

MRC NEWS

www.mountain.rescue.org.uk



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

ISSUE 7

JANUARY
2004

NEWS FROM THE MRC

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NATIONAL FUNDRAISING DEVELOPMENTS

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Plus

COMPETITION

Win waterproof feet and hands!

Mountain Rescue saves lives in wild and remote places...

...it's our new tagline, but what does it all mean?

Shampoo manufacturers coo it's because we're worth it, DIY giants promise we can do it (no really you can... never mind what those nasty fly-on-the-wall people might tell you), those who would feed us promise every little helps... even the makers of classy cars blind us with a bit of vorsprung durch technik.

Tag line, strap line, punch line, pay off... call it what you will but any brand worth its Cerebos will have one. Tucked away at the bottom of the ad, usually lurking somewhere in the vicinity of the logo (though not always, you understand, if the art director is having a particularly creative moment. Or brainstorm, depending on your viewpoint).

It's there to schmooze us, stroke our ego, appeal to our vanity and good sense, affirm our belief that we are actually very clever people to have chosen it in the first place. It tells us about the product or service, what it's doing for us now, what it's already done for other people and what it really hopes it can do for us in the future. It underlines the unique selling proposition (USP) of the product, the thing that sets it apart from others, the thing that nobody else in the marketplace can offer. In short, it distils an entire advertising and marketing campaign into a few words which, with repeated exposure, will immediately conjure up images of that campaign, without the need for the campaign. And, perhaps most important of all, it asks us for money. Well not in so many words, of course. That would be vulgar.

So... mountain rescue saves lives in wild and remote places. It does what it says on the tin. (See, there goes another one.) But before we tear it limb from limb, how did we get here?

How did we get here?

Some five years ago, the MRC was tasked by all its members to raise the profile of mountain rescue across a national canvas. Much has already been done in this direction with the preparation of corporate guidelines, representations at outdoor shows, the creation of a national press officer, the website. Indeed, the ongoing development of the MRC News.

Back in October, members of the MRC Exec, and various other representatives from around the country, spent a second 'development day' at Buxton base. The first day, back in June, had taken a frank look at where the MRC is now, where we hope to be in five years and how we plan to get there. This second day considered our strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and threats to our organisation. It very quickly became clear that whilst we have many strengths, we often fail to recognise our weaknesses. And, in common with many other charities, an overriding weakness is that we do not understand our own brand. Historically we have failed to capitalise on its value, both at national and team level.

Our brand, presented in a professional and

considered manner, presents an image of us which should both aid public awareness and enhance our chances of raising funds. An effect which should also cascade down to team level. And back the other way, come to that!

But, to be blunt (and that's my job as an advertising person) we are potentially allowing people to hijack our identity for their own marketing purposes without benefit to us. Much of this is down to our voluntary ethic, the not wanting to profit from our passion but, if others recognise the value of having our identity attached to their promotional activity, then so should we.

Harsh facts

It's a harsh fact of life, but it's a very competitive marketplace. Thousands of new charities every year compete for the same pound in your back pocket. Often with marketing techniques which verge on the unscrupulous. So, we need to work on our brand.

Which brings us back to that logo and tag line. The roundel, our logo, is our mnemonic, the generic bit that appears everywhere – vehicles, clothing, stationery, buildings, flags – the bit that the public recognises and which marks each of us out as belonging to a wider organisation. The tag line, as I said, lurks around the logo, enhancing its value and conjuring up a far greater image in the public consciousness.

Why wild and remote? Don't some of us work in perhaps slightly less wild and remote areas than others? In fact, this was hotly debated on the day but, in the end, it was agreed the words epitomise the spirit of adventure at the heart of every mountain rescuer. That which drew most of us into its web in the first place. And, whilst we may be comfortable in our own environments, an area can be 'remote' and 'wild' only ten minutes from a roadside if you are lost, injured or in distress.

Of course, branding isn't just about what appears on the page – it's all the stuff that goes behind it, that instantly evoked image. How will our tag line schmooze the public? What will it tell them about us? Well, backed by a campaign of use – on the MRC website and through promotional literature – it tells them we are there for them. When they get into trouble and nobody else can reach them, we will. We'll pick them up, dust them down, give them whatever care they need... quite possibly save their life. And we do this because we can. Because we want to. We're experienced. We're trained. We're professional. We're organised. And we're jolly nice people, too. Oh, and we're voluntary... so can we have some money, please. (Oops! too vulgar!)

The new tag line was adopted in November. Although it is by no means obligatory, teams can also use it as part of their own identity. All we have to do now is live up to its promise.

Judy Whiteside MRC News Editor

ISSUE WELCOME TO ISSUE 7 SEVEN

NEXT ISSUE

Issue 8 will be April 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

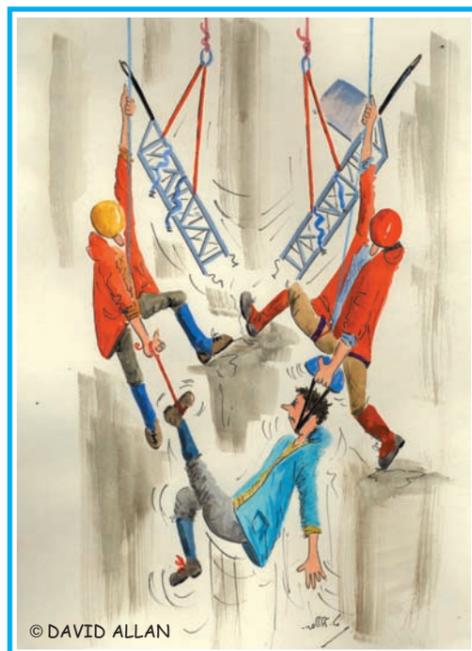
to everyone who has submitted news, articles and photographs for inclusion in the MRC News. If your contribution isn't here, don't worry. Everything is kept on file for future consideration/inclusion, so please keep up the good work.

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

As a fresh-faced youth in the field of mountain rescue with only 24 years experience, there a number of things that always cause me amazement as well as amusement. Chief among these is the apparent conflict between the free 'spirit of mountaineering' and discipline of conformity in mountain rescue. Many team members started out as mountaineers of some sort. They will have been drawn to the sport for one or more of its qualities that can be broadly described as individualistic. Yet at the same time, they have ended up in an organisation that is 'team-oriented'. What is going on?

A key feature of mountaineering has to be the enjoyment of freedom. You can choose your time to start and finish, your route and who you go with (if anybody!) You are in charge of your activity. Many would say it is civilised anarchy. Risk-taking is present throughout the day, but you are in control; and when you're not, take huge pride in coming through the difficulty. It is definitely idiosyncratic; you are answerable only to yourself (sometimes even to your family!) Mountaineering is a selfish, goal-seeking activity. We all derive a massive amount of pleasure being in great surroundings, stamping our independence on a world increasingly driven by mass taste and opinion. You retain the ability to 'walk away'.

Rescue in normal circumstances requires good teamwork. Mountain rescue requires it in even greater quantity and quality. Most readers will have had to work with members they find difficult. But have you ever endangered anyone's life or safety because of this? Teamwork demands co-operation. For this rules, procedures and protocols are operated to focus the efforts of all in one direction. It is clearly the selfless discipline shown by members that sees most incidents brought to a successful conclusion.



© DAVID ALLAN
THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE STRETCHER EASILY SPLITS INTO TWO HALVES...

Who in their right mind would respond 24 hours-per-day, 7 days-per-week, in all weathers to assist some of our clients? Many a team leader has dropped his jaw when the full story is told. Police officers (far more used to implausible stories than us) ask for the story to be repeated because they have suspended belief. Was I really dragged out of my bed to wet-nurse some Hooray Henrys off the fells in the dead of a wet foggy night? And then there is the form filling, equipment cleaning and fundraising. Yet you continue to do it. You must be mad?

But isn't that exactly why we do this work? At the back of our minds there is the mountaineer speaking words like 'challenge', 'different', 'unusual'. We continue to be involved in mountain rescue because it satisfies our need to do the thing that mountaineering offers – freedom to choose to help someone, challenge our skill and knowledge for the benefit of others, break a few rules to speed the casualty to professional medical care (and maybe get a pint or two before closing).

Behind all this, are there not very selfish motives at work? There must be something in it for us or why else would we inconvenience ourselves so much? Job satisfaction is something that seems to be lacking in many areas of society today – perhaps it is this, together with pride in making a professional and worthwhile contribution to our communities. Public perception, especially from the local population, is that we are 'mad'. 'They should be left there to rot' is regularly heard. Perhaps there is not a lot of difference between mountaineering and mountain rescue after all!

Perhaps the most fitting statement came from John Hinde, during a long conversation I had with him at the Lancaster conference. He talked about his long career in MR both in the services and in civilian life, but he concentrated on the humorous and weird. Never sentimental, but aware of others, he said, 'By all means take this work seriously but never ourselves!'

Ged Feeney MRC Statistics Officer

...AND FROM THE EDITOR...

Okay, this is the plan. As from January 2004, the MRC News will be a quarterly publication. January, April, July and September. Why? Well, it does appear to be getting the information out there, where it counts. And all the signs to date are that you enjoy it.

We've come a long way together since those tentative first steps, when I wasn't really sure you'd even want to read it, let alone contribute. Nowadays, far from the worry about lack of copy, now it's more a question of who might I offend by leaving them out? Miracle of miracles (in the world of newsletter publishing), articles, letters and ideas arrive at my door unsolicited.

So here's the thing... if this is going to work as a quarterly, I need even more input from you. Team news, gear reviews, your opinions on the issues of the moment, travel tales, book reviews, film reviews... and plenty of mouth watering photography. Remembering that our central focus is mountain rescue, of course.

Deadline for the April issue will be Friday 28 February. I know you won't let me down.

Judy Whiteside MRC News Editor

MRCNEWS

WORK AT HEIGHT LEGISLATION

Some of you will have been following this with interest. The most recent draft is now available on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk.

The final four months' consultation period, before the new regs are put in place in June 2004, is now up. Whilst the HSE recognise that MR team members are volunteers and not, therefore, included in work directives, there are still concerns. Mike Margeson, MRC Equipment Officer, believes the new legislation to be 'unrealistic and, frankly, poorly drafted and thought through' including, as it does, outdoor activities such as rock climbing, mountaineering and caving alongside building sites, engineering and rope access work places. A meeting between the HSE and representatives of the outdoor industry was scheduled to take place 4 January at Plas y Brenin.

VAC MAT MARK 2

Issue to the regions of Mark 2 is now complete. It has been noted that one of the changes is 'more beads' so the mat is firmer and requires more moulding round the casualty while the air is being evacuated. A handy trick is not to shake the mat to spread the beads out, as with the old mat, but for a team member to have a lie down and move about on it before use, to spread the beads out.

FOLLOW ON FROM PAS Y BRENIN EQUIPMENT DAY

An equipment inspection and checking day is planned for Spring, following the success of last May's Equipment Day. This will take place at a central location with 24 places available. If successful, there will be a further course later in the year.

NATIONAL TEAM LEADERS' MEETING

The National Team Leaders' Meeting took place in Huddersfield on Saturday 6 December, hosted by Mike France. Not a huge turn out on the day, but there was varied input and food for thought for all. From Calder Valley MRT came discussion on the implications of a major road traffic accident involving team members and a team Land Rover Ambulance, so badly damaged it had to be replaced. There were also presentations on the work of Penrith and Llanberis teams and lively question and answer sessions. Consensus is that this is always a good day and a useful forum for deputies and team leaders to network.

CONFERENCE 2004. BANGOR

The 2004 Conference takes place at the University of North Wales, Bangor, North Wales, from Friday 10 to Sunday 12 September. No prices as yet. Keep an eye on MRC News for latest developments.

