website and from the Facebook group — or email me for a copy.

To join the Facebook group, just set up a profile, use the search facility to find the group and click 'Ask to join'. We'll verify that you are a team member, then let you in. And, regarding another concern often raised — I can confirm that it IS a private group and not accessible by the public. See you there. ■

life online

Social media fiends will have spotted a few changes on the public-facing MREW page over the last month, not least of all a new arrival in the form of a Twitter feed.

The changes include a more consistent corporate look, and handy links to Twitter, the MREW

members, Paul and Julia, were snapped holding hand-drawn messages exhorting us to 'Support mountain rescue' and check out Twitter, at '@mountrescueuk', respectively. Despite reported grumbings about their creative integrity relative to our brand value (we do that so well, don't we? Grumble, that is), both posts appear to have been popular. I'd say the device worked pretty well for us.

The good old British weather also contributed to our increase in popularity, with images and stories from across England and Wales showing team members out in seriously bad conditions to assist their communities.

Of course, images tell a great tale, but you can't beat a movie! Rob Johnson's film of his team (Llanberis) features a rescue on Snowdon in March, in full winter conditions, when the team was called to assist two walkers with hypothermia, stuck on steep snow without crampons or ice axe. Catch it on YouTube at <http://tinyurl.com/c3um2fj>.

Meanwhile, in the Lakes, Tracey Elliot Walker has been working with the Cocker mouth team for over a year. Using headcam footage from team members and her own filming of the team in every sort of weather the Lakes could throw at her, she has produced a documentary which may feature her local team but tells the story of rescue teams across England and Wales. Watch a trailer for the film, due soon on DVD at <http://tinyurl.com/caqf93s>. JW



website and our online shop. It's still a work in progress, so we watch with interest as it develops.

Fans might also note that the content is more diverse, with daily stories from teams across the UK, fundraising tales and pledges of support, news items of interest to anyone heading to the hills, safety information, advice, weather reports, some very impressive short films... and more ideas to come. One particular post triggered the start of a 1000-figure (and still counting) increase in our 'Likes' in a matter of days — employing a creative device currently favoured by far greater creative mortals than we. Edale team



Facebook: www.facebook.com/MountainRescue.MREW
Twitter: @mountrescueuk



SHOULD WE JUST GIVE THEM ANOTHER HOUR TO TURN UP?

LAKE DISTRICT

MBE FOR MARK HODGSON AND JULIAN CARRADICE

Mark Hodgson, team leader of the Keswick MRT was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours list. In addition to his forty years with the team, nineteen year as team leader, Mark has made and continues to make significant contributions in the field of mountain rescue to the Lakes region and the national body.



Mark Hodgson (above left) and Julian Carradice (right).

Julian Carradice, a member of the Cumbria Ore Mine Rescue Unit also received an MBE. Julian served as a team member of Wasdale MRT for over 32 years, serving as team leader for more than ten.

Still in Keswick, at the AGM in late January, Alan Prescott stood down after five years as chairman of the team. He has been succeeded by Malcolm Miller, a team member with over 40 years experience in the team. Roy Henderson also stood

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FOR RICHARD LONGMAN

Richard Longman has stepped down from his operational role in mountain rescue after a long and distinguished service. Richard has been a member of Wasdale MRT for over 30 years and for most of those years has been a committee member and treasurer. However, in addition to his work at team level, he has carried out a significant amount of work beyond the team, for example, with county resilience matters and in particular within LDSAMRA as a trustee and officer. Most notably, Richard has been treasurer of the association for many years and instrumental in financial matters such as insurance, where the level of cover we have today reflects the work he has put in both at regional and national level. His LDSAMRA colleagues honoured him at the region's January meeting where, to his great surprise and appreciation, he was presented with an LDSAMRA Distinguished Service Award. Three days later, at a specially convened meeting in Gosforth, Wasdale team honoured him by unanimously electing him as a life Honorary Vice President of the team. Although no longer a full time active team member, Richard continues to attend the rescue base to assist with rescues and support the team.



Richard Longman with his award.

down after 22 years as deputy leader and Steve Hepburn now joins Chris Gilyon, Chris Higgins and Simon Hodgson as deputies. At the annual team dinner, MREW Long Service Awards were presented to Simon Hodgson, Scott Henderson and Neil Dowie (with 25 years each) and Robin Humphreys, Ian Wallace and Mark Hodgson who have each clocked up 40 years.

RESCUE 2020: PROGRESS SO FAR

Richard Warren writes... Progress on implementation of the report's nine key areas, incorporating 29 recommendations for change, has been good. These include both internal processes and also the working arrangement with adjacent teams, however, the main focus has been on improving the working relationship with our external partner agencies and particularly the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS). Our concern had

been the repeated delays in calling out teams and inappropriate tasking of assets. Part of the solution, and indeed the main contributor to the success to date, lies in the introduction of SARCALL within the NWAS control centre at Broughton last autumn, initially as a three-month pilot. Following what was an extremely successful trial, SARCALL is now a fully operational and integrated system for calling out Lakes teams with minimal delay for the casualty. Along with a greater awareness of our resource capabilities, a better understanding of the environmental and geographical challenges surrounding off-road incidents, and a willingness on both sides to work cooperatively, this has meant a real and positive step change in the way incidents are dealt with once the '999' call is received by Cumbria Police or NWAS. RESCUE 2020 was a major investment of time and effort for the Lakes teams and it is now starting to show real



FROM KIRKBY TO ANTARCTICA...

Mountain rescue team members certainly like to get about and you won't get much further afield than Craig Wearmouth, proudly wearing his mountain rescue polo shirt in sunny Antarctica — at what must be several degrees below freezing. Craig is now on his third tour for the British Antarctic Survey, over a period of seven years. He's been working the 'summer season' (explains the polo shirt!) from November to March — made more interesting this time round as he's been involved with demolishing the old base, Halley 5, finishing and opening the new Halley 6, and the extra chartered ship, as well as their regular ship, fetching supplies and taking waste away. 'It's a massive task,' says Craig, 'involving a lot of skilled people in all professions mucking in.'

His background is driving plant machines and wagons, so during relief he is hauling cargo back and forth from the coast — 'boring at times when there is nothing to see on a flat ice shelf, but the horizon is made even harder to spot when there is no contrast and you can't tell the ice from the sky, or the bumps in the track!' The rest of the time he works on the construction side and raising all the building out of the snow, which accumulates at around 1.5 metres a year.

Halley is well-known as the place where the hole in the ozone layer was discovered and this is still monitored. 'They tell me it's recovered,' says Craig, 'but what do I know?'

'It's not all work — we managed a day out at the penguin colony, one of the largest in the Antarctic. It felt a great privilege to be able to walk around with them — they're just as interested in you as you are in them — but you do have to put up with the smell of penguin poo!

'We leave in March for a two-week cruise to the Falklands. I am hoping to get up in a plane for a flight round the ice shelf, then a big holiday on my way home via New Zealand and South America. That said, I do miss being able to walk on the fells and out with the team. Being part of mountain rescue helps keep me fit so I hope they still need me when I get home!'

improvements in the way our call-outs are executed. We will continue to report on progress over the coming months.

DO WET SUMMERS EQUATE TO LOWER INCIDENT NUMBERS?

Probably the wettest summer on record clearly had an impact on the numbers of visitors to the Lake District during 2012, showing a 25% reduction on 2011, and this may well be a factor in the levelling out of call-outs. There was a slight increase during year — 432 compared to 425 — but nothing like the worrying trend of previous years, which delivered a record 600 incidents in 2010. Unfortunately, we still see tragic events and the fatality rate remains high with 22 deaths, the majority being non-winter hill walking. This represents 1 in 20 and must be considered too high a rate. What can be done to reduce the numbers of fatalities? Education and awareness of the dangers and risks for the ill prepared remains a prime concern for teams and hopefully in time the message will get across. We make no apology for repeating this mantra every year if it helps save a single life.

The teams have dealt with a 100% increase in the number of 'resilience' requests, to support colleagues in the statutory emergency services — partly due to increased cooperation between the teams and the ambulance service — and this year will I am sure, see an even greater involvement of mountain rescue in resilience matters particularly at strategic levels (Gold and Silver Command).

A GRAND DAY OUT DAY IN THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

February saw Cumbrian businesses and services travelling south for 'Cumbria Day' in the Jubilee Room of the Houses of Parliament, in an effort to encourage tourism and promote local business. Organised by Cumbria Tourism and Rory Stewart, MP for Penrith and the Border, it was supported and attended by all six Cumbrian MPs — Sir Tony Cunningham, Tim Farron, Jamie Read, Rory Stewart, John Stevenson and John Woodhouse — with LDSAMRA represented by Richard Warren. Eminent Cumbrian mountaineer, Doug Scott, opened the day but not before he had made a bee-line for the LDSAMRA table where he felt more at home amongst the photographic material on display! In his opening speech, Doug gave the Lakes teams and their voluntary status a strong level of support. All those attending were provided with tables for brochures and space for a pop-up display in what was a very compact Jubilee Room. Hundreds of MPs and Lords came into the room, sampled the produce and generally took a great interest in the different organisations. It was a great

A TEAM WITH NO MOUNTAINS, TRAINING IN SCOTLAND? AND WHY NOT...

SCARBOROUGH & RYEDALE VISIT COIRE CAS ROGER HARTLEY

So, why DOES a team with no mountains need to go to the Cairngorms for training? Well, we committed to undertake out of area training for several reasons but essentially, as mountain rescue becomes less team-centric, we need to be able to operate in a wider area. The April Jones search in Machynlleth showed that teams from all over the country must be able to operate safely in any area and if we train in more extreme environments than our own, we are more able to operate safely and concentrate on the search/rescue.

So, two self-drive mini buses set off, one Saturday in February, headed for Grantown-on-Spey via gear shopping in Aviemore. Some team members had been there many times, for others it was their first trip north. So, whether it was anticipation of revisiting familiar territory or nervousness at not knowing what to expect, most had an early night.

Sunday morning saw us at the Cairngorm ski area car park. Conditions were cold and clear with 25/30mph south-westerly winds. There was good snow cover higher up but much had gone at lower levels. Cornicing was evident and the avalanche risk was moderate. So, ensuring everyone had the extra personal equipment and team climbing ropes, we headed into Coire Cas.

This first day was to train everyone in the techniques to travel safely on ice, both on the level and higher-angled slopes, including ice axe breaking — an essential skill in the Scottish mountains — and the construction of belays with the minimum of equipment.

That evening we'd arranged a talk by the much respected mountaineer, Dave

'Heavy' Whalley. I have known Heavy for over 30 years, since a young member of RAF MR. His views were held in high regard even then and his standing has only increased. He was informative, thought provoking and controversial but all the time relevant to issues faced by every team in the country — and clearly his breadth of knowledge can only be admired. I would encourage anyone to go to his talks if you get the chance, and check out www.heavywhalley.com.

Monday's objective was to reach the summit of Cairngorm at 1245m and do some navigation, giving team members the opportunity to use the skills they gained yesterday. Four of the group decided not to summit because of illness and fatigue (decisions not taken lightly but of utmost importance in extremes of environment) and the rest of us took the pathway to the left of the funicular railway. Having expected freezing temperatures, snow storms and horrendous gales, imagine our surprise when the weather was exceptionally good: very light wind and clear blue skies! With hard névé underfoot and the path steep, the climb was hard and crampons and ice axes had to be used but this is what we were there for and all stepped up to the mark. Two hours twenty minutes later we were stood on the summit looking at stunning views across to Ben Nevis and the west coast. For six of the group this was their first Munro and for some it was the first mountain they'd climbed at all. I have no doubt that they found it hard but I think it's safe to say the trip was a great success and it seems certain we'll be going again!



Continued on page 29

Sixty years of mountain rescue

COCKERMOUTH MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM



Article compiled by Judy Whiteside, from the Cockermouth MRT Annual Report 2013, with thanks to John Dempster and Steve Brailey.

Cockermouth team threw open its doors on Saturday 23 February to celebrate sixty years in the business of mountain rescue. Visitors and invited guests were treated to a never-ending supply of tea and coffee, as they toured the base, checked out state-of-the-art equipment, admired the team's three vehicles and chatted to team members old and new.

The team has come a long way since its early days, when a tobacco tin housed the first aid kit and troops were rallied by a knock on the door, yet some things remain the same — not least of all, as the picture shows, the getting wet!

John Millington, a founder member, remembers well the evening it all began, a mere sixty years ago, on 23 February, 1953.

'My friend David Martin and I are in Armstrong's Café at a meeting called to discuss the formation of a mountain rescue team in Cockermouth. The café is familiar to everyone in the town. This room, above the cake shop, is used by many different organisations, including our

'Rucksack Club', for meetings, lectures, slide shows and so on. There are probably about fifty here. We know a lot of them because we go climbing or walking with them every weekend but they're all a bit older (I'll be sixteen next week and David is a year younger).

'There are people here, too, from Keswick Mountain Rescue Team, which was formed in 1947. George Fisher, Mike Nixon and Rusty Westmorland will be offering their help because they have the knowledge and experience of mountain rescue. They've brought George Abraham with them — he's getting on a bit now, but he's one of the famous Abraham brothers

who took all those wonderful photographs in the mountains.

'There are people here from the ambulance service and the police, and some farmers and other people from the Lorton and Buttermere area. We know Tom and Jos Richardson from Gatesgarth Farm, and we recognise Chris Greenhow from the Fish Hotel and Rodney Twitchen from the Victoria. It's usually these local folks who are alerted when there are incidents on the fells.

John Bell is presiding — quite a change for him. He's usually up a ladder with a paint pot and brush. He's well-regarded in the town as a painter and decorator but he's also one of the first amateur photographers to make colour slides.

'Everyone seems enthusiastic and there are offers of help from all round. Rodney Twitchen has a contact at the British Ropes Company and is certain he can get some ropes at discount — these new nylon ropes are very expensive. Somebody thinks they know where they can get a stretcher and Dr Jim Joyce thinks that local doctors and chemists would help with first aid items. He's also volunteered to be the Medical Officer.

'Transport could be a problem. The police will help when they can and Sydney Graham, a local businessman with a large estate car, can help on occasions. Norman Lister, who works at Jennings Brewery, says he will be allowed to use one of their lorries although it won't be very comfortable for those riding in the back. At best, until an

ambulance can be afforded, the team would only be able to bring casualties to the nearest roadside. Call-outs would be coordinated by the police. Those few people who have a telephone would pose no problem but those who haven't would be contacted by a knock on the door by another team member or a policeman.

'Funds will have to be raised for equipment and the day-to-day running of the team. Donations will have to be sought from local people, businesses and other organisations and it is likely that each team member would have to pay a subscription. David suggests that funds could be raised by jumble sales, raffles and coffee mornings. Harold Bowe says he can open an account at the National Provincial Bank where he works and he becomes the team's treasurer.

'After a short break for tea and biscuits, it has been agreed — there will be a mountain rescue team in Cockermouth. There are one or two dissenting voices, and some people express concern that David and I are too young to be exposed to potentially dangerous work but Inspector Hulley comes to our defence by saying we would be useful for running messages! We don't say anything but we are hoping to be more involved than that! We're both very fit — in addition to the climbing and walking we're active in the Scouts and play rugby at the grammar school. David is a good gymnast and I'm quite useful for those riding in the back. At best, until an

ambulance can be afforded, the team would only be able to bring casualties to the nearest roadside. Call-outs would be coordinated by the police. Those few people who have a telephone would pose no problem but those who haven't would be contacted by a knock on the door by another team member or a policeman.



John Bell is elected as chairman and Jack Jackson as quartermaster. It was they who first had the idea of starting a mountain rescue team for Cockermouth. Norman Lister will be team leader.

'So... what a good start to what we think will be a great year. The Queen will be crowned on 2 June and we are all certain John Hunt's expedition will conquer Everest before then. And, who knows, maybe Stanley Matthews will win his first cup-winner's medal and Gordon Richards his first Derby? They say the Queen will reign for a very long time —

perhaps more than sixty years. I wonder if the Cockermouth team will last that long... it would be interesting to come back in 2013 and find out...'

Well, the Queen does indeed still reign and the team shows no sign of demise. So what HAS changed?

From the six rescues carried out during their first year, incident numbers have continued to rise with the team dealing with 61 during 2012. In common with fledgling teams across England and Wales, equipment then was hard-won and the main criteria for join the team seemed to be

'somebody who liked walking and was quite handy at first aid'.

