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# mountain rescue

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SPRING  
2019 **68**



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

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ISSUE 68:  
SPRING 2019

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

## EDITORIAL

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## NEXT ISSUE

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

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

## Cover story

Getting to know the ropes without the casualty on board: Mountain Rescue Ireland team members at their annual rope rescue rigging course in Doolin, County Clare © MRI.



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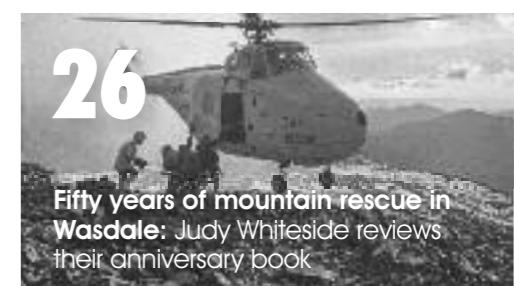
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MIKE Margeson  
[mike@mountainrecreation.co.uk](mailto:mike@mountainrecreation.co.uk)

## MIKE MARGESON MREW OPERATIONS

I have to start by reflecting on recent rescues north of the border in serious winter conditions with high avalanche risk, sadly resulting in five fatalities in a week. It's a reminder to us all that familiarity can breed contempt. The mountains are not benign and it highlights the importance of our own personal skills and team training programmes.

Nick Owen (Langdale Ambleside MRT) reports that the Lake District #AdventureSmart project will be hosted and launched by the Lake District National Park on 3 May. I can also report that MTE, the BMC and MTC have agreed to contribute £1,500 each to funds already donated, towards the creation of six short film clips and website development.

Speaking with Mike Park (SAR-H lead) and our Scottish colleagues, there is still work to be done to improve our helicopter and winch training to keep our members safe. There is only so much time and aircraft resource availability and this needs to be targeted where most needed. This is the only way we are going to get the aircraft training time for those who need it and are going to use it. Discussions on the next SAR-H contract are beginning and we must present a united voice at UKSAR of our operational and training needs. Clearly this is not happening at the present time.

The Operations group has been busy since January updating, reviewing and significantly modernising the MREW Primary and Core Capabilities to be a member team. This has been a significant piece of work and will be circulated with other documents for CIO member teams prior to the AGM meeting in May.

At our recent meeting we discussed the Peer Review programme, which comes to an end in December. There was consensus about the value of the process to teams and how useful it could be in sharing good practice. It's clearly the sort of process that those outside MR, looking in for whatever reason, would expect to see us having in place. A request was made to the management group for further support and funding and the programme has now been extended and funded till the end of 2020. Tim Cain, who has done an excellent job delivering the project, is also to continue until the end of 2020 in this role.

**Technical stuff:** there are regular debates around methods and kit used for managing rescue loads. I am aware of at least two new products coming to the market. These are purpose-designed devices with 250-rescue load rating. This is very positive and good news as it will provide a potentially wider choice of purpose designed products that are lighter, smaller, more intuitive and user-friendly to operate.

The next Operations group meeting is on 13 July. If you have anything you wish to be discussed, contact your regional group representative and they can raise it on your behalf. ☺

## MIKE FRANCE MREW CHAIRMAN

I've not yet seen the official incident figures for 2018, but from feedback on social media and the last regional chairs' meeting, it sounds like most teams have had another record year. The concern continues. When teams in tourist areas report a third of their calls as 'avoidable' if people took some basic actions before going on the fell, we need to see what we can do to help.

Following on from the launch of #AdventureSmartWales, the Lakes teams have been working with #AdventureSmart over the last twenty months, with financial input from the teams, LDSAMRA, MREW and the JD Foundation to launch in Cumbria this spring. It would be nice for another national park/MR region to take on the mantle as the next area.

We know it's really hard to find a benchmark to monitor if this project is working as all we've got is call-out numbers. I know we'd all like to see these reducing but when you promote the great outdoors, more people venture out. Being realistic it will take time before our calls drop, so we need to keep using teams' social media and the press to remind hillgoers to think safe. A bit of pre-planning can save a call to us for help.

As you all know, MREW was asked by the membership 'What does MREW do for us?' By the time you read this, we will have visited all the regions with the roadshow. So far these have gone very well. Those who attended had views about the direction of the national body, all comments made have been recorded and will be put into a report. It was a little disappointing more newer members didn't come along as our aim was to inform the next leadership of MR what MREW does. The Powerpoint used will go on the website and if there is enough interest we could run it as a workshop at the conference in September. Talking of which — have you booked your place yet? From what I've seen of the work streams it's going to be a good weekend.

I also hope that by the time you read this, we will have moved to the CIO. There's a transfer pack out there, a lot of work by many members has gone into this — apart from trustees, both the operations and regional chairs groups have spent time getting the information right for you. Can I take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in getting us to this point, and also thank the unincorporated trustees for their work over many years. They will still have some responsibility for some time.

Sadly, I need to report that Jody, our freelance fundraiser, is no longer working with us. A lot of research and contacts have been made giving us a foundation for the next person to join us. I am keen not to lose the momentum with this role. On the plus side after many years of searching for a national fundraising officer, Richard Carratu, of Buxton MRT, has put his hat in the ring to take on the role.

I am also pleased we now have the job description out there for anyone of you who would like to give my job a go, once my stint as chairman is up, next year. ☺



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**Sally Seed** looks at some of the national and international days, weeks and months through the year and the social media opportunities they bring

It's very easy to see media coverage and social media posts purely from your team's perspective but sometimes it pays to look at the media environment and see how your stories could fit (or be created to fit) into existing agendas. A recent example was posting on social media around International Women's Day but there are lots of others coming up in 2019 that could be the hook for your story.

May is **National Walking Month** — who knew? Given that there'll be stuff in the media about getting outdoors and walking for health and wellbeing, it could be an ideal time to approach your local radio station (usually BBC as they feature more talk) with some advice on seasonal equipment and preparation for

Sunday 16 June is **Father's Day**. This is probably more of a social media post than a press release but it might be worth posting on the Friday evening that the fathers on the team are keen to spend it with their families so please be well-prepared for whatever



Illustrations © VARTA.

those planning to be out and about. Check out [livingsstreets.org.uk](http://livingstreets.org.uk).

**Volunteers' Week** falls Saturday 1 June to Friday 7 June. There are almost too many options for this one. Your own team members and the time they commit to training as well as call-outs is worth communicating,

you're planning on the hills on Sunday. September is **World Alzheimer's Month** and, although it's not something MR makes a big thing of, we know that a reasonable number of those involved in our searches are suffering from some sort of dementia. It could be worth working with your local

Alzheimer's or dementia charity to create some cross-links and social media posting during September to highlight this and raise awareness of both charities: [alz.co.uk](http://alz.co.uk).

Thursday 10 October is **World Mental Health Day** and 4 November is the start of **International Stress Awareness Week** so there are opportunities to talk about the support given to those in the team and in other emergency services to cope with the mental health challenges. Again, this could be a chance to work with your local MIND charity or similar.

Thursday 5 December is **International Volunteer's Day**. I'm not sure how much coverage this achieves in the UK given the June week that is very established, but it could be worth looking out for relevant hashtags and making the connections.

I hope some of these will be useful and, of course, don't forget **Mountain and Cave Rescue Awareness Day** on Sunday 27 October 2019. It coincides with the end of British Summer Time so the clocks go back at 2.00am that morning and it gets dark an hour earlier. The day is planned to fall this way so that teams can use it as an opportunity to stress the need for walkers to carry a torch and batteries (or a spare) for the shorter daylight hours.

If you know of other special days, weeks or months coming up and with an MR connection, please let me know or post in the MREW Members Group on Facebook with a tag to the Publications committee.

If there's a topic you'd like me to cover in future, get in touch. Until next time, thanks. ☺

## SAR TECHNOLOGY AT THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW 18-19 SEPTEMBER

Visitors to this year's show can source new search and rescue equipment and technology whilst networking with partner agencies they could collaborate with on future operations. Staff and volunteers from mountain and cave rescue, Lowland Rescue, NSARDA, RNLI and UK International Voluntary Rescue Alliance will all be on hand to offer advice and expertise in the dedicated Search and Rescue Zone. How emerging technologies are improving the efficiency and operational effectiveness of emergency response is set to be the key focus of the show. The College of Paramedics will be running free CPD workshops and there will be a seminar theatre dedicated to mental health and wellbeing.

'Technology and innovation are enabling our emergency services to tackle the complex and dynamic challenges they face today and into the future,' says ESS event director David Brown. 'This year, more than ever the Emergency Services Show is set to be a showcase for new and emerging technologies that will deliver enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in operations, enabling rescue professionals both to do more and to do it better.'

The Emergency Services Show takes place at the NEC, Birmingham, 18-19 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](http://WWW.EMERGENCYUK.COM)



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# Getting to know your insurance policies: some useful policy advice about age restrictions

FROM **CHRIS JONES** OF **INTEGRO**  
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Throughout the year, MREW members approach the Integro team with questions and concerns about their policies and the type of cover required. Most recently we have received several enquiries about age restrictions on the Liability, Personal Accident & Motor Policies, the following table summarises this:

POLICY	OPERATIONAL MEMBERSHIP MOUNTAIN & CAVE RESCUE	OPERATIONAL SUPPORT MOUNTAIN & CAVE RESCUE	SUPPORT MEMBERSHIP MOUNTAIN & CAVE RESCUE	SUPPORT FRIENDS & FAMILY (VOLUNTEERS) MOUNTAIN & CAVE RESCUE	NOTES
Role Description	Member who operates on the hill or in caves	Operates and supports at and around the control point on operations	Does not operate on call-outs	Not a member of the team but helps out with the team	
Example of Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Party Leader</li> <li>• Hill Party Member</li> <li>• Water Technicians</li> <li>• Boat Operator</li> <li>• Canoe/Kayak</li> <li>• Drone Pilot /Spotter</li> <li>• Cave Rescue/ Underground</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incident Controller</li> <li>• Search Manager</li> <li>• Control Technician</li> <li>• Radio Operator</li> <li>• Logist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranges fundraising</li> <li>• Assists with catering</li> <li>• Casualties on training exercises</li> <li>• Checkpoint marshals on fell races/walks</li> <li>• Maintenance of vehicles/base</li> <li>• Admin team</li> <li>• Non-response driving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assists with fundraising</li> <li>• Casualties on training exercises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please be advised this is not an exhaustive list</li> </ul>
Liability Policies	Minimum age 18 Maximum age 74	Minimum age 18 Maximum age 84	Minimum age 18 Maximum age 84	Minimum age 16 Maximum age 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members retire at 85</li> </ul>
Personal Accident	Minimum age 18 Maximum age 74  Benefits are under Category A of the policy	Minimum age 18 Maximum age 84  Benefits are under Category B of the policy	Minimum age 18 Maximum age 84  Benefits are under Category C of the policy	Minimum age 16 Maximum age 65  Limited benefits under Category C of the policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relates to MREW Police and Top Up Policy – teams not under this scheme need to look at their own Police Force Policy.</li> <li>• Benefits reduce to 20% of those stated between ages 75-80 and reduce further to 10% of those noted for 81 and over for Operational and Support members</li> </ul>
Motor Fleet	Minimum age 18 Maximum age 74	Minimum age 18 Maximum age 84	Minimum age 18 Maximum age 84	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must hold a valid driving licence</li> <li>• Driving licence checks to be carried out annually and ensure licences are valid for vehicles/trailers driven</li> <li>• <i>Motor Fleet Policy is being revisited for the renewal at the beginning of July</i></li> </ul>

IF YOU WANT ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE  
EMAIL US AT [INSURANCE@MOUNTAIN.RESUCE.ORG.UK](mailto:INSURANCE@MOUNTAIN.RESUCE.ORG.UK)



## SIMON THRESHER MREW VEHICLES OFFICER

### Give your tyres due care and attention

Tyres have been a focus for the VSC recently and with the generous support teams now receive from Cooper Tyres, I thought it time to put pen to paper.

There's plenty of them about in MREW and they play an important part in training and call-outs but do we give them the attention they deserve? How do you look after YOUR tyres?

We all know about checking tyre wear to make sure we're above the legal minimum depth and we're good at spotting uneven wear on tyres indicating tracking or balance issues, problems with shock absorbers or suspension components.

Tyre pressures are important as the correct pressure ensures good grip and better MPG as well as improving the tyre's durability.

For those with newer vehicles or members that are a bit tech savvy you might have seen that Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems (TPMS) have been fitted on new passenger vehicles by law since November 2014 and make checking tyre pressure quick and easy to do. They also monitor the tyre while driving, alerting the driver to a loss in pressure.

TPMS systems can also be fitted to older vehicles! Oldham and Calder Valley teams have been trialling an aftermarket system from Michelin for the last couple of months with excellent feedback — thanks to the guys over at [wheely-safe.com](http://wheely-safe.com) for supplying the trial units. These systems are easy to fit and remove, simple to check and can also be extended to include monitoring of your trailer tyres too. If any teams are looking at a TPMS system or interested in how they have trialled please drop me an email.

#### What about tyre age?

On the sidewall you'll find a tyre's 'DOT code' and one of the key pieces of information gained from this is the date the tyre was manufactured. Since 2000, the date section of the code (the last digits) has been made up of four numbers.



The first two digits give the week number, the last two the year of manufacture. In the picture, the age code is '3909' so that tyre was made in the 39th week of 2009. If your tyres have no date or only a 3-digit number, they were manufactured before 2000 and should be replaced ASAP.

There is no definitive tyre-age limit regarding when you should replace your tyres but if they are over five years old, you should keep a close eye on their condition. If they are 10+ years old, consider replacing them. Remember to check additional tyres such as spare wheels or trailers as these tyres typically see less use and are more susceptible to ageing.

#### Anything else you can do?

On and off-road, drivers should be constantly aware of the ground conditions and assessing their route — protruding stones, sticks or other debris can rip into the tyre wall damaging the tyre beyond use. Whilst most of the driving we do is well suited to standard road tyres a good set of all-terrain tyres with a strengthened sidewall will give some protection.

The common myth is that off-road, chunky tyres will get you through any obstacle off road. This isn't true! Once that tread is full of mud, regardless of how deep the tread, all tyres will perform the same. It is driving technique rather than tyre choice that makes the biggest difference to traction and an off-road training course will give your drivers a much better understanding of the capabilities of both vehicle and tyre. ☺



THE DISCO BEING PUT THROUGH ITS PACES up at the Jubilee Tower, Darwen IN LANCASHIRE with Bolton team members... December 2018



## Keeping Track A year in the life...

### #MREWDiscovery



OFF TO THE OGWEN VALLEY where team members gave this feedback... for and against February 2019

#### SOME PLUSES...

- Hugely impressed with the serenity and lack of fuss required to surmount some pretty tough terrain. Where a Defender needs lots of operator skill and input, the Disco just needs pointing in the right direction to get it to most places.
- Ride quality and noise levels on and off road were superb. 2.0ltr diesel impressive in performance and frugality.
- Controls are all pretty much where you would want them. Internal space is vast and very useable.
- Found the vehicle great to drive, responsive and the off-road capability got us where the team would need to go.

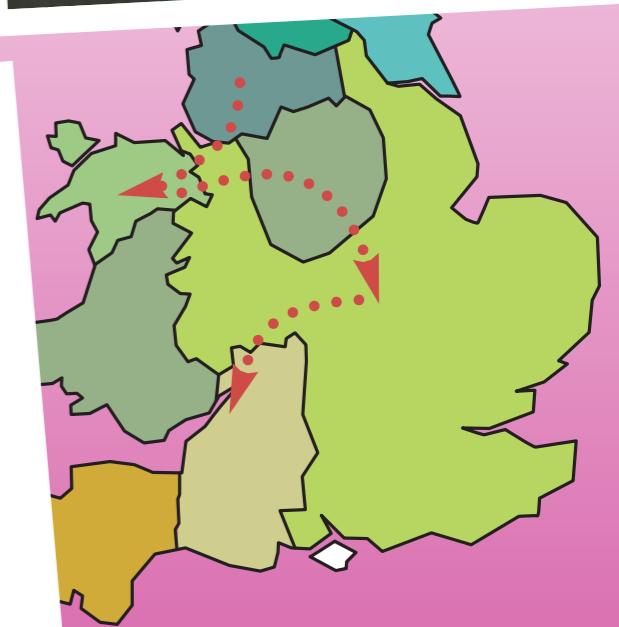
#### AND SOME MINUSES...

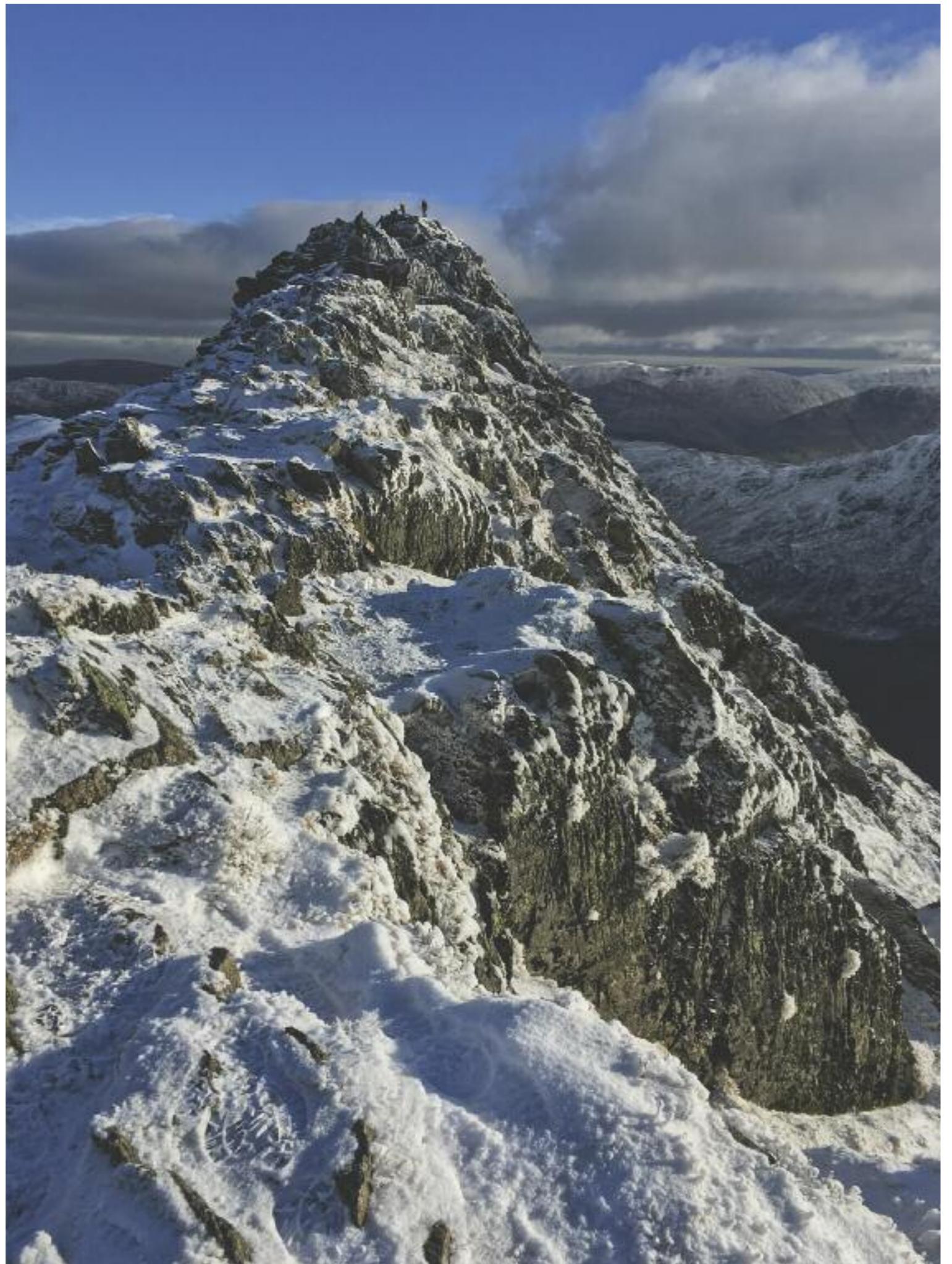
- Reversing on a dark, wet, night when the camera is blurred, we felt the reversing light is poor and the wing mirrors taper too much to give a good view. Coupled with the fact the proximity sensors and BSM indicators are very persistent in clustered terrain, going backwards requires use of more than the aids provided.
- The thing is a technological marvel but cost of ownership is a massive negative and although some teams could choose to buy and run one at their risk, most would balk at the costs. Given the high initial cost and 'liability' when out of warranty, the solution would be some sort of five-year fully-inclusive lease scheme. Ten years might be better but we can't imagine a lease company or JLR wanting to stick their neck that far out!
- Would be a great first response vehicle, with the ability to get where it needs to go and the flexibility to haul troops, but the space for a stretcher was quite limited. The balance lies in the costs. Would we want one? Yes. Would we want to pay for one? No.