PROBLEMS WITH 999

At a recent Duddon & Furness call out, team members arrived to find the Ambulance and the North West Air Ambulance parked up in a nearby forestry car park with three of the personnel and some passing walkers about to embark on a technical evacuation of a lady who had fallen from Pack Horse Bridge into the mini gorge below. The situation had arisen because her companions, on dialling 999 and asking for mountain rescue, were told that they could not have it. But did they want Fire, Ambulance or Police? This dialogue was repeated several times until eventually the operator, instead of putting them through to Police control, put them through to Ambulance control, who promptly dispatched the Air Ambulance and a standard Ambulance crew from Millom, to go all the way up to Duddon. So, when the Ambulance did arrive, half an hour later, the Air Ambulance had been sitting there for some time, with no comms (as it was on the ground). At this point, the Ambulance driver, an ex-team member, decided that mountain rescue should be called. Only three days later, Mike Margeson, team leader of Duddon & Furness, heard from Dave Freeborn, Patterdale team leader, that they had experienced a similar, if not worse, 999 situation. When the informant called and asked for

mountain rescue, they were not only told they could not have it, but were cut off by the operator. Obviously, these issues are being followed up but it does indicate that it is worth teams visiting their local Police control room on a regular basis, to keep a presence. We clearly still don't have a joined up service. High time we did.

INSURANCE UPDATE

Dave Little, MRC Treasurer reports:- The run into Christmas would be a whole lot easier and less stressful if I reorganised the renewal of the Public Liability insurance to some other time of the year! Details of the renewed policy will be with the regions in the new year. A couple of queries cropped up last year. Firstly, **water rescue** seemed to cause concern. In our summary of cover, our operational areas include lakes, rivers and watercourses of the UK and, therefore, any training necessary to be competent. Of course, we are mountain and cave rescue teams, so such operational areas are incidental to our normal activities. There was a restriction imposed by insurers on the size of powered watercraft, not greater than 3m in length and not exceeding a speed of 7 knots. The new policy should have an increase in length allowable and it should have rectified the omission of 'coastline' in the operational areas. Secondly, our Medical Officer has revised and updated the **MR First**

FIXED DATES IN THE CALENDAR

MRC MEETINGS
3RD SATURDAY IN
MAY & NOVEMBER
TEAM LEADERS MEETING
1ST SATURDAY IN
DECEMBER
TEAM DOCTORS MEETING
2ND FRIDAY IN
OCTOBER

Aid statement. This was handed over to the insurers early November and so far there has been no adverse comment. Earlier in the year I offered to update the **Insurance News** but, due to changes, it was like trying to hit a moving target. Early in the new year I will complete the document and circulate to all teams. As before, it will contain cover and certificate details. I have also contributed to national concerns raised on difficulties faced by charities in obtaining appropriate insurance at a reasonable cost. The Home Office working party on insurance cover has been involved and the matter has been raised to government. So far, the contribution has been a questionnaire and the resulting report can be found on www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/ecwg/index.html I think it will be a long time before government concern turns into practical help. Talking of help, at the last MRC meeting, I asked if there is any willing 'insurance expert' within MR, then it would be very beneficial to have such a person on board to help with the ever increasing complexity with insurance. If you know anyone, please contact me on davidhlittle@supanet.com

RAY DAVIES TO STEP DOWN

Ray Davies is to step down as Secretary of the MRC next May. A replacement will be sought through the normal procedures.

NEW TEAM RECOGNISED

New team in the south west, Cornwall Rescue Group, has now been officially recognised as a member of the MRC.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE COMMS UPDATE

At the beginning of October, UKSAR issued the long awaited implementation and control document (Version 4.5). The document covers use of HIGH BAND land search and rescue radio channels from the Home Office, Scottish Executive and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Channels are available for use by bona fide teams and organisations involved in rescue work. ie. MRC, BCRC, ALSAR and the Police. Over the past few years,

most teams who had received approval to use the LOW BAND search and rescue channels sought executive approval to use the HIGH BAND search and rescue channels (Appendix A for MRC; Appendix B for MRC of S). There are now ten additional HIGH BAND channels (Appendix C), which are administered by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. EVERY team and organisation wishing to use these channels must apply (using the appropriate form) to the Chairman of the UKSAR CWG, Tony Jones. The MRC Communications Sub Committee is working with the MRC of S to provide a default operating channel to all teams using the new frequencies to reduce the problems of co-channel interference. This allocation will be subject to a 'Gentleman's Agreement' and a team will not 'own a channel'. To view/download document and application form, go to www.uk-sar.org look under work groups, and select 'communications'.

OLDHAM INTERNATIONAL WEEKEND 2004

Friday 30 April to Sunday 2 May 2004
Prices unchanged from last year. Invites will be mailed out early in the New Year. Contact Tony Gillon on omrt@aol.com for further details.

MRC COURSES 2004

NATIONAL TRAINING SEMINAR

100 places.
Everyone welcome.
Date: Sunday 16 May
Location: Plas y Brenin
Contact: Richard Holmes
0191 252 7485
r_n_holmes@hotmail.com

PARTY LEADERSHIP TRAINING

30 places.
This practical course promotes effective leadership of parties during a search and rescue operation, crucial to a successful outcome.
Date: Weekend 2-6 July
Location: Rishworth
Contact: Peter Smith
01706 852 335
petersmith.mr@btopenworld.com

SEARCH FIELD SKILLS

30 places.
This course addresses skills required by searchers in the field. It considers the vital role of search parties and how they maximise their efficiency and effectiveness.
Date: 4-6 September
Location: Bangor University
Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE
01248 364131
Peter Howells
01633 893447

SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

40 places.
This course addresses the vital skills required to plan and manage a search operation.
Date: 13-17 September
Location: Bangor University
Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE
01248 364131
Peter Howells
01633 893447

WATER HAZARDS AWARENESS

To be arranged.
Contact: John Edwards
jmemr@talk21.com

EQUIPMENT INSPECTION & TECHNICAL ASPECTS

To be arranged.
Contact: John Edwards
jmemr@talk21.com

IT FIGURES!

By way of a change, I thought I would give you an insight into the exciting life of the Statistics Officer outside of MRC meetings. There were three main issues to deal with over the last six months. The common thread to them all is information. One of the main aims of the MRC is to keep the public informed about the work of mountain rescue teams throughout England and Wales. This must extend beyond the locality where they operate if we are to raise our profile and increase public awareness.

Some of the 'older lags' may well remember the disabled climber, Norman Croucher. His ascents of mountains over 10,000 feet number eighty, including the sixth highest in the world, Cho Oyu, which reaches 26,906 feet. He has recently published a book, *Climbing for Seasoned Gentlefolk* in which he puts forward the argument that older members of this species have a right to explore rock faces and mountains. In the second edition, he wants to include some information about causes of accidents.

I was happy to reply that this group (over 50s) are more likely to collapse, be reported overdue or succumb to a slip that those under 50. However, they are less likely to be benighted, reported as cragfast or reported as lost. If ever there was evidence for there being something in a 'wise old head', then you are looking at it!

The MRC Chairman regularly meets with representatives from the BMC. Information and views are shared that are of mutual concern. David Allan asked for two points that he could discuss with the BMC. Without delving into the figures, it has become clear over the years that there are two irrefutable issues in climbing accidents in this country.

Unlike all the other major climbing area, climbers in the Peak District generally rip out all the protection as they race toward the ground. Many reports point out that the 'runners

were stripped'. Many climbers 'decked out' having lost all protection. It may be worth investigating why this is so. Is the protection used unsuited to the rock formations or are they badly placed?

There are many accidents on what are deemed 'Scrambling' routes. They tend to offer that additional excitement that a path walk fails to give, but usually contain greater objective danger than many rock climbs, given that little protection is used. The accidents do not seem to happen to experienced practitioners, but more to those ignorant of the nature of the activity. This area could benefit from a higher profile within a BMC education initiative.

Finally, the MRC has received a request from Dr Bob Koester, University of Virginia, USA, for us to participate in a study into the behaviour of missing persons. In particular, he wishes to incorporate into his international study the data we have been collecting on the subject. The MRC has approved our co-operation with this well-respected academic who has many published papers on the behaviour of lost person, especially Alzheimer's sufferers. In a small way it is encouraging to our own study to continue this despite many search subjects still not being reported as part of our study.

I am not one to waste an opportunity – if you haven't already started, begin to report the behaviour of your search subjects. As with all these items, I will keep you updated on any developments.

Ged Feeney MRC Executive

Climbers in the Peak District generally rip out all the protection as they race toward the ground.

Many reports point out the 'runners were stripped'. Many climbers 'decked out' having lost all protection.

PARTY LEADER COURSE

Rishworth School
4-6 July 2003



Once again, the course was blessed with good weather as thirty prospective Party Leaders assembled on the high Pennine moors. They had travelled from all parts of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland to take part in this practical training weekend. The course has a high staffing ratio involving fifteen experienced members drawn from a variety of teams throughout England and Wales, along with seven members from local teams who volunteered to act as exercise casualties.

The wild moorland of the Pennines, deeply incised with steep sided stream valleys, provides excellent and varied locations for realistic practical exercises. The members were tutored and then mentored in small parties as they worked their way through a succession of scenarios that reflected the requirements of 'National Training Guidelines for Fell Party Leaders'.

Knowledge and skills acquired during the course greatly enhance the confidence of members to undertake the role of Party Leader in dealing with briefings, deployment, safety, search techniques, casualty site management, triage, fatalities, evacuation, recording and reporting.

Effective leadership of parties during a search and rescue incident is crucial to a successful outcome. Furthermore, Party Leaders who are trained rather than having to learn 'on the job' are a great asset when being deployed by Team Leaders and Incident Controllers.

Comments from the course members:-

Just to let you know that the party from SEMRA arrived safely home with their now increased knowledge and party leadership skills. I thank you most sincerely for a wonderful weekend. It was for us a fantastic chance to work with other mountain rescue teams and to learn from each other.

Excellent course – thanks very much for the obvious effort which went into the organisation and co-ordination of the two days. The quality of instruction was excellent. I greatly appreciate so many people giving up their weekend to contribute to the course. The venue was great – especially the catering. Apart from the formal skills-based training there was a superb opportunity for networking between teams which has given me an alternative perspective on a number of aspects of the MR role.

Many thanks for an excellent weekend. The fell party that I was lucky enough to be part of worked and gelled together very well. Some members were more nervous than others but we got each other through the weekend with TLC and a lot of graft. I was proud to be part of this course and also having it on our patch really helped us to help the other members.

Just a short note to say many thanks to yourself and all the organising team from myself and the Tayside Team – an excellent weekend in field and play!!! Meeting similar colleagues from the south was well worth the journey.

Special thanks are due to the Dulverton Trust who sponsored the course via the MRC and helped to keep the costs at an acceptable level for the participants. An excellent weekend.

Peter Smith Course Director



Mountains for Active Diabetics Update

Hot on the successful heels of Mad Idea 2003, Mountains for Active Diabetics weekend, held at Plas y Brenin in March 2003, **Mad Idea 2004** travels to Europe. The Ecrins National Park, France to be precise. 23-27 June. The event, again introduced by Nikki Wallis (Wales) and Jerry Gore (UK/France), will be based at La Maison du Parc National des Ecrins, in Vallouise.

Just to give you a taste of things to come, guest speakers include Herbert Hausmann from Germany, the first person with diabetes to complete the Marathon des Sables, a 143 mile ultra marathon across the Sahara and winner of the Diabetes Exercise & Sports Association Athletic Achievement in 1998. Then there's Will Cross, from the UK and USA, conqueror of both North and South poles, summiter of Aconcagua, crosser of the Sahara and team leader of the 2004 Everest Expedition, which aims to place the first person with diabetes on the summit of Everest... Ernest Bladé, from Catalunya, Spain, one of the world's most accomplished diabetic mountaineers, with climbing and mountaineering experience rivaling the world's top professional climber... Mauro Sormani from Italy, world class cross country skier, ski roller, sky runner, high altitude alpinist, also with diabetes... and many others. This will truly be an event you cannot afford to miss, with lots of practical relevant advice and information, discussion about diabetes management, different diabetes therapies, the effects of altitude and extreme environments on diabetes, blood glucose meters and much, much more...

