

# mountain rescue

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**56** SPRING  
2016



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



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## WELCOME TO ISSUE 56

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

### EDITORIAL

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### NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 57

Editorial Copy Deadline: Friday 3 June 2016

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).

## Cover story

An walker with a suspected ankle fracture is stretched by Buxton team members for two kilometres on Kinder Scout in January. Dense cloud had prevented helicopter assistance. The casualty stoically declined an ambulance, and was driven to hospital by a friend © Buxton MRT.

### PLEASE NOTE

Articles carried in Mountain Rescue do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Mountain Rescue England and Wales. We do not accept responsibility for advertising content.

# Word <sup>first</sup>



MIKE MARGESON

The RAF disbandment parade of the search and rescue force has been and gone and the last step of the SAR migration process is complete with the transfer of the Aeronautical Rescue Coordinating Centre Kinloss, to the new MCA National Maritime Operations Centre NMOC at Fareham. It is, indeed, a time of a great deal of change and we need to work together to maximise the benefits and direction of these changes.

I am strongly optimistic that the future looks positive. I am struck by the recent experience and clear warning messages from north of the Border and convinced that we are stronger together. This was well illustrated and demonstrated in December in our responses to the floods. Although there is still much to learn and develop, I am sure that the national team leaders' meeting in April will pull together learning and help shape future developments. We responded in ways that would not have been possible five years ago.

This leads me to Mike France's closing comments in the last magazine, on the topic of the formation of a new Operations group. The specialist working groups and subcommittees do a huge amount of invaluable work. I am now posing the question: how well integrated is this work?

Our subcommittee specialist structure was set up for the MRC a long time ago. I am firmly of the view that we need to look at and review this. A model has been discussed and put forward of an operations group which would bring together the operational issues from the regions to directly engage with the specialist subcommittee officers. This whole operational area would, of course, need to include the MITG and SARCALL, as well as the dogs. This idea has been discussed in the last regional

chairs' meeting and it is clear there are many and varied views on this. I would encourage regions to discuss this more and make their views known.

It is fantastic news that the first MREW Bell stretcher, CE-marked and medically approved, ran off the production line at Lyon Equipment and was dispatched to Glosop team. It has been a long and difficult process to get production back and in service. A few people have worked incredibly hard behind the scenes, to whom we owe much thanks for ensuring this vital piece of equipment is available again to teams. I would like to set the challenge to our new equipment officer to undertake the research and development of the new Mark 4 MREW Bell stretcher. Maybe a new joining system, perhaps round upper rail rather than box, and telescopic carrying handles?

Tim Cain continues to make good progress with our Peer Review project. I would encourage any team considering the process to talk to Tim, or to members of Bowland Pennine or Wasdale, the first two teams to have put themselves under the microscope.

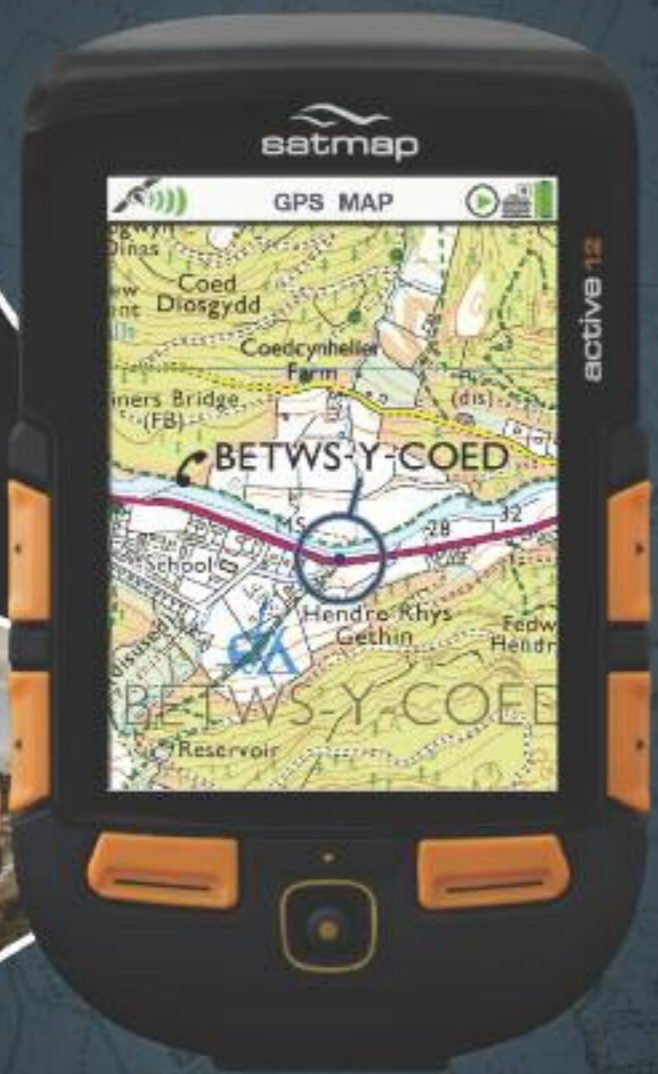
Finally, back to the topic of helicopters, and a worrying note regarding the new SAR-H training scheme. After an initially promising start, it would appear that significant numbers of team members are either out-of-date or have not yet completed the iSAR computer-based Stage 1 basic training for the aircraft that they may encounter. This is most disappointing as it only takes about ten minutes to complete so must surely be the minimum to allow a team member to work with a Coastguard aircraft. I would urge teams and team members to address this issue with some haste. ●

See King © Judy Whiteside.



Farewell to old friends...page 7

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way ahead



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**national news**

**meetings**

**MREW BUSINESS AND COMMITTEES**  
Saturday 21 May 2016  
Lancashire Police HQ, Hutton

**MREW BUSINESS AND COMMITTEES**  
Saturday 17 November 2016  
Lancashire Police HQ, Hutton

To book in, contact: **Dave Close**  
[secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
Or speak to the relevant officer for your subcommittee – contact details available on the MREW website.

**MOUNTAIN+CAVE RESCUE AWARENESS**

**30 OCTOBER 2016**



**CHANGE OF DATE FOR MOUNTAIN AND CAVE RESCUE AWARENESS DAY**

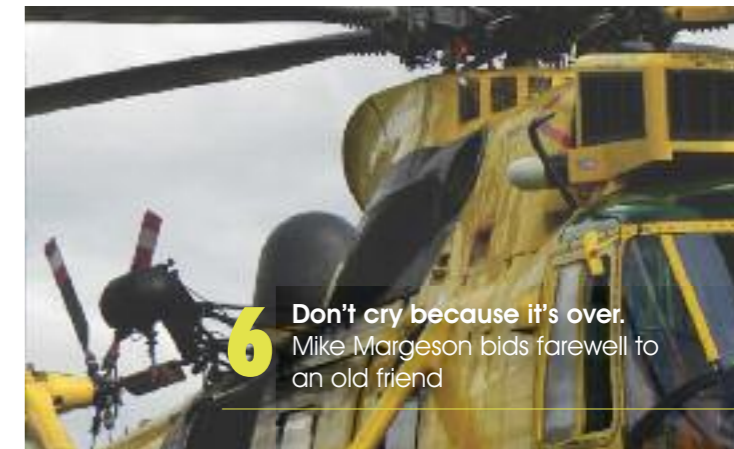
Following discussion about how to maximise the impact of this national Awareness Day, we've decided to move the event to Sunday 30 October, the day the clocks go back. This should allow all of us – locally and nationally – to capitalise on the safety messages associated with darker nights and approaching winter conditions.

'We're aware that May Bank Holiday events and collections are a great focus for local team activity,' said Andy Simpson, MREW Press Officer, whose Publications committee has suggested the change of date, 'and we would encourage teams to continue with these events.'

'However, looking at the bigger picture, we're aiming to raise national awareness beyond the usual audience for mountain and cave rescue, so we're keen to try the October date, with its darker evenings and the approach of winter conditions and the inherent safety messages implied. We're also keen to run the day at a time when fewer teams have established events.'

'We'll keep everyone posted through the summer months and make promotional posters available later in the year.'

**inthisissue**



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Mike Margeson bids farewell to an old friend

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Ed Proudfoot looks back over the team's history



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Don't cry because it's over.  
Smile because it happened.

RAF Sea King at rest © Judy Whiteside.

**THE SEARCH AND RESCUE FORCE DISBANDMENT PARADE RAF VALLEY 18 FEBRUARY 2016**

MIKE MARGESON

Our president Peter Bell, and myself as vice chairman, had the privilege and honour to represent civilian mountain rescue at this historic and special moment and celebration for the RAF SAR force.

A fitting programme and day, planned and masterminded with (not surprisingly) immaculate precision, was watched closely by a significant number of senior and high ranking RAF officers, TV crews and, of course, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

The formal celebrations took place in a hangar adjacent to the Valley SAR Force headquarters building. A full parade ceremony with the RAF marching band and all three SAR force Squadrons 22, 202 and 203 in full parade dress. At the end of the hangar was an extremely shiny Sea King MK 3 and the distinctive Westland Whirlwind. There had been considerable polishing duties going on! The marching band started up behind the aircraft to bring in the squadrons, and then played as the standards, salute and review of the parade were taken by Air Marshall North.

After the formal events there was a short address by the force Commander Group Captain Bentley and a ten-minute montage film of the Whirlwind Wessex and Sea King aircraft in action over the years on a big screen, with a choir made up of service personnel children singing very beautifully and quietly in Welsh. For many of the older SAR force personnel present, some of the footage going back many years must have been extremely poignant.

The Duke and Duchess met with present and past SAR Force personnel and the proceedings concluded with an aircraft fly past. My overwhelming impression of the day was that of so much pride of such a fantastic job well done. I would like to conclude on a personal note of thanks for the number of times on rescues I have been so relieved to hear and see that yellow aircraft arriving, or the winchman descending towards me. The programme for the day concluded with the quote 'Don't cry because its over, smile because it happened.' ●



**SAR-H MIGRATION UPDATE: MARCH 2016**

JOHN HULSE

**The ARCC moves to Fareham**

The new National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) at Fareham is now fully operation and handling the calls that previously went to the ARCC facility at Kinloss. The Kinloss site is in a transition mode 'shadowing' the NMOC with the plan to complete the transfer by 1 April 2016. After this point, all requests for HM Coastguard SAR-H aircraft will be wholly managed by the NMOC/ARCC team at Fareham. This team currently consists of a mix of MCA operations specialists and embedded RAF personnel on secondment from Kinloss ARCC.

All MR requests for SAR-H aircraft will continue to be made in the normal manner through the police who will contact the NMOC/ARCC on our behalf. There is no change to this process.

The original ARCC phone number links direct to the ARCC team in the NMOC. After the full transition, new phone numbers will be provided and distributed to teams.

The tasking method for RAF Mountain Rescue Service (RAF MRS) teams has changed in the MoD and they are now in a different part of the RAF. However, the RAF MRS are still available for civilian SAR tasking subject to the usual criteria. All requests for the RAF MR teams by civilian MR teams must be made in the normal manner through the police. They will contact the NMOC/ARCC, who will then contact the relevant MoD duty officer to discuss the tasking. Team leaders should not make direct contact with the RAF MRS requesting their support prior to the operational tasking being agreed by the MoD.

SARCALL is now fully implemented in the new NMOC/ARCC so please fully use the incident log facility to share operational situational awareness with all our partners.

We expect further details of the NMOC/ARCC processes during April and will keep you informed as soon as possible.

**SAR-H aircraft**

All the SAR-H bases serving MREW areas have now transitioned from military SAR helicopters to HMCG helicopters operated by Bristow. The transition has been mostly painless and we are getting high quality and responsive SAR-H service from the new aircraft, often flown by the same crews as the military SAR aircraft.

The Bristow iSAR Computer Based Training (CBT) system has been a real success with 2,206 MREW team members enrolled in the system at the end of February 2016.

Pauline Hallett who is a team leader with Ogwen Valley MRO and the MR SPoC for the Caernarfon SAR-H base, has taken on the role of iSAR Single Point of Contact for MREW teams into Bristow at Aberdeen. If you have any iSAR issues, please contact Pauline on isar@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

The CBT lessons for each aircraft takes only about ten minutes and will enhance your understanding and safety in and around the aircraft. In the interests of operational efficiency and safety, we need to get this training completed as a matter of urgency.

In the southern MREW regions, you may well encounter either the S-92A or the AW139 helicopters. Please ensure that you have done the computer-based training (CBT) packages for both aircraft. We are also asking NWMRA teams to complete the training for both aircraft as the St Athan AW139 has been operational in NWMRA whilst the Caernarfon S-92A was away in the Lakes. There are still a lot of teams in the dual-aircraft footprint where the required CBT has not been completed by a significant number of team members. Please can all teams ensure that all their members have completed the required packages and are 'current' within the twelve months timespan.

Most of the SAR-H bases are now actively using SARCALL to improve their situational awareness. In many cases, an alert SMS is sent to the base whenever an MR team is called out by a police force or ambulance service. Please can all teams work to keep the open incident log updated and relevant to help the aircrew help you!

Finally, please keep in close contact with your regional MR SAR-H SPoCs who are working hard on your behalf to develop excellent relationships with the SAR-H Base crews to help you obtain the best possible training and exercise opportunities. ●

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.

## Understanding each other

There have been a few instances recently when it's proved hard to explain to journalists how MR works (and why it works in the way it does) without confusing things or creating problems. And, similarly, there've been a few times when I've needed to explain how journalists see things to MR contacts too.

In the hope that it will help others in similar situations, here are a few points based on the advice I've given individuals and teams.

• **If you don't want to see it in print, don't say it** — it's unfair to put a journalist in the position of knowing something interesting and yet expecting them not to use it. They have a job to do (and tend to be curious by nature) and you're only making it harder if you try to insist that something is 'off the record'. What usually happens is that something along the lines of what you said will turn up on the page — along with the proverbial hitting the fan.

As those who've done the MREW media training will remember, there should be only three answers to a question: I know and can tell you, I know but can't tell you and I don't know. Anything else is risky or speculative.

• **Keep it simple and don't be surprised if it is then simplified even further** — rescues and searches aren't straightforward and trying to get everything into your press report can confuse things. It's worth getting someone else to read your report with fresh eyes and see if they can follow it easily before you issue it. Be prepared to simplify the chronology and don't be surprised if the reporter (or the sub-editor) simplifies it even further.

It can be upsetting to see facts mixed up

and printed in error but, unless there's been a deliberate attempt to twist what you said, leave it and move on. Asking for (or, worse, demanding) apologies and corrections can easily sour media relationships and will usually fail or, at best, draw attention to the error. The best advice in these circumstances is to make sure your own sources (website posts, social media etc) are accurate and clear.

• **Make sure recent recruits to your team know your rules** — new members are usually enthusiastic, keen to talk about their work and they can be good sources of fresh ideas and contacts. But be aware they may not realise you have rules about who posts on social media (and when) and who talks to journalists. Not making them aware of how you do things can lead to problems. Best to anticipate this and ensure that team media protocols are all part of the induction and training process.

• **Journalists use social media too** — a couple of times recently, teams have been surprised that a journalist has picked up on a story or a picture or a piece of video as 'we didn't send a release out to them'. Many teams now have 1000s of Likes on their Facebook pages and 1000s of Followers on Twitter. It would be unusual if none of those people were journalists. Bear this in mind with the timing and content of your posts,

remind team members about it and then be prepared to respond if the call comes to follow up with comments or an interview.

Finally, here is one point for journalists that you might be able to use in your dealings with them too.

• **Not naming and shaming casualties is actually enlightened self interest** — some journalists will push team spokespeople to criticise those they've rescued but, generally, teams try to avoid this and prefer to make broader statements about being prepared, being equipped and planning for the weather. Similarly, reporters often want a team's view on charging for rescue or similar approaches.

If your journalist contact is getting frustrated by your insistence on saying very little, it's perhaps worth reminding them of how many donations to the team are made by casualties, their friends and family — so, in fact, many ARE paying and it would be crazy of the team to upset the very people who are often their greatest supporters!

I hope some of these are useful in planning and anticipating your media contacts. It's all about avoiding the problems rather than firefighting if you can and you may have your own advice to share. If so, please get in touch with [sally@stoneleighcomms.co.uk](mailto:sally@stoneleighcomms.co.uk) or via the Editor. Thanks. ●

### NOT NAMING AND SHAMING CASUALTIES IS ACTUALLY ENLIGHTENED SELF INTEREST



## INSURANCE UPDATE:

NEIL WOODHEAD

North Wales Police have managed the re-tendering of our national **personal accident** policy for us with new brokers AJ Gallaghers. As I write, we are awaiting policy documents from Aviva. Copies will hopefully have been circulated before this goes to print.



The **civil liability** policies have been renewed with Brit Insurance. Many thanks to all those who returned their annual declaration, despite our request for its completion being delayed this year. Your assistance in responding quickly is much appreciated.

Remember, as always, if you've any queries please just email and I'll give you what help I can but please note I cannot give professional advice to teams or individuals — for that you must speak to your insurance broker. You can contact me via [insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk).

## SARCALL UPDATE: JOHN HULSE

SARCALL continues to grow quickly. The latest key new user is the National Maritime Operations Centre (NMOC) ARCC team at Fareham. The operations controllers at the NMOC are making significant use of the system to improve their situational awareness when dealing with land SAR operations. To help ensure all partners get the most from

SARCALL, it is very important that teams keep the incident logs up-to-date and relevant.

In addition, most of the SAR helicopter bases also actively use SARCALL as a means of improving their situational awareness of land operations.

There were some really valuable lessons from the flood events in December. To make the system more usable in major incidents, an optional new mode will put parts of SARCALL into a workflow task mode, enabling far easier use in complex and wide-area operations. More details to come in May!

We've made it even easier for team leaders to obtain the SMS response results for their team. The team leader can send the new command 'STX' followed by the team

abbreviation to SARCALL, which then returns an SMS to the team leader's phone. This SMS contains the abbreviated names of all team members who've responded with either 'Available' or 'Late/Limited'.