AND SOME VERY POSITIVE FEEDBACK from South Snowdonia March 2019

As a true Defender guy... WOW!! I really wasn't expecting to be blown away, but I was very impressed with what it could cope with but we didn't dare take it up some of the tracks we take the Defenders up and only due to it being slightly too wide (bodywork and mirrors). I for one can't wait to see the new Defender and especially the utility version and let's see which team will be the first to get an order in... Once again, thanks for arranging this for all the teams.

A QUICK STOP OVER IN LLANBERIS then it was off to JLR training event for a week then off to SARA... April 2019





## Hinkes thinks

### A winter filled with tragedy

Climbing is a way of life for me. It's an addiction of sorts and if you were to cut me in half it would say 'mountain climber'. I love being in the hills and mountains, but sometimes they can deal a tragic, blow and remind us of our mortality.

**E**rnest Hemingway quipped that there are only three true sports: motor racing, bullfighting and mountaineering. All the rest are merely games. But none of us climb to die, we climb to live and climbing and hillwalking enhances our lives.

As mountain rescuers you might have to come to terms with the trauma of a fatality. It can make you feel despondent and very sad and we often console ourselves thinking people who die in the hills were at least doing what they wanted to do.

Tom Ballard who died on Nanga Parbat in March was doing what he wanted to do and quoted as saying that he did not want to die in bed. Tom was a fine young man, taken too young. Other mountaineers who were in the area and acclimatised searched for Tom and Daniele Nardi, his Italian climbing partner. They were below 6500m so a helicopter could be used, albeit at the limit of its capacity. Going on the mountain was risky, especially on the Mummery Rib which was the route Tom and Daniele were attempting. Temperatures can fall to 40° below and avalanches raked down the route. A drone was used, but eventually the bodies were spotted and confirmed through a telescope. Unlike in the UK, they are unlikely to be recovered as the risk of rescuers being killed by rock and ice fall or avalanche is too high. Sometimes mountains can be brutal and we have to come to terms with the harshness of such loss of a human life.

But you do not need to climb in the Himalaya to get killed. I have had a few unusual occurrences, close shaves, near misses — call them what you will — in the UK. Even in the Lake District I've been avalanched twice and escaped unscathed. I call them 'Gifts' and I try to learn from them. I have always impelled myself into experiences in the hills, even going out in atrocious weather, so that if it happens 'for real' I will not be fazed. When I started hillwalking, I'd sometimes go out on the North York Moors near where I lived for a survival experience and spend the night in a big orange plastic bivvy bag — just for fun. I learned a lot about exhaustion, exposure and hypothermia, and developed an innate resilience that has served me well.

This year there have already been several

deaths in the hills. In England and Wales, full winter condition were brief and elusive, with a warm, sunny period in February. I managed to get a few crampon and ice axe days climbing gullies and ridges in wintry conditions in the Lake District. In January, I had a classic ascent of Striding Edge in clear Alpine-like conditions. Fresh snow covered the rocks, but as it wasn't icy, crampons weren't necessary if you had the skill and experience to deal with cold snow-covered rock. However, crampons were needed in the gullies full of snow and ice, unless you were only on a Grade 1 route and you wanted to practice step-cutting technique!

I also scrambled up Pinnacle Ridge with a smidgen of slushy snow settling on the

benign routes can catch you out if your vigilance falters.

In Scotland, Ben Nevis has had quite a few fatalities including due to avalanches. One serious incident involved four climbers being avalanched in Number Five Gully. At the time there was an SAIS category 'High' risk of avalanche. The climbers concerned were French and Swiss, who some may think should be more avalanche-aware than us Brits. However, the mountain does not take nationality or a person's avalanche knowledge into consideration. At all times we must be vigilant and constantly assess and reassess the conditions and situation.

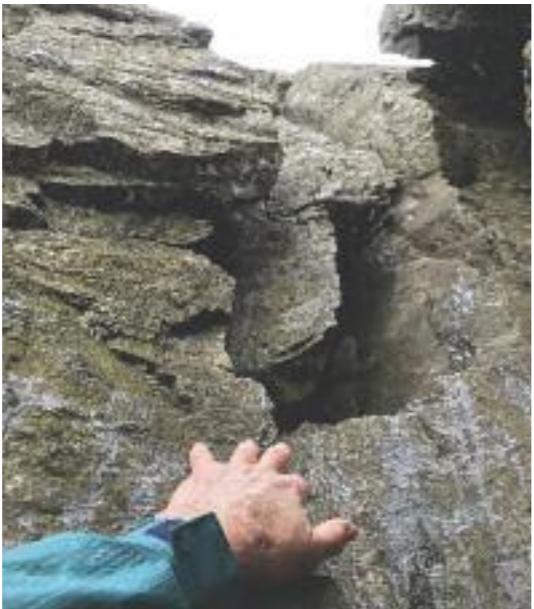
In Glencoe, two climbers were benighted after climbing a route on Stob Coire Nan



Opposite page & above: Difficult ground along Striding Edge © Alan Hinkes.

ledges. There have been several accidents and avalanches on the summit slope of this route and I thought of a friend who was avalanched on the descent to Grisedale many years ago. Even easy and seemingly

Lochan, which without local knowledge can be difficult to navigate off in inclement weather. When they didn't return, friends alerted the MRT. Not knowing where they were or what had happened, a major



search ensued including possible avalanche burial. As it turned out, the pair had dug an emergency snowhole and survived atrocious condition overnight with severe wind chill and spindrift. The rescue team found them in daylight the next morning. One was airlifted to Aberdeen but sadly died, the other suffered frost nip. Apart from black finger tips he is physically fine, but finding it difficult to come to terms with the death of his climbing partner. So often we only look at the physical injury and do not notice the psychological effect on a person after an accident or a rescue.

Mental resilience and toughness is just as important as physical resilience and toughness in adversity. But after the acute surviving period or rescue has finished, coping and dealing with the memory is necessary, which calls for balanced mental resilience.

Geoffrey Winthrop Young wrote in his 1920 book Mountain Craft: 'In climbing mountains danger is a constant, ever-present danger, not remote as in other sports and we can be at grips with it before we are aware'.

Particularly in winter and on big snowy hills and mountains I make the analogy that we

are constantly sliding into a very deep hole — called 'the Incident Pit'. You need to realise that you are always skirting around and trying not to slip into this imaginary 'incident pit.' This is especially true in a mountain rescue situation. Small, seemingly unimportant incidents or minor nuisances can accumulate and become a major problem.

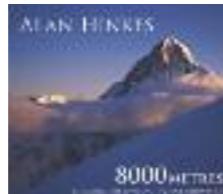
Attention to detail to avoid an accumulation of small errors (or minor accidents) is essential to prevent a serious incident. With every setback or near miss, you will slide deeper into the 'incident pit' until it is extremely difficult to escape. Ultimately you are in so deep that extricating yourself becomes impossible and you die.

Constant evaluation of your situation, controlling or modifying the effects of any

minor incidents, is vitally important. You must always try to remain in control of the situation in mountain terrain. Exhaustion, dehydration, exposure, both hypothermia and hyperthermia, along with changing weather and avalanche conditions must be constantly checked.

Attention to detail can mean the difference between life and death. If you feel you are sliding further into the pit you must take measures to scramble back up, metaphorically speaking. And you must always be prepared to turn back ☺

**Top, left to right:** Ice axe planted, looking up Number One Gully, Helvellyn on Red Tarn Face; Looking up a difficult section on Pinnacle Ridge, St Sunday Crag, then looking down, near the top, at the drop below — a 'handie' and a 'bootie' © Alan Hinkes.



**ALAN HINKES** IS THE FIRST BRITON TO CLIMB THE WORLD'S HIGHEST MOUNTAINS, THE FOURTEEN 8000M PEAKS. HE IS ALSO A KEEN ADVOCATE FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE. HIS BOOK ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE, '**8000 METRES**' NOW AVAILABLE IN THE MREW SHOP

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Jess Moon Bowen, Mountain Rescue Volunteer

Brecon Beacons, Wales

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## FEBRUARY: BUXTON TEAM LEADS THE WAY WITH DRONES

Buxton Mountain Rescue Team has become the first Mountain Rescue England and Wales team to be granted approval by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for the use of drones. The approval will enable the rescue team to be able to use the drones to search for missing persons in places where access is difficult or unsafe for team members.

The approval is the culmination of a project which started nearly eighteen months ago when two team members, Roger Bennett and Carney James Turner, had a chance conversation with staff of the Pure Buxton magazine.

The project started with an advertising campaign led by Pure Buxton, which resulted in contributions from organisations including Derbyshire County Council, High Peak Borough Council, Buxton Billerettes, Poynton Round Table and Women's Institutes, together with many other donations from individuals who just want to help. In total, nearly £10,000 has been raised to purchase the drones and train the pilots.

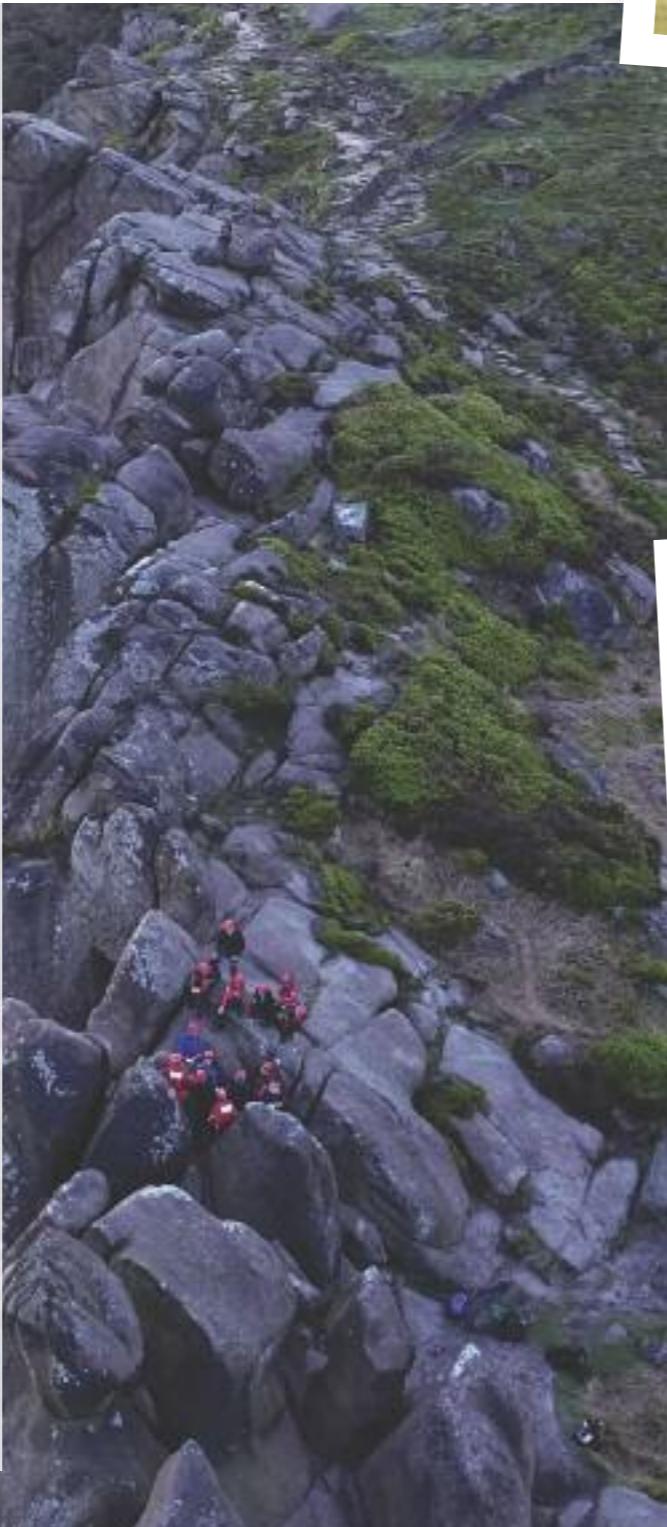
So far, the team has eight trained pilots, known locally as the Drone Team, ready to be tasked to search for missing persons on call-outs. They even have their own badge.

Team leader Neil Carruthers said, 'The approval from the CAA demonstrates that they have the confidence the systems and procedures the rescue team has in place are safe and effective. I am delighted that we are the first mountain rescue team in England and Wales to successfully gain approval to use drones for search and rescue. The drones will allow the team to search areas such as boulder fields, water margins, moorlands, crags and difficult ground. The drone technology will complement our other search resources such as team members on the ground and the search dogs, all of which have an important part to contribute in search operations.'

'I would like to congratulate all the team who have been involved in the training and especially the pilots who have demonstrated not only a good theoretical knowledge, but also the ability to plan drone operations as well as practical competence in the safe use of our unmanned aerial vehicles.'

The team would like to thank RUAS Unmanned Aviation Services, the drone training provider who have supported all of the pilots to gain certification and also Brendan O'Neil from Derby Mountain Rescue Team who has given up a great deal of his personal time to help train our pilots.

In late February, the news caught the imagination of journalists at BBC Radio Derby, resulting in a report and interview with the drone team, live from the Peak District National Park.



Photos © Carney James Turner, Buxton MRT.



## MARCH: RED-NOSED CHRISTMAS REINDEER BOOST SCARBOROUGH & RYEDALE FUNDS

The £3000 donation, from the Rotary Cavaliers, has enabled the team to replace some of their old analogue radios with six hand-held digital radios.

The cash was raised from the 'Christmas Reindeer Project', the brain-child of Rotary member Tom Potter. Each reindeer, as well as cats and dogs, was made by Tom himself and as Christmas approached he was fully engaged in keeping up with the demand. Thanks must go to the fourteen businesses around Scarborough who did such a great job in selling the reindeer!



## FEBRUARY: UPPER WHARFEDALE TEAM MEMBERS MAKE IT ONTO THE SMALL SCREEN

The three-part documentary by ITV Calendar explored the lifesaving work of rescue services who rely on public support to do their work. Team members joined the RNLI at Filey and the Derbyshire Air Ambulance in the series which was aired on all of ITV's regional programmes across the country.

The team chose a cave rescue in a remote and hard to access area to show reporter Matt Price what they're faced with on a typical rescue. He had already taken part, survived, days out with the Filey lifeboat and the Derbyshire Air Ambulance helicopter so he was more than ready for the mountain rescue experience.

The team became involved after Matt began setting out his plans for the series, at the lifeboat station in Filey, says David Dennis. 'He mentioned to two old friends of mine John and Joanna Ward, both lifeboat stalwarts, that he'd yet to make any MR contacts. 'We know a man' was the instant response and we are most grateful to them both for setting us up for the programme.'

Filming involved one of the team's training exercises. Matt had already endured the sheer effort of just getting to the scene of the incident in the Land Rover. Next he was scaling down slippery rocks into the darkness below — a daunting first experience. During his underground crawl to the injured caver, he learned some of the extra difficulties we face in an underground rescue and the risks involved — and to hear that even Christmas Day doesn't spare team members, one recalled incident resulting in a long duration rescue of a caver suffering a double pelvis fracture.

'It was a great day for us all and Matt's investigative and editing skills produced a great feature not just about our team but for the benefit of mountain rescue generally.'

**Above:** Matt Price learning the ropes © ITV News Calender.

## MARCH: ROYAL RECOGNITION FOR SCARBOROUGH AND RYEDALE TEAM

For the second time in five years, the team has been awarded formal recognition by the Duke of York's Community Initiative.

The award lasts for five years and is presented to community projects based in Yorkshire, owned, developed and led by the community they serve, which are well run and an inspiration to others. Individual awards are given in recognition of exceptional leadership skills.

The team completed a comprehensive questionnaire in December and, once shortlisted, provided evidence of their constitution, policies and procedures along with audited accounts, budgets and evidence of a robust strategic plan. They were subsequently visited by assessors in January who spent the morning with a cross section of the team.

'Late in February we received the good news that we'd been successful and will be formally presented with the award by HRH The Duke of York in early April'.

The award isn't just a 'Royal recognition of excellence', the team is also entitled to use the Royal logo to enhance fundraising credibility and it brings with it access to business management support through workshops, mentoring and networking, and an in-house funding stream.

'This is a great result for us,' says Ian. 'It confirms that we're a well run, financially sound, inclusive, forward-looking charity serving the people of Yorkshire and beyond. And the award sits well with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service which we are also proud to hold.'

'Along with the MREW Peer Review, this is great example of an external audit of the team telling us that we should be justifiably proud of what we do and how we do it.'

'While the peer review looked at us very much from the operational perspective the DOYCI audit process focused more on the charity aspects of the team comparing and contrasting us with a diverse range of Yorkshire charities and organisations.'

'While the process is time-consuming we'd commend external audit to all teams. We all know we do a great job but it is really satisfying for others to spend time with you, review your documentation, challenge your thinking and then come to the same conclusion.'

'We look forward to a further five years with the Duke of York's Community Initiative and the benefits it will bring to the team.'



## HOW LUCKY CAN WE BE! WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST AMBASSADOR

Last spring, we ran the account by Derby team member and former Royal Marine Pat Parsons (first published by Jotnar as part of their Legend Journal Series), recalling the moment his 'perfect life' changed forever. He described his rescue and recovery from a serious climbing accident, and ultimately how this led him to join the mountain rescue team that had been there for him.

'How lucky can you be?' he had thought, finally living his retirement dream of taking people climbing for pleasure and actually getting paid for it. And then came the accident, his first memory sitting at the bottom of the crag, covered in ropes, his first thought for his clients, their faces aghast. A piece of rock had snapped off and within seconds his world had changed forever — from fearless marine to something much more vulnerable.

Derby team members 'did their job magnificently' says Pat, 'expertly and compassionately' reassuring him through moments which should have been quite terrifying. 'At the time, I took their actions for granted but in reality, they had just performed a small miracle.'

'I'd been climbing and mountaineering for 37 years and was just starting to believe I was getting the hang of it. Big mountains and big adventures from a life of soldiering had shaped me and prepared me for any challenge a Royal Marines Mountain Leader could expect to face.'

'But that had just changed: how was it going to help an 'incomplete paraplegic' with a burst fracture of the T12 vertebra, which was the diagnosis and my new reality'.

Over the following year or so, he learned to walk again, progressing from wheelchair to crutches to sticks despite a spinal injury which has left his legs and feet partially paralysed. He learned too about the bowel and bladder issues and pain management

spinal injury patients routinely have to deal with. But as time has gone on, his confidence has grown and his love of the mountains hasn't waned.

In the ten years since, he's not just cycled and clambered up rocks (with adaptive foot-supports), he's climbed mountains like Triglav, Kilimanjaro and Mont Blanc and cycled across the length of the Pyrenees. Then last year, he and his wife came across a mountain rescue exercise in the Peak District.

'I'd have loved to have joined mountain rescue, I said, assuming it was beyond my reach. 'So bloody well get on and do it!' came the reply. She had just turned the key and opened a new door'.

Now a proud member of the same team that came to his rescue all those years ago, Pat is a passionate advocate of mountain rescue, able — through painful experience — to speak about it from both ends of the rope. And, in March, he agreed to become an official ambassador for MREW, our second addition to the ambassadorial Who's Who alongside Alan Hinkes.

'I have learned many things with mountain rescue, including the art of followership (which I am rather enjoying!) and, while occasionally I struggle to keep up with them, I also occasionally have something to offer and this is proving to be another huge milestone on my road to recovery. So now, more than ever perhaps, I say to myself 'How lucky can you be?'

And how lucky are we to have him! ☺



**Top:** Back on the rock © Pat Parsons. **Centre:** Pat's only photograph of himself in a wheelchair © Pat Parsons.

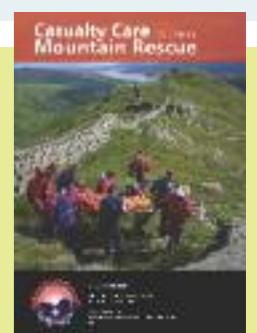
**Bottom:** Pat on the left, awarded the 'Red Jacket,' July 2017 © Derby MRT.

Based on an article in the Legend series: [www.jotnar.com](http://www.jotnar.com).

