

mountain rescue

ISSN 1756-8749

£4.75



51 Winter
2015



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR MOUNTAIN AND CAVE RESCUE IN ENGLAND AND WALES



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WELCOME TO ISSUE 51

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

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

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NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 52

Editorial Copy Deadline:
Friday 27 February 2015

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

Advertising artwork must be supplied, ready prepared on CD or via email as font embedded high resolution PDF/EPS/TIFF (300 dpi).

FRONT PAGE

Calder Valley SRT
Search Dog Meg in snow on Land Rover Defender
© Anne Farnell.

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**



WINTER 2015



first Word

MIKE FRANCE

I'll start by firstly wishing everyone a good New Year, and then back to the subject of communications. You told me the problem was between the teams and the MREW officers, in that officers don't always reply to your emails. I pledged in the last issue to sort that out and, thanks to Mark Lewis, I hope we've now done that. Mark has set up new email addresses for all the committees (water@training@ ICT@mountain.rescue.org.uk, and so on) these will go to the officer, vice chair and secretary for each committee, so someone from that group should reply to you, but not necessarily the officer. If you want to email the officer only, continue to send emails to them at, waterofficer@ trainingofficer@ etc but remember they will be the only person reading that email and you may not always get an immediate response.

At the strategy day there was a lot of positivity about taking the organisation forward. The officers want to be able step out of their traditional roles when required, to support one another, and for you to see them as a management team working on your behalf to benefit all of us. So don't be surprised if you get feedback or support from anyone on that team. Specialist officers will always be the specialist in their skilled area, but I have asked these guys to act as senior managers cascading some of the work to each other to help you. And that means we also need you to step up and help us.

I've said it before: YOU are MREW so, to move the organisation forward and develop better relationships, it's also down to you. At the general meeting in November I got the feeling this process has started.

This is also a good time to remind you there are some officer's post available. You wanted time limits on the posts but that only works if you are prepared to fill the vacancies. I do understand time is precious and balancing family life, work and then MR is all but

impossible, but some of you must have the skills and a bit of time to step up and help. If you don't we will finish up with paid roles as some of these posts are critical to running a national charity.

I hope by now you have been told the good news about the Labor funding, this again is a great opportunity to work together to maximise your regional and national training. I understand your regional training officers are now taking this forward.

Some of you will be aware that Rory Stewart MP stood down as chairman of the APPG. This group has been useful for us. It opened the door to Westminster last year with the opportunity to meet MPs from all parties and explain how we fund mountain and cave rescue teams. Andrew Bingham MP will be taking over from Rory as chairman. I strongly believe it was the networking at Westminster that helped secure the VAT relief announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. We have worked closely with the RNLI, UKSAR and the Charity Tax Group to achieve this result. My concern has always been that the administration of VAT relief could bring more work for us and the teams. Let's hope I am wrong.

Finally more good news — I also hope you have heard that the management team are working to a new code of conduct. You can find this under policies on the website. I believe it's what we all do, but to be able to show to other organisations that our officers and trustees operate within a standard, is a positive development. With all MREW policies, if you want to change MREW to your team name and adopt them, you are very welcome.

Finally, within this 'First word' slot, I'd like other officers to air their views on things as well as mine, so every now and then I will invite one of my colleagues for their thoughts. The next will be written by Mike Margeson, my vice chairman. ■

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MOUNTAIN RESCUE MAGAZINE

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The **civil liability policy** is renewing shortly, so please help me once again with completing the declaration that will be required. This will be sent out shortly, if it hasn't already landed in your team's inbox. A copy is of course on the website. It's really important that each team completes and returns a declaration if you want to continue having the protection of our policy.

The national **personal accident (PA) policy**, funded by various police forces, will also be renewed shortly. For teams covered by the national policy,

account of this when looking at your budgets for 2015 and how much fund raising will be needed. Details of how this will be administered will be sent to teams in due course.

The **legal costs insurance** for team members has been taken up by 35 teams — is your team one of them? Ask your team if you have the cover and if so you can find full details on the website in the resources section of the member's area. In brief the covers are listed below and these are 24/7 — not just when you are on mountain or cave rescue activities.

fundraising activities for 2015 then it's important you know what the liability policy covers and doesn't cover. There is a guidance note on the website that you should take note of. Acceptable fund raising activities include collections/tin shakes, talks, demonstrations, slide shows, stands at county fairs/carnivals, organising sponsored and challenge events including walks, abseiling and mountain biking (subject to details being lodged with insurers at least six weeks before the event), standby cover at fell races, provision of First Aid at third party organised events (Medical malpractice is excluded) and providing hill awareness and navigation guidance (including time on the hill). These must all undergo the appropriate risk assessments and an audit trail must exist to confirm this and be retained on the team's file for a minimum of three years.

Some activities are NOT acceptable to insurers and these include duathlons, triathlons, urban rat races, dragon boat racing, kayaking, hire of mobile climbing walls and the use of any mechanically propelled devices on land/air/water. The reason these events are not immediately acceptable is that these types of activities do generate claims and many of a substantial size. Any type of event promoted as a race is unattractive to insurers and

would prefer you offer events termed as a 'challenge' and record finishers in strict alphabetical order only, as competitors can have a single minded determination that overcomes a need to act responsibly to themselves and those around them.

Insurers may consider some of these 'not acceptable' activities at an additional premium — payable by the team involved. Before submission we will require from you full risk assessments, full details of the proposed event, how will it be marshalled and run etc. Each event will be on a stand alone basis and MREW require notification at least two months in advance to give insurers ample time to consider. Any activities involving mechanically propelled devices on land/air/water are not acceptable whatsoever and you will need to arrange separate alternative cover.

Copies of many insurance documents are available online in the member's area of the MREW website. They can be found in the resources section under the insurance heading. Remember that as always if you have any queries then please just send me an email and I'll give you what help and assistance I can. But please don't leave it until the last minute, as you're unlikely to get an instant reply. ■

AUTUMN STATEMENT BRINGS GOOD NEWS FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Team members of mountain and cave rescue teams across England and Wales were delighted and grateful to hear the Chancellor's statement in December — albeit with some degree of caution. From April next year, search and rescue charities will be able to claim refunds on VAT, which will provide a huge boost to team funds.

MREW Chairman, Mike France, said, 'It is great to have the recognition in central government of the valuable work done by volunteer rescue services and also of the generosity of our many supporters. This issue of financial support has been under discussion for a long time and there have been various options and mechanisms in place — the latest announcement looks encouraging but we've still to see the details of how much admin will be needed from our already stretched volunteers and also how we can ensure that this refund and other support from central government has a positive impact for all the 50+ teams.'

The move means that from April, money donated by the public to provide essential services can be used in full for the purpose intended without a proportion being lost in VAT payments. In future, mountain and cave rescue will be treated similarly for VAT as the emergency services we work alongside, such as the police and fire and rescue service.

Both MREW and BCRC have worked closely with the RNLI, the UKSAR Volunteers Working Group and the Charity Tax Group and this was helped enormously last year by our 'week in Westminster', chatting to MPs — but this was just a small part of a sometimes tortuous process, over many years, during which time many have taken up the campaign both within mountain and cave rescue and at Westminster.

A first meeting with Treasury and HMRC officials has already taken place to discuss the details and look at draft legislations, but there are still lots of questions. It's hoped that whatever system is put in place, it will be simple for teams to manage but the management team would look at producing a guideline to ease the process for team treasurers.



Langdale Ambleside © Paul Burke.



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

we will shortly need you to declare numbers of team members ready for renewal — please help us keep admin to a minimum by replying as quickly as you can.

Good news for **vehicle insurance** in 2015 — MREW will continue paying the premium for up to 3 vehicles and 1 trailer per team, when the scheme renews in July. Teams will still get the same great rates on any additional vehicles and trailers. So once again you take

- Motor Prosecution Defence
- Criminal Prosecution Defence
- Representation at a Public Enquiry or Coroner's Office
- Attendance expenses at a Public Enquiry or Coroner's office

Changes to named members and other teams wishing to take out this cover can be made at the renewal next October, but not in the meantime.

If you are planning your

IN THE news

Image © Spaceheater. Dreamstime.com

MREW PR consultant and media trainer **Sally Seed** looks at an aspect of media coverage from the past few months and suggests things to be learnt for future media relations.

What makes a story?

There's a bit of a Holy Grail in PR about finding the story that develops a life of its own, that crops up in a wide range of media with stunning pictures and that generates lots of interest and sales (or, in the case of mountain rescue, donations and support). Think Duchess of Cambridge wearing a dress from a London designer — the dress is an immediate sell-out online as soon as she's in the papers. Or a couple running the London Marathon and getting married half way around the course (that one was everywhere a couple of years ago and it certainly promoted the event). Or (and you can read more about this on page 14) a lovely

Border Collie goes missing in the Lake District and is found and then rescued just in time by the local mountain rescue team. People (and animals), money, milestones, anniversaries, novelty, Royalty and celebrity all make the news but so do controversy, disaster, problems, disagreements and generally bad news. Have a look online, through your newspaper or check an evening news programme and you'll see just how little good news is in the news. That's what we're up against in mountain rescue — we have to create novelty, milestones and people (or animal) stories and get them out in a timely way with brilliant images if we're going to compete

for those few slots of good news. And we have to do it while avoiding the pitfalls of becoming part of the bad news.

A few successes from recent years have included:—

- **The HRH Land Rover donation for the Royal wedding** — not a lot of national coverage but anyone based in Cumbria will have got tired of seeing that vehicle!
- **The Peak District 50 years celebrations** — especially the link back to the 1960s' rescues that catalysed the creation of the teams.
- **The drone story in the Lakes** — although the team at UCLan got more press on that one than MR

as they were able to be completely positive and enthusiastic about it.

Recent gaps that I'm aware of include:—

- **MR team members running the London Marathon** — (minimal coverage in local papers in spite of best efforts).
- **Princes' Charities Forum Days** with WellChild, Centrepoint and Child Bereavement — great for local profile but coverage often more about local police and the helicopters as MR).
- **The huge involvement of MR teams in support of the Tour de France** in Yorkshire in July 2014 (interviewed on local TV but no widespread coverage).

We have to create novelty, milestones and people (or animal) stories and get them out in a timely way with brilliant images if we're going to compete for those few slots of good news. And we have to do it while avoiding the pitfalls of becoming part of the bad news.

So, are we doing something wrong? What could we do differently? And could we create a different set of problems? The simple answers are No, Plenty and Probably — and a journalist's perspective on the three examples above shows why.

For the first, imagine the headline: 'Ten fit men and women run the London Marathon'. Reaction? So what?! Create more of a story (and a more dramatic picture) and 'Rescuers carry bloodied Holby City extra through the streets of London' might capture a bit more media interest. On the Charities' Forum days, there

are some wonderful opportunities for great images of young people and families out in the wilds doing fun stuff, organised and supervised by smiling mountain rescuers. But recent press images from these events often tend to be more along the lines of everyone posed in front of a helicopter. We need to consider investing in a day of a photojournalist's time, someone who is used to capturing things as they happen and who is also familiar with the need to check for permissions and image releases from anyone on shot. That way, we're more likely to capture the real stories of the day, be able to tell them and show them quickly

and then see those images and stories in broader media. But we also need to beware. As many of those involved in the Tour de France cover know, there were a couple of incidents in the days before the race — keen cyclists trying out the course and coming a cropper on one of the bends or drops. No one in MR would have wanted to put a damper on the events and we certainly wouldn't have wanted to be the ones fanning concerns about the safety of the course just ahead of the Tour. But that would have been news and it would probably have been picked up by the national

newspapers and TV. MR would have had a high profile — but be careful what you wish for...



If you've created a great media story or a striking image from a simple event or activity, Sally would like to know more. And if you'd like advice on how to create more of a story around something that you have planned for 2015, she's happy to talk about that too. Get in touch with sally@stoneleighcomms.co.uk or via The Editor. Thanks. ■

How to get in touch with not just the officers and trustees but also some of the key specialist advisers who assist in running the organisation: producing the magazine, maximising PR opportunities, developing and maintaining SARCALL and securing insurance cover on your behalf.

who?

your management team



CHAIRMAN: MIKE FRANCE

chairman@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Represents mountain rescue with Government, the emergency services, other SAR organisations and The Princes' Charities Forum. A member of Woodhead MRT.



VICE CHAIRMAN: MIKE MARGESON

vice-chairman@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Works on operations and governance, supporting the officers in their roles. Currently developing a peer review process. Team leader of Duddon and Furness MRT.



SECRETARY: KEITH GILLIES

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An interface between teams, regions and the MREW management team, Keith is a member of Bowland Pennine MRT.



ASSISTANT SECRETARY: DAVE CLOSE

assistant-secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Supports the MREW Secretary in his role, enabling better communication within the organisation. Dave is a member of Dartmoor SRT (Ashburton).



FINANCIAL DIRECTOR: PENNY BROCKMAN

treasurer@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Manages MREW finances and the administration of grant monies and continues to review our financial systems. Penny is team leader of Central Beacons MRT.



MEDICAL: MIKE GREENE

medicalofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Represents mountain rescue in medical matters to the Government, the emergency services and IKAR, and maintains the morphine licence. Mike is a member of Wasdale MRT.



PRESS OFFICER: ANDY SIMPSON

pressofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Deals with the press, TV and radio, and supports teams in their own publicity, chairs the communication group (PISC) and is also chairman of Rossendale & Pendle MRT.
Vice chair: Judy Whiteside: editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk



VEHICLES: DARYL GARFIELD

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Works with the police, Government and teams in all matters 'vehicles'. A member of Penrith MRT.
Vice chair: Paul Smethurst: smethyp@gmail.com



WATER: ANDY LEE

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Works to establish the necessary guidance and standards to ensure the safety of members in a water environment. Andy is a member of Edale MRT.



ICT: MARK LEWIS

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Develops comms technology across mountain rescue. Mark is a member of Western Beacons MRT.
Vice chair: Iain Nicholson: ian@sardogs.org.uk



EQUIPMENT: RICHARD TERRELL

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Liaises with suppliers and manufacturers. Rich is a member of Central Beacons MRT.
Vice chair: Ray Griffiths: raygriff@btinternet.com



FUNDRAISING: NEIL HAYTER

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Develops revenue opportunities and sponsorship deals to benefit all teams. A member of Edale MRT, Neil also oversees the MREW social media presence.
Vice chair: Bill Whitehouse: billrhw@aol.com



TRAINING OFFICER: AL READ

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Develops training and guidelines for team members at all levels across a range of disciplines. Al is a member of Ogwen Valley MRO.
Vice chair: Tim Cain: tim@timcainleadership.co.uk



BCRC: BILL WHITEHOUSE

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As chairman of BCRC, Bill represents the interest of cave rescue and supports the management team. He is also a trustee of the Benevolent Fund.

internal trustees



MREW CHAIRMAN: MIKE FRANCE

chairman@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Part of Mike's remit as MREW chairman is to represent the interests of the organisation at trustee meetings, to ensure the smooth running and continued governance of the organisation.



SHIRLEY PRIESTLEY

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Shirley has been a member of the Scarborough and Ryedale MRT for 24 years, during which time she has undertaken a variety of roles at all levels. She is also treasurer of the Benevolent Fund.



MARK HODGSON

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Mark has a wealth of mountain rescue experience, with one of the busiest teams (Keswick MRT), and an impressive attendance record over many years. Team leader for twenty years, he stood down in 2013 but continues to be involved with rescues.

external trustees



CHAIR OF TRUSTEES: PAUL AMOS

paul.amos@mountain.rescue.org.uk
An Emergency Management and Leadership Development consultant, Paul also lectures on field operations at Coventry University and teaches flood rescue management at strategic level. He was with Hereford and Worcester FRS for fifteen years.



STEVE WOOD

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Steve is well known within the SAR community through his work at Mapyx Limited which has long been a supporter of all charitable rescue organisations.



PHIL PAPARD

philip.papard@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Phil has been a member of the Cave Rescue Organisation for over forty years, serving as controller, training officer and chairman. He retired as Principal Inspector in the HSE in 2012, after 25 years.



PETER DYMOND

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Peter's professional background is with the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the Coastguard Rescue Service, the volunteer emergency response arm of the MCA.

specialist advisers



EDITOR: JUDY WHITESIDE

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Provides design and editorial services for the magazine. Outside her role as editor, she assists in a number of areas in communication, publications and marketing and supports the fundraising group. Judy is also secretary of the Benevolent Fund.



SAR-H: JOHN HULSE

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The creator of SARCALL and a team leader of the Ogwen Valley MRO, John continues to lead on the SAR-H migration process.



INSURANCE: NEIL WOODHEAD

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Continues to work with teams on a range of insurances for teams. 'Woodie' is a member of Kinder MRT and is also chairman of the Benevolent Fund.



PR SUPPORT: SALLY SEED

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Supports Andy Simpson and Judy Whiteside in their roles and provides PR advice and support to MREW and teams where required, seeking to improve communication both internally and externally. Sally also helps deliver media skills training.

STATISTICS: GED FEENEY

statisticsofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Ged collects and collates incident information from the teams, producing an annual report analysing the statistical evidence and observing the key trends and influences.



PRESIDENT: PETER BELL

president@mountain.rescue.org.uk
Acts as an ambassador for mountain rescue to the outside world and thoroughly enjoys engaging in technical discussions.

VICE PRESIDENTS: TONY JONES & PETER HOWELLS



...turn to page 32 for BCRC contacts

meetings

MREW BUSINESS AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Places: 100
Date: 15 May
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton

MREW BUSINESS AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Places: 100
Date: 20 November
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton

TEAM LEADERS' DAY

Date: 7 February
Location: Swaledale base.

Please note this meeting is for team leadership only. To book in, contact:
Keith Gillies 01772 335605
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk



Images: www.pyb.co.uk

MREW SUPPORTS NEW HILL & MOUNTAIN SKILLS COURSES FOR HILL WALKERS

Wales support any initiatives that seek to develop the personal skills and self-reliance of hill and mountain walkers,' says Mike Margeson, MREW vice chairman and team leader of the Duddon and Furness team. 'So we are positive about this new scheme and confident the courses will be delivered by experienced and approved providers.'

The Hill Skills course is designed for hill walkers with little or no previous experience and covers a practical understanding of the countryside and moorland environment, how to plan walks, familiarity with maps and the equipment required as well as an understanding of weather and how to deal with emergencies. Mountain Skills is an ideal choice for walkers interested in transferring their skills

to more mountainous terrain, covering map and compass work, mountain weather, movement through steep ground, planning and preparation, emergency procedures and the seasonal effects of the mountain environment. Phil Benbow, chairman of North Wales MRA says, 'We're really pleased to support this scheme in North Wales. It will play an integral

part in our efforts to reduce the number of unnecessary call-outs for teams in the area. It's a great way to give members of the public the skills they need to safely enjoy the hills and mountains.' The BMC and the Mountaineering Council of Scotland are also backing the initiative. See www.mountain-training.org for details.

Mountain Training launched the nationally accredited Hill & Mountain Skills Scheme for novice and improving hillwalkers earlier this year. The courses, endorsed by Mountain Rescue England and Wales, aim to equip people with the basic knowledge and safety skills required to participate in hill and mountain walking in their own time. 'Mountain Rescue England and

BELL STRETCHERS LOAD TEST MARKING FOR MREW: RECORDS, SERVICING AND STICKERS

LYON EQUIPMENT

In preparation for the transition in helicopter provision, MREW has been working hard to ensure that the teams' Bell stretchers present no problems when Bristow take over.

Since Lyon Equipment took on the service and load test, detailed records have been kept of all the work done to each stretcher sent to us, along with load curve graphs and inspection sheets relating to load testing. However, there are stretchers listed on historical records we hold that have not been put in for service or testing in the last five years.

To find out what has happened to these stretchers, MREW has been contacting the teams whose name appears on these records, asking if they still have them, if they are they still being used and reminding teams of the servicing and testing requirements.

The responses have been extremely helpful in ensuring the records accurately list those stretchers in use, and that these are compliant to Bristow's requirements.

It appears that some stretchers have migrated to new owners in the UK or abroad, some have been retired by the team and are now decorations on the garage wall whilst a very small number are simply unaccounted for, having not been around in the memory of any current team member.

To guard against these retired or missing stretchers accidentally returning to service, and to highlight to aircrew that what they are presented with is within the recommended service and load test dates, MREW and Lyon have produced a highly visible adhesive sticker to be fitted to each stretcher.

Each sticker is pre-printed with the SERIAL NUMBER OF THE STRETCHER, THE TEAM NAME IT IS REGISTERED TO AND THE DATE OF LOAD TEST EXPIRY, along with a reminder of the servicing and load test schedule requirements.

THERE ARE TWO STICKERS FOR EACH STRETCHER, ONE FOR THE HEAD SECTION



AND ONE FOR THE FOOT SECTION. BOTH MUST BE FITTED.

There are three reasons for this. It reduces the risk of a stretcher losing its 'in test' marking, for teams with more than one stretcher mixing sections between stretchers is less likely and, crucially, it increases the chances of aircrew being able to see the sticker when the stretcher is loaded with a casualty.

The sticker has been sized to fit neatly on the frame of the Bell Mk2, Mk3 and Split Tangent stretchers. To give the best visibility it is suggested they are placed as shown in the images.

DO NOT PLACE THEM WHERE A FOLDED HEAD GUARD OR STOWED HANDLE WILL COVER THEM UP.

Stickers are being issued to teams with stretchers that have a current load test via MREW. All stretchers load tested by Lyon Equipment from the end of November 2014 will have them fitted before return to their team.

LYON MREW valid load test until: 18/03/2015
STRETCHER SERIAL No: 3971217
BELL Approved service: BUXTON MRT

Refer to user's guide. Oil Stretcher after every use and check regularly in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. User should keep service records. Stretcher must be serviced after no more than 100 rescues / 8 years.

LYON MREW valid load test until: 18/02/2015
STRETCHER SERIAL No: 3971215
BELL Approved service: BUXTON MRT

Refer to user's guide. Oil Stretcher after every use and check regularly in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. User should keep service records. Stretcher must be serviced after no more than 100 rescues / 8 years.

LYON MREW valid load test until: 28/04/2015
STRETCHER SERIAL No: 3971215
BELL Approved service: WESTERN BEACONS MRT

Refer to user's guide. Oil Stretcher after every use and check regularly in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. User should keep service records. Stretcher must be serviced after no more than 100 rescues / 8 years.

LYON MREW valid load test until: 27/05/2015
STRETCHER SERIAL No: 2870403 HGB112746B PLIK J545740
BELL Approved service: CLEVELAND MRT

Refer to user's guide. Oil Stretcher after every use and check regularly in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. User should keep service records. Stretcher must be serviced after no more than 100 rescues / 8 years.



Spotted on the Dartmoor SRT Tavistock Facebook page, team members taking part in Tavistock Carnival. There are no words...

Photograph supplied by Dave Hatwell, former team member.

