

mountain rescue

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62 AUTUMN
2017



MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES: SO MUCH MORE THAN MOUNTAINS

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WELCOME TO
ISSUE 62

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

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NEXT ISSUE
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Editorial Copy Deadline:
Friday 8 December 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

National Rope Rescue training courses will commence later this year. Lyon Equipment, based in Cumbria, won the tender to work with MREW to provide the training © Lyon Equipment.

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



There's been a lot going on at national level. Following the AGM in May, under their new chairman, Peter Dymond, the MREW trustees have been looking at the proposed review of the organisation. Steve Wood and David Coleman (new trustee), along with Keith Gillies (regional chair rep), have put together the terms of reference for the review panel to work to. I am informed that the panel will be made up of the regional chairs — no executive officer has had any say in this process and will not be part of the review panel, as a national officer.

Jake Bharier (also a new trustee) has taken on the rewrite of the CIO, looking at the legal part of the document, the bits required by the charity commission and this has been with you since the end of July for feedback. There are some changes to job titles, but most of this part is 'boiler plate'. The 'standing orders' are the working parts of the document, how we come together. These are still to be written and that's where we will need your input.

Davie Thomson stood down as national fundraising officer in September, due to work commitments. I intend to chair a meeting of the fundraising group at the November meeting. If you can attend, please do so. If you'd like to help us with national fundraising, please contact me. I have a plan!

After much discussion and the agreement of the trustees, we had twenty professionals apply for the role of freelance trust fundraiser. Shortlisting was hard work but after an intense review of the applications we interviewed four applicants, and now have an excellent person in Jody Dyer. Her role is to look for national trusts and grants you would not be able to apply for. That said, if she comes across something a team or region could apply for, she will work with you to secure that grant or trust. Jody will give a presentation at the November meeting so you get to know her. This is a big step-change for the organisation but we cannot continue spending as we do without help. On the subject of fundraising — thanks again to our patron HRH The Duke of Cambridge, we came away with a cheque for £30K from the polo.

We continue to support the Princes' charities by hosting an annual day out for children and young people. I attended the event this year in the south west — once again, a great day, lots of very happy children and young people, so thanks SWERA. The baton has been passed to the Yorkshire Dales for 2018 and we are now looking for someone to take on the 2019

event. If your region would like to do this, please let me know.

We continue to support the JD Foundation where we can. Blacks held an open day in the Peak District, for some children they have a connection to, and asked if we would support them. In turn, we asked for your help and Buxton and SARDA members turned up for the day. These offers of help benefit all of us, showing our supporters what a great organisation we are.

Al Read and Penny have again got our Libor bid in on time. I know most of you know they spend hours and hours on this. Mark Lewis



Polo match 2017 with The Duke of Cambridge, this year courtesy of the BMG Foundation Polo Cup.

has also spent hours on the new radios, and found the best supplier for our needs. If Jody does as we hope, there should be more money to buy you more radios later.

Some of you will be aware we've set up a 'wellbeing' working group to look at our members' needs. Many of you have gone through the TRIM training but when we need help, the voluntary sector seems to hit a wall in going forward. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and Prince Harry, have done a lot to promote mental health, to explore key issues across the First Responders sector. Prince William recently called a meeting of police, fire and ambulance and invited MREW to sit at the table. Elaine Gilliland attended the meeting, in London and, I am pleased to report, came back with £30k ring-fenced for MREW, held by the Ambulance Trust for our use to support members' treatment.

Finally, on a positive note, thanks to Jaguar Land Rover, we have a brand new Discovery on trial for twelve months. Simon Thresher is leading on this so, if your team has an event coming up or wishes to use it for team training, please contact him via vehicleofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk. ☺

MOUNTAIN RESCUE EQUIPMENT SALE



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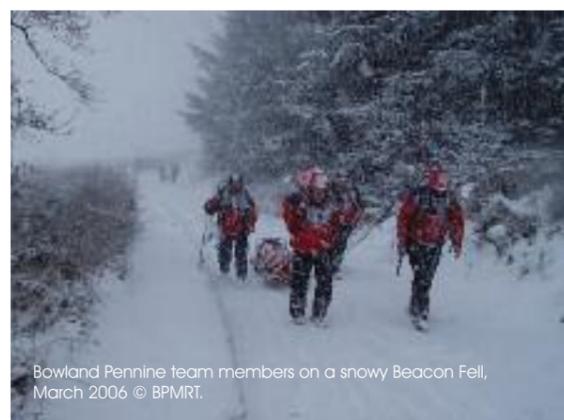
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meetings

MREW BUSINESS AND COMMITTEES
Saturday 18 November 2017
Lancashire Police HQ, Hutton

MREW BUSINESS AND COMMITTEES
Saturday 19 May 2018
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.



Bowland Pennine team members on a snowy Beacon Fell, March 2006 © BMIRT.

THAT BOWLAND PENNINE IMAGE: STILL ICONIC AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...

JUDY WHITESIDE

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have spotted this now well and truly iconic image featuring in a full-page ad for Integro, the recently appointed MREW insurance brokers.

The ad, in the July magazine, was primarily about making teams aware of the work Integro is doing, alongside MREW, on behalf of all team members — but, unfortunately, the relevant accreditation for the image was missing, which was gently pointed out by Tim Cox, Bowland Pennine MRT chairman. We always endeavour to credit images with the appropriate copyright and caption but occasionally one will slip through the net. So my apologies to the team: *mea culpa*.

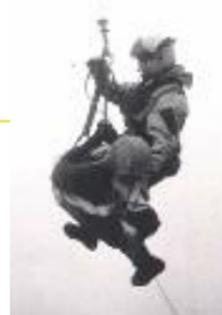
It has to be said, that image is still well and truly iconic, summing up as it does the 'working conditions' team members often find themselves smiling valiantly through. And it's one of many corkers we've received over the years, for use in the magazine, the annual review and occasional MREW marketing material — offered free of charge, and frequently the work of professional or semi-professional photographers who earn their living behind the lens. Thanks to all those who contribute these images — the mag really wouldn't be the same without you!!

inthisissue



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MEET THE NEW TRUSTEES

Three new trustees are in place and already working together with the existing trustees and officers, to take the organisation forward. But who are they?

Jake Bharier (left) spent 20 years working for a multinational chemicals company, initially as a paint technologist, and then at corporate level in the area of health, safety and environment, then a further 20 years managing finance and support services, and strategic development, for Skillshare International, an international development charity working through volunteers. He has substantial experience of working with federations and networks in the voluntary sector, including as treasurer of CONCORD, the European confederation of Relief and Development NGOs, and president of the Workers' Educational Association. He is still active in international development, as a trustee of a charity working with partners in the Horn of Africa, and as chair of an international committee reviewing standards of governance and accountability for a global process working on development effectiveness of NGOs, under the aegis of OECD and the UN. Jake lives on a hill in Herefordshire, where he looks across to the length of the Black Mountains, and makes apple juice.

David Coleman (right) describes himself as 'a Derbyshire lad' who enjoys hill walking, golf, gardening and, occasionally, sampling real ales! He is also a qualified Coastal Skipper. Appointed as Deputy Lieutenant of Derbyshire in 2007, he served as High Sheriff in 2014/15.

Professionally, he served in the Derbyshire Constabulary, in a variety of uniformed and detective roles and ranks, before making Divisional Commander of Derby Division in 1994. That same year, he was appointed ACC (Operations) in Leicestershire. Appointed Chief Constable of Derbyshire in 2001, he was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in 2004, and retired from the police service in 2007.

A strong advocate of the voluntary sector, he is involved with several charities, including Foundation Derbyshire, Sporting Futures, Umbrella, Autism East Midlands, Derbyshire Scouts and the High Sheriff's Fund. Significantly, he has been PDMRO President since retiring in 2007.



Finally, **Phil Benbow** (left with his dog Flash) is chairman of the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association (NWMRA), having taken over from Dr Tony Jones in 2013. He has been a member of Llanberis MRT since 1978, and is a call-out coordinator for the team. He is a former member of SARDA Wales, having had three dogs on the call-out list. He is also a member of the MR SAR-H steering group.

As chairman of MountainSafe, a partnership of organisations in North Wales, he helps promote the safe enjoyment of Snowdonia's mountains.

He has climbed and played in the mountains of North Wales for most of his adult life, as well as in Scotland and the Lake District, with a few trips to the Alps mixed in.



LYON EQUIPMENT WINS MOUNTAIN RESCUE ROPE RESCUE TRAINING CONTRACT

Cumbria-based outdoor business Lyon Equipment secured the contract in July, following a tender process, and will commence training a group of MR team members to become technical rope rescue instructors in their regions, in October. The company will provide four courses, delivered to MREW regions in the South West, South Wales, Pennine/Peak District and North East England.

Rope rescue is conducted by most MREW teams, although the frequency of use of these skills varies from region to region. Teams that use rope rescue skills frequently have well-developed capabilities and supporting training processes. The training provided by Lyon Equipment will focus on those regions that use rope rescue skills less frequently. Personnel attending the courses will be selected by their teams and regions, and on completion of the training these individuals will then cascade that training to the remainder of their teams. The aim is that the courses will considerably enhance the technical rope rescue skills of the individuals and teams involved, while also assisting with inter-operability between teams.

Training will be headed up by Lyon Equipment's training manager, Bill Batson MBE. Bill has a long history of mountain and cave rescue and is an operational member of the Cave Rescue Organisation in the Yorkshire Dales. He is also a search and rescue dog handler, currently with two operational search dogs. Prior to joining Lyon Equipment, he served with the Royal Air Force Mountain Rescue Service for some 27 years, during which time he served as team leader and chief instructor. In 1996, he was awarded the MBE for 'services to mountain rescue' and has also received the MREW Distinguished Service Award. Bill has developed and delivered a range of rope rescue courses for the emergency services, and Lyon Equipment is proud to be considered as one of the UK's leading providers of this specialist training.

Provision of these courses has been enabled courtesy of the Libor funding, and forms just one of several national training initiatives proposed by MREW. Others include Driver Training and the Avalanche Training programme planned for the coming winter.

OPERATIONS: MIKE MARGESON

This summer has been very busy for teams and the same is true for the operations group. The transition to the new digital platform is moving ahead, and orders from Simoco will probably have begun arriving by the time you read this. It's fair to say this will be an evolving project, but initial tests seem to be very positive.

- We've also now run a pilot incident command and control course. Operational reps attended to help review the material before it rolls out further. This work is extremely timely as we continue to move forward with JESIP principles and inter-agency working practices.

- November will see the biennial medical conference take place, run by Langdale Ambleside. I'm sure there will be significant discussion of the new arrangements for the Casualty Care certificate as well as high quality inputs from our medical professionals.

- New for this winter are Libor-funded avalanche training courses at Glenmore Lodge. Initially, the available places will

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE TRUST ARCHIVE UPDATE

In the last issue, I reported on the opening of the new Mountain Heritage Trust archive at the Blencathra centre. As a result of talking to one of the Mountain Heritage trustees at the opening event, I managed to arrange an initial official meeting between them and MREW. I invited Dave Freeborn, who had restored our film, and Ray Griffiths, our

president, to join me in meeting with Kelda Roe, the manager and archivist and Jeff Ford, chair of the MHT trustees, at the archive offices at Blencathra Centre. The meeting was positive and, in principle, MHT would be happy to help and work with us, but have no budget or funds to help. It was also said that as a key player in the setting up and development of the Mountain Heritage Trust, the BMC would need to be in full support. I therefore set about seeking this support from the BMC, which I have now received and have in writing.

Why do I tell you all this? Mountain rescue has such a rich history, interlinked with the development of mountaineering itself. It seems important we do not miss the opportunity to record and preserve this history, whether that be photographic or written history or historic equipment sitting in the back of your base or garage somewhere. The oral history should be a priority to record. The Fell and Rock Club undertook a similar project recently, getting the record of older members of the club before the opportunity was lost.

We have just appointed a fundraiser to look at national grants and funding streams. I am convinced that this could be an area we could get some funding, in order to contract in a project worker to bring some of this work together. I feel strongly that there is both a responsibility for us not to lose this material and at the same time a real opportunity to put together a really educational asset.



MOUNTAIN & CAVE AWARENESS DAY: 29 OCTOBER 2017

Once again, we're taking the opportunity to work with one of MREW's commercial supporters, VARTA Consumer UK, on the campaign for this year's Awareness Day. Building on last year's Winter Walking Guide and the Spring Power Up approach to mobile phones, we're hoping to develop the theme of **How dark is dark?**

As many rescue teams are all too well aware, families and groups out and about at this time of year often don't realise just how dark it can get in the countryside, especially in our national parks and other popular walking areas.

We're planning to focus on this with plenty of safety advice, product information from VARTA Consumer and we are also in touch with the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) who publish interactive maps that show light pollution and, in the process, highlight the darkest areas of the UK. Further details are taking shape as MR Magazine goes to press but have a look at nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps and nightblight.cpre.org.uk for background.

And keep an eye on MREW social media, especially Facebook for further information, links, graphics and tools to help your team to make the most of these connections for your own communications at the end of October.



DARK NIGHTS NEED PELI LIGHTS

Peli professional lighting products are designed for extreme conditions and ideally suited for exposure to the worst winter weather. The rugged 9410 LED is a powerful, rechargeable light perfect for search and rescue. The LEDs provide over 1200 lumens with a beam reaching 430 metres (high mode) that cuts through darkness and fog. With 10.5 hours of run time (economy power), the 9410 features a 120° tilt head to angle the beam where required and has 3 modes: high beam, economy and flashing mode. There is a 3-stage battery level indicator, a sure grip

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Peli Area Lighting: This successful range of portable, rechargeable lighting systems has been chosen by mountain rescue teams across the UK to illuminate the work area, command HQ or emergency scene. The 9440 Area light, fully deploys in under ten seconds and extends to over two metres in height. The 9440 quickly retracts telescopically to less than a metre long in the closed position, allowing it to be carried easily. This lightweight, portable unit weighs only 7.3kg and is supplied with a shoulder strap and mains charger.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION GO TO:
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'REACH AND RESCUE PRODUCTS ARE ESSENTIAL TOOLS THAT MULTIPLY THE CAPABILITIES OF WATER RESCUE TEAMS AND INCREASE SAFETY BY KEEPING THE RESCUER OUT OF THE HAZARD ZONE' GLENN NEWELL, PRESIDENT OF RESCUETECH, GEORGIA, USA

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COMMS: MARK LEWIS

SIMOCO WIRELESS SOLUTIONS TO SUPPLY MR TEAMS

The mission critical comms specialist is to upgrade teams across England and Wales to the Digital Mobile-Radio (DMR) network.

The DMR Tier II equipment will ensure interoperability and will comprise the roll-out of over 1000 digital radio devices and base stations, including the 700 Series of portable and mobile radios, specifically the SDP760 digital portable radio and the SDM730 mobile radio terminal, both of which are capable of operating across multiple analogue and digital modes. The 600 Series base station to support instant push-to-talk voice communications and VoIP telephone connectivity, and open-standards applications support completes the picture.



DMR delivers greater clarity, reliability, scalability and better coverage and will enable MREW to deploy features such as a GPS mapping application so control room-based

team members can precisely locate and track their colleagues out on the hill. Crucially, Simoco's solution is fully interoperable with our existing analogue systems. Teams will be able to swap between digital and analogue networks, so those at different stages of digital migration can continue to collaborate.

From the start, Simoco has understood that our top priority was interoperability between the existing analogue systems and any new digital equipment, whilst also allowing us to communicate effectively with other emergency services such as the coastguard and police helicopters and air ambulances. We're a complex organisation, so it would be impossible to migrate entirely to digital at the push of a button. We now look forward to working with them for many years to come.

'Mountain rescue is a truly inspirational organisation', says Ian Carr, of Simoco. 'These volunteers are out at all times of day and night, in all conditions, in some of the most rugged and risky terrain in the country. Clear and reliable comms really can be a matter of life and death. We've worked with mountain rescue in the past, developing their analogue network and we're delighted to now be helping them move to a digital future — while continuing to maximise their existing investment'.



THE 'MREW' LAND ROVER DISCOVERY 5 AND OTHER NEWS...

VEHICLES: SIMON THRESHER

Every year AIRSO (Association of Industrial Road Safety Officers) hosts the National Blue Light Users Conference. Mountain rescue has been invited to attend for the last few years and each year we've managed to send at least two people to the event.

As well as attending presentations on legislation, vehicle updates, best practice and standards, the event is also a great opportunity to network with the chief officers and driver trainers from the statutory services as well as various training and equipment providers. This year, Paul Smethurst and Julian Earnshaw attended and came back with some interesting updates and news:



● **Roadcraft:** The 'bible' advanced drivers work to is releasing online learning which, on first glance, looks similar to the learning environment you will have seen when doing online helicopter training. This could be very beneficial to drivers within MR as they will have access to the most up-to-date material and be able to test their knowledge at any time. Watch this space!

● **Section 19 HSDT:** Draft legislation was sent out to all interested parties in 2016 and the feedback received, along with feedback from the Minister for Transport, identified a number of items that required changing. These changes have been carried out and the next consultation is due soon. It will only be open for four weeks so, when it arrives, I will have a very short time to gather any feedback from teams and put a response together for the Department for Transport.

● **Accidents and incidents:** A large number of incidents occur between blue light vehicles and the public every year — to be expected given how many emergencies occur. Interestingly, the stats show a very clear distinction between the number of incidents involving highly conspicuous liveried vehicles and covert vehicles, with the latter having a much lower percentage of incidents. Research shows that the drivers of covert vehicles are much more aware of how invisible they can be to the public and so are more alert to their surroundings. Something for our drivers to be aware of!

So, what else is happening with vehicles? The floodwater driving course has been very well received with every place taken and almost every team booking places. Teams have been fantastic in offering use of their bases and vehicles, and identifying training areas. I have spoken at length with the course provider and we hope to start offering courses dates at weekends starting mid-October onwards.

Land Rover: At a polo match in 2016, a conversation between HRH The Duke of Cambridge and a director of Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) led to what could be a very exciting venture for MREW. Soon after, we

were contacted by JLR and since then I have been speaking regularly to Land Rover about MREW and our vehicles. Last month, an offer dropped into my inbox: 'Would we like to have use of a new model Discovery for twelve months?'

