

mountain rescue

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SUMMER 2018 **65**



THE ONLY OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND



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Eric Hjortleifson - Pro Team Member

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WELCOME TO
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 Mountain Rescue is the **only** official magazine for mountain rescue in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

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

Cover story

Joint exercise in May, involving members of Buxton and Derby MRTs, Cheshire and Staffordshire Lowland teams and Watersafe UK © Buxton MRT.



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

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When is a chef expected to perform life-saving procedures, four hours away from the nearest... anything?

Let's be honest. Mountain rescue is nuts.

There's a volunteer from every walk of life in MR including doctors, military personnel and firefighters, but often the fastest on scene is the local builder who knows every crag, gully and shortcut in the area. When he arrives at the scene to see a fallen climber, he knows the fastest and safest way off the mountain – BUT how does he deal with the open femur fracture and severe head injury?

Nick Wright is a long-standing member and deputy team leader in one of the busiest teams in the Lake District. He has spent many years working with team members from a variety of backgrounds. His expertise in pre-hospital care as a practicing paramedic, coupled with his years of experience in dealing with traumatic injuries in hazardous environments, has helped him to improve the skills and confidence of his fellow team mates.

Medskills Academy, founded by Nick, is not your bog-standard first-aid provider. It specialises in providing MR teams to progress beyond the Casualty Care syllabus, by helping develop and consolidate the skills needed to manage care in the challenging environments we encounter on a daily basis – from first-hand experience.

His credibility in the field means it is unsurprising that, following a Mountain Rescue England and Wales survey, Medskills Academy was selected to provide 36 team members funded places on their Pre Hospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) course.

Medskills Academy isn't just for those who have limited experience in casualty care. Even the most advanced clinicians can benefit from exposure

to the highly realistic scenarios, designed to challenge your ability to both lead and work within a pre-hospital team, under the supervision of experts in the field.

What's unique to a Medskills Academy course (in particular the PHTLS), is the diversity of students it attracts. On the latest PHTLS course attendees included paramedics, an A&E registrar and a GP, as well as members of an MR team. This was a phenomenal opportunity for learning, as they were able to contribute to group discussions, share personal experiences, and appreciate the care of prehospital patients from a truly holistic and multi-disciplinary perspective.

Courses from the Medskills Academy are purpose built for those working in hazardous outdoor environments and include:

- Prehospital Trauma Life Support
- Airway Courses
- Major Incident Medical Management and Support
- Human Factors: Managing Human Error
- Prehospital Ultra-Sound
- Swiftwater Rescue.

It is an unrivalled passion for mountains and pre-hospital care which fuels Nick and his team of experts, which enables them to design and deliver highly-regarded courses. Their philosophy is to keep things simple when it comes to training, by making sure 'folk get the attention they need with pre-hospital training, from experts in the field.'



MIKE FRANCE CHAIRMAN

Having spent the day with Upper Wharfedale, Scarborough & Ryedale and CRO at the annual Princes' Charity Day, it just reminds me how many good people are in mountain rescue and how much you want to help and support others. It reminds me that MR is not all politics.

When you spend so much of your time reading MR emails, trying hard to drive the CIO forward, listening to concerns about how the organisation is run or should be run, you need that wake-up call that Mountain Rescue England and Wales is a great organisation doing some great work supporting our communities, helping many, many people who find themselves in a difficult situation, and sometimes dealing with death. You are mountain rescue — you just get on with it.

I am in a lucky position in that I do talk with members from many different teams. It's fair to say mountain rescue for them is their local team. Their team is what they joined, their team will take them on the journey through mountain rescue, not MREW. MREW only plays a small part for many. It has a role to play in that journey but their team is the most important part. That said, MREW's role is an important one, that's why it's undertaking a process to review. We've got to manage what members want and need, and what we need to do to manage and develop the organisation.

Personally, I think MREW has many strengths (you would expect me to say that), one being how over the last few years we have developed our national profile with others. You do a great job promoting that within your communities, but when I meet with other organisations, outside companies or the statutory services, they like the way we work, our profile and professionalism.

A lot of that is down to the management team, these guys take work from you at the subgroup meetings, they take tasks from our

national management team meetings, they also meet with many of the other organisations, outside companies and the statutory services and get on with it. Please don't underestimate how much work they do and what a difference they make to the organisation. It's the members of the management team that hold MREW together.

The next few months we have a lot on. The executive officers will need to meet and guide the new CIO through the policies of mountain rescue, and we have some! The regional chairs need to guide you, the trustees and the management team through the review process. Penny and Al need to manage round five of the Libor funding. It sounds like the operations group have their hands full with rolling out the new incident reporting system, and the major issue we have getting helicopters to set training days.

I'm pleased to report we have a new equipment officer in Paul Smith, joining the team to help with some of these tasks. And I hope by now you've heard from the AGM that I gave the meeting two years' notice of standing down from the chair's role, (that will be fifty years in MR, that's enough), so another job for the CIO trustees in finding my replacement. That's one job I am not leading!



'Simon! They won't let me anywhere near the vehicle!' © Mike France.

I will finish this report by letting you into a conversation I had the other weekend when a team member said to me, 'I have been in MR for about fifteen years. It's changed so much in the last five years'.

Change can be hard and it can be a waste of time for some. I really hope you see what I see. Mountain rescue HAS changed and for the better. In a dynamic organisation there will always be things to do, things that could be done better. If we stand still, change will continue to happen and we won't be driving that change, it will come from others.

Finally, can I take you back to a statement made earlier in this report, when I meet with others, they make comment about our profile and professionalism. You do a great job. 🍷

PHONEFIND FACILITY NOW AVAILABLE IN SARCALL

May saw the launch of the new PhoneFind facility in SARCALL, aimed at helping the recipient get the best possible location data sent to their mobile phone, together with informing them of the simple steps to using PhoneFind, including how to deal with any failure cases.

Key features include:

- Active guidance and simple feedback displayed on the target phone screen
- A neat method of improving the accuracy of the location process on the target phone
- Automatic population of the selected SARCALL

incident log with all stages of the phone location process, including the hit location, all time-stamped

- Emails sent to inform the initiating user and team leader group about the send, delivery and location detect events together with detailed location coordinate information
- Tight integration into SARCALL
- Location positions displayed in both MRMAP and SARCALL mapping.

You will find the new PhoneFind button on your team home page. That button launches a new mobile-friendly web page in which you can select the open incident log to be auto-populated and, if required, the MRMAP Radio IDs. The target phone

number is entered (UK and international formats supported) and the form submitted. This sends an SMS with a time-expiring web link to the target phone. When the recipient clicks the web link in the SMS, simple dynamic guidance of the process is shown on the phone screen, together with the final grid location and accuracy values. The data is sent back to SARCALL which processes the information. The 'hit' location is then shown in MRMAP if the team has radio IDs stored in SARCALL, and shown in SARCALL mapping with a marker. The phone location is also recorded in the required open incident log and detailed in an email to the initiating user and relevant team leader group, if configured.

I chose to do my PHTLS course with Medskills Academy because their courses are accredited, specific to practice and take into account the latest research. They adapt courses to the participant level of experience, which nicely bridges the gap between mountain rescue and the professional health care industry. As a registered paramedic and a member of mountain rescue, I found the PHTLS invaluable. It's not only allowed me a great CPD opportunity, it enabled me to learn, consolidate and develop my skills in a safe, positive and non-judgemental environment."

Registered paramedic and mountain rescue team member

To find out more, go to medskillsacademy.co.uk





DiARY of an EDITOR

Luddite at Large *Loosely translated as:*
The Things I Do For Mountain Rescue



Birthday wishes and a bimbling bee at Buckingham Palace...

Note to self: Next time the chairman gives you the heads-up that a Royal invitation's coming your way, and you should wear your mountain rescue kit (which, in case you didn't already know, I don't have, not being an operational team member and all that), after which, you and the (also female) financial director each enjoy multiple sleepless nights and endless telephone discussions about what exactly constitutes 'smart' female mountain rescue kit, fit for a palace, and where we should procure it... next time – should there ever be a next time – get thee on a shopping expedition! Immediately. Just in case. Don't hesitate. Not for a moment.



Because then, when some of the other (male) invitees declare their intention to wear the 'lounge suit' detailed on the invitation (foreswearing the 'morning coat'), subtly accessorised with a mountain rescue tie (rather than the not-so subtle, in-your-face branded but perhaps not-really-garden-party-material hill kit), and the chairman tells you, when there are zero shopping opportunities left available before the Big Day, that you CAN, after all, 'wear your posh frock', you (and the financial director) can avoid going into a tail spin about what you're going to wear!

S'okay for the chaps. Open up the wardrobe door, pull out a fits-any-occasion lounge suit, throw on a white shirt, remind yourself how to tie a Windsor

(natch), quick spit and polish in the footwear department and you're done. Suited, booted, ready to mingle — come sunshine or rain (because, as the invitation also states: 'This is an outdoor event. Please dress accordingly.')

But when the invitation says 'Ladies: Day dress (with hat optional)' and you've googled 'What do I wear at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party?' and the screen fills with hats and fascinators and chic little dresses and tottery heels, an explosion of colour, a riot of posh frocks... and up to that moment you'd been planning (reluctantly, I have to admit) to toe the party line in a black suit, white top and pin-on MR badge... there's so much more to think about.

Hats for one thing. Do we? Do we not? (Don't get me started on fascinators!) And shoes. Comfy or sassy (bearing in mind we have to schlepp not just across London but further afield), strappy (for which read 'egg slicer'), peep toe or full-on court?

And then there's the colour-matched bag — small enough to be demure (and get through the police cordon), big enough to house a bit of cash, credit card, travel tickets, lippie, a hankie (monogrammed cotton, of course, but tissues as well), mobile phone, entry card and two forms of ID (one photographic). Maybe a packet of wet wipes (sticky things those cakes, in the heat). Small umbrella (colour-matched to my dress,

naturally). And, finally — for me at any rate — notepad and pen.

And what if it rains at this 'outdoor event'? Or suddenly blows cold? Jacket? Wrap? Thermal underwear? Arghh!!!

Well, faced with all that, there really was only one thing for it: dig out the wedding dress!

So that's what I did. And, for the record, the financial director (who happened to be a guest at said wedding) dug out her outfit too.

So there we were, on Tuesday 22 May, me (Magazine Editor), Penny Brockman (aforementioned Financial Director) and Jody Dyer (Director of Development), with a collection of MREW officers (Mike France, Mike Margeson, Mike Greene, Mark Lewis, Andy Simpson, Simon Thresher, Julian Walden, Al Read and Dave Close), all scrubbed up and ready to party. Us and the other 5988 guests. My that garden's big.

Officially, it was 'The Prince of Wales's 70th Birthday Patronage Celebration in the gardens of Buckingham Palace'.

Far more significantly, it was also the first public engagement of our most recently-wed Royal couple, Harry and Meghan. The one where Harry nearly got stung by a bee and Meghan stifled a giggle.

Guests included members from 386 of His Royal Highness's patronages and 20 of his military associations, alongside representatives of the emergency

services, mountain rescue and the RNLI.

The sun was shining, the sky was blue, the cucumber and mint sandwiches were de-lish, as were the cakes. And the lawn... well, let's just say it was welcome relief, once we'd finally met our hosts, to throw off the heels and sink our screaming feet into its cool, green perfection. And that wasn't just us girls. Rumour has it that one of our officers developed a blister, so unused is he to wearing 'proper shoes' — but then he probably couldn't throw off the footwear with quite such abandon. Wouldn't have been right.

We were gathered there to celebrate the work of all the Prince's charities, including the Prince's Trust which, since its foundation in 1976, has supported over 826,000 young people.

In 2009, mountain rescue had attended a similar garden party, in which Prince Charles brought together heads of the nation's leading uniformed youth groups to form the first collaborative network for uniformed youth. Some of those youngsters were there to help this year, alongside a number of the cadets and emergency services personnel who were first responders after the bombing at the Manchester Arena on 22 May 2017.

Our own patron, the Duke of Cambridge, incidentally, was in Manchester that day for a service of remembrance at Manchester Cathedral, along with families of the victims, the

injured, the first responders to the scene, civic leaders and other national figures.

Harry's warm and witty speech — either side of the bee — paid tribute to the inspirational work his father has done, over forty years.

He spoke of the inspiration his brother and he continue to draw from their father's 'selfless drive to affect change, whether that is to improve the lives of those on the wrong path, to save an important piece of our heritage or to protect a species under threat'.

Finally, Harry hoped he might be the first to wish his 'Pa' a 'Happy Birthday', teasing him for celebrating his birthday six months ahead of the November date, adding 'How very royal!'

Sadly for us — with our tottery heels and hot feet — standing patiently in line for a very long time to meet the newlyweds, it was not to be. Harry and Meghan spoke to a few small groups before making a quiet exit (we later learned), leaving Charles and Camilla to engage with the crowds, flanked by men in morning coats and Yeomen with impressive facial hair and ladies with clipboards. And engage they certainly did.

I think I can safely say, a great day was had by all. It was an honour to be asked. And what better opportunity could there possibly be to bring the wedding frock out of mothballs?

Oh, and happy birthday Sir! 🐝

Opposite page: Top: In the gardens at Buckingham Palace: Left to right: Al Read (Training Officer), Dave Close (Secretary), Mike France (Chairman), Mark Lewis (ICT Officer), Jody Dyer (Director of Development), Penny Brockman (Financial Director), Judy Whiteside (Editor), Julian Walden (Assistant Secretary), Simon Thresher (Vehicles Officer) and Andy Simpson (Press Officer).

Opposite page: Bottom left: Cucumber and mint sandwiches and suitably-crested chocolate cake.

Above: Left to right: Yeoman of the Guard, the newly appointed Duke of Sussex, Yeoman and 'Morning Suits' and the Prince of Wales.

Images courtesy of Judy Whiteside, Penny Brockman, Simon Thresher and Mark Lewis.



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The Kestrel 5500 adds wind direction including crosswind, headwind and tailwind calculations, vital information for rescue helicopter teams and ground crew. Data can be shared using LiNK (BluetoothLE) or via USB Data transfer interface, useful for reports and later analysis, ensuring the safety and speed of all those involved in a rescue operation.

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Images courtesy of Scottish Mountain Rescue, Mourne MRT and Judy Whiteside.



SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE IRELAND ALSO JOINED IN THE FUN AT THE PALACE...

Moira Weatherstone (SMR Secretary), Jonah Jones (Skye MRT), Denis Gallagher (Assynt MRT), pictured left to right, above left, were amongst those who made the trip south to represent Scottish Mountain Rescue. Robert McCutcheon (Galloway MRT) also attended the garden party.

Meanwhile, Jeremy Purdy (Secretary), Martin McMullan (Training Officer) and Ian McCracken (Equipment Officer), all from the Mourne MRT (pictured left to right, above centre), were just three of many from Northern Ireland there to enjoy the sunshine.

GDPR: DEREK BROWN

Friday 25 May finally saw the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) come into force. This will be the final update from me as the project will end and it will be business as usual.



Phase 2 of the MREW GDPR project is almost complete as all the support materials we agreed to produce have been provided to team data protection leads within the Moodle learning environment. We were slightly behind schedule in placing these as the ICO modified their guidance on the appointment of data protection officers just as we were about to publish our first documents.

The change in guidance led us to remove the requirement for all teams to have a nominated Data Protection Officer (DPO) to fill the mandatory role defined in GDPR. Instead we introduced a Data Protection Lead (DPL) role for each team to ensure that all data protection correspondence and issues are directed to a clearly responsible person to ensure they can handle any Subject Access Requests or Freedom of Information requests that come to the team and have a legal time limit for the team to respond. All teams should have their nominated DPL stated within their team page on the MREW Members area of the website.

We have provided a support forum within Moodle to enable people to ask questions or clarify existing guidance. This proved useful to draw out things that teams needed some clarification. Thanks to those who raised the questions as I am sure the responses were useful to others.

We also carried out initial information assurance work on key information systems such as SARCALL and D4H and provided interim reports to MREW trustees. A prioritised list of additional information systems and services will be included in the final phase of the project. We won't be able to provide assurance for every system in use by MREW teams. However, we aim to cover the key systems and services used by most, if not all, teams.

Many thanks to those who have assisted the project in making things happen for us, namely Penny Brockman for proving strategic relations with MREW trustees, Umar Sabat for his expertise in providing the GDPR products, Al Read (Training Officer) for his support with making Moodle work for us and Mark Lewis (ICT Officer) for his continued support in whatever we asked. All very much appreciated.

ICT AND COMMS: MARK LEWIS

Radios: The central purchasing of radio equipment for teams across England and Wales has gone well, with some teams increasing their allocated MREW funding to take advantage of the available bulk purchasing. This in turn has helped with additional orders. We continue to work closely with Simoco on improving the product. As with any radio manufacturer, firmware and software updates are released a few times a year to add enhancements and fix bugs as with any digital device.

All teams have now migrated to the new bandplan and the transition appears to have gone smoothly so thanks to the regional officers for helping make this happen. Many teams are moving with technology and exploring the use of the digital. It offers great benefits and should be considered by all teams.

Please remember:

- UKSAR and MREW only recognises the Tier II DMR standard to enable interoperability
- Repeaters MUST be authorised by UKSAR before installation
- Radios must not be used in digital mode whilst in Scotland
- You must also have the full suite of analogue channels in your radios.



Moodle: Scottish Mountain Rescue is now on board with Moodle, taking advantage of the excellent Casualty Care material. If you need access to the Casualty Care material please register at <http://goo.gl/forms/2tahjSoohburN4qf2> and allow 5-7 days for activation.

NB: Members often try to re-register as they've forgotten they already have! In this case, try using the forgotten password link. Your username is the email address you registered with.

Keeping Track

A year in the life...

#MREWDISCOVERY

UPDATE MREW

A SPOT OF EASTER SNOW AND A BIT OF BEER BARREL ROLLING
On duty with North of Tyne team members at the Hedley on the Hill Barrel Race in which the first to lug a nine-gallon barrel of beer one mile up Currock Hill in Northumberland gets to claim a share
Easter Monday 2018



AND AWAY TO CORNWALL... Taking in the views at some of the most iconic landmarks in Cornwall both above and under ground. **10 June 2018**



ROTHBURY AND HEXHAM Visiting community paramedics and coming under the scrutiny of North East Ambulance Service then on to a POLSA meeting in Newcastle. Just another day at the office... **12 April 2018**



IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING... Holman's test mine, Mullion Cove Coastal Retreat and Lizard Point



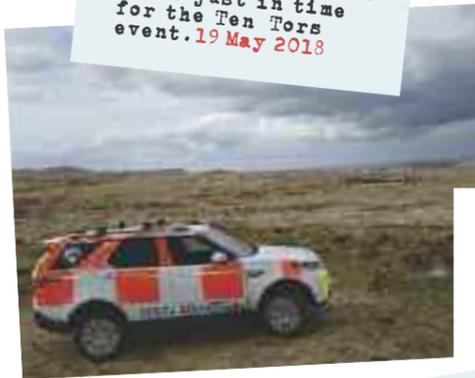
COLIN THE OTTER goes for a test drive... **21 April 2018**



Images courtesy of: North of Tyne, Dartmoor Ashburton, North Dartmoor and Cornwall teams, via Facebook #MREWDISCOVERY

Right: Colin the Otter, out and about in the county © Dartmoor Ashburton.

NORTH DARTMOOR TEAM took delivery of the Disco just in time for the Ten Tors event. **19 May 2018**



FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT... A far more comfortable way to travel than one of our two Defenders with the air suspension soaking up the bumps. **North Dartmoor MRT**



TEMPLAR WAY Ashburton team members helped out with a sponsored walk in aid of Shaldon Primary School so Colin the Otter demanded his driver take him along for a royal visit... **May 2018**





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UPDATE MREW

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Preparing for crisis management and emergency communications

SALLY SEED MEDIA TRAINER & PR CONSULTANT

I'm talking here about the preparation for a crisis or an emergency that could threaten the reputation of your team, not the daily life of mountain rescue, dealing with crises and emergencies on the hill!

We've always struggled to come up with this sort of scenario for media training — MR volunteers are almost always the good guys in a crisis — but a few recent incidents have made me realise there's a shift in attitude, especially on social media, and teams need to be prepared to be on the back foot too.

The sorts of issues that could be picked up and turned against teams are injuries to team members during training, road traffic incidents involving MR vehicles, delays to arrival at a casualty that then create online complaints, even prioritising calls so there's a perceived lack of response to a lost or injured animal.

The first rule is to be honest and consistent — and that means you've got to take the lead within your team and be really clear on what can be said and by whom, whether that's on social media (personal or official), or to a calling journalist. My rule of thumb is to consider the court oath to tell the truth and nothing but the truth but you do NOT have to volunteer the whole truth.

The second rule is to focus on being prepared rather than taking the initiative. Once your team members know what can be said and who the spokespeople are, the main thing is to agree a standby statement, including the key facts, that you'll use if asked. This needs to address key questions such as who, what, where and when — but not the why and how!

