

MRC NEWS

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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE COUNCIL OF ENGLAND & WALES

ISSUE 6

JULY
2003

NEWS FROM THE MRC

Developments & discussions
from MRC, May 2003

NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGIONS

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of UK SAR

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Bob Sharp & Alfie Ingram

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MOUNTAIN RESCUE COMMUNICATIONS

Past, present & future
by Dave Gough

WILD MEDICINE

Vaughan Mason,
Dublin & Wicklow MRT

NATIONAL FUNDRAISING DEVELOPMENTS

Penny Brockman, Central
Beacons MRT

POACHER TURNED GAMEKEEPER

One sunny day on Crib
Goch...

Valuable occasion or easy day out for the lads?

Mountain rescue can only function with the commitment of many people – some in the van, others out of sight – with a range of skills and different ideas. Indeed, a key strength of our organisation is the mix of members from widely differing backgrounds and experience.

Nevertheless, team leaders occupy a very special place in the scale of things. They represent the sharp end of the service, in many ways responsible for moulding, not only the way rescues run, but also the public perception of mountain rescue. They have passed the most stringent form of peer review by experienced colleagues only to be rewarded by being given responsibility for all the activities of a team of opinionated, and occasionally anarchistic, individuals.

They are expected to be ever available not only to carry the incidents but also to tell the world about them. The quotes and misquotes that the press have obtained from team leaders over the years would fill a bedside book.

Considering this vast array of operational experience it is perhaps surprising that we did not see the opportunities afforded by bringing this group together at a much earlier stage.

There have now been four annual Team Leaders meetings, attended on average by leaders (or deputies) from 75% of teams in England and Wales. The content of the meetings has been wide ranging and has been characterised by three things. Firstly, the quality of the presentations. These have been made from a background of great operational experience and thus have been well informed and relevant. Secondly, the ensuing discussions have been lively and full of pertinence and good ideas. Thirdly, there has been an almost universal acknowledgement that useful things have been taken away from the meetings. It has, in particular, been refreshing to hear larger busy teams applaud ideas from smaller teams.

It would be impossible to list all the topics and contributors in this space but a flavour is worth inclusion. Each meeting has listened to presentations simply describing the way a team functions and Derby, Oldham, Rossendale & Pendle and Teesdale & Weardale are some of the interesting contributions made. John Hulse (Ogwen) addressed the difficult question of assessing a

team's competence, Mark Hodgson (Keswick) considered the responsibilities of a team leader and Julian Carradice (Wasdale) provided a very personal account of the difficulties facing a team leader. There have been vigorous debates on the election and tenure of office of team leaders and useful discussion of what a team should not do.

This is but a snapshot of the varied items covered. Whatever the subject matter, there has always been good informed opinion present to steer discussions in a positive way.

An easy day out? No. I think this has been one of our better and profitable moves. But if you know differently, please speak up.

It would be good to draw in the teams who have not yet appeared and topics for future meetings are always welcome.

The date is fixed on the first Saturday in December. This year, however, the venue will change as the PG Centre in Preston is to close. We are looking at alternatives and if you have one please do not keep it secret.

David Allan MRC Chairman

Duke of York opens Buxton base



Full story on page 9

NEXT ISSUE

Issue 7 will be January 2004. You can send articles, news items, photographs, anecdotes, letters... complaints even... hard copy or disc (in Microsoft Word/Quark XPress format for copy and JPEGs/Photoshop EPS or TIFF for scans, please) to the Editor
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I look forward to hearing from you...

Every care will be taken of materials sent for publication however these are submitted at the sender's risk.

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Editor's Note
Articles carried in MRC News do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the MRC.

A Quick Thank You

to everyone who has submitted news, articles and photographs for inclusion in the MRC News. This issue, for the first time, I have to apologise for not being able to include all I have received due to constraints in both space and budget. However, everything is kept on file for future consideration/inclusion, so please keep up the good work. Who knows, one day, in the not too distant future, we may have quarterly magazine...

...A WORD FROM THE TOP TABLE...

For a number of years – quite a number of years – there have been discussions on raising the profile of mountain rescue within the wider community. More recently, suggestions have been made that the 'Brand' could be very marketable – an important factor with regard to national fundraising.

Another aspect, somewhat less public but just as important, is the recognition of land search and rescue by central government. Mountain rescue is but part, a vital part, of land SAR. In 1989, the MRC was asked to comment on the Home Office publication *Dealing with Disaster*. There was little recognition of the voluntary bodies involved in land SAR. A number of revisions were undertaken. In 1995, the MRC submitted a paper to central government on the recognition of land SAR. A significant step forward was the publication of the Report of the Search & Rescue Review Group (Feb 1996) with two important recommendations:–

a) An SAR helicopter should be able in still air to reach any inland part of the UK within 2 hours of call out by day or by night.

b) There should be further consultation on three options for strengthening co-ordination and consultation machinery for SAR generally.

The end result was the current structure for the representation of SAR – all of SAR – to central government. This structure, described in two short articles in Issues 1 & 3, came into existence in mid

...AND FROM THE EDITOR...

'Why do we do it?' Simple question really. Basking in the Patterdale sunshine (where I was taking part in the Executive's day reviewing the MRC and what it stands for) having snuck outside for our group's break out meeting, it was an easy answer. It's the buzz of getting out on the hill (or street) and effecting a successful rescue. It's because we love the mountains, the spirit of adventure, the sheer excitement... we're back to that buzz again. 'Ah, but where does that leave me,' I asked, 'a non-operational support member?' We-e-ll... theory is that there are two types of people around the mountains. Those who love being mountaineers and those who love being around them – buzz by proxy.

Oka-ay. I accept that, having originally stumbled into mountain rescue myself through a relationship in my life (and clearly not understood the meaning of the word volunteer) there is a certain truth in the theory. But that no longer applies and here I am still, editing the MRC News, helping to organise conferences, advising on corporate identity, sitting in the sun at a rescue team base discussing the future of the MRC... I've even recently been elected as Secretary of my own team, for goodness sake. All this and me 'just' a support member. Perhaps I should

2000. Since then, the MRC has been active in many aspects of the work of the UK SAR Operators Group and its specialist Working Groups.

The intangible results are difficult to list but the tangible results are that the MRC and its Regions are now written into the Framework Document, first published in 2002, and that 5 channels (10 frequencies) in the International Maritime band are allocated for the use of Land SAR. It is hoped that these will be released for use before the end of 2003.

The Annual Incident report has been tabled each year. Indeed, the work of Ged Feeney has contributed to a number of areas, specifically, the Report of the Helicopter Coverage Working Group. As other work progresses, so further requests are made to Ged for incident data. Work has started on the development of compatibility of incident data basis between the MRC, MRC of S, ALSAR and other data sets.

One area of concern that has yet to be resolved is the proper co-operation with the Ambulance Services and the use of Air Ambulances in remote and difficult terrain.

The international representation of the MRC is another important aspect of raising its profile. For some years, the MRC has been a member of the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (IKAR) and participated in the various Sub commissions. In October, the MRC of S hosts IKAR 2003 at Coylumbridge and the MRC will be participating.

During the past six or so years, connections have also been developed with the Civil Aid Service, Hong Kong. Members from the CAS have attended Search Planning & Management courses and given presentations at the Conferences.

Tony Jones MRC Vice Chairman

have escaped while the going was good? But I didn't. Because I get a buzz out of it too – though lord knows how when most of my MR related time is spent staring at a computer screen working on various MRC publications.

Perhaps it's the acknowledgement and appreciation I get from using my professional skills to help mountain rescue? As a complete *ingénue*, I am able to absorb and gather the information around me and distil it, I hope, into a form that everyone can read, understand, enjoy. Judging by the response to this newsletter, I'm on the right track. And incidentally, I hope that, ultimately, I can work the same magic on the general public's perception of mountain rescue.

But perhaps the point I should be making is that there are probably many more like me out there, willing to spend a lot of time and effort on behalf of MR, without ever having to carry a heavy rucksack, wear a head torch or sleep in a tent that doesn't accommodate a hairdryer. Oh I know there may have been times in the past when the Bring & Buy stall organisers didn't quite appreciate how their sterling efforts might not rank quite so highly on a team member's list of priorities as an actual call out, but we're swimming with bigger fish now. You need all the skills you can muster to keep the sharks at bay. So cultivate your support members. Let them bring their particular strengths to the table and see what they can do for you. They might just surprise you.

Judy Whiteside MRC News Editor

MRCNEWS

VAC MATS ON STREAM FOR TEAMS

The Mark 2 vac mat is in the final stages of its production run and should be coming out to teams over the summer months. Any team wanting more than the one which the MRC are providing, please contact Roger Daines on polar@snowsled.com or 01666 502731.

540 BELAYS

540 belays are now out in service with fifteen teams. But, says MRC Equipment Officer, Mike Margeson, there are still some strange and ill-informed comments filtering through. The 540, he stresses, is NOT a lowering device of any description. It is a purpose designed, easy to use rescue belay device capable of taking up to three people and stretcher. 'Some people have asked why I have been enthusing about this device so much. It's simple. It works. It takes a large load, at least a x10 safety margin, it's simple to operate and it

releases under load if required. 'Whether you have a travelling system or a lower from the top, you need a safety back up. The question I would ask is this – have you tested that back up with a two or three person load by failing the lower ropes? If you haven't, then it's time you did, so you know it works, rather than simply assuming it does.'

NEW CAS BAG

The new bag has now travelled the regions for a year. The various small final suggestions will now be implemented by Aiguille and a final Mark 4 made for the autumn. Still on the cas bag, Mark Taylor, who had some interesting input on helmet tests at the Equipment Day in May, has offered to do some heat loss tests on the new and old cas bags in a cold room lab at Leeds University. Could prove very interesting.

EQUIPMENT E-GROUP

Mike reports that the e-group is being used

more but he is still keen to get more information flowing. If you want to join the group, please send him your details – mmargeson@hotmail.com – and start contributing.

PLAS Y BRENIN EQUIPMENT DAY MAY 18

The day was well attended with 64 team members representing 25 teams including four from Dublin & Wicklow MRT – good to see them there. The format was different this year – six varied speakers gave plenty of food for thought. The Equipment Sub Committee has, for some time, been encouraging the idea that regional equipment inspection, and care and maintenance training, would be a good move forward. The day only helped to confirm those thoughts for many. Mike would like to thank Richard Holmes for his help with the admin of the day and, as ever, the warm hospitality of the Plas y Brenin staff. These national training

days have become a fixed calendar event and a valuable opportunity for team members across the country to exchange views and learn. Next year's day will return to cas care and medical matters.

INSURANCE

Dave Little provides a brief update until the Insurance Cover Update & Review document is released in a few weeks time. **Public Liability** – the new cover documents have been issued to your regional Finance Sub Committee reps. Our Summary of Cover, incorporated within the policy, is now being reviewed in readiness for renewal, later in the year. If you have any comments please forward them as soon as possible.

Trustee Indemnity is in the process of being renewed. Details and documents should be available within the next month. **Helicopter Training** was renewed last November through the MOD bulk policy. Contact Dave if you need copies for your training days. ACPO continues to work on your behalf to improve **Personal Accident** insurance and has requested that all forces set minimum cover at six times the salary of a sergeant on mid point (ca £200k). Cover when operating outside the team's own area should be included. Just a word of warning – make sure that if you are called by others (ie. ambulance control, coastguard etc), there is

PLEASE NOTE THE FIXED DATES IN THE MRC CALENDER
MRC MEETINGS
3RD SATURDAY IN MAY & NOVEMBER
TEAM LEADERS MEETING
1ST SATURDAY IN DECEMBER
TEAM DOCTORS MEETING
2ND FRIDAY IN OCTOBER

a system in place whereby cover is still provided. Problems have occurred recently in one area at least. Any queries, you can contact Dave on davidhittle@supanet.com

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The Central Beacons team proposed that Peter Howells be given the Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his 40 years service to mountain rescue. One of the founder members of his team, this year celebrating its 40th anniversary, Peter provides an amazing level of commitment, not only to his MR colleagues in South Wales but across the UK, both through his work as an officer of the MRC and Chairman of the UK Conference committee, responsible for the organisation of the National Lottery funded UK conferences and courses from which all team members can and have benefited.



...AND THEN WE PRACTICED STRETCHER LOWERS AND BANDAGING...

NATIONAL FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT

As national fundraising comes back 'in house' the ramifications of change have become increasingly apparent. If mountain rescue is to develop a national profile, and an organisation capable of attracting unrestricted funding to the benefit of all its members, then we must create the infrastructure to cope. And, before we can sell ourselves as a brand, we must be absolutely sure what that brand represents, both to the average team member and the general public. To this end, the MRC Executive and the Fundraising Group met at Patterdale MRT base in early June to try to establish a clearer idea of where we are going. A long, hot, tiring day produced some interesting insights and a surprising consensus of opinion. Read the report – far right.

VAT FOR TEAMS

From the plethora of often confusing information regarding VAT for teams, a document has now been put together by Penny Brockman summarising everything you should need to know. This is available to download as a PDF from the MRC website.