Booking forms and programmes are now available online at www.mountain-mad.org
Keep an eye on the site for regular updates!

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REGIONAL NEWS

LAKE DISTRICT

25 YEARS' SERVICE AWARD

Dr Mick Leverton, Medical Officer with **Duddon & Furness MRT** has been presented with his



25 years' service award. A GP in practice in Millom until his retirement, Mick was a member of the Millom team before its merger with Furness MRT and remains an active member of the new team. He

has seen many rescues and searches in his twenty five years, with a huge amount of his time devoted to the training and development of casualty care and equipment for the team. It was Mick's idea to obtain and trial the lightweight oxygen cylinders which have proved to be such a success.

AUCTION RAISES £6K

Wasdale MRT's summer auction weekend raised well over £6,000. Not quite the same as last year's event, but impressive nevertheless.

Team Secretary Guy Newbold takes this opportunity to thank those members of other teams who turned up in foul weather and apologises for the absence of the host team for most of Saturday! On the biggest fundraising event of the year came a call from Scafell to a chap with a broken ankle! 'Still', he says, 'it gave us a chance to try out our new team issue Páramo suits which performed very well indeed in torrential rain on the long carry out.' The team has now purchased a new advance Land Rover and renovated the existing one, to bring it up to scratch with the new vehicle. So they now have two very shiny and well equipped Landies with just the minibus ambulance left to replace. Fundraising plans are underway. Wasdale T-shirts and base layers are still available at 'very reasonable' prices – email Guy on sec@wmrt.co.uk

EVEREST CHALLENGE

Dan Golding, Training Officer with **Coniston MRT** and one of the team's doctors returned home in late November after coming a magnificent thirteenth in the Everest Challenge. He was also first overseas runner across the line in this marathon event, which sets off from Everest base camp. Look out for more on his achievement in the April issue.



Beer Walk 2003

'What is it?' I asked. 'It's about a 15 mile walk taking in about ten pubs, a drink in each one.' It took me about a nanosecond to reply, 'Yep, count me in.' Not that I condone drinking to excess in any way, but surely it has to be a Gift from the Gods. 24 cans in a pack. 24 hours in a day. Coincidence? I think not.

It was the Beer Walk and I was a Beer Walk Virgin. 15 miles of staggering through Saddleworth villages Diggle, Delph, Dobcross and Denshaw. What was it with Saddleworth planners and the letter D? Come to think of it, did I actually walk through Denshaw?

I was only half way round and it was already starting to become a bit of a blur. Where am I? What's the name of this pub? What's the name of that hill we have to climb? There I was, traipsing round after a bunch of Beer Walk veterans like a sheep. Literally. There were 15 odd people (some odder than others!) representing the team – two Bo Peeps, a farmer, his dog, a sheep pen... and the rest of us were sheep.

We were dressed in white suits covered in cotton wool, actually. But, after ten beers, who cared? A great day was had by all (so I am told) and we even raised some cash along the way.

Michael Grimes Oldham MRT

MID PENNINE

HELP THE HOMELESS

In mid summer, members of **Bolton MRT** found themselves without a roof over their heads when, due to housing redevelopment, they lost their modest one bay garage and equipment/training rooms. The team had enjoyed a peppercorn rent on the Overdale property since 1971, thanks to Bolton Council. A double blow came with the announcement that the nearby factory premises, where the other three vehicles and two trailers were kept, was to close in December. However, the fairy godmother came in the form of Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service, who provided a two bay, fully heated garage at Bolton Central Fire Station, along with next door toilet facilities. The team now has the double benefit of paying less rent than on their previous property, for almost three times more space!

Next in line with the magic wand was Greater Manchester Ambulance Service, who offered the use of a very large building within Ladybridge Hall Ambulance Training School, Bolton. There the team enjoy the use of two out of a five bay ambulance garage, complete with the entire upstairs space, which was in a very derelict condition, necessitating a spend of some £23,000 on refurbishment. There is also an adjacent toilet and storage building. So, far from being homeless, they now have all four vehicles undercover, in heated garages, in two locations with excellent HQ facilities at GMAS, Ladybridge and full use of the Ambulance Training School facilities! If that wasn't enough, property developers Bellway Homes have also stumped up £3,000 for the team's early vacation of the premises!



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REGIONAL NEWS

NORTH EAST

INSIDE OUT IN SCARBOROUGH

December saw **Scarborough & District SRT** receiving an Area Commander's Commendation from North Yorkshire Police for their part in the successful search and subsequent rescue of 78 year old Geoffrey Noble. Mr Noble was reported missing from home on 31 July, after going to Scarborough for his usual weekly shopping trip. An extensive search was quickly assembled. Mr Noble was eventually found in the early hours of Saturday 2 August, in an isolated area of Harwood Dale Forest, within two miles of his home in the remote village of Harwood Dale. He had spent two nights in the forest as the result of a fall but, despite being cold, was otherwise unhurt. The commendation was received by Andrew Priestley, Team Leader, at a presentation in Helmsley.

NORTH WALES



USES FOR A BELL...

'Team members will be familiar with the popular standard MR stretchers used throughout the UK. Those who have assisted the Ogwen troops will also know that Ogwen has often been different,' reports Christopher Lloyd. 'In the early days of the **Ogwen Valley MRT**, we had the Mariner stretcher which was brought back from Austria by team members. For many years we used the stalwart of all MR stretchers, the Thomas. Initially it was the straight Thomas with a canvas bed. Then the bed was changed to the more aero-dynamic wire mesh. In the mid Sixties, the stretcher was split in two halves. We experimented with a totally demountable model. By the mid Eighties a few team members set about the Ogwen one design stretcher which comes in kit form. Team members love this stretcher because it can be divided amongst team members and no one or two people are left carrying a paraglider on their backs. As with all designs it does have disadvantages. One disadvantage is that to other MRTs, it looks like a Meccano set without the written assembly instructions. In more recent years we have addressed this problem by buying a Bell stretcher, so that stretcher carries in Northern Snowdonia are not exclusive to those who have mastered the Ogwen one design kit.

'On Saturday the 9 August 2003 (one of the hottest days of our glorious summer), the team was called to assist a middle-aged casualty with heat exhaustion some 2,000 feet above the Ogwen Valley on Pen yr Olewen.

'The casualty had already endured a two hour car journey from Manchester that morning before being let loose on the steep and direct assault on the south face of Pen yr Olewen. As she carried no water, she was disappointed to find that this side of the mountain had no streams or pools. When she collapsed, her two colleagues soon exhausted their own water trying to revive her. One of them returned to the valley floor to collect more water. After a further three hours of nursing the casualty, without much success, the OVMRO were called.

'The advanced party was deployed and soon found the casualty lying conscious in the shade of some boulders near the summit. They radioed the Base requesting a stretcher party. At Base we looked at the assortment of stretchers ranging from the straight Thomas of the 1930's design, the Mariner of the 1950's design, the Neil Robinson of a similar age, the Ogwen one design and then the Bell. That's the one, but don't let's bother with that great stretcher of Forth Bridge design. We'll take the pack frames.

'Travelling so light, we were soon at the casualty site where we found Feathers, a seven year old Airedale terrier. She was carefully loaded onto the assembled pack frame stretcher and carried off the mountain.

'Perhaps Peter Bell hadn't thought of this type of casualty when designing the Bell stretcher system, but it fitted the job perfectly.

'And, as for Feathers... she made a full recovery within a few days.

PEAK DISTRICT

PDMRO FOUNDATION COURSE

The PDMRO Basic Course, now renamed Foundation Course, took place in early October at the Scout Dike Activity Centre, Penistone, West Yorkshire. This was the first course under the new Training Sub Committee Chairman, Dave Morgan. With 35 delegates, representing all seven teams in the Peak District, this was the best attended course for some years. Lectures focused on the more advanced needs of mountain rescue, in acknowledgement that team training is now very much improved and up to a high standard. It was felt that these



SOUTH WALES

Bob Wilson

Members of **Longtown MRT** are mourning the recent death of Bob Wilson from a rare and incurable form of cancer. Bob was an experienced Search Manager and a popular and active member of the team, which operates in the Black Mountains of South Wales. As an Inspector in West Mercia Police he brought much of his professional knowledge and skill into the service of the team. He was a kind man, competent and calm under pressure, whose care of casualties and their families was exemplary. Tim Potts, Team Doctor/Chairman said, 'We, his friends and colleagues, will miss his comradeship and consider it a privilege to have shared times with him on the hill. The Team would like to say thank you for all the messages of sympathy and support from fellow mountain rescue team members within South Wales and nationally.

members would benefit from subjects that are not normally given at team level, mainly due to getting the right instructors to benefit the many. These subjects covered the police and controller involvement from the beginning of an incident, all aspects of search, scenes of crime and downed aircraft – complete with an ejector seat and dummy pilot! As the first under the new title, there were lessons to be learned but, on the whole, it was agreed to be a very good course, enjoyed by the members. 'We would like to thank all the people involved who made this a success and look forward to running the course again next year, based on the knowledge we gained over the weekend,' said Eve Burton, on behalf of the PDMRO.

YORKSHIRE DALES

FURTHER ROYAL HONOURS FOR UWFRA

Upper Wharfedale FRA have received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for voluntary service by groups in the community 2003. HM Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Lord Crathorne, presented the award to a full house consisting of members past and present as well as local dignitaries and the regional press. Only 200 awards had been made nationally, with only four in the county, so it was a great accolade. In his address, Lord Crathorne observed that UWFRA was more than a team, it was a family and one which knew the value of working together closely. And he spoke from first hand experience, as the current President of Cleveland SRT.

Lord Crathorne went on to present individual medals to the 60 members who were able to attend the event, which required some effort with all the handshakes and individual photos. In anticipation of this, the team made sure he signed the visitors book on arrival whilst he still had use of his hand! At one stage, his speech came to an unexpected end and, after a shuffling of papers, he had to confess that he



Tribute to John Wright

I could write for days and still not encompass the impact John Wright made on Exmoor SRT and, indeed, the broader community. Every team member who was privileged to work and play alongside John will have different but equally fond memories of time spent in his company.

I first met John in June 1992, when he and I, along with several other members still in the team today, responded to an advert for suitable applicants to join the North Devon Search Volunteers. It was the beginning of a friendship that lasted over ten years.

John quickly gathered support, from old and new members alike, for his vision of a moorland search and rescue team to cover Exmoor and the surrounding area. Within nine months of that initial meeting, he had the backing of both Devon & Cornwall and Avon & Somerset Police Forces, Exmoor National Park and Dartmoor Rescue Group (DRG). Through discussion with DRG, he learned that recognition as a moorland rescue resource would mean acceptance by the South West England Rescue Association which, in turn, affiliated us to the MRC. The first AGM of the Exmoor team took place on the 3 February 1994, with John unanimously elected as Chairman, a measure of the respect in which he was held.

Christine Wright, John's wife, supported him and the team fully. Indeed, the rescue equipment and vehicle were based at their home in Bishops Tawton. They even used their own washing machine to clean the casbags and KISU's. DRG donated an old, ex-British Gas Land Rover, which John quickly set about turning into a useable rescue vehicle.

John had a glass eye, having lost the sight in one eye as a teenager, when he was shot with an air rifle. Despite that, he was one of the best drivers I knew, having spent many, many years riding motorcycles on and off road, competing in the Scottish Six Days' Trial for several years. On frequent occasions I shared the front of the Land Rover with John en route to a call out and can only remember closing my eyes twice! He'd tell me that was okay as he had shut his as well!

