

Mountain MAGAZINE Rescue



ISSUE 8

INCORPORATING MRC NEWS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN ENGLAND, WALES & IRELAND

APRIL 2004

RESCUE ON THE BREITHORN

...or how to bag a
4000er (and a
rescue) without really
trying

SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY...

First official ascent of
Blackpool Tower

WORK AT HEIGHT REGULATIONS

Major changes for
mountain rescue
teams - or not?

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FROM THE MRC
AND AROUND
THE REGIONS

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"If you've got to get into this kind of predicament, I can't think of a better person to be with" Doug Scott mumbled through gritted teeth. He was talking to Chris Bonington in 1977, when their first ascent of the Ogre turned into an epic descent. Together they battled through extreme weather conditions with little food and no medical supplies. And together they made it back to basecamp. The ordeal lasted eight days. Doug crawled most of the way with both legs broken. Chris sustained broken ribs and developed pneumonia. So sharing a joke together, 24 years later, on their old haunt Shepherd's Crag, is something they relish more than most.



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NEXT ISSUE

Issue 9 - July 2004

Editorial copy must be supplied as Word/Quark document.
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Advertising artwork must be supplied, **ready prepared** on CD or via email as font embedded PDF/EPS/TIFF (300 dpi) or quark document with all relevant fonts and images.

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

Front page pic
Andy Simpson, MRC Press Officer on top of the Breithorn

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

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

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

It's only four years since the creation of the Publication & Information Sub Committee (PISC), a small group of people with diverse skills, enormous enthusiasm and a willingness to work together.

The remit from the Executive Committee was very clear – we must communicate more clearly and effectively with the mountain rescue family, in the regions, teams and individuals, providing the service at the point of need.

We already had the website developed by Paul Horder, Paul Baxendale and Dave Freeborn. This has continued to develop, providing a public face to the MRC and mountain rescue, together with the private side, which promotes discussion and information sharing within mountain rescue.

The MRC Handbook was very much out of date, and clearly required revision and updating. It was available to the public and used by those recreating in the moorlands, fells and mountains of England and Wales. Eve Burton took on this role, assisted by Judy Whiteside and Andy Simpson.

Funding was a problem and sponsorship was actively pursued and obtained resulting in the publication of a modern, updated handbook, together with the insert, which is updated annually. The active co-operation of teams and regions is essential to ensure an accurate flow of information, which reflects well on the MRC.

The vehicle chosen to communicate with mountain rescuers was a newsletter. This was to be produced by mountain rescuers for mountain rescuers. Judy Whiteside and Andy Simpson were asked to undertake and develop what became the 'MRC News'. Funding the publication was an issue.

...AND FROM THE PRESS OFFICER...

It's been a busy week! As I write, (19.3.04) a number of developments have taken place in the MRC's efforts to get central government to take us seriously. Or, in the case of some MPs, notice that we actually exist at all and are relevant to their constituents.

It started back in early February when Peter Howells, Penny Brockman, Stewart Hulse, Tony Jones and myself attended a meeting at the Houses of Parliament, to which all MPs were invited. Sadly only 7 or 8 (out of 600?) turned up but the end result was very positive in that an Early Day Motion was agreed and backed by those present. The EDM, announced last week, called for all party support of the work we do and asks that

However, the MRC saw this as a priority and accepted there is a cost, which it must meet. The professional standard achieved in terms of design and content, has allowed Judy to sell advertising space to companies involved in providing outdoor equipment, which now means the publication is completely self-funding and will be published on a quarterly basis. An amazing achievement, which is testament to the skill and commitment of the editor.

It was important to identify a contact with media skills to be available and act as a conduit to direct media interest to the appropriate person within the MRC and Andy Simpson fulfils this role admirably. However, his role has grown, as equipment manufacturers, suppliers and exhibition organisers wish to become more involved with mountain rescue – clearly demonstrating the raised profile that mountain rescue now enjoys.

Ged Feeney, Statistics Officer, is part of the PISC group, providing clear, accurate data which is reproduced in the MRC Handbook. Part of this is 'causes of accidents' which can help in reducing future accidents by raising awareness in accident prevention. This is only possible through teams providing Ged with their incident data, which then enables the MRC to provide a true and accurate record of mountain rescue incidents.

This group of people have worked hard over the last four years. The profile of mountain rescue is higher than ever before and, probably more importantly, the communication flow to mountain rescuers throughout the MRC is markedly improved. I hope members feel some ownership of the MRC and what it is achieving. I know I do.