So, hopefully before the magazine is out, we will take delivery of a brand new Discovery SE complete with lights and livery. The intention is to share the vehicle out to any team that would like to trial it. It would be great to see it appear on the 4x4 courses as well as at any large events. If your team would like to have it please email me vehicleofficer@mountain.rescue.co.uk.





Mid Pennine team members dive in to refresh water skills

MICK SMITH
CALDER VALLEY SRT

In mid-July, Mid-Pennine team members came together at the River Washburn in North Yorkshire to refresh their water rescue skills and to forge a stronger working relationship. Water First Responders and SRTs from Calder Valley, Bolton and Holme Valley teams gathered in the flow beneath Woodyard on the river.

It's worth mentioning that this training was made possible by kind invitation of Halifax Canoe Club and Yorkshire Water. On limited occasions, the river is supplemented from Thruscross Reservoir, providing a guaranteed strong flow of water along the river length into Fewston Reservoir — the perfect opportunity for canoe club members to enjoy a slalom competition in the upper section, whilst we train downstream in the lower section of the river.

Throughout the day, team members trained together to practise the core water rescue skills required to operate safely around swift water, including defensive and aggressive swimming through the flows, throw line rescue and tethered rescue swims to retrieve casualties from the water. The afternoon session included more technical rescue skills training, including the tethering and manoeuvring of a rescue craft across the river and into the flow using high lines. Such skills may be called upon to carry out a rescue from a vehicle trapped during a flood.

This training was also part of a developing programme to bring together water rescue members from across the Mid Pennine region. All members are trained to the same national standards and experience during recent major water rescue incidents such as the flooding incident earlier this year on the east coast has shown that MR water rescue specialists often work together to support the statutory emergency services.

All the equipment seen in these photographs, such as the dry suits, water craft and specialist ropes, is funded by generous donations from the public and sponsors from across the region, all supporting their own local teams. We'd all like to thank everyone for their continued support for mountain rescue teams, which allows us to train and maintain essential skills, ensuring we are prepared to help the public in times of need.

LAKE DISTRICT

RESCUE SPARKS MEDIA INTEREST AND A SERIOUS SAFETY MESSAGE

Following a '100% avoidable' incident, one Saturday evening in September — which saw Patterdale team members called away from their own dinners only to find the 999 caller was tucking into a meal and glass of red wine at the pub — the team took their frustration to social media, urging hillgoers to take the mountains seriously.

The team was initially called to assist a group of walkers who were making slow progress descending from the fells. The group of five were actually benighted without torches, having been caught out when it went dark. One had suffered a very minor injury but had they all, perhaps, 'bitten off more than they could chew'?

Several team members had variously left their own family dinners, one a wedding, another a party, (so far fairly 'normal' in the world of mountain rescue), but when they went to meet the original 999 caller, at the pub, they were disappointed to see him tucking into his own dinner and glass of red.

It transpired that the missing party of five were part of a much larger group of 76 — and the leader of the group was safely tucked up back in his accommodation when he was called to ask whether he could account for the other 71. He couldn't, and there were two more walkers missing. Fortunately, they made it down to a campsite under their own steam while confusion continued.

While this rescue was underway, Langdale Ambleside MRT received a call for two walkers lost in the same area. Both teams began a search and eventually the missing people made their own way down to the valley. This group had separated and both pairs were well and truly lost. Neither really knew where they had been and neither could they use a map properly — not that this would have helped as they didn't have one. Neither did they have torches.

Team members finally reached their own beds in the early hours of Sunday morning.

'Please, please, please,' urged the team's Facebook post, 'take a map, appropriate clothing and a torch if you are going into the mountains. Then we can save our time for helping people who really need our assistance and we might even get to enjoy our dinner, wedding or party.'

'We don't mind helping at all but we'd really like to see more people taking the



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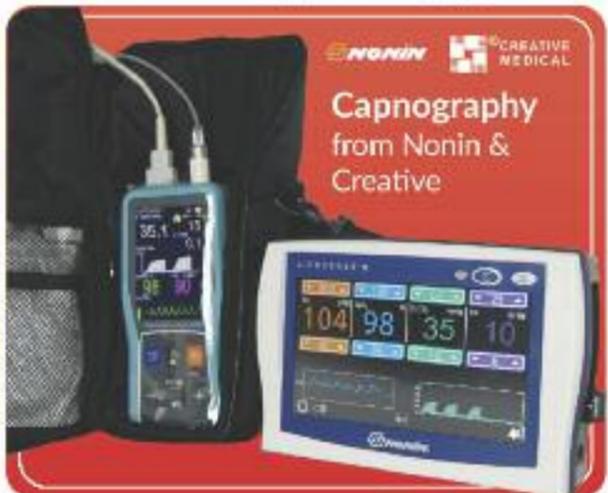


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mountains seriously. We want people to keep themselves safe.'

The post drew a great deal of media attention, including enquiries about who the large group were and whether there were young people or children involved. A later post confirmed that this wasn't the case and neither was it a charity event. The 76 people involved were generally very inexperienced walkers from a wide range of countries.

'We do want to get the safety message out there again before the clocks turn back in a few weeks time. And if the post has done nothing more than make more people stop and think about what they need to take with them and what they actually do in the mountains, then it's served its purpose. If it helps to save a life, even better.'

NORTH WALES

HYPOTHERMIA WARNINGS AFTER NEAR-NAKED CHARITY ASCENT OF SNOWDON

North Wales teams also pressed home the safety message in September, after a man who reached the summit in just his underpants developed hypothermia.

Nathan French took to the highest peak in England and Wales in his Superman undies to raise money for charity but a paramedic was called to meet the Liverpool student after his descent.

Phil Benbow, chairman of North Wales Mountain Rescue Association, said teams were seeing more unprepared visitors.

Commendably, Mr French had decided to



MID PENNINE

225 FOR 5

This would make quite a respectable cricket score, writes **Tim Cox**, but what's perhaps more impressive is that it is actually the number of years that five BPMRT members have notched up. It is quite remarkable that they all joined mountain rescue in the same year, 1972 and are still very much actively involved today.

Simon Harris joined the Northern Rescue Organisation acting as an exercise casualty, being a member of St John Ambulance. Keith Gillies, Tony Bond and Phil Lund were at school together in Preston and became involved in mountain rescue through their youth club Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Pete Taylor joined the South Ribble FSRT and became the first team leader of Bowland Pennine when it formed in 1980 by the amalgamation of South Ribble and the NRO. Tony took over the team leadership from Pete and Keith is chairman of MPSRO.

It's not unusual for at least a couple of these five stalwarts to be seen carrying the bell stretcher on a call-out. They bring to the team a wealth of knowledge and expertise gained from years of experience. It would be a very rare exception to attend an incident in an area that they could not say, 'I remember a call-out here some time ago'.

Left to right: Pete Taylor, Phil Lund, Tony Bond, Simon Harris, Keith Gillies and Phil O'Brien © Bowland Pennine MRT.

take on the challenge to raise money for a dementia charity after his grandmother developed the condition, but his experience was a valuable lesson in how hypothermia can affect the body and the need to be appropriately dressed for the environment. He expressed surprise at 'how cold' he got. Feeling unwell at the summit, after completing the 1,085 metre climb, he descended on the Snowdon Mountain Railway.

'I was shaking uncontrollably and they covered me in tin foil. On the train down I started to feel really sick and going deaf and my eyesight started going funny. I was getting really emotional so my dad, who was with me, called an ambulance.

'The paramedic checked me over and



LAKE DISTRICT

LONG STANDING SEARCH DOG HANDLER'S CONTRIBUTION TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE RECOGNISED

Mick Guy has been involved with search and rescue dogs since the early days of SARDAs and, in July, his long service was recognised with an LDSAMRA Long Service Award.

Mick was a member of Kendal MRT for ten years before joining Keswick MRT, where he remains an active member, 28 years on. During his time in mountain rescue, he has thousands of call-outs to his credit —1600 with Keswick alone, including 237 dog searches with his three search dogs — and he has undertaken the role of training officer, chairman, secretary and treasurer, to name but a few.

Left: Mick with his Long Service Award. Far Left: Search Dog Ginny prepares to fly. Images: Facebook @ Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs

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said I was showing early signs of hypothermia.'

Phil Benbow — also a member of the Llanberis team which covers Snowdon — said while it was 'laudable' to undertake charity treks up Snowdon, it was essential that people dressed appropriately for the conditions, planned their trip and checked the weather forecast.

'We have a significant number of calls every year about people on Snowdon who are not equipped properly,' he said. 'They make an assumption that because there's a café at the top and a train, that it's a walk in the park. It's not — it's the highest mountain in England and Wales and people need to respect that.'

'Llanberis has been called to 173 rescues so far this year and that will be over 200 by the end of the year — the third year in a row we will have topped 200. That's way too many for volunteers who have to give up time with their family or at work. People just need to think ahead.'

FAMILY SETS UP 'TREE HOUSE PROJECT' IN MEMORY OF JOSH

Josh Llwyd Hopcroft was an 18-year-old loving, funny, outgoing, handsome, happy young man from Llanfair, near Harlech. But in February last year, he was reported missing and his father Dion, Aberglaslyn team leader, and other members of the Aberglaslyn team, were involved in the search for him.

Team members searched through the night and on until 5.00am with no results. As it started to become lighter, Dion set out alone to carry on the search for Josh. Three and a half hours later, sadly, he found his son's body in a field close to their family home. After alerting the relevant services, Dion, Josh's brother Sion, and Aberglaslyn team members carried Josh's body back to their family home. Josh had committed suicide.

Eighteen months on, Sue and Dion, their family, friends and team members are determined to turn their devastation at Josh's death into a positive force for good with a fundraising event for two charities — Josh's Tree House Project', a new charity, still awaiting a charity number, and also Aberglaslyn MRT.

The plan for Josh's Tree House Project is to build a cabin that can be used for private counselling sessions, speaks, group talks, bereavement sessions and, most importantly, educational talks about suicide prevention. Sue and Dion also hope to set up a memorial garden in memory of Josh, alongside the Tree House, a place of solace

for people to go when they need it most. Their hope is that Josh's Tree House Project will make a big impact on mental health and help with obtaining independence and stability within the community.

'No one will ever know why Josh did what he did,' writes Kieron Hollingworth, a friend and team colleague, 'but it pains his friends, family and loved ones to think that maybe if he had talked to someone about what he was going through, this utter tragedy could have been prevented. We hope Josh's Tree House Project will help other people in similar situations.'

'Suicides and attempted suicides have rapidly increased. Suicide is preventable, but it needs to be everybody's business to tackle and reduce the act of suicide through preventable measures. This family's closeness and strength amazes me every day, and if I can help them in any way I can in making this project work, I will.'

The charity fundraising day will take place on Saturday 28 October, at the Ysgethin Inn in Talybont. The event will be based on a

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'Day of the Dead' theme — a traditional Mexican celebration of the dead — and will feature a children's Halloween party, party games, music, dancing and fancy dress competitions and lots of Halloween-themed arts and crafts. Weather permitting, there will also be a birds of prey demo. And, for the adults, a Day of the Dead-themed party with live music, food and drink, raffles, auctions and — providing they don't chicken out — the waxing of a few team members' legs. (I expect photos for the next issue! Editor).

So, if you're in the area on 28 October, please do pop along and show your support, in memory of Josh. And if you can contribute with a donation or raffle/auction prize, email Kieron via k.j.hollingworth@live.com — your support will be very welcome.

Finally, from Dion: 'I would like to thank my son Sion and other close friends and team members, for helping me carry Josh home that morning.'

@ To call out or not to call out: that is the question.

WITH 'AVOIDABLE' CALL OUTS ON THE INCREASE IN THE LAKES AND NORTH WALES, HOAX CALLS BRING A FURTHER ADDED PRESSURE TO TEAM MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, AS CHRIS LLOYD WRITES...

At about 07.15hrs on a very wet Saturday morning, North Wales Police received a 999 call from a man asking for mountain rescue. The call was broken and brief. He said he needed mountain rescue and he was at the top of Cwm Idwal. And that was the sum of his three calls, made over about five minutes. As it came through as a 'roamer' call, the police could not return the man's call. The call went to one of the Ogwen Valley team leaders. With very little information, he called for local members to attend and be deployed as hasty parties to search around Cwm Idwal. In extremely wet conditions, four parties of two members each were deployed to search around the cwm and adjacent hill sides. Team members came across other stalwarts heading for the hills and asked them to look out for a male needing assistance. They met a man coming down from the back of the cwm. He hadn't seen anybody.

There was concern about the information provided. Could this man have been out all night and was now suffering from hypothermia? Would this explain the poor quality of the telephone calls? He hadn't been able to give his name or telephone number and the latter could not be traced.

The search area was increased and more team members arrived at Oggi base. To add to the pressure, at 09.50 North Wales Police received another 999 call reporting a man needing the assistance of mountain rescue on Tryfan. This time he was able to give a telephone number but the signal was lost before he could give his name. He did give some information which implied that he was a local man. When the police found that the telephone number didn't exist, suspicions were aroused.

The team leader asked North Wales Police to carefully compare the messages of the Cwm Idwal caller and the Tryfan caller. There were just too many similarities in the voice, the accent and the information given. This was probably a local man and this was a HOAX.

By 11.00 team members were recalled from the mountains to Oggi base. After a warm up, a change of clothing and hot drinks, they headed for home and their families: it wasn't only fifteen team members who were not best pleased.

Hoax calls are rare. This one was difficult to foresee. Mobile phone coverage above Cwm Idwal can be poor. The weather had not been good overnight. This could have so easily been a hill walker with hypothermia. And, fortunately, that was the only call of the weekend.

Chris Lloyd
Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation



JOINT EXERCISE IN THE NORTH PENNINES, UNDER AND OVER GROUND

Late September saw six of the eight North Pennine mountain and cave rescue teams taking part in a search exercise, based at the Tan Hill Inn. Using a scenario organised by Teesdale & Weardale SMRT, more than 60 team members spent almost five hours searching for casualties and evidence across a wide area of moorland, farmland and underground.

'We try to organise a joint training exercise each year,' says Pete Bell, of Teesdale and Weardale, 'and this year the specific aim was to test our communications, particularly our radio systems. There've been a lot of changes in these in recent years and we know there's more change to come as MREW implements a national transfer to digital radios. We want to be sure that, whatever system each team is using, we all know how to speak to each other.'

The scenario was a light aircraft crash and the search for several passengers who had dispersed from the crash site and were wanted by the police for questioning.

'The teams also each brought along a cas care-trained casualty for the exercise,' said Pete, 'and we had one of them located underground as if they'd fallen into a pothole. It all helped make the exercise work for the two cave rescue teams — and COMRU — as well as the search and mountain rescue teams from Kirkby Stephen, Penrith,

Swaledale and Teesdale and Weardale.'

'A day of testing like this is the best way of learning fast and then adapting how we work so things work even better for the real thing,' said Pete. 'Thanks go to everyone who was involved in planning and running the day as well as duty inspector Barry Evans from Durham Constabulary and the crew of the MCA rescue helicopter from Humberside. They were with us for over an hour, working with search teams and building on our experience of their vehicle. As always, thanks also go to Louise Peace and her team at the Tan Hill Inn for their hospitality and for allowing us to use their facilities as a base.'

'The primary focus was communications,' says Adam Hearn, comms officer for Teesdale and Weardale, 'so it was good to see everybody's willingness to overcome various issues with radio and phone systems. Yet again, the value of the SARCALL log was demonstrated as the universally accessible medium for all MRTs. As we're all

aware, having reliable access to the internet is becoming more and more important for MRT control vehicles. Whilst the new Emergency Services Network will hopefully provide this in the long term, currently teams either have to site their vehicles where there is mobile phone coverage or use satellite broadband. During the exercise, we had a couple of teams sharing their access with others and this worked well.

'Airwave again proved to be the system of choice for voice communication between team controls, although there were some issues with limited talk groups access — but that's just the sort of issue that, having tested our processes, teams can report back locally and find solutions.'

Teesdale team leader Steve Owers, took on the role of press officer for the exercise and Scott Bisset observed as he will be taking over that role soon. A brief statement to all team search managers summarised the information to be given to the press, with all further questions directed to the press officer.

This was tested with a few calls to team contacts by Sally Seed, posing as a journalist or police contact, and the process worked well. Mountain rescue led a joint press conference fairly early on, with questions (as you'd expect), from Sally. The final press conference, led by the police, would be for real. 'This meant I could concentrate on the work MR had done and pass any sensitive or awkward questions to the police,' says Steve.

'When I attended the briefing, the search for missing people of interest was intriguing enough,' says Chris Jones, COMRU member, 'but the mention of the small orange cylinders built in an extra frisson of excitement, especially as we were



Clockwise from top left: Land Rovers at the ready; COMRU team members with the Unimog; Coastguard helicopter overhead; team members await the helicopter. Images courtesy of the teams involved.



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NORTH EAST

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE FIGHTER SHARES HIS GOOD FORTUNE

Earlier this year, Scarborough and Ryedale training officer, Jon Bateman, entered the team in a Ruth Lee Ltd photo competition on Facebook to win two of their rescue manikins. But, despite fantastic local support and many votes from the wider Mountain Rescue England and Wales community, the team was pipped to the post by Ben Spalding from Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service. They thought that was the end of it but not so...



Above: Left to right: Anni Wilson, Ben Spalding, Mountain Rescue Manikin, Jon Bateman and Gareth Taylor © Scarborough & Ryedale MRT.

'Firstly,' says Ian Hugill, 'the company offered us significant discount on a mountain rescue manikin (it fits into a rucksack so can be easily carried out to the find site).

'Then Ben Spalding contacted us to kindly offer us one of the manikins he had won, AND also offered to deliver it to us on the way



Image © Cleveland MRT.

MAKING DEMENTIA FRIENDS

Cleveland team members regularly assist the police in the search for vulnerable people at risk in the community, so one group of people they regularly come into contact with are dementia sufferers and their carers.

To help them do this better, the team invited the Alzheimer's Society to run their highly regarded Dementia Friends information session at their Wednesday night training. The session was both informative and entertaining, and it's available free to any member of the community with an interest in dementia — just visit dementiafriends.org.uk for details of courses near you.

to the Great North Run which he was running as part of his fundraising for The Fire Fighters' Charity!