At training weekends and conferences, John could stay at the bar commanding an audience until the early hours of the morning, when men and woman half his age had admitted defeat and retired to bed – and still be first up and out in the morning.

He had extremely high standards and demanded the same level of commitment from all team members which, on occasion, exasperated him. In February 1999, John did not seek re-election as Chairman despite having served continuously for five years in this post. He was suffering considerable pain since the operation on his heart two years earlier, which included the fitting of a pacemaker – even this had been installed to cause least impact where his rucksack touched his skin. Anything to maintain his enjoyment of walking. As President, he continued to be an ambassador of the team.

In November 2002, John attended the first indoor meeting for several months, whilst thinner and visibly weakened by cancer, he stood and addressed the team for several minutes, congratulating everyone on their efforts to promote and carry the team forward. He was genuinely proud and content at the knowledge that he had contributed to this success, though I doubt he realised just how great his contribution was. This was the last time I saw him alive. John died at home on 3 January 2003, surrounded by his family.

Team members, dressed in our red team jackets, provided a guard of honour outside the church. John's body was escorted to Bishops Tawton Church and crematorium by the team Land Rover and some twenty plus motorcycle outriders on their classic machines, thus representing the two most influential interests in his life.

One of John's ice axes is mounted at team headquarters alongside a memorial plaque in his memory, and each year the John Wright Award will be presented to a member of the team. The criteria for nominations will not be fixed, as John would have been the first to recognise that it takes many qualities to make a good team member including humour in the face of adversity, of which he possessed in abundance.

Sam Bryant-Jones Medical Officer, Exmoor SRT



had left the last page of his notes in the official car. Perhaps, with his MR experience, he should have anticipated the cheers and applause this prompted. Indeed, his 'deliberate' mistake went down so well it was suggested that he build this into all his future presentations. He has yet to respond to this suggestion!

Lord Crathorne also presented ex-Chairman, Chris Baker, with a surprise gift from the team for his tremendous service. This completely took Chris aback but, as he struggled with the packaging, up stepped Lord Crathorne and, in full regalia, drew his ceremonial sword to slice through the binding tape – a splendid moment and all these goings on before anyone even got to the buffet area to toast the occasion over a drink or two! A momentous day!

The team got back to business a couple of weeks later with a 14 hour long rescue of a seriously injured caver in the notorious Dowder Gill Passage, part of the Dow Cave system near Kettlewell. With the assistance of colleagues from the CRO at Clapham, the call out, involving 90 members, was a full YDRP effort. The caver, who had been trapped by a boulder, was finally brought to the surface to be taken to hospital by a helicopter from RAF Leaconfield where he was found to have severe injuries to his legs and femur. Lord Crathorne would have been proud of both teams.

Kit crit An illuminating experience?

Beep, beep, beep off goes the pager, it's a 'hurry up' job, a lower leg fracture a short distance up the fell. You dash up the fell in the setting evening winter sun and evac' to the helicopter. You and the team put on your trusty head torches, then stumble and grope you way back down in the dying orange glow of your six year old head torch battery! Sound familiar?

We first played with LED torches two years ago with the Petzl Tikka (3 LED) which proved excellent for personal light and lasted forever (almost) on three little AAA batteries.

Now there's a new LED torch out called the Tikka Plus. As with the previous Tikka, the LEDs are super efficient and give a blue/white pool of light rather than a spot – and the best part is that you never need to replace the bulbs!

So why the Tikka Plus? Well, the addition of 1 extra LED, making 4 in total, increases the light output greatly. The body is now pivoted so it can be adjusted up and down but the best part is the 4 light settings that the Plus has. Setting 1 is full power approx 15m light beam for 80 hours on the three AAA batteries. Setting 2 gives a 10m pool for 120 hours. Setting 3 is only for the very meanest team members – 5m of light beam for 150 hours. Setting 4 is a flashing mode. This should only be used by the extremely mean as it is very difficult to walk in time with the flash, but the batteries do last for 400 hours!

On a slightly more serious note the Tikka Plus weighs only 78g with batteries (about the same as an empty tea cup) and costs around £30. It gives more than enough light to walk off the fell. It's not a search light and not as

bright as most head torches with bulbs; the difference is that the batteries last so long you should always have light rather than the traditional orange glow and the dread of explaining to the wife why you need to spend £6 on a flat battery! LED lights have proved themselves with our team. Even some of the 'old school' have hung up their fading head torches for super bright LED technology.

A personal review by Alan Woodhead Bowland Pennine MRT (lucky enough to work for a company which lets me buy lots of new toys!!)



GOOD WILL AMONG RESCUE TEAMS the story continues...

Back in July 2002, we reported that, thanks to a significant bequest from a Keswick resident which allowed them to purchase two new Land Rover 110 Td5 Station wagons, Keswick MRT were able to donate one of their older vehicles to Edale MRT. As a result, the Peak District team were able to review their situation and decided to purchase two new vehicles – one brand new, and one that was well maintained with a low mileage. In June this year, they took delivery of a new Land Rover. Since then, team members have worked hard to make the vehicle up to the right specification for the job. Some of this work has involved making contacts with various suppliers to get the best deal, some has been sheer hard graft kitting the vehicle out. This, of course, left them with a bit of a problem. They now had three vehicles and really only needed two. What should they do with the old Land Rover? It was around this time that the newly launched Cornwall Rescue Group asked to visit Edale, along with other teams in the area, to see how they operate, what type of systems they use, what training they have and so on. Jim Galliene from the Cornwall Rescue Group visited for a couple of days

to have a look around and explained how they were hoping to get things off the ground in Cornwall. Said Neil Roden, of Edale MRT, 'Having in mind the generosity of the Keswick team, we were quickly able to agree that we should gift our old, but serviceable Land Rover to the CRG free of charge. In September, Jim and another member of his team, met with Edale team members for a short handover ceremony.' Edale MRT Chairman said, 'It's really good that we find ourselves in a position to help out another team. We benefited from the generosity of Keswick MRT and it's good to keep alive the spirit of teams helping one another. Everyone at Edale wishes all the best to the Cornwall Rescue Group and I hope teams can continue helping each other'.

It's good to keep alive the spirit of teams helping one another.



It's been a busy year for Cornwall Rescue Group. Launched in March 2003 to provide a dedicated search and rescue team for Cornwall, they ended the year on a high having been accepted as a member of the MRC, becoming a registered charity, and finally going live in November.

Says Team Leader, Jim Gallienne, 'It's been very hectic but very exciting for us. And I'd like to say a big thank you to all the MR teams who've helped us on our way.'

Earlier this year, CRG made an appeal to other teams for assistance via the MRC website. Response was extremely positive, with offers of help ranging from advice and information through to equipment and vehicles. This led Jim, and CRG Chairman, Andy Brelsford, to conduct a

fact-finding mission around other teams. 'We wanted to see different ways of working', explained Jim, 'and visited three very different teams – Edale, Bolton and Keswick. We were given tours of their bases, joined in their training sessions and even accompanied Edale on a shout, which was really educational.'

Since then, the Peak District team have donated their surplus Land Rover to the team. 'We're very grateful to Edale for this gift. It is currently our only dedicated vehicle and will certainly improve our operational capabilities,' said Andy.

It's not just about equipment... we've received lots of useful tips, guidance and information and been amazed at how helpful other teams have been.

Bolton MRT are also doing their bit. They are awaiting a new delivery of jackets and Buffaloes and have offered their old ones to their new friends in Cornwall.

'But it's not just about equipment,' Jim went on. 'We've also received lots of useful tips, guidance and information and have been amazed by how helpful other teams have been.'

Throughout the year, CRG have been busy recruiting and training new members and team strength currently stands at 45. Their training is run through Remote Access International (R-A-I) and, unusually, the group actually gets paid when its members are training.

According to Jim, '2004 looks like being just as busy for us with some trial schemes with other Cornish emergency services being developed. And, of course, the pager is poised and ready for those call-outs to come flooding in!'

Win waterproof feet... and hands, too, come to that

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Take a look on www.SealSkinz.com and you'll see just how versatile these monkeys are – running, horse riding, canoeing, fishing, cycling, rowing, walking, motorcycling... sailing... There's a whole bunch of people telling the world what they get up to in their SealSkinz.

All you have to do to get your feet – and hands – inside a pair is answer a few simple questions and tell us in no more than 30 words what you'd do in yours...

- 1 How many products are there in the SealSkinz range?
 - 2 What sort of sheep keep your SealSkinz mid-thermal socks cosy?
 - 3 What's the maximum temperature you'd wash 'em in?
- And finally... **What would you do in yours?**

Send your entries, along with your name, address and hat and glove size (see website for sizes) to The Editor, MRC News, 8 Bridgefoot Close, Boothstown, Worsley, Manchester M28 1UG to reach us by 20 February. Winners will be announced in the April issue.



Interesting avalanche stats

- In Switzerland, 21 persons died in avalanches during the winter 2002-2003. 12 were off-piste skiers and 9 backcountry skiers.
- 25 avalanche rescue operations were carried out in French ski areas, of which 5 were on the slopes and 20 off-piste. 8 had a fatal outcome (all off-piste) with 9 dead, amongst which 4 guides. (source: SNOISM).
- A third of all people killed in avalanches in France during winter 2002-2003, as well as the winter before, were either guides or instructors themselves or a person in company with one. This shows that an avalanche accident is not always a result of bad judgement or lack of experience. An avalanche is a phenomenon that is hard to foresee, even for an experienced skier.
- In order to excavate an avalanche victim buried at a depth of 1m (average depth), 4 cubic metres of snow must be removed which corresponds to 1.5-2 tons of snow (source: SAC, Swiss Alpine Club).
- Although a number of avalanche victims equipped with transceivers are found by their companions, 75% are excavated by organised rescue services (reported accidents). The main reasons are lack of suitable equipment, strength and presence of mind (source: SAC).
- In Switzerland, 80% of mountain accidents are today notified by means of mobile phones.
- The average time elapsed between the received alarm and the arrival of the Swiss helicopter rescue service (REGA) on the accident site constantly diminishes. It is currently 22 minutes.

Paul Horder offers some personal notes to give a flavour of this year's Conference.

IKAR was attended by 155 delegates from 22 of the member organisations

Austria (11) · Canada (6) · Croatia (10) · Czech Republic (3) · England & Wales (3) · France (18) · Germany (5) · Italy (16) · Liechtenstein (5) · Norway(8) · Poland (6) · Romania (1) · Scotland (8) · Slovak Republic (4) · Slovenia (5) · Sweden (11) · Switzerland (21) USA (14)

The general theme this year seemed to be, 'lessons which can be learned from rescues'.

This year, for much of the time, the Terrestrial and Avalanche Commissions worked together which meant that many of the presentations were based on avalanche problems. This emphasis seems to vary each year depending on where the year's problems and interesting rescues had been focused.

Make sure that avalanche beacon batteries are in tiptop condition. Many tales of beacons having discharged batteries, no batteries or of not being switched on!

Recommendation for joining static ropes – use figure of eights with double fisherman's. Other knots acceptable if the users can justify the safety of them.

An IKAR winter workshop is being held in Pontresina, Switzerland in mid January 2004. Next year it will be in Zakopane.

An Austrian account of an impressive and protracted rescue on the Widdersstein (2533m) on 29 December 2002

Three climbers were avalanched near the summit. Weather conditions and much new snow with avalanche danger meant that the rescue was thwarted several times. Subsequent avalanches justified the decisions. The transceiver on one victim was turned off! Victims found on third day at 1.2m and 1.5m depth (just under surface of original avalanche). The third victim was found alive! A perennial question – how far do you take your rescue missions?

Dale Atkins of the USA
Lessons learned in avalanche rescue in the US
300 rescues from 1950 to 2003 had been analysed. In summary where mistakes had been made, the following areas of error were identified.