## APOLOGY RE NEW EDITION CASUALTY CARE REVISION IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE

In the last issue of the magazine we incorrectly headed the piece about the latest edition as 'Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue' which is, of course, the title of John Ellerton's seminal textbook on the subject and copyright belongs to John. We should point out that these are revision notes, produced by Andy Caple and published by Langdale Ambleside MRT.

TO ORDER COPIES OF CASUALTY CARE REVISION IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE, EMAIL [ANDY.CAPLE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ANDY.CAPLE@GMAIL.COM)





## NO ORDINARY SUNDAY

In the short time I've been part of Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team I've attended a variety of call-outs, from missing persons to crag rescues and everything in between. However, nothing could have prepared me for the incident that the team faced one Sunday afternoon in late-January.

### WORDS & PHOTOS **WILL CLOSE-ASH** NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK MRT

Like many members of our team, I was enjoying a quiet Sunday afternoon with my family, when the 'usual' text from SARCALL came in, asking for team members to respond with their availability to an incident. Nothing unusual so far and as I left my poor wife and children waiting for their ice creams and ran the short distance home, my mind was considering the possibilities of the call-out. Probably an injured walker along Hadrian's Wall or a North East Ambulance Service assist for a mountain biker somewhere near Kielder.

The RV was in the north of our patch, the Harthope valley on the east side of the Cheviot, at least an hour drive from where I lived.

What I wasn't to know at this point, was that our team leader had earlier that afternoon received an unexpected phone call from north of the border. The team leader from Tweed Valley MRT reported that one of their team members had received a call from his gliding club to say one of their pilots has crashed high on the Cheviot plateau. The exact location was not yet known but we should expect a call from Northumbria Police.

Fortunately, our team leader was out for the day with Northumbria Police's Superintendent for the Northern Area Command, in whose patch the glider had crashed, and their respective families. Whilst not quite believing what they had both just heard, the wheels began to turn.

As I drove into the valley an hour later, I watched the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) helicopter flying away, presumably with the casualty safely on board. At that point, I assumed we'd been stood down, but as signal was poor in the valley, I pressed on to the RV.

Dusk was settling as I arrived to find fire engines, ambulances, the police and team members from our team and our sister team, North of Tyne. I approached the now very busy control vehicle and was logged in, but there was so much going, I still wasn't sure what had happened. I stopped one of our team members as he was moving kit out of our Land Rover and asked what had happened. 'A glider has crashed on the side of Cheviot', came his response.

I was momentarily shocked as I looked up into the rolling clouds now covering the mountainside. I knew the forecast from the Met Office had freezing temperatures and snow forecast for the peak and could only begin to wonder what conditions were like up there.

I quickly grabbed my gear as other team members prepared for a second possible helicopter flight on to the mountain. As I helped get kit from our vehicles, I was quickly brought up to speed. Earlier in the afternoon, a glider from a local club had become disorientated in thick cloud and had crash landed on the south east flank of the mountain, just below the summit.

By now the hasty team was closing in on the glider crash site and two further hill parties, including members of the Fire Service with cutting equipment and two GNAAS medics, had been rapidly air-lifted as close to the scene as possible by the Coastguard helicopter — which wasn't that close due to the deteriorating weather! The pilot was injured, but in a stable condition, and thankfully was protected from the worst of the elements by the cockpit of the glider. He was initially assessed by the hasty team before his care was handed over to the GNAAS medics.

The challenge was to now bring him down before conditions became much worse. Three further hill parties were deployed up the valley carrying the stretcher and technical rope rescue kit. The plan was to lower the stretcher to below the cloud base and at the earliest opportunity transfer the pilot to the Coastguard helicopter for an onward flight to hospital. At a distance of 5km from the RV and height gain of over 600m, it wasn't going to be the easiest rescue we'd done. The conditions on the hill were also continuing to deteriorate. Temperatures dropped and heavy snow began to engulf the crash site as team members had to battle a wind chill well below -8C.

Arriving at the crash site was a surreal experience. The glider was embedded among rocks and scree and apart from some minor damage, still intact. Clearly the pilot had managed a 'hard landing' which in the end, probably saved his life.

The Incident Site Manager and hill parties already at the crash site had planned to use an Edale Shuffle to safeguard the stretcher as it was sledged by team members down the mountain side. We set about getting that ready as the pilot was extracted from the cockpit and packaged on the Bell stretcher.

Once we'd dropped below the cloud level some 400m from the crash site, the Coastguard helicopter was able to come in, do a soft landing and pick up the pilot to take him to hospital.

Everyone was relieved, elated and certainly tired by the time we all arrived back to the RV for a hot debrief. In total, 29 team members had been involved for eight hours and it was, without a shadow of doubt, a supreme effort by everyone involved and a truly multi-agency response. In the end, it turned out to be no ordinary Sunday!

**Note:** Northumberland National Park and North of Tyne teams would like to thank the team leader of Tweed Valley MRT for the early 'heads up' and Northumbria Fire & Rescue Service, Northumbria Police, HM Coastguard and the Great North Air Ambulance Service for their invaluable support during the call-out.

We would like to pay particular thanks to the two walkers who went to the aid of the pilot and remained with him until mountain rescue personnel arrived on scene. They did an exceptional job of keeping the pilot calm and provided him with additional clothing. We would also like to thank the gamekeeper who transported two team members up onto the hill on his quad bike. ☀

## BRITISH EXPLORING CONNECTIONS

Patterdale team members are appealing to colleagues across MREW to consider joining with the British Exploring (BE) society as expedition leaders.

'I have been a trustee of British Exploring for the last couple of years,' says Patterdale TL, Mike Blakey. 'I will be deputy chief leader on the trip to Yukon this summer and I'm supporting fifteen young people in my care (through my day job) to go on BE expeditions to the jungle, the Himalayas and the Yukon too.'

Nigel Harling has just been made a Fellow of British Exploring. 'I first went on a BE expedition aged seventeen and, over the course of the next 25 years, I led on a further five trips around the world. I met some amazing people, travelled to incredible wilderness areas and undertook meaningful scientific work. I would thoroughly recommend anyone in MR to consider getting involved – we have the right skill sets and the right approach.'

If you're interested in finding out more and could give your time for free this summer, full details are online at [britishexploring.org](http://britishexploring.org).

'It would be great to maintain and broaden the MR/BE relationship for the benefit of young people if we possibly can,' says Mike.

Dr Theo Weston, also an experienced BE leader, said 'BE run some fantastic expeditions to truly amazing parts of the world resulting in life changing experiences for both leaders and participants. I can highly recommend anyone from MR give it serious consideration – you won't regret it!'

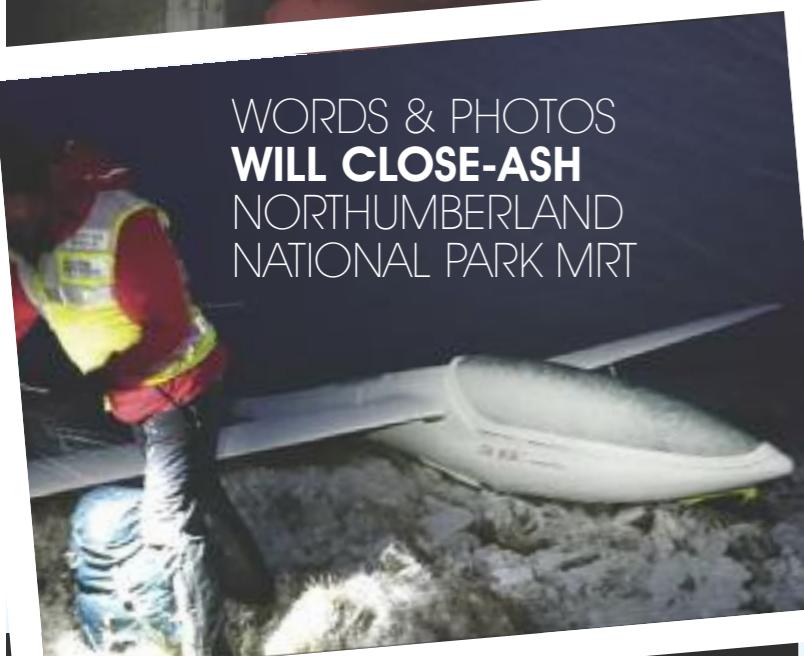
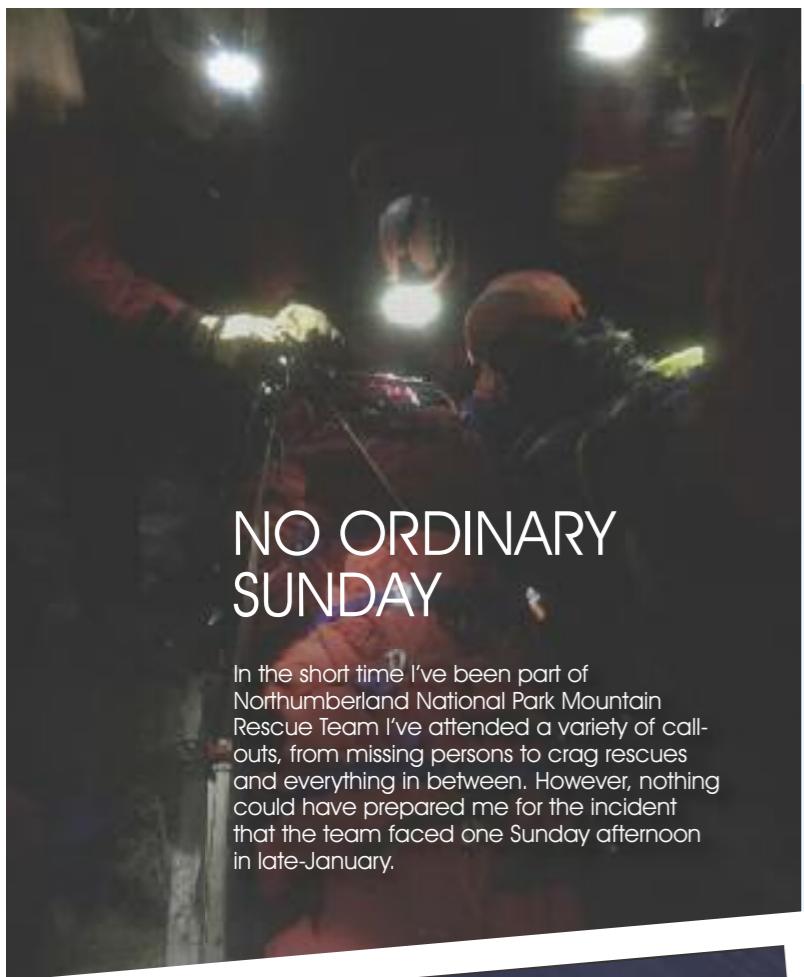
## ELLIOT BROWN RAISES £14,000 FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

The company has raised the money over the past four years through sales of their bespoke 'Mountain Rescue' watch, a special edition of its Canford model, which retails at £365.

Ian Elliot, joint founder of Elliot Brown Watches, said 'We're an adventurous brand for adventurous people. We're incredibly proud of our association with Mountain Rescue England and Wales and plan to continue our support for years to come, with the hope that thousands more can be donated from the sale of our watches.'

Elliot Brown also offers a discount to team members who want to buy one of the watches. They plan to continue fundraising with the launch of a new version.

The new model will have a luminous second hand, larger luminous hour batons, a red perimeter round the 12-hour marker on the timing bezel, and a subtle black-on-black mountain backdrop echoing the MREW roundel. It will go on sale in June this year.



# TEAM TALK WINTER



## THREE-DAY EFFORT TO RESCUE TRAPPED DOG FROM MUDDY MERTHYR CAVE

In February, South & Mid Wales CRT almost three days up to their eyes in mud, in their efforts to rescue a small dog trapped some metres inside a small cave complex near the path in Cwm Fechan, near Merthyr Tydfil.

The cave has several entrances, but they're either filled in with earth and rocks or too tight for a person to access. Digging was the only option. Team members started to dig to the dog, initially from two directions, but eventually concentrated their efforts on the lower entrance to the cave. This involved working in a small, tight muddy passage, removing a lot of mud and solid rock to gradually excavate a way through. Thankfully a happy ending, a happy dog and a happy bunch of cavers. A brilliant effort by all.



Photos © South & Mid Wales CRT.



Photo © North Dartmoor MRT.

## JANUARY: TEAM MEMBER BEATS HIS OWN RECORD, COLLECTING £10,000 OVER 2018

It has to be said, North Dartmoor's Les Agar is something of a phenomenon in the realms of team fundraising. A team stalwart since 1970, ill health in recent years has forced Les to retire from operational training and call-outs, but that hasn't stopped him continuing to commit himself over and above the expectations of the average volunteer.

Les has positioned himself outside Whitehouse Services (just off the A30 near Okehampton), every single weekend for the past few years, come rain or shine, to fundraise for the team. In 2017, his persistence raised a staggering £7000, but last year he well and truly smashed that, bringing in over £10,000. And his dedication to fundraising hasn't gone unnoticed, with regular appearances in the local press and a letter of commendation from his local MP.

Les's attitude is that every 20p counts, every 10p counts, every 5p makes a difference. He feels that if he can't do his bit out on the hill, this is his way of actively contributing. He's also helping hugely in the team's drive to raise £90,000 for a new control vehicle. Can't help thinking that with Les involved they'll get there sooner rather than later!



Above: Paul Edisbury with some of the cadets.

## FEBRUARY: KINDER TEAM SENDS BIG THANK YOU TO ARMY CADETS

Just before Christmas, the cadets were involved in raising money for the team through a nine-hour bag-packing stint at Sainsbury's in Wilmslow town centre, reports Paul Edisbury, Kinder team member and volunteer sergeant in the Cheshire Army cadet force.

The cadets, from Wilmslow Detachment, Normandy Company, raised £1101.30 which was split 50/50 between Wilmslow detachment (to provide much needed training equipment for the cadets) and the Kinder team.

'A massive thank you to the cadets, from the team', says Paul, 'for all their efforts. Those involved were Sgts Cairns, Hornby and Wilson, Cpl Houldsworth, English and Hornby, LCpls Sheard and Sheekey and Cadets Marcombe, Laverick, Holmes, Bennett, Bachofner and Beesley'.



## JANUARY: NEW INCIDENT CONTROL VEHICLE IN CALDER VALLEY

Thanks to the generosity of the Community Foundation for Calderdale (CFFC), Calder Valley team members have a brand new state-of-the-art Incident Control vehicle, affectionately known as 'Calder Mobile 4'.

In 2016, the need to replace their existing vehicle, the team made an application to CFFC for a grant towards the cost. To their delight and surprise they were awarded £60,000.

After spending some time evaluating what vehicles were available to convert to a mobile office, they settled on a four-wheel drive Volkswagen Transporter. Several design meetings with Vehicle Conversion Specialists of Bradford later, the vehicle went in to build last summer and was delivered in October.

Not long after, Calder Mobile 4 was called into action on a large multi-team incident in November, where it was used to coordinate eleven MR teams, police and coastguard personnel, vehicles and helicopters in the successful search for a missing person in Haworth. The new vehicle performed admirably and the latest communication technology included in the conversion was fully utilised. CVSRT also intend to use the vehicle to coordinate their Flood Response Team.

In late January, team members attended the CFFC AGM with the new Calder Mobile 4 to show how the grant has helped the team, and to thank them on behalf of the team and everyone they assist.

Top: Matt Greaves (CVSRT) and the Mayor of Calderdale, Councillor Marcus Thompson inside Calder Mobile 4 at CFFC AGM. Left: Calder Mobile 4, suitably liveried and ready for action. Images: CVSRT.

## MARCH: THE CAVE RESCUE ORGANISATION (CRO) RECOGNISES 675 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE YORKSHIRE DALES

- The team paid tribute to its many long-serving members with a Long Service Awards evening, in recognition of the contribution made to the team's mission of 'saving lives above and below ground in the Yorkshire Dales'.

About 70 members gathered at Bentham Golf Club for an evening led by CRO chairman, Sean Whittle, and presentations were made by the president of the team Ben Lyon, the founder and owner of Lyon Equipment, a long-standing partner and sponsor of the CRO.

Long Service Awards were presented to 25 members, CRO Team Awards to nine members for ten and twenty years service, and MREW and BCRC Awards to sixteen members: seven for 25 years' service, seven for 40 and, amazingly, two for 50. The latter were to Jack Pickup and Roy Holmes, both of whom have been very active members since the

1970s. Both still continue to turn out as operational support members, providing valuable logistic support to incidents.

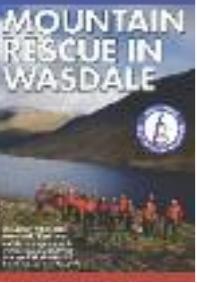
Awards were also made to two new Life Members, Dave Gallivan and Fred Weekes, both of whom have now 'retired' from active service but were recognised for their outstanding contribution to the team whilst they were members.

The evening was a great opportunity to reflect on what the longest serving members have given to the local community over many years. In his address, Ben Lyon said it was 'wonderful to see so many long time members, and familiar faces' but he added that it was

'heartening to see younger members coming through to carry on the great work'.

Left: Group photo of all members receiving CRO and MREW/BCRC Awards. Above: Left to right: Jack Pickup, Ben Lyon, Roy Holmes receiving 50 Year Long Service Awards. Photos © CRO.





## MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN WASDALE

PUBLISHED IN ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY BOB BENNETT & JOHN BAMFORTH  
REVIEWED BY JUDY WHITESIDE

Not every team chooses to celebrate their 'big birthdays' with a book. Books take a lot of time and huge collaborative effort. There's the digging through records, sorting out which dog-eared scraps mean something, which don't, which long-forgotten photos fit where and who the faces belong to. Then pulling it all together, getting it to print. On top of everyday mountain rescue commitments, it's a big ask.

Which is why it's even more remarkable that the latest 'team history' off the press, celebrating Wasdale's fiftieth anniversary, is written largely in the first person as opposed to a third person overview.

Bob Bennett kicks things off, covering the early years leading up to the formation of the team through to 1991. He recalls his own memories of the developing rescue team including the organisation of early training — on local ground and up at Glenmore Lodge — collaboration with the already established Cockermouth team, the drive for recognition and rescues of note.

He also recognises the contribution of Royanne Lavender, the team's first active female team member, whose presence initially sparked some opposition. How would she cope with the 'bad language'? Which I suspect, back in the days when women were still a rarity in mountain rescue, roughly translated as 'We don't think a woman will be up to it'. Needless to say, Royanne was more than up to it. And probably then some.

John Bamforth (chairman 2012-2018) picks up from 1991, collating snippets from annual reports and meeting minutes from that year to the present day. There's also entertaining input from Penny Kirkby, a long-time team member and dog handler, Bill Pattison MBE (team leader 1978-1999) and

Julian Carradice (team leader 1999-2010), and the inevitable list of team members past and present.

So... the detail.

I'm a sucker for a tale of mountain rescue times long gone by and Bob doesn't disappoint. I particularly liked the story of Edward Cornelius Crump, aged 50, who set off from Tilberthwaite to Crummockwater over Bowfell and Scafell Pike wearing a Mackintosh, tweed suit and boots, and carrying just his sandwiches and a piece of cake. This was 1929, mind. Pretty standard gear. Imagine the social media outrage nowadays.

It was 'fiercely hot' that summer and Crump decided to extend his walk down to Wasdale along the left bank of the deep gash of Piers Ghyll, a spot which ranks with Broad Stand as one of Wasdale's blackest. He lost his footing, falling onto Bridge Rock and injuring both ankles, a 50-foot vertical drop beneath him. Apparently unfazed and confident his absence would be noticed, he took his remaining sandwiches and cake, divided them into pieces to last for four days and waited.

It was nineteen days before he was found, quite by chance, by two notable Keswick climbers who spotted Crump, delirious but still alive. He had survived on water, the



**Top:** Unloading stretchers for the evacuation of the bodies of two boys caught in the severe storm on Scafell Pike summit, New Year 1976 © WMRT. **Above:** Bob Bennett and Alan Dunn act as barrowboys during a practice lower on Branstree © Royanne Wilding.

butties and cake, his Mackintosh his only shelter. And he made a full recovery, living on a good few years more until his death in 1946.

Today's team began life as the Wyndham Search Team in late-1965, based in the Egremont area, 'an enthusiastic bunch' who 'lacked training in search techniques in all but

the best weathers.' Their first year saw just six call-outs. Three years later, they changed the name to Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team. Not everyone, however, was happy with the change.

In December 1968, the West Cumberland News & Star, under the headline 'New group muscling in', quoted the Cockermouth team secretary as saying 'we feel the existing services are more than adequate to cope with an emergency in the district. The formation of this team is no more than an unnecessary duplication'.