From the archive

BRAND IDENTITY: THE EARLY YEARS
TAVISTOCK 1983 (OR THEREABOUTS)

EQUIPMENT UPDATE: RICHARD TERRELL

As forward planning for the Government grant could teams submit to me, via their regional equipment reps, any large-spend items in their ten-year plans. This will allow me to group together items so we know what you are looking for in the future. For the 2015-16 grant we're looking to purchase for teams helmets, harnesses

and a form of lighting (head band torch or hand torch). I've asked the regional reps to agree with what teams want and combine orders for individual regions and have this information back to me by 31 July 2015. The request was to build a catalogue comprising:—

- 3 different helmets
- 3 different harnesses
- 3 different types of lights.

Each region will collate their teams' orders then return centrally to purchase.

THE NEW STRETCHER

The stretcher is now in for CE marking and I am working on the technical file as part of the process. All being well, we are on target for the first run to start in October.

KINDER MRT COURT CASE: NEIL WOODHEAD

In August 2009, a team member suffered a significant injury during a fall whilst

rope rescue training. He took legal action against the team and the matter came before Manchester County Court in December. After three days of evidence the claimant's legal team reached a point where they were unable to make final submissions to the judge because they did not have the expert evidence necessary to maintain their case that the team had breached its duty of care to the claimant. The judge therefore

dismissed the claim. This has been a difficult time for the team, who have had to wait five and a half years for the matter to be resolved. They can now move forward with certainty. The team is grateful to members who gave evidence in a fair, considered and honest manner, both in support of the claimant and the team. Thanks to MREW officers, insurers and lawyers

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- Understand the human factors involved
- Empower motivation and performance
- Understand and apply briefing and reporting skills
- Refine situational awareness
- Practice problem solving on small group operations
- Understand interoperability
- Understand control of media, social media and public interaction
- Awareness of dealing with fatalities and forensics
- Understand and apply training, coaching and mentoring into small group operations
- Define and apply safety skills in an operational situation.

For further details and to book, contact elaine.gilliland@gmail.com or visit the online shop

(available to team members of MREW and BCRC only).



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IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, AND TO FIND OUT MORE, EMAIL MARK@TRUE-MOUNTAIN.COM



national News

FANCY GETTING INVOLVED AT NATIONAL LEVEL?

If you do fancy getting involved at national level, now might be your opportunity to make a difference, with a number of posts becoming available by the AGM in May. Some are management committee posts, some are specialist officers. So what's the difference?

Management committee officers are elected by the membership, expected to attend monthly management meetings, report progress to the committee against tasks and actions, and support the aims and goals of the organisation as necessary.

Specialist officers are appointed by the management team and are not required to attend monthly management meetings unless invited to do so to report on specific tasks.

Interviews will take place early in 2015. Expressions of interest for any posts should be made to Keith Gillies via secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk and be received no later than Friday 27 February. **Please note: Financial Director and Assistant Treasurer posts are also open to non-MREW members.** Start polishing that CV!

MANAGEMENT POSTS

The **Financial Director** will help deliver our strategic goals through consistent, robust and expert financial advice to the management team and trustees. He/she is responsible for all financial matters relating to the charity, ensuring the financial viability of the organisation within legal, constitutional and accepted accountancy practices. Applicants should bear in mind that this is potentially a ten-year post in a rapidly-developing environment and that current experience and a background in accountancy and finance is essential.

The **Assistant Treasurer** will be expected to work closely with the Finance Director to build the understanding for others of the charity's financial position and performance including collation, review and analysis of management accounting information and the preparation of budgets and forecasts. A background in management accounting and an individual who is a qualified or part-qualified accountant is desirable.

The **Equipment Officer** is expected to manage the equipment budget, coordinate the NHS grant and advise on the development and use of new and existing equipment. He/she will oversee the distribution of equipment to teams and be available for advice, and will also liaise with suppliers, partners and the media where necessary. Applicants must be serving MREW members and appreciate that this is a technical officer role.

SPECIALIST OFFICERS

The **Procurement Officer** will be expected to work closely with the finance team and other officers to support their needs. He/she will help prepare purchase specifications and conditions to be used as the basis for the tendering process, lead on the review of existing contracts and work to develop the required contacts to support any national procurement schemes that could benefit MREW. There is a strong requirement for applicants to already have a background in the procurement and negotiation process, with the ability to oversee, negotiate and develop contracts that could benefit MREW and the teams. Applications from MREW members are desirable.

The **Statistics Officer** will aim to record and report all statistical information generated within or supplied to MREW. He/she will promote the use of the incident management system, support teams in its use and ensure any changes to the system are formally managed. Additionally, he/she will ensure our compliance under the Data Protection Act with regard to all personal data contained within incident reports, and liaise with colleagues in Scotland and Ireland — and the MREW Press Officer — to ensure a complete and accurate picture of SAR activity. Applications from MREW members are desirable.

ANOTHER CHANCE TO WIN A CANON POWERSHOT D30

We're keeping the competition open a few weeks longer — so enter now and set yourself up for 2015 with a brand new camera! The Canon PowerShot D30 is durable enough for the most challenging outdoor activities. It's waterproof down to 25m, shockproof and freezeproof down to a temperature of -10°C — ideal for every adventure!



Just answer this question: **Down to what temperature in Celsius can you keep using the Canon PowerShot D30?**

Send your answer to editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk. The winner will now be announced in April mag. We promise.

T&Cs: Entry restricted to one per person (excluding employees and families of Park Cameras Ltd & Mountain Rescue Magazine). No cash alternative. Events may occur that render the promotion or the awarding of the prize impossible due to reasons beyond Park Cameras or Mountain Rescue Magazine's control, who may at their discretion vary or amend the promotion and the participant agrees that no liability shall be attached to Park Cameras as a result thereof.



NEW YEAR HONOURS FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUERS

Two long-serving mountain rescuers were recognised in the Queen's New Year Honours List.

Founder team member of Langdale Ambleside, John Graham, and Anthony 'Rob' Robinson, a Coniston team member both received the MBE.

31 DECEMBER
WWW.GROUGH.CO.UK



KIDS! PAINT A LAND ROVER AND WIN A RIDE IN THE REAL THING!

Clapham-based CRO's novel fundraising drive — launched last summer and aimed at their younger supporters — continues to inspire creativity online.

Fans buy a model Land Rover from secretary@cro.org.uk for just £10 then create their own version of the team's own vehicles — for the chance to ride in a genuine mountain rescue Land Rover. So far entrants have even included one from Japan.

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CROLANDROVER

LAKE DISTRICT

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FOR DAVID ALLAN OBE

At a recent LDSAMRA meeting, David was presented with an LDSAMRA Distinguished Service Award for the contribution to his team and the region over the years. Chairman Richard Warren presented the award on behalf of the twelve teams.

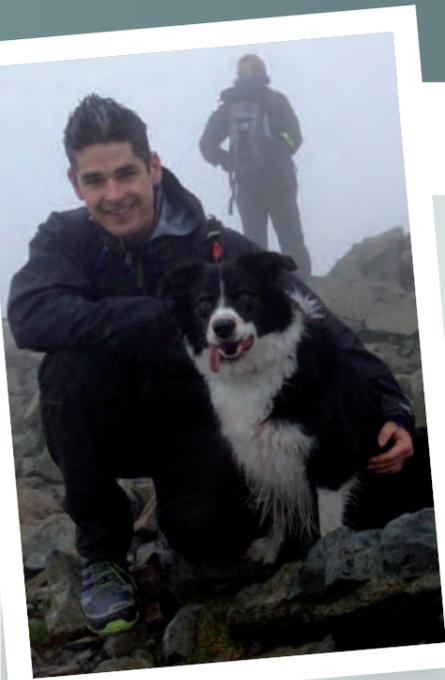
David stepped down as chairman of Mountain Rescue England and Wales at the AGM in May 2014, after a highly distinguished involvement in mountain rescue and 39 years as a team member. He joined Furness MRT (now Duddon and Furness) in 1975 as a young medical doctor, following a move to Cumbria to work as a surgeon at the Barrow-in-Furness General Hospital. Within a very short time he became team doctor and subsequently entered the ranks of the then Mountain Rescue Council as its medical officer. In 1999, he relinquished his



David Allan receives his LDSMRA Distinguished Service Award from Richard Warren.

medical role following his election to the chair. Amongst a number of key achievements in taking the organisation forward, he introduced national standards for casualty care, training and also secured royal patronage for mountain rescue from Prince William, now the Duke of Cambridge.

Holding such a senior national position requires a high degree of impartiality, independence and clear separation between national responsibilities and the support to your team or region. This is something David managed to achieve extremely well and as a result mountain rescue is in a much stronger position now than when he took over the role fifteen years ago. The region's teams wish David and his wife Sheila a well-deserved rest from the demands of the role. We also wish Mike France, the new chairman of MREW all the best for his future efforts in what is an extremely demanding and responsible position.



JASPER THE COLLIE – AN OPPORTUNITY OR A THREAT?

Social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, whether we like it or not, has grown massively and is now having an increasing impact on our volunteer mountain rescue services and our communities. **Richard Warren** discussed the implications of one very high profile missing collie.

Social media demonstrated its power when April Jones went missing and this has now translated into looking for animals. Whether we are pet lovers or individuals who just cannot see why saving the life of an animal should create such media interest, social media definitely had the upper hand.

Following a call on Facebook and Twitter for help to find Jasper, the world quickly mobilised itself into action. When I say the world, I mean the big wide world, including interest and help from as far afield as New Zealand and the US!

Clearly the involvement of an animal reached a whole new network of on-lookers that more ordinary activities simply do not do. In this case the audience was one that cut across and through society rather than the more usual outdoor lovers or mountain rescue supporters.

So this article is about how we as volunteer rescue organisations might want to manage social

media, avoiding the pitfalls and maximising the benefits. It is a personal view based on Wasdale team's recent experience.

Putting things into context and to give a little more background, Wasdale team became the focus of media attention in November last year, not because of the numbers of Three Peakers nor the family rescued from our notorious Broad Stand accident black spot on Scafell, but because of the rescue of Jasper, a lovely Border Collie who became separated from his owner Adam on a descent from Scafell Pike.

Following a call on Facebook and Twitter for help to find Jasper (#findjasper) the world quickly mobilised itself into action. When I say the world, I mean the big wide world including interest and help coming from as far away as New Zealand and the US!

Examples of extraordinary kindness included a group getting together to help fund bringing in a commercial helicopter to search for a day and a young lad who offered £500 of his grandmother's legacy money to pay for night vision equipment in the search.

Jasper's owner Adam spent each day searching the fells, following up many sightings of collies in quite far afield locations with no success. Groups of volunteers wishing to help were coordinated by a member of the public with some knowledge of dog behaviours when they become lost.

Were mountain rescue search teams asked to help? Wasdale was asked but we carefully declined — although we did offer to pass messages to our team members to look out for Jasper when out and about, something we've done in the past and would continue to do as a team.

It was on the third or fourth day that an experienced mountaineer from Carlisle set out from Seathwaite at 10.30 pm to search the tops, following a reported sighting. As a dog lover who'd recently lost his own family pet, he didn't want Jasper's owner to go through the same trauma. He was therefore motivated to go out that same night with a pretty foul weather forecast and below freezing conditions expected. Fortunately he did find Jasper at around 2.30 am, but only when his powerful torch beam was reflected in the dog's eyes, and knowing the difference between reflected light in sheep's eyes compared to a dog's.

In fact, Jasper was extremely well hidden, tucked in behind a pile of boulders on the remote northern edge of Broad Crag and off the beaten track. He was frightened, hungry, thirsty, exhausted and had injured his paws. Coaxing Jasper down with food didn't work. And due to the difficult ground with loose boulders covered in ice, it soon became clear that carrying Jasper could end with the mountaineer falling and getting injured so he decided — after a great deal of soul searching — to dial '999' and request help.

The team were called out by Cumbria Police, with pagers going off at 3.00 am, asking for volunteers to bring down an injured dog [Jasper]. Seven team members were involved with five on the fell. On our ascent, an unexpected slip on a patch of ice at 750 metres was a timely realisation that conditions for the carry down could be a bit of a challenge. Jasper and his finder were eventually located at 900 metres in difficult weather with low cloud, poor visibility, high winds, some rain and freezing conditions.

Only when Jasper and his owner were safely back at base did we appreciate the power of social media. Prior to the find we were aware of reports of well over 500,000 people following the story. To help raise funds for the team, Jasper's owner set up a Justgiving page at the rescue base, in-between the numerous telephone calls coming in from the press. Immediately the page went live, donations streamed in. Our expectation of a few thousand pounds was overtaken within the first hour. By day three we'd hit £20,000. After seven days the total donated by over 5,000 kind people had topped £51,500 with an additional £11,500 in Gift Aid. There were also donations to the team's own Justgiving page.

STATISTICS:

- Total received: £63,000.
- Total views on team's Facebook post regarding Jasper: over 100,000 with over 8,000 likes.
- Supportive comments on Facebook: over 300.
- Negative comments: 3
- Tweets and retweets: too many to count!

POSITIVES:

- Good PR for the team with numerous comments regarding the volunteer nature of mountain rescue.
- Over £63,000 raised, plus related donations via different routes.
- Raised profile of MR generally.
- Boosted team morale.
- Wasdale now has an extra 350 followers on Twitter.
- Demonstrated that Twitter and Facebook are far more useful for raising profiles than just a standard team website.

NEGATIVES:

- Potential pressure on emergency services to request volunteer teams to look for animals, and indeed people (eg. the request from North Wales Police for an MREW search manager to assist in leading the search for a missing British walker in Crete. This request came from pressure

on the Government after a similar social media campaign.

- The potential of hundreds of inexperienced people going into hazardous environments to help search. Who looks after the

know who it will reach and it is definitely a useful way of interacting with journalists.

- Having both Twitter and Facebook, used sensibly, can maximise your reach and

It soon became clear that carrying Jasper could end with the mountaineer falling and getting injured so he decided – after a great deal of soul searching – to dial '999' and request help.

volunteers and who rescues them when they get into trouble? In Jasper's case we were fortunate in that the person who found Jasper was an experienced mountaineer.

KEY LEARNING:

- Do not underestimate the power of social media.
- Social media is an extremely valuable tool in your PR and fundraising toolbox — you never

potential donations. But remember to include links to web pages to make this easy.

- Trending can occur in the mountain rescue situation so be cautious in its use, making sure any trending is beneficial to your team.
- Finally, make the most of images — shots of a happy collie, our rescue and the team by the vehicle, all helped the social media flow. ■



At the team's AGM in November, Wasdale team members welcomed Adam and Jasper, who handed over a cheque for £63,000. Chairman John Bamforth pledged that the 'truly fantastic sum of money' would be spent wisely, contributing towards the team's ongoing new base appeal.

MID PENNINE

£10,000 FUNDING FOR ROSSENDALE & PENDLE THANKS TO YORKSHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY



The team was unveiled as a winner in December, thanks to a £150,000 cash giveaway that was set up to leave a lasting legacy in local communities. The Yorkshire Building Society pledged the donation during its 150th anniversary year and the team, based in Lancashire, was one of fifteen chosen by members of the public to receive the cash boost. More than 600 charities had applied to the society's Lasting Legacy Fund before 30 were put forward to a public vote. The team plans to use the cash to upgrade medical treatment equipment such as splints, medical bags and stretchers.

CALDER VALLEY CHAIRMAN CLOCKS UP 40 YEARS SERVICE

A monthly vehicles and kit maintenance evening in November marked 40 years of unbroken service with the team for Pete Farnell, who joined the team as a young 20-year-old. Through the years, he's held many key roles, from radio officer to team leader and now chairman. Most recently, he is also a SARDA handler with Meg, his trusty sidekick. Forty years service requires not just a considerable amount of time and commitment but also a very understanding family, so it was the team's pleasure to welcome Pete's wife Anne and their son Joe to the evening. Mountain rescue clearly runs in the



Pete Farnell with wife Anne and son Joe.



OFFERED FOR SALE TO A SUITABLE HOME. ONE CAREFUL OWNER

In their push to replace their old mobile control vehicle, Buxton team are offering it up for sale — preferably to a deserving mountain, cave or ALSAR team. The Ford Transit vehicle was bought new by the team in April 2003 and served as a minibus for several years before conversion into a mobile ops control in 2010. It is offered for sale with many extras on board including three Icom radios, a Webasto space heater and a Transvend water boiler, internal and external scene lighting all round with a twin batteries and split charge system to allow for on base stand-by charging. It can carry eight people and has a full blue light package. There is also plenty of room for rescue kit secured in a rear cage and a stretcher can be carried internally. There are currently 27,500 miles on the clock with a full service history maintained by Derbyshire County Council. The engine is a 2,400cc diesel with a registered gross vehicle weight of 3,500 kg and therefore drivable on a standard driving licence. The vehicle will become available in March or April 2015 when the team will replace it with a similar vehicle, with 4 x 4 capability. The trustees are not permitted to give the vehicle away but have agreed to accept a reasonable offer which reflects the extras fitted to the vehicle from any voluntary organisation with similar aims to those of mountain rescue. Private offers will not be accepted.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE EMAIL ENQUIRIES@BUXTONMRT.ORG.UK.

PEAK DISTRICT

BIG LOTTERY FUND: BIG DONATION!

Buxton team members received an early Christmas present from the Big Lottery Fund in December, when they heard they had been successful in their bid for a £10,000 grant from the National Lottery. The donation is a welcome contribution to the team's year-long appeal to raise £50,000 for the replacement of a specialist vehicle. Peter Farrer, the team's fundraising officer, said, 'This is marvellous news at a time when income to the appeal was slowing down. We're grateful for the grant which means the new incident control vehicle should be on the road in spring. 'The people of Buxton have been magnificent in their support for the team's appeal throughout the year but it was feared that the launch of the vehicle may have to be delayed while waiting for more

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TEAMS AND CASUALTIES IN THE LAKE DISTRICT, LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE BENEFIT THANKS TO LIFE-SAVING DONATIONS FROM ROTARY CUMBRIA AND LANCASHIRE

The community organisation has provided a huge boost to teams and casualties with the provision of life-saving equipment.

In December, Kevin Walsh, former district governor for Rotary Cumbria and Lancashire, handed over two Autopulses and a lightweight Propaq monitor as part of £15,000-worth package of equipment, to Lakes team representatives gathered at Kendal base. And in October, a similar handover (this time of defibrillators) took place at Bowland Pennine team base involving members of the Lancashire team, colleagues from Rossendale & Pendle and Bolton, and the Cave Rescue Organisation in Clapham.

The AutoPulse provides automated cardio-pulmonary resuscitation to patients, which

means the procedure can be continued while the person is being stretched or winched into a helicopter when it would be impossible to carry out manually.

There are now seven AutoPulse units available to teams in the Lakes and two have already been used in rescue situations. The donation will make a big difference to the teams' ability to increase a casualty's chance of survival if their heart stops when severely hypothermic, or in the event of prolonged resuscitation where helicopter evacuation is impossible due to adverse weather conditions.

Dr Stuart Allan, Kendal team

RIGHT: MEMBERS OF BOWLAND PENNINE AND ROSSENDALE & PENDLE TEAMS WITH KEVIN WALSH FROM ROTARY CUMBRIA AND LANCASHIRE.



FAR LEFT: FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, RICHARD WARREN, TIM FARRON, LES GORDON (LANGDALE AMBLESIDE), DAVID BINKS (DUDDON AND FURNESS), KEVIN WALSH, MIKE GULLEN (WASDALE) AND PENNY KIRBY (WASDALE). LEFT: MAX MODELS THE AUTOPULSE.

doctor, sees it as a tremendous step forwards in the management of severely hypothermic patients in the mountain environment, and 'yet another area where teams are increasingly working together and supporting each other in providing life-saving casualty care.'

The donation follows many months of planning, fundraising and discussion for Rotary Cumbria and Lancashire. 'Rotarians are keen to take action in our communities and this project is a great example of how we can respond to identified

needs and make a real difference' said Kevin. 'While we would all prefer that this equipment were not needed, the more we can make available in our communities the more lives can be saved.'

The £65,000 package of donations, which also included community public-access defibs and funding for health fairs, attracted match-funding from the Rotary Foundation, the movement's international charity body, and donations from Rotary colleagues in Saitama, Japan; Bangalore, India, and south-east Scotland.



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to Lantra Certification and preparation for B+E test. Our certificated courses meet the nationally recognised standards of PUWER – the provision of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. Our practical hands-on courses are run by our team of friendly experienced instructors, at our purpose-built centre. Based on the beautiful 1400 acre Coniston Estate, we've a mix of man-made obstacles and

natural terrain meaning you will leave us having experienced best practice in off-road driving first hand. Our vehicle fleet includes all Land Rover and Range Rover

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BRIDGEDALE IS SOCKING IT TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Bridgedale has been supporting the Lake District teams with free socks for over a year and this autumn's Gathering in Scotland saw that generosity extended UK-wide with 21 more teams now benefiting from the firm's generosity.

'We started out with an offer of four pairs of hiking socks per person to our local Kendal team in early 2013,' explains Chris Gordon, the product manager at Bridgedale, who is based at Burton-in-Kendal near Carnforth. 'As part of producing our socks, we also knit some which are cosmetically imperfect and not processed for sale, but they function perfectly well. We saw the connection to mountain rescue as a great opportunity to support the vital work of the rescue teams and to put the imperfect socks to good use.'

As the offer was extended to all the Lakes teams, Bridgedale was donating nearly 2500 pairs of socks per annum (that's four pairs, two lightweight and two heavier weight, per person, per year). That total is now up to nearly 5000 pairs of socks donated to mountain rescuers in 2014, with Chris extending the offer to the Peak District teams as part of the region's 50-year celebrations. 'The Buxton, Glossop and Kinder teams all picked up on the offer in Scotland,' he says, 'which has given us the contacts to extend the offer to other Peak District teams for the year ahead.'

Bridgedale celebrated anniversaries of its own in 2014 with a heritage that stretches back a hundred years and promotions to mark the provision of Blaxnit socks to soldiers at the beginning of World War One.

The Gathering also put Bridgedale in touch with other teams right across the UK. In January, Chris reported that the company was just one team away from having 50% of the UK teams covered, which he hopes will easily be surpassed this year, adding, 'We would encourage teams interested in this offer to get in touch via info@bridgedale.com'.



Chris Gordon of Bridgedale © Solly Seed.

cash. Now the appeal is back on target and we can place orders for the technical equipment to be carried on board. We just need a final funding push for the vehicle to be available for call-outs from April onwards.'

The new vehicle will replace the current mobile control room which is now eleven years old and a veteran of more than 400 call-outs. The new vehicle will have dual roles. As an ambulance, it will be able to carry a patient and, with 4 x 4 capability, will be able to assist the ambulance services in times of bad weather. As an incident control room, it will have the latest comms equipment, computerised mapping and search management software. In either role the vehicle will be a great bonus to the team which attends around 80 incidents each year.