By December 1953, the new Cockermouth team had raised about £50, enough to buy 300 feet of rope, six karabiners and two electric lanterns. Members donated the rest of the equipment. The first stretcher cost forty pounds — with telescopic handles and runners on the bottom, it was designed for mines rescue work — and Cockermouth was the first rescue team in England to have portable radios, after 'some clever infiltration of the Civil Defence by members of the

team' enabled use of their portable radios. In 2013, the annual running costs are likely to be £46,000 per year. Eventually a Jeep joined the ranks (requiring a large concrete block to be fitted to the front bumpers to rectify a weight imbalance), replaced, in time, by a Roll's Royce no less! Building a new garage — which served as the team's HQ for many years — in 1962, involved as much team effort as any rescue, with building materials, cement mixer, plans and legal work all donated free of charge. Jim Coyle's father used his skills as a builder, ably



ABOVE: The first garage, with Eric Hargreaves, Jack Jackson, Antony Rigby, Peter Chandler, Dennis Graves and Dave Towers © Cockermouth MRT. TOP: Stretcher carry, early 1960s, with Jim Coyle, Jock Thompson, Billy Bowman, John Dempster, Peter Shand and Frank Rushton. RIGHT: Team members on exercise, one very wet weekend in September 2012 © Michael Lishman. BACKGROUND IMAGE © Judy Whiteside.



ABOVE: The current Cockermouth team at Fleetwith Pike © Cockermouth MRT.

assisted by team members acting as labourers.

Today's team boasts an award-winning base — housing three fully kitted Land Rovers — thanks to a sterling fundraising effort and support from Sport England. Completed in 2003 — and with a Civic Trust award for 'outstanding building' and an Allerdale Disability Association award in appreciation of its accessibility — the base was the first of its kind, envied and emulated by colleagues across the country.

The team has seen some devastating events over the years, including the tragic death of their team leader and a second team member during a training exercise, in June 1969. Team members were practising a new technique of horizontal stretcher lower at Low Crag above Gatesgarth, Buttermere. One lower had been successfully completed but, on the second, a huge rock, which was holding the main belay, broke away causing a substantial rock fall which engulfed the stretcher and several of the members. Jock Thompson, the team leader, who was acting as one of the barrowboys, was struck by the boulder and killed instantly. Jim Coyle, the other barrowboy, suffered a broken arm and cracked ribs. One of the two belay members, Michael Stephenson, was catapulted out onto the scree below and died in hospital from his injuries, the following day. Kathryn Wilson, the other main belay person, was carried down the crag, resulting in a broken arm and a broken pelvis. Rex Usher, acting as the casualty on the stretcher, was buried under the debris. He

suffered cracked ribs and severe bruising. Several other team members suffered more minor injuries such as rope burns.

The accident had a profound effect on a very young team and it remains probably the most serious accident to have occurred in mountain rescue in Britain.

'There was a general feeling that we wanted to pack it in,' recalls Jim Coyle. 'You've got to remember, we were young lads. We'd never had to face anything like this before.'

Far from packing it in, however, the 27-year-old Jim himself bravely took up the mantle of team leader, a post he held for 38 years. It was to his credit that the team developed from such a low point to become recognised as one of the core Lakes teams. During his time as leader, he also helped establish the Search and Rescue Dogs Association in England, with his first dog, Rock, gaining the coveted 'C' grade — at the time there were only two other handlers at this high standard in the country.

In 1983, a plane crash on the west side of Steeple Ridge left its two occupants dead and team members, assisted by Wasdale, brought the bodies down. The crash scene required securing overnight before the Air Authority Crash Investigation Team could arrive the following day. Team member Jack Parker, a serving police officer, happened to be on duty that night so he was duly 'volunteered' by his inspector to act as guard overnight. A couple of team members stayed at the scene whilst Jack went home for his tent — or more specifically, his son's tent. Unfortunately, his eighteen-year-old son had other

ideas, stating that his father couldn't use his tent unless he too could spend the night on the mountain in it! Jack agreed and the pair returned to the scene of the crash as darkness fell. Else you haven't yet made the connection, the young man's name was Mike and that evening was the first involvement of the now infamous Mike Park MBE had with mountain rescue. He joined the team in September that year, taking up the role of team leader five years ago when Jim Coyle stepped down.

Last year, team members scrubbed up well to receive a BBC 999 award for their rescue of a walker who had slipped down a 100ft mountain drop sustaining head injuries, a rescue which 'had potential to go very, very wrong'.

Steve Brailey, team chairman, said he was proud to receive the award 'not only on behalf of Cockermouth MRT, but on behalf of the twelve teams in the Lake District and the 50 plus teams in England and Wales that carry out hundreds of rescues every year — many every bit as dramatic.'

But, besides the standard mountain casualties of broken limbs and lives, caused by slips and trips on the fells, the team has been involved in their fair share of incidents involving the wider community. During heavy snowfalls on the west coast, in 1996, paramedics were deployed to the team's base, from which the Ambulance Service operated for four to five days. In 2010, team members assisted the police in the aftermath of the Cumbria shootings, and their neighbours Keswick, following the school coach crash. But it was events in

2009 which really catapulted Cockermouth onto international news screens, with the terrible floods that swept through the town in November.

The rescue effort lasted five days, but it was the scenes in the first 36 hours that team members will never forget. As RAF Sea Kings flew back and forth over the devastation, airlifting people to safety, team members set about searching homes and businesses on the ground. When the floods subsided, the town had visits from the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary and others but the most memorable was Prince Charles, who took the opportunity to speak to and thank team members, a fitting tribute to their hard work.

As for their 'joining' criteria, this too has changed, to reflect the demands now placed on mountain rescue not just by the nature of incidents and the ever-changing developments in equipment and technology, but the expectations of both team members and public that the team can deliver a world-class professional service. 'Previous experience' now includes not just walking and a basic grasp of first aid, but the ability to walk, climb (to a Lake District V Diff/Severe grade) and navigate in both summer and winter conditions. Indeed, team members regularly undertake challenging expeditions and trips around the world's mountains, both as a team and individually.

Much has changed yet many things remain the same — the mountains are the same, the injuries too are largely the same, and the dedication and enthusiasm of those involved certainly hasn't changed much. Many of the faces remain the same too. 'It's really quite humbling,' says Steve Brailey, 'to see that we have two team members with over 50 years of service in the Cockermouth team, twelve team members with 25 or more years of service and another twenty members with ten or more years of service.'

In its sixty years of service, the team estimates it has been called out 1,407 times, with

about a third of these in the past ten years. Sadly, about a hundred people have died in the incidents. Since 1953, the team has had a total of 182 members.

Mike Park concludes: 'Today's team stands on the shoulders of giants — the people who first came up with the idea of a Cockermouth mountain rescue team and made it a reality, the people who followed, both within the team and throughout the wider mountain rescue community and the wives, partners, family and friends that equally make the team what it is as the team members themselves.'

For the full 60th Anniversary Annual Report, go to cockermouthmrt.org.uk.

MICHAEL LISHMAN worked for many years as an advertising and editorial photographer, based in London, before returning home to the Eastern Lake District with his young family. He specialises in environmental portraiture and is currently working on a long term project documenting the work of the Cockermouth team, focusing on the team members. As part of this project he produced a series of images to celebrate the team's 60th anniversary. www.michaellishman.com Michael@michaellishman.com



BOOTS WITH CRAMPONS FITTED

PIG HAMMER

TAPE CHOCS

WILLANS HARNESS

WIRE CHOCS

TAPE SLING WITH KARABINER

JOE BROWN HELMET

ICE AXE WITH WOODEN SHAFT

HAWSER LAID NYLON ROPE

SET OF CHOCS

MOAC CHOC

PEGS AND BRAKING DEVICES

ELASTOPLAST AND PLASTERS

Mountain rescue kit circa 1953



CANVAS RUCKSACK

VENTILE ANORAK

PARAFFIN STORM LANTERN

GAITERS

LEATHER BOOTS WITH NAILS

EARLY HARNESS

HEMP WAIST LOOP

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NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE SEARCH AND RESCUE AWARDS BLACK SHEEP BREWERY



BELOW: Assembled guests and award winners at the Black Sheep Brewery Centre. INSET: Master of Ceremonies, Tony Peers, has a chat with Evie Chapman. LEFT: The prior to the presentation.

opportunity for networking and discussion about the issues facing mountain rescue. Lord Dubs is a great advocate of mountain rescue, especially his local team, Cockermouth MRT and he came across to lend his support. Richard Leafe, CEO of the Lake District National Park was also keen to assist in getting the safety message across. The one disappointment was not being able to speak to David Cameron. Despite this, the day was a great success and a valuable opportunity for the region's teams and, indeed, mountain rescue as a whole. Following the event, the six MPs formed an Associate Parliamentary Group for Tourism and Business to take forward Cumbria's priorities in Westminster on a cross-party basis. LDSAMRA will ensure that our region's teams continue to have a strong voice through our local MPs.

LONG SERVICE AWARDS FOR DUDDON & FURNESS MEMBERS

Stephe Cove (pictured above, on the right), former team chairman and now chair of trustees, and new chairman, Andy Woods (pictured left), were presented with their 40-year and 25-year awards, respectively, in early March.

regional News



NORTH EAST

MBE FOR CLEVELAND'S GARY FINCH

A member of Cleveland MRT for 42 years, Gari was awarded the MBE in the Queen's New Year's honours. Since joining the team in 1971, he has held a range of posts, including transport officer and thirteen years as chairman but perhaps his

most significant role is that of call-out officer — a post he has held now for 23 years. He brings a wealth of operational experience to the task and continues to be an invaluable asset for the team. Gari's commitment, however, has not been restricted simply to Cleveland. As chairman of NESRA, he continues to make a significant contribution to mountain rescue in the north east. Tim Wood, team chairman said: 'The team is absolutely delighted that Gari has been honoured in this way. Given his incredible contribution to mountain rescue, it is difficult to think of a more deserving recipient of the MBE.'

MORE SWALEDALE FUNDRAISING NEWS FROM AFGHANISTAN

In February, 67 personnel from the HQ and Sp Sqn completed the final charity event of their Afghanistan tour, to raise funds for Swaledale MRT, by bench pressing the equivalent weight of their regimental vehicle fleet — that's 2,403,923kg — in fifteen hours. Team member, Major Stu Canane, Quartermaster (Technical) with 21 Engineer Regiment, is now looking forward to seeing his team mates, back home in Swaledale, in April.

Early March saw David Allan and Judy Whiteside travelling to Masham, in the Yorkshire Dales, as guests at the North Yorkshire Police Search and Rescue Awards Presentation Night. And, with the dress code billed as 'Lounge suit for gentlemen' and 'Ladies dress to impress' it was good to see suitably suited and booted mountain rescuers and uniformed guests mingling in the Black Sheep Brewery Visitor Centre — and what better place for a mountain rescue event than a brewery?

The evening was cheerfully chivvied along by local showbiz veteran and comedian, Tony Peers who, having arrived a little

late, hit the ground running with his own particular brand of good old-fashioned humour (think

Butlins, where Peers is proud to have cut his comedy teeth). Team members from CRO, Cleveland, Scarborough and Ryedale, Swaledale and Upper Wharfedale mingled with Colonel York, the Vice Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Julia Mulligan (Police and Crime Commissioner), Tim Madgwick (Temporary Chief Constable) and Sue Cross (Temporary Deputy Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police), and representatives from fire and rescue, ambulance and air ambulances, coastguard, RAF and the national parks.

A fantastic meal provided some amusement with the reminder that our dinner choices were handily printed on the back of our name cards. Only problem was, none of the choices printed there matched any of our remembered choices. But, in the event, everyone seemed happily catered for and the wine — and beer, of course — went down well too.

The awards presentation comprised each of the five teams receiving an award and a donation of £3000. Prior to each award, a guest speaker was invited to talk about an incident in

which they had been involved with the team. Star of the show was young Evie Chapman, who has singlehandedly raised a good sum of money for Scarborough team. She bravely stood up to tell the 60-odd guests how she completed one of Scarborough team's challenge walks last year, raising significant sponsorship in the process. In fact, people were so impressed by her story that the donations for the next event started rolling in before she had chance to sit down!

In the final part of the evening, Bernie Bond (CRO), Gari Finch (Cleveland), David Swales (Scarborough & Ryedale), Alan Bailey (Swaledale) and Alan Stockdale (Upper Wharfedale) received Lifetime Achievement Awards — each one hard-earned and well deserved.

The event was organised by PC Jon Rushton, of North Yorkshire Police, the liaison officer for the five teams, sponsored by Sepura and hosted by the North Yorkshire Police to recognise the work done by mountain and cave rescue teams in the area. 'Our goal,' said Julia Mulligan, 'is to ensure North Yorkshire remains the safest place

to live, work and visit. It is clear people don't just want to be safe, they want to feel safe. There can be no greater demonstration of that than the work of the search and rescue teams.'

David Allan sums it up: 'I was delighted to be invited to the fourth occasion of the event. In the week that saw the country lose its AAA rating there can be no doubt that this event has a robust AAA quality.'

'The first A is for admiration for the commitment, skill and dogged hard work of the team members. The second is for appreciation of their efforts as demonstrated by the support on this occasion from the statutory rescue services. The third is for aversation — sadly the feature from other regions in emulating the lead shown by North Yorkshire. I hope it will change in the coming years.'

'Whilst many people have contributed to the success of these events, special mention must be made of Jon Rushton whose interest and drive has been instrumental in instigating and sustaining the occasion.'

All in all, a great event and a great evening out!

NORTH WALES

THREE TEAMS COLLABORATE IN FUNDRAISING PARACHUTE JUMP

NEWSAR, Bolton and SARDA team members have taken the 'team collaboration concept' a step further by joining forces in a charity parachute



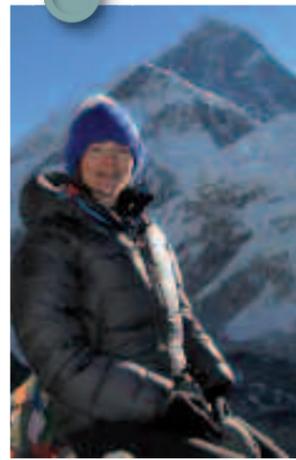
THE COLLABORATIVE PARACHUTE TEAM
BACK: Chris Greenhalgh (Bolton), Elaine Gilliland (Bolton), Amanda Norton (NEWSAR), Declan Mayo (NEWSAR), Ann Parry (NEWSAR), Martin Tuggey (NEWSAR). FRONT: Steve Nelson (SARDA), Dani Burgess (NEWSAR). NOT PICTURED: Neil Becousse (NEWSAR).

FROM ABERGLASLYN TO EVEREST: CATRIN TREKS IN AID OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Catrin Patterson, who is originally from Porthmadog, embarked on a trek to Everest Base Camp in November, to help raise cash for Aberglaslyn MRT, which covers part of Snowdonia. The team is currently fundraising for a new rescue centre at Porthmadog, which will house their two Land Rover ambulances, boat and specialised rescue equipment.

Catrin flew out to Lukla in early November and trekked for ten days to Base Camp, then walked up to the 5,647m summit of Kala Patthar before returning to Lukla, raising a total of £3,015 for the team.

Press officer, Gethin Edwards said: 'The team is grateful to Catrin for her hard work in raising these much needed funds, which take us a step closer to the completion of our new base. We'd like to thank everyone who has contributed towards Catrin's expedition — and to the construction of the base.'



jump. The solo jumpers (yes, that's right they won't be strapped to any instructors), have been brought together by Dani Burgess, a trainee team member with NEWSAR. Building on relationships she forged at the residential foundation course in mountain rescue in October 2012, Dani's team of eight aims to raise £9000, to be split between the three teams. But, unfortunately, despite her hard work Dani will not be making the jump herself. She has been desperate to do a charity parachute jump for sixteen years. Joining NEWSAR in 2012 gave her

the perfect opportunity to fundraise for a charity close to her heart and tick another life experience off her 'to do' list but a run of bad luck, and injuries that seem to increase in severity, makes you wonder if she should ever set foot out of a plane. Dani's first jump attempt, in 1997, was cancelled eight weeks before the training had been scheduled, when she broke her leg and dislocated her ankle whilst on an adventure week. Her injuries were so severe that Dani was told she'd be unable to jump for another two years! In 2011, her second

attempt was scheduled, again for May, and exactly eight weeks before, she dislocated her knee and did significant cartilage damage in a netball match. Out of action for several months and later having surgery to gain back full mobility, Dani had now missed two opportunities to parachute. And now, her latest efforts too have been thwarted by yet another injury — this time much more serious: a broken back.

'Becoming slightly superstitious about my history of failed jumps, I opted not to go for a May jump but bring it forward to April. I'd even joked about my failed attempts and that I was going to be extra careful leading up to the eight-week countdown. 'So, exactly eight weeks before my 'D' day — and a few close shaves in the Cairngorms on winter ex — I thought I was home free! Then, going about my normal day's work, exercising a local show jumper's horse, when the inevitable happens: I fall off. More embarrassing, I get helicoptered to hospital by the same air ambulance we did our mountain rescue training with last year!' Not one to give in easily, despite not being able to jump, Dani has continued fundraising with a cycling challenge over the next month, in line with her rehabilitation. The jump is set to take place on 13 April. Watch this space for an update!