- * **Poor organisation**
No 'plan' in place or a 'plan' not practised, flawed leadership, lack of proper equipment, failure to utilise personnel adequately.
- * **Mishandling of the informant**
Inaccurate information (place last seen, number of victims, location),

failure to keep hold of the informant and to question adequately, failure to take informant/witness back to the scene, failure to keep track of the informant/witness at the site.

* **Inadequate, hasty search**
No hasty search at all, inadequate search missing vital clues, no silence (not listening), not finding the accident site!

* **Mismanaged search**
Poor control over access to area, not probing all the area, not trusting the dog's inclinations and digging indicated areas, contamination of area by rescuers, helicopter landing in area before probing.

* **Mistakes made by individual personnel**
Improper training, inadequately equipped, poor physical condition.

Solutions
Develop and practise a written plan (procedures, personnel, leadership, comms, resources, etc). Don't plan alone – brainstorm. Practise using simulations.

Hans Jörg Etter of the Institute of Avalanche Research in Davos

3581 victims (115 pa) between 1970 and 2002 in Switzerland. The data was annually mirrored in all the European countries. **It was now 'cool' for snow boarders to have helmets, rucksacks and shovels!** Friends of victims find three out of four alive; MRTs find one out of four.

On 7 February 2003, pistes were made safe and opened after 4 days of snow (73cm of snow had fallen). Boarders immediately went off piste. At 1103 hrs, an 850m wide avalanche, triggered by boarders, travelled 1600m engulfing an unknown quantity of boarders over 1200 hectares. The first two were found within 18 minutes. Another after 27 minutes. There was concern for a fourth. He was found 1.5 hours later hidden under a rock which had protected him. After speaking to witnesses and checking for Recco signals, the rescue was terminated. 8 dogs and 23 rescuers employed over 3.75 hours at a cost of 40,000 swiss francs or €27,000.

Dan Hourihan, President of the MRA in Alaska
He referred to the UK as holding 'the roots of MR'! The most important

person in rescue is – the casualty. Don used the phrase, 'the genetics (DNA) of an incident' and spoke about the **ICS (Incident Command System)**.

Each incident has chaos, lack of information, bad information, injury or death, risk of death or injury, amorphous (unfocused) energy, undefined authority and hysteria. Common errors included failure to lead, to know resources, to take risks, to take proper immediate action, to establish objectives, to properly delegate and to document. The components of ICS are common terminology, functions, resources and facilities, modular organisation, integrated comms, unified command structure, an incident action plan, manageable span of control, designated search managers and facilities and comprehensive resource management.

On 21 March 1999, one hour south of Anchorage, it was 25°F with storms and heavy snow – rather cooler than usual. There is no habitation but it is a well-used snow recreation area. During the weekend described, there was a 3km wide avalanche, 1km of which travelled 560m. The alarm was raised at 1600 hrs. There had been 200+ people in the area, of which maybe 21 were thought to be in the avalanche, although there was no certainty at this stage. 2 bodies were found on that day. On Day Two, it was then known that 6 people had been avalanched with 4 unaccounted for. Lots of members of the public turned up and, although many were ill-prepared and not equipped, they were used because of the scale of the incident. 2 dogs and 170 searchers and 100 snowmobiles for 12 hours that day. 2 more bodies were found by probing. By Day Three, there were 350 people searching. After 12 hours nothing was found and fatigue was a major problem. Day Four saw the national guard involved, totalling 645 volunteers. At 1730 hrs, a fifth victim was found by a snowmobile in deteriorating weather. On Day Five, the family was still searching but in the face of more avalanches, in which two more died, they also quit! The sixth victim was found in the first week of May.

Manuel Genwein discussed the merging electronic technologies
Radio transceivers, radio entertainment, MP3, CD and tape players, GPS, satellite and GSM

phones, medical sensors (eg. pulse rate), ambient air temperature sensors and oh, yes – avalanche beacons! How much could/should these devices be integrated in emerging electronic devices? It was agreed that, at least for the present, avalanche beacons should not be combined with any other facilities. But would the transmission of GPS data be helpful? There were many questions, not least of the ethics.

Fabio Gheser from the Italian South Tyrol
Described an incident in the Schalstal on 20 February 2002 during which **a rescue team member was avalanched and buried under 208cm of snow while searching for a missing skier.**

Each incident has - chaos, lack of information, bad information, injury or death, risk of death or injury, amorphous energy (unfocused energy) and undefined authority and hysteria.
Common errors included - a failure to lead, a failure to know resources, a failure to take risks, a failure to take proper immediate action, a failure to establish objectives, a failure to properly delegate and a failure to document.

Paul André Gillioz spoke of skier safety in the Unterwallis area of Switzerland where gates to off-piste areas had been installed

These gates would only allow skiers to pass through if electronically unlocked and the risk was acceptable. Questions included the restriction of personal freedom, the removal of personal judgement, and of problems with civil liability should there be an avalanche to a skier who had been led to believe the area was safe.

An unusual avalanche rescue in the Polish Tatra above Zakopane starting on 28 January 2003

The avalanche occurred at 1100 hrs from a 2499m peak and carried 13 climbers down to the frozen lake below. The weight and power of the avalanche broke the ice and much of it entered the lake. A helicopter and rescuers were on the scene by 1115 hrs and they quickly saw a foot. The badly injured victim was unconscious but sadly died two months later. Another climber was found alive. A third, fatally injured, victim was found under 1.5m of snow with a broken back. 36 rescuers and 6 dogs

HOSTED BY THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE COMMITTEE OF SCOTLAND

suspended the operation at 1700 hrs. The rescue recommenced on day two with a further six Slovakian dogs and a helicopter at 0630 hrs. The dogs indicated in the area of the lake but the rescue was called off at 1420 hrs. For ten days the weather and conditions deterred any rescue efforts. Even in May, the weather was not kind but on the 13th divers were brought in. On 30 May, two bodies were found in 5m of water; 7 June two bodies in 20m; 8 June one body in 36m; 17 June the last victim was recovered from 70m! 2203 hours had been spent on the rescue involving 15 dogs and 260 rescuers.

Bruno Jelk of Zermatt demonstrated the MERS (multi-evacuation rescue system) for rapidly removing people from stranded cable cars or chairlifts.

An exceptional summer on Mont Blanc

Very hot and dry with three weeks when the temperature did not drop below 0°C even overnight at 4000m! The permafrost melted resulting in almost continuous rockfalls all over the Alps. The Gouter Ridge was closed and climbers were discouraged from proceeding by an armed gendarme. The problem had become unmanageable. There were warnings of overcapacity and of the risk of accident on this particular ridge. On 8 August, there were 40 evacuations! The 'ban' lasted for three weeks. There would have been a public outcry if the local officials had done nothing, yet the situation raised numerous ethical and moral dilemmas.

Gilbert Habringer from Austria described emergencies which helicopters can encounter on rescues

Such as rotor, gearbox or fuel problems, most of which can be quite unforgiving. Although Europe uses twin-engined helicopters, they can also experience problems. He had been doing work on auto rotation descents using external human cargoes. We were shown some tests

done on video. Clearly, slow rotation was safer and more controlled for all concerned, but this method was not in the instruction books.

Bruno Jelk described the rock fall on the Hörnli Ridge of the Matterhorn on 7 July
At 1130 hrs, 1500m³ of rock fell across the gullies near the start of the route making any subsequent traverse lethal. As a result, all the 84 climbers, who were on the mountain were taken off by helicopter. At 1900 hrs there was a further rock fall which justified the helicopter evacuation. So **the Matterhorn was closed** but who has the authority to close it? Who owns the mountain? The old route was closed and a new, temporary route was engineered above the old allowing climbers to use the Hörnli Ridge again.

On 4 August there was a rock fall just below the summit and a 20 year old German was killed with head injuries. Questions were asked about why the ridge was re-opened if it wasn't safe and about who re-opened the route. There is no case law in these circumstances and no legal basis for opening and re-opening routes. If there are fixed ropes, presumably the installers are liable? A lawyer had said that the route cannot be blocked, only that advice can be given on the implications of proceeding. If a route is opened, does it imply that all other routes are safe?

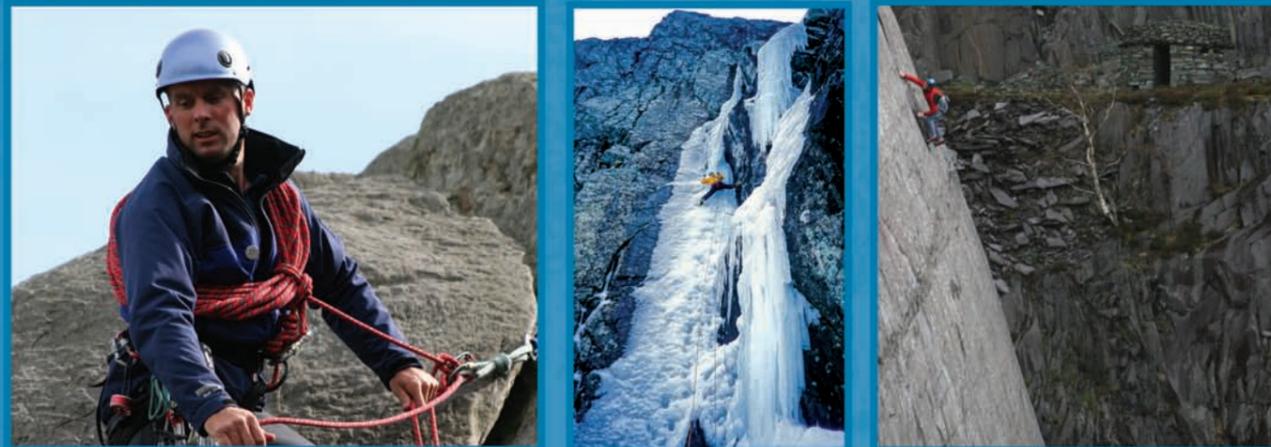
The Liongrat of the Matterhorn (Italian side) had also been closed due to a rock fall and the Carrel Hut was in danger of collapsing. There had been **400 rescue missions on the Matterhorn in 10 days** – more than in the whole of any previous year!

Turkey is being encouraged to join IKAR. The Mountaineering Association of Iran is seeking support in strengthening their rescue organisation.

The Air Commission visited the ARCC at Kinloss and reported seeing technologies which they didn't know existed! There were many differences noted in the rescue co-ordination methods of the different countries!

An excellent Conference organised by the MRC of Scotland. Congratulations to those involved!

Enjoy the experience of their lifetime.



If there's one thing we pride ourselves on at Plas y Brenin, it's our staff. Their experience is second to none. Not simply experience in their chosen activity, but experience in teaching that activity too. For the Mountaineering Instructor our staff's knowledge is a valuable resource and one which is geared toward helping you develop in your career.

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workshops focusing solely on assessing others in a mountain context along with courses examining the complexities of teaching navigation.

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Whatever skills you choose to develop, our instructors will have plenty of experience in that department and they'll be keen to share that experience with you.

For a free 56-page colour brochure telephone us on 01690 720214 or e-mail brochure@pyb.co.uk.



Rigging for Rescue One Week Course KESWICK



X-treme Knitting for the outdoors



This was an excellent week run at Keswick MRT base in October and funded by them, so a big thanks to KMRT for this. Kirk Mauthner was flown in from Canada to head up the course. For those people not involved with RfR then it was not a 'rock jock' course, as class ran from 09.00 to 22.00 with a large amount of physics and mechanical engineering theory, so some of those rusty MRT brains needed powering back up! It was a very full course, some nights we had to run to the Dog & Gun to get last orders!!

The week looked at the theory behind rope rescue practices and focused on crag type environment for stretcher evacs using hauling and lowering systems.