NORTH EAST

ROYAL REWARD FOR LOCAL INNOVATION

Scarborough & Ryedale team were one of three Yorkshire community groups to have their coffers boosted in October, each receiving a share of an £8,000 pot distributed by the Duke of York's

'I take my hat off to you for all the good works you do... you know how to make a difference.'



The Duke of York with Ian Hugill © Simon Kench/DOYCI.

Community Initiative's Innovation Fund. The presentations were made at an award ceremony held at the Magna Science and Adventure Centre in Rotherham.

Prior to the presentations, representatives of 43 community groups from across Yorkshire were

next page

GET THE EXCLUSIVE QUEST ORIGINS AND QUEST 2 BOOTS FROM COTSWOLD

COTSWOLD
outdoor

Whether you're being battered by ice or pummelled by rock, it's good to know your boots will stand up to whatever the outdoors can throw at them. For over 66 years, Salomon has been creating hiking footwear for every level of outdoor enthusiast. Born in the French Alps in 1947, the company and its people have continued to soak up knowledge and test new ideas to forge one of the most advanced footwear ranges on the planet. Their latest Quest Origins and Quest 2 boots combine trail running fit and stability with Gore-tex® technology for maximum comfort and protection on multi-day hiking adventures.

The Quest Origins boot recaptures the rock solid performance of the very first Quest boots. The full grain leather finish provides superior strength and durability while the leather tongue and red laces provide a striking aesthetic. The boot incorporates a Gore-tex membrane to provide innovative waterproof protection in any weather. The Contagrip® outsole is designed to provide maximum traction, stability and durability in all types of terrain – whether slippery rock or gravel slope.

The Quest 2 boot is the next generation in a line of pioneering hiking boots and ideal for conquering almost any terrain. Add this to the same features as the Quest Origins boot: an ergonomic tongue for improved comfort, 4D chassis, Sensifit™ foot support technology, Contagrip outsole and the Gore-tex membrane. All of this technology is rounded off with a matt-finish 4D chassis and a premium cuff lining for a stylish look.

With our free in-store boot fitting service, our expert team of staff will be able to give you the very best fit possible.

VISIT COTSWOLD OUTDOOR TODAY FOR OUR EXCLUSIVE QUEST ORIGINS AND QUEST 2 RANGE OR VISIT WWW.COTSWOLDOUTDOOR.COM.

introduced to HRH The Duke of York. Paying tribute to the work they do he said, 'I take my hat off to you for all the good works you do... you know how to make a difference.'

Next year, the team celebrate 50 years since their formation as Scarborough and District SRT and they have never been busier. Receiving the award on behalf of the team, Ian Hugill reported that the money would go towards the provision of PPE and water rescue equipment for the team's swiftwater flood rescue technicians and water first responders.

NORTH WALES

TEAMS NOW FULLY OPERATIONAL WITH ICOM GPS-ENABLED RADIOS

In July, the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association took delivery of Icom GPS mics that allowed teams to return to GPS tracking, via MRMap. The Icom F51V handsets and GPS mics are fully waterproof (IP67) and bases and vehicles have the F5062 mobile units. All that is required is a simple software update of the standard radios. Working closely with Icom and Dave Binks, the

Icom radios can now be polled by MRMap and report their positions to the system in a similar way to other GPS radios. This has been a major replacement project for the region thanks to the persistence, technical work and support given by Paul Smith (NWMRA) and Dave Binks. For further details, contact comms@nwmra.org.

ISUZU D-MAX FOR ABERGLASLYN

The Aberglaslyn team became proud owners of a new vehicle in November, replacing one of the existing Land Rovers. The 36-strong Porthmadog-based team are the youngest in the North Wales region, and the Isuzu is the first brand new vehicle in their eighteen-year history. In fact, it's the only vehicle they've procured in over ten years.

Sadly the vehicle's predecessor, a 1996 Land Rover Defender suffered a catastrophic gearbox failure in the summer. A mammoth appeal raised £21,000

towards the commissioning of a new vehicle, which was sourced and supplied with the help of RJ. A significant donation was also received from Robertson International, based at Llandudno.

The North Wales Police Commissioning Centre at Deeside prepared the vehicle for mountain rescue purposes, including fitting the latest emergency warning equipment and a custom racking system which is easily accessed via the gullwing canopy. A sliding tray which moves the entire floor of the load bay out to the rear ensures maximum use of space. Gethin Edwards, team secretary said, 'The new vehicle is a significant milestone for us, and will significantly improve our level of service. It's the result of many months of hard work, and testament to the generosity of our sponsors and those who have worked tirelessly to make the project possible. The new vehicle will undoubtedly serve the team and the region well for years to come.'



AN EVENING OF THANK YOUS IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

October saw a glamorous gathering of rescue services from across North Yorkshire, at the Tennant's Auction Centre in Leyburn, hosted by North Yorkshire Police. **Sally Seed** reports.

The event, organised by PC Jon Rushton, was an opportunity for Dave Jones, Chief Constable, and Julia Mulligan, Police and Crime Commissioner, to recognise the 'professional, dedicated and tireless assistance to the search effort in North Yorkshire and beyond' of the five teams active in North Yorkshire.

One surprise was the donation of £4000 to each team from the North Yorkshire Police charity fund — £1000 as a thank you for their support during the Tour de France events and £3000 towards funds. ACC Paul Kennedy of North Yorkshire Police, and president of NESRA, said, 'I am extremely proud of my links with NESRA. The donation from the North Yorkshire Police Charity Fund recognises the contribution made and time given by the

volunteers who keep these vital organisations running. I'd like to thank each and every one of them for their work.

'The donation to each team was a surprise,' said Ian Hugill, who was also involved in organising the evening. 'We've now held four of these dinners and the thanks and recognition from the police is much appreciated, as well as all the support we get from Jon Rushton. To receive a large donation recognising each team's work was brilliant.'

The five teams — CRO, Cleveland, Scarborough & Ryedale, Swaledale and Upper Wharfedale — were represented at the dinner along with some of their supporters, the Air Ambulance and RAF rescue, the emergency services, both the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire and the previous

Lord Lieutenant, MREW and the North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales national park authorities.

Two brief speeches were made by individuals who have been rescued in North Yorkshire. Tom Kiernan spoke, with his friend David Harper, about his rescue from a mine in Swaledale and Jane Way talked about her rescue by the Upper Wharfedale team after a fall that seriously injured her arm and shoulder.

Mike France, chairman of MREW, made a presentation to representatives of the RAF crews in the north east. 'It was an honour to present RAF E flight 202 squadron with a certificate of thanks for the support they've given mountain rescue over the years. And it was an opportunity for me to thank the RAF and Royal Navy crews

from the many other bases for helping us in the rescue of many, many people over the years. It's fair to say, without that help, some people are with us today who wouldn't be otherwise.'

As well as presentations to the teams, Barry Dodd, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire presented five awards to individual members. 'It makes me feel very humble,' he said, 'to hear about the commitment and hours put in by these rescue volunteers. It is hard not to be impressed when you hear about people with 20, 30 or more years of such service.'

That commitment was perhaps summed up best by Chief Constable Dave Jones when he described rescuers as 'modern day heroes who walk towards harm.' ■



MASS INCIDENCE OF EXPOSURE STRIKES ABERDYFI

Members of the Aberdyfi team have plenty of experience of the Welsh mountains in poor weather. And – like any other team – they're more often to be found swaddled up in state-of-the-art clothing to keep themselves warm and dry. So what on earth prompted them to bare all in the wind and rain?

It was all down to Rummings, a popular bar in Aberystwyth, which started raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support five years ago. To date, they have raised over £18,000 with their tasteful calendar nudity but they hope to break the £20,000 mark with their 2015 Macmillan Naked Calendar, launched in November. Bar owner Huw Roberts said, 'Each year the bar takes on a theme and for 2015 we're marking the great effort the emergency services provide in the town. We are proud of this year's calendar and have only achieved this with the kind support of our staff, customers and friends.'

Team member Graham O'Hanlon took part in the photo-shoot. 'When Rummings first contacted us it seemed an unusual concept for one charity to be fundraising for another. We kicked the idea around a bit and in the end decided to give it a go. Like any section of the community, the lives of many team members have been touched by cancer, and we were pleased to be able to do our bit to support Macmillan. Responses from team members ranged from 'Let's get naked now!' to hastily arranged trips out of town, but in the end a hardy handful braved the poor weather for this great photo.'



NORTH WALES

AND SPEAKING OF CALENDARS...

This issue's stunning cover shot is just one of a selection of stunners in Calder Valley's 2015 calendar, still available for just £6 +£2 p&p from fundraising@cvsrf.org.uk.



SOUTH WALES



Last summer saw Penny Brockman, who is MREW treasurer and leader of the Central Beacons team, picking up a prestigious award for her work in mountain rescue.

'HIGHLY COMMENDED' BUSINESS AWARD FOR PENNY

The Institute of Directors Wales 2014 Award for a director in a social enterprise or voluntary organisation recognised Penny's work with mountain rescue, especially her commitment to the national organisation.

'I'm just coming to the end of my tenth year as national treasurer,' said Penny, 'but I've been involved with mountain rescue since joining Central Beacons MRT in 1986 and I've been operational team leader for three years. To have my work in the voluntary sector recognised by the Institute of Directors is much appreciated and it was particularly good to be able to reinforce the voluntary nature of search and rescue in front of such an influential business community at the awards ceremony.'

This was the second such award for Penny — earlier in 2014, she had been awarded Social Enterprise Director of the year, another significant achievement. Both attract Britain's top business talents, recognising their contribution and excellence in leadership. Belatedly celebrated here in the magazine, but well done, Penny!

SOUTH WEST

PLYMOUTH TEAM LOSES OUT IN BID FOR PIONEERING RESCUE DRONE

During November, Dartmoor SRT Plymouth competed with other local worthy causes to receive £50k funding for a commercial drone. The project, named 'Rescue Drone' identified that their use in SAR operations would enable the team to locate casualties more quickly and effectively, thereby saving lives. But, despite great local support and primetime TV promotion, the bid failed, losing out to a local community centre.

'We were hugely disappointed,' said project leader and team trustee Roger Hyde. 'but also grateful to those who had supported the project, in particular the proposed drone supplier, Resource Training, the team's principal partner Plymouth University, local emergency services and also a branch of the military recently returned from drone operations in Afghanistan who had offered support for the project and ongoing training'.

The £50k costs would have paid for not only the unit and requisite insurance, but also the commercial training and qualifying of five drone pilots within the team, ensuring all practical and legal rules were understood and followed. The military connection was an opportunity to integrate their additional tactical SAR knowledge, with the practical CAA requisite training.

Having worked and developed SOPs with similar drones in a commercial capacity for an international disaster response non-profit several years ago, Roger has direct experience of seeing the drones in action in remote and hostile areas. During the TV filming for the campaign, many team members saw the drone in action and, without exception, were excited about the potential of drones in the UK SAR environment.

Jonathan Benzie, one of the team search managers commented that looking back on the previous year of searches conducted by the team, the drone could have been deployed on half of them.

'The use of a drone will significantly enhance our capabilities when searching for missing or vulnerable people. The drone can search an area of ground faster than the traditional foot teams — probably equivalent to two search teams on the ground. The night vision camera is a particular benefit as many of our searches are at night and we are limited to what we can see with torches. This would greatly increase our field of vision.'

'The drone also allows us to search dangerous areas like quarries, crag faces and river valleys that may be difficult or dangerous for foot teams to search. Furthermore, we often require the services of a helicopter and the drone can provide similar capabilities, reducing the cost to the taxpayer. 'I am convinced that, by having the drone as part of our search capability, we could find missing people and bring them back to safety faster.'

Projects like Sky Watch in Northern Ireland are doing a great job of pioneering their use within the UK with local search teams and emergency services. It is only a matter of time before a UK team has the units themselves with qualified personnel embedded who could deploy the units on any search or training exercise. As the private and commercial use of drones increases exponentially, their practical, life-saving application during SAR needs to be considered as statutory legislation is considered and parliament debates their use. The team is now seeking alternative sources of funds.



INTERNET CONNECTION IN REMOTE LOCATIONS

With the increasing use of SARLOC, SARCALL and ViewRanger (BuddyBeacon), and the clear advantage of being able to connect MRMap to its servers, the availability of an internet connection to search managers is pretty key — relatively easy when teams are managed from a fixed location, such as a rescue centre or police station, but more challenging with mobile control vehicles. James Grant, ICT officer for Dartmoor Rescue Group (DRG) explains how the teams are looking to solve the problem.

'Search and rescue on Dartmoor and the surrounding areas is undertaken by the four teams that comprise DRG. Almost all call-outs involve deploying a control vehicle to an RV point, usually somewhere on Dartmoor, where there is sufficient parking for team members and from where a misper search or casualty recovery can be undertaken most conveniently. The only options for internet connection appear to be satellite or the cellular phone network, unless an opportunity exists to piggyback on a third party's wi-fi. Within the Dartmoor National Park boundary, however, only one mobile phone mast has been allowed and all service providers have their aerials at various heights on the FM broadcast radio mast at North Hessary Tor. Consequently, only a G2 (GPRS) data signal is available over most of the moor and there are many areas with no mobile signal. Better reception is available, of course, on the edges of the moor from masts outside the national park boundary.'

'Ashburton, Okehampton and Tavistock teams have opted to use the cellular phone networks to connect their control vehicles while Plymouth is currently planning to use the more expensive but potentially more reliable satellite approach. Ashburton, Okehampton and Tavistock use the same roaming SIM and external cellular aerial but

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AIR SPRUNG CELLS FOR THE PERFECT PLATFORM

Sea to Summit has come up with the sleeping mat equivalent of the pocket-sprung luxury: Air Sprung Cells. Under load, each cell deforms independently, conforming to your body shape, providing more contact area and thus an even dispersion of pressure. Air Sprung Cells differ from the traditional baffle construction of other air mats

on the market because they are constructed using a dot-weld pattern, creating a high surface area matrix of interconnected chambers! But Air Sprung Cells are just the beginning! Depending upon the model you choose, they come as a single layer or dual, independently-inflated layers. Single layer mats are

aimed at the weight conscious but still comfy and warm. A dual layer not only doubles up on comfort and warmth, but also you can fine tune the amount of air in either layer to perfect your sleeping platform. The mats all have the new Multi-Function Valve which inflates the mat with ease, deflates rapidly and even fine

tunes for comfort. They can be inflated with the optional Jet Stream smart pump or, if you want to travel super light, simply by mouth. Retail prices between £74.99 – £164.99, available from March.

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OBITUARIES

Bryan Snowden

Bryan Snowden, a founder member of Cleveland MRT, was described as having been the 'heart and soul of the team' for forty years. He died in November, aged 80.



Close friend and former team member, Ged Bishop described Bryan as a man who loved the outdoors and did a lot of walking and climbing from a young age. Bryan, he said, would describe himself as 'curmudgeonly', but he had a very clear sense of right and wrong. 'He was a free spirit with a mischievous sense of fun and a ready remark to calm things down.'

Born in Darlington, then educated at Yarm School, Bryan went to Leeds University to train as a history teacher but it was always clear that his real love was the outdoors and, after university, he became a national park warden in North Yorkshire.

In 1965, a group of wardens, realising that the increasing popular Lyke

Wake Walk was causing problems with lost and injured walkers, formed the North York Moors rescue teams with Cleveland MRT covering the northern part and Scarborough and Ryedale MRT the south.

Over the four decades he was involved with the team, Bryan was involved in every aspect of its activities. He served as call-out officer and secretary for the first twenty years and was instrumental in developing the team from a group of well-meaning enthusiasts using personal Land Rovers and secondhand equipment to the well-equipped, highly trained team it is today.

In the early days, he also coordinated with the other embryonic North East teams, helping set

up NESRA, which he chaired for many years.

He was involved in hundreds of rescues over the years. The moorland fires of 1976 and other years were perhaps the most taxing in terms of time, with the team out every other night for two weeks armed with beaters. The Lockerbie air disaster in December 1988 was the most harrowing, as Bryan and the team were called to search the Kielder area for debris, most of which turned out to be personal items.

In 1972, he married primary school teacher Jan who he'd met through teaching and their common love of the outdoors, a love they continued to share, until ill-health gradually took its toll on Bryan. Increasing

ill-health finally forced him to step down as an active team member in the 1990s but he continued to serve the team, coordinating fundraising and acting as a vice president. For his services to mountain rescue, Bryan was recognised with a Distinguished Service Award from MREW in 1990 and a Long Service Award in 2000.

His funeral took place at St Bede's Chapel in Acklam, attended by many members of the team, both past and present — including one who flew over from Austria — alongside his teaching colleagues, family and friends.

Above: Bryan (left) receiving his Long Service Award from Lord Craithorne.



Martin Willey

The air ambulance, land ambulance and first responders were already on scene when the team arrived but nothing could be done. It was an emotional scene and we said some words of thanks in the woods where he lay before carrying him down in our usual professional manner and comforting his partner Carol as best we could.

At the tender age of seventeen, Martin was a founder member of the Wyndham Search Team that, in 1968, became the team we have today. He seemed ageless: in fact, he was 63 and, having spent 46 years in MR, was just about coming to terms with standing down from team activities and spending more time in the camper van.

He worked on the

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway (the Ratty) and often bore the marks of working there, grease ingrained in his hands and soot on his face. Carol said he'd had a disjointed education. Eventually, the rebel in the Martin we knew took over and he left school famously saying that the only useful thing he'd learned was how to climb.

Over the years he put a lot of effort into the team particularly the vehicles and buildings. My first encounter with him was during my interview, eighteen years ago. All I can remember of him, whilst trying to give coherent answers to testing questions, was thinking how delicious his fish and chips must have been as he emptied the paper wrapping in short order. Who can forget,

also, that greasy sandwich box or the largest bars of chocolate you've ever seen, which he always seemed to have.

A good friend, Bert Jenkins said of him, 'He loved jokes and the humour of life and shared them all with our little group, commenting, perhaps after some story of persistent bad luck, 'Ah well, all part of life's rich tapestry'.

'I saw him reflective; I saw him thoughtful; I never saw him sad. He didn't drink and our group, given to the odd pint of something cask-conditioned at the end of the day, welcomed his services as designated driver. We had a standard line when it was his round, 'Hey Martin, there's something wrong with this glass, it's gone kinda

clear and transparent', and he'd pick it up, say 'Looks like a perfectly good glass to me...' and go for refills. He had a way with people and perhaps all it consisted in was the ability to arouse the charitable instinct.'

On that Saturday in October, we vainly tried to rationalise the situation and thought, if he was going to go, then this would have been the way he'd have wanted it. He was chopping wood, which he loved to do, having a crack with a mate, within earshot and sight of the Ratty. Fortunately, it was swift — he would have hated hospital.

He was one of life's great characters and we will thoroughly miss him. Our thoughts are with his partner and his family.

regional News

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Okehampton has chosen a modem from a different manufacturer.

'The heart of the Ashburton/Tavistock systems is a 434T WiFi 3G modem router which, in addition to four ethernet ports, has a PSTN port which allows a standard telephone to be connected. Ashburton connect the router to their search management PC using one of the ethernet ports, while Tavistock makes use of the router's wi-fi signal to connect to its search management laptops.

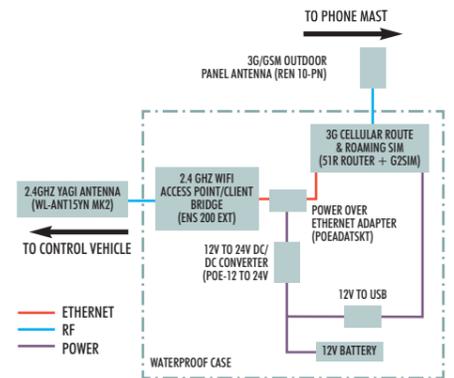
'The routers are connected to an omnidirectional A0121 external aerial offering a claimed 5dB of gain. The 434T router and A0121 aerial were provided by Solwise (solwise.co.uk). To access the mobile phone networks at a cost acceptable to them, the three teams use a pay-as-you-go network roaming SIM card, provided by Gould Electronics (g2sim.co.uk). To date, Tavistock's experience with the A0121 external aerial (mounted on a hinged two metre aluminium mast) and the g2sim is that a cellular signal is received and MRMap connects to its servers at RVs where an ordinary mobile phone detects no service.

'One of the attractions of the Ashburton/Okehampton/Tavistock approach is that the roaming SIM allows internet connection while the control vehicle is being deployed. Having initiated a call-out using SARCALL, a search manager can

lose visibility of team members' responses until internet connection is re-established at the RV. Tavistock's experience is that internet connection using the roaming SIM is adequate to keep a laptop or tablet updated with SARCALL responses as the control vehicle deploys, even with the cellular aerial clipped down in its travelling configuration. Thus the search manager has an up-to-date statement of team members' availability on arrival at the RV.

'Trials at different RVs continue but the feasibility of building a cellular/wi-fi repeater has been discussed with Paul Stephenson of Solwise. If needed at an RV with no cellular signal, the repeater would be deployed to an elevated location (on a hillside, for example) offering line-of-sight to both a mobile phone mast and the control vehicle. The link between the mast and the repeater would be cellular while the repeater to control vehicle link would use wi-fi technology. The schematic in Figure 1 embodies the principle using components available from Solwise. A relatively small capacity lead-acid battery would satisfy the modest RF powers involved so such a repeater would be highly portable compared with the portable VHF repeaters currently used.

'To receive the wi-fi signal at the control vehicle, another access point/client bridge would be used. This would be mounted on the roof of the control



vehicle and would be trainable in the direction of the repeater. It is envisaged that the 8dB of built-in antenna gain provided by the ENS200 would be sufficient for this application. The connection components between access point/client bridge and the existing control vehicle's 434T modem router would be as shown in Figure 1.

'As yet, the operational need to build the repeater has yet to be justified... which is a pity as it would be good fun to get it up and running!'



Jacquie Howell

It was with deep sadness that the Oldham team heard of the death of Jacquie Howell, the team's volunteer Bulletin Editor, who passed away after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Mick Neild pays tribute to a remarkable woman and team supporter.

Jacquie's first Bulletin was in March 2011 and, even though she was fighting her own personal battles she still volunteered to help the team. She was a selfless and gentle lady who inspired many. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jacquie's family and loved ones.

Jean Betteridge, her friend and colleague, said, 'When Jacquie volunteered to edit the OMRT Bulletin, wanting to put her writing and design skills to a positive use, she found a team that she loved and wholeheartedly

supported until her death this June. Although she said 'No climbing up mountains for me', OMRT chimed with her life and values.

'Her Oldham roots ran deep, born and living almost all her life here. A keen gardener, she loved green spaces, the plants, birds and wildlife found there. Most of all, her working life was spent in services (Citizens Advice, Manchester Advice, Advice UK) that aided people in difficulties, no matter who they were. At work she combined

technical expertise with brilliant people skills: highly organised, she got the job done.