Under the new chairmanship of Andy Simpson, the PISC group will achieve much for mountain rescue nationally, and I hope you will continue to support it, as you have over the last four years. Remember it's working for you.

Ian Hurst Ex PISC Chairman

the relevant government departments review their support of our work and look to make similar funding available as that awarded to our Scottish colleagues.

A flurry of activity ensued, some people supporting the EDM, some not. Even the BBC picked it up, resulting in a piece appearing in 'The Politics Show' in the North East region on March 14. The interesting thing was that no government department sees itself as responsible. Indeed, I was contacted by the Department of Health for information on the two health authorities who give us some funding for equipment, about which they knew nothing.

Nevertheless, the ball has started rolling and, whilst I know that government funding for MR is an emotive subject, we'll at least see if there's any interest out there. If there is, we'll see what's on offer. If not we'll carry on rattling tins at passing shoppers in ASDA car parks.

Andy Simpson MRC Press Officer

NATIONAL TRAINING DAY, PLAS Y BREININ

This year's National Training Day will depart from the format of previous years. Rather than a single topic or theme, there will be a wide range of different sessions, including a couple of medical scenarios, water safety, GPS mapping, stake belays, and a further topic yet to be confirmed. Peter Smith will be co-ordinating the attendees. These days have always been very well received and well worth the time and the journey. David Allan, MRC Chairman, said, 'I would urge all teams to encourage their members to consider attending, as there is bound to be something of interest. There is always value in looking at how other teams do things and sharing ideas.'

MRC WEBSITE

There is still concern that teams and their members are not taking full advantage of the website. Its potential use as a tool for the rapid dissemination of information comes up for discussion at every Conference. The facility is there – and within the private members area – yet many seem reluctant to upload information, or meeting reports. With this in mind, Paul Baxendale will be staging a half hour demonstration

at Plas y Brenin in May. The presentation will take place between 13.30 and 14.00, at the beginning of the afternoon meeting.

MRC HANDBOOK

The production and distribution date for the new MRC Handbook and insert has been shifted to June. The deadline for updated team information is 30 April. This should be sent to Eve Burton, Handbook Co-ordinator at 9 Princes Road, Chinley, High Peak SK23 6AB or via email on veburton@chinley35.fsnet.co.uk

The address to contact Eve via the website has recently changed to handbook@mountain.rescue.org.uk The address for the Mountain Rescue Magazine has also changed. This is now editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk

INSURANCE UPDATE

Insurance details should now be with teams through their Secretaries. If you haven't received yours, please contact David Little, MRC Treasurer.

MRC NEWSGROUPS

Use of the newsgroups appears to have dropped off recently. This may well be linked to a sudden realisation that newsgroup discussions are publicly accessible... or perhaps interest has genuinely waned? Whatever the

reason, this remains a strong platform for the exchange of ideas and information. We know that many of you follow the discussions without actually throwing in your two penn'orth, but why not join in? If you don't know how, here's what you do... If you have Outlook Express, go to Tools>Accounts. Click the add button and select News. Fill in the boxes with your name and email address. The NNTP server name is news.mountain.rescue.org.uk (it doesn't require you to log in). The friendly name is the one you will see with your folders, like the inbox, so choose something you will like. Typically, you connect using your phone line, select your existing ISP account. Click finish and it's done. You should now be able to see the server and its groups in the same window as your inbox and outbox. Clicking on any of the groups will connect you.

The MRC server hosts various groups. Messages are arranged in threads, made up of a number of postings on a common theme. You can move from one message to the next and so easily follow the thread of the discussion. The main group of interest is the mrc.general. This is where the majority of discussions take place. mrc.test is for people to practice posting messages

and creating threads. You should use this before posting messages for real and to make sure your system is correctly configured. It's also worth pointing out that messages on this group disappear very quickly so as not to clog up the system.

mrc.announce is used to pass on messages about new groups, changes to the system and more general announcements. mrc.faq holds the answers to some commonly asked questions. If you have a problem, this is the place to look before posting the question to one of the groups. Finally, mrc.internet concerns questions relating to the internet.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Members of the National Development group met again, in January, for further discussion on the national development of mountain rescue. There has already been much comment, from around the country, about this drive to modernise the MRC. But why do we need to? Is this just a whim? What exactly is driving it? At the root of the problem are the different perceptions, at all levels, over the exact role of the national body. On the one hand, we expect 'them' to co-ordinate, set standards, define roles, provide training and, hopefully,