A standby statement is just those key facts and an acknowledgement that something's happened if you're asked or if there are obvious online rumours. That's not the same as issuing a press release with the full story and creating interest if you'd rather not.

Finally anticipate the questions you could be asked if the news gets out — especially the ones that you don't want to be asked!

For a vehicle incident, this might be, 'Has this ever happened before?' when you know there's been at least one other incident in recent months. Your reply doesn't necessarily have to answer the question directly as long as it's relevant and says something useful. That might be that it's been one of the busiest winters ever for the team and the vehicles have been out in all sorts of conditions, taking some knocks in the process. Your priority is always safety — of casualties and of team members — and driver training is a regular part of your programme to keep incidents to a minimum.

Criticism over delays in reaching a casualty can create questions about response times and, from your team's point of view, the answer needs to concentrate on the number of volunteers required, where they're travelling from (work, home etc), and how long it takes to ensure everyone's fully equipped and then get to the casualty.

You're quite within your rights not to want to comment on a specific incident but use it as an opportunity to encourage people to call 999 for the police and ask for mountain rescue as soon as they know there's a significant problem as every bit of time counts. Similarly, if avoidable call-outs have

been an issue in your area, you could use the prepared response as an opportunity to show how unnecessary call-outs create problems and can delay teams in reaching the really important cases. But remember: the truth and nothing but the truth. Don't use this as an excuse if it wasn't really the case.

Remember that truth is absolutely necessary if you're to maintain trust in your communications. So, it really does come down to being prepared. Specifically:

- Prepared to manage your team's communications closely
- Prepared to respond to an enquiry or criticism with something brief and factual
- Prepared to answer the questions that might follow.

One final bit of advice — and it relates to the animal search and rescue criticism. So far, this has only really cropped up on social media and, as far as I am aware, teams have taken the line of not responding, enabling other followers to make their case and letting the whole thing calm down and disappear. That silence needs to be a conscious decision too but, in cases like this, it is just as valid as a statement or response.

I'd be very interested to hear from teams with examples of this sort of communications challenge — and keen to learn from your experiences, so please get in touch. ☺

IT REALLY DOES COME DOWN TO BEING PREPARED



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Throughout the year, members of MREW have raised a number of questions and concerns about their policies and the type of cover required. As your broker of choice, Integro is here to answer your queries and below are some answers to the most frequently posed.

In respect of the severe snowy conditions in certain parts of the UK earlier in the year we received the following question:

Q. Does our insurance give any cover when asked by the driver of a third party vehicle to try and move it, from the position it is stuck to a safer location?

A. If the driver of the stuck vehicle simply wants the vehicle moved, there is no cover under the MREW motor insurance policy should any damage be caused.

However, if the stuck vehicle is obstructing the path of a search and rescue vehicle on its way to a search area, then it needs to be moved to a safer location. If damage is then caused to the obstructing vehicle whilst being moved there is insurance in place.

Examples of other repeated questions:

Q. How do we insure our radios?

A. If the radio is permanently fitted in the vehicle, it will be covered by the vehicle insurance. It is essential that we are advised of the value of all items that are permanently fitted so the insured value of the vehicle reflects its true worth in the event of a claim.

However, if the radio is portable, then it should be included in the value of the equipment you separately insure on an 'all risks' basis.

It is worth mentioning that the 'insured value' of any vehicle should include all conversion costs and in the event of an insurance claim where the vehicle may be badly damaged/possible write off, evidence of such value will be essential.

Q. We are considering the use of drones. What are the insurance implications and typical costs.

A. Each operator/pilot will need to be PfCO trained and/or CAA certified. If the drones are owned by individual team members, the insurance will only cover the drones whilst being used for search and rescue activities and not for any private or recreational flying. Insurance would apply whilst the operator/pilot is completing their training and obtaining the CAA Certificate. The insurance cost is twofold:

1. Damage to the Drone. This depends on the value of the drone. Assuming a value of £1000, the annual premium would be £70 + tax.
2. Liability whilst operating the drone. To provide £1m limit of indemnity the annual premium would be £100 + tax for each operator/pilot.

THESE ANSWERS ARE GENERAL. IF YOU WANT ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OR HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS PLEASE EMAIL US AT INSURANCE@MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK

UPDATE MREW



Princes' Charities Day heads for the Yorkshire Dales

Since Prince William became our patron in 2007, Mountain Rescue England and Wales has worked with the Princes' Charities Forum to enable sick or disadvantaged young people and their families to take part in a fun-filled day of outdoor activities. The Forum comprises the charities who share the patronage of Princes William and Harry and the Duchess of Cambridge.

Each year, the event has been hosted by a different region and this year it was teams from North Yorkshire, with Upper Wharfedale, CRO and the Scarborough and Ryedale team doing the honours. Some 36 young people from Centrepont, Child Bereavement, Place2be and WellChild headed to Nidderdale, along with carers and family members.

'We knew that the lives of some of these young people are dominated by hospital visits, with very limited opportunities to enjoy adventures in the countryside,' says Sara Spillet, UWFRAs lead member for the event. 'We set about producing a day they'd all remember with a real mountain rescue call-out theme.'

'We decided on Nidderdale and using How Stean Gorge and Beverley Park Outdoor Education and Activities Centres. A huge bonus came our way at How Stean Gorge, when retired UWFRAs member Stan Beer and his wife Anne, the owners, not only gave us the centre's facilities and instructors free, but included free meals as well. Transport between the centres was provided free by the Upper Wharfedale Venturer and the Wharfedale Packhorse buses and team member David Nelson drove one of the buses.'

The day was set up as a mountain rescue search and rescue operation with many tasks and problems along the way which needed dealing with before they could move on to the next phase. The final stage and success was rewarded with hot chocolate and other treats they had to heat on a portable stove to finish off the exercise. Some of the older ones had tasks involved in canoeing which included working with the swiftwater specialists in the teams. Emergency vehicles from the fire service and police added to the adventure.

'It was an amazing day,' adds Sara, 'and a huge learning opportunity to work with these remarkable young people who put so much effort and enthusiasm into what was such a special day for them.'

'We live very privileged lives compared to the people who attended and it was such a wonderful day for us as well, seeing the enjoyment they got from the experience. We would all readily volunteer for when our turn comes round again.'





Professional is not a label you give yourself...

It's a description you hope others will apply to you. Calder Valley team recently took the opportunity to undergo the peer review process and the three peer reviewers, from Central Beacons (South Wales), Llanberis (North Wales) and Swaledale (North Yorkshire), spent a weekend with the team. *(Based on an article about their experience, in the Halifax Courier).*

TIM INGRAM CALDER VALLEY SRT

Spread over three days of a weekend in April, running from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon, the review is designed to be an interrogative experience, based on a set of 96 questions and subsequent coaching interactions, culminating with a simulated call-out to demonstrate the team in action. The ultimate purpose of the review is to 'hold a mirror' up for

teams to assess, evaluate and grow from constructive feedback from fellow mountain rescuers.

Tim Cain (peer reviewer from Swaledale MRT) explains, 'My vision is that peer review becomes the gold standard culture of continuous improvement within and between rescue teams.'

Despite the peer review, CVSRT obviously remained available for call-outs to assist the emergency services.

At 04:26am on the Friday morning (prior to the review), CVSRT members received a request from West Yorkshire Police to assist with an on-going search for a high risk vulnerable person who was reported missing in the Wyke area.

Fifteen team members plus search dog Meg assisted the police with searching and clearing areas of interest for six hours with no conclusion. The missing person was later found safe by a member of the public, outside the search area.

On Sunday, just as members were concluding the peer review, the team was alerted by Yorkshire Ambulance Service to an incident involving a walker who had slipped on a moorland track at Goose Green near Wainstalls, sustaining a lower leg

injury. Thirty-five team members (and one peer reviewer) responded immediately and made their way to the location whilst SARLOC was used to

comfortable, the lady was packaged and stretchered off the moors and handed over to the ambulance crew. Whilst waiting for the ambulance to

'MY VISION IS THAT PEER REVIEW BECOMES THE GOLD STANDARD CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WITHIN AND BETWEEN RESCUE TEAMS' TIM CAIN, PEER REVIEW LEAD

pinpoint the casualty's exact location.

Within 20 minutes, the team had located the casualty, provided pain relief and box splinted her leg. Once

arrive on scene, Meg, with handler Pete Farnell, provided additional casualty care (pet therapy), which had a notable affect in reducing the casualty's pain score. Well done Meg!

CVSRT Chairman, David Warden concluded, 'Even though the peer review weekend with two call-outs was a challenging process, it was worthwhile and enjoyable, and we hope to see the benefit in the coming months and years. Whilst the weekend was rigorous, that was probably the easy bit. The next step is to receive the written feedback from the reviewers and then for the team to analyse and apply any recommendations into our procedures and, hopefully, continually improve the teams effectiveness.' 🐾



Opposite page: Peer review in action. This photo: Call-out to Wainstalls © CVSRT.

Four seasons in one day...

CLAIRE KEY BRECON MRT

On the weekend of 9-11 February, Brecon team members welcomed Tim Cain, Ben Carter (Calder Valley SRT), John Bamforth (Wasdale MRT) and Dave Goddard (there as an observer from Northern Ireland), for their peer review.

When the concept of the peer review process was initially discussed at the November MREW meeting in Preston 2016, with teams encouraged to take up the offer, Brecon team leader, Nigel Dawson, proposed the idea to the entire team. With the firm support of the membership, a committee decision was made to engage with the process.

'The initial questionnaire covering all areas of team management and operation took a lot of work,' said Brecon chairman Duncan Forbes, who took on the unenviable task of collating the information and completing the questionnaire. 'But it was well structured and covered the right areas'.

The weekend itself was divided into distinct sections. On the Friday evening, a small meeting between the team leadership, team officers and peer reviewers discussed the structure of the weekend and some of the

management sections of the questionnaire. Saturday was an open session to which all team members were invited, something unique in the experience of the visitors. The presence of such a broad spectrum of team members enabled the reviewers to understand perceptions of team procedure from many different perspectives, through non-biased interrogation of the areas covered in the initial questionnaire.

For many, the initial reaction was that the team was being tested, a natural response that started to decrease as everyone got to know each other better. The team was continually reassured that the process was not a test or scrutiny, rather a facilitation of its own internal review of procedures and practices.

It took time to adjust and become comfortable but, on the whole this was achieved by the end of an intense and

exhausting day in which many Post-it notes were utilised! Reviewers and team members then retired to the local pub for food and a chance to socialise and discover more about each other and our respective teams in a more relaxed environment.

Sunday was more relaxed and within the realms of comfort and familiarity for all involved, despite the Brecon Beacons doing their best to demonstrate to our visitors every type of weather in its repertoire, from bright sunshine to near blizzard conditions.

This was a practical search and rescue exercise designed to demonstrate as wide a range of the team's operational competencies as possible. The exercise provided opportunities for more relaxed discussion/chat with peer reviewers, offering team members insight into other teams' working practices and procedures and an opportunity to ask questions pertinent to them

as individuals within a wider MR context. The day seemed like a mixture of inter-team working, being observed and to some degree assessed, all mixed together, but it was an enjoyable and informative experience for all involved.

The team appreciated the recognition of our many 'good working practices', primarily, that Brecon MRT is inclusive, with good team cohesion — demonstrated by the high percentage of team members from all levels of time served and experience who attended either the admin-based discussion day or the practical exercise and, in many cases, both.

Brecon was recognised as working well as a team, fully integrating new members and including all the members in the ongoing development of the team. This firm structure supports our eagerness to work with other

Right: The Brecon Beacons demonstrated every weather condition they could from bright sunshine to snow © Brecon MRT.





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teams in South Wales, and the development of inter-agency relationships, particularly in regard to our extensive major incident experience.

The feedback form records that the team is considered 'developed' or 'highly developed' in the areas covered by the review but requires development in underground rescue. The team has no real plans to develop in this area as South Wales is expertly served by colleagues in South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue team who are also part of the South Wales Search and Rescue Association alongside Brecon and the other South Wales teams. Expanding on the once-a-year joint training with cave rescue is a possibility we would be keen to explore.

The process continues. Peer review is not one weekend but adds the impetus to continue ongoing reflection and review of team processes. The information reported back after the weekend was allocated to one team member, in Brecon's case a relatively new team member with experience from outside MREW of similar management tools. This was collated and action points formed. A list of operational tasks were allocated to officers for immediate implementation. For example, stretcher straps to aid dealing with a vomiting stretcher-bound casualty being transported in the team vehicle. A plan for policy development, for consideration by leadership and committee from which project leads and working groups can be identified and tasked has also been outlined and is being developed.

'As a forward-looking team, Brecon were



Below: Peer review Brecon: definitely a positive experience! © Brecon MRT.

eager to participate in the MREW peer review project,' says Nigel Dawson. 'It was reassuring to have independent acknowledgement of areas in which we are excelling and good to expose problems that need addressing along with signposting to good practice to help develop the team strategy moving forwards.'

The team would like to thank Tim, Ben, John and Dave for their time and expertise in facilitating this process. This was a positive experience for the many team members involved and we hope they enjoyed the time they spent with the team, and indeed, their stay in Brecon. ☺

incidents

January to March 2018

Lake District	North Wales	Central Beacons
Cockermouth 7	Aberdyfi 3	Longtown 4
Coniston 5	Aberglaslyn 7	Western Beacons 1
Duddon and Furness 12	Llanberis 34	South West
Kendal 13	NEWSAR 24	Avon & Somerset 9
Keswick 3	Ogwen Valley 35	SARA 7
Kirkby Stephen 24	South Snowdonia 4	Yorkshire Dales
Langdale Ambleside 15	Peak District	CRO 13
Patterdale 9	Derby 18	Upper Wharfedale 16
Penrith 32	Glossop 13	Search Dogs
Wasdale 9	Woodhead 11	England 5
Mid-Pennine	Peninsula	Lakes 3
Bolton 4	Dartmoor Okehampton 6	South Wales 2
Bowland Pennine 1	Dartmoor Plymouth 1	Wales 3
Calder Valley 2	Dartmoor Tavistock 12	RAF
North East	Exmoor 11	Leeming 1
Northumberland NP 14	South Wales	Total 459
Scarborough & Ryedale 14	Brecon 33	
Teesdale & Weardale 1		

NOTE: IF YOUR TEAM'S INCIDENTS ARE MISSING FROM THESE STATS, PLEASE CONTACT THE STATISTICS OFFICER VIA STATISTICSOFFICER@MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK

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TEAM TALK



APRIL: SEVERN AREA TEAM MEMBERS HOST MREW OFFICERS FOR CLIFF RESCUE EXERCISE

As well as land search, the team operates a small fleet of inshore lifeboats, serving the Severn Estuary (not covered by the RNLI), and holds inland water rescue craft and SRT teams at its five rescue stations – with some team members solely in the land team, some solely boat crew, and others in both.

The cliffs at Wintours Leap, Chepstow and at Symonds Yat are some of the most important in the West Country and popular with climbers. Whilst the majority of call-outs are for missing persons, SARA has dealt with many casualties on these cliffs and trains there regularly. Last summer an injured member of a youth climbing group was the subject of a dramatic winching operation through the tree canopy.

To demonstrate the team's competence in technical rope rescue the exercise in Woodcroft Quarry, in the Wye Valley, involved a fallen climber (SARA's long-suffering manikin), who had suffered a badly broken leg. Mike France (MREW Chairman), Mike Margeson, Al Read and Julian Walden watched as two casualty carers were lowered to the casualty, followed by a stretcher, then a raising operation to the cliff top. Most of the cliffs in the Wye Valley are accessed by road from the top, so raises are frequently practised. Once 'Beachley Bob' had been rescued and carried out, there was a hot debrief over tea and biscuits.

Not surprisingly, there was very useful feedback for the team. Mike Margeson challenged them to shave at least 30 minutes off the rescue. Al Read challenged them to use more lightweight and flexible systems. The JESIP principles were identified as crucial, in particular the need to work together with neighbouring teams.

'This was an important step for SARA,' said Mark Carwardine, SARA chairman. 'We are grateful to the MREW officers for making themselves available, with the considerable travel times involved. This exercise has given us a solid and useful basis from which to further improve our capabilities.'

'SARA is also benefiting from the input of external professionals, with a mindset that everything can be improved. We welcome the opportunity to share practice and would appreciate any possibility for representatives of our team to visit other teams to this end.'

Top: Craig Holmes with the stretcher © SARA.



APRIL: SOUTH SNOWDONIA TEAM OPENS DOOR TO NATIONAL TYRE DEAL

Through their ongoing sponsorship from Cooper Tyres, the South Snowdonia team has opened the door for a national tyre deal with Cooper Tyres Europe, so teams across England and Wales can benefit from discounted tyres for team vehicles.

The relationship between Cooper Tyres and the team began five years ago. Ken Griffiths, the team's vehicle officer and a keen off-road driver, already knew the product well and approached the company. Cooper Tyres were happy to oblige and supplied the team with a set of four Discoverer STT tyres for the team's Land Rover. Cooper Tyres continues to support the team and, following various conversations with Ken and Griff James-Evans (NWMRA Vehicles Officer), they are happy to extend their support of mountain rescue with their brand – more on this to follow in due course.

Meanwhile, in early June... Team members were sickened by the attempted theft of their Defender doors when they discovered all the door hinges had been loosened on their Land Rover, presumably in preparation for a return visit to steal them. North Wales Police was notified and regular nightly patrols of the team's base have been put in place to help safeguard the vehicles. This has highlighted the urgency of moving forward with the construction of the planned new vehicle garage and stores, currently in the early stages of planning permission with Snowdonia National Park.

Above: South Snowdonia team vehicle © SSSRT.

APRIL: KNIT ONE TODAY...

COMRU members were delighted to get their new Petzl Boreo helmets with Duo Z2 headlamps in April. All apart from young Anna, that is.



Seems caving suppliers don't yet cater for eleven-month-olds! Fortunately for Anna, fellow COMRU member Tess Witheridge came to the rescue with a pair of knitting needles and a considerable amount of talent to produce an (almost) exact likeness in wool in time for Anna's first birthday.

'Anna enjoys wearing her helmet around her cardboard box cave system,' says dad Matt, 'and it is the only item of headwear that doesn't get instantly thrown from her head onto the ground. I'm certain when she's old enough she will thank Tess herself, but in the meantime — thanks Tess!!'

Above right: Anna and Matt Nightingale © Adrian Swift.

TEAM TALK

Crimewatch catches up with SRMRT

IAN HUGILL SCARBOROUGH & RYEDALE MRT



It started with the inevitable email in early May: 'I'm one of the directors on the BBC Crimewatch Roadshow and we're currently considering the potential of filming an item with Scarborough and Ryedale MRT for our new series. We're particularly interested in water rescues since we've covered caving and climbing rescues in previous programmes. Would it be possible to have an initial chat on the phone to discuss possibilities?'

There followed a quick call with Simon from the BBC where we discussed:

- Twenty percent of our incidents involve working in or around water: good
- The York floods: too hard to set up
- North Sea tidal surges: too hard to set up
- Slips trips and falls near water: not dramatic enough
- Searches in and around water: not dramatic enough and often resulting in a sad outcome
- Injuries at the base of one of the Fosses (waterfalls) in our area: interesting...

We agreed to take the last scenario further.

About a week later, Simon called back with a request to set something around a water rescue from below a waterfall and an additional request to fully involve the presenter, Michelle Ackerley, in the filming. There was a degree of urgency in that it all had to be filmed one day in the next four weeks while the production crew were in the north east of England.

As with most things mountain rescue this resulted in a frantic period of cat-herding.

The BBC were accommodating in allowing us to film on a weekend. Their best slot was the bank holiday at the end of May — historically one of our business periods and when a good number of team members were on holiday. The first weekend in June was a possibility before the series went out on the Monday but it would involve considerable travel for the BBC.

We settled on 2 June which was not without difficulty as we were already committed to first aid cover for a mountain bike event in Dalby Forest, a street collection

in Scarborough and a need to provide operational cover for our patch. Cleveland MRT kindly offered to provide cover for our area should anything occur which meant that fourteen of our more experienced team members were available to stage a water rescue followed by a technical rope recovery from the valley to the road.

There were a couple of suitable venues but the landowners for the first, and logistically easiest, location were camera shy. We had better luck with access for the second option, which had a considerable carry in and out only, to find out that the access road was closed due to a landslip. We believed we could work around the road closure so settled on Thomason Foss above Beck Hole and are grateful to the Birch Hall public house for allowing us to use their 'back garden'.

There followed a period of visiting risk assessments and BBC best practice to ensure the full involvement of Michelle in the action with as much drama as possible but with minimal risk.