This facility will take some of the guesswork out of knowing who is responding to the call-out.

Security remains critical and the new registration scheme enables implementation of a range of services such as terms and conditions acceptance, re-registration, renewal notices and so forth.

If you have any questions, either get in touch with your regional admins or raise a Helpdesk ticket.



## OBIT



## PETER HOWELLS OBE MStJ

1948 – 2016

On 25 January, mountain rescue lost a giant when Peter passed away, aged 68, after an eight-month battle with cancer. His brother-in-law, **Oliver Crispin** pays tribute to a remarkable man.

At Peter's funeral, (in a Newport Cathedral packed to the brim with red jackets) the family placed a number of items on his coffin, each one symbolising different facets of Peter's life: his Scout belt, his electrician's tools, boots and gaiters, his medals and police hat, his pipe (of course) and a bottle of Merlot. The label on the bottle read: *'Founding Member — the most famous wine in the country, couples decades of experience and tradition with its encouragement, energy and*



Peter and Penny on their wedding day in 2005. All images © Penny Brockman.

*passion. Characteristically vibrant yet a little bit smoky, has a purity of truth that sees energy and electrically trained flavours with Special Commandant aromas. This is a classically elegant and beautifully-made wine. Can be drunk alone, but best drunk in company. Brought to you by a friendly, enriching, knowledgeable, respected, inspirational, gifted, funny and dedicated family company: Howells Brockman plc.'*

These words epitomised Peter.

A founding member of the Morlais MRT in 1963 (now Central Beacons), Peter was the consummate 'mountain rescuer'. Over the years, he served as team leader and chairman, and held a number of high-profile roles at regional and national level. He was key to the development of national search management courses, instrumental in bringing the likes of Don Cooper and Skip Schoffel across from the US to share their knowledge and chaired a number of successful UK MR conferences.

If this wasn't enough, Peter also served Gwent Police for more than four decades. He joined the Special

Constabulary with South Wales Police in September 1969, and Gwent Police four years later after moving to Newport. He worked his way up through special constabulary sergeant, inspector, divisional and then headquarters commandant and deputy chief officer, achieving chief officer in 1996.

He represented the Welsh region at the Special Constabulary National Coordination Group for national policy meetings, was a founding member of the National Strategy Project team and a member of the National Recruitment Standard Project team.

Peter was born in Dowlais where his father owned and ran a newsagent and tobacconist. Scouting and the discovery of a schoolboy interest in electricity very much set the stage for his life. He became a volunteer with the Civil Defence Corp in 1963 and remained a member until it was disbanded in 1967. In his professional life, Peter was apprenticed into SWALEC, ultimately becoming a technical trainer.

But it was the Aberfan disaster in 1966 that proved a defining moment in his life. Just nineteen years old, his involvement in the rescue operation shaped a determination to make a difference to his community.

When Peter was nominated for a national honour for what was then a mere forty years service, there were three defining reasons — mountain rescue, the Special Constabulary, and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Peter was awarded his OBE in 2005 and proudly used his post-nominals at every opportunity.

The best anyone can hope for is to leave this world a better place. Peter did this. There are people alive today or who will survive an incident in the future because of the work he did.

But perhaps one of the things we are most proud of is his belief in gender diversity. Due to his encouragement and leadership skills, the Central Beacons team has grown to have one of the highest percentages of female members in the country including a female leader. In what remains predominantly a male environment, he understood and recognised the strength and power of women.

That female team leader, of course, is his wife Penny Brockman, who also serves as MREW financial director. It was their mutual commitment to mountain rescue that brought them together and, with their marriage in 2005, Peter gained an extended family who he loved dearly as his own. He spoke with love and pride of what his own daughter Rachel had achieved. And as for Penny, he would tell her every day he loved her and he never tired of telling people this. Together they made an entirely complimentary team with different but equally valuable skills. The fact that they were soulmates was evident to all.

Peter faced his illness with great courage, fully aware of the likely outcome. He drew huge comfort from the many prayers, letters and practical support he received but he talked about his illness with ease in a very matter-of-fact way.

Carried in on a Bell stretcher by team members, Peter's coffin was greeted at the cathedral by the Standard of St John and a Gwent Police Guard of



Honour including Chief Constable Jeff Farrar who saluted the coffin. Team members also formed their own Guard of Honour. A cortège of some ten mountain rescue vehicles, blue lights flashing, later escorted Peter to the crematorium.

Peter doesn't just leave his wife and daughter, her husband Jon, and grandchildren Maddie and John-Henry. He also leaves us, his extended family: Sarah, Penny's twin, myself and our children Josette, Hermione, Rollo (Peter's godson) and Fabian. We will all miss him terribly. ●

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](mailto: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](mailto: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: DAVE CLOSE

[secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk) or  
Acts as an interface between teams, regions and the MREW management team. He is a member of Dartmoor SRT (Ashburton).



### FINANCIAL DIRECTOR: PENNY BROCKMAN

[treasurer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
Penny continues in the role in lieu of a new appointment. She manages MREW finances and the administration of grant monies and continues to review the financial systems. Penny is team leader of Central Beacons MRT.



### MEDICAL: MIKE GREENE

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



### VEHICLES: DARYL GARFIELD

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Works with the police, Government and teams in all matters 'vehicles'.  
Vice chair: Paul Smethurst: [smethyp@gmail.com](mailto:smethyp@gmail.com)



### WATER: ANDY LEE

[waterofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:waterofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
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: [iain@sardogs.org.uk](mailto:iain@sardogs.org.uk)



### EQUIPMENT: JOHN WEALTHALL

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John takes over from Richard Terrell, looking after all things equipment. He is a member of Duddon and Furness MRT.



### ASSISTANT SECRETARY: ELAINE GILLILAND

[assistant-secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:assistant-secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
Assists Dave Close in the secretary role. Elaine is a member of Bolton MRT.



### TRAINING OFFICER: AL READ

[trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
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](mailto:tim@timcainleadership.co.uk)



### BCRC: BILL WHITEHOUSE

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

## external trustees



### CHAIR OF TRUSTEES: PAUL AMOS

[paul.amos@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto: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

[steve.wood@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:steve.wood@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
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](mailto: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

[peter.dymond@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:peter.dymond@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
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.



### MREW CHAIRMAN: MIKE FRANCE

[chairman@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto: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

[shirley.priestley@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:shirley.priestley@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
Shirley has been a member of the Scarborough and Ryedale MRT since 1990, during which time she has undertaken a variety of roles at all levels. She is also treasurer of the Benevolent Fund.



### PRESIDENT: PETER BELL

[president@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:president@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
Shirley has been a member of the Scarborough and Ryedale MRT since 1990, during which time she has undertaken a variety of roles at all levels. She is also treasurer of the Benevolent Fund.

### VICE PRESIDENT: TONY JONES

## internal

## specialist advisers



### EDITOR: JUDY WHITESIDE

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



### INSURANCE: NEIL WOODHEAD

[insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
Member of Kinder MRT and chairman of the Benevolent Fund. He is consulted by the management team and other specialist advisers on insurance matters, helping to manage the insurances we have in place. He will also offer basic help and assistance to teams with their general queries.



### SAR-H: JOHN HULSE

[SAR-H@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:SAR-H@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
The creator of SARCALL and a team leader of the Ogwen Valley MRO, John continues to lead on the SAR-H migration process.



### PR SUPPORT: SALLY SEED

[sally@stoneleighcomms.co.uk](mailto:sally@stoneleighcomms.co.uk)  
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: ROB SHEPHERD

[statisticsofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:statisticsofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
Collects and collates incident information from the teams. A member of Llanberis MRT and North Wales CRO, he is also involved with SARDA Wales.



### PROCUREMENT OFFICER: DAVIE THOMSON

[procurementofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:procurementofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk)  
Davie will be looking to establish an effective purchasing policy, including an online catalogue and training modules in how to negotiate better deals at team level. He is a member of Swaledale MRT.



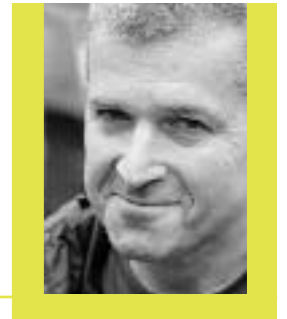
...turn to page 40 for BCRC contacts





## OVERVIEW TIM CAIN

This is the second report on the new peer review process. It follows the second review, conducted for Wasdale team in late February, Bowland Pennine, the first team to take advantage of the process, completed the formal part of their review in the latter part of 2015 (see MR Mag 55, Winter 2015, p.10 for 'A Personal View').



# Peer review episode two: Wasdale MRT



Learning from the reviews conducted so far, it has become apparent that the minimum time required to conduct an effective analysis is two full days (a weekend). Day one is spent round a table discussing the team's responses to the 'question set'. This is a set of questions intended to 'hold up the mirror', generate a discussion and raise awareness of how the team approaches the key areas of operational effectiveness. The questions are constantly evolving to reduce duplication and to be more effective in what they seek to interrogate.

The team owning the review and their invited reviewers have an active part in distilling the questions for the teams who follow. We have reduced the initial set from well over 100 questions to 96 for the next review at Kendal in May. The team decides who answers each question or group of questions. Ideally this involves as many team members as possible, to engage in the debate and encourage ownership.

On day one, successful exchange of ideas around the questions relies on stakeholders being fully represented, even if only for part of the day. We have found that there is further opportunity for informal discussions on the Saturday night in the bar. Day two is the opportunity for the reviewers to talk to as many team members as possible and to get the grass roots opinion of how well their team does business. A call-out scenario exercise is a great way of doing this. Embedding the reviewers within the exercise worked really well during the Wasdale visit and even provided an extra pair of hands on the stretcher.

Here I should explain: The reviewers are selected by the team from a pool of twenty-two very experienced mountain rescue volunteers. (We need more volunteers to help as reviewers.) The team invites two people, from those who are available, to join me during the visit. John Hulse (Ogwen) and Dr Dave Strachan (Swaledale) acted as reviewers for Wasdale. Our ground rules explicitly forbid us from offering an opinion. Our role is to make observations about what we think we have seen and ask questions to confirm that what we have seen is a true reflection of reality.

It is not our job to offer our advice or opinion. Our job is to raise the team's own awareness about what they do well and

perhaps not so well. Clearly, our experience might be of value and it allows us to ask powerful, challenging questions which make team members think: Why do we do it that way? Should the team wish to explicitly ask a reviewer for their opinion, the reviewers can of course oblige — offering opinion being an MR strength! Teams are also offered an additional 'observer' from outside organisations who joins the visit to offer an alternative perspective during discussions. For example Mark Leyland from Scottish Mountain Rescue will be observing the Kendal review visit.

The process is already highlighting shared challenges for our community of practice:

- 'How do we prepare people for leadership roles?'
- 'How do we fit all the training objectives we need to achieve into the limited time available?'
- 'What's good practice for keeping track of individual training currency and competency?'
- 'How do we maintain our numbers of team members, particularly experienced mountaineers and hillwalkers?'
- 'How is safety managed most effectively during team practices — what's the value of a dedicated safety officer?'
- 'What does good Trauma Risk Incident Management look like?'
- 'How will the team be structured and operating in five years time?'
- 'How do we 'plug in' to the statutory emergency services during major incidents?'

A shared dialogue about these challenges in this publication will help us all to learn and develop.

In summary, the peer review process is developing extremely well. Feedback from both Bowland Pennine and Wasdale teams has been constructive and positive. It is still early days, we have another five teams with dates in the diary and three more have expressed a real interest, but have yet to book their dates. Understandably some teams are watching to assess the outcome of the initial experiences. Only one team has explicitly stated that they are not interested.

Top, left to right: Duddon & Furness MRT 'virtual base'; Second incident casualty care. Centre: Landing the catch! Bottom: Second incident – casualty evacuation. Opposite page: Hands on for casualty care. Images © Wasdale MRT.; First incident – view of casualty.



We're still finding our way, evolving the process to maximise the benefit, firstly to the team undergoing the review and secondly for our wider 'community of practice'. This report seeks to explain the evolving process, discuss the developments and begin to explore some of the emerging issues, which are common to us all.

Peer review seeks to allow the team to gain a greater awareness of how well it does business, so it can develop and enhance its performance. The process is owned by the team, for the team, with most of the effect achieved internally during the four to six month review period. This period includes an initial coordination meeting with me, receiving and considering the question set, the visit itself, feedback conversations, deciding what to do with lessons learned and how to share these lessons with colleagues, regionally and nationally.

As we progress, unexpected outcomes are becoming apparent, not least the relationships being forged between reviewers and team members. These will continue, sharing good ideas, into the future. Following their review, Bowland Pennine suggested a follow-up visit one year on. It was thought this would help the team maintain momentum with their ongoing development.

## TEAM PERSPECTIVE JOHN BAMFORTH, CHAIRMAN

We first heard of the review process when Mike Greene, our medical officer at the time (and MREW Medical Officer) raised the subject at one of our bi-monthly committee meetings. It's fair to say that whilst there was general support for the idea and most felt it was good practice to be constructively challenged, there was a good degree of reticence in being first, or one of the first teams, to go through the process.

At the next LDSAMRA meeting in September 2015 I made a beeline for Mike Margeson and asked him bluntly what the whole thing was about. The answers that came back were good. Mike said the process for selecting the lead person was in progress. With the majority of the committee backing the idea and a good dollop of trepidation I volunteered us to be one of the first.

The next we knew was we were the second team on the proverbial chopping block and Tim contacted us in early October to arrange the introductory session. I chose to have with me two people who are shadowing me as chair for succession planning reasons (a recurring theme later on) and who were independent from the elected committee.

When Tim arrived, we had a look round the base and quickly settled into the easy banter of what was happening in MR. It was explained that this was our process and we set out some basic ground rules. Tim was at pains to point out that any learning output was ours. If we chose to, we could share it with other teams and the wider peer review process and it seemed churlish not to do so. It seemed to us we had a golden opportunity to 'have the mirror held up' by experienced MR buddies in order to learn and better prepare for the future.

Then the hard work began with a questionnaire containing 96 questions covering all aspects of MR. It was then I really understood that running a team is a complex business. Like many things we come to do regularly, we gradually become at ease with the minutiae that make up the whole. It's only when they're laid out, you realise how complex they can be. For example, we try and take the best things from our personal and work lives and adapt them to our MR world but this can be fraught with problems. The world of the

volunteer in a mountain rescue team is not the same as the structured world of work or our own personal space.

The scoring system was straightforward:

1. Area for development
2. Developing
3. Developed
4. Highly developed.

Although Tim said we shouldn't agonise whether we were a '2' or a '3' in the spectrum, we felt we should give proper consideration to the answers. So how did we 'eat the elephant' of a questionnaire? Well, although the questionnaire has a structure in terms of learning outcomes, we added another column onto the spreadsheet allocating the question to the relevant committee officer or subject matter expert and asked them to complete their section. We used seven subjects:

- Medical
- Training
- Vehicles
- Communications
- Operations
- Equipment
- Team management.

We asked each of them for some narrative and a score and, if they had time, to complete as much of the rest of the questionnaire as possible. Some sections like vehicles and communications only had a handful of questions and, other than operations, which had over 30, the rest had less than 20, which was manageable for most folks. The three steering group members completed the questionnaire first and I moderated the answers before sending this out to the rest of the people completing it. We've always found it is easier to comment on an answer that was already there than fill in a blank sheet of paper.

I then moderated the answers received. This was difficult where the scoring difference was more than '1' and highlighted that

people view things from very differing perspectives. With Christmas in between, this whole process took us about two months but I daresay others could go faster.

A bank of five peer reviewers was offered for the main event and we selected two in addition to Tim. Many thanks to those who offered their services. On the basis that we wanted people from outside our region to give another region's perspective but who had similar MR experiences to ourselves, we chose John Hulse and Dr Dave Strachan.

Luckily I had the chance to speak to Kev Camplin of Bowland Pennine MRT at the MREW meeting in November 2015 and his advice was to have a full day for the questionnaire because their evening session went on until the early hours. Also, it was very useful to have a scribe and plenty of tea, coffee and refreshments on hand. That advice paid off. We structured the Saturday session into the seven subjects listed. It was a little disconcerting when, with 96 questions to address in eight hours, we'd gobbled up an hour and were still on question number five! That said, some of the more fundamental team management questions like the first one on Standard Operating Procedures touched on so many other areas, we were spending a minute per question later on and actually got finished through the whole question set at 5.30pm, after starting at 9.00am with refreshment breaks built in.

The output stretched to several sheets of notepaper and seven sheets of flip chart paper. It was an exhaustive and exhausting process — something only a few beers could sort out afterwards!

For the Sunday training exercise, we ran a real scenario with alert messages, SARCALL response, team briefing at base upon arrival and so on. Given good winter

conditions, there were calls to set the exercise as a winter job but we chose a scenario that involved casualty care, steep ground, boat and stretcher handling, command and control as well as a second incident. We felt this gave a more rounded picture of what we do than a specialist winter practice would ever do.

Although we'd practised a similar incident about eighteen months previously, and there had been similar real rescues of casualties on the Wastwater screes, this one still had its challenges. The boat was new and had never been used in anger like this, and you never know what issues casualties will present. In the end, we had both a trauma and a medical situation to deal with on very steep ground and this was done methodically and demonstrably.

The hand-over-hand movement of the stretcher down the screes to the lake shore went as well as we hoped but loading and unloading of the stretcher onto and from the boat presented issues and the eventual boat access to the northern side of Wastwater was different than we first planned. A second incident shortly after tested us out again with a search in a gill followed by trauma treatment at a river crossing. Evacuation from Greendale Gill always presents a challenge given the narrow path and steep slope on one side and steep drop on the other but the team did this well, in a calm and communicative manner.

Back at the vehicles, when we'd freed our casualty from his bag, we had a hot debrief as we do normally with some observations from the review team. This was followed up at base, with the promise of a formal feedback session that is yet to be arranged.