'True to his word, Ben stopped by the base on the Saturday and handed the manikin over to Jon on behalf of the team.

'Many thanks to him and good luck with his ongoing fundraising campaign. He can be assured that the manikin will be a key part of our training regime.'

OUR BLUE LIGHT TORCH RELAY CONTINUES NORTHWARDS

In August, members of Scarborough and Ryedale and Cleveland teams joined in this national campaign to raise awareness of mental health within the emergency services. The two teams had the privilege of carrying the torch as it passed from North Yorkshire towards Cleveland and Teesside on the next leg of its journey.

The torch arrived at Scarborough's base in Snainton on Sunday 6 August. From there, it was carried through the team's patch for handover to Cleveland team members at The Lion Inn, Blakey Ridge later that day. Then it was onwards and upwards to the summit of Roseberry Topping, where Cleveland MRT handed on the torch to Cleveland Police.

The event has seen the blue light torch travel around the country since April in the hands of various emergency services and mountain rescue team members have been amongst a number of volunteer organisations involved along the way, along with lifeboats and coastguard teams.



Above: Our Blue Light relay torch safely handed over at the Lion Inn © Cleveland MRT.

A new direction... being a probationary Mountain Rescue volunteer

PEAK DISTRICT

Image © Kinder MRTI.

As the Land Rover climbed slowly over the boulders on the track, I was glad of the hand-hold above the door. Fingers tightly gripping the handle to stop too much movement, my head occasionally bouncing off my forearm rather than the glass in the window, I felt the excitement and the tension of what I was now a part of.

Looking over my right shoulder, across the ever-darkening valley, I could just make out the lights of one of the other vehicles as it too wound its way up to its predetermined position to act as relay station for the communications gear. All the while, the radio chatter giving snippets of information for the task in hand, as the leader briefed us on what was happening.

I have travelled like this many times before, years ago as part of a Sabre Squadron on exercise, but not this day: this day was different. This was no exercise, and as Solihull's finest battled with the ancient track-bed, lurching from side to side on an old drovers' route that is interesting enough as a footpath, let alone as the conduit to get us, five plus gear, to the RV, the feeling of excitement and tension began to be displaced by the fear of being the 'noobie'; of not wanting to screw up, not wanting to let the team down, let myself down.

This was it. This was my first time on the hill as part of the search and rescue team.

This was real...

90 minutes before, I had just sat down to watch a Harry Potter film. Contemplating a beer as the opening credits rolled, I heard the unmistakable sound of the SARCALL SMS tone.

'Bugger!'

I read recently that you volunteer to be a mountain rescue team member, but that's where the volunteering ends. The call comes through and you answer it if you can. It's not a game, it's not a hobby. Someone is out there, in need of help. You don't look out of the window and think that it's raining too heavily, or you'd rather sit and watch the film.

That's not why you joined. It's not about being a hero, it's about helping, being there. I've been on the other end, and I know the feeling of seeing those who can help appear out of the mist. This is why I joined.

Arriving at base, I am tasked by one of the deputy team leaders. Straight onto the mountain. This is it. The first two call-outs I've been on, I have been '2 IC — Brooms and Tea' whilst other team members went out, but this is now my first real deployment.

And off we go. Off through the village, off through the farm, off the tarmac! Off onto the old drovers' road and up the side of the hill, off to join with Mobile 1 which went up with the advance party sometime earlier.

Time goes quickly. I watch as others, many years more proficient, fall into routine and I wonder if I will be of more use than ornament. No need to worry, my task is to carry half a Bell stretcher, the 'friend of the probationer', to which my own gear is then strapped.

I'VE BEEN ON THE OTHER END, AND I KNOW THE FEELING OF SEEING THOSE WHO CAN HELP APPEAR OUT OF THE MIST. THIS IS WHY I JOINED

Then we're off on foot. It's now dusk and the light is fading rapidly.

Lesson 1. Don't forget to get the head torch from the top of your Bergen before you get loaded up like one of those pack horses from centuries past...

The colour has now drained from the landscape to be replaced by the shades of grey that come with the developing night vision. Distant lights from farms and villages

appear as people go about their business, unaware of what is happening not far from their kitchens.

We have a grid reference for the casualty. We now know where they are, and the position is confirmed by the presence of the regional police helicopter which has located the party and is now hovering, holding station, acting as that initial beacon of hope for those we're searching for.

But that is still two kilometres away. Two kilometres of path, peat bog, rocky outcrops, streams, steep drops and holes underfoot just waiting to grab your boot and break your ankle. And it is getting really dark now.

A stop for a kit carry change at around the half-way mark, a chance to retrieve the torch. Then we are off again, searching in the dark for the lights of the party.

No longer on any discernible path, the four of us have now spotted the lights and we are off piste, the pace having quickened. News that the coastguard helicopter is en route means we now have to move quickly. Care though, these groughs are deep, the sides slippery and the last thing you want is to go head first into the peat...

Finally on site with the casualty and the advance party, the cas carers have already stabilised the injury, and taken care of the rest of the party. The rest of us go into the holding area, waiting to be tasked. The idea of a stretcher carry-off returning along that same route is not one that fills the soul with joy, so the sound of the approaching helicopter is music to our ears. But no time to enjoy the sight of the beast approaching, now is the time to assemble the stretcher, remembering the lessons and exercises that we have done.

Lesson 2. Wear gloves when linking the two halves, the clips when swinging into place can do you an injury, somewhat defeating the 'don't become a casualty yourself' maxim.

New orders. We are to stretcher the casualty to the waiting helicopter. The initial 'Across that?!', as I look across the grough to our front, all the while being buffeted from the now-landed helicopter's idling downdraught, dissipates as the training kicks in again. The casualty is loaded and off we go.

And yes it is slippery.

And yes it is dark.

And yes it is difficult to move when you have a hurricane trying to lift you off your feet.

And then we are there, by the open door of the helicopter, loading the stretcher onboard before retreating whilst we wait for the return of the stretcher.

Doors close, the engine winds up, the wind strength increases and you feel the thing lift off. Moments later and there are just flashing lights fading away into the distance. The noise levels drop and you can once again hear yourself think.

Hill gear packed away, now back with half a stretcher on my back and we are off, back across the top, back into the darkness, back past the weird outcrops that loom out of the depths of the night. Light of foot this time knowing we have done our job, and with the adrenaline that comes with that, the way back seems shorter, the pack and the stretcher lighter. Maybe it's because for me, that's it, that's my first rescue. To the rest of the team, it's just another night on the hill, but to me it's special.

A bumpy ride back to base, vehicles unpacked, replacement gear loaded back in ready for the next call, the debrief and the first chance to take a drink from the flask and it's all over. We depart, each heading away in the early hours, knowing the morning alarm will go off way too soon, and work will beckon.

I stumble into bed far too late, but still full of the feeling of having achieved something useful for once. This new direction in life is one to hold onto. 🍷



SOUTH WEST

ASHBURTON
TEAMWORK
HIGHLIGHTED
IN NEW FILM

Dartmoor SRT Ashburton has launched a film highlighting the vital community service it provides across the county and beyond. The team is well known for its work on Dartmoor but less so for the wider support they offer in both rural and urban areas across Devon and further afield. Team members were amongst mountain rescue colleagues from across England and Wales, called on to assist in the devastating floods in York, December 2015.

With public donations accounting for more than 92% of its funding, the group approached Ashburton film-makers Blinkback to help spread the message.

Team leader Keith Lambeth said, 'Although responding to Dartmoor call-outs is still our staple we also attend flooding and water incidents and missing person enquiries including those with mental health factors such as dementia and self-harm. Blinkback's film highlights this diversity which frequently goes unnoticed as our call-outs often happen overnight when most people are in bed.'

'We are very grateful to the team at Blinkback who kindly donated their time and considerable experience to produce the film. And we're delighted with the end result which highlights the service we provide and will raise awareness among those who are unaware of the wide range of support we offer.'

Blinkback director David Kilkelly said, 'Dartmoor Search and Rescue performs such a vital role across the region. BlinkBack is based and works within Dartmoor National Park so we have a natural connection.'

'We felt that by donating our time and skills we could help raise their profile and communicate their message to a wider audience.'

Film stills © Dartmoor Search and Rescue Ashburton. Film produced courtesy of Blinkback www.blinkback.co.uk



Hanging by a thread



TECHNICAL ASPECTS AND TOP TIPS FOR MULTI-PITCH CLIMBING

Instructing and coaching climbers on multi pitch climbs, or climbing as a rope of three presents the instructor/leader with a variety of considerations and challenges. This article focuses on an overview on influences and options (and their pros and cons) when choosing and using appropriate ropes and rope/belay systems for leading novice climbers on multi-pitch climbs as a rope of three. However the core technical aspects (use of ropes, belay methods etc) are applicable to any team of climbers operating as a team of three.

BY GEORGE MCEWAN GEORGEMC@COLDCLIMBS.COM

Our starting point to operating effectively with two climbers is addressing the 'What to do' (finding out and confirming where they are at in their current climbing performance and experience), then addressing the 'How to do it': choice of climb appropriate to climbers' aims and abilities, what rope type and system (single vs half, parallel vs series), belay method (direct belay vs semi-direct), how to rig the stance and so on. By following that process we should find that our multi-pitch climbing sessions reflect what is appropriate to our climbers' needs and less of the 'I do it this way cos I always do it this way' approach.

I'll be focusing on the technical aspects of balancing our climbers' needs and abilities with making safe and efficient progress up a multi-pitch climb. I'll cover what options we have regarding the types of rope to use (and their pros and cons), choosing appropriate rope systems, belay methods, managing a pitch and stance management principles.

I should stress that the techniques described here are not meant to be the definitive guide to all the technical aspects of multi-pitch climbing as a rope of three. Instead, it should serve to promote thought, discussion, and a greater awareness of the variety of aspects that makes

working with climbers on multi-pitch routes such a challenging and demanding experience.

TYPES OF ROPE

Rope technology has come on in the past decade. There is now a bewildering array of rope types and diameters to suit every possible situation encountered in the climbing environment. However, knowing the type of environment you are going to use the rope in, and what use you are putting the rope to, simplifies the decision-making process. There are three main rope types available. These descriptions are taken from the Beal website and based on the UIAA standard for rope types. They are:

- **Twin Rope (diameter range around 7.5mm)**

This rope is always used with the two strands together,

remaining parallel: each climber ties into both strands and these are always clipped together. The main advantage over single rope is that it allows for abseils as long as the rope, and each rope is less weight for each climber to carry. It is lighter than half rope but **does not allow for separate strand clipping.**

- **Half Rope (8-9mm)**

A 'rope' formed of two strands which the leader is tied into but, unlike twin ropes, **two seconds may each be tied into just one of the strands.** The leader clips only one strand into each runner so as to reduce drag. Half rope is recommended on climbs where an abseil descent is necessary or possible. It is equally preferable whenever belays are less than perfect, notably when ice climbing, because with just one strand clipped, you reduce the shock load in case of a fall. In

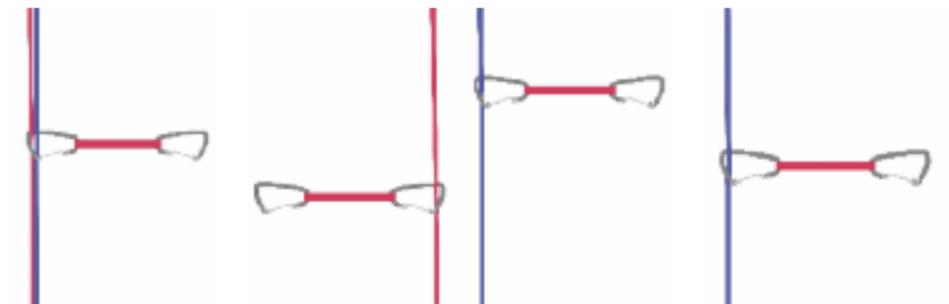
addition they offer better protection against stonefall or falling on an arête. To limit the drag, and thus the fall factor, you can clip the strands separately. **It is also possible to use half ropes like twin ropes ie. clipping both strands together.**

- **Single Rope (8.9-11mm)**

This rope is used as a single strand. It is best adapted to difficult routes which are fairly straight-line, to easy routes without change-over belays, and where descent is not by abseil.

ROPE TYPES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR BELAYING AND SECONDING

You will see that I have highlighted several statements in the above descriptions. These are statements advising certain types of usage that are of



Left to right: Twin Rope; Half rope; Single rope. Illustrations © George McEwan.

Climbing © George McEwan.

relevance to us working with climbers on multi-pitch climbs.

These statements highlight the following considerations:

● **Twin ropes: '...does not allow for separate strand clipping...'**

Twin rope systems are pretty specialist and it is arguable, with the recent developments in thinner, stronger half rope technology, whether the twin rope system will not be going the way of the Dodo. Pit Schubert in an article titled 'Our ropes are stronger than we believe' made the following point about twin rope use: '...And twin ropes have an energy absorbing capacity over sharp edges which is, depending on the sharpness of the edge, up to double that of a normal single rope.'

So maybe there is still a use for twin ropes yet. My personal view, in a professional context working with two climbers, is they (twin ropes) are of no use as the ropes MUST be used with both single strands treated as one. Still climbers might choose to use such a system for their own climbing. The ropes do split into lighter carries which has its own advantages.

● **Half ropes: '...two seconds may each be tied into just one of the strands...'**

Having seconds follow their leader up on a single half rope has always provoked a lot of discussion. It was one of these practices that a lot of instructors and guides used, yet there was little or no official sanction from rope manufacturers as to whether it was OK. Like all these things, individual instructors tended to make their own call on a situational basis as to when this type of use was appropriate.

When I was researching this, I noticed that the three manufacturers I checked out (Beal, Edelrid and Mammut), all had a statement in their description of rope use suggesting that such use was possible. However, I think there are several caveats.

Although using thinner diameter ropes means the leader/instructor towing less weight behind them on climbs, you have to balance out that weight saving with the ability of your belayer(s) to hold a potential fall. Thinner ropes require attention to the relative diameters of rope and belay plate slots.

For example using an 8.9mm single rope with a belay plate that has slots designed to fit a

9–10mm rope could mean the belayer failing to hold a leader fall, or a descending climber having problems when abseiling down steep terrain.

If you choose to use half ropes then both ropes must be inserted into an appropriate belay device if the second is to have any chance of holding a leader fall. In this case, the issue comes down to how competent your belayer is at belaying two ropes through a single plate. If the belayer is a novice and unused to managing two ropes through one belay device then such a task, at best, might be awkward or challenging for them, at worse it could well compromise their ability to hold a leader fall.

With novice belayers it is worth considering using thicker (single) ropes as this would allow both climbers to belay you simultaneously on independent ropes. Not only does this save you having to mind which rope you are being belayed on, it also keeps both belayers busy doing something. In the 'unlikely' event of you falling two inexperienced/unknown belayers attempting to hold a fall is better than one!

For the leader/instructor managing their two seconds climbing below them it is worth remembering that thinner ropes generally mean more stretch — this can be exciting for your seconding climbers if one of them falls off and that individual gets to experientially discover what is meant by 'rope elongation'. Keeping the ropes very tight can help mitigate how much stretch occurs should one or other fall off (also helps prevent a novice second climbing past a runner — although having 'eyes on' is a more effective way of avoiding this wee scenario). Another option is to use 'single' ropes, with a correspondingly lower elongation factor.

One of the issues that crops up as an argument against using half ropes with climbers is the risk of ropes being cut — although it should be borne in mind that any rope — single or half, can potentially be cut. I would suggest that some of the factors you might have to consider regarding this risk include the following:

● **How likely is this to happen, and if it does what are the consequences?**

If there is a risk of a stone fall (go to any crag, cliff, or mountain and you must have a stone fall risk, either natural or climber

triggered), it probably does raise the issue would you want to be climbing in such a place?

● **How great is the risk?**

Low or high risk? Do you then balance that out against the advantages that using half ropes give you — such as speed of movement, ease of climbing for the leader etc. What about the second putting their ice tool through their rope?

● **Is the rope liable to run over an edge?**

In many cases this can either be avoided, or the risk lessened, by good ropework, but some rock types are more prone to nasty, sharp wee edges.

Choosing a rope that has superior abrasion resistance or is edge tested might help mitigate any such fears of ropes being cut or damaged. Although it should be noted there is no UIAA standard for testing ropes running over an edge. Pit Schubert has an article on the UIAA website where he describes the adventure two of his friends had when one of their 'twin' ropes was partially cut by some stonefall high on an alpine rock climb. When he recreated the situation, by cutting a twin rope 1/3 of the way through, he found that it still managed to hold eight falls!

I think on balance (and taking into account the points raised above), the decision about whether to have your climbers second on half ropes or single ropes hinges more on the actual aims of the climbing (broadly speaking coaching vs guiding), and each individual climber's belay skills and experience. Skinnier ropes potentially make holding any leader fall more problematic — unless both ropes are inserted into a single belay plate, in which case the belay skills of the belayer are the main consideration. Like all these things it comes down to the instructor making an appropriate judgment based on the prevailing and unique situation. Or in other words — it depends!

● **Single Ropes:**

Single ropes, around 10–10.5mm diameter, although comparatively heavy to trawl behind you on a climb, do have the main advantage of being more wear resistant, they stretch less (as explained above) when loaded, and because their larger diameter means holding a fall is less problematic with most belay devices, they are still the most common rope type used by

instructors. Although make sure they fit into your belay plate, especially if you plan to use the plate in 'guide mode' — some thicker ropes are a pure pain to pull through a belay device used in guide mode, especially if they are wet/frozen.

You can get thinner diameter single ropes now (down to 8.5mm), although many of these ropes are for specialist use eg. hard sport climbs and are not designed for the rugged hard use that they tend to receive on multi-pitch climbs. All the issues regarding belay plate compatibility and the implications on holding leader falls, as explained above, stand with these super skinny single ropes.

ROPE SYSTEMS

As well as deciding what rope type we are going to use, we also have to decide what rope system is appropriate — series, parallel or two climbers on one rope.

Deciding which rope system to use really comes down to deciding on the outcomes or aims for your session. So although the instructor may have one set of desired outcomes for the day, there may be other outcomes which might be more pitch dependant. Thus I tend to think of a session as not just the whole day, but as individual pitches on a climb. In the course of a day, or even the climb, the instructor will continually appraise these outcomes as conditions, abilities etc dictate. Bottom line: Be flexible.