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We've finally gone and done it — we've just joined the social media revolution, having established new Keela Twitter and Facebook accounts! Why not 'follow' and 'like' the latest goings-on at your favourite outdoor clothing company, or you can even share your outdoor experiences with us. We'd love you to get involved and interact by sending in some short stories and pictures of funny things that have happened to you recently while enjoying the great outdoors.

The person submitting the quirkiest/funniest anecdote will win a full Keela outfit, so they can be kitted out from head-to-toe in our brand's very latest gear. Remember, keep it brief (no more than 250 words), include a picture if you can and tell us something strange, unusual or just plain bonkers that happened to you recently while out walking, climbing, running or biking.

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MOUNTAIN RESCUE VISITS THE SENEDD

On 5 February 2013, ten members of Mountain Rescue England and Wales visited the National Assembly building in Cardiff, known as the Senedd. The National Assembly for Wales is an elected body that represents the interest of Wales and its people and as such it seemed long overdue for mountain rescue to make its voice heard in that arena. **Dave Worrall** reports.

The idea grew from a recent MREW meeting, and discussion about the All Party Groups within Parliament. For those of us across the border, Westminster isn't the only government and having asked the question, it seemed inevitable it should be followed up. As secretary for North Wales MRA, I approached the Assembly Member (AM) for North Wales whose area includes the operational areas of the Ogwen Valley and Llanberis teams. Alun Ffred Jones is AM for Arfon and he agreed to sponsor us to visit the Senedd.

During our conversations, it was suggested by Alun Ffred that we include the South Wales teams as well. This would provide us with an all-Wales perspective and I welcomed the suggestion. For some reason, connections between south and north Wales had lapsed and, to be honest, needed to be re-established. I contacted Dave Lewis, secretary for South Wales MRA and put the idea to him.

The response was very positive and arrangements were made to attend the Senedd to speak to AMs and promote the work of mountain rescue. Visiting

any government building is a complex process and agreement had to be obtained for vehicles, kit and personnel, but it all came together in the end.

For his part, Alun Ffred Jones helped with informing the AMs of our visit and getting them to agree to listen to our message. He also persuaded Huw Lewis, the minister with responsibility for mountain rescue, to say a few words about our work. All in all, seventeen AMs spent time with us and discussed issues. As the Welsh Government has 60 in total, we were very pleased with the response.



SENEDD VISITORS LEFT TO RIGHT: BACK ROW: John Grisedale, Iwan Thomas, Antoinette Sandbach AM, Harold Burrows, Huw Birrell, Penny Brockman, Dave Williams, Dave Lewis. FRONT ROW: Phil Benbow, Nigel Dawson, Dave Worrall.

For our part we needed to go with a clear message and we chose to concentrate on the topic of insurance. During the search for April Jones, it was a shock to discover that mountain rescue team members had varying levels of insurance. Our message was simple: if we all take the same risks in helping people, surely we should receive the same insurance cover?

The message was well received and, on the strength of the initial meeting, we have been invited to meet with the minister in the future. Going to the Senedd isn't what I would normally expect to do as a member of a mountain rescue team, but hey! you never stop learning and, if it helps the cause, it's what must be done.

SOUTH WALES

LOCAL CHURCH SUPPORTS LOCAL MOUNTAIN RESCUERS

Ewyas Harold Baptist Church have been busy this year making a difference to local charities, and recently presented a cheque to Longtown MRT for the sum of £575. Revd Matt Powell contacted the team early in 2012 and made it clear the community wanted to work with a nearby group. 'This year we are celebrating our 150th year of being a Baptist church in the village, and as part of our work we run several fundraising events. During 2012 we looked at several projects and decided that this money often gets absorbed into a national pot, and therefore doesn't go directly to support local people. As such we thought Longtown MRT was a good way to make sure locally-raised funds went to a locally-based project.'



Longtown MRT chairman, Mike Jones, and Longtown team members with Jenni Whistance, the church representative.

SOUTH WEST

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE MET OFFICE

Craig Scollick writes... As we all know the weather plays a huge part in the work carried out by mountain rescue teams across the UK. In addition to the call-outs caused by the weather and our responses being tempered by the weather, we are more and more often called upon to provide support during the more extreme weather events such as flooding and heavy snowfall. During their winter programme this year, Dartmoor SRT (Ashburton) team members were lucky enough to visit the headquarters of the Met Office in Exeter, Devon, to learn more about where those all-important weather forecasts come from.

The Met Office host for the visit was Penny Tranter. She is a Met Office weather forecaster who has many years' experience of forecasting UK weather — including at the Olympic and Paralympic sailing events for London 2012. She is now a Met Office adviser specialising in Civil Contingencies providing professional meteorological advice on severe weather to emergency planners and responders throughout Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Team members were given a fabulous insight into the history of the Met Office from its humble nautical beginnings right up to the hi-tech present day, including the amazing array of equipment,

satellites, computers and personnel which are all part of producing today's forecasts. Not only was the forecasting side interesting but the team also discovered that the headquarters are located in a state-of-the-art highly sustainable building.

The team was also fortunate enough to be shown round the 24/7 Ops Centre, Weather Desk and Flood Forecasting Centre. The 24/7 Weather Desk is the Met Office's customer centre and is responsible for responding to calls, emails and even tweets. Met Office customers who receive forecasts and warnings include civil and military aviation, ports and airports, supermarkets and of course the general public. A keen sailor from the team was particularly delighted to see the weather forecaster responsible for producing the shipping forecast that day. The 24/7 Flood Forecasting Centre, a joint venture between the Met Office and the Environment Agency, was equally fascinating. This is where rainfall forecasts are combined with current and forecast river and ground water level data, to produce flood risk guidance for England and Wales.

Several team members were leaving on a winter climbing trip to Glen Coe a couple of days after the visit and they, of course, asked for a forecast — sadly the snow would have passed but at least they received a personalised forecast for their trip.

As it was such a fantastic and informative visit that

Continued on
page 31

OBITUARY

Fred Barlow BEM

It is with sadness that the North Dartmoor Search and Rescue Team, based in Okehampton, Devon, report the death of Frederick George Barlow BEM (Fred) on 12 February 2013, having reached the age of 90. Fred was a well-known figure at mountain rescue conferences representing the South West at SWERA meetings, on Dartmoor and at the Ten Tors Event. **Andy Aiano**, Chairman of the North Dartmoor Search and Rescue Team (NDSRT) looks back over Fred's life.



LEFT: Fred on a Devon Cave Rescue training exercise.

BELOW LEFT: Members of the North Dartmoor team on an early training exercise. Fred is third left, other members of the group include Mike Ireland, a still serving member (second left) and Paul, Fred's son (far right).

BELOW: Fred at Cranmere Pool, 75 years after his first visit.

presented with the Dartmoor Society Award for his work with young people.

One of Fred's favourite walks on Dartmoor was to a spot known as Cranmere Pool where, in 1854, a cairn was set up on which was placed a jar (later replaced by a letterbox) so that visitors could leave a card to prove they had managed to reach this remote location. There was a regular rescue team walk there on Christmas mornings and Fred could be seen standing on the letterbox, conducting the singing of carols and issuing a nip of brandy! Fred was first taken to Cranmere Pool by an uncle in 1928 and his final visit was 75 years later — an achievement of which he was very proud.

Fred's abiding love was for the outdoors and for Dartmoor in particular, which he referred to as 'God's Acre' — and immortalised with his poem.

Fred said this about his poem. 'The poem sums up my feelings about Dartmoor. Walking has been a life-long hobby with me. I've walked in every National Park in England and Wales and backpacked in Scotland, but the magic of Dartmoor still entrances me. Don't just put your pack on and your head down to see how many miles you can do, but remember to stop and stare; you will be surprised what you will see.'

Fred is survived by his wife, Joyce, son, Paul who has also been involved in rescue for forty years — firstly with the Dartmoor Rescue Group and currently with Derby MRT — daughter, Ruth, grandchildren and great grandchildren. He will be dearly missed by all who knew him. ■



Fred was a founder member of the Dartmoor Rescue Group following a series of high profile incidents on Dartmoor during the late 1960s. A group of interested locals met in February 1968 because the need was identified for 'a voluntary civilian organisation made up of people with a good knowledge of Dartmoor... that could liaise with the armed services and the area police... and that could be called upon day and night.' Further to this, Fred helped set up the 'North Moor Section' based in Okehampton in August 1969 and was, for many years, the Section Controller. He was life President of the North Dartmoor

Search and Rescue Team, as the North Moor Section later became known.

In the early days, when technology was very basic, Fred would regularly drive around in his Morris 1000 picking up team members for call-outs. When a casualty was located, the team sent a runner back to a waiting team member, sitting in a car, who would then hurry off to the nearest telephone box to call out medical or other help! Another example of the technology of those days is a memorable call-out in the early 1970s to southern Dartmoor near Combestone Tor, where Fred and the members of the North Moor Section searched the O Brook at night using gas searchlights!

Fred was a dedicated supporter of the North Moor Section and never refused an invitation to give a talk to help raise funds. He was a great raconteur but many of his stories, particularly to the WI are probably unprintable!

In 1978, Fred helped set up SWERA (South West England Regional Association), and was a member of its committee for many years and served as its vice president. Thus, Fred became regional representative for the south west to the MRC (as it was then). In

1988 Mountain Rescue England and Wales awarded him with its Distinguished Service Award.

Fred served with the Army during the Second World War, first as a dispatch rider and later he trained as an Army Commando at Achnacary, Scotland — the original training base for the very first army commandos and then Royal marine commandos. It was during this time he first took an interest in rock climbing. After being demobbed, he worked for a gas company and later as a GPO engineer. Both jobs took him around Devon and Cornwall and, hence, his local knowledge was formidable!

It was while he was working in Cornwall that Fred's long involvement with rescue began when he became involved with a surf and cliff rescue team in Bude and then with a mine rescue team which, in turn, led to his twenty year involvement with the Devon Speleological Society and Devon Cave Rescue which for many years he was the coordinator.

In 2007, Fred was rewarded for his devotion to search and rescue with the presentation of the first Mountain Rescue England and Wales 60 Years Long Service Award.

He played an active part in the Ten

Tors Event — an annual challenge for youngsters of up to 55 miles on Dartmoor over two days, starting and finishing in Okehampton Battle Camp. He was a member of the Ten Tors policy committee and served as the safety officer — still attending meetings until very recently. Most weekends during the training period, Fred would go round checking Ten Tors teams and hence built up good relationships with the participants. During the evenings of the Ten Tors event weekend, he could be found with members of the North Moor Section in the Officers' Mess, entertaining the military top brass with stories of his adventures on Dartmoor.

Throughout his life Fred was involved in youth work, in addition to taking local young people on camping and caving trips, he also became involved with youth organisations from Wiltshire and Dorset. He was a regular visitor to Baggator Farm Training Centre of the Dorset Association of Youth Clubs, and helped to introduce hundreds of youngsters to Dartmoor.

In 1980, he was awarded the BEM (British Empire Medal) in the New Year's honours list for his work for the community, and in 2000 he was

God's Acre by Fred Barlow

Why do I love old Darty-Moor
Of swirling mist and granite for
Sweet babbling brooks- fast sparkling streams.
A place where a man can sit and dream.
I've roamed these hills and valleys below
In rain and mist, sleet and snow;
And as I walk each different way
I know the sun will shine one day.
It's come at last, the glorious sun
I'll cover many miles 'fore the day is done.

The sky so blue, not a cloud in sight
I'll be home and dry before the night.
A buzzard soars in the evening sky
In the distance the echo of a curlew's cry;
The ravens wing their homeward way
The sun goes down on another day.
The will-o'-the-wisp flits cross the mire
Lighting his way with green mystic fire.
The wish hound runs past darkening tors
And silence falls over all the moor.

For sixty odd years I've roamed these hills
And every time I get more thrills.
When I am old and can roam no more
I'll think of all these days and memories stored.
At the end of the day as I kneel to pray,
Thank you Lord for another good day.
I know He walks with me, of that I am sure
And that's why I love old Darty-Moor.

the team has offered the Met Office the opportunity to visit their rescue centre, and then sample some real weather with them during an exercise on Dartmoor.

Craig Scollick of Dartmoor SRT (Ashburton) said: 'As a mountaineer and a member of a rescue team on Dartmoor I have a keen interest in the weather and have always wanted to visit the Met Office. The visit exceeded my expectations and we are all very grateful to Penny and her colleagues for hosting the



event. We do hope to see them with us on Dartmoor in the near future.'

Penny Tranter from the Met Office said: 'It was a delight to show Dartmoor SRT (Ashburton) the work of the Met Office and the Flood Forecasting Centre — as weather can have such a large impact on many aspects of their work. I look forward to visiting the team and learning more about their activities'.

TEAM LEADERS' DAY, FEBRUARY 2013

David Allan reports

Keswick MRT hosted a very successful and well attended meeting, on a day when the brilliant weather and the snow on the hills offered a real temptation to skip the meeting and go climbing.

Not only were the topics addressed of great interest but the quality of presentation was uniformly high. I believe everyone will have left Keswick with much to think about and things to do.

Daryl Garfield delivered a well informed and clear resumé of the position relating to driving team vehicles and outlined the plans for a uniform training package. Whilst what he said regarding driving exemptions may not have been to everyone's liking the position is now very clear and the way forward understood.

Karen Frith and Fiona Boyle presented a timely wake-up call on the difficult subject of data protection. It is unlikely any team left without a mental list of questions to ask and things to change. There will undoubtedly be many more discussions and deliberations before all the ramifications are resolved.

The key involvement of mountain and cave rescue in the search in Machynlleth was described by a number of speakers. The final report has not yet been written and it is therefore probable that there will be even more lessons to learn when that is available.

There is no doubt that teams performed exceedingly well on the ground and were vital to the conduct of the search in a number of ways. It is also apparent that the procedure for bringing in resources and teams from outwith the immediate area is not so well organised and relies almost entirely on an ad hoc arrangement. Whilst this did not actually impair the delivery of an effective operation on this occasion it had the potential to do so if, for example, mountain rescue involvement had been required over several more days.

The first time mountain rescue was involved in a major incident was, of course, at Lockerbie. At the time, I believe there was a general feeling this was unlikely to happen again and did not justify the establishment of a major incident procedure. Subsequent events — culminating in Machynlleth — have disproved this assumption. In the discussion following the presentations, it emerged that there is a need and a wish to have a more formalised procedure in place to improve the response of mountain and cave rescue teams to major incidents.

An initial meeting of representatives from around the regions will take place in the very near future. Almost all of those involved have some experience of dealing with a

major incident. This group will make recommendations on the most effective way of establishing a robust system for mobilising teams and resources. It is anticipated that the first report will be delivered to the MREW May meeting.

The final session of the day listened to a number of accounts of the repetitive nature of accidents at some well known 'blackspots'. A wider-ranging discussion followed on the generic topic of accident prevention and the extent to which mountain and cave rescue might be involved. This is a difficult subject for the majority of people who have come into mountain rescue from a mountaineering background and are firmly wedded to the concept of the freedom of the hills including the freedom to take risks. What has, however, changed in recent years is that the ability to assess risk in the mountains and make a call on acceptable risk is often absent. Does mountain rescue have a moral obligation to look out for those who unwittingly put themselves in the way of harm? Even if the answer to this question is yes significant challenges will remain in delivering an effective means of reaching the people at risk. This is a debate that is set to run for some time.

All the presentations are available to download from the Members area of the website.



SEARCH DOGS: THE WORKING END



So, we've read about the training and operational work of dogs in a number of articles in previous issues of MR Mag, but what's happening at the working end of the dog: its nose? **Iain Nicholson** explains.

We all know a dog's sense of smell is much better than a human's, but how much more effective is it? The view varies in each book or research paper you read, and is very subjective to people views. Some will say a thousand times, some millions. But what we can definitely say is, it's a great deal better than the human nose!

In trailing, we have 'the bible' in scent work, that bible being 'Scent and the scenting dog' by William G Syrotuck. This small book is a wealth of information, and makes the point that the dog needs a good nose to get the scent, and a good brain to process that information.