It has been hard work but rewarding to date. Ultimately its success will rest with us and how

we take on board the lessons. Necessarily, given the time constraints on us all, this will involve some collation into themes and then prioritisation. Succession planning, effective recruitment, and member competency are a few themes to come out. I daresay these areas will be common to a lot of teams so it will be interesting to see how we can help each other improve.

In the future, from all this shared experience it may be possible, for example, to have a template for how a team can run. This could encompass all aspects of team activity from policy to standard competencies, constitution to training reviews, incident planning and logging, to name but a few. Individual teams could take which parts are relevant to them and adapt them to their own needs. After all, many of us use common tools. Having been through this process it is increasingly obvious to me that there are more similarities between teams than differences.

As a team we are already sharing much with our regional colleagues and the increasing dialogue between regions can only help improve matters. So here's the challenge, give the process a go and see what you really look like in the mirror. Learn and share. Sure we will all make mistakes but equally we will all do things well and that's fine... as long as we reflect on what is done and we improve.

Thanks must go to Duddon & Furness MRT for providing very realistic casualties and a virtual base for the scenario, the various team members for their valuable contributions and the peer review team for their insightful questions and giving up their free time. ●



Peer review team (John Hulse and Dr David Strachan) observing © Wasdale MRT.

## REVIEWER VIEW DR DAVID STRACHAN

For a mountaineer and a medic it is no small thing to spend a weekend avoiding giving opinions and comparing (that may just be me!), and I was not sure it was even going to be possible before starting. The instructions received beforehand were clear – this was not a judgement, or even an exploration of best practice, this was a weekend asking difficult questions of a team who are operating consistently at a phenomenally high level, but equally face the challenges regarding their direction, shape and evolution.

We were not a team of subject matter experts on the specifics of rescue, but rather a set of generalists challenging the team to analyse the broader questions about who the team were, how they functioned and how that would change over the coming years.

The structure of the weekend seems simple, until you appreciate that simple questions like 'how does the team manage a call-out' cease to have simple answers once you drill down to the deeper ideas about why, whether that approach is robust, efficient and resilient beyond the input of key players. It was a chance to push the team leadership to challenge their assumptions about their structures and systems and encourage them to see if changes would benefit the team in the future. Most of the questions project the team forward and push a strategic planning aspect that as a whole, MR is newly coming to, highlighting perceived threats and problems and developing a proactive approach to them.

The Saturday was predictably a glorious day, and all of us were itching to get out on the hill, yet a brutal day of analysis generated eight A2 sheets of ideas and problems for the team to look at over the coming months, as well as heavy investment in local coffee suppliers. Sunday was a day to get out and watch the team at work. We sat in on a training exercise, observing from the initial plan through to the repacking of kit afterwards. The key focus was to get away from the leadership of the team and chat with the 'troops', exploring their views, ideas and challenges, and seeing their responses as the recipients of training and the operational management of call-outs. This was a chance to see the theories from Saturday put into action on the hill, seeing how the team responded and dealt with dynamic problem solving and watching the evolution of a simulated rescue.

The privilege of being able to rummage into every aspect of a team is profound. I have seen a variety of approaches and management techniques that have evolved within Wasdale, many of which would benefit my own team's development, some of which are borne out of the geography and 'demographics' of Wasdale team's patch and types of call-out. It is not easy to explore these 'intimate' areas of team functions without raising hackles or coming across as an 'inspection'. Every question has to be carefully structured to avoid any sense of criticism or judgement, because at the end of the day the team are the experts in how their patch works, how they provide best care for their casualties and rescues. Our role is to challenge them to improve that function because ultimately it is the outcome for the casualty that is the most important factor. My biggest learning outcome was that the areas we identified that represented the challenges for Wasdale are those we face in my own team. They are the broader questions we need to look at across MREW in order to keep providing the expert service that we do. The answers, however, are going to need a local nuance and this process should get teams focused on what shape that is going to take. My thanks to Wasdale MRT for their enthusiasm and hospitality. ●





## LAKE DISTRICT

### JOINT TRAINING TAKES TEAMS UNDERGROUND

In January, members of Cockermouth and Keswick teams gathered at Honister Slate Mine for an underground rescue practice with Cumbria Ore Mines Rescue Unit (COMRU) — and it was an indisputable photo opportunity, what with all those primary colours in one place!

The scenario was an accident where a mine worker was trapped under a large piece of slate in the working part of the mine. During the simulated evacuation of the mines, a member of the public was then reported to have sustained a lower leg injury. Cockermouth team members



Rescue practice in Honister: Members of Keswick, Cockermouth and COMRU take part in an underground rescue scenario © Rob Grange/Keswick MRT.

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Images: LDSAMRA Joint Winter Training in the Cairngorms, January 2016 © Jago Miller, Coniston MRT.



## LDSAMRA JOINT WINTER TRAINING: CAIRNGORMS, JANUARY

WILL SCOTT, TRAINING OFFICER, DUDDON & FURNESS MRT

Fourteen members from eight Lakes teams took part, the aim to review and refresh avalanche knowledge and its practical application, personal skills and companion rescue, then apply this learning to MR scenarios in a challenging environment. Joint working, which has made such a positive impact over recent years, also lay in the brief.

In order to make a course more sustainable on an annual or biennial basis, Glenmore Lodge was approached to deliver this with an MR bias. The instructors were all active members of Scottish teams and experienced instructors, which made for some excellent discussion on practical issues of call-outs in full winter conditions. Using the new 'Be Avalanche Aware' (BAA) process provided a consistent approach to avalanche discussion, relevant to any mountain area.

Friday looked at avalanche and hazards on a mountain journey. The day began with a group session looking at current conditions in the Cairngorms, adding detail from history of weather, terrain and snowpack. As part of the day's journey, hazards and BAA were reviewed and discussed, in avalanche conditions which were to be consistently 'considerable' over the course.

Saturday aimed to develop personal skills, and apply prior knowledge of snow, weather, people and terrain into making decisions about route choice to suitable venues with regard to safe and unsafe slopes. Skills looked at included building snow anchors on the flat at gully tops, rather than on the slope as in

personal climbing, and navigation issues in a search group. Each course member used their own team's transceiver, shovel and probe, and it was good to see some commonality in kit.

On Sunday, we reviewed our learning and applied it in scenarios which were MRT-specific, such as helping someone off steep ground in avalanche-prone terrain and companion rescue. The scenarios meant travelling into or through terrain for which a concrete decision had to be made by every member of small groups. The aim was not about technical difficulty, but applying the planning process, discussing and reviewing the plan as the journey developed and accessing the area of highest risk.

Some specific learning points focused on:

- Tasking a person early at base to pull together and collate key conditions information
- Conditions information at base presented in such a way that individuals can make their own judgements on risk, supported by whole team briefing
- Being slick with group checks and companion rescue
- Actively using the BAA process [beaware.sais.gov.uk](http://beaware.sais.gov.uk).

The enthusiasm on the course was infectious, be it on the hill making decisions, chewing over actions, or hearing how different teams do things and what nuggets could be fed back. Small groups made for lots of learning with everyone actively involved, for newer and more experienced members alike. ●





Meanwhile, COMRU arrives with the required lifting gear and a wealth of underground experience.



**Casualty safely recovered.**  
Cockermouth team's Neale Connolly lends a helping hand © Rob Grange/Keswick MRT.

# Anatomy of a rescue practice



Team members gain basic access to the casualty and perform 'C' Spine immobilisation. After taking stats and prepping the oxygen, they are able to build a picture of what's happening.



Keswick team members attend to the casualty while COMRU assesses how to move the rock without putting anyone at risk.



A smooth coordinated lift to extract the 'casualty' which was replaced by a dummy (right) before the rock was moved.



With the casualty safely packaged, it's a stretcher carry up a steep incline towards the Keswick Sprinter.



And we're off... Images © Rob Grange/Keswick MRT.

## PAGE 17 >

attended to this incident whilst Keswick and COMRU dealt with the entrapment. After the first part of the exercise the teams then returned to Keswick base for the second phase of the practice. As all team members know, on major incidents such as flooding or protracted searches, you can be working long hours in cold conditions. Food and drink provision is pretty much essential to any operation, more so when you have hungry team members coming in from other areas. Keswick MRT has developed a close relationship with Keswick WI to help support them during such incidents and a team of their volunteers stepped up to the mark for this rescue practice, providing a fantastic three-course meal and hot drinks for nearly forty hungry rescuers, much, much more than the tea and sandwiches that many expected. Many thanks to all involved, a great training session all round.

## MASONS LEND THEIR SUPPORT TO LAKES RESCUE TEAMS

The Masonic movement across Cumbria has offered a major contribution to the county's rescue teams. In February, cheques for £2000 each were handed out to representatives of Cockermouth, Coniston, Duddon & Furness, Kendal, Keswick, Kirkby Stephen, Langdale Ambleside, Patterdale, Penrith and Wasdale, as well as Maryport Inshore Rescue, in recognition of their work in the aftermath of Storm Desmond. The presentation was made by the Mark of Master Masons of the Province of Cumberland and Westmorland, by Barry Kirkbride, deputy provincial grand master, and Keith Hodgson, provincial grand master.



**Recognition for flood rescue work:** The Mark of Master Masons of the Province of Cumberland and Westmorland presents £22,000 to the Lake District rescue teams who helped with the devastation wrought by Storm Desmond © Cockermouth MRT.



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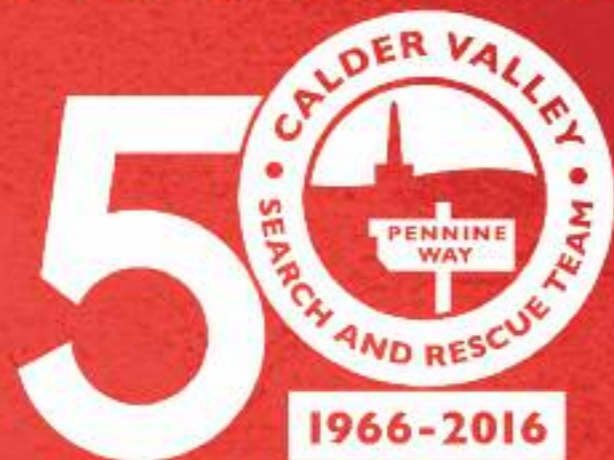
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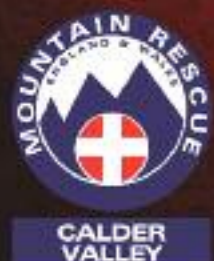
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Tickets: Send a SAE with your cheque made payable to  
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[www.cvsrt.org.uk](http://www.cvsrt.org.uk)

### MID PENNINE

#### HALIFAX BUSINESS SUPPORTS CALDERDALE FLOOD EFFORT

In January, insurance software provider SSP pledged £20,000 to help local businesses and people affected by the recent flooding in Calderdale. With its head office based in Dean Clough in Halifax, many of the company's employees were directly impacted by the December floods and chief executive Laurence Walker was keen to find ways to support them and other local people as well as local businesses.

'When a local tragedy like this happens it affects everyone who lives and works here. Many people have been flooded out of their homes or businesses, and we can all help and support the amazing work of local groups who are working hard to put right the damage', said Walker. Altogether, the Community Foundation for Calderdale, received a £10,000 donation which included £5,000 government match-funding. Calder Valley SRT received £5,000 to purchase new equipment and the further £5,000 has been allocated to donate to a local business support fund. Several SSP staff were granted fully-paid time off to volunteer with some of the many local flood response groups.



Above: SSP Chief Executive, Mr Laurence Walker presents a cheque for £5000 to CVSRT members Mick Smith and Richard Smith © Calder Valley SRT.

#### CALDER VALLEY LAUNCH THEIR GOLDEN JUBILEE YEAR

Over forty Calder Valley team members and supporters gathered in February at their base in Mytholmroyd to raise a glass for their fiftieth anniversary.

During the evening, president Bob Uttley read the original minutes from the very first meeting, held on 15 February 1966, before cutting the anniversary cake. The informal celebration marked the official start of the team's Golden Jubilee year.

To help celebrate this monumental milestone, a series of special events have



Above: CVSRT Group photography courtesy of Tony Hanners. [www.hanrahanphotography.co.uk](http://www.hanrahanphotography.co.uk)

been planned, with something for everyone. They hope colleagues from across the country will join them at one or all of the events to make it a truly memorable year — not least of all the 'Rescue Fest Five-0' (see opposite page) — so keep an eye on the events page on the team website for more details of other forthcoming events.

#### BOLTON CELEBRATES RECEIPT OF GRANT FOLLOWING FLOOD WORK

Bolton team members were celebrating in February, following news of a £10,600 grant from the Department for Transport, for flood rescue equipment and training. They were amongst a number of rescue charities which benefited from the grant, with a total of £915,000 awarded nationally. The team was involved with the flooding events in December, in Lancaster, Kearsley and Salford.



Above: Bolton team members during water rescue training © Bolton MRT.

### PEAK DISTRICT

#### DERBY'S DAVID WHITMORE AWARDED QUEEN'S AMBULANCE SERVICE MEDAL

The award recognises the contribution David has made to the London Ambulance Service, including his work with the Health and Care Professions Council on the introduction of registration for paramedics, his involvement in responding to major incidents and his role in developing training for new ambulance crews.



David Whitmore

In his spare time, David is a Derby team member, and has also travelled to Uganda to help develop a national ambulance service there. He is also co-vice chair of the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care, the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

David, who has worked for the London Ambulance Service for 36 years, said he was deeply humbled and honoured to be awarded this prestigious medal. He will go to Buckingham Palace later in the year to receive his award from the Queen.

The Queen's Ambulance Service Medal honours a very small, select group of ambulance crews and control room staff who have shown exceptional devotion to duty, outstanding ability, merit and conduct in their roles within NHS Ambulance Services.

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### BUXTON TEAM MEMBERS SAY FAREWELL TO BBC BREAKFAST'S BILL TURNBULL

Bill Turnbull left the BBC's flagship morning news programme in February, after fifteen years on the iconic red sofa. In celebration of his time living and working in the Peak District National Park he went out and about with a camera crew, meeting some of the locals, including members of Buxton and Edale teams at Teggs Nose Country Park, near Macclesfield, where they filmed a local rescue exercise. On Wednesday 24 February, the programme went out live from Edale village, in the shadow of Kinder Scout.

**Below:** Bill Turnbull gets the lowdown on an Edale team vehicle © Edale MRT. **Bottom:** Buxton team members with Bill Turnbull © Buxton MRT.



### CASUALTY RETURNS TO THANK RESCUERS

Members of the Peak District teams joined Watersafe UK for a day of powerboat skills training at the Redhill Marina, Nottingham in January. The water was close to freezing and provided a good opportunity to test out the recently donated training kit from the AA and operational equipment from Gill Marine. Skills covered during the day included the use of ladders from boats (a much needed technique used during the recent flooding) recovery of a casualty into a boat, safe operation of a powered pontoon, acting as crew on Watersafe UK's search and rescue inshore lifeboat, and engine failure drill — which meant reverting to paddles, giving everyone a chance to warm up after taking a dip in the somewhat chilly river. An enjoyable day was had by all and good links were cemented between the two rescue charities.

**Above:** Syamenda (centre) with members of Kinder MRT who helped 'save his life' © Kinder MRT.



## ROGER JONES MBE 1945 – 2016

A founder member of the Ogwen team, Roger died peacefully at Ysbyty Gwynedd, Bangor on 10 March. The 'Voice of Ogwen' will be sadly missed by family, friends and team members past and present. **Chris Lloyd** looks back over Roger's life.

Roger was one of the founding members of OVMRO when it began operating out of Ogwen Cottage, and was a team member for fifty-one years. Having always lived in the Ogwen area, he became involved with mountain rescue through the Scout movement, when his father was Gwynedd area county commissioner. He joined the Scout outdoor activities centre at Yr Hafod in 1959 and was employed as a mechanical engineer at Bangor University.



Roger carries a casualty to safety during an early rescue © OVMRO.

During his time as a team member Roger gained something of a reputation for being clearly spoken, and became affectionately known as 'Jones the Voice' following an incident where he was able to communicate with fellow founding member Ron James that he needed to turn his radio on, when all other voices had failed.

Roger was a team leader with OVMRO from 1966. At the end of his tenure, in 2010, the team was delighted that Roger was awarded an MBE for services to mountain rescue. In his usual way, ever the team player, he

stated that the award was really for the team rather than an individual.

He served on the team committee or as a co-opted officer for fifty years — first elected to the committee in 1966 — and served as treasurer from 1972 to 1975. He was chairman in 1990, and it was during this time that the first major renovation of Bryn Poeth occurred. His vision, along with others, transformed the team into the semi-professional organisation it is today.

He was co-opted as the team's transport officer in 1995, and held this position until the time of his death. He was instrumental in the purchase of new vehicles for the team, and ensuring they were always ready to transport members and casualties both locally and more recently on call-outs to the floods in York and Cumbria.

Roger had a great interest in international rescue too, and attended the ICAR (International Commission for Alpine Rescue) conference on numerous occasions. He always extolled the benefits of networking at the conference and continually encouraged other members to attend, regarding the conference as a 'wonderful jolly and a hoot!'

With such a wealth of experience, Roger always had lots of stories to tell. Everyone who met Roger will have enjoyed listening to his tales of the many rescues he took part in. Not only was he able to offer advice and words of wisdom, he always encouraged new developments within the team, such as the Ogwen stretcher, and was keen to encourage the younger generation.

Roger's family, his wife Jill, two daughters Claire and Heather, and his son Geraint always supported his rescue activities. In fact, Geraint himself became a full team member in 2007.

It was only fitting that the 'Joe Hero award', at the team's 50th anniversary dinner in 2015, was presented to Jill in recognition of all the support family members give to team members.

As Roger said, during an interview for the team's book, 'If I hadn't enjoyed doing it, I'd have stopped doing it'. A great many people can be grateful that Roger enjoyed mountaineering and mountain rescue. He will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him.