The weather was everything we could have expected as it rained every day. Ohh... and it was windy too. I'm sure the ropes will be nearly dry soon.

Participants came from Keswick, Penrith, Langdale Ambleside, Bowland Pennine, Buxton and Calder Valley. Any rope rescues in these areas can now be carried out with extreme knitting! The information gained on these courses will hopefully be cascaded back into teams. MPSRO are doing this in the form of 1 and 2 day work shops. Other teams may do this internally. If you get the chance to attend any of the sessions on RfR then it is really worthwhile.

Thanks again to Keswick and all the teams who worked together so well.

Alan Woodhead Bowland Pennine MRT

Mobile Phones

An outline of the new driving legislation

What's legal?

- ☺ To use a hands-free kit, providing the phone is being held in a 'fixed' cradle.
- ☺ To make or receive calls whilst the phone is being held in a cradle (pushing buttons whilst in the cradle, or operation via buttons on a steering wheel would not breach the new regulation).
- ☺ To make a call on a hand-held phone for a genuine emergency call to 999, if it would be unsafe for the driver to stop.
- ☺ Continued use of Push to Talk (two-way radio) devices – it was deemed this presented a lower risk.
- ☺ Drivers may continue to receive data on their phone when on the move, providing that the driver does not hold the device whilst in operation – there is no requirement for the handset to be switched off when in the vehicle.
- ☺ Employers providing phones to employees will not be an offence, but to force an employee to use phones will make the employer liable.

What's not legal?

- ☹ It will be an offence whilst driving to use a handheld device to:-
 - * Speak or listen to a phone call
 - * Use a device interactively to access any sort of data – including Internet, text or other images
- ☹ To hold a hands-free phone at any point whilst driving. This also applies to all mobile devices, ie. BlackBerries, PDAs etc.
- ☹ The use of a hand-held phone, even when stationary (ie. in a traffic jam, at the traffic lights) will remain an offence.
- ☹ In addition, drivers who use a hands-free phone could also face prosecution for failing to have proper control of their vehicle, if their driving is considered to be dangerous or reckless because of the distraction.

The penalties

- ☹ Fixed penalty fine of £30 and 3 points on to the offender's licence for using a hand-held phone whilst driving.
- ☹ A possible fine of up to £1,000 may also be applied on conviction (£2,500 for drivers of goods vehicles or those manufactured or adapted to carry 9 or more passengers).

Get turned on...

Gear freaks watch out! A new concept from Marmot aims to make map reading in the dark a whole lot easier. Aimed at mountain professionals, the Phenomenon EL features electroluminescent (EL) panels, strategically integrated into a waterproof/breathable all weather GORE-TEX® XCR® performance shell which can illuminate an immediate area, at the same time as increasing visibility and identification.

Electroluminescence (EL) is the conversion of electrical energy into light. Developed in 1936, it found commercial application in the early 60's in illuminated aircraft instrument dials. Since then, it has been applied in a broad range of products, from consumer products, telecommunications, cars and safety equipment to architecture. In 1987, US Coast Guard research concluded that EL lighting is more conspicuous than point source navigation lighting. It's shadowless, homogeneous, can be

shaped to fit into small places, available in many colours, doesn't produce heat, is weatherproof, insensitive to shock and flexible. But this is a first for its integration as wearable technology into high performance waterproof/breathable outerwear.

Serious field trials for the functionality, durability and longevity of the system have only just begun. 'This piece,' says Jim Frazier, VP of Design for Marmot, 'represents a major breakthrough in garment design and development and will initiate a whole new field of products for the outdoor enthusiast.'

So... performance outerwear at the flick of a switch. All you have to do is turn it on.



Distinguished Service Award

Peter Howells Team Leader of the Central Beacons team was presented with his award at the MRC meeting in November.

PICNIC HINTS IN ASSYNT

Or Guy Wilson vents his spleen in Scotland



CANOE STOP ON LOCH VEYATIE

I awoke next to Chris. Now I've woken next to a few people in my time, but never Chris – so it took a few moments for the mind's misty window to clear and reveal, of all things, a misty window. Ah! I was in Chris's car in a lay-by. Now some of you, who have no doubt shared a few beers and tales with me in North Wales, are thinking this is going where you thought it was going, but no... this is an altogether different tale.

The adventure starts in the lay-by of an interpretive centre in The Inver Polly nature reserve. Actually, the adventure had started at 6 pm the previous day when I'd been collected by Chris in his car with Ron's canoe on top. I was informed by several people that it wasn't in fact a canoe, but a kayak. It's a kayak. They're not called canoes – canoes are open things like Indians paddled. Hmm... well no, this is a canoe – an open thing like Indians paddled.

Anyway, here we were several hours later, via Lockerbie's fish 'n' chip shop and Tesco in Inverness, in a lay-by. Thankfully with Ron's canoe still on top.

Now, I don't like interpretive centres. I believe they're for lazy buggers and they attract folk who come to look at the 'interpretive centres' when they should be looking at the bloody scenery! Those charged with looking after our wild places should concentrate on looking after wild places, not tarmac-ing it for car parks. However, I needed a sh*t and this place had a bog.

We'd intended to paddle down the loch that very morning but

considering we would be at the other end with time to kill in the afternoon, why not knock off Stac Pollaidh in the morning then canoe down the loch to Suilven in the afternoon? This would give us a spare day later on and it was such a beautiful day it seemed entirely too good an opportunity to miss. The winding single track road was awash with yellow gorse and, while we stopped to make breakfast in the sunshine, one could detect a hint of its coconut air. Everywhere one looked gave a lift to the heart and a cleansing of the mind. Blue loch with white waves (there was a stiff breeze), green grass, green birch and rowan trees, blue sky and the sunshine yellow of the gorse running through the whole thing, a ribbon tied along the road. Willow warblers singing in the nearby trees, far off a cuckoo came and went on the wind. Tea was brewing for our marmalade sandwiches.

Stac Pollaidh (*peak of the peat moss*) is not a Munro, nor is it a Corbett. It's quite small in actual height (613m) but its undoing is its nearness to the road. A broad scar runs from the car park straight up the

middle of its back, a scar that is not in keeping with the slow wear of wind and rain on Torridonian sandstone. There is a request that you walk round the other side of the hill and make an ascent from there, so of course this is what we did. I wondered, why, oh why, build a bloody car park? Why place in that car park a large, gaudy display board? It's a nature reserve! Doesn't that mean it should be reserved for nature, with the main priority its protection and not visitor numbers (read money) for NTS, SNH or whomever? Anyway, we took her from behind (giggles all round) – and why not?!

Once gaining the ridge, somewhere in the middle we turned left in order to find the south east top, but our forward progress was stopped by a horizontal cleft barring our way. An attempt at downclimbing was not successful, so we turned the problem on the hill's left flank and then climbed up on some easy slabs. A small cairn waited.

From here, we did a 180 and headed north west to walk the whole half kilometre ridge. The downclimb we had earlier backed away from turned out to be a nice satisfying climb when going upwards. From then on, the ridge posed few problems and as our hands warmed to the rock we began to take the various pinnacles head on as our confidence grew. Arêtes of bizarre shape went at right angles to the main ridge, more resistant to wear than the surrounding rock, which gave Chris an opportunity to expose himself (to the void of course) and for me to expose some film.

All too quickly we reached the summit, located on the top (where else!) of the mountain's north west buttress, but not before a final

exposed move which, once done, proved to be fairly simple. In fact, we re-enacted it for a couple we found confounded by the problem on our way back. What delightful show-offs we are.

Getting down was done in almost unseemly haste. Clambering down a couple of rock terraces with a slide or two on lower screes, we regained the continuation of the path. Consequently, we had not only done a complete traverse of the ridge but also a circumnavigation of the base of the mountain. The final path back to the road was hedged with delicate orchids that ranged in colour from almost white to coral pink.



CHRIS ASTRIDE STAC POLAIDH

On our return, I almost stood on my team pager laid in the footwell of the car, having left it there when I turned off yesterday. Momentarily, I wondered what I might have missed, then immediately mentally chastised myself. It wasn't me who was missing anything! How sad it must be to deprive yourself of the healing effects on the soul that this land can give, because your pager may go off and you'd miss it. You know who you are!

We found a place not far from the car where we could sit on the cool grass and in the sunlight dappled shade of a rowan tree we made tea and sandwiches for our lunch – ciabatta, rocket, watercress, Cashel Blue cheese and sweet tomatoes. Whilst tea was okay, a long slender glass of cool Pinot Gris would have been better. However, no time for alcohol, as we had to drive a little way north to do what we had been excitedly waiting for – launch the canoe.

At Elphin, we stopped near the eastern end of Loch Veyatie. After some initial problems finding a key to the gate at the head of the track, we drove on down to the edge of the loch. We lifted the canoe off the car and carried it over another gate to the water. I ferried the rest of the gear over to the canoe while Chris took the car back to the main road. I was worried at first as to how we'd manage to get such a payload and ourselves into the canoe but, somehow, we managed. All in, there were four rucksacks, two cool boxes, a tent and fishing tackle. We took pictures, and I hoped that these wouldn't be the last, sad pics that our relatives looked at after the authorities had fished out our lifeless bodies from the bottom of the loch.

The headline in the papers I always imagine as 'idiots!'. Sleeping one night in a crevasse on the Mer de Glace with Pete and Mick, I had imagined it collapsing and the headline being 'idiots!' Or, with the same two reprobates, surfacing in an air bell in the flooded passage between Stream passage and Rowten pot and seeing the surreal sight of little yellow plastic ducks, I imagined the headline that would follow if it all had ended there. 'Idiots!'

I climbed into the front of the canoe and immediately felt more secure as I looked at the sunlight play on the small brown pebbles that were on the bottom of the few inches of clear water beneath the boat. Two powerful strokes from Chris in the rear and the sunlit pebbles disappeared into the inky blackness of sudden depth and I had to fight down the fear that rose in me. We paddled very delicate-like, intending to follow the steep shore to our right but, almost immediately, as we passed the mouth of a stream that entered the loch, we were pushed out on the current and with the increasing breeze, right into the centre of the loch. Out in the open broad sheet of water, it was pretty rough. The waves certainly had little white horses on them and I know I was scared but, strange as it may seem, I began to put up my nine foot fly rod, attach a reel to it, thread line through rings and tie on a fly. On another day, in another place, I had saved a sheep from drowning. As I brought it onto the bank, with body still immersed, it began to casually nibble at the grass. I nibbled at my bank with the fly rod. I wanted trout for tomorrow's breakfast.

Back to the loch... gone was any delicacy of style in our paddling.

Also gone were any thoughts of fishing, as the wind blew waves so high, with troughs so deep between, that we were seriously in danger of being swamped. We tried to turn for shore but this would have meant putting more of our side to wind and wave. We could see in the distance where the loch narrowed and from the rocks great spumes of spray were being sent skywards. We were actually making good progress as the wind was pushing us along from behind, this being, of course, dependent on us going in the right direction, a discipline that we were not always capable of. We were on top of the first narrows more quickly than we had expected and had no

were later added to the stock until cooked through at the same time adding the smoked haddock, broken into flakes. Last of all went in some fresh cream and cayenne pepper. Chris had some Ukrainian rye bread buttered for us to soak up the juice. It is definitely a warming soup for outdoors or, maybe, an indoor soup on a cold winter's night.

I picked up my rod and was about to go find a sheltered spot for a cast or two when into our camp arrived five people pulling three canoes! OK, let's be specific here – two canoes and a kayak. It seemed the loch was too rough and they were attempting to pull them overland back to the head of the loch. After a brief

mighty fish. It has in fact lived its short life caged, swimming in a circle, and nose to anus with others in a sea of their own excrement. Like the refugee beyond the border of its true home, it is prey to the ravages of disease. These diseases are treated by what the industry likes to call 'medicines'. They are, in fact, marine pollutants and require a licence from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. Read those words! Environmental Protection! The very body charged with protecting our environment is in fact issuing licences for money so that pollutants can be poured into the sea. Remember you are what you eat.

