

mountain rescue

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CALVIN AND HOBBS: CLIMBING AN INCOMPLETE TOOTH, BBC, ILLU OF 9/16/17

WELCOME TO ISSUE 60

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

EDITORIAL

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NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 61

Editorial Copy Deadline:
Friday 9 June 2017

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

Central Beacons team members and Floss the trainee search dog assembled in front of the cameras during filming for the BBC Idents 2017, proud to represent mountain rescue. Image courtesy of the BBC.

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.

first Word

PENNY BROCKMAN



So much has changed in our financial situation since I first took on the role of treasurer, that Mike invited (volunteered?) me to have the 'first word' for this issue to talk about it all — and I freely admit this is a little outside my comfort zone. But then facing up to challenge has been something of a feature of my time in the financial chair!

When I started out, the organisation had just £50,000 in the bank, or thereabouts. We were two years away from the red. Discussions about how we could plan for the future — whether we even had a future — dominated not just our management meetings but our biannual national meetings. We had to make some difficult calls. Hard to believe now but there was even serious talk of closing the magazine — despite it being firmly recognised as a valuable communication tool both inside and outside the organisation.

How different the position now! The last five years of so have seen us benefit hugely from sponsorship deals with Go Outdoors and, more recently, the JD Foundation. We've received government grants and money from Libor. And the patronage of HRH The Duke of Cambridge has raised our fundraising profile and brought in substantial funds from the Royal polo matches.

But with more funding comes even greater challenges: how to deal with the growing complexity and volume of both our requirements and the needs of teams. The financial decisions we make may not suit everyone, all the time, but I guarantee they are never made lightly or hurriedly!

A key area in which we've been able to make a real difference is through our personal accident insurance — one of those things we pay for hoping never to have to use! There's nothing visual or sexy about it but we all need it in place, just in case we need it. This year, we have significantly increased the amount covered, adding to what the police pay. They pay £350K in death and benefits, we've upped that to £750K. Their weekly payment for personal injury is £350K — we've made it £700K. And we're investing £40K per annum to make that happen.

As you already know, we also cover vehicle insurance — three vehicles plus one trailer per team — and there's public liability too. Altogether we've committed around £120K each year to protect teams, their team members and their vehicles.

To help relieve the load in insurance, we have a new brokers in Integro and they are providing us with a dedicated five-strong support team. They have access to the insurance@mountain.rescue.org.uk email address along with myself and will respond directly to your enquiries.

We're now in the third round of Libor funding. This year we've been granted £119K and overall we've received £267K in training funds. Libor sits in a class of its own as challenges go — first in deciding what to apply for, then working out how best to spend what we've got, inviting tenders, drawing up agreements with providers then getting that training out there in a timely fashion (this latter a challenge in itself!)

All the officers have put in a tremendous amount of work to make all this happen but I must thank Al Read in particular who has burned many an hour with me in putting together the bid and planning the training. Thanks to Libor, this year we plan to run search management, medical, technical rescue, water and party leader courses as well as training in personal winter skills and avalanche awareness.

Later this year, we will be producing quarterly management accounts based on the themes of Governance, Fundraising and Profile (the magazine and other marketing activity) and Services to Teams (insurance, equipment etc). This has been facilitated by Excluserv. I hope it will bring greater visibility of our finances but it's been necessary due to the sheer volume of things we now deal with. It's an extremely complex system for a voluntary charity.

With Excluserv, we're also implementing a customer management system called Salesforce which means we'll be able to connect more effectively, anywhere, any time, so everyone involved with any particular project will know what's going on at different levels. Thank you to Paul and Jacques and everyone at Excluserv for guiding us through all these processes.

Only three years ago, we were still a computer and paper-based accounting system — Excel spreadsheets all over the place. Now we have an integrated platform to run it all, so we're much more resilient. Goodness knows what financial challenges the future will bring but hopefully now we are much better placed deal with them. ☺

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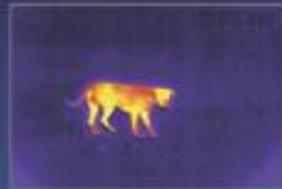
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meetings

MREW BUSINESS AND COMMITTEES

Saturday 20 May 2017
Lancashire Police HQ, Hutton

MREW BUSINESS AND COMMITTEES

Saturday 18 November 2017
Lancashire Police HQ, Hutton

To book in to MREW business meetings, contact: **Dave Close**
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

Or speak to the relevant officer for your subcommittee — contact details available on the MREW website.

who's who update



INTRODUCING THE NEW MREW WATER OFFICER: KEVIN GARVEY

Kevin, who took on the role in November, has been a member of Rossendale and Pendle MRT for six years and is also an assistant team leader. He's held the position of water rep for the MPSRO for the last three years, a position he enjoyed sufficiently to apply for the national water officer role.

Away from mountain rescue, he currently works for NWS as an Emergency Medical Technician 1, but previously worked in Further Education and Outdoor Education. He is a kayaking instructor and climbing instructor and has worked in the outdoor industry for the last sixteen years, both in a full time capacity and as a freelance instructor.

inthisissue



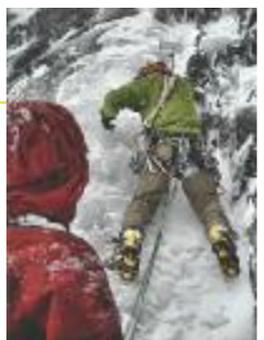
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what's in at a glance

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SARCALL UPDATE:

JOHN HULSE

New users are increasingly being added into the system with some major partners joining. This widespread usage is especially important when teams are dealing with large or complex multi-agency operations. A good example of this model is Cumbria where we have North West Ambulance, Cumbria Police, Cumbria Fire and Rescue, Great North Air Ambulance, RAF Mountain Rescue Service, two HMG helicopter bases and all LDSAMRA teams able to freely interact and share information using SARCALL.

The development work on SARCALL continues apace with a steady flow of improvements driven by operational and security needs. Some recent highlights are:

- **Full online OS mapping** showing MRMAP radio locations with the mapping scaling down to street-level, if required. This excellent facility is mobile-friendly and helps deliver improved situational awareness for teams and our partners. Created by Jon Lynch of Wasdale MRT, it has proven very helpful in a number of recent complex operations.

- **Debrief form added** to enable learning points, observations and post-operation reports to be added to the closed incident logs. The visibility of each debrief entry can be set to either 'Team-Only' or 'All Partners in the Region'. This selective capability enables effective and candid recording of post-operational debriefs and comments.

- **Web-based response facility added** to enable team members to quickly and easily declare availability for team operations, even when they do not have SMS service. The facility enables team members to use any web device such as a PC, tablet or smartphone with internet access to easily declare their availability to their team.

- **Log viewer report modified** to display the IP address of every log viewer instance. This has been useful for audit purposes and for identifying potential security issues.

- **Migration to 'mobile-friendly' continues** to enable the smoother experiences with smaller screen devices such as smartphones. An increasing number of users access the system from smaller screen devices and more parts of SARCALL are being changed to become mobile-friendly.

Please consult your team admin or SARCALL regional admin to learn more about how to get the best from SARCALL and these new facilities.



Images courtesy of Sue Clarke (née Walmsley) Joe's daughter.



JOE WALMSLEY REMEMBERED

JUDY WHITESIDE

An email in March alerted me to the death of mountaineer Joe Walmsley, at the beginning of February. Not only was Joe a well known and accomplished mountaineer in his day, he also served as equipment officer for the then Mountain Rescue Committee, so it seems fitting to remember him here.

By all accounts, Joe was a reserved man, and I can find little about his later life. But drill down into Google and you regularly see his name amongst the mountaineering pioneers of the mid-twentieth century, putting up new routes, leading expeditions, making climbing history.

'His climbing career was impressive,' says David Allan, ex-chairman of MREW. 'He was a very active member of the Rucksack Club and put up a number of good new routes at home — mostly in the Peak District.

In 1957, he was leading a British party which got within 300 feet of the summit of Masherbrum. The expedition was marked by the death of one member of the party, Bob Downes, who died of pulmonary oedema. The expedition was also notable for the presence of one of its strongest members, Don Whillans, on his first Himalayan expedition.

In 1961, Joe led a British-Nepali expedition in the first ascent of Nuptse via the South Face — considered to be the first 'big wall' climb in the Himalaya — a successful trip which included a young Chris Bonington.

'He served as equipment officer for the Mountain Rescue Committee from 1977 to 1993,' says Dave, 'and was awarded a Distinguished Service Award in 1992. Most of his work was around stretchers — improving the Thomas and introducing the Bell. It seems strange now but at that time the only direct contact between officers was through the May and November meetings and it was difficult to get to know people as individuals.'

On behalf of mountain rescue, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our condolences to his family.

FUNDRAISING: HELP REQUIRED

DAVIE THOMSON

The fundraising group will hold a meeting after the AGM in May. We are looking for people with the time and commitment to get involved in national fundraising and to help manage a variety of income streams. Time commitment is varied but will involve six meetings per year.

If you'd like to get involved, even on an ad hoc basis, call me on 07710 462713 or

via fundraisingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

OPERATIONS GROUP UPDATE:

MIKE MARGESON

All news was eclipsed by the tragic loss of the Irish Coast Guard rescue helicopter R116 and its highly experienced crew of four off Black Rock lighthouse, County Mayo. As operations lead, I speak for us all in extending our sympathies to the families, friends and colleagues in the south east Ireland rescue community. Not surprisingly, talking to Alan Carr, chair of Mountain Rescue Ireland, he spoke of the rescue community in the south east being particularly close knit and

everybody knowing the aircrew.

This whole event shines a very bright light on the importance of our training schedule with MCA. Along with driving, water and crag rescue, our work with the air assets is high on the risk register. It is vital we continue to support our SAR-H reps by logging training and any helicopter interaction. When I hear people complaining about spending ten minutes undertaking the safety training module online and look at some of the poor completion figures, it worries me greatly. They should all be 100%.

The new operations group will hold its third meeting on 15 July and undoubtedly we will have

a busy and full agenda. However, I would remind everybody that this is the meeting where your regional reps can ensure that things on the ground which need attention are fully discussed and collectively agreed by regional operational leads and specialist officers. So if you have items for the agenda, please get them to Elaine (group secretary) or myself by 1 July. Up for discussion will no doubt be radio transition and SAR-H training.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank John Wealthall, who is standing down as national equipment officer at the



alongside the new equipment officer.

EQUIPMENT UPDATE:

As Mike mentions, the post of equipment officer will become vacant when John steps down in May. Anyone interested in the role should contact Dave Close in the first instance for details via secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

@letters

28 January 2017:

Dear Judy, I was interested to see the 'Spotted in Wasdale' monocycling photo in the Winter 2017 issue. The chap in the photo was me! My son (11) and I were making a mountain unicycling (municycling) descent of Scafell Pike at the time. This is a 'thing' and we represented the UK last year in the World Unicycling Championships in San Sebastian, Spain.

Dr Stuart Allan

Team Doctor, Kendal MRT & GP in Milnthorpe, Cumbria



And, later (following further questioning from the editor)...

I'm also on BBC2 tomorrow night [Sunday 29 January 2017] at 9.00pm in Special Forces: Ultimate Hell Week. I'm not so sure that was fun all the time! But back to unicycling — the whole family do it, but my son and I are probably the most into the downhill stuff. Daughter Tara, who is nine, is also in on the act. Evan and I unicycled the top of the Calf in the Howgills last week.

Municycling to mountain biking is kind of like what rock climbing is to mountain walking, you have to be really up close and personal with every bit of the terrain otherwise it just pings you off. Super workout for the core and great cross training for fell running, my family's other passion. I'm also into ultra running and have done the UTMB and BG.

It's just another way of enjoying the fells. People have some very interesting ways of reacting and ignoring us on the fells...

So now we know. Thanks Stuart! (Editor)

Photos show Evan and Stuart at the World Championships with their unicycles.



25 January 2017:

Dear Sally and Judy, I read with interest the article regarding RTAs, especially fatal ones. This article is very poignant to my wife and myself as we lost a friend due to a fatal RTA last year when an insecure load became detached from a contractor's vehicle, entering through the windscreen of her car and causing her fatal injuries. She left a grieving family, a husband and two sons who are just starting out on their individual careers.

The point I want to make is that all drivers are responsible for their vehicles, whether team, personal or business — the disruption and trauma that an accident of this magnitude can cause is unthinkable. Not only has the driver to go through the legal procedures which may end up as a fine, the loss of a licence or even the loss of employment, but as most rescue team members live in rural areas, they may be known to those tragically injured and also the families and friends of the injured. This will be an added strain on the driver as he or she will have to live with the consequences for the rest of their life.

I can't emphasise enough that it only takes a couple of minutes to check the roadworthiness of the vehicle and the security of any load being carried, where a lapse of concentration could cause years of concern and distress. Perhaps I'm getting paranoid but I'm now more aware of any potential load carrying vehicle and the dangers.

Dave Salter

Ex-OVMRO team member & current OVMRO [Treble Three] Support Group member.



ALAN HINKES OBE TO BE AMBASSADOR FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

JUDY WHITESIDE

We're not sure why it didn't occur to us before, given the volume of positive sharing and retweeting of anything mountain rescue-related which comes through Alan's social media accounts.

Still the only British mountaineer to have bagged all fourteen 'Eight thousanders' (in pursuit of which feat he actually climbed 28), this amiably chatty — some might say loquacious — Yorkshireman must already be our most enthusiastic supporter. So we thought we'd make it official.

His association with mountain rescue goes back some way. Back in 2010, he set about climbing 39 county summits in seven days to raise awareness of Mountain Rescue England and Wales as well as funds, supported by a number of teams along the way. That was the first time, he says, he realised the 48 teams were all separate charities.

When first approached with the idea — essentially a recognition of what he was already doing, helping promote mountain rescue — he was (as they say in Yorkshire), extremely chuffed to be asked.

'I've lots of friends in the teams,' he says, 'and I've a lot of respect for anyone in mountain rescue. They're fantastically dedicated people and professional in what they do. They love the hills and they genuinely enjoy getting out there and helping save lives. And I'm happy to get involved in whatever way I can.'

'It'll be great to have him on board,' adds chairman Mike France. 'We look forward to seeing Alan around a bit more!'



Peer review: From both sides of the fence

CHRIS GRIFFITHS NEWSAR TEAM LEADER



From both weekends I learned much, went away with lots to think about and many things to be proud of. I now also have a better understanding of how we, as a team, can review what we are doing ourselves. I also saw how my own team supported each other, in the same way other teams do, in ensuring that we always do the best we can for those who need our help. And, of course, there was the usual MR bonus of making new friends along the way.

Peer review is about reflection not deflection. There is no finger pointing, it's not threatening or judgemental in any way, it simply facilitates an inward look — a reflection — that offers a structured insight into how your team works. It's honest, open and, above all, it is designed to be developmental.

You will come away from the

review with things to do that will make your organisation more effective and efficient. Peer review engenders a sense of responsibility and ownership by the whole team to make progress.

The review poses questions that you will need to find answers for — in a way that best suits your team, its unique dynamics and its circumstances. It highlights what you do well too — and it is always nice to receive praise from respected peers. If it does not motivate and reassure, then you have not engaged positively from the start.

Feedback is honest and reflects what was seen and discussed. You may not agree with every word but you will come away with a clear picture of what you need to work on and you will have a true reflection of how your team functions.

The process itself is hard work for

everyone involved — it has to be because there is a lot to get through in a limited amount of time but you must remember that it is your review and you have control from the start — something that Tim constantly makes very clear.

NEWSAR came through refreshed and energised, we had good guidance and support from the reviewers and now have plenty of things to discuss at all levels of the team.

The reviewers, Tim, John and Derek were friendly and supportive but at the same time challenging at every stage. They were also good company to spend a weekend with and even came to our call-out on the Saturday night.

I would strongly recommend that all teams opt into the process. Take from it what you will — but I would be amazed if you found it anything other than a positive experience. Give it a go. If you think you don't need to do a structured review, then you really do!

My only negative is that there is no facility for the review team to share what they feel is an example of good practice as a matter of course. I for one learned much from Pete Goble and his team at Rosendale where I was warmly welcomed during their review. Good practice needs to be shared across the whole MR world... we all have the same aims after all.

I have included our Five Year Plan (left), as requested by the review team. It is meant as no more than an example of a development strategy. Some things are clearly more achievable than others, but what it has given is a focus to the whole team and in doing so some degree of measurability in relation to progress. If it is of any use, please feel free to use it/adapt it for your own organisation.

And finally, having survived seven school inspections, if anyone knows anyone in Parliament then please suggest this as an effective, friendly and positive model as a replacement for the dreaded Ofsted... could be a good earner for MREW to hire Tim out to the Minister for Education too!! ☺



Having been involved with the review process as a reviewer in November 2016, I was keen to see how the experience would differ when my own team — NEWSAR — was visited in February of this year. With a little time to reflect, I can honestly say that there was little difference.

OUR TEAM MISSION: NEWSAR volunteers provide the police, ambulance service and local communities with a highly competent search and rescue capability that can be deployed swiftly, safely and effectively 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

OUR TEAM VISION: By 2020, we will be known by the wider community as a centre of excellence for all-terrain, all-weather search and rescue, serving the communities of north east Wales and beyond.

OUR VALUES: We are a professional and multi-disciplined. We give our time as volunteers to help save lives.

WE ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE FIVE AIMS

PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE

- Keep improving teamwork.
- Recruit and retain hill members, 'specialist' members and supporters.
- Communicate better with each other.
- Maintain our positive culture.
- Start to deliver NWMRA MREW training in casualty care and search and water rescue.
- Work towards expenses.

QUALITY RESOURCES: EQUIPMENT, VEHICLES, BASE

- Equip everyone fully.
- Store, audit and replace our equipment effectively.
- Maintain our vehicles safely.
- Put in place a rolling vehicle replacement programme.
- Maintain base to a high standard.
- Plan and budget for a new base and create a fundraising plan to make it happen.

SOUND GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

- Aim for operational excellence, always.
- Introduce MREW Peer Review.
- Keep qualifications up to date and aim for constant personal development.
- Improve and share our handbook and policies.
- Improve exec performance.
- Review our constitution.

STRONG REPUTATION AND PROFILE

- Have a clear communications plan — messages and protocols.
- Produce new literature.
- Offer more expert speakers.
- Create and use a stakeholder database.
- Build influential relationships.
- Generate more media coverage.
- Make better use of our website and social media.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Set a clear, future 'base budget'.
- Agree a fundraising plan to support the team's aims.
- Clarify fundraising and supporter roles.
- Review community fundraising and plan activity according to cost/benefit.
- Agree an approach to building revenue through trading.

Peer review: Progress

TIM CAIN



AIMS:

- To allow individual teams to gain greater self awareness of their processes and procedures in order to enhance their own performance.
- The share good ideas widely across MREW and beyond.
- To demonstrate that continuous improvement is embedded within the organisations culture.

Number of teams reviewed: 8.
Number of teams actively planning a review: 5.
Available Opportunities 2017-2018: At least 5.
 (Teams interested in running their own review should contact tim@timcainleadership.co.uk)
Main Events (since last report): Peer Review end-of-year-one 'Way Forward' meeting. Nineteen teams were represented. Observers from Mountain Rescue Scotland also came along. Mountain Rescue Ireland has stated an interest in the process. At this meeting, the strengths, weaknesses and actions needed to improve the process were discussed and agreed.
Reviews completed by: RPMRT, NEWSAR and NNPMRT.