Oh my, how wrong can you be? The intervening years have more than demonstrated a very real need, with 140 calls for help from the team recorded in 2018, of which they attended 101.

Undeterred by any such territorial concerns, the pioneers pressed on, seeking affiliation with the then Mountain Rescue Committee. This was initially deferred, as A S Pigott, the MRC chairman, believed they needed more experience. The team was finally affiliated in July 1969.

There are plenty of incident stories here, some from the casualty's point of view, some of tragic fatalities, some of bodies failing to be found despite the team's best efforts. There's even a murder. In 1984, during the search for the missing French girl Veronique Mireille Marre (sadly found much later as a skeleton), Bill Pattison asked for a search of the lake by police divers. The discovery of something rolled up in carpet and weighted down proved to be Margaret Hogg, whose husband had murdered her several years earlier, driven from Surrey to Wasdale under the cover of darkness, then rowed into the lake and dumped her body.

Occasionally, the reader is enticed by what promises to be a juicy tale, only to be left dangling — much like the subject of one particular call-out. A single sentence notes 'the first of three kinds of rescues' in 2007, with 'the search for a cow, the rescue of a plastic bag and an incident involving an Italian Job-style vehicle precariously overhanging a steep drop on Hard Knott'. I mean, come on. You're teasing me. Surely there was more to be said?

Wearing my editor's hat (how would this fall on the uninitiated reader, one not steeped in a daily drip of MR news?) I'd have liked a bit more cross-referencing too. The Joe Beaumont incident, for example, gets half a para under '2012' but, again, it's barely a note. It was only when I'd read through to page 204 it became clear there was indeed more, with Joe's story one of several 'notable call-outs'.

Joe fell 12 metres whilst abseiling Bell Stand in Eskdale, in March 2011, sustaining life-changing fractures to his upper and lower legs, a fractured elbow and facial lacerations. He later made an award-winning film about his experience and set about raising funds for the team through a series of epic rides, despite huge discomfort.

And yet, elsewhere, there are detailed accounts of incidents, maybe because these were pursued at the time so already on the record. Key memories include the 2010

Cumbria shootings, dealing with the floods of 2009 and 2015 and the phenomenal fundraising opportunity presented by Jasper the dog.

That one incident, and the viral sensation which followed Jasper's return to his owner, helped kick-start the team's new, purpose-

member responded. Saturation point cannot be too far away. We can only hope the efforts to roll out #AdventureSmart across the Lakes will have some impact.

All that said, team members continue to show 'an astonishing commitment to the team', says Penny.



**Above:** The notorious Piers Ghyll with team members in action on a call-out in May 2003 © WMRT.

built headquarters, finally opened in September 2018 by Jos Naylor MBE, using bailer twine and sheep shears in place of ribbon and scissors.

The section covering the last 28 years makes for sobering reading — there's palpable frustration as the pages turn. Littered as it is with figures (incident numbers, casualties treated, equipment costs, even website hits), there's no denying the steady upward trend in everything, not least the rising pressure of Three Peaks charity challengers, many of whose calls for help appear to sit firmly in the 'requesting free guide service' category.

Such is the pressure now on team members' time, notes Penny Kirkby, that for one call-out last year not a single team

Here's to the next fifty then. Who knows where Wasdale will be by 2068, but you can bet that young team members then will look with wonder at the 'quaint' way things were done back in the first half of this century, however state-of-the-art we might think ourselves now. Let's hope they never forget they are where they are thanks to the hard work, commitment and often life-long dedication to the cause of their predecessors. ☀

TO BUY THE BOOK, AND SUPPORT THE TEAM, VISIT WMRT.ORG.UK AND FOLLOW THE LINKS. IT'S JUST £10 PLUS POSTAGE.



Photos © Devon Cave Rescue.



## MARCH: DEVON CAVE RESCUERS HIT THE WALL

It's not all underground... Devon Cave Rescue team members headed for Dartrock Climbing Centre to practice their rope access and rescue techniques – especially vital in vertical caving and mine rescue.

**ANDY LAW**  
At 1545 on Wednesday, Skye MRT was called out to assist with the recovery of a male who had suffered a cardiac arrest near Kylerhea. En route, we learned that it was our colleague Andy Law, who had been setting up a children's nature project on a hillside near his home.



**MAY THE WIND UNDER YOUR WINGS BEAR YOU WHERE THE SUN SAILS AND THE MOON WALKS**

## MARCH: SKYE MRT PAYS TRIBUTE TO COLLEAGUE FOLLOWING CARDIAC ARREST

It was with huge sadness that Skye MRT announced the death of their team colleague Andy Law, in late March. Team members had been called out to assist with the recovery of a male who had suffered a cardiac arrest near Kylerhea. En route, they learned that it was Andy, who had been setting up a children's nature project on a hillside near his home.

As they arrived at the RVP, Coastguard Rescue Helicopter R948 was uplifting him to Broadford hospital, where he was sadly pronounced dead, despite valiant efforts by his companion, police, the ambulance crew and helicopter paramedic. The team took to Twitter to pay tribute to their friend, who had been on the call-out list until only recently.

'Andy was a much liked, respected and committed team member over many years, and a good friend to those of us who knew him in that time. Never flash, always calm and steady, he would happily get on with any task that came his way, whether long carries or consoling distressed casualties.'

'He had the furthest to travel to most call-outs, yet he was there at so many of them, never complaining at a wasted journey or a night on the hill. Always with a camera in hand or nearby, Andy was also our unofficial photographer, snapping incidents or exercises.'

'Although he had retired from the call-out list a few months ago, he was still a non-active team member, responsible for our website, another job he did with quiet efficiency.'

'Today, our love and thoughts go out to his wife Debbie and three children, his wider family and many friends who will all miss him terribly.'

**Left:** Screen clip from the Skye MRT Twitter page.



## MARCH: JOE GILBERT CYCLES TO PARIS TO RAISE FUNDS FOR PATTERDALE TEAM

In March 2016, Joe Gilbert fell 200 metres (the length of two football pitches) while walking on Helvellyn in the Lake District. He broke his neck, kneecap, ankle, foot, shoulder, hand and most of his ribs. He also dislocated an ankle and shoulder, and suffered a collapsed lung.

Over the following eight hours, Patterdale team members, in Joe's words, 'somehow managed to keep me alive on the side of the freezing cold mountain. As I lay there unconscious, bleeding heavily, they professionally went about their business'. It took two helicopters, nineteen team members and countless hours of medical and practical lifesaving experience to save his life. 'Without them,' he says, 'I simply wouldn't be here'.

Two years on, with eleven operations, three pints of blood, countless hours of physio and an awful lot of hard work endured, Joe returned to Patterdale to visit his rescuers. 'It was a very humbling day. The team are driven, dedicated, knowledgeable and seriously hardworking. The amount of their free time they give to others is incredible.'

'We also got to see just how much kit, equipment and vehicles are needed by the team. It's safe to say, none of this comes cheap. Without donations, the Patterdale MRT would not exist and neither would I so, in May I will be cycling to Paris with Simon, Geoff and Ben who were with me that day, plus Matt and Ollie who fancied a week off work. We are aiming to raise as much money as possible.'

**FOLLOW JOE'S JOURNEY ON JUSTGIVING.COM/FUNDRAISING/JOE-GILBERT3**

**Top:** Joe in hospital following his accident © Joe Gilbert.



## MARCH: FAMILIES APPEAL TO CLIMBERS IN THE BEN NEVIS AREA TO FIND MISSING ICE AXES

Lochaber team has appealed to climbers to be on the look out for the ice-tools of the four men who died in an avalanche in Number Five Gully in early March. Most of the gear belonging to the climbers was found and will be returned to Switzerland and France shortly, but the tools are still missing.

A Lochaber MRT spokesperson said, 'This equipment is symbolically very important for the families and if you do happen to be in area please have a look and it would be very much appreciated if they could be found and returned [to Fort William police station or the Lochaber MRT base].'

Four members of the Swiss club were avalanched in Number Five Gully on the North Face on 12 March. Two French nationals, aged 32 and 41 died on the mountain and a 43-year-old Swiss man also losing his life. A 30-year-old Swiss climber was airlifted to Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow.



**Above:** Some of the equipment the climbers had brought with them to Ben Nevis in a photo released by the family via Lochaber MRT.



## APRIL: YOU'VE BEEN FOOLED... OR HAVE YOU?

Odd how every year, around the beginning of April (well, okay, bang on the first), at least one or two mountain rescue teams come up with so many inspirational ideas. Simultaneously, it's like a magic bubble of creativity pops right over their heads. But, hang on a minute. Maybe they're not quite as foolish as they first appear?

In Ambleside, where team members will celebrate their fiftieth anniversary next year, they think they might have the answer to rising incident numbers and team members <ahem> getting older: lowering the recruiting age. They're now actively looking to the younger generation to support the team in delivering an effective service, combining the enthusiasm of youth with the knowledge of existing team members.

The announcement was accompanied by a short film clip in which team leader Nick Owen explains the new system to a backdrop of a very efficient band of youngsters, piling themselves and their kit into a Land Rover, before walking up the hill to an 'incident'. And it's true, their energy and enthusiasm is clearly evident.

The news was, of course, the ideal opportunity to remind hillgoers of a few safety awareness tips and last time we peeked it was proving to be one of their most effective posts. It even caught the eye of a BBC news team. Let's hope the underlying message got through.

Meanwhile, over in Yorkshire, CRO announced what some might see as a rather controversial plan to reduce pressure on their own team members with a statement from their media officer, Alistair Pine-Butterly. In an effort to make the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge more accessible, easier to negotiate and more user-friendly and also minimise unnecessary time on the hill for team members, they've submitted a planning application to install zip lines between the three peaks – cutting down journey time, eliminating the requirement to carry any navigational aids and, with the installation of mood lighting pylons, totally negating the need to carry any form of illumination whatsoever. Might just work...

Elsewhere, long-time supporter and supplier of socks to mountain rescue teams, has come up with a technical solution to that age-old problem for long-suffering sock-wearers everywhere: losing a sock in the wash. Bridgedale's innovative 'Polarity Fusion' technology twists opposite and equal unique magnetic yarns into 'pairs' of socks.

'By changing the direction of the twist of the yarn during the yarn fusion process we are able to change the polarity of copper-impregnated yarn. A z-twist on the fibres gives the resultant yarn a positive polarity and an s-twist on the fibres gives the yarn a negative polarity.'

'Simply throw all your socks in the wash together – 30 degree eco cycle – and during the drying process, the heat activates the magnetic yarns and the matching pairs are drawn together and finish the wash as a pairs of socks. No longer will you ever lose a sock in the wash.'

Oh, please Bridgedale... please make it be true.

**Top:** Some of the junior squad with their adult colleagues © LAMRT.

# TEAM TALK WINTER



## FEBRUARY: THE WORK OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS DEBATED IN HOUSE OF LORDS

Lord John Burnett, patron of Dartmoor SRT (Tavistock), called a debate in the House of Lords on 28 February to highlight the significant contribution mountain rescue team members – and their families – across England and Wales make to public safety.

Following an earlier visit to the team, Lord Burnett opened the debate by expressing ‘profound gratitude’ to the Dartmoor team and mountain rescue in general. ‘The whole House, I am sure, will join me in expressing the gratitude of all of us to Mountain Rescue England and Wales and to all the members of the teams, their partners and their families for their dedication, courage, stamina, altruism and wholehearted commitment’.

The focus of the debate was to acknowledge the work of the voluntary organisations that make up mountain rescue and the ‘essential service’ they provide. Right on cue, as the debate unfolded, Tavistock team members were called to search for a 62-year-old male despondent. He was found at 4.30pm, coincidentally just as the debate was wrapping up. The team warmed him up and gave him hot drinks whilst awaiting the arrival of an ambulance.

Lord Burnett called for a meeting with HM Treasury to discuss whether government funding could be secured to contribute to the ongoing training and operational costs of mountain rescue. He urged the minister, Baroness Barran MBE, to arrange a meeting between the Treasury and Mountain Rescue England and Wales because ‘the demands on the teams increase annually, and it is imperative that the government understand that, in order to save the Treasury millions of pounds per year, some hundreds of thousands of pounds annually are required to assist’.

On behalf of Her Majesty’s Government Baroness Barran assured the House that the Treasury would be made aware of the debate, adding that it was a pleasure ‘to recognise not only the terrific work of Dartmoor Search and Rescue Team but all our search and rescue services and their combined contribution to public safety. I am sure the House will want to join me in paying tribute to all of them and their volunteers for their courage and skill to save lives in whatever environment’.

**Top:** Photograph taken at Tavistock’s rescue centre the weekend before the debate. Left to right: Lord Burnett (Patron), Baroness Barran MBE (Government minister), Paul Hudson MBE (Team leader) and Rhod Davey (Team chairman) © DSRT Tavistock.



# TEAM TALK WINTER



## NEW TO THE ONLINE SHOP: GIFT CARDS

Looking for a gift idea, want to give to a good cause but buying that goat or a gallon of marine fuel doesn’t quite hit the mark? Well now you have another option, with these mountain rescue gift cards.

We’ll be selling them at different values to see how they go and if they prove popular we might just expand the range. We’ll kick off with cards for £5, £15 and £25 — same image on each, just a different value.

They work just like those other charity gifts, whatever form they might take. You make the donation to mountain rescue and we send you a card and envelope for you to give your loved ones, wishing them happy whatever and thanking them for their kind donation. Check out the shop to buy.



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Pennine Way © Humphrey Bolton | Creative Commons



## WALKING THE PENNINE WAY FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES

MARK RICKABY

I wrote an aspirational blog post in March where I talked about how you should take every opportunity to do something that you find exciting, inspiring or that nurtures your soul. It became the most popular thing I’ve written since I started The Peaklander website and the response was more than I could have imagined.

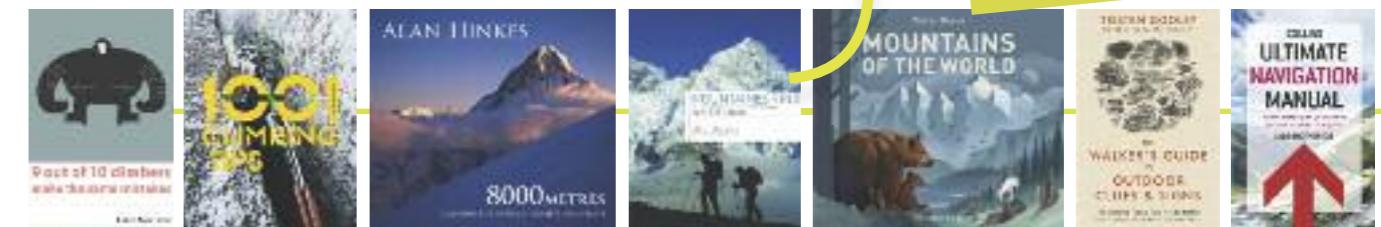
It wasn’t long before I realised my hypocrisy: While I was sat at home writing posts about how to live a better life, I’d been delaying walking the Pennine Way for years out of fear of failure. So, I decided I was going to stop making excuses and do it. Not only was I going to do it, I was going to do it the hard way – alone and with a tent on my back.

For those of you who don’t know, the Pennine Way chases along the mountain tops along the rugged backbone of England and offers 268 miles of the finest upland walking in England.

While the goal of walking the Pennine Way is a personal one, I’ve been a supporter of Mountain Rescue England and Wales for a while and it seems to me that if I can raise a bit of money for them along the way, I should. I adore being in the great outdoors and their incredible work provides a safety net for so many people like me. Please, if you can, support me. I’ll do my best to get to Kirk Yetholm without needing to call you.



CATCH UP WITH MARK ON  
[THEPEAKLANDER.COM](http://THEPEAKLANDER.COM) OR VIA TWITTER @THEPEAKLANDER  
[JUSTGIVING.COM/FUNDRAISING/THEPEAKLANDER-PENNINEWAY](http://JUSTGIVING.COM/FUNDRAISING/THEPEAKLANDER-PENNINEWAY)



## MREW ONLINE BOOKSHOP GROWS LEGS

Judy Whiteside

If you’ve visited the online shop recently, you might have spotted that the bookshop side of things has begun to expand a little. Here’s why. When we started the blog a few months ago, the idea was to promote not just the work of mountain rescue but also to create another vehicle to get across our safety messages, wrapped up in anecdote. It was only when navigation expert Lyle Brotherton agreed to contribute a piece on winter navigation it occurred we also should be selling the book with his name on too. Surely a win-win – for us, for Lyle (and other authors) and for the reader.

Of course, nothing is ever quite so straightforward, but after a few weeks of form filling and general admin stuff, we’re officially ‘a bookshop’. To start, we’ve stocked the shop with books — some hot off the press, some published for some time — which echo our story, be that tales of the mountains and mountain rescue or authoritative accounts stuffed with tips for improving your skills and staying safe. We’ve also stocked a couple of delightful children’s books which focus on the mountains.

I’m happy to report we saw the effectiveness of expanding our bookshelves and linking to the blog and social media with the retelling in March of the Neil Moss story (featured on page 54), the DVD of which has positively taken flight.

[shop.mountain.rescue.org.uk/collections/books-magazines](http://shop.mountain.rescue.org.uk/collections/books-magazines)

## Stop Press: Drones!

MARK LEWIS

Last October, with the backing of the management committee and the regional chairs group, MREW funded two members to attend a CAA PfCO course (Permission for Commercial Operations). Both passed, so their operations manual and their NQE recommendation certificate were subsequently submitted to the CAA. MREW is proud to announce that they have been awarded a PfCO.

A working group has now been formed consisting of regional representatives.

More info soon!

Raising funds for rescue

\* THE TITLES ABOVE ARE JUST A SELECTION OF THE BOOKS NOW AVAILABLE





## RUNNING THE MARATHON FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE: INTRODUCING THIS YEAR'S RUNNERS

Who are they and why choose to run for mountain rescue? In fact, why bother running at all? Who better to tell us than the runners themselves.



**TIM WAINWRIGHT**  
RELATIONSHIPS MANAGER  
LIVES IN BATTERSEA

Tim grew up in the beautiful Ribble Valley in Lancashire and from a very early age enjoyed exploring the outdoors with his father, often venturing further afield into the Forest of Bowland, Peak District, Yorkshire Dales and the Lakes, often with a visit to the local mountain rescue base thrown in for good measure.

'My admiration for mountain rescue was sparked when, on one walk of Helvellyn, we came across the Patterdale team as they were deploying late into the afternoon to rescue a fallen walker. Their speed and professionalism were superb and on this occasion they had called in the RAF Sea King to support. The operation ran on into the evening but it was thrilling to watch the team and helicopter working together, then see the Sea King land close to our youth hostel a short time later for the casualty to be transferred to land ambulance.'

'In my teens, I undertook my Duke of Edinburgh Awards, the highlight taking us for our Gold assessment to Snowdonia. I was fortunate enough to be supported through my Duke of Edinburgh by my geography teacher at Clitheroe Royal Grammar School, Helen Morton, who was also a member of SARDA [Helen Howe, nee Morton, now based in North Wales, is a handler with SARDA Wales]. So, for the Duke of Edinburgh 'service' element I spent six months with the Rossendale & Pendle team. My appreciation of and understanding for the fantastic work of the organisation was secured.'

'I've continued to explore the mountains since. Later, as a member of the RAF Reserve and Yorkshire University Air Squadron, I witnessed the fantastic work of the volunteer rescue services as we deployed in support of the floods in Cockermouth in 2009.'

**Raising funds  
for rescue**

'Whilst I didn't join the RAF, instead following my politics degree to work in the House of Commons, my support for armed forces and volunteer services remained. In January 2018, I joined the newly constituted London Search and Rescue as a Lowland Rescue Search Technician supporting the Metropolitan Police in the search for vulnerable and missing people across London. Whilst a newly formed organisation, our volunteers are in substantial need, and the team continues to grow and develop.'

'My training for the London Marathon has largely consisted of pounding the streets of London a couple of times a week with longer runs at the weekends to increase the miles. This will be my first London Marathon and I'm delighted to be doing so in support of the amazing volunteers of Mountain Rescue England and Wales. Their dedication, professionalism and service allow me and many others to explore the hills and mountains of the UK safe in the knowledge that they are there if we need them.'

'One such person who explored the hills and mountains like no other was a friend of mine, Christopher William Bell. It was with Chris I enjoyed climbs of Ben Nevis and exploring Glencoe and Oban. He was a true inspiration and the epitome of everything climbing mountains is about: enjoyment, challenge and a spirit of adventure.'