FIXED DATES IN THE CALENDER

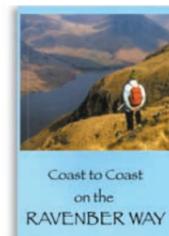
MRC MEETINGS
SATURDAY 22 MAY
& 20 NOVEMBER
TEAM LEADERS MEETING
SATURDAY
4 DECEMBER
TEAM DOCTORS MEETING
FRIDAY
8 OCTOBER

equipment. On the other, we want to be able to make our own decisions, do our own thing when it suits us. A more efficient MRC will better serve its member teams, by enabling them to better serve the public. A stronger national profile for mountain rescue will render us less financially vulnerable (through the generation of non-restricted funds), make more effective use of our brand (right through to team level) and increase our ability to influence other professional organisations involved with search and rescue. To achieve all this, amongst other things, we need to recognise and utilise the professional (non-mountain rescue skills) of those within our organisation and have the infrastructure in place to manage that change. Communication is vital at all levels and we also need teams to buy into the concept. It won't be an easy process for any of us. The question is, are we ready to take up the challenge?

READING MATTERS

COAST TO COAST ON THE RAVENBER WAY

BY RON SCHOLES



The Ravenber is a challenging coast to coast walk from Ravenglass, in Cumbria, to Berwick-upon-Tweed, England's northern most town. Following existing rights of way, the route leads the walker through terrain of dramatic contrasts. It passes through the mountain heart of Lakeland and traces the Roman road over the High Street Range. It crosses the pastoral Eden Valley, climbs the High Pennines and heads towards the remote

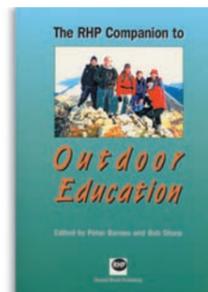
fell country of Northumberland. The vast northern forests and rounded heights of the Cheviot Hills give way to the leafy valley of the River Till and, finally, the traveller follows the banks of the mighty Tweed, to reach the North Sea at Berwick. A walker of many years' experience, Ron Scholes takes the reader on a complete guided tour of the route, from history and architecture to the best spot for lunch. The 209 miles walk is divided into fourteen sections, with sketch maps to indicate the main route as well as a number of alternatives.

A long standing leader of YHA walking tours, and the author of several books and many articles in magazines and journals, he has appeared regularly on radio, and briefly on TV, and is renowned for his popular lectures and illustrated talks on walking and the countryside.

Coast to Coast on the Ravenber Way. 1-85821-185-9. Published by Landmark Publishing Ltd. Price £7.50. For further information ron.scholes@btinternet.com

THE RHP COMPANION TO OUTDOOR EDUCATION

EDITED BY BOB SHARP & PETER BARNES



Outdoor education may not be high on the agenda in these days of 'couch potato' computer oriented learning but this book goes some way to address the balance. The first comprehensive text about outdoor education written explicitly for students, academics and practitioners in the UK, it also provides a 'detailed overview for those trainers, commissioners and funders with whom outdoor educators work in partnership,' according to the publishers. It is a 'lucid

and helpful assessment of the state of outdoor education today, with an important focus on how differing individuals and groups may learn from outdoor experience...' states the forward by Roger Putnam MBE, former chair of the Mountain Leader Training Board, the National Association for Outdoor Education and the English Outdoor Council.

The RHP Companion to Outdoor Education. 1-903855-36-5. Published by Russell House Publishing Ltd. Price £18.95.

NATIONAL TRAINING SEMINAR

100 places.
Everyone welcome.
Date: Sunday 23 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

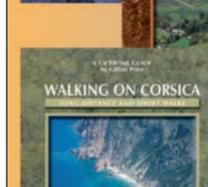
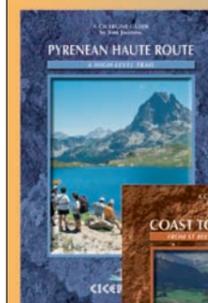
To be arranged.
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jmemr@talk21.com

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MRC COURSES 2004

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Mountain Rescue Bites Back

Judy Whiteside hits the Trail in the name of mountain rescue...

There's been a fair amount of hot air around lately. Some might say that's pretty normal amongst mountain rescuers, especially fuelled by a few beers, a hard day on the hill and a bit of internal politicising. But, I'm not talking about that – although even within MR, opinion on this particular topic seems to be divided – the 'You're being far too sensitive,' camp versus the 'This is outrageous, isn't something going to be done about it' camp.