'She valued OMRT for the very same qualities. She was a great team worker, so she recognised a great team when she saw it. 'Quietly spoken and unassuming, Jacquie was lovely company, such fun, with her wickedly funny, offbeat sense of humour and inspired ideas. She lived the five years of her illness with courage, honesty, fortitude and grace, without self-pity. Caring and generous, she

dearly loved her parents, her sister and two brothers, her nieces and nephews, and she had a remarkable gift for friendship. She said her friends were an inspiration to her, but she was an inspiration to us all'.

This year has been a difficult one for the Oldham team, first with Phil Beard's accident, then the loss of Jim Duffy, followed just a few weeks later with the loss of Jacquie.

She had come to the team back in 2011 after we placed an advert with Oldham Voluntary Services, looking for

someone to take over from Trish as editor of our newsletter. It's hard to say what went through her mind at her first team meeting — to say the least we are an odd mix of characters, but over the last few years she fitted in perfectly. Her dedication and attention to detail was fantastic and just what we needed. It's not easy getting our lot to put pen to paper (a bit like pushing water up hill) but Jacquie had her methods and edited ten issues of the Bulletin for which we are truly grateful.

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incidents

figures

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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	21	Cleveland	15	Derby	9	CRO	24
Coniston	9	North of Tyne	2	Edale	26	Upper Wharfedale	8
Duddon and Furness	11	Northumberland NP	2	Glossop	10	(Previous quarter: 22)	32
Kendal	9	Scarborough & Ryedale	20	Kinder	9	Search Dogs	
Keswick	42	Swaledale	6	Oldham	10	Lakes	5
Kirkby Stephen	8	Teasdale & Weardale	1	Woodhead	5	England	7
Langdale Ambleside	42	(Previous quarter: 18)	46	(Previous quarter: 57)	69	Wales	2
Patterdale	28	North Wales		Peninsula		South Wales	8
Penrith	10	Aberdyfi	5	Cornwall	8	(Previous quarter: 17)	22
Wasdale	18	Aberglaslyn	11	Dartmoor Ashburton	1	RAF	
(Previous quarter: 125)	198	Llanberis	51	Dartmoor Okehampton	3	Leeming	2
Mid-Pennine		North East Wales	5	Dartmoor Plymouth	1	Valley	2
Bolton	15	Ogwen Valley	28	(Previous quarter: 14)	13	(Previous quarter: 2)	4
Bowland Pennine	2	South Snowdonia	7	South Wales		Total	582
Calder Valley	11	(Previous quarter: 72)	107	Brecon	25	(Previous quarter: 417)	
Holme Valley	7			Central Beacons	15		
Rossendale & Pendle	3			Longtown	5		
(Previous quarter: 29)	38			Western Beacons	8		
				(Previous quarter: 57)	53		

real rescues

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OCTOBER: RESCUE OF A FALLEN CLIMBER TEMPORARILY CLOSES BRISTOL AIRPORT

Just 1.5km away from the end of the very busy main runway at Bristol International airport — not the most ideal location for a helicopter winch operation!

Avon and Somerset team had been called to rescue a fallen climber in Goblin Combe. He had fallen about twelve metres, landing on his head and his injuries were severe, possibly life threatening. After a quick brief from police, it was established that the incident was about 2km off the road up a track, and then a climb to the accident site. It was obvious that the best form of evacuation would be by helicopter. Working with SWAST paramedics and the HART team the casualty was stabilised and made ready for helicopter evacuation. Due to the mechanism of falling, this meant full spinal precautions were taken, in a kcd spine splint and vac mat. Communications throughout had been difficult, liaising

with HART, RAF and the airport, which was temporarily closed, whilst the winching took place, but finally the casualty was winched from the base of the cliff face and taken to Southmead hospital and the airport was reopened. The report received from the hospital was that the casualty had received severe scalp injuries but no actual skull injury. His left arm was broken in several places and he had sustained bruising down his left leg and hip. One very lucky man!



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SAR-H MIGRATION UPDATE DECEMBER 2014

JOHN HULSE & PHIL BENBOW

Since the migration work started in March 2014, the core SAR-H Migration Group consisting of Phil Benbow, Mike Park, Al Read and myself have worked very hard to establish a viable agreement for MREW team access to the new SAR-H aircraft. On 13 November, we concluded the negotiations with the MCA and Bristow to obtain a model for the training stages, the transition process, the single point of contact model and the steady-state training access. During this time we have been working very closely with Scottish Mountain Rescue as the two national organisations have similar challenges in the migration process.



This article will expand a little on the information that was given at the November meeting and flesh out some of the detail around the transition to Bristow helicopters and the new world in which we will begin to work from the turn of the year. We've come a long way in a comparatively short time, and managed to put some structure around the way we have traditionally worked with military helicopters over a long period of time. While acknowledging that we have always operated in a safe and professional way, when we came to look for evidence to support our discussions with the

MCA and Bristow around training and operational flying, it was a bit thin on the ground! Thankfully the SAR-H data that teams have been contributing to on SARCALL has helped immensely, as well as various other documents we've managed to find in dark and dusty corners!

As a group we took the view from early on that the transition would be a really good opportunity to not just find a way to work with new partners but also to set up a new helicopter training and operational regime that was fit for purpose and would take MR forward as an organisation into the foreseeable future — or at least for the next ten years!

So, to begin with training. The model we have agreed with the MCA and Bristow incorporates three stages and it's not a lot different from the training model most teams are familiar with.

TRAINING STAGES

We've broken the training down into three stages which are clearly defined: 1A, 1B and 1C, which generally align with the different

levels of interaction that MREW teams will have with SAR-H aircraft. Previously, teams recorded their helicopter training themselves and those records were mostly kept locally and, if we are honest, regional and national numbers were 'best guess'. Training records are clearly important and none more so than helicopter training. So just as there is now a structure around the training stages we now have the opportunity to accurately record both the training and operational interactions with the aircraft. This is essential for both Bristow and MR and a welcome step forward.

The details of the three stages which have been agreed are as follows.

STAGE 1A TRAINING

This is an online resource for individual team members and there will also be a DVD which will be available for group viewing. This stage is an introduction to the specific type of aircraft and is intended for team members who are likely to operate in close

proximity to helicopters. The resource includes:—

- **Helicopter capabilities:** generic and type specific.
- **Hazards** posed by lights, lasers, pyrotechnics, radio transmission devices.
- **Safety distances:** engine exhausts, rotors, radio, radar, disc entry/exit routes.
- **Downwash:** personnel, structural and equipment security, foreign object damage (FOD) and wind chill.
- **Noise** and static electricity.
- **Communication with aircrew:** radio, hand signals.
- **Managing the winch hook** and loads whilst on the ground and signalling hook clearance.

The SAR-H Migration Group strongly recommends that every team member completes this training stage every twelve months. We anticipate that the resources will become available from the end of January 2015.

STAGE 1B TRAINING

This stage is the cabin briefing with the aircraft on the ground. The training will be delivered by

the aircrew when the aircraft is at an MRT base or at the SAR-H base. The training is focused on MR team members who are likely to fly during operations and the topics include:—

- Key elements within the cabin.
- Stowage of equipment.
- Seating and the operation of safety belts and harness.
- Identification of the normal and emergency exits.
- Dealing with emergencies including the brace position.
- Moving within the cabin.
- Individual or dual strop winch to and from the aircraft.
- Managing the hook and any loads whilst on the ground and signalling hook clearance.

The SAR-H migration group recommends that team members complete this training stage every two to three years if they are likely to encounter SAR-H aircraft.

STAGE 1C TRAINING

This stage focuses on the training of MR team members in winch operations and is intended for those who will be operationally flying and then winched into or out of the aircraft. The training will be delivered by the aircrew when the aircraft is at an MRT base or at the SAR-H base. Those completing this stage will be competent to be lifted in a single lift strop and the training will include:—

- Single or dual strop winch to and from the aircraft.
 - Managing the hook and any loads whilst on the ground and signalling hook clearance.
 - Witness the demonstration of highline winching technique.
- Given the significant amount of time needed to complete this training stage, it is anticipated that the training will be initially focused on the operational team members of the MR teams who have the most SAR-H interaction requiring winch work.

Whilst all this is going on, we must not lose sight of the fact that there will still be Sea King aircraft tasked by the ARCC well into 2016, so it is still important for us to keep up our training on this aircraft. To help manage this process we would ask teams to move away a little from current practice — whereby team training officers generally sort out their

own local training — and ask you to work with your regional Single Point of Contact for the SAR-H transition (SPoC).

Most MR team members are familiar with the SPoC concept which we have adopted in order to make the transition as smooth and easy as we can but we've tweaked it slightly to make it more robust and to share the load a bit. So for us, our 'single point of contact' will actually be two people — but it works for us!

The regional SAR-H link reps or SPoCs are listed in the table above and their role will be to work closely with the chief pilot at each of the SAR-H bases. This has been agreed by Bristow and, in fact, is preferred by them as a way of working. Bearing in mind that we are not the only organisation that needs to train and become familiar with the new aircraft. This method will ensure that we remain at the forefront of a potentially very long list of other stakeholders. However, as there are fewer SAR-H bases than there are MREW regions, we have nominally 'homed' regions to specific bases as the table below shows. The table also shows the training and operational start dates for the bases as they come on line.

As we now move into the training and very soon live

operations with the new aircraft it is really important we establish good communication links with the chief pilot in each of the bases through the regional SPoCs, to make sure that in each region there is fair and equitable access and appropriate prioritisation of training for each of the region's teams. What really won't work is a situation where individual teams try to arrange their 'own deal', so please work with your regional SPoCs!

Just to make things a little more complicated — as if they aren't already — the Humberside base (the first to come on line with training starting in January, and Go-live for 1 April), has five regions 'homed' to it. Because all five regions could be potentially working the aircraft from 1 April, all their team members require training before that date! To help squeeze this quart into the proverbial pint pot, Mike Park will take on the role of SPoC — there is only one Mike Park! He will work with the five regional SPoCs to make sure this initial engagement gets off to a good start, then withdraw a few months after the Go-live date when everything is running smoothly!

Mike has been deeply involved in the SAR-H migration since March 2014 so is ideally positioned to actively manage the



transition phase. We feel that if we can get Humberside right then the rest of the bases should be relatively straightforward. At least that is our plan!

TRANSITION TRAINING

In the twelve weeks prior to Go-live of the new aircraft at each base, there will be a higher level

page 29

Region	SAR-H Reps	Base	Training Start	Operations Start
NESRA	Steve Glasper	Humberside	January 2015	April 2015
	Jason Blunsdon			
YDRP	Graham Hughes	Humberside	January 2015	April 2015
	Phil Nelson			
LDSAMRA	Chris Marsden	Humberside	January 2015	April 2015
	Simeon Leech			
MPSRO	Kev Camplin	Humberside	January 2015	April 2015
	Andy Haigh			
PDMRO	Martin Gorman	Humberside	January 2015	April 2015
	Phil Ridley			
NWMRA	Pauline Hallett	Caernarfon	April 2015	July 2015
	Iain Ashcroft			
SWSARA	Huw Jones	Cardiff	July 2015	October 2015
	Mike Lake			
SWERA	Alan George	Cardiff	July 2015	October 2015
	Pete Sadler			
PENMACRA	Alec Coyer	Newquay	October 2015	January 2016
	Roger King			

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mike@mountainrecreation.co.uk

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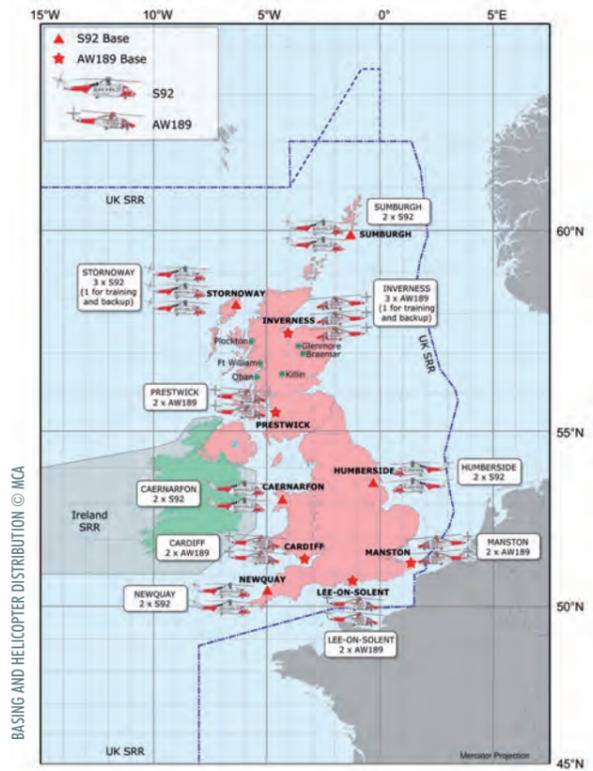
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of access for training and the objective is to work closely with the crews to get as much training completed as possible. Where possible, the aircraft will be in the regions to gain as much operational awareness as possible with the teams. The SPOC will work with teams to manage access to training. In January, the Humberside S-92 aircraft will start training with teams.

STEADY-STATE TRAINING

Once the SAR-H base is declared 'live', the aircraft will obviously be focused on

operational delivery and this means that training for teams will need to be carefully scheduled and organised. To gain the maximum possible training opportunities, the SPOC will organise exercise and training events on behalf of all the designated regions linked to the base. We ask that you support them in their work to manage the training on your behalf.

RECORDING SAR-H INTERACTIONS

It is essential that we continue to record all the training and operational interactions with the

SAR-H aircraft so we can measure the success of the transition to the new provider. The data is being captured in a survey form in SARCALL. Currently there are more than 440 SAR-H interactions in the database covering military, Helimed and police helicopter activities with teams in both operations and training. Please continue to provide data to the SAR-H survey so we can monitor the levels of engagement as we transition into the new provider. The data provided by these survey reports will be reviewed at national level every four months at our regular meetings with Bristow and the MCA to help determine the quality of the continuing service. At the moment from the database we have a very good picture of what our current service looks like. It will only be through this statistical information that we will be able to make sure the new service is providing the same or better service. So please continue to fill in the survey form on SARCALL. It really is the only way we can measure the performance of the new service.

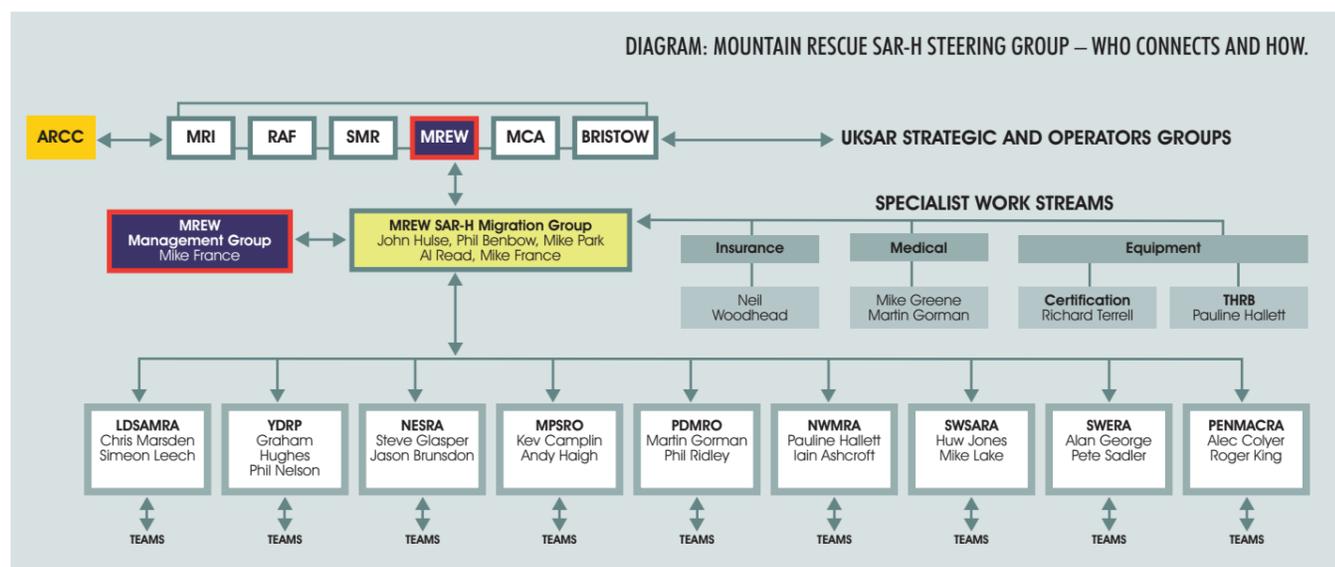
STRETCHERS

Unlike the military SAR-H environment, Bristow operates under CAA rules for certain operational areas including equipment. As such, Bristow currently requires stretchers for winching to be appropriately maintained, inspected and tested in accordance with the manufacturer recommendations. The impact of this requirement is

under consideration by the equipment officers of both MREW and Scottish Mountain Rescue. One alternative option is to use the Tyromont Helicopter Rescue Bag (THRB) for winching the casualty rather than the MR stretcher. To ensure we understand the operational, medical and equipment issues of the possible introduction of the THRB, an evidence-based trial is being managed by Pauline Hallett (Ogwen Valley MRO). The trial is being done in four busy teams over a three-month period using sets of scenarios and operational events. The output of the trial will be a set of recommendations and if required, input to the creation of training resources.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

The SAR-H Migration Group are really pleased that we've got agreement with the MCA and Bristow resulting in a fair and appropriate process that will be reviewed periodically as we move from the transition into the steady-state phases of operations. The work with Bristow has clearly shown that they are firmly committed to delivering a seamless transition to operations with the new aircraft. We want to thank all team members, and especially the SAR-H link reps, for their support — we will keep you updated as we move through the migration. ■



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water



WATER INSTRUCTOR COURSES HAILED A GREAT SUCCESS

Thirty-six team members have achieved Module 2 instructor sign-off with Outreach Rescue, meaning the training can now be officially delivered to the same high standard across England and Wales. **Andy Lee**, MREW Water Officer, summarises the strategy.

It's been a busy year for water rescue! Developing a cohort of Module 2 instructors across the regions was identified in the water strategy as a priority. Module 2 standards are achievable for the vast majority of mountain rescue team members but who delivers the training and to what standard has been the issue. This training can now be officially provided across England and Wales as a result of this programme.

Rescue and the staff could not have been more dedicated to our needs. It was clearly not just a delivery process because all the team have been working hard to ensure the best possible product and process. I have to especially thank instructors George and Laurence who I've had the pleasure of working with and who have tirelessly supported developing the process, including tweaks along the way — such as when 'Titch' from

qualification to teach MREW members, this ensures we are teaching an appropriate course for our membership whilst achieving the DEFRA Module 2 standard.

Thirty-nine mountain rescuers from six of the seven regions filled available places on this fully-funded course. Nine long weekends were organised over the months of October-December. Availability was asked for from all members, and places were allocated accordingly. A number of challenges were overcome with swaps and best efforts were made to accommodate everyone's needs.

I contacted George after the final weekend and he said, 'As soon as the programme got underway it was clear we were working with some very experienced people with good instructional backgrounds. The challenge we presented to them was not so much skill acquisition as the re-evaluation of a skill set and its precise boundaries.'

'Delegates were more than happy with this. Many having a concern over the possibility of 'skill-creep' under operational pressure with first responders being drawn into dangerous situations.'

'Despite cold conditions, we were frequently lifted by outbreaks of morale, with each group possessed of some terrific characters. This lightened what was, in fact, a lot of hard work for all concerned. All in all, it was an absolute privilege to work with such a committed crowd of people and I hope the programme leads to positive things in the future.'

Summing up with a sobering thought message, he urged all

first responders to remember: 'Good swimmers die every day!'

The training was delivered at Outreach Rescue in North Wales. I attended five of the weekends and had the pleasure of meeting many of those who signed up, and they have been extremely successful events. The enthusiasm and commitment has been overwhelming. And as a result, we now have 36 fully-qualified MREW Module 2 Instructors.

SO WHAT NEXT? GO LIVE DATE 1 FEBRUARY 2015

I must thank the water steering group who were busy over the Christmas period producing documents and the final sign-off process to enable our instructors to get out delivering courses. We utilised the training weekends to collate ideas and regional needs and from this a declaration and course registration form along with skill sheets and assessments are being produced for 1 February.

The new cohort of instructors has been invited to a development weekend in February, to complete the final part of their development and this will include training in the MREW accreditation process and other practical skills workshops.

The new MREW Module 2 standard instructors will now be able to deliver training with MREW Water Certificates issued centrally.

A huge thanks to all involved in the process which will continue to strengthen our operational capabilities and, more importantly, our safety in this area. ■



OUTREACH RESCUE

The tendering process began at the beginning of the year, with over twenty companies submitting applications for the delivery of the Module 2 Instructor courses. It was a lengthy and robust process with the successful tender submission made by Outreach Rescue.

As national officer responsible for this project it's been a pleasure to work with Outreach

South Wales made a suggestion for an additional element and the three of us swallowed our pride and adopted his recommendation, to the benefit of all the candidates.

The course has been designed in such a way as to ensure high standards within the time challenges volunteers are faced with. Whilst the candidates can only use this

...turn back to page 6 for MREW contacts

Brief introduction to the British Cave Rescue officers and how to find them...

who?



CHAIRMAN: BILL WHITEHOUSE

chair@caverescue.org.uk
Represents cave rescue with Government, the emergency services, UKSAR and MREW, including fundraising and forward planning. An executive trustee of the Mountain and Cave Rescue Benevolent Fund and chair of Derbyshire CRO.



VICE CHAIRMAN: DANY BRADSHAW

vicechair@caverescue.org.uk
Assists the chairman in his role and represents BCRC at MREW. Currently taking the lead on the team assessment process. He is chairman of SWERA and Warden for Mendip Cave Rescue since 1979.



SECRETARY: EMMA PORTER

secretary@caverescue.org.uk
Currently involved with revamping the BCRC website. Represents BCRC at the British Caving Association and lecture secretary for the national caving conference and the 2015 BCRC conference. Member of MREW forward planning group. Emma is training coordinator of Midlands CRO and member of Gloucestershire CRG.



TREASURER: PAUL TAYLOR

treasurer@caverescue.org.uk
Manages finances and coordinates fundraising and conference secretary for the BCRC Conference. Represents BCRC at the MREW vehicle committee. Paul is chair of Gloucestershire CRG and a member of South & Mid Wales CRT.



TRAINING COORDINATOR: JIM DAVIS

training@caverescue.org.uk
Addresses national training needs and works closely on the team assessment process. Represents BCRC at the MREW training committee. Jim is a member of the Cave Rescue Organisation.



EQUIPMENT OFFICER: MIKE CLAYTON

equipment@caverescue.org.uk
Liaises with MREW regarding the Government grant and runs PPE inspection courses for teams. Represents BCRC at the MREW equipment committee. Secretary of Midlands CRO, he is a member of Gloucestershire CRG.



COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER: JON WHITELEY

communications@caverescue.org.uk
Seeks to enhance ICT for cave rescue and is BCRC rep to the MREW ICT committee and also PenMaCRA comms rep. One of three MREW SARCALL administrators and a rescue controller for Devon CRO.



INFORMATION OFFICER: HEATHER SIMPSON

informationofficer@caverescue.org.uk
Maintains contact details for the fifteen teams. Part of MREW fundraising group and also manages MREW collecting tins from Stratford-upon-Avon — as far as you can get from a cave or mountain! Heather is a member of North Wales CRO and Midlands CRO and a new recruit of the Derbyshire CRO.



LEGAL ADVISER: TOBY HAMNETT

legal@caverescue.org.uk
A solicitor by profession, focuses on pragmatic solutions and believes in communication to ensure legal risk is minimised. If a case requires specialist knowledge outside his area of expertise he can assist in ensuring the right expert is identified.



DIVING OFFICER: CHRIS JEWELL

diving@caverescue.org.uk
Advises on cave diving issues and liaises between the Cave Diving Group and BCRC.

MEDICAL OFFICER: VACANT

medical@caverescue.org.uk
Advises on medical matters and keeps teams aware of medical issues of concern to cave rescue. Represents BCRC at the MREW medical committee and represents BCRC at UKSAR.

THE NEXT BCRC CONFERENCE IS BEING ORGANISED JOINTLY BY GLOUCESTERSHIRE CRG AND MIDLANDS CRO.

19-21 JUNE, 2015
THE DEAN FIELD STUDIES CENTRE, PARKEND NR LYDNEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Preparations are well underway, with a series of lectures, workshops and a multi-team cave rescue training exercise planned, plus an evening of entertainment in Clearwell cave. Cave rescue teams and team members should put the date in their diaries now and await further details.

Photo © Gloucestershire Cave Rescue.

caves



BCRC TRAINING DAY AND AGM

EMMA PORTER

The weekend of 12-13 April 2014, saw representatives from almost all the fifteen cave rescue teams across the UK and Eire meeting up for a training day and AGM. The morning of the training day, was spent at the fantastic Derbyshire CRO base, which is shared with both mountain rescue and the fire service. After an introduction by Bill Whitehouse, Piers Hallihan, a member of both South and Mid Wales CRT and South Wales Police, gave an excellent and very relevant presentation on scenes of crime awareness in a cave rescue context. This was followed by BCRC's Training Officer, Jim Davis discussing training and team management strategies, following by a comms update. After lunch, we moved outside

to a local quarry, utilising the quarry for practical sessions on rigging frames, use of stemples, rock splitting and boulder moving. On the Sunday, during the AGM, a presentation was made to Pete Allwright, the retiring secretary, who had held the position for twenty years of dedicated service to BCRC. Thank you to Derbyshire CRO for hosting the event and providing the catering, the trainers and all those who helped over the weekend.



Top left: Paul Witheridge Larkin frame. Above: Bill Whitehouse presents Pete Allwright with a BCRC Long Service Certificate.



INTRODUCING THE COMRU UNIMOG... PAUL WITHERIDGE

never happen. After a time this becomes obsolete, even if never used, and is sold off. In the UK there are a number of companies that buy this surplus and offer it to the civilian market, aid agencies and the governments of other countries.

We managed to contact one such company that had over 30 'as new' UNIMOG military ambulances in store, originally manufactured for the German government and held in reserve all their life.

They were prepared to supply one to COMRU, fully serviced and MOT'd, registered for the first time in the UK as an ambulance and complete with full military tool kit, snow chains and recovery gear — for less than a quarter of the original new vehicle price. Bargain!

Getting the UNIMOG through UK registration was not as easy for the company as first thought and it was a learning curve for both them and the local DVLA office, but because the vehicle was a genuine Mercedes Benz build and not

registered previously in the UK it was accepted and went through. Better still, as a three-seat ambulance it went down a few classes for the MOT so no long trips to the regional test centre.

To keep costs down, converting the inside to our requirements was carried out by team members — those who want to know what was done and how can see the postings on the team's Facebook page. The only additional work was the vehicle livery which was done locally by a company who specialise in high quality vinyl 'wrapping'. It made a change for them from a well-known haulage company's wagons.

So, COMRU now has a vehicle that fits our needs, is built to last and hasn't bankrupted us. But how much did it all cost? The grand total, as a fully operational vehicle, came in at £26,000.

Working on a planned fifteen-year life with the team that looks like money well spent!

In all teams, there comes a point when it's time for a replacement vehicle. For COMRU, the problem was twofold. It wasn't just that the current vehicle, a long-wheelbase LDV CONVOY, was starting to show its age, the volume of team technical equipment had expanded significantly. It was time for some radical thinking so, rather than look at what was traditionally used by teams and finding the nearest 'fit', we began with a clean sheet and a look at key features needed.

- The team's operational area covers the Lakes, Pennines and, on request, into the north east and southern Scotland. Many of the mine locations are remote and involve significant access challenges to vehicles, especially in winter. An ability to traverse both snow covered roads and unmaintained mine tracks was important.

- The volume and weight of equipment couldn't be reduced so vehicle capacity had to match, with spare for future developments.

- On the country roads the team has to travel there is a practical, safe speed that should not be exceeded. This allowed for a vehicle that may have a slower than average speed for an 'emergency' vehicle.

- The broad geographical spread of team members mean they go

direct to site on a call-out. The vehicle moves off with only two people on board so there would be no need for crew cab-type multiple seating.

- Whatever we chose had to conform to the requirements for registration as an ambulance.

- It had to be affordable, both to buy and for ongoing maintenance.

- It had to be tough enough to stand outside all its life as we have no fixed base or heated garage to protect it.

A lot of the commonly used vehicles dropped off the list pretty quickly. It seemed a 'truck' was needed but, for access reasons it couldn't be a huge truck, it must have a good turning circle and be nimble on the fell. It would need four-wheel drive and be in a licence category that allowed a good number of drivers to be available.

The one vehicle that cropped up again and again was a UNIMOG. Not exactly what we were expecting! A new UNIMOG was way out of our financial reach so thoughts turned to what was available in the used market and here is where an intimate knowledge of European government sales is an advantage!

All governments buy equipment for wars or disasters they hope will



WHEN WINTER ISN'T WINTER!



Across the UK our winters for the last few years have been warmer, and we have faced the challenges of navigating in wet and windy conditions rather than arctic like snowfalls.

The UK Met Office's outlook for the start of winter 2015 suggests this pattern is continuing, for the time being anyway:

'The outlook suggests the continuing risk of our weather coming in from the Atlantic, which brings unsettled conditions, during the first part of the three month period. Latest predictions for UK-mean precipitation favour near or above average rainfall for November, December and January. This is a fairly normal set up for the time of year, when we do expect unsettled weather, but the outlook does suggest that spells of wet and windy weather may be more frequent than is typical.'

Wet cloudy days, with few daylight hours, are the times I see least folk on the hill, probably because these are the days I choose to be least

out too! Team members have no such choice and the sheer fatiguing factor of traipsing thru continuous driving rain in diminishing light requires different navigational skills to those employed in white winters. Personally, I find that I am most likely to make navigational errors in this type of weather, probably because white winter is an alert to my brain to be more vigilant and in the summertime you want to stay up high on the peaks benefiting from good visibility. To help counter this factor, I have ten golden rules for navigation in wet and windy weather, especially when it is severe and combined with low levels of visibility, particularly at night.

1: Confirm with the search manager that you and your hill party really do need to be out, as sometimes waiting until daylight is the safer and more efficient option. Pressure from the

police can create a 'be seen to be doing' atmosphere.

2: Use shorter legs: every step is critical and this allows you to continually review your progress and be able to choose small features.

3: Use **back markers**.

4: Aiming off is often safer than trying to find a single feature from a distance.

5: Anticipate what you are going to pass and use **collecting features**.

6: Identify **catching features** to stop you in safety.

7: Make use of **outriggers** to determine contour slopes.

8: Use **steering** or a **three-person line check**.

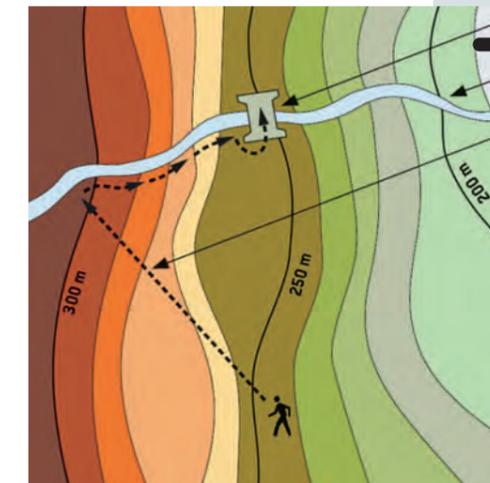
9: Keep the hill party together at a steady pace.

10: Concentrate and lead with calmness.



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A REMINDER OF BEST PRACTICE FOR SOME OF THE LESS USED TECHNIQUES REFERRED TO BELOW



AIMING OFF

The added advantage of flowing water (rivers, brooks, streams etc) is that you can also work out from the contour lines which way they are flowing. In this instance, you would walk downstream. It might be worth noting that, when you hit the linear feature, you pace how far it is to your attack point – just in case you overshoot it!

1. Select your Attack Point.
2. Identify a Linear Feature such as a wall, stream or track near to the attack point.
3. Take a Bearing to one side of your attack point.
4. Calculate from the map the approximate distance from the point at which you will reach the linear feature to your attack point.
5. Walk this bearing.
6. When you reach the linear feature use it as a 'handrail' to find your attack point, pacing the distance.

BACK MARKERS



MOVE LEFT



MOVE RIGHT



ACKNOWLEDGE – COME TO ME



START – STOP

1. Determine the bearing you are going to move on.
2. Ask another member of the hill party to be your back marker and agree your signalling as per above images.
3. Walk this bearing to within a safe limit of

- visibility. Stop, turn around and take a bearing to your back marker. Move sideways to correct your position if necessary.
4. Put both arms up in the air to indicate to the back marker and the rest of the hill

- party to walk to you.
5. The back marker also puts both arms in the air to acknowledge and walks to you.
6. Repeat the technique as required.

COLLECTING FEATURES

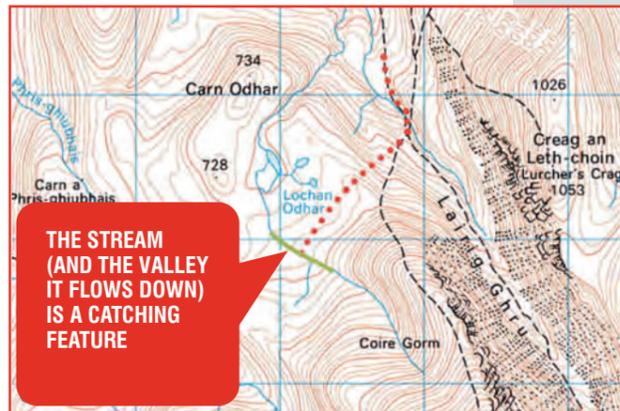
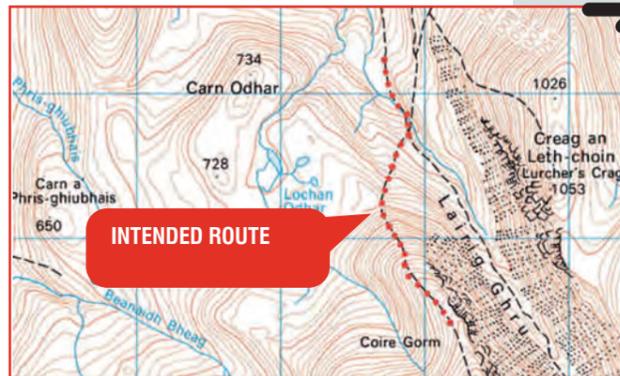
ie. features you predict or know will be on your path and mentally collect along the way.

Creating a mental image of what is coming next on your journey is first-class navigation. As you navigate to your next Attack Point you can confirm that you are following the correct track using features which you have identified will form part of your track. These can be almost any feature marked on a map and are easily categorised into three types, from the most precise (1 placing you exactly: a Fix), to those putting you in the general area (2 & 3 giving you an estimated position: EP).



1. Spot features: such as bridges, intersections of paths, junctions in rivers/streams, cairns, summits.
2. Linear features: such as walls, streams and ridges with no junctions.

3. Area features: the terrain may change from rocky to marshy to rolling; should you be going uphill or downhill, or reaching a level ground or a particular land feature.



CATCHING FEATURES

ie. features you predict will be on your path, which if you reach, signals you have overshot your destination

Ideally this is a linear feature which runs perpendicular beyond your Attack Point so if you reach it you know that you have overshot your attack point. Rivers, streams, walls and roads are ideal. Conversely, it could be the edge of a forest, a lake or a definite change in the contours, such as a depression in the land.

1. Prior to undertaking a critical leg of navigation, study your map and look for a catching feature beyond your intended direction of travel.
2. It should be wide enough to allow you a good margin of error so if you miss your attack point substantially you will still be 'caught'.
3. Stop and take a bearing from a feature which you can see and which is on the map to get a fix of where exactly you are along your catching feature.
4. If there is no obvious feature immediately next to this, pace out in one direction along this linear feature and search for a point where you can take a second bearing to get a fix.
5. Do not travel a long distance from where you first hit the catching feature. Stop and now pace back to where you were. Think about the terrain you are travelling over to see if there are any clues you have missed.
6. Pace the same distance in the opposite direction and look for a feature to take a fix from.

THREE-PERSON LINE CHECK

ie. when visibility is severely impaired, this is a more reliable method to correct for drift than back markers.

1. Determine the bearing you are going to walk on and set your compasses to this bearing.
2. The hill party navigator leads off on this bearing.
3. Another member of the party follows in the footsteps of the navigator, walking 10-15 metres behind.
4. The third member follows, leading the rest of the party, using their compass to check the bearing, looking ahead at the two walkers to see if they are in line with each other.
5. The lead navigator needs to stop at regular distances, at which point the rest of the group should stop immediately.



OUTRIGGERS

In poor visibility, having an understanding of changes in the local terrain is important. In this technique, two people walk alongside you and near enough to be seen, using head torches is advisable, so you can gauge their height in relation to yourself – this will give you an appreciation of slope aspect and gradient. Obviously, you need to be confident there is no danger presented to your outriggers by features such as cliffs or bodies of water – if there is, rope up!

So, Winter 2015 is most likely going to be wet and windy with the UK Met Office's caveat of '...however, there are still substantial probabilities that either average or cool/dry conditions may occur. This is because there are many competing factors that determine what our weather will be like in the coming months.'



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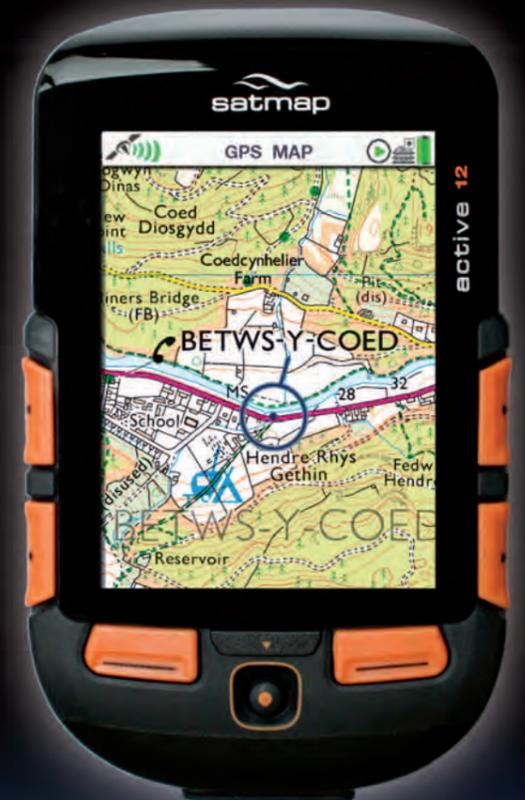


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MULTIPLE CHALLENGES FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

WHEN ALICE WALTON'S WALKING COMPANION DIED IN THE MOUNTAINS THEY BOTH LOVED AND ALICE LATER WITNESSED THE OGWEN TEAM AT WORK, IT INSPIRED HER TO RAISE FUNDS TO SUPPORT ALL MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS.

I moved to North Wales six years ago to do a degree in Outdoor Activities, fell deeply in love with the mountains and never left! As a regular mountain-goer, I find it impossible not to have a massive respect for mountain rescue teams, going out in all weathers to safeguard those who love the outdoors.

In 2011, I saw the Ogwen Valley team's fantastic efforts first-hand, after a climbing partner with undiagnosed epilepsy had a seizure at the foot of a crag, resulting in a long tumble down the side of the mountain. And prior to that, in 2010, my close friend and regular mountain walking partner, Andrea Watton, had died in a via ferrata accident in a Swiss gorge. Several fundraising events for OVMRO were held in her memory. It's my ambition to join a team one day to make a really worthwhile contribution but until then, raising money is a great way to get involved.

I started my latest fundraising effort at the start of the year. During a New Year's Eve gathering, I wrote a 2014 bucket list and decided to take the opportunity to make a really positive impact on people's lives... so 'do something charitable' went onto my list. Because of my encounters with mountain rescue and the fact that they directly save lives, day in day out, in the mountains, I couldn't think of any charity that deserved my support more. Using other items from my 2014 bucket list, I set myself three mountain challenges and I am proud to say that I have successfully completed them all.

On a sunny afternoon in April, I rode over Snowdon on my bike, in the thick of a heatwave. It was a fantastic ride — over two hours of intense uphill up the Llanberis path, followed by an insanely steep, rocky descent down the Rangers path, which required even more effort just to cling to the handlebars!

In May I organised and completed the Three Peaks Challenge, summiting Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and

Snowdon in 22 hours 54 minutes, despite a whole catalogue of complications, including two hours of standstill traffic, a serious case of the judders in our car and my abandonment of the clock entirely, halfway up Snowdon, to stop and take roughly twelve million photographs of the sunrise!

Finally, in June, I ran the Trail Marathon Wales half marathon at Coed-y-Brenin in 2 hours 10 minutes, which amazingly made me the 11th female to finish!

By September, I was so close to the total, I could almost taste it! So, undaunted, I decided to attempt another challenge: to complete the Welsh 3000s walk/run. For those who don't know, this is a 35-mile trip over all fifteen of the highest peaks in Wales (which, conveniently, are arranged in a nice line between Pen y Pass and Abergwyngregyn, through Snowdonia). It's a fantastic route, following the ridge lines through Snowdonia from the very highest point all the way down to the north coast.

This is something I'd planned to do with Andrea but sadly never had the chance. A group of us had attempted the challenge over three days in her memory, but had to bail on the second day due to extreme winds and an impending storm.

The walk involves climbing over 3,800m and would take roughly nineteen hours to walk, but we hoped to find the energy to run some of it as well.

So, on Saturday, 13 September we set off from Pen y Pass car park at 06:05 and made brisk progress up the Pyg Track. We could see enough from the beginning of the dawn glow not to need our torches and, feeling sprightly, we arrived at the Snowdon summit in an hour and a half. After a quick photo, we jogged the easy ground and walked the harder stuff over Garnedd Ugain, Crib y Ddysgl ridge and Crib Goch, before making good progress down the scree and picking our way through difficult ground to find a good path down to the road.

Then it was on to the Glyderau and up to Elidir Fawr — a bit of a slog, without much to see (although the view behind us was pretty spectacular). We paused only for a photo at the top, then jogged the downhill and flat to the col before Foel Goch, where we stopped for our first decent break of fifteen minutes to take on some pasta... or in my friend's case, eat rice pudding out of a sandwich bag, without a spoon!

At 12:10 we got moving again, jogging a few of the easier bits but mainly walking, over Y Garn, Glyder Fawr, Castell y Gwynt (just in case it's ever included as a summit in its own right) and Glyder Fach, which we reached at 13:54. We had a bit of fun posing on the interesting-shaped rocks, then walked/slid the gravelly descent to the right of Bristly Ridge to Bwlch Tryfan.

On the way up Tryfan, we were both starting to feel a bit less fresh than before and our slowest few kilometres were up the scrambly ascent to the Adam and Eve rocks on the summit, which we reached at 14:57. Believe it or not, Tryfan is only a Welsh 3000 by 60cm, but it would be a shame not to include it because it has such a unique style and really spices up the walk. We arrived back at the road an hour later and, enjoying the ease of the concrete surface, briskly walked the kilometre to the beginning of the Carneddau.

On the way up Pen yr Ole Wen, we were really feeling the 2,000 m of ascent and 33 km we'd already put in and it became a bit of a mind game to psyche ourselves over a few false summits to the insignificant cairn at the top at 17:48. However, after this, the ground became much easier and Carnedd Dafydd felt like a minor blip on the horizon. We then contoured around Carnedd Llewelyn to Yr Elen, leaving our bags at the point we'd return to. This meant exchanging a particularly nasty slog for a satisfyingly short uphill to the summit of Carnedd Llewelyn, which we reached just as the sunset colours were fading from the sky, at 19:54.



From here, the walk became a long, dark, chilly plod, following bearings and paths through the hazy night, over the last three, fairly unmemorable, summits: Foel Grach, Carnedd Gwenllian (not always included because of its low prominence against the ridge it sits on) and finally, after a few mirage-like rocks that looked a lot like trig points, the actual trig point on the summit of Foel-Fras. We'd ascended sixteen peaks in 13 hours 44 minutes from leaving Snowdon... but we still had a long way to go!

We decided, after another consultation with the map, that our quickest route down would be to head diagonally down steep, tufted grass to Afon Goch, then follow this past the Aber Falls to the car park by the A55 at Abergwyngregyn, where we'd left a car.

The ground wasn't great at all and this, combined with our fatigue and the dark meant that, by the time we reached a decent path by the river, between us we had no less than three ankle injuries! We stumbled along the path, which seemed to take an eternity to reach even Aber Falls, let alone the long path back to the car park.

After following the river for an hour and a half, we finally made it to the car, with a MASSIVE sense of relief — and I only just remembered to stop my Garmin route recorder. The sense of achievement was strong, but completely overpowered by the desire to curl up into a ball and go straight to sleep right there! After an incredible seventeen and a half hours, we had made it!

So, why Mountain Rescue England and Wales? Although I am based in Wales, I'm a regular mountain user across several teams areas, so decided to raise money for MREW instead of a specific team. Thanks to an incredible amount of support from friends, family and even people I didn't know, we've so far raised a fantastic £907 (and, hopefully, still counting!) in sponsorship money. I really wanted MREW to get a nice round £1000 or more, so I kept up the fundraising beyond the three challenges — including running a sweepstake to guess our Three Peaks Challenge finishing time, a mini-lottery to win an MREW waterproof pen or thermal mug and the Welsh 3000s.