UK CONFERENCES

Plans are underway for the next two UK Conferences, for which it is hoped to secure funding by later this year. Proposed venues are Bangor, North Wales in September 2004 and Coleraine, Northern Ireland in September



2006. Keep watching the MRC News for updates.

QUEEN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE MEDAL FLEECE

A reminder that team members who have recently received their Jubilee Medal can kit themselves out with a special fleece jacket for the knockdown price of £15. The black Skye 200 jacket is produced by Keela in Zetland 200 micro fleece and features elasticated cuffs, 2 outer zip pockets, shock cord in hem with adjustable cordlock and loops at cuff and collar for attachment to jacket. Available in sizes XS to XXL, the jacket has the MRC logo embroidered on the left breast, with the text 'Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal'. Block orders are invited, from teams only, to John Edwards – jmemr@talk21.com – or by post to John at 5 Valley Cottages, Manchester Road, Greenfield, Lancashire. Payment on delivery please. For further info, contact John via email or telephone 01457 870734.

HELICOPTER VIDEO

The Sea King Passenger Safety Brief video has been revised and is being circulated to regions for forwarding to teams. Through Fit Sgt Duncan Tripp, D Flight, 202 Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth, thanks to the RAF for providing the videos for each region and team.

ONE SUNNY DAY IN PATERDALE...

On a sunny day on the 14th June the MRC Executive met for a whole day in Patterdale, with one objective – to spend some time reviewing the MRC, and ask ourselves some difficult questions. What exactly is the purpose of the MRC? What relevance does it have to the average team member on the ground? How do we see ourselves now and where would we like to be in 5 years time? What would we like to achieve? The need for such soul searching on a day when frankly the blue skies over Helvellyn had more than a whiff of seduction, had arisen from a presentation, earlier in the year, by Penny Brockman, on behalf of the National Fundraising Group. Penny had identified a number of issues which were going to hinder our success as a national fundraising force, not least of all the lack of a five year plan, first requisite of any financial planner looking to develop a successful – and lucrative – future. We were fortunate to acquire the services of Ceri Hutton, a consultant in the volunteer sector, who donated her time for the day. Ceri already had a clear understanding of the MR mindset. A keen mountaineer, she grew up with the mountains and 'mountain people', her father a member of a Mountain Rescue team in the 1960s. Nevertheless, the agenda that she and Penny put together for the day was nothing if not challenging. Before we could even begin to look to the future, we were asked to consider the pros and cons of staying the same. In other words, not changing at all. It was very soon apparent that to remain as we are carries a huge risk. Having established that, Ceri asked us to look at what we saw as the key future activities of the MRC by identifying who we want to be, what shape the organisation should take and our role, both within mountain rescue and in relationship to external bodies. Once we had an understanding of this we were able to begin putting together a mission statement encapsulating what we value and think is important, and what we get out of MR. A further day is planned to develop on some of the discussions which arose during the day, which will then allow for a more detailed planning session. We came away with a very positive view of the direction the MRC should take and the steps required to get there. Keep an eye on the MRC News for updates over the coming months.

MRC Executive

BMC TECHNICAL CONFERENCE 2003 Plas y Brenin, North Wales Sunday 9 November 2003

THE ESSENTIAL TECHNICAL EVENT FOR ANYONE INVOLVED IN OUTDOOR RETAIL, TRADE OR TRAINING & ACTIVE CLIMBERS WITH A HEALTHY INTEREST IN THEIR OWN SAFETY

This essential event will focus on some of the currently important issues in the world of technical equipment for mountaineering and climbing, and also provides a forum for discussion of any technical-related subject. The conference should not be missed by anyone involved in outdoor retail, trade or training as it provides a unique opportunity for direct discussion between these groups and the end users of equipment. The event will also be found incredibly useful by anyone who actively participates in outdoor sports and simply wants to increase their technical understanding of the safety equipment they use. It represents a chance to increase your own personal knowledge of areas with which you are unfamiliar, and to question some of the most knowledgeable experts in the UK on subjects of particular personal importance.

Event Presenter – Andy Perkins (UIAGM Guide, Technical Committee)
Keynote Speaker – Pit Schubert (President UIAA Safety Commission)

Presentations:

- Recent technical reports** – Neville McMillan (Chair Technical Committee)
- Bolts & corrosion** – Rob Allen (Technical Committee)
- Helmets** – Mark Taylor (Technical Committee)
- Ropes** – Richard Terrell (Central Beacons MRT, Technical Committee)
- Lessons from roped access work** – Ben Lyon (Lyon Equipment, Technical Committee)
- Open question & answer session** – Technical Committee Panel
- Practical Sessions**
- Idiots on the rocks** – Plas y Brenin speaker
- Crack detection in metalware** – Rob Allen
- Black museum of old broken gear** – George Steele/Ian Hey

Places are sure to go fast, so don't miss this exciting opportunity to expand your technical knowledge. Contact the office or email ianhey@thebmc.co.uk for further information and a registration form.

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THE MRC MEDICAL SUB COMMITTEE – ITS ROLE

Many medical sub committees spend too much time, in my opinion, controlling costs rather than concentrating on patient care, but the MRC Medical Sub has positioned itself away from politics. Previous chairman Dave Allan focused on encouraging team members to develop their cas care and forcefully cut through bureaucratic barriers to allow members to use techniques and drugs that go well beyond first aid. It is great credit to Dave that this line has been followed at a time when regulation and protocol have advanced to supplant knowledge and experience. Mountaineers, walkers and increasing numbers of bikers have him to thank for improved cas care over the last 10 years. This has left us with a large legacy of work that needs regular attention – the Cas Care card (5 yearly), exam (yearly) and syllabus (3 yearly), and the drug list (3 yearly) and position papers on matters such as advanced training that need review as teams develop new priorities. Fortunately, all this is central to delivering a high standard of care to the casualty. To manage this workload, we have subdivided into smaller units. For example, Tim Potts, Robert Stokes and Brian Wright bring the exam paper together. The amount of work put in to setting an exam should not be underestimated. We intend to include the documents on the disc given to our regional reps annually so that an up-to-date set is easily available. Suitable ones will also be placed on the web (though not the current exam paper!) A number of documents of a more sensitive nature, such as the description of cas care for the insurance companies, may also find their way onto the disc to increase our openness and prevent the erroneous rumours that circulate endlessly.

What else can the Medical sub do? I think *Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue* will stay outside the sub committee and be commissioned rather than written by members. I hope we will be able to develop teaching resources by collecting good lectures from regions and teams and disseminating them more widely. We are going to tentatively work on a few clinical areas to produce guidelines on common problems. The first two, on head injury and spinal injuries, are in various stages of completion. Time constraints may mean that our starting point may be taking other people's guidelines, particularly IKAR's, and adopting appropriate ones.

There is also the area of training team members, examiners and team doctors. Will we be able to support more than the occasional day like the successful one at Plas y Brenin in 2002? A new format is going to be tried in early 2004 to see if we can develop a better idea of what we should be doing and what we should be encouraging others to do.

John Ellerton MRC Medical Officer



IKAR comes to Scotland for the first time in October. The Coylumbridge Hilton venue, situated as it is

on the edge of the Cairngorm Mountains, is ideally placed to host such a prestigious meeting of the leaders of the international mountain rescue community.

The business of IKAR is to receive, discuss and disseminate information on all matters relating to MR. The commissions meet twice a year normally, once in separate meetings and once at a general conference which also includes a plenary session where the general business of the committee is dealt with.

Unlike other conferences, there are no formal external speakers or presentations. The sole purpose is to transact the business of IKAR and subject matter for the conference sessions is arranged by the chairmen of the individual commissions. It is, therefore, not possible to say at this stage what the topics for discussion will be. Members of IKAR are entitled to send reps to the meetings of the individual commissions. Other

organisations may send observers at an additional cost. It is also possible that non-member organisations be invited to make a presentation to one of the commissions, if this is seen to further the business of the commission. The international nature of IKAR makes language a particular problem. The business of the medical and air rescue commissions is conducted almost entirely in English, that being something of a lingua franca for the professions involved. The avalanche and terrestrial rescue commissions are less open to the use of a common language and their business will be transacted in English, German and French with the aid of a simultaneous translation facility. The use of Gaelic, the language of the Garden of Eden, will be restricted to suitably lubricated social occasions.

In addition to formal business, there will be a full partner programme, a drinks reception, hosted by the Coylumbridge Hilton, for the arriving delegates on the Wednesday evening and a civic reception and gala dinner on the Friday evening.

Willie Marshall Chairman MRC of S



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LAKE DISTRICT

FAREWELL MILLOM...

January's MRC News introduced the Lake District's newest team, Duddon & Furness, and told a little of the history of the late Furness team, and this article says goodbye to **Millom MRT**. Many readers, even those who know the Lakes, will be hard pressed to point to Millom on a map of England, knowing little of this small ex-iron mining town on the Duddon Estuary (just off the bottom left-hand corner of the old one inch map of the Lake District). For those who follow the news, it's somewhere between Barrow in Furness (Legionnaire's Disease) and Whitehaven (BNFL Sellafield)!

Millom's association with mountain rescue actually predates many of the more famous local teams. The airfield at nearby Haverigg was the home of RAF Millom MRT, one of the very first teams ever formed in the early 1940s. Putting a bomber training school where the mountains came down to the sea gave plenty of opportunities for those early pioneers, who return each year to the RAF Museum reunions at the camp (now one of Her Majesty's Prisons). Museum copies of log books for the station make interesting reading – they tell of many expeditions into the hills and along the shore to pick up the pieces of unsuccessful missions.

A few years before the civilian team was formed in Coniston, it was servicemen and women, with little or no kit, or experience of the mountains, who were dispatched up the Old Man to recover the bits of a Spitfire. It had been flying lower than the other two in its group when the pilot was surprised to find the summit ridge in the mist. The archives recount experiments in the use of Bren-gun carriers as transport onto the fells, successfully reaching the summit of Black Combe. It's hard to imagine the journeys team members made in the back of lorries going down to help with searches in Wales.

It wasn't until 1967 that the Millom Fell Rescue Team was formed. Again aircraft played a part. A small plane crashed on the Combe and it was some days before the wreckage was found. It seemed likely that the pilot was alive

for some time and would have been saved, had there been a team in the area. A local landowner approached the Millom Climbing Club and they formed the basis of the new team. A young Peter Jackson was the first team leader. 32 years on, he was still there as the last team leader, and continues as joint leader of the new team – probably a unique record in the annals of mountain rescue.

Equipment was scrounged from a variety of sources. The first stretcher and safety helmets came from the ironworks. What little kit they had was stored in a loft above a garage. Few people had phones and call outs involved driving round the town knocking on doors. Mountain rescues were not common – only 85 incidents with 66 casualties and 8 deaths in the whole of the Lakes for that year. The Wasdale team didn't exist and it was the Millom team that carried the Mickledore stretcher box up Brown Tongue to its position between Scafell Pike and Scafell.

Things have come on a long way since then – Land Rovers, radios, Bell stretchers, oxygen, GPS and Goretex. Some time ago, Sid Cross,



Members of Millom MRT carrying the stretcher box up Brown Tongue

President of the then LDMAA remarked at a MR Medical Conference in Ambleside that he was amazed a trade stand had a '£400 thermometer' (pulse oxymeter!) for sale and how he could never have explained that to the early volunteers who carried folk off the fells on five-bar gates. But it is still the members, who turn out for training, fundraising and the 'real thing', who are the backbone of the team.

Seven of us were awarded long service certificates last year for a total of over 200 years' service to mountain rescue. There have been another 154 members over the years.

So it's goodbye Millom, hello Duddon – traditions and history start in 2003. Just what will things be like when the new team gets to its thirtieth birthday?

Stephe Cove Chairman Duddon & Furness MRT (ex-Chairman Millom MRT) & **Peter Jackson** Joint Team Leader Duddon & Furness MRT (ex-Team Leader Millom MRT)



One of the first pictures of the old Millom team. Peter Jackson appears far right. Photos taken by a founder member, Ian Beck



HELLO DUDDON & FURNESS...

Duddon & Furness MRT was officially launched in April, with an Open Day at team base, part of a week long calendar of events in this year's Cumbrian Mountain Festival, but six months from its actual operational launch, how does the new team feel and look? Are there lessons to be learned? Was it right to merge the Millom and Furness teams or is it too early to tell? The idea was first floated as far back as 1993 with the publication of *Rescue 2000*, a piece of independent research by Wally Keay, commissioned by LDSMRA, which looked at the future of rescue provision across Cumbria. Despite the shelves of books devoted to the process and pitfalls of change, both teams had their fair share of heated debates, but the positives far outweigh the negatives, according to Mike Margeson. 'The most important point for me, was that we decided to take the time to do the job properly, with a two year timetable to realistically cover all aspects of team activity. Our first decision was to immediately have joint call outs and one training programme – crucial for us to start working together and getting to know each other. Inevitably, this highlighted any differences in existing working practices and systems.'

Five members of each team were chosen to form an interim management group to oversee the whole process. Little did they realise what a workload they were taking on! It was decided to involve as many people as possible, with specialist sub groups for medical, equipment etc. Consequently, everything has been recently reviewed and agreed, resulting in new and better systems of working, giving legitimacy



The new Duddon & Furness MRT line up

to the original intention – to create a better, more effective MR provision for south west Cumbria.

'Six months in I can say, without hesitation, that we have a new team that is considerably more skilled and has made leaps and bounds in its efficiency across the board. All involved can readily see this and are focused, motivated and talented.