We can pretty much break down the type of work we do on multi-pitch climbs into three main areas, each with their own unique considerations. In reality, there is a great deal of blurring between the different areas, as even when guiding two climbers up a route you can still be coaching them eg. at the stances. Or you may choose to lead your first two pitches in series, then switch to parallel whilst you switch on the 'afterburners' to boost up the climb quickly.

TEACHING

Novices/intermediate climbers who aim to progress. Emphasis on 'instruction' with a need to act as a role model for the sport and for the systems used to reflect common practice.

COACHING

Peers/advanced level climbers who want to lead and/or get up harder routes.

GUIDING

Climbers who are being given an experience. This may be because there are other aims to the day, or the emphasis is on getting up a climb. The rope/belay systems used need not reflect the way anyone else does it.

So focusing on the overall aims for the session influences our choice of rope/belay systems used. Whatever we choose to do methods used should meet the following criteria:

- Be safe
- Reflect aims of session

This whole process can, and should, be reviewed throughout the climb. By using each pitch as a 'session' you can then decide what is, and what isn't, appropriate for your students. This helps avoid the classic starting with series rope system and 'come hell or high water that is what I will use cos it's easy' approach.

For example you have two climbers who have aspirations to lead multi-pitch climbs. They tell you they have led a lot of single pitch climbs, and both have their own rack etc. You start with a 'warm-up' multi-pitch climb which is technically a bit easier than what they both say they are leading at, and you decide to start off in series as you can then have them both going through 'lead climber' behaviours. After several pitches, things have been moving slow. Time is not on your side, so you decide to ratchet up the pace. You change over to parallel so you can bring both your climbers up simultaneously, and make up some time. This scenario is very much simplified, but I hope it serves to illustrate that we can change around our rope systems 'mid stream' if we feel it is appropriate.

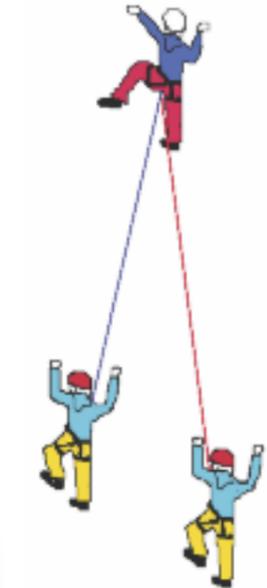
ROPE SYSTEMS PROS AND CONS

Each rope system has its own unique advantages and disadvantages.

PARALLEL: 'en fleche' or arrow

● **Pros**

- Flexible in that both can climb if desired (fast) or one at a time
- Allows second student to be tied off, if moving one at a time, protecting them should they inadvertently dismantle the belay
- Instructor can be at the 'point', or switch to series (with themselves as middle person)



Parallel Rope System

- Stronger student can help weaker by presence
- Leader can abseil full rope length, or any distance between, without bringing up students.

● **Cons**

- Rope tends to become tangled
- 'Struggling' student can get caught up in other rope, if moving one at a time
- Can be heavy work for the leader dragging two full ropes behind.



Series Rope System

SERIES

● **Pros**

- Allows the first student to adopt 'lead' climber behaviour

eg. clipping rope through runners behind

- Attention can be devoted to one student at a time
- Instructor can step out of the 'point' allowing the students to adopt a standard two person rope (instructor can solo/self line placing runners etc as appropriate)
- Ropes easier for instructors to sort.

● **Cons**

- Can be very slow (moving one at a time)
- Tiresome and lonely for last student
- Risk of last student falling full length of rope should they inadvertently be unclipped by the second.

TWO CLIMBERS ON ONE ROPE

● **Pros**

- Simplified rope work
- Fast to use — both students climb at the same time
- Stronger student can support weaker student.



Two climbers on one rope

● **Cons**

- Only suitable on straightforward, easy ground
- Students have to be briefed to climb at compatible speeds.

BELAY SYSTEMS

Choice of belay systems would (should?) reflect the aims of the session, and/or intended progressions. For instance if teaching two novices to rig belays, you may choose to use the rope to link the anchors and use a belay plate (semi-indirect belay).

Alternatively, if it is a guided experience, you may choose to use slings to link the anchors and use a direct belay.

Other factors such as how good the main belay anchors are, likelihood of seconds falling or getting stuck, will all influence the decision as to the most appropriate belay method. The two most commonly used belay systems are:

● **Semi Direct (or semi indirect): Leader tied into belay using rope; Belay plate (ATC or similar) clipped into rope loop on harness.**

NB: Position of braking hand in relation to anchor tie in is crucial using this method.

● **Pros**

- Method is common practice, ie. reflects belay and anchor methods commonly used by climbers on climbs
- Leader can devote attention to single client
- Can be easier to give a tight rope in extremis or hoist
- Avoids full impact force on the belay in the event of a fall. (Use of rope, and dynamic belay increases dynamic element in system).

● **Cons**

- Difficult to bring two climbers/students up at same time if moving at different speeds. If one second significantly weights the rope it can be impossible to take in/pay out the other rope safely through the belay plate
- Leader is in the system necessitating a potentially complicated escape if required.

● **Direct: Leader tied into/ clipped into central point linked back to all anchors on main belay. Belay plate in 'guide mode' clipped directly into this central point.**

NB: Only use a plate designed to be used in this way AND make sure you have practised with the plate BEFORE going on a climb and using it for real).

● **Pros**

- Less strain on belayer when rope is loaded
- Leader not in the system, so easy to move about when rope loaded
- Fast method of bringing up second(s) as two seconds can be brought up independently, and simultaneously
- Tight rope can be given (can be really quick to also set-up simple hoist if extra 'oomph' required)
- When plate correctly operated in 'guide mode' belay method

simpler to use — just pull in the rope(s).

● Cons

- Arguably not standard climbing practice, so might not paint the picture of belaying/anchor methods 'commonly' used on multi-pitch climbs
- Can be very awkward to lower second(s) if loaded (one-way clutch) in control. THIS TAKES PRACTICE TO DO SAFELY
- Requires 'bomb proof' anchors — not always available especially on some winter climbs.

MANAGING A PITCH

Earlier, I highlighted the focus in the description of half rope use:

'...It is also possible to use half ropes like twin ropes ie. clipping both strands together...

This is one issue that comes up when discussing how to manage the ropes when leading a pitch with your two climbers. Although it is possible to clip both ropes in the same runner you have to think about the 'What ifs?'

FACT: Clipping both half ropes into a single krab on a runner, whilst reducing rope stretch in the event of a leader fall will increase the loading on that piece of protection (pulley effect — when a climber falls off, the load on the anchor is approx 1.6 times the force the falling climber exerts).

FACT: With both ropes clipped into a single krab on a runner there is the danger that the moving loaded rope will damage the other non-moving rope. Although whether it would cause a rope failure I am not so sure about, but at best you could have some friction damage to the outer sheath.

From a more practical point clipping both ropes into the same piece ensures, when using

parallel rope technique, that tangles and crossed ropes are certain. This can lead to other problems for both you and your climbers on the pitch. Far better to avoid or reduce the chance of such tangles occurring.

When using parallel ropes, avoiding tangles and rope twists can become a major preoccupation for the leader. It need not be though. A couple of simple techniques and you can reduce the likelihood of major rope twists occurring:

- Parallel rope technique IS NOT double rope technique. Don't confuse them! Think of parallel rope technique as like a railway track ie. both lines always run parallel. This way you avoid climbers taking pendulums if they fall off, or managing to climb under/over the other rope and becoming 'stuck'.

- Arrange the ropes so they always run separately (if you need to clip both ropes into one runner, ensure they still run separately see image above).

- Take care at the stance to avoid crossing ropes, especially if using an auto-block belay plate.

STANCE MANAGEMENT

Stance management is the general term used to describe the organisation of climbers on a stance, on multi-pitch routes. This organisation includes elements such as correct belay plate orientation, rigging of anchors; placement of climbers on stance relative to a variety of factors eg. hazards, belaying etc, organisation of ropes, and appropriate client/student briefings.

It is perhaps the most difficult part of working on multi-pitch routes to 'get right'. Efficient solutions tend to involve not just



using the right technique, but adapting the relevant techniques to the type of stance.

Many problems can be avoided if you work forward from first principles ie. what are you trying to achieve with your people in that session? (For session you could read pitch, as teaching aims can change whilst on a route, perhaps because you have misjudged your climbers abilities, you are running out of time etc). Such an approach will tend to narrow down your options to a manageable range.

The main principles involved in stance management are:

● Aims

- Safety of climbers
- Efficient changeover at belays
- Reflect the aims of the session.

● Basic points

- Stance can accommodate climbers
- If appropriate (can be vital with complete novices) is in visual contact of seconds on 'hard' pitch
- Is safe ie. good anchors, no danger of falling rock/ice/leader on seconds

GEORGE MCEWAN IS CURRENTLY THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF MOUNTAIN TRAINING SCOTLAND. HE WAS THE FORMER AMI TECHNICAL OFFICER AND HEAD OF MOUNTAINEERING AT GLENMORE LODGE NATIONAL OUTDOOR TRAINING CENTRE.



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SUMMARY

Rope technology has come on in the past decade. Ropes now come in a variety of diameters, with their recommend use also becoming more specialist eg. ropes for sport climbing, ice climbing etc. Half ropes can be used to bring up two seconds, but using either half ropes or thin diameter single ropes (<10mm) does raise the issue of belay plate and rope compatibility.

Thin diameter ropes do make holding a falling leader harder for an inexperienced belayer. So although using thin diameter ropes means the leader/instructor is hauling less rope weight behind them, it could mean that in the event of a leader fall, inexperienced seconds might be unable to hold it successfully.

Choosing a rope system —series/parallel or two on a rope —should be based on the aims of the session rather than what is easier for the leader/instructor to use, likewise with belay methods. However, a flexible approach to using rope systems and belay options should be used as the situation on multi-pitch routes can change — more so in winter.

Whatever rope type and system we use, attention must be paid to ensuring good rope management to avoid tangles and twists, both on the pitch and at the stance. It not only makes life easier and slicker for the leader/instructor but also for the climbers. More time spent climbing and coaching — less time playing at knitting on stances! ☺



Both sides of the fence, both sides of the Pennines

CARL FAULKNER CLEVELAND MRT

Cleveland MRT took part in a peer review earlier this year and, in September, I joined the review team when they visited Bolton MRT, so I've seen things how things work from both sides now. Hopefully in this article, I'll explain why the review process as it is currently conducted is helpful, and other teams and their respective members will be able to consider if it's something they would want to encourage their team to actively consider.

Away from the team, my work in education as the leader of a 'MAT' (Multi Academy Trust), and before that as a school inspector, means I've seen numerous reviews, assessments, validations and inspections. Some have been great, helping to drive change and some, to be frank, have been bullying and intimidating, setting back individuals and teams and destroying confidence.

My experience of the Peer Review process in mountain rescue was clearly very limited but, after speaking with Tim at an information sharing session at Bowland Pennine team base (great lunch provided by the way, at a well organised and well-resourced facility), with Jill Stubbs, Cleveland's secretary, we both felt a review would help our team.

I think the Peer Review process as it is developing has four key elements. I'll try and reflect these and include some of the lessons I've learned along the way.

1. SAFETY AND TRUST

None of our teams could operate successfully without giving the highest priority to safety and trust, and this is reflected in the process.

When Cleveland team was reviewed, Tim responded quickly to our questions, and met with us to help us understand how best we should structure our review. Equally, when working as a reviewer, Tim made clear his expectations and how we should engage with team members. This helped to secure a sense of trust and openness.

This did not mean avoiding difficult questions or offering only support and praise. A strength of the review is in the asking of unexpected questions and then working with the team to help them understand their responses. It does mean listening and observing with care, looking for people's readiness for the challenge in front of them and their emotional state at that time.

To create safety and trust on your Peer Review you could consider:

- **Provide time to get to know each other.**

This doesn't require a great deal of time or deep, personal disclosures. I would advise taking some time throughout the weekend to eat pizza or cake. Bolton's recipe for Lemon Drizzle cake is definitely best practice, and they have promised to share it with the MR community!

While the reviewers are not there to give advice, we all love to share a story of the odd or unusual call-out, incident or recollection on how things used to be.

- **Talk about how well the review is going, it's never too late to refocus your energies**

The ability to discuss your thoughts on how well the process is developing is a critical feature in any group that aspires to share effective feedback, not only because feelings are at the heart of most difficult conversations, but also because questioning people's accepted way of doing things inevitably generates difficult feelings. Ali, the team leader at Bolton was exceptionally skilful at this; I learned a great deal from him.

- **Make it OK to say no.**

The question set IS long and very thorough. I would advise seeking to work through all the questions, if time permits. A strength of the process is, however, the ability to call 'Time!' on any one section, and to prioritise which elements you focus on. I would suggest this be part of your planning before the review. In Cleveland, we have been reviewing our 'tech rescue systems', the peer review gave us chance to reflect on how well embedded that change was. We didn't allow the team to focus on other areas so deeply... after all, it is the team's review.

A foreseeable risk in many teams, where we all freely give our time up, will be that people feel obligated to discuss every aspect



of the review in painstaking detail. Teams are free to postpone such conversations. I would suggest the ongoing dialogue between both parties through the weekend should be used to scaffold these decisions.

2. BALANCE

The question set is good, but it's not a perfect tool for self-reflection. We often trust that answering the 'official' questions posed of us will give us all the answers, but that's just half the story. The other half is observing the team in action. If you want a successful review you can't have one without the other, but time is an obstacle that could prevent us from showing all that we want to over the course of a weekend.

To establish balance:

- **Get out on the hill.**

After pizza and discussion on Friday, Cleveland team spent part of Saturday and Sunday on the hill with the review team. For us this worked better than a whole day of questions, your team may come to a different view.

- **Have a call-out!**

This may be slightly harder to arrange, but both Cleveland and Bolton teams had call-outs during their review. It provides the reviewers with a great insight. John, Ken and Tim were in one of our response vehicles when the Cleveland call-out came. We'd held a prior discussion about how we would deploy in the event of a 'shout'. As it was, on this occasion, our lucky casualty benefited from the attention of four MR teams!

Stopping with Tim and Matt at an RTC for two hours after the review was less welcome but Bolton team did an excellent job, also

Bolton Peer Review © Tim Cain.

Post call-out hot debrief

TIM CAIN



Eleven teams have conducted their own reviews to date: Bowland Pennine, Wasdale, Kendal, Dartmoor Plymouth, Woodhead, Rossendale & Pendle, NEWSAR, Northumberland, Scarborough, Cleveland and Bolton. A further four have started the process: Central Beacons, Brecon, Calder Valley and Ogwen Valley. This meets the remit of five teams per year outlined in the original terms of reference, however, other teams have declared an interest and there is scope for at least four more teams to conduct reviews before the end of 2018, when the current pilot is due to end. Contact me for information.

In addition to English and Welsh teams, we have actively engaged with Mountain Rescue Ireland (MRI), supporting their own review process and sharing learning. I travelled over and acted as a reviewer for the North West and Mourne teams. This was an enlightening experience, highlighting the opportunity for shared learning and cooperation. Their process is more centrally directed and standards driven, a position that I feel we must strongly resist and which, I know, gives many of us cause for concern. Hopefully we can influence MRI helping them to understand the advantages of 'holding up the mirror', where the team reviews itself, supported by critical friends. John Hulse and John Bamforth, both now 'old hands' at the reviewer role are due to travel over to support Dublin Wicklow and Kerry teams soon. Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR) have also been interacting with us over peer review and we hope to develop those links.

All the teams who have conducted reviews of their working practices report that the process has been beneficial and even enjoyable. As we develop the process, we have continually evolved the question set so that it maximises the opportunity for teams to be more self-aware. Examples of new questions include:

- Describe the team's call-out activity by percentage and what is the relationship between how the team is structured and that call-out profile?
- What is the team's operational requirement for rope rescue and how is the team's rope rescue capability and equipment structured to match this?
- What is the team's operational requirement for water rescue and how is the team's water rescue capability and equipment structured to match this?
- How is cascare adapted to meet your team's environment?
- How are the team's communications adapted to meet the challenges of the water environment?

Looking toward the end of the pilot in 2018, as more people gain experience of the supporting reviewer role, my hope is that teams will begin to organise peer review for

themselves, and that the process will become organic within and between teams. To that end, here are the guiding principles:

1. Team led.
2. Impartial facilitation of self-reflection leading to continuous transformation of core business and people seeking to support improved effectiveness whilst retaining individual team identity and autonomy.
3. Quality assurance of process and equipment seeking to continuously raise standards.
4. Sharing good practice across the whole organisation and beyond (eg. ALSAR).
5. Risk management. Raising strategic and operational awareness.
6. Reviewers keep opinions to themselves unless specifically asked for a view.



The ideology that underpins these principles is distributed leadership, where team autonomy, team identity and team excellence are encouraged, with MREW acting as facilitating body for sharing good practice

New reviewers needed! Please consider volunteering as a reviewer. Once you've done a review and have seen the process in action, then you can set up your own and spread good practice! 🙌

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attending and offering skilled casualty care.

As a team member not known for his casualty care skills this was a particularly interesting time for me, as Bolton team members were able to review the reviewers' cas care at the scene of the incident!

3. NORMALCY

Training events and call-outs can create space for people to be open to new ideas, but there is a risk that, the next day, everyone goes back to the real world and the learning is lost.

In Cleveland, we have learned that a more structured debrief can help ensure consistency of response, whilst allowing for structured innovation. It has been very helpful seeing best practice shared in the MR Magazine.

We've had to work hard over the last two years to keep to our Standard Operating Procedures. After the review, Tim suggested we shared the prompt cards we have recently developed. Taking on the idea of the guides our Swift Water Technicians hold, we are expanding these across all aspects of our operations. We will share them in a future issue of the magazine.



Above: Cleveland members; Cleveland call-out meets Peer Review process © Cleveland MRT.

Our next step is to integrate the behaviours we want (a structured debrief, and regular review of our SOPs) into our team's daily routines. This will normalise the behaviour. We don't want to rely on only getting, and acting on feedback at unusual times (for example when we have a near miss or when something's gone wrong).