Simon and I worked on a potential script over multiple phone calls and we settled on an interview with Michelle followed by the re-enactment of a previous incident where a girl had suffered a potential spinal injury after 'tomb stoning' from the lip of the foss into the plunge pool below it. This was thus to involve a water rescue, a carry downstream from the pool and then a Tyrolean rope lift to the opposite river bank and then up to more gently sloping ground and the roadside.

The team assembled on the Wednesday evening at the end of May to run through the scenario, provide fresh blood for the resident North Yorkshire midges and test the BeckWatter beer in the Birch Hall. All looked good for the Saturday.

The challenges continued almost to dawn on the day when the local weather forecast predicted thunderstorms and flash flooding early afternoon in the area. A quick rework of the script, to film the action first and the interview second, seemed like a pragmatic compromise.

So at 10:00 am, on 2 June we were joined by Simon and Amy, one of his researchers, from South Wales, Michelle from Cheshire and team members from the four corners of our area. There followed a safely brief and then it was time to kit Michelle out in a dry suit, brief her on her 'injuries' then position her at the base of the foss. Team member Paul Thompson acted as water incident



Safely out of the water. Images © SRMRT.

manager for this phase and Steve Glasper as the advanced skills casualty carer. Other team swiftwater technicians then executed a swimming rescue and vectored recovery to the pool side.

There followed extraction out of the water with spinal protection provided by a MIBS and spinal insert, followed by a medical assessment on the riverbank before extraction via a Bell stretcher and vacmat.

As this carry out was initially in the cold

MAY: GERRY ACKROYD STEPS DOWN AFTER 46 YEARS AS SKYE TEAM LEADER

In his time as leader, Gerry managed over 1,500 call-outs, usually leading from the front in extremely difficult conditions, with countless walkers and climbers brought down from the hills, mostly safe and well, many with severe injuries, and scores who tragically lost their lives.



Gerry became leader in 1972, and quickly began increasing the size and ability of the team. He often practised alone in the Cuillin Hills with the RAF helicopter crews, to establish approaches and winching sites, which led to many audacious rescues. And he borrowed many techniques and equipment from the world of 'rope access' to upgrade the team's rigging systems.

Gerry was a key figure in pushing for the radio networks and government funding which has made such a difference to every Scottish mountain rescue team, and he always fought in the interest of Skye MRT, convinced the team had unique problems to deal with.

In 2010, he was awarded an MBE for services to mountain rescue in the Queen's New Year's honours list. Gerry's wife Joan, and two sons Graham and Mark, have all been team members, and were also praised for their huge support and contribution over the years.

Gerry's deputy for the last ten years, Neil Urquhart, has stepped up as team leader, with James 'Paddy' Stephenson as his deputy.



Gerry guides team members down
© Heavy Whalley.



© DSRT Tavistock.

APRIL: TAVISTOCK TEAM CELEBRATES FIFTY YEARS WITH A GRAND DINNER

It was a special night for Dartmoor SRT (Tavistock), when they hung up their red jackets, polished shoes which were not walking boots and tamed their windswept hair for an evening in black tie to celebrate their anniversary year.

Just three days and fifty years after the documented first meeting in Tavistock, team members met at the Town Hall for 'fantastic food, beer and dancing'. They were joined by team members of old, a founder member, the team's patron Lord Burnett, the Mayor of Tavistock and other distinguished guests. A fabulous time was had by all, reminiscing call-outs past, with former members bewildered by how things have moved forward.



Above: Tim Cox and Crispin Myerscough with raffle prizes
© BPMRT.

MAY: TEAM SUPPORTS RESCUE BENEVOLENT FUND

The Gladly Solemn Sound Choir gave a concert in Garstang with the proceeds of the ticket sales going to Bowland Pennine MRT.

The £100 raised during the interval from the raffle of prizes provided by team members was donated to the Rescue Benevolent Fund. Team secretary, Crispin Myerscough, who organised the event said, 'As team members, time is already heavily committed to call-outs, training, talks and fundraising, but the raffle enabled two team members to demonstrate the team's continued support of the benevolent fund. Judy Whiteside and Shirley Priestley gratefully accepted the cash on behalf of the fund, at the national meeting in May.

'We've been encouraging teams members to support the fund so this was great news!' says Judy. 'A big thank you to Tim and Crispin and Bowland Pennine team members for their efforts – and indeed to others who are now giving regularly.

'As a separate charity to MREW, the more cash we have in the bank, the more we can help team members when they need it.'



MARCH: BOB UTLEY STEPS DOWN AS CVSRT PRESIDENT

Handing over the reins to president elect Mr David Whitteron, Bob retired in March from a position he has held since 1994.

At a presentation evening at the team's base, Bob was presented with the MREW Long Service Certificate, by Deputy Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Squadron Leader David Dinmore MBE DL RAF (Rtd) and appointed lifetime vice president. Earlier, he had also been awarded a Certificate of Loyal Service by West Yorkshire Police, in recognition of service to Calder Valley SRT. The certificate was presented by Chief Superintendent Dickie Whitehead, on behalf of Chief Constable Dee Collins, with a donation to the team of £2000. During the evening, invited guests and team members enjoyed tributes to Bob from the past team leader Peter Smith OBE and current team leader Ben Carter.

Top right: Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Sqd. Ldr David Dunmore MBE DL RAF (Rtd) with Bob Utley MBE. Top left: CVSRT President Elect David Whitteron. Images © CVSRT/Dave Howarth.



TEAM TALK



APRIL: KIRKBY STEPHEN CHAIR RETIRES FROM THE TEAM AFTER 33 YEARS

One of Kirkby Stephen team's longest-serving members has retired, having served as training officer and treasurer, both for several years, and chairman for the past ten.

Mike Saint was also treasurer of LDSAMRA for the past five years and, for several years, chair of the North Pennines Search and Rescue Coordination Group, a coalition of the various teams working across the North Pennines. At the team's AGM in March, he was elected a vice president, in appreciation of his long and expert service to the team and to mountain rescue as a whole.

Above: Left to right: Adrian Cottrell (KSMRT team leader), Mike Saint and Arthur Littlefair (chairman) © KSMRT.

MAY: FAREWELL SEARCH DOG NELL

It was with great sadness that Calder Valley team announced the passing of search dog Nell who, with handler David Warden, featured so photogenically alongside their team colleagues Ellie and Pepper in our April issue.

Nell had retired on her thirteenth birthday having given over eleven years of service to mountain rescue. The team would like to thank Nell for her many years of dedication and commitment to the team and the community. 'She was an adorable character and will be sorely missed'.

Above: Nell in action © David Warden.

zone in the boulder field below the falls, we pulled in other team members to assist with the carry until the SRT completed the extraction to a flat slab at the side of the beck below the Tyrolean.

At this point, Tony Heap took over as crag master with Jon Bateman and Russ Hayes controlling the dead end and live end of the system respectively. For continuity of care, Steve swapped his PFD for a harness. The rope element involved almost 1km of rope and a significant proportion of the team's technical metalwork and slings. After much hauling of ropes, Steve and Michelle were clear of the valley and Tony was to enjoy his piece to camera running through the names and purpose of each rope in the system.

Throughout, Simon and Amy were rushing

around to get 'just the right' shot while team members not directly involved with the action were providing safety cover and ensuring the cameras, GoPro, radio mics, spare batteries, tripods and kitbags were all in the right place at the right time, or at least close to it. One of our Incident controllers, David Edwards, even found a Crimewatch broly to augment his hill kit.

At the end of the filming of the rescue the rain came but not the forecast thunderstorm, just that steady vertical rain that effectively soaks you through. The result of this was a bizarre interview with Michelle and myself stood in the stream and the camera set up out of the rain under the bridge in the village.

All appeared happy with a long and

successful day's filming and we went on our way. For us, that involved emptying our vehicle into the drying room back at base, and for Michelle, a drive back home to Cheshire before heading south for next week's programme. Simon and Amy were to stay one further day to get some backdrop footage before heading back to South Wales.

While Beck Hole and Goathland ('Heartbeat' country) are two of our hotspots it was a while since we had been to Thomason Foss in anger but clearly our activities had angered the 'slippery rocks gods' and we were back the following day, after hastily repacking the Land Rover, to a 64-year-old lady with a lower leg injury. Thankfully, the location was a little

downstream of the Foss and due to the nature of the injury it was a simple paddle over the stream in the Bell and a sweaty carry up to a waiting ambulance.

Initially Simon had suggested that after the filming we would be invited to join them on the day of broadcast to deliver a brief demonstration on the benefits of group shelters, so I was pleasantly surprised the following Tuesday to take a call to say that the BBC were so impressed with the team they were turning over the whole of the live element of the show on Tuesday 19 June to us and could we arrange a suitable location, five to six team members, two additional short activities to camera and some input from people we had previously assisted! So back to herding cats, and all this in the next

two weeks and for a working morning!

By the time this is in print the show will have aired and teams will have had chance to marvel at what we had achieved or say 'we would not do it that way'. Both equally valid.

And then there was another call from BBC Radio York the same day inviting us to a workshop on the concept of a new Rural Affairs Programme due to air late summer. That may well be the subject of another article!

All this in the (unwritten) job spec of a team PR officer. (MREW media skills trained!). All my own words but without the dedication, professionalism and good humour of the team, plus the kindness of the Birch Hall public house in letting us use their land, none of this would have been possible. ☺



For real the following day © SRMRT.

Combining digital and paper navigation: How new technology can be used alongside your map and compass

DEREK BAIN SENIOR INSTRUCTOR, GLENMORE LODGE

It had been a tough two hours for the lads. They'd navigated through a sensory depriving white out, following compass bearings and counting paces, ploughing through shin-deep snow, tip toeing over icy slabs to finally bump into the rime encrusted summit cairn of Ben Macdui. The effort, both physically and mentally was etched into their rimed-up faces. The training had obviously worked, the map and compass had delivered them accurately on the summit and they were justifiably proud of their new skills. However...

...the low light suggested it was late and it was a long way back. I suggested that I could give them a rest and take over the navigation. They gladly accepted and were keen to see how I would use the GPS to speed our return. Five minutes later and they were looking worried, why was the GPS screen still blank? Suddenly the commitment of their position dawned on them; the challenge of repeating the whole route in reverse wasn't lost on them. They were a long way from home in a very serious location with no back-up. No back-up? I questioned. I pulled out my map and compass.

The GPS, which wasn't working, was potentially a convenient short cut. My real back-up was the map, compass and the skill demonstrated to get to the summit! Soon enough we were back at base without incident.

This happened on a skills training course I was running. It wasn't staged, it happened for real. For some unknown reason the GPS unit could not get satellite reception on the summit of Ben Macdui! An hour later, trying again in a different location, the GPS worked.

TRAD NAV IS THE BACK-UP, GPS IS THE CONVENIENCE. I SUSPECT MANY RESCUES ARE THE RESULT OF PEOPLE USING THE TECHNOLOGY AS THE BACK-UP

However, without the skills of traditional map and compass navigation (trad nav) there is no way we would have found our way off the mountain. This is an important principle. Trad nav is the back-up, GPS is the convenience. I suspect many rescues are the result of

people using the technology as the back-up.

I'm not an expert on GPS or digital navigation. The way I use the technology has evolved naturally through selection pressure on the job. It is not my intention to cover the detail of all the technology available, or even all the possible ways of using the technology, but to identify some important principles and key features that I think are important. When discussing GPS and digital navigation, I am considering hand-held GPS units such as those provided by Garmin, smartphones with GPS function and mapping capability, desktop applications such as Memory Map and Anquet and online internet and app based resources such as Viewranger.

The two main areas I use the technology are Planning and Route finding.

PLANNING

I routinely use my desktop mapping software and online resources for planning. For me the most important feature of desktop mapping software is that it allows printing of map areas and convenient access to different scale maps. Purchasing digital mapping is an economical way of obtaining maps, and gives me flexibility to choose the most appropriate scale for the area, conditions or journey type I'm planning.

For example, I'll print a 1:25 000 scale map if I'm accessing more developed areas, whether urban, farmland, forestry or with lots of water. This will help me identify access areas, farm boundaries, paths, forestry tracks and open access routes more easily. Alternatively, if heading into the Cairngorms in winter I need the contour information, so I'll print a 1:50 000 or 1:40 000 scale map. As well as printing, I can also scrutinise map detail using different scales at the planning stage. This might be to have a close look at steep ground or to identify water features and river crossings. This can inform the nature of the ground underfoot and whether the terrain looks easy to travel over or not and actual navigation tactics. For example, compare the cliff edge and particularly the gully heads on the 1:25 000 and 1:50 000 scale map of Ben Nevis. This informs the tactics and route choice I would take travelling around the summit plateau of Ben Nevis (Figures 1a & b).

Also at the planning stage, I often use the digital map to work out how long a route will take (Figure 2). Obviously guidebooks can give an indication but in a rescue situation we are often not following these kinds of routes. I also plug in information that a guidebook can't know. For example, you may be consistently faster than guidebook estimates, you may be doing it as a big group, or it may be dark and/or challenging winter conditions. These will all influence your speed.

With a little practice you can use your digital mapping software to give you a more accurate estimate. You can plot your route on the digital map and modify the speed the software uses to calculate a route time eg. Use 3km/hr instead of 4km/hr.

I also identify key decision points in the journey, alternative route choices and emergency route choices. These can also easily be checked for time implications. If you have a GPS unit that you intend to use for route-finding on the hill then you can also transfer your planned route to your GPS unit as an aid memoire. There are now plenty of sources of GPS routes or tracks,

including fellow team members. This option seems very easy, however, be aware you still need to carefully check the route and determine if it is suitable for you and your team. Is the route suitable given the forecasted conditions? Is there avalanche hazard? What if you need to return to trad nav? What are the potential hazards on the route? Are there any river crossings? I don't tend to use these programmed routes as I use a smartphone with digital mapping and that provides all I need without the need to download the route.

ROUTE FINDING

This section is written with the assumption that you could follow your entire route in the conditions expected using trad nav. As before, the digital nav is a short cut, your trad nav is your back up. Whether using trad or digital we don't often navigate with the map continuously in hand with a known and accurate position. We memorise sections of route with key relocation features.

Typically, we follow a path until we reach a junction, summit or river crossing, for example. Using trad nav this requires good relocation skills such as scale recognition, contour interpretation and slope aspect use. In difficult situations, this may require a move to prove your location. This all takes time. The simplest use of GPS is probably this. Turning it on and getting a grid reference. On even the most basic handheld units without maps this option is available. However, you then need to transfer possibly a 10-figure grid reference onto a map where six figures is the norm. This is prone to error, sometimes large errors!

As mentioned earlier, I use my smartphone GPS with digital maps, some key points to consider:

- **The first key point** is that my phone is primarily to make calls. The two things I consider important here are waterproofing and battery life. Depending on your phone type and age, battery life may be an issue. I make sure it is fully charged before heading out onto the hill. At home that's simple. Away from home or on extended or overnight trips I take a charger. For waterproofing, I prefer a waterproof hard case but I also occasionally use waterproof bag-type pouches. Be aware you will have to work your device with gloves on. I have become quite good at using my nose, however, you might find that a small stylus will work better!

- **The second key point** is that the digital maps I use are permanently downloaded onto my phone. This means I do not need phone reception to access the maps. They are not online or in cloud storage as it is not guaranteed I will have phone reception to receive the maps. You may have been involved in a rescue due to people either using inappropriate maps or maps that require phone reception to use.

- **The third key point** is that with any technology you need to know how it works, how to set up the functions to suit your device and how to use it! This sounds simple but if you are new to the technology you will need to read the instructions and do a practice walk somewhere non-serious. If all this is

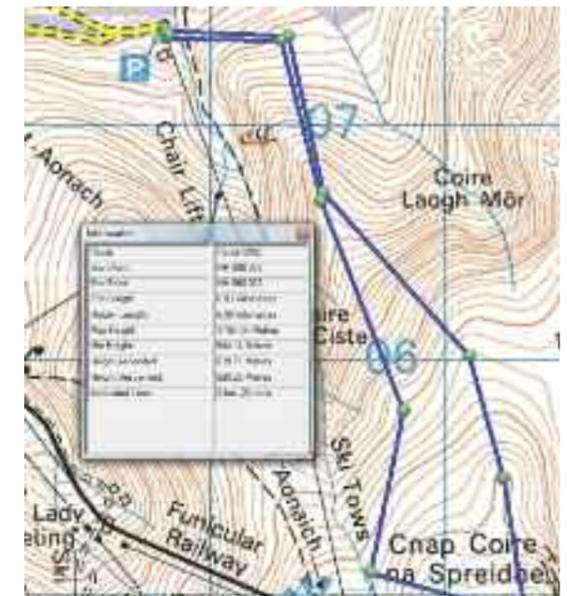


Figure 2: A short route plan using a 1:50 000 scale map. Useful information about the route can be displayed easily. The estimated time in this case is based on 5km/hr plus 1 minute for every 10 metres height gain. This can be changed to suit circumstances.



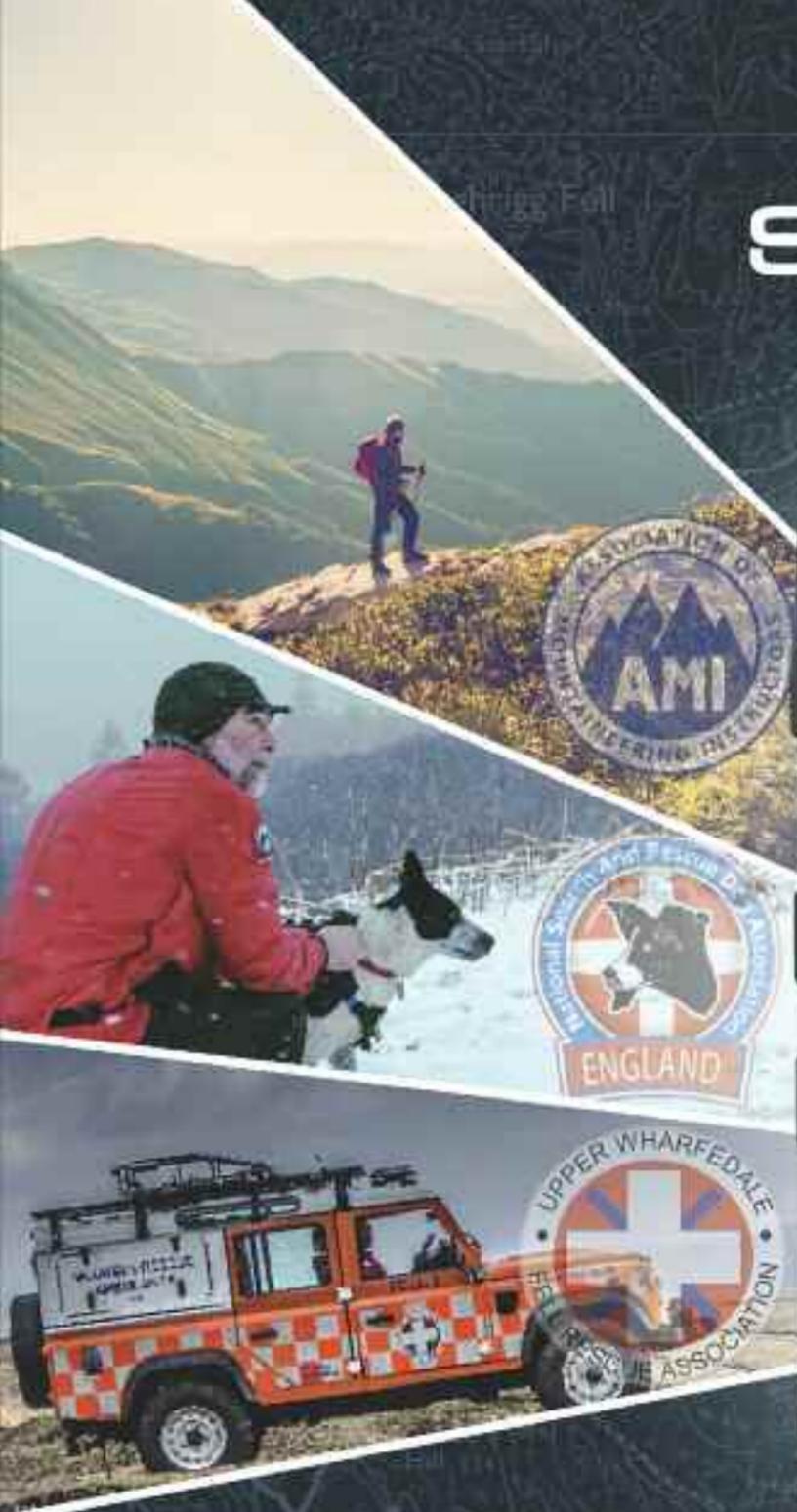
Figure 1a: The arrows are pointing towards the top of No 4 Gully and No 2 Gully.



Figure 1b: The arrows are again pointing to the top of No 4 and No 2 Gullies. Just how far these gullies cut into the plateau is clear on the 1:25 000 map. This is good information to have at the planning stage and can inform route choice and tactics. It would also be possible to print a 1:50 000 scale map for the whole route but 1:25 000 for just the summit area. These would both fit easily into a small map case.