WHAT WAS AGREED AS GOOD?

- Overall aims and objectives
- Increased self-awareness for team
- Open question nature of question set
- Positive culture from reviewers
- Team ownership of the process
- Developing relationships between teams through reviewers
- Value for money.

WHAT WAS AGREED AS NOT SO GOOD?

- Length and intensity of question set day
- Perceptions of standardisation
- Difficulty in sharing successes
- Lack of awareness of the true aims and objectives.

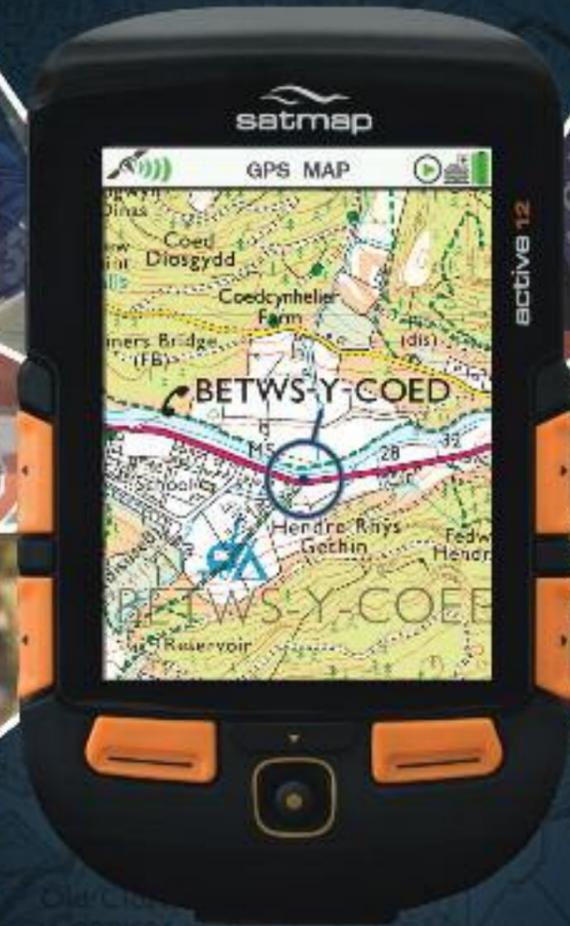
IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TECHNICAL RESCUE SECTION

- What is the team's operational performance requirement for rope rescue?
- How does the team organise itself to match this rope rescue requirement?
- How is rope rescue equipment organised to meet the operational requirement?
- Describe any special measures the team adopts in relation to cascare in the rope rescue environment?
- How does the team communicate from the bottom to the top of vertical pitches?
- What is the team's operational performance requirement for water rescue?
- How is water rescue equipment organised to meet the operational requirement?
- Describe any special measures the team adopts in relation to cascare in the water environment?
- How does the team communicate in the water environment?

LOOKING AHEAD: THE PROCESS GOALS FOR 2017

GOAL	OWNER
Continue to consolidate the Question Set (QS)	Peer Review lead and all stakeholders
Upload the QS to the MREW website	Peer Review lead and webmaster
Establish Peer Review Forum to spread 'Solutions' (Good practice)	Peer Review lead and webmaster
Develop 'Follow up' reviews, including small scale subject specific reviews eg. Medical or vehicles	Peer Review lead and teams
Recruit and train 'the right' reviewers	Peer Review lead and team leaders
Make the process more resilient	Peer Review lead
Refine terminology and issue glossary of terms	Peer Review lead
Communicate the aims and objectives more widely	All
Ensure transparency	Peer Review lead
Conduct at least another nine reviews before the end of 2018	Peer Review lead and teams
Communicate with MR Scotland and MR Ireland to develop good practice	Peer Review lead and teams
Develop Peer Review through social media	Peer Review lead and teams

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LAKE DISTRICT

CONCERNS OVER 'AVOIDABLE' CALLS FOR HELP FROM CHARITY WALKERS



Above left: Walk off of four people involved in the incident on 22 February © Paul Cook.
Above: Upper Eskdale, on an altogether calmer day © Bob Smith (grough.co.uk).

Over one 24-hour period in late February, Wasdale team members — along with colleagues from neighbouring teams — were involved in three '999' mountain rescues.

'All the incidents were avoidable,' said Richard Warren, 'if the lost walkers in all cases had paid attention to the weather forecast, and been better equipped with map, compass and torches. Organisers must keep their groups together and know where everyone is. More importantly, February is not a good time to organise a charity walk with inexperienced walkers'.

The first call, at 2.00pm, was for four young females under-20, who had become separated from a party of 36 undertaking a charity walk up Scafell Pike. The team was initially unaware of the other 32 walkers — spread out across the mountain — or how the four had come to be on their own. The girls were ill-equipped, had never been on a walk like this before and had been up since 3.00am that morning for the drive from Liverpool. Their position was identified and six team members set off in extremely poor conditions, with forecasted torrential rain and severe winds, and visibility down to 20 metres. Two were suffering deepening hypothermia when the team arrived to find them huddled behind a boulder. They were warmed up in the bivvy tent and put into dry clothing. Team members described the descent as 'extremely challenging, even for the rescuers, and the four girls needed regular strong encouragement to keep

moving'. The four girls were finally brought down to the Wasdale head car park and reunited with their friends at around 8.30pm.

Meanwhile, as team members descended the mountain, a second call-out came in, followed by a third Scafell Pike incident. This latter, dealt with by Keswick MRT, involved more than 70 rescuers from seven teams, a Coastguard helicopter and six search dogs and handlers in the search



Above: The area now dubbed the 'Scafell Bermuda Triangle'. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights [2016].

for a couple who ultimately spent fourteen hours on the fells sheltering in their bivvy bag — a piece of kit they probably owe their lives to.

At one stage, the operation had to be suspended because rescuers could not stand up in the driving wind and rain lashing

the fells. The walkers were eventually found, cold and exhausted in Eskdale, fifteen hours after first being reported missing.

Keswick team members were originally called out about 6.10pm to help the Wasdale team search for a family group, including two teenage children, who were overdue on a walk between Seathwaite and Great Langdale.

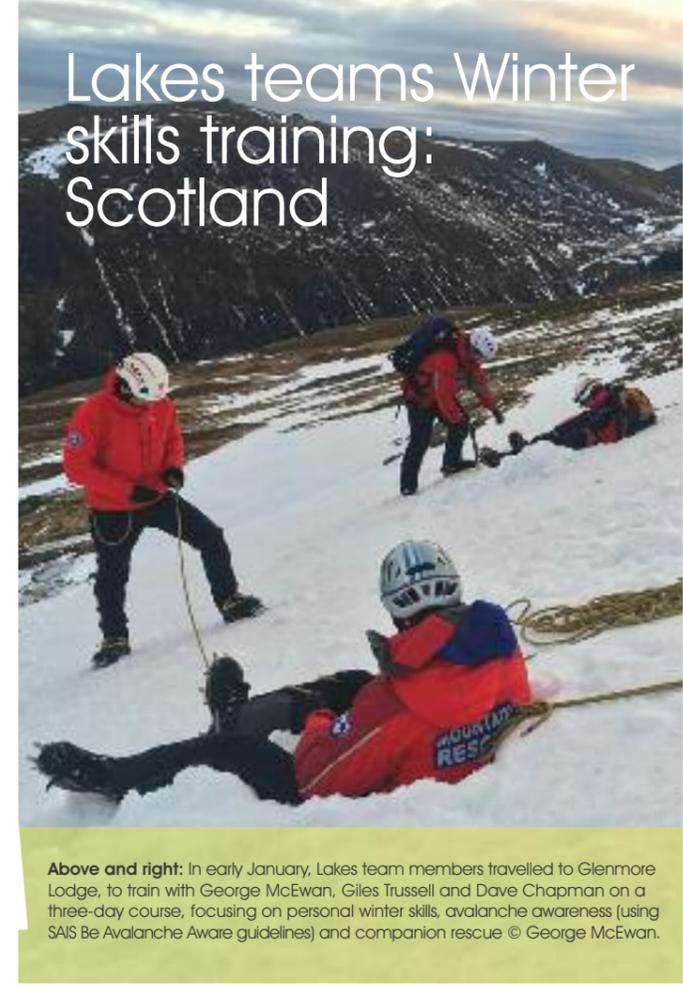
Two of the Keswick team's search dogs, along with fifteen team members, searched main footpaths in the area as the weather deteriorated. Just as it was looking as if a major escalation was necessary, word came though that the party had turned up at Wasdale Head Hotel. Breathing a sigh of relief, we began to withdraw from the hill.'

However, word came in that two other walkers had been reported missing on Scafell Pike. A Keswick team spokesperson said, 'They had left no details as to their route, but told the hotel they would be parking at Seathwaite. Enquiries showed the vehicle still to be there, so we informed Wasdale that we would be continuing our search patterns for the previous job, and would they continue theirs?'

'In the meantime, weather conditions had worsened, and visibility was minimal. Further information trickled in about the couple, who were obviously inexperienced, and not particularly well-equipped for bad weather. The two teams, assisted by Duddon and



Top, centre and bottom left: Team members from Cockermouth and Patterdale travelled north in January for a few days training in the Northern Corries with Charlie from Assynt MRT. Note the youngest team member on the far right of shot, below. Congratulations to her not only a first Munro but her first Scottish winter bivvy! (well, a 40-minute power nap in a sno hole). Images © Andy McAlea. More images available at www.flickr.com/photos/103901323@N05/.



Lakes teams Winter skills training: Scotland

Above and right: In early January, Lakes team members travelled to Glenmore Lodge, to train with George McEwan, Giles Trussell and Dave Chapman on a three-day course, focusing on personal winter skills, avalanche awareness (using SAIS Be Avalanche Aware guidelines) and companion rescue © George McEwan.



Furness MRT covered as much of the ground as possible, but once conditions got to the point where team members could not stand up in the driving wind and rain, a decision was taken to stand down the search till morning.'

The search resumed at 8.00am on the Wednesday, with seven teams, four search dogs and the Prestwick Coastguard Sikorsky S-92 joining the operation in improving conditions. The helicopter airlifted some of the rescuers higher on to the fells to start their search for the couple.

'After three hours, the couple were found in Eskdale by a member of Duddon & Furness MRT. They were cold, exhausted and stunned by the ferocity of the weather. They had spent fourteen hours in a plastic bivvy bag, waiting for daylight and a break in the weather, before trying to walk out. Their bivvy bag may well have saved their lives.

'The S-92 flew from Keswick to pick them up, and they were given hot food and drink to warm them up at Keswick's base. Keswick MRT then arranged transport for them back to their hotel.

'The 70-plus rescuers in the meantime had walked down to various collection points, and transport was coordinated to bring many of them back to Keswick base for soup and sandwiches, provided by our wonderful WI group, who turn out to our biggest jobs to feed and water us.

'Our thanks to the crew of Rescue 999 from Prestwick, who flew in very testing conditions, and to our neighbouring teams who helped us out.'

The couple's rescue involved 22 Keswick team members and 49 from the Penrith, Cockermouth, Kirkby Stephen, Wasdale, Duddon & Furness and Langdale Ambleside teams. The team members were involved in the search for just over eleven hours.



Above: Road closed signs, clearly ignored © Penrith MRT.

'ROAD CLOSED' SIGNS IGNORED AT DRIVER'S PERIL

On a similar note [avoidable rescues], in February, Penrith team members were requested to assist a stuck motorist and two passengers. Fortunately, the vehicle was easily turned round and able to drive back to Penrith, but the incident prompted the team to urge motorists to abide by the road closed signs, rather than reach a point where they need assistance, adding 'The signs are clear, the road is not'.

MID PENNINE

CALDER VALLEY TEAM REACH THEIR 1000th RESCUE

Calder team members reached their milestone in early March with a call to a 68-year-old lady who had sustained a lower leg

PAGE 14 >



ALL CHANGE AT THE TOP IN PENRITH

After seven years as Penrith team leader, Mike Hill has handed over to Kaz Frith.

'Mike has led the team during a number of significant rescues and searches,' says Kaz. 'He will continue to be an operational member, providing much needed advice and guidance whilst I get up to speed with the role'.

Karen has been on the team for sixteen years, serving as a deputy leader for the past three. She is also a search dog handler of ten years – she and Dottie having clocked up nearly 250 dog call-outs, including a number of finds.

Above: Mike Hill hands over to Kaz Frith © Penrith MRT.



Above: Incident number 1000 for Calder team. Right: Meanwhile, continuing our theme of 'getting 'em young', Calder team member Sophie with baby Jesse. Images © Calder Valley MRT.



injury whilst walking along The Pennine Way at Top Withens near Haworth. Once the lady had been packaged and made comfortable, team members stretchered her to the helicopter for evacuation from the moors to the land ambulance situated on the road head. Team members created a secondary landing site for the helicopter and then assisted with the transfer to the ambulance.

BABY JESSE JOINS TEAM IN CALL TO INJURED MOUNTAIN BIKER

Eagle-eyed readers will have already spotted the 'Patterdale baby', enjoying a spot of winter training in Scotland with mum Anna. Meanwhile, in the Calder Valley, team member Sophie responded to a call for help even though she had her baby Jesse with her at the time. Mum and baby joined team members on Harden Moor, near Bingley, when they were alerted to a mountain biker who had suffered a head injury.

'My role was very different to my roles in the past,' explains Sophie. 'It was hands-off

but important, nevertheless. As one of the first team members on scene, I was able to give the rest of the attending team more information about the location of the casualty site. When the rest of the team arrived, I was waiting and able to direct them into the site through tricky terrain, which made their job quicker than had I not been there'.



NORTH WALES

NEW VEHICLE FOR ABERGLASLYN...

The Porthmadog-based Aberglaslyn team has taken delivery of their second Isuzu D-Max, which replaces the last of the team's Land Rover Defenders.

Supplied by RJ Williams of Talsarnau, the vehicle was delivered in August 2016, before commissioning for mountain rescue purposes by the North Wales Police Fleet Commissioning Centre. A final touch was the racking, built by nearby Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge works at no cost to the team.

Team chairman Jon Dobson Jones said, 'The new vehicle is a significant milestone for us, giving us two reliable and fit-for-purpose vehicles for the future. I am delighted at the success of the project and eternally grateful to our partners who have assisted us in being able to continue to provide a high level of service to those who visit our area and our communities'.

Having tried and tested their first Isuzu since late 2014, the 36-strong team now has two identical vehicles. They currently respond to around 60 incidents per year.



Above: NEWSAR team members with staff of Auto Defiance Ltd down at their workshops. Right: The newly-named 'Carys' © North East Wales SAR.



... AND FOR NORTH EAST WALES

Faced with the twin problem of aging off-road vehicles and the cessation of production of Land Rover Defenders, NEWSAR's vehicle manager, Griff Evans entered into discussions with local firm Auto Defiance Ltd and the decision was made to send the team's Land Rovers for a nut and bolt rebuild from the ground up.

Work on Mobile 1 started in the autumn. It was stripped back to the chassis with parts needing replacement or repair being identified at this point. On rebuild, a galvanised bulk head was added to the new galvanised chassis, strip down checks on the engine, gearbox and clutch and running gear were carried out and new parts required replaced on assembly. All body parts were also resprayed whilst they were off the vehicle.

The Land Rover was then treated to new suspension, bushings all round, a straight through exhaust system and a new bumper was added to finish off the ground floor. A bespoke wiring loom was also created to encompass the team's operational requirements and increase vehicle security. A speedline floor was added and the vehicle's undercarriage was treated to a full complement of underbody protection. Decals and branding stickers were added in at the end.

Mobile 1, now christened Carys, was revealed to team members on 1 March and was first tested in anger within the week.

'The team at Auto Defiance has done a great job to extend the life of Carys and help ensure that NEWSAR can continue to respond to call-outs. The team is hugely grateful to them, and to working partners, Bearmach, LR Centre, Richards Chassis, DT Engine Solutions Ltd, Hel, Spraycraft Deeside, Terrafirma, Super Pro and Frog Island 4x4, as without them all, this project would not have been possible.

Thanks to a grant of £17,000 from the Morrisons Foundation which will go towards the next refurb, Mobile 2 is already down with Auto Defiance Ltd and NEWSAR is looking towards getting this back on the road in a couple of months.

PEAK DISTRICT

SECOND SPINE CHALLENGE FOR GLOSSOP TEAM MEMBERS



Above: Tim Budd (2016 Winner), Alasdair Cowell (2017 Winner), Patrick Haley (2017 Finisher).

This is a significant year for the Glossop team, marking their 60th anniversary. It will also be the second year the Mountain Rescue Spine Challenger event, a non-stop 108-mile race from Edale to Hawes up the Pennine way. Glossop MRT has been proud to be a part of the race both years, helping out with intermediate checkpoints, and also as competitors. The racers have been obliged to carry GPS systems with them as part of the mandatory kit and the team would like to thank Satmap for loaning their GPS units to the GMRT competitors.

In both 2016 and 2017, three team



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Above: Alasdair Cowell at the finish line © Glossop MRT.

members have set off from Edale, and a Glossop team member has won the trophy for being the first mountain rescuer past the finish line. In 2016, Tim Budd, Phil Shackleton and Patch Haley stepped up to the plate. Tim won in an overall time of 32 hours ten minutes, Phil battled on through 59 hours of bad weather and gruelling terrain to finish just inside the cut-off. Patch pulled out 50 miles into the race but vowed to come back in 2017. Glossop supported the race at Reaps and Cowling, but at the same time also had two call-outs.

This year, Alasdair Cowell, Matt Dooley and Patch once again stood at the start line. Unfortunately, Matt had to stop after 30 miles. Patch went on to finish in a superb time of 50 hours and 54 minutes, and Alasdair, who started at a pace considerably faster than the rest of the field, managed to hold onto his lead to win in 33 hours and 37 minutes. This year, again, the team, along with supporting the race had a call-out — this time to rescue a racer who had injured themselves on Bleaklow. Once more, the team was able to meet its obligations, and support and rescue at the same time.

An excellent way to kick off proceedings for their 60th year! You can read Alasdair's account of his challenge on page 56/57.

PENMACRA

EXMOOR TEAMS STRETCHED TO FOUR CORNERS OF THEIR AREA

Phil Sparks writes: When telling people about what we do, they're often surprised at the size of the area the team covers. In January, this was amply demonstrated as we had call-outs to the four corners of our area — roughly described as North Devon, as well as west and south Somerset. Team members are based mainly in the population centres around the fringes of



TEAMS ACROSS ENGLAND AND WALES RECEIVE FUNDING FOR WATER RESCUE EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

In January, Maritime Minister John Hayes announced that water rescue charities around the UK would receive £913,000 funding in the third round of funding provided under a five-year, £5 million scheme, announced as part of the 2014 budget statement.

The grant supports charities running local lifeboat and rescue services, helping those in danger on and around inland and inshore waterways, including during flooding and other incidents. The money can be used to buy new lifeboats and other equipment such as lifejackets and safety gear.

'Every day, countless volunteers in water rescue charities across our island nation carry out vital work during emergencies, not only around our coasts but also keeping our rivers, lakes and inshore waters safe,' said the Minister. 'It is imperative that we value and support their tireless efforts. I am delighted to be able to announce the latest round of funding, ensuring they have the equipment and resources they need to provide their round-the-clock lifesaving services.'

An expert panel — including representatives from the devolved administrations, DEFRA, the MCA, RNLI and the RYA — assessed applications submitted to the Department for Transport on the basis of how the equipment or training will be used to support lifesaving, search and rescue operations and flood response capability locally and nationally, whether the funding will deliver wider community benefits and how the equipment and skills will bring sustainable benefits.