To make the Peer Review normal:

● Don't be exclusive.

Open up the discussion. Get other agencies involved. Make sure your support group is there as well. This isn't a review for the benefit of the committee — it should benefit your future casualties.

IN CLEVELAND, WE HAVE LEARNED THAT A MORE STRUCTURED DEBRIEF CAN HELP ENSURE CONSISTENCY OF RESPONSE, WHILST ALLOWING FOR STRUCTURED INNOVATION. IT HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL SEEING BEST PRACTICE SHARED HERE, IN THE MR MAGAZINE

● Work in public.

Share the planning process and keep an open mind. Be precise about arrangements. Not everyone wants to be in a room for a day discussing your team's responses so consider breaking the day up. Shift mountains to make sure there is a representative sample of the team there throughout — mix up your newest members with the long established. The discussion is what makes the peer review a success or a flop. The right atmosphere allows everyone to learn together and renew their common purpose.

● Keep some notes.

Our base is now festooned with Post-it notes, and the odd flip chart. We will revisit these to help us plan our next steps. It is vital that someone captures all the discussion for your team.

4. PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

As members of a rescue team, be it as a medic, SRT, team leader, chair, committee member, whatever, if we want our teams to improve we have to get engaged with the process. It's everyone's responsibility. Gari Finch led some great work in Cleveland in support of this ethos before the review, and this paid dividends for us during the 'difficult' questions.

Cleveland team has sought to build this engagement through changing how we record training. We've moved away from a simple 'hours logged' system. The team has been working with Rob Adams, who is now a support member, on developing how well we understand the skills represented within our team. He has helped us build an app that lets us not only record competency but also acknowledges that team members should also have currency with any given skill. Team members record, after receiving an email alert to prompt them to access the app,

@ Feedback from Alistair Greenough, Bolton team leader, to Tim Cain:

'Hi Tim. My hope was a warts and all picture so hopefully that's what we gave.

Yesterday evening, my phone simply did not stop with calls from members who were impressed with the way the reviewers conducted themselves, which is brilliant. One of our newest members was, to be quite honest, bricking it before and told me he had a great day so that must count for something.

Even without the review document, this weekend has already served great purpose and I will most certainly be speaking up at the leaders' national and regional meetings and to anyone who will listen. It really is a great thing you are doing.'

activities they have been involved in at training or on a call-out. They interface with the app through a very simple toggle system. A typical event can be logged in two clicks and three or four swipes. Simple!

At both Bolton and Bowland Pennine team bases they had simple and effective systems to share team member availability through the SARCALL response system. Definitely something to share more widely.

As team leader, it means I am more confident we have an improving understanding of team members' current skill and competency levels. A good example would be knowing not just that driver training has been undertaken, but also how recently a team member has driven, and under what conditions, be it a training exercise or a call-out.

To develop personal accountability in the review:

● Ask!

We can't just sit back and wait for the review, and then expect it to be insightful. Seek everyone's involvement in preparing your answers for the questions set. Consider creating interest groups (transport, medics, whatever), if that's what will work for you. Perhaps even better though, is to add some 'not interested at all' individuals to those groups. If we want to really understand how secure we are operating as a team then you will need to hear diverse opinions. Get those responses recorded on the question set and if you can, type them up. You want your review team to focus on the content not the legibility!

In my opinion this review process approaches best practice in many ways. I would recommend you go for it, but take steps to ensure you get the most out of the process. And one last tip: make sure you get the review team to the pub on Friday night before last orders... 🍺

April to June 2017

Lake District

Cockermouth	12
Coniston	12
Duddon and Furness	14
Kendal	4
Keswick	24
Langdale Ambleside	31
Penrith	11
Wasdale	14
(Last quarter: 70)	122

Mid-Pennine

Bolton	27
Bowland Pennine	23
Calder Valley	17
Rossendale & Pendle	14
(Last quarter: 63)	81

North East

Northumberland NP	5
Scarborough & Ryedale	5
Swaledale	8
(Last quarter: 20)	18

North Wales

Aberdyfi	7
Aberglaslyn	19
Llanberis	40
North East Wales	8
Ogwen Valley	19
South Snowdonia	3
(Last quarter: 29)	96

Peak District

Buxton	3
Derby	24
Edale	25
Kinder	2
Oldham	3
Woodhead	7
(Last quarter: 47)	64

Peninsula

Cornwall	6
Dartmoor Okehampton	2
Dartmoor Tavistock	5
Exmoor	2
(Last quarter: 47)	15

South Wales

Brecon	32
Central Beacons	3
Longtown	8
Western Beacons	1
(Last quarter: 10)	44

South West

Avon & Somerset	4
SARA	4
(Last quarter: 8)	8

Yorkshire Dales

CRO	23
Upper Wharfedale	7
(Last quarter: 8)	30

Search Dogs

England	1
South Wales	3
Wales	2
(Last quarter: 12)	6

RAF

Leeming	3
Valley	2
	5

Total 489

(Last quarter: 314)

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.



AUGUST: DIFFICULT EXTRICATION AT OXYGRAINS BRIDGE

Calder Valley team was asked to provide urgent assistance with a difficult extrication of a driver of a vehicle, which had left the A672 near to Junction 22 M62 (Rishworth Moor) and come to rest approximately 50 foot down the steep banking in a deep ravine.

Twenty-four team members deployed to the site in team vehicles. The driver had incredibly managed to self-extricate from the vehicle and appeared to have only minor injuries, but the mechanism of the incident dictated full immobilisation for his extrication up the steep ground. Whilst the medical personnel cared for and prepared the casualty, team members rigged a rope system and lowered a stretcher with two barrow boys. The casualty and stretcher were then safely hauled up to the roadside and handed over to the waiting Yorkshire Ambulance Service crew.



AUGUST: DOMINO THE SPRINGER SPANIEL RESCUED FROM WATERFALLS

Domino fell 25+ metres at the popular Clun Gwyn waterfalls, near Ystradfellte, ending up at the water's edge at the bottom of the steep sided gorge, next to the torrent of water coming over the falls.

Central Beacons team members rigged up a rope rescue system to lower one member down. With an assortment of leads, collars and bags, he was able to persuade Domino to come to him. The pair were then hauled back up, so dog and family could be reunited. The team took the opportunity to urge pet owners not to put themselves at risk if something unfortunate does happen to their animals whilst out enjoying a walk in the countryside, but to do as this family did and seek the appropriate assistance.

Photo (via Facebook), published with kind permission of the owners. @CBMRT



AUGUST: DARTMOOR SEARCH CALLED OFF AFTER WALKERS FOUND AT BUS STATION

Two helicopters, the emergency services and members of the Ashburton, Tavistock and Okehampton teams were involved in the thirteen-hour search.

The two walkers set off for a camping trip from Burrator in the West of the Dartmoor National Park, heading towards Okehampton via Postbridge, but reported themselves lost on the northern reaches of Dartmoor. Two telephone conversations with the Ashburton team indicated they were possibly in the Rough Tor or Cut Hill area, wet and borderline hypothermic, but no further communication had been possible after 9.00pm on Friday.

Tavistock and Okehampton members searched through until the early hours of Saturday, whereupon Ashburton and Plymouth took over. Then, on the Saturday morning, a chance conversation with a farmer revealed that his wife had given two walkers a lift into Tavistock that morning. He was confident it was the same two. The pair were subsequently picked up from Plymouth bus station, safe and well.

A Dartmoor Rescue Group spokesperson said, 'It would be very helpful, if walkers who self-rescue, having raised the alarm, make sure they contact the emergency services at the first opportunity to let them know they are OK, so as to avoid unnecessary efforts being made to locate them. We're glad, of course, to hear they survived their ordeal, due in no small part to their being well prepared with the right clothing, food and shelter.'

'We trust that should they reattempt their excursion in the future, additional consideration be given to leaving an intended route card with family members, carrying a GPS device, map and compass, to pinpoint their location periodically.'

Above: Team members return from a call-out © Dartmoor Ashburton. Facebook: @dartmoorrescueashburton

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For 20 years, CM Specialist Vehicle Division has led the field in bespoke body conversions and integrated electrical communication systems to the public sector, as well as private and charitable organisations, a trusted conversion partner for major manufacturers such as BMW, Volkswagen Group, Iveco, Mercedes, Peugeot and Vauxhall. All projects are managed in house throughout the life-cycle including design, quality control, supply chain management, integration and post-production engineering services. We are the one-stop shop for mountain and lowland rescue vehicles.

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INTRODUCING THE AT RISK DISK



We are KEYE Safety, the owners and creators of the At Risk Disk which was originally developed during our time as part of the Young Enterprise competition during Sixth Form. The Young Enterprise scheme gave us the opportunity to develop our own product and we created the At Risk Disk to help save lives.

Its concertina design fits into the now redundant tax disk holder and folds out to hold important details, such as medical information and personal identification to aid the emergency services at a Road Traffic Collision.

Recently, KEYE Safety finalised a deal with Halfords so the new and updated At Risk Disk is now available nationwide, in all Halfords stores and online.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS, VISIT WWW.ATRISKDISK.CO.UK OR PURCHASE THE AT RISK DISK ONLINE AT HALFORDS: WWW.HALFORDS.COM



Dead men don't wave

HEAVY WHALLEY

CALL OUT ON BEN NEVIS MARCH 1990

During the bad winter of 1990, there were many fatal accidents in the Scottish mountains. I was a team leader of RAF Kinloss MRT at the time. After nearly eight days of constant call-outs, we were asked to help Lochaber, Glencoe, the helicopters and SARDA in a search. A young 17-year-old had gone missing on Ben Nevis. He was alone and hadn't returned to the youth hostel.

This was a wild winter. All the teams were busy. The pressure on the volunteers who made up the teams was huge. We'd gone from call-out to call-out and hardly been home. When we were asked to help, we all had the chance to return home but everyone stayed. We were exhausted but a 17-year-old missing was near to us all, many of us with children. Three days later, after the worst weather the Ben could throw at us, the missing lad was

alive was an emotional moment. Big burly policemen and mountain rescue troops were overjoyed. My pal Pete Kirkpatrick, then leader of RAF Leuchars MRT wrote a great account of the three-day search and I was given permission to reproduce it in my wee blog — and now, again, here.

Why here? Well, nearly 30 years on, in July this year, I received an email.

'Just seen this article' ran the text. 'Gary is my brother and we will always be thankful for your not giving up on him. To say it changed things in our lives is an understatement. I am now a mountain rescue team member in my home town [Oldham]. Gary was also a team member but had to leave for work commitments.

'He is now a father of five amazing children and has helped to save many lives as an A&E charge nurse. None of this would have happened without everyone out over that week.'

Rarely in those days did you get feedback on the casualty. We all worried about what Gary's recovery would be like after three days and nights on Ben Nevis. We heard he had recovered in hospital in Fort William but that was all so it was wonderful to get this news all those years on. It makes it all worthwhile.

Mountain rescue is amazing, and the effort by all the teams on these type of call-outs is incredible. There is a toll though, not only to the casualty but to our families who sit and worry at home. Team members are unpaid volunteers, and they can often miss out on birthdays and family time. Yet when we recover someone like Gary it's an incredible feeling. Even 30 years on, to hear how well he is doing is heartwarming to say the least, and makes the effort so worthwhile.

Pete's article describes an incident typical of many that go unreported but, to me, it's what mountain rescue is all about...

How could a dead person be waving at me? My eyes must be mistaken. Tiredness and the constant peering into the mist were creating false images. It could not be true, but if it was, by hell it was some surprise.

Those five days had started with the RAF Leuchars MRT undergoing a normal weekend training exercise in the Arrocher Alps. During every weekend, the six RAF MRTs train around the hills to maintain fitness levels and expertise. The usual result is teams returning to their units, contented and weary late on a Sunday night.

This Sunday started to change shape around Crianlarich on the journey home. Over the radio we heard of a rescue taking part on the Buachaille in Glencoe. An offer of help was made and accepted.

The incident involved a cragfast climber high on the mountain. In true, good MR fashion we carried the world to the scene, in the hope it would not be used, but reluctant to ascend the mountain with hope alone. Happily, the climber was recovered quickly and assisted off the mountain. The team went to ground in the Kingshouse Hotel on the edge of the Rannoch Moor, four to a double room, one snorer per room.

Monday. The rain lashed down and the windows rattled. Inside the dining room the team tucked into a civilised breakfast, girding their loins for the drive back to Leuchars — or so we thought. Telephone call: assemble the team and report to Hamish McInnes in Glencoe.

Two overdue climbers had left the previous day for a route on Stob Coirre Nan Bieth and not returned. The weather was causing concern. It seemed wise to combine RAF Kinloss and Leuchars, Lochaber and Glencoe team members and go find out why.

That day the teams assisted five climbers from the mountain. Three who had never been reported missing but needed help, and the original pair who walked in uninjured having survived an enforced bivouac. The MR workforce had put in a considerable effort due to the gale force winds, difficult ground and snow conditions. Another night in the Kingshouse was needed, too tired to go home now.

Tuesday. Another telephone call, report to the Fort William Police Station and assist in a search for a missing seventeen year old lad called Gary Smith, lost since yesterday on Ben

Nevis. Quickly formulated opinions passed through the brain, but as yet not for public consumption. Yesterday's weather, his lack of experience, the statistics of the big bad Ben — this lad was a goner.

Over 120 people swamped the mountain and helicopters scoured the visible areas. Danger spots were probed carefully and fearfully. His parents had travelled up from Manchester. This was not another lost person; it was now somebody's son. I have a son capable of the same misguided mountain enthusiasm. [Pete's son is the now the world famous Andy Kirkpatrick! Heavy]

Mountains are there for pleasure and adventure. Epics are great if you survive. The trick is having the epic only once and learning from it. Was this lad still capable of learning?

We helped to search Five Finger Gully and expended more nervous energy than physical in the dangerous ground. In a last chance throw of the dice, a night search seemed appropriate. A small group went out again. A lone Land Rover remained in the Glen, hopefully awaiting a positive radio message. No such call came. The searchers returned to their sleeping bags, depressed. Many heads were down, quite rightly — we were all exhausted and many were getting pressure to go home and back to work.

[I was helping organising the search from Fort William Police Station with Donald Watt, Lochaber team leader and Pete is right, this was the last day of our chance to find Gary alive. The family were with us and things were looking bleak. Heavy]

Wednesday. New search areas, but no new information. Tired hearts and legs ascended the mountain again. No stretchers. Private opinions had been voiced — bodies don't need rescuing, only finding.

My team had been tasked to search the slopes north of the main footpath above the half way Lochan. Difficult rocky ground to walk on let alone search in misty and sleety conditions.

The area was finally reached and the separate parties began to slowly search across their 500-foot portion of the mountain. I was in the top group and five minutes into the search I could see an arm waving from a red shape. A mixture of emotions and thoughts ran through me — relief, guilt, concern and professional questions on what to do next. Satisfaction would only be allowed if we got him off this mountain alive.

He was barely conscious, soaked to the skin and half covered in a plastic sheet torn to shreds by his crampons. But he was alive. Just.

During the next fifteen minutes other party members arrived, dry kit replaced wet clothing; sleeping bags, hats and gloves eventually cocooned his body. The message, 'You've been found, but it's not over, hang on, don't give up now', was firmly implanted. Repeatedly! Down below, the news of the find had revitalised everybody involved in the SAR operation. A tremendous combined 'will to live' seemed to transmit upwards.

Beneath the mist line sat the Leuchars 22 Sqn Wessex, only 60 seconds flying time away, poised, waiting for the

opportunity to snatch the casualty and save him an hour of bone-jarring man handling. Suddenly the mist parted and that window of opportunity appeared. Rapid plans were made between the ground party and the helicopter. A quick in and out, a difficult winching operation, pray for the break to last — let's do it!

The helicopter closed in carefully with a constant eye on the swirling mist. The winch man descended into our welcoming arms. Straps were placed. Checks were made. Thumbs up!

GO, GO, GO. Gone. Gone to live another day. ☺



Above: Lost, found and evacuated. Images courtesy of Dave 'Heavy' Whalley www.heavywhalley.wordpress.com

located barely alive. It was touch and go to get him off the hill and down to the helicopter, but what a great story with a successful outcome.

When he was located, I was helping with coordination in the Police Station in Fort William. The shouts of joy over the mountain rescue radios that he was

Inspired by Gary's experience, as Heavy's article notes, both brothers later joined Oldham MRT. What impact did the ordeal have on their lives and how did the experience affect how they approached their own team membership?

'Gary and I climbed Ben Nevis in 2007,' says Paul Smith. 'It was the first time for him since 1990 and I think it put some demons to bed for him. Shortly after our return, there was an ad in the local paper asking for new members for the Oldham team. Remembering what had happened to Gary and watching what my parents went through at the time — and my own worries and concerns — I contacted them straight away and became a trainee. Having gone through the experience of being a family member waiting for news of a missing relative, it does help me understand what people go through, and how important it is to keep looking, no matter what. That last look could save a life.'

He pays tribute to the support he and his parents received during those few dark days. 'It was beyond all expectation,' he says. 'The family running the youth hostel were amazing. They put us up and looked after us as if we were their own family. The police and mountain rescue teams kept us fully updated all the time but, when Gary was found, Dad and I had gone into Fort William for some fresh air and a walk. A policeman found us and gave us the news. He took us to the hospital, then gave us some binoculars to watch the rescue. We were at the helipad when the helicopter landed. The care in the hospital was amazing and again not only did they look after Gary, they looked after us as well. It was a real team effort by everyone.'

As for Gary, the last thing he remembers from his ordeal, was seeing a person in the distance, that he knew had seen him too. 'I was completely unaware of the actual rescue. I just think I thought I was safe now and my body shut down. That's the last I remember until I was in hospital.'

'I've always enjoyed outdoor activities,' he says, 'and I worked as an emergency nurse for many years, so felt I had a lot to offer. It was also a great opportunity to give something back. I'm well aware I owe my life to the dedication of everyone involved in my rescue back in 1990. It's hard to repay that, so giving time to something I enjoyed doing was no great hardship.'

'When I was involved in a rescue or a search, I suppose I had a better understanding of what the casualty was going through, the thoughts going through their head. I feel the psychological side of things when it goes wrong can be actually worse than the situation you are in and, as in my case, the longer you're stranded, the worse this can be. So with my own personal experience in this situation, I feel this pushed me on more.'