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direction. Once you're moving, it quickly becomes intuitive and easy to determine your route choice. Your device may have the option to use a direction of travel arrow. This arrow points from your current location to your estimated position given your current speed and direction (Figure 3).

In addition it is very useful to record a track of your journey. This will allow you and others to determine what ground has been covered at a later stage. This is the most common way I use my digital nav. This isn't my default navigation approach however. It is very simple but is actually relying heavily on my trad map reading skills. Where it is particularly useful is in poor visibility where you are traversing difficult terrain off paths and need flexibility in route choice. Using trad nav you, will have to follow a compass bearing and use dead reckoning such as pacing or timing to determine distance travelled and, thus, position. In this example it is particularly important to not deviate from the compass bearing as this will be difficult to account for both in terms of position relative to your intended line but also your dead reckoning using pacing or timing. This could result in a position error.

Therefore using trad nav, it is important to stay on your bearing. This can be tedious while searching complex terrain, traversing peat hags, negotiating bogs or rocky steep terrain. This all becomes

unnecessary using digital navigation. You can deviate around obstacles or make diversions for a search and still be aware of your position on the map relative to your target.

Of course, using a GPS without digital mapping requires different techniques and skill sets because you are not looking at a map! I find this a disturbingly remote way to navigate as I am not in touch with what to expect as I journey. This has also led to accidents. Given the cost and accessibility of digital mapping I feel this is the safer and more efficient way to use GPS.

This article has differentiated between trad nav and digital nav. My key principle at the beginning of the article was that your trad nav skills have to be sufficient to complete any planned journey given the anticipated conditions. This is because your technology isn't fail-safe. Hopefully you can also appreciate that even when using the technology your map reading skills are essential.

In actual fact, for me, digital navigation is just navigation using an electronic map. Being able to monitor your position on the map increases your flexibility to alter course frequently and is convenient, but be aware of over-reliance. You need to keep your trad nav skills current and the only way to do that is use them frequently. 📍



Figure 3: This is a screenshot from a smartphone used to navigate the first leg of the route shown in Figure 2. The centre of the circle was my current location. The vector arrow points to where I would be in 2 minutes given the current speed and direction I was travelling. I could see that I was walking in the correct direction to cross the knoll I was looking for. In addition, note the track is not in a straight line, it shows where I deviated from my line to avoid bog but was able to return easily towards my destination.

ABOUT DEREK BAIN:



Derek Bain is a Senior Instructor at Glenmore Lodge, Scotland's national outdoor training centre. Glenmore Lodge offers courses in all areas of mountain sport, from first aid, avalanche awareness, navigation, mountaineering and climbing, as well as the full range of qualification courses. The Centre also offers tailor-made packages for groups.

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Training and Standards Interoperability for UK search and rescue organisations

AL READ MREW TRAINING OFFICER

Our primary aim was to open discussions about training and standards between the different SAR responders. More specifically, the idea was to share knowledge between the participants, identify any common training standards and then collect information about wider training and interoperability issues. This was the ideal opportunity for team members across the spectrum to have their say. We had delegates sit in groups and they had a number of questions to answer over a ten-minute period and were asked to identify a person to

INTEROPERABILITY IS 'THE EXTENT TO WHICH ORGANISATIONS CAN WORK TOGETHER COHERENTLY AS A MATTER OF ROUTINE' JESIP 2013

speak on behalf of the group in the plenary session. Each group comprised a mix of volunteers and professionals, to open the discussions across the range of responders.

Having quickly introduced themselves to each other, team members were asked to complete section A (how many volunteers/professionals within the group), then create a response to the initial two top level questions, using a combination of an A3 worksheet, Post-it notes and active discussion. During the plenary session following this, the groups were able to provide verbal feedback.

STANDARDS FRAMEWORKS AND GUIDELINES

Standards come in many forms and guises

- International Standards
- NFPA 1670 (US SAR Standard) — widely adopted
- National Standards
- National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- British Standards/Codes of Practice

- Organisational Standards
- Health & Care Professions Council (SET and SOP)
- Lowland Rescue Search Technician.

Frameworks

- DEFRA Flood Rescue Concept of Operations Training Modules
- Lost and Missing Persons Search Framework
- Bristow/MCA Helicopter Stage 1A, 1B & 1C.

Guidance & Guidelines

- UKFRS National Operational Guidance/Training
- MREW Rope Rescue Guidelines
- Team level training documents.

TOP LEVEL QUESTIONS

Two top level questions were distributed roughly 50:50 across all the groups:

Q1. What standards are common to most of the group?

Q2. How do you link training standards to operational capability at multi-agency incidents?

The answer provided to Question 1 fully reflected the range of organisations attending the conference, but there were a few themes including:

- DEFRA Flood and Water Rescue Training Modules
- Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme training
- Casualty Care/Medical.

A wide range of other standards were identified, usually associated with the main area of response (land or maritime), or the particular organisation.

Question 2 responses highlighted incident command and the sharing of information as essential to link different types of training and the standards achieved by them. A common theme was the use of Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP), but also the impact of training and exercising together. Common language with coordinating authority awareness of standards would assist.

THEMED QUESTIONS

In addition to the top level questions, each group was asked a further specific question, which prompted a range of responses. A summary of these is provided below each question:

What role should UKSAR have in setting training standards?

There was a strong feeling that UKSAR should carry the responsibility for developing standards, creating guidance, identifying resources — and any areas where these are lacking — and facilitating the efficient dissemination of information between the strategic planners and those on the ground. Specifically:

- UKSAR should take responsibility for the guidance of the standards for all resources where these resources can identify the primary search and rescue standards used
- UKSAR should 'type specialise' all UKSAR resources and develop a matrix to show standards, possible overlap, identify efficiencies and equivalency, and prevent duplication
- UKSAR should undertake gap analysis in consultation with all UKSAR organisations to develop a clear understanding of primary standards for search and rescue
- UKSAR should facilitate and increase two-way communication between strategists to practitioners.

Who should fund any national training standards development?

There was general agreement that the funding for developing and furthering national training standards should come from central government and then cascade down to the relevant national representative bodies.

How do you validate standards between organisations?

With search and rescue organisations — voluntary, statutory and military — increasingly called to work together on multi-agency, cross-border incidents, there is a growing need for greater

AI Read and Kris Manning (Lowland Rescue) ran a workshop around training and standards and how they impact UK SAR responders. Over 90 people were divided into random groups as they entered the lecture theatre for a presentation followed by group working, then feedback from the floor.

understanding of standards with the disciplines. This might be achieved by:

- Guidance and familiarisation on-scene and by local liaison visits
- Standards need to be more inclusive of disciplines and operations, geography, environment and capability (ie. mountain, water, coast, lowland etc)
- Recognisable ID on-scene
- National benchmarking and team-typing
- Harmonisation and mapping
- Singular competent regulatory body.

How do volunteers meet a standard?

As volunteer bodies work 'professionally' with the paid professionals, operationally it is key that the volunteer organisations

are seen to achieve recognised 'professional' standards and, in turn, that the professional organisations recognise that 'professional standards' are maintained by the volunteers. Volunteers would be better able to meet 'professional standards' by:

- All organisations working to a centrally laid down, recognised standard
- The establishment of transparent standards, visible to all organisations
- The regular revalidation of standards.

Who should verify and set standards?

It was generally felt that organisations should be responsible for setting and verifying their own standards, within their particular disciplines, by the deployment

of the relevant agency, association or 'trade body' and that agreed standards are only necessary for combined operations and safety. However, UKSAR could assume oversight responsibility across the spectrum of search and rescue by:

- Capturing common standards, language, education and promotion
- Developing an equivalency matrix.

Where do we go from here with standards?

In order to achieve the above, it would be necessary first to establish what are the common practices, then:

- Establish minimum capability and standards

JESIP MATURITY MATRIX (JOINT EMERGENCY SERVICES INTEROPERABILITY PRINCIPLES)

	LEVEL ONE (CHAOTIC/INTUITIVE) A fundamentally ingrained culture of single service working	LEVEL TWO (INFORMAL/AD HOC) Some positive examples of an interoperable culture, but a highly inconsistent national picture	LEVEL THREE (MANAGED/EFFECTIVE) A nationally consistent commitment to interoperable working but not yet fully ingrained as part of the culture	LEVEL FOUR (OPTIMAL/BEST PRACTICE) A fundamentally ingrained culture of interoperable working
DOCTRINE	Single service doctrine	Joint doctrine exists but not widely accepted or understood	Universally accepted and understood joint doctrine on interoperable working	Joint doctrine on interoperable working fully embedded and aligned with all current and future single service and specialist doctrine
TRAINING	Single service training	Some isolated examples of joint training but a highly inconsistent national picture	A nationally consistent approach to joint training thought not formally integrated into existing training programmes	Joint training fully embedded as the default position for the emergency services and integrated into existing training programmes
TESTING AND EXERCISING	Single service testing and exercising	Some isolated examples of joint testing and exercising but a highly inconsistent national picture	A joint testing and exercising strategy developed and accepted by all services	A joint testing and exercising strategy fully embedded within all services
JOINT ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING	Consistent failures to respond to lessons that have been identified	Some positive examples of responding to lessons identified but a highly inconsistent national picture	A joint organisational learning strategy developed and accepted by all services	A joint organisational learning strategy fully embedded, nationally

Rope Rescue Operator Instructor Training

BILL BATSON MBE
LYON EQUIPMENT WORK & RESCUE TRAINING

Some time ago Lyon Equipment was successful in being selected to deliver a series of Rope Rescue Operator Instructor courses on behalf of Mountain Rescue England and Wales. Lyon has a long and successful history of supporting our mountain rescue teams with both equipment and training and we were delighted to win this contract.

The courses were headed up by myself, an ex-RAF Mountain Rescue team leader and chief instructor and long-term team member of the Yorkshire Dales Cave Rescue Organisation.

Our remit — given to us by the MREW training officer, Al Read — was to deliver training and assessment in four regions: South Wales (SWSARA), the south west (PenMaCRA), the Peak District (PDMRO) and the north east (NESRA and YDRP). The overarching purpose of the training was to carry out

techniques were used, with teams being invited to demonstrate their current procedures. Yes, we did make a number of constructive suggestions along the way, but no, we did not try to reinvent the wheel or persuade anyone that 'there is one way, and only one way' to do anything.

In all, we provided training to 48 MR personnel from across 28 teams, so there is a reasonable chance that you have spoken to at least one person who attended one of the courses. Suffice to say, the feedback we

received was that the 'one way' philosophy of the 'zone' and minimised the need for catch-up training between courses. The only exception was the course delivered in Durham for the NESRA and YDRP teams. The return of the great British winter resulted in a last-minute postponement of the first weekend (blocked roads and teams being on back-to-back shouts). The planned 'second' weekend therefore became the 'first' weekend, with the second taking place almost a month later in April.

...OUR ROPE RESCUE SYSTEMS SHOULD BE BOTH SAFE AND EFFECTIVE AND WE SHOULD APPLY A CASUALTY-LED RESCUE PHILOSOPHY...

So, what were the principles we agreed should be applied to pretty much all rope rescue operations?

Well, if it's not a statement of the obvious, we agreed that the three key requirements are that our rope rescue systems should be both SAFE and EFFECTIVE and we should apply a CASUALTY-LED RESCUE philosophy.

To ensure that this is the case, we agreed on a sub-set of principles. In no particular order, these included:

- Rope rescue equipment and associated personal fall protection equipment should be correctly selected, maintained and managed throughout its life
- Anchor systems should be unquestionably sound and must take into account the expected magnitude and direction of the load to be applied, including any potential shock forces
- Consideration should be given to applying a 10:1 safety factor to rope rescue systems
- Appropriate systems for edge personnel should be established and used

a review of current rope rescue practice within individual teams, to agree a set of principles that should be applied, and to create a cadre of appropriately qualified personnel who can then deliver rope rescue operator training to their own team personnel.

The courses were not designed as prescriptive 'How to Do It' training and a wide variety of equipment and

received has been pretty much entirely positive and we are left feeling that it has been a very beneficial process — for the individuals attending, for their teams and, ultimately, for the casualty.

The four and a half-day courses were generally delivered over two consecutive weekends. This did mean some disruption to team and family life but also meant our 'trainees' stayed 'in



Photos © Lyon Equipment.

- Two-line systems should be the default system for vertical operations (>75°)
- Lowering/raising devices should be used on both lines and should be auto-locking
- Both training and operational scene management should include a rescue plan for any rescuers working on the cliff face
- Consideration should be given to designating Cold, Warm and Hot Zones at the cliff top, with appropriate levels of personal protection being applied to each
- Effective communications must be established and maintained
- Effective 'pre-departure briefs' should be conducted, to include final safety checks, activity brief and roll call immediately prior to commencing the lower/raise.

It was also generally agreed that shared or 'mirrored' rope rescue systems offer several significant improvements over previous 'main and safety' line systems. In fact, following the courses, a number of teams have switched to shared systems for both lowers and raises.

The second weekend of each course covered key areas and considerations for successful delivery of rope rescue training. Each individual then participated in the delivery of a two-hour training session, after which they received constructive criticism from their peers and course instructors.

One of the clearest messages to come from the training was how much can be gained by training alongside your neighbouring teams in terms of shared ideas and experiences. This can only be a good thing.

Another message that came through clearly was that, while it was evident that teams are making a good job of maintaining and managing team rescue equipment, this is not always the case when it comes down to personal

equipment used on training and call-outs. Of course not all teams allow personal kit to be used for team events, but where this is the case: be careful! The failure of a badly maintained personal harness, sling or Prusik loop can be equally as catastrophic as a team rope that breaks!

Lyon would like to record our thanks to MREW for being given the opportunity to deliver this training and to the individual team members for their enthusiasm and hunger for knowledge. Particular thanks to Central Beacons, Dartmoor Ashburton, Oldham and Teesdale & Weardale teams for the use of their bases during the courses. ☺

- Develop an equivalency matrix
- Develop a process similar to CAP 999 (*The national approval guidance document in place for Helicopter Search and Rescue in the UK is published to assist organisations in determining procedures and Operations Manual guidance to operate civil search and rescue helicopters in the UK*).

NB. There were concerns that government agencies can often be a blocker to the development of standards and procedures due to their own guidelines and regulations.

How do we promote the adoption of standards?

Once established, operational standards could be communicated through the various organisations:

- Training together
- Working together
- Liaising at local level
- Creating bottom-up, rather than UKSAR, guidelines.

How can technology be used to enhance training?

Mountain rescue is already embracing alternative methods of training via the Moodle platform which enables distance learning and computer-based training in specific key areas such as Casualty Care and SAR helicopter initiation procedures. Obviously, hands-on training will always be needed to fully understand, experience and assimilate the needs and demands of the rescue environment, be that technical rope skills, stretcher carrying, casualty handling and first aid treatment, or swiftwater skills, but aspects of all of these might lend themselves to online learning. Other suggestions, which could harness the technology, included:

- Teleconferencing with remotely-based instructors running live training sessions
- Systems could be put in place to capture organisational knowledge which could then be shared online.

SUMMARY

There was a great deal of animated discussion amongst the ninety workshop attendees, with a number of significant themes emerging. The JESIP principles were broadly supported and the development of an equivalency matrix was noted by a number of groups.

There is clearly work to be taken forward by UKSAR and this was just one step on a potential journey to support improved operational responses. Watch this space! ☺

'London marathon runner left fighting for her life after drinking too much water', read the headlines...

FIRST
AID
SKILLS

WHAT IS IT?

Hyponatraemia simply put is having low salt levels. At any one time our body's salt and sugar levels vary according to what we're doing and what we're consuming — and according to how well or ill we might be.

For the outdoors enthusiast there may come a time when we drink so much fluid that our sodium (salt) levels become overly diluted or we drink so much fluid that we essentially sweat out our salt to the point that we go into hyponatraemia. And, with rescue teams regularly undertaking standby duties for local challenge and endurance events — and often organising events such as these as team fundraisers — it's something worth being aware of.

If you ask a medic what causes this condition the first thing they'll probably tell you is that it is very often caused as a side effect of one drug or another. But for the casualty who is otherwise fit and healthy and enjoying the outdoors this is unlikely to be the reason.

The context for the outdoors enthusiast or endurance athlete is likely to be that of a hot day, dealing with a casualty who has very diligently been drinking a lot of water. It can also occur in the casualty who is maybe on expedition in a foreign environment and who is dehydrated due to diarrhoea.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? WHAT DO WE SEE?

When our sodium levels are too low or too highly diluted, the cells in our brains swell up. In turn, the casualty experiences symptoms that are associated with cerebral oedema (ie. compression on the brain). When the brain is affected in this

way the symptoms gradually manifest themselves in the casualty's behaviour. Confusion, clumsiness, nausea, vomiting may all be seen. Initially though, nothing may be seen but the casualty will have, at the very least, begun not feeling quite right.

In its later stages as the brain continues to be squeezed by this excess in fluid, things for the casualty get worse. Seizures, respiratory arrest and pulmonary oedema may all follow — all of which can have fatal outcomes.

HOW CAN IT BE PREVENTED?

The answer here is not to stop or discourage people from drinking freely. When organising any endurance event I personally factor this into my risk assessment. If I know the weather's going to be hot and I know people will rightly want to drink lots of fluids, I encourage people to eat a balanced diet including savoury products as well as the usual array of sugary, high energy snacks. If food is provided, salt is added. As well as offering people sugary drinks, I will offer them bags of crisps, for example.

WHAT DO WE TEACH THE FIRST-AIDER TO DO?

A first aider will not diagnose hyponatraemia. In fact, out of the hospital environment, in its early stages, even a medic wouldn't necessarily make a diagnosis.

Leaders working with clients on endurance events or on expedition need to be aware of people not feeling well. First things first, whatever the casualty is doing, they should initially be stopped from continuing. Consider the casualty's

alertness. How are they describing their symptoms? It could well be that they're not hungry or maybe not hungry for sugary snacks. Might they be tempted to eat something salty? If you have any (and on a trek or on expedition I carry loads), the first-aider should offer the casualty oral rehydration salts or electrolytes such as Dioralyte sachets. Make sure you dissolve the powder in the prescribed ratio since the aim is to offer the casualty the right concentration of salts to fluids.

If the casualty's condition begins to get worse, I recommend that the first aider seeks further advice by calling 999 (in the UK) and talking through what they are facing with a member of the local mountain rescue team. If you're already on the spot as mountain rescue, of course, all the better.

If the casualty becomes confused, the first aider should treat the casualty as unconscious and lie them down in a safe airway position. (If the casualty is struggling to breathe lying down, they should be allowed to sit upright). The casualty should be monitored and the emergency services updated with any changes or deterioration. If the casualty has a seizure, protect the head as best as possible and time the duration for which it happens. If the casualty stops breathing, or if breathing is not normal (agonal) the first aider needs to be prepared to commence CPR. ☘

Further information about the treatment of suspected hyponatraemia and other marathon related injuries can be found in the 2017 Guidelines for Management of Marathon Related Medical Emergencies. Go to bit.ly/2HQONf0.

Hyponatraemia in sport (Exercise-Associated Hyponatraemia)

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HOT AND SWEATY? FOCUS ON YOUR SKIN

Photo © Euan Whitaker, ClimbNow.

Many of you will undertake greater outdoors challenges during the longer days of summer but place less importance on your clothing choices as in winter. Appropriate summer clothing is very important for your enjoyment and comfort levels, especially when you're hot and sweaty. In hot weather your choice of clothing is as important as how you wear it. Sweating is expected over summer months, so much of your comfort level is determined by how your next-to-skin garment handles sweat.

Dress in multiple layers and take layers off as your temperature increases. The baselayer must move sweat away from your skin. Merino wool is very effective in removing moisture in both vapour and liquid states, keeping the skin drier for longer. Avoid heavy baselayers because they are more likely to make you sweat. A lightweight merino midlayer provides insulation and helps move sweat away from the baselayer. It is highly breathable, dries quickly and will insulate you even if slightly damp. Remember your outdoor enjoyment is linked to keeping your skin dry.

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Where does your team set the basic minimum first aid qualifications for trainees and team members?

Al Pepper, Rossendale and Pendle training officer, explains how they go about it.

It goes without saying that when it comes to team training and subject matter it's something that has to be consistent and be of a suitable standard that fits with both the team's and MREW's requirements and guidelines.

As much as each team differs in the way it operates, we do have some standard options with MREW qualifications (Casualty Care, Party Leader etc) available to team members. But a few questions recently popped up when recruiting new trainees as to what standard we should expect of them before they become operational, the main one being first aid qualifications.

Within Rossendale & Pendle MRT — and no doubt others — it's ideally a prerequisite to have a recognised basic first aid qualification or certainly for this to be achieved before progression onto operational trainee and full team member.