A number of mountain rescue teams submitted bids, receiving just under £225,000 between them. Successful recipients included Derby, Cleveland, Scarborough and Ryedale, Upper Wharfedale, Woodhead, Duddon and Furness, Kendal, Kirkby Stephen, Patterdale, Bolton, Cornwall, Dartmoor (Okehampton, Ashburton and Tavistock teams), Exmoor, Severn Area, Aberglaslyn and the North Wales MRA, all of which were heavily involved in flood rescue efforts during December 2015.

Image: Flooding in Carlisle, December 2015 © Karen Phillips-Craig.

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.

When the TV company calls

The start to 2017 has seen a few MR teams on TV in various ways and also a crop of enquiries from production companies looking for teams to feature. From a brief exchange on the MREW Facebook Group, it's obvious there's confusion and frustration out there so it seemed a good theme for a media column.

As many team press officers and secretaries will know, MREW (usually Andy Simpson as Press Officer) is approached regularly about media opportunities. These vary and it's worth considering the differences before offering to help.

• **As certain as it can be** — Some enquiries are from regular programmes such as The One Show and Countryfile where the enquiry will come from a member of the production

exactly what's required, how many people are to be involved and whether other angles are being included before you fix anything.

From past experience, exact locations can sometimes cause problems too. We had a real juggle in the Lake District a few years ago when team members (ideally with a search dog), were requested as part of a piece about ice climbing and winter conditions. All good until we realised that the climbing instructor, quite rightly, wasn't confirming the exact location until he knew what the ice conditions were like. Right up to the last minute, we didn't know which team's area the filming would be in, or whether that team had a fully accredited search dog (and handler) to take part.

commission. No one is guaranteeing that this will go ahead but the production company needs to have its contacts and plans in place for the submission. There's also no guarantee of when the series will be broadcast or which network — assuming it goes ahead at all.

My best advice with these calls is to find out as much as possible about the company's success in pitching similar programmes in the past. If they're jumping on the bandwagon of daytime emergency shows, it's less likely to happen than with a company that's had three series of 999 Emergency broadcast on BBC2 already and is looking to pitch a similar show.

If you go ahead and the programme works out, plan to get across your messages about volunteers and reliance on public donations — in the context of being seen on screen and working with other (paid) emergency services, this can sometimes get lost.

• **Quirky and surprising** — Finally, there are the enquiries that come out of nowhere and seem completely unrelated to MR. Think NEWSAR and the Gok Wan programme, *How to Look Good Naked* from a couple of years ago. Or, more recently, Central Beacons MRT and the 2017 BBC1 idents — currently appearing regularly at peak times.

These opportunities are hard to predict but can almost be better than the emergency rescue shows. They reach different audiences, communicate strong messages about MR and, of course, raise awareness with potential supporters. If you get involved in one of these, plan for your local team PR around it to really make the most of the profile and, let's face it, fundraising opportunities.

In conclusion, you never know what might come out of a willingness to take part on TV. As Huw Jones of Central Beacons MRT has said of the BBC1 idents enquiry: 'We've worked with a lot of film and TV crews over the years and we don't tend to get too excited about it all. I think it's fair to say we weren't fully appreciative at the beginning of quite how big this one was going to be!'

If you have recent experience you'd like to share or to see covered in future, please get in touch via sally@stoneleighcomms.co.uk or through the editor. Thanks. ☺

• **Speculative and hopeful** — These are the common calls from production companies 'planning a TV series'. What this usually means is that an independent production company is putting together a proposal to submit to the broadcasters as a possible

WE HAD A REAL JUGGLE IN THE LAKE DISTRICT A FEW YEARS AGO WHEN TEAM MEMBERS (IDEALLY WITH A SEARCH DOG), WERE REQUESTED AS PART OF A PIECE ABOUT ICE CLIMBING AND WINTER CONDITIONS. ALL GOOD UNTIL WE REALISED THAT THE CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR, QUITE RIGHTLY, WASN'T CONFIRMING THE EXACT LOCATION UNTIL HE KNEW WHAT THE ICE CONDITIONS WERE LIKE.



or researcher team. Although often quite short notice, there'll be a good chance of the piece being broadcast because it's being scheduled into an existing show.

There are still things to bear in mind when responding, of course. Time commitment and the availability of team members on the day of filming is always an issue and needs to be considered carefully. It's worth emphasising to the person on the phone that you are all volunteers with day jobs — it's still a message that needs communicating as clearly as possible. And the caller may also assume you'll be in touch with past casualties and they'll be happy to be interviewed. Check



Above: Exmoor team's area of operation; Multiagency search at Chard Junction.

Exmoor. Our team vehicles are kept at our headquarters in South Molton, North Devon and at Taunton Fire Station and these two centres are over 40 miles apart.

At the beginning of January we were called to Bideford in North Devon. This search, for an elderly gentleman, went on for four days, assisted by our colleagues from North Dartmoor and Dartmoor (Tavistock). I clocked up the best part of 400 miles not including driving the team vehicles around the search area. On one of the days during the search, the other teams continued without us as we were called away to search for a vulnerable male with learning difficulties on the Quantock Hills, near Bridgwater in Somerset — about 72 miles from the previous search.

The next call, on 20 January, was in the far south of our area in Chard, Somerset; another vulnerable adult. Luckily for me that's not far from where I work, but for a couple of our team members it was a 130 mile round trip. Just 42 for me. The next time I wasn't as fortunate as the call, in appallingly wet conditions to an abandoned car in a flooded field, was to the far north of Devon, near Ilfracombe.

To complete the month we were called to South Somerset, south of Chard to search water courses, for a man from another



Opposite page, above and right: Central Beacons team members line up for the BBC ident shoot. Images courtesy of the BBC.

abandoned car. Another multi-agency search saw team members travelling up to 1 hour 45 minutes to don water kit to search the flooded River Axe.

We often clock up some big mileages when helping other teams in the region, but this month many of us have done nearly 700 miles within our own operational area on call-outs alone. Add in training, a new members induction and a trip to Tavistock for the TRiM awareness course, and it adds up to a 1000 miles. We are lucky our area is so beautiful to drive around, even if it is in the dark.



SOUTH WALES

CENTRAL BEACONS LINE UP ON PRIMETIME TV IDENTs

If you've been watching BBC TV recently, you'll have spotted the group of mountain rescue team members assembling on screen alongside some pretty high profile programmes. And it's the Central Beacons team who got the gig. But how?

When Huw Jones MBE, press officer for Central Beacons, said 'Yes' to taking part in some filming with documentary photographer and director, Martin Parr, he wasn't quite sure how the resulting images would be used but it seemed an opportunity not to be missed.

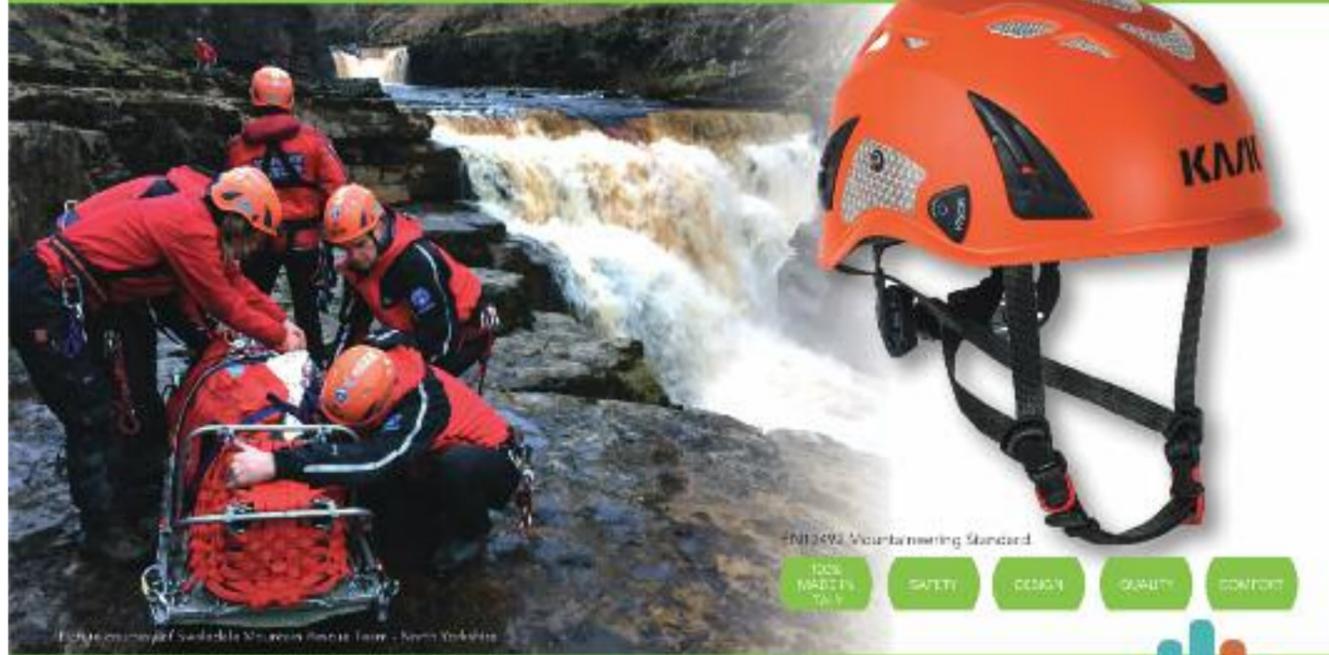
'I've been in the team for over 35 years,' says Huw, 'and we've always had a proactive, cooperative approach to working with the media. We've worked with a lot of film and TV crews over the years and we don't tend to get too excited about it all. I think it's fair to say we weren't fully

DARTMOOR TAVISTOCK MEMBER RECEIVES MBE

Paul Hudson of the Tavistock team was awarded MBE in the Queen's 90th Birthday Honours List, for 'Services to Rescue on Dartmoor'.

The investiture, at Buckingham Palace, was conducted by MREW patron HRH The Duke of Cambridge. Paul has been with Tavistock since 1991, holding various posts during that time and has been team leader for the last eight years. 'The award was a great surprise and personal honour but was also recognition of the service we all provide here in the south west peninsula.'





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appreciative at the beginning of quite how big this one was going to be!

But big it certainly was with the group of team members featuring in one of the new BBC 1 idents ahead of programmes such as Countryfile, the Six O'Clock News and, most high profile of all, the final instalment of Sherlock.

'If mountain rescue had to pay commercial rates for the time on screen, we'd need a substantial budget,' says MREW press officer, Andy Simpson (whose professional background is in media buying), 'so this was priceless. It was also brilliant that the director approached us as they wanted to feature MR. I put the opportunity out for the teams to consider as they specifically wanted a Welsh team to take part to add to their spread of groups involved.'

Huw met with the location team in December 2016 and, after looking at a couple of options around the team's base in Merthyr Tydfil, they selected an area known as Neuadd Valley in the Brecon Beacons. Filming took place shortly afterwards with just half a day to capture a group of team members gathering in various moods.

'There was the usual need for multiple shots while lighting, angles and positioning were tweaked,' says Huw, 'but they also needed to capture three different versions — a serious one, a relaxed one and then more of a laughing and joking one. Add to that getting Floss, the search dog in training, to look in the right direction and it was a busy morning.'

The publicity and public awareness of MR created by the idents is proving to be invaluable. They will run all year, along with others featuring everything from sea swimming to wheelchair rugby.

'While some people can be a bit cynical about this sort of exercise,' says Huw, 'we've been flooded with compliments, some friendly mick-taking and the social media side of our PR has been overwhelmingly positive. We're very proud to represent mountain rescue across the UK with this scale of exposure.'



Above: Avon and Somerset team members with their new radios © ASSAR.

SOUTH WEST

RADIO HELP FOR AVON AND SOMERSET TEAM

Avon and Somerset team members are one step closer to the completion of fundraising for new VHF digital radios, thanks to a donation by the Thatchers Foundation. ASSAR, who work closely with Avon and Somerset Police and other emergency services, typically search for and rescue missing individuals in difficult ground, including cliffs, steep terrain and water, cover around 1800 square miles throughout Somerset, Bristol and Bath.

Team chairman Chris Thring said, 'We provide a vital service in searching and rescuing from difficult ground and we are very grateful to the Thatchers Foundation for their donation.'

'The radios we currently use, analogue VHF, are increasingly unreliable and their effectiveness is poor. The new digital VHF radios will have many advantages and will

allow our teams to function effectively to serve the population.

Mike Williamson, of the Thatchers Foundation adds, 'With the Mendips on our doorstep we are very aware of the commitment and dedication of the volunteers in ASSAR. They deserve to have the most effective equipment to assist them in their challenging work, we are therefore very pleased to make this donation of £5,000 which will bring them towards their target for the purchase of their new radio communications.'

The Thatchers Foundation was set up by the Thatcher family to help and support community and charitable activities, in particular in the parishes of Sandford, Winscombe and adjoining villages. Contributions to individuals or organisations may be through financial grants, or through the donation of time and physical help. For more information, visit thatcherscider.co.uk/thatchers-charitable-foundation.

DO CLOUDS INTERRUPT BLUE SKY THINKING?

The proposed Emergency Services Network (ESN) is inherently high risk, and such an approach has not yet been used nationwide, anywhere in the world.

Only South Korea is currently seeking to deploy a solution similar to ESN nationwide, but starts from a better base with significantly greater 4G coverage.

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YORKSHIRE DALES

SCARBOROUGH TEAM HEADS TO SCOTLAND FOR WINTER SKILLS TRAINING

Scarborough & Ryedale MRT took its annual trip north in search of snow over the half term. While conditions were less than ideal, they found enough to practise the essential winter skills and get some long mountain days in.

'We always take as many of the newer team members as we can to teach and reinforce skills,' says Ian Hugill. 'So it was interesting to understand what they get out of such a trip and whether the trip is meeting their objectives. In SRMRT, we do take trainees with no experience so long as they are willing to learn. Sometimes it's hard to remember those first few days on big hills so here's some feedback from a couple of our trainees. We also met some SARDA dogs and handlers training in the same area'.

'I was a little apprehensive about the SRMRT winter skills trip,' says Laura, a trainee member for just eleven months. 'Having never undertaken any serious walking in winter conditions, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I was asked to bring along lots of kit with sharp pointy bits, which made me somewhat fear for my own safety, given that a lot of this was going to be attached to me whilst trying to navigate steep slopes in the snow.'

'However, as always, I felt safe with my team mates and the many instructors provided tuition and guidance, to enable me to gain confidence both in the kit and its use in winter conditions. It goes without saying I needed a lot of trust in my training officer as he held me by the ankles and then sent me sliding off down a slope, head first on my back, with nothing but my ice axe to aid me stopping.'

'My personal highlight was getting to act as a body for the search dogs. I was completely buried in a snowhole and reliant on the skills of the dogs and handlers to find me. Once the dogs located me, they continued to dig until they made their way into the hole and joined me. It was fantastic and a great relief to see their paws and nose appear through the snow as they broke into the hole!

'All in all a great trip away with the team learning invaluable skills and strengthening the bond within the team.'

'I wasn't sure what to expect,' says Liz, who joined sixteen months ago, 'but I thoroughly enjoyed myself. We haven't had a lot of snow locally since I joined the team but if we do get a bad winter, knowing that we've practised the skills recently will give me more confidence to deal with the conditions.'

'Just working on steep ground, in the absence of snow, improved my confidence. At home, training is usually round a specific skill set rather than simple confidence when moving around on awkward ground.'

'And if any of us needed a reminder, on the last day, while we were bringing the course to a close, the Coastguard Helicopter and Cairngorm MRT were in the next corrie trying to save a fallen climber's life.'



NORTH EAST

SIX SWIFTWATER TEAMS DEPLOY TO NORTH SEA TIDAL SURGE

Ian Hugill writes: Yet again the Mountain Rescue England and Wales community and other volunteer organisations have pulled together to help us with flood response in our area. Just over twelve months after the York floods, we deployed for the anticipated tidal flood surge along the east coast on 13 January. This was to be our second 'once-in-fifty-years' surge event in the last four years.

Thursday evening/Friday morning 12/13 January: Cleveland MRT deployed overnight to Sandsend to the north of our patch. Scarborough water assets and drivers along with Swaledale MRT deployed to Whitby. A composite team from Calder Valley, Bolton and Bowland Pennine teams, along with the York Rescue Boat, deployed to Scarborough along with two of our incident controllers. We also had one of our incident controllers based in Silver Control at Scarborough Town Hall as an adviser and to coordinate our deployments.

We were asked to deploy for the high tide in the early hours of the 13th and the next tide later that afternoon. Not all our team members deployed with us for this incident, we had a couple of incident controllers and the remaining team members standing by to respond to a belt of snow and freezing conditions anticipated to hit the North York Moors National Park and Yorkshire Wolds in the early hours of the morning.

In addition, we also had one team member on call with Yorkshire Water, one team member working as Emergency Planner with Scarborough Borough Council and a good number keeping the National Health Service and Yorkshire Ambulance

Service running as part of their 'day' jobs.

Friday 13th, 05:00: The high tide in the early hours of the morning was uneventful, the sea level in Whitby was at least 0.5 metres below the level at which flooding would have taken place. The local teams stood down and returned home. For Scarborough and Ryedale, we then had the drive back to the base through a snowstorm, but not before a welcome cup of tea in the Endeavour public house thanks to the landlord (an RNLI volunteer), opening the bar very early. The composite team from Calder Valley, Bolton and Bowland Pennine teams enjoyed the hospitality of Scarborough Station, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Friday 13th midday: For the high tide and anticipated surge in the afternoon the team once again provided a single water team to stand by in Whitby from 1400 to 2000 hours, four incident controllers to be based in Scarborough and Whitby, and a Mountain Rescue adviser at Silver Command in Scarborough. The other teams returned to Sandsend and Scarborough.

Friday afternoon: All three locations suffered significant flooding and all the voluntary assets were deployed in active roles.

In Whitby, our tasking included assisting a vulnerable gentleman who wished to be evacuated from his property in Church Street. He was evacuated to a location of his choice which was nearby. We went on to attend four properties on Church Street to make contact with the residents and ask if they wished to be evacuated. All were happy to remain in their property. Throughout we helped a number of persons to walk through the (shallow) floodwaters in a safe manner.

Swaledale MRT attended a similar range of incidents as did Cleveland in Sandsend.

In Scarborough our incident controllers coordinated the tasking and activity of a

composite team led by Calder Valley SRT and a team from the York Rescue Boat as well as providing logistic support with one of our 4 x 4 vehicles. Calder Valley was tasked to a number of incidents in the North Bay area of the town and one of our water rescue technicians went out as local guide for Bowland Pennine and Bolton teams during the afternoon's high tide. While out in South Bay, we met with York Rescue Boat. The main tasking for this team was ensuring a safe cordon around damage to the sea wall by the Spa and cliff lift.

Yet again, the voluntary mountain rescue community pulled together to provide invaluable support for the statutory emergency service and the local resilience forum and planners, many of us travelling considerable distance just to get there. Saving lives in wild and remote places... So much more than mountains...

Top: Whitby high tide and the view from Whitby Bridge. Below: Back to the somewhat dryer and more comfortable location of the Endeavour pub © Scarborough & Ryedale MRT.





IAN HURST

Buxton Mountain Rescue Team was deeply saddened to announce the death of its Honorary President, Ian Hurst MBE, on Wednesday 22 March. **Roger Bennett** writes.