Left: Gary Smith, alongside a SAR Sea King. Above: Paul Smith with his wife (who was also an Oldham team member at one stage). Images courtesy of Paul Smith.



kit stuff



JON WICKHAM

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

Yellow Publications, 'Around & About' Maps: Despite the OS being the gold standard of mapping, not all of us have the eyesight to take in all those tiny contour lines and field boundaries. The people at Yellow Publications have realised this and used the OS license to enlarge the 1:25,000 maps to a 1:16,000 scale, making the detail much easier to read. The maps are also laminated so they don't disintegrate in the rain. yellowpublications.co.uk.



Exped Clear Cubes: Exped are well known for their wide range of drybags but many don't realise that this is just a small part of their product range. A new alternative to a drybag is their Clear Cube range. As it sounds, they are small fabric cubes with clear sides so you can easily see the contents. Welded construction and water-resistant zippers make these very weather proof, though

they won't completely seal like a dry bag. There are four sizes from 1L to 12L, each colour coded, making them great for storing small items, particularly medical kit. Exped (exped.com) is distributed by Lyon Equipment lyon.co.uk.

Tyny Tools: If you've ever tried to attach a piece of gear using an accessory karabiner, but it doesn't quite work, take a look at these guys. They produce a small range of accessory karabiners with swivels and stretchy silicone cords, great for attaching kit to rucksacks and securing loose items. Tyny Tools (tynytools.com) are distributed by Ardblair Sports Importers ardblairsports.com.

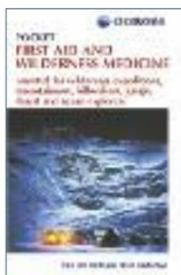


Call-out by Hamish MacInnes: This classic of mountaineering literature is now available to buy again thanks to the nice people at Vertebrate Publishing. Necessary and riveting reading for any mountain rescuer. v-publishing.co.uk.



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

books



POCKET FIRST AID AND WILDERNESS MEDICINE

BY DR JIM DUFF & DR ROSS ANDERSON

REVIEWED BY MIKE MARGESON

First aid and pre-hospital care in the remote environment presents a serious challenge for even the most experienced outdoor professional.

While there will never be a replacement for training and experience, this recently updated and popular guide provides a wealth of information all collated into one place, and reflects current best practice.

There are a number of books or guides on the market, but this edition's pocket size and plasticised cover makes for a handy reference text that can be realistically taken on a trip or expedition. The diagrams are clear, and the language avoids medical jargon for clear, easily understood terminology. The order and progression of the text works well, and will be familiar to anyone who has undertaken a basic life support or mountain rescue Casualty Care training. The sections on primary and secondary surveys are excellent. There are appendices covering key areas such as avalanches and altitude sickness with algorithms providing a useful aide memoire to instructors and leaders working with groups in remote mountain areas. Information is also included on first aid kit contents and medication for a wide range of illnesses and conditions.

POCKET FIRST AID AND WILDERNESS MEDICINE. ESSENTIAL FOR EXPEDITIONS: MOUNTAINEERS, HILL WALKERS AND EXPLORERS – JUNGLE, DESERT, OCEAN AND REMOTE AREAS IS PUBLISHED BY CICERONE WWW.CICERONE.CO.UK 252 PAGES. PRICE £11.95. ISBN 978-1-85284-913-9



OUTSMART NATURE

WITH THE RIGHT INSULATION WINTER IS FAST APPROACHING...

We know that the key to enjoying this beautiful and challenging season is keeping warm. That's why our experts invest so much time choosing our insulation range. Because when the cold starts to bite, nothing less than the best will do.

This winter we're really impressed by jackets like the Microlight Alpine from Rab, and Mountain Equipment's Arete Hooded Jacket. Both use natural down that has been treated with a water-resistant coating, allowing you to benefit from the extra warmth natural down provides, while they dry quicker and hold less water.

But that's not to say that synthetic jackets are on the wane, far from it. The new Icarus and Phoenix Jackets from Montane utilise a new generation of PrimaLoft® technology. PrimaLoft® ThermoPlume mimics natural down more closely than ever before, with small silky tufts. Overall it creates a packable jacket with exceptional performance in wet conditions.

Discover the latest cutting edge insulation in your local store, where our experts are on hand to help you outsmart nature.

OR YOU CAN EXPLORE OUR ENTIRE INSULATION RANGE ONLINE AT COTSWOLDOUTDOOR.COM.

DON'T FORGET, ALL MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS RECEIVE A 20% DISCOUNT* IN-STORE AND ONLINE.



Winter wear to keep you safe

FROM THE CHIEF KIT GURU, BLACKS OUTDOOR RETAIL*

Image via Pixabay.com.

The Blacks Autumn and Winter range has been assembled to take on the worst of the weather, we have all the gear that is dedicated to keeping you warm, dry and safe. Whether you're chasing lofty peaks or just fighting the frost on an early morning commute, we've got reliable apparel and equipment that will keep you safe. We've put some of our favourite pieces from the collection through the wringer, so you know they're up to the task. Here's what our chief kit guru had to say.

Whatever the weather: the Montane Air Jacket

Montane claim that the Men's Air Jacket is tough enough to take on the worst of the British weather, so we thought it best to put it to the test.

My first thoughts were that the jacket runs a little baggy, but after putting a jumper underneath (I'd usually wear a fleece but it wasn't too cold out) the jacket fit much more

closely and sat comfortably over the top of my other layers.

The conditions on test day were not too typical of August — they were wet because it's school holidays, but it was also windy with a bit of a nip in the air.

The Air Jacket uses PERTEX® Shield AP fabric, a technical layer with a 20,000mm



Montane Air Jacket

hydrostatic head which is double what is required to be classed as 'waterproof'. On this day, the fabric was more than capable of handling the constant drizzle. The hood has a stiffened peak, which also meant that keeping my head and upper body dry was easy enough.

Good waterproof performance can mean a compromise on breathability. What's the point in having a waterproof barrier if you're



Mountain Equipment Arete Jacket

going to get soaked from the inside from being too warm? I found the Air Jacket was breathable enough for the level of activity I was doing, but this may have been limited by the non-technical jumper I was wearing underneath. On more active days, I think using the jacket solely with a base layer would be perfectly sufficient.

The pockets were a good size, although accessibility could be limited when wearing a bulkier backpack. The AquaGuard® zips did their job and kept my phone and keys nice and dry. The Air Jacket managed the damp but temperate conditions with aplomb. Granted, a bit of light summer drizzle wasn't what it was made for, but it felt robust and technical enough to handle much more.

Wrap around warmth: the Mountain Equipment Arete Jacket

Picture the scene, it's a frosty morning with the sun low in the sky. You know as soon as you step outside you'll see your breath hang in the air, you know your waterproof just won't be warm enough. That's where the Arete Jacket comes into its own.

The jacket has an athletic fit, meaning it sits close to the body for optimum warmth, and warmth is its speciality.

The Arete is filled with super lightweight PureDown that simply locks in heat. It's put together in the same way as your favourite sleeping bag, with cross-stitch baffles that provide warmth from the very core.

The Arete is innovative in its design in that it's super easy to store when not in use. The whole jacket simply packs into its own pocket, so it can easily be thrown into a bag or pack. I'd say the Arete is a go-to layer on dry, cold days. It can easily handle temperatures in the minuses, and is laden with practical features for both walkers and casual wearers.

Classic performance meets modern design: the Mammüt Ayako Boots

Mammüt have come bounding onto the scene this year with a heavy duty backpacking and alpine hiking shoe that boasts a super high tech and modern design. The Ayako is a boot that has evolved over the years, being first brought to us as dedicated Via Ferrata footwear. The new Ayako claims the same tough mountain performance, but with added hillside-worthy flex.

We tested the boots in long grass, on wet rock and on a muddy gravel trail. Safe to say the GORE-TEX® lining did its job and the boots stayed dry and cool all day.

As far as the fit goes, they were a bit roomier than I thought they would be, but that was easily countered by adding some trusty Smartwool® socks.

The laces feature set-back anchor points that attach via webbing to the heel for added stability, this can really be felt when moving

over rockier terrain. Although cushioned, you still get ample feedback from the ground which gives a more secure feel.

What makes the Ayako adept at dealing with mixed conditions is the Memo Foam® interior. Memory



Mammüt Ayako Boot

foam surrounds the foot which protects from knock after knock, this makes a huge difference after a few hours transitioning from different terrain types.

All in all, the Ayako is still a tough mountain boot, but with the added flex and fit factors it is perfectly functional as a hillwalker. It might not be the best for multi-day treks where asphalt is the main terrain, but for scrambling and hiking it's a 'shoe' in.

We have gear for any kind of adventure that is made to keep you safe and comfortable. All of our Autumn and Winter range is available online and in-store.

*JD SPORTS FASHION STORES INCLUDE BLACKS, MILLETS, TISO AND ULTIMATE OUTDOORS. SINCE MAY 2016, THE JD FOUNDATION HAS SUPPORTED MREW THROUGH THE CARRIER BAG CHARGE SCHEME OPERATING ACROSS ITS RETAIL OUTLETS.

Beasties in the hills

The warm, wet conditions of late summer created an unusual proliferation of biting and stinging insects in the region of Scotland that I live – from midge, which I regard as just a plain nuisance, to horseflies which bite painfully, and then ticks, which require more consideration in their removal and then subsequently checking you show none of the symptoms of Lyme disease.

LYLE BROTHERTON
IS FOUNDER OF THE
ULTIMATE NAVIGATION SCHOOL
.CO.UK CHARITY AND
AUTHOR OF THE ULTIMATE
NAVIGATION MANUAL.



After having not long ago read about the former England rugby captain, Matt Dawson, undergoing heart surgery after being bitten by a tick in Britain, I am more vigilant than I have been before, in removing ticks attached to me and my dog, then watching for symptoms of Lyme disease. The difficulty arose in that I didn't really know what symptoms to look out for, nor did I know how to correctly treat horsefly bites or any other stings/bites come to that!

NHS England and Wales and NHS Scotland report these six insect stings/bites as the most common, all of which we, as responders, plus our casualties, may encounter:

1. Tick
2. Wasp/Hornet
3. Bee
4. Horsefly
5. Mosquito
6. Midge.

These bites/stings were reported only when an adverse/unusual reaction took place, as most insect bites and stings clear up on their own in a few hours or two to three days.

I researched how to identify which beastie has bitten or stung you (or the casualty), treat the injury and symptoms to be aware of afterwards. The remedies detailed are only those recommended by the NHS and/or the Hospital for Tropical Diseases, University College, London.

With the exception of tick bites, treatment

for any of the other bites or stings is the same, any differences are noted by insect. As any of these insect bites or stings, including ticks, can cause anaphylactic shock, it is also detailed in the treatment section.

Advice is also given about how to avoid being bitten or stung in the first place.

TICK

Related to spiders, these arachnids feed on the blood of mammals to which they attach themselves when the host (in this instance you!) brushes past foliage with a tick on it. After landing, they may migrate to warm moist areas of your body, armpits, hair and groin or simply remain on your leg or arm. After having bitten into you and affixed themselves, they grow from just 1mm across up to the size of an eraser at the top of a pencil when full of blood.

Identifying a tick bite

Tick bites are easy to identify. This is because the tick remains attached to the skin for days after it first bites — up to ten days — and are typically singular because they don't bite in groups or lines. Most tick bites are harmless and will cause no physical signs or symptoms. Having said this, a staggering 3,000+ cases of Lyme disease were recorded by the NHS in the UK in 2016.

The important thing is to firstly recognise that you've been bitten by a tick, which can

only be done visually and feeling areas of your skin as they are painless. Then remove the tick immediately, as you're more likely to become infected if the tick remains attached to your skin for more than 24 hours.

TREATMENT FOR TICK BITE

Remove them using a tick removal tool, such as made by O'Tom™ and follow the manufacturer's instructions (Great video at www.otom.com/en/) or, by using a pair of fine-tipped tweezers that won't squash the tick. Gently grip the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull steadily away from the skin without crushing the tick. Wash your skin with water and an antiseptic soap afterwards, then apply an antiseptic cream to the skin around the bite.

Ask for an urgent GP appointment or go to A&E if you develop:

- A distinctive circular rash (*erythema migrans*) at the site of the tick bite, usually around 3-30 days after being bitten. The affected area of skin will be red and the edges may feel slightly raised. Around 70% of people with early-stage Lyme disease develop these. The size of the rash can vary significantly and it may expand over several days or weeks. Typically, it's around 150mm across, but it can be much larger or smaller than this. Some people may develop several rashes in different parts of their body.

- Flu-like symptoms in the early stages, such as fatigue, muscle pain, joint pain, headaches, fever, chills and neck stiffness.

WASP/HORNET

Hornets are the largest of the eusocial wasps and correspondingly their stings are larger too!

Identifying a wasp or hornet sting

Wasp and hornet venom is so nocuous that the sharp pain is felt the instance they sting. A small pinpoint mark on your skin and no sting in the wound, unlike bee stings. A swollen red mark may then form on your skin, which can last a few hours and may be painful and itchy. Sometimes a larger area around the sting can be painful, red and swollen for up to a week. This is a minor allergic reaction that isn't usually anything to worry about.

BEE

Unlike wasps, bees are not generally aggressive and only sting when provoked, usually by getting trapped in clothing.

Identifying a bee sting

You'll probably hear its buzz, because as it leaves the sting site it has to pull away from the sting and sack it leaves in the skin, the bee dies as a result of this. You need to remove this as soon as possible, as the venom sack continues pumping after being detached from the bee.

1. Scrape it out sideways with something with a hard edge, such as a bank card, or your fingernails if you don't have anything else to hand.
2. Don't pinch the sting with your fingers or tweezers because you may spread the venom.
3. If you can't remove the sting it will usually come out by itself and is often not harmful.

The sting will cause pain, redness and swelling for a few hours. As with wasp stings, some people may have a mild allergic reaction that lasts up to a week.

HORSEFLY

They are 10-25mm long, dark-coloured flies, generally found near to cattle, horse stables, ponds, pools, woodlands, and grassy areas.

Unlike midge bites, it can take much longer to recover from a horsefly bite because they cut into the skin rather than pierce it, which can cause the wound to become infected.

Identifying a horsefly bite

The bite is instantly painful because they have jagged, saw-like teeth which slice open skin, then they release an anti-coagulant to stop the blood from clotting. The bite will be easy to see with a spot of blood oozing from it. Horsefly bites develop into large, red, itchy,

swollen bumps within minutes. For most people they're completely harmless, but extremely uncomfortable. Some people also report feeling hot, weak, nauseous or dizzy.

MIDGE

Midges are most active in humid areas at dawn and dusk, or in cloud cover when the intensity of the sunlight is diminished, but are unable to fly when the wind-speed is ≥ 7 mph

Identifying a midge bite

Midges feed for 3-4 minutes and are painless, however, itching sets in after about five minutes, when a small red swelling occurs and nearly always on exposed skin. As midges feed where they land. Once one midge has found a food source, they emit pheromones to attract other midges, this leads to nearby midges swarming and means people are rarely bitten just once.

While they're not usually serious and won't pass on diseases, they can be annoying to deal with, causing swelling and painful itching. Some people can react badly to midge bites and these symptoms may be particularly intense, or last for longer than usual.

MOSQUITO

Whilst it is well known that these insects can transmit Malaria and more recently the Zika virus, in the UK they do not.

Identifying a mosquito bite

A round, puffy bump will appear, which soon becomes red, hard and swollen and very itchy. You may have multiple bites in the same area, randomly spaced.

TREATMENT FOR WASP, HORNET, BEE, HORSEFLY, MOSQUITO AND MIDGE BITES AND STINGS

If you catch the insect in the process of attacking you, never squish it, as this empties the contents of its stomach or venom sack into your body and leave the sting, proboscis buried in your flesh. Instead, sweep it away with a sweeping motion of you hand.

Post-bite/sting

The priority is to keep the wound clean to prevent an infection. Rinse with either an antiseptic wash or drinking water.

To reduce swelling, pain and relieve itching, a topical anti-inflammatory is recommended, such as:

- Boots 1% hydrocortisone cream
- Boots 10% Ibuprofen gel
- Lloyds Pharmacy 3% Benzydamine cream.



Challenging the map and compass message

PETER SAPSFORD

Perhaps 20% of call-outs can be traced back to a navigation error. The published advice focuses on how to cope with the consequence of errors rather than how not to make them. Frequently the specific navigation advice to hill walkers is to 'take a map and compass and know how to use them'. But how do people know if their navigation knowledge is adequate? A minority will take an interest in examining their technique and a fraction of them will take a course. The majority will be self-taught which leads to the huge range of navigational ability evident everywhere, and a degree of over-confidence.

My concern here is not with those whose problems are because they know very little or just that they have made a one-off error, but it is with those who have no awareness of their limited knowledge.

From experience of teaching navigation and assessing potential walk leaders I have recognised several sources of navigation problems among people who would describe themselves as experienced hill walkers with some map and compass skills.

Firstly, a combination of having no interest in details of the route or its surroundings, concentrating only on conversation and being over relaxed about what's happening. The result can be a surprise that the path is running out and confusion starts.

Secondly, the lack of ability to estimate or calculate distance travelled from the last known location results in attempting to relocate in an area a long way from reality and sometimes across a huge radius of possibility. This can then be followed by 'the fit the map syndrome', falsely identifying only a couple of general features and continuing into further disorientation. For some this is not just their ignorance of pacing or timing technique, but just an unrealistic basic idea of how far we have walked in the last half hour.

Thirdly, inability to use contours and basic relocation skills. Many experienced fell walkers have little ability away from footpaths and ridges and in training are surprised at what can be deduced from just the 'off-piste' ground. Compasses are often in packs and not readily accessible, so there is no regular technique practice.

Does this sound familiar? Is this

what you see and hear? If so should these problems be addressed by nudging people's complacency and getting them to recognise that their skills have room for improvement?

Bad news for some. There is evidence that over relying on GPS can impair your sense of direction. We lose the ability to see the bigger picture and it can leave you with less knowledge of where you are, not more. When using GPS we don't register surroundings in the same way, neither in urban nor rural settings. Satnav takes away the drivers' knowledge of how they got

BAD NEWS FOR SOME. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT OVER RELYING ON GPS CAN IMPAIR YOUR SENSE OF DIRECTION. WE LOSE THE ABILITY TO SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE AND IT CAN LEAVE YOU WITH LESS KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE YOU ARE, NOT MORE

there. Equally, through GPS use, outdoor navigation skills can be neglected and grow rusty.