Sorry, I can sense your attention wandering already... what on earth is she rambling on about? Trail, that's what. Trail, the best selling walking mag in the UK. Back in January, they ran a piece on mountain myths, incorporating mountain rescue. Having spent the last four years plus helping to develop various means whereby mountain rescue can better communicate both internally, and to a wider public, I read those few paragraphs with dismay.

Sure, they did say we do a 'fantastic job'. But, apparently, there are no figures existing about how many rescue call outs there are each year, how many mountain deaths, or what is the biggest 'killer', as they call it, in the UK hills. It would also appear that, while the Lake District teams have had the good sense and foresight to form their own 'umbrella organisation', the rest of the country is woefully uncollaborative and there is 'no national organisation responsible for making use of the huge amount of data each team amasses each year. Lessons learnt in one place aren't being applied in the others.'

Now, there may still be a residue of feeling (misguided in my opinion) that the MRC is some distant corporate body, out of touch with its grass

roots, but those people who turn up to regional meetings across the country and sit on national sub committees or represent their teams and regions at national level, might beg to differ.

Following the article, the MRC Press Officer, Andy Simpson, had a lengthy telephone conversation with Guy Proctor, Trail Editor. Problem solved. Er... wasn't it? February's issue came and went. Okay... maybe it's the lead times on these big mags? But there was a response from a Scarborough & District team member, so clearly not. Then, in March, came a letter from a former lifeboatman and governor of the RNLI, seeking to stimulate debate on the formation of a national body for mountain rescue.

He says, 'With the overview of a national body, fundraising can be carried out on a countrywide basis, as can publicity. Also, extensive testing of clothing and equipment can be instigated, and buying decisions made on the basis of sound reasoning and evaluation.' A national body could bring 'standardisation of approach', produce 'training regimes' and 'negotiate insurance schemes'.

Of course, he is absolutely right. (Perhaps we should ask this chap to join our organisation?) But... hello.... these things are already happening. We have regional and national bodies who not

only talk to each other, but exchange information with our international cousins through our own UK Conferences and IKAR. We have a statistics officer. Our statistics are available every year through the MRC handbook, the MRC website and through the BMC. We have insurance in place. We are undertaking research and development in (and supplying) equipment – most notably the casbag. We run national training courses. We are looking – indeed, have already begun – to fundraise nationally. And, given that Trail had been made aware of these facts, you might think they would have responded accordingly, perhaps pointed the reader in the right direction.

So, steam and sparks spitting from my pen, I sat down and wrote (yes, long hand) a very detailed letter on our behalf, which was then transferred to typewritten hard copy and email. I won't repeat its content here – if you're interested, I posted it to the newsgroup and it was also sent out to teams, via Eve Burton, as the 'official MRC response'.

At the time of writing, there has been absolutely nothing from Trail, not even an acknowledgement. The April issue now sits on my desk. Thankfully, they have printed a letter from the Lake District which goes a good way to putting the record straight. But, as the editorial staff at Trail appear to think that only the Lakes teams have any sort of co-ordinated activity – or communicative skills – does printing that response, rather than the 'official' one from the national body, not merely reinforce the myth?

Maybe I'll turn back the pages of the May issue and see that mountain rescue has finally been vindicated. Mmmm...

A,B,C,D and E - Casualty Care revamp in progress

Don't panic – Casualty Care is not being re-written! The Medical Sub Committee has started the process of reviewing the MRC Casualty Card. The pink A5 card has been in existence for a good many years. I think it was one of the first national items produced and gained widespread acceptance thanks to the hard work of Brian Wright and Graham Percival. At the time it was cutting edge stuff. I can remember the interest shown by hospitals and ambulance services in the clear way it put information across. It did wonders for the image of the MRC in many Accident & Emergency Departments.

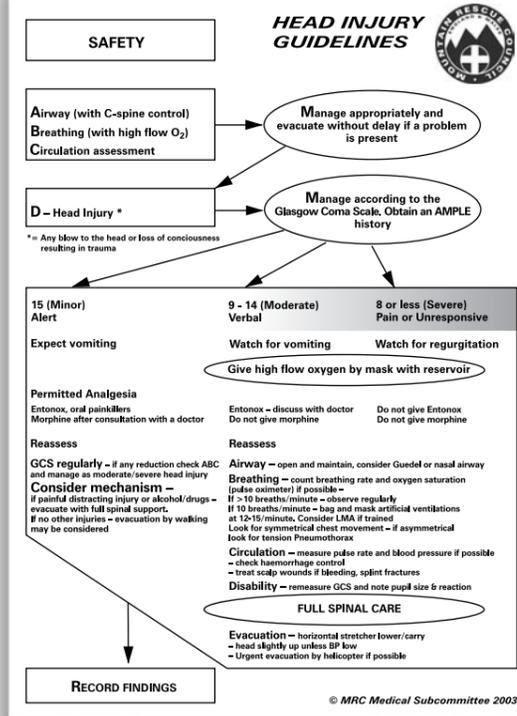
However, time has moved on and, though the essential information has remained the same, many teams have now developed more modern casualty cards to meet their own requirements. There are many outstanding examples, perhaps the most advanced being one developed by Mathew Kinsey in the Peak. Perhaps we will find it difficult to get back to a universal card but we are going to try.