Ian was a member of the Buxton team for twenty-six years but his involvement with mountain rescue in the Peak District goes back to the very beginning of the regional organisation in 1964. In fact Ian, as a then voluntary warden with the Peak District National Park Authority, was already regularly dealing with mountain accidents when the 1964 Four Inns tragedy gave rise to the formation of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation.

During fifty years, Ian served the regional rescue organisation in nearly every capacity including spells as secretary, insurance officer and treasurer. In 1972, he became a founder member of the PDMRO Incident Controllers' Panel which took over from the previous Search Controllers' group. As an incident controller, Ian was often the first point of contact when an accident was reported and consequently has dealt with hundreds of calls for assistance from injured or lost people. He only retired from incident controller duties in 2013.

Ian was not content with voluntary work at regional level but also played a role in developing mountain rescue nationally. He was soon actively involved in all administrative matters, becoming a trustee of Mountain Rescue England and Wales in 1980.

If that commitment was not enough, Ian also joined Buxton MRT in 1990 as an active rescuer. He was to become team chairman in 1991, a post he held for 20

years until becoming president in 2011. In 2008, together with another team member, Roger Bennett, he wrote and published a book recounting the history and development of rescue in the Peak District. In a further demonstration of his commitment to community service, Ian also served as a magistrate in Derbyshire for many years.

Ian's life has been dedicated to the service of others and, as a volunteer, he has never been rewarded with, nor

Her Majesty The Queen awarded Ian with a Member of the British Empire medal for services to mountain rescue.

He will long be remembered for his dedication to helping people in distress in our remote areas and for his contribution to the development of mountain rescue over a period of fifty years. His depth of knowledge, vast experience and his cheerful face will be sadly missed.

Our thoughts are with his family and especially his wife Zan.



Top: Ian (left) receiving his Fifty Year Long Service Award from PDMRO President, David Coleman, in 2013 © Buxton MRT. **Above:** At Buckingham Palace © Ian Hurst.

wished for, payment for any of his work. In June 2013, Ian was rewarded with an invitation to Buckingham Palace where

At the time of writing, full details of the funeral arrangements had not been announced. ☺

The rescue community joined in tribute and mourning in early March, when Irish Coast Guard search and rescue helicopter Rescue 116 crashed into the sea off County Mayo, killing all on board.

As of 25 March, the bodies of Captain Dara Fitzpatrick and Captain Mark Duffy had been discovered, along with the aircraft's black box recorder. The search for the two remaining crew members, Winchman Ciaran Smith and Winch Operator Paul Ormsby, was continuing. Captain Fitzpatrick was the first to be recovered, in the water and in a critical condition, but later died in hospital. Captain Duffy's body was discovered, two weeks later, in the cockpit of the helicopter wreckage.

Dara Fitzpatrick was a senior pilot with over twenty years' experience. In 2013, she made Irish aviation history by flying the first all-female mission for the service, with Rescue 115, alongside co-pilot Captain Carmel Kirby.

She was the chief pilot for Rescue 117 at the Waterford base before her transfer to Shannon to build up flying hours on the Sikorsky S92 at that time. During the female flown mission, the duo flew a cardiac patient from west Cork to Cork University Hospital before transferring a critically-ill five-year-old child from the hospital to Temple Street Children's Hospital in Dublin. She also featured in a television documentary on the Irish Coast Guard. May she and her colleagues rest in Peace. ☺

Above: Captain Dara Fitzgerald in the cockpit.



MARCH: RESCUE COMMUNITY STUNNED BY NEWS OF THE RESCUE 116 CRASH



Kev Camplin, team leader, and Tim Cox, team chairman of Bowland Pennine MRT explain.

Has mountain rescue really changed very much? The photograph on the left shows a stretcher carry-off by the South Ribble Fell Search and Rescue Team in the 1960s and, on the right, 50 years later. Essentially our role hasn't changed in half a century: searching for missing persons and the recovery of casualties from the fells to an awaiting ambulance.

It's tempting to be rather smug and say, 'We've been doing mountain rescue for over fifty years. We know what we are doing and there isn't anything anyone could suggest which would improve how we do it'.

However, there are greater changes than just the fancy jackets, not evident from a comparison of the photographs. The number of call-outs has grown out of all proportion, the speed of our response is quicker, and our communication systems continue to improve, as has the casualty care we are able to provide. Mountain rescue is dynamic, in a constant state of change and we need to be open-minded about embracing change.

Having got the Peer Review ball rolling as the first team to participate in November 2015, it seemed appropriate that Bowland Pennine MRT should offer to host the Way Forward meeting in January 2017 at our base near Garstang,



WHAT DID PEER REVIEW EVER DO FOR US?

Lancashire. Fifteen months down the line, we have reflected upon what the team has achieved in implementing the action plan drawn up following the Peer Review. One of the participants at the Way Forward meeting made the analogy that the Peer Review acted like a torch shining a light into dark corners. We had developed systems and practices that worked for us but the Peer Review raised questions about issues that we had not thought about. It made us stop and think and ask ourselves, 'Could we do things differently and better?'

Since the review, we've adopted D4H, implemented SARCALL, organised a regional TRiM assessor training course, developed a five-year management plan and updated our policies and procedure documents. Some actions require longer-term planning and the allocation of finances such as moving over to digital radio comms. There are quite a few ticks against the Action Plan topics but it is likely to be like painting the Forth road bridge — as some topics are completed others will be added to the list.

What has the Peer Review ever done for us? It acted as a self-appraisal, made us question how we do things and enabled us to identify where improvements could be made. We perhaps could have done this without engaging in the process, but it certainly acted as catalyst for change. We would recommend it wholeheartedly to the house!

MID PENNINE

SOUTH WEST

TWEED VALLEY TANGO TRAVELS SOUTH TO TEWKESBURY

In March, a three-man team from SARA Tewkesbury made the long journey north to take delivery of their new control vehicle from Tweed Valley MRT. The Scottish team had made it known they were willing to donate the Tango to another SAR team, after two years of fundraising to replace the vehicle.

'This is a great addition to our capability,' said SARA's Dr John Dutton. 'Its primary role will be for land search but it will also be configured to act in this capacity during flood incidents.' Station Manager Dave Trinder added that following minor mechanical and bodywork fettling, the interior would be reconfigured to suit the team's requirements through a rolling programme, as funds become available.

SARA Tewkesbury is one of five rescue stations within SARA. The team is grateful to Tweed Valley for the donation of the vehicle, which they say will enable them to fulfil their commitment to the communities of Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.

Ryan Notman, Tweed Valley's vehicle officer, said the team was very pleased to pass on the control vehicle and that they 'look forward to see it become operational under SARA'.



The Tewkesbury team receiving the control vehicle. From left to right, John Dutton (SARA), Ryan Notman (Tweed Valley MRT), Dave Trinder (SARA) and Bob Streeter (SARA).



CRO PAYS TRIBUTE TO INSPIRATIONAL FUNDRAISER JACK MORGAN

In January, it was with the utmost sadness that members of the Cave Rescue Organisation announced the death of Jack Morgan, at just thirty-seven years old. He had been a keen fundraiser for the team.

YORKSHIRE DALES

Jack raised over £2,500 in April last year, by propelling himself up Pen y Ghent on his mountain trike, despite being paralysed from the waist down. And he had been planning to do the same on Wherside this year. He died peacefully at Bradford Royal Infirmary, leaving a wife, Laura, and eight-year-old daughter Eve.

'When Jack undertook his climb of Pen y Ghent,' ran the team's Facebook entry, 'we were deeply impressed by his determination, strength and character in completing a tough route, on far from ideal tracks for his mode of transport. Our thoughts are with his wife Laura and daughter Eve.'

Following his accident, Jack became an inspirational champion for others with mobility issues. Rachel Platt, whose partner Andy Jackson joined Jack in last April's climb, and who went along herself said, 'We were all so proud of Jack doing what he did. It's so easy for people to walk Pen-y-ghent, but to do what he did and with paralysis it meant a lot to us. We were so looking forward to him attempting the other two, it was such a challenge.'

The Craven Herald noted that, in 2015, Jack was nominated in the Volunteer of the Year

category in the Craven Community Champion awards, for his outstanding contribution to improving the accessibility of routes in the area for wheelchair users and people with limited mobility, and for being 'an inspirational role model to colleagues, students and the Craven community'.

He was a member of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority 'Access For All' advisory group and represented the charity, Experience Community, which helps people with disabilities access the countryside. And he appeared on BBC's Countryfile, to raise awareness of improving footpaths for people with disabilities and to demonstrate the all terrain wheelchair, the mountain trike.

In August 2008, Jack had suffered a cliff-top fall whilst walking on holiday in Scotland. It snapped his spinal cord and left him permanently paralysed from the chest down. He was discovered unconscious at the foot of 60-foot cliffs by the local Lochinver coastguard and airlifted by the Stornoway helicopter to the Western Isles Hospital. He was unconscious for three weeks and received treatment in Southern

General Hospital in Glasgow, before being referred to a specialist unit at Pinderfields Hospital, Wakefield. He had surgery to strengthen his spine and was finally strong enough to sit up in bed after four months. He returned home in April 2009.

Despite his injuries, he eventually returned to his job as a maths teacher at Craven College, working full-time. He told the Craven Herald that 'it was apparent early on that I'd broken my spinal cord and would be paralysed, but the fact that I'd survived meant every day was a lucky day. You have to be committed to being patient and let the body mend itself. It was just lovely being back home, I have a gorgeous wife and daughter and amazingly supportive friends. My friends have been fantastic and very thoughtful. They've kept me going and I really appreciate what they have done for me. There are still an awful lot of things I want to do in life.'

A sad loss of a truly remarkable and inspirational man.

Image © Andy Jackson.



NOVEMBER: 'WELL BUILT' LABRADOR RESCUED FROM LANDSLIDE

Keswick team helped save Callie the Labrador after she slipped down a landslide above a swollen river.

Callie had landed in a tiny scoop in a gully about 12 metres above the fast flowing Greta. Aided by a national park ranger, suggesting the best point of access, one of the team's dog handlers took a harness and some treats, and was lowered about 30 metres from the trees above the site. She was able to harness Callie and then team members above rigged a three-to-one pulley system, to pull them both to the top. Once on safe ground, Callie was much happier and able to be walked off to the A66, where she was reunited with her grateful owner.



FEBRUARY: WALKERS RESCUED IN WHITE-OUT CONDITIONS ON PENDLE HILL

Three walkers were escorted from Pendle Hill in Lancashire, after becoming stranded on the top in blizzard conditions and low cloud.

The Rossendale and Pendle team was called by police, who had located the walkers using SARLOC. Team members ascended the hill from two directions and the party was found, checked over and escorted from the hill to waiting team vehicles at Pendle House Farm.

Above: White out conditions on Pendle Hill © RPMRT.

Lake District		North East	
Cockermouth	1	Cleveland	6
Coniston	5	North of Tyne	5
Duddon and Furness	6	Northumberland NP	7
Kendal	7	Scarborough & Ryedale	13
Keswick	15	Swaledale	7
Kirkby Stephen	1	Teesdale & Weardale	1
Langdale Ambleside	21	(Last quarter: 64)	39
Patterdale	10		
Penrith	6	North Wales	
Wasdale	3	Aberdyfi	6
(Last quarter: 109)	75	Aberglaslyn	4
		Llanberis	31
Mid-Pennine		North East Wales	9
Bolton	14	Ogwen Valley	22
Bowland Pennine	10	South Snowdonia	5
Calder Valley	18	(Last quarter: 49)	77
Holme Valley	1		
Rossendale & Pendle	3	Peak District	
(Last quarter: 71)	46	Buxton	22
		Derby	8
		Edale	6



Photo: GNAAS.

MARCH: WALKER AIRLIFTED AFTER 130 FOOT FALL FROM BLENCATHRA

Walkers came across the man, after spotting something blue on the lower path further down the fell. The man, in his sixties, had fallen into Mousthwaite Comb, suffering serious chest and head injuries.

As the two walkers watched, they saw an arm move, and realised the horror of the situation. One of them got down to the man, realised he had fallen some considerable distance from the path above and had suffered serious head injuries.

Keswick team requested the attendance of an air ambulance but, once they were on scene, it was clear it might be quicker to request a winching helicopter because of the distance to helimed, and the awkward carry. The medical crew from the air ambulance, and two of the team's paramedics worked together to stabilise the casualty, and he was given anaesthesia to enable him to be flown safely in the helicopter. In the event, the Coastguard S-92 helicopter was cancelled and the casualty was carried down to helimed. GNAAS later thanked Keswick MRT for 'their help and expertise throughout the operation'.

Glossop	5	Peninsula	
Kinder	8	Cornwall	5
Oldham	12	Dartmoor Okehampton	4
Woodhead	7	Dartmoor Plymouth	1
(Last quarter: 90)	68	Dartmoor Tavistock	7
		Exmoor	2
		(Last quarter: 47)	19
		South Wales	
		Central Beacons	1
		Longtown	4
		(Last quarter: 31)	5
		South West	
		Avon & Somerset	5
		SARA	2
		(Last quarter: 0)	7

Yorkshire Dales	
CRO	8
Upper Wharfedale	10
(Last quarter: 37)	18
Search Dogs	
England	8
Lakes	4
Wales	1
(Last quarter: 8)	13
RAF	
Leeming	5
RAF Valley	1
(Last quarter: 1)	6
Total	373
(Last quarter: 507)	



MARCH: RESCUE FOR STRANGERS LOST IN SAME PLACE ON KINDER SCOUT

Buxton team members were called to Edale, following a call to the police from a lone hill walker reporting himself lost. The weather was very poor with substantial rain falling on an already sodden moor, swelling streams into torrents, low cloud reducing visibility to a few metres, and deep snow lying in groughs and across footpaths, hampering progress.

The incident controller was able to contact the walker and plot his position as the Woolpacks. Team members quickly climbed onto the moor and approached the area from two directions. The man was on the first day of the Pennine Way long distance route, well-equipped and carrying a whistle. Whilst he was waiting for the team to arrive, another two walkers, from the Manchester area, heard his whistle blasts. They too were lost and all three decided to stay together until help arrived. Then another lost walker turned up, a lady on holiday in the Peak District from Brazil.

All four had set off from Edale at different times on Friday morning and decided to stay together until the team arrived. On arrival, team members quickly assessed each of the lost walkers and then guided them off the moor via Jacob's Ladder to Edale.

'This was another example of people using mobile phones for navigation and underestimating the seriousness of our local hills and weather conditions,' said Buxton's Roger Bennett, whilst urging walkers to carry map, compass, torch and whistle on every visit to the moors.

Above: The four walkers being escorted from the hill © Buxton MRT.

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: UNIQUE MEMORIAL CONCERT ANNOUNCED, IN HONOUR OF CLIMBERS KILLED ON BEN NEVIS

Tim Newton and Rachel Slater died on Valentine's Day 2016, after being caught in an avalanche on Ben Nevis. 'An April Folly', happening as we went to press, was a celebration of their lives, with a team of climbers carrying a grand piano to Claife Heights Viewing Station in Windermere for an open-air memorial concert.

The event was organised by musician Robert Richmond, whose son, Michael, a keen climber, was a friend of the couple. He had originally planned a sponsored walk to raise money for the Lochaber team, who spent weeks searching for the couple's bodies and whose members acted as pallbearers at their funerals, before his father came up with the idea of a concert. 'With the mountains and the lake as a backdrop and the ruins of Claife as a performance space, it promises to be an inspirational experience,' said Mr Richmond. The plan was for the piano to be carried

to the summit by Michael Richmond and fellow climbers. Rachel's parents, Nigel and Rosemary Slater, gave the idea their full backing, describing it as 'a wonderful idea and a beautiful way to honour their daughter and her partner Tim'. The piano was planned to arrive by ferry, before being carried on a specially designed frame, up the 270 metres to the viewing station, for a programme of music by Debussy, Holst and Rachmaninoff along with Mr Richmond's own arrangements of pieces by Ravel and Shostakovich.

Members of Coniston MRT were set to be on hand to collect money on the day — money which would be shared between the Coniston and Lochaber teams. We hope to bring you an update on the day in July. People can also donate online by visiting the project's Virgin Money Giving page at bit.ly/2n3lOw0.

THE TELEGRAPH AND ARGUS.CO.UK
[FACEBOOK.COM/CONISTON-MOUNTAIN-RESCUE-TEAM](https://www.facebook.com/coniston-mountain-rescue-team) & [@LOCHABERMRT](https://www.facebook.com/lochabermrt)



Left: Alasdair Brock takes a well-earned rest during floods at Eamont Bridge © Ashley Cooper. Below: Paul Beresford, front left, during the York floods © Paul Kingston (courtesy of North News).

DECEMBER: DESMOND DEVASTATION RECALLED

Team members from the Penrith and Scarborough and Ryedale teams were amongst colleagues from around the country who reflected on the devastation which had struck at the heart of their communities just twelve months before.



Matt Nightingale, shared his experience of working in the floods in Carlisle. 'Trawling through the carnage in countless homes was one of the most upsetting things I've done in mountain rescue. On a mountain there is risk, albeit small, and hillgoers accept those risks. Seeing the water come into and destroy homes, places of sanctuary, was so saddening. 'Moving water is seriously hazardous. Swimming across Sainsbury's car park, while it was a river too deep to stand in, was something I will never forget. There was the risk of being swept away and pinned underwater against hedges and trees, or further still into the Solway. Fortunately, I was part of a trusted and well-trained team, knowledgeable and experienced enough to keep risk to a minimum.' 'We were tasked to Eamont Bridge village,' says Alasdair Brock, another Penrith member. 'A large proportion of residents had to be evacuated due to flooding and we had to access homes through people's back gardens, sometimes by cutting down fences or lifting people to safety over walls. Some homes were inaccessible without a raft.' Penrith team members had also been on hand in the floods of 2005 and, like many of their colleagues around the country, thanks to

the generosity of the public since then, they are now better trained and equipped, and have the background systems in place to manage their response in line with the statutory emergency services. That close working relationship was critical to the success of the response this time. One of the things often not appreciated is the impact on team vehicles during flood rescue work. 'The vehicles go through a lot of water in events like Storm Desmond so they need constant service and maintenance,' says Alan Conway. For Scarborough and Ryedale team member Paul Beresford, the flooding in York was the first call-out after his newly-acquired swiftwater rescue training, earlier that month. He spent most of Boxing Day night and the following day in the Huntingdon Road area of York, getting people from their homes to dry land and shelter, as well as some tasking around Navigation Road, Fishergate and Skeldergate. His key memories include seeing the true devastation first-hand. 'Houses that only 24 hours earlier would have been filled with families celebrating Christmas around the tree and then seeing everything floating around the room. 'In October 2016, I was lucky enough to

meet again the first people we took to safety. They were finally back in their house, after many months, but still feeling the effects. 'Another memory was the sheer scale of response from the mountain rescue community. To see so many people and teams coming to help us in York made me feel very proud to be part of MR'. 'After the floods,' says Ian Hugill, Scarborough team leader, 'the team ran a comprehensive wash-up to see what we did well and what we could do better next time. Our training plan and operational planning now more closely integrates water skills in with other MR skills and scenarios. As a result of the awareness generated by the floods, Malton and Norton Rotary kindly donated funds to allow us to procure a rescue boat to augment the rescue raft which was so useful in York and various other grant submissions are in place to help with equipment and training more team members in water rescue and flood work in the coming months'. In fact, Scarborough and Ryedale team was amongst the rescue organisations who benefited from the government grant to charities running lifeboat and rescue services on inshore waterways, including flooding.