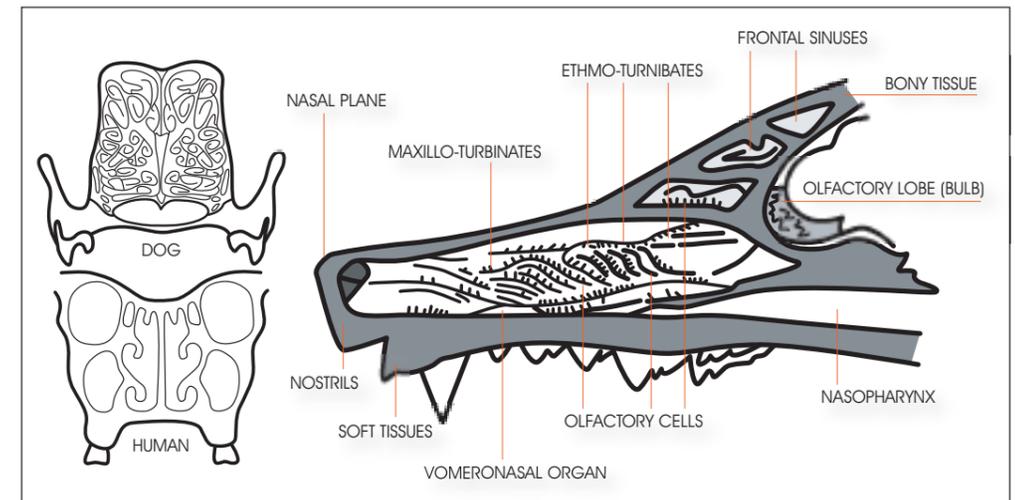
Looking at the diagram of the dog's and the human nose, let's look at the canine olfactory system. Syrotuck tells us 'the olfactory system is composed of the nasal chambers and sinuses which serve as receptor areas for scent', essentially capturing the minute scent particles for the brain to process. Typically, a human has five million nasal cells dedicated to the olfactory process, but when compared to the estimated 220 million cells of a German Shepherd, the difference in capability is immediately obvious! Work by Moulton (1969) attributed this increased olfactory area to the enhancement in discrimination, where

even a small increment in ability will enhance the detection of subtle differences in odours.

As you can see in the diagram, the maxillo and ethmo turbinates are massive in comparison with the human equivalent, and form the nasal membrane area. Each type of turbinate has its own function. The role of the maxillo turbinate is to create turbulence, warm and moisten the air coming into the nose — a sort of a pre-processor for the scent system. The rear part, containing the ethmo turbinates, is the real business end, with the highest concentration of olfactory cells, which work on the pre-processed air to best effect.

And now the clever bit! Look at the canine tooth and the position of the vomeronasal organ. Dogs use this more than we realise, so you may have missed it unless you watch your dogs behaviour closely. This organ is essentially a tubular canal starting from the front of the canine tooth. It contains olfactory cells, and 608 nerve bundles. This concentrated scent collector is connected directly to the part of the dog's brain for processing scent. With trailing dogs, we often see them lick a leaf or piece of vegetation when working on a trail. This is the action of the dog taking scent, and is the start of the process of using the vomeronasal organ to process concentrated scent to the brain, rather than via the nasal route.

For the scent odours to reach the olfactory area, active sniffing is needed. When at rest, a dog breathes



approximately fifteen times a minute; when walking, this rises to 31 times a minute. When a dog sniffs, this rises to between 140 and 200 times a minute. Essentially, sniffing changes the air pressure in the nose, resulting in the scent odours entering the nasal cavities and not the mouth. Some studies on the breathing patterns of dogs, across a number of trails which were increasingly difficult, found that they increased their sniffing frequency, and also the duration of the sniffing bouts, on the harder trails (Schoon and Haak). The reason is that the scent present on a 'hard' trail is much less than the 'easy' trails.

So where does all of the scent get processed once it's in the nose? The olfactory lobe is the part of the dog's brain that processes the information sent by the nerves from the nasal areas and vomeronasal organ. It is

widely accepted that almost every cell in the olfactory network is linked directly to a part of the nervous system which, in turn, is linked to the olfactory lobe in the brain. This provides a dedicated multi-lane 'scent motorway' along which the information can be fed at high speed to the brain, and processed. The brain is the area that recognises, interprets and files the 'odours' in memory for reference in the future. Often a trailing dog will turn its nose when offered a scent article, generally signifying to the handler that they have 'stored' the scent and don't need a reminder at that time.

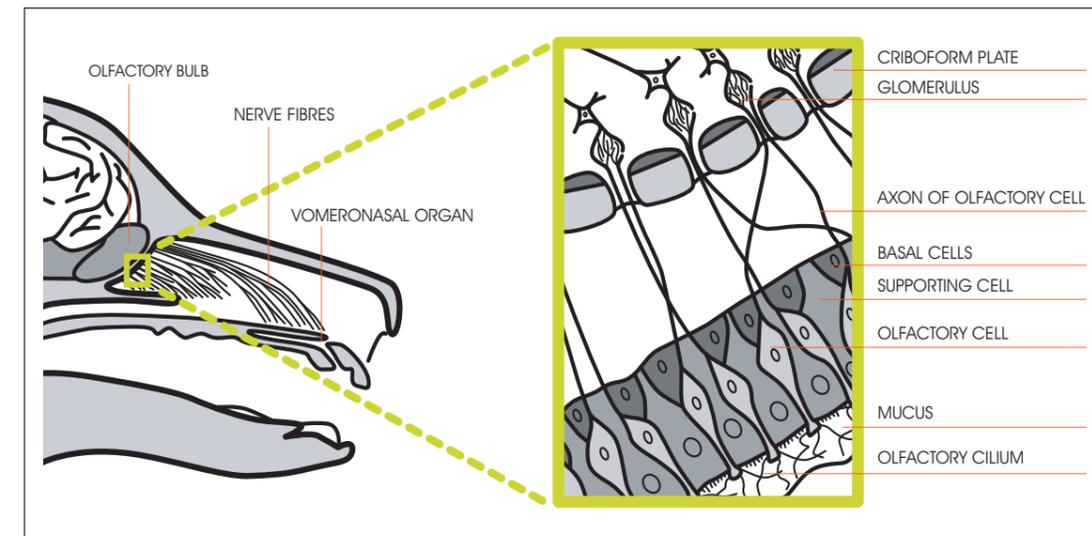
The research undertaken on scent has provided some data that interesting, and some that's obvious. It's certainly accepted that short-nosed dogs are regularly subject to respiratory difficulties, sometime due

to restricted nostrils. Interestingly, research has shown that albino dogs and certain light coloured bred dogs are known to have partial or almost complete impairment of smell. An obvious one is that small dogs may not be as good as the larger dogs due to smaller nose and brain!

So that's the dog's nose covered in brief! We could go a long way into the cell structure and detail of the nose, however hopefully you'll have a better idea of the workings and processing that goes on now. In the next edition, we'll have a look at what makes the scent and odours the dog smells. ■

REFERENCES

K9 Subject Discrimination: Adeee Schoon and Ruud Haak
Scent and the Scenting Dog: William G Syrotuck



TOP LEFT: Cross section of the posterior part of the nose in dog and human. The labyrinthine folds of the ethmoid turbinate bones and the adjacent cartilaginous structures in dogs provide the sensory epithelium with a very large surface area.

TOP RIGHT: The anatomy of a dog's nose. The olfactory cells are primary sensory cells equipped with axons forming synapses with neurons (mitral cells) in the olfactory lobe.

LEFT: A large number of olfactory cells form synapses with a single mitral cell in a tuft of nerve endings called a glomerulus. Illustrations by Judy Whiteside, based on the original Syrotuck drawings.

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dogs

SUCCESSFUL ASSESSMENTS FOR SARDA ENGLAND

WAYNE THACKRAY



ABOVE: Left to right: Pete Farnell with Meg, Graeme White with Fern, Dave Astley with Jack, Nick Shepherd with Dolly, Mick Neild with Bob and Steve Ward with Ty.

The SARDA England assessment course has been held in the Lake District for as long as any of the current handlers and bodies can remember — with steep rocky fellsides and harsh winter conditions it is ideal for testing the abilities of aspirant and experienced dog teams.

Once again, the Lakeland fells were kind to us with dry but cold weather and reasonable visibility in most areas, and the snow held off at lower levels until the drive home for many. Derwentwater Hostel was our base as usual over the weekend. This course was our tenth anniversary staying at Barrow House and, as always, the staff made our stay a pleasurable one.

As for the hard working dogs and handlers, we are pleased to announce that four more dog teams successfully passed their Initial Grade Assessment tests. Nick Shepherd from Kinder MRT with his GSD Dolly, Dave Astley from Calder Valley SRT with his collie Jack, Pete Farnell also from CVSRT and his collie Meg, and Steve Ward from Oldham MRT put his third collie Ty onto the operational list. Grading three dogs equates to about 20 years service — no mean feat by anyone's standards.

Also on this assessment weekend, Graeme White from Cleveland SRT with his spaniel Fern and Mick Neild with his collie Bob, passed their Upgrade Assessment tests to become Full Grade search and rescue dog teams.

SARDA England would like to thank everyone involved in making the course such a success. The staff and new owners at Derwentwater Hostel, the visiting assessors from our sister associations for helping to assess, the Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs for arranging the availability of land and to the local landowners for allowing us the use of their land. And a huge thank you must, of course, go to our dogsbodies, a proud, dedicated and usefully devious bunch without whom we couldn't train our marvellous animals in the first place.

NEW PATRON FOR SARDA ENGLAND

SARDA England is pleased to announce the patronage of a very special person not only within mountain rescue, but the global search and rescue dog community. Thanks to the persistence and patience of some of our dedicated members, Hamish MacInnes OBE BEM has kindly agreed to be SARDA England patron. As you can no doubt imagine, we are incredibly honoured and grateful for his support.

NEWS FROM SARDA WALES

ROB JOHNSON

We've had three finds in the last two weeks in North Wales, unfortunately two were deceased but, nonetheless, the finds have brought closure to the families of the victims.

Sally and Spin had a mountain find on the Glyders at the end of February. Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation requested the assistance of the search dogs shortly after midnight to help find two walkers who were several hours overdue. The walkers had gone to ground in white-out, blizzard conditions and were found taking refuge in a group shelter. They were lost, had no torch or crampons and had been out on the mountains for seven hours over their due return time. They were cold and tired but thanks to Sally and Spin, the Ogwen team members and 22 squadron (who lifted them off the mountains), they are safe and well.

Two of our older dogs have retired. Richard has retired his red collie Celyn and Gareth has retired his Labrador Max.

We have had three new handlers accepted onto the long process of training a search dog after passing the stock test and obedience test all new dog teams have to go through. The new trainees are Paul and Mist, Esther and Izzy and Geraint and Will (Geraint has previously qualified an air scenting collie and with Will, a black Labrador, is training the dog as a trailing dog). To keep up with search dog news in Wales, visit: www.sardawales.org.uk/blog.html.

SPOTLIGHT ON CELYN



Red collie Celyn hung up her search jacket in February, after ten good years and a search and rescue career to be proud of. Richard and Celyn first qualified, in November 2002. Within 24 hours, they were on their first search, for a missing despondent in Llangynog near to Oswestry. 'After four hours,' says Richard, 'the search was called off when the missing man was spotted near a telephone box outside the village, so off we went home in the early hours of the morning, tired but pleased Celyn had worked really well. Within a month, we had our first find for a despondent on Harlech beach. The Coastguard had been searching for most of the night but, within an hour, we had found a man, and he was sent on his way to hospital.'

'In March 2003, we passed our novice mountain assessment and, a year and a half later, we qualified as full mountain search dog. Over the years, Celyn has been on many call-outs all over the country, and even Ireland, with five live finds and one dead find to her name.'

'One of her last call-outs was in Machynlleth searching for missing April Jones. She spent the day searching with many other volunteers whilst giving my new search dog, Scout, the day off after four days of searching.'

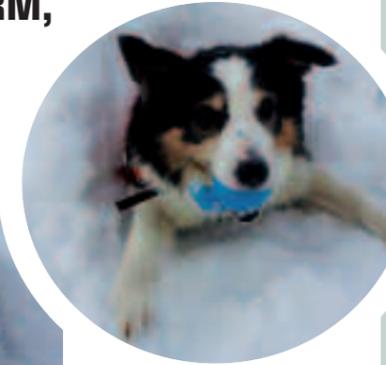
'Celyn has worked hard over the years and has been very faithful to me and I am proud to call her my dog, I hope she enjoys her retirement, but I know she would rather be out searching.'

LAKE DISTRICT MOUNTAIN RESCUE SEARCH DOGS WINTER TRAINING COURSE: CAIRNGORM, FEBRUARY 2013

ELLY WHITEFORD



LEFT: Digging a snow cave.
ABOVE: Trainee Bracken emerges from a snowhole with toy reward.
BELOW: Digging for the 'casualty'.



Lakes search dog teams both fully qualified and training headed to the Cairngorms, Scotland in mid-February for the six-day annual winter training course, joined by two teams from SARDA Ireland and another from SARDA Scotland.

Based at Badaguish Outdoor Centre, the course concentrated on training the dogs to locate people buried under the snow by avalanches or other ways such as cornice collapses and drifting snow. The training differs from the usual searching of mountain areas where wide ranging and hunting is essential.

In the winter terrain, potential incidents could involve relatively small areas and the dogs are trained to have their noses to the ground as opposed to air scenting, the usual method of scent detection. In order to train, we need deep banks of snow several metres deep, so we dig out a trench about two metres long by at least two metres deep, then hollow out a cave to one side under the snow. It is here that the volunteer 'bodies' lie in warm clothes and bivvy bags — gradually being blocked in with more and more snow as the dogs get accustomed to finding the scent and digging. The final result would be that the trenches are completely filled to ground level and the location hidden in an area of disturbed snow — the dog would then be introduced to the area to search, locate and start digging. The handler will assist the dog digging until the dog can enter the cave and get its reward from the body such as a toy or food. In reality, the dog would just be used to indicate a location and moved on if there were multiple casualties and a team would commence the digging but, in training, the dogs need to associate the find with reward. All the dogs were locating and digging well by the end of the course despite training time being reduced by weather conditions and call-outs.

Whilst training in Scotland we were requested to assist Cairngorm MRT with a search for six missing students and the avalanche in the Chalamain Gap. In both incidents, lives were lost and it was a difficult week for all involved.

Both incidents underlined the importance of the training we do on this course. In Scotland, there have been over 80 recorded avalanches so far this season, with eight fatalities and many more with injuries. Over the last few years, there have also been people caught in avalanches in the Lakes. Luckily, all have survived to tell the tale. In winter conditions, extra care needs to be taken, weather and slope stability and avalanche risk assessments made. Wear a transceiver and carry the right equipment. It is the people who witness the avalanche that give the casualties caught their greatest chance of survival.



THREE NEW DOG TEAMS JOIN LAKES CALL-OUT LIST

ELLY WHITEFORD

For the three handlers undergoing their final assessments in October 2012, the end seemed so near and yet still so far to finally achieving the status of fully graded and receiving the well earned 'green tag'. However, despite the ups and downs of the past two to three years, Bill Malone and Ani, Andy Peacock and Corrie, and Chris Francis with Beck, all graded within days of each other at the training weekend in the Duddon Valley. For these handlers the hard task of assessment is over but the real call-outs are just starting.



ABOVE: Bill and Ani (left) pictured with Andy and Corrie. BELOW: Chris Francis with Beck.

A member of Kendal MRT, Bill actually started training another collie, Blue, which didn't quite make the grade but he was able to put all he learned into action with Ani, a pretty black and white collie who ensures Bill is kept an eye on and keeps up.

Andy is a member of Patterdale MRT. He started training Corrie — a small red and white collie — in 2010. Although on the small side, Corrie's speed and enthusiasm makes up for any lack of size and she has developed into a very keen search dog.

Chris is a long standing member of Keswick MRT. He has qualified two search dogs previously and all his dogs are yellow Labradors — or 'proper' dogs as he refers to them. Beck is a real character and, unlike her collie colleagues, prefers a piece of high quality sausage or a biscuit as her reward for finding the bodies rather than a squeaky toy — although sandwiches left unguarded will do just as well! Chris is also a committee member and call-out coordinator of the association and will determine the best use of the dogs for the teams and police.



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language
 HOLD rest check
 ! delay
 STEADY
 stand by
 CEASE
 so many ways to say STOP
 WHOA
 AVAST

what are we REALLY saying? STILL

Leader
 All stations stand by for pre-operational brief. All stations, all stations, this is a pre-operational brief for a 1-person pick-off lower of 20m to collect a casualty, then continue 35m to next stance as a 2-person rescue load. Anyone not understand the brief?

All stations/positions, carry out pre-operational checks. 'Fresh Eyes' the system.

Leader
 Safety ready?

Leader
 Roger. Main ready?