'I would say to any team thinking of merger – come and talk to us. The benefits outweigh the worries and any attachment that you may have to the status quo.'

SEA & MOUNTAIN RESCUE COURSE

Cockermouth MRT, in conjunction with Lake District National Park Voluntary Wardens, are running a Sea & Mountain Rescue Weekend Course, September 5-7, at the Buttermere Youth Hostel to promote the work of the rescue services in the Lakes. The weekend involves talks and slide shows, along with a look behind the scenes at the team's base and the Workington lifeboat. To find out more, contact course co-ordinator Derek Tunstall on 01946 861051 or derekftunstall@freeuk.com

MID PENNINE

NEW BABY IN ROSSENDALE

Following a gestation period far beyond any previously recorded in human history, **Rosendale & Pendle MRT** have finally taken delivery of their new baby, conceived after an awayday trip to the Peak District. Although not without complications, and some worries about possible feeding problems – the infant has a tendency to choke and splutter on first taking nourishment – these are regarded as purely teething troubles, and should settle themselves over a period of time. Proud father, Vehicle Officer, Steve Hutton, who had undergone months of psychological testing from his fellow team mates before convincing them of the need for this new addition to the family, was present at the birth and has since continued to nurse his fledgling with loving, if somewhat proprietorial, care. (A phenomena inherent in Vehicle Officers everywhere, as their fellow team members will doubtless attest.) Needless to say, as soon as they set eyes on the new babe, even the hardest of hearts were melted and team members young and old have lovingly accepted and embraced her into their bosoms. Already, in the few short months of life, she has rewarded that love with willing service and it is hoped that there will be many years of happy, resourceful life to come.

But seriously, always a dilemma when the moment comes to replace a vehicle, and faced with a blank sheet of paper – what to replace it with? With a spec that included standing room in the rear, space for a standard York stretcher and a loaded Bell, seating capacity for 4 or 5 personnel, storage cupboards for kit and a keen price tag, Steve went down to Glossop to look at their newly converted ex-RAF 127 Land Rover ambulance. However, further research led to a local company specialising in the conversion of Land Rovers. From a donor vehicle that was an ex-army 127 Rapier Land Rover – basically an open backed Land Rover with cab – the vehicle now has a newly formed cab and windscreen to enable seated rear passengers to see forward, and a purpose-built rear compartment with three darkened side windows, two opening, one fixed. The layout comprises two forward-facing seats and storage cupboards



Baby look at you now...

down the offside, and York stretcher and side facing attendants seat down the near side. There's also enough room for the Bell to slide down the centre of the vehicle and be clamped in, and a step which slides out from underneath the rear, then folds out again into a full width double step to the double rear doors.

JAZZ AWARD

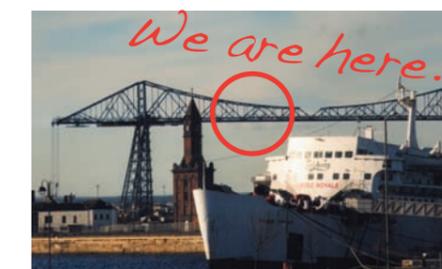
Bolton MRT have received the James Newton Memorial Trophy from the RSPCA and a commendation for the rescue of a seven month old German Shepherd called Jazz. She had jumped over a wall and appeared to have broken her leg. At the presentation in May, team members were saddened to hear that Jazz had died six weeks after the incident as a result of an operation following the fall.

NORTH EAST

WHEN THE CALL CAME...

Dave Little, **Cleveland SRT**, reports... It was a bright sunny Tuesday afternoon in March. Perhaps the omens were good for tonight's game. The Boro had been high in the Premier League and there had been dreams that we might get a place in Europe for next season. Of late though, the results had not been so good and we were sliding down the table. Then the call came... 'Could Gari and I get down to the Riverside Stadium urgently?'

The adrenalin started to flow. As it flooded the brain, I reacted immediately – there was no need to listen to the rest of what was being said. I slammed the phone down. So this was it. After 40 years of being on the sidelines, our chance had finally come. Star players, Juninho and Boksic, must have been ruled out. I am a midfield general and Gari is more of a striker. We roared into the players' car park and started running up the stairs to the players lounge.



There was something familiar about the voice of the uniformed official we had just totally ignored – the team's police liaison officer! What the stuff was he doing at the Riverside?

Then it dawned. The fleeting 'senior moment', in which we had thought and dreamt of stardom, was now turning sour. Two sad old fellows who should have known better and concentrated on bringing their zimmerframes rather than their football boots.

Now it was back to reality with a resounding thump, a missing vulnerable on the banks of the River Tees. The search did turn out to have its memorable moment. One search party scored a first by searching the boom of the famous Transporter Bridge. (The lads from Auf Wiedersehen, Pet didn't demolish it. By the way, there is only one other like it in the UK at Newport, South Wales. Maybe, Pete Howells has done something similar already). If you look closely just to the left of the centre of the boom, you can just see the search party.

Oh, yeah, the result... Middlesborough 2: Aston Villa 5... Maybe they needed us after all.

INSIDE OUT IN SCARBOROUGH

The BBC has spent the last few months shadowing members of the **Scarborough & District SRT** for regional programme, Inside Out. Broadcast throughout the North of England, the episode will focus on a group of new recruits as they join the team following a very successful recruitment campaign.

Presenter Chris Jackson joined the hopeful team members as they underwent initial selection and training exercises in search, ropework, find site management and the use of specialist casualty care equipment. He then took part in the Probationary Selection Weekend along with another group nearing their first year with the team.

It's hoped that the programme, screened in July, will promote not just the Scarborough team but MR in general. Team PR Officer Pete Thompson explains, 'This show has a very large catchment area. It will be viewed by potential new recruits not only in our area but that of other NESRA teams and across to the Lake District. Whilst dramas like Rockface have taken MR to a wider audience it can sometimes appear elitist and daunting to prospective members. It's hoped that Inside Out will show mountain rescue as an organisation within which the average person can be actively involved.'



Gary Anderson (Equipment Officer) being filmed standing around as usual (allegedly!)



NEW VEHICLE IN CONTROL

Teesdale & Weardale SRT President, Lord Barnard, and the Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary, have unveiled the team's new control vehicle, based on a 4.6 ton IVECO, after a year of planning, design and build.

The vehicle features a full length roof platform for easy access to push button hydraulic mast and additional equipment. Front and rear light bars carry a PA system and 360° flood and spot lighting surrounds the vehicle. Equipment is accessed through an alarmed rear roller shutter door and strapped and caged in this compartment. The front driver and passenger area, with screened windows, incorporates the team's search management software system. The laptop mounted to the dash relays all information to a second screen and printer in the main control area, which is accessed by the side door and is able to seat a further seven people. The comms console (TETRA, low & high band, marine, police and ambulance) links the front area with the map board and office support, including photocopier. Ideal for briefings, this area quickly converts to carry a Bell, clamped to the floor rail

system, with ample space for casualty care. An independent heating system heats the area, which also has floor to ceiling wipeboard capacity for extended briefing requirements. The computer screen records live all radio comms and incident details, as well as carrying a complete mapping service of the county.

Externally, the control area can be expanded by way of a pull out roof/walls from the roof platform, adding a fully enclosed and storm resistant room capable of holding at least 25 people. This area can be supplied by hot water and used as a triage point. A 12V & 240V system runs through all three main compartments. External link up points and slave battery and generator ensure constant power.

Costing £22,000 plus the purchase of the base vehicle, the conversion was carried out by MMB of Macclesfield.

For more information, please contact David Bartles-Smith, Deputy Team Leader, on cathanddave@bartles-smith.fsnet.co.uk or visit the team website www.twsrt.org



PEAK DISTRICT

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS

The profile of mountain rescue in the Peak District was significantly improved through a Business Partnership Dinner, organised by David Coleman, Chief Constable Derbyshire Constabulary, in October. The idea was to raise awareness within the local business community of the working relationships which exist between police and teams, and to seek sponsors to assist in the purchase of the new high band radios.

The dinner prompted a promise from East Midlands Electricity to donate one of their Land Rovers to the PDMRO. The vehicle, which will go to **Woodhead MRT** is a 130 model, diesel, P reg, three seat cab Quadtek back, with a winch on the front. The team had a forward control unit/equipment carrying vehicle for planning and co-ordinating a search and rescue but not the four wheel drive capability to take them up tracks. The vehicle is currently undergoing relivery.

I'M A CASUALTY GET ME OUT OF HERE!

Oldham MRT's International Weekend may not have had the customary requirement for sun cream application, clouded as it was with cooler weather and torrential rain on the Saturday, but a successful and full weekend was enjoyed by all. Delegates assembled from across the UK – Plas y Brenin, Buxton, South Eastern MRA, Edale, Holme Valley, Tayside, Kerry, the Isle of Man, Bucks, Assynt, Derby and the Metropolitan Police – to work off hearty Oldham breakfasts in a series of training sessions culminating, on Sunday, in a grand cableway rescue out of Wilderness gully. On a couple of occasions the 'casualty' very nearly became a real one. First, whilst descending the gully, the unwitting volunteer slipped and sustained a rather large bruise on the left buttock then, en route back up, a stone dislodged above her, almost landing on her head. Nothing like a little authenticity!

The weekend ended in usual fashion with a hog roast and more than a few beers at the Cross Keys Inn.



IT'S ONLY A GRASS FIRE....

Easter was a sad time for local hill lovers in Oldham, as moorland above Saddleworth, Mossley and Carrbrook grew blackened and scarred in a series of grass fires. As one of the first fire crews to arrive approached an **Oldham MRT** member, he was heard to comment, 'I can't understand what all the fuss is about. It's only a grass fire... Bloody hell!!!!'. He never actually finished the sentence. With flames of 15 to 20 feet high, a firewall stretched before him for over two and a half miles, driven by high winds at a speed faster than most people can run. This was a little bit more than just a grass fire.

A perplexed senior Fire officer asked team leader, Mick Nield. 'Is this normal? Are these types of fire always this bad?' The response indicated that this was far from normal and this was going to be very difficult to deal with. It had been eleven years since the last serious moorland fire in this area of the Peak District. 'What can you do?' he asked and, over the next four days, the team showed exactly what they could do!

Team members were to be found almost everywhere. High on the moor, and often into the heart of the blazing landscape, with comms equipment – advising the fire service of its size, location and direction of travel. Removing fences, allowing sheep trapped by the fire to escape. In the midst of the fire, using navigational skills to guide fire crews through the dense smoke – akin to navigating through thick mist and clag. (In oven like temperatures, a mist that stings the eyes.) Staying with the fire crews fighting hard to stop the advancing wall of flame and provide first aid cover, or guiding them safely over terrain unfamiliar to crews more used to the streets and buildings of Manchester.

The same intimate knowledge of the local landscape was used to advise Senior Fire Officers of the lie of the land, where vehicles may travel, or where water could be expected



on the moor for use in fighting the fire. With tenacity, to manhandle portable pumps and hose, dam streams to hold back the water for the pumps and, at times, to physically fight the fire by whatever means available (although this was never the brief, it is difficult to stand by and watch.) Team vehicles carried Fire Service personnel and equipment into areas otherwise unreachable. At one point, the flames were seen to leap the track over the roof of one the Land Rovers. The same vehicles were used to aid evacuation of people and live stock from premises at risk.

Some two thousand acres of prime moorland were lost, along with its unique flora and fauna – in excess of two thousand grouse, breeding pairs of merlin, curlew, golden plover and countless meadow pipits.



Dave Knight, OMRT Training Officer said, 'With the greatest of respect to our colleagues in the Fire Service, their primary concern – and rightly so – related to safety of persons and protection of property. The difference is in the interpretation of which property to protect considering the limitations of resources available. Our local moorland is priceless, and to watch it burn is akin to witnessing the injury of a close friend.

'In fairness to the Fire Service the flames always had the upper hand, moving fast and, in the main, inaccessible to the equipment that could have made the difference. There was little chance of stopping the fire, more to channel and guide as best they could. Some may argue that this was a situation in which a mountain rescue team should not have become involved yet our particular skills were needed and used.

'Our thanks are extended to the Greater Manchester Fire Service for their efforts and co-operation, Greater Manchester Police Air Support Unit, Greater Manchester Ambulance Service and the Salvation Army who fed all of us over the four days plus.'

Lake District teams were also involved in some spectacular grass fires, during what was one of the hottest springs on record for a very long time. Once again we find ourselves extending our deepest sympathies to those who rely on our local hills for their livelihood – the landowners, farmers and sporting tenants – the very same people that rescue teams rely upon for access to the open spaces and crags, in order to train and practice our skills.

ROYAL VISIT OPENS NEW BASE

When **Buxton MRT** got word that HRH The Duke of York had agreed to formally open their new base on 12 March, time was short. Minds were focused. Stops pulled out. Help came from outside the team to improve the area around HQ, in the form of High Peak Borough Council, Doveholes Community Association and RMC, who all contributed to the landscaping and turfing, rebuilding of drystone walls, laying tarmac, clearing litter and distributing some 500 leaflets to the local community, and the Doveholes Over 60s club agreed to open up their building on the day for refreshments. In the two weeks leading up to the visit, work was completed on the new building, the original building was thoroughly cleaned and painted outside, site visits were held with various organisations, invitations sent out, static and active displays worked up and practiced, briefing notes written, plaques designed and ordered, the buffet organised, (the biggest buffet in living memory – your Editor will vouch for that! I suspect the crisp mountain is still being scaled!), car parking facilities arranged and publicity organised.