In the morning we pan fried the

From the cool box, I took the fish stock I'd prepared at home and began to warm it up on the wee gas stove. On the other stove I cooked some diced potatoes and onions for five minutes in a little olive oil. These were later added to the stock until cooked through, at the same time adding the smoked haddock, broken into flakes. Last of all some fresh cream and cayenne pepper. Chris had some Ukrainian rye bread buttered for us to soak up the juice.

time to attempt for shore. Through we went. The elation, satisfaction and, dare I say it, cockiness in our demeanour soon evaporated as the loch opened out completely to the elements, at its far end even narrower, funneling all the natural energy into a tumultuous coming together of rock, wind and water.

Bollocks to this! We headed for shore, a small strip of straw coloured shoreline our target. Thankful indeed, when our little boat finally nudged up to terra firma.

We pulled the canoe up onto the shore and found a patch of rough grass just big enough to take the small two man tent. No sooner than we had

chat, they decided to leave their boats with us while they walked out and stayed in the hostel back at Elphin and return tomorrow in the hope of better weather. Chris and I felt chuffed at what we had achieved on the loch as to us these were real canoeists!

Anyway, back to fishing... off I went over a couple of hundred yards of boggy heather to where I could see a decent sized loch that from the look of its calm but rippled surface was somewhat more sheltered than ours. When I got there I was most surprised to see that it was a very sheltered arm of our loch with a wide grassy lawn along the shoreline that would have made an ideal camp.

trout in butter with sliced almonds drizzled over the top. As we ate, the canoeists (no, we didn't eat the canoeists) from yesterday arrived and, fortunately, the weather had improved and they could paddle out at leisure. It was less windy, blue skies, white fluffy clouds but with the odd really purplish black one around. You could actually see the curtains of rain beneath them still lit up in sunshine. We passed pleasantries and had a bizarre game of naming films where people carried boats overland! *The African Queen*, *Deliverance* (d'ling d'ling d'ling ding ding!). My contributions of *Ice Cold in Alex* and *Hannibal Across the Alps* were disallowed on a technicality



SPOT THE YELLOW TENT



NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL BREAKFAST

done this than everything began to seem much brighter. The sun was shining and while it was still windy it didn't seem to matter on land, unlike on water. And, of course, it didn't. From the cool box, I took the fish stock I had prepared at home and began to warm it up on the wee gas stove. On the other stove I cooked some diced potatoes and onions for 5 minutes in a little olive oil. These

Bugger! After a couple of hours fishing I had six brown trout with two kept for breakfast. Beautiful scarlet spotted wild fish unlike the finless flabby rainbows that lie dull-eyed under supermarket cling-film in a polystyrene tray rather than a fresh bed of heather. Or worse still, supermarket fake salmon! An abhorrence, as far from the truth as possible as the romantic image of the

(neither were boats – one was a truck, the other an elephant). The most illuminating part of the conversation however, was being informed that it was possible to do Suilven from east to west in its entirety. The Corbetts book reckons the eastern top is the domain of rock climbers only. That was it then. At least, for Chris, who was made up with doing the whole east-west



SUILVEN CLEFT

traverse. I still had my doubts. Just looking at the thing it was possible to tell there was going to be some difficulty where a bloody great big bit of the mountain went missing.

We warmed up with a long tramp across the pathless bog and heather, keeping feet dry by walking on the flat rounded rocky outcrops which showed through the flow like the bald pate of some giant beneath the peat. On each rise we surveyed the sprinkle of little lochans and worked out a route to the eastern slopes of Suilven (the pillar – Norse).

The initial gradient was pleasant and only gradually became steeper. Broken rock terraces gave a little scrambling opportunity. Looking over our shoulders every few minutes revealed the land dropping away to a breathless vista. The view looked as if it must have been the inspiration for the front cover of a Lord of the Rings book. Weathered sandstone mountains stood like ocean liners across the land.

The sun shone down on a loch to our left and easily visible were the sand and gravel formations far out into the loch caused by an incoming stream. It was like looking at some

satellite picture from space. We soon stood on the very eastern top Meall Bheag, a slight nervousness in my stomach as I thought, 'Theres a big bloody gap here somewhere'. We walked only a few paces till we reached a cleft in the mountain. Across this cleft, there was a perfectly formed bridge from debris that, over the millennia, had fallen into the gap, grass growing on it and a neatly worn path across. I laughed aloud, almost hysterically. Is that it? This is what had been making me nervous all morning?!

I admit there was a slightly exposed move to the right to climb a couple of moves out but this was nothing. Well, I say nothing and it was nothing, but for some reason I couldn't do it. I just froze at the thought of it. How stupid! I sat on a rock wishing I'd never bloody gone up the damn hill in the first place. I could be fishing down there somewhere, gazing up at this mountain instead of being stood on it scared to death.

Chris went on to see what the next top looked like. He came back and said it was do-able. I crossed the earth bridge and climbed up the opposite face quite easily. What was all the fuss about? Well, if I'd felt nervous about the first gap, the next one almost turned my stomach inside out, a bloody great divide with no obvious way across to Meall Mheadhonach. (Middle hill!)

I stood (not too) near the edge of a chasm with the opposite vertical face some 20 metres away. 'How the hell do we get across this?' I asked. 'Easy!' says Chris, 'There's a path down to the side'. So there was. One could see a feint worn across and down the almost vertical rock terracing to our right. We began to downclimb very gently. I used the perfected Wilson method of 'six points of contact' namely both hands, both feet and both cheeks of your arse! Don't you just hate downclimbing face out? I much

prefer 'face in' – apart from not seeing where you might end up, one can use the other perfected Wilson method, nine points of contact! Dispense with the bum cheeks, but employ both hands, both feet, lips, eyebrows and groin.

We eventually made the lowest terrace, below which was a great void of bugger all. We traversed round the corner and found ourselves just one last tricky move away from relative safety. You had to face out, trying not to look into the void on your right, and reach out to a stance a little further away than your legs will reach, remembering not allow your momentum to keep you going forward. It was not unlike the crux move on little Chamonix or Shepherds Crag.

Chris went first. I passed him his rucksack, then mine. To say I then completed the move, although the whole truth, doesn't really explain everything. I have explained this once on a Wednesday night in the Griffin.

Let's just say I tried to hold something that wasn't there. If you've ever seen a boxer brainlessly punch drunk, scrabbling for his gumshield, unaware that he's in a boxing ring blindly trying to hold onto a small piece of reality whilst completely losing all dignity, then that is something like it was. When the move was completed, an audible sigh of relief broke the spell and I noticed sounds rush into my ears again. There had been a sense of utter silence. Next move was a traverse round the corner on a ledge with a rock overhang above it, so rucksacks off again to be passed round. We crawled round the corner (in my mind I heard the rock climbers shout, 'No knees!' F**k 'em! I crawled round on my knees.)

Another narrow earth debris connecting ridge awaited, and on the opposite side a steep climb on good solid holds, this was very much more enjoyable, especially now that the

worst part was over. One could enjoy the movement on the rock, picking out individual handholds so when you put your hand on the rock, it was like a Cortina door handle!

We stopped for lunch on top of the next ridge. Chris's speciality this time – Ciabatta, salad, Cashel Blue cheese and some kind of Tunisian salad dressing. Whilst munching on my lunch, I noticed the path we were about to take in our westward continuation was somewhat wider than the previous one. As in a lot more feet had been this way. A sure sign things were going to be a lot easier.

Another down climb, on the left this time. A bit more technical than other moves but with hardly any exposure. There was a wide ledge about 15 feet lower down and, once we made this, it was a stroll to the Bealach Mor where the normal path comes up the side of the mountain. I have to admit, had we come up that path straight from the valley floor, it would have been an injustice. I was grateful that Chris had persuaded me against my natural caution. It had been a cracking day!

There is a well-made, bloody great wall there (I have no idea why) but we dumped our rucksacks by it as we would be returning on our descent. We bimbled up the last easy scrambles to the summit cairn of Caisteal Laith (the grey castle), took a few pictures and enjoyed the view back along the ridge. Westward ho then, looking out across the sea as far as Lewis, grey in the sea haze across the Minch. As we made our way off to descend to the Bealach, clouds rolled over the summit – perfect timing.

Down the screes we raced, scattering a herd of red deer en route, as well as stones. At the foot, we stopped to look back where we could see the whole mountain... Fantastic. Absolutely fantastic.

too much salt. The cayenne pepper gives a very warming taste, ideal for winter. Finally, chop the boiled egg and add to the soup with the freshly chopped parsley. As with any food the quality and freshness of the ingredients are paramount. Don't buy horrible orange artificially dyed haddock – get the undyed. Use a free range egg and have home baked bread and real butter with your soup – not margarine and Mother's Pride.



NATIONAL FUNDRAISING

What's branding got to do with it? asks Penny Brockman

Did you know that there are now over 5,000 new charities forming every year! How can a charity compete in such an increasingly competitive market? What makes mountain rescue so special? I must admit, I know we are special and provide a wonderful service – I'm the first to extol this in any fundraising campaign for my own team. But I've often wondered what makes a charity successful in obtaining a spread of voluntary income for its funding base – which corporate bodies must seek to do in order to reduce risk.

My research led to some interesting facts. There is considerable evidence of the benefits of brand orientation in regards to voluntary income generation. It is now recognised that branding will have to be seen, sooner rather than later, as an integral part of a charity's strategy. What is more, there has to be consistency throughout the charity, in order to achieve a strong and successful brand in the years ahead. Consistency in communication to the target audiences; consistency in visual identity, name and logo; and consistency in behavioural outcomes, for instance 'acting out' the charity's brand values in day-to-day activities.

A brand is perceived as a product or organisation plus – where the plus indicates a unique set of values which allow differentiation and, hence, donor choice, within competitive environments. It's a message that is gaining more currency as charities fall in line with the corporate ethos of private sector companies, proactive in customer relationship marketing.

There are numerous markets for the different parts of mountain rescue in England and Wales. The existence of a market base of individuals who do not want to support a specific team or region is continually being reiterated in the emails I receive for national fundraising. These are from people who have a passion for mountaineering or hillwalking, but do not want to give to a specific team or region. Therefore, we need to produce a brand that can support the marketplace for the teams, but also the national image. A strong brand is fundamental to support national fundraising. Consequently, a development process is taking place in the MRC. I would like to give a big thanks to Ceri Hutton who has provided consultancy to support this process.

Of course this has not stopped other areas of activity in national fundraising and there are three where effort has been concentrated.

1. Light Weight Oxygen project

This project started when the Medical Sub Committee recommended that all teams should be provided with lightweight cylinders. As we were only provided details of one company, a large amount of effort and time has been spent evaluating other products in the market to support the business case

for the product chosen. We are now putting the finishing touches to the business case. A number of funders have also been identified. The difficulty in arguing a case to obtain funding is the ability to provide the on-going support of the costs for maintenance and refilling.

2. MRC Website

There have been two areas of effort. First, a review of the website to meet the needs of national fundraising. There is a draft format but, of course, this will have to go through the branding exercise to ensure consistency of message. The second area of effort has been to attract 'on-line giving'. I would like to thank Paul Baxendale for his hard work to bring this to fruition.

3. Administration of email

There have been various emails from those who want to make donations and individuals who want to do events for the MRC. I would like to say thank you to all of them. They are:-

* **Gentian Club** who provided donations to the rescue teams to the areas they visited in 2002. Cheques were distributed to teams, not only in England and Wales, but Scotland and Ireland.

* Someone came through requesting the charity number for a legacy.