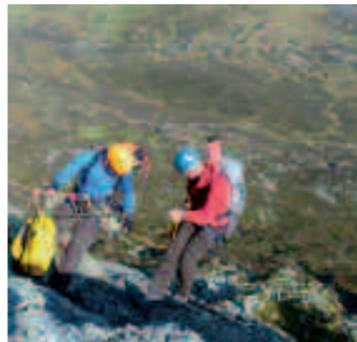
Leader
 Roger. Edge ready?

Leader
 Roger. Attendant ready?

Leader
 Roger. Load the system... Main lower slow...

Leader
 Standby... edge transition Edge transition complete ALL STOP Transition to load sharing

TIME



Ogwen Valley MRO team members in training on Tryfan © Dave Worrall.

Safety
 Roger. Safety ready.

Main
 Main ready.

Edge
 Standby... Edge ready.

Attendant
 Attendant ready.

THINGS GO WRONG FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS...

- Processes fail, are not understood or followed, or are poorly communicated.
- Equipment is used incorrectly or inappropriate or is just not the right bit of equipment for the task.
- People may not have the right training, sufficient experience, lack confidence to highlight issues, follow the group's thoughts and influences.

Rope rescue is usually considered as a higher risk activity, especially due to the nature of the terrain and the consequences of a failure. Most high risk activities have a number of 'safety nets' associated with them to help us avoid getting things wrong, such as using two lines in rope rescue (process and equipment is used to mitigate any failures). If we do not have safety nets then we tend to operate with higher levels of care and higher levels of cautions.

WHAT ARE NON-TECHNICAL SKILLS (NTS)?

We often have a good understanding of technical activities and the knowledge and skills required to do the different tasks such as rigging a stretcher, operating a belay device, build an anchor system.

Non-technical skills are the range of other skills that we all require to help ensure the technical aspects work within the team.

A number of key non-technical skills have been identified in other high risk activity areas. Flin, O'Conner and Crichton (2008) identified a number of key NTS and these are often found to be influential in maintaining situational awareness in high risk activities such as flying or working in operating in theatres. The skills include:—



STOP! BRIEFING

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- Briefing
- Fitness for Work
- Minimising distractions
- Focus on critical phases
- Updating team members
- Monitoring
- Speaking up
- Management of time pressures.

The aim of this series of articles is to highlight non-technical skills in the mountain rescue environment.

LANGUAGE

It can be as simple as ensuring that we have a common language to help us understand what is REALLY being said.

As an example there are a number of words used to indicate 'Stop'. The words we use can depend on the training we have received and the common usage we are exposed to. To a fire and rescue service person the words 'Hold' and 'Steady' are very different to the word 'Still' — they all mean 'stop' but with differing urgencies. Another common term used for stop, especially if the movement is not intended is 'WHOA!' (often shouted loudly and repeatedly!) Having commonly understood terminology will help team members understand exactly what is being briefed and agreed commands. Whatever language is agreed, it becomes useful to work hard to consistently employ it on as many occasions as possible. This builds in a critical mass of understanding

amongst the team members, they understand what language to use and it helps maintain a higher level of situational awareness.

It is also worth considering what happens when the verbal communications are difficult and the language to be used is different. Whistles are often used in the water rescue environment and can also be employed in the rope rescue environment.

The system of communication should afford some levels of security if the message is incomplete and if only half a message is received then it should trigger a clarification or, at worst, avoid an unsafe movement.

BRIEFING

A good briefing system for all people involved in the incident can help maintain high levels of situational awareness. So what are the components of a good briefing?

BRIEFING TEMPLATES

Briefing can be used through out incidents, as an example an overall briefing using a model such as SMEACCCC (Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration, Command, Control, Communications and Check was the briefing understood) can help provide the overall setting for an incident. An example of an overall SMEACCCC type briefing for rope rescue incident provided by the leader could be:—

S — The incident is a stranded climber on a ledge a few metres below the access point.

M — The team will build a multi-point anchor system to support a pick off rescue system to lower a rescuer 15m to the casualty and continue to lower the attendant and casualty a further 25m to safe ground.

E — Team A are to construct the multi-point anchor system and build the two line lowered pick off system, Team Member B is going to be the attendant, Team Member C will act as edge man.

A — Equipment to be distributed as required, attendant to take sufficient equipment to secure the casualty.

C — Team Member A is in charge of the lower.

C — A full pre-operational brief will be conducted with a system check before committing, all team members are reminded that they can call for a 'STOP' at any time.

C — Primary communication will be by radio, channel 244, fall back communications will be by voice or hand signals.

C — Did anyone not understand the briefing?

This briefing sets out the overall aims for the lower and provides general set up guidance.

Further briefings and checks can

then be used at critical phases of an incident such as before committing to the system, edge transitions, changes of modes (eg. changing from lower to lift, adding and additional load to the systems).

Figure 1 (right) shows a possible briefing flow associated with the start of an rope rescue lower to the point of where a rescuer has completed edge transition and is suspended on the system.

If the team understand that there is a template for the briefing and follow checks then they work as a better informed group.

SUMMARY

Operating safely takes many things to work together, there are items that can be designed out and that includes how we communicate and brief before we fully commit to hazardous operations.

Having a sound understanding of the language to use and a framework to use it in helps team members to understand and anticipate what is likely to happen next. Having high levels of situational awareness will help keep team members safer for longer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article would not be possible without the previous work of the OVMRO Technical Rescue Working Group and the wide ranging discussions we all experienced, as well as numerous discussions with emergency service personnel involved with rope rescue. ■

REFERENCES

Flin, R., O'Conner P., Crichton M. (2008), *Safety at the Sharp End*, Fareham: Ashgate.

WHISTLE COMMAND	WATER RESCUE	ROPE RESCUE
1 short blast	Stop – attention	Stop – attention
2 short blasts	Look up stream	Move up
3 short blasts	Look down stream	Move down
3 short blasts repeated	Emergency	Emergency

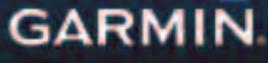
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vehicles

The new National Vehicle and Driving Package was launched in February, with those present at the seminar able to take away a copy of this comprehensive document for their teams. It's a substantial piece of work, providing teams with all they need to meet their vehicle and driving needs. By way of introduction, we thought we'd reproduce Daryl's foreword here.

The scientist Mary Ward was killed while travelling as a passenger in County Offaly, Ireland (then part of the United Kingdom) during 1869, the first recorded car accident victim of any kind.

Bridget Driscoll was the first pedestrian victim of an automobile accident in the United Kingdom where she died on 17 August 1896 aged 44 years. As she and her teenage daughter May crossed the grounds of the Crystal Palace in London, she was struck by an automobile belonging to the Anglo-French Motor Carriage Company that was being used to give demonstration rides. One witness described the car as travelling at 'a reckless pace, in fact, like a fire engine'.

Although the car's maximum speed was eight miles per hour, it had been limited deliberately to four miles per hour. The accident happened just a few weeks after a new Act of Parliament had increased the speed limit for cars to fourteen miles per hour, from two miles per hour in towns and four miles per hour in the countryside.

The jury returned a verdict of 'accidental death' after an inquest enduring some six hours. No prosecution was made, the coroner Percy Morrison (Croydon division of Surrey) said he hoped 'such a thing would never happen again.' The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents estimate 550,000 people had been killed on UK roads by 2010.

The 1931 Highway Code was developed as a response to the growing 'anarchy' on the roads, following the Road Traffic Act of 1930. Despite the fact that, since 1927, there had been automatic traffic lights in Wolverhampton, negotiating these were not even given a mention; instead, all users of the highway were given 'sound advice', such as being 'ready to stop when meeting a flock of sheep, a herd of cattle or a pack of hounds'!

When the revised edition of the code was issued in 1935, the then Minister of Transport Leslie Hore-Belisha (of Belisha Beacons fame) urged that: 'In every human activity, there is a standard of conduct to which in the common interest we are expected to conform. This code is the standard of conduct for the road... respect for the code, and for the spirit underlying it, is so much a moral duty that its practice should become a habit, and its breach a reproach.'

Many years later our organisation, teams and drivers do not want to become yet another statistic. Whatever we do, be it call-outs, training or fundraising, we inevitably have to drive, and this is one of the greatest risks we face. Safety should always be our priority. This Mountain Rescue England and Wales Vehicle Management and Driving package builds on these ideals, by working collaboratively to draw on good practice and recognised standards, resulting in a clear set of competencies giving opportunity to develop the skills of our volunteers, whilst reducing the risk of harm. Additionally, the management and on-going maintenance of vehicles is an area that contributes significantly to risk reduction. We are all aware how it is one of, if not the greatest risk to our organisation.

'Practice becoming habit' and 'Drive to arrive' should be our aim in all aspects of vehicle operation and I am indebted to the contributors to this document.

'Practice becoming habit' and 'Drive to arrive' should be our aim in all aspects of vehicle operation.

THE NATIONAL VEHICLE AND DRIVING PACKAGE, SCHEME AND SEMINAR



DARYL GARFIELD MREW VEHICLES OFFICER

Saturday 23 February saw 37 of the 57 mountain and cave rescue teams from all regions converge on the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service Academy for the National Vehicles and Driving Seminar 2013.

This was the first, I hope, of an annual or biennial seminar/conference for all matters relating to vehicles and driving.

Subjects for the day included Section 19 (Speed Limit Exemptions consultation) and the new National Vehicle and Driving Package which has been compiled for teams to meet the legal responsibilities and duty of care requirements of operating and driving team vehicles.

Invitations went to all teams via regional secretaries, vehicle officers, regional vehicle subcommittee reps and the Facebook group. Some teams reported that they had not received the details or invitation, so please update me or your regional vehicle rep if your vehicle officer contact details have changed.

After everyone had settled into their seats with tea/coffee and bacon butties in hand, we were ready to start... well almost. After a few tense moments involving a Hoover, batteries and a scratch of heads with the projector, wondering how I could get 80 people squeezed around a laptop screen, the 'other' remote control was found and we were up and running.

Delegates were briefed on the vehicle package, with opportunities to question and confirm understanding, resulting for many in a realisation that the package was not as labour intensive as first imagined and actually easy and straightforward to use. Several external driver training companies attended as exhibitors, providing representatives with other sources of vehicle and driving information.

The first session of the day covered the implications for teams with regard to the consultation, and making them aware that it was not just 'Speed'

being discussed in the document, but also several other exemptions. It was emphasised that the consultation included the potential for the regulation to be applied to all blue light usage — not just those teams wishing to claim exemptions. Aside from Section 19, representatives learned about team responsibilities in regard to vehicles, maintenance, driving and training.

The day progressed with a detailed breakdown of the new National Vehicle and Driving Package, which provides teams with all they need to meet any vehicle and driving needs, including policy and procedures, vehicle maintenance, vehicle packs, driver training and portfolios.

An eye-opening 'Lessons Learned' from Derby MRT's team vehicle collision followed, which explained very clearly how their outcome could have been very different had they not had full robust policies, procedures and easily accessible driver, vehicle and maintenance records, which were required to be disclosed by the investigating authorities. This not only affected the team, its trustees and membership, but also the driver and their family for over three years, starting with a criminal prosecution, followed by a civil action for damages against the team and the driver. 'Lessons Learned' resulted in a number of recommendations including:—

- Make the team a limited company
- Create a benevolent fund (the team could not support the driver in any way financially or legally)
- Keep accident checklist in vehicle
- Adopt formal procedures for driver approval and training
- Keep a vehicle log of who drove and when

The National Vehicles and Driving Scheme:
The scheme will give each team their own unique referenced paperwork and drivers their own individual portfolio.
All paperwork and packs will be provided by MREW as part of the scheme.
Hopefully this will be in place for teams by May's meeting. More details to follow...

- Keep training records
 - Ensure early contact with the relevant MREW officers
 - Signpost the team driver to legal representation if necessary.
- Many of these recommendations are now incorporated into the national package.

MREW's response to the Speed Limit Exemption consultation (section 19) was briefly outlined too and the 22 teams that responded were thanked for their contribution.

During the closing stages of the seminar, representatives were posed a number of questions, the first being: 'Would teams believe that they'd take the package on board?' From a quick forest of hands going up, it was clear there was strong support. Additionally, representatives indicated very positively that despite initially being sceptical about the practicalities

of the package, following the presentations, they now had a clear understanding of the content, the necessity to follow it and a large majority indicated a keenness to implement it fully within their own teams.

A big thank you must go to Jon Goddard of Central Beacons MRT who — along with a number of his team colleagues — has spearheaded the driving package. Clearly, MREW would not have progressed so far without this hard work. Finally, thanks are due to Richie Paskell and Martin Williams from Western Beacons MRT for compiling the Driving Portfolio, putting an extraordinary amount of time and effort into it.

So where do we go from here? Well, we are now busy behind the scenes

Continued on page 47



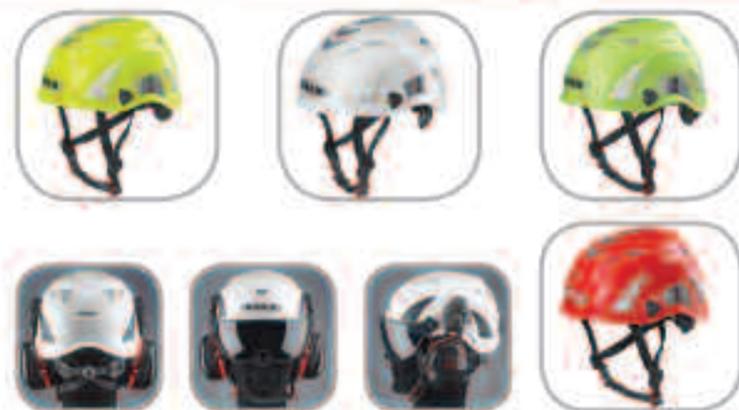


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BUSIEST YEAR EVER FOR THE AA'S SPECIAL OPERATIONS RESPONSE TEAM

The near-permanent wet weather during 2012, combined with the snow in early 2013, has served to give the AA's Special Operations Response Team (AA SORT) its busiest year since it was formed in 2008. The team, which uses dedicated 4x4 Land Rover Defenders, is equipped to deal with severe weather response including floods and snow.

The team numbers around 90 with the majority also trained as Swiftwater Rescue Technicians. Crew members are located from Inverness to Devon, and from Aberystwyth to Suffolk. Most have a regular 'day' job but are called out for SORT duty as and when required.

John Seymour, National Manager for Special Operations at the AA, says: 'The biggest single challenge we've faced this winter has been the number of drivers who've ignored 'Road Closed' signs and tried to drive through flood water. Not only in most cases have they wrecked their cars — some of them high-value models — but they've put their own lives at risk as well as the lives of those who have been called to rescue them.'

The AA, in consultation with the fire service, has developed specific scripting for its call handlers when dealing with drivers stuck in flood water. This ensures drivers are not referred unnecessarily to the fire service. In addition, the AA SORT duty officer makes direct contact whenever possible with anyone stuck in water to give specialist advice, including personal health and safety guidance.

This last year has seen the SORT team extend its operations to include river-based search and rescue, working with mountain rescue and other land-based SAR teams in searching for missing persons. Seymour comments: 'This has given us valuable experience and enabled us to develop strong working relationships with other responders for mutual benefit.'

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The Department of Transport's Speed Limit Exemption (Section 19) consultation:

MREW and BCRC's response and application was submitted on behalf of ALL teams.

Many thanks to the 22 out of 57 teams that responded and assisted with this. Copies of our response will be distributed to teams in due course.

Seminar Presentations:

These will be available in the Resources section on the Members area of the national website — www.mountain.rescue.org.uk — and will be sent out to all teams.

developing the National Vehicles and Driving Scheme. Teams will be able to sign up to the scheme, which will provide access to support for the new package. Packages will then be sent out to teams with a unique reference number (per team) on each sheet of the package. All maintenance sheets will be sequentially numbered and the individual Driver Portfolio will give each driver their own unique identification number, almost like a passport. This should provide integrity to the package and assist teams if they are involved in an incident.

The scheme will give teams free access to the package (Policy and Vehicle Packs for each vehicle, Individual Driver Portfolio for each driver and replacement packs of sequentially numbered paperwork (ie. Pre-use checks) plus help and advice on setting up the process and systems.

I believe this package will assist and save individual teams having to reinvent the wheel several times over. It gives a uniformed, robust process which may assist and protect trustees, teams and drivers should they have to defend themselves

following an incident, that may or may not have been our drivers fault, leading to a criminal, civil action or negligence claim.

Another aspect of the scheme will be a return form to be filled in at the end of each year (including things such as current vehicles, the number of current drivers and their level of training, and the number of emergency response drives carried out). This is to enable me to compile statistics and have readily available information to provide answers for partner agencies and other organisations, such as the Government and to represent you to the best of my abilities at a national level. Without evidence to support my arguments, we limit our ability to prove our case.