We do get a proportion of candidates who possess first aid qualifications and also Health Care Professionals applying to join the team but where do you set the basic minimum first aid qualification a trainee and full team member should hold outside of Casualty Care or HCP?

To me it was obvious that the answer was in-house accredited training and I may have regretted making the statement as that meant I'd volunteered! But after many hours of typing and research the job was done.

The aim then was to find a qualification suite with a suitable awarding body with a range of nationally recognised qualifications that would cover all bases and meet our minimum standards.

Meeting the requirements of an awarding body to achieve 'Centre Status' is by no means an easy task. Apart from a lot of coffee it required us to attend training sessions, record our previous relevant teaching hours and prove we have a robust means of managing quality of delivery and assessment. Personally my previous background is in teaching, training and as a centre coordinator, so having some experience in this helped enormously.

Now that we have achieved Centre Status, it enables us to deliver in-house courses and ensure every member of the team holds a 'Level 2, twelve-hour activity specific' first aid certificate. The qualification itself is flexible and can be tailored to mountain rescue and other outdoor-type environments or, if required, courses can be developed for mountain bikers, horse riders etc using the same course content.

The learning objectives and outcomes are not too dissimilar to the Casualty Care standards so we can deliver the L2 qualification as a minimum to all team members. This also builds members confidence and knowledge facilitating progression onto the MREW Casualty Care course where they may have previously felt a little overwhelmed.

For the L2 course it takes a minimum of twelve hours of class contact. This can be either delivered over two days or split into sessions. It is aimed at being a practical hands-on course with on-going individual assessment and a written (multi-choice) examination. Optional units can be bolted

onto the course (eg. Catastrophic haemorrhaging, AED etc). On successful completion, the qualification is valid for three years and has given us a minimum standard that is accredited.

Delivery of the courses is relaxed and aimed at being informative and student-centred. In fact the last two courses have both been interrupted with call-outs and ironically both incidents involved injuries that had been discussed earlier that day. There certainly is nothing like observing a real-time call-out and treatment for a learning experience.

Feedback from our candidates has been excellent and gives the team as a whole a well-rounded approach to ensuring each member is competent within the core skills required to be operational.

As an approved centre, we can now offer a range of courses alongside and above the basic L2 and, as we progress with development, the courses will expand.

It's not an easy process and you'll need teaching, quality assurance experience and, of course, current nationally-recognised and accredited first aid or medical qualifications to apply for centre approval with an awarding body.

So, from a training officer's point of view, it benefits team training and will fit into the plan nicely by using the learning objectives as ongoing revision and practice for those who have achieved the qualification. It's a great way to have some form of measurable competence for team member basic core skills and potentially have them progress onto Casualty Care. ☺

FIRST AID SKILLS

MEDICAL SNIPPETS: MIKE GREENE



Subcommittee minutes can be found on our VLE Moodle site, accessible to all members. For instructions on passwords and links see the website or email medicalofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk. This remains an 'open' meeting for all team members and during 2018/19 a discussion forum will be established on the VLE to enable input from those who cannot attend in person. I am delighted that John White and Mike Hughes have volunteered to

act as vice chairs, Brendon Sloan takes over the role of exam paper coordinator, John Saxton remains the Casualty Care Certificate Registrar and Sarah Garner is MSC meeting secretary. Les Gordon continues with the Hypothermia Guidelines and link to the LAMRT Casualty Care Revision in MR. Richard Walker continues his work on Casualty Care VLE development.

The MREW Hypothermia Guidelines remain an example of national and international good practice. This year has seen the adoption of a Mild and Moderate Guideline reflecting best practice – important because these are the majority of cases we treat. My thanks to Les for his work in developing and maintaining these guidelines. In May 2018, a number of MREW members attended the Sixth International Hypothermia Conference and ICAR Med Com Spring Meeting in Tromso Norway.

Health of Volunteers: The MSC has begun two pieces of work to support the organisation in looking after our volunteers. An 'occupational injury' questionnaire was distributed by a research fellow and the results will give an overview of the potential issues facing the organisation. Dr John White has started work looking at best practice for the prevention of stress-related problems in MR. This will involve international collaboration with members of ICAR who have a similar interest.

Looking forwards, the major project for this year is developing the Casualty Care certificate Moodle VLE and have obtained funding and the help of professional AV/IT expertise to develop the site. The two main aims are to create a user-friendly interface and provide materials that can be used as teaching resources.

Lucky escape on Helvellyn

An accomplished mountaineer and regular visitor to the Lake District, **Alan Hinkes** is no stranger to the dangers of the winter mountains. He recounts his experience, in January this year, when another climber fell 500ft on a snowy Helvellyn after trying to help a stranded walker in trouble. Scott Baxter, the climber in question, also reflects on what was a very close shave.

Winter climbs and steep snow faces have a tendency to feel steeper than they look. It's easy to get lulled into having a go and before you know it you've 'psyched out' and become stuck or cragfast as the snow or ice face rears up.

Over 30+ years in the winter hills, I've effected many 'rescues' — helping stranded walkers and climbers who are stuck after getting out of their depth on a steep, exposed snow slope. It usually means cutting steps in the snow and ice or sometimes roping up to safely extricate the person before they slip.

One of these minor dramas nearly turned into a major tragedy on Helvellyn this winter. It all began, as most incidents do, in a benign, pleasant sort of way after a nice day out on the hill.

I'd been soloing a few grade 2/3 climbs on the Red Tarn face of Helvellyn, it was a fine sunny, cold weekday in January. Quite a few other climbers were out and, at the summit shelter, I got chatting to two others, Wesley and Scott, who had also soloed a couple of 2/3s. They recognised me and we had a good chat, comparing notes on conditions, the Himalayan climbs I'd done as well as Helvellyn climbs, guiding winter routes and the general risks of winter climbing.

As we walked past the Trig Pillar a young woman with a dog rushed up to us asking if we had a rope. She had crampons on her boots and an ice axe. Instantly I knew what she meant: someone needed help. I replied that we had all been solo climbing without a rope but there was a group with ropes back at the summit shelter if we needed any. Calmly I asked what the problem was and she said her boyfriend was stuck on the Red Tarn face.

Before looking over the edge I asked if she had climbed up the steep exposed snowslope with the dog, to which she replied, yes. Here we go again I thought, I'd better descend and reassure her boyfriend and assess whether a rope is required.

Some cloud had rolled in below, obscuring Red Tarn. The boyfriend was about fifteen metres below the plateau rim, where it steepened up more significantly just before the summit. He had an ice axe and poorly-fitting crampons on bendy boots. This is relatively easy ground for a Mountain Guide, MIC or experienced mountaineer, but not to be underestimated as an uncontrolled slip could result in a very long slide to Red Tarn with fatal consequences as, sadly, Patterdale MRT know only too well.

As I stepped over the top and started to descend, intending to assess the situation better and see whether I should go for a rope, Scott also started descending. Apparently, he had decided to give the chap another ice axe so he could climb on. I was walking down facing out with one tool ready to brake. Scott had what I thought was two tools, it turned out he was carrying three. Descending slopes such as Red Tarn face requires care and attention to detail, you need to be alert and ready to stop a slip immediately. The best rule is never get complacent and do not slip.

Scott slipped. I instinctively started bellowing at him: Brake! Brake! Brake! Brake! I wanted to shout: Throw away a tool and use only one axe to self-arrest. It happened so fast, there was no time for that and he disappeared into the mist, sliding close to the

stranded person on the face, nearly knocking him off and making the situation much worse.

Now I felt sickened as I knew he'd gone a long way and was probably badly injured. Wesley was now hollering and screaming Scott! Scott! Scott! and running round to Swirral Edge to descend.

I was in a quandary, what to do.

Who to rescue first? Descend immediately to Scott and leave the boyfriend, who might slip and become another casualty, or rescue him first?

Luckily I heard others below who had seen Scott fall and found him. He was still alive and OK for now they said.

The boyfriend was now screaming at me to keep away in case I also slipped and took him with me. I had no time for niceties now and perhaps too abruptly replied, 'I know what I'm doing'. To which he said 'That's what the other guy said!' I could only reply bluntly and reassuringly that I really do know what I'm doing. On this sort of terrain I am in my comfort zone. No bravery or heroics is needed. It's a straightforward task.

Quickly I chopped him a ledge to stand on to comfort his nerves and help his stress, before he slipped off. I rapidly nipped back up to get his girlfriend's ice axe, so he had a tool in each hand and I started cutting him big steps up the snow slope.

Once he was safe I had no time for debriefing and immediately descended the face down to Scott. En route I found two of his ice axes. 'Not a good sign', I thought and was tentatively expecting a bloody sight. Miraculously and thankfully he was in one piece and not a sign of any claret. Somehow he had managed to avoid going over the rocky buttress on the face and had slid down a snow gully to the right. Luckily the slope was not iron-hard neve. The afternoon temperature had softened the surface, which had slowed him down as he no doubt dug his gloved hands into the snow.

Scott was standing and lucid when I reached him and a

couple of others had traversed from Swirral Edge to help him. I remember him telling me he had avoided digging in his crampons in case he cartwheeled. From an initial first aid check, it seemed he had probably escaped with only broken ribs and as he could walk I decided to get him across to Swirral Edge, where there just happened to be a GP who confirmed he had probably only broken ribs, otherwise he would be in a lot more pain and more incapacitated. I've had broken ribs and it's painful enough, but Scott is tough, he was not making any fuss and was happy to let me help him to the top of Swirral Edge.

My reasoning was that if he did need help, the summit plateau area and path to Swirls was easier for a helicopter and MRT than hanging around on the narrow exposed arête of Swirral Edge. When we reached the summit cairn of Swirral, Scott was happy enough to descend, so I passed his rucksack to Wesley and waved them off, mentioning if they needed any help, Keswick MRT on the Thirlmere side would be there fairly rapidly.

By the time I got down the path to Glenridding I could see the Great North Air Ambulance flying over. Scott and Wesley had made the 999 call, Keswick team, GNAAS and the Coastguard helicopter were scrambled (the latter subsequently stood down). GNAAS dropped off their paramedic and doctor close to the scene and then airlifted four team members up from Swirls car park to assist. Scott was flown to Carlisle, a very lucky man.

It had been a near miss, a close shave for Scott. I always try to look at incidents such as these as 'gifts' from which you can learn. The first rule is not to put yourself, the casualty/victim or anyone else in danger or at more risk.

Scott is an ardent climber, lovely chap and family man and he had the best and most laudable intentions to help someone in distress. He immediately, without hesitation, went to help another person. All is well that ends well and Scott was out climbing again later in the winter. ☺

ALAN HINKES IS THE FIRST BRITON TO CLIMB THE WORLD'S HIGHEST MOUNTAINS, THE FOURTEEN 8000M PEAKS. AN AUTHOR, PHOTOGRAPHER, FILMMAKER, INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER, ENVIRONMENTALIST AND MOUNTAIN GUIDE. HE IS ALSO A KEEN ADVOCATE FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE.



Scott reflects on his experience...

Alan has captured the incident very well. After he left us, Wes and I attempted to descend the path. However, Wes was concerned I was not behaving normally and looking peaky (going green) hence putting the call in to mountain rescue and the team getting up to the cove.

Wes and I climb together regularly and, as you might imagine, we've talked about this a lot since the incident! As Alan says, I think I also treat this incident as a gift. We are not invincible and minor misjudgements can escalate quickly. I had an incredibly lucky escape!

I'm certainly not comparing my experience to Alan's (how could I?) but like him, I've also affected many rescues. In fact, earlier that day, Wes and I had helped two walkers ascend the steep top part of Striding Edge. This type of activity is pretty commonplace in the mountains in winter and wrongly, I think, I approached the 'rescue' which caused the incident in a similar way to others I have been involved in.

As for the learning points I have reflected on:

- Earlier in the day, whilst climbing up, we had decided not to descend by this route, as we felt it would have been unsafe and better to descend Swirral to reach the climbing routes... So why did I step over without giving it a second thought when I saw someone in trouble? (a big learning for me!)
- It was relatively easy ground in the grand scheme of things. I must have gone up and down that part of the mountain dozens of times before. I never ever carry three ice axes, I had never done so before so why did I think it a good idea on steep ground?

I would like to take this opportunity to put my thanks across to all involved in getting me to the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle. There was a level of embarrassment having to call mountain rescue and I insisted Wes should not make the call but, in hindsight, I respect that he made the right one.

I was focused on getting home after the incident as it was my birthday and my wife had arranged a family meal for that evening!

I never thought I would need to use the services of MR but so happy they were able to assist. Post-accident, my running club (I am an active fell runner) raised funds at one of their races for Keswick MRT for saving 'one of their own' so a small contribution to help the team.

Opposite page: Left to right: Alan with Scott Baxter and Wesley Orvis. **Above:** Conditions on Helvellyn that day. Photos supplied by Alan Hinkes.

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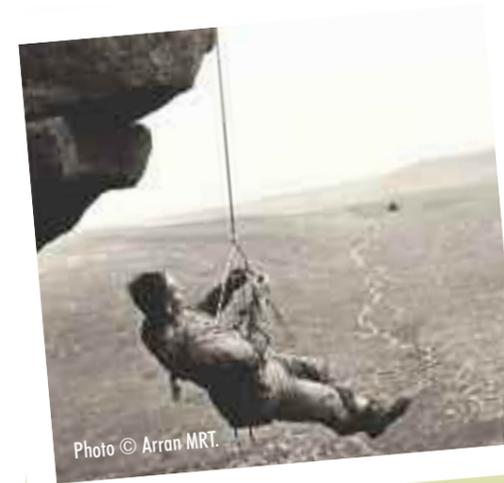
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MAY: FAREWELL TO STEWART LAMBIE MBE

Arran team members paid tribute to Stewart, a founder member of the Arran Mountain Rescue Team, in early May. Stewart was team leader for 27 years and chairman until fairly recently.

'His commitment and contribution to the team over the years has been extraordinary and he will always be a big part of everything we do.'

'The photo shows Stewart, taken many years ago, dangling off an overhang on Stacach Ridge high above Coire Lan, before all the fancy gear we have now.'



MAY: NORTH WALES TEAMS RECEIVE AWARD FOR WORK IN RHINOG CRASH

In March last year, the North Wales teams worked together to assist North Wales Police during the search and initial recovery phase following the tragic crash of a helicopter in the Rhinog mountains.

In recognition of their work, the Chief Constable of North Wales Police presented an award to the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association (NWMRA) in May. The region and all the teams were very pleased to receive the award but recognise the loss of life of five people and extend their continued condolences to the families affected by this incident.

Above: Iain Ashcroft Operations Officer for NWMRA (right), presents a copy of the award to Chris Griffiths, NEWSAR Team Leader (left) © NWMRA.

TEAM TALK

Memorial cycle to Syracuse set to remember Lockerbie disaster

HEAVY WHALLEY BEM MBE

I have the honour to represent mountain rescue, SARDA and the military on the 30th anniversary of Lockerbie this year. There will be a commemorative cycle ride from Lockerbie to Syracuse University New York State, USA in late October – a journey of over 600 miles in the USA alone – and prior to this, we will cycle to Edinburgh from Lockerbie.

I am one of a team of five, all Lockerbie residents. For me it will be testing time, not just physically but emotionally. Like many involved in 1988, I live with the tragedy every day and have regular contact with those who were involved and many those loved ones lost their lives.

Collin Torrance was the youngest police officer at Lockerbie that fateful December, the local bobby and the man who came up with this idea. But why Syracuse?

There were 259 people, from 21 nations, aboard PanAm 103, aged between two months and eighty years. Then there were eleven of our own townspeople from Lockerbie who lost their lives. So why focus on the 35 students of Syracuse, an eclectic group from a 'foreign' land?

Since 1990, in the aftermath of the loss, funds were gathered from public and private donations that allowed a formal link to form between Lockerbie Academy and Syracuse University. A scholarship programme was established that allowed two graduating sixth year pupils to travel to the USA, to study and live as first year freshmen for an entire year. Concurrently, each year, 35 students are invited to apply for and be awarded a special remembrance scholarship position at the university. This is highly-prized and contested

each year and is given to final year seniors, each of whom represent a student who was lost from the flight. The assembled 37 students, in parallel to their normal studies, also embark on a year-long programme of events to highlight humanitarian work – peaceful, anti-terrorist initiatives, debates, artwork and other awareness and charitable activities. The focal point of all this work is the Remembrance Week, held on campus each year, normally around late October, which culminates in a ceremony whereby students speak, family members attend and the university

honours those lost in the hope that such tragedy never occurs again.

Since 1990, Lockerbie has sent 56 of its children across the Atlantic, 3,200 miles away, to be part of this amazing programme. This in turn has forged hundreds... thousands... of new friendships and lifelong relationships between students, staff and relatives and friends of those lost – all with a purpose of continually understanding and appreciating one another a little better and helping to shape the future.

In June, I was afforded the deepest privilege of being able to tour this dynamic, forward-thinking institution first hand. I was able to speak to the scholars, hear their plans for the future and experience some of their drive and determination for a more compassionate society. I want to thank those who looked after both my children as they journeyed through this process too, by joining them in Syracuse this year, and I want as many people as possible to see this phenomenon at first-hand too.

The motto of the scholarship is 'Look back, Act forward'. What an ethos for living! We will of course be remembering all those lost and

affected by PanAm 103, but that's why we focus on Syracuse. Please join us in this journey at

facebook.com/CycletoSyracuse/. RAF Mountain Rescue, the civilian teams, SARDA the SAR helicopters and the military were a huge part of this tragedy and did so much that few know about. Many of our team members were affected by this tragic incident. I hope I will not let them down. I am still working on a roll of honour of those involved, so if you have information in that respect, please contact me at heavywhalley@icloud.com or heavywhalley@heavywhalley.com. ☺



'LOOK BACK LIVE FORWARD': WHAT AN ETHOS FOR LIVING!

MEET AUTO DEFIANCE LTD: LAND ROVER MAGICIANS



NEWSAR is now the proud owner of two completely renovated and rebuilt vehicles that not only look brand new but perform as if they have just come off the production line.

INTERVIEW WITH CHRIS GRIFFITHS TEAM LEADER, NEWSAR:

It's said that good things come to good people. Well that is certainly true for NEWSAR because, when we decided to recruit specialist drivers, not only did we get two 'off-road' specialists, Griff Evans (our NEWSAR Vehicles Manager) and Gareth Joseph (Auto Defiance Ltd Workshop Manager), we also gained two Land Rover fanatics who instantly set about giving our ageing vehicles the love and attention they badly needed.

That 'care package' has resulted in NEWSAR now being the proud owners of two completely renovated and rebuilt vehicles that not only look brand new but perform as if they have just come off the production line.

Following discussions with Griff, about how we were going to fulfil the ambitious vehicle replacement programme introduced some months earlier, complicated by the news that Land Rovers as we know them would no longer be produced, we even considered turning to a Japanese 4x4.

But, as Griff pointed out, if your Land Rover encounters a problem, you can usually get it home with a small bag of spanners. Added to that, a Defender 110 or 130 easily fits a stretcher in the back and their monetary value is growing each year, meaning they continue to be a huge asset.

When we approached Auto Defiance Ltd in Deeside, owned by Nina and Matthew Horton, we were met with the kind of enthusiasm that can only be associated with those that are in love with what they do, who have consummate pride in everything they produce and for whom 'going the extra mile' is commonplace. The deal was done, we handed the first of our 'babies' over to the workshop team, headed by Gareth, and stepped away.

The vehicle was finished on time, extras added, new bespoke stretcher racking system included and a respray that simply makes it look brand new. Better still, Auto Defiance had named her for us. 'Cerys' left the workshop and what has become 'Llinos' took her place.

In my opinion, Auto Defiance Ltd - outcome, customer relations, value for money = magnificent!

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APRIL: SALT COMES TO THE RESCUE FOR SRMRT

Every Scarborough and Ryedale team member is required to carry a personal first aid kit in their rucksack. Historically, these have been supplied by the team members themselves but the team recently decided that they would now provide the kits, to relieve team members of some expenditure and ensure consistent medical provision.

Team members already buy items such as rucksacks and boots, pay a membership fee and donate a minimum of 150 hours a year to the team.

Many of the team's casualties suffer lower leg or forearm injuries and extraction often involves a protracted carry-out over uneven ground on a stretcher. Despite best care, such a journey can easily aggravate any existing trauma. As part of the review, the team looked at the range of splints used and chose to replace existing stock carried in the vehicle medical sacks with a range of vacuum splints. The aim was to provide a simple yet robust solution which causes minimum discomfort to the casualty while protecting any injury.

On hearing about this particular project, Scarborough and Locals Together (SALT) kindly stepped in and offered to fund it with a donation of close to £1000 which provided 40 personal first aid kits in dry bags, one per operational team member and four sets of three vacuum splints and associated pumps for the team's four front line emergency vehicles.

'This is the second time SALT has funded medical purchases for the team,' says the team's Ian Huggill, 'so they truly help their local team save lives in wild and remote places. We'd like to show our gratitude to them, their trustees, staff, volunteers and customers for this kind donation.'