'Sadly, six years ago we lost Chris, aged just 24, on the mountains as he was caught up in an avalanche in the Scottish Highlands. Mountain rescue teams deployed to save Chris and his friends. Sadly, it was not to be but those mountain rescue volunteers risked their lives to try and save our friends. So, on 28 April as I descend the Mall, I shall look to the sky and think of Chris, forever thankful of mountain rescue teams across the country and with the uplifting spirit of Chris saying 'Go harder! Go faster!!'

[JUSTGIVING.COM/FUNDRAISING/TIMWAINWRIGHTL1M19](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/timwainwrightl1m19)  
OR FOLLOW HIM ON TWITTER @TM\_WAINWRIGHT



### IAN SADLER SEMI RETIRED, LIVES IN THE SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK

Spotted out running one day by a current member of South Snowdonia SRT, Kirstie Lumsdon, Ian was asked whether he fancied running for Mountain Rescue England and Wales. And he did.

- As chairman of the Barmouth Lifeboat Station for eight years, and race secretary for the Barmouth to Fort William Three Peaks Yacht Race, Ian knows a thing or two about the volunteer rescue services. 'Locally', he says, 'compared to the RNLI and the Air Ambulance, mountain rescue is always bottom of the list'.
- Currently semi-retired, Ian spent 23 years in the Royal Navy Submarine Service, at Faslane, where he walked the Munros. Since then, he worked in the NHS in general practice for sixteen years but now reckons he has no time for a 'proper job' with all the voluntary work and running training.
- His first race was the Mersey Tunnel 10K. Then he discovered Park Runs and aims to complete his 100th in May this year, with a personal best so far of 20:44.
- He's done numerous half marathons but his first marathon was in June 2018 with the Liverpool Rock N Roll. His aim had been to do a marathon before he was sixty, not to stop and in under four hours. He achieved it at 3:55:02. This year, he's signed up for no fewer than thirty races, including the Manchester and Snowdon marathons, the Great North Run, a number of half marathons, and, of course the Virgin London Marathon. And when he's not actually out competing, he's out training with the Penny Lane Striders.

[JUSTGIVING.COM/FUNDRAISING/IAN-SADLER11](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ian-sadler11) OR FIND HIM ON FACEBOOK @ FACEBOOK.COM/IANSADLERFORMREW



### CHRIS LISTON FROM BILSTON

Chris signed up for his first marathon in 2011 with the New York, but a 'horrible gardening' injury to his right foot put paid to that when he was warned off running for the foreseeable future by his surgeons.

- As the years passed, I missed running and I really wanted to test my foot out. So in 2017 I got back into running and signed up for New York again — and this time I did it, albeit very slowly!
- That was meant to be a bucket list item ticked off, and I planned to never lace up a pair of trainers in vain ever again, but since then I've completed the Great North Run, the Berlin Marathon, and any number of other half marathons and 10km runs but I'm still not satisfied! So when the email from mountain rescue came through offering me one of their places in the London Marathon 2019, I was never going to say no!
- My eldest boy is absolutely obsessed with his Daddy's medals, and he is convinced that one day I might beat Sir Mo Farah!! Well, erm, that might never happen, but this April I will have the chance to finish about two or three hours behind Sir Mo, which is good enough for me!
- Thanks to his office, who helped him organise a charity walk in the Peak District in February, Chris has raised an additional 'non-running' £750 towards his total.

[UK.VIRGINMONEYGIVING.COM/TEAMARCHIE](https://www.virginmoneygiving.com/teamarchie)



### LEE STONES MEMBER, WOODHEAD MRT

Having always wanted to run a marathon, the London Marathon in particular, when the chance arose for the one remaining MREW place, Lee couldn't resist applying.

A runner 'on and off all his life but never consistently', he'd wanted to get a little fitter and raising funds for MREW is a bonus. 'Since starting my training, me and my fiancée, Lucy, have booked a date and venue for our wedding this summer — another reason to shape up! We've a busy year ahead of us and she is super supportive with the training.'

'I ran a half marathon in 2011 and have run sparsely since. Week commencing 4 February, I jumped straight in at week five of a 16-week training programme. The training generally consists of two short mid-week runs and one longer run at the weekend, with increasing distance each week. I ran 9k in 52 mins in early February, which is just less than

a fifth of a marathon and later in the month ran 13k in 1hr 24mins, which is just short of a third of a marathon. Now in late March, I'm up to 23K single distance. My target is a 4:30, so I still have a way to go yet!'

[JUSTGIVING.COM/LEE-STONES1](https://www.justgiving.com/lee-stones1)

### JOHN EALING NEUROLOGIST, AND MEMBER, ROSENDALE & PENDLE MRT

John has been in the Rossendale team for six years, having joined after the sad, tragic death of a fellow fell runner. He wanted to make a contribution before he needed mountain rescue assistance himself!

'Although my medical training is of some help, my day job is very different to my MR role. My job, my family, marathon training and mountain rescue makes for quite a hectic schedule.'

'I've only done one marathon before. That was the Langdale one in 2018 and at the time I committed to avoid such torture again. Enter Andy Simpson [MREW Press Officer and RPMRT chairman] who sent an email offering me a place in the 2019 Virgin London Marathon.'

'I must admit to being uncertain. It's great to be asked and I'm sure it'll be an experience to tell the grandchildren but so would root canal work without anaesthetic. I'm unable to just turn up and jog round the course in six hours so I'll do things properly and aim for a decent time (target yet to be determined but should be faster than the Langdale Marathon as that claims to be the hardest UK road marathon). Doing that means months of hard and often very boring training. Running for more than two hours is very, very tedious. It's usually done in the evening so it's dark, cold and usually wet.'

'But no turning back now and it's for a great cause. Assuming I can avoid injury, I'll be pounding the streets for the next few months building up the stamina. I have an online training plan but dread the daily emails advising me of the next day's run — but at least the calorific burn means I have an excuse to eat like a pig for a few months!'

[JUSTGIVING.COM/FUNDRAISING/JOHNEALINGVIRGINLONDONMARATHON](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/john-ealingvirginlondonmarathon)

Off to a practice with a MacInnes stretcher,  
No 4 hawser laid rope and a casualty bag  
© Wasdale MRT.



## The importance of recording our mountain rescue heritage

In the last issue, we talked about working with the Mountain Heritage Trust and the importance of us all getting started on collecting and valuing our historical record, with the creation of an oral record the highest priority.

**MIKE MARGESON**  
MREW VICE CHAIRMAN



We need to get on with this — at team, regional and national level. A recent trigger to me was the fantastic article by Jonny Dry for MHT, in Summit magazine, about Hamish MacInnes and his road to recovery. This struck a real chord for me about the number of really important characters and their mountain rescue stories we need to catch and record whilst we still can.

MHT will support and help us with a workshop at the conference in September. I also plan to take the opportunity then to undertake some interviews and recordings. But first, we need to collect a list

of those who you believe in your team or region have made a significant contribution to our history. We are working with MHT to put in a Heritage Grant Application to fund a project worker to take this all forward but, in the meantime, what about your own team's archive? Is it all over the place in the back of cupboards and dusty shelves? Or have you recorded, preserved and valued your archives, or even produced a book? Please feel free to send MHT or myself details of anybody you feel should be on this list. I am keen it should represent all our regions. ✎

The worst of the winter seems to finally have left the British hills and the vibrant colours of spring flowers are already evident around our offices on Blencathra.

**CHRIS MARTIN**  
MOUNTAIN HERITAGE TRUST



MOUNTAIN  
HERITAGE  
TRUST

The winter months saw us finally complete the archiving of Peter Boardman's vast slide collection and, no sooner had we celebrated this crowning achievement, the Ian McNaught-Davis archive arrived in the office — our challenge for the spring.

All of this, however, is a sobering reminder of the richness of our mountain heritage and the stories we can preserve for the benefit of future generations of mountain users. Following on from our introduction in the last magazine, momentum

is building to gather together the stories of the rich 'heritage' of mountain rescue in England and Wales and embody them within the archives of Mountain Heritage Trust. Intrinsically linked with this is perhaps an opportunity to consider both the lessons from the 'rescuers' and the 'rescued' and how these subsequently went on to shape mountaineering practice, training, equipment design etc. Hopefully, the past few months have allowed you the opportunity to consider your own

team's past, its larger-than-life characters and the incidents that have become reference points in your team history. Put more simply, hopefully you've begun to define the core of your own heritage.

Our initial plans are to support the collation of your stories via an 'oral' history project, essentially a series of relaxed and informal interviews with

Terry had the good fortune to visit Upper Wharfedale team headquarters in Grassington and was hugely impressed with the way that team has already started addressing the preservation of heritage items and information. Thanks go to Chris Baker for taking the time to show her around the impressive new HQ and their commitment to heritage preservation was clearly evident in their book 'Upper Wharfedale — the First Fifty Years'.

For now, if any of you have any questions or require more detail on our heritage collections, please feel free to drop us a line at [enquiries@mountain-heritage.org](mailto:enquiries@mountain-heritage.org). We are ready to support you and your teams in whatever way we can. ✎



Photos © Holme Valley MRT.



## MARCH: HOLME VALLEY LAUNCHES MAJOR £60,000 FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE CONTROL VEHICLE

The team launched the crowdfunding campaign after their old van was damaged beyond repair. Following the accident last summer, the vehicle was written off by insurers, leaving the team to manage its busiest year ever without a key asset.

'It turned out that what we thought was relatively minor damage was going to cost an arm and a leg to repair,' said Owen Phillips, team leader. 'To us it was a purpose-built and kitted-out control van with huge intrinsic value, but as far as the insurance company was concerned, it was just a sixteen-year-old panel van.'

'We wanted to do anything we could to avoid major expense to the team, so we looked into independent repair costs — but soon came to the conclusion that spending thousands of pounds keeping an aged vehicle on the road just wasn't a sensible or justifiable use of charitable funds.'

For the last few months, the team has gratefully taken loan of an old vehicle from Calder Valley SRT to plug the shortfall while a campaign is put together to fund a replacement.

'We're hugely grateful to our friends at Calder Valley for lending us their old van and offering their experience with the design of our

new one. It was unbelievably lucky they put their new vehicle on the road when they did, meaning their old van's working life could be extended a little longer to help us out with our shortfall.'

'We are seeing this unfortunate incident as a great opportunity to design and build, from scratch, a vehicle that precisely suits our needs. We've looked at this from every angle, chatted to suppliers and converters, consulted with other teams around the country who have run similar projects and learned what didn't work for us in the past and remembered what did.'

'This is an opportunity to create a vehicle that will allow us to manage operations more effectively, respond better, work slicker and ultimately help to make a difference to more lives, well into the future.'

The proposed new vehicle will feature a 4x4 chassis to help get the vehicle wherever it is needed, state-of-the-art digital comms kit to manage operations and monitor progress in real time, advanced power systems to keep running for the duration of an incident, stretcher-carrying facilities to transport patients safely, if required, and built-in welfare facilities to keep team members working more effectively, for longer.



## JANUARY: NEW SEARCH DOG ON THE HILL IN THE CALDER VALLEY

Calder Valley team chairman, David Warden and his three-year-old Border collie Wynn, were successful in the Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England (MRSDE) assessment, confirming they have achieved the required standard for operational duties.

Wynn joined the team in 2015 as a ten-week-old trainee, the third dog David has trained as a mountain rescue search dog. The assessment required the pair to demonstrate their capability over three days in winter conditions in the Lake District mountains. They undertook five searches, successfully achieving five passes. In addition to being capable of operating in mountain and high moorland environments in all weather conditions, they are also trained in searching in lowland areas, including woodland, semi-rural and certain urban environments. Wynn joins Meg, Jack and Finn serving the team, and three trainee search dogs, Tinker, Orion and Tess.



Left: David and Wynn © Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England. Above: Wynn © Anderson | photographybyanderson.co.uk

# TEAM TALK WINTER



## MARCH: BBC PICKS UP ON WASDALE SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Following a number of rescues over the past couple of years in the vicinity of Piers Gill on Scafell Pike, a number with tragic consequences, the Wasdale team has been working with the National Trust, the Lake District National Park Authority, Cumbria Tourism and Cumbria Police to reduce the number of rescues.

Many of these call-outs could have been avoided with a little bit of preparation: taking note of forecasts, having a reliable means to navigate out of trouble and an understanding of where accident blackspots exist. The BBC national news picked up on the story and, along with the producers of the BBC Inside Out programme, contacted the team to help get the safety messages out there.

After a couple of false starts last year due to poor weather and other national news events taking priority, a date was fixed in February for filming and interviews. The programme went out on Monday 4 March with a short introductory piece on the six o'clock news followed, later that evening, on the BBC Inside Out programme.

'We will continue to work with our partners to improve signs, posters and information,' says Richard Warren, 'especially in car parks and valleys where walkers will hopefully take note before venturing onto the hill. Getting safety information and awareness messages out there will help reduce the growing number of avoidable call-outs and injuries. All the teams in the Lake District have their own accident blackspots so hopefully what we are trying to achieve should also help our team colleagues across Cumbria'.

**Top:** Left to right: Jesse, Danny Savage, Camera John, John Hryb, Penny Kirby, John Fletcher and Dean Wilding. **Above:** With Dean Wilding, Danny Savage and Phil Gibbs.

## OBIT



### JOHN MAYER 1937–2018 BUXTON MRT

Buxton team gathered at Macclesfield Crematorium in January, to say farewell to John Mayer, the team's most senior member who joined the rescue team in 1965 during its very early and formative days.

John, originally from Manchester, was a skilled rock climber with great experience of the crags in Wales, the Lakes and Scotland.

As a life-long lover of the great outdoors he would willingly volunteer to help those in need of assistance on the Peak District moors and almost accidentally became part of the newly forming rescue team in Buxton. In the days long before mobile phones and GPS navigation devices people lost on the moors was the most common call to the team. Searches would often start in the middle of the night and last for many hours before the casualties would be located and finally carried back to warmth and safety.

The then small band of like-minded friends would deal with just a handful of calls each year. In the beginning, the team had no base of its own, limited equipment and only a few members with cars. John would recall memories of waiting with others on Buxton Market Place for someone to arrive with knowledge of what the call-out was about and hopefully with some transport to get them up to the moors.

Eventually, after forty years, he stood down from frontline action and took on a new role as call-out coordinator, responsible for ensuring sufficient team members turned out to deal with an incident. Finally, as new technology made much of this role redundant, John took on regular checks of the team vehicles and rescue equipment following their return from a call-out. A task for which he was still volunteering just twelve months ago.

During fifty-four years with the team John was awarded with a Long Service Medal from St John Ambulance, the Queen's Golden Jubilee and Diamond Jubilee medals, and Appreciation of Long Service Certificates from both PDMRO and MREW.

Countless people unwittingly owe a great deal to John and his never-stinting contribution which enabled Buxton team to grow from just an idea into a skilled and busy community service. Throughout his half century of commitment he had the precious support of his wife Julie who was by his side to the end of his long battle with cancer.

John will be sadly missed. A stalwart member who can never be replaced.

**Top:** John with his Long Service Award © BMRT.

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MOUNTAIN RESCUE MAGAZINE SPRING 2019

Mountain rescue teams across the UK may now be blessed with a growing number of operational female team members but female team leaders remain relatively rare.

Rachel Smith stood down last year after three years as leader of the North of Tyne team.

**Helena Sansum** – one of the team's newest female recruits – felt inspired to interview her about the role and mountain rescue in general.



# Rachel Smith

North of Tyne MRT

**Helena:** When I joined the team as a trainee in September 2017, I felt instantly welcomed by everyone. It struck me that the team had a real sense of community, and at the helm was a friendly, professional individual with a big smile and a great ability to dish out hugs too!

Women seem to be less likely to volunteer with mountain rescue teams, yet we had a team leader who was a woman under-40. Fantastic! In our team, officers are in a post for three years at a time, so when Rachel's role as leader came

**Helena:** How has the team changed or progressed since then?

**Rachel:** Massively. We've embraced technological advances to enable us to deliver the best care and attention to both searches and rescues. We've moved with the rest of MREW in becoming more professional and accountable. In my opinion the team has formalised its roles and responsibilities but mainly has grown in recognition by other agencies and the public, particularly in working with our emergency services.

team leader at the time, Mark, which gave me the confidence to go for it. I also knew I could learn so much in this role and make myself a better team member.

**Helena:** What would you say is your biggest achievement in the team and as team leader?

**Rachel:** Encouraging the involvement of family and friends in the team. It must be a family effort otherwise it can become a huge strain. The team has social events and offers junior walks and so the environment welcomes families.

In terms of incidents it would be the multi-agency incident which occurred on the Border Ridge in the Cheviots in January 2017. It involved two teams from England, two from Scotland, all emergency services, HART and the Coastguard. I was the controller from the start and working with the other controllers and services was a massive job. In the end it was a successful call-out which resulted in safely evacuating twelve people in tough winter conditions over a long period. I learned so much that day about how I can continue to improve as a leader and controller, but also how well the team works with others.

**Helena:** What impact would you say your leadership had on the team?

**Rachel:** Openness, communication and allowing officers to run with their posts has enabled us to continue to progress and for current members and trainees to undertake further responsibilities.

**Helena:** What about challenges along the way?

**Rachel:** The role has a huge impact on your personal life, particularly in terms of time and commitment to the team, meetings and general expectations. I have a huge amount of support from members, friends and my family but I've also had challenges from members too. It takes time to get the recognition for the role you have undertaken but I got there in the end.

**Helena:** What interested you in the team leader role?

**Rachel:** September 2006, after a work colleague, Stuart, told me he knew a group of people I would love! He couldn't have been more right.

**Helena:** Do you have any advice to pass on to new team members, like myself?

**Rachel:** Attend, enjoy, contribute. Everybody has something different



Above: Rachel Smith (left) and Helena Sansum (right) during event cover for the Mad March Mare in Northumberland, Saturday 2 March © The Bigger Picture Ltd.

to an end, about a year after I joined, I thought what better time to reflect on her leadership. I set about asking some questions to gain a greater insight into the team leader role and what it meant for Rachel.

**Helena:** When did you join the team?

**Rachel:** September 2006, after a work colleague, Stuart, told me he knew a group of people I would love! He couldn't have been more right.

**Helena:** When did you become team leader?

**Rachel:** September 2015, having completed three years as deputy and, prior to that, team secretary from 2009.

**Helena:** What interested you in the team leader role?

**Rachel:** I had attended emergency service briefings, prior to call-outs being activated, and knew I could contribute to the team in this way. I was encouraged to do so by the

team leader at the time, Mark, which gave me the confidence to go for it. I also knew I could learn so much in this role and make myself a better team member.

**Helena:** What would you say is your biggest achievement in the team and as team leader?

**Rachel:** Encouraging the involvement of family and friends in the team. It must be a family effort otherwise it can become a huge strain. The team has social events and offers junior walks and so the environment welcomes families.

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**Helena:** Do you have any advice to pass on to new team members, like myself?

**Rachel:** Attend, enjoy, contribute. Everybody has something different

Teams took to social media to celebrate International Women's Day in March and throw the spotlight on some of their female team members. Here's a few from north of the Border.



## Lisa Higginson Killin MRT

**Day Job:** Pharmaceutical Account Manager

Strange to say for International Women's Day but I joined Killin because of a bloke! My partner (now husband) had been in the team for a few years and suggested I attend a training meeting. I really enjoyed the technical rope work and casualty-handling aspect. I was hooked and I could see from the camaraderie that this was something I wanted to be a part of.

You get good bits and bad bits but the good really does far outweigh the bad. It's all down to time management. Juggling work, home life and mountain rescue can sometimes be a struggle – I work full time and have two young children so fitting in training and call-outs can be difficult. I do feel a responsibility to keep up and improve the skills needed such as first aid, technical skills and just being hill fit.

Training is such a big part of the team – bonding and having an understanding of each others' capabilities is important when it comes to a difficult rescue. And there's also nothing like a bit of horrendous weather to help team bonding. A few weeks ago on a rescue, I was huddled under a shelter at the summit of Ben Lui with some of my team in freezing conditions and sharing tea, food and hand warmers, and borrowing extra clothing, waiting for new directions. You don't forget things like that.

I think the wonderful thing about being part of MR is the trust you share. We're all from different backgrounds and bring different skills to the team. I have never been made to feel different being female – although I do seem to have avoided carrying the stretcher up the hill over the years! (Believe me I'm not complaining!!)