My next challenge is to achieve my Mountain Leader Award, which will improve my navigation and ropework skills, in order to — hopefully — become a valuable member of one of the teams in North Wales. In the meantime, my time will be spent devising fundraising games and events to reach my £1000 target and beyond! If you'd like to see how I'm getting on towards my target, have a look at justgiving.com/spalice or you can follow my blog at spaliceoutdoors.blogspot.co.uk. ■

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FAR LEFT: THE TRIG POINT OF SNOWDON WITH BIKES IN APRIL. TOP: ALICE WITH HER TRAIL MARATHON WALES COASTER IN JULY. ABOVE: YOGA AT DAWN ON THE SUMMIT OF SNOWDON IN MAY.

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**SHEFFIELD HELIPAD COLLECTION
SCALES NEW HEIGHTS**

**EDALE MRT JOINS FORCES WITH
NORTHERN GENERAL HOSPITAL IN VITAL
FUNDRAISING APPEAL**

The Northern General Hospital in Sheffield is raising money for a new helipad which will allow air ambulances to transfer critically injured patients directly into the emergency department without the need for an ground ambulance. Edale team members and supporters have been standing alongside them in the fundraising effort.

When a patient has suffered major trauma, the faster they receive specialist treatment, the higher their chances of surviving, or surviving well. So every second really can count. Many of the casualties rescued in the Peak District are flown to the Northern General by air ambulance so this is a cause very close to the team's hearts. And, in December, team members were delighted by the generosity of Sheffield's shoppers, on one of the busiest shopping days of the year in the run-up to Christmas, raising almost £1,000 in their annual bucket collection outside the John Lewis store — all towards the hospital's Saving Time, Saving Lives appeal — leaving just under £420,000 to raise to reach the £2 million target.

'Despite the hustle and bustle, passers-by made time to stop and donate to the collection which we had pledged to the Helipad Appeal,' said Martin Gorman. 'Big Issue seller, John Murphy even donated some of his funds after he knew he'd earned enough for his family. The kind-hearted ex-RAF serviceman donated some of the extra cash customers had given him for Christmas.'

David Reynolds, Director of Sheffield Hospitals Charity said, 'It's heart-warming to see and we'd like to thank every single person who donated. We're especially grateful to the Edale team for their fantastic support standing out all day collecting for our helipad appeal — it's really inspiring.'

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SHEFFIELD HELIPAD APPEAL OR TO MAKE A DONATION VISIT: SHEFFIELDHELIPAD.COM OR CALL SHEFFIELD HOSPITALS CHARITY ON 0114 271 1351. YOU CAN DONATE £5 BY TEXTING HOSPITAL10 TO 70660. TO SEE THE SHEFFIELD HELIPAD APPEAL VIDEO, VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=Y9DRXMC2W54&FEATURE=YOUTUBE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9DRXMC2W54&feature=youtu.be)



Photo © Nick Lumb.



**AN INSPIRATIONAL FUNDRAISER, WHO
IS 'LIVING WITH MOTOR NEURONE
DISEASE, NOT DYING FROM IT.'**

RAISING FUNDS WITH COCKERMOUTH MRT

Fletcher 'Fleck' Ditchburn was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 2009. Prior to his diagnosis he enjoyed walking, and cycling and running marathons, the sort of man whose cup was 'always brimming over'. And the fact that he now relies on a wheelchair for mobility has done little to dent his enthusiastic fundraising efforts, with a little help from his friends.

Having enjoyed a lifetime of fitness the diagnosis was all the more shocking but, from the start, Fleck's mantra has been 'I'm living with motor neurone disease, not dying from it.'

Given his love of the Cumbrian fells, it came as no surprise to his family and friends when he had the idea of climbing Skiddaw in his wheelchair. So in autumn 2010, aided and abetted by family, friends and the Cockermouth team, Fleck made it to the summit of Skiddaw.

In April 2011, he developed breathing

difficulties, gamely putting up with discomfort until finally being rushed into hospital with a chest infection and pneumonia two months later. His left lung had collapsed and he was in intensive care for almost six months.

But back home, nursed 24 hours a day by a small army of carers, including his wife Pat, and using machines to aid his breathing, more plans were hatched.

Inspired by his long stay in hospital he was determined to raise funds towards vital equipment. So, not being one to take things sitting down,

his next plan was to climb his beloved Blake Fell, which he can see from his house in Lamplugh.

Once again, assisted by family, friends and team members (and this time with a portable ventilator attached to his wheelchair, and regular physiotherapy stops) Fleck reached the summit cairn in around 90 minutes, in challenging weather conditions. A huge personal achievement.

'The weather was so bad,' he said. 'The wind was howling and the rain was battering down. You couldn't see down the valley but then the wind blew that hard, it made a hole in the clouds. I could see the view, Derwentwater and Catbells... then the clouds closed again. It was awesome.'

Between them, Fleck's challenges raised £7,500 for the Intensive Care Unit at West Cumberland Hospital, and he has also given £2,000 to the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

This autumn, Fleck turned his attention to the team who have supported him so wholeheartedly in his fundraising efforts so far. This time it was a slightly less challenging raffle with prizes donated by the local businesses of Cockermouth and the surrounding area, which raised £1,200 towards an Autopulse for the team.

The team would like to thank Fleck and his family and carers for their continued support. He's an inspiration to us all!

PHOTO: COCKERMOUTH TEAM MEMBERS WITH FLECK © NICK LUMB.

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SKYDIVING DRAGONS SUPPORT THE TEAM THAT HELPED SUPPORT THEM

RAISING FUNDS FOR CORNWALL SRT

Over the years, Devon and Cornwall-based charity Pete's Dragons has tirelessly fundraised for Cornwall Search and Rescue Team, initially buying the team's third vehicle (the 'Dragon Wagon') and since then much other vital equipment. In October, they took on their biggest challenge yet when an occasionally sunny day saw 25 dragons jump from 15,000 feet to raise funds for the team and the Samaritans.

Spectators also enjoyed the cake (and wine!) stall, raffle and even a samba band and, in a finishing flourish to the day, 'Hairy Dragon' Graeme (a Cornwall team member) even went one step further with a sponsored head shave soon after landing. Losing his previously flowing locks helped him win the ultimate dragon honour (and the cake) for the most money raised.

Pete's Dragons formed in 2010 after

much-loved Peter Wicks tragically took his own life at just 24 years old. Desperate to say thank you to the search and rescue teams who spent five freezing January days searching for Peter, his big sister Alison Hill and best friend, Kate Waddam, planned a cycle ride to raise funds. Since then, they have completed one fundraising campaign a year including bungee jumping from Victoria Falls, cycling

from Land's End to Twickenham, cycling from Gibraltar to Bilbao and climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.

Alison Hill, explains, 'Pete's Dragons evolved from a desire to thank the charities involved in searching for my missing brother and supporting us after his death.'

'Whilst that is still the heart of what we do, we now pride ourselves on inspiring, supporting and celebrating the achievement of our dragons' personal challenges as they conquer their limitations and achieve their goals.

'Pete's Dragons expanded in 2014 and the hope is that this will continue through 2015. Our aim is to raise funds to continue to support Cornwall Search and Rescue Team but to also reach out and support families affected by suicide in a practical way.'

The lead-up to the skydive itself involved a great deal of fundraising just to get the campaign started and get dragons and other volunteers to the airfield, including a family fun day, dog show and car boot sale.

'It was with great pride,' writes team member Mark Grantham, 'that the team were able to accept a cheque for £3,250 from Ditsy and Diva Dragon, with more to come with further fundraising events over the festive period.'

'We're so lucky to have such dedicated and hard-working supporters and we'd like to thank them for their tireless efforts'.

raising funds
for rescue



THE HARDMOORS PRINCESS DOES IT AGAIN

TWO YEARS 'ON THE TROT' FOR SCARBOROUGH & RYEDALE MRT

A chance remark on Facebook in the summer of 2013, that the team had lost two significant fundraising events because of call-outs, inspired Scarborough resident and stalwart of the Hardmoors Ultra Marathon team Kelly Jackson to doing what she could to help.

In a few short weeks she'd dreamt up the 31-mile Hardmoors Princess Challenge, obtained the necessary permissions, got entry forms out, booked the hall and, on the last weekend of August, ran a hugely successful event out of Ravenscar Village Hall. Following the event she donated the proceeds from the challenge to the team easily making good the money they'd lost.

And in 2014, never one to sit on her laurels and with a little more time, Kelly organised the second Hardmoors Princess Challenge, again on the last weekend of August. Not

content with one event this time, in addition to the original 31-mile event, she created the Princess Short 'n' Sweet Challenge, an 8.5 mile race on the same day!

The team was delighted to be invited to the Hardmoors Goathland Trail Marathon on Saturday 8 November to be presented with a cheque from Kelly for the superb total of £2315.51 raised through the latest Princess events. And this was in addition to another large contribution on the day as a result of the team being called out (again) while supporting the event back in August.

'On hearing we were leaving,' explains Ian Hugill, 'Kelly took one of our collecting boxes and passed it around the competitors who were in the hall at the time and then handed it straight over to us!'

'We are truly humbled by the kindness shown by Kelly and the wider Hardmoors community.'

Left to right: Neal Ingram, Flip Owen, Kelly Jackson, John Steele and Steve Hayton at the cheque presentation outside a very wet Goathland Village Hall © Scarborough & Ryedale MRT.



BENEVOLENT FUND IN BUSINESS AT LAST!

Almost eighteen months after registration as a charity, the Benevolent Fund dealt with its first applications in December. Fantastic to be able to put to the test the application procedures the trustees and regional reps spent so many months formulating — not to mention making awards to both applicants, in very different circumstances! **Judy Whiteside** and **Neil Woodhead** explain how the process stood up to the test.

Happily, the consensus was that the process we've put in place works well. In short, an application comes to the secretary, the trustees award immediate financial relief if needed, then call a meeting of the trustees and regional reps. Once assembled, the reps are provided with the application forms and any accompanying information about the applicants, redacted of any personal details. This allows them to discuss the case in hand without fear of personal bias and maintains the applicant's confidentiality. The trustees then leave them to their ruminations, only returning to the room once the reps are ready to make their recommendations.

The trustees listen to the recommendations and discuss

with the reps, before making the final decision on a course of action which, in most cases, is likely to be a 'rubber stamp'.

Perhaps now would be a good point to thank the regional reps, who responded at very short notice to the called meeting. And, in December, so close to Christmas! Unfortunately, it's the nature of any benevolent fund that applicants may well need very immediate assistance, so meetings must be called as swiftly and conveniently as possible — always a challenge when you're bringing together individuals from the length and breadth of England and Wales! But it worked.

And the consensus was that the format of having people in the same room, for a face-to-

face discussion, was the best way to consider applications, given the sensitivity of the information under consideration. There have been suggestions (and much subsequent discussion by trustees and reps), that meetings should allow for individuals to call or Skype in but this was rejected outright as feasible by all those present in December.

It's probably worth noting that every single process we now have in place was co-written by the trustees and reps, over a period of three years (!) and regularly went out to teams for feedback — all of which was constructive and subsequently incorporated as best it could be. It was decided very early on that all those discussing any claim should be in the same room. It's unfortunate that this has now become a point of dissent in some areas.

We do understand that we are all being expected to attend an ever-growing list of meetings (and that some have further to travel than others) but for now at least, the requirement to have all those involved in the room will remain — a decision which owes more to the desire to provide the

best possible environment for the claimant and the details of their claim to be discussed, than to any Luddite tendencies within the group. Telephone conference calls and internet-dependent conversations by their very nature require a degree of management and a level of concentration which we feel can only detract from the matter in hand — the welfare of the claimant.

Hopefully, we won't have too many claims each year. It was good, logistically, that we could discuss two at once on this occasion, although this will doubtless be the exception.

What we WILL be doing, however, is making some changes to the application form so the questions asked provide a little more detail.

PROVIDING REHABILITATION

It's great to report that one of the claims has enabled us to sign off and put into practice our agreement with the Fire Fighters' Charity. Their three centres in Devon, Cumbria and West



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JANUARY: REMOTE RESCUE LEAVES TEAM WITH SUBSTANTIAL REPAIR BILL

Calder Valley SRT faced a repair bill in the region of £350 following a trip to particularly rugged area above Walsden, near Todmorden in West Yorkshire.

The team had been called to assist with the rescue of a walker who had suffered a suspected dislocated knee. The Yorkshire Air Ambulance was also scrambled to deal with the incident and, having pinpointed the man's location, airlifted some of the Calder Valley team members and their gear to the site while others made their way on foot from team vehicles which had reached a nearby farm.

Once located, the casualty was made comfortable and warmed using a kisu shelter before being loaded into the vacuum mattress and onto the Alpine stretcher. The stretcher was then rigged for haul and sledged back up the steep ground to the helicopter and flown down the valley to the waiting land ambulance crew.

Job done, team members returned to the vehicles, but it became apparent that one of the vehicles had sustained structural damage whilst accessing the off-road location rendering it unable to use the 4x4 system.

'Thankfully, explained a team spokesman, 'we were able to use our winching skills and managed to return the vehicle to terra firma with the help of the other vehicle.'

The incident demonstrated excellent teamwork between the Calder Valley SRT, ambulance service and air ambulance but, unfortunately, it meant that one of the vehicles would be out of action for a few days as repairs were undertaken.

NOVEMBER: RESCUED MEN RELIEVED TO HEAR THERE WAS 'NO CHARGE'

The two men, from eastern Europe, had been brought down to safety from Tryfan after getting stuck in darkness. The Ogwen team was called out after the lights from the men's mobile phones were spotted moving on the mountain.

The men had spent a day in North Wales, visiting Llandudno and Conwy Castle before heading for the mountains. They saw Tryfan, checked the OS map on their phone and concluded that the summit was only a short distance from the A5, so off they ventured, up the rocky North Ridge.

Unlike many European mountain walks, the way to the summit of Tryfan is not marked with painted rocks or signposts. By the time they reached the towering wall of the North Tower, it was mid-afternoon. Wisely, they decided to return down the ridge but, with the onset of darkness, lost any sort of path. They tried in vain, going up and down using the lights on their phones, which were seen and reported to North Wales Police.

Fortunately, the two young men were easily located on difficult ground above the Milestone Buttress and brought back to the safety of the A5.

'They were embarrassed by the incident and concerned about how much it was going to cost' said Chris Lloyd.

'There was a look of relief when it was explained that not only do we have free access to much of our countryside, but rescue is free too!'



Tryfan © Terry Hughes.

More real rescues

DECEMBER: PENSIONERS SPARK MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE TO DISUSED MINESHAFT IN TAL Y BONT

The two men, in their seventies, had to be rescued after one of them got into difficulty trying to exit the mine. The pair had been part of a group conducting geology survey at the disused Bwlch Glas mine.

Mid and West Wales Fire Service were called initially and sent two crews from Aberystwyth and one from Machynlleth, with Aberdyfi SRT alerted by Dyfed Powys police soon afterwards. The team was tasked with stretcher the casualties from the pithead over steep and broken ground to the waiting ambulances, once they had been brought to the surface by other teams. Equipment was put in place on the hillside in anticipation of their arrival but, as the night wore on, the casualties were sufficiently recuperated to take an active role in their own rescue underground and walked of the hill unassisted once they had reached the surface. Nevertheless, it was the early hours of Sunday morning before team members were back at home.

One member of the exploration party later posted an account of the incident on a mine exploration forum to the effect that the casualty had been unable to get himself out of the mine due to a 'sudden loss of energy' adding that 'it was a strength matter — one of us lost all strength and energy suddenly and simply could not climb back up the rope'.



A SMALL FRACTION OF THE RESOURCES ON HAND © ABERDYFI SRT.

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*SWERA: NO REP

belief that money given by the Fund is from MREW funds. It isn't. Yes, both the national organisations contributed to and supported the Fund in its initial development — indeed, the idea of a benevolent fund was largely driven by David Allan, as the previous MREW chairman, and MREW members themselves. But, now it is an independent charity responsible for raising and dishing out its own funds. That said, its very existence is to benefit members of mountain and cave rescue teams and the wider rescue family, so we all have a vested interest in keeping it afloat!

There are still some teams who originally pledged donations but these have not, as yet, been forthcoming. Hopefully, now we're seen to be fully operational (and paying out to those who need it), others might be encouraged to contribute. You can also give as an individual, whether you're a team member

or not — and thanks to all those teams and individuals who have already done so: it's provided invaluable support for two team members when they needed it.

THREE WAYS TO GIVE

1. Raise a cheque and send it to Shirley Priestley, Treasurer, Mountain and Cave Rescue Benevolent Fund, 13 Maple Grove, York YO10 4EJ.
2. Make a BACS transfer direct to the Benevolent Fund CAF Cash account (clearly marked with who you are!)
Sort code: 40-52-40.
Account Number: 00023601.
Our charity number: 1152798.
3. Fill in the form provided here and return to Shirley.

WHO CAN CLAIM?

It's simple — you may make an application for benevolence if you are a member of any England and Wales mountain or cave rescue team and injured

on a call-out, training exercise or any other official activity or event which was undertaken with, approved by or under the direction of a mountain and cave rescue team. A family member may also apply, if their claim is directly related to a mountain or cave rescue activity, provided this was undertaken with, approved by or under the direction of the team.

If NOT authorised by the mountain or cave rescue team, you are NOT eligible to claim. Applications must be approved and signed by a team official before they will be considered.

FAQS, FORMS AND OTHER STUFF

You can download the FAQs, a claim form and a sponsor form, from the Members area of the MREW website. Just go to the folder marked 'Benevolent Fund'. Or email Judy via judy.whiteside@zen.co.uk.

Sussex offer a range of support programmes including physical rehab and recuperation to members of the fire and rescue community and other services — and now to us too!

Having suffered injury whilst on a call-out, one of our applicants will be undergoing rehab treatment at one of the centres. It's a substantial offering for the Benevolent Fund which we hope will prove beneficial to more team members over time.

WHOSE MONEY IS IT?

Another aspect which continues to come to light is the

THE BMC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE INVESTIGATES REPORTS OF EQUIPMENT FAILURE AND PUBLISHES THE RESULTS IN THEIR TECHNICAL REPORTS. THESE RECENT FINDINGS WILL BE OF INTEREST TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS AND INDIVIDUAL CLIMBERS ALIKE.

AUTHOR: KUNAL MASANIA



SNAPPED RIGGING ROPE FOR TYROLEAN: INCIDENT REF: 11/01: LOW STRETCH ROPE

The BMC was contacted by an adviser to an outdoor centre. It was reported that a 'postman's walk' set-up had failed at the pursuits centre and that they wished the BMC TC to examine a sample of the rope. This was sent to the BMC (left) with information regarding the set up and loading circumstances received by email.

It appears that failure was due to a combination of malpractice and a poor set-up of the postman's walk. Although chemical damage could not be discounted, given the circumstances, it seems unlikely. This report outlines the findings from information received, to confirm that mechanical overloading seems the most reasonable cause of failure of the system. Thankfully, the climber was not injured during the failure of this set-up.

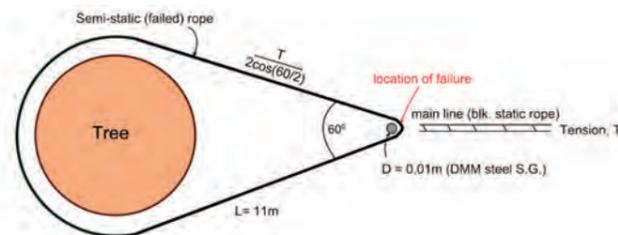
The system appeared to be over tensioned. Whilst also retraining the instructors at the centre, the adviser

wished the BMC TC to evaluate the set-up and a sample of rope in order to confirm this hypothesis.

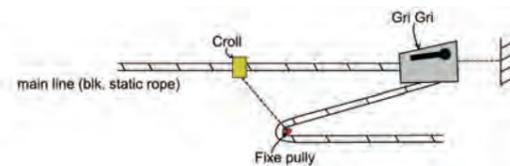
SET-UP

This 11m section was slung around a tree with a single loop (see schematic). The broken region was in contact with a Ø10mm DMM carabiner at a 50/60° angle to the tree. Hence the tension in the tree anchor rope is about 0.58* (tension, T, in main line).

A 3:1 pulley system was created using a Croll and Fixe pulley attached to a Gri Gri. All participants pulled on



SCHMATIC OF THE SET-UP DESCRIBED



THREE-TO-ONE PULLEY SYSTEM DESCRIBED

the rope to pretension the system before and after each postman's walk. Hence, loading could be assumed to be around 7.5 kN* in the system, before the climber crossed the rope.

* Assuming that five participants pull about 600 N each, with a three to one pulley system — with friction reducing this ratio to 2.5.

* Acknowledging Mr A Huyton's valuable contribution of hand forces data, and friction information for the Fixe pulley and Gri Gri.

The figure of eight-on-a-bight on the fixed end was so tight, that they were left on the rope and **could not be opened** between times of rigging of the traverse use — verifying that the pretension in the system was likely to be very high.

LOADING

The climber's hands held on black low stretch upper rope, whilst they walked along a second rope. Often the climber would fall onto sling lanyards attached to the black low-stretch upper rope. The failed rope was a semi-static 10.5 mm PA Beal rope that was used for rigging the static rope to an anchor point (tree).

In this incident, the system failed after the fourth loading on this occasion of use. A larger than average client (assuming 100 kg) fell very close to the tree anchor onto the black static rope (assuming one metre away). The climber fell onto lanyards made from slings (static tape, assuming one metre).

It is entirely possible that the dynamic safety limit of the rope was



SIGNS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE AND DIRT ON THE SAMPLE ROPE.



LEFT: A CUT END. RIGHT: THE FAILED END OF THE SEMI STATIC ROPE.



CLOSE UP IMAGES OF THE FAILED END OF THE ROPE.

exceeded. The specification data state that the rope is capable of 15 falls exceeding 100kg (1 kN of force). With a highly tensioned rope, it is possible to produce very high tensions in the main line as the angle of the rope approaches 180°.

* Acknowledging Mr A Huyton's input of tensions in the main line.

This repeated fatigue loading at the pursuits centre, combined with environmental fatigue (the rope appears to be very dirty and old) and the stress concentration of the small radius of the screwgate all contributed to the failure of the rope. Given that the rope failed at the stress concentration caused by the screw gate, rather than the knot, one could postulate that the rope will have failed at somewhere between 30-70% of the maximum strength of the rope. It is interesting to note that the tree anchor rope failed rather than the black main line despite the rope diameters being similar (10.5 mm versus 11 mm). The tension in the tree anchor rope being estimated as 0.58 times the main line tension. It is possible that this was due to the tree anchor rope being left outside between seasons, whilst the black main line was packed away during the winter.

Given the information received, unfortunately, it is not possible to conduct an accurate stress analysis.

However, it can be shown that with the basic assumptions outlined the climber could easily apply a load in excess of 10 kN on to the system and thus contribute to the failure of this set-up.