MARCH: CELEBRITY OTTER SPOTTED IN ASHBURTON

Colin, the Rescue Otter, beautifully painted by wildlife artist Ayse Rifat, is one of a hundred otters that will be making an appearance in the Dartmoor National Park over the summer as part of the Moor Otters Public Arts project. The Moor Otters will be displayed in publicly accessible areas in and around the national park and gateway towns in 2017, after which they will be auctioned off to raise valuable funds to enable the park to continue conserving the landscape for current and future generations to enjoy. Doesn't he look otterly fab? WWW.MOOROTTERS.CO.UK



MARCH: NORTHUMBERLAND TEAM UNVEILS THEIR DINKY NEW TRAILER

The conversion was designed to make a cost-effective mobile office out of a simple box trailer, allowing the team to operate much more effectively when the need arises, and also a handy base for fell races, mountain bike events and challenge walks. 'We must say a huge thanks to those companies who have helped us get this far, donations of sign writing, interior fit-out, LED lighting, tyres, discounts on items and many other things. Without that kindness we wouldn't have it on the road today. THANK YOU ALL!'

[FACEBOOK.COM: @NNPMRT](https://www.facebook.com/nnpmrt)



AVAILABLE IN THE SHOP NOW: 'IMAGES OF A WARMING PLANET' BY ASHLEY COOPER + TGO BOOK OF THE YEAR, 'RISKING LIFE AND LIMB' BY JUDY WHITESIDE. GO TO MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK TO BROWSE OUR BOOKS.

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The Gothic green light had bathed everything in shades of green, grey and black for several hours. Moments later we were cutting through the cold night air, freefalling down to the cloud layer that would provide a blanket of darkness to conceal our final descent and touchdown. In those few moments of calm before the storm, I gazed in amazement at the crystal-clear night sky around, the Milky Way prominent like a fluorescent strip-light. The head torch that I had been issued with also gave off this surreal green light and I've continued to use it for navigating at night since.

LYLE BROTHERTON

IS FOUNDER OF THE ULTIMATENAVIGATIONSCHOOL.CO.UK CHARITY AND AUTHOR OF THE ULTIMATE NAVIGATION MANUAL.



Last month I was training advanced military navigation to Special Forces aspirants, soldiers who have been through briefing and are about to go through their Selection. They were interested in why I used this colour of light in preference to the older standard red filter. The answer 'I got it for free' didn't seem to be appropriate!

Back at my office, the ubiquitous Google offered me more confusion than answers, with seemingly everyone having an opinion about which light is best for preserving night vision, most providing little or no empirical evidence to support their standpoint.

My first port of call was to contact the manufacturers of head torches that have colour filters available, commonly red, green and blue. They were helpful and talked about different coloured lights used for signalling, yet most could not state in what situations each colour should be used, and if they did they referred to studies that can best be described as 'marketing science'.

My next port was the US Department of Defence, who referred me to the National Centre for Biotechnology Information, US National Library of Medicine, a brilliant repository of millions of scientific papers from all over the world, written by credible scientists, mostly working in universities or clinical specialists, who for medical research, have taken an interest in Scotopic Vision = Night Vision. This article is my distillation of the various meetings and calls I've had with these scientists.

There are many reasons to try and preserve an element of night vision in low light levels, but not quite dark environments: from pilots, who, when landing aircraft at

night, need to see both their instruments and the runway, to mountain rescue responders, who need to read maps, search and move across difficult terrain. Head torches cannot illuminate everything within our field of vision.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF PHOTORECEPTORS IN THE HUMAN RETINA: RODS AND CONES

RODS

- Active at low light levels (*Scotopic vision = Night vision*)
- Not sensitive to colour
- Concentrated at the outer edges of the retina and used in peripheral vision
- Unable to detect sharp accurate images.



Top: Green cat's eyes © Alejandro Duran. Dreamstime. Above: These simulated images are a good example of how our field of vision improves within low light levels after 10 minutes.

CONES

- Active at higher light levels (*Photopic vision = Daytime vision*)
- Used for distinguishing colours
- Essential for receiving a sharp accurate image.

In normal daylight conditions the cones are almost exclusively responsible for our sight: photopic vision.*

In very low levels of light, the rods are exclusively responsible for our sight: scotopic vision.

However, pure scotopic vision has several drawbacks:

- ✗ Inability to distinguish colours
- ✗ Unable to see sharp accurate images (unable to read print)
- ✗ Difficulty in viewing objects directly, instead needing to look around them
- ✗ Static objects can appear to move (Autokinesis).

There is a misconception that pure scotopic vision is what most professionals, who work in low light, but not quite dark lighting situations, require. Actually, all of these professionals need a combination of photopic (day) and scotopic (night) vision and this combination is called mesopic vision. MR responders are a good example as they must be able to see detail and colour, not least to read maps, which is impossible in pure scotopic vision.

The second misconception is that the colour of the light is important. This is only true for pure scotopic vision when red light should be used, as scotopic vision is produced exclusively through rod cells which are completely insensitive to wavelengths longer than about 640 nm (deep red).

In mesopic vision, the intensity of the light (brightness) is of far greater importance than the colour of the filter, making good light hygiene essential for preserving it.

So my informed answer to 'the Boys' is that the military operate primarily using mesopic vision and it is moving over to green light. This is because the cones, needed to provide high visual acuity (focus and sharpness), are most sensitive to wavelengths of light around 498nm (green-blue). In addition, night vision goggles, standard military issue now, produce a green image and therefore, by using the same colour of light for head torches, they are not compounding the problem of dark adaptation recovery.

Furthermore, map reading is an essential of the job in MR and red light does not show the brown contour lines on maps, whereas green light does, plus, it shows up blood! ☹

* In bright light conditions the retina repurposes the rod cells to increase contrast information.

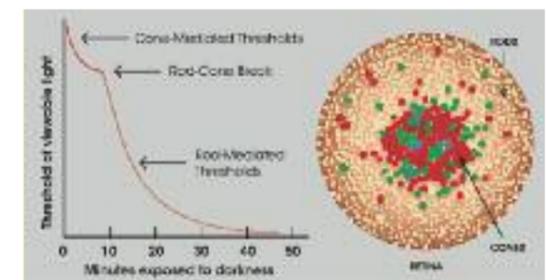


Above: Top to bottom: Photopic vision, Mesopic vision and Scotopic vision. A quirk of mesopic vision to be aware of is something called the Purkinje Effect. In photopic vision the red petals are bright against the dull green of their leaves, or adjacent blue flowers. In mesopic vision, the contrast is reversed, with the red petals appearing a dark red or black, and the leaves and blue petals appearing relatively bright.

TEN GOLDEN RULES FOR ADAPTING TO MESOPIC VISION AND MAINTAINING IT

1. In darkness, after around 10 minutes, most of our cones have shut down. This process is most efficient in complete darkness. To assist your eyes, completely cover them with your hands, keeping them open, as tightly closing them can affect focus, for 1 minute.
2. The time from last seeing a bright light and the length of time you were exposed to it are the principal determinants of how quickly your eyes will adapt to mesopic vision. So, if you are in a vehicle and not driving, do not look at other vehicles lights and if possible avoid seeing the area lit by the headlights of the vehicle you are in.
3. Use a head torch that is fully adjustable for brightness and use the minimum intensity you need to complete your task.
4. For fastest dark adaptation recovery use a green filter.
5. Choose LED coloured lights, as opposed to coloured filters, as these emit light at one specific wavelength, ideally around 498nm (blue-green).
6. If you need to see all colours, such as when treating a casualty, use the dimmest white light for the shortest amount of time.
7. Visual acuity at low light levels diminishes with age and by individual, so don't be prescriptive about head torch settings, allow the individual to determine what suits them best.
8. Use a head torch that can swivel to point at your feet and help reserve other hill party members mesopic vision by never shining your head torch directly into their face.
9. In groups, keep your head torch pointed ground wards and set the dimmest level.
10. If a bright light appears, such as a car headlight or flare, cover your leading eye with your hand to minimise flash blindness.

TYPICAL SENSITIVITY OF HUMAN EYES AS THEY ADAPT TO DARKNESS



The cone cells adapt within 10 minutes but then are overtaken in performance by the rod cells. The rod cells can take several hours to become completely dark adapted and reach their peak sensitivity to low light conditions.

Note that this plot is only representative of the general trends. The actual curve varies from person to person, from one spot on the eye to the next, and from one day to the next.



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JANUARY: TICKING OFF THE MOUNTAINS FOR MIA

NEWSAR team members spent an afternoon in January helping Mia Austin (Mountains for Mia) tick another thing off her wish list with a trip to the summit of her favourite peak, Moel Famau.

Mia suffered a devastating stroke at the age of 21, and now has Locked In Syndrome which means she has no voluntary movement, cannot speak and communicates through eye movement or a spell chart.

Before her stroke, Mia and her friend Richard spent a lot of time on Moel Famau and Richard knew it would mean the world to her to be able to go up to the summit again. He got in touch with NEWSAR and the team was delighted to be able to help, taking Mia, with her friends and family, to the top in the team vehicles.

'It was a pleasure for the team to be involved with helping out such a lovely lady with such a wonderful family,' said team leader Chris Griffiths. 'Thanks for asking us to help Mia and Richard'.

FACEBOOK.COM: @NORTHEASTWALESSEARCHANDRESCUE



MARCH: TEDDIES PLAY IT SAFE IN THE SNOW

There was plenty of snow on the tops still in March, but the Llanberis 'limited edition' bears were playing it safe.

The cute bears were on hand at the Llanberis Adventure Mountain Film Festival this spring, helping promote the team's work and demonstrating best practice in the mountains. Everyone say ahh...



THE ADVENTURE BEGINS... AN UPDATE

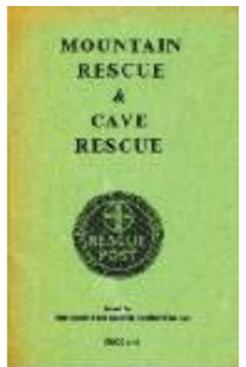
BOB SHARP

Just an update on my article published last year in Issue 58. Firstly, thank you very much to the many readers who commented (positively) and alerted me to a few errors. My 'master list of teams' is now updated, although I know it is still incomplete and will probably never be 100% correct. Such are the uncertainties of history.

I have recently been given a couple of old MRC handbooks from the late-1960s and early-1970s and note a few teams listed that I missed in my initial research. I'd be most obliged if anyone can provide further information on any organisation in the list. The handbooks of the day identified two categories: 'Affiliated Teams and Organisations', and 'Recognised Mountain Rescue Teams'. The distinction is not clear to me and there does appear to be some overlap. For example, Cockermouth MRT is identified as an affiliated body (not a recognised team!) and the Dewsbury Adventure Club is given as a mountain rescue team (but was probably just an affiliated body?).

Basically, I'm interested in the teams or organisations that morphed into a recognised rescue team or were combined with others to form a new team. Here is my list of 'unknowns'. Any information that will help me work to a more complete and accurate list of teams would be appreciated.

- * Army Apprentices School, Harrogate
- * Bewerley Park Centre
- * Dolgellau Fire Service
- * Dewsbury Adventure Club
- * Llandudno and District Mountain Rescue Team
- * Moray Outward Bound Sea School
- * Mid-Pennine Mountain Accident Panel
- * Nansen Club
- * Northern Rescue Organisation
- * Outward Bound Mountain Schools (possibly representation of Eskdale OB MRT and Ullswater OB MRT)
- * Outward Bound Sea School, Aberdovey
- * Peak Park Planning Board
- * Penrith Mountain Rescue Group (possibly the precursor to Penrith MRT)
- * Scottish Ski Club
- * Scarborough and District Search and Rescue Team
- * Shropshire Field Studies Centre, Arthog
- * Upper Teasdale/Weardale Fell Rescue Organisation (possibly Teesdale & Weardale SRT)



In the meantime, I am more than happy to circulate my current draft database of all teams to anyone who may be interested. The file identifies around 120 teams (past and present), which are ordered by country, and in the case of England and Wales, region too. The starting dates are given for each team and in most cases a brief comment is also included, describing how the team began, combined or ceased. Thank you.

CONTACT DETAILS: BOB SHARP VIA LOMONDBOB@GMAIL.COM.

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

who?



CHAIRMAN: DANY BRADSHAW

chair@caverescue.org.uk

Represents cave rescue with Government, the emergency services, UKSAR and MREW. Currently taking the lead on the team assessment process. Dany has been a Warden for Mendip Cave Rescue since 1979.



VICE CHAIRMAN: BILL WHITEHOUSE

vicechair@caverescue.org.uk

Assists the chairman in his role and is a trustee of the Mountain and Cave Rescue Benevolent Fund. Bill is the current chairman of Derbyshire CRO.



SECRETARY: EMMA PORTER

secretary@caverescue.org.uk

Ensures comms between teams, BCRC and beyond, currently reviewing BCRC incident reports. Represents BCRC at the British Caving Association and lecture secretary for the national caving conference. Training coordinator of Midlands CRO and member of Gloucestershire CRG.



MEDICAL OFFICER: RICH MARLOW

medical@caverescue.org.uk

Advises on medical matters and keeps teams aware of medical issues of concern to cave rescue. Represents BCRC at the MREW medical committee and represents BCRC at UKSAR. Rich is a Mendip Cave Rescue warden.



TRAINING COORDINATOR: JIM DAVIS

training@caverescue.org.uk

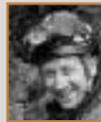
Addresses national training needs and works closely on the team assessment process and represents BCRC at the MREW training committee. Jim is a member of the Cave Rescue Organisation.



INFORMATION OFFICER: IVAN YOUNG

informationofficer@caverescue.org.uk

Ensures that contact information for the fifteen cave rescue teams within the UK and Eire is maintained and updated regularly. Collects, collates and distributes incident and other statistics from the teams. Rescue controller and treasurer for Scottish Cave Rescue Organisation.



EQUIPMENT OFFICER: MIKE CLAYTON

equipment@caverescue.org.uk

Liaises with MREW regarding the Government grant and runs PPE inspection courses for teams. Represents BCRC at the MREW equipment committee. 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.



TREASURER: HEATHER SIMPSON

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

Manages finances and coordinates fundraising. Part of MREW fundraising group and also manages MREW collecting tins. Heather is a member of North Wales CRO, Midlands CRO and Derbyshire CRO.



LEGAL ADVISER: TOBY HAMNETT

legal@caverescue.org.uk

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



DIVING OFFICER: CHRIS JEWELL

diving@caverescue.org.uk

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



FOREIGN SECRETARY: PETE ALLWRIGHT

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

◀ ...turn to page 50 for MREW contacts

Image © Gloucester Cave Rescue Group.

LOOKING AFTER EACH OTHER, DEALING WITH POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AND MENTAL ILLNESS



DAVE 'HEAVY' WHALLEY

Many readers will know that I suffered from PTSD after Lockerbie in 1988 and, at times, it still affects me. I have written about it many times in my blog and regularly hear from others who suffer from this tragic disease. It is sad to see that a tragedy such as Lockerbie affected nearly 60% of my team of 36, many only realising this as recently as the last ten years! So many families have had to deal with this and the strains are huge – I know from my own time in the dark room that is PTSD!

I was also heavily involved in the Shackleton Crash in Harris in 1990 in which nine died, and the Chinook Crash on the Mull of Kintyre in 1994 when there were 29 fatalities. I was on scene very quickly at all these tragedies, so I speak with vast experience on this subject. Add to that nearly 1000 mountain incidents all over the UK and I have seen my share of tragedy. This is very different from a military scenario, where you might expect to see death and trauma. We were not expecting to experience anything so traumatic.

PTSD is one of the mental illnesses most associated with military service along with a range of other more common mental illnesses which might affect anyone, including depression, anxiety and panic attacks, and substance misuse – most commonly alcohol. Yet I know many of my friends in rescue have had problems too.

We've come a long way since 1988, but it still isn't easy for those needing help to get it.

Mental health is hugely under-resourced due to the huge demand. I once waited nine months to get an appointment with a psychiatrist. I was lucky and I coped and am much better but what an awful journey! Incredibly, at my leaving medical with the RAF, in 2007, I was asked how I could have PTSD 'as I was a caterer by trade'.

Mental illness is the biggest killer of males in Scotland of a certain age, maybe because we Scots, especially the males, find it hard to talk about our demons!

We must change this mindset.

We have a duty to look after those we love and care for and, if we see friends struggle, we must speak to them and get them help. Many suffer in silence. We spend so much time looking for and helping people we don't know who are in trouble in the mountains. We get so close on rescues or in the companionship of the rope on a climb or a long expedition, yet how often do we miss a pal in trouble? It's too late at a funeral to be sad over the loss of a troubled pal, a trusted friend. We need to learn what to say while we still can.

It's great to see that Scottish Mountain Rescue is now running TRiM courses for team members [and MREW is doing the same]. All this helps highlight the problem of PTSD for future generations. Things are getting better. Slowly.

If you have problems, go to your GP or, for the Military, Combat Stress and Help for Heroes. If you know of other organisations, please let me have details as I often get asked for advice. There is also a lot of information online!

Left untreated for a number of years or decades, PTSD requires more intensive treatment. There are still positive health outcomes for sufferers, and the potential for a life beyond symptoms, but seeking suitable, timely treatment is key to maximising the chances of recovery. If PTSD is diagnosed early and the sufferer receives the right treatment in the right

environment, rates of recovery are very positive. Veterans can live normal fulfilling lives, are able to work with the condition and can generally become symptom-free for long periods.

There is also a risk of delayed-onset PTSD, where symptoms do not occur for years or decades after the traumatic event. Those who present with delayed-onset PTSD have often been exposed to the effects of multiple traumas over a longer period of time, suggesting that those who serve multiple tours are more at risk of developing PTSD several years after leaving the Military. Many rescue agencies have similar problems.

Professor Gordon Turnbull, an RAF psychiatrist, assisted the RAF MRTs after Lockerbie and is now a world authority on PTSD. I would advise anyone involved in rescue to read his book *Trauma: From Lockerbie to 7/7: How trauma affects our minds and how we fight back*. He tells the story well, although I feel he could have spoken to those involved a bit more.

Since this article was first published on my blog, I've had a number of folk contact me – hopefully some will find help.

One reply said, 'Help is out there. It can transform lives and reduce or negate the effects of PTSD. All GPs should be able to refer to CBT and EMDR practitioners through the NHS and these techniques really do work when practised by empathetic and caring practitioners.'

I would urge any of your

readers to never give up on seeking help and to be brave in being part of a movement to remove the stigma of mental health in those who have dedicated their lives to the service of others. It is only right you receive the help you need to heal the psychological wounds which, left unresolved, will determine the quality of your life, for the rest of your life.'

Another wrote that PTSD is 'the elephant in the room. Those most vociferous in their denial are often those worst affected. Authorities both civil and military are only now beginning to recognise it. As for treatment, it's a matter of trust. In many organisations it doesn't exist because those affected have an innate fear of it affecting their careers.'

'I paid privately to address it. Worth every penny and, although there are no miracle cures, it's a sure way to at least begin to function and rationalise.'

Another spoke about EMDR as 'exceptionally powerful in reducing the distress associated with traumatic experiences.'

'The brain doesn't process the trauma memories in the same way as other auto-biological memories. This fragmentation means the memories or feelings will either pop into your mind or make you feel you reliving the event. EMDR helps create a cohesive memory of the event.'