There are always nerves when the phone beeps with a call-out. Can I go? What will it turn into? How long will I be out? My family understands this happens. Often, the next morning, my children ask how everything went and did I find the person. It's great they're so interested in mummy's other 'job'. I've left at the start of a dinner party I was hosting and had to leave a full roast dinner in the oven with instructions for my parents when to take it out to eat without me. Family come first but knowing you have the capability to make the difference on the hill for someone who is in real distress drives me to go when I can. Being part of mountain rescue gives me the opportunity to work with a great team whilst developing my skills further but also important to me is maintaining my identity. Yes, I'm a wife a mother and I work but I'm also a member of SMR of which I am very proud of.

**YES, I'M A WIFE A MOTHER AND I WORK BUT I'M ALSO A MEMBER OF SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE OF WHICH I AM VERY PROUD OF**



## Lara Adams Kintail MRT

**Day Job:** Lecturer in outdoor adventure

I joined twelve years ago. At the time I was working as an architect and had no children. It seemed like a great way to pursue my interest in the outdoors and at the same time give something back. Since then, I've had two children and a complete change of career. The team has provided continuity through all of this, and has been amazingly flexible as my needs and ability to contribute have changed. I think the time commitment puts off a lot of women with young families, but joining a team is for the long haul, and everyone has circumstances that might affect their ability to contribute for a period of time. You do what you can. For me it was a great benefit, when my children were very small, to have a training commitment that made sure I got out on the hill from time to time – I think without that commitment to others, I'd have lost sight of one of the things I enjoy most for a while, and perhaps been the worse for it.

Being part of a team is supportive, friendly, funny, frustrating and political – all at the same time! But most of all supportive – it's been a great network of friends for me and a fantastic learning experience. I had no previous experience of MR and spent a lot of time feeling as though everyone else knew what was going on and I didn't – but other team members were very patient with my questions, and I now realise that everyone is in the same boat when they first start out.

When a call-out happens my first reaction is usually 'I can't go... I'm too busy... I can't sort out childcare... my kit's not ready...' and then, after a minute of reflection, the problems start to solve themselves, and I realise I can make it work. And I'm always glad I did. There aren't many more worthwhile ways to spend one's time that I can think of. There's a great diversity of ages, backgrounds, careers and life experiences on my team, but out of over twenty team members only two are women. I'd like to see that change over the next few years.

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**Jane Grimley Arrocher MRT**

Day Job: After 20 years in visitor services management in the charity and the whisky sector, I've just started a half-gap year at 63!



I joined in the summer of 1987 and have never looked back! At that time we didn't have team vehicles, personal kit or a team post. There was no central grant funding so it was quite different from today, but the team work, mutual support, friendship, banter and 'can do' attitude are as they always have been: fantastic!

We've always done lots of fundraising which is good for team bonding! Our first Land Rover was purchased in 2001 due to generous match funding by a local hotel. It wasn't long before we recognised the need for better personal kit so the team started running navigation and winter skills days and providing outdoor events support to supplement donation tins. We were eventually a beneficiary of the generosity of the Order of St John and built and opened our Mountain Rescue Post in 2003.

Like most teams, we are all rather more 'active' (up to our necks in paperwork) than ever before. I've spent a long time as team secretary and now I'm learning the ropes as treasurer.

The team members were all men when I joined, but after the usual trainee time I was part of the team. Kit is the only area where gender has been an issue – my first team jacket was size 'small man' and I could have had a comfortable overnight bivvi in it! Women are now much better represented in Scottish Mountain Rescue. There are now four in our team including a long-serving and very experienced SARDA member, and another has just joined as a trainee.

The training opportunities are incredible and everyone in our team is given the opportunity to attend and learn new skills and improve rusty ones. A more recent benefit is the recognition of the potentially emotional challenges people may face after difficult shouts and the fact that SMR is working with Police Scotland to provide wellbeing training and support is fantastic.

I joined because I love being in the hills. It seemed a great opportunity to be a part of a team who serve the community by helping those who also enjoyed being in the hills. I was working in the Armed Forces when I joined so the sense of being in a team, looking out for each other, commitment and sense of humour were already part of my life.

Many Arrochar team members have been involved with MR for years. We have strong teamwork and friendships and, of course, team hugs after the occasional domestic! I have always been hugely inspired by my colleagues who are all busy people and are prepared to share their talents and expertise and give freely of their time when they can, to be in mountain rescue. I feel fortunate to be part of such a great group of people.



**Kirsty Pallas Oban MRT**

Day Job: Outdoor Instructor

I hadn't thought about joining the team, but was asked to come along to a training day. After meeting the team and being out on the hill with them, I was really keen to join and use my skills to help out people in need. Being a team member complements my job, as there's a lot of transferable skills, and it helps with situations I might encounter while I'm working.

The level of training is great, be it technical rigging, avalanche rescue or something as simple as putting snow chains on the vehicles. I love the variety of both training and the call-outs – keeps us on our toes! An early hours of the morning call-out might be momentarily inconvenient, although all that's forgotten once you're out. Oban team has a fairly high proportion of women, which is great to see when you're starting out. Helps you realise you don't need to keep up with the six-foot-something guys! There's a real camaraderie – it's just really a big group of friends who enjoy similar things and have a passion for being in the Scottish mountains.

When a call-out comes, there's the initial adrenaline and uncertainty of the situation or what we're going into. The weather might be wild, but it doesn't seem to affect us because we're focused on the situation. It's only once you're back to base you get time to reflect on it all. Getting a casualty down and safe reminds you why you volunteer for this, but we also have to be prepared for the times when it might not be such a successful outcome. Having the team there and people to open up to is really important for these situations. Being a team member has helped me develop a whole range of skills and meet a really awesome bunch of people! I'm very grateful for the opportunities I've had because of it, and I know there will be plenty more!



**Moira Weatherstone Arrochar MRT & SARDA Scotland**

I joined Arrochar in 1990 after moving to the area. It allowed me to combine my experiences in the great outdoors, love for the mountains of Scotland and at the same time give something back. I'd always felt that, no matter how experienced you are, you may one day find yourself injured or ill in the mountains and requiring the service of a mountain rescue team.

There were very few women involved in mountain rescue then in Scotland, traditionally a male-dominated culture, but I've watched with enthusiasm as the numbers have steadily increased over the years. Everyone is included and accepted for their knowledge, experience and what they can bring to the team.

In 1992 I became a qualified dog handler, one of only two female handlers in Scotland at the time. I now work my third search dog and I think I'm the longest serving female dog handler in the history of SARDA in Scotland. I've had the privilege of working with most of the mountain rescue teams throughout Scotland and met some of the most amazing, selfless dedicated volunteers. Mountain rescue is a family, working together, supporting each other often in the most challenging of situations with one goal in mind: saving of lives. We have laughed, socialised and cried together.

Over the years, I have volunteered as treasurer and training coordinator of Arrochar MRT, secretary and assessor for SARDA Scotland and served as treasurer of Scottish Mountain Rescue for over eight years but my greatest joy is hearing that a missing person has been safely located. The feeling of having been part of the team that brought a loved one home is rewarding.

I still remember the cheers that went up from the mountain rescue team members, dog handlers and members of the RAF mountain rescue team one particular January, when the team leader announced that the missing person had been found safe and well. However, the sad reality is that we don't always find the missing person immediately and searches can go on for many days. Walking away, driving home after a long day in the mountains is always challenging if you know there is still someone out there. A tremendous sense of helplessness. I always try to focus on the positive, remaining sure we'll find the person safe the following day. Being part of a team, the family of mountain rescue, volunteering to save lives has been a privilege and a rewarding experience.

# What's in an avalanche forecast?



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## Home page

The home page itself, with the six-area hazard level diamonds showing each forecast area, is generally used just to access the desired forecast, however, it's



worth a pause at this point to notice what each diamond is showing. If Torridon, Lochaber and Glen Coe are considerable while the North and South Cairngorms are lower, then that in itself may provide an overall picture that the west has more snow (either currently or forecast) than further east.

The diamonds will always show the level of the highest hazard over a 24-hour period in the forecast area, even if it's only localised in a single aspect.

## The forecast page

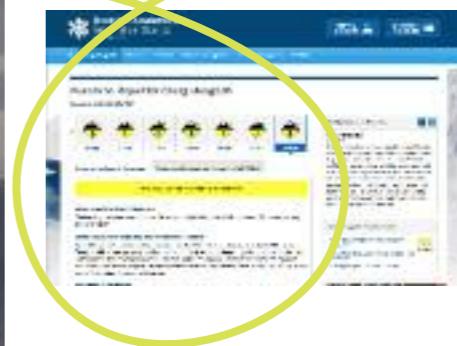
Clicking on a particular diamond will bring up the forecast for that area. At the top of the screen shows previous hazard levels in a reverse chronological order and associated forecasts. This was a feature that was added

**Main image:** Drifting snow  
© Glenmore Lodge. **Inset:** Bill Strachan and his family in a snowhole © Bill Strachan.



a few years ago and can be very helpful in seeing the trend of weather that has led to the current state of play. History is a key aspect to avalanche forecasting.

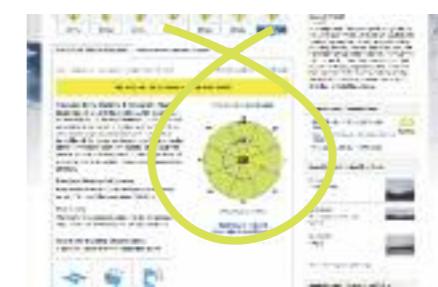
The main forecast makes up the bulk of the page, however, the 'Observed Avalanche



Hazard' tab is a good place to click before reading the actual forecast. It helps get you in the snow mindset and reading the history from the previous day along with the weather forecast starts the process of coming up with your own predictions. Even if the exact details of your own forecast are not the same as the SAIS ones the trend is likely to be correct. Asking yourself the simple question of whether the hazard will be around the same, higher or lower than yesterday will get your mind thinking about aspects, temperatures and precipitation. If you have first-hand knowledge of the previous day's conditions then reading a professional's observations helps calibrate your own thoughts.

Now that we're back on the main forecast, the first thing that will catch your eye is the coloured rose with the various aspects showing appropriate colours. Research has shown that most people look at this for a surprisingly short amount of time and then navigate away from the page. This is a significant mistake as the rose is only a summary of the conditions The devil, as they say, is in the detail.

'Forecast Snow Stability and Avalanche Hazard' is the most important part of the actual forecast. Whilst there may be, for example, localised areas of considerable shown in the rose the text may well detail more specifically where that hazard is.



'Especially round corrie rims and scarp slopes'. Walking into the corrie with limited visibility and with only the information from the picture of the rose in your head, it would be easy to think that the hazard level is lower than forecast, but with the information in the text you will be aware that the top of the slopes (that could well be hidden in cloud) are where the main hazard lies.

The 'Considerable' hazard covers a slightly wider range than the other hazard levels. (In other words the low to high end of Considerable varies more than Low, Moderate or High). Text such as 'avalanches are likely' let us know that we're operating in the higher end of the range. Again, there is no way of knowing this by the rose alone. Cornice hazards can also be mentioned, this is significant as technically they are not part of the snowpack and not included in the rose or hazard scale but are definitely worth knowing about. Rockfall and dangerous run-outs are generally mentioned under the Comments section.

## Terminology

It's a very difficult job to summarise the forecast into the few lines that are published daily. The terminology that is used helps keep this concise and consistent with other countries. It's important for us users of this information to fully understand what's being said. Here are a few of the words you might come across.

- **Cornice:** An overhanging mass of snow formed above steep drops in the lee of the wind.

- **Scarp slope:** The slope below where a cornice would form.

- **Neve:** Hard snow that has been through freeze thaw cycles.

- **Crag apron:** The slope that rises from the corrie floor to the buttress.

- **Windslab:** Compacted snow that forms in lee areas due to wind. This can often release in large slabs/blocks.

## Icons

These are found at the bottom of the forecast page. The icons are pretty self-explanatory and represent cornice, weak layer, windslab and rising temperature. Something that is often missed by readers is that by clicking on them you will get a detailed explanation of the hazard as well the trend of it. Rising, Constant or Decreasing.



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## SPRING SHOWERS

Signs of spring are appearing all around us. But despite the rays of sunshine, many of us will be keeping our down jackets on for another month or so. But what if spring showers come our way?

Did you know down quickly loses its insulating properties when it gets wet. That's because water conducts heat away from the body up to 25 times faster than air. Hence the cold chill getting out of the swimming pool.

Nikwax Hydrophobic Down is 50-times more water repellent than conventional down which works by adding a flexible DWR finish to each down filament – reducing the absorption of moisture. It's already being adopted by big outdoor brands including Rab, Therm-A-Rest, Berghaus and Mountain Hardwear.

But remember, to keep it in peak condition, Hydrophobic Down, like all down, still requires care. Introduced last year – Nikwax Down Wash Direct is the first ever aftercare product specifically designed to clean down and maximise its performance.

TO FIND OUT MORE, VISIT: [WWW.NIKWAX.COM](http://WWW.NIKWAX.COM)



## AQUAPAC'S WATERPROOF MINI VHF/WALKIE-TALKIE CASE

REVIEWED BY CHRIS COOKSON

I've used various Aquapac cases over the years to (successfully) protect marine VHF radios and numerous phones and other devices from that deadly electronic killer, water, so I jumped at the chance to see what the latest cases looked like and how they performed.

The first thing I noticed was the IPX8 rating, with Aquapac specifying up to 10m continuously, which covers all the things I'd subject it to these days. The radio I wanted to protect was a Motorola MTH800, but the case would work with lots of other makes and models, including PMR446 (Personal Mobile Radio) sets, with dimensions of 230mm tall and 190mm in girth (see [aquapac.net](http://aquapac.net) for more details).

The MTH800 was a good fit and the plastic supple enough that I could operate all the radio's controls, even with a gloved hand, something I'd struggled to do with older case/radio combinations. The plastic has proven to be robust too, protecting the contents from water and minor abrasions, and dust and dirt too. Aquapac's own Aquaclip seals the case, and I also found this to be robust and easy to operate wearing gloves. I had no problem putting the radio in the case or getting it out.

I'd used the case on a number of rainy days, but its first real test was storm Callum, in October, out on the tops in Buttermere. Working hard to stay on my feet in the strong winds and driving horizontal rain, I had the radio and case hung around my neck using the lanyard supplied, in order to give the case a realistic test — a test it passed with flying colours. The radio remained completely dry, unlike most of the other kit I was carrying or wearing that day!

The second big test came during a call-out in the midst of storm Deidre. For much of this, both radio and case were in my hand as I tried to make sense of radio traffic over the wind, and also reply promptly to any directed at me. Up to 400m it was just rain and wind, but above that the freezing rain had covered everything in verglas. Whenever I came to task requiring two hands, I put the case and radio on the ground. To progress safely up steep and verglassed ground, sometimes needed two hands so radio and case sometimes came into contact with the rock, grass and ice we were travelling over and afforded some abrasion protection as mentioned. Sorting out my personal kit later, quite a lot of it was wet, but the MTH800 was perfectly dry in its case, so could go straight on charge, something my IPX7-rated smartphone (with me but not in a case) couldn't, until it had dried out.

Our 'normal' Simoco mountain rescue radios have an IP rating, are deemed waterproof but wouldn't fit in the particular case under review (Aquapac do another case where they would). And, according to the Aquapac website, these cases float (not something I've tested with a radio inside), but that might be of use to those involved in water rescue. I've known of a few MR sets being 'lost' in a river or the bottom of a lake!

In summary, I clearly haven't tested the case to the extremes of its spec, but it stood up well to typical mountain rescue usage. Weighing only 50g, with an RRP of just over £20, it won't weigh you down and seems value for money for the piece of mind of keeping your electronics alive. ☀



As mentioned earlier, knowing the weather history is a huge part of understanding the current conditions. The Weekly Snowpack Summary condenses the previous conditions into a short easy to read paragraph. Don't be fooled into thinking that it's not worth reading just because it's short. If phrases like '...with a number of human triggered avalanches occurring during the last week...' don't get you switched on, nothing will! If it's been a few days since I've visited an area this is the first section of the forecast page that I read.

## Snow Profiles

The profiles are accessible from the drop down menu on the right of the forecast. There is a load of information here. There is an excellent video and pdf available on the SAIS website on how to interpret the information recorded, definitely worth a read. Although I often spend time reading through the profile information it's also a way of

forecast itself is developed from all the information gathered on the forecasters journey.

## Avalanches map

These are avalanches reported by site users. A great resource to see what's been happening and where. You can select avalanches by period or for all time. The



**DON'T BE FOOLED INTO THINKING THAT IT'S NOT WORTH READING JUST BECAUSE THE WEEKLY SNOWPACK SUMMARY IS SHORT. IF PHRASES LIKE '...WITH A NUMBER OF HUMAN TRIGGERED AVALANCHES OCCURRING DURING THE LAST WEEK...' DON'T GET YOU SWITCHED ON, NOTHING WILL!**

Image: Small cornice © Glenmore Lodge.

designed to be factual and easy to use with non-biased information. It's nice to read through the blogs and get something more personal from the forecaster. They, like us, love the mountains and clearly enjoy sharing some stunning pictures of mountains and wildlife that they see on their travels. ☀

I'm so excited right now because I'm planning my first proper expedition in 'Andy's Landie'. Mountain rescue volunteers in Scotland have invited me to their bases in June/July to check out their Land Rovers, meet the teams and talk about mental strength and wellbeing.



## Five ways to wellbeing

This trip will assist teams introducing the 'UKSAR Wellbeing Framework' after their recent Wellbeing and Resilience weekend. What an adventure it will be! Normally the old girl doesn't stray too far from home, but this is a challenge I'm up for, although it does seem a little daunting right now because I don't think she is ready just yet. But that's part of the fun and adventure — getting the vehicle ready for the trip and sorting out the route, stops, digs etc. I have also decided that I'm going to make a short film from the highlights of this trip after acquiring some BBC training on making films on my mobile phone.

The trip idea was hatched in February at the first ever Wellbeing and Resilience weekend for Mountain Rescue Volunteers in Scotland, where I had the pleasure of speaking. Congratulations to our colleagues north of the Border for being the first members of the UKSAR community to implement the UKSAR Wellbeing Framework. Special mention for Steve Penny (SMR Wellbeing Officer) who has also released a short film 'Avalanche' which focuses on how one volunteer felt after a traumatic incident. You can view it here: [tinyurl.com/y3mm6xf](http://tinyurl.com/y3mm6xf).

Let me explain why I'm so looking forward to this trip and why it will be so good for me.

Firstly, it's an adventure. Success is not guaranteed — there is preparation involved. I'll need to improve and prepare the Landie, as the old girl doesn't normally venture too far from home, for fear of breaking down. I'll have purpose preparing her for the trip and almost be 'on a mission' as I journey around the bases and through some amazing scenery. During the trip, I'll learn more about the teams, meet up with old friends and make some new ones. I'll also be able to share my story and lessons I've learned about my own mental strength and wellbeing through my career and personal life. The challenges and rewards of this journey are linked closely to wellbeing, which is the subject of this blog.

I discovered recently that the NHS has published '5 ways of Wellbeing', based on research. The focus is on the five categories of: Connect, Keep Learning, Take Notice, Be Active and Give. Surprisingly close to my own list (see previous blog), but a lot simpler and, because it's based on research,

this is worthy of checking your own mental health against.

Knowing about this simple recipe for wellbeing and applying it in my own life over the last few years would have helped me look after myself much better than I did. What works well for you? How do you provide these five things for yourself if you are feeling great right now, or what areas have you been neglecting, if you are not feeling so fantastic lately?

Perhaps take a look at yourself. Is there something slightly out of kilter with your routine/balance? Perhaps you're not sleeping well, drinking slightly more alcohol or caffeine, irritable, lacking your normal drive, having difficulty making simple decisions or not able to complete certain tasks? Perhaps a slight adjustment with more emphasis on the 'Five ways' could make the difference?

These are the proven five areas of your life to focus on in order to feel better and do better. It's very important to take care of one's mental health in simple ways. Having occasional poor mental health for a few days doesn't mean we are mentally ill or have a formal diagnosis, but is just a normal part of life, especially as a volunteer emergency responder in mountain rescue.

Over the last year I realised that just as our physical health varies over time with minor dips (colds, sprains, sports injuries), we all have varying mental health over time also. For example, feeling a little low after an upsetting call-out, feeling slightly anxious about a new job or role within the team, sadness when a loved one becomes seriously ill. By focusing on these five ways of wellbeing in your own life, especially during the many bumps of twenty-first-century life, we can keep ourselves and each other on track for good mental health and develop our mental strength, often in a fun and positive way.