The day dawned bright and clear – if a little nippy. Last minute touches were made to the static displays, active displays were practiced. Tents for the guests and Doveholes Band were erected, the forecourt swept and hosed down, vehicles cleaned and polished, and the union flag, together with the MRC flag (flown for the very first time in England and Wales!) were hoisted on to the communication tower. The Duke of York arrived by helicopter, to be welcomed by team officials and local dignitaries. As members of the public jostled eagerly at the barriers, HRH took time to divert from the serious matter of touring the base to engage in a little banter, much to everyone's delight. Then it was back to the tour, led by Neil Carruthers, Team Leader. The Duke was very interested in the role and service provided by mountain rescue, expressing some surprise that there were, in fact, so many teams scattered across the country.

The 45 minute visit seemed over in a moment, a fitting follow on from the 1990 opening of the first building, by HRH The Princess of Wales. Approaching another Royal to do the honours may have seemed an improbability, but the consensus back in November was 'Why not try?' The idea was discussed with the Lord Lieutenant's Office in Derbyshire, followed by a letter requesting that the Duke be formally invited to open the Operational Centre. Further communications revealed that the Duke's diary would be agreed in January and that confirmation or otherwise would be received some time later. On the 17 February, the team heard that the visit was 'very likely', but not yet confirmed, because the Duke was out of the

country. A recce meeting, a week later, with the Duke's Private Secretary, his Personal Protection Officer, Derbyshire Police VIP Protection Unit, the Vice Lord Lieutenant and staff from the Lord Lieutenancy discussed the programme, including the displays, guests to be invited, car parking, helicopter L/Z, protocol and publicity and so on... but still the visit was not confirmed until late February. Hence the last minute frenzy of activity.

The new base marks a huge leap forward in Project 2000, a ten year plan, which has so far proceeded beyond all expectations. It all started with the replacement of the team's front line response vehicle, to the tune of £35,000 – on the road within a year of the project launch. Phase Two, building a new operational base, was always going to take a little longer. The scheme wasn't helped when construction regulations imposed by the local planning authority doubled the price tag. But, in less than three years, the building is complete and officially open at a cost of £85,000 and Phase Three, the internal reconstruction of the existing building into a dedicated training block is now complete. Decisions must still be made regarding exactly what extra training facilities the building will offer, but plans are in the pipeline for a computer projection system to aid group training. Phase Four, a secondary response vehicle, estimated at £25,000, has just arrived and should be ready for service as



Mountain Rescue Council flag flying high

we go to press. Attention is now turning to Phase Five, the provision of a Search Control and Team Welfare Trailer, and Phase Six, the provision of all the necessary personal protection equipment used by operational team members. Buxton certainly appear to be roaring through their plan at high speed, with great success – whatever it is they're on, perhaps they could bottle it!

NORTH WALES

SEARCH AWARENESS WEEKEND

Aberglaslyn MRT are hosting the North Wales Mountain Rescue Search Awareness Weekend on 24-26 October at Rhyd Ddu. There are limited places available to people outside the North Wales area on a first come, first served basis. A small charge of £10 per person will be required to accompany the booking form, which will be non-refundable to no-shows. Please contact Gwen Patmore for more details and a booking form – 01766 514081 or gwenrichard@cymru1.net

The team has won an internet-ready PC from BT Connections. As they do not have a base, this will be available for use at Snowdon Lodge, Tremadog. So next time you're down for a climb and need to use the internet, please drop in. Rumour has it that there are more PCs to be given away soon – you can find out more from www.btcommunityconnections.com.

DESTINATION SNOWDONIA

More than 2000 members of charities from all over Britain will soon be travelling to Snowdonia thanks to a joint marketing initiative spearheaded by Snowdon Lodge owners Carl Borum and Anja Grunert, Ian McNeill of Snowdonia Adventures and Gwynedd Council Marketing Manager, Sian Jones. The move will bring large numbers on hiking and biking training breaks before they go off to the four corners of the earth, raising millions for charity.

In March, Snowdon Lodge and Snowdonia Adventures played host to representatives of Charity Challenge, an international company that administers events around the world, including this year's cancer charity challenge 'The Great Walk of China', in which women will raise money walking the length of the great wall of China. The group enjoyed an intensive weekend of training on the hills and cycle trails of Snowdonia. Later in the evening, Aberglaslyn MRT Training Officer, Richard Beech, gave a talk on mountain rescue and a search dog presentation.

SOUTH WALES

BIG BLACK MOUNTAINS CHALLENGE

5 am on Saturday 17 May and Big Black Mountains Challenge organiser Len Harbottle of **Longtown MRT** anxiously watched the weather and worried that the number of entries may be affected. It was overcast, wet and windy, but as the participants began to arrive it became clear that, far from bothered, they were keener than ever! The number of entries exceeded all records and, despite the miserable conditions, they remained cheerful throughout. Last year's event raised around £18,000 and the team hope that this year will see even that record broken.

SOUTH WEST

NEW TEAM FOR CORNWALL

March saw the official launch of the newly formed **Cornwall Rescue Group** at the Eden Project. Membership currently numbers 35, although Vice Chairman and Operations Officer, Jim Gallienne anticipates doubling that figure. The new team fulfils a need identified by SWERA back in 2002, for a dedicated group to carry out search and rescue in Cornwall. Members of several organisations such as Cornwall Mine Rescue Organisation, Search & Rescue Tracker Association, HM Coastguard, Cornwall County Council Emergency Planning, Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and SARDA were approached to form the group. Previously, teams from neighbouring counties had been called in, placing a huge strain on resources. Before going fully operational, CRG will work with Dartmoor Rescue Group in Cornish call outs to ensure systems and procedures are fully adequate.

The team is currently based at Ponsanooth, near Truro, but is looking for something more centrally located. Their area is considerable – covering 11 OS maps – and takes in moorland areas such as Bodmin and Penwith Moors, hundreds of miles of coastline, as well as urban and semi-rural areas. Already this year, the police have requested their Initial Response Team to attend call outs. This is a trial project which enables Devon & Cornwall Police to talk with a Search Manager on site, on the phone or at a nearby police station, before deciding on a strategy for action. As Cornwall has never had its own rescue team before, it is hoped that this will help familiarise them with the team and encourage earlier call to incidents.

Basic training is provided by Remote Access International. The courses are fully funded, externally verified and certified by Duchy College on completion. Training plans also include working with neighbouring teams in joint exercises. Says Jim, 'Although we have no mountains and not much moor, we anticipate being kept busy with lost person searches across the county. We are on course with a go live date in October and are currently in the process of trying to acquire kit, which seems to be never ending!'

Newsgroupers may well have spotted Jim's plea to any teams out there who have any spare equipment – can you please throw it their way. Contact him on extremejim@talk21.com

HASTY TEAM

Dee Richards reports... In 1991, during the long drive back to the South West after a Karrimor Mountain Marathon in Arrochar, Chris Dixon, Mike Rasdall, Nigel Worsey and Norman Wright began to sow the seeds of establishing a running team that could be utilised for search and rescue on Dartmoor.



The Hasty Team. L to R. Paul Fox, Dee Richards, Chris Dixon, Kevin Brown, Wendy Cooper

Members of **Dartmoor Rescue Group**, Tavistock Section, their thoughts were that a 2-man running team with lightweight equipment could cover a large area of moorland. The aim a quick find with full back up by search teams. Steeped in myth and legend, Dartmoor represents many challenges for those who venture there. The hapless navigator can struggle in a sometimes featureless landscape when the mist suddenly descends. The majority of call outs are lost souls, the only clue to their whereabouts a car left in a lonely spot... the proverbial needle in a haystack.

When Chris put the concept forward, there were immediate reservations. Coping with the worst of winter gales and driving rain in nothing more than trainers and a thin jacket seemed like asking for trouble but, finally, it was decided to trial the runners for 3 months, on exercise nights only. Out went the normal rucksack bulk, in came a scaled down version in 30 litre rucksacks – the Hasty Handbags! The exercises proved extremely successful and it was decided to use Hasty on subsequent call-outs.

The Hasty team is ideal for an area like Dartmoor. They are deployed ahead of the search teams and can be 4km into the moors before they hear the first radio checks of the walking teams. Typically, a search area is the last known position or route the casualty was expected to take. The objective is to revisit that area and search further until the route is complete. Limitations are based on the assumption that the casualty is conscious and able to respond to shouts and horns.

Currently, a member must be on the call out list for at least six months before they can join Hasty. As there are usually only two in a team at any one time, the need to be able to take control of a casualty site places much emphasis on training within a small group. Hasty tend to be a very close-knit unit for this reason and the camaraderie plays a large part of who we are. Fitness is crucial, running over rough terrain saps the legs and can be risky at night. The distances covered can be huge, running for 7 hours or more is not uncommon. Of the four original members, only Chris remains. Dee Richards, Paul Fox, Wendy Cooper and, Kevin Brown, back him up. As team leader, Chris ensures we function within the group as a whole. He likens Hasty to merely being a 'cog in the wheel'... but a very big cog at that!

For any information on Hasty, contact Chris Dixon on christopher.dixon@ic24.net

TRIPLE CALL AT WINTORS LEAP

While most climbers were enjoying the warm clear evenings towards the end of March and beginning of April, **Severn Area RA** and other local emergency services were kept very busy along the popular cliffs of Wintors Leap in the Wye Valley. SARA was called to three separate incidents, within three weeks of each other, along the same stretch of cliffs. Unfortunately one proved to be fatal.

The first call came as most members were returning from work and hoping to enjoy the evening's good weather. Instead, within half an hour of the call, some of them were assembling at Woodcroft quarry, whilst others prepared to launch SARA 1, the biggest of their inshore lifeboats.

The report was that a young male had fallen 60 feet, attempting to scale Easy Way Down. This male casualty was very lucky. Planning only a short walk with a friend, and wearing just trousers, t-shirt, sweatshirt and trainers, they had decided on the slightly quicker option of attempting to climb out of the valley via the steep path, which to this unlucky man proved to be easier coming down than going up. His friend had managed to make it to the top, but he lost his footing and fell, sustaining fractures to both ankles, cuts and bruises.

The hardest part of the rescue was the decision how to evacuate this casualty, safely and quickly. There were three options. 1. Complete the long carry out to the Air Ambulance, which had managed to find a small clearing for landing near the edge of the river, but this would take over an hour. 2. The Fire Service team could take him back up the cliff to the waiting ambulance above. 3. Lower him down the steep, muddy embankment to the waiting lifeboat, the approved option.

During the lower, one of the paramedics was issued a lifejacket with a crash course on how to use it, then SARA 1 made a rapid, steady approach down the River Wye and out into the Severn, where it was met by the road ambulance on Beachley slipway. From here the casualty was taken from the boat and into the ambulance for the short distance by road to the waiting Air Ambulance. He was then flown to Frenchay hospital, where he made a full recovery.

The second call to SARA didn't prove so successful as the cliffs of Wintors Leap claimed their first fatality of the year. A climber had fallen from the Forbidden Wall, and, though saved from falling any further by his equipment, he died in hospital a day later.

Lydney Fire Services Rescue Team secured the casualty and lowered him to the base of the climb. SARA assisted the Fire & Rescue to carry the casualty out to the Air Ambulance.

The third call came a few days later. Another climber had fallen approx 20 feet on Fly Wall, off Woodcroft quarry, saved from falling any further by his climbing equipment.

Lydney Fire & Rescue carried out another excellent job of lowering the casualty to the base of the climb, where the casualty was stabilised by ambulance staff before the long carry out, up the steep climb through the Woodcroft Quarry, to the ambulance at the entrance to the quarry. Despite multiple injuries, he made a full recovery.

YORKSHIRE DALES

JUBILEE MEDALS ETC...

Members of **The Upper Wharfedale FRA** will be presented with their Queen's Jubilee Awards by the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, later this year. Meanwhile, two members of the team have been invited to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party. At the last general meeting, Chris Baker retired after 24 years as Chairman and is succeeded by well known caver Harry Long. The end of June will see the team joining forces with the Cave Rescue Organisation to raise funds through running the 24th Game Show, which is held at Broughton Hall, near Skipton.

ISLE OF MAN

WELCOME TO THE MAINLAND

The **Isle of Man Civil Defence MRT** became an Associate member of the MRC earlier this year, but we know little about them, so this seems a perfect opportunity to introduce them to their new colleagues in the mountain rescue community.

The team is part of the Isle of Man Civil Defence Corps, a volunteer organisation supported by the Isle of Man Government, comprising 35 trained volunteers, of which 22 are part of the MRT, with the others currently in training. The team receives equipment, training and transport, including two minibuses and two 4WD and all volunteers must complete a six months probation period, after which they receive waterproof clothing and equipment if they wish to start training with the MRT.

The Isle of Man is a Crown Dependency and, as such, is not part of the UK, having its own Parliament and making its own laws. The Island is approx 35 miles by 15 miles and the population is 75,000. The highest point is Snaefell, at 621 metres, the topography a low lying area around central high ground and the climate wet and mild. However, due to the exposed position of the Island, extreme conditions on high ground are common in winter, with wind speeds of 80-100mph occurring on a regular basis.