Modern casualty cards reflect (and remind) the casualty carer to do the A(irway with cervical spine control) then B(reathing with oxygen) then C(irculation) first. A Primary Survey with an AMPLE history including prompts to do something, like stopping bleeding, at the appropriate time right in front of you as you deal with the casualty. Sounds like a good idea in the melee of incident. This apparently easy task is being spearheaded by John Saxton in Cleveland. Getting the right information for the wide breadth of different casualties is going to be a challenge.

To support the new casualty card we are also expanding our range of guidelines to put more flesh on the bones. The A card is almost complete and the D card on Head injury is available on the web (as illustrated). Others will follow to complete the series. I hope they will complement the new casualty card.

'Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue' is being re-written (for 2005) but the approach to the Primary Survey will look very like, if not identical, to the 'guideline' cards. Now you see I have another motive to developing the Primary Survey!

John Ellerton MRC Medical Officer



A tiny piece of technology with a big impact...

When it comes to mountain rescue equipment, weight and size really do matter. So much so that, until relatively recently, the cardiac defibrillator remained the preserve of the hospital and ambulance service. But the revolutionary Access CardioSystems AED – with its tiny dimensions and weight – looks set to change all that. Sold in the UK through R L Dolby, the Access defibrillator is a realistic addition to any team's kit.

Managing Director, Arthur Dolby said, 'We have been selling medical equipment for more than 30 years, and only rarely do we see products making such a revolutionary leap forwards as the Access AED. At just 1.3 kg, it should be regarded as being as indispensable as bandages.'

The AED is available in three formats – Public Access, with user prompts and voice instructions, the AED version with ecg display, and the ALS which has the ability for experienced users to override the automatic settings for use as a manual defibrillator.

All models are Bi-phasic and will interpret and advise shocks for ventricular fibrillation and wide complex ventricular tachycardia greater than 180 bpm. Optional features allow any event to be recorded and replayed with interpretation on PC.

Mr Dolby added, 'With this level of technology and at such low prices, there really is no excuse for defibrillation not being more widely available. As a keen and regular hill walker myself, I'm sure that older walkers and climbers would take comfort if they knew that the MRT were carrying defibrillation facilities.'

UK Mountain Rescue Conference 2004

Friday 10 September to Sunday 12 September

This year's Conference takes place at the University of North Wales, Bangor. At the time of going to press, funding from the Community Fund has not been achieved. Nevertheless, the cost to delegates has been pinned at the level of the Durham Conference, three years ago. There will be 400 subsidised places available for team personnel at £75 (excluding Scottish Police teams) including accommodation.

Initially, there will be four places allocated per team – the deadline for teams to take up their allocation is 31 May – after which places are open to applicants – and the price, potentially, goes up!

To ALSAR and Irish teams, the cost is £125. It is also anticipated that representatives of other organisations will attend. To HMCG and Emergency Services personnel – including RAF, Police MRTs, Red Cross and St John Ambulance – the cost will be £250.

Exhibitors are still being signed up and the programme yet to be finalised, but the Conference Committee hope to present a stimulating weekend to rival the success of 2002. And rumour has it that the bar at Bangor Uni knows better than to run out of beer... well, we'll see about that, eh?

For further details, contact Eve Burton on 01663 750371 or via email eveburton@chinley35.fsnet.co.uk

For trade stand information, contact Richard Terrell on 07971 191942 or 01495 270717. Email exhibitors.conf2004@mountain.rescue.org.uk or richardterrell2@aol.com

We're looking for photos for use during the Conference and in the brochure – please send on CD to Richard Terrell, 21 Mount Pleasant Terrace, Pontywaun, Crosskeys, Newport, Gwent NP11 7GH or via email as above.



FIRST RESPONSE...