This is still a work in progress, but hopefully by the time you're reading this article it should be in the final stages of being put together and being discussed with the vehicle subcommittee reps for final agreement. The plan is for the final National Vehicle and Driving Package and the Vehicle and Driving Scheme to be ready for launch — and for teams to sign up to — at the MREW meeting at Hutton, in May. ■

DIAGRAM INDICATES THE PROCESS OF THE SCHEME FOR TEAMS

MREW: Send application

TEAMS: Complete and return application

MREW: Processes request to printer

REGIONAL REPS: Receive and distribute packs to teams — each with unique team number

TEAMS: Use package and complete annual return on: Drivers, Blue Light Use, Vehicles etc...

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Also recently published is Cicerone's acclaimed mini-guide to **First Aid and Wilderness Medicine**, now in its 11th edition, updated with the latest techniques, and used by expedition leaders throughout the world. Divided into three parts covering fundamentals of medicine, accident and illness protocols and the treatment of specific accidents and illnesses, the guide is highly practical and quick to reference.

The appendices include a medication chart, suggested first aid kits for different circumstances, how to use the Lake Louise Score, an altitude illness flowchart, sample rescue request forms and a directory of useful contacts and information sources.

SEE THE CICERONE WEBSITE — WWW.CICERONE.CO.UK — FOR FURTHER DETAILS OF THESE, AND OTHER GUIDEBOOKS.

STUFF Book

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN TREKKING

by the Plas y Brenin Instructional Team

Review by Rob Johnson

This is the latest in the excellent series from Mountain Training UK and the official handbook for the IML Scheme. It has been written by the Plas y Brenin instructional team and will, I am sure, become the bible for anyone enrolling on the scheme. It also serves as a great resource for those of us who have gone through the scheme and are using the award.

The book follows the now familiar format of clear precise diagrams, well written and informative prose and boxed out additional information and tips for leaders. Topics covered include Planning Your Trip, Environmental Issues, Staying Healthy, Altitude, Navigation, Hazards, Weather, Snow, Snowshoeing and Dealing With Problems. The key areas of the syllabus are covered and always with an international theme. Navigation skills, weather hazards and snow are all familiar to us in the UK but this book will get people thinking about the differences in an international mountain environment. My first thought was 'what would this book add that isn't already covered by previous volumes?' A quick flick through the illustrations alone provided the answer — this book is packed full of tips from real expeditions throughout the world. There's plenty of advice on hot, cold, wet and windy places, though not much on off-trail bush navigation, a feature of the more arduous (and esoteric!) trips in New Zealand and Tasmania.

The book will allow candidates to structure further reading — for example, it is not possible to go into any depth on flora and fauna in a book of this size but it will prompt further reading where required. The weather, hazards and navigation sections in particular are genuinely international and give a good global overview of these important skills. Overall a great book for IMLs, trainees and anyone planning an overseas expedition.

'International Mountain Trekking' by the Plas y Brenin Instructional Team is published by MTUK. Price £18.95. ISBN: 978-0-9541511-7-1.

TREKKING IN LADAKH

by Radek Kucharski

Review by Neil Roden

For those fortunate enough to have visited this part of northern India, at the western end of the Himalaya, this will make you want to return. Ladakh is a harsh, high altitude region — far more remote than the popular trekking areas of Nepal — excellent for the adventurous trekker. In true Cicerone style, this book is packed with information and hundreds of colour photos which capture this remote trekking region. For the first time visitor, there are good chapters on planning your trip, when to go and who with. Trekking in Ladakh means you will almost certainly have to get to Leh, home of Ladakh's only public airport, at an altitude of 3,500 metres (so expect to experience altitude sickness). Choose to go by road and you'll need more time and have to ensure the roads are open. Nonetheless, it's a good base from which to start your trekking in Ladakh, an opportunity to acclimatise and buy last minute supplies.

Detailed routes for eight treks in the Ladakh region range from six to twelve days, each trek with a day-by-day itinerary with details of distance, time and altitude range, and details of water supplies along the route.

I strongly recommend this book — the advice here should make your trip that much more enjoyable and safe.

'Trekking in Ladakh' by Radek Kucharski is published by Cicerone. Price £20.00. ISBN 978-1-852846-75-6.

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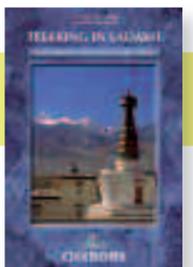
SCRAMBLES IN THE DARK PEAK

by Terry Sleaford & Tom Corker

Review by Chris Guest

A good little guide covering some of the hidden gems in the Dark Peak. This guide as you would expect from Cicerone, has a good introduction section which includes information about equipment, access, routes and grading etc. The guide is well laid out with the scrambles categorised in to the relevant geographical locations. Where there are several scrambles close by, the guide includes possible link ups which you can do to make it a full day out on the hill. Alternatively, the route maps include a nice walk to and from the scramble. The routes have been clearly marked on OS maps and backed up with a full description. Also covered in this guide are scrambles which can be carried out in the winter. This is great as some of these routes are classics but just be aware the descriptions are a little brief.

'Scrambles in the Dark Peak' by Terry Sleaford and Tom Corker is published by Cicerone. Price £12.95. ISBN: 978-1-852846-74-9.



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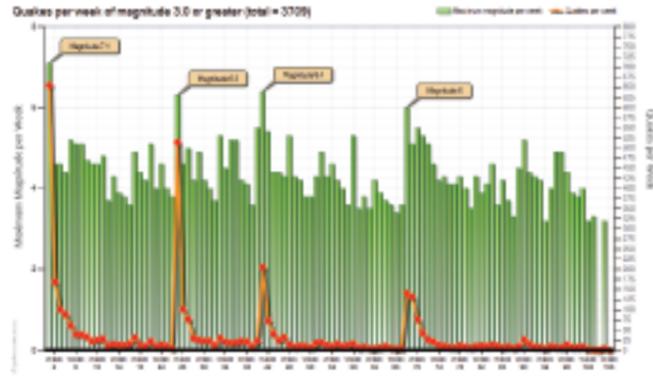
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Tony Wells presented two sessions at the Conference in September. General manager at the Search and Rescue Institute in New Zealand (SARINZ), Tony has been involved with the organisation for more than ten years and currently has overall responsibility for all operational aspects of SARINZ, including training, R&D and the operational team.

THE CHRISTCHURCH EARTHQUAKE: A GROUND SAR RESPONDER'S PERSPECTIVE



Volunteer LandSAR teams (the NZ equivalent of mountain rescue teams) are not normally part of a civil defence response, but this emergency was on a magnitude never before encountered. Whilst fire service and urban search and rescue teams from around the world dealt with the specialist task of recovering people from collapsed buildings, LandSAR teams designed and implemented a plan that led to the checking of nearly 66,000 homes in less than a week. How was this possible when it is not part of the normal scope of

In February, 2010, a devastating magnitude 6.2 earthquake hit Christchurch New Zealand, causing widespread devastation and the loss of 185 lives. This earthquake was just one of a series of twelve thousand earthquakes (almost four thousand greater than magnitude 3) that began with a magnitude 7.1 earthquake on 4 Sept 2009 and continues until this day.

operations? LandSAR teams normally operate in conjunction with the police, in combined incident management teams, so are used to preparing incident action plans and managing all facets of incident response activities. The teams have their own portable communications network, which meant comms could easily be established without mains power or a consistently working cellphone network. They also receive the same consistent training at national level and have a common understanding of CIMS (the NZ equivalent of ICS) — which meant clear control, command and communication channels were easily established. A clear focus on a specific task with discernible outcomes meant the teams easily coped with the task, and could have achieved even more. Some clear learning came out of the response:—

- A need to build relationships through inter-agency training so that LandSAR could make civil agencies aware of what it can offer and how it can support other agencies.
- If civil emergencies are to be included in the scope of a LandSAR response, a national training framework, resources and competencies need development.
- A need to take positive, proactive and decisive leadership — most people are looking for it and welcome it. ■

SOUND AND LIGHT FOR SEARCHING

Sound (whistles) and light as search tools are incredibly powerful tools and form the core of a number of search techniques in NZ. Other search tools include various visual search techniques (eg. purposeful wandering), search dogs and man-tracking are some of the others. The use of controlled sound and light has saved numerous lives that might otherwise have been lost.

Lost Person Behaviour (LPB) and anecdotal evidence strongly suggest that a number of lost persons will be located close to a track, trail, or similar lineal features — particularly early on in the search response during the hasty phase. Visual search can only do so much, and in low light conditions, darkness, fog/mist or in thick vegetation the Average Maximum Detection Range (AMDR) or Sweep Width for a visual search will be incredibly narrow. Thus, to search a large area requires either additional resources or more time to obtain a reasonable Probability of Detection (POD). By utilising sound and light as an additional component of searching, we can greatly increase our detection index or sweep width, and in a lot of cases make 'finds' that are outside of our visual detection range ie. increase our POD for only a little extra effort. In New Zealand, we had fifteen years worth of anecdotal evidence that the techniques worked well and saved lives. As SAR practitioners and tutors, we taught these techniques and knew they worked — but questions remained over how effective the techniques were, and what were the variables? Where was the scientific research to back up what we were teaching? How could we teach best practice when we did not have the data to support what 'best practice' was? In 2010, with design and implementation support from Robert 'Bob' Koester (Virginia, USA), the SARINZ Trust funded the design and initial experiments to answer some of these questions. Some of the results supported what we believed, others were surprising. Some of the surprising results included:—

- Searcher hearing was an issue — some field searchers had partial deafness they knew nothing about.
- The performance of whistles varied greatly to that stated by the manufactures.
- No discernable difference in the distance a whistle blast travelled between the day and night.
- The sound patterns of whistles varied between types — with some producing more sound to the sides, others more to the front.

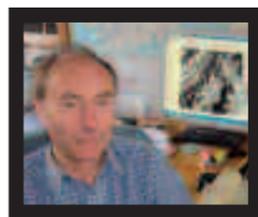
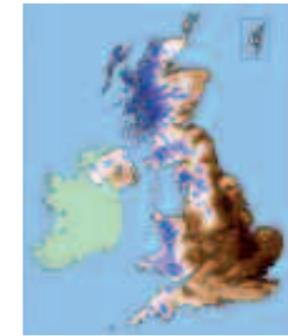
This conference presentation explored the issues of the trial, the results and what the future might

hold, what data is required from more trials and how that might impact on field search practice and reporting in the future. END NOTE: more trials are needed to gain additional data. The final data could be easily incorporated into products such as SARMAN which, when combined with a GPS track and information reported by the field searchers, such as weather, environment type and wind conditions, could easily calculate a scientifically-based POD. ■

SARINZ are running tracking courses at Bowland Pennine's Smelt Mill base, in the Trough of Bowland, in September. For details, please email tracking@ipp-lkp.com.
13-15 September Track and Clue Awareness
20-22 September Sign Cutting and Ageing Course (for those who have completed the earlier course on 13-15th.



IS IT WETTER ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP?



The annual distribution of rainfall over the UK, particularly over western Britain, shows considerable similarity to the underlying topography: the higher the land, the greater the rain. But how closely does the rainfall on a particular hill match the underlying contour pattern? **Geoff Monk** of the Mountain Weather Information Service explains.

Answering that is not easy, as generally the higher and more remote the land, the fewer the rain gauges, and also — due to more snow in winter — the more gauges can get clogged up with unmelted or drifted snow. Thus, overall it is difficult to assess the exact increase of rainfall with height.

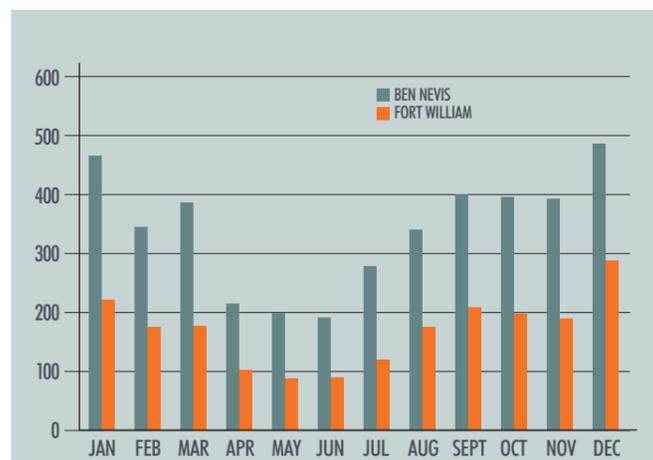
However, we have 25 years of rainfall recorded in the late Victorian era at the two observatories located at the summit of Ben Nevis and in nearby Fort William. The graph indicates mean monthly rainfall at the two sites. Both indicate very high rainfall but, more or less all year, twice as much falls on the summit as at the

bottom. The total rainfall must have been very difficult to measure in the frequent gales and snow on the summit but the team of scientists, some of whom performed new scientific experiments during their six monthly periods of confinement on the summit, would have used a range of measuring methods. However, it is still possible that, particularly in the windiest (winter) months, there will have been an underestimate of the rainfall.

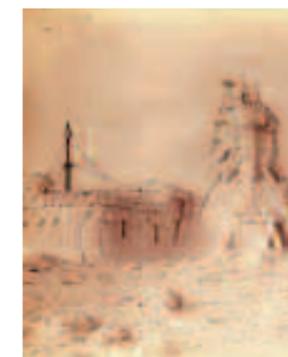
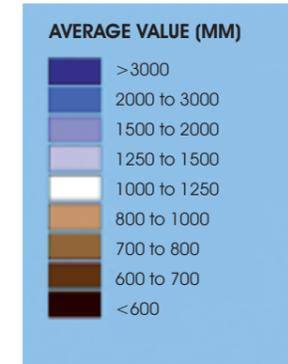
Evidence from Ben Nevis and other remote rain gauges suggests most rainfall variation occurs on mountains nearest the coast — the hills first hit by precipitation as it comes in off the sea. When the wind is easterly (off the land) in the Ben Nevis area, the increase of the rainfall on the mountain is much smaller. In the annual rainfall map, this explains the relative smoothness of the pattern in mountain areas toward the east, for example near the Cairngorms, where rain-bearing winds are mostly south or southwesterly. Nevertheless, when the wind is north or northeasterly, rainfall reaches the northern Cairngorms first, resulting in considerable increase in intensity with height.

There is evidence, particularly in strong winds and where there is snow to a low level, that there is spill-over with increased precipitation landing some way downwind from the mountains. Certainly rain often becomes increasingly heavy when walking toward the higher fells in Cumbria, for example up Borrowdale on a wet and windy south or southwesterly. There are also occasions when the normal pattern is distorted by 'convergence'. This is most noticeable in Britain when cold air from the south east flows out across Cumbria into south west Scotland, whilst warmer air from the south runs up the Irish Sea. The warm, often saturated, air runs up over the top of the cold air, increasing the rainfall rate before making landfall over Galloway or Cumbria, although there will still be intensification over the mountains themselves.

Thus, although local effects can alter the distribution of rainfall on any one day, during a period of constant rainfall, peak rainfall rates occur where air coming in off the sea first encounters mountain summits, the effect amplified by increasing wind speed. ■



Monthly average rainfall in millimetres at the bottom of (Orange) and summit (Grey) of Ben Nevis.



MAIN IMAGE: Rain clouds © Daniel Raustadt. Dreamstime.com. TOP: Annual average rainfall over the UK. Courtesy of the Met Office © Crown copyright. MIDDLE: Average values. ABOVE: The Ben Nevis observatory under snow and time c1900.

THE REACH AND RESCUE POLE

Designed with operator safety in mind, in a 3-metre hazard zone, the Reach and Rescue Pole accurately deploys a flotation or rescue device to a casualty as quickly as possible, on water, ice, mud and flood. The largest pole folds to 2.6 metres for easy storage in a 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.

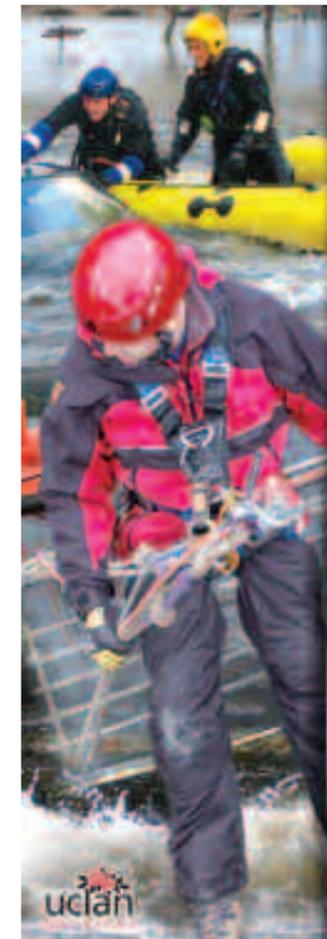
A quick-connect detachable carabiner (Carago) facilitates rescue of suspended victims in harnesses, making Reach and Rescue Pole Kits a versatile multipurpose piece of kit.