The Isle of Man, as with the Channel Islands, still maintains a Civil Defence Corps to act in support of the Emergency Services. This is important due to the geographical position of the Island and the finite resources available. To provide this support the Civil Defence Corps

undertakes a number of different tasks including search and rescue. It also undertakes Emergency Lighting, Rest & Reception Management, Flood Relief, Emergency Catering, Evacuation and Civil Protection. A structured training programme is provided including specialist training courses off Island. Members from all walks of life and professions are organised into two teams, each having a team leader and deputy, and a Corps Commander and Deputy as overall Command and Control. The operational line management of the Corps is exercised through the Department of Home Affairs, Civil Defence Division, via the Emergency Planning Officer and Assistant Emergency Planning Officer.

The MRT is called out by the Emergency Services around 18 times a year and is very highly regarded as a professional, highly trained group with an established system of command and control who can undertake a range of tasks. Over the past five years they have attended a number of missing person searches, light aircraft incidents and assisted the police in open area evidence searches.

Contact Details – Martin Blackburn, Emergency Planning Officer 01624 621742 (Mobile 07624 493 491); Ian Notman, Assistant Emergency Planning Officer 01624 621742 (Mobile 07624 494 402); Mervyn Dickaty, Corps Commander 01624 842044.

ALSAR

AGM UPDATE

This year's AGM showed a good turn out by member units from around the country. The new Executive Officers are Andy Williamson in the Chair, assisted by Vice Chair John Dutton, Secretary Margaret Bennett, Treasurer Steve Cranswick and Training Officer Rob Bradley. All agreed that the coming year will be an exciting time of many changes for ALSAR, reflecting the growth in Lowland SAR units over the last couple of years. Many aspects of the association will be reviewed, including the constitution, training and codes of practice, and charity registration applied for. Andy Williamson comments, 'ALSAR remains committed to raising the profile of lowland search and rescue in the UK, educating local authorities and police forces to the benefits of properly trained and equipped volunteer units.'

NEW AND APPROVED ALSAR TRAINING

How do you ensure that every searcher has the same minimum level of training across twelve lowland search teams? How do you ensure that they have access to the same quality of instruction wherever they train? ALSAR has decided that over the next 12-18 months, courses and instructors will have to provide evidence that they are competent to be

approved. This is not intended to exclude any course or individual, but to give them all an opportunity to meet a common standard. Rob Bradley, ALSAR's Training Officer, will be working with teams and instructors to advise and guide them towards achieving this aim. The standards for a course include covering the syllabus, ensuring learning by assessment, quality assurance through lesson observation and a strict recording and reporting mechanism. Likewise, an instructor must prove not only relevant SAR qualifications and experience, but also teacher/trainer qualifications and experience. ALSAR is also looking to put on Instructors courses in the near future to allow up and coming instructors to gain knowledge and experience in a safe environment. Why has it been felt that this is needed? Several reasons, according to Rob. 'The increase in litigation, meaning teams must ensure adequate training and record keeping, and the need for an increased level of professionalism to mirror our increasing responsibilities. But mainly to allow all searchers to do the job they volunteered to do – to do their best to find the next misper!'



L. Andrew McNeil & Corrie. R. Les Telford & Kess

SARDA

LAKE DISTRICT SEARCH DOGS

SARDA Lakes April course in Patterdale, brought welcome success for two handlers and their dogs who have been training for three years to make the grade as Mountain Rescue Search Dogs. Both were assessed by senior handlers from the Association, as well as an external assessor from England, and passed with flying colours. Over two days in Brown Cove, Helvellyn and Pasture Beck, Hartsop, they searched a total of five areas, finding all the volunteers who helped by hiding out on the fell pretending to be casualties.

Les Telford, of Kendal MRT, and his dog Kess, had their training radically disrupted by Foot & Mouth right at the beginning. Access to areas for training was disrupted for nearly seven months, and this meant a delay in the progress made by Kess. However, they recovered well from this initial setback and, after successful assessments in the Cairngorms and the Yorkshire Dales, completed the eight days needed in Patterdale.

Andrew McNeil, of Cockermouth MRT, found his dog, Corrie, as a pup in the pound at Whitehaven Police station. She had been lost and abandoned but Andrew took her on, and has made a real success of training her for rescue work in spite of having had to fit his training round the demands of the rescue team and his job as a chartered building surveyor. This search dog team will join the two other search dogs working with Cockermouth MRT.

The two new handlers joined the ranks of 11 other Search & Rescue Dogs attached to Lake

District teams. They can now be summoned by radio pager to searches anywhere in the Lake District – or indeed outside it. Lake District Mountain Rescue Search dogs have worked in Dumfries and Galloway, Northumberland and North Yorkshire in the last few years. Their first search was on April 27 – called to assist Keswick and Wasdale MRTs in a search for

The Scottish Executive are to give around £300,000 to Scottish Mountain Rescue, towards the cost of updating radio equipment. The MRC of S has already raised about £200,000 towards the scheme. Chairman Nick Forwood is currently engaged in an equipment evaluation process which will determine the actual cost of the equipment required. The announcement was made during a visit to the Cairngorm Ski Centre near Aviemore, in April, by First Minister Jack McConnell, who made a firm commitment to increase funding via the police and to ensure that the autonomous, voluntary status of teams is continued. Speaking to BBC News, he said, 'These men and women are prepared to risk their own lives to rescue walkers and climbers who are lost or injured. It's vital that these teams have access to modern equipment and that we have committed to provide funding to help ensure that this modernisation project can go ahead.'

Miller Harris, Secretary of Lochaber MRT, said, 'This funding is a welcome step and recognition from the Scottish Executive about the importance of mountain rescue.'

Making an impression...

With all this talk of the mountain rescue brand and the desire to impress upon the tin-filling public what a worthy job we all do out there on the hills (and, increasingly, streets) up and down the country, it's easy to get carried away with an impression of our own goodness. However, it would appear, from a letter which recently found its way under the front door of my team's base, that we still have a way to go with schmoozing the general public. And, in our defence, when we, in turn, pushed a letter through all our neighbours' letterboxes, apologising for any inconvenience, we received some very warming responses, one of which I have also detailed.

The first letter went like this... 'I am sick and tired of being woke up by your stupid sirens and the sound of your vehicles being driven up and down the street at all hours of the night. Some people have to get up early in the morning for work and like to be in bed early so we can get a good night's sleep but that is impossible with you idiots. Also I would like to be able to park my car outside my own door. I am fed up especially on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings to return and not be able to park near my own front door. I know you do pay road tax the same as everyone else but how would you like it if I came and parked outside your front door and you could not park your car. I do not see why we should suffer any inconvenience because some stupid moron decides to go for a walk on the hills and gets lost. Followed by you stupid morons trying to find them. Also in winter we have our cars damaged by salt and grit just because you are in our street. You like walking up hills so why don't you move your stupid organisation to the top of Cribden. If we are inconvenienced in anyway by noise or are unable to park our cars this Sunday, we will report you to the environmental health department.'

Thankfully, followed by... 'I was concerned to hear that you had received a complaint recently about sirens and parking. I have been living here for eight years, and though aware on occasion of a siren being used, it has never disturbed me. As for parking, there is no shortage in Clegg Street, there being houses on one side only for much of the street. I am also proud to have the search and rescue team at the top of my street, as I know what important work they do. Although I realise it is important for you to maintain good relations with the local community, I am tempted to say sod 'em, and carry on with the important work.'

Now, committing these comments to press may well invite some speculative criticism from our colleagues in mountain rescue – I should hardly need to say that my team strives to maintain professional standards and good relationships with the community as much as the next one – but I feel sure that we are not the only team to suffer from this misunderstanding of our work. And it would appear that 'mountain rescue' still has a way to go on the image front...

Judy Whiteside MRC News Editor & Secretary Rossendale & Pendle MRT

News from your Statistics Officer...

Following the untimely death of John Hinde, a new Statistics Officer has been appointed by MRC of Scotland. He is Mike Walker, a member of the Dundonnell team and training a search dog. We have met twice since he was confirmed in post and following early discussions, he had expressed a wish to investigate the use of the Incident software. It was clear from the start that in its present form, the software may not be to the liking of the Scots. However, this gave me an ideal opportunity to make a few long overdue changes to the application.

The version recently circulated to existing users and to some Scottish teams contains a number of features that will make the process a little easier. The main difference now is that the software can be configured to the individual user/team or national body. It is fair to say that the current users are pleased with the product. I for one am very pleased with their use of it, as it saves me many hours of typing! Far beyond the selfish motives, it does give the service a unique database for reporting, research and training purposes. Finally, if there are any teams, currently submitting paper reports who are interested in using the programmes, they need only get in touch. It is supplied without cost.

While on the topic of information and databases, I have been involved with the RNLI in developing a database of inland water-related incidents (INREM). There will be some overlap with our database, but they wish to cover the whole of England and Wales. The development is still in its early stages and much discussion will be needed before anything concrete is seen. The MRC are represented in the discussions taking place and I will continue to report progress over the next few months.

The Missing Person Behaviour study continues. I have received many reports from our own teams and from Scotland, Ireland and teams associated to ALSAR. The number of cases reported has recently topped the 500

mark. As a research tool, it will continue to gain strength as long as teams carry on supplying these reports. It is my intention to issue an annual report, usually in September, giving details of the data so far received. It must, by its very nature, be a technical paper. It sets out to provide a statistical rationale for the reliability of the conclusions it supports. These are, and will continue to be, posted on the MRC web site

www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/private/stats.sw.php

As a direct result of both the study and our involvement in Search Management training, a handbook has been produced. We (Dave Perkins, Pete Roberts and myself) have pulled together all of the research currently available about missing person behaviour. It is now presented in a manageable form for the search manager. Under the usual categories, familiar to many readers, it outlines the circumstances and likely behaviour patterns of persons, both in N America and here. It is our intention to update this regularly and make it available in electronic form from the MRC web site. Your comments, good or bad, are more than welcome.

Finally, in the last issue of the MRC News (Issue 5 January, page 5), I outlined a policy for the reporting and recording of incidents. I was underwhelmed by the responses. I know it's not a particularly 'sexy' subject but it does affect the way the public sees our work. It is mainly a way to inform all MR personnel how their work will be recorded and made available for analysis. I announced at the MRC meeting in May that I would operate the policy as stated in the article for the next 12 months and gauge reaction. As I have implicitly been adopting its methods for some years, you may not see a difference. But at least all will know how I have reached decisions when they find I report their figures slightly differently.

Ged Feeney MRC Statistics Officer
ged@gfeeney.demon.co.uk

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INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Following his article in January's MRC News, relating to partnerships between US mountain rescue teams and international teams (that means us, too), Rick Lorenz reports that the response has been 'less than overwhelming', with no responses at all from England & Wales.

To recap, the idea of the project is to build friendships, encourage cultural and professional ties and develop co-operative ventures.

Teams can be matched according to size and interest. Contact could start with email and eventually expand into exchanges where one team hosts visits from members of the other team. Participants will be asked to post a short team profile on the Mountain Rescue Association website so that everyone can learn about the partner teams.

There are currently about twelve US and five international teams involved. If you would like to find out more about how YOUR team can be involved, Rick is still looking for teams to sign up. To find out more, contact –

Rick Lorenz
Tacoma Mountain Rescue
1410 South Mountain View Ave, Tacoma WA 98465 on
fmlorenz1@aol.com
or check the MRA website
www.mra.org

PAST AND PRESENT



Words **Bob Sharp & Alfie Ingram**
Photographs **Ian Dawson & MRC of Scotland**

The Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland began life in June 1965, with Dr John Berkeley the first Chairman, Hamish MacInnes the Secretary, John Watson the Treasurer and Ben Humble the Accident Report Collator. Prior to 1965, civilian mountain rescue provision in Scotland was devoted essentially to the installation of first aid kits at the more popular mountaineering areas of the country.

As early as 1960, it was realised that the absence of some kind of overseeing and co-ordinating body was unsatisfactory. April of that year saw an initial attempt to co-ordinate mountain rescue with the formation of two organisations – one a sub-committee of the Mountain Rescue Committee (responsible to that committee for Scottish affairs) with Jack Arthur of the Red Cross as its Chair, the other the Scottish Council for Mountain Rescue (which in itself was to have a dual function) led by Donald Duff of Fort William and stretcher fame. Not surprisingly, the resulting amalgam of no less than twenty seven representatives from organisations as diverse as Youth

Hostels and Tourist Boards resulted in massive bureaucracy and very little was achieved. In 1962, by which time the sub-committee had gone through a name change to become the Scottish Branch of the MRC, W. H. (Bill) Murray, President of the Scottish Mountaineering Club at the time, took a leading role in reorganising the whole set up.

In June 1965, at the Red Cross rooms in Bath Street, Glasgow, the



Donald Duff with Duff Stretcher. Sheep Fank Wall, Glen Nevis. c1956

Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland was formed – an independent organisation with nine representative organisations and five regional representatives from areas in Scotland where mountain rescue teams operated. A further five members could be co-opted if required.