So, finally, take care, look after each other and have the courage to ask for help. 🌟

* Heavy's blog is available at heavywhalley.com.



Images: Dreamstime.com. Insert: Home page of the new website.



www.rescuebenevolent.fund: It's your rescue benevolent fund!

Biggest, and most easily demonstrated, news from the Benevolent Fund is that we now have a website, tastefully decked out in our brand colours: orange and black. And thanks to the opening up of the market, to allow just about any suffix imaginable, you can find us at rescuebenevolent.fund. Which we thought had quite a ring to it.

JUDY WHITESIDE

We also now have a justgiving page at www.justgiving.com/rescuebenevolentfund. And, on the back of all this, we have dedicated email addresses — thanks to Google for Charities and the patient assistance of Mark Lewis, who calmly guided me through the tangle of internet red tape.

So, should you feel the need to contact the benevolent fund, you can email me on secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund — which is, by necessity, completely separate from my personal addresses but, perhaps more importantly, from my editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk address.

We're now far better placed to push on with raising awareness of the benevolent fund and, also raising the funds we will need to be able to respond to any future claims. Which brings me to another slightly delicate concern — the perception out there, in mountain rescue land, that we are effectively a subcommittee

(albeit, we hear, a very well-thought of and highly credible subcommittee) of Mountain Rescue England and Wales.

We're not. But, I will agree, the confusion is understandable. The formation of a benevolent fund was, after all, instigated by mountain and cave rescue team members, and talked about for many years at the national

meetings. The decision to finally take it forward occurred during a management meeting. I remember it well. For this was the same management meeting at which, when the chairman (then David Allan) cast round the table asking for 'volunteers' to front it up, I made the mistake of not staring at the carpet. By the end of that agenda item, the minutes reflected that the

'secretary's job' was mine. How easily we find ourselves written into these commitments!

Once we began looking into it, though, under the guidance of an independent legal adviser, things were far from straightforward. First, the best way to set up a benevolent fund was as a separate organisation — a separate charity, with a separate 'declaration of trust' and with finances separate from the increasingly complex finances of the national body. But, because mountain and cave rescuers had begun the process, and populate the board of trustees, with a clear remit to support mountain and cave rescue team members and their families where possible, clearly there is a substantial crossover between the two charities.

Indeed, MREW matched the amount Gail Todd and I raised with our coast to coast walk, to kick off our CAF account, and since then a number of teams and regions have been



generous in regularly donating to the fund. But many don't, and our efforts to encourage individual team members to contribute have so far failed. Is this, we wonder, because there's a perception that it's being looked after by MREW — a perception which could work both in our favour and against us?

The truth is that we currently have around £56,000 in the bank. We've dealt with seven claims in our first three years, helping both team members and family members in a growing variety of ways: physical rehab, counselling and hardship — the need for which has risen as a direct result of involvement with a mountain rescue incident — and we continue to receive enquiries.

Not every approach comes within the admittedly tight criteria set out in our declaration of trust and in those cases, sadly, we can't help (not for want of wanting to!) But, as claims increase in number, funds will quickly be depleted. We're very aware of this and very circumspect about how we spend any of this money but we need to build for the future. We are also constantly looking at ways we can develop and expand the charity over the coming years.

We guarantee that any money which comes into the fund absolutely belongs to the fund. And any decisions made about the fund are made not by MREW, or its officers, but by the fund's trustees, guided by your representatives from the nine regions.

I know we still have a huge PR mountain to climb. But if you support the idea of a benevolent fund for mountain and cave rescuers and their families, whether or not you think you might ever claim yourself, please think about giving to the fund. If every single team member gave just a quid a month on standing order, the difference would be phenomenal. Remember, it's your rescue benevolent fund 🙌

GIVING TO AND FUNDRAISING FOR THE FUND

- By BACS to the Benevolent Fund CAF Cash account, clearly marked with who you are! The details are: Sort code: 40-52-40. Account Number: 00023601. Charity number: 1152798.
- Give via justgiving.com/rescuebenevolentfund



NOVEMBER: OVER 3000KM, THREE COUNTRIES, ON FOOT, COMPLETELY ON HER OWN

Sophie Rooney arrived back in Banbury, having run the length of Scandinavia and lived up to her motto of 'Dare Mighty Things' and with a life-saving blood transfusion along the way.

Her journey began in Nordkapp in the very north of Norway but, within a few weeks, Sophie was very unwell. The route having taken her temporarily into Sweden, she found herself in hospital in Abisko. Diagnosed with a bleeding ulcer, she lost half her volume of blood and needed an emergency blood-transfusion.

Undeterred, after a couple of days, and a warning from the doctor to take it easy, she set off again. The daily distance was reduced for a while — from the planned 40km/day to 25km. The illness and shorter distances run meant the whole trip took longer than planned and was a lot colder, as she ran into the winter. It also meant fewer camping facilities as they began to close for the season.

Despite that, the vast majority of nights were spent in her increasingly chilly, damp tent, with

a few respite nights in camping huts or hotels when she was able to negotiate a big enough discount. Some of the best nights were thanks of the many new friends Sophie made along the way, who invited her into their homes and gave her a real taste for the country.

The final stages of her journey took her to Denmark, making her way towards the German border and Flensburg, the finish line, where she was met by her family.

The whole adventure was to raise funds for three charities: The Thomas Theyer Foundation, The Stroke Association and Mountain Rescue England and Wales. The final result was in excess of £2,000 but she hopes to add to this through talks to schools and clubs. Well done Sophie and thank you!

SCOTLAND

MARCH: SARLOC HELPS LOCATE DANISH STUDENTS LOST ON FIRST DAY OF WALKING TRIP

Two overseas students had to be rescued after getting into difficulties in the wintry Cheviot Hills within a day of landing in Britain.

The 20-year-old girls had set off from Kirk Yetholm on the northernmost section of the Pennine Way, for the start of a six-month walking holiday in the UK and Ireland but after a day struggling through considerable quantities of lying snow, and having somehow missed the refuge hut on Auchope Ridge, they found themselves in darkness, far from shelter and without an adequate tent.

Border Search and Rescue Unit was called out after the pair made a 112 call for help and asked for fire rescue. Their call was routed to the police by the fire service, who called out BSARU. No hint of a location was available, even after phone conversations. The team used SARLOC to pinpoint their position a couple of kilometres north-east of Windy Gyle.

'The young women had just started the climb towards their exposed destination, which lies on the Pennine Way at 619m (a shade under 2,000ft)', says team leader Stuart Fuller-Shapcott, 'and became aware that they were getting increasingly tired and cold, and far outside their comfort zone. Conditions at valley level were extraordinarily muddy and slippery after recent rain and snow-melt, which made vehicular access to the hill difficult. Luckily the local farmer was able to shuttle some of our members onto the hill in a specialised six-wheel rough-terrain vehicle, with the remainder making their way up on foot.'

'The casualties were found cold and a bit scared but otherwise unharmed. We warmed them and walked them to the Border Gate, where the farmer collected them and ferried them down into the valley. Once again, we're indebted to Rob at Cocklawfoot for help in a rescue on the Border Ridge. We also had valuable help with the SARLOC system from our colleagues in the Northumberland teams.'

'The girls were just a bit inexperienced and under-equipped in terms of kit and hill-craft to be tackling the Cheviots in winter conditions. No doubt, after a few days' reflection, they'll carry on with their holiday a little wiser for the experience. We wish them happy travels.'

FACEBOOK.COM: @BORDERSAR



Image: Border SAR

Sophie at the Norway/Sweden border © Sophie Rooney

THINKING OF TAKING UP THE MUNRO CHALLENGE?

When **Bob Sharp** climbed his first Munro in 1976 he didn't envisage completing every single one and he certainly gave no thought to writing a book on the subject some forty years later. It took him fifteen years to 'complete' and a further 25 years to collate the log entries describing every expedition. But now he's written it all up and he's happy to share it.

The resulting book is an informative account of one person's endeavour to 'complete' all 277 mountains (Bob worked to the 1991 Munro Tables). Every outing (single and multi-day expeditions) is systematically presented, each providing details of the Munros and Tops climbed, route taken, weather, walking partners, experiences, hardships, lessons learned. Numerous photos and statistical analyses (eg. daily, monthly and weather patterns) as well as a complete list of all the Munros, their height,



Bob on Ben Lawers with his dog Breac © Judy Whiteside

ranking and number of times climbed.

'Munro-baggers are often criticised for their 'tick list' mentality,' says Bob, 'which may be true for a very small number, there is some truth in the view that the process of climbing every mountain makes one a 'better' person. Anyone who tackles the Munros invariably finds the experience rich and varied, full of surprises, challenges and pleasures. And there's no better way to learn, first hand, much about Scotland's social history, geography, mountain safety, access laws, wildlife, environmental concerns, and so on.

'It also turns out that every mountain has a remarkable history, full of secrets, surprises and tales to tell. This comes to light through the process of preparing each expedition, planning routes and climbing the mountain. Ben More near Crianlarich, for example, was the mountain that saw the very first search dog find. Ben Chonzie in Perthshire boasts the densest population of mountain hares in the UK (and would you believe it that if you give chase to a mountain hare, it invariably runs uphill!). Schiehallion is a perfect cone in shape and the place where contours were invented and where an experiment carried out in 1774 by the Astronomer Royal, Nevil Maskelyne, first determined the mass of the earth. There are hundreds of other tales'.

Some of these wider topics are discussed in articles Bob has written over the years and several are included. One of these describes the day he and his Lomond MRT colleagues climbed Ben Lomond with the Milton Mountaineers, a group of blind climbers, fearful this would be challenge too far. The only problem was the BBC crew whose extreme lack of fitness turned a five hour jaunt into a fifteen-hour epic! Another describes the day he and fellow rescuers broke the Guinness world record for climbing the four most geographically extreme Munros in the shortest time. Before he retired, Bob worked with many university students who later went on to fame and fortune, including Di Gilbert (Seven Summiteer), Gordon Kennedy (Russ Abbot's Mad House) and Craig Pollack (Team principal for the British American F1 racing team). He also recounts some of the amusing experiences he had climbing new Munros with students, often out of their depth.

'The book might not be for all,' says Bob. 'But for anyone embarking on the challenge, there's much to guide you to possible routes, alert you to the physical and logistical challenges, and highlight the immense gratification and learning opportunities that come with the challenge.'

EMAIL BOB FOR A PDF (NO CHARGE!) VIA LOMONDBOB@GMAIL.COM.



MARCH: GENERATOR STOLEN FROM PATERDALE TEAM TRAILER

Team members were stunned to hear that a generator worth £2,500 was taken from the team's display trailer after the first day of a popular weekend festival.

The generator, which was used to power the trailer during PR and fundraising events, disappeared after raiders broke into the trailer overnight on the Saturday, during the Dalemair Marmalade Festival. Fundraising officer Nigel Harling said, 'We'd had a busy day hosting a toast-sculpturing activity as well as meeting visitors and talking about the work of mountain rescue. The generator was stored with other vehicles and displays but thieves had obviously been sussing us out and realised that our generator was relatively mobile and potentially valuable.

'Fortunately, very little damage was done to the trailer itself but the generator is still a big piece of kit to lose and one that, like everything in Patterdale MRT, had been bought with donations from our amazing supporters'.

Social media was quick to share the news and, within days, a post via the MREW Facebook page was amongst a number of messages from potential donors. 'Thank you', posted the team, in response to the deluge of support. 'Your kind words and actions are greatly appreciated. We are overwhelmed by your generosity.'

DON'T YOU JUST LOVE A HAPPY SEARCH AND RESCUE DOG? CHECK OUT THOSE EARS!

SPOTTED ON FACEBOOK.COM: @EDALEMOUNTAINRESCUE



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NORTHERN IRELAND

MARCH: PASSER-BY USES FACEBOOK TO SUMMON HELP

Aisling Costello used Facebook messaging to summon help after coming across an injured woman on a Northern Ireland hill, putting out a plea out to her friends to contact emergency services to rescue the woman on Divis Mountain, which overlooks Belfast.

She posted the message at about 10.40am on the Saturday to say: 'Stuck on top of mountain with a girl I found who has fallen and can't move. Need a number to call can someone call for help or can someone call. I have no signal only internet. Divis and Black Mountain. We are at top.'

Dawn Petrie of the Coastguard picked up the thread and the police and ambulance service were alerted. Ms Costello also posted three photographs on Facebook to try to guide emergency crews to the pair's location.



Photo: The road leading to the summit of Divis Mountain. Unnamed on maps, the National Trust leaflet calls this 'Summit Road' © Copyright Rossographer and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.

The police service helicopter was scrambled but not used in the rescue. An ambulance crew found the two women who had also been joined by other passers-by. The injured woman was taken to hospital for

further treatment, suffering from a suspected broken leg.

The (478m) 1,568ft Divis Mountain, and neighbouring Black Mountain, are owned by the National Trust and, in good weather, give panoramic views of Belfast and beyond.



Photo: Holme Valley MRT.

MARCH: MILKING THE FRONT COVER

Good to see January's front cover stars, Holme Valley's Adam and Steve, making the most of their meteoric rise to fame.



IN THE COLD OF THE NIGHT BY ANDREW BIBBY.

REVIEWED BY JUDY WHITESIDE

ISBN: 978-0-9955609-1-8 PRICE: £8.99 PUBLISHED BY GRITSTONE PUBLISHING WWW.GRITSTONE.COOP

There's been a murder on Scafell Pike... the half-naked body of a Three Peaks challenger is discovered below Scafell and a member of the mountain rescue team just happens to be a former investigative journalist who's determined to find out what happened to 'the body in the bog'. This is the premise behind Andrew Bibby's second novel about dodgy doings in the Lakes.

Author Andrew Bibby is a professional journalist, whose work has appeared in a number of nationals, including The Guardian and The Independent, so he knows a thing or two about the workings of the journalistic mind – although he insists his leading man Nick Potterton, 'once a successful journalist but now a struggling part-time freelance for the local press', is a fiction. Or at least, not based on Bibby himself.

As an avid fellrunner he is also more than familiar with the fells he writes about. At the launch in November, at Langdale Ambleside base, he stressed that the story –

including his version of mountain rescue procedure – takes place in 'an alternative universe'. His knowledge of mountain rescue, he says, was gleaned through friends and 'mainly in the pub'. I just felt I should warn you. That said, Bibby is donating a percentage of all his sales fees to Langdale Ambleside MRT so read this and you'll be supporting them too.

Gritstone has also reissued Bibby's previous Lakeland crime novel as a companion volume. The Bad Step, another murder story set on Crinkle Craggs has, up until now, only been available on Kindle.



Mountain Paws
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MOUNTAIN PAWS UNVEILS NEW COLLECTION

When working on the mountain or exploring the great outdoors, life is better with your canine companion by your side. For 2017, Mountain Paws has unveiled a brand-new collection of leads, harnesses and accessories that are perfect for adventurous dogs and their owners.

Originally launched in 2006, the brand's new collection is its most comprehensive to date. Whether supporting a rescue on Helvellyn or enjoying an amble along the local footpath, Mountain Paws has something for every dog owner. In addition to a full range of leads, collars, bowls and accessories, the collection also includes a number of technical harnesses for active dogs. The high-spec Dog Hiking Harness is available in four sizes and is fully adjustable making it easy to achieve the perfect fit. Specially designed to fit comfortably around the dog's shoulders and stomach, the harness gives hikers enhanced control. A breathable and flexible, foam chest panel offers the dog optimum comfort and freedom of movement and its durable design also features a robust aluminium D ring lead attachment.

Committed to mountain rescue, Mountain Paws is proud to be working alongside SARDA England for 2017.

FIND OUT MORE OR VIEW THE FULL RANGE AT WWW.MOUNTAINPAWS.CO.UK.



No fankles on stances

SOME TOP TIPS FOR SMOOTH CHANGEOVERS USING PARALLEL ROPE TECHNIQUE AND A GUIDE PLATE ON A DIRECT BELAY



A few years ago, I wrote an article for the then AMI Magazine about facilitating stance changeovers on multi-pitch climbs whilst using parallel rope technique, without ending up with ropes snaking over and around each other. I later updated it following several discussions about some aspects of the drill I had described in the original 'No Fankles On Stances'. A subsequent products review on UK Climbing prompted further discussion about guide plates on and off line. Here it is now, for a wider readership. I have sought to make my description of some aspects of the drill a bit clearer and have also highlighted some potential pitfalls to be aware of. Written with the instructor/student in mind, the principles remain the same.

BY GEORGE MCEWAN GEORGEMC@COLDCLIMBS.COM

A key aim of the changeover drill I describe is to ensure that the stance changeover is efficient and tangle free, with no ropes doing their own thing under or around the belay. Partly that's my OCD kicking in but there are also potential safety issues associated with tangled ropes and inexperienced clients on stances. If the ropes are very tangled, at best your clients will have a job sorting it out; at worst one or t'other may be tempted to untie to sort out the problem...

I'm going to run through the method I use and teach, and which (in my personal opinion — seeing as I'm writing this that's what you get!) is guaranteed to give you a twist-free changeover. I should stress that there are other ways of doing this although one of the advantages of this method is that once you have the basic steps nailed it becomes a drill, which when practised can about be done with your eyes shut. This means when next you are on a stance you don't have to stand and stare blank-eyed at your set-up which looks like a seething mass of mating snakes and work out which rope goes where. Or re-invent, from scratch a new 'system'.

Depending on how you've gone about doing this before you might find that this method takes a bit of getting used to. So my advice is — practise this on the ground and take your time. There is no rush. The key to success is ensuring you have each step of the drill clear in your head. Once you have that then you practise the drill ensuring you follow each step in sequence. Once you have the sequence nailed, then the speed and efficiency will soon follow.

I will not be discussing the dos and don't of parallel rope technique or methods of releasing Guide Plates etc. You can download and read about these aspects in earlier articles from the links I've listed in the references at the end of this article. They complement this article.

STANCE PREP: SOME PRINCIPLES

Careful selection of your stance and how you rig it will make a huge difference to how efficient your changeover will be. The usual caveats about stance selection in relation to your clients' abilities, nature of the

climbing etc apply here*. A key component is ensuring that when using parallel rope technique you strive to keep your ropes running parallel. Sounds easy but it does seem to fox people.

One of the common errors is to equate parallel rope technique with double rope technique. They are not the same. I'd suggest thinking of your ropes as rail tracks when using parallel rope technique*. Cross the tracks and you'll derail the train!

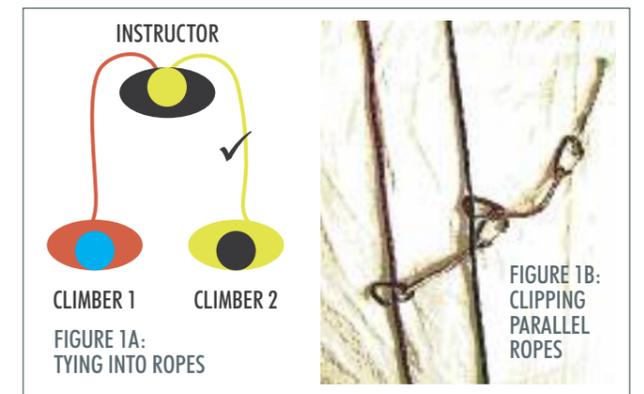
In saying that, there are a few principles we can apply here that will make your life a great deal easier (making the assumption

that we are using a sling(s) to link our anchors to a single point and on a direct belay):

● You and your clients tie in on same sides

When you and your seconds are tying into the ropes ensure you keep the ropes on the same side eg. Client/Climber 1 on the LHS is tied into the red rope which is tied into your LHS; Client/Climber 2 on the RHS is tied into the yellow rope which is tied into your RHS. Ensure when you tie in that you are facing the climb as are your clients (Fig 1a).