### What is Mental Health First Aid?

There are 350,000 people registered in England — and over 2.5 million people worldwide — trained to recognise mental ill-health and help others find the support they need to stay well. We are a growing community, who are creating a society where attitudes and behaviour to mental health are normalised.



Left: Andy with his Landie in the snow.  
Bottom: Edale Land Rover parked up at their base with Andy's Landie in the background © Andy Elwood.

We use a five-step action plan to assist others: **ALGEE**

- Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis
- Listen and communicate non-judgementally
- Give support and information
- Encourage person to get appropriate professional help
- Encourage other supports.

It's been a busy start to 2019 for Andy's Landie. After some green-laning fun with Mrs E over the Christmas holidays and fun in the snow early January, the real work began again with frequent runs to the tip and transferring hardcore from our house refurbishment to a friend's field for his building project. This weekend I managed to find all the oil top-up points in the transmission system of the series III and replenish them as required. This was the first step of mechanical preparation for the Scotland trip. Next on the list are replacing driver's seatbelt, passenger step, electrics health check and an upgrade for the satnav.

I also recently visited Edale MRT, my local team, to learn about becoming a supporter and to hook up with my friend Dave Torr, their equipment

officer. Dave was the person who told me the Series III was for sale and for that I owe him a lot. We had a great morning as we walked his dogs over big moor and chatted about all sorts, before having a black pudding Scotch egg lunch and heading over to Edale base to check out the team's newly refurbished Land Rover. I'm only reflecting on it as I type that, without knowing it at the time, we were unconsciously boosting ourselves with the 'Five ways of Wellbeing' that day. You can read more about my Edale visit in my online blog (details below).

### Future events to see Andy's Landie:

- **Mind Blue Light Champions** meeting (London 21 March)
- **Our Blue Light Day** (17 April)
- **Alkit (Hathersage) Search & Rescue presentation** (Date TBC)
- **College of Paramedics National Conference** (14-15 May. Poster presentation)
- **Series & 110 Land Rover club National Rally** (25-27 May)
- **Highland show – Rural Mental Health stand** (Edinburgh 20-23 June)



# Who helps the helpers? Kinder MRT take positive steps towards team member wellbeing

**Neil Woodhead** Kinder MRT & Chair, Rescue Benevolent Fund

As chairman of our Rescue Benevolent Fund I'm acutely aware of mental health issues and the impact these can have on our team members. We're all volunteers with varying levels of pressures within our busy lives and balancing work, home life and mountain rescue can affect our wellbeing. It's in the interests of our teams and those we go to find and rescue, that we have rescuers who are mentally fit as well as physical fit.

Volunteering as a mountain rescuer can be very positive for our wellbeing. It ticks all the boxes when we look at the five ways to wellbeing:

- Connecting with other people
- Being active
- Taking notice of the moment and our surroundings
- Continuing to learn and develop skills
- Giving back to the community.

I'm sure teams around England and Wales have varying levels of knowledge and training in mental health matters. My own team is Kinder in the Peak District and when I became a deputy team leader a couple of years ago, I asked myself questions about how we looked after our members. How do we deal with the aftermath of a traumatic incident? How do we support our members with mental health issues in their working or home lives? Could we do more to support our members in this area?

As part of the Blue Light Programme that Mind has been running for the last four years, funding became available that enabled local Mind groups within the Greater Manchester area to offer free training to their local mountain rescue teams. I jumped at this chance to put something in place for Kinder, seeing if they could provide us with what I was looking for. They were very keen to work with the voluntary search and rescue sector, agreeing to send trainers out to our base in the village of Hayfield to deliver two different days of training. The first was in

December and covered Trauma training, followed up in February with Peer Support training.

We had 20% of the team at each day, which was a fantastic uptake and proved to me that wellbeing is something our team members believe in and will support. The progress that Kinder has already made with the implementation of a Wellbeing Policy and a group of Blue Light Champions is fantastic. We are much better prepared now to deal with traumatic incidents and to support our team members at different levels. It's a win-win situation for us — both team and team members benefitting. If the opportunity arises for your team to strengthen its resilience and response to mental health issues, we would urge you to take it.

At the time of writing, I understand that the Blue Light Programme funding will come to an end on 31 March. At that point, the mountain rescue community must ensure that the progress we've made isn't lost. Mind's Blue Light Support will continue.

Remember that the Rescue Benevolent Fund is here for all our team members. As you will have read in the last magazine, we aren't just here for when you suffer a physical injury whilst volunteering for a mountain or cave rescue team. We've also helped people who have suffered mental health problems following a mountain or cave rescue incident. Details can be found on our website at [rescuebenevolent.fund](http://rescuebenevolent.fund). ☺

## Dave Eustace

I've experienced the trauma of having a casualty die on me. It wasn't a pleasant experience and I was grateful for the support of my teammates. Others have had similar experiences. Generally, I love the comradeship and support of going for a beer after a job. I find it helpful to talk through what we've done, even to have a laugh. But, it doesn't suit all of us all of the time. Some jobs, some experiences, some people need a different support environment.

Now, throughout society, there is greater awareness of mental health, partly thanks to the work done by our patron, the Duke of Cambridge. The time seemed right for us to move 'beyond the pub'. As a deputy team leader, trustee and member of the team executive I am conscious of our duty of care to our members. So, I was delighted when Neil organised the training sessions from Mind. Professional input was just what we needed.

I went to the Champions Trauma Workshop for more senior team members. It was excellent, providing me with increased confidence in dealing with mental health. For me the key 'take homes' were: increasing my understanding of trauma and PTSD, learning some techniques for recognising these, gaining knowledge of signposting to help and understanding my boundaries as a lay person.

Recently, we've had some difficult

jobs where casualties could very easily have died on the hill. We reflected on what we could do to help people cope afterwards. We've taken the obvious step of developing a Wellbeing Policy and setting up a group of Blue Light Champions that should help the team. But we realised we could also help the casualty, their party, and their family and friends at home. We tend to think of our job as being done once we've removed a casualty to a place of safety. We've now gone beyond this by producing a Casualty Information Pack, designed to reassure and help anyone connected to the casualty in the days after the rescue. It comprises a leaflet around mental health and PTSD, an MREW leaflet around Staying Safe in the Hills, and a letter from the team to them which covers:

- ◎ Reassurance about the non-judgmental nature of mountain rescue
- ◎ Tips on dealing with social media in case of adverse comments
- ◎ Signposting to the MIND website and NHS health services for mental health issues
- ◎ Offers of help from the team if they would like to talk about their rescue or visit the site.

We're working hard to make everything we do more professional. It's easy to focus on technical rescue, but this training was equally important. To quote a cliché: 'our members are our greatest asset' and we need to look after them. ☺

## Matt Field

Having been on the receiving end of mental health care, the statistics around mental health issues within the Blue Light community came as no real surprise (87% of Blue Light workers have reported personal mental health issues: Source, MIND). This figure is considerably higher than the national average and flag waves quite well the issues faced by those whose job it is to go to the aid of others, be it full-time or volunteer.

For me, the biggest hurdle was opening up to others: friends, relatives, work colleagues. It wasn't until after a series of potentially life-altering incidents I realised I needed to speak to someone. A decade ago, mental health problems were often swept under the carpet. Today, through various awareness programmes, this is no longer the case. However, there can still be a block on how to initiate that conversation.

The second phase of Kinder MRT's involvement with MIND focused on what we can do to 'be there'. Peer support is exactly what it says, and in this case under the banner of Blue Light Champions that support takes the form of trained individuals who have the background knowledge to act as 'active listeners', who have the skills not only to allow the person who may be seeking help to have the space to speak in, but also be able to guide the conversation to better understand what may be required. The Blue Light Champion is then able to offer signposting to the relevant resources someone with a potential issue may require.

Blue Light Champions are not counsellors, they are not medically trained mental health experts. Their role is not to offer 'sage advice', but to draw on their own experiences to help provide a safe space for others who may just need a chat. From here, a route to help can be determined, which may just be another chat, or it may be a more structured approach.

The other side of the peer support coin concerns the wellbeing of the Blue Light Champions themselves. Within Kinder MRT, as part of the Wellbeing policy, we are creating a support framework to ensure the Blue Light Champions don't become secondary casualties due to the nature of these conversations. A Peer Support Group will enable the sharing — where appropriate — of the issues raised, training and group discussions. This is seen as vital to the successful utilisation of Blue Light Champions, both from a pastoral point of view and also to meet regulatory requirements on data handling. A Blue Light Champion may suddenly find themselves privy to exceptionally personal information, and just as we do for physical injuries, we must ensure that confidentiality of that information is maintained.

It is hoped that through this new to Kinder MRT process, we can ensure that we can be there when people need time for that 'Can I have a quick chat?' moment, and be better able to support them as they move forward. ☺

**Below:** Kinder team members in action with the stretcher © Kinder MRT.

**TO QUOTE A CLICHÉ: 'OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR GREATEST ASSET' AND WE NEED TO LOOK AFTER THEM**



## Wellbeing and resilience: an update from Scotland

**Steve Penny** Tweed Valley MRT  
& SMR Wellbeing Officer

Membership of a voluntary responder team is a rewarding and fulfilling experience for many reasons. However, we recognise that, on occasions, wellbeing and good mental health can be challenged by just **being** a volunteer responder. Wellbeing can also be challenged by some of the tasks that team members can be exposed to, and this in turn has potential impacts on family, the team, and life outside of volunteering.

On occasions, such impacts can have a significant effect on the wider team and even the community, especially in the more remote areas of our country where communities are smaller and more close-knit.

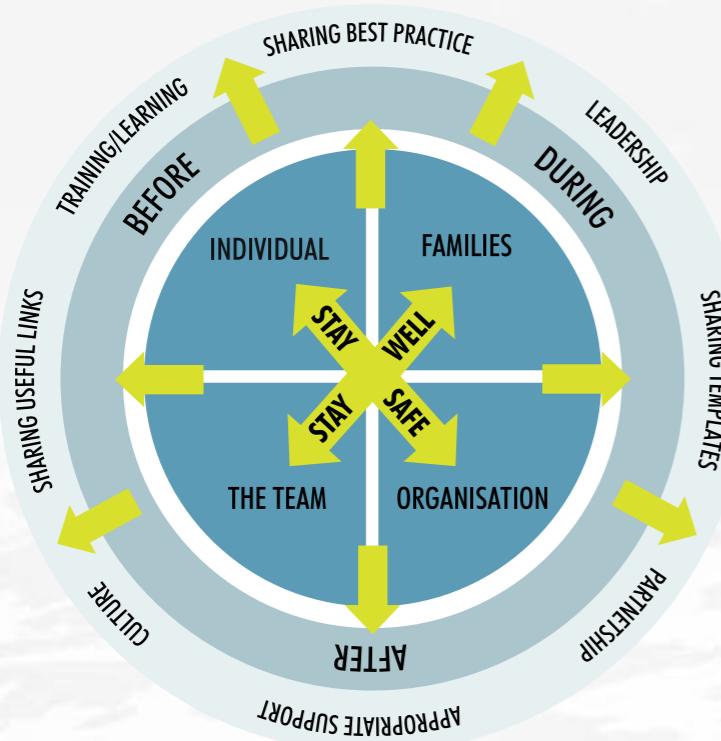
Our aim, in Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR), is that individuals, families, teams and the national organisation can develop the awareness and support mechanisms to suit the needs of individual volunteers within local teams, the areas of the country in which they operate, and the characteristics of the membership. All four of these groups play an essential part in our wellbeing as volunteer responders. It is essential to champion this locally within teams and nationally by SMR with a view to building overall capacity within our

volunteers and teams to deal with issues, and at the very least to recognise and be more open to talk and discuss, breaking down the stigma often associated with mental health and wellbeing. Feeling able to talk or giving time to listen can make a

### IT'S OFTEN THE DAY-TO-DAY CHALLENGES OF JUST BEING A VOLUNTEER RESPONDER THAT CAUSE THE BIGGEST ONGOING CHALLENGES TO OUR WELLBEING

significant difference. No qualifications are needed to offer someone the space and time to talk.

The key objective of **Stay Safe Stay**



We have learned, both from feedback here and overseas, that it is often the day-to-day challenges of just being a volunteer responder that can cause the biggest ongoing challenges to our wellbeing. Such day-to-day concerns have an impact on volunteers, their families and the teams, every day to some extent, and therefore are important. Strengthening personal resilience from a good stable foundation will then help individuals, families and teams to tackle the incidents that challenge wellbeing — for example difficult traumatic incidents, the accumulation of such incidents, and/or incidents that adversely affect the whole team but which occur far less frequently. It is not enough for us to concentrate our efforts on recovery after an incident — we must put efforts into preparing before, and how we deal with our actions during an incident.

What follows is an overview of some key recent milestones, where we are now, and next steps.

### Key milestones

- The setting up of the **Lifelines Scotland** project ([lifelinescotland.org](http://lifelinescotland.org)) in 2016 was a significant step forward in addressing the challenges faced by

volunteer responders. Thousands of people across Scotland volunteer to give emergency help to their fellow citizens. But who helps them? The Lifelines Scotland project was initiated to offer exactly that support. Whether a Community First Responder or volunteer with mountain rescue, the RNLI or any other emergency response service, there will certainly be a time when the resources will be helpful.

The website has information about how to stay well, beat stress and boost resilience. Family, friends and even employers may find the resources valuable too. The **Staying Well Road Trip** is an interactive learning module available on the home page of the website and well worth running through (around 30 minutes).

Lifelines Scotland is funded by the UK and Scottish governments using LIBOR fines. It is led by Gill Moreton from NHS Lothian's Rivers Centre for Traumatic Stress in Edinburgh. (The LIBOR fines also funded the Blue Light Programme in England, led by the mental health charity MIND).

- At the start of 2018 we were asked if we wished to make a short film describing one person's experiences of dealing with a traumatic incident in mountain rescue (MR). That film was completed for launch at the Emergency Services Show in September 2018 and endorsed by Stephen Fry! It has now had many thousands of views and has hopefully helped to start conversations around mental health and wellbeing within the volunteer responder community and beyond. This video is available from the Lifelines Scotland home page.

In addition to that, in March 2018, Police Scotland agreed to provide access to its Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for all mountain rescue team members and their families in Scotland at no cost. This was a significant step forward and was the result of a lot of work behind the scenes involving both police and mountain rescue representatives. All MR volunteers were provided with wallet cards and fridge magnets with contact details of the EAP services.

- In February 2018, the **UKSAR conference** featured a session on mental health and wellbeing, and was attended by HRH The Duke of Cambridge. This was delivered by Andy Elwood and acted as a further motivator for action and resulted in the formation of the UKSAR Wellbeing Working Group — tasked with developing a Wellbeing Framework that might apply to all volunteer responder organisations. Mountain



Rescue and Lowland Rescue were well represented on this group along with others. The group worked throughout the spring and summer of 2018 and presented a **UKSAR Wellbeing Framework**, again at the Emergency Services Show in September. Greater detail of this framework could be in another feature — at present we are finalising some details to support it.

### Where we are now

- Following on from the UKSAR work in 2018, in Scotland we produced a booklet which we hope will help the families of our MR team members understand what it means to have a volunteer in the family. This booklet is based heavily on material we received from Fire and Emergency New Zealand. It covers many areas that are common to the members and families of all volunteer responder organisations. We have produced this as a template which allows teams to personalise various bits to suit. This is now available for all of the MR teams in Scotland.
- We are now actively investigating options for access to an appropriate benevolent fund for all our team members. This is part of the current review of all our national insurance covers which are in place for teams and members.

### Next steps

- To date we have been working across a range of initiatives under the overall banner of Wellbeing. We have made a start to a number that fall into the category of preparation and raising awareness. We've initiated some training and sharing best practice and produced some new materials to support new member induction and engage families to a greater extent. We've recognised that integrating wellbeing into all operational activities is key and we've looked for — and taken — opportunities to network and build

**Above:** Left to right:  
Pictured at the Trauma Care Conference, Elaine Gilliland (Bolton MRT), Rebecca Binstead (Strategic Relations Manager MCA), Steve Nelson (Bolton MRT) and Steve Penny (SMR Wellbeing Officer) © Steve Penny.

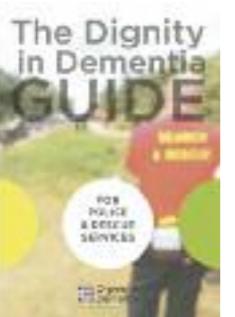
# Dementia awareness

**LESLEY GILL**  
DIGNITY IN DEMENTIA

Mountain rescue teams are sometimes involved in incidents involving individuals with dementia, be it carrying out searches when they go missing from home or helping evacuate people during major events such as flooding. During these times, it's very easy to inadvertently make a difficult situation worse by saying or doing the wrong thing, which can then lead to increased anxiety and fear for the person with dementia.

In Cumbria, Dignity in Dementia, an award-winning social enterprise, has provided really useful dementia awareness sessions, together with a short Guide, specifically designed to provide team members with the knowledge, understanding and confidence to carry out this work in a way that supports individuals with dementia effectively. The sessions followed on from a project Cumbria Constabulary and Dignity in Dementia are running together, that aims to reduce repeat police call-outs involving people with dementia. As part of the project Dignity in Dementia delivered training to front-line officers and a number, who are also MRT members, said how relevant and useful the training would be for Cumbria's teams.

Dignity in Dementia focuses on the emotional wellbeing of individuals with dementia. As dementia progresses and memories fail, family carers and the public can fall into the trap of thinking that those with dementia also lose their ability to feel



emotions. They are wrong. As the part of the brain (hippocampus) that holds memories gradually dies, the part that deals with emotions and feelings (amygdala) remains intact and emotions and feelings actually intensify. It's therefore very important to recognise how a person with dementia is feeling at any particular time. When team members come in contact with them they are likely to be anxious, confused and scared and therefore it's imperative that MRT

members work in a way that reduces these feelings and helps put them at ease.

It's possible that their speech may be affected so they might not be able to tell you how they feel or answer your questions. Indeed they may not be able to make sense of what you are saying and become even more confused and anxious as they struggle to respond to you. Additionally, vision can deteriorate significantly as dementia progresses with many individuals in the later stage experiencing monocular vision.

Consequently, it's important to approach from the front, be at their eye level and speak in a clear, calm and friendly manner. If asking questions, ask one at a time and try to keep them short and simple. Those that can be answered with a 'yes' or 'no' answer are

best, as open-ended questions can cause the person to become flustered and upset as they struggle to understand them or find an answer. If they tell you something you know is wrong, don't put them right. Their reality is real to them and they are likely to become more confused and angry if corrected. Instead try to distract them by picking up on a word they have used and then changing the subject. If possible try not to ask them about something that has just happened.

Dementia will probably have affected their short-term memory, so asking questions about recent happenings can cause them to panic and become agitated.

Also never tell them that a relative is dead. People with dementia may have gone back to a particular time in their past and get confused when people they expect to see aren't there. They may think that their mother, father, spouse is still alive and could even have gone out looking for them. If you tell them that the person is dead they may not believe you or they could easily be shocked and relive their grief. Instead ask them to tell you more about the person and pick up on something they say and then gently change the subject.

## Types of sentences to try and avoid

- You just asked me that
- You said that before
- I've already told you
- Calm down
- Please stop doing that
- I just gave it to you
- You don't go to work any more.

## Some helpful sentences to use

- I can't remember either
- You seem worried/anxious/upset
- I really need your help with
- Let's do it together
- I know how hard it can be
- I'm feeling scared too
- You seem to miss your [....] Tell me more about them
- I could really do with a friend
- Tell me more about it
- Show me what you do with it
- You must have really enjoyed your job.

## Elopement and wandering: When a person with dementia goes missing

A person with dementia who believes they are living in an earlier time within their history, can set off from home to carry out roles they previously did — for example, to go off to work or to pick up children from school. Alternatively they may feel unsafe in their house as they don't recognise it, or their spouse, who they see as an intruder. Therefore they feel the need to flee to safety and go to a home that they recognise which feels safe and secure. They quickly become lost and the MRT get involved in the search. Situations such as this are referred to as elopement.

Those involving a frail person in later stage dementia are referred to as wandering. Because they have monocular vision and only see what is immediately in front of their nose, they won't follow an obvious path. Therefore they can end up in very dangerous and inhospitable places such as dense shrubbery etc.

When mounting a search it's important to remember that the person who is lost is likely to feel frightened, confused and traumatised. Hearing their name being called repeatedly in an urgent manner is likely to scare them even more. Consequently they are unlikely to respond and make themselves known.