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.

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



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THE MREW MAPSERVER PROJECT

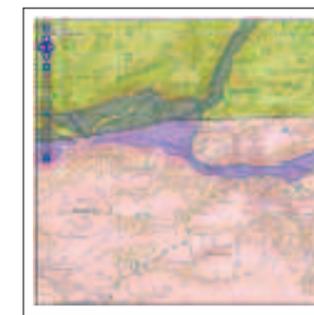


If you read the MREW forums you may have seen mention, by **Russ Hore**, of the 'MREW map server'. Somebody recently asked: 'What is this map server and how do I look at the maps?' Here, Russ explains about web-based mapping in general and the MREW map server project. This is primarily aimed at those team members who develop code using web-based mapping but will be of interest to others using such applications as SARLOC and MRMap for the web.

particular scale at a particular zoom level. So when the map server is configured, you can request a layer for each scale the server holds. As you zoom in the server knows which scale map to return. So when you are zoomed out and can see the whole of the UK, it will return the 1:250k map layer, as you zoom in it returns 1:50k, then 1:25k, then 1:10k the possibly vector data. All of this needs no extra work from you.

Do not think that all a map server can return are what we traditionally call maps ie. effectively pictures of OS paper maps. The server can return many types of geospatial data such as where SARLOC hits have been received. So you may ask the server for a layer containing the SARLOC hits, one containing the team areas and a third containing 1:25k and 1:10k data.

I mentioned 'vector data' above. Simplistically speaking, there are two types of map data, raster and vector. Raster data is what you get if you scan a paper map at home. You will know that if you keep zooming in on raster data in the end all you see is a very blocky image. That is because the raster data is made up of a series of



Map containing the SH 1:50k tiles, the EA Flood data and the team areas. Clicking in the purple bit retrieves information from the server for the EA Flood Warning and the Team Areas.

EA FLOOD WARNING

w_region	w_name	name	descrip	river_sea	w_descrip
Cymru	Afonydd Mawddach Wnion a tref Dolgellau	Rivers Mawddach Wnion and the town of Dolgellau	the flood plains of the rivers Mawddach and Wnion including parts of Dolgellau	Mawddach	gorlifair yr afonydd Mawddach ac Wnion gan gynnwys rhannau o Dolgellau

TEAM AREAS

team_id	team_name	colour	region	country
3	Aberdovey	#FFCOCO	NWMR	MREW

dots of a fixed size. As you zoom in the dots get bigger. Vector data, on the other hand, is not made up of dots but from equations that define what shape to draw. As you zoom in, the shape is redrawn at the same resolution each time. So the lines on a vector map never become blocky.

The effects of zooming in on a map containing both raster (1:50k) and vector (EA Flood Data: the purple areas) data is clear to see in the examples (top left). You can see the raster data has become unusable but the vector data is still sharp.

One layer that will be available from the Map Server is the OS Vector Map District Vector data — a bit of a mouthful so I call it 'OSVMDV'. This data will display clearly at all zoom levels (notwithstanding, at zoomed out levels, the data itself may be too small to see).

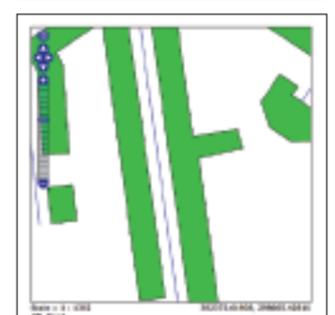
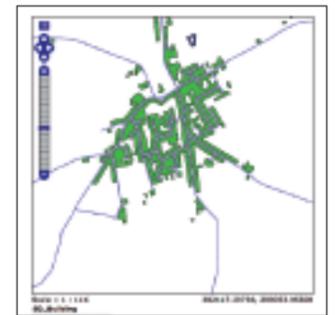
Another feature of vector data is that it contains 'attributes'. As I explained above, vector data has equations in it to draw shapes. Each shape can be tagged with additional information, for example, what it is: building, wooded area, power lines etc. When you request the OSVMDV data from the Map Server you can say: 'Give me only the wooded areas from OSVMDV

and colour them red because I want to see them clearly on top of the 1:25k I also want you to return.'

The map server can also return these attributes to you. So when you click on a point on the map the server can return all it knows about the layers under the mouse click. Taking the example (bottom right), a map containing the SH 1:50k tiles, the EA Flood data and the team areas. Clicking in the purple bit just above centre will retrieve from the server the information (detailed in the panels above), for the 'EA Flood Warning' layer and the 'Team Areas' layer.

So any data associated with a geographic location in the map server can be returned with a single click. Looking at the OSVMDV data (right) we can see how the quality of the 'map' does not change as we zoom in.

Some of you will have seen me asking for teams to provide the outline of your team area. At the moment I have only asked for what you consider to be 'your' patch. In the future, we will expand this to the area you respond to which, in many cases, is different. For example, in South Wales, as I understand it, teams have a primary area (their 'patch') but readily respond to call-outs in other



Quality of the 'map' does not change as we zoom in to the OSVMDV data.

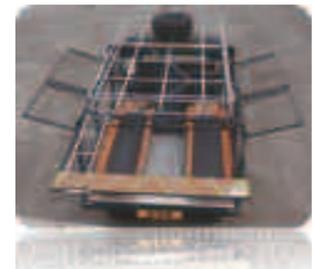
teams' patches. We may also have areas for 'capability' by which I mean, which team can do water rescue in this area. If a neighbouring team has no water rescue capability but you have, you may only respond to water rescues in that area.

This is a taster of the MREW map server and some of the things it will be able to do for us. Any questions please feel free to email me via sarloc@russ-hore.co.uk. ■

morton EUV

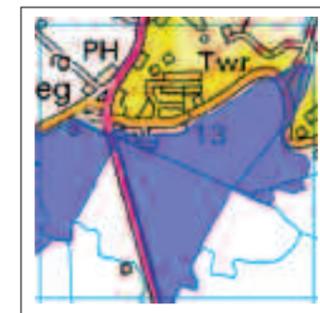
Emergency Utility Vehicle

A Y Morton & Co have now developed a purpose built twin stretcher rescue vehicle. The rear unit is manufactured as an independent bolt-on pod, incorporating a full roll over protection system and fitted to a Polaris Ranger 6x6 chassis cab. With stretchers removed, the vehicle can be utilised for a multitude of purposes including fire fighting equipment and personnel transportation.



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Zooming in on a map containing both raster (1:50k) and vector (EA Flood Data — the purple areas) data shows the above. You can see the raster data has become unusable but the vector data is still sharp.

Over the last few years more and more, geospatial data has become available. Possibly the best example of this would be the OS OpenData initiative. Before OpenData, the cost of a 100km square of 1:50k data would be around £100 per year. Now it, and many other scales and formats, are free to use and you can either download it or order on DVD (advisable). Many of you have probably obtained this data for use with MRMap. Dave Binks has done a magnificent job of making this data easy to use via MRMap but if you want to use the data in your own applications you may find it hard work. This is where a map server comes in.

Technical jargon: If you downloaded the OpenData data what you end up with is a number of picture files; each on a different part of an OS map, and each is called a 'tile'.

I am sure you are familiar with web based mapping with the likes of Google Maps, Bing and Google Earth etc. What most of us will have seen is just a front end to a computer (server) on the internet that 'understands' how the tiles it has available to it, fit together to form a continuous map.

If we want to start writing our own web-based mapping application we can use such services as Google Maps on our own web pages, with one major constraint: your web pages have to be publicly visible ie. they can not be behind a password-protected page. For MR-related data this can be a huge disadvantage. If you want to password-protect your web-based maps you have to pay a license to the map provider. Currently this is in the region of £5,000 per year for Bing maps and this only allows a limited number of users. MREW has purchased a one-year license for Bing maps but this is only available to

SARCALL and not SARLOC, MRMap for the web etc, due to the increase in cost for more users.

So, we have lots of free maps from the OS and we want an easy way to display them to end users. Now we could work out which tile(s) to load from the OS data set and how to piece them all together into a seamless map. But luckily there are a number of programming interfaces (APIs) available for displaying web-based mapping data, OpenLayers and Leaflet, to name just two. Both of these APIs use a standard protocol (WMS — Web Mapping Service) to talk to a map server and receive the tiles it needs. In simple terms you ask the map server: 'Give me a picture centred on this location containing this data at zoom level x.' The map server does all the clever stuff of finding out which tiles it needs and piecing them together and it returns you just the data you need.

Technical jargon: The server returns a layer, which is just a picture containing all, and only, the data you requested. You can request multiple layers — more on that later.

The map server has many other clever tricks up its silicon sleeves. Once you have requested a layer, and the server has done all the hard work piecing it all together, if you request the same layer again it does not have to do all the piecing together again, it just sends you what it has cached, making things much faster.

Layers can have 'styles' attached which define how the layer is displayed. There are many, many options here but one option defines two zoom levels (Min and Max). When you are zoomed out above 'Max' or below 'Min' the layer will not be displayed. Why is this useful? Because we have access to various scales of mapping, we may want to see a

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Medical Snippets

FROM DAVID ALLAN

IN PRAISE OF THE RADIAL PULSE

There has recently been a tendency to bypass the radial pulse in favour of the carotid and also to use the pulse oximeter in place of palpating the pulse directly. The radial pulse is pre-eminent amongst vital signs and should never be ignored or devalued.

Detecting the pulse is a simple skill easily acquired and practised. It simply requires the deployment of two or three fingers and familiarity with its location can easily be acquired from the wrists of friends and relatives. And perhaps people next to you on the bus or in the cinema! Access to the radial pulse is easy in almost any situation, especially with a casualty on a stretcher. (In contrast the carotid is difficult to access in less than ideal positions.)

If the radial pulse appears to be absent, first check the other arm. A unilateral absence of the pulse is not uncommon. Absence of the pulse gives a rough estimation that the systolic blood pressure is less than 70mm Hg. The normal rate in adults is between 60 and 100 beats per min. (Some authorities prefer 60-90). With a history of trauma, a rate in excess of this is strongly suggestive of blood loss. This is almost certain if the rate, recorded every 15 minutes, is rising. A normal rate in young fit adults may not exclude the

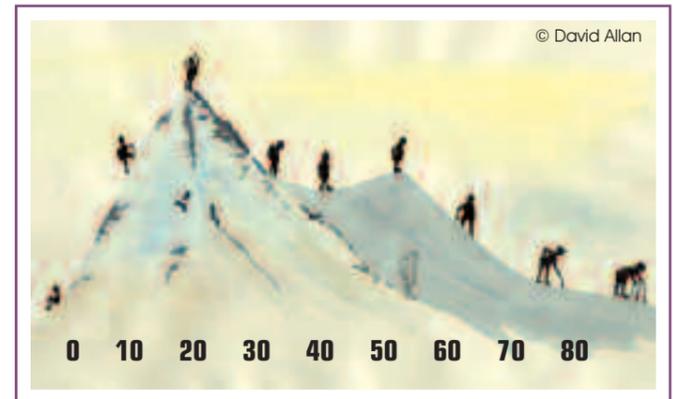
possibility of blood loss as this group are often able to maintain a normal pulse and blood pressure in the early stages of haemorrhage. The pulse volume, or force of beat, can be estimated with a little familiarity and a 'thready' pulse with an elevated rate is a clear warning sign. Irregularity of the pulse can be recognised quite easily. This may be a 'normal' finding in elderly casualties but

“*Learn to love the radial pulse. It is the most valuable of all the vital signs.*”

should always be regarded as an indicator of some cardiac malfunction. Learn to love the radial pulse. It is the most valuable of all the vital signs.

AGE AND ACCIDENTS

Not very many years back it was unusual to see more than the occasional hardy person on the hills who had passed the age of retirement. Now the post-retirement population form a significant percentage of the hill going community. There is as yet no record of an accident involving a Zimmer frame but such an event might come as no surprise. The



© David Allan

incident data from MREW reveals a steady rise in the number of elderly casualties. The large majority relate to accident and injury rather than lost or overdue.

There are three basic physiological requirements in order to perform well in the mountains. First is muscle strength. With training and practice this can be sustained as age advances. Second is flexibility, or elasticity. Once again regular exercise will go a long way towards maintain an adequate state of affairs. Third is balance and coordination. These deteriorate with age and little or nothing can halt the decline. Thus the high incidence of trips and falls in the elderly and this is clearly reflected on the hills.

There are important considerations for mountain rescue teams when dealing with elderly casualties. It is estimated that at least 80% of the population over the age of 65 is taking some form of regular medication and, in many cases, this will be a cocktail of drugs. Some, such as anticoagulants, carry a serious risk of complicating trauma, especially where head

injuries occur. Others will make it necessary to carefully check the compatibility of drugs that may be administered for pain relief.

Chronic illness will of course be common in these people and trauma has the potential to aggravate a condition such as heart disease. Careful history taking and, on occasion, telephone consultation is important.

The resilience to trauma falls progressively with age. (It begins to deteriorate from the age of 25!) Various factors contribute to this decline. Weakened more brittle bones has obvious implications. A falling basal metabolic rate increases the risk of hypothermia in situations where younger adults would not be affected.

Current figures would suggest that this trend will continue. The elderly hill goers are not tied to computers and video games like the new generation and will perhaps try to relieve their exploits of an earlier time. As Rex Harrison observed: 'I am now at the age where I've got to prove that I'm just as good as I never was'.



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your circumstances and advise you on the best options. We can guide you to the right kind of cover to suit your needs. Being based in the Lake District means many of us here at FMB are keen on the outdoors. Mountain rescue is run by volunteers who give up their time and energy to make the mountains a

safer place for all of us. And, we figured if they can get out of bed in the middle of the night to search for people they've never even met, often in appalling weather conditions, then we can support them by donating a 15% of our fee.



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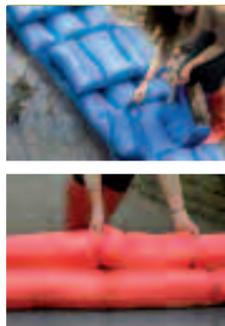
HYDROSACK AND HYDRO-SNAKE: THE IDEAL SOLUTION TO A CRITICAL PROBLEM

'Britain braced for more flooding' — it's a frequent news story, with images of towns across England and Wales sitting proud of the water, whether summer and winter. And, with the amount of water already in the ground so high, it doesn't take a large amount of rain for flooding to start. In 2012 alone, billions of gallons of rainwater fell on already saturated land in a matter of hours causing devastation for some.

The traditional solution of sandbags are heavy and difficult to dispose of, they leak, and they can trap harmful bacteria and toxins as water filters through them making them a health hazard. Telford-based medical equipment supplier SP Services are championing HydroSack and HydroSnake as the ideal solution — the perfect replacement for the traditional sandbag.

Before use, each pack weighs less than 1kg and contains the equivalent of six sandbags. When soaked with water before installation, each HydroSack or HydroSnake can absorb up to 20 litres of water. HydroSack contains a super absorbent polymer which expands to hold up to 40 times its own weight — letting water in but refusing to let water out. A wall built from either, or a combination of both, produces a highly effective barrier to flood water. Flooding is a problem that won't go away but, with the right planning and preparation, anyone can minimise the damage to their property, or damage to critical areas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT SP SERVICES' FRIENDLY CUSTOMER SERVICES HELPLINE ON 01952 288 999 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.SPSERVICES.CO.UK



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TRAUMA AND ACUTE MEDICINE WEEKEND Edale MRT Base, Derbyshire. 13-14 April

Steve Rowe *Edale MRT Medical Officer*

As I write, we are five weeks away from the eighth annual Trauma and Acute Medicine Weekend, which will be run as usual from the Edale MRT base in the Hope Valley, Derbyshire. Judy has asked me to write a little bit about what we do on the 'Trauma Weekend', as it has become known, and what sort of topics are covered.

The Trauma Weekend was originally set up to assist teams in the Peak District who did not have doctors and paramedics in their ranks to help deliver some trauma and medical teaching.

The first course saw twenty members from the PDMRO attending, with some positive feedback and an agreement to try and do the same the following year. In its initial few years the running of the course was supported by a grant from Dr David Dalrymple-Smith, Edale's ex-medical officer of 25 years service. Dr David wanted to be able to contribute something towards the development of casualty care teaching within the PDMRO. His assistance was incredibly useful in the early years, and has allowed the course to develop and flourish to the national event it now is.