PAGE 44 >



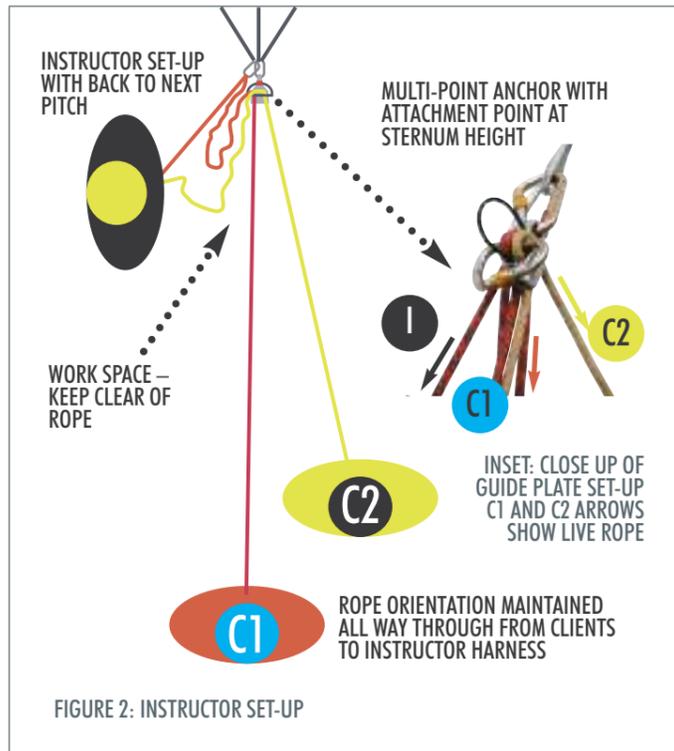


FIGURE 2: INSTRUCTOR SET-UP

● **Place a runner just before you get to the belay**

Not always possible but still a top tip. If you place a runner just before you get to your chosen stance, ensure when you clip the ropes you have them running separately (Fig 1b shows a method of doing this). This helps you keep your ropes separate and will make your life easier when you come to set-up and use your Guide Plate.

● **No Dances on Stances**

It can be tempting when looking for anchors to move about the stance, twisting and turning like an eel on a stick, but remember you have two ropes tied onto you, so make sure that as you move about you don't twist your ropes. This is where placing that runner just before the stance comes in handy as you can then check if you have crossed your ropes during your anchor hunt.

● **Set yourself up with your back to where you are climbing off to next**

Before setting up and attaching yourself to the anchor check out where the pitch goes next. Make sure your chosen stance is going to work both for bringing up your clients ie. is in sight and sound if appropriate* and for you leading the next pitch. Mind as your clients come onto the stance you can shift out of the way to make more room.

If you set yourself up with your back to where you are going then you free up a 'working space' in front of you that allows you to organise your clients in such a way that you don't have to climb over or around your team when you leave the stance.

● **High anchor points**

Select suitably high anchor points that when you equalise them have the main attachment point (or power point) is at about sternum height. This allows you to arrange your team nice and tight on the anchors. It also saves your back as you can stand straight and pull the ropes in without having to bop up and down like the Hunchback of Notre Dame on chemicals.

● **Anchor redundancy**

Bit of commonsense with this one — this may well be not appropriate for all scenarios — mind, it's your call at the end of the day. My preference when working in parallel and using a direct belay to bring up two clients is to use three independent bomber-placed pieces of protection linked together. My thinking behind this is that if anything untoward happens, the last thing I'm having to think about is my belay. Also given that equalising all the pieces so they are loaded identically (even a slight shift in position can mean the load changes slightly), means that it is

more likely you will still have two of your anchors taking the main load. If you only use two bomber pieces such a slight shift in position can often mean the main load is only on one piece.

Figure 2 gives an overview of the above principles.

USING YOUR GUIDE PLATE

There is now a huge selection of 'Guide Plates' available. I'd suggest care when selecting a suitable Guide Plate for work and/or play. As rope technology has advanced so has the range of diameters available for use. This means it is now possible to have ultra skinny ropes eg. Edlerid Apus which is a half/twin rope coming at 7.8mm diameter. Now it's a no-brainer that a Guide Plate that is designed for say 8.5–10.5mm ropes may have issues in how it performs with skinny ropes outwith it's performance range. Conversely, working with a device rated for 7.8 to 10mm ropes will cope with these skinny ropes allowing a smooth take in, but there will be too much friction when you come to haul through a hairy 10.5mm rope. So match your chosen Guide Plate with the rope diameters you will commonly use. This may well mean what works for personal use with skinny half ropes may not be as good for work use when using large diameter single ropes.

So how to set-up your Guide Plate to ensure no fankles? The following sequence of photos will take you through each step. As I said this might be slightly at odds with how you do it at the moment but in my humble opinion it's worth working with.

As I said I feel it's main advantage is that you if you can nail this as a drill, as soon as you have set-up your stance and brought your clients up, the changeover will go smooth as. I

promise no rope crosses or fankles if you follow this sequence exactly. My word is my bond.

STEP 1: SETTING UP THE ROPE

This is key to how this drill works out. Get this bit the wrong way around and you'll have your ropes twisted or coming out underneath each other.

When you set-up the Guide Plate, do it in the same way as shown in the illustration. This means that your braking ropes/dead ropes come out of the Guide Plate on the TOP SIDE.

The trick to doing this is how you lift the ropes into the plate. When setting up the ropes in the Guide Plate ensure you maintain the same rope orientation as your pitch and as you tie in — ie. red on left, yellow on right, as shown in illustrations.

As you take in the rope, ensure you pull and stack the dead rope OVER your tie-in point ie. the rope you have used to clip into the belay. This ensures you stack the rope away from what is going to go so keep this area clear. This also minimises the chance of ropes crossing.

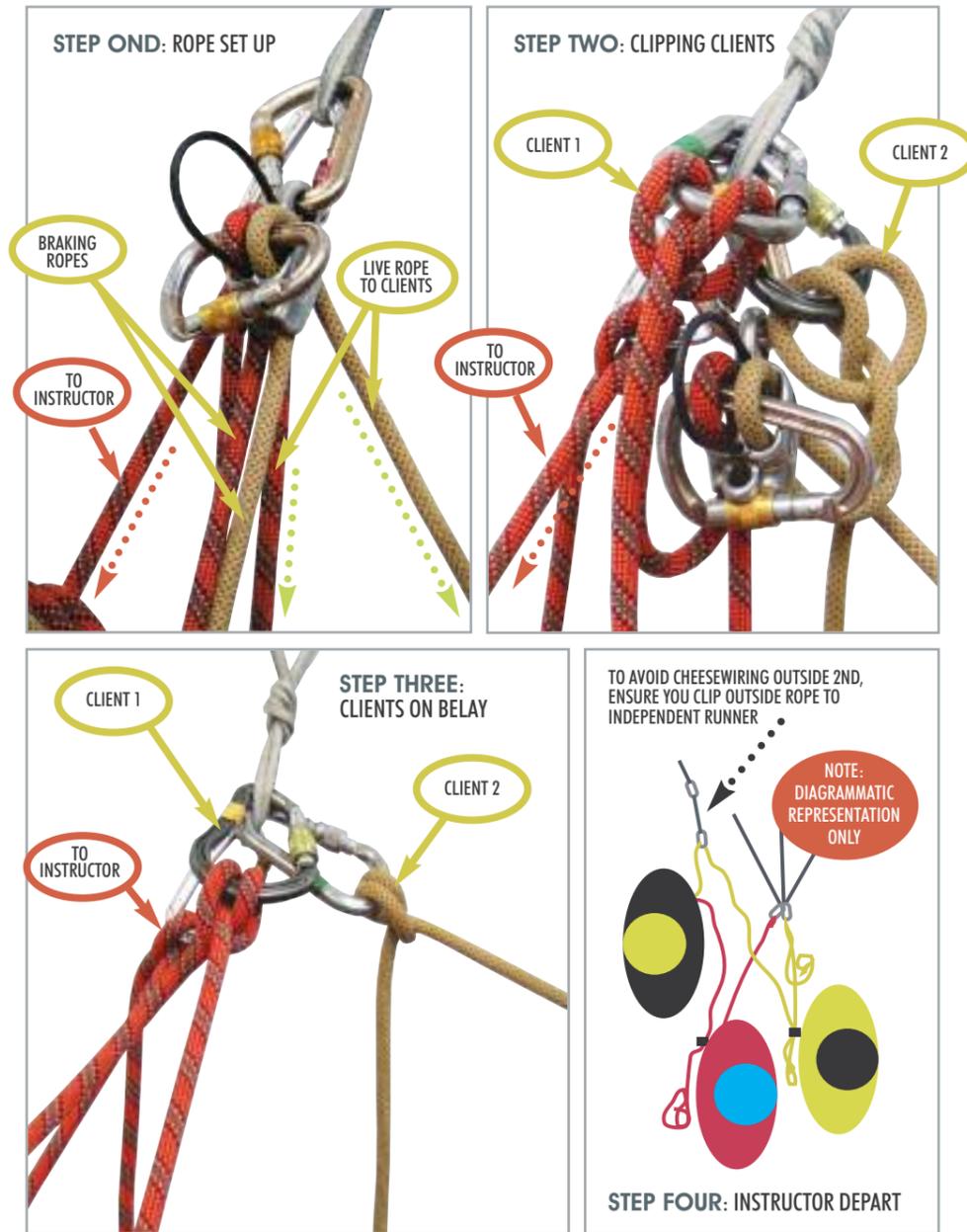
STEP TWO: CLIPPING CLIENTS

When your clients get onto the stance, you can then clip them into their respective krabs. When doing this, stack the krabs in the order your clients are going to leave the stance.

In this case, the client on the red rope (Client 1) will be first off, whilst the client on the yellow rope (Client 2) will be the last off the stance.

WARNING!

WARNING! Take care here — although the ropes you want will be coming off the top of the



Guide Plate, make sure you don't pull one under the other etc, to clip them into the krabs.

STEP 3: CLIENTS ON THE BELAY

After the clients are clipped in you can then take them off the Guide Plate and either have them, or you, adjust the clove hitches so your clients are close and tight on the belay. Just be careful here as you will have a little bit of slack after you remove the braking krab off your Guide Plate.

STEP 4: INSTRUCTOR DEPART

Once both clients are clipped in close and tight on the anchor, you can have them back coil the

rope so your leading ends are on top of the rope stacks.

WARNING!

There is potential here for having a rope fankle so ensure that your team stack the dead rope on the same side as you want them to have their belay plate braking hand (this will help with plate orientation later).

Once all the ropes have been back-coiled (TOP TIP: as your clients start to back coil the ropes, feed them out. Your clients will have climbed the route at different speeds so the rope will not feed out as easily as it might. If you feed the ropes out as they back coil you can reduce the chance of major fankles developing), you can then have your clients put you on belay.

At this point check they have

the plate orientation correct etc.

Once all this work is done I usually start to rack the gear whilst chatting to my clients about the next pitch coming up — maybe highlighting some technique related issue, technical input etc. I also stick to this drill, so that after a couple of pitches my clients know what the drill is — helping make the changeover more efficient.

WARNING!

Take care about this next step. Before you head off, you have to manage the rope coming from the outside person. My own preference here is to have both clients belay me on their respective ropes — my thoughts on this are that it gives both of them a job to do and it means that, in the unlikely event I take a

fall, I've got two chances of my fall being held by potentially novice belayers.

Back to managing the rope coming from the outside. Good practice in multi-pitch climbing would be to place an early runner as soon as, if not before, leaving the stance to reduce the potential impact force (Fall Factor 2) on the belay if the leader falls off as they leave the stance and the possibility of the belayer(s) having to hold a FF2 with the plate set-up for an upward pull.

By ensuring you do this — and I'd suggest you place this runner BEFORE leaving the stance — you also reduce the chances of the outside client being cheese-wired if the leader takes a fall. So in my opinion a MUST DO is place that early runner before you leave the stance and clip the rope running from you to the furthest away client's belay plate through that piece. Mind this is a key runner so it should, and must, be bomber. Enjoy the next pitch!

SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME?

So how do you know if you've done your stance changeover correctly? Well if you have ropes twisted, running underneath the tie-in points of your clients or any weird fankleness that causes you to untie, you've made a mistake somewhere along the line.

I can safely guarantee that if you follow the above method the only twists you will have in the rope come from those that your clients may put in the rope as they second the pitch. Such twists should be easy to spot as your clients climbing up approach the stance and are easy to sort. Also good rope management on the pitch should be enough to reduce the chances of this happening.



MARCH: LAND ROVER UNVEILS DRONE-FITTED SAR VEHICLE

The bespoke vehicle was launched at the Geneva Motor Show in collaboration with the Austrian Red Cross, as part of the global partnership between Land Rover and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Land Rover generously donated 'Project Hero', the new Discovery vehicle with a tailor-made communications drone and other specialist technology to enhance Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response operations in the wake of disasters.

The roof-mounted drone can take off and land while the vehicle is moving and is controlled by occupants using a tablet app. Once airborne, it feeds live footage to emergency response teams, allowing rescuers to investigate an emergency safely, and to rapidly assess damage, hazards and the condition of people who need help.

Meanwhile, the vehicle functions as a fully-equipped mobile command unit, with storage for emergency supplies and an interior that can be reconfigured for a stretcher and other needs.

It will be trialled for a year by Austrian Red Cross emergency response teams in simulations and test-runs as well as real-time responses to accidents, landslides, avalanches, floods and other disasters that occur in Austria's mountainous Eisenerz region.

'Land Rover's innovative use of emerging technology combined with Red Cross and Red Crescent expertise and access to at-risk communities will hopefully lead to more rapid and effective humanitarian action and, we hope, ultimately more lives saved,' says Dr Jemilah Mahmood, IFRC Under Secretary General for Partnerships. 'We're grateful to Land Rover for 63 years of support. It's a partnership that has transformed the lives of countless people around the world.'



MREW TRACCAR SERVICE: TEAM MEMBER AND VEHICLE TRACKING

GERALD DAVISON
IT OFFICER NWMRA & MREW ITC GROUP

The majority of teams are using something to track the position of their troops on the ground. At its most basic level, this is usually a GPS mic on a VHF radio into a base radio and attached PC/laptop running MRMap. This will show the position of team members around your control point.

Over the years, MRMap has been extended to link together receivers using the internet, so you can see position information remote from your location. It can also receive positional data from a variety of sources such as mobile phone apps and Spot trackers. Lately it is taking external feeds from aircraft position receivers and external systems with aircraft positions.

For mobile phone tracking of team members there have been a few different apps over the last few years. Many are now using Viewranger with its built in BuddyBeacon feature. However, not every team has decided to use Buddy Beacon and you have to leave a PC running somewhere for your team with the right configuration for Viewranger in MRMap. Every time the phone apps change, MRMap has needed an update to support them.

MREW was asked to look at a simple stand-alone phone tracking app that could be used to feed position data into MRMap without using any proprietary systems. It was also envisaged that this system could become the aggregator for other data sources, leaving MRMap to do what it does best — being a simple-to-use application that can be used in the field on low power PCs.

Secondly, a very 'lightweight' app for mobile phones. Essentially you just configure the phone app to match the server settings and then switch it on. It doesn't do anything fancy like mapping, it simply sends tracking points when you turn it on. You can create an 'on' and an 'off' icon for your mobile phone and then all the team member has to do is remember to switch it on. It is as simple as that. The Traccar app can be found on the Apple and Google App stores.

A few people have experimented with 'cheap GPS/SMS/GPRS' tracking devices for vehicles, available on Amazon for just over £30. Add a SIM card and your team vehicle can be position tracked whenever it is in range of the mobile phone network.

Almost any GPS tracker that can communicate via GPRS can be interfaced to Traccar.

A Traccar interface has been written for Delorme InReach satellite trackers and other interfaces are being considered, such as Spot. Traccar implements Geofencing — a

geofence being, typically, a boundary of an area. You can create a logical geofence around your base and every time your team vehicles leaves the area bounded by the geofence you can send an email to a group or a text message out to an individual or a group through World Text.

More interfaces and uses will develop over the coming months and years.

SUMMARY

- Simple small app for team member tracking
- Possible to add in low cost vehicle tracker
- Other tracker interfaces being written
- Messaging to email or text for devices moving outside pre-set areas (eg. vehicles away from bases).

If your team is interested in using Traccar or wants more information on the vehicle trackers, it is suggested your comms/IT officer contacts Mark Lewis via ictofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk or Gerald Davison via it.officer@nwmra.org.

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TWITTER: @MOUNTRESCUEUK

NEW TO THE MREW MEMBERS AREA

Public Liability insurance certificate 2017
Policy confirmation.

Team members legal defence fees policy wording

CAMELBAK: HYDRATE QUICKER!

From the company who brought you hands-free hydration, the new Crux™ reservoir will hydrate you quicker and keep you going for longer. Delivering 20% more water per sip allows users to stay better hydrated in less time so you can tackle bigger, better adventures. A brand new cap and handle boast the widest opening on the market and make cleaning and refilling easy and effortless. One end of the drink tube features the Big Bite Valve mounted to an on-off lever that creates a simple and ergonomic way to shut off water with one hand for a completely leak-proof system. The other end of the tube connects to the reservoir with the Quick Link™ System, allowing the drink tube to be disconnected and remain routed in the pack while the reservoir exit port automatically shuts off for leak-proof removal and fast refills. Crux also features the patented Big Bite™ valve that is irrefutably the best drink interface on the market thanks to its self-sealing silicone design.

True to its name, Crux is at the core of every hydration pack CamelBak creates. Each pack is designed from the inside out, starting with the reservoir and how it is integrated into the pack. CamelBak optimises how water is carried for different sports and gives you a wide variety of hydration products for the perfect fit.

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TRACCAR

Traccar is an Open Source GPS Tracking Platform (www.traccar.org). It was selected by the ICT group as the platform to aggregate a variety of application-based data and feed into MRMap for display. There are two main components:

- Firstly, a server application, with a management interface which allows you to create and update devices to be tracked. The data captured is then sent on automatically, in real time, to MRMap. MREW is now operating a central Traccar server that can be used by teams.



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?



Photo shows Holme Valley MRT, last issue's cover heroes.

your management team



CHAIRMAN: MIKE FRANCE

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



VICE CHAIRMAN: MIKE MARGESON

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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

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Acts as an interface between teams, regions and the MREW management team. He is a member of Dartmoor SRT (Ashburton).



FINANCIAL DIRECTOR: PENNY BROCKMAN

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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.



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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

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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



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.

specialist advisers



EDITOR: JUDY WHITESIDE

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.



PR SUPPORT: SALLY SEED

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



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



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Develops comms technology across mountain rescue. Mark is a member of Western Beacons MRT.
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY: ELAINE GILLILAND

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Assists Dave Close in the secretary role. Elaine is a member of Bolton MRT.



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Develops training and guidelines for team members at all levels across a range of disciplines. Al is a member of Ogwen Valley MRO.
Vice chair: Alan George: ajgeorge@lineone.net



FUNDRAISING: DAVIE THOMSON

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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.



WATER: KEVIN GARVEY

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Works to establish the necessary guidance and standards to ensure the safety of members in a water environment. Kevin is a member of Rossendale & Pendle MRT.