Rosemary Forest of SALT said the group was 'delighted to help the team once again. We live in an area of great natural beauty with some remote parts and it's extremely reassuring to know there is a group of expert and experienced volunteers with all the right equipment on hand to help if anything happens where you need assistance.'

Above: Left to right outside the SALT shop on Falsgrave, Scarborough: Rosemary Forrest, Ian Huggill, Carol Sellers and Phil Cook © SRMRT.

TEAM TALK



APRIL: CLEVELAND TEAM ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FROM MERCEDES BENZ

Mercedes Benz of Teeside, a part of the Sytner Mercedes-Benz Group, has loaned the team a fabulous Mercedes GLC 4x4 Sports Utility Vehicle.

'We are very pleased to be supporting such a worthwhile organisation as Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team,' said Jeremy Simpson, the company's head of business. 'We like to give something back to the community and this was an opportunity to do so whilst also showing the increasing versatility of our product range. The GLC is performing diverse roles around the world but getting the search dogs and handlers to an emergency in Cleveland must count as one of the most important and demanding. We hope our contribution makes a difference to the team'.

Thanking Jeremy, Carl Faulkner, team leader, said the team was 'delighted that Mercedes-Benz of Teesside is able to support us through this generous loan. The new 4x4 will be used primarily to support the team when on call-outs and in training but we are also fortunate that three of our members have committed to train search dogs and the vehicle will help them transport their dogs, and other team resources safely and efficiently'.

Last year saw Cleveland team members attending a record 63 incidents, attending everything from crashed mountain bikers to lost walkers or transporting nurses through the snow to reach their patients.

Staff from Mercedes-Benz at Preston Park were due to attend the team's base near Great Ayton to look at the facilities and see just how their vehicle it being deployed.

Above: Jeremy Simpson from Mercedes on the left with Carl Faulkner CMRT next to him, along with some team members and the team's aspiring rescue dogs Bracken, Oscar, Murphy and retired old hand Jake.

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safety awareness



300 walkers an hour ascending Scafell Pike from the Wasdale Valley

Due to the growing numbers of incidents on Scafell Pike and elsewhere across the county, the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA) has been supporting the Wasdale team in their efforts to reduce avoidable rescues and help sustain the team's ability to deal with what has now become an average of three rescues a week.

Scafell Pike is England's highest mountain, a magnet for experienced hill goers and many who have never been up a hill before. Last year saw 140 incidents, mostly on Scafell Pike, ranging from lower limb injuries, major trauma, medical emergencies and those groups and individuals who just get themselves lost. Sadly, a number end up as fatalities through their inability to navigate themselves safely off the mountain in bad weather avoiding the accident blackspots such as Piers Gill.

Partnering with the National Trust, the Lake District National Park Authority, Cumbria Tourism and Cumbria Police, we have taken action to launch a campaign to understand the issues and get our safety messages out

a better understanding of where walkers are coming from and what they know about the voluntary nature of mountain rescue.

The day itself, Sunday 27 May — on what can only be described as an invasion of tourists and visitors to the Wasdale Valley and Scafell Pike — was extremely successful. Our awareness and information gathering was well supported at the National Trust Brackenclose car park at the head of Wastwater and at the foot of Scafell Pike. Five national trust staff were in attendance to help get safety messages

ONE OF THE BEST ORGANISED GROUPS WE MET ON THE MOUNTAIN WAS A HEN PARTY OF SEVEN LED BY A QUALIFIED MOUNTAIN LEADER

McCall, taking time out of his busy schedule to join us in the afternoon, talking to walkers both in the car park and on the mountain. He arrived just in time for our first incident and left just before we received the second Wasdale incident for the day.

We spent the bulk of the day talking to people going out on the mountains and also those returning, many who we had spoken to on their way out so we got a good feel for how their day had been. We counted over 300 walkers per hour heading up the mountain from the Wasdale side which meant probably the same numbers heading up from Seathwaite and Langdale.

The weather was extremely hot with very strong gusty winds and people seemed to have got the message about water and sun cream and the risks of being blown over, higher up the mountain. There were very few who we could say were fully-equipped for all eventualities but it was a pleasure speaking to those who understood the risks, were supportive of what we were doing and generally made what could have been a difficult day very enjoyable.

We'd like to have seen more maps, rucksacks and appropriate footwear but they were few and far between. Footwear ranged from the standard lightweight trainers to a pair of full-length leather motor bike boots. The majority were visitors to the county and at least five of the people I spoke to were foreign nationals on holiday. All but one person was more than happy to talk about their preparation (or lack of it) and appreciated the contact. There was also

RICHARD WARREN
CHAIRMAN, LAKE DISTRICT SEARCH & MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

positive feedback on the need for improved signage mainly car park but also some support for information higher up the mountain.

The car parks were full to capacity and overflowing into passing places and grass verges. Something definitely needs to be done regarding the infrastructure for dealing with this number of vehicles coming up the valley. Toilets were abused and litter is still a real problem, both on the mountain and lakeside.

IT WAS A PLEASURE SPEAKING TO THOSE WHO UNDERSTOOD THE RISKS, WERE SUPPORTIVE OF WHAT WE WERE DOING AND GENERALLY MADE WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN A DIFFICULT DAY VERY ENJOYABLE

The car park was full of Three Peaker white minibuses when I got there at 8.45am. National Trust staff spent the early morning cleaning up the appalling mess left behind by these 'organised groups' (the staff do a great job and their efforts should not go unrecognised). One of the best organised groups we met on the mountain was a hen party of seven led by a qualified mountain leader. There were many dogs being taken up that would definitely have been at high risk from the heat.

Fortunately, there were no Scafell Pike incidents on the day, apart from the lady with severe stomach cramp who was taken straight to Whitehaven Hospital by Wasdale MRT as there were no ambulances available. A busy bank holiday Sunday for the Lake District teams with ten incidents across the county. ☺

TEAM TALK



MAY: PRACTICAL SUPPORT KEEPS CENTRAL BEACONS TEAM ON THE ROAD

The generosity of South Wales Constabulary and Gearmate has helped keep the team on the road and available in the wake of last year's dreadful fire.

Since the fire at the team's base in Merthyr Tydfil in November, team members and their supporters have been fundraising and seeking support to reach a target of £250,000 to renovate the damaged headquarters and replace specialist vehicles and equipment.

'We've had tremendous support from all sorts of people and organisations,' says team leader, Penny Brockman, 'and we've made a lot of progress towards that huge target. It has also been wonderful to receive loans and donations of practical equipment so we can get back to normal in terms of training and responses to call-outs even more quickly than we ever thought possible.'

One significant donation came from South Wales Police who have given the team a Mitsubishi L200 vehicle. This has been given the familiar livery and blue lights of a mountain rescue vehicle, plus an added extra to make it even more useful. Gearmate, of Alcester in Warwickshire, heard about the fire and destruction and offered to fit a team vehicle with a donated full drawer storage system and this has now been fitted.

'Our main aim in making this donation was to provide the team with additional tools that will enhance the amazing work they do,' said Gearmate's Nick Moberley. 'We're all about allowing 4x4 owners to maximise the potential of their vehicles and this system should help Central Beacons to organise their equipment, improve the security of the vehicle and, ideally, even contribute to their response times due to improved accessibility.'

'These practical donations and loans are an amazing support,' says Paul Richards, the team's deputy vehicle officer. 'The Gearmate donation makes the L200 even more useful to us as there's a lot of bulky equipment that needs to be stored and transported to incidents and then accessed as quickly as possible — this storage system will make that possible and, at a value of over £2,000, it's good value but not something we'd have been able to justify at present even though it should make a big difference.'

The team from Gearmate met with team members at their temporary base at Merthyr Tydfil Fire and Rescue Station on 24 May) and the vehicle is now in full use on call-outs across the Central Beacons area.

'We're very grateful for this support from Gearmate and from our partners at South Wales Police,' said Penny. 'We're already seeing the benefits of using this vehicle and being able to keep so much equipment safely and securely. Thank you to everyone who has supported our appeal in any way at all.'

Top: Work in progress as the Gearmate system is added to the Mitsubishi L200.

Right: Left to right: Jon Goddard (CBMRT Vehicle Officer), Jennifer Bonson and Angela Oliveira (Gearmate), and Paul Richards (CBMRT).

Images © Ann Seymour Photography.



Top: Image via Pixabay. Above: Cumbria Police, National Trust volunteers, the Lake District National Park, Cumbria Tourism and mountain rescue team members were joined by Peter McCall PCC (in the middle, wearing shorts) © Richard Warren.

to a wider audience. The Spring bank holiday weekend was targeted as one way of finding out what walkers understand about the importance of good preparation and having the right equipment. We also wanted to get

across and we had a very good turnout from Cumbria Police, Wasdale members and Lakes search dogs.

It was particularly helpful to have Cumbria's Police and Crimes Commissioner, Peter

VEHICLES UPDATE: SIMON THRESHER

Regional 4x4 courses: In the three years since the start of the programme, there have been 23 courses across the regions, providing training to over 160 members nationally. The uptake of these courses from some regions has been fantastic with the instructors in high demand but, unfortunately not so well undertaken in some.



The instructors are due to renew their qualification this year and the Vehicles subcommittee has agreed that those instructors who have met the criteria laid down in the original agreement will be put forward to requalify (if their regions agree). This may leave gaps so we will be looking at funding for new instructors to fill any identified gaps.

Floodwater driving: So far, 20+ teams have been provided training, with over 70 members trained nationally. The feedback has been good but courses across the regions have varied slightly in content and delivery. Driving in water is currently being taught on the 4x4 courses by the MREW instructors so, once the current programme is finished, the 4x4 instructors will look to taking this on. I will be speaking to RoSPA about the possibility of accrediting MREW courses.

Recovery training: We have Libor funding for a course with bids from two possible providers. Once a provider is agreed, we will put together a suitable bespoke course which will contain equipment currently in use by teams and will only be designed for teams to self-recover 'stuck' vehicles.

Tyres: Huge thanks must go to Ken Griffiths and Griff James-Evans of NEWSAR who have been working behind the scenes for several months now with a major tyre manufacturer (Cooper Tyres), who supply both Cooper and Avon brands. Coopers has agreed to support MREW with, amongst other things, discounted tyres. There will be no minimum ordered required to obtain and keep the discount. Teams will need to order centrally so any purchases can be validated. Further details will follow, and these will be communicated out to all teams via main channels once agreed.

Other driver training: As team needs change and vehicle capacities and abilities increase, it is becoming necessary for team members to hold C1 entitlements on their licence in order to drive teams' vehicles. This is likely to become more of an issue as older team members retire and younger drivers come forward without the entitlement. It's a subject that's been on my radar for a while and thanks go again to Griff at NEWSAR who has been working with his employers to come up with an offer for MREW.

Team members from across MREW will be able to obtain heavily discounted rates on their C1 training. Details of how to take up the offer will be sent out to all teams shortly, so if team members wish to take up the offer they need to contact their team leader or team secretary who will put them in touch with Griff directly. It's worth noting though that the price of the testing is fixed by the DfT and isn't discountable!

UPDATE MREW



JUNE: NEW MOUNTAIN RESCUE BLOG GOES LIVE

A new blog, bringing what will be a chattier take on all things mountain rescue, has now gone live on the MREW website.

Just click on the dropdown menu option in the top bar and there it is, at the bottom: Blog. Aimed at the public, it will be the vehicle for news, views, safety information and maybe also provide the opportunity to delve back through the magazine archives for articles which still hold true. Now all we have to do is keep writing it...

OPERATIONS: MIKE MARGESON

Equipment officer role: I am delighted to announce that we have a new acting equipment officer in Paul Smith from Oldham MRT. Paul is a member of the equipment subcommittee and equipment officer of his team. He will be put forward for formal voting by the membership at our November meeting. I have had a number of conversations with Paul and he is very enthusiastic to get started. As I chaired the last equipment group meeting, it was clear to me he has good support from the members of that group. I would also like to thank Chris Bagworth who has been holding the fort for over a year despite the demands of a new young family. Chris will help Paul over his first six months in the role.

Whilst on equipment matters, I'd like to remind teams that there is a 50/50 deal on the new MREW/Bell stretchers. This means that a new stretcher comes in at about £1600 to a team. Application process as always, a letter to the equipment officer on team-headed paper with the signatures of two team officials please.

The near miss culture we've been used to for many years is in my view clear evidence of a grown-up organisation. We've all benefited from the open sharing of incidents and accidents and any learning derived and, as operational lead, I am very keen we continue to do so. If a team wishes to be anonymous that's fine, it is the sharing of any learning that's important. For example, it has come to my attention that two stretchers have been damaged recently — one quite significantly. Both were damaged enough not to be worth load testing or repairing. I

believe they were a Ferno Titan and a McInnes. I wonder what happened? Were there any lessons to be learned there?

The next **operations meeting** will be on 14 July. It is important that your regional representatives are fully briefed with any operational issues from your region.

The roll out of the new **digital radios** has been going well. The next stage is to further develop network capabilities of regions. It is quite clear that ESN will not be operational for some time and Airwaves Tetra will be around for a bit longer than anticipated.

Safety education work: Adventure Smart Wales has gone live. Discussions on rolling this model out wider are underway with Nick Owen (Team leader, Langdale Ambleside MRT) leading for the Lakes region, which is keen to adopt this approach. The Snowdonia Partnership made a presentation to the Publications group in May and also at UKSAR in February. Using a range of platforms like this to get education safety messages to the wider public has to be the way forward. Linking partner organisations on a local and regional basis to coordinate this work is a stronger way to tackle the problem.

Rob Shepherd's new **online incident reporting system** went on trial in North Wales at the start of May. Talking with Phil Benbow and Al Read, it would appear that after a few teething problems, it is working well and will hopefully very soon be ready to further roll out to other regions. This should improve the quality, security and ease of incident reporting.



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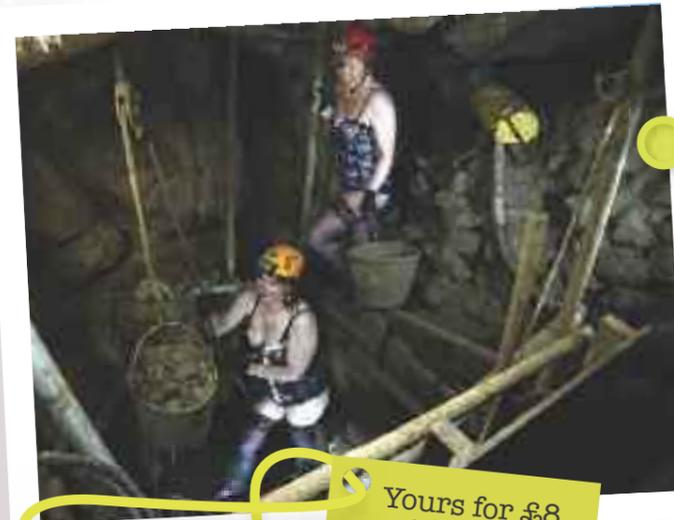
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TEAM TALK



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GCRG CALENDAR 2019

Paul Taylor and Nicky Richens from Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group have produced a calendar showing various GCRG members, in both surface and underground locations, dressed as you would not normally expect to see cave rescuers dressed.

From underground surveying in a DJ and bow tie to cave digging in a basque, it's all very much out-of-context clothing. Or, where there are cavers in caving clothes, it's very much to match the location. So in Rainbow Chamber (so named because of its rainbow-coloured rock strata walls, the brief was to 'please come in all various-coloured caving suits'). The end result was stunning.

'In case you're wondering,' says Paul Taylor, 'this is not a page three or a WI Calendar Girls calendar. Some might consider a couple of the pictures to be a little risqué but it's just a bunch of cavers having a great time.'

'The whole project has been a fantastic amount of fun to produce for all the very willing participants and it's hoped those who buy a copy — with all of the profits going to GCRG — will enjoy looking at the pictures and have a great laugh. No Photoshop trickery.'

To order, go to gcrg.org.uk, download an order form and email it to chairman@gcrg.org.uk. Or email to the same address with your contact details and the number of calendars you'd like to order. This is a limited edition print run, so if you're looking for something different on the calendar front, order a copy and support GCRG — while stocks last!



DON'T MISS MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES AT THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW IN SEPTEMBER

Visitors to this year's Emergency Services Show can find out about the latest search and rescue techniques while sourcing new equipment and technology. Mountain Rescue England and Wales, the Association of Lowland Rescue, the British Cave Rescue Council, NSARDA Search Dogs and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency will all be exhibiting in The Collaboration Zone of the show where visitors can network with other emergency services and partner agencies. The College of Paramedics will be running free CPD workshops and there will be a seminar theatre dedicated to mental health and wellbeing.

The Emergency Services Show takes place at the NEC, Birmingham on 19 and 20 September. Entry to the exhibition and seminars is free, as is parking. The NEC is linked to Birmingham International Station and Birmingham Airport and is directly accessible from the UK motorway network.

ALL MOUNTAIN RESCUE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ARE INVITED TO REGISTER NOW FOR FREE ENTRY AT WWW.EMERGENCYUK.COM

THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW
NEC, BIRMINGHAM | 19-20 SEPTEMBER 2018

OBITUARY



RICHARD GRAVES

'Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard but always near, still loved, still missed and very dear.'

On 3 May, Calder Valley team recounted a heartwarming story of an incredible young lady. Six-year-old Amelia Graves had decided to have her lovely long hair cut off to help raise funds for two charities. Amelia donated her hair to the Little Princess Trust — a charity that creates real hair wigs for children and young adults who have lost their own hair due to cancer treatment or other illnesses. Amelia was also fundraising for CVSRT, as her dad Richard was an active team member. She raised an incredible £800 from the event.

It was with heavy hearts in May, that the team announced the heartbreaking news that Amelia's dad Richard had sadly lost his own battle with cancer and passed away.

CVSRT member Richard Graves was in his own words 'shy, retiring, polite and happy. Likes the outdoors (loves t'Yorkshire Moors and t'dales!!)' And his favourite quote was 'Life is for living and living is free'.

Richard was indeed a true gentleman. Honest, genuine and a funny chap who brought warmth, compassion and a cheeky smile to any occasion or situation, be it training, fundraising, social events, or at a call-out to help a member of the community. He also worked for Lloyds Bank so used his business

knowledge to assist the team as treasurer until his illness restricted his spare time.

Despite battling cancer, Richard (with the help of his children, Jack and Amelia), successfully completed his MREW Casualty Care examination in November to the delight of his family and the team.

At the request of the family, the team shared again 'Amelia's Charity Chop' page, for anyone wishing to support her fundraising and donate in memory of Richard. To donate, go to bit.ly/2yrf0Bs.

CVSRT would like to pass on their sincere condolences to Natalie, Jack, Amelia and all his family and numerous friends at this very difficult time.

'His caring nature and happy smile was contagious and we will always remember him with fondness'.

'All Calder stations... all Calder stations, this is Calder Control... Stand by for the last call message for Calder Richard...'

'Calder Richard... Calder Richard this is Calder Control. Although you may be gone, you will never be forgotten.'

'We ask that you look over and protect us. Our teammate, our friend, our family...'

'Calder Richard still on the hill. Listening, Out.' 🙏

Above: Richard Graves and his smile after being winched down from an RAF SeaKing © CVSRT.

JUNE: 100 YEARS IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Pete Jackson was a founder member of the then Millom Fell Rescue Team, in May 1967. Dave Hughes joined later that year. Pete led both the Millom team and then Duddon & Furness MRT until 2007. They remain active team members.

Above: Dave Hughes and Pete Jackson.

APRIL: COVENTRY'S ANNUAL VAISAKHI CELEBRATIONS BENEFIT MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Ever have the feeling that your team is 'sending you to Coventry?' asks David O'Sullivan, press officer for the Derby team. 'Well that's exactly what happened when I was asked to pick up a cheque on behalf of MREW, at the Coventry Sikh's Vaisakhi celebrations.

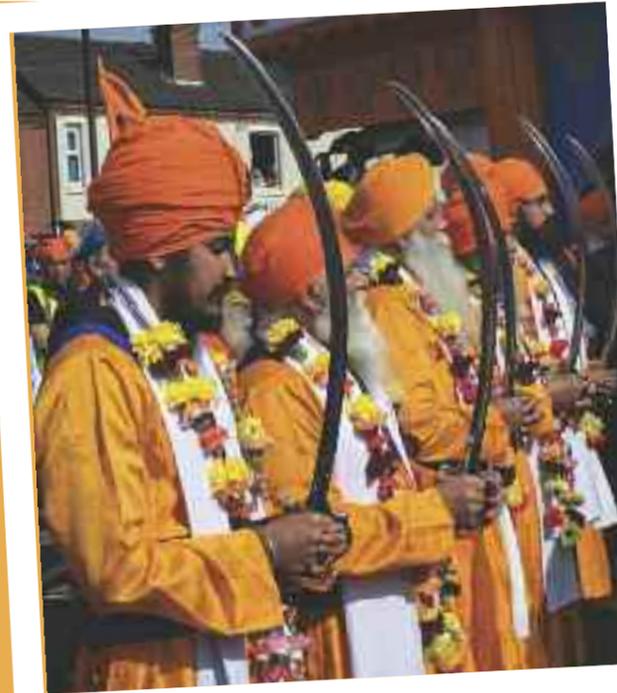
'As it turns out, far from being shunned and ostracised from a community, I was welcomed into one as if I were a long lost relative, with an honest and open friendliness that is seldom witnessed these days.