Worse news for people who age! A sense of direction declines consistently after teenage years. This is from research* using an app game that had three million players, now developed into a virtual reality computer game as part of the world's biggest dementia research experiment. In Sea Hero Quest VR, you captain a boat and use your sense of direction to chart a course through complex waterways, desert islands and big oceans while anonymous data is collected and assessed. Findings so far also

PETER SAPSFORD IS A RETIRED ADULT EDUCATION MANAGER, TEACHER/TRAINER OF MOUNTAIN NAVIGATION AND ASSESSOR OF WALKING LEADERS. HE'S ALSO A REGULAR LAKES DOGSBODY.



include that men are more likely to rely on landmarks and external cues in the environment, and women more likely to use an internal, cognitive map and an intuitive sense of direction. Nordic nations outperform the rest of the world although it is not yet clear why. Hopefully, the VR version will show that it's not age that causes declining navigation skill but computer skills on the game!

So, if many people's navigation skills are inadequate or declining and they don't realise it, how do we motivate them to realise that improvement is needed and that it can be fun? I think we need to add a challenge to the message 'Take a map and compass and know how to use them'.

Asking some simple test of the basics — can you do this and that with bearings, contours, distances, features, poor visibility, timing? etc. Then a message that if you can't, then your navigation has some room for improvement and with your interest and motivation you are bound to enjoy your learning using the options on the web, in magazines, books or on courses.

I think the issue is that people think they can navigate adequately but don't know how limited their skills are and they only find out when all the factors combine to give them a bad day. Can we shake their complacency, increase motivation and gently encourage more learning? ☺

* <http://www.seaheroquest.com/en>
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-29/the-virtual-reality-game-gathering-data-for-dementia-researchers>

Ice is a great way to help reduce the swelling from stings and bites, particularly wasp, hornet and bee stings: use an ice cube or an ice pack and place it on the sting for around 20 minutes.

In very rare cases they can cause cellulitis, an infection of the soft tissues. It's best to clean the wound with an antiseptic soap and warm water, then apply an antiseptic cream to the skin around the bite.

Ask for an urgent GP appointment or go to A&E if:

- The area affected remains red, hot and painful (it may also be swollen and blistered) after more than three hours, as you may be developing cellulitis, which is a skin infection that can be serious if untreated.
- Lymphadenopathy — lymph glands can swell to more than a few centimetres in response to a bite or sting and may be felt under the chin or in the neck, armpits or groin, where they can be found in larger clumps.

ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

Anaphylactic reactions are characterised by the sudden (minutes or less) onset and rapid progression of the following features:

- Difficulty in breathing due to airway swelling or spasm and the casualty may make snoring or wheezing noises when they breathe
- Faintness
- Anxiety (they may get a 'feeling of impending doom')

- Pale and clammy appearance
- Occasionally, abdominal pain, vomiting and incontinence
- Hives/urticaria or swelling in the mouth, although this may be absent.

Action if the casualty is conscious:

- If they feel faint, lie them down on their back and raise their legs. Do not sit or stand them up
- If the casualty is not feeling faint, sit them in an upright position if they have problems breathing
- Loosen clothing around neck and waist
- If they are conscious and have medication (such as an auto-injector or EpiPen) help them use it, if they're unable to do it themselves and you have been trained and are competent to do so, then do so.

Action if the patient is unconscious:

- If the casualty is already unconscious, an EpiPen should only be used if there is prior permission from the casualty or the responder is medically qualified to administer
- Tight clothing, especially around the neck should be loosened and the patient should be made as comfortable as possible
- Casualties who are breathing and unconscious should be placed in the recovery position
- If the casualty's heart stops or the breathing stops, administer CPR.

Preventing insect bites and stings (NHS Guidelines)

- DO use an insect repellent — those containing 50% DEET (*diethyltoluamide*) are most effective over exposed skin — especially at sunrise and sunset when insects are more active
- DO apply to clothing — not man-made fabrics
- DO NOT spray any insect repellents over cuts, wounds or irritated skin, or use under clothing
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water
- Wash treated clothing before wearing it again.

TO DEET OR NOT TO DEET

DEET (*diethyltoluamide*), is the most common active ingredient in insect repellents, at concentrations between 30-50% — always start low — applied directly to the skin or to clothing, and provides protection against most biting insects such as mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, horseflies and even leeches.

DEET is an effective solvent and can dissolve some plastics, including watch glass (crystal) and nail varnish, even some synthetic fabrics containing rayon.

WHO studies have shown 20% Icaridin (common trade names are *Bayrepel*, *KBR3023*, *Picaridin* and *Saltidin*) to be as effective as DEET without the irritation associated with DEET, plus, Icaridin does not dissolve plastics. ☺



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news

MREW media trainer and PR consultant, **Sally Seed**, looks at an aspect of publicity and PR and offers some advice for the future.

Developing a win-win-win

Your time is valuable. Fundraising and community events can be a big pull on resources so it's wise to focus, prioritise and then make the most of the opportunities that arise and see them as an investment.

A few such opportunities have arisen for MREW nationally and for teams in recent months and now seems a good opportunity to share ideas.

• Bloggers on the radar: Many supporters (and potential supporters) of MR now get their news online and this is extending to the equivalent of online magazines — vlogs and blogs. There've been a couple of examples recently where team members have worked with supportive businesses to reinforce the connections, make new links and raise awareness with this rapidly growing and increasingly influential media audience.

Thanks to Julian Earnshaw of Bowland Pennine MRT, who went along to a camping weekend in June, organised by VARTA Consumer UK for a group of outdoor bloggers. This was a good opportunity to reach several writers and opinion formers and make sure they understood how MR works, its voluntary nature and expertise. Obviously, VARTA had commercial objectives in mind, building on their practical and financial support for MREW, but Julian was able to raise the profile of MR in general and his team in particular.

• Sharing a platform: In August, Blacks Outdoor, part of the JD Sports group, involved members of Central Beacons MRT in their presence at the BBC Countryfile Live event in Oxfordshire. It made sense to introduce some of the people who have been on screen in the BBC1 idents during 2017. It was another time commitment for members of the team but they planned ahead and made the most of it.

'As a team, we were really enthused to be asked to be part of Countryfile Live and, with plenty of notice for planning, we were able to cover the whole long weekend and spread

the workload,' says Huw Jones.

'Throughout the ident run, we've been proud to represent mountain rescue and the same applied at Countryfile Live, supported by MREW with supplies of merchandise, magazines, leaflets and the promo film, which ran on a loop for the four days.

'We had lots of interest from walkers, climbers and biking enthusiasts, from across the UK. We also met quite a few people interested in becoming involved as volunteers and pointed them in the direction of their local teams. They were long, tiring days but very rewarding to be able to spread the word about the good work of MR UK-wide.'

There's no way MREW could justify paying the huge stand costs for an event like this, but working with a business supporter created a win-win situation for both Blacks and mountain rescue and a win-win-win if you count those who'll be rescued in future!

• Strengthening links: When significant employers get involved in supporting MR, there are opportunities to work with employees so that a brief donation is developed into an ongoing relationship. This might be a supermarket or local holiday site connection, or even something simple like the team's usual fuel station or vehicle mechanics. In all these cases, there are opportunities for photo calls when money is presented but there are other possibilities.

If your team is the local supermarket's charity of the year, why not invite staff to look around base or to send younger managers out with you on a training day? A wider group of people get to know more about you, you get some more interesting pictures and stories for the local papers (and for that display in the



Central Beacons team members at Countryfile Live with presenter Ellie Harrison © Huw Jones.

supermarket) and there's always the chance the connection could develop into something longer term.

Similarly, if a holiday camp site regularly makes a donation, could you help out at an event over a Bank Holiday or give a talk in the bar to visitors and staff who are keen on walking and could use some advice? It doesn't have to be complicated — groups of children love to be inside a team Land Rover, their parents appreciate seeing them strapped (securely) into stretchers and a lot of adults could learn from seeing the contents of an MR rucksack.

The key thing with all of these is that you may need to set the ball rolling and ask — so you're in control of the time commitment and can pursue the ideas that seem to be most beneficial rather than waiting for something to happen or having to react to an offer that isn't really a good use of your resources. Good luck — and look out for other ideas to adapt in the pages of MR mags to come!

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

THE KEY THING WITH ALL OF THESE IS THAT YOU MAY NEED TO SET THE BALL ROLLING AND ASK – SO YOU'RE IN CONTROL OF THE TIME COMMITMENT



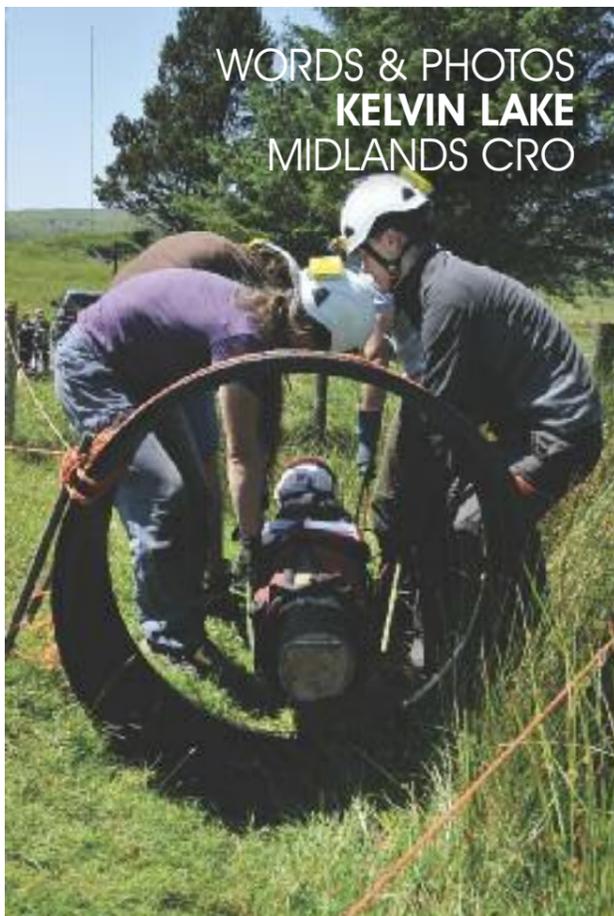
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ResCon 2017 The BCRC Rescue Conference

Hosted by South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team (SMWCRT) at Penwyllt the British Cave Rescue Council conference in June was blessed not only with an interesting and engaging series of talks, workshops and demonstrations but probably the hottest and sunniest weather encountered in Wales for years – it was a relief for many delegates, after the long climb to OFD Top Entrance to escape underground!

Eighty cavers, representing most of the UK cave rescue teams, enjoyed an introductory Friday evening meal of Cawl (traditional Welsh lamb stew), huge chunks of bread and cheese, and some excellent apple crumble and custard (not necessarily all in the same bowl!), with a bar run by South Wales Caving Club, while watching a series of caving and cave rescue slideshows and films (produced by Andy and Antonia Freem) in the marquee.

Saturday started bright (literally) and early with the arrival of the AW139 Coastguard helicopter from St Athan. The crew gave conference delegates guided tours of the machine and a chance to see the wide range of equipment on board. This AW139 will be replaced in October by a larger aircraft, capable of carrying more people, as part of

Finally, Dougie MacDonald (from the MCA) and Clark Broad (Bristow Helicopters) covering the details of the latest developments in SAR helicopters plus a series of safety briefings and short film clips on working with helicopters, what to do and what NOT to do.

The morning was rounded off with SMWCRT team members demonstrating the stretcher obstacle course – the requirement being to carry a stretcher with a casualty that had a bucket of blue liquid for a stomach around an obstacle course without spilling any! The winning team would be the one with the greatest depth of liquid left at the end of the course (no secret top-ups allowed – the liquid should still be blue at the end, and clingfilm was banned), moving outside the designated course at any point incurred a 5mm penalty.

Over the weekend there were some excellent performances by the competitors – the ultimate winning ‘SMWCRT’ team didn’t appear to have spilt anything! They each received a goody bag kindly donated by Cotswold Outdoors.

The afternoon sessions on Saturday and Sunday comprised a series of Round Robins, Q&A sessions and workshops both on the surface and underground, giving delegates a good choice of topics and skills to experience.

First aid topics covered Casualty Care training requirements, developments for dive rescue of a stretchered casualty, tilt rig options and casualty securing with a K&B stretcher and the Petzl NEST (run on the surface by Paul Witheridge from Lyon Equipment), and rigging for vertical stretcher haul options (demonstrated by Michael ‘Slug’ Hales from CRO in OFD 2).

Rescuer safety was covered by Dan Murray (Derbyshire CRO) with an underground workshop on bad air detection, physiological effects and appropriate responses. While Vince Allkins ran an interesting ‘hands-on’ workshop in the safe and effective use of cordless drills in cave rescue, plus the

techniques and requirements for the installation of resin anchors, and rock splitting with plug and feathers (sadly it didn’t cover how to avoid sunstroke while installing your anchors or splitting rocks!). Comms were covered by exercises and demos of both Cave Link (John Roe) and Nicola 3 (Graham Naylor and Peter Allwright).

In parallel with all these workshops, a series of talks covered topics such as the Rescue Benevolent Fund (Bill Whitehouse) and kit innovations for casualty comfort and rigging an emergency bivouac (Ali Garman). Plus tours of the SMWCRT rescue facilities, Land Rover loading and equipment demonstrations.

In addition to Lyon demonstrating new stretchers, rigging, and a new Quadpod, Hywel Jopling had a display of various rescue stretchers – including a ‘large’ bariatric stretcher, which would certainly test underground anchors if used to its capacity. Starless River and SP Medical Supplies were also in attendance, allowing people to inspect and purchase new kit.

Saturday was rounded off with a coach trip to Dan-yr-Ogof show cave and Cathedral Cavern where they were entertained by a Welsh male voice choir, a rugby club bar and hog roast (with superb cracklin’!), a choice of vegetarian options, plus a good selection of chocolate cake, tarts and cream. Caving can be tough at times.

Returning to Penwyllt, we made good use of the warm summer evening for conversation and chats at the SWCC bar and a prize draw with prizes generously donated by Lyon Equipment and Starless River.

Congratulations to Peter Dennis (conference coordinator), and all the team members involved, for their hard work in making the weekend such a success, not forgetting Ashford Price and everyone at Dan-yr-Ogof for the excellent evening entertainment and meal. 🍷

improvements to the Coastguard helicopter rescue service.

The morning continued with introductory talks by local MP, Chris Davies, Bill Whitehouse (former BCRC chair, who had to compete with the roar of the helicopter as it took off), DCC Gareth Pritchard (talking about strategic changes affecting voluntary SAR teams working with police), Dr Brendan Sloan (BCRC medical officer, on the subject of changes to Advanced Casualty Care training and management of controlled drugs), followed by Jon Whiteley (Devon CRO) on SARCALL.

Image via Pixabay.com



Archive photos supplied by UWFRA.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF MOSSDALE CAVERNS TRAGEDY REMEMBERED

The summer marked the 50th anniversary of the Mossdale Caverns caving tragedy, the worst caving incident in British caving history, when six young cavers drowned when the passages they were in became engulfed by flood water.

The Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association conducted the rescue attempt which lasted some four days and involved over 300 people — including CRO, other adjacent rescue teams, caving club members, the emergency authorities, and many local people.

Mossdale Caverns, high up on Grassington Moor in North Yorkshire are graded 'super severe' and prone to serious flooding, although on this fateful trip there were no indications of likely flooding, the quantity of water entering the cave was well below normal and the weather forecast was for bright periods with just a chance of thundery showers.

Such was the enormity of the rescue situation at one point the cave entrance was under four feet of water. Frantic efforts were made to try divert the water, building

dams, trenches, many using their bare hands. It was twelve hours before rescuers could get underground. The risk to the rescue cavers was very high and at times they had to be brought out. Rescuers had to work in chest high water.

Sadly, after many hours of frantic digging, the dreadful reality came when the rescuers found all six men had perished. Their bodies were not recovered and the coroner at the subsequent inquest decided they should remain in the cave and the entrance be sealed as a grave. No criticism was made of the young mens' decision to venture deep into the system. Three years later, caving friends of the victims got into the cave and moved their remains to a higher level which was then named The Sanctuary.

Several Upper Wharfedale team members who took part in the rescue attempt are still in the team, including Chris Baker, who had the enormous responsibility of being team leader at the tragedy.

A memorial service took place at Conistone Church, attended by local people as well as UWFRA and caving clubs members, many having taken part in the attempted rescue. Family and friends included Rachel Taylor, the daughter of one of the victims. Rachel, from Bradford, was only two years old when her father died. As she grew up, she became a great friend and fundraiser for UWFRA. It was a deeply moving moment when she read out a poem she had written in her father's memory.

A plaque naming the victims marks the place where British caving's darkest day occurred. ☹

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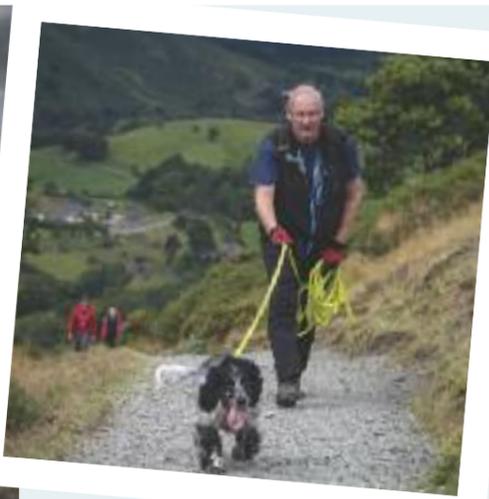
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SARDA WALES UPDATE



SARDA Wales bring the tally of Scent Specific Trailing Dogs in the UK to four with a double pass for Skye and Izzy, writes **Tim Sherlock**.

SARDA Wales has long been at the forefront of developing trailing within the UK but, recently, 'Team Boris' with handler Steve Nelson, have carried the torch on their own. Last year, with Steve as a mentor, Jamie Ketteridge then a member of NSARDA Anglia joined the ranks, but SARDA Wales had two of their own heading towards assessment, which could provide a much needed boost to the ever-increasing demand on Team Boris.