* **The University of Essex Mountaineering Club** did an event for Mountain Rescue Council and Essex Search & Rescue Association. The event was climbing the height of Mount Everest on a climbing wall. They climbed a total of 5702m over the course of the day (easily beating their target of 3400m). Thanks to all those who took part, but especially Tobias Moncaster.

* We have had a request from someone who wanted to become a regular donator to support the MRC rather than a team. He was persuaded to provide 'giving forms' to other friends who would be interested in supporting the Council.

* We had someone who wanted to use their business skills to raise funds and to sell the message of mountain rescue by showing people how they can be influenced. This is wonderful as he is going out to a whole new audience.

* Lastly we had someone doing the 3 Peaks Challenge who obtained a small amount of sponsorship.

It is worth noting here that the majority of these individuals do not live in the areas we operate but are mainly from the south east. In other words, we have a market which is outside mountain rescue areas and we need to reach out to them.

Tony Rich MRC Legal Adviser. What does he do?

Having been involved as Legal Adviser to Cave Rescue for about 10 years and the MRC for about 8, I suspect someone is starting to wonder what I actually do. It must, after all, be the only position in the Executive that is not repeated at area or team level.

Firstly, may I make clear that I am available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to any team or area association that believes it has a problem where legal advice would help. The advice is always provided free of charge.

Education

The biggest part of my job is educating the MR community on legal issues. By far the most important thing I can do is get home to everyone that fears of civil litigation are misplaced and exaggerated. No one has brought home a successful claim against a volunteer rescue team in England and Wales, as far as I can establish. A claim in Scotland was settled for nuisance value by insurers. Even if a claim were made, excellent liability insurance cover is in place to protect you.

I am also available to visit teams or regions if they believe a briefing on legal issues will help.

Operational Support

Teams sometimes find that the aftermath of their operations raises legal issues. A typical example is the request for documentation by a

would-be claimant seeking evidence to support his case. Sometimes, direct advice to the team is all that is needed, sometimes, a quiet word in the appropriate earhole. Sometimes, however, policy issues are raised which have national significance, in which case, I will help work out an appropriate policy. For example, helping cave rescue identify a policy as to the circumstances in which it was prepared to attend an incident involving protesters underground who were being evicted.

Admin Support

This covers a significant proportion of the time I give to MR. Teams often want advice and guidance on matters such as their constitution, constitutional changes, charity law and so on. A common area of debate is whether or not a team should become a limited company. In general terms, my view is that, the larger and more complex the team's financial and physical operation, the more the advantages of incorporation outweigh the disadvantages.

Dispute Resolution

Some of the most sensitive work is to resolve conflict within MR. I should explain that in a disagreement between an individual or an officer of a team, I am a resource available to the team. Between a team and region, I am a regional resource and so on, to national level. If the dispute

is at the same level, I operate as instructed either by the Chairman or the next level up in the chain.

Unfortunately, I've been called on to assist in resolving disputes at all levels and often find that the intervention of a sympathetic mediator or adviser can help everyone to overcome their difficulties.

Other duties

I normally sit on the Finance Committee as the problems I can help with are most likely to arise there. However, I am available to all committees and officers of the MRC, regions and teams as requested. I have been involved in the insurance and fundraising debate as well as dealing with a myriad of other minor points such as blues and twos, copyright protection, disputes with sponsors and so on.

And Finally...

As I say, I am always happy to help anybody. That said, I have one final word of warning – free legal advice is often said to be worth precisely what you pay for it!

Tony Rich MRC Legal Adviser



You've walked the walk, now smell the chowder... Guy's Gastronomic Grub Corner....

Fish Stock

Ingredients

1kg (2 lbs) fish heads and bones
1 medium onion
couple of carrots
1 medium leek
1 medium stick of celery
qtr head Florence fennel
3 sprigs flat leaf parsley
3 sprigs fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
pinch sea salt
2.5 litres cold water

Method

Roughly chop and chuck the whole lot into a big pan. Bring to the boil and simmer for a further 30 mins. Don't stir or disturb. Skim off any scum. Don't overcook it or it'll start to taste bitter. Sieve but don't force any bits through. You want a nice clear stock.

Smoked Haddock Chowder

Ingredients

25g (1oz) butter
1 small onion, chopped fine
400g (14oz) potatoes, peel a roughly chop
725 ml of the above fish stock
200g (7oz) natural uncooked smoked haddock
75ml (3 fl oz) single cream
cayenne pepper
1 hard boiled egg
freshly chopped flat leafed parsley

Method

Melt butter in a saucepan and cook half the potatoes and two thirds the onion gently for 5 mins. Don't let it colour, then add stock. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15 mins. Cool, then puree in a liquidiser. Return to pan and add your remaining vegetables, cover and simmer for 10 mins. Skin and flake the fish and add it along with the cream, salt and cayenne to taste. Don't add

Men may not listen and women may or may not be capable of reading maps but now Bob Sharp & Nina Saunders present an even more controversial proposition...

MEN CLIMB WOMEN WALK!

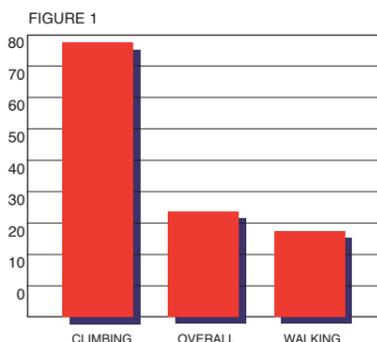
Most of us probably never analyse why we walk or climb. We simply enjoy the various pleasures of each venture before planning the next foray into the hills. Similarly, it is likely we rarely stop to consider who takes part. There seems little doubt that the hills beckon people from different backgrounds and sectors of society.

If there are over four million 'mountaineering days' in Scotland each year, then such a vast number is bound to involve people from virtually every walk of life. Interestingly, within such a vast population of people, there are some underlying patterns which tell us a bit more about those who are attracted to the hills and mountains.

We recently carried out two comprehensive surveys involving walkers/mountaineers in Scotland. One showed that more than half of those involved in the leadership scheme of the Scottish Mountain Leader Training Board belong to professional occupations (teachers, doctors, accountants etc).

A second study, which focused on mountain incidents in Scotland, revealed that people from professional backgrounds present a higher risk than any other occupational group. One conclusion from these findings is that mountaineering tends to attract a disproportionate number of people from professional backgrounds.

Other information suggests the presence of even stronger patterns of participation within the hillgoing fraternity, particularly in regard to gender involvement. SportsScotland carries out an annual survey into sports participation in Scotland. A recent paper summarising data over a ten year period revealed some interesting (although not altogether surprising) patterns. Overall, male participation in sport is significantly greater than that for women. Men participate in a much wider range of sports



compared to women. Furthermore, men are much more likely to take part in outdoor sports such as football, cycling, running/jogging, whereas women are more likely to participate in indoor sports such as dancing, swimming and aerobics.

In some sports/activities, there is a very clear gender distinction. Activities such as football, golf

and snooker tend to be the preserve of men, whilst activities such as dancing, keep fit, horseriding and yoga are followed mainly by women.

What about hillwalking/mountaineering? Several lines of evidence suggest there is a clear distinction between men and women in terms of whether they climb or walk. What are the facts?

Firstly, data on mountain incidents/accidents shows that men are three times more likely to be involved in an accident compared to women. This can be interpreted in several ways. For example, it may be that more men are involved in climbing/walking compared to women. Or it could be that men simply take part more often. Another conclusion is that men take part in activities that are more hazardous/risky and, as a consequence, come to grief more often.

This is supported by the finding that incidents in rock climbing, snow/ice climbing and scrambling involve more men than expected, whilst incidents in hillwalking involve more women than expected. Figure 1 shows that, compared to the average 3:1, the proportion of males is much higher in climbing incidents and correspondingly lower in walking incidents. This leads to the conclusion that men climb and women walk!

And there is further support when injuries are examined in regard to gender. The data above shows that men are much more likely to suffer serious injuries compared to women. Specifically, men are more likely to suffer fatal and multiple injuries and women more likely to suffer limb injuries and non-fatal, medical problems. And, when the data regarding terrain and time of the year is examined, it reveals further support.

Men are more likely to be involved in an incident when the ground is rocky, snow or ice covered. In contrast, women tend to be involved on hill paths or open hillside. And, in regard to time of year, men are more likely to be involved in an incident in the winter months and women in the

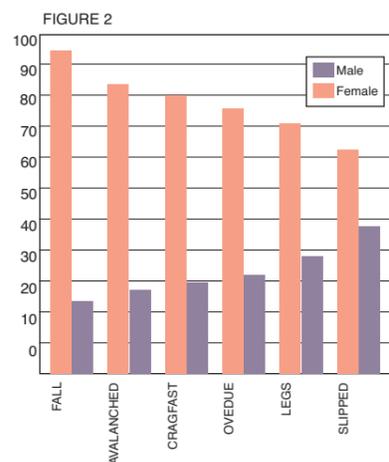


Photo: Ian Venables climbing on Kilt Rock, Isle of Skye Kinloss MRT

One conclusion is that men take part in activities that are more hazardous/risky and, as a consequence, come to grief more often.

summer months. Further, there are clear gender differences in the nature of incidents that take place. Figure 2 shows that men are much more likely to fall, become avalanched or cragfast compared to women. In contrast, women are more likely to slip and become lost compared to men.

In summary, the incident data leads to the rather clear conclusion that men and women are involved in activities which differ in their degree of risk. If the premise is accepted that climbing/scrambling is more hazardous than

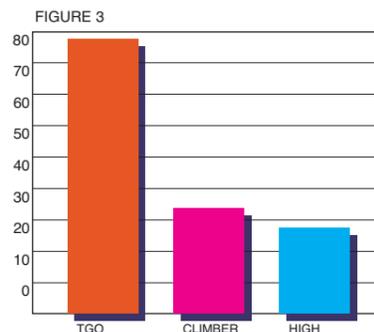


walking, then an obvious conclusion is that men tend to climb and women tend to walk. There is data from quite different sources that supports this notion.

An analysis was recently undertaken of the popular walking/climbing magazines. In particular, we looked at the front cover of the magazines to ascertain the gender depicted by the image

displayed. We noted how frequently the cover included images of men only and how frequently the cover included images of females only (or females and males).

Figure 3 shows data for a fifteen year period (1985 - 2001) and reveals clear differences between the three magazines. TGO magazine shows a broadly even balance with around 53% of all issues showing a male image. In other words, 47% of all issues show covers with females only or males and females. Climber and High Magazine are



quite different, with each showing a significant tendency towards male oriented images. (High Mag = 84% and Climber = 79%) Clearly, there is a tendency for TGO to lean more heavily towards a female image on its front cover, compared to the other two magazines.

It is also interesting to note that, over the past 15 years, the cover of TGO has become more female oriented whilst High Magazine has become less female oriented. If it is accepted that TGO is aimed more at walkers and the other two magazines more at climbers then, once again, we see a relationship between walking and females, and climbing and males.

It is interesting to question why different people are attracted to particular sports (there is an entire body of literature which tackles this very issue) and especially to examine why, in some cases, men and women are attracted to different sports/activities.

Do men climb and women walk? And, if this is true, so what? Perhaps the gear manufacturers

Men are much more likely to become avalanched or cragfast compared to women. In contrast, women are more likely to slip or become lost compared to men.

should align their products more towards gender differences - walking gear for women and climbing gear for men? Perhaps course providers should think more carefully about marketing and devising courses that appeal more closely to the needs of men and women.

And perhaps Mountaineering Councils should dichotomise their efforts to helping men and women more specifically - run navigation courses only for women, focus climbing walls policy for men only?

What are your views? Does your experience suggest it's mainly men that climb and women that walk? If so, is this healthy? Why are there differences? Is this the way it should be? Is the distinction distorted through prejudice?

This article first appeared in The Scottish Mountaineer.

MRC DIRECTORY

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