'I really didn't quite know what to expect from the day and, having been asked to wear a head-covering (cue embarrassing photos), I have to say I was a little apprehensive about what I may be asked to do during the day. A key part of the Sikh faith is voluntary work and charity and, as the number five is very significant for them, each year they select five charities to donate to.

'My early start was rewarded with cracking weather, which made the whole day run more smoothly. The other charity representatives and I joined the celebrations and, once the main religious service had concluded, we were ushered through throngs of people, under the crowd control rope, to the front of the festivities. I found myself standing with the saffron-robed Panj Piare (the five beloved of the Guru, who have been newly baptised), in the middle of the Nagar Kirtan ceremony in which the Panj Piare are followed by a float carrying the Guru Granth Sahib (holy Sikh scriptures) and process through the community whilst holy hymns are sung.

'The whole experience was fascinating and, fortunately, I had my very own guide, Bali, on hand to explain things. He was also very happy to learn that mountain rescue was made up entirely of volunteers as this resonated with her beliefs. As the time came to collect the cheque, several rather long speeches were given and I had a sinking feeling that maybe I should have prepared something. Luckily, I just had to stand and smile!

'A big thank you to the Coventry Sikh Community for supporting MR in this way and being so welcoming. And, in true MR style, I made it home just as Derby MRT had the first of three back-to-back call-outs!



TINA TAKES ON NEW MOUNTAIN CHALLENGE!

Last year, Tina Page took on the National Three Peaks Challenge in an epic solo, unsupported 500 mile run completing nineteen marathons in nineteen days...

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[RUNNINGTHESUMMITS](http://runningthesummits)



This summer, she has brushed off her trail shoes again for a flapjack-fuelled adventure in continuing support of Mountain Rescue England and Wales and SARDA England, her goal to eventually raise £50,000 through her ongoing challenges.

She will attempt to summit all 180 English mountains as defined by the Hewitts classification, which involves running a similar number of miles as her #3PeaksRun, but this time it's all about the climb.

The challenge will involve 42,500 metres of uphill, the equivalent of climbing from sea level to the top of Everest five times, or almost half way from Earth's surface to the edge of the atmosphere or 26.2 miles straight up... a vertical marathon!

TEAM TALK



JANUARY: QUEEN'S AWARD FOR LONGTOWN TEAM

The team received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award for volunteer groups, at a special ceremony in Abergavenny in January.



The award was presented by the Lord Lieutenant of Gwent, Brigadier Robert Aitken CBE, and Commodore Toby Elliott OBE RN DL, to members past and present from the team's 50 year service. 'It's an honour to be here tonight representing the Queen,' said the Brigadier. 'I can't think of a more fitting way to mark the team's 50 years. It is very well deserved and I am delighted to present it to the team.'

Longtown MRT team leader, Luke Lewis, said 'The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is testament to the dedication and skills of a team of volunteers who are always on call, in all weathers, to assist not only people in trouble in mountainous areas but also our wide ranging community. Today's team walks in the imprints of boots worn by some remarkable men and women who worked tirelessly to form today's team. This is their award as much as ours. This is our moment in the sun, a chance to celebrate.

'Tonight our neighbouring mountain rescue teams are covering for us, but tomorrow morning we are back on duty again. We are proud to accept this award but we also recognise that we must live up to it and ensure that tomorrow, the team provides as good or yet better service to reflect the needs of an ever-changing world.'

He also thanked Mike Jones, the team's former chairman, who had 'worked so hard to bring this award about.

SELF CATERING HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION IN THE LAKE DISTRICT



Bush Green is owned by **Coniston MRT member Dick Palmer** and consists of three double bedrooms, shower room and downstairs bathroom, living room, dining room, large driveway and double garage.

Located in Broughton-in-Furness on the edge of the Duddon Estuary, the Lake-District playground and Coniston fells are just 15 minutes away, Wasdale is 40 minutes and the northern Lakes one hour. Walking, mountain biking from the doorstep. Route assistance available. All amenities are close to hand in Broughton, 1/2 mile away. Bush Green is fully equipped with gas central heating, woodburner in the living room, wi-fi, and has lockable bike/vehicle storage.

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- Dogs by arrangement.

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TEAM TALK



MAY: THREE SWALEDALE 'SHOUTS' WITH A DIFFERENCE!!

Swaledale team's 50th anniversary celebrations have continued apace. Following the success of the dinner, two other projects have come to fruition: The Shout (the book) and The Shout (the play). We'll come to the third 'shout' later.

The Shout: The Book: In 2017, someone came up with the idea of producing a history of the team, charting the first 50 years, the change in titles, base locations and 'shouts'. Tony Harrison, a long standing team member, stepped up to the plate. Having trawled the archives (ie. opened every box in the depot and dusted off the papers), he has pulled together a history of the team, including



contributions from team members old and new about key incidents over the years, most notably the Puma helicopter crash on Catterick ranges in 2007. The team had been on a training day, when the helicopter came down close to them, being some of the first on scene, they assumed control of the incident and there are poignant reflections from one of the team members who was incident commander. An excellent read.

£6

The Shout: The Play: As if a book wasn't enough, underground rescue leader Pete Roe has written and directed a play of the same



© Chris Moss.

title. He's written a few plays in his day and, when not appearing on the 'Lakes and Dales' series or rescuing puppies from sinkholes, he put pen to paper to write a play about mountain rescue volunteers. Premiered at the Georgian Theatre, Richmond, with a mix of local actors and team members, it hit the road across Wensleydale and Swaledale before a grand finale at the famous Tan Hill pub. 'The play was born from my personal experiences,' says Pete, 'from over forty years in mountain and cave rescue. These ideas had been bubbling around in my head for many years and I just needed to find the best way to present them and tell the story. A play felt like the most appropriate medium and I was confident it would be a colourful presentation

and one others could explore and experience. Swaledale's 50th anniversary was just the motivation I needed to put the show on!'

And finally, a shout out to Swaledale dogs:

The team was saddened earlier in the year, to hear that search dog Molly had passed away. Molly, who was the first search dog on the team with her handler Rich Hey, had been enjoying her retirement.

Meanwhile, search dog Cassie has made it onto the call-out list with her handler Tim Cain (left), after passing their assessment with SARDA England. This is the first time Swaledale has had two operational search dogs on the team, both deploying together for the first time in May.



© Mark Harrison.

JUNE: NEW CONTROL VEHICLE FOR LONGTOWN

Longtown MRT has recently replaced their 10-year-old Control vehicle, choosing CM Vehicle Specialists in Bolton to supply and convert it to mountain rescue use. The Peugeot Boxer L4H3, was chosen for its space and load-carrying capacity and one of the major criteria in rigging it was that it should come in at 3.5T or less to satisfy driving license requirements.

The vehicle was designed with an up-to-date communications system, comprising the new DMR Simoco radio systems (including a 9m mast) and VSAT satellite communications, backed up by 4G router and a VOIP phone. Airwave is also included since it looks like it will be needed for a while and there are two small, Intel NUC computers, both running MRMap and MX Sarman, and four screens, one of which is a large screen for briefings etc.

Power management was a big issue. The vehicle uses a Victron inverter to supply the on-board mains. This can be fed from on-board batteries, a 2kW generator or an external mains supply. As a final backup, the vehicle alternator can also charge the service batteries if required. The power system is remotely monitored when the vehicle is in storage to ensure the system is in a good state at all times.

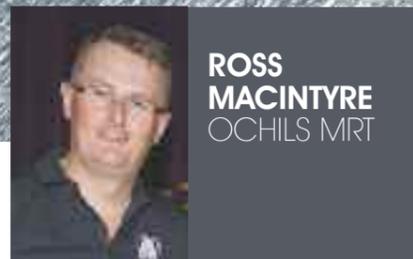
Inside the work area, to maximise the available space, there are rotating seats for the driver and passenger seats and space for three people to work during an incident (two search managers and a radio operator, each with their own desk space). Interior lighting is LED with the option of red light for night-time.

The rear of the vehicle carries enough equipment to support a normal incident — including a water boiler and drinks provision for hill parties — but these may be supplemented by equipment from the team's Land Rover if required.

Funding of this sort of project is a big outlay for any team. The cost was some £75k, which represents three years' normal running costs for the Longtown team. The vast majority came as lump sums from various organisations, including a large anonymous legacy. Special thanks to the main fundraisers: Abergavenny Rotary Club, SR & PH Southall Charitable Trust and The Rowlands Trust.

Top left: Images of the interior © LMRT.
 Top: The new vehicle in use at the Big Black Mountains Challenge © Tim Pustka.

Life as a mountain rescue probationer



'It's a boy!' On a wild winter's night in 1983 there was one significant member missing from my arrival into this world, my father. I wasn't due to be born for another few weeks, the call-out had come earlier in the day, someone in trouble needing help, why wouldn't he go...

Mountain rescue has been in my blood since that first day of my existence. Many family photos of birthdays, weddings, parties all lacking one familiar figure. This was offset by the wonderful experiences, climbing, hill walking, skiing from when I could barely walk. I was brought up in the mountains, sometimes sworn to secrecy, apparently my mother didn't need to know about that route or that epic that her ten-year-old had just completed. Following in my father's footsteps was inevitable.

Education, work and then a family pushed this ambition further from view, although still passionate about the mountains with small children, the time required to devote to MR was beyond what I had to offer.

Fast forward a decade or two and I'm standing in the car park about to go for a 'walk' with the team to be assessed as a potential new trainee member. I'd say I was quite a level-headed person, I don't get stressed easily, however, my palms were sweating, the self-made pressure was getting to me. Once out on the hill, I started to relax. This wasn't about showing off my skills as a mountaineer, this was an

assessment of how I would fit into and work with the team.

Mountain rescue is all about this team spirit. Who do you want alongside you in a tough situation, when things are getting really serious, the potential difference between life and death?

A week or so later I was invited to join the team as a trainee member, able to attend all training events, talks, fundraising activities but not on the call-out list. I was lucky, there were two of us from my village accepted that year, this would prove to be beneficial to both of us, both having the required skills for the team but each finding that the other was slightly more experienced in certain areas and we could advise and coach each other.

The year spent as a trainee was eye opening. The dedication from the whole team to help people in need was apparent from day one. Training in a mountain rescue team is not what people outside of mountain rescue might expect. Knowing how to be a safe and competent mountaineer is a prerequisite. Team training is about the skills over and above the ones we already have and is very varied, ranging from additional

medical training (over and above each trainee already held first aid certificate), to search techniques, off-road driving, rescue ropework and working with helicopters.

Sometimes it was mentally draining — how was I going to remember all of this information? — but this is where teamwork becomes even more apparent, everyone is happy to answer even the daftest of questions, spending their own time going over a subject. This has stayed with me and I ensure I'm always available to help newer team members now.

The year flew past, the highlights included a summer and winter training weekend where the social side of the team was the focus. This also allowed me to experience how other teams operate as we had a day working with each team whose area we visited. I also spent a very memorable day on the north face of Ben Nevis with 'the MR legend' Mick Tighe. You can't buy that kind of experience.

The training plan is usually put together a year in advance by the team training officer — what a commitment over and above the normal team duties! This yearly cycle means

that during the first year, all the skills required by the trainee team member are covered. At the end of the year, the trainee takes part in an assessment day, showing how the skills learned in that year can be put into practice. The week leading up to my assessment day was spent honing our skills. My buddy and I from the village spent a few nights helping each other — from ropework on the local crag to revising the medical assessment procedures. We were as ready as we could be!

My assessment day was in April and a very warm day. A couple of weeks before I had been struck down with a really bad chest infection and cold and was still suffering. I arrived at the base with nervous anticipation. I was paired up with my assessor: the team training officer! No pressure there then! The rest of the team also takes part in these assessment days, mostly scattered across the hillside as mock casualties while

RACING OUTSIDE TO GET MY GEAR, I FORGOT I WASN'T WEARING MUCH MORE THAN MY PYJAMAS...

some joined us in our separate groups to help the assessor. The day was spent navigating from hill to hill dealing with each 'casualty' as it came over the radio, with a bit of technical ropework thrown in for good measure. While I was slightly slower than normal due to the cold, I put all the training into practice and completed each task. Assessment over, it was back to the post (what MR teams in Scotland call the team base).

The assessors had a quick meeting and confirmed we had all passed and were now on the call-out list. What a wonderful feeling! My life had gone full circle. I was now the one that would be able to help people. Unfortunately, my father passed away in 2006 so couldn't share in my news. Within a few hours I had been added to the call-out text message system and we celebrated a busy but rewarding year.

The next few weeks were strange, I was never able to fully relax. My phone could go at any minute. Would I hear it, would I be able to go? In the end I decided I needed to continue to do the normal things in life too, so went out for a meal with my wife. We had a great night and made plans for the next day as it was Easter Sunday. I went to bed feeling the most relaxed I had in a few weeks...

My call-out text alarm is quite abrupt. It's not the kind of gentle tone that wakes you up for work in the morning, this is a brutal, loud and nasty alarm. As I woke up I remember thinking about what it sounded like then realising that, in fact, it WAS going off. The time: 3.00 am.

'FULL TEAM CALL-OUT. MEET AT THE POST'. I fumbled with my phone, typing the response to

let the boss know I was coming. I'd been so organised for a call-out when at work that all my clothes were in the car. Racing outside to get my gear, I forgot I wasn't wearing much more than my pyjamas (just as well the neighbours weren't awake at 3.00 am!). Getting in the car with my buddy from the village we made the decision to pause, just for a second. The most dangerous part of any call-out can be driving to the scene, we spent a few seconds to get our heads together then set off to meet the team.

The call was to search the hillside as a member of the public had seen lights on the hill, this turned out to be a number of wild campers and a false alarm with good intent.

We were safely home by 7.00 am although I couldn't sleep, still feeling the adrenaline from the previous few hours. Getting that first call-out out of the way was important. I didn't sleep through the alarm, I knew what to do, the training took over. From

that day and each call-out since I have always taken that few seconds when getting in the car to get my head together. The culmination of a very busy year in the team as a trainee then a probationer, hard work but very rewarding.

That first night, at 3.00 am, my wife got up with me to make me a sandwich in case I got hungry and waited up in bed until I was safely home...



Opposite page: Ochils Rescue Support Unit on duty in April 2017. Above: Team members in action during the snow in early March. Images © Ochils MRT.

now when a call-out comes in, she shouts at me if I turn the light on! Mountain rescue is a team effort, it's the wives, husbands, partners, children and colleagues that allow us to drop everything at the drop of a hat and for me I'm eternally grateful. ☺

TEAM TALK



POWERFUL, RUGGED AND WATER RESISTANT: THE IDEAL AREA LIGHTING

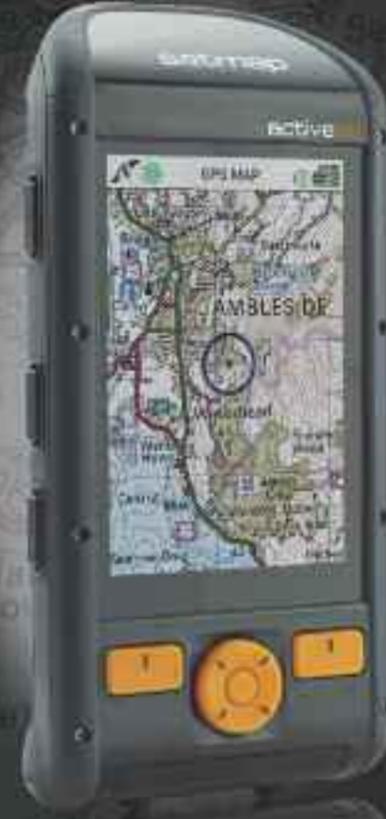
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JUNE: CLEVELAND MEMBERS HELP A TEAM SUPPORTER TO REACH HIS PEAK

Much more accustomed to carrying people down from Roseberry Topping, Cleveland team members lined up to carry one of their staunchest supporters uphill instead!

Keith, who has raised money for the team in the past and is a friend of a team member, is disabled and regrets that when he was fit enough he had never managed to get up this 320 metre iconic local landmark. Well it was time to put that right.

Aged 71, he has the rare muscle-wasting condition Lambert-Eaton Myasthenia Syndrome, and he was over the moon when he heard the trip up had been organised. It was the team's privilege to help Keith achieve his goal, by combining the challenge with team training and thus reinforcing their stretcher-carrying skills.

Keith was absolutely delighted to finally get there and took the time to catch the views across to the Cleveland Hills and down into the Tees Valley. He has warmly thanked everyone for the experience and the achievement was 'toasted' at the top before everyone adopted our much more familiar practice of carrying him back downhill!

'It was a bit of a break from normal training sessions,' says Ken Dunbar, the team's PR officer. 'It was an evening that everyone thoroughly enjoyed and we wish him well'.



Cleveland teams members and their 'casualty' for the evening, Keith Stubbs. Images all thanks to of the team's 'enthusiastic and capable photographer' © Gary Clarke.



Mountain rescue saved my life...



Izzy de Santis and David Bartles Smith. Images courtesy of MIND.

IZZY DE SANTIS TEESDALE & WEARDALE MRT

Izzy de Santis and her partner, David Bartles-Smith are members of the Teesdale & Weardale team. Their story featured in a presentation by Faye McGuinness, at the UKSAR Conference, about the Mind Blue Light Programme. What came over loud and clear in the video's narrative was the strength and support Izzy has taken from her involvement in mountain rescue. She has kindly agreed to share her story here too.



This is my story. It's about me and my illness and how mountain rescue helped save my life. My experience of mental health difficulties didn't come from my MR experiences. Rather, I believe I am representative of a now widely-stated statistic: Mental health will affect 1:4 of the population at some point in their lives. Mental health challenges are more likely to find their way into team members' lives through routes that have no link to the work or function of mountain rescue.

The impact will be very individual, from well-hidden needs to more obvious trauma. The Time for Change programme seeks to highlight the reality of mental health, its occurrence and, most importantly, the pathway to stability and how those around people who are struggling can make a big difference. This might be family, friends or work colleagues and these relationships will have a uniquely varying degree of relevance and input to your mental health survival. Core to this may be self esteem, acceptance and

the feeling of being valued and needed. These needs will be individually different but I am sure many who have suffered with mental health difficulties will be able to reflect on their own feelings and may recognise this in themselves.

My needs also extended to the desire to forget, to find distraction and step out of my dark world into something where I could feel much happier and safer. Being safe from dark thoughts was a constant battle. The more intense the distraction the better. So I climbed, I free climbed and I fell. I climbed more and raced horses and fell again and so the attraction to adventure, and the brilliant drug that it is had begun.

I climbed extensively from a young teenager, benefited from the Jonathan Conville Trust with my first Alpine summits at 18 and, later, enjoyed exploits with my university mountaineering club. The mountain bug has always been there, but some years later, as my mental health struggles intensified, it became more than that — it was the fabric

of my survival. I felt better for periods of time, I had found new friends in MR and felt part of this new family that really cared and accepted me.

On reflection, I could have remained curled up, holding onto my blanket, and put my despair, fear and dark thoughts and perhaps hope in others to change everything for me. I didn't. I sought to fight and my chosen battle ground was my passion: the mountains. My survival is not just down to the support of those around me. It is entrenched in those very intense experiences provided by mountaineering, mountain rescue and working outdoors. My prescription for stability

MENTAL HEALTH WILL AFFECT 1:4 OF THE POPULATION AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIVES

in mental health is much more than drugs and more about these individual experiences and how they have woven my own survival blanket.

Far from being traumatised by what I have seen, witnessed and experienced in mountain rescue, if anything, I have found peace and safety. My inner world was more often far worse.

When I joined the team, I disclosed my mental health needs and was accepted. I contributed well. So it was particularly difficult for me when my health declined. The underpinning problem wouldn't go away and, gradually, I was swamped. I found I functioned at my best when with the team. Despairing days would be offset by call-outs or team training. My self-harming — away from the team — escalated, and although I had confided in the team leader and some team members about my difficulties, the overriding fear of rejection from my MR family started to gain strength. Although I knew my MR colleagues would be there for me, I struggled to believe they would stay loyal to my needs forever.

I was sectioned a number of times and later spent a year in a therapeutic community which helped me turn my life around but, before that, the lowest point was when I attempted suicide and hung myself. I had placed a ligature around my neck and dropped from the back of a door. Fortunately this was while I was in hospital and I was found quickly and, after a period in intensive care, I survived.