A service to celebrate Roger's life



Jill and Roger Jones on the day he picked up his MBE from Buckingham Palace © Roger Jones.

was held at Bangor Crematorium on 24 March attended by family, friends and Ogwen team members past and present — and it was standing room only. Fifty members of OVMRO stood in their red fleece jackets as the hearse arrived, escorted by the team's two Land Rovers and the forward control vehicle. The low throb of rotor blades could be heard from the grey clouded skies. Spirits were low. Then the silence was broken by the thundering roar of rotors as the S-92 helicopter passed overhead, en route to a job somewhere.

Anyone who knew Roger, knew he could tell a good tale. Often, he would feature in the story, recounting his view of a particular incident or amusing situation. This time the tales were all about him, as the assembled crowd heard again of Roger's many misdemeanours over the years. Respectful laughter echoed through the chapel. This was the Roger we all knew!

It was a non-religious service without hymns, but Roger did enjoy a good sing-song in the pub. As a tribute, Wally Owen, a past team member, took to the stage with his guitar and sang the old climbing song 'All for the want of a nail'. Those who could remember sang along too. Later, Alistair Cook read 'A Prayer for Mountain Rescue' then, bravely, Roger's widow too addressed the crowded chapel, thanking team members for their support.

The service ended with 'The Lark Ascending' and then it was off to the Tyn y Coed Hotel, Capel Curig where the party continued for the remainder of the day. Roger would have approved. ●



### MATT AND PETER TAKE A STAR TURN ON TELLY FOR GLOSSOP

Friday 29 January saw Matt Dooley and Peter Jozefczyk driving a Glossop team vehicle onto prime time evening telly, thanks to a feature about Land Rover Defender production coming to an end. Researchers for BBC's 'The One Show' had contacted the team after discovering that they had been involved with delivering a baby in the back of their Defender during the bad winter of 2009/10. With Peter driving, Matt was in the 'hot seat' facing the microphone, coolly answering questions about the team's involvement in the floods in Cumbria, York and Salford, amongst other things. And presenter Omid Djalili clearly bonded with Matt offering that, should his current employment falter, the latter had a fine career ahead of him as an 'Omid Djalili lookalike'. Great PR for Glossop and mountain rescue in general.

**Above:** Alex Jones introduces the next item as the vehicle drives off stage right. **Top:** Peter Jozefczyk (left) and Matt Dooley with presenter Omid Djalili © Clip courtesy of the BBC and Glossop MRT.



Ladder training from a boat © Steve Brett

### PEAK DISTRICT

#### PDMRO JOINT WATER RESCUE TRAINING WITH WATERSAFE UK

Members of the Peak District teams joined Watersafe UK for a day of powerboat skills training at the Redhill Marina, Nottingham in January. The water was close to freezing and provided a good opportunity to test out the recently donated training kit from the AA and operational equipment from Gill Marine. Skills covered during the day included the use of ladders from boats (a much needed technique used during the recent flooding) recovery of a casualty into a boat, safe operation of a powered pontoon, acting as crew on Watersafe UK's search and rescue inshore lifeboat, and engine failure drill — which meant reverting to paddles, giving everyone a chance to warm up after taking a dip in the somewhat chilly river. An enjoyable day was had by all and good links were cemented between the two rescue charities.



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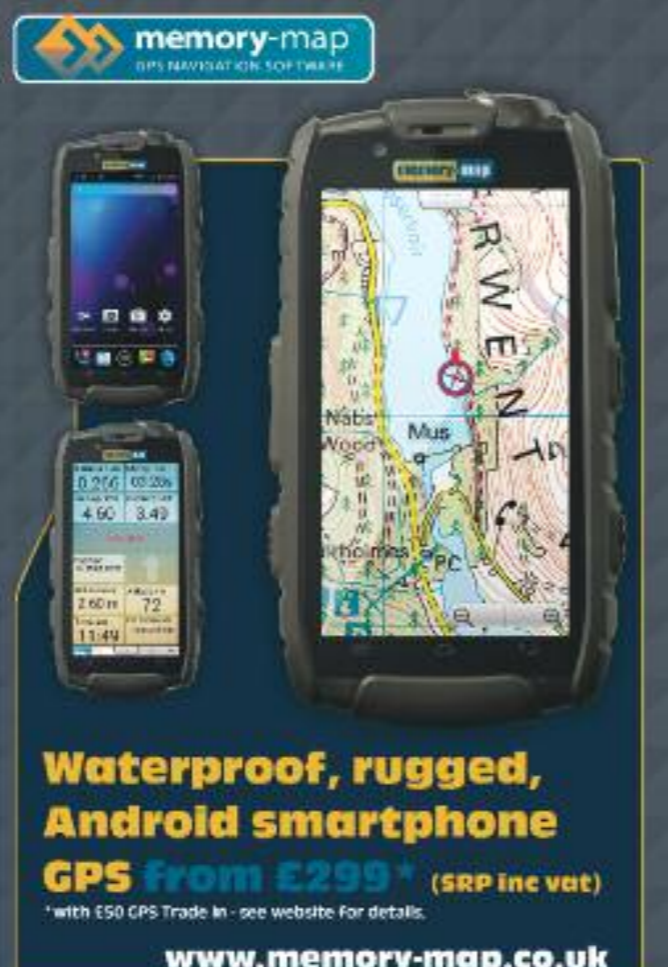
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## WALES

### MOUNTAIN RESCUE MOURNS TWO OF ITS LONGEST STANDING MEMBERS

This year has seen sad losses for teams in both the north and south of the country, losses which have reverberated not just throughout England and Wales but across the world. Both Peter Howells, who passed away in January, and Roger Jones, who died in March, were founding members of their own teams (Central Beacons and Ogwen respectively), involved at every level locally regionally, nationally and internationally. Both had dedicated their lives to helping those in trouble in the hills. Full obituaries for both these fine gentlemen can be found elsewhere in the magazine. Suffice to say here, they will be very sadly missed. And, on behalf of mountain rescue, thank you both for all you have brought to the party. It was an honour to know you.



Assembled team members pay respects to Peter Howells, at rest on the stretcher he was carried in on © Malcolm Walker.

## YORKSHIRE DALES

### CAVE RESCUE ORGANISATION

Over the last couple of months, many teams were posting on their social media channels about the demise of the Land Rover Defender. CRO, however, didn't join in because they've just been involved in putting



CRO Land Rovers past and present © CRO.



the finishing touches to the newest member of their fleet: a Land Rover Defender!

According to their own Facebook page, 'she was one of the last 130 spec Defenders, which went out of production last year. Upspecing and electronic fitment was carried out by Crake International, the specialist arm of Kentdale Land Rover, whilst the bespoke rear conversion was carried out to our specification by N & J Aluminium Linings Ltd, of Clitheroe. A huge thanks to both companies for their care, attention and eye to detail'.

The vehicle was finally put on the run in early February, replacing the team's W-reg CRO 2, which they say 'will eventually sail off into the sunset, after carrying out a few more fill-in duties for us'.

As the photos show, it might still be a Land Rover, but there's been a fair few things change since the 1970s!

## SOUTH WEST

### DARTMOOR BOOK WILL RAISE FUNDS FOR THE TAVISTOCK TEAM

Dartmoor SRT (Tavistock) announced the publication of 'Walkham. A walker's guide to a beautiful Dartmoor Valley' in March. The A4 hardback book, by team member Peter Swaine, contains over 200 photographs and detailed route descriptions of walks, exploring every part of the Walkham and its catchment area. From the source high up on the north moor to its confluence with the Tavy at Double Waters, the Walkham passes through an astonishing variety of landscape. From bleak blanket bog, through wild open moorland, past impressive rocky tors and dense ancient woodland, the walks reveal the

landscape and history of this wonderful valley.

The remains of Neolithic burial chambers, stone rows and circles, Bronze Age settlements, peat extraction, quarrying and mining are all contained within the 52 square kilometres of the Walkham Valley, and this book shows where to find them.

Peter has lived in or near the Walkham valley for most of his life and is one of the most respected members of the team. A member for over 20 years, he is currently



deputy team leader and has also previously served as chairman. All profits from the book will be donated to the rescue team.

Members of the public are invited to reserve their copies of the first edition of 'Walkham' (limited to 500). To reserve a copy, visit dsrt-tavistock.org.uk and complete the form or email book@dsrt-tavistock.org.uk. The cost of the book will be £20 + p&p, but no payment is required at this time.

# Edale Mountain Rescue Team Sixty years

In a report compiled by Edale team members past and present, based on Ian Hurst and Roger Bennett's book 'Mountain Rescue: History and development in the Peak District', **Ed Proudfoot** looks at the history of the team, from humble beginnings to present day, with over fifty operational members and dealing with 138 incidents in 2015.

During the early 1950s the newly formed Peak District National Park was causing concern to those who knew its dangers. As the number of visitors to the area increased, so did the number of remote emergency incidents. Without a formal or organised rescue service, those who became lost or injured in the hills were at significant risk. Edale Mountain Rescue Team

can trace its origins to a cold Sunday in Edale sixty years ago, where a meeting had been organised to remedy this situation.

## THE FIRST STRETCHER

On 19 February 1956, all the relevant parties met in Coopers Café in Edale to discuss and organise the establishment of a search and rescue

organisation for the area. Representatives from the then Mountain Rescue Committee (MRC) and the Peak Park Planning Board (PPPB) had been invited along, with all the existing local rescue volunteers including the police, fire service and RAF Harpur Hill. The meeting was a success — followed by the team's first exercise, up on Kinder, of course —

resulting in the formation of the 'Voluntary Warden Search and Rescue Organisation'.

There are two men who were instrumental in setting up this meeting, and so too the team. Tom Tomlinson was the first full-time head warden for the newly formed Peak District National Park. Fred Heardman was the licensee of the Old Nag's Head pub in Edale. Incidents were being regularly reported to these two and they headed up the rescues based on their knowledge of the area and their outdoor skills. It was at their initiative that the Nag's Head had become a Mountain Rescue Post the year before, having acquired the title along with the only item of equipment the service owned — a stretcher — in 1955.

## MOUNTAIN RESCUE POSTS

The vital role stretchers could play in improving outcomes for casualties in remote locations had been recognised further afield in the early 1930s. The design of a robust stretcher, and then the provision of them in suitable locations, were two key factors behind the emergence of organised mountain rescue in England. This became the Mountain Rescue Committee (MRC) in 1946 and is what we know today as

Mountain Rescue England and Wales. Rescue Posts were steadily being set up nationwide to provide a stretcher and other basic rescue equipment free to use by anyone attempting to assist a casualty in the hills.

## BASIC OPERATIONS

Tom Tomlinson and Fred Heardman, along with the National Park's warden service and local volunteers, formed the nucleus of the Voluntary Warden Search and Rescue Organisation. The fire service, outdoor centres and local mountaineering clubs were also called upon where necessary to provide specialist skills or additional people in the case of extensive search incidents.

Team volunteers were rallied to an incident using a rudimentary call-out and transportation system that took account of the fact that most of them did not have their own car or telephone. A main contact in each major town would be notified of an incident via telephone, before alerting other volunteers in their neighbourhood. Some members of the team would meet at a local pick-up point to be transported to the incident by road, whilst others would get there under their own steam on foot, by bicycle or by train. Team equipment

consisted of just the stretcher and some basic first aid equipment kept at the Nag's Head. The PPPB also provided six whistles. Walkie-talkies were turned down, deemed to be too cumbersome.

In 1959, the rescue post moved into the PPPB's newly constructed Fieldhead Information Centre, also in Edale. The centre had an exhibition about the rescue team, complete with a stretcher. However, being the only stretcher, it was also the same one that had to be removed from the exhibition every time it was needed for an incident.

## TEAM COMES OF AGE

The next milestone in the team's history was shared with all the teams in the area following the 'Four Inns Walk' tragedy in the winter of 1964. Three Boy Scouts lost their lives despite the efforts of all of the teams in the area.

This was the third fatal incident in three years. Together, they highlighted the need for a more coordinated approach to rescues across all the teams that had formed in the Peak District. Within twelve months, the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation was born.

Early in 1965, the PPPB officially recognised 'the establishment of a warden rescue service

comprising 30 part-time patrol wardens which will operate from the rescue centre maintained by PPPB at Fieldhead, Edale and whose activities will be supervised by the head warden'.

All daytime call-outs were channelled through Fieldhead who would then contact the closest full-time ranger. The ranger would make an initial assessment and then call out other resources as necessary.

## EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

In the early 1970s, the few ropes and bits of hardware were kept in a damp hayloft, up a ladder, at North Lees, below Stanage. This kit was later moved to the Ranger Briefing Centre at Stoney Middleton and then on to Brunts Barn, Grindleford, in the mid-1970s.

At this point, the stretcher was joined by a second one. Over the years they were stored in various, but strategically useful, locations including Fieldhead, Stanage, Stoney Middleton and Cottage Lane School near Sheffield.

By now the team's first lighting provision for night time operations had also been acquired in the form of miners' lamps. Unfortunately, leaking acid from the lamp batteries would often cause damage to team members' kit.

Medical equipment was limited. Team members would supplement the basic equipment by bringing their own medical kits or 'borrowing' supplies from attending ambulances.

## NEW HQ

In 1986, the team first moved to our current site, what was then the Blue Circle cement works near Hope. They gave us the use of a lean-to which the team improved with two repurposed Portakabins acquired from the NHS. Although this early set-up at the cement works was very dusty, it was much appreciated as, for the first time, all team equipment was stored in one place.

In 1990 the team was donated a garage unit on the same site. The unit was turned into a store, meeting room and garage area. A year later this became home to the team's first vehicle — a yellow, ex-British Telecom Ford Transit van, affectionately known as the 'Custard Bus'. The vehicle was rigged out to transport the team's equipment, including the stretcher. Up until this point the team had relied on the use of Ranger Service Land Rovers or team members' own cars. A second vehicle, a Land Rover, was donated by Severn Trent Water in 1994.

In 2007 the cement works — now owned by

Lafarge — kindly offered the team bigger premises. After much hard work by team members and Lafarge modifying three large garage units our current base was officially opened in October 2007 by the Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire Mr John Bather.

## EDALE MRT AND THE NATIONAL PARK

Until the mid-1980s Edale MRT consisted solely of full-time and part-time National Park wardens, later known as 'rangers'. Team members needed to have passed the ranger training course before being accepted as a probationary team member. While the team still works closely with the PPPB, the ranger training course is no longer a requirement.

## THE TEAM TODAY

Since the 1990s the scope, professionalism

and ability of Edale team has continued to grow. The team has seen the introduction of uniforms, new vehicles and rigorous medical training required for all team members. Today, with five team vehicles, extensive professional equipment and an instant call-out system, it seems a far cry from 1956.

While the team might have come a long way since those early days one thing has never changed: the 54 full team members and eight aspirants in 2016 show the same dedication and teamwork as all the volunteers throughout the years who have given their time to rescue others in distress in the hills.

*Compiled by Edale team members past and present, based on 'Mountain Rescue: History and development in the Peak District 1920s-present day' by Ian Hurst and Roger Bennett. ISBN: 978 0 7524 4091 0*



**Above:** The early team in action. **Top, left to right:** Fred Heardman directs walkers outside the Nag's Head; the current team and vehicles; the 'Custard Bus'.



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## NEW CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR ANNOUNCED FOR SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Scottish Mountain Rescue has elected Damon Powell as their new chairman, taking over from Simon Steer who stepped down recently.

Accepting the appointment, Damon said, 'I am delighted to accept this vital and challenging role. Scottish mountain rescue teams are a world-class voluntary service delivering people to safety anywhere across Scotland at any time in any weather. It is a service reliant on voluntary funding and the dedicated commitment of volunteers with behind the scenes support of their family and often their employers.'

Damon, an active member of Oban MRT who recently stepped down after twelve years as team leader continued, that 'there has been a busy start to the year for Scottish MRTs, with lengthy searches and tragically a number of fatalities in the mountains. Such events do take a toll on teams and their members and in turn members' families. I take up this post with great respect for the dedication that the community of MRT members constantly exhibit'.

Kev Mitchell, team leader of Ochils MRT was appointed as vice chairman at the same time. Kev said, 'I've known Damon for a number of years and look forward to working with him and other members of the executive in these important and challenging roles'.

We wish Damon and Kev the very best in their new roles.

**Images:** Damon Powell (top), and Kev Mitchell.

## TOM TAYLOR RETIRES FROM HIS RAF ROLE



Tom retired from the RAF at the end of March, after a long and illustrious career. A familiar figure at national meetings and conferences, he has been involved with mountain rescue and communications since 1968, including working with the MREW ICT committee and also acting as the MOD rep at UKSAR Communications Working Group. **Mark Lewis** looks back over Tom's outstanding career.



**Back row left to right:** Colin Ferguson (Police Service Northern Ireland), Kenny Roberts (Police Scotland), Fraser Murrey (Ofcom), Rebecca Binstead (UKSAR Manager MCA & Secretary to UKSAR), Stuart Caruthers (Royal Yachting Association).

**Front row left to right:** Kate Bithell (Representing National Police Chiefs Council), Tom Taylor (MoD), Mark Lewis (Chair UKSAR CWG), James Coles (SMR Rep to UKSAR CWG).

During his career, Tom has been based at various RAF MRS stations, starting as the team's wireless operator and finally serving as team leader at St Athan and Kinloss. For the last twenty years, he has been employed by the MOD in a number of posts within the ARCC at RAF Kinloss, but a secondary role has always been mountain rescue liaison and LandSAR communications.

Some interesting projects Tom was responsible for were the production of the first successful MR-to-hill party VHF comms installation and the first MR trialling and then use of mobile phones in 1986/7 for incident management on a Cairngorm call-out.

For the last fifteen years or so, Tom has worked closely with the MREW ICT committee for which we are grateful.

Together with Dr ASG (Tony) Jones, who

was its first chairman, Tom was one of the founding members of the UKSAR Communications Working Group, having identified vacant international maritime marine channels and submitting the proposal that led to us acquiring our current frequencies.