SIGNS OF BAD PRACTICE/MIS-USE

- 3:1 pulley system (actual mechanical advantage of 2.5 when friction is considered) using all participants to remove slack in the rope.
- Unable to open knots between use.
- Repeated retensioning after every crossing.
- Very dirty, old rope with possible signs of environmental degradation.
- It was found that, a month before this incident, a Gri Gri had its handle spring broken when trying to release this system, such was the pretension in the system.
- A local instructor had previously needed to cut the rope in order to release tension in the system for dismantling.

EXAMINATION

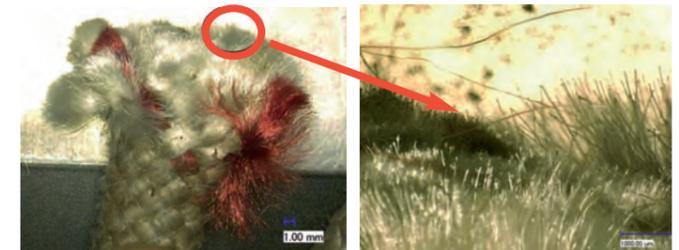
The rope in question is a Beal 10.5mm Spelenium semi static. Optical microscopy was conducted on the cut end of the rope and a sample from the failed end of the rope. There are obvious differences between the two samples of rope, shown above.

The failed end of the rope shows that the core is exposed a reasonable length down the rope, about 40 mm at each end. It is clear from the image that the cores are kinked to the left (in the images), hence indicating plastic deformation having occurred in the polyamide (PA) core of the rope. When the rope was examined, no evidence of failure due to cutting or abrasion could be identified.

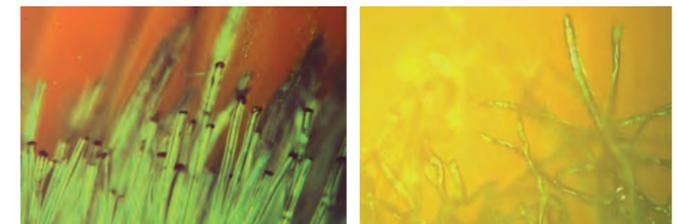
There was significant evidence of necking of the fibre ends close to the failed region. This is indicative of a quasi-static or fatigue type loading from the applied tensile load. Final failure obviously occurred via a dynamic load applied to the system. However, it seems that damage had already occurred to the rope from the rigging.

If one compares the failed fibres and cut fibres at high magnification, distinct differences can be seen. The cut fibres are straight, aligned and have clean ends at the point of cut. The failed fibres show evidence of fibrillation and tensile drawing, indicative of a tensile loading failure. It is most likely that this initiated at the core, on the outside of the rope (side not in contact with the carabiner), and progressing through cross section of the rope.

* With thanks to Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz for use of optical microscopy facilities.



MICROSCOPY IMAGES OF (A) A CUT END AND (B) THE FAILED END OF THE SEMI STATIC ROPE.



HIGH MAGNIFICATION MICROSCOPY OF THE ROPE, SHOWING (A) A CUT END AND (B) THE FAILED END OF THE SEMI STATIC ROPE.

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LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE: A DISCUSSION ON THE WAY DECISIONS ARE MADE IN RISK/TIME CRITICAL SITUATIONS

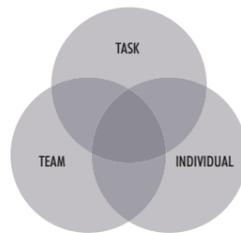
A recent meeting of the MREW training committee discussed the syllabus for a new Party Leader training course. A question was raised about the inclusion of mentoring and coaching, rightly described as an essential element of helping to pass on the benefits of accrued valuable experience to up and coming mountain rescuers. This raises important issues relating to the part that experience plays in team leadership and decision-making.

There are, of course, many theories of leadership. A whole industry has arisen promoting various ways of improving leadership skills, all of which attempt some form of definition. These are usually framed in terms of qualities, skills, attributes, environmental context, task objectives and style. Perhaps the simplest definition is that leadership is influence, nothing more and nothing less. Using the Action Centred Leadership model of John Adair, we can see that 'influence' does indeed fit the bill — in other words, influence on the task, the team and the individual.

MAKING DECISIONS

The main component of influencing the outcome of the task is effective decision-making. Classical models of decision-making are linear in nature. They assume a logical, stepped approach to identifying the task, generating options, evaluating those options before selecting the appropriate course of action. In the corporate world, huge computer programs are employed to bolster this rational process, but such logical reasoning is only part of the picture.

Psychologists are divided on the issue. There is a view that a logical approach is an essential way of bolstering emotion led thinking.



JOHN ADAIR'S ACTION CENTRED LEADERSHIP MODEL

Nobel prize winner Daniel Kahneman describes all humans as having two types of thinking: fast and intuitive and slow and logical, with the strongest decisions being made using more of the latter than the former. This approach is countered by Gerd Gigerenzer as being overly simplistic and ignoring the hugely

successful intuitive side of human decision-making. The question is, what has this got to do with party leadership in the mountains?

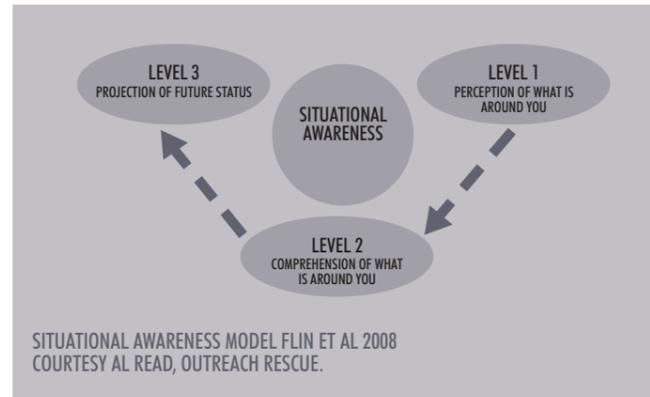
Many mountain professionals will be aware that decision-making during time/risk-critical situations require a different type of approach, one that relies far more on intuitive processes. These processes are recognised in similar fields of work such as the police and fire services as well as military operations. Rhona Flin describes such time-critical activity as naturalistic decision-making, where option identification and evaluation are carried out simultaneously at a subliminal level.

'Recognition primed decision-making' allows time critical calls to be made that rely on a personalised mental template of similar situations that lies within the mind of the decision-maker and is developed over time through reflection and a depth and breadth of experience and training.

GUT FEELINGS

Many things temper this valuable experience. In her work looking at populations in risk environments, Jacqui Wilmshurst identified a number of influences on the way that experience influences decision-making. These relate to prior knowledge, trust, self-concept, attachment to place, attributions of responsibility, decision-making style and 'beliefs'. This last element can also be seen in the context of the outdoor activity world. How do the deeply-held beliefs and values of the mountain professional impact on decision-making? A clue can be found in Loel Collins' work on the psychology of decision-making in adventure sports coaching.

Loel's work recognises the impact heuristics or rules of thumb have on professional judgment and decision-making. These 'gut-feelings' are thought processes that appear quickly in the consciousness, whose underlying reasons we are not fully aware of and yet are strong enough to be acted upon. Heuristics are simplifications of complexity based



on experience and any shortcoming in experience weakens the heuristic.

Examples of mountain-related heuristics are found in McCammon's study of avalanche incidents. He identified a number of 'decision traps' that resulted in accidents involving relatively experienced participants.

- **Familiarity:** The situation looks similar to one previously experienced.
- **Commitment:** There is a strong prior commitment to tackle this scenario.
- **Scarcity:** Personal freedom to exercise a prerogative (powder snow fever!)

There are other heuristics that are evident in the risk environment:

- **Recency:** Recent actions/thoughts/feelings can end up being accessed more easily than others, even if they are not the most appropriate for the situation.
- **Affect:** Our emotions about the situation can influence the decision-making process more strongly than 'cold' rational aspects.
- **Social:** We can make decisions we think will show us in the best light, rather than are necessarily optimal for the situation (similar to peer pressure but may not include actual pressure from others).

When people have to decide what hazards face them when going to a new or difficult place, they are likely to make an initial evaluation based on a) what they most recently thought about in relation to risks (recency), what worries/scares them the most (affect) and what other colleagues

(especially trusted ones) have told them they should worry about (social). Of course, these heuristics can be viewed both positively and negatively. The familiarity heuristic is an essential bias within the Recognition Primed Decision making model enabling quick decisions based upon limited information. Many readers will recognise that many of the times they get things right in the hills are due in part to a gut feeling based upon a certain familiarity with the situation or location: they've been there before.

However, it is crucial to recognise the importance of context in this situation. Context is the particular set of circumstances of the risk situation being faced. This is different for every event regardless of how many times such an event has taken place at that location. Failure to understand this crucial context is what turns a useful intuition into a decision trap.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Understanding context is an essential part of the three-stage situational awareness model devised by Rhona Flin et al.

1. The first element is an accurate perception of the situation, this is as much about what the perceiver feels about things as what they see or hear.
2. The second stage is a valued comprehension of the environment this can be a technical, knowledge based conclusion, but is more often than not a gut feeling based upon a

series of informed hunches.

3. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, a considered projection of future state involves a degree of crystal ball gazing, again informed as much by rules of thumb as a rational forecast. In fact, it has been shown that the degree of accuracy of hunch based compared to logic based forecasting shows very little difference in accuracy performance.

This cyclical process provides a useful framework for the evaluation of the operational/safety context. However, perception is in the eye of the beholder, which takes us back to the original point about values and beliefs. Do mountain professionals have a different set of heuristics to most other people? Loel Collins suggests that there are probably rules of thumb intuitively employed by outdoor professionals that result in an unshakeable self-confidence. These values might even be peculiar to that region, team, party or individual leader. Such self-confidence can sometimes overlook the impact of heuristics, which can be dependent on situation, desired outcome, 'validity of experience', role/position within the group and personality of the decision maker. McCammon's avalanche awareness conclusions are warning enough of the dangers of overconfidence. The expert decision maker must be aware of these limitations and monitor/modify accordingly: in essence, intuitively creating time to think.

SO WHAT?

So what has this got to do with coaching and mentoring? Well, let's assume that rules of thumb are essential elements of decision-making and that mountain professionals have their own peculiar set of collective and individual values that direct their own gut-feelings and the way they perceive the context/environment of such decisions. Let's also assume that a higher understanding of these processes leads to more consistent effective decision-making. We can then ask if such things can be taught.

Unsurprisingly, it would seem that teaching someone to have 'experience' is not at all possible, but teaching people how to be more

reflective to enable a deeper learning, to more fully embed key knowledge, experience, values — such things are teachable, and effective coaching and mentoring have a part to play. One way to do this is to introduce Action Learning, in which mountain professionals take questions into their practice or training and then reflect later on what their practice has taught them about their own process, style, beliefs etc.

Any personal development system must recognise that experience is only beneficial if the individual learns from it in both tacit and non-tacit ways and this includes an understanding of the limitations of the applicability of future uses of that experience. Such a premise should be the keystone of any coaching and mentoring scheme. It would ensure that existing mountain professionals continue to make good decisions and that the knowledge of how to do so is passed on to the next generation. ■

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PAUL AMOS IS CHAIRMAN OF TRUSTEES FOR MREW. AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT. HE IS CURRENTLY DEVELOPING A RESEARCH PROJECT LOOKING AT THE HUMAN FACTORS IN RISK AND TIME-CRITICAL SITUATIONS PARTICULARLY IN THE MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT.

DR JACQUI WILMSHURST IS A CHARTERED PSYCHOLOGIST IN THE FIELD OF RISK AND RESILIENCE WITH A BACKGROUND IN THE MILITARY.



SCOTLAND: DISTILLER CONTINUES ITS SUPPORT FOR SCOTTISH MR

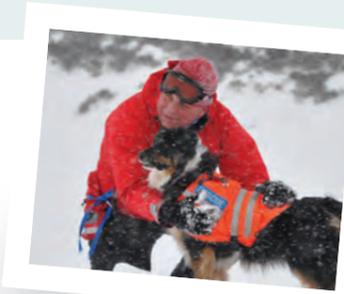
Ian Macleod Distillers will continue to support Scottish Mountain Rescue through its Isle of Skye 8-year-old Blended Scotch Whisky.

The partnership was established in October 2013 with the aim of generating essential funds and raising awareness of the importance of Scottish Mountain Rescue's voluntary work across Scotland. The first year saw the launch of the 'Isle of Skye Mountain Spirit' campaign including national advertising, PR, a dedicated website with online fundraising function, a special UK edition of the whisky and fundraising events with the first Munro Challenge involving collaboration with outdoor retailer Tiso to encourage Scots of all ages to climb a Munro and raise money for Scottish Mountain Rescue.

The company also made a cash donation of £10,000 to launch the campaign and 15 pence from the sale of each bottle of Isle of Skye 8 Year Old Blended Scotch Whisky goes directly to the charity.

Simon Steer, chairman of Scottish Mountain Rescue, said, 'This partnership has been a great success so far with funds raised for SARDA, new equipment and avalanche training through a variety of fundraising initiatives including direct funding and the Munro Challenge. We're looking forward to another successful year ahead with a second Munro Challenge and other fundraising initiatives from Isle of Skye Blended Scotch Whisky.'

5 DECEMBER WWW.MOUNTAINRESCUESCOTLAND.ORG/NEWS



LAKES DOGS BENEFIT THANKS TO WAINWRIGHT SOCIETY

Lake District dogs and their handlers, along with an animal rescue group which Wainwright supported during his lifetime, will be the joint beneficiaries of the Wainwright Society's latest fundraising efforts.

Most of the cash comes from an annual walking challenge and sales of the society's calendar. Animal Rescue Cumbria was set up 1972 to provide suitable homes for unwanted pets. Two years later, the group recruited Alfred and Betty Wainwright and registered as a charity. Wainwright continued to support the charity financially in its early years, this ceased following his death. Seven years before the formation of SARDA in 1965, Wainwright dedicated the third of his pictorial guides, The Central Fells, to 'the dogs of Lakeland, willing workers and faithful friends, and an essential part of Lakeland life.' Although he wasn't, at that time, thinking of mountain rescue dogs, he was clear that working dogs played a vital part in life on the fells. And with 2015 being the 50th anniversary of the formation of SARDA, the society hopes to raise funds for the Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs (SARDA Lakes until 2010) to replace all the training radios of dog handlers, which are a vital part of communication whilst out on the fells.'

14 DECEMBER WWW.GROUGH.CO.UK

Scottish Avalanche Information Service

REPORT FOR WINTER 2013-14

The first wave of storms arrived in late December 2013 bringing storm force south to south-westerly winds which continued for most of the winter. Snow started to accumulate above 600 metres in all the forecast areas. Escaping the snowfall, the glens and valleys of the highlands did not get the same levels of precipitation and it was perceived to be a mild and benign winter!

The first recorded avalanches took place in late November, one triggered by a person on foot and many others as a result of post-storm thaws effecting the snowpack. Storms abated for a couple of days over the Christmas period with natural avalanche debris from storm period activity observed in many areas.

Storms, snow and poor visibility returned again after this too brief respite, followed by a general thaw in all areas but cold temperatures soon returned and the snowpack stabilised.

This pattern of one or two days of calm followed by new storms, poor visibility and snowpack instability continued into March with many avalanches occurring, some human-triggered. These were often associated with colder temperatures, poorly bonded layers and snow accumulation due to wind transportation forming unstable windslab.

Continual south and south-westerly winds produced extremely large cornices overhanging many northerly aspects throughout the highlands from January, becoming progressively larger. This presented a continual potential, but unpredictable, situation regarding cornice collapse and the triggering of slopes.

February presented a period of fluctuating warm and cold temperatures with snowfall and rain. No human-triggered avalanches were recorded, but many natural avalanches due to cornice collapse took place.

Early March was generally stable, with warmer temperatures and a diminishing snowpack in a number of areas. Slow downhill movement of the deep snow accumulations due to gravity produced 'glide cracks' on many slopes. From mid-month, colder temperatures and blizzards returned with new accumulations forming unstable windslab. A period of avalanche activity triggered by persons on foot and skiers/boarders occurred over a period of four days. The end of March and the beginning of April saw a significant calming of the weather, warmer temperatures and cold nights, which brought the winter season quickly to an end.

In summary, the winter was characterised by storms and a deep snowpack in many of the mountain regions. Snowpack instabilities and avalanche activity was common during and immediately after storms but the fluctuating temperatures quickly stabilised the snowpack and presented a reduced avalanche hazard. However, no respite was presented, new storms kept arriving so there was no long-term stability.

AVALANCHE HAZARD INFORMATION

This is provided on a daily basis in the five main mountain areas of Scotland. Avalanche hazard assessment is achieved by traveling in the mountains on foot or by ski and carrying out snow profiles and field observations, noting many factors which, when combined, provide an indication of the avalanche hazard.

comprise Mountain Guides, instructors and avalanche experts from many countries and their experience and professionalism is integral to providing the best avalanche forecasting service possible to all who engage with the winter mountain environment of Scotland.

Creag Meagaidh reported the most high hazard days, as its geographical location on the border between west and east weather systems and steep mountain topography present a significant set of factors. Hazard level proportions between all five areas were fairly consistent with Considerable or High reported on 55% to 61% of the operational days.

The moderate level of hazard occurred for approximately 20-30% (circa 50% in Torridon) of the winter days. Human triggered avalanches are still a possibility at this level and it is often considered that Moderate presents strong

December to April 2014 was notable for its continual storms and significant snowfall above 600 metres in many areas, with 'exceptional amounts' witnessed in Glencoe. In fact, records from the Met Office National Climate Information Centre indicate that it was the wettest such period for Scotland overall for 100 years.



On return to base the weather forecast provided by the Met office forecaster team in Aberdeen is used for further information. A forecast is then determined and, after discussion between relevant SAIS forecasters, avalanche reports published.

The SAIS forecasters have many years of experience in avalanche hazard assessment (in most cases over fifteen years). They are experienced and committed climbers, skiers and outdoor enthusiasts, competent in all the skills necessary for safe travel in the most challenging of winter conditions. The team

potential for catching people out — the mountain traveller may be off-guard, the areas of instability are often more limited in location and may only be present in isolated, steep places, usually high up in corries. Additionally, although the snowpack may be moderately stable and limited in area, the size of a group and its spacing is critical in how people can load a snowpack with their weight and the triggering of an avalanche becoming possible.

Moderate levels of hazard therefore still require vigilance, and a good spacing out of group members in order to minimise the

loading on a slope. The five hazard levels are defined by the European Avalanche Hazard Warning Scale which is also the recognised scale worldwide.

RECORDED AVALANCHES

These are a compilation of observed avalanche occurrences from a number of different sources including SAIS observers in the five areas of operation and submitted reports from winter mountain activists and non-mountain users.

The SAIS avalanche reporting facility on the website has helped greatly with the public being able to send details of avalanche occurrence observations which, once verified, provide good information. Observations, however, require good visibility and human identification. In this respect, avalanche occurrences are recorded only where people can travel in the mountains or can see clearly from roads and paths. There are many places in the mountain areas where people do not travel or cannot see when the weather is poor so it can be assumed that a greater number of avalanche occurrences have taken place than have been recorded.

The recording of avalanche occurrences is the best indicator of the immediate short term snow stability situation. Avalanche occurrence location and the reporting of avalanche incidents is therefore very valuable in enabling the SAIS to pass on good information to the public, provide snowpack stability verification and show the extent of avalanche occurrences.

The number of occurrences recorded for winter 2013/14 was 350. Of these, 325 were natural and/or cornice release and 25 were human-triggered. Of these, three were purposefully triggered by ski patrol or SAIS observers during the hazard assessment process, nine by skiers and boarders, and sixteen by people on foot. In total, 44 people were involved in avalanches, 20 (nine on ski or board, eleven on foot) were carried down in the avalanche, but there were no fatalities.



NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED

The new website provides avalanche reports, snowpack history, blogs and weather forecasts in one location, reactively designed for use with desktop computers, tablets and smartphones. Avalanche maps have been upgraded and continue to provide up-to-date information on the location of avalanche activity, providing key information on snow stability in respect of altitudes, aspects and locations — a great resource to add to the avalanche reports.

Snow profiles are upgraded with additional information which will help interpretation. Info icons will appear when the hardness of layers or temperature gradients become potentially significant.

The 'Be Avalanche Aware' initiative is also available as an interactive program or pdf download. ■

BE SAFE AND SECURE ON YOUR FEET THIS WINTER WITH RUD SHOE CHAINS

RUD Chains offer a variety of shoe chains providing exceptional traction on snow and ice. The **RUD I-Sock** (right) is a revolutionary safety product which simply straps on to your boot and can be worn whilst driving. Lightweight, easy to fit and robust, it's an essential safety product for the emergency and delivery services, the elderly and the general public.



The **RUD Bergsteiger shoe chains** (left) are made from welded high grade steel — a perfect fit for hikers and mountain trekkers, they suit many outdoor activities. They are simple to attach and self-cleaning, available in multi-functional packaging which can be easily stowed away in your pockets.

The **RUD Alpin shoe chains** (below left) are ideal for hiking, trekking and trail running. Fitted with ultra-light quick fit crampons, they are quick and easy to fit and offer front crampons with the 'flex' system which prevents the unwanted accumulation of snow and ice. The steel hoop on the shoe's tip offers excellent stability so suitable for ice, mud and slippery surfaces.

Be safe and secure this winter with RUD's impressive winter range of snow chains, automatic snow chains and shoe chains. Don't take any chances, be safe and secure on your feet and in your car.

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[HTTP://RUD.CO.UK/PRODUCTS](http://rud.co.uk/products)



SARCOMM: OUR AIM IS TO HELP THOSE WHO HELP OTHERS

Those who participate in search and rescue operations, are by nature geared to assist others in time of need. At Sarcomm, we aim to help those who help others, by providing modern secure radio systems at reasonable cost to groups who either need to upgrade their current radio system (say CB) to a system offering better range, or maybe to comply with the requirement of their client, if working on behalf of a local council or NHS trust. We've already helped 4x4, and fast water rescue groups with their upgrades, and have supplied ground to air communications and safety radios to several air show organisers.

Sarcomm is run on a not-for-profit basis, and we are interested in hearing from volunteer groups anywhere in the country who would benefit from an upgrade in their radio communications capability.

Where groups have upgraded and may have a repeater capability, we are interested in hearing if these groups would consider a mutual arrangement for sharing of repeater space to allow interoperability across county boundaries, building upon the strong coverage provided by Sarcomm in the Midlands, where we are based.