Some of the organisations – such as the Scottish Youth Hostels Association, and the British Red Cross Society – involved in the early days, are no longer members, whilst teams such as Dounreay MRT, the Ayrshire Hill Group, Lammermuir Search & Rescue Group and Moffat Hill Rescue Group have long since been incorporated into currently affiliated members. Interestingly, the Scottish Cave Rescue Organisation, although listed in the early 70s, but which had no contact with the Committee for quite some time, recently returned to the fold as an affiliated member.

It is interesting to look at some of the issues that were significant in the early days, many still high on the agenda today. In the late 70s, the Committee received an annual training grant from Shell UK, of around

£1600, which continued through to 2002. Income was discussed regularly. In 1979, the Committee agreed to levy each team the sum of £20 to assist with administrative costs – discontinued in 1994, with the proviso that it would be reintroduced should the finances of the Committee require such funding to operate.

Various Minutes through the 70s reported that morphine was little used and should therefore be removed from the list of kit kept in Posts. The RAF suggested MRTs should use strobe lights to guide in helicopters during both night and day. There was discussion on how climbers could be better advised about avalanche dangers. The Committee suggested it might help if an article was written by a Committee member and submitted to a climbing magazine.

Discussion on equipment was common. At one point, the shelf life of nylon ropes was discussed – it was suggested that 2 years was a maximum. The RAF confirmed that SAR helicopters for civilian use would be possible only 'where life was in immediate danger'.

Changes to radio frequencies were discussed in the mid 70s when the National Controlling Committee was established – the cost of crystal changes was important and teams were advised not to buy new sets before seeking advice from the Committee! Teams were also advised to appoint 'press release persons' to reduce the increasing 'undesirable and inaccurate press statements', and the Committee was advised 25 years ago that use of the Red Cross logo was illegal and something should be done about it. Twenty five years later action was taken!

Today, the MRC of S represents and co-ordinates mountain rescue in Scotland. It liaises with all the departments, authorities and providers of search and rescue services in mountainous terrain and, through the Scottish Home & Health Department, maintains a series of mountain rescue posts at strategic locations throughout Scotland. It administers and organises seminars and training courses for team members and provides grant aid to teams in respect of training and equipment by

acting as a central focus for charitable donations. The MRC of S is administered by an Executive Committee that meets quarterly, comprising a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Medical Officer, Training Officer, Equipment Officer and Statistician, and reps from ACPO (Scotland) and ARCC (Kinloss). It can also co-opt additional members and at present there are members representing the Scottish MLTB, MRC England & Wales, Mountaineering Council of Scotland and the Scottish Mountain Safety Forum.

The General Committee meets twice a year. It comprises reps from the 28 mountain rescue teams in Scotland (23 civilian, 2 RAF, 3 Police) and SARDA, as well as other organisations including the eight Police forces, the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy, HM Coastguard, Bristows Helicopters, MRC, Mountaineering Council of Scotland, Scottish Mountain Safety Forum, Scottish Ambulance Service, **sportscotland** and Scottish Cave Rescue. There is also representation on various organisations, such as

the Scottish MLTB, with a brief specific to the provision of search and rescue and mountain safety. It has reciprocal representation with the MRC and the Irish Mountain Rescue Association and is a full, independent member of IKAR, the International Kommission for Alpine Rescue. It is represented on the United Kingdom SAR Operators' Group and on the Communications Working Group.

Unlike the MRC, there is no regional structure, only two working levels – General Committee (Executive Committee) and the teams. A key function is to collate and analyse mountain accident information in Scotland. The Annual Report listing each incident in Scotland has been published for many years in the Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, but there are currently discussions about how this vital information can be made available to a wider market. There is also close liaison with the MRC Statistics collator in regard to the development of a UK-wide data base. For a number of years, the MRC of S has worked very closely with the Order of St. John which has funded vehicles for all teams, and bases for those in need. Discussions are ongoing to see how the Order can continue funding in other ways.

All rescue teams in Scotland have independent status and guard this position very strongly. The MRC of S has no controlling or regulatory function, but has developed over many years a set of 'Guidelines for Good Practice' which all teams use as a foundation for their training and operational work. These are monitored



Grey Mare's Tail rescue

required. It responds to key issues as they arise and is proactive in looking to the future needs of Scottish mountain rescue. In recent years, matters relating to funding, publications, constitution, equipment, communications, first aid/medicine, training and insurance have all been discussed. The Committee has sought for and gained significant external funding to develop a new stretcher that takes account of modern materials and construction. It has also responded positively to the need to revise its communication systems and been successful in gaining significant funding from the Scottish Executive to replace essential hardware for all teams. Discussions are ongoing in regard to revised and enhanced insurance benefits through the Police and ring-fenced, revenue funding through the Scottish Executive. In 2001, the Committee initiated its own Distinguished Service Award for individuals who have made a highly significant contribution to mountain rescue in Scotland at team and/or national level. It has also gained copyright for its logo and redesigned and manufactured new Post plaques for all teams.

Despite the many advances in rescue, equipment and training provision over the years and the



Lochaber Team. Dead Man's Bogie. c1970

and revised as required and demonstrate a commitment to professionalism, health and safety and structured training within a voluntary context. The MRC of S recognises the need to respond to an ever changing world and adapt and develop when and where

changes made to meet these and prepare for the future, the MRC of S remains true to the basis on which it was founded – to make provision for the assistance of anyone who may find themselves in difficulties in the mountains of Scotland.

The Group has now spent some time looking at the failures and successes of national fundraising to date. It was felt that, before we could go any further, we should identify what was needed to ensure long term success. Ian Henderson, Llanberis MRT, rose to the challenge to guide the group through this process, and the results were fed back to the Executive. The need for a stronger 'brand' (not only the logo but the vision, mission and values of the organisation) and a long term plan was clear.

Consequently, the Executive spent a day in June reviewing the MRC. Ceri Hutton, who had been introduced to me by Neil Dowie, of Keswick MRT, had kindly offered to donate consultancy time to support mountain rescue. She and I put together an outline agenda of the day and the results that needed to be achieved. You can read more about the day on page 4.

One of the changes in the National Fundraising programme has been the decision that we were not ready to pay an external consultant to fundraise for us. Peter Panteli had raised over £40,000, but it was restricted funding and unable to support his own consultancy costs, so it was mutually agreed not to renew Peter's contract. The money he raised has been used to support the purchase of a vacuum mattress for every team and the National Training Courses.

A lot of charities obtain income through the public having the ability to gift aid over the internet and so, in the last couple of months, there have been a number of members working on implementing this for us. A large amount of time has been spent reviewing other charity web sites to look at other income generation ideas and the language used on these sites. We now have a draft format for an updated MRC web site.

The national fundraising phone line has been relocated to Andy Simpson (MRC Press Officer) who kindly took on this thankless task, requiring a number of hours a week. So far, we've had a number of success stories. One person wants to provide a legacy to the Mountain Rescue Council, and a number of phone calls have been received from members of the public who want to donate to specific teams. Eve Burton (Buxton MRT) is supporting Andy in the administration of these phone calls.

The national fundraising email address has also been busy. This year, we had our first person doing a sponsored event. Tim Stallard, who ran the London Marathon for the MRC, definitely deserves our thanks. The Gentian Club also contacted us via email wanting to donate to the teams in the areas they had visited in 2002. Your team may be one of the lucky ones – if so, your cheque will be arriving soon.

All this has proven that there are some members of the public who have loyalty to a team or region, whilst others have no particular allegiance but want to do an event or provide money to MR in general. This latter category is the market we need to capture.

As the phone calls and emails come in, it becomes more apparent that we

do not have the infrastructure in place to support the fundraising initiative – MRC sponsorship forms, a Certificate of Thanks and so on. This meant that Judy had to work hard to put these together. Thanks Judy. National Fundraising may well conjure up an image of many hours filling in application forms and writing letters to trusts, but this type of activity cannot be sustained long term. Neither would it allow the MRC the freedom to decide how money should be spent, as we will always be bound by the conditions of that application. And we would find it very difficult to raise money to support central costs such as insurance which can only be funded by unrestricted income. Short term activity such as income generated from applications and letters will not bring long term financial stability to the organisation. We need to build an infrastructure that can support the raising of funds through gift aid, donations, legacies and events. Some of this will be quick wins and others will take a long time and demand an organisation that has to change. No organisation can stand still. If it does, it will find that ultimately it cannot control its destiny and becomes reactive rather than proactive to internal and external influences.

I'd like to thank the teams and team members who have contacted me with ideas and contacts and to gain assurance that their activities are co-ordinated with National Fundraising. Please continue the good work.

A 24 year old Oxford student, studying for a PhD in fluid dynamics, has raised over £450 for the MRC by running in the London Marathon. Tim Stallard moved to Oxford after five years in Sheffield, where he did his first degree – a location chosen for its proximity to the Peak District. Having done a fair bit of climbing, the flat Oxfordshire landscape proved a bit of a problem, so he looked for an alternative way of keeping fit. Tried rowing for a term, but grew tired of seeing the same stretch of river in the dark, so decided to take up running – 'a great way of exploring the local countryside when you haven't got a car and a good method of getting fit for alpine walk-ins.' As his brother had always said he wanted to do the Marathon, Tim entered him in 2002 as a (somewhat harsh) 30th birthday present, and had to enter as well to make sure his brother turned up! However, they didn't get in, so reapplied this year. His decision to raise money for the Mountain Rescue Council came from his interest in climbing. Aware that team's did their own fundraising, he had almost decided to focus on a single team. Lochaber sprang to mind due to a couple of incidents involving friends of his, but he eventually decided on the MRC because of fundraising effectiveness. 'I was likely to get funds from a few climbing friends for an individual team, but thought people who don't know much about the organisation would be more open to support a national body. Not sure how correct that it, but I seemed to do okay,' said Tim. We couldn't have put it better ourselves...

Penny Brockman Central Beacons MRT

Wild Medicine!

Vaughan Mason NREMT
Paramedic Deputy Team Leader
Dublin & Wicklow MRT, Ireland



February saw Larch Hill Scout camp in Ballinkeer, Dublin strewn with sick and injured patients and american voices dispensing advice. The reason? It was this year's venue for the Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician (WEMT) course hosted by IMRA.

While this course may be unfamiliar to the majority it has been run in Ireland since 1996 and, more recently, in Scotland. It was developed by faculty members (Doctors, Paramedics and EMTs) of the Wilderness Emergency Medical Services Institute (WEMSI) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and its affiliate WEMSI Europe. WEMSI is a part of the Center for Emergency Medicine of Western Pennsylvania, the largest single medical campus in the US.

What is wilderness medicine? Broadly defined, 'wilderness' is a remote geographical location more than one hour from definitive medical care. 'Wilderness medicine' could be defined as skills necessary to assess and treat injuries or illness in a prolonged pre-hospital setting, often in severe



environments with minimal facilities available. The Wilderness provider may have to remain many hours or days with an injured person. Whereas most prehospital books and courses are designed for those with rapid access to hospitals, the WEMT course was developed for those that respond to emergencies in remote areas such as mountain rescue, cave rescue and disaster relief teams. It is also applicable to expedition leaders and guides provided they have some form of medical direction. We had an excellent range of instructors this

year. From America, Dr Sam Chewing, trauma surgeon & cave rescue specialist; Jack Grandley, Flight Paramedic STAT Medivac in Pittsburgh & FBI tactical medic; Dr Rebecca Lindsay, GP from Whistler, Canada; John Evans, Remote Medic & Climbing Ranger on Mt McKinley Alaska; John Hinds, Crew Chief & Flight Paramedic, Dartmouth Hitchcock Air Response Team, New Hampshire & FBI tactical medic.

From the other side of the water we had Joe O'Gorman, Course Director & EMT with ERAS and DWMRT; Gerry Butler WEMT DWMRT; Kenny Roberts WEMT Dublin Airport Fire Service & Team leader DWMRT; Dr William Lumb, UK Cave Rescue Medical Officer; Dr Marie Crawford, GP on the Isle of Skye; Sgt Jim O'Neill WEMT Irish Air Corp SAR and Kevin Forde WEMT Irish Army Medical Corp.

Our students also came from varied fields in Ireland and the UK – cave rescue, Irish air corp and army, ambulance personnel, mountain rescue, civil defence, Dublin Fire Brigade and remote expedition leaders.

Nestling at the foot of Three Rock Mountain, Larch Hill provides good lecture facilities and large grounds with rough terrain to hold the many outdoor scenarios. From their arrival on Sunday, students are deluged with a series of indoor lectures on diverse topics such as wilderness trauma, cold disorders, neurological assessment, pharmacology, hypothermia, altitude sickness, bites and stings. Interspersed with the indoor lectures are practical sessions, including patient packaging in vac mats, stretchers, patient assessment, minor surgical, splinting and medical direction via radio. And after the rigours of each day there is the evening review in the local hostelry!

On Friday, there was a written exam, with the following day devoted to a large scale mass casualty exercise in the Wicklow Mountains involving

Eastern Region Ambulance Service (ERAS), DWMRT, Glen of Imaal MRT, Civil Defence, SARDA and Irish Air Corp SAR Squadron.

The scenario was a plane crash in the mountains requiring the skills of the various agencies involved, with the WEMT students treating the casualties while the other agencies took care of search planning, logistics, search, rescue and evacuation to a casualty clearing station run by the ERAS in the big inflatable tent!