He has been active in negotiating for our new, and hopefully imminent, channel allocation too. Tom fought long and hard for, and was largely responsible for, legalising the use of personal locator beacons on land in the UK. He has been trialling various distress aids such as the aforesaid PLBs and also SEND (Satellite Emergency Notification Devices) such as SPOT messengers.

However, we don't mention the time when Tom was required to use his SPOT messenger in anger for a walking friend who had an accident on the remote Ladhar Bheinn in Knoydart. Imagine the chat at the ARCC when it was activated. What? It's our Tom who requires a helicopter for real? Our friend Steve Wood (who manages SPOT messenger registration for many customers) was contacted by the ARCC and he apparently said, 'It's Tom's. He knows what he's doing. Send a helicopter!'

To say a big thank you to Tom, and give him something to remember his work by, the ICT committee decided a little present would be appropriate — what else but a plaque with a SPOT messenger donated by Steve and a defunct but decorative MR radio of mine mounted on it? Thanks to Nigel Dawson for making the fine plaque!

It was Tom's last UKSAR CWG meeting in February, and we felt it appropriate we mark the occasion — and where else but the ARCC for his last supper of a few drinks and a curry. A magnificent bronze MR figure was presented to Tom on behalf of the various agencies for all his hard work.

He was keen for me to pass back his sincere thanks for the gifts and to wish all his MR friends and acquaintances, quick finds and happy and safe times on the hills. Best wishes Tom, and don't feel you need to be a stranger to MREW. ●





## TWO BIRDS, TWO STONES...

Al Day, Calder Valley team member and air ambulance paramedic, puts Helimed paramedics and mountain rescue trainees to the test.

'This is the worst job I've ever done', complains Andy Joynson, clutching his HD video camera as we shelter from the worst of the wind and rain in a group shelter, high on the South Pennine moors. Andy, who worked for over ten years on the BBC's 'Helicopter Heroes' series, is lying. I remind him of an incident a couple of years ago when the pair of us were required to scramble out of Gunnerside Gill in deep snow at speed because the air ambulance was unable to lift out of the steep ravine with both of us and the seriously ill patient on board, much to the amusement of Swaledale MRT. 'Christ, yeah, I thought I was going to have a heart attack,' he recalls.

Today Andy is filming for a fundraising video for the Yorkshire Air Ambulance Charity. We're waiting for Helimed 99, one of Yorkshire's two air ambulances, to locate Castle Dean Rocks on Rishworth Moor. On board are three new aircrew paramedics, and today is the climax of their Technical Emergency Crew Members course.

The scenario is a walker who has tumbled ten metres down the cragside, sustaining multiple traumatic injuries. Before they concern themselves with the casualty, however, the first challenge is to navigate to the scene. The weather is not making this easy. Low cloud has made a direct route from their base at RAF Topcliffe impossible and they have had to follow the low ground then track up the Ryburn Valley. Fortunately for the new aircrew, pilot Chris 'Digger' Attrill, knows exactly where he's going and it's not long before Andy and I hear the familiar whine of the MD 902 helicopter.

The aircraft lands on close to the top of the crag and the aircrew make their way down the side of the rocks to the bottom of the beck to deal with the casualty. Within minutes, I hear the message on the Airwave radio asking the Air Desk for mountain rescue assistance. The reply explains that Calder Valley SRT has already been dispatched, ETA twenty minutes. The aircrew are soon able to contact CVSRT via their handheld ICOM FM radio and the cavalry are approaching scene with rope kit, vacuum mattress and stretcher. The rescue team quickly package the patient in a vacuum mattress and he is evacuated on the Bell, up the steep ground to the helicopter using a moving V-belay. Once loaded and pre-flight checks complete, the aircraft departs for the 'exercise' major trauma hospital.

As Helimed 99 leaves Rishworth Moor, her sister aircraft Helimed 98 is departing from Ladybower in the Peak District with another three aircrew trainees who have been completing a similar scenario with Edale MRT, under the watchful eye of team leader James Stubley. They are also en route to an

exercise hospital location on a track which will take the aircraft directly over our location.

As the helicopter approaches, the second phase of the training begins with Helimed 98's pilot declaring an 'exercise' single engine failure. As with most in-flight emergencies, it is the responsibility of the front seat paramedic to cross check the pilot's emergency drills with the flight reference cards. HEMS recruit Pete gets halfway through the list of actions ('Fuel boost pump to off for affected engine...') when the pilot calmly declares that the remaining engine has flamed out and the aircraft is auto-rotating towards a clear area of moorland. 'BRACE, BRACE, BRACE' calls the pilot and the helicopter flares sharply before settling into the heather.

The aircrew are informed that the pilot is trapped and, with the helicopter on fire, they have less than a couple of minutes to evacuate their casualty and grab some survival gear before their aircraft lifts and departs, leaving them and their patient alone on the wet and windy moors.

Five minutes later, I find the aircrew and their casualty sheltering in a group shelter and in good spirits. They've been able to work out a rough location based on their track and the flying time and have passed this through to the Air Desk who has confirmed the location with data from Helimed's GPS tracking, and subsequently dispatched the nearest mountain rescue team to assist them. Twenty nautical miles to the south east, the crew of Helimed 99 have befallen a similar fate and are awaiting the arrival of Edale MRT.

Within the hour, the rescue teams have located the crash sites and commenced a stretcher evacuation of the casualties to the road head, giving the aircrew has the chance to experience a stretcher carry. A third of the Calder Valley team members today are trainees. This joint training helps prepare them for the frequent call-outs the team attends alongside an air ambulance.

Yorkshire's two air ambulances cover an

area of four million acres which includes the operational area of nine mountain rescue teams. Working staggered twelve-hour shifts, cover extends from 7.00am to 10.00pm in the height of summer, reducing with daylight in the winter. One of the aircraft is equipped for night recovery and can lift from scene and fly to a lit helipad in the dark.

Both aircraft are equipped with the latest kit including Zoll Autopulse, traction splints, pelvic binders, intra-osseous access drills and a range of advanced analgesic drugs including morphine, ketamine and midazolam. They carry specially designed Polar Snowsled casbags, group shelters, throwlines and lifejackets and come equipped with VHF radios to enable communication on 62A (emergency calling channel) in flight, as well as twin TETRA radios. Comms are maintained on the ground with handheld ICOM radios programmed with all the Yorkshire MR team channels, plus hand-held TETRA sets.

As well as mountain rescue and survival training, new aircrew paramedics must complete a three-week Technical Crew course which includes navigation, weather interpretation, aircraft handling, crew resource management, helicopter underwater escape, water rescue and advanced trauma skills.

Yorkshire Air Ambulance is proud of the excellent working partnerships with the mountain rescue teams around Yorkshire. Good communication is key to maintaining this relationship through regular liaison meetings and joint training exercises as recommended by the British Helicopter Association's HEMS guidelines. ●

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# casualty care

## AN INTERESTING DAY

Les Gordon of Langdale Ambleside MRT provides a team doctor's account of one of the team's busier days in recent times, late last October.

It started off like any other Saturday. A small group of us were testing out the DMM Talon steep ground anchor when the first page went off at 10:46. A man was unconscious on the Band about one-third of the way up. We ran back to the team vehicle and started the blue light drive down Kirkstone and out into Langdale.

Whilst on route, we heard over the radio that he had chest pain, had vomited and the belief was that he was having a heart attack, so we told the fastest person in the first vehicle ahead to run up carrying only the absolute essentials ie. AED and aspirin.

By the time the rest of us arrived, Great North Air Ambulance paramedics were also on site, having landed further down the valley below the cloud so the paramedics could walk up. They did a full ECG which clearly showed an MI. The situation had now become time critical.

The paramedics radioed ahead to alert the hospital to be ready to provide specialist treatment to open up the blocked coronary arteries. It also meant we were in possible cardiac arrest situation so we rapidly prepared the man for evacuation by stretcher. We'd brought our AutoPulse just in case we needed to do CPR whilst we were carrying him down. We cannulated so that we could give IV morphine, anti-emetic to try to stop him being sick and adrenaline if he went on to have a cardiac arrest, and monitored him continuously in case he started to deteriorate.

At 13:00, we were nearing the helicopter when the second page went off: a fallen person on Gimmer Crag. Now we knew we were in trouble. For readers who don't know Gimmer, it's a very popular climbing crag in Langdale. The SW-facing sheer rock face has a number of climbing routes that start from about 350 metres above the valley floor, rising to the top, a further 200 metres above. But we were still involved with the first casualty, and the walk up from the valley is very tough, primarily because of the gradient, but also because there are no paths. It's all loose scree and boulders, and on that day, it felt like the boulders had been painted with varnish. A top down approach would theoretically have been possible but wouldn't have worked in this case because with the cloud down to about

150 metres above the valley floor, we'd no idea where the casualties were. There was no option but to go up from the bottom.

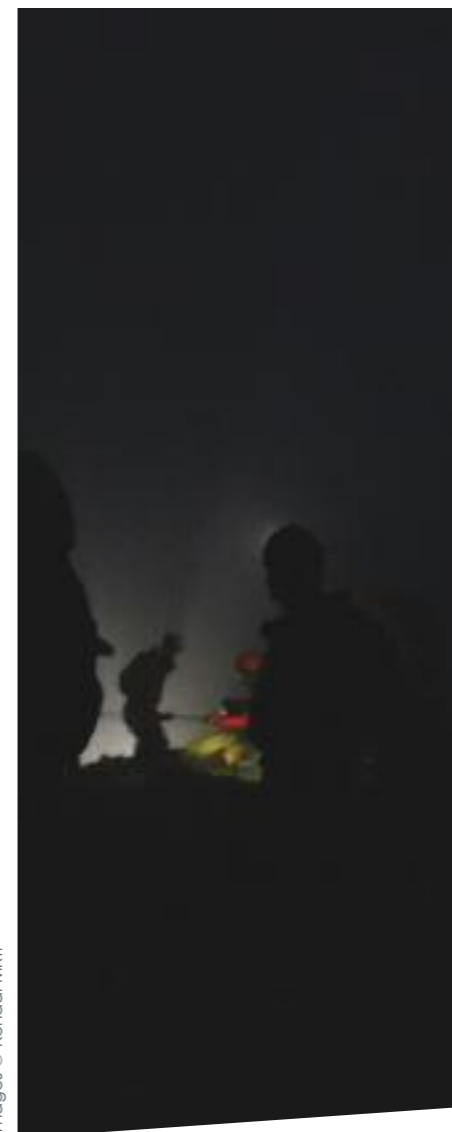
We subsequently discovered that there were four people. They had thought that the weather was too bad to climb so had decided to scramble up Gimmer with the aim of walking off at the top. However, they used no climbing gear at all. Fortunately, they were wearing helmets.

Whilst we were making our way up, a third call came in. A man had fallen on the Climbers Traverse, Bowfell, at a height of about 800 metres. By then LAMRT were all committed to the Gimmer job so Coniston MRT kindly took over that rescue. Fortunately, that casualty only had minor injuries and, with some encouragement, was able to walk off.

Our first team member arrived at the Gimmer site at 14:15 and we heard over the radio that the picture was very bad: two people injured. The worst was a 25-year-old woman who had fallen 40-50 metres in a tumbling fall, described by her boyfriend as 'like a rag doll'. Access to her location was extremely difficult. She was lying at the bottom of a narrow 'V' shaped gully. We had to climb up and then down to reach her. The gully was about four metres deep and the side walls were vertical bare rock or grass and rock. Where she was lying was only about 1.5-metre wide. The base was a ledge about 2-2.5-metres long. Beyond the end of the ledge, there was a vertical crag about 3-4-metres high to a flatter area from where she was later winched. Water was running continuously through the area. It was clear this would be a really big job and Kendal, Duddon, Wasdale and RAF MR teams came to help.

She had multiple injuries including a scalp laceration, fluctuating levels of

Images © Kendal MRT.



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## casualty care

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consciousness, inability to see anything on her left-hand side, back pain, an open knee injury and a puncture wound on the left thigh. There was a concern that the puncture wound had been made by a fractured femur, and support for this was given by the fact that her heart rate was about 150/min. Blood pressure and oxygen saturation were acceptable. Initial care included oxygen, monitoring, stabilisation of position, head pads, cannulation (for analgesia or IV fluids), and bandaging the open knee wound. Hypothermia was a real concern, not only because the casualty had been lying out there for almost 90 minutes before we arrived, but because, in the presence of major trauma, hypothermia significantly worsens the outlook. The request over the radio was for lots more oxygen and for air evacuation.

Over the next 90 minutes, her vital signs stabilised somewhat — which was fortunate because we weren't in a position to deliver any meaningful treatment. Her heart rate gradually fell to more normal levels and the BP remained normal. These factors argued against a major fracture (such as femur) or a spinal cord injury. Oxygen saturation remained stable on a little added oxygen. The conscious level continued to fluctuate.

Two team mates went further up the tricky terrain to investigate the second casualty, who fortunately, only had minor injuries. In the meantime, a rope system was set up. The photo on the right is the view out of the gully back towards where the rope system was set up.

Two other team members came down with the stretcher. The best we could do in the confined space was to position the stretcher at an angle of about 75° to the line of her body. The two team members, the boyfriend and I lifted the casualty onto the stretcher (plus cas bag and vac mat) as best we could. Not ideal — considering that

there was a possible spinal injury — but no alternative. There was no room for any more team members and we certainly couldn't have done a proper lift and slide. The priority was to get her to hospital ASAP. Even so, it took four hours to get her off the hill. Although MR teams (rightly) train how to move casualties with possible spinal fractures, the fact of the matter is that in reality, you sometimes have to accept second best because that is the best you can do in that situation. I was very relieved after we got her on the stretcher when she complained of pain in her left leg. At least the spinal cord was still intact. We put her helmet on her

again before attempting to move the stretcher, which was just as well as the stretcher became wedged in the crack and tilted to one side.

The weather was awful. The cloud was very low and the helicopter crew was reluctant to fly. I did something I rarely do and asked them to pass the message that the team doctor on-site would like them to make every effort — which they did, to an astounding

physically exhausted. The group was eventually located by team members from RAF MRT at a height of about 860m (near the summit) and walked down. The rest of us tottered back to our base and devoured a very welcome pie and beans, and a mug of hot tea before getting stuck into sorting a mountain of wet kit.

This was one of the most arduous days we've had in a while but the stunningly

It is very important that people do not ever undervalue their contribution or feel that their role is inferior in any way if they don't do some of the more high-profile jobs on a rescue. A car engine works well, but if just one small part is missing, the whole thing grinds to a halt.

effect. It was a most amazing sight to see the S92 emerge out of the mist and creep slowly closer and closer to the rock face until they were near enough to winch. She was air lifted off around 17:00 and taken to the nearest major trauma centre. But given the weather and the extremely difficult and treacherous terrain, if we'd had to carry her off, it would have taken a further three to four hours.



We phoned the hospital later to discover that the casualty was doing well. Interestingly, although her brain scan was essentially normal, she was only speaking Italian — which is her native language. This is actually very significant and goes beyond the fact that she comes from Italy. Native language is stored in a different part of the brain from acquired language. The

girl speaks fluent English but the head injury must have injured part of her brain leaving her no alternative but to speak her native language. It resolved over the next few days. A general anaesthetic can occasionally have the same effect, as can some other forms of brain injury.

Whilst we were on our way down from Gimmer, the fourth call came in. A party of five (including three children) had become benighted somewhere on Crinkle Craggs. The cloud had been almost down to the level of the hotel bedrooms all day so it was a 'brave' decision to go up there. By that time, all the people involved in the Gimmer job were

successful outcome was due to the effective and good-natured cooperative working of several MR teams. If we should ever forget why we do MR, we can remember these cases, particularly the first two. In those, the helicopter couldn't get anywhere near the casualty. We had to protect them from the environment, stabilise, package and transfer them to a location from where they could be taken for definitive care. It is very important that people do not ever undervalue their contribution or feel that their role is inferior in any way if they don't do some of the more high-profile jobs on a rescue. A car engine works well, but if just one small part is missing, the whole thing grinds to a halt. So it is with MR. A successful rescue is only possible if everyone pulls his/her weight and does their allocated role — whatever that is. Two people are alive today because of us — every one of us — not just those in close contact with the casualties — and that is a great thing.

So the tally for the day: Four incidents. One seriously ill casualty, one seriously injured casualty. Two minor injured casualties. Several scared, cold people including three children, rescued collectively by Langdale Ambleside, Kendal and Coniston teams, assisted by five members of Wasdale MRT, one member of Duddon & Furness (who was only in our base to borrow a piece of kit), five members of two separate RAF MRTs, Great North Air Ambulance and a Coastguard S92. Total fifteen hours duration. One other casualty to mention... the pie freezer back at base. Someone's probably going to tell you that pie and baked beans at midnight is bad for you. When it's the only decent meal you've had since breakfast, there are plenty who'll disagree... ●

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## FEBRUARY: GAMEKEEPERS PLAY PIVOTAL RESCUE ROLE

Tribute has been paid to Yorkshire's gamekeepers, for their vital help with search and rescue missions on the moors.

With two-thirds of Scarborough & Ryedale team calls coming from the vast tracts of upland heath, members rely on the expertise of keepers who manage the remote and unforgiving landscapes for grouse shooting.

Last year, the busiest in the team's fifty year history, saw 80 call-outs with some rescues running over a number of days on moorland that is difficult to navigate and access. The gamekeepers' unique knowledge and understanding is invaluable.

'They are our eyes and ears,' says Ian Hugill, and often the last to have seen those who go missing. Their all-terrain vehicles help get us on to the moors and can take casualties to the roadside. We frequently ask for help in opening private gates for our 4x4 ambulance.

'Lack of buildings and shelter on the moors result in hypothermic casualties. It's not just the injured, but those who stay with them who need our help.'

'Another problem is establishing mobile signal. Even if there is one, it's not easy for people to describe their location. Again, it's the keepers who manage this land that come to the rescue.'