The two hopefuls were Damian and Skye, a Sprocker Spaniel, and Tim and Izzy an Irish Red and White Setter. A member of Cheshire SAR, Damian has also been a member of SARDA Wales for five years. Tim is a member of NEWSAR and joined SARDA in 2013. Damian and Tim have trained alongside each other, with Steve as their coach and mentor.

SARDA Wales has very high, tried and tested, standards for the trailing dog teams, evolved from those developed by Tom Middlemas and Iain Nicholson for NSARDA. Tom has spent a lifetime training dogs across the world and he and Iain, a previous SARDA Wales trailing dog handler, developed a reward-based system of scent discrimination. On completion, the dogs move on to working trails, building on the foundations of scent discrimination and the game of hide and seek to make a fun yet extremely successful game for the dogs.

As the November assessments loomed, Skye and Izzy and their respective handlers increased the levels of training to try and ensure success, at what was fast becoming something of great interest to many. Both teams were put through the rigorous process of four trails over two days, in differing terrain and complexity including urban environments and mixed scenarios to reflect the work they would hopefully one day be doing. Both teams were successful, a great result for all involved, putting two more trailing dogs on the call-out list and taking the tally to four in the UK.

Steve congratulated them on their hard work but warned them that 'this was where the real work started'. Since then, both dog teams have been involved in many searches, in their own team areas and further afield.

SARDA Wales now has six open area dogs and three trailing dogs, allowing the flexibility and ability to respond appropriately. SARDA Wales chairman Antony Griffiths said, 'With an increased number of requests from North Wales Police to assist in the searches for missing people in the urban environment, two more trailing dogs on the team is a huge benefit and, on some of the bigger searches, it's nice to see both the open area and trailing dogs able to assist in the search effort.'

SARDA Wales is always looking for volunteers to either become handlers or as support, or hiding for the dogs as dogsbodies. If you wish to find out more visit our Facebook page or email info@sardawales.org.uk.

Search Dog Photo © Rob George Photography



WARNING: CUTENESS ALERT

Calder Valley team announced an anticipated new addition to the family in July with eleven-week-old Springer Spaniel Orion!

Orion and his owner and handler Gary Smith, have dived straight into training which is expected to take approximately two years to achieve the standard set by SARDA. The pup has three distinct markings on his back that look similar to the stars in the constellation of Orion's Belt, and Orion is also known as The Hunter in Greek mythology, so it seemed an appropriate name for a search dog.

Gary joined CVSRT in 2015 and has been very actively involved with the development of their current search dogs, regularly acting as a dogsbody and assisting as a navigator for the team's dog handlers on call-outs.

Search dogs have been a part of CVSRT since 1977 and, over the years, there have been fifteen dogs and ten handlers. If you would like to follow Orion's development and training, he already has his own Facebook page @redtagspan.



Scottish Mountain Rescue, behind the scenes

KEV MITCHELL VICE CHAIRMAN SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Most people are aware of the work of the active mountaineers in mountain rescue teams across Scotland, but that's the tip of the iceberg of support and help that enables rescue teams to respond to incidents.



In 2016, the member teams of Scottish Mountain Rescue responded to 436 incidents, giving up 22,697 hours of their time to go to the assistance of people in need. There are about 850 organised into 23 independent civilian member teams plus three Police Scotland teams and one RAF team. Every team member is a volunteer. Each one of them is ready and willing to drop what they are doing, leave their beds, walk out on family, abandon their work or social event to assist total strangers.

For every incident team members respond to, family members, work colleagues and friends are there to help and support in the background: providing additional childcare, covering work appointments and taking care of all the day-to-day details of life that never end and don't pause because of call-outs.

Our member teams also depend on the support of many people and organisations. At the most simple level, the hill walker dropping a coin into a collecting can in the hotel bar at the end of the day is a great support. Public donations along with support from

the Scottish Government, St John Scotland, JD Foundation and others is a crucial part of the complex funding jigsaw teams have to complete every year.

St John Scotland is a perfect example of the support for SMR that for the most part takes place in the background. Their support and funding, provided over the last twenty years, has made it possible for mountain rescue teams to transform themselves from the days when they worked out of cupboards or boiler rooms with ancient Land Rovers, into the professional, well-equipped, world-class organisations operating today. As a result of their support, most teams now have their own dedicated rescue post and modern vehicles suitable for the increasing demands and expectations placed on them.

Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR) is the name of the national support organisation for mountain rescue in Scotland. SMR is an independent charity with a voluntary board and works to enable the individual teams across Scotland provide a world-class service. To achieve this, SMR concentrates on three areas.

Facilitation: SMR provides a structure for teams to meet, share ideas and discuss best practice and common challenges. To this end, and with the help of funding from the UKSAR Training Fund, SMR delivers national training courses that are largely run by team members for team members. Topics are mostly specific to mountain rescue and, by using our members to deliver courses, relevance for participants is guaranteed. There is a course running somewhere in Scotland every two or three weeks and, in the last year, 200 places on training courses were filled.

Representation: SMR provides a collective view of the individual teams to be heard at a national level. Here SMR works regularly with our primary partners Police Scotland, the Scottish Government, Scottish Ambulance Service, UKSAR, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Bristol Helicopters, Mountaineering Scotland and colleagues in Mountain Rescue England and Wales as well as Mountain Rescue Ireland, among others. As many important decisions are made in London,

SMR recently sent representatives to meet MPs and Peers in Westminster and will work to develop those crucial relationships. SMR works hard to tell the story of Scottish Mountain Rescue to anyone who will listen. This included maintenance of a website as well as Facebook and Twitter feeds, all of which contribute to getting our message across.

Funding: SMR provides collective access to funding at a national level that would be difficult for individual teams to reach. At a time when the pressure on volunteers is sadly increasing and there is a growing professionalism expected in mountain rescue, SMR works with individual teams to develop national funding sources that complement their own fundraising.

SMR represents 23 of the 27 civilian MR teams in Scotland and our member teams are spread across the country from Assynt to Galloway, Aberdeen to Hebrides.

The time spent on incidents is just one indication of the commitment needed to run a rescue team. All individual member teams are charities and have voluntary boards responsible for ensuring that their charity runs according to the requirements of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Training is a considerable time commitment for the individual team member. Most if not all teams train at least once a month on average. Some teams take a summer break, holding no training between say June and August, recognising that members need a breather. Other teams train year round and some teams train twice a month. In addition to team training there are

national courses, the purchase, care and maintenance of equipment, vehicles and bases, all of which demand time.

And then there is fundraising. Each team receives approximately a third of their annual running cost from the Scottish Government, and this money is distributed via SMR. This support is gratefully received and much appreciated. For most teams, it is possibly the largest single income in any one year that is not restricted to a particular use. But each team still has a funding gap. Individual large items, such as a new vehicle, may receive grant support from a variety of sources, but in order to be operationally ready 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, each team carries out its own fundraising activities. Some

JUST AS IN ENGLAND AND WALES – AND IRELAND – OUR MEMBER TEAMS DEPEND ON THE SUPPORT OF MANY PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

teams have support groups of people who do not go out on the hill on rescues but are willing and able to carry out fundraising and other tasks. But for most teams, it is the operational team members who fundraise.

A simple example of the work involved is that collecting can on the bar. Someone has to manage it, ask every business if they would like a can, buy and badge the can, collect and replace it when full, count the donation (which should involve two people), keep records (each collecting can should be uniquely numbered with the amount and location of the donation recorded), and — finally the good

part — bank the cash. Each can is a great help so more cans are better and lots of cans adds up to a steady trickle of behind-the-scenes work.

There is no accurate figure for the amount of time it takes to run a rescue team. However, to operate as a modern charity, comply with relevant legislation, maintain readiness of kit and personnel as well as fundraise... for all SMR team members the number of hours must be a significant multiple of the hours spent on call-outs.

So remember, if you are in difficulty, whatever the time of day or night, whatever the weather conditions and wherever you are in Scotland, there will be a group of volunteers ready to come to your help. And behind those people stands a large network of others providing support that makes it possible for the rescuers to get out of the door and onto the hill.

For further information on SMR, including links to the teams, visit scottishmountainrescue.org. You can also follow SMR on Facebook @ScottishMountainRescue or Twitter @ScottishMR.

This article first appeared in The Scottish Mountaineer



Photos: © Scottish Mountain Rescue.

TAKING THE MOUNTAINS TO HOLYROOD

Mountaineering organisations met with members of the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood in September, thanks to the involvement of the MSP and enthusiastic mountaineer, Liz Smith.

The theme for the evening was 'Enjoy Scotland's Mountains Safely' and, hosted by SMR and Mountaineering Scotland, it was attended by SMR team members, MSPs, cabinet ministers, cabinet secretaries, clubs and partners from across Scotland's mountaineering community.

The aim was to celebrate the dedication and expertise of the volunteers and professionals who keep people safe in Scotland's mountains and wild landscapes. Liz had also submitted a motion in parliament recognising and praising the work of both



organisations, with the cross-party backing of 36 MSPs.

'Without Mountaineering Scotland and the Scottish Mountain Rescue service,' said Liz, 'our hills and mountains would be a lot more dangerous and it's only right we celebrate their hard work at Holyrood.'

Above: Liz Smith MSP (left) with Tavish Scott MSP (right) © Scottish Parliament.



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40 YEARS OF NIKWAX – KEEPING PEOPLE DRY WITH CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Nick Brown, CEO started Nikwax, the British outdoor aftercare company, in 1977. As an outdoor person who backpacked in the mountains he wanted dry and comfortable feel, and as a graduate he needed to earn a living. Nikwax was born and initially focused on preserving and waterproofing leather mountain boots. Producing aftercare products with minimal environmental impact has been at the root of the brand from the beginning, and Nikwax solutions have remained PFC-free since. What followed was the first range of water-based garment and footwear waterproofing and cleaning products. These effectively replaced harmful aerosols, could be easily used in a washing machine and were safe. Today Nikwax is a multi award-winning brand both in terms of its development of innovative products, as well as its environmental credentials. Nick Brown, says: 'As consumers become more aware of the environmental challenges, they will want the brands they choose to have a history that they can be proud of, combined with the ability to invent new and greener solutions to the practical problems of life.'

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SEPTEMBER: SOLO '3PEAKSRUN' CHALLENGE FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE AND SARDA ENGLAND

Three years ago I'd never run anywhere except perhaps for a bus. Yet, in September, I found myself stood on the summit of Ben Nevis with the wind howling and the rain horizontally slicing at my cheeks, totally elated to have run there, all the way from the summit of Snowdon — with a diversion over the summit of Scafell Pike along the way, attempting a challenge referred to by a local BBC Breakfast Radio presenter as 'completely bonkers'.

My 500-mile '3PeaksRun' Challenge idea began to form when two things happened. Firstly, I discovered the sport of ultra-marathon and trail running and was so inspired to see people of all ages and shapes running arguably insane mountain races, I wondered whether I too might be capable of such a thing. Then figured I'd have to start running if I was ever going to find out!

Secondly, as a keen hiker and long distance walker, I was always on the look out for a new outdoorsy adventure and had heard about the National Three Peaks. Researching the challenge, I realised I wanted to undertake it in a more immersive way, spending time in each region and under my own steam. I considered cycling between the mountains and knew many had done that,

MRT — who feel the pressure of such popular activities. Many of those who undertake the Three Peaks are unaware that these are charitable organisations, manned by committed volunteers, and reliant on donations to operate.

I also chose to support SARDA England as symbolic of the rest of my route, outside the immediate area of the Three Peaks and in recognition that search dogs help people from all walks of life in various situations and in urban areas — not just hill-goers.

The physical and mental health benefits of time spent being active outdoors is without question and I wanted to take the opportunity to encourage others to enjoy getting outside, and to share useful resources and guidance from experts about being prepared and safe in the hills.



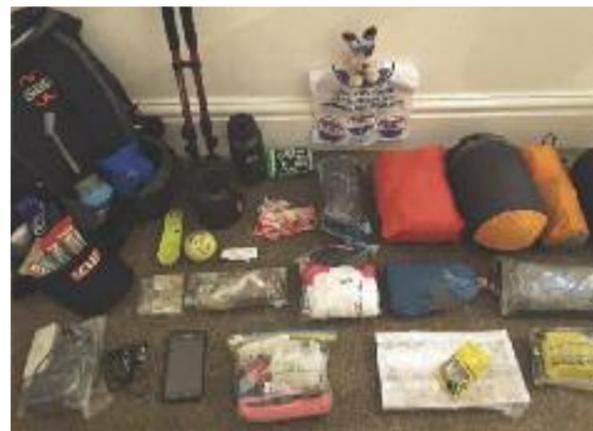
enthusiasm, I bounded up the Pyg Track almost with ease, wishing I would feel as strong as this every day. But, just 48 hours later, with my feet rashed and raw and my joints sore and stiffening, I had to wonder whether I was really up to this challenge after all. I reminded myself of the time I'd recently spent at the SARDA England training meet where I'd told myself that when the running got hard I just had to remember the boundless energy and enthusiasm of the incredible search dogs to spur me on. Still, they had four legs after all and I certainly hadn't expected to be struggling just two days into my challenge!

However, where I might not be a particularly great runner, endurance was something I had plenty of. As the days went by, I grew stronger as the miles passed beneath my increasingly battered (very soggy) trail shoes.

I planned the route to stay off road as much as possible and combined a total of 22 local and national trails to get me all the way through Wales, England and Scotland, along mountain trails, cycle paths, rail trails, coast paths, canal towpaths and city parks.

In the spirit of adventure, I put pretty much zero planning into where I might be sleeping each

night but carried lightweight camping gear to keep my options flexible — cue impromptu nights in a soggy bivvy bag, convivial meetings around a roaring fire in the hearth of a remote bothy, sharing wild camp sunsets, a late evening bunkhouse on a



Top: Snowdon summit shot; Tina Page with her trusty mascot Patch. Above: Tina's entire kit for the trip; Map showing the Three Peaks © Tina Page.

but I was unable to find a record of anyone who had completed the challenge solo and entirely on foot. So that became my goal.

As the conventional 24-hour challenge was so popular and had divided opinions, I also wanted to raise awareness, as well as much needed funds for the charitable organisations in each of the regions — Ogwen Valley MRO, Wasdale MRT, Fix the Fells and Lochaber

After a whirlwind few months of planning logistics, launching a blog and social media feeds, spreading the word and trying to get a few training runs and a spot of Pilates in, whilst also working seven days a week on-board a boat — a challenge in itself — the day finally arrived when I stood at the foot of Snowdon.

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JULY: BADGE IDEA RAISES FUNDS FOR THE LAKES TEAMS

Earlier this year, hill-lover Steven Rogers hit on a novel fundraising idea. As a member of the Facebook group 'I Love The Lake District': why not produce badges for group members to buy and wear on their adventures, in order to identify fellow members?

Another member suggested raising funds for mountain rescue at the same time. At the end of June, he was able to present a cheque for £720 to be shared between the twelve teams. The presentation took place at the LAMRT base in Ambleside.

'Mark Bains (LAMRT chairman) did a fantastic job of showing us around the base and explaining the work of mountain rescue' says Steven, adding that a few thank yous are in order.

'Kim Rogers, who did all the postage and packing, Kath Bland, who suggested fundraising for the Lakes teams, Janet Pickering who did the design for the centre of the badge and Julie Bewsher who helped me with PayPal and bought the first badge.'

Badges were sold all over the UK, Holland and as far away as Australia. Since June, the badge selling has been handed over to the admin of the Facebook group and fundraising will continue through them.

raising funds
for rescue

AUGUST: HALIFAX LADIES CIRCLE HAND OVER HUGE CHEQUE

Calder Valley team members welcomed members of the Halifax Ladies Circle to their base in Mytholmroyd, accompanied by a rather huge cheque (literally).

Stacey McGowan and the ladies had kindly nominated CVSRT as their charity of the year in 2016 and did a fantastic job raising funds throughout the year. The ladies popped in to meet the team and present their cheque for an incredible £3178.67.

Right: Team leader, Ben Carter was on-hand to gratefully accept the generous donation and to thank everyone at Halifax Ladies Circle for their hard work.



Above: Tina and Patch on the summit of a somewhat inhospitable Ben Nevis © Tina Page.

railway platform and even an invitation to the absolute luxury of a B&B with a soak in a bath, a cooked breakfast and a kindly host who selflessly offered to wash all my wet and smelly clothing the same day. (I'd waded through a river so things were pretty ripe by that point!)

In fact, despite being a solo and unsupported challenge, one of the most memorable parts of this adventure has been the incredible people I've met along the way. Several runners managed to track me down en route and met up to share a few miles on the trail, many bringing flapjack (my fuel of choice) and, despite my fear of showing myself up in front of 'real' runners with my slow plod, it was a joy to spend time with them and hear about their own running adventures. Plus, no one ever once mentioned how slow I was!

Brian Allport, from SARDA England, brought along search dog Tess as I crossed the border into Scotland — as well as a very appreciated deliciously sticky flapjack tray bake from Val Allport which I pretty much

devoured in two days! Countless others followed my progress via social media offering endless encouragement and support and I was very touched by their kindness.

After 19 days and 18 hours of negotiating the miles through wind, rain, sunshine, darkness, fog, bog, mud, fallen trees, city streets, 7-foot padlocked gates, feisty cows, inquisitive horses and bridgeless rivers I left the summit of Ben Nevis, the final challenge in my bid to be the first woman to run the National Three Peaks. Just a steady downhill to the warm welcome of the Glen Nevis SYHA hostel remained. After 505 miles, three mountains and over 42,000 feet of total elevation, I was filled with a zen-like calm as well as the excitement of heading towards a big plate of comfort food, a hot shower and a dry, cosy bed. Not so 'bonkers' after all!

AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS, TINA'S FUNDRAISING PAGE AT UK.VIRGINMONEYGIVING.COM SHOWED £1927 RAISED BUT THERE IS STILL CHANCE TO DONATE

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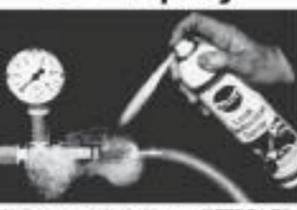
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