As with any mass casualty exercise there is a certain element of controlled chaos but the use of Major Incident Medical Management & Support (MIMMS) principles allows greater efficiency in dealing with a large number of casualties. Thankfully, unlike last year's exercise, we were not interrupted by a mountain rescue call out or, as in other years, a thick fog descending on the entire area rendering incident management very interesting.

While not all of the course is directly applicable to Ireland, it does develop students' ability to think laterally faced with unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of street based EMS training.

Students faced large volumes of information and stressful scenarios but came out feeling more confident of their own judgment and decision making skills when dealing with patients. They also had quite a lot of fun!

The US National Registry of EMTs has accepted the WEMT course as satisfying its requirements for a refresher programme for EMT-Bs. 48 hours of the curriculum are applicable towards its sections 1A and 2 continuing education requirements for recertification for both EMTs and paramedics. The Course has also been granted recognition by the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh – Pre-Hospital Care Faculty and is currently being assessed by the PHECC to provide continuing education credits for recertification of the NQEMT.

Contact Websites

WEMSI www.wemsi.org
WEMSI Europe www.wildmedic.org
Center for Emergency Medicine
www.centerem.com

First Response... your comments...

WHEN THE MRC PRESS OFFICER PUT HEAD OVER THE PARAPET...

Your article on page 2 of the MRC News (January 2003), reminded me that once I had the reputation of being outspoken and, on the odd occasion a tad controversial. Some may say I still am!

First, I must applaud you in going on record that you think the MRC should be more authoritarian in the management of mountain rescue in England & Wales with a mandate to be judge and jury when teams, as you put it, 'act out of agreed bounds.'

Most of what you said has been whispered behind closed doors for many years. On the odd occasion, when your likeminded thoughts have surfaced in public, they have been quickly despatched to the dustbin, as rocking the boat on such a sensitive issue would banish supporters with personal ambitions to the wilderness for ever. Many years ago, I was one of the unofficial discussion group that 'vented ideas' on the

same theme as your article. I'm of the same opinion now as I was then. Mountain rescue teams and their respective area associations should be left to manage their own affairs. There is nothing more efficient, in my own opinion, than having local knowledge and discipline to create a successful service to the people that need our help. How many times have we, in all walks of life, suffered a deterioration of service, when local management has been replaced by a distant central agency, many miles from the action. I don't think it would go down very well, team members with many hundreds of rescues under their belt, and who operate in high risk areas, being managed in every sense of the word by people on a National Committee, who have far less experience. I have always held the view that mountain rescue is a practical emergency service and should remain so. If problems arise within a team or area, a quick solution is nearly always found at local level. Patterdale singlehandedly fought for tax

relief (VAT) on certain items such as radios, medical equipment and vehicles. Many years ago, LDSMRA was the first to fund, with police help, and manage its own team members' insurance scheme, with generous financial benefits for team members. The Lake District and North East teams used advanced medical equipment and set up training programmes which led to team members performing advanced medical techniques on the fells. I could list many more 'battles' that teams and panels have successfully won through their determination and tenacity but, more to the point, the local independence of a small group has been there to see it through to the end, with the will to win as they set out on a dedicated course of action and not capitulate at the first hurdle.

If we look back over the history of mountain rescue, it has shown that the end result of most major advancements is more achievable when local teams and areas have taken up the challenge and fought

tooth and nail on what they believe to be right. Let me make it quite clear that this is not banging the Lake District drum, or giving the impression that we are greater than thou, but these are the facts. I am sure there are many more pioneering advancements from other areas where the initiative of individual teams has succeeded without MRC help. Once a battle has been won, other teams can benefit and adopt those ideas if they wish. My fears are that if the MRC became an autonomous body, which is centralisation in another form, initiatives would grind very slowly, if not stop altogether. Small efficient organisations are far more effective than large ones. For one, there is less bureaucracy. Convincing a team or area committee that something is worth pursuing and fighting for is far easier and less frustrating than getting agreement from a national body. Consensus of opinion would vary enormously and decision making would drag on for ever. In my opinion, nothing would be done and you

would achieve far less. How many times outside of mountain rescue have we heard that 'Big is best' and how many times in our daily lives have we thought that this philosophy is a complete load of nonsense. With all due respect, I rest my case. I have attended meetings of the MRC for 30 plus years and, contrary to some, I do think there is an important role for the MRC, but not in the way that you see it. However, I am aware that some teams need more support from the MRC and rely on them for guidance. Other teams need far less. Sorry Andy. I admire you for nailing your colours to the mast, but I must respectfully disagree with your thoughts.

*Stewart Hulse MBE
President Langdale Ambleside MRT*

...AND AGAIN...

In many ways, Stewart's right but, unfortunately, most of my comments about the MRC and its powers (or lack of) could equally be directed at regional organisations. The Lake District has, clearly, empowered LDSAMRA with the authority to deal with issues and problems – this can't be said of most regions. Maybe we should look a little closer to home for solutions to local problems. In the case of my own region (Mid Pennine) a strong constitution would be a good start. However, as Stewart points out, this isn't the first time the subject has come up, and I've no doubt it won't be the last. Either way, something needs to change before some daft team takes the good name of the whole of MR down with it.

*Andy Simpson
MRC Press Officer & Rossendale & Pendle MRT*

MOUNTAIN RESCUE RADIO COMMS

A Short History and Forthcoming Changes

It was back in 1991 that I first became involved with mountain rescue radio comms, as rep for the British Cave Rescue Council on the Radio sub committee. At that time, radio comms had just moved from amplitude modulation to frequency modulation and most teams had been issued with the Philips PF85, as recommended in the Morrill Report of 1988.

The Low Band channel initially allocated (CH1) was administered by the Home Office and on the Chief Constable's block licence of the Police Authority which administered the relevant team's rescue resource. A second channel (the next channel in the frequency plan) was made available from the DTI on payment of a licence fee, reduced if the team was a registered charity. This channel's terms and conditions had more restrictions than CH1 but, after much arguing, to little avail, these were accepted as part of the available radio comms.

By the early 90s, radio comms had settled into a way of life. In 1995 Clive Smith, the then Radio Officer did not stand for re-election, and I was voted into the newly named post of Communications Officer. One of the first tasks was to try and modify the terms and conditions of both channels. With CH1 it was to permit use of CTCSS (Continuous Tone Controlled Sequential Squelch) and DTMF (Dual Tone Multi Frequency) tones to enable simplex repeaters to be used. With CH2 it was landline control of hill top radios which would provide benefits when multi-incidents in a particular area occurred. Gathering pace in the background was a proposed digital trunked radio system (now known as Airwave) that the emergency services were expected to move to by the turn of the century.

As the 90s drew to a close mountain rescue stood at a crossroads with its radio comms. We could carry on using Low Band but the Philips PF85 that most teams used was nearing the end of its serviceable life. We may be able to migrate to the digital trunked system being supplied to the Police but network coverage could pose a problem in mountainous areas. A third option may be to move to High Band. Whichever route was chosen there was a cost implication. As an interim solution a High Band frequency was sought via the Home Office. This would give compatibility with Scottish MR teams, air to ground communications (CH73) and the ability to have other emergency channels as well as locally sought channels, all in one radio. In 1999, the then Scottish channel (53A) was transferred to the Home Office for England and Wales, and the Scottish Office. The Home Office also made available for use by the MRC a pair of frequencies to be used either as simplex channels or configured as a repeater using CTCSS.

Reports from the Marchioness disaster brought to a head, along with other things, the lack of interagency communications. From these reports was born UKSAR

(United Kingdom Search & Rescue). Within UKSAR an Operators Group (OG) was established which had the requirement to form a Communications Working Group (CWG). At the CWG inaugural meeting in April 2001, the National Controlling Committee (NCC), which had overseen the Search & Rescue radio channels, was merged with the CWG. At the inaugural meeting a sub committee was formed to produce a user requirement specification for land SAR. This sub committee had representation from the Home Office and Scottish Office, the MRC and MRC of S, and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).

The user requirements provided for a dedicated air to ground channel, a calling channel, several simplex channels for operational use and a repeater channel. As an interim, air to ground communications could take place on CH73 and the use of CH0 would be permitted in serious situations. Recently the MCA made available 5 pairs of frequencies within the marine channels for use by land search and rescue teams. A bandplan has been developed which will include the High Band channels currently available on the Police Authority block licence.

Changes within the Home Office could mean support for the Low Band frequencies being withdrawn much earlier than scheduled and the move to High Band equipment to take place within the next two years. The current High Band channels may be transferred to the MCA so that all allocations come under one authority. With these proposed changes likely to take place it would be prudent for teams' radio officers to keep in contact with regional comms reps. Consideration should be given to any purchase to be made, and guidance sought from a reliable source. Do not buy replacement equipment in haste and repent later when it does not fulfil the requirement of the final bandplan.

The bandplan will include marine channels 24, 62, 63, 64 and 83 and will be appended 'A' or 'B' depending on which frequency of the pair is being used ie. 24A. The Home Office High Band channels will be renumbered 91, 92, 93, and 94 (repeater) and the original Scottish channel will revert to 53A. Equipment (portables and mobiles) needs to operate across the frequency range 146 MHz to 174 MHz and be capable of operating on both 12.5 kHz and 25 kHz spaced channels. The equipment should be programmable from a PC and have a minimum of 32 channels in 'banks'. CTCSS is desirable, as is alphanumeric display. A trial of several handheld radios was carried out by Bolton MRT and SARDA. A report is available on the MRC website under comms titled 'VHF High Band Handportable Selection'.

If you wish to discuss any points raised in this article my email address is david@ffog66.freesevice.co.uk

At the 2003 AGM Phil Ord took over the role of MRC Hon Communications Officer.

Dave Gough

COURSES 2003

At the end of April, the contents and methods of presentation of the Search Field Skills course and the Search Planning & Management course were critically reviewed and revised. The following courses will be run in 2003:-

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS

This course addresses the skills required by searchers in the field. It considers the vital role of search parties and how they maximise their efficiency and effectiveness.

Cost: £280

Date: 6-8 September

Location: Bangor

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

This course addresses the vital skills required to plan and manage a search operation.

Cost: £480

Date: 9-13 September

Location: Bangor

There will be a refund to volunteer members of the MRC and MRC of S rescue teams. The amount of the refund will depend upon the level of grant aid and the uptake of places. As of the end of May, there were still places available.

For further information, please contact either

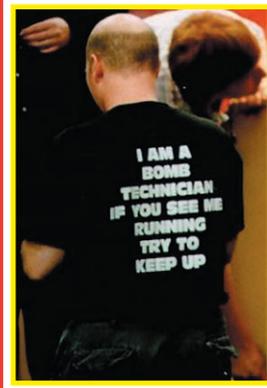
Dr ASG Jones MBE

01248 364131

Or: Peter Howells

01633 893447

NEW HEALTH & SAFETY ADVICE



Mountains for Active Diabetics 2003 International Conference Plas Y Brenin, Snowdonia

"...this patient is no longer fit to practice alpinism"

March saw the first ever international conference and meet for diabetic climbers, mountaineers and adventure enthusiasts, organised by the UK branch of IDEA (International Diabetic Expedition & Adventure) at Plas Y Brenin, Snowdonia.

Over 85 people from Italy, USA, Luxembourg, South Africa, Belgium, England, Wales and Scotland attended, with many descending on the cliffs and mountains during the weekend – whilst Snowdonia was bathed in some of the most glorious weather that had been seen for a while.

Mountains for Active Diabetics and the MAD 2003 programme at Plas Y Brenin was organised by active mountaineer Nikki Wallis, Chairman of SARDA Wales (now training Jacob, her second mountain rescue search dog, a Husky/Labrador cross), a Warden for the Snowdonia National Park Authority, a member of Llanberis MRT – and, amongst other things, a Type 1 diabetic with a lifelong passion for mountains and climbing them.

Friday night's programme included three lectures, which culminated in an audio-visual extravaganza presented by one of Britain's top climbers, Jerry Gore – also a Type 1 (insulin dependant) diabetic, who has undertaken many serious expeditions and big walls all over the world – Shishapangma's north east ridge, first ascents in Tibet and Pakistan, and big wall projects in Borneo.

The evening began with a lecture on diabetes physiology and biochemistry, a difficult but essential topic eloquently presented by South African active diabetic Stephen Posnett. Nikki introduced the second lecture with an audio visual of diabetic action shots from all over the world, followed by an overview of adventuring safely with diabetes geared to the wide audience present – diabetics, teachers, instructors or guides responsible for diabetic participants – and also some thoughts for health care professionals and emergency medics.

Saturday saw many of the delegates climbing at Dinas Cromlech in the Llanberis Pass. An array of classics including Cemetery Gates E1 5b (5.10a), Cenotaph Corner E1 5c (5.10c). Some headed for the exposed delicate scramble up and over Crib Goch towards Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa 1085m), the highest point in England and Wales, others for the classic North Ridge of Tryfan (915m) in the Ogwen Valley.

That evening David Panofsky from the USA opened the lecture series with an introduction to the IDEA 2000 project, and a general discussion of practical considerations for diabetes and mountains. David explained how the International Diabetic Expedition on Aconcagua, which placed seven diabetics on the summit on January 13, 2001, has metamorphosed into a clearing house for all things surrounding diabetes, mountains and adventure.