Edale team has good links with other teams around the UK so, when we discussed running the course for a second year, we had team members from outside the Peak District interested in attending. It seemed reasonable to accommodate these requests, but we were ever aware that by increasing numbers on the course it would 'dilute' the hands-on experience folk were getting. It is for that reason that we've kept candidate numbers to between 40 and 50. With around twenty instructors on the course, this enables good intensive learning in a small group environment.

Major trauma is a relatively rare disease for the majority of mountain rescue team members throughout the UK. Sure, there are a few teams who see more than their fair share due to their location, but for many it is a rare

occurrence. However, managing a casualty who has suffered serious injury should be at the core of what we are able to provide as mountain rescue team members. THIS is the time we can really say we've saved a life.

The MREW trauma and acute medicine course delivers the core skills and knowledge required for dealing with our most seriously injured casualties. The emphasis is on having a structured approach to assessment, and doing the basics well. This approach is shared by those who instruct on the course, so candidates get a clear message and hopefully a simple plan to work to next time they are faced with having to deal with major trauma on their patch.

We have involved instructors and lecturers from outside mountain rescue, whose knowledge and skills are very relevant to what we do. From the early days of the course we have been lucky enough to have a consultant trauma and orthopaedic surgeon from the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield. For those of you that have attended, you will know that Simon's 'direct' lecturing style usually draws a full audience, with instructors packing in the back of the room to listen to his gems. He is national expert in the management of complex lower limb injury, and has a wealth of experience in patching up the broken climbers delivered to him on a regular basis by teams from throughout the Peak. He sees it as a good investment of his time — his patients get the right care from the outset, making his job in hospital easier as the right things have been done pre-hospitally.

We also have three consultant anaesthetists that instruct on the

course, along with registrars and specialists from a range of medical disciplines. All are MR team members with coal-face experience in dealing with MR casualties, so white coats and stethoscopes are left at the door!

Candidates will also get the chance to train with paramedics and doctors from a number of the air ambulance services in the UK who come and contribute to the course.

What candidates will find is that although there are many doctors and paramedics teaching on the course, there are also more than a few experienced team members. We know we can get non-medical team members up to a good level of knowledge and skill, and this is demonstrated by our diverse mix of instructors. Trauma is not the sole preserve of 'medics' — it is something ALL mountain rescue team members can deal with safely, rapidly and effectively.

The general outline of the course is as follows:—

Many candidates arrive Friday night. We don't offer en-suite rooms but there is always floor space at Edale's base.

After registration on Saturday morning, it's straight into lectures — building the principles of a system of trauma management. Then some hands-on practical skills sessions to put into practice what's been talked about in the lectures.

Lunch is plentiful, and whilst candidates eat they can browse the trade stands. We invite equipment manufacturers to come and show us their products and help off-set some of the cost of the course to the candidates. Those that do exhibit know the target audience well so will be only too happy to answer questions candidates may have, as well as demonstrating some of the new kit MR teams may find useful.

After lunch it's more talks and skills stations, before an hour or so to get sorted for the dinner at a local pub and, depending on speaker

availability, an after dinner talk. In the past we've had talks from polar explorers and medics, alpine mountain guides and our very own John Ellerton.

Sunday starts with breakfast, then on to lectures and skills stations, consolidating Saturday's learning. After lunch, we get candidates into small teams to manage a number casualties with serious injuries or illnesses, all facilitated by experienced instructors. This part of the course was only added last year and was received well, as a chance to put all the knowledge and skills acquired into practice in a controlled, mentored setting.

We ask candidates to give us frank feedback at the end of the course — we need to know what we can improve and change and, as a result of the feedback over the years (mostly positive!), the course has evolved into the success it is today.

A mention must also go to all the support crew — the Edale team members and friends who make sure teas are topped up, food is ready and waiting and that candidates are looked after and made to feel welcome.

What has been interesting to me over the years is the increasing number of medical professional team members we have attending the course. All of course are welcome, and it's great to share knowledge and ideas which can be taken back to teams throughout the UK and cascaded on to other team members.

If you are interested in coming to the course, get in touch with Trevor Lawton, Edale MRT training officer on training@edalemrt.co.uk, or for general enquiries Dr Steve Rowe, Medical Officer Edale MRT, on drsteve Rowe@gmail.com

This year's course is almost full, however, we intend to run it next year so watch out for the adverts in the magazine or enquire next January to the email addresses above. ■

UPDATE ON NICOLA 3

TESTING 30 DECEMBER 2012 AND 24 FEBRUARY 2013

EDITED BY PETER ALLWRIGHT, GRAHAM NAYLOR & BRIAN JOPLING

The report overviews the testing of the Nicola 3 Cave Radio systems undertaken on Sunday 30 December and 24 February. The main aim of these tests was to establish radio distance – that is, to show the radios would perform at least equally to the Nicola2 and the HEYPhone cave radios and exchange voice communications over the same distances.



Graham Naylor on Nicola 3 in OFD 1 © Graham Christian

On Sunday, 30 December 2012, the testing party assembled at the South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue at the SWCC headquarters at Penywllt, South Wales. The weather was, to say the least, inclement: cold and wet with

the weather deteriorating throughout the test period. The underground radios were set up just inside OFD 1, about 100 metres from the entrance. The surface radios were off to the side of the footpath down to OFD 1 in a meadow area. The distance of the test was some 320 metres. Some considerable time was spent on Nicola 2 tests. Benoit Joly, of the Speleo Secours Isere (3SI) was visiting and had a repaired Nicola 2 which needed testing. This was carried out first and took longer than planned.

Once this had been done, the Nicola 3 test began. The strength of the audio received appeared somewhat weaker than the Nicola 2 and the HEYPhone. It was noted that the clarity of the Nicola 3 signal did make this weaker signal usable for an attentive user. At this point, the weather became unbearable and further testing was abandoned.

In a debrief, the Nicola 3 designer, Graham Naylor, summarised that the apparent weakness was not a transmission signal strength problem, but due the lack of amplification of the

audio signal to the microphone. This would require a change to the FPGA firmware — rather than to the circuitry. He would make these modifications and another test was planned for one month's time, on the weekend of 26/27 January 2013. However, the period of bad weather causing travel chaos — with one of the testers snowed in — meant this was postponed.

For the further test, on 26 February, again in South Wales, the weather was much better, even if there was a cold easterly wind blowing. These tests concentrated on the earthed aerials (versus the capacitive aerials). These require a good earth to be made — more on this later.

December' test was repeated and it was quickly shown that the changes to the firmware gave a strong audible voice at the microphone/speaker. The signal strength matched that of the Nicola 2 and the HEYPhone, but was much clearer.

The surface party moved back a further 200 metres or so and repeated the test. Again the Nicola 3 performance matched that of the Nicola 2 and the HEYPhone, but the signal strength had dropped a point. The Bluetooth headset was then connected, giving a louder and clearer audio than the microphone/speaker.

The surface aerials were then rotated through 90°, which gave a step up in signal strength. This also applied to the Nicola 2 and the HEYPhone.

During these tests, it was noted that the audio signal coming out of the speaker was drifting slowly up and down.

Moving on again another 150 metres or so, the three radios performed equally in their signal reception with a point or so drop in signal strength. We were now some 650 metres from the underground radio in OFD 1. The digital quality of the Nicola 3 again gave the clearest

signal, especially through the Bluetooth headset.

A further 100 metres on gave us our first problem — none of the radios on the surface were able to receive from the underground radios. This was on a high point where the ground coverage may have interrupted the signal. However, throughout the whole testing period, messages had been exchanged between the HEYPhone at the base in the South Wales Caving Club and the party in the OFD 1 entrance (subject to some management of the HEYPhone aerials on the surface). Joplo comments he was surprised how well the HEYPhones performed — could this be at least partly down the new Lithium Ion batteries used? The aerials at this location were well earthed with metre-deep crowbars. So, the Nicola 3 party moved to that location.

The Nicola 3 was set up with the same configuration as tested at other locations. A successful exchange of messages with the underground party was made — this location is over 800 metres from the party in OFD1 with a depth of about 150 metres — but it was noted that the signal strength was some two points below the HEYPhone. (HEYPhone: strength 3, Nicola 3: strength 1).

After a brief discussion, the HEYPhone aerials were attached to the Nicola 3, giving an immediate boost to the Nicola 3 which was then operating at the same strength at the HEYPhone. Some experiments with the aerials were then carried out, the conclusion being that the aerials must be fully earthed to get the best performance. More work is required.

CONCLUSION

These tests have shown that, provided the Nicola 3 is correctly earthed and the aerials are of sufficient length, a distance of over

800 metres can be achieved, subject to geological conditions.

The drift of the volume in the speaker was explained by Graham Naylor as the radio trying to optimise and this would need addressing in the FPGA firmware. The Bluetooth headset performed well, though there is still some work to be done getting the implementation robust.

It was felt that we could move to the next stage of testing. A test will be scheduled for Peak Cavern in Derbyshire followed by the Yorkshire Dales. It is expected the radios will be available for testing at the BCRC AGM weekend. The need to test in France would then follow when dates can be arranged.

EARTHED VERSUS CAPACITIVE AERIALS

Throughout these tests, we used the earthed aerials. For these to work, a good earth must be made and as indicated by a red LED lighting in the Nicola 3. It must be said the surface earthing might have been unsatisfactory in some tests, but acceptable results were obtained.

At the base in the South Wales cottage, the 'fixed' aerial earthing at 35 metres was not used — the crowbars were positioned at 50 metres giving a one metre-deep earth in wet soil. This goes some way to explaining the good communications using the HEYPhone — indeed the signal saturated at times requiring one leg of the aerials to be removed.

These aerials were plugged into the Nicola 3 and gave excellent results at 800 metres, proving the point about earthing.

The capacitive aerials will remain an option for teams. There are locations where, for one reason or another, it is difficult to get an earth. We still need to experiment with these operationally in locations where previously there have been difficulties in communicating.

The project would like to give an immense thanks to South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue and those members who assisted with these tests. And an enormous thanks to Brian and Marg Jopling for their hospitality for both tests. ■

DEVELOPING THE T-CARD CAVE RESCUE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

'T Card' boards are already used to manage the deployment of personnel and resources by cave rescue teams. **Keith Edwards** has been developing an electronic version of the system, which is now being used by the Gloucester Cave Rescue Group. During the weekend of 23/24 February, Paul Taylor of GCRG demonstrated the system at a cave rescue management workshop in Croatia and, as a result, several European cave rescue teams are also interested in using the system. Keith explains how it all works.

This electronic system is being developed in Microsoft Excel, as a macro-enabled workbook. It will run in any version of Excel from 2003 onwards, apart from the Mac version.

The aim has been to replicate the functionality of a 'T-card' board in managing and deploying personnel and resources during an incident while providing a shorter set up time and simplicity of operation. The computer-based system also has a number of additional useful automated features:—

- The date and time that team members arrive at the incident are recorded.
- Personnel and equipment 'in' and 'out' times are allocated using the computer's system clock.
- An event timer and times that teams have been deployed for also utilise the system clock.
- T-cards are coloured according to resource type.
- Computer code is attached to buttons to automate and simplify aspects of managing the board.
- Events are automatically recorded in an incident log.

The workbook has three worksheets:—

1. T Card System
2. Resources
3. Incident Log



The system in use in the field. The laptop is powered from the auxiliary power outlet via an adaptor.

THE RESOURCES WORKSHEET

Resources (personnel and equipment) are managed on this worksheet.

- The system can be pre-loaded with all team members and items of rescue equipment.
- It is simple to add or delete items from the tables and to sort or filter the tables by any column.
- When a team member or item of equipment becomes available on site, 'Yes' is entered adjacent

Name	Type	Used	Next Avail
John Smith	Personnel	Yes	12:00
Jane Doe	Personnel	Yes	12:00
Bob Jones	Personnel	Yes	12:00
...

to the name in the 'Checked In' column. The date and time when a team member reports to control is automatically added in the 'Date/Time' column. Once checked in, they/it becomes available for deployment on the 'T-card' board.

THE T-CARD SYSTEM WORKSHEET

This worksheet is used to manage the incident and team deployment. When the 'New Incident' button is clicked, the board and incident log are cleared, the event timer is started and an initial entry is added to the incident log.

- Twelve teams can be deployed

Continued on page 62



Management of the incident and team deployment.

and each team can have up to eight members assigned to it. Up to eight items of equipment can be allocated to each team.

- Personnel and items of equipment are selected from in-cell drop-downs such that once a team member or item of equipment has been deployed; it cannot be allocated again either to the same team or another team.

- Cave rescue team members appear on green cards, non-cave rescue personnel on blue cards and equipment on yellow cards.

TEAM DEPLOYMENT

Clicking on the 'Deploy Team' button for a team automatically time stamps the 'In' column and starts the 'Team Deployment Time' clock for that team. An entry is also added to the incident log. Some intelligence has been programmed into the system to anticipate the most common scenarios encountered when deploying a team.

STANDING TEAMS DOWN

Clicking the 'Time out' button for a team brings up this dialogue box where the whole team or individual members and/or items of equipment can be stood down. The 'Out' column is time stamped appropriately and an entry is added to the incident log.



INCIDENT LOG WORKSHEET

The system automatically maintains an incident log. All events in the log are date and time stamped. Events can also be entered via the keyboard.

SAVING AND ARCHIVING

As well as saving the workbook, there is also an archive function so that a 'frozen' version of the board can be saved at intervals during the incident. Each archive file is automatically sequentially numbered. The event log and archive files could provide valuable evidence in any subsequent feedback session or enquiry.

SOME THANKS

Thanks must go to Mike Clayton, Emma Porter, Graham Smith and Paul Taylor along with members of Dudley Caving Club, the Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation (MCRO) and Gloucester Cave Rescue Group (GCRG) for their suggestions and advice which have led to the development of the current version.

TRIALS

Interest in trialling the system has been expressed from Midlands CRO and Gloucestershire CRG.

If any other teams out there are interested in trialling the system and/or assisting in its future development, please contact Keith Edwards via keith_edwards@blueyonder.co.uk.

TOP LEFT: Standing teams down. LEFT: Incident log worksheet.

MIDLANDS CRO AND GO OUTDOORS

Midlands CRO continued to do the bit on behalf of the relationship between mountain and cave rescue and GO Outdoors — and to promote mountain and cave awareness — prior to Christmas. Armed with displays and getting into the festive spirit, the eight team members all donned Santa hats and spent the day looking after the climbing wall and chatting to customers at the Erdington store. Belated thanks — the Santa hats having long-since gone back in their boxes — to the management and staff at GO Outdoors, Erdington.



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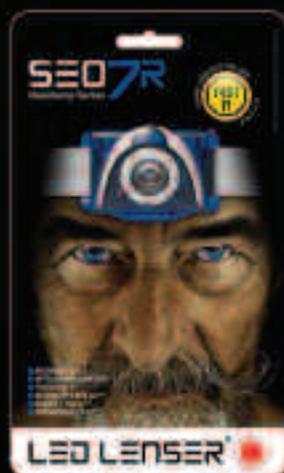
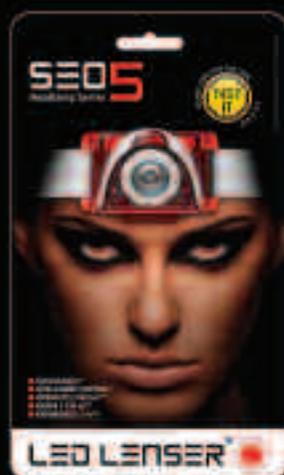
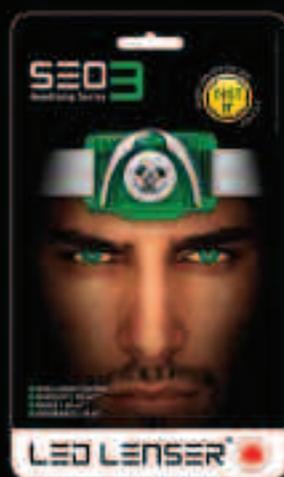
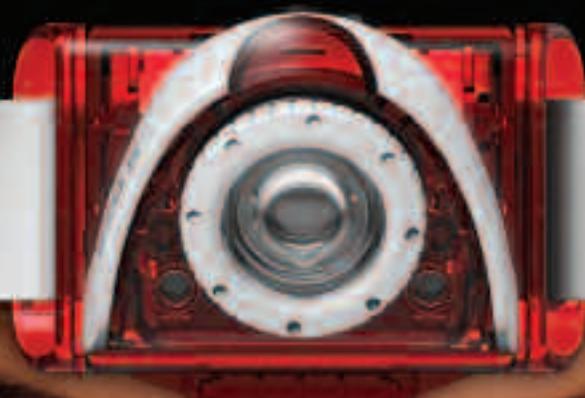
The truth is the majority of rescues happen in "normal" countryside, not in the mountains. The lion's share of rescues happen to ordinary people...

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

John Graham
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