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



STATISTICS: ROB SHEPHERD

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Collects and collates incident information from the teams. A member of Llanberis MRT and North Wales CRO, he is also involved with SARDA Wales.

external trustees



STEVE WOOD

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



PETER DYMOND

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



MIKE FRANCE

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



SHIRLEY PRIESTLEY

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Shirley has been a member of the Scarborough and Ryedale MRT since 1990, during which time she has undertaken a variety of roles at all levels. She is also treasurer of the Benevolent Fund.



PHIL PAPARD

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

internal trustees

...turn back to
page 36 for BCRC
contacts



PARAMO MAKES PIONEERING FAIR TRADE ANNOUNCEMENT

In 2016, Páramo became the first outdoor brand to sign up to the Greenpeace Detox commitment. In January 2017, we were delighted to share a ground-breaking and heart-warming announcement on Fair Trade, which sets us apart among outdoor brands – 80% of Páramo production now carries the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) First-Buyer Label.



This year, Páramo celebrates 25 years of ethical partnership with the Miquelina Foundation, which empowers exploited women and girls affected by civil conflict in Colombia. Miquelina's Fair Trade production standards have been verified by the WFTO, of which it is now a fully-fledged member. Páramo products produced at Miquelina from January are guaranteed Fair Trade.

With Páramo's encouragement, Miquelina registered as a charity in 1997 and achieved the ISO 9001 quality certification in 2002. Today, the factory is responsible for well over 80% of Páramo's production. All factory profits are reinvested in equipment and in social projects. A housing cooperative in a district of Bogotá gives the women the opportunity to buy property at a fair price. The nuns have built a community centre, a virtual library, a kindergarten and a canteen for schoolchildren. A satellite project in Pereira City, 200km west of Bogotá, is now extending Miquelina's valuable work. No wonder more and more professionals choose Páramo when heading outdoors – gear verified for Fair Trade, renowned for performance and guaranteed for durability.

TO FIND OUT MORE, VISIT PARAMO.CO.UK
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Awaiting salvation in a snowhole



Dog handlers, as we all know, are a breed apart. Over and above their team training and call-out commitments, they will frequently be found yomping up and down hills in all weathers in hot pursuit of their four-legged friends in the course of dog training. Some of that training takes them to Scotland, in search of snow. But spare a thought for the hardy souls who volunteer to travel with them to hide in snowholes and drink beer. In January, **Peter Sapsford** had his first experience of being buried in a 'snow grave', waiting for salvation...

I've dug several snow holes, some I've been happy with. One with a front and back door was big enough for a group to stand in, but this time it was different. First the term had changed to 'snow grave', then there wasn't a door and I was six feet down, in a grave six feet long, on the Cairngorm Plateau and being blocked in. This was the LDMRSDA winter training and my first experience of being a dogsbody buried under the snow.

'Just blocking you in now, Peter. OK?' Rob Grange, search dog Rona's human from Keswick, was trying to reassure me and advised me to 'get comfortable and just chill'. There seemed to be a lot of snow blocks going in and too much shovelling on top, but it was, after all, to bury me properly in what was supposed to look like an avalanche. Then it went quiet.

After ten minutes of chilling, one minute of I spy something beginning with 's', I found myself philosophising — which was partly prompted by the radio message: 'Welfare check, Peter. Are you happy?'

Well, I thought, to be happy you must have everything you want and need — food, drink, shovel, transceiver, radio, professional rescue team with dogs nearby. But down here in a snow grave, what about the meaning of life or, to put it another way, how do I get out of here? Meaningful life surely depends on finding purpose, value, self-worth and a search dog that can at least sniff you out?

The group, handlers and bodies from the Lake District, three external assessors from Norway Rescue Dogs and thirteen graded and trainee dogs were based at Badaguish,

a very comfortable centre near Loch Morlich regularly used by LDMRSDA.

We were concerned that there might be insufficient snow for the training, but on the first day we found plenty tucked away at 1100 metres in Ciste Mheard, not far from the Cairn Gorm summit. There wasn't enough for the ski runs to be open and we didn't see anyone else around except more MRTs looking for winter training opportunities. Lochaber, Oban, Arrochar, Police Scotland and RAF were all represented in the car park.

Later in the week, more snow arrived but it was the wind that stopped us using the plateau. Instead we used the forest for more training, this time trying some new approaches provided by the Norwegian assessors, including a mixture of air scenting and ground scenting trails, plus further training and assessments for the non-graded dogs.

Per Olav Gundersen asked me to get within the branches of a fallen tree on a small island of gravel in the middle of a river. What joy! It was only 150 metres from the road and the handlers' start point. His thinking was that the

dog handlers might just be organising their dogs and themselves as they started the search pattern and would not expect a body so soon. Wrong. Every dog found me first time. Something to do with forgetting to pack the deodorant?

Next day, with less wind, we were back on the plateau and followed SAIS advice to avoid NW to NE aspects. Kathy Grindrod, SAIS forecaster was in our group and had given us an evening lecture about her work. What stuck in my mind was her comments about reactions to the avalanche risk being

'considerable'. Some people apparently think that means it isn't 'very high' or 'high' so that's not so bad. Her message was not 'don't go', but 'choose the place to go'. This time, LDMRSDA training officer Andy Peacock and Chris Francis, Beck's human, set up a multiple casualty avalanche simulation involving a burial and several partially-buried bodies.

Evening lectures on the details of avalanche searches made clear the difficulties and tragedies people had experienced. Charlie McLeod, Assynt MRT, described the dangers

of entering the high-risk areas during an avalanche search. He left us with some sobering thoughts by describing his own experiences on the Ben Nevis north face. Similarly, our Norwegian visitors gave an account of one of their searches for an avalanche victim who had sadly died, not of asphyxia or trauma, but of exposure under the snow, probably on day two. Following this and some reflections, it was back into the snow grave again!

This time we had fine weather, deep suitable snow and now I had some knowledge of what was going on. Digging your own grave is an excellent idea. This one had plenty of headroom and room for some energetic play with the dogs, plus I rather liked its architecture.

During the wait for the dogs there was no more wondering what am I doing down here, and is the meaning of life really 42. Instead I carved features, small alcoves and made a shelf which was so successfully frozen on the wall that I advanced to medieval style vaulting across the roof. The first vaulting arch was nearly finished when Ely Whiteford's dog Bracken dug his way in and, in the ensuing tuggy toy game, destroyed the shelf and the part-finished arch. It was a shame to leave it all behind.

Our final evening was another impressive bit of organisation, involving a Highland piper, kilts, a great meal, some quantity of alcohol and memorable entertainment activity. It was perhaps the most hazardous activity of the week and is subject to 'what goes on at winter training stays at winter training'.

For this dogsbody, the week was a thoroughly enjoyable experience of professional organisation and training constantly adjusted to suit the conditions. We all know the commitment and energy required to be a busy MRT member. Add to that the years of search dog training required by handlers and you have an admirable measure of dedication. Back home I wonder what will happen when one of these very professional dogs scents me from across the street in Keswick. It would probably be a dog thought like: 'Sniff. Mmmmm, Peter's nearby. Good, he'll have a squeaky toy ready'. 🐾

Main photo: Search dog Rona © Rob Grange. **Inset top:** Peter Sapsford. **Above left:** Search dogs at rest in the snow © Ely Whiteford.



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dogs



SARDA ENGLAND UPDATE

There have been some changes in SARDA England this year. Currently there are 34 graded dogs, spread over the five locations (North East, Mid Pennine, Yorkshire Dales, Peak District and South West), providing a rapidly deployable and highly effective search asset that operate as part of a mountain rescue or search team.



The latest dog teams were graded at assessments in Wales in November 2016 and the Lake District in January 2017.

Two of these dogs are new breeds to SARDA England. Abby is a Hovowart, classed as a rare breed in the UK and the first of her breed to train as a search and rescue dog. Her achievement is made all the more special as she had only just been given the all-clear, following a cancer operation in 2016, when the assessments took place.

Shoala is an English Shepherd — another first for SARDA England. There are two other English Shepherds in SAR in the Lake District and it looks likely there will soon be more as these dogs have proved to be very successful in both trainability and temperament.

In training at the moment are also a Golden Retriever, Wire Haired Pointer and a Labradoodle. It appears that the Border Collie is becoming less in number but will undoubtedly remain the most popular choice for handlers for some time to come!

At the AGM in January, SARDA England appointed a new chairman. Ian Spiers replaced Ian Thompson, who had been in the role for seven years. A decision was also taken for SARDA England to come out of NSARDA and operate independently.

In February, several dogs and bodies travelled up to the Cairngorms for winter skills training. Although the snow conditions were a bit thin until Thursday, both experienced and trainee dogs and handlers were able to get some valuable training done. A trip in the

funicular was an added bonus! Sponsorship has recently been obtained from Mountain Paws (mountainpaws.co.uk) who have kindly donated a selection of leads, bowls and harnesses etc to our graded dogs.

The SARDA England website has recently been updated for 2017. All information can be obtained from there including call-outs and finds, as they happen! Go to sardaengland.co.uk.

Group photo. Left to right: Ian Spiers and Olly (Full Search Dog), Mark Harrison and Abby, Paul Bartrum and Flo, John Coombs and Shoala and Bill Batson and Angus (all Novice Grade). **Above right:** Search Dog Maya breaks into a snowhole.



MARCH: DAUNTLESS DOG RESCUE FROM ROCK LEDGE

Aberdyfi team members brought the stranded two-year-old dog to safety after she was spotted motionless on the rockface, days after straying into a gorge near Machynlleth.

Dauntless, who belonged to a local farmer, had run into a steep-sided gorge near Aberhosan earlier in the week, and the owners had made a number of attempts to coax her out or get down to her, all without success. In the end, they called the police for help from mountain rescue. A group of twelve team members attended the call-out but at first, said Graham O'Hanlon, things didn't look so good.

'The dog had been spotted late the previous day, and had been quite vocal in letting everyone know where she was, but as we made our way up the hill there was no noise and no movement. I wasn't the only one who feared the worst.'

Unable to get a good view into the bottom of the gully, it was decided to lower a rescuer into the gorge for a better look. On the second descent, a small stationary bundle of fur was spotted on a rock ledge, but it looked like Dauntless had not survived her ordeal. However, as the rescuer got closer, an ear pricked, a tail wagged, and all was well. Dauntless, seemingly fine from her time in the gorge bottom, was packaged into a rescue sack and hauled back to the top of the gully to be reunited with her owners.

'We were very pleased things worked out well for both dog and owners. We rely on the cooperation and forbearance of the farming community as we go about our rescue business, so it's good to be able to return the favour every now and then. And these sorts of rescues give us valuable training to keep our rope rescue skills as sharp as they can be.'

FACEBOOK.COM: @ABERDYFISART

Taking up the challenge with the Mountain Rescue Spine Challenger



Glossop team member **Alasdair Cowell** was amongst those who took part in this year's Mountain Rescue Spine Challenger to raise funds for mountain rescue and pit themselves against the most gruelling of challenges. He was supported along the way by team colleagues, always at the ready with hot drinks, cold pizza and tough words, which clearly did the trick because he won!

Preparation for this very challenging race began early in 2016 with several visits to the Yorkshire Dales, running big miles over the northern part before concentrating on the more southern areas of the route, going over the same sections over and over. Then, once I'd reccied the whole route, it was time to concentrate on getting more big running miles into my legs. Then the day arrived. It was snowy and icy underfoot but my Inov8 Oroc's coped with the conditions extremely well, hardly slipping at all. I strode out at a comfortable pace and found myself way out on my own climbing Jacob's Ladder. Kinder needed careful navigating as the clag was well down but I was soon on the flagged section heading for Snake Summit. I said a brief hello to my MR team mates as I shot past them and concentrated on getting to Reaps to meet my support crew — Tim, a 2016 MRT Spine Challenger winner, and Julian, to top up supplies.

After a quick stop, it was head down to the A635 Skye Road. To my amazement I passed the tailenders of the 8.00am Challenger starters on Torside Dam and soon passed more as

I climbed to Laddow Rocks. Was I going too fast? 'Nah, these guys are just walking, 'just keep ploughing on,' I thought.

With Black Hill summit behind me, it wasn't long before I was sat down drinking tea with my support crew by the A635. I decided to put more layers on here as it was now starting to get dark. Then, with no hanging about, I was back on the Pennine Way ticking of the miles and finding myself passing more and more of the earlier starters. This gave me quite a psychological boost and raised my spirits enormously.

The running was going well at this point as I came into A62 supply stop and it didn't seem long before I was slurping another hot drink down at the M62 stop.

Next stop was Hebden Bridge, about three hours away. With a very comfortable lead I could afford to take it a little easy on this section. Once past Blackstone Edge Trig, it was a drop down to the White House pub. I yelled my name and number to mountain rescue marshalls, and began the long trail run alongside the reservoirs.

I reached Stoodley Pike in eight hours and fifty minutes, passing more runners, a couple

of whom appeared to have deviated off course slightly, and I could see more torch lights ahead of me.

I'd been running alone for some time and realised I'd been talking to myself for quite some time, so when I finally caught the two runners in front of me I decided to stop for a brief chat, see how they were doing and feeling. Their pace was too slow for me so I said good luck and goodbye and got on with the job in hand.

Finally I reached Hebden Bridget, not quite halfway, with rain forecast. A hot drink and cold pizza and I was back out in the darkness, ticking of the miles. This section went really well, still able to run and keep a good pace going.

Another hot drink and more food at Ponden then off for Cowling in the rain. By now, my legs were feeling tired and feet a little sore. I walked a big chunk of this section but speedily enough to still keep a comfortable lead over the rest of the MR runners. As I dropped into Cowling, I was so pleased to have navigated off Ickornshaw Moor without any mistakes. It's a horrible place up there in the middle of the night in cold, wet, miserable conditions.

Tim greeted me at the road head and directed me to the camper van for hot soup and bread and another hot drink. I climbed out of Cowling, at a reasonable pace, my legs and feet really starting to feel it now. It's as much a mental challenge to put those aches and pains to the back of your mind and try and think of something to block it out, as it is a physical one to just keep on going.

Before long, I was climbing up to Trig Point 388 above Lothersdale, very much on my own, not a soul in sight. I touched the trig as I passed and began my long descent to Thornton in Craven.

Tim greeted me on the lane and pointed out the camper van. It was quite an effort stepping up into the van and such a joy to sit down and take the load of my feet. I decided to don dry, warmer clothing here as my pace had slowed somewhat. It took some time for the legs to get going again, but with the aid of my poles I was soon back to a marching pace. My whole body was aching now and my head was pretty messed up too. Time for the mental strength to help me battle on through this brutal race.

I navigated my way to

Gargrave in reasonable time, crossing very muddy fields and stile after stile. What a joy to see the camper again! My feet were on fire by the time I came into Gargrave. The Oroc's, with their medal studs, had served their purpose well in the snow and ice but it was time to change into the more comfortable X-Claws. I had a hot drink but the only thing I could eat with ease was a banana. All my body wanted was to sleep but Tim and Julian were having none of it. 'Get this hot drink down you then be on your way!'

Malham was our next meet and at some point between Gargrave and Malham I turned my head torch off to enjoy the sunrise.

I motored on, putting the little climb out of Gargrave behind me and was soon hugging the banks of the River Aire. I stopped and chatted to a gentleman walking his dog who asked if I was running the Spine, after a brief chat he wished me good luck and said goodbye. I wondered if I made any sense at all in the state I was feeling.

Up to Malham was a fairly short section and I was soon dragging myself up the small step up into the camper van for a much needed hot drink and more soup. I quite easily found myself closing my eyes and drifting off when, 'You can have a sleep once you've got to the end!' rudely interrupted my nap! With which I was soon kicked out and sent on my merry way. I only had to get to Malham Field Centre and over Fountains Fell before I could sit down again in their nice warm camper van.

My route across the top of Malham Cove was not so good. Trying not to fall over the Limestone rock took some time, but luckily went without any incident. Before long, I was walking alongside Malham Tarn and heading into the Field Centre: Checkpoint 1.5

It was a brief stop to give my number, a short sit down and chat with the race marshalls then off again for Fountains Fell, still maintaining a reasonable lead.

I found myself following one of the earlier starters of the challenger as we ascended Fountains Fell. He was setting a reasonable pace for the climb and I managed to keep with him to the top.

The descents were becoming very painful and my downhill speed was very slow. The poles were helping massively, mainly helping to keep me from falling over. My feet were very sore and my knees, especially my right knee, were

hurting a lot. All that was in my head was to put the pain to the back of my mind and keep soldiering on.

What a relief it was to get onto the tarmac surface, head for the camper van and a sit down. Again, it was a big effort climbing up into the van, the race clearly showing how brutal it is and what effect it has on you as a runner.

Sleep. It was all I wanted. But the best I got was a hot drink and five minutes of respite before once again getting my marching orders. I fuelled up the best I could, pulled myself together and tried to psych myself up for the last big climb of the race: Pen Y Ghent.

The camper van drove off into the distance leaving me out there, walking like a zombie, ready to scale the last high point of the race. My poles made the ascent a little easier. My head was down as I focused on every step.

On the summit, I squeezed through the hole in the wall and began my long, painful descent. You just have to keep fighting the pain and get it done. I finally managed to drag myself into Horton and the cave rescue marshal point at the café. I poked my head round the door and had a quick chat then continued on to the camper van.

Horton-in-Ribblesdale is just over 90 miles into the race, but the last leg was still to do and night was falling. I could feel myself rapidly melting into the seat in the camper van and drifting off to the land of nod. 'WAKE UP! Get this soup and hot drink down you!'

Soup consumed, I was booted out the van, next stop Hawes. The finish.

The climb out of Horton is just horrible. Already hobbling on sore feet, the Land Rover track was a nightmare with no soft verges to walk on, just loose rock and stone. It seemed an age before I was walking on softer ground, which eased my feet only a little.

The trek out to Cam High Road went on forever. The sun had gone down and, once more, I was walking by torchlight. This time though, I was feeling delirious and extremely exhausted, hoping not to make any serious navigational errors. Luckily, I could still keep that little bit focused, despite my vegetative state, and managed to stay on the Pennine Way.

Finally I took that right turn onto Cam Road and began the long haul towards Dodd Fell Hill. Suddenly was descending quite

rapidly before I'd even hit the tarmac section of Cam Road and it set off alarm bells in my head. I'd veered off the road in my delirious state and started to head the wrong way into Cam Woodlands. I stopped, checked my GPS and quickly got myself back on track.

At the left turn at Heator Pasture, I could see torchlights behind me, swinging around in the dark. I hoped that wasn't second place mountain rescue gaining on me so I began to stride out at a good pace, at times finding the strength to run a little, just to put a bit more distance between me and them.

By some miracle, I made the final descent at Ten End and began the long painful slog to the finish, sharp stabbing pains in my right knee.



But still holding the lead. 'Keep putting one foot in front of the other, that's all I have to do'.

Then I was off the hill, into the final lane and fields. The earlier torch light caught up and passed by — a Spine Challenger from the early start not an MR runner.

I weaved my way through the houses, hobbled past the cheese dairy and church, into Hawes. Tim and Julian saw me into the finish and a small gathering outside clapping me in. I hauled myself up five steps into the hall to more cheers and claps.

I DID IT! 33 hours 40 minutes! All that hard training and recoving over the past twelve months had paid off. I WON. 🏆



Top: Glossop runners Patrick Haley and Matt Dooley. **Above:** Alasdair Cowell, winner! **Opposite:** Alasdair crossing from Kinder Scout towards Snake Summit and waving through the pain.

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