The next presenters were members of the Italian ADIQ (Diabetic Climbers at High Altitude) Cho Oyu expedition post-monsoon 2002, including diabetics Vittorio Casiraghi (member of the Italian Academic Climbing Club) and Marco Peruffo, a diabetic since the age of ten and one of four expedition members to reach the summit of Cho Oyu. This expedition was among very few on the mountain not relying on high altitude porters, guides, or supplemental oxygen.

Adventurous outdoor diabetics are faced with many complex and initially daunting issues that are

not usually addressed in specific practical terms by health care teams or doctors unless, of course, they also happen to be diabetic and into these pursuits – the reason for setting up MAD.

Although attitudes seem to be slowly moving away from putting every single diabetic into the 'disabled' category, there are many out there who, due to an incomplete picture of all that is involved, or misleading press articles focusing on 'when things go wrong', still believe that all people who have diabetes should stay at home and not do much else.

There could be nothing further from the truth – especially when you look at some of the fine mountaineering achievements and exploits of, for example, some members of MAD and IDEA – Gasherbrum II, Aconcagua, Everest, Cho Oyu, Ironman Triathletes, Olympic level cyclists, South Pole expeditions, ultra elite mountain runners, scuba divers, mountain rescue team members...

Blood glucose monitoring devices and diabetes management therapies are becoming more accessible and have vastly improved over the past decade and more and more diabetics are venturing into the mountains. There is no reason why this should not be so.

Diabetes can suddenly affect anyone, at any age, for no apparent reason – although stress seems to potentially exacerbate an underlying predisposition. Exercise provides a motivating goal to manage the condition and a mechanism for lowering blood sugar levels, thus reducing potential for the long term complications that can arise from elevated blood glucose. Members of MAD strongly believe that outdoor pursuits also develop lifelong skills of self reliance, confidence and motivation, essential to the successful ongoing management of diabetes.

Some of the factors that adventurous insulin dependent diabetics should understand are:

- * altering basal insulin (background insulin) rates according to adventure pursuit and intensity
- * how to keep insulin warm when in extreme hot or cold environments
- * how to deal with diabetes at altitude or when climbing on an exposed big wall
- * maintaining a balance between carbohydrates and insulin during endurance events
- * or even monitoring your blood sugars when in more remote inaccessible situations and what to do with the readings, and also...
- * what to do when things go not quite as planned – dealing with major hypoglycaemic episodes or diabetic ketoacidosis

The latter factor is where, potentially, mountain rescue teams may be involved and it's down to the astute first aider to be aware of medical issues which may have either contributed to the incident in the first place, or just indicate a secondary issue to manage in addition to other injuries sustained.

How do you know if the unconscious casualty on the hill has the medical condition of diabetes? Not all diabetics wear ID bracelets or carry cards (as the First Aid books will have you believe).

And diabetics do not always 'smell of pear drops'!

Another widely misunderstood fact, this occurs due to the presence of higher blood sugars resulting in the body being unable to use sugar as a fuel instead using fat, which then produces by-products which smell of pear drops. Although not commonly known, this can occur on the hill or during exercise if a diabetic undertakes exercise with a high starting blood sugar level which throws the body into a decompensated mechanism where it is unable to use the sugar that is present. This results in an uncompensated feed forward mechanism, which will not correct itself without medical intervention ie. fluids and insulin.

Many diabetics now use subcutaneous infusion lines attached to insulin pumps (as opposed to the old syringe and vials) which deliver discreet pre-programmable dosages of rapid acting insulin and offer infinitely more fine tuned control.

However, all responsible, experienced diabetics will carry some readily accessible glucose on their person to treat the odd hypo (which occurs if the blood sugar starts to drop below the normal level of approx 4mmol). They will also carry a small diabetic management kit, containing a blood glucose monitor and spare bits and bobs for the 'just in case' scenario, usually found in a pretty accessible location.

Most diabetics you will come across on the hill will also probably have quite scarred or pin holed fingertips from taking frequent blood sugar readings (hourly readings are ideal as these blood glucose readings then give an indication of whether insulin action has finished or still active).

If a member of your team is diabetic (Type 1 or 2), the best first aid training you will get regarding the treatment of a diabetic casualty on the hill is likely to be from them. Diabetic team members can be the ideal first aiders for casualties who have diabetes, whether it is just a management issue secondary to the initial complaint or the cause of the call out, as they will have an understanding of taking blood sugars and what the readings mean.

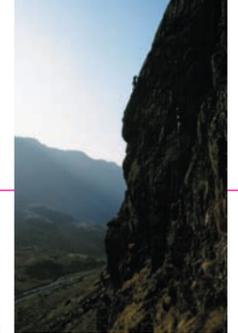
It is highly probable that incidents involving diabetes as a secondary management issue (for example a climber gets hit on the head with a rock, suffers a minor head injury, oh, and by the way also has diabetes) will increase over the next decade as more and more people with diabetes participate in extreme outdoor pursuits.

The aim of MAD-IDEA is to disseminate practical advice and diabetes management information to those contemplating mountain pursuits, and to educate associated groups and organisations on some of the issues likely to be encountered.

Another international diabetes and mountain forum is being organised for next year in Ecrins National Park, France and plans are underway for the 2005 International Diabetic Expedition & Adventure mountain project.

For more information visit www.idea2000.org <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/madidea> or contact Nikki on

nikki@wallis-rawlinson.freesevice.co.uk



Is this the MR rucksack of the future?

12 months ago I came into contact with a new company, Deuter, and was lucky enough to acquire an Air Contact 45 + 10 litre rucksack. I've played with a few rucksacks over the years but there was something different about this one. It had a host of features which were specifically suited to MR.

The bag is a split (zip in/out) main body made from heavy-duty textured fabric with base access zip, double layer base and side compression straps (actually long enough to hold a karri mat) on either side. Two aluminium stays support the load behind the padded back. Inside are straps and pouch to hold hydration system or survival bag, a small mesh key pocket and pocket for 2 laminated OS maps. Outside are 2 ice axe attachments and centre daisy chain. Volume adjustable hood with 3 pockets

and crampon attachment loops, the back system is a fully, and easily, adjustable. Padded back, shoulder straps and hip belt are all standard.

Apart from the comfort, adjustability, durability & colour scheme (red & black) the bag is compatible with Deuter 10 litre pockets (exactly the right size for a new High Band Tait radio), the hip belt also now has a zipped pocket just the size for a Voda Pager.

Since this bag first found its way into the team and was subjected to the usual 'equipment doom & gloom!' it soon proved to be a very popular item – nearly 50% of all our call out members have one!

A 40 + 10 ladies version is now available with the same spec.

Technical Spec:
* Size: 45 + 10 litre
* Weight: 1950g
* Fabric: Textured rip stop
* Colour: Red/black
* Price: £100.00 Retail
The 50 + 10 has just been reviewed in Trail March 2003
These bags are available from Xi Training www.xitraining.co.uk (if you contact them as a MRT member they will give a discounted price.)



A personal review by Alan Woodhead Bowland Pennine MRT

Reade's Route. A tale of Gamekeeper turned Poacher?



Last May, Ed Roberts and Mike Potts from Stafford MRT set off for a days rock climbing in the Llanberis Pass. What should have been a pleasant day out on the crag turned into something altogether different. Here is their story...

Mike. Crib Goch was looking its stunning best that morning. It was bright and sunny, but not too hot as the breeze took the edge off the heat. We walked and scrambled up a very busy Crib Goch with our climbing bags on our backs. Below the summit, the tall clean Crib Goch Buttress rises for 250 feet from the scree slope of the upper Cwm Uchaf Cwm Glas with spectacular views across the Glyders.

Ed. We had decided to do 'Reade's Route' – 220 feet V Diff – on the North Face of Crib Goch, first climbed in 1908, and not to be confused with 'Reid's Route', an E1 5a that lies to the right of our 'Reade's Route'. Llanberis guidebook describes it thus: –

'A classic outing. The stride across the gap from the top of the pinnacle is quite memorable. Start immediately left of Crazy Pinnacle Gully, and scramble up broken slabby ground until it steepens. Belay on a stance overlooking the gully. Climb easily up the rib past numerous ledges to a large platform below a steep wall. An easy rake leads into the left-hand branch of the gully. Ascend the wall with a difficult move on the left, and go up to a stance at the foot of a large pinnacle. Climb the pinnacle and stride across to a crack in the wall – the crux. Ascend the crack to the top of another pinnacle. Finish up the rib by a shallow groove.'

I decided to lead the first pitch, as the interesting crux of the climb would present Pottsy with a challenge. So, at the first belay stance, Pottsy took the gear from my harness and prepared to lead the next pitch. He made steady progress to the top of a pinnacle, which he had to step off on to a wall behind – the crux. He placed a runner above himself at this point to safeguard this move, and successfully made the step across. At this point Mike took the opportunity to rest, and then made steady progress up this wall for another six

or seven feet before placing another runner.

Mike. Felt very relieved to have passed the crux move. I rested before climbing comfortably for another six feet and placing a nut in a crack. Having moved beyond this suddenly the big jugs disappeared and I became unbalanced. I seem to remember sliding rather than falling down the rock and, reassured that I had some protection just beneath me – it failed and popped out – my gentle slide became a fall which I can't really remember at all.

Ed. As he passed the runner he went up another 4 or 5 feet when he fell. The runner came out as his weight came onto it, and he fell behind the pinnacle coming to rest behind a flake out of my line of sight. He'd fallen about 30 feet. I called out, but there was no response and after a few attempts I secured him onto the belay. With the remaining rope, I configured a system using a belay plate and prussik loop, so I could move across the ledge in an attempt to contact him.

I managed to get far enough across to see the top of his helmet, and saw him lying in an inclined position with his head slightly down. At this point, I was still unable to reach his position as my movement was restricted by the amount of rope available and the terrain we were on. With no response and not being able to conduct a full casualty survey, I needed immediate assistance and phoned ARCC requesting Sea King 122 from Valley. At this time Mike's airway may have become occluded as he started snoring. This lasted for a few moments after which he began to come round. Owing to my position, and the situation, I was unable to give ARCC a grid ref and gave the location by name. Within a few minutes, I heard the helicopter making a radio check which was a great relief. Meanwhile, Pottsy had started talking and was complaining

at his discomfort. I asked him to slowly check his extremities with movement in an attempt to gauge the extent of his injuries. He did this and seemed to have no fractured bones. He then asked about getting upright, which I felt would alleviate his distress. I went back to the belay and pulled the ropes to aid him. All this was done at a very slow pace and he managed to right himself into a sitting position. I then secured him to ensure his movements were minimised.

Mike. My head was pounding. I was hot (very hot). All around me seemed calmed. Why was I lying down? Where the f*** was I? Why was Ed shouting? I didn't have a clue where I was or what I was doing. I didn't know what had happened since we'd left Stafford on Friday afternoon. I felt suddenly light headed (almost drunk in fact – nicely drunk in a beautiful place with friends). What was going on?

I was confused and Ed starting speaking to me. We started giggling and talking c***. As I was lying down I checked out my body for injuries. The adrenalin was pumping and the only thing that I was aware of was a massive headache. I got upright and was surprised when Ed told me that a helicopter was on its way.

Ed. The helicopter soon arrived overhead and proceeded to winch. I later discovered that this winch operation had 180 feet of cable and was superbly done so close to the ridge crest). Meanwhile, I was giving Mike assurance, and told him not to move. I quickly prepared a sling for the loadie, so he could position himself safely on the ledge where I was. The crewman got down to me, unhooked from the winch and the helicopter flew away. When the turbulence and noise calmed down the loadie said that it would be better if Pottsy could be lowered to our position.

Mike. The sight of the helicopter was

a great relief. The loadie was soon with Ed, who was busy reassuring me and explaining things. I managed to stand up when I discovered my body was aching all over. Ed carefully lowered me onto the ledge where the loadie and he were positioned. I was soon secured and examined physically. The helicopter came overhead again and lowered the winch. I felt hot, tired and very relieved as I was laid down on the floor of the helicopter. The crew examined me further and discovered a deep gash to my upper thigh caused by landing on a 'friend' on my harness. Now the harness was applying pressure to the wound and stemming the flow of blood. I had a large bump on my head (helmets recommended!!) and couldn't move my shoulders as I'd torn the ligaments in them whilst falling.

Ed. Pottsy was soon winched up and heading west to Bangor. I declined a lift, choosing to climb down and walk to Llanberis Pass, which would also give me a chance to regain some composure. Mike. I felt quite numb and shaken by the incident as I lay in bed at Bangor hospital, my kit and clothes quickly cut from me. But Andy Elliott and Graeme Sargent appeared and the banter soon prevailed, after seconds of sympathy and concern. Reality. Everyone involved had been great and it was brilliant to see Ed when he walked onto the ward – absolutely brilliant! Cheers Ed!!!!

**Cpl Mike Potts
& Jnr Tech Ed Roberts
MRS HQ Flt, RAF Stafford**

FOOTNOTE It is standard RAF procedure for any accident involving personal injury to be followed by a formal inquiry.

The inquiry into this incident completely exonerated Ed of blame. In fact, he was praised for his handling of a difficult and stressful situation. He has since been awarded a C o m m a n d e r - i n - C h i e f ' s Commendation. Mike has made a full recovery and is back to climbing with a vengeance.