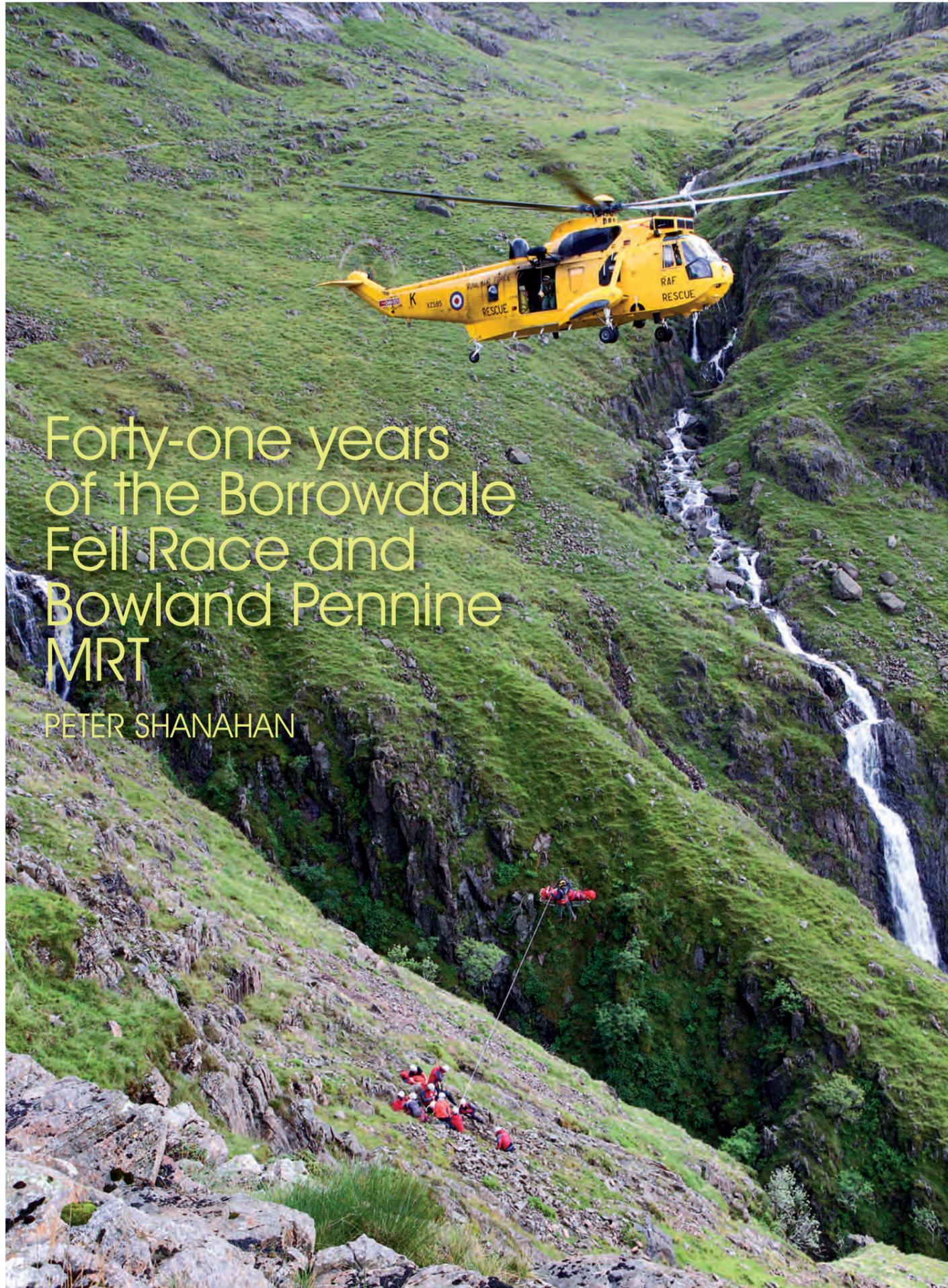
Commercial quotations for PMR users (private ambulance, security, taxi, bus, courier, recovery) are also undertaken by Sarcomm, with the profits from these contracts being ploughed back to support the volunteer rescue teams.

SO, IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO UPGRADE YOUR VOLUNTEER GROUP'S RADIO SYSTEM, OR WOULD LIKE A QUOTATION FOR A RADIO SYSTEM TO ASSIST IN THE RUNNING OF YOUR DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS, PLEASE CONTACT US AT [WWW.SARCOMM.CO.UK](http://www.sarcomm.co.uk). EMAIL [ADAM@SARCOMM.CO.UK](mailto:adam@sarcomm.co.uk) OR [CHRIS@SARCOMM.CO.UK](mailto:chris@sarcomm.co.uk)



Photo: Sarcomm provided support for the staff of Big Yellow Storage while attempting the Three Peaks Challenge in aid of Cystic Fibrosis.





Forty-one years of the Borrowdale Fell Race and Bowland Pennine MRT

PETER SHANAHAN

It's a dull start to the day in Borrowdale, and the northern fells of the Lake District have cloud on their summits. Plenty of rain came down in the night and the Derwent is looking well charged. Slowly, tents begin unzipping and stoves lit to begin a day of hill climbing, number checking, sweeping and some smiling.



there for the spot pick-ups. This leaves Bowland Pennine in a privileged position to practise skills in the Lakes alongside their Cumbrian colleagues.

The 2014 race was a little more special in that two Bowland Pennine members were running the race: myself, running in Lonsdale colours, and Paul Simpson, running for Bowland. I had done the race three times before. This would be Paul's first major fell race in the Lakes. I knew what lay ahead and tried to pass on my knowledge to Paul, who was rather nervous. We'd both marshalled in the race before and knew the safety net that BPMRT has tried and tested. The summit parties also make great food caches!

page 54

This is the Borrowdale Fell Race — a 27 km (16 mile) foot race for individual men and women competitors over some of the most challenging terrain in the Lakes, including the summit of Scafell Pike. The start and finish are at the Scafell Hotel in the village of Rosthwaite, at the southern end of Derwent Water. Held on the first Saturday of August, competitors can expect everything in this race — from scorching sunshine to winter conditions.

From jostling at the start for a position among the 500 runners, to slippery mud, scree, sharp rocks and cheering (plus brave) bystanders and the two kilometre height gain (and loss) all runners know they are in for hell of a day. But they are reassured about how seriously their safety is in this event by the presence of the Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team who will be marshalling the string of checkpoints.

Some Bowland Pennine members have stayed the night on the event field to either bring vehicles from the team's base in Lancashire or (and quite rightly) enjoy refreshments at the Scafell Hotel on a Friday night. As the runners are busying themselves with their fell shoes and race numbers, troops are making their way to the summits of Bessy Boot,

Scafell Pike, Great Gable and Dale Head. The fell parties are armed with radios, medical kit, the Sport Ident 'dibbers' and warm layers. It will be a long day, with many of the fell parties returning to control long after the finishers.

Bowland Pennine has supported the Borrowdale for 41 years and it's one of the highlights of the team calendar. It all began with

friendly discussions with Miles Jessop, owner of the Scafell Hotel, and members of the then South Ribblesdale Mountain Rescue Team for the race to be marshalled. Keswick and Wasdale MRTs, whose areas the race covers, face a busy weekend right in the middle of the summer holidays so they're unable to commit to marshalling but they're



Left: RAF extraction with assistance by BPMRT and Wasdale members to waiting helimed at Wasdale Head © Andy Holden. Top: Borrowdale 2014 completed! Paul Simpson and Peter Shanahan at the finish. Right: Runners braving the scree © Andy Holden.

Race control consists of Bowland Pennine's Search Control Unit, a Sprinter van, inside of which is an array of radios linked to MRMap for real-time tracking. Radio communications is via a repeater mast in the village which most of the main summit parties can receive. Controllers spend the day checking on competitor numbers with Borrowdale Fell Runners, the race organisers. Messages are relayed across the network on matters such as first runners past a checkpoint, possible incidents, retirements, vehicle movements, and conditions. For added interest, our positioning also gets broadcasted. In support are a team Land Rover and mini-bus to ferry troops and deal with any possible incidents.

For Paul and me there was a rude awakening on the long climb up to Bessy Boot along a calf-screaming grassy slope, arms pumping on our thighs for any extra push. The summit is reached at last and then on to Esk Hause. A short 'hello' from the first marshals, too busy jotting race number down in high winds.

It's at this point that nasty cramp sets in for me on both calves... with 25 km left to go! To add to the problems, the weather arrives in spades. The wind knocks over runners, and the driving rain means you can only look at the ground in front of you. At least all runners are sensible to actually pack decent waterproofs (as stipulated by the Fell Runners Association).

Esk Hause is reached and then it's on to the clogged-in summit of Scafell Pike, carefully negotiating the slippery boulders on Broad Crag. The Scafell Pike

summit party are hunkered down next to the cairn. I quickly make use of some of their 'spare' food whilst they are busy with information on unfolding incidents. These guys will soon be busied with a fallen runner on the descent from Scafell.

Over the four decades of supporting the Borrowdale, Bowland Pennine has had memorable experiences, mainly to do with extreme weather conditions, and antics during the evening celebrations. The marquee on the event field was the stuff of legend, with steel bands, dancing, and much merriment. Numerous camping incidents are shared each year, with erupting camp stoves, bogged vehicles, and sheltering inebriated runners who have lost their way. The Borrowdale, however, helps reinforce close bonds within the team, where new members rub shoulders with those who have seen the very first race.

The runners make their way off from Scafell Pike down a treacherous scree slope. I slide onto a rock and leave a big gash on my left thigh. No time to worry about that as the Corridor Route needs careful negotiation and onto the Sty Head checkpoint. It's good to catch friends here and is the main escape point to Seathwaite for those runners in no shape to carry on. The climb up Great Gable is simply a staircase. The summit party here often get the worst of the weather (wind, hail, lightning) and, with another quick hello, runners peel off to the east for the drop to Green Gable. If you're lucky, you can pick up the grass slope, if not, it's a nasty scramble over loose rock (with runners and

walkers above and below you!). It is with relief that the Honister slate mine comes into view. By now my legs are fading from the persistent cramp. Waiting at the road are Pete Taylor (former Bowland Pennine team leader) and John Houghton who have this spot each year and offer much welcomed support.

The last climb is Dale Head. I think I said 'Sod it!' to myself and just got on with the 30-minute walk to the top. At this point many guys passed me, including two from my club. I was slowing. The guys on the summit were good to see. By now it seemed a serious incident was unfolding back along the Corridor Route, involving Bowland Pennine MRT parties from Scafell Pike, Sty Head, Wasdale MRT and helicopters from the RAF and heli-med. I leave the Dale Head team to begin the long descent down to the slate mine above Rosthwaite where I rejoin one of my club members who has slowed up. Always nice to stick together... though I get burned off in the last mile!

Many readers will appreciate coming into the finish from a long race. There is just such a thrill to enter the last stretch with spectators cheering you on and giving the customary 'not far now'. This Borrowdale has been particularly challenging for both runners and marshals. I manage 4 hours 40 minutes. Paul comes in 30 minutes after me - an excellent effort for such a sticky day. I make use of the first aid tent run by Bowland Pennine on the event field - with the gash on my left thigh being cleaned up. Because of the incidents on the fell, it is not until four hours after the last runners come in that all fell parties return, and it becomes dark. Most were wet through. Brews were made, with our team members joined by walkers who had helped in the earlier incident on the Corridor Route.

The day ended with beers around the barbecue, then to the Scafell Hotel bar for the informal debrief. So another Borrowdale is over and Bowland Pennine returns home. For me and Paul today was very memorable. To the other runners, the support Bowland Pennine provides has allowed generations to enjoy this superb event safely — to come back next year!



Above: Borrowdale 1995.



NSARDA ON FILM

At the Emergency Services Show, in September, members of the National Search and Rescue Dog Association were delighted to be approached by a PR company wanting to create a film promoting their work.

The company was looking for an organisation that helps the emergency services and is country-wide so Harold Burrows, NSARDA chair, invited them to North Wales to see what the search dogs and handlers get up to.

Within three days the filming was complete, a rush was sent out and the final version launched. The film was sponsored by O2. Catch it at <http://youtu.be/x1HHgDSTbgo>.

8 DECEMBER WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MOUNTAINRESCUEUK



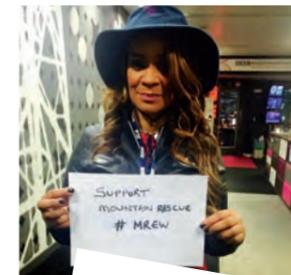
MUST-HAVE PREZZIE

Spotted on the Aberdyfi Facebook page...

Created, we read, by 'the very lovely Mrs Team Treasurer' for use on winter rescues — 'ideal for keeping call handlers warm between cups of coffee'.

We've suggested this might be a goer for the MREW shop but the Fundraising chair's not having a word of it... tsk.

10 DECEMBER WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ABERDYFISART



THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE GETS BEHIND THE 'SUPPORT MOUNTAIN RESCUE' SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Much excitement in December both on and off line, when our Royal patron agreed to show his support by joining the campaign, hand-writing his own sign and getting himself snapped.

It was our best post yet on Facebook, with 56,736 people reached and 555 shares no less! It also prompted a fair bit of comment. Interestingly, one commentator was convinced this was a Prince William lookalike, citing that the 'neck was too long and the mouth the wrong shape' but we can assure you this was the real thing.

The post also inspired a few pledges of similar support from a wide range of individuals including Rowetta, of the Happy Mondays, and Tim Farron MP — and a few others as yet to be revealed. Our national equipment officer even took time out during a trip to visit family in Australia to have himself snapped showing support against the backdrop of Sydney Opera House. He's thrown down the gauntlet as the most southern shot so far... any takers?

10 DECEMBER WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MOUNTAINRESCUEUK



FORTY YEARS OLD, FORTY SUMMITS FOR DEANNE

For her fortieth year, Midlands CRO team member Deanne Wilkins set herself a little challenge: 40 summits, over 400m throughout the year from January to December.

As a member of cave rescue most of Deanne's time is spent underground so it was good to take to the hills.

'Although I've enjoyed some easy hill walking I've felt a great achievement facing tougher challenges' said Deanne. 'Conquering Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in six days, a fantastic day's walking six summits over sixteen miles across the Berwyns and a scramble across the Nantle Ridge taking in four summits in some major mist have been among my favourites.'

'I've had a couple of failed attempts along the way, because safety has been paramount. Various friends and family have joined me on my quest. We had to abort an attempt on Cadair Idris due to a friend having an asthma attack. Getting her down was more important than reaching the summit, but we later went back and completed it. Fortunately, we never had to call on mountain rescue but I think we all know how easily things can go wrong and knowing the support would have been there is a great comfort.'

Deanne made a donation to mountain rescue as a small token of thanks. Next year, she plans to spend a bit more time underground, but there is still plenty in my sights above ground as well. She sends special thanks to her family, friends and caving pals who helped make the challenge possible.

life online

WEATHER BOMB STRANDS VEHICLES AS WINTER ARRIVES EARLY FOR SOME

The so called 'weather bomb' of snow caught a few drivers out on Carter Bar in early December, trapping many drivers in their cars.

Members of the North of Tyne and the Northumberland National Park teams joined forces with colleagues north of the Border in helping up to 100 people from their cars and towing vehicles to safety, when snow blocked to A68 on the England-Scotland border. The speed at which the snow came down took motorists by surprise and there were so many vehicles stuck, the snow ploughs couldn't get through.

11 DECEMBER WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/TVMRT



NARROW ESCAPE FROM THE SWOLLEN RIVER WEAR

Teesdale and Weardale were called to assist when Jamie McDonald got his Land Rover stuck crossing a swollen ford.

Firefighters found that the water had reached the windscreen, with the 24-year-old still trapped inside, but managed to winch him to safety through the vehicle's window as the Land Rover was washed away, and as team members were assembling on scene.

It transpired he had tried to drive across at a point where the water was two foot deep but was swept away, the vehicle turning 90 degrees as the waters rose. A very lucky man!

Facebook: facebook.com/MountainRescue.MREW
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MAKING THE GRADE



DAVE MARSH

'Well' said Neil, 'Where is it?' The reply would be the culmination of two long years of search dog training plus eighteen months watching a puppy grow to fully grown mature dog.

It started way back in January 2012. Neil phoned me asking if I'd like to take on a lovely wee dog that the then owners wanted to rehome. 'Whats the reason behind the rehoming?' I enquired.

It transpired that Sasha's owners had small children, one of which had jumped on the dog when she was asleep. Startled at being woken suddenly from her slumber, the dog snapped at the child. And, after that episode, Sasha was on her way out of their family.

Neil, being well known to the populace of Newcastle as a dog trainer, was asked if he knew of anybody who could take on the dog. He duly contacted me with one question being asked by

Yours Truly: 'Is she suitable for drowned victim search work?'

Emails were exchanged and in due course, Sasha was put on the greyhound wagon from Northern Ireland and transported across. The collection point was set for what turned out to be a wet miserable Saturday morning at Birch services on the M62 at the given time. First impressions of Sasha, once the doors opened were of a typical small, smooth-coated seven-month old collie bitch with a tail that never stopped wagging. Ideal, thought I!

And so the process of bonding with Sasha commenced. I decided not to push things along with any formal training other than the heel

and obedience work where handler and dog must work in tandem. However, once that little problem had been resolved, the larger ones loomed.

If you're looking to train a dog to search for people who have drowned, who do you turn to? Well, in this instance, Neil Powell would be the correct choice and many words were subsequently exchanged via numerous telephone conversations.

What to do? How to do it? And so on. The list was endless and also daunting in that I was training on my own.

What could be seen as minor hiccups could turn out to be major disasters if the training regime was

applied incorrectly. Fortunately, there were a series of pointers I could refer to for guidance in the guidelines compiled by Neil and John Sjoberg. Neil had met John many years ago at a conference. John had a vast pool of knowledge gained from him having trained dogs for the Swedish armed forces to detect unsolicited frogmen entering Swedish territorial waters. With Neil's experience of training similar dogs over 30 years (the first being many years in advance of anybody else in the UK), they decided to compile a set of training stages and working standards. These same standards were accepted by NSARDA in 2007 and copied and plagiarised by many others since.

The next very important step was to apply and be accepted for membership of SARDA Ireland North. Why this route? Well, the simple answer is that no other association believed in, never mind undertook, training in this specialism. So, like people who have an interest in trailing, you have to look outside your own current association for training and support. And that's what I got by the bucketful with Ireland North.

Alongside Neil, there is John Lowery, a member of the Mourne Underwater Search Team and his right-arm man Rodney. More of both later.

The guidelines are exactly that. Guidelines. If a problem arose, it warranted a quick call to Neil to sort things out. However, another helping hand appeared on the horizon in the shape of Mike Dermody.

I had met Mike during my days as an air scenting handler, meeting up with Mike and Mick (don't get confused now — these are two separate people). Mike was working for Greater Manchester Police as an experienced dog handler (cadaver, drugs, bombs; general purpose etc) and Mick Dewar from Greater Manchester Fire Search and Rescue was in the process of training search dog Echo for disaster work, both here and abroad. Echo is a golden

Labrador with a wonderful temperament and well-suited to the job he was being trained for. So, the three amigos would meet up on a very regular basis for training with no hint of politics in any discussions.

As I was drawn into the training regime, Mike indicated he'd like to have a go with his dog, a Belgian Malinois by the name of Quincy. So, with the assistance of a very experienced dog handler, training was up and running with earnest. What followed was building an understanding of what was required, how to train for it and whether there were any additional routes we could use to broaden our understanding.

One of the numerous contacts Mike had made was with Peter Cross from the University of Central Lancashire. Peter is the course tutor for Forensic Anthropology at the School of Forensic and Investigative Sciences. He runs the Taphonomic Research in Anthropology Centre for Experimental Studies site in Lancashire where studies in human decomposition are undertaken.

As well as being able to ask for advice from Peter, we also had Lorna Irish to turn to for advice about how a dog is able to locate bodies in water. Lorna is studying for a PhD at the University of Huddersfield after completing the first year at Cranfield University. She works closely with police forces and other organisations around the world to try to improve the understanding of victim recovery and drowned victim search dogs.

Well, I had everything in place and the only thing left to do was train the dog. It so happened that Neil had decided to run another preliminary DVSD course over in Northern Ireland, so Mike and I decided to register our interest. The journey over saw us link up with Harold Burrows, NSARDA Chairman, Ken Sloan of SARDA England and Philip Eichman from ALSAR. This was due to the fact that NSARDA had decided to invite interested parties from sister organisations in order that people

would be trained and assessed to the national standards approved by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

The weekend course consisted of lecture room presentations and discussions on how scent was dissipated, the stages of training etc. The classroom part was followed by practical sessions on Castlewells Lake, Castlewells. Also present were the MUST dive team (Mourne Underwater Search Team) and John Sjoberg, who'd flown in from Sweden. By the end of the weekend, lots had been learned and digested for future training. I should mention that Neil and his dog Fern were also re-assessed and given another two-year operating ticket, so no resting on your laurels once qualified!

It can be noted at this juncture, that numerous training sessions were organised and attended by Mike and me on a local level along with many trips back to Northern Ireland with NSARDA supporting course accommodation costs. One trip involved us travelling up to Derry, to work the River Foyle. The river is half a kilometre wide and sixteen metres deep in places. The tidal race is strong and fast (an understatement!) making it difficult for searches. However, both dogs located and indicated a position which was subsequently searched by towed sonar. Once analysis had been completed, divers retrieved the target two metres from where both dogs had indicated.

Training sessions came and went with the ultimate dates of assessments looming fast. These were set for August 2014 at Lough Neagh, Northern Ireland. The inshore lifeboat crew assisted on the first day with us working the lough by ourselves the following day. With the weather deteriorating fast, it was decided to let Mike and Quincy have precedence and this proved to be the correct decision. The dog passed and then the weather deteriorated so fast, we were unable to continue with our assessments. Neil and John indicated they wanted to see

Sasha and I completing a full assessment before we could be considered 'fit for purpose'.

Roll on two months and the opportunity arose in early October. I'd been given the parameters of a search area with a full scenario briefing. The method of search was discussed and then we were off. Rodney drove the boat, Neil watched me intently and I watched Sasha. The area was searched on sweeps at 90 degrees to the wind and, over a two-hour period, we'd covered most of the lake at Castlewells (2 x 0.5 kms). After a break for lunch, searching recommenced with Sasha indicating after twenty minutes. The search area was narrowed down and that is when Neil asked the question 'Well, where is it?' Squeaky bum time followed with me indicating at a point in the lake. Neil asked Rodney where the target was (Rodney had placed it). A wind puffer was produced to check the wind and it transpired we were three metres from target.

Neil turned to me with a smile on his face and the words 'Well done, you've passed!'

So, where do we go from here. Well, it's reported there are at least 168 drownings in England alone in one year. I know approximately 60% of the missing have been found within the initial search stages but it's the remaining percentage we will be most suited to search for. For that, Mike and I need access to a boat, trailer and vehicle to tow them, so a bit of fundraising work is required to start with. We're also working on raising our profile with the police and the various police dive teams. The Police National Search Centre is following what we do with interest and the Chief Fire Officer for Merseyside has forwarded our names for inclusion on the DEFRA register in relation to Flood Disaster Relief.

I've also made contact with Humber Search and Rescue with a view to meeting up with three firemen who are members and wish to train a dog to help in their searches on the River Humber.

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