Owner of Spaunton Moor, George Winn-Darley, said he was delighted his gamekeepers were able to play such an important role. 'Not only do they assist when asked, they raised over £400 for the team during the last grouse season. We also offered two free shooting opportunities in their charity auction, which brought in another £1,000.'

'We're acutely aware of our pivotal role and very proud to help. The rescue team spent several days on the estate in November searching for the body of a missing person, who was eventually found by a keeper. I am indebted to George Thompson and his under-keepers Anthony Orr and Bradley Collis for all their support.'

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## CASE STUDY: RUNNER WITH FROSTBITE

Glossop MRT posted this article on their Facebook page in early March. It proved a salutary tale for all fell runners out there, used as they are to running up and down the winter fells in little more than a flimsy vest and shorts to keep them warm.

We were recently contacted by a local runner who had been running around Bleaklow. By his own admission, he had made a mistake, failing to wear appropriate clothing and prepare for the winter weather. He was subsequently diagnosed with 'Second degree' frostbite, requiring treatment with antibiotics, and wanted us to raise awareness about how easy it is to find yourself in difficulty with potentially life changing injuries.

### What is frostbite?

Frostbite is caused by the exposure of parts of your body to temperatures below freezing point, which causes freezing of the skin and underlying tissues. Fingers, toes and feet are the most commonly affected but other extremities including the nose and ears. The cheeks can also develop frostbite.

There are different degrees of frostbite. In superficial frostbite, the skin can recover fully with prompt treatment. However, if frostbite is deep, tissue damage can be permanent and tissue loss can occur. For example, the end of a finger or toe can gradually separate off. The most important way of preventing frostbite is to get out of the cold. And, if you are exposed to the cold, make sure you have adequate protective clothing.

### What causes frostbite?

Usually your blood carries oxygen to all parts of your body so that your body tissues are kept healthy. As a protective response, when your body is exposed to extreme cold, blood vessels narrow (constrict) so that blood (and oxygen) are diverted away from your extremities to your vital organs to keep your body alive. After some time, this lack of blood supply and oxygen to the skin can start to cause

damage to the cells.

In areas of the body affected by frostbite, ice crystals form and cells and blood vessels become damaged. Blood clots can also form in small blood vessels which further reduces the chance of blood and oxygen getting to the affected tissues. The chance of frostbite is increased the longer you are exposed to the cold temperatures. If the cold temperatures are accompanied by wind (producing wind chill which brings the temperature down further), or high altitude, there is a greater risk. Generally, frostbite is worst in lower temperatures.

### Who gets frostbite?

Frostbite commonly affects the following groups:

- Soldiers
- People who work outdoors in the cold
- Homeless people
- Winter sports enthusiasts such as skiers and climbers.

However, it can affect anyone who is exposed to temperatures below freezing and particularly those who wear inadequate clothing.

If you have underlying health problems such as narrowing of the arteries, mainly occurring in the legs (peripheral vascular disease) or diabetes, you have an increased risk of developing frostbite. If you take certain medicines that narrow (constrict) your blood vessels, your risk is increased. Beta-blockers are a good example of this. You are more at risk of developing frostbite if you smoke, as the chemicals in cigarettes can cause your blood vessels to constrict.

### The different degrees

Rather like burns, frostbite injuries are classified by the degree of injury. The degree of

frostbite basically refers to how deep the frostbite injury goes. Your skin has two layers: the outer layer (epidermis) and the dermis. The dermis sits just under the epidermis. Beneath the dermis is a layer of fat, and then the deeper structures such as muscles and tendons.

- First degree frostbite just affects the epidermis
- Second degree may affect the epidermis and part of the dermis
- Third degree affects the epidermis, the dermis and the fatty tissue beneath the dermis
- Fourth degree affects the full thickness of the skin, the tissues that lie underneath the skin and deeper structures such as muscle, tendon and bone.

Frostbite can be described using these four levels but it may simply be described as superficial frostbite or deep frostbite. Superficial frostbite corresponds to first or second degree frostbite. Deep frostbite corresponds to third or fourth degree frostbite. These are important because superficial frostbite means there is likely to be very little or no tissue loss. Deep frostbite suggests there will be greater tissue loss.

### What are the symptoms of frostbite?

Frostbite can cause feelings of cold and firmness in the affected area, such as the fingers or toes. Stinging, burning and numbness can also occur. You may experience pain, throbbing, burning or an electric current-like sensation when the affected area is rewarmed.

In first degree frostbite, the affected area of skin usually becomes white and feels numb. Sometimes the skin is red. If it is treated quickly, the skin usually recovers fully. First degree



Images show the injury caused to the runner diagnosed with 'second degree' frostbite.

frostbite is sometimes called 'frost nip'.

In second degree frostbite, the affected skin is often red or may become blue. It feels frozen and hard. There is also usually quite a lot of swelling in the affected area. Blisters filled with a clear or milky fluid appear on the skin.

In third degree frostbite, skin can be white or blue or blotchy. Blisters also develop and can be filled with blood. Over some weeks, black thick scabs form. The skin feels hard and cold.

In fourth degree frostbite, there is damage to the full thickness of the skin and also the underlying tissues such as muscle, tendons and bone. The skin is initially deep red and mottled and then

...turn  
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MREW  
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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. A trustee of the Mountain and Cave Rescue Benevolent Fund and chairman 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

Ensures comms between teams and BCRC, deals with external enquiries, currently involved with reviewing BCRC incident reports. Represents BCRC at the British Caving Association and lecture secretary for the national caving conference. Emma is the training coordinator of Midlands CRO and member of Gloucestershire CRG.



## MEDICAL OFFICER: RICH MARLOW

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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. Rich is a Mendip Cave Rescue warden.



## TRAINING COORDINATOR: JIM DAVIS

training@caverescue.org.uk

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



## EQUIPMENT OFFICER: MIKE CLAYTON

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Liaises with MREW regarding the Government grant and runs PPE inspection courses for teams. Represents BCRC at the MREW equipment committee. Chair 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 chairman. One of three MREW SARCALL administrators and a rescue controller for Devon CRO.



## INFORMATION OFFICER & ACTING TREASURER: HEATHER SIMPSON

informationofficer@caverescue.org.uk or treasurer@caverescue.org.uk

Maintains contact details for the fifteen teams. Part of MREW fundraising group and also manages MREW collecting tins. Heather is a member of North Wales CRO and Midlands CRO and a new recruit of the Derbyshire CRO. As treasurer she manages finances and coordinates fundraising.



## 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

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Advises on cave diving issues and liaises between the Cave Diving Group and BCRC.



## FOREIGN SECRETARY: PETE ALLWRIGHT

Represents BCRC at the European Cave Rescue Association and liaises with overseas cave rescue bodies.

Image © Gloucester Cave Rescue Group.

## EUROPEAN CAVE RESCUE MEETING: ORFU, HUNGARY OCTOBER 2015

Due to the distance, this year we flew out to Budapest for few days holiday before the conference. This comprised visiting some of the tourist sites including the Gellért Thermal Baths and river cruises. We were collected Thursday morning by Gyula Hegedüs of the Hungarian Cave Rescue Service for the three-hour drive to the conference venue in southern Hungary.



PETE ALLRIGHT  
WITH ADDITIONS  
BY BARBARA  
ALLRIGHT

The conference centre was Mecsek Háza, a cave research base and education centre near Orfű Lake. It was comfortable, especially as we were first there and able to get one of two private rooms. The remainder of the delegates were allocated floor space and a mattress.

### BIVOUACS

The main theme was underground camping and bivouacs during

He covered various bivouac types some of which are commercially available, such as the Steinberg and the Vativo, and improvised bivouacs using the material in prepared kits. Experimental testing has shown that the temperature in these bivouacs can be raised to between 25° and 30°C — providing a relatively comfortable, warm micro-climate for rest periods and whilst the next section of cave is being rigged.

When queried, I pointed out our (British) need for bivouacs in the way they were describing was small. We tend to use the Kisu-type throw-up tent into which you can get six or more rescuers along with the casualty. This has been shown to create an adequate micro-climate for most of our needs. This method has the advantage of being very light (in comparison), and quick and easy to deploy. But that is not to say we will never need such bivouacs.

Guiseppe Conti, from the Italian Cave Rescue Service, described in some detail the developments in Italy. They provided a significant number to the Reisinger rescue and were applying the lessons learned there and elsewhere. They are developing a 'deep camp' kit for use in these protracted rescue situations.

To summarise, an underground camp kit has been developed to support eighteen rescue team members comprising bivouac tents with cooking, eating and sleeping areas; sleeping bags, mattresses and hammocks; food and cooking systems; water treatment; toilet and hygiene facilities.

The aim is to keep each sack below 6½ kilogrammes. The presentation details what is in each sack, which results in a total of sixteen bags for a team of eighteen rescuers. Clearly this leads to a logistics problem if the team is to also carry rescue gear. And, of course, having sent the initial

kit into the cave there is a need for resupply to sustain the rescue teams during the operation. The project is in its early stages and is yet to be tested.

Included in the packs are drills for rigging the bivouacs and hammocks. The Italians are investigating compact rotary hammer drills. This may well apply here where we need drills for the rigging stage that are perhaps more compact than the larger drills needed for enlarging operations.

### MEDICAL PRESENTATION

This was presented by Dr Emiliano Petrucci over the internet from Italy and proved to be very technical, with detailed medical analyses of gases and the use of explosives. It was made much more difficult because the internet connection was slow. His PowerPoint and there were a number of mobile phones using the available bandwidth during the presentation.

The study looked into the effect of chemicals and gases that might be encountered in caves and how the human physiology reacts. Of interest was the use of explosives, which showed that chemicals and gases would enter the bloodstream during such operations and could present a serious problem. Further studies are to be carried out but we need to be aware if we use explosives on a rescue or go to a rescue where explosives have been used.

### ITALIAN CAVE RESCUE HANDBOOK

A Italian Cave Rescue handbook documenting their techniques has been translated into English and will be available to download from <http://formazione.cnsas.it>. I believe we have much in common although they have the deep rescue problem we don't have.



Above: The Steinberg bivouac © Dinko Novosol.  
Right: The rather less sophisticated improvised version © Pete Allright.

extended rescues, such as the Reisinger incident last year, when an eleven-day rescue successfully recovered the injured caver.

The presentations were opened by Dinko Novosol, from Croatian Cave Rescue, who outlined the need for such bivouacs and detailed the requirements for maintaining the casualty condition as well as that of the rescue team.

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**Libby Peter: Mountain Guide and mother of two.**



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STOP PRESS: JETBOIL MINIMO STOVE WINS IN THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION AWARDS IN MARCH.



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PAGE 41 >



## TWISTED PAIR CABLES

Underground comms until now has been either via cable or through-the-rock communications. Another option is being investigated and developed by the Italian Technical Group. The objective is:

- to transmit digital data over existing hardware (ie. standard phone twisted pair cable)
- to be scalable with respect cave length/depth
- to use some standard communication technology.

Simply, they have taken the twisted pair telephone cable which those of us not on fibre use for an internet connection. This is run into the cave from an appropriate point on the surface to the location in the cave over up to 1km and more. A suitable modem has been developed using 'off-the-shelf' parts and, as far as possible, software. This is housed in a waterproof container and run off suitable batteries then connected to each end of the cable to provide comms. The modem also offers Wi-Fi and Bluetooth.

A fully configured system allows video conference calling (through software such as Skype), transmission of video and audio data and transmission of medical data collected through appropriate instruments. Other functions could be envisaged.

The system under development was demonstrated in a local show cave. From the conference base several miles away, we were able to talk with the underground party on

Skype (through a GSM connection at the cave entrance). We then travelled to the cave and saw the underground operation.

The principle of operation has now been demonstrated. Next is moving to practical operational use. The system uses a twisted pair cable; robust versions should be used operationally to reduce the tendency to break. Again, further details can be provided if required.

## FOUL AIR

It was left to the Brits to explain our experience of foul air situations. This I did by summarising all the lessons and decisions BCRC has made over the years. This included the deployment of gas detectors. The Germans and Croats use the Dräger gas detector. Amongst other properties, their units need calibrating every two years compared to the QRAE at every six months. Worth noting when we replace.

## IN CONCLUSION

In all a good conference. The weather was kind and indeed very warm on the Saturday. A pleasing trip into Pecs with the Croats and Italians set us up on Friday evening.

Next year might be Italy or southern Germany. And, finally, thanks to BCRC for funding the conference fee of €50.

**Above:** The Italian comforts kit with the Croatian's demonstrating a bivouac platform in the background  
© Pete Allright.

## BENEVOLENT FUND UPDATE

### JUDY WHITESIDE SECRETARY

It's been a busy old year for the Benevolent Fund, quietly getting on with what we set out to do (help people), gathering income (which, of course, enables us to do what we set out to do), and learning from the experience of actually doing what we set out to do!

Since its start, the Fund has dealt with four applications for support — two for physical rehab, one for counselling and the fourth for financial support. Both rehab cases were dealt with by The Fire Fighters' Charity at Jubilee House in Penrith and feedback has been positive that the care received was both beneficial and comprehensive. We should perhaps also mention, lest it has deterred anyone from applying to the Fund, that there is a second treatment centre in Devon which would be more accessible for people further south, should the need arise.

From the start, we've sought to maintain confidentiality for our applicants. That said, it's always good to have testimonial evidence that the system is working and one of our rehab applicants has kindly agreed to share his story here.

David 'Benny' Benson, dog handler and Patterdale team member, sustained an injury in October, simply walking downhill — although this had been preceded by a difficult stretcher carry from Swirall Edge down to Red Tarn, then to the outfall and then sledging down towards Greenside. Benny takes up the tale...

'Penrith team had just kindly taken over the carry out of the casualty so the hard work for me on this job had concluded. It was a simple walk off with a light pack when me [sic] right knee went 'clunk clunk' to the medial side and I went down. I got up, and 'clunk' it went again.



David Benson with his dog, Brock, a trainee trailing dog  
© Rob Grange.

'After some self-diagnosis and filling in my own cascard, the mickey-taking started. And it got better as my old team mates from Kirkby Stephen arrived with a stretcher. They'd been ask to support us with the casualty carry but got me instead. GNASS was tasked and they got me off the hill.

'An X-ray revealed nowt remarkable. A week later, I was with the orthopaedics in Carlisle. They gave me three of their valuable minutes and diagnosed a sprained MCL with instructions to get in touch with my doctor if it didn't improve. Meanwhile, rest and anti-inflammatories. I got about on crutches ok with the dog more upset than me as no long walks were going to happen for a while.

'The swelling reduced and I gained confidence in weight bearing and mobility, progressing to walking with sticks in about three weeks. That still didn't satisfy the miserable dog.

'I attended Jubilee House for a week of rehab just before Christmas. The timing was good as I was now moving about okay but still cautious. JH was an excellent experience. I'd wondered how you can do rehab all day for a week, what could they possibly do with you to fill in all that time? Well they did. I wasn't expecting it to be so holistic: diet and nutrition, men's health and relaxation. Knowledgeable people who were happy to chat and answer questions, a good bunch of folk who created a calm, positive atmosphere and wanted to make you good again. Worth getting injured for!

Benny still has a way to go with his rehab, having been referred back to the orthos in January, and the option is also there for him to take a second spell of treatment at Jubilee House, supported once again by the Fund. We'll keep you posted and wish him a full recovery.

So... we do seem to be achieving what we set out to do. Which is great. And we're continuing to explore other avenues of support. If you feel you could benefit from the Fund, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me, or speak to your regional rep. And if you want to put some money in the pot, feel free to do that too. This applies whether you're donating as an individual team member, on behalf of your team or region, or you're a non-team member who just wants to support the Fund. As the applications come in, so does the need for a healthy bank balance so we need you to help us!

The best way to give is via BACS transfer direct to the Fund's CAF Cash account. Sort code: 40-52-40. Number 00023601. Please ensure that your transfer is clearly marked with your reference so we can identify where it came from and send thanks to you accordingly!

That's just about all I have room for here. Thank you for your support thus far and, if you have any queries, please don't hesitate to email judy.whiteside@zen.co.uk.



## MARCH: WITH SADNESS WE REPORT THE DEATH OF TED BURTON

Ted Burton was a stalwart of mountain rescue — a long-time team member, former team leader of Buxton MRT and a PDMRO Incident Controller.

He and his wife Eve were also involved at national level, for many years an integral part of the organising committee for the UK MR conferences, amongst many other things. Ted passed away on Sunday 20 March in a Stockport hospital. At the time of writing, funeral arrangements had not yet been announced but we will bring you a full tribute to Ted in the next issue.

**Above:** Ted Burton, centre, at the opening of Kinder MRT base in 2010 © Kinder MRT



## FEBRUARY: THE HOUNDS OF LLEWELYN AND THE MYSTERY BLOOD TRAIL

Ogwen team members were called to investigate a mystery trail of blood on Carnedd Llewelyn after two walkers made the discovery and heard dogs barking.

The pair rang 999 as they were worried someone could be injured, but said they could neither see the dogs nor follow the trail. And, unfortunately, they were unable to give a grid reference. Due to the urgency and failing light, the MCA S-92 helicopter was requested and, with a couple of Oggi members on board to act as spotters, carried out an extensive search of the east side of Carnedd Llewelyn but found no person and no dogs.

'Team members were stood down,' says Chris Lloyd, 'and the Hounds of Llewelyn were left in peace!'

**Above:** Carnedd Llewelyn © Richard Webb and licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Licence.

## JULY 2015: LIGHTNING STRIKES. TWICE!

On Sunday 5 July last year, two people tragically died as a result of two separate lightning strikes on two separate peaks in the Brecon Beacons. Brecon team members were out on their monthly training exercise in Cwm Llŵch, just north of Corn Du, one of the main peaks in the Brecon Beacons, at the time the storm and lightning hit. **Dave Coombs** was there.

The exercise scenario involved a search for a number of casualties, who happened to be medical students. The weather was mixed with some early showers and some periods of drier weather and even some sunshine.