Instead, when calling their name do it in a friendly manner and turn it into a short sentence that asks for their help. If possible, find out something significant about them and incorporate it into the sentence. For example, if they are a dog lover, 'Susan, could you give me some advice about my dog.' They are much more likely to answer.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT DIGNITY IN DEMENTIA GO TO **DIGNITYINDEMENTIA.ORG**  
IF YOU'D LIKE TO COMMISSION A SESSION OR PURCHASE COPIES OF OUR GUIDE FOR POLICE AND RESCUE SERVICES, PLEASE EMAIL ME VIA **LESLEY@DIGNITYINDEMENTIA.ORG** OR RING **07816 895021**



## Hypothermia guidelines instrumental in saving a life, soon after lecture

I write to report a recent incident; a male who was in his early 20s who has survived due to MREW hypothermia guidance presented by Dr Les Gordon [MR Magazine, October 2019].

A group of Senior Paramedics in North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) were given a lecture on the management of hypothermia and MREW protocols during a routine training day. The Paramedic teaching the Paramedics was myself, a member of Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team.

The following morning, the first job of the day was a call to a remote park area, where reports of an unconscious male had been found by the side of a small lake.

The man was found to be cold, wet and unconscious. The Paramedics confirmed signs of life and recognised the possibility of hypothermia. With minimal movement, vapour barrier, insulation with a blizzard blanket, oxygen and ECG monitoring the casualty was managed to best practice. Helimed support was requested, as the Paramedics, with their new knowledge, knew the high risks of Ventricular Fibrillation (VF).

Despite careful casualty management, a VF arrest occurred. Mechanical cardiopulmonary resuscitation was delivered via a LUCAS device.

The casualty was admitted to a regional cardiothoracic centre for ECMO treatment. Rewarming commenced with success and the young male was discharged five days later.

This successful outcome was due to the Paramedics being educated on Hypothermia by a Paramedic who is also a mountain rescue team member. Following the incident, further education has been published to the ambulance service on hypothermia and to recognise the need for prolonged CPR and ECMO rewarming.

This is a great case to demonstrate that MREW members can make a real difference in the pre-hospital environment with their knowledge of hypothermia. We are currently collaborating to submit a more formal letter and case report about the incident to a medical journal.

My thanks go to Dr Les Gordon, for the work he has done to educate all MREW members in hypothermia management.

**David Stuart. Casualty Care Officer, Bowland Pennine MRT Operations Manager, NWAS**

# Hypothermia

## Wellbeing and resilience: an update from Scotland **continued**

relationships with both appropriate organisations and government. And we are strengthening recovery support for when it is needed.

- We will continue to push on with our work and develop an action plan for 2019 and beyond.

The key to **making it work** will be a combination of continuing work nationally and at UKSAR level **but** also to encourage teams, individuals and families to start the process at local level — a very much bottom-up approach. This will help to identify the issues faced at local level in local conditions and allow best practice, available resources and support mechanisms and, most crucially, the gaps at local level to be highlighted and then tackled in a coordinated way.



It's important to remember that a small step to improve wellbeing in any group at any level is a step forward and steps forward can only be good — this will take time and effort. But it has to be worth it — it needs to be done. ☺

ANY QUESTIONS OR FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME VIA **WELLBEINGOFFICER@SCOTISHMOUNTAINRESCUE.ORG**

## Remembering Neil Moss: sixty years on

On Sunday, 22 March 1959, Oscar Hackett Neil Moss became jammed while trying to pass down a narrow unexplored tunnel in Stalagmite Chamber – now known as Moss Chamber – in Peak Cavern, one of England's best known caves with its imposing entrance overlooking Castleton in Derbyshire. In 2006, David Webb's film about the tragedy set about correcting some of the myths surrounding the rescue attempt by talking to those who were there. Based on an article written by David in 2007, **Judy Whiteside** looks back at how the incident unfolded and its influence on cave rescue.

Late in January, an email found its way into the Editor's inbox. An appeal for help. Not for mountain rescue (the days of calling us out by telegram being long gone) but for information. And not about mountain rescue either.

'I recently read an article on your website [Fight for Life: the Neil Moss story],' said Pete. 'I'd be interested to learn more about this tragic event and the brave rescue attempts. I've tried to find a copy of the DVD online but have been unable to do so. Having checked your website, I can't see it listed there either. I appreciate this DVD is a few years old now but I wondered if you had any suggestions for how I might be able to locate a copy? Any help would be much appreciated'.

Well, it's always good to receive positive feedback — not least for an article published seven years ago — and, as it turned out, we were able to put Pete in touch with David Webb, who also happened to have some copies of the DVD.

All of which reminded me that this year is the sixtieth anniversary of a cave rescue which became a pivotal moment in caving history, the perfect opportunity to retell the tale here. We've also stocked our newly-expanded bookshop with copies of the DVD. Just in case.

Moss was a twenty-year-old undergraduate, studying philosophy at Balliol College, Oxford, and also the sports-loving son of a British cotton executive. By all accounts he loved to explore and where better than the vast unknown darkness underground?

He was one of eight cavers from the British Speleological Association who entered the Derbyshire cave that fateful day. Their intention was to explore a passage about half a mile from the show cave, discovered just two weeks earlier. They elbowed, crawled and climbed their way through narrow mud-filled passages, a thousand feet below ground, until they reached a larger, open chamber from which a still narrower shaft led almost straight down. Slimly built and six foot tall, Moss was the first to descend.

In *Race Against Time*, Jim Eyre and John Frankland describe how four of the party had been involved in the original exploration. 'They knew that the tight shaft corkscrewed and was difficult. They had also estimated that the depth of the shaft was approximately forty feet but seventy-five feet of ladder was lowered down the hole in case the shaft continued'.

At around 3.30pm, Moss forced himself into the hole, 'kicking all the surplus ladder before him. The shaft hung slightly off vertical for twelve feet, then came a difficult corkscrew twist leading to a ten-foot long inclined bedding plane and then a further vertical eighteen-foot drop'.

Thinking he might be able to move the



Opposite page: Peak Cavern vestibule crowded with onlookers and rescuers. Left: Moss Chamber section showing the shaft. Below: Rescuers in discussion with a police officer in the vestibule.

All images © David Webb. Courtesy James Lovelock collection.



boulders blocking the shaft to one side, Moss manoeuvred himself to a slight recess but in his struggle jammed the loose ladder beneath him. Tired of struggling, he determined to climb out of the shaft, but he never resurfaced. Unable to lift his feet sufficiently to climb back up the ladder he became 'sandwiched in an elliptical slit only eighteen inches wide' and asked the others to pull the ladder whilst he held on to it. They succeeded in lifting him a few feet but then the ladder jammed.

Difficulties such as these are not rare in caving and Moss's companions at first took it for granted that rescue would be a mere matter of lowered ropes and heaving. Gradually, the truth dawned.

Several attempts at hauling him up with ropes ended in failure, each time the rope snapping or shearing on the rock edge. By now the atmosphere was severely polluted, the air flow to the shaft cut off by his body. Moss was clearly becoming disorientated, his behaviour irrational. In *The Honour of*



Being Human, written 25 years after the event, George Cooper, described him as becoming 'less cooperative' seemingly 'unconcerned about the seriousness of his plight' even suggesting to the others 'that they go out and eat'.

His rescuers too began to feel the debilitating effects of carbon dioxide. Three of the volunteers lost consciousness whilst attempting to descend the shaft. A fourth, Ron Peters, succeeded in getting a rope

experienced caver small enough to negotiate the narrow shaft.

Early in the morning of the second day, eighteen-year-old June Bailey — later described by a British Pathé newsreel as 'a Manchester typist' — turned up, eager to make the descent. A number of media reports later described the part she played in the rescue effort, including that her instructions were to break Moss's collarbones if necessary to free his

below and he was last reported as being firmly jammed in an unmovable position with one arm forced into a recess under a ladder rung with the effort to free him'.

Meanwhile, others tried excavating the rock lower down, hoping to break through into a lower tunnel, but it soon became clear this was in vain.

The incessant rain was threatening to flood the Mucky Ducks area of Peak Cavern. The advice came through to withdraw, for

His father, Eric Moss, had waited at the tunnel entrance throughout the ordeal and it was he who requested his son's body be left in place, before anyone else risked their lives. According to those left to clear up, the lower part of the shaft was sealed with a number of loose rocks, collected from the floor of the chamber — not with concrete as frequently reported — and an inscription left nearby.

The Neil Moss story became worldwide

statement: 'I say, I'm stuck, I can't budge an inch.'

Radio news bulletins went out via the BBC and, within hours, volunteers from all over England responded to the call for help. The RAF, National Coal Board, Royal Navy and dozens of private caving groups had joined in the rescue effort. Sadly, the intense media interest also drew morbid crowds of 'sightseers' and fed a number of apocryphal accounts of the event.

1959, Ron Peters was awarded the George Medal, Les Salmon, John Thompson and Flt Lt Carter the BEM.

As a direct result of the tragedy, new procedures for the call-out and coordination of cave rescue began to take shape. Neil Moss did not die in vain, nor will he be forgotten. The story of his death remains a salutary reminder of the fragility of life and the nature of risk.

In 2004, it was retold in the novel *One Last Breath* by Stephen Booth and, in 2006, Webb — a Derbyshire caver himself — produced his DVD on the story. Filming had begun several years earlier and continued intermittently, but was finally completed late in 2005, following sustained prodding from the principal protagonists. Time was marching on.

'In 1994, I found myself in Peak Cavern and Moss Chamber. I was already familiar with the outline details of the immense physical and emotional struggle that had taken place there thirty-five years earlier, but the large, well-decorated chamber that housed the tiny shaft which became Neil Moss's final resting place possessed an extraordinary atmosphere that was impossible to ignore.'

'Here was human drama which had captured the imagination of cavers and non-cavers alike. The fact that, had he lived, Neil Moss would have been the same age as me, was an additional spur to retell the story, through the medium of video, using the recollections of those who were there.'

'The story was already well documented and the announcement to caving colleagues that I was planning to make a film met with mixed reactions. A few thought I'd be opening a can of worms, but most were very supportive and felt the rescue attempt an important part of local caving history and should be recorded for posterity.'

'Despite the heroic efforts in almost impossible conditions, there followed many accusations and counter-claims regarding poor organisation and incompetence relating to the failure to extract Neil. Some of the media coverage was negative towards cavers and caving as an activity. Certain quarters called for it to be banned altogether as irresponsible and dangerous.'

'I wanted to show the structure and voluntary nature of our rescue services. The Neil Moss rescue attempt was a pivotal moment in caving history. It focused minds and changed attitudes in a manner that helped move the sport towards a more considered approach and became the catalyst for the reorganisation of the Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation. I wanted to record the memories and feelings of those who were there and present a study that was as unbiased and factually accurate as possible.'

'Two very full accounts exist — one by Eldon PC member George Cooper [referenced earlier], the other by Les Salmon, one of the rescuers. Both have since died. I was also fortunate to find a box



Clockwise from top left: Oxygen delivery lorry with ambulance in the background; Ron Sutton from the local caving club exits the cave covered in mud; Neil Moss; Rescue team members prepare to help; Flt Lt Carter, RAF doctor; Carrying oxygen cylinders up to the cavern. All images © David Webb. Courtesy James Lovelock collection.

around Moss's chest but this only added to his breathing difficulties.

When a delivery of oxygen bottles arrived at 12.30am, it was in the hope that this would revive Moss and facilitate his extraction. Again and again, his would-be rescuers entered the shaft but were forced back, often themselves in a confused and distressed condition.

As an RAF doctor, waist-deep in mud, pumped oxygen down through a tube, a renewed plea went out — for an

shoulders. However, none of these can be substantiated, says Webb — though doubtless she did enter the cave.

By early Monday afternoon, almost 24 hours after he had entered the cave, Moss's laboured breathing could still be heard.

'We felt we had to try it all again,' say Eyre and Frankland. 'Compressed air cylinders were used to try to blow the foul air out of the tube. The walls, ladder and rope were smothered in mud. All that could be seen of Moss was an indistinct muddy blockage far

everyone's safety. When the rain eased off, with one of the RAF doctors to have joined the rescue effort, they returned to the head of the shaft where they had last heard Moss breathing. But this time there was no sound. In Webb's documentary, Dr Hugh Kidd describes the experience as the first and only time he had declared death without actually seeing the patient.

Though the exact time of Neil Moss's death is uncertain, the inquest stated 3.00am on Tuesday 24 March.

news, reported in newspapers in America and Australia as well as here in the UK. On 6 April, Sports Illustrated reported that 'all was quiet for a while' as Moss worked his way down, 'then suddenly from some forty feet below came the terrible, factual

The three-day incident had a huge impact on Castleton and its inhabitants, and all those involved in the rescue. In echoes of the Thai cave rescuers of last year, some of the key figures involved received recognition at the highest level for their efforts. In August

of correspondence between Les and Eli Simpson of the BSA. This included a copy of the police log which revealed the true extent of the three-day operation.

'My first scoop was to be granted an interview with Bob Toogood, one of the original team, who agreed to be interviewed in Moss Chamber. Spurred on by this, I went on to interview others who took part, each with a different perspective.'

'The only photographs of the site had been taken by well known French caver Jo Berger, which subsequently appeared in Paris Match (although as coroner's evidence they should not have). My lengthy correspondence with the Paris Match office failed to produce the desired issue. However, I did receive the following week's edition, which contained an article and photos of the diminutive caver June Bailey who had offered to help. The female angle was picked up on by the media although she had not been allowed to descend the shaft. It was some time later when Ralph Johnson produced a yellowing and slightly dog-eared copy from his attic complete with Jo Berger's famous photos.'

'Eventually, I also received a collection of old press photos from James Lovelock, author of *Life and Death Underground*, which contains an illustrated chapter on the incident. He had been a freelance reporter with the News Chronicle at the time. This was the icing on the cake, as the quality and relevance of the photos was outstanding.'

'Having thoroughly enjoyed gathering material, interviewing people and making new friends along the way, I faced the daunting task of actually making the movie. The hardest part was deciding on the structure and a storyline that flowed, with twelve hours of footage to trawl through and a commentary to make, to fit the sequence of photographs. It took almost a year dipping in and out to complete the project.'

And thirteen years after releasing his DVD, it continues to be well-received. If you, like Pete, would like to secure a copy we now have copies available in the MREW shop. \*

*References: Mountain Rescue Magazine, July 2007. 'Background to making Fight for Life' by Dave Webb. Descent (195), April 2007. Wikipedia. Sports Illustrated. British Pathé 'Pothole Tragedy 1959' www.britishpathé.com/video/pothole-tragedy. 'Race Against Time' by Jim Eyre and John Frankland. 'The Honour of Being Human' by George Cooper, 1984.*

**Top:** Ron Peters on the left of a party of rescuers. **Left:** WVS ladies dispense refreshments. All images © David Webb. Courtesy James Lovelock collection.

ARTICLE WRITTEN WITH HUGE THANKS TO DAVID WEBB FOR HIS PROOFREADING AND CORRECTIONS – AND THE SUPPLY OF IMAGES AND CAPTIONS. THANKS TOO, OF COURSE, TO PETE DUGGAN, WHO INSPIRED US TO REVISIT THE STORY.



## MRI National Rigging Course 2018

### ALLEN THURSTON NORTH WEST MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

Team members from across Ireland headed to Doolin at the beginning of October for another run of the MRI National Rigging Course 2018. The weekend was well attended by 22 members of seven teams, plus two members of defence force.

The course always starts with introductions and the basic principles of the rigging system adopted. Although equipment changes over the years, the core of the course remains the same, outlining what sort of maximum loads can, and cannot, be dangled off the end of a rope and briefly introducing Kilo Newton measurements (without having a PhD in physics being a pre-requisite). It talks about ensuring safe systems, whereby if a piece of equipment fails, the rescuer and rescued suspended from the system will come to no harm. It also shows how to construct systems so, if we have human failure and someone forgets to keep hold of a rope or a piece of equipment, the system is built in a manner that no one falls anywhere. Built on this foundation, the system provides a safe, simple, robust and replicable model for technical rescue in Ireland. The Friday night also involves a 'get-knotted' session where any misconceptions about how to tie knots are ironed out.

Luckily, on Saturday, Colm had arranged exceptionally good weather for us. He often does this to test the human fallibility principle as it causes those working ropes to be distracted by the beautiful views across the Aran Isles from Doolin cliffs. An abundance of natural belays at the top of the cliffs maximises the time spent mastering new skills. Saturday closes with the 'sciency' part where Ronan takes a session of pulleys and mechanical advantage. Whilst a PhD in physics would help here, he manages to explain it in a straightforward enough way, that even those not built to be a 'mathlete' can understand.

Well to be honest Saturday didn't close right at that moment. There was, of course, the social highlight of the weekend, a fabulous meal accompanied by live music and good company in Doolin village — a great chance for team members from across Ireland to chat to each other informally.

Sunday always proceeds with more inclement weather. This year was no exception and the Atlantic started blowing in quite a rate. However, by this time, the mixed composition rigging teams had trust in the equipment (formed during abseils on Saturday), the system (attained through a number of sessions) and each other (as each team member rotates into every position on the rig, including 'barrowboy/girl').

A feature of the course is the commitment of the instructors — this year, Colm Byrne, Ronan Mullen, Ronan Lenihan, Pat Murphy, Brendan Beirne and myself — who all come from slightly different backgrounds and present differing solutions to technical rescue, but work within the framework highlighted. I am always impressed by the knowledge of my fellow instructors, who seem to have tested each bit of kit to ensure safety, and that it works within stated parameters. I believe the core design principles of the MRI rigging model are a real strength. It means that if we work together with another team (something I have done repeatedly during my 30-year involvement in mountain rescue in Scotland and now Ireland), on a cold, dark night, we have the same blueprint in our minds. National training of this ilk is an essential part of effective provision of technical rescue in Ireland.

None of this would happen without the amazing organisation and drive of Colm Byrne. It's fair to say his dedication to training and development and the vision to have this at a national level across Ireland has saved many lives throughout the island. \*

As this is the tenth Anniversary of the MRI Rigging Course, it is fitting to say a little about its development and history. **Colm Byrne**, course director, delivers a few 'thank yous'.

In 2004, on behalf of Mayo MRT, I invited Kirk Mauthner to run one of his seminal [then titled] 'Rigging for Rescue' courses on Achill Island. He ran a 70-hour rigging course from the OED centre on Achill attended by fourteen MR members, at €1000/person, from half the teams in Ireland.

In the years that followed, Scottish Mountain Rescue has developed a rigging course and MRI sent a number of members on this, in anticipation of developing a course which would meet the needs of the mountain rescue teams of Ireland. These events laid the foundation for our first MRI Rigging Course in 2009 — now an annual event attended by 205 team members, some of them twice, during its ten-year history. (The 2017 course was cancelled due to the tragic death of Kevin Hallahan in October, while training with his Dublin Wicklow team in Wales).

The course has developed to keep pace with best practice, though the basic formula has remained the same with basic theory and critical tests of safety, so we understand and can assess the safety of our systems, and lots of demonstration and observed practice to develop our skills.

The volunteer instructors have given their expertise, at considerable cost in both time and money, to the development and running of this course. Their contribution has been the main reason for its success — not to mention the weather gods who have favoured us, the best training location in Ireland and, of course, Doolin itself.

#### Course instructors to date:

Jonathan Hart & Shaun Roberts (Scotland), Ronan Lenihan (GOIMRT), Richard McCarter (DMRT), Graeme Stanbridge (NWMMRT), Lorcan McDonnell (KMRT), Declan Cunningham (DWMRT), Patrick Murphy (MMRT), Rowan Kavanagh (DWMRT), Jim Sutherland (Scotland), Ronan Mullen (GOIMRT), Jon Sanders (Scotland), Brendan Beirne (GOIMRT), Allen Thurston (NWMMRT).



# who?

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<b>CAVE RESCUE: VACANT</b>

## Rescue Benevolent Fund

We're here to help you



There's never a 'good time' to have an accident. Right? But accidents happen, we know that.

Sometimes, they happen to team members while they're involved with rescuing someone else. And, more often than not, they've put their own lives and families on hold to help someone in need. Quite apart from any physical or psychological injuries, that accident might impact on their ability to earn. Their family might struggle, both financially and emotionally.

The Rescue Benevolent Fund is there to help team members and their families when they need it, with the physical rehabilitation of broken limbs, emotional support through access to counselling and even immediate or longer term financial support.

It could just as easily be you. So if you feel you could benefit from our support, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

To donate, go to [justgiving.com/rescuebenevolentfund](https://www.justgiving.com/rescuebenevolentfund)



W: [rescuebenevolent.fund](http://rescuebenevolent.fund) E: [secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund](mailto:secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund)

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## British Cave Rescue

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