That was fifteen years ago. Steve (our current team leader) came to visit me, as did other team members, and I was left in no doubt that the team wanted me. My future safety blanket was to be very much woven by these amazing colleagues.

Although my mental health issues are still there, my stability has gradually returned. I've been able to extend this horizon of positive functioning. Naturally, there has to be commonality and this has remained very much framed in mountains and adventure. I've had some amazing times and to share

my experiences is a privilege but also very much part of my continued attachment to this new found 'safe place'. I remember a teenager on an expedition in Africa commenting on my arms and asking if a bear had done that. 'Yes', was the reply. He didn't believe me, but the rest of the conversation was massively empowering to all.

I would argue that mountain rescue provides a very unique context. Much is written about mental health strategies, now being acted upon in workplaces throughout the country. Mental Health First Aid is a growing concept. Listen to and provide support to your colleagues, be aware and recognise that mental health issues will affect many of us at some time in our lives.

Volunteering, however, adds a new, far more empowering dimension. The mental health survivor will no doubt place greater store in these volunteer colleagues, may expect more, and may be more likely to accept this support than in their workplaces. This concept makes absolute sense to me as I feel that MR does provide a strength of bond, kinship and trust, and acceptance that is not just unique to its volunteer setting but crucially these attributes dovetail with the very needs identified to achieve survival from a mental health crisis. MR teams can make a greater difference to their members than is realised!

If my experiences of positive team support can be mirrored throughout MR and beyond, then I would be very, very happy. And that is my mission. I would ask you to help me achieve this and perhaps help your colleagues and consider a couple of questions:

- How can your team make a difference to team members who are struggling with their mental health?
- How can you make your team a safe place?

MR helped save my life. My team had no plan, it just had people who cared, in the right place at the right time. Please think about it and look at how your team may respond to members who express mental health needs. If MR reflects the society we live in, there will be a need — more likely, a hidden need. Can it be just left to luck that the right people are there at the right time or can we be better prepared? I believe we can and the solutions to support teams are out there right now. 🍀

IZZY JOINED TWSMRT IN 2000. A SEARCH MANAGER AND ADVANCED MR MEDIC, SHE HAS HELD THE POSTS OF SECRETARY, YOUTH TEAM LEADER AND DEPUTY TEAM LEADER. IZZY IS ALSO A QUALIFIED TEACHER, FREELANCE EXPEDITION LEADER, COURSE DIRECTOR/TUTOR FOR MOUNTAIN TRAINING AND AN EQUINE VETERINARY NURSE.

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TEAM TALK

MAY: BUXTON LEADS 'ENORMOUSLY SUCCESSFUL' LARGE SCALE JOINT EXERCISE USING DRONE

Over a hundred personnel from five different rescue teams were involved, including Buxton, Derby, Cheshire and Staffordshire Lowland teams and Watersafe UK, as well as a number of police search advisers.

Deputy team leader Rob Stordy led the organisation of the exercise. 'Despite some very challenging additional scenarios being thrown in to keep the search teams on their toes, they still managed to locate, treat and recover the 'missing child' with an impressive degree of speed and skill. The exercise was also the first real test for our new drone team, using the drone that's on loan to us very effectively. We were able to view the drone footage inside our main control point to assist with planning and it was the drone

team who managed to locate the 'missing child' first. This has further confirmed our view that drones are likely to play an essential role in mountain rescue in the future, so we'll be fundraising for this project now harder than ever. We are still £2000 short of our fundraising target, so any donations really are very welcome.

'In the midst of what was a complex exercise, our joint teams also managed to go to the aid of an injured trials biker, who was treated for a suspected collar bone injury. There's never a good time to break your collar bone, but if you must do, there's no better time to do it than when there are a hundred rescuers already in the area!

'The teams worked very well together, demonstrating a good appreciation of the principles of interoperability throughout. We are very confident that, should we be called up on to deal with any sort of major incident — including high risk missing children — we would be able to provide an extremely effective joint response'.

Following the exercise, the team leaders from all the involved teams met again to look at any learning points and discuss how they can continue to ensure the best response to the incidents their teams are called to.



Photos of the joint exercise courtesy of Buxton MRT.



MAY: TRIBUTE TO KEVIN HALLAHAN

Mountain rescue is a very close-knit community as we all know. It crosses many boundaries and attracts people from all

walks of life, bonded by a desire to help fellow hill and mountain goers when they are called upon.

It was a particularly poignant last year when, in September, Kevin Hallahan, a member of Dublin-Wicklow MRT, lost his life on Crib Goch during a training exercise. In April, relatives of Kevin visited Llanberis team members, in whose patch it was, to donate a personal memento and photograph and ask that it be kept in the team's base. Llanberis team members were happy to oblige and the framed tribute to Kevin will be on permanent display there from now on.

Photo courtesy of Llanberis MRT.

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Lomond Mountain Rescue Team: The early years.

BOB SHARP



BOB SHARP WAS TEAM LEADER OF LOMOND MRT AND HELD A VARIETY OF POSITIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL INCLUDING EDITOR, SECRETARY AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE THEN MOUNTAIN RESCUE COMMITTEE OF SCOTLAND. HE HAS A KEEN INTEREST IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE HISTORY.

Left: Early years of training. Bob Sharp on the right of photo
© Sandy Seabrook.

The Lomond MRT, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last year, was one of the first to form in Central Scotland. Sandy Seabrook, one of the visionaries who helped found the team, had already been involved with the development of mountain and cave rescue south of the Border. Quite a long way south, actually.

The early days were thwart with difficulties and challenges. Those involved at the beginning were clearly heading into the unknown. Whilst a few teams had already been established elsewhere in Scotland¹ (and many more in England and Wales), nobody was confident that a new team was viable. Was there a need and if so, would it be recognised by the police and the national body, the then Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland (MRCofS)?

Who would fund it? What kind of equipment would be needed? What would be the team's area of operation? Where would the team store its equipment? What kind of training was required? Who would take responsibility for the operation and how should it be structured? Not least of all, who would make up the team, what should be the skill base and how would members be recruited? It must have been daunting for the early stalwarts to face so many uncertainties.

Several locals to the Drymen area (20 miles north of Glasgow) were involved in the early days. One of these, Sandy Seabrook, was the first leader, a position he held for 25 years until he retired in 1992. Sandy had spent twelve years as an army sergeant and, when he retired in early 1967, he moved to Scotland to take up a position as warden of Montrose House, which provided short courses in outdoor pursuits for members of Glasgow Boys Clubs.

Sandy already had form. He had helped establish the Devon Cave Rescue Organisation and had worked with Hamish MacInnes to create what was to become the Search and Rescue Dog Association. Sandy was on the first experimental course in Glencoe in 1964 and became the first person in England to qualify as a SAR dog handler in 1967 with his GSD, Rory.

Sandy and a work colleague discussed the possibility of establishing a team to serve the local area. Both were aware of the increasing use of Ben Lomond and the neighbouring mountain area for recreation. They discussed their idea with Hamish MacInnes

who, initially, wasn't supportive. Hamish's view was that Scotland was already well covered. Undeterred, Sandy placed an ad in the local newspaper asking for volunteers and, on 28 December 1967, eleven individuals, including Sandy, the local GP, two police officers, two local foresters, a motor engineer and a planning officer, met at Montrose House to establish Lomond MRT. There were no restrictions on membership, except the requirement to live locally and possess the special skills or knowledge that would help the cause. Over the years, the GP had already been called to deal with injured walkers on Ben Lomond so his experience gave some weight to the need for a local rescue team.

It was agreed the team should break with existing rescue structures and operate separately from climbing clubs and other organisations. It was to be an independent entity. Shortly after, Stirling and Clackmannan Police agreed the team's new and unique role in search and rescue, making it clear that in the event of an accident, the police would be the first to be notified (not the rescue team). Team members would be covered by police insurance (personal accident). Sandy's lawyer also confirmed that police recognition was dependent on acceptance by the MRCofS. The team's application was subsequently accepted but it was some years before the Inland Revenue registered the team as a charity.

Initially, the team didn't specify an exact boundary of operation. There was a feeling its 'patch' would define itself through the geographical spread of rescues and this approach turned out to be correct. Most rescues still take place on Ben Lomond, Conic Hill and Ben Venue, the hot spots of 50 years ago.

A comprehensive training schedule was established within a year with indoor sessions at Montrose House on alternate Thursdays. Topics included rescue procedures, use of equipment, first aid, general mountaineering, rock climbing and

snow and ice techniques. Whole day sessions were held once a month on Sundays — also still the same — with stretcher carrying and lowering, and search management featuring prominently. The team's first joint training exercise in 1969 involved the police and RAF teams. Team members were also involved, almost immediately, in providing safety cover for hill-based events.

A key issue was that of a team base. With Sandy working at Montrose House, the owners gave full support for the premises to be used as the team's official base for meetings, training sessions and equipment

THE CIVIL DEFENCE CORPS AGREED TO PROVIDE TWO MK1 MACINNES STRETCHERS. THE TRANSFER PRICE AGREED WAS FIVE SHILLINGS – 25P IN TODAY'S MONEY

storage. They also gave the team full use of their 14-seater minibus.

There was little equipment in the early days. Most items, including hawser laid ropes, harnesses, helmets and a Mk 1 MacInnes stretcher came courtesy of Montrose House. Running costs were paid mostly by members who, typically, used their own gear and clothing on call-outs. Radios were non-existent, although the police agreed the team could use two of its radios, a proviso being they could only be used by members who were police officers!

There was a delay of many years before the team purchased a set of used Storno Pocket Set radios from the Forestry Commission. Gaining a license from the Minister of Post & Telecommunications delayed further their eventual use!

Early equipment included a set of Helly Hansen PVC anoraks courtesy of BP Chemicals and a pair of Thomas leg irons. The Civil Defence Corps in Lanark agreed to

¹Aberdeen MRT (1964), Arran MRT (1964), Borders SARU (1963) Braemar MRT (1965), Glencoe MRT (1961), Kintail MRT (1965), Killin MRT (1967), Grampol MRT (1960), Skye MRT (1962), RAF Kinloss MRT (1944), RAF Leuchars MRT (1956), Gordonstoun School MRT (1951) and Rannoch School MRS (1959).



provide (on permanent loan) two Mk 1 Maclnnes stretchers. The transfer price agreed for both stretchers was five shillings (25p in today's money). One member built a number of wooden collecting boxes (based on a design used by the Lake District teams), which were distributed locally. These generated several hundreds of pounds each year, a huge amount of money at the time.

In the mid-1970s, Sandy learned that the Home Office was selling vehicles. This was an opportunity not to be missed. He hot-footed down to Dumfries where, for the sum of £120, he purchased an almost brand new Austin Gypsy with just 120 miles on the clock. Its registration number was ALF 565B. This vehicle served the team well for over fifteen years. At this point, it was offered (but refused) to Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries. It is now long gone along with its registration number, but one of the team's current vehicles is always affectionately known as 'Alf'.

Like their counterparts in England and Wales, for team members in those early days, fundraising was an essential part of membership and central to the rescue ethic. One team member received the princely sum of £2 for giving a talk to the local guild! The team was highly proactive at raising publicity through the press, which occasionally led to unexpected donations.

A few years after the team was founded, the local police constabulary made a commitment to fund essential equipment for the three central teams — Killin, Ochils and Lomond — although this ceased in the late 1990s with the advent of central government funding.

Montrose House served as base for just over two years. The team's medical officer agreed that all equipment could be stored in the garage attached to his surgery, an arrangement which continued for four years, when the team managed to gain access to a large private garage in Drymen for its new team base. The garage was also used to store newspapers before collection by a recycling merchant. This meant that, every month or so, the vehicle and cache of equipment had to fight for space with mounting piles of old newspapers. When the battle with the papers was finally lost, the official rescue post was moved in 1981 to two small units formerly used by the local council's cleansing department on a ten-year lease. Twenty-four years later, team members moved in to a brand new, bespoke base in Drymen in 2005 funded by St John Scotland. Ownership was transferred to the team late in 2017.

If there was insecurity in the early years about the team's base, there was also an air of caution on the part of the police. Help was forthcoming in some areas but there was hesitancy in others. It seemed the energy and vision of team members didn't always fit well with the sometimes ponderous approach of the police. An issue from the



Above: The team's first ever vehicle, ALF 565B © Sandy Seabrook. Intended as a civilian replacement for the military Austin Champ and a commercial rival to the Land Rover, around 21,000 were built between 1958 and 1968. Some 250 were purchased by the Home Office for use as an emergency vehicle in case of a nuclear attack. These were stored with the Civil Defence Corps.

very start was that of insurance cover. As early as February 1968, the local police were asked to assist, but help was not forthcoming.

'Whilst I do not wish to decry in any way the public spirited action which has brought your team into being,' said the Chief Constable, 'I cannot ask my police authority to consider including members of your team in any police insurance scheme without showing the need to have such a team available for mountain rescue.'

'The terrain in this police area is not to be compared with that existing in Argyllshire and Inverness-shire and on the few occasions when help has been wanted on hills in this

ONE TEAM MEMBER RECEIVED THE PRINCELY SUM OF £2 FOR GIVING A TALK TO THE LOCAL GUILD...

area it was in the form of a search rather than rescue. In such searches in the past, police found the helicopter used by the RAF Search and Rescue Team most helpful.

'The frequency of hill searches or rescues in this area is low and really does not justify the expense involved in equipping, maintaining and operating a rescue team and I have, therefore, little evidence to support an approach being made to my police authority for help in such matters.'

Looking back, it's clear to see why the police were a tad sceptical. Happily, this was short-lived and it wasn't long before it was agreed that 'civilians, while voluntarily assisting in an attempt to save human life or attempting to discover the whereabouts of a missing person, would be covered for injury or death'.

A year or two later, the local police made a commitment to fund essential equipment.

For example, in 1973 they donated £450 which helped pay for pre-stretched nylon ropes, 24 Alpine jackets and nickel cadmium batteries for the team's searchlights.

At the time, the team relied very much on the relatives of team members to alert everyone to a call-out. But this only worked if someone was available. The police suggested they maintain an up-to-date list of members, addresses and telephone numbers. In the event of an incident, Police HQ would contact each and every individual member. This placed an onus on the police but took away a degree of control from the team. This arrangement was overtaken in 1980 when the team established a number of area reps. Now, when the police called the team for help, the team leader would contact each representative who, in turn, would alert their own members. Additionally, Central Scotland Police agreed that whenever one of the three central teams was called out, the other two teams would also be alerted. This system would ready all three teams for potential assistance if additional resources were required. It was sound in theory but never worked in practice.

The team was called out infrequently in the early years but, with each passing decade, the numbers increased significantly. Concerns about the team's viability, relationships with the Police, funding and equipment challenges have all melted away with time so that today, the team is central to emergency provision in Central Scotland.

With over 600 rescues under its belt, it is very well funded and has its own bespoke base with team members qualified in all aspects of the team's work. The vision shown by those stalwarts at the beginning who took the leap of faith has proven to be spot on. ☺

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Search and Rescue in Northern Ireland

DEBBIE CORRY DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE NORTHERN IRELAND

It all began back in 2011 when only four of the nine independent voluntary search and rescue teams, tasked by the PSNI and MCA, had direct access to local government. This included a small amount of funding. A number of other groups lobbied local elected representatives for more inclusive arrangements and it was agreed that the DoJ would take on policy responsibility for inland search and rescue given the relationship we have with the PSNI.

Maritime and aeronautical functions are still coordinated on a UK-wide basis and fall under national arrangements.

THE INITIAL REVIEW INTO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ARRANGEMENTS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

In order to ensure a new framework would be fit for purpose, the DoJ launched a strategic review. A team was appointed to:

- Review the current arrangements, including a comparison with England, Scotland and Wales
- Map funding arrangements
- Consider co-operation between the voluntary and statutory bodies
- Explore relationships between search and rescue and civil contingencies.

A steering group was appointed to oversee the review and there was extensive stakeholder engagement with umbrella bodies and the voluntary groups. It was widely acknowledged that any changes could only work if there was input from all

the stakeholders and, most importantly, the voluntary groups.

As you would expect, a number of difficulties were encountered along the way. DoJ was new to search and rescue and had to familiarise themselves with search and rescue very quickly, gaining an understanding of the different disciplines of each of the groups and managing expectations, particularly funding.

A formal report with thirteen recommendations was considered and published.

WHAT DO THE ARRANGEMENTS LOOK LIKE?

The new structure focused on the formation to two groups.

The Policy Group comprises DoJ (chair), PSNI, MCA, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, the key umbrella bodies and relevant NI government departments. The role of the group is to:

- Provide policy advice on the structure

and frameworks arrangements for Northern Ireland search and rescue

- Consider recommendations from the NISAR Practitioners' group
- Promote effective and efficient cooperation between the various agencies/departments involved in search and rescue, including the voluntary and statutory
- Oversee the assurance process for the NISAR Assets register and the collation of call-out data
- Explore the longer term strategic needs for search and rescue in Northern Ireland.

The Practitioners' Group comprises an Independent Chair, DoJ, PSNI, MCA, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, the nine independent voluntary teams, Royal National Lifeboat Institute, Red Cross and an independent medical representative.

The role of the Group is to:

- Provide a forum to share information and best practice
- Develop links with other members
- Engage with the statutory tasking authorities
- Consider specific issues/development of work programmes
- Feed into NI policy development
- Enhance links with UKSAR through an improved flow of information.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The new arrangements provide opportunities for the groups to come together and share best practice, discuss lessons learnt and engage with the tasking bodies. The venue for meetings is rotated on occasion allowing other groups to host and showcase their facilities and capabilities. For example, the venue for one of the meetings was the premises of the new Northern Ireland Air Ambulance. The agenda for the meetings is sufficiently flexible to allow relevant organisations to present on issues which are of interest to members.

One of the most significant pieces of work the Practitioners' Group has progressed is the development of an Assets Register, this records the capability and capacity of the

Debbie Corry and Doreen McCintock (from the Department of Justice Northern Ireland) and Judith Sexton (from the Police Service of Northern Ireland), jointly presented a strategic review of how the overarching search and rescue framework arrangements in Northern Ireland have developed over the past number of years.

voluntary groups and statutory specialist teams involved in search and rescue across Northern Ireland.

Members of the Practitioners' Group have agreed on a NISAR Logo which teams can use to show that they are part of the Northern Ireland arrangements. A dedicated search and rescue page has been established on the Department of Justice website with information and links to the search and rescue groups who are part of the NISAR arrangements. Details are available at: www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-search-and-rescue

The group has also compiled an Annual Report — a copy of which is available at: www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-search-and-rescue-practitioners-group-annual-reports.

The DoJ's Press Office has also been busy looking for ways to showcase the excellent work of the voluntary groups. In recent months, a number of short video clips have been released on the DoJ Twitter feed Take a look at @Justice_NI.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BENEFITS TO DATE?

Since the new arrangements came into place, all voluntary search and rescue groups now have access to:

- A forum to raise concerns
- Clearer structures — groups have met the Department's top management team within the Safer Communities Directorate, in DoJ
- Better networking opportunities for groups. This has led to offers to share resources and identified opportunities for groups to train together
- Opportunities to raise group's profiles through media promotion and celebrate their success
- Opportunity for all of the groups to bid for funding.

The Statutory Agencies have:

- Improved governance and assurance arrangements
- Clearer processes and agreed procedures



Opposite page: Mourne MRT on exercise © Mourne MRT. Above: North West MRT on exercise © North West MRT.

- Greater understanding of the extent of voluntary groups' capability and capacity
- Opportunities to meet the groups at training exercises, meet their members and hear about the difficulties and changes they face at first hand.

CASE STUDY

The response to an incident in August 2017 clearly showed the benefits of the multi-agency partnership working. NIAS received a call that there were 30 cadets and staff in difficulty with severe weather in Mourne Mountains. There were reports of multiple injuries ranging from ankle injuries to mild hypothermia.

The response included deployment of the Mourne MRT and North West MRT, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Hazard area response team, PSNI Search and Rescue Team and HM Coast Guard teams, alongside local police. A multi-partner ferry system to transport cadets and stretchers down a predetermined track was put in place. The lead for CASEVAC was the Mourne team, with statutory agencies fitting into their team.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES MOVING FORWARD?

Over the next few months, DoJ intend to work with the voluntary groups to:

- Identify the strategic needs of inland search and rescue over the next 3-5 years and how these might change
- Map search and rescue assets onto an IT system which can be accessed by all bodies
- Look for ways to strengthen relationships — between both voluntary groups and statutory bodies
- Identify ways we can recognise the work of the volunteers and their commitment
- Support groups to ensure they are as sustainable and resilient as possible.

The DoJ is keen to recognise the professionalism and enthusiasm of the voluntary groups who provide a search and rescue service alongside their statutory partners. The commitment, professionalism and enthusiasm of volunteers who undertake these vital roles is truly remarkable. 🙌



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