The team routinely uses SPOT GPS trackers to monitor the position and progress of team members and vehicles. The incident control team were receiving messages that the 'casualties' had been located and were being treated. The pre-programming facility enables those on the hill to notify incident control by pressing a button, saving valuable radio airtime and allowing team members on the hill to carry on treating the casualties.

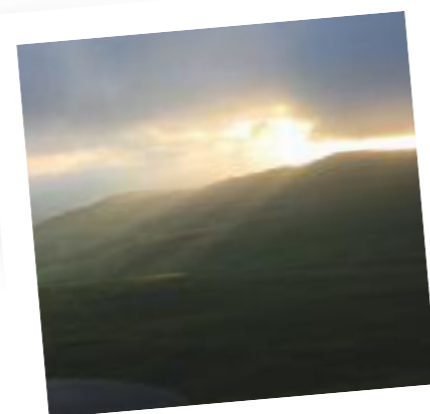
Around 12:00hrs, a thunderstorm hit the area. It passed fairly quickly, it was decided we would end the exercise and get people off the hill as soon as possible. The decision was relayed to hill parties by radio and the vehicle radio mast was taken down as a precaution.

At 12:05hrs Dyfed Powys Police called for the team's assistance following a number of 999 calls about people being struck by lightning. Initial reports suggested there were three casualties on Pen y Fan (highest peak

in South Wales), one undergoing CPR, one injured but conscious, and another. This was now a serious incident. An 'Area Call' went out to all South Wales teams, with details of the incident and asking for teams to meet at Pont ar Daf where the start of the quickest route onto the highest peaks is accessed.

The four South Wales teams (Brecon, Central Beacons, Longtown and Western Beacons) use the Area Call system where there is a casualty in a known location, to ensure sufficient resources reach the site quickly, to effectively treat and evacuate the casualty. All the team pagers are triggered and those team members within 40-minute response time making their way to the RV. Once the 'on-scene commander' judges that there are sufficient personnel and other resources to carry out the rescue, a 'no further personnel' message is triggered.

Pager requests now sent, the Brecon team members from the exercise were tasked towards Pen y Fan via Corn Du to assess the situation. Information was still confused as further reports were coming in suggesting casualties on Cribyn in addition to those reported on Pen y Fan.



doctor and other team members towards Corn Du. Others were sent to rendezvous with the team Land Rover, collect further medical equipment and thence to the cas site. Central Beacons and Longtown members also assisted with the treatment and recovery of the casualties.

The first party, including the team doctor and colleagues, swiftly reached the first casualty, high on the summit of Corn Du, just 35 minutes from the police call.

Colleagues from Central Beacons went by Land Rover to the 'gap road' to access Cribyn as there were reports of casualties on the summit. Others were dispatched from Pont ar Daf with medical equipment and stretchers towards the summit of Pen y Fan via the main 'tourist route'.

Shortly after, a Sea King from RMB Chivenor arrived on scene. They were able to pick up the two casualties from Cribyn before landing on Corn Du, picking up the other injured casualty, team doctor and another team member, evacuating them all safely to hospital.

The incident received a great deal of media interest, some speculating inaccurately that a selfie-stick may have been a factor. Although lightning strikes and thunderstorms are a feature of mountain weather around the world the tragic loss of two lives on separate peaks two kilometres apart is thankfully a rare event and our thoughts as a mountain rescue community go out to the families and friends of those who tragically lost their lives in this event.



Above left: Training tracks of search parties carrying SPOT trackers. Above right: SPOT tracks of team members. Top right: Llyn Cwm Llŵch. Images © Brecon MRT.

## Oct•Nov•Dec•2015

## incidents

### Lake District

Cockermouth	11
COMRU	1
Coniston	10
Duddon and Furness	11
Kendal	5
Keswick	28
Kirkby Stephen	7
Langdale Ambleside	32
Patterdale	15
Penrith	8
Wasdale	21
(Last quarter: 134)	<b>149</b>

### Mid-Pennine

Bolton	16
Calder Valley	6
Rosendale & Pendle	4
(Last quarter: 25)	<b>26</b>

### North East

Cleveland	2
North of Tyne	2
Northumberland NP	3
Scarborough & Ryedale	18
Teesdale & Weardale	1
(Last quarter: 19)	<b>26</b>

### North Wales

Aberdyfi	8
Aberglaslyn	5
Llanberis	20
North East Wales	9
Ogwen Valley	26
South Snowdonia	4
(Last quarter: 130)	<b>72</b>

### Peak District

Buxton	22
--------	----

Derby	11
Edale	8
Glossop	7
Kinder	16
Oldham	16
Woodhead	13
(Last quarter: 90)	<b>93</b>

### Peninsula

Cornwall	4
Dartmoor Tavistock	9
(Last quarter: 30)	<b>13</b>

### South Wales

Brecon	1
Longtown	4
(Last quarter: 44)	<b>5</b>

### Yorkshire Dales

CRO	11
Upper Wharfedale	10
(Last quarter: 20)	<b>21</b>

### Search Dogs

England	7
Lakes	4
Wales	3
(Last quarter: 13)	<b>14</b>

### RAF

Leeming	2
Valley	7
(Last quarter: 9)	<b>9</b>

<b>Total</b>	<b>428</b>
<b>(Last quarter: 514)</b>	

Editor's note: Please note that numbers quoted may not be precise for any given period. Stats should be returned to the Statistics Officer, not to the Editor.

## MARCH: WALKER INTERVIEWED BY POLICE AFTER RESCUE FROM HELVELLYN

Patterdale were initially called, following reports that a 20-year-old solo walker on Helvellyn had fallen and injured his back after walking for three hours.

The location of the casualty was somewhat vague and his telephone signal was intermittent. After an initial search, a further call from the casualty suggested he was on the Thirlmere side of Helvellyn. Keswick team members searched the area and an air ambulance flew over the possible areas. Fortunately, the man was spotted from the air, 500m above Thirlmere. He was uninjured but team members stretched him down a steep and awkward slope to the ambulance below. From there, he was taken to hospital and subsequently interviewed by the police for possible false calls.'

The incident came in the wake of news from Scotland that a male of similar age had presented to two hospitals in the Highlands recently, claiming to have fallen a significant distance from crags, one requiring helicopter transfer. No injuries were found and it was felt that his presentations were fictitious. Teams south of the Border were advised that should they find themselves in a similar situation and become suspicious, they should contact the police.



Image © Keswick MRT.



Bow being cared for after the rescue © Central Beacons MRT.

## MARCH: FOUR TEAMS AND A HELICOPTER TO THE RESCUE AFTER TWO DOGS FALL OFF PEN Y FAN

Rescuers were called out to south Wales's highest mountain on Easter Sunday, when two dogs fell down a steep face. Central Beacons team members were joined by colleagues from Brecon, Western Beacons and Longtown.

It seems the dogs had chased after a piece of litter and gone over the north-east face of the mountain, falling a considerable distance. The owner then followed to try and help his dogs. Team members located him and one of the dogs, Bow, on the central face of Pen y Fan. The owner was relatively well, but Bow seemed in quite a bad way. Due to the deteriorating weather, with very high winds and

snow showers, the aircraft was unable to winch from the face so the man was helped to the valley bottom on foot and then flown him to the team's control point. Team members then carefully carried the injured dog in a baby rescue basket, down to the valley floor to be flown around to meet up with her owner. This left the task of locating and recovering the second dog, Roo. She was eventually found, very cold but miraculously unhurt and reunited with her owner. Fingers crossed that Bow will make a full recovery.

## TAYLOR MADE OFFERS 40% DISCOUNT ON PANORAMA ANTENNAS



Taylor Made RF was founded by Chris Taylor, having spent 33 years in the Radio, Communications and RF field, gaining experience across a wide area of technology. Since 1980, Chris has worked with a vast cross section of RF related products and holds a full amateur radio license (Call sign G0WTZ). He has now branched out with his own company offering a greater breadth of products including receivers, antennas and amplifiers.

**Taylor Made RF is happy to offer 40% discount from the retail prices of Panorama antennas (not radios) for Mountain Rescue.**

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# kit stuff



## JON WICKHAM

In my day job as a buyer for an outdoor shop, I get to see a huge amount of outdoor kit. A few of these are of little interest to the general public, but just the thing for MRTs and their members. Here is a run-down of some kit you might be interested in.



Plastic quick release buckles are on all sorts of outdoor and MR kit. In particular they are pretty much universally used in shoulder and compression straps on rucksacks. Eventually they will tend to fail with use, and can be easily stood on if a pack is left on the floor. Unfortunately, many of these buckles are sewn in to their webbing straps, meaning the piece of kit may need to be returned to the manufacturer for a new buckle to be reattached. Sea to Summit have come up with a fantastic alternative for this: **Field Replaceable Buckles**. Each buckle has one or two metal pins which can be removed and replaced with a Philips screwdriver. Just snap off the broken buckle, slot in the replacement and replace the pin!

Available in a variety of sizes to fit common webbing widths. For more see [seatosummit.com](http://seatosummit.com). Sea to Summit is distributed by The Mountain Boot Company ([trade.mountainboot.co.uk](http://trade.mountainboot.co.uk)).

During some recent bad weather, my car journey was cut short due to the road being blocked by a fallen tree. This could just as easily happen to a team vehicle on a shout, and though a tow rope or winch might enable the tree to be dragged clear, in this case it would have been impossible as the tree was pinned by other trees. This prompted me to investigate carrying a compact saw in our team vehicles. There are various folding 'pruning saws' available but I was after something a little more substantial. This led me to the new **Gerber Freescape Camp Saw**, a hack saw that will fold away in to its own handle, keeping it unobtrusive and preventing the blade from snagging when stored. Small enough to be compactly stored in an already rammed Land Rover. Large enough to be effective on trees. For more see [gerbergear.com](http://gerbergear.com). Gerber is distributed by Dalesman International [dalesman.uk.com](http://dalesman.uk.com).



Finally this isn't a piece of kit as such, but **In the Shadow of Ben Nevis** has caught my eye. It's the autobiography of Ian 'Spike' Sykes, the story of a lifetime spent in a variety of wild places. Team members may be most interested in his extensive experience in RAF Mountain Rescue as well as Lochaber MRT. Definitely worth a read! Published by Vertebrate Publishing. [v-publishing.co.uk](http://v-publishing.co.uk).



**JON WICKHAM** IS EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORY BUYER AT GEORGE FISHER IN KESWICK. HE IS ALSO A MEMBER OF BOWLAND PENNINE MRT

life online

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Twitter: [@mountrescueuk](https://twitter.com/mountrescueuk)



## MARCH: LAKES TEAM MEMBERS CAUGHT PHOTOBOMBING NUMBER TEN

On 23 March, representatives of several Lakes teams travelled to Westminster for a 'Flood Heroes' reception at 10 Downing Street, hosted by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, in recognition of their work during the December floods.

Amongst those from the Lake District were, from left to right in the photo, John Bulman (Cockermouth), Mike Blakey (Patterdale), Mike Gullen (Wasdale) and Jonathan Burgess (Kendal), who was also representing the Cumbria Council's resilience team. By all accounts a good time was had by all.



## GERBER KNIVES TO THE RESCUE

The Gerber Freescape Camp Saw features an innovative design that allows the saw to fold up flat while remaining completely assembled and without threat of lost parts. It utilises four pivot points to effectively cut larger diameter wood while using the full length of the blade. When folded up, the blade is protected and can be stowed safely in a vehicle or rucksack. Highlighted with green allows the saw to be found and the rubberised grip makes it easy to handle and use. The blades are replaceable with a standard saw blade.

Gerber have also just relaunched the River Shorty rescue knife, now featuring a bright green handle which makes this easy to locate. A new sheath has been included which can be mounted multiple ways and on a BA easily. The blade is serrated, blunt tipped and made from high-end stainless steel so is hard wearing. EZ-Out Rescue knife is also now available, featuring a fully serrated blade with a rounded tip nose blade for puncture protection. The blade is made from high-end stainless steel. Featuring a yellow handle, with a simple to use locking system and large thumb loop which allows you to easily open the EZ Out Rescue one handed.

TO FIND OUT MORE, CALL 01772 453918 OR VISIT [DALESMAN.UK.COM](http://DALESMAN.UK.COM)



## MARCH: PORTRAITS THROUGH THE AGES

A Bassenthwaite photographer aims to photograph a person of each age from one to 100 in Cumbria, in aid of mountain rescue.

The collection will depict how people age and change over the years. Carmen Norman was keen to raise something for mountain rescue teams following all their work during the December floods. A professional landscape and portrait photographer, she plans to put all the images together in a book, the proceeds of which will go to mountain rescue. She still has a few gaps in the ages so if there anyone out there who fancies being part of the project, please get in touch with Carmen via [photosbycarmen.co.uk](http://photosbycarmen.co.uk). We'll keep you posted on how the book progresses.



Image © La Chocolatina UK.

## MARCH: SWEET IDEA FOR ROSSENDALE AND PENDLE

Blackburn-based La Chocolatina UK aims to raise a few bob for their local team with a novel bit of confectionery.

They will be selling a white chocolate creation, filled with pineapple ganache and finished in the red, white and blue mountain rescue colours while out and about at events, and all profits from these will be donated to the team. Yum.

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/LA-CHOCOLATINA-UK](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/LA-CHOCOLATINA-UK)

### NEW TO THE MREW MEMBERS AREA

**Getting Started with Incident Software v5.6** Short tutorial on install/upgrade and use of latest incident reporting software

**Incident software v5.6** Setup program for new installation and for upgrade of v5.

**National Fundraising Group Minutes, February 2016**

**Drone use in MR** in the general discussion forum, posted by Rob Johnson plus link to his article at <http://filmuphigh.com/drone-use-in-mountain-rescue/>

**And, oft requested, the following can still be found in the Publications folder of Resources:**

**MREW Social Media Guidelines (2013)** Still current.

**MREW Corporate Guidelines (2009)** Still current.

**The CORRECT CMYK version of the MREW roundel.** Contact [editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk) for team versions.

## FEBRUARY: APPEAL TO WALKERS IN SNOWDONIA TO STOP BUILDING CAIRNS

Footpaths and the fragile upland environment are being damaged by the custom of picking up stones and piling them up to mark routes, says the Snowdonia National Park Authority.



Cairns on the Ty Nant path on Cadair Idris © Natural Resources Wales.

And the BMC have backed their call to halt the building of cairns, saying it encouraged laziness in people as they no longer felt the need to follow a map. Outdoor website [grough.co.uk](http://grough.co.uk) reported that the problem has

become so severe, a demolition day is planned for cairns on Cadair Idris and work has already begun to 'rationalise' some of the piles.

Simon Roberts of Snowdonia NPA said, 'As the cairns are built, stone by stone, the footpaths are eroding and the fragile landscape is being damaged. As the footpaths widen, the cost of maintenance increases. But, even more dangerous, the cairns can mislead walkers, especially in fog'.

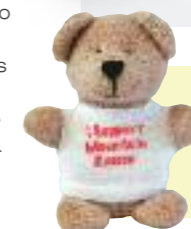
## MARCH: EX-TEAM LEADER APPOINTED PATERDALE'S HONORARY TEAM PRESIDENT



At the team's AGM, long-serving Patterdale team member and ex-team leader, Dave Freeborn, was appointed honorary president of the team in recognition of his huge contribution to the team over many years.

'We've only ever had one person in this role,' said team leader, Mike Blakey, 'and that was our founder, Dr James Ogilvie. Dave was completely taken aback by the announcement, which is typical of his modest view of all he's done for the team over 35 years. We wanted to mark and honour his contribution and, as I think he suspects, keep him as involved as possible for many years to come!'

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raising funds for rescue





## MONTANE SPINE MRT CHALLENGE, STEP BY FROZEN STEP...

In January, a number of team members took up the challenge of running the gruelling Montane Spine® MRT Challenge. This special challenge was only available to mountain rescue personnel, with participants raising funds for their respective teams or MREW, in one of the toughest winter races you can find. **Tim Budd** was one of those hardy souls.

Fellrunning is my thing. Short races, long races, bogs and hills. It got me into mountain rescue, and it's the ability to get to remote places on Blecklow, at speed, carrying personal and team gear which is my strength.

I'd been aware of the Montane Spine for the last couple of years — mainly because it goes through our patch on its first day — but hadn't really considered it until this year when Montane, with encouragement and assistance from Matt Torr of Oldham team, created the 'Spine MRT Challenge'.

Essentially, the route is the same as the normal 'Spine Challenger', Edale to Hawes: 108 miles with a time limit of 60 hours. It was a chance to do what I love and raise money for the team. Brilliant.

But this wasn't simply a long run — though I'd be first to say I've never run 175km in one go — it was the fact it was in January. The weather would be changeable and challenging and sleep deprivation could well be an issue, as well as nutrition, not getting injured and not being too fatigued.

Beside me are Phil and Patch, also from Glossop.

Soon enough it's countdown. A flash of lights and we're off. In under an hour, we're at the bottom of Jacob's Ladder and on the climb to a foggy Kinder. As day breaks, a few racers around me are breathing pretty hard and I wonder if we might have gone out a bit fast.

Across the tops I overtake the leaders, and by this point, I'm really wondering if I've gone out too fast as I take the overall lead across Glossop's patch. From here it's easy running all the way to Wessenden and beyond. My shoes grip the flags, my head clears and the enjoyment of just being out on a cold January day takes over. I haven't run properly in a couple of months now, and my legs just go. No sense in slowing them down as I feel on top of the world.

Crossing Snake Summit, Glossop team members cheer us on. Food and drink is on hand but I don't really need it, so I run on up onto Bleaklow, easy running through home territory, and back down to Reaps. A couple of the lads accompany me up towards Laddow and Blackhill.

After the M62, I'm overtaken, putting me solidly in fourth and I know I can't keep up their pace. Just before the reservoirs, by the White House, there's more refreshments and encouragement. Still too early for me, so I stumble onwards across the reservoirs. The slog to Stoodley Pike take its toll, and I battle gamely to get to the checkpoint at Hebden Bridge before nightfall.

At that point, socks get changed and I catch up with the leaders who are already getting ready to head back out. A couple of cups of tea later, the weather has changed to torrents of rain, and I'm into the dark again, running fitness spent. All that's left is my walking and carrying ability. Each new pair of mitts are soon sodden and cold. I slosh my way through ankle and knee-deep mud as the Pennine Way snakes its way through badly drained farmland. I'm ploughing one foot in front of the other from one roadhead to the next where my fantastic support crew (Lynne) plies me with coffee, food and spare gloves.

Cowling appears and the welcome sight of Glossop Mobile 1, parked up and full of familiar faces, tea, food and encouragement despite two call-outs since I met some of them at Snake. Nice one lads!

From Cowling, it's mud-plugging, slog through ankle-deep sludge and slurry, trying not to think too hard. I worry that the river might still be flooded, but thankfully it's not.

Through Malham, the rain appears to be

turning white — or is it a trick of my head torch? No. As I reach the tam, the white rain is most definitely snow, and heavy at that. I make my way to the field centre checkpoint for a quick brew, put on my thermal leggings, eat some Kendal Mint Cake ready for the worst part of the journey: Fountains Fell.

At 5.00am, not yet dawn, snow is drifting to a foot deep, there's no discernable path, hands and feet are frozen. Six kilometres to the last checkpoint, is it intelligent to keep going? This is perhaps my lowest point. The inner voice kicks in. So easy to give up — but that's not the point, is it? I dig in, grit my teeth and figure the best thing to do is be on the other side of the hill. And the quickest way to get there: get over it.

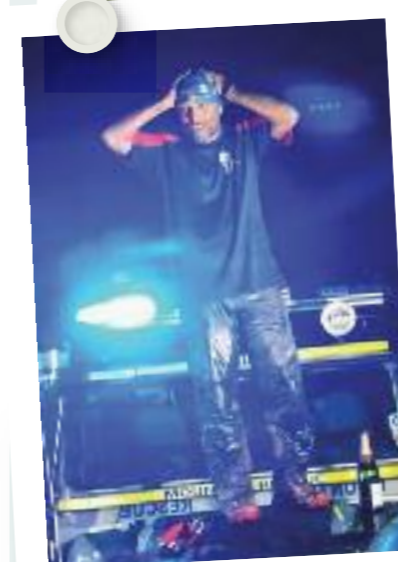
Sunrise comes as I top out, and I bash my way through snow and slush to Dale Head and Pen y Ghent. With a rising wind from the left, I force my way uphill and fight the headwind on the way down. The walk off Pen y Ghent seems to take forever as fatigue really begins to take its toll.

After a quick tea stop in Oldham's van in Horton-in-Ribblesdale (had I known they'd be there I'd have been looking forward to it for HOURS), it's the long trudge to Hawes. The walk to Cam High Road takes so long, I wonder if I've gone wrong, hallucinations begin to occur and I see about ten people ahead of me. Turns out only two of them are actual people.

Eventually the path to Ten End appears and with it, wave upon wave of hail battering me from the south. Great. I'm now surviving on willpower alone, battling with every fibre of my being to get to the end.

Stumbling into Hawes I am thoroughly broken — beyond shivering and generally in a mess. I've been tired after races before, but never broken and incapable. I'm plied with food and tea, and after being checked over by a medic, allowed to get some sleep. Standing is a challenge, walking nigh on impossible, but knowing that I've completed in 32 hours and 10 minutes is fantastic. The winner was less than three hours ahead of me, I'm fourth! The next runner comes in about six hours later.

Of the sixteen MR personnel who set out, representing Oldham, Calder Valley, Border Search and Rescue, Edale and Glossop, nine finished, in times ranging from 32 hours to 56 hours. Thanks to all along the route who cheered us on, plied us with refreshments and generally helped us get to the end. Really, thank you. As a challenge, I cannot recommend it heartily enough. ●



## MEANWHILE, JAVED TAKES ON THE MONTANE SPINE RACE... TWICE

The Montane Spine Race® is 'a 268-mile, non-stop, uncompromising winter challenge encompassing the entire Pennine Way. Widely recognised as one of the most demanding national trails in Britain'. So says the race website. Javed Bhatti upped the ante in January when he set out to run the route in both directions in aid of mountain rescue. And he succeeded it, still smiling — possibly the first time 'the double' has been achieved in winter conditions.

The 52-year-old was one of only 24 ultrarunners to complete the race at Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders. Yet, despite the event being dubbed the most brutal race in the country, he promptly turned around and ran the route southwards, a total distance of 862km (536 miles). His initial aim was to raise £500 for Mountain Rescue England and Wales but, at the time of writing, his JustGiving page showed a remarkable £5,826.42.

The Lichfield-based runner, arrived at the southern end of the Pennine Way in Edale shortly after 6.30pm on the Sunday, just over fifteen days after leaving the Peak District village on his northern leg. Cheered on along the way by members of the various teams whose patches cross the race route, he was greeted at the Nag's Head by, among others, members of the Edale team.

He told online magazine grough.co.uk that he'd always planned to do a double and had hoped to do the second leg a little faster than the first. 'Unfortunately, the weather was against me with the snow, the ice and the wind direction straight into the face. I had to use snow shoes across the Cheviots. And Cross Fell was pretty bad, straight into the wind, and Tan Hill too.' Nevertheless, it was a fantastic achievement by Javed. No wonder he was smiling! On behalf of mountain rescue, thank you.

**THE CHALLENGE MIGHT BE OVER BUT YOU CAN STILL SUPPORT JAVED VIA [JUSTGIVING.COM/JAVED-BHATTI2](http://JUSTGIVING.COM/JAVED-BHATTI2)**

**Top:** Javed Bhatti arrives at Edale at the end of his double Pennine Way run © John Bamber. **Left:** Champagne finale © Buxton MRT.



## RUNNER TACKLES FIFTY-TWO RACES IN FIFTY-TWO WEEKS

Diane Waite plans to complete the 52 races during 2016 in aid of the Calder Valley team.

'After much consideration, I decided that as this will be my fifty-second year, I would challenge myself to a race a week, entering various distance races throughout the year.'

Team treasurer, Richard Graves used to run with Diane at the Stainland Lions Running Club together. He has every faith she will complete the challenge. Diane is already well on her way to her target of £1000, with £517 pledged as we write.

**YOU CAN SUPPORT DIANE VIA [MYDONATE.BT.COM/FUNDRAISERS/DIANEWAITE1](http://MYDONATE.BT.COM/FUNDRAISERS/DIANEWAITE1)**

**Above:** CVSRT president, Bob Uttley (left) and team treasurer Richard Graves with Diane © Calder Valley SRT.

## BOG RESCUE FEATURES IN C2C PATH APPEAL

Kirkby Stephen were approached by the North Pennines AONB Partnership early in the year, to say a few words in support of their project to pave part of the Coast to Coast route near the Nine Standards.

The path at this point is notoriously boggy and difficult to navigate, more so following prolonged wet weather. Team members were involved in a tricky rescue there last summer, digging out two stuck walkers sunk up to their waists in the bog.

The project, in collaboration with local charity Friends of the North Pennines and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, aims to raise the money to restore the path through a crowdfunding campaign. A number of television personalities have also voiced their support, including BBC Countryfile's Julia Bradbury and shepherdess Amanda Owen, star of ITV's The Dales.

The money raised will enable the partnership to engage contractors to helicopter in stone flags to lay a new path, while staff and volunteers will help revegetate the rest of the damaged peat.

**TO FIND OUT MORE — AND HELP KEEP THIS POPULAR FOOTPATH IN GOOD CONDITION — CHECK OUT [CROWDFUNDER.CO.UK/RAISINGTHESTANDARD](http://CROWDFUNDER.CO.UK/RAISINGTHESTANDARD).**



**Below:** Last summer's boggy rescue © Kirkby Stephen MRT.

raising funds for rescue



I'd had a pretty good 2015 and was upping my mileage but, in November I trained too heavy, too far, too soon and my progress was massively curtailed by an Achilles' tendinopathy. For the final two months, I ran no further than 15km at a time. It was tough and go just how far up the Pennine Way I might get on the day.

So... It's close to 7.00am, it's cold and dark and there's 150 of us standing in a field 1km south of the Pennine Way. We're all in race gear and ready to run, eager and anxious to get going. The announcement that the start is delayed by ten minutes is met with groans.



## LAUNCH AUTHORITY AND CALL-OUTS: A MOUNTAIN RESCUE VISIT TO POOLE

**PAT HOLLAND**  
TEAM LEADER, SOUTH EASTERN MRA, IRELAND.

Since 2009 Mountain Rescue Ireland has run a leadership course for its senior members and for members of other voluntary services. Last year we welcomed a staff member from the RNLI as part of a deal in which we exchanged course places on our respective leadership courses. Our aim was to learn from each other and I was particularly interested in how our course would measure up against one from a very large organisation with a permanent staff.

The course started the following morning and participants were from both operational leadership who man the lifeboats and shore-based governance leadership. Interestingly while the coxswain may command their lifeboat, a non-seagoing launching authority will have the ultimate authority to decide if it is safe and appropriate to launch. This balance of authority and interlined (but different) responsibilities, is somewhat similar to our chair and team leader, though I suspect not many chairs have refused a team leader the authority order a call-out.

It raised the issue for me of what training we provide for MR team chairs — or are they there only to deal with awkward and non-operational topics? Is it asking too much of team leaders to be responsible for all aspects of a team's tasks and governance?

Much of this work is done for RNLI crews by non-seagoing volunteers. It was interesting, however, to see that there was a lot of overlap as to what each particular role should or should not be doing. A good section on roles and contracting addressed this for the RNLI though I think we go deeper in our own course, looking at contracts between members, teams, services and beyond. However, the RNLI course is only one of a suite of courses for leaders, all within a 'competence framework'.

The MRI course which myself, Mary Mullins and Diarmaid Scully have presented in Ireland, Exmoor, North Wales and Scotland deals mostly with the personal aspects of leadership, such as values, contracting, conflict etc. It is strongly based on coaching but with inputs from community development and emergency management. It does not deal with either incident command or Mountain Rescue Ireland governance, there being another course for the first and little space for the second, the course running over a weekend only.

In contrast, the RNLI course runs over five days, Monday to Friday midday, and deals with all three areas. It also has leadership scenarios of the type familiar to anyone who has done the MR Party Leader course, though in our case that does not include a very large swimming pool where big waves and bad weather can be generated at the click of a switch!

I found that I was having to think at two

levels all the time, firstly to enjoy and learn from the course as a participant, a team leader from a different service, and secondly as a course organiser/trainer. It was a most interesting and fulfilling experience, one that I am very grateful for.

As a team leader, it was clear to me that there is an ethos of head office being there to support the boat crews. However, head office also requires of them the data and behaviour necessary to run their service safely and efficiently. There are some 'differences of opinion' within the RNLI — 'front line versus head office', and 'full timer versus volunteer', but it is very limited and the RNLI have a very strong culture of 'doing it right'. This is clear in the hugely impressive All Weather Lifeboat construction facility where several millions sterling worth of new lifeboats are being painstakingly manufactured 'in house' in pharmaceutical facility levels of tidiness and cleanliness.

The college is also 'doing it right' as the luxury bedrooms and excellent food are not only there for course attendees but also for the public, generating income for the RNLI. Several of the course sections were topics head office clearly needed the local team management to be familiar with, and while they were not directly relevant to MR, their actual existence was more than interesting.

The core value or model for the course was the Bridge Team Management model, derived I think from the Cockpit Resource model introduced by airlines when they realised that having autocratic captains could cause problems. This is partly an incident command model where there are several topics which a leader needs to keep in mind. Our course model, the leadership triangle of Task, Process and Relationship, is more a personal leadership model. Both ways of working have been designed in the front line so they clearly work. There is need for both and several other models to be available to leaders.

One aspect that surprised me was the apparent lack of a 'party roles' model. We have the Party Leader model which is now an accepted standard for the organisation of a search or rescue party. However, in the leadership scenarios and discussions I did not find such a model. There was certainly a leader, and some very good ones, but no set

roles for the other party members. Maybe the shipboard roles of coxswain, helm, navigator etc do not translate well into land scenarios. There certainly are separate RNLI courses for these sea roles. It would be interesting to see what the RNLI would make of our party roles. Briefing is now becoming very important in the RNLI and our practices would be comparable. Our debriefings might benefit from the use of their model of Safety, People, Equipment and Performance.

One of the course modules dealt with the types of leadership styles and the RNLI are very clear which styles are the most successful for them, depending on the people (their skills, experience and behaviours). This is unlike our course, where the coaching ethos and perhaps lack of any national consensus on the topic prevent us from picking the most appropriate. They go so far as to test leaders and to discuss with them what sort of leadership is appropriate. Is this an area we should move into? It was interesting to see Decision Lines used, where people have to show by their position in the room where they fit on a scale between Autocratic and Democratic, but the question of where do you want to be was not asked.

There was a lot of honesty modelled on the course: honesty about what head office was doing and not doing, on mistakes made and lessons learned on all sides. Just as with speakers to MR gatherings, each speaker noted their operational credentials and it is clear that those who have not served in the lifeboats can be a bit conscious of it as they talk to the volunteers. It shows the importance given to the task of search and rescue by the organisation.

Safety is a huge part of the course, being emphasised in every briefing and debriefing. There is a clear and determined effort to make it part of RNLI culture and daily work. While we are similarly concerned with safety, the resources available to the RNLI make it possible to do independent accident investigations, risk assessments, lessons learned discussions and then the introduction of standard SOPs across every boat station. They are developing to a combined preventative, influence, education and rescue service so as to reduce deaths by drowning in a number of different ways.

Teaching methods were generally

traditional with several guest speakers and a small number of carefully chosen exercises. PowerPoint was used effectively with good videos though hand-outs or references for later reading were sparse though they are in preparation. Unlike our course, there was little official time for group discussions among participants unless this was presumed to happen at meals and in the college bar. This probably reflects both the lack of agreed national protocols in our system as well as our commitment to coaching methods.

There was a remarkably effective, hilarious and engaging section on conflict management with professional actors which made many clear points by showing the wrong way for a leader to intervene. I was also surprised that models to deal with conflict management were not taught. Our small survey of the MR course participants (admittedly a small sample) has shown that several months later it is not the fun scenarios that are remembered but the simple models from Transactional Analysis. They certainly underlie the teaching as we found out in the marvellous acted conflict scenarios but were not explicitly mentioned.

Coming away from the course, I found I had a much better appreciation of the efforts put in by both full time and volunteer members in the RNLI. As in MR, the volunteers give a huge commitment. However alongside that is a strong and confident organisation providing a professional back-up to the volunteers on a cross country basis. We do not have such a foundation. Our course in Mountain Rescue Ireland compares well to this RNLI course, though contexts and philosophies create some differences. The real difference is in the system behind them.

I learned much else of course and now can even recognise the Shannon lifeboat, the latest and very impressive design! I must thank all those who made my visit possible and the trainers and participants who made me feel very welcome. It was a marvellous opportunity, one that affirms not only the value of volunteers but also the sheer power of a committed charity. ●



## JANUARY: JO BRAND WALKS FOR COMIC RELIEF

Okay, not actually fundraising for mountain rescue, but when did we ever pass up the chance to feature a celeb on these pages? Jo Brand completed her BT Sport Relief Challenge: Jo Brand's 'Hell of a Walk' in January, helped along the way by mountain rescue team members whose areas she passed.

Glossop team members even managed to bestow a few gifts on the comedian (above right). At the time of writing, she had raised a massive £1,159,220. And who could fail to be inspired by her determination to carry on, in the face of blisters, aching limbs, uncertain terrain and good old Storm Jonas with its driving rain, hail and 60mph gale force winds which literally blew her off her feet. By the finish line in Liverpool, she had clocked up an incredible 135.7 miles travelling from east to west across the width of the country.

'I wanted to do this to raise shed loads of money for Sport Relief, because it helps a huge amount of people. Especially projects that mean a lot to me,' she told John Bishop, as he welcomed her back to reality. 'But also, I wanted to show fat old women that they could walk!' An incredulous Jo described having been blown over by the wind along the way but said it was 'so fantastic to walk across a massive swathe of the country and see how generous, friendly and community-minded people are. I can't thank everyone enough. It's overwhelming'.

A fantastic effort by Jo. And just to complete the name-dropping, Jo was also joined along the way by some of our other MR pals (and some yet-to-be-pals) including Bill Bailey, John Bishop, Billy Bragg, Alan Davies, Lesley Garrett, Sue Johnston, Gabby Logan, Lee Mack, Davina McCall, Louise Minchin and Ricky Tomlinson.

[SPORTRELIEF.COM/WHATS-GOING-ON/JO-BRANDS-HELL-OF-A-WALK](http://SPORTRELIEF.COM/WHATS-GOING-ON/JO-BRANDS-HELL-OF-A-WALK)



## MARCH: THE HARDEST OF ALL OCCASIONS

Aberglaslyn team members found themselves involved in a particularly harrowing incident, when called to search for 'one of their own,' the eighteen-year-old son of one of their serving team leaders.

A major search, alongside members of South Snowdonia SRT and SARDA Wales continued through the night. Tragically at 8.00am, Josh was found deceased in fields close to the family home.

A celebration of Josh's life was held on Friday 11 March, at St Tanwg's Church, Harlech. Police stopped the traffic as his wicker coffin was brought to the church on a tractor-drawn trailer, to be greeted by a sea of red mountain rescue jackets — honouring the request that mourners wear 'bright colours and a daffodil'. Aberglaslyn team members and representatives from other teams in North Wales formed a guard of honour as the coffin was taken into the church.

On behalf of the wider MR family, our condolences go out to Josh's family, friends and fellow team members at such a difficult time.

**Above:** A sea of red and yellow pays tribute to Josh. Image published courtesy of The Daily Post.



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