PROPOSED NAME CHANGE

Rebranding and reimagining is an ongoing process in any progressive organisation, and now we have before us the proposal to delete the word 'Council' from our national body. Whilst no doubt there will be those fully in favour, those against and those indifferent, this proposal would have a large effect on a number of teams, who so far have fully supported and fallen in with the 'corporate identity' thinking of the MRC to date, (and gone through one previous name change from Committee to Council, since when our corporate image has been greatly developed and refined).

Bolton MRT is not alone in applying the MRC badgework throughout the team in many applications, in full support of the MRC. Should such a name change now be approved then, instantly, Bolton MRT and many others, are out of date with their signage and logos, which was provided at some considerable cost to us – and to our supporters who raised the money.

For example, within the Bolton team, and after taking advice from the MRC, we have changed all our letter headings, website header and other team admin, to utilise the MRC logo.

A recent order for four items, each x 50, of new team outdoor clothing has just been delivered, each item bearing the MRC approved logo. We have also (at cost) changed all three of our team member casual clothing items to bear the MRC logo. Both our new bases carry large signboards, bearing the MRC logo, as do our four team vehicles and two trailers, on both sides of each.

And now we understand there is a proposal to change the name and, therefore, the logo again! No doubt the supporters will mention a changeover period, but lets be realistic with our organisation, money is tight within teams, and I doubt if many of us can afford a rebadging exercise with what we have to date. For example, our new outdoor clothing has a life

expectancy of ten years (along with the badgework sewn into it).

There is always a time and place to change things but not, I proffer, at the moment when encouraged by the MRC, a great many teams have fallen in with the 'corporate badgework' to date. Surely we should be consolidating the image many teams have now fallen in with, rather than having yet another badge out there, to add to the confusion of our broad corporate identity? Perhaps the supporters of such a name change, and the associated badgework and logo change which would have to take place alongside this, would consider an appropriate fundraising effort, to pay for rebadging within all those teams who have supported the corporate identity of the MRC, and carried the MRC logo to date? (Yes, I know that's a non starter.)

Garry Rhodes (Team Leader) and the leadership of Bolton MRT. February 2004

LAKE DISTRICT



TEAM MOVES IN...

Langdale Ambleside MRT have moved in to their new base... and very impressive it is, too. Where the old Lowwood headquarters once stood, is now a gleaming, high tech rescue centre, complete with an impressive meeting room, chairs arranged neatly round a square table formation (I didn't like to ask what happened in the empty space in the centre), a comfortable sofa-filled relatives' room, locker room, drying room, fitted kitchen (freezer, apparently full of pies, cupboards full of KitKats, and not a bad cup of tea!), dining room, high tech control room, equipment store, presentation room... not to mention a pristine garage from which the team vehicles can exit the front doors, straight onto the main road, returning later through the back doors... and neatly back into position.

Nick Owen, Deputy Team Leader, takes up the story...

Langdale Ambleside MRT moved in to its Lowfold premises just after its formation in 1970. It was a shed! The shed developed into a garage, and an operations room, then a double garage, and a bit more space, and so on... The trouble was that the draughts and cold were never really addressed. Nor the low ceilings that saw at least three team members knocked out in my 12 years with the team. The other problem was that the lowest floor level was lower than the highest water level, and a wet'n'dry vacuum was on permanent standby to reclaim the floor. The other main shortcoming was that we had grown to need four Land Rovers, and only had three garage spaces. One vehicle stood outside cultivating moss! Somewhere around 1999, someone had the bright idea of moving to a new base. We were buoyed by the success that other Lakes rescue teams had had with fundraising, particularly through the Lottery.

Next decision was where? This caused much discussion (some quite heated). The decision we finally arrived at was to stay put and redevelop. This decision was arrived at largely because there appeared to be nowhere else in Ambleside where we could find the space we needed. We then went about the process of deciding what we wanted. We looked at all the things we couldn't do presently, visited nearly every rescue base in the Lakes, and some further afield, and stole all their good ideas. Then we appointed an architect who had designed a new base for Kendal MRT which they were very happy with.

The problem with this was that we then needed a temporary home. Again we hunted, and had some generous offers, but none entirely suitable. The

problem was solved when we realised that we could, temporarily, use an adjoining house that we had purchased in acquiring the land we needed. One of the problems we encountered in the early stages was that we discovered that we didn't own the entrance to our car park, or the land we needed to get drive-through access to the garage. To resolve this we purchased two neighbouring houses, changed the deeds

on one to get our garage access and sold it on minus its garden. The other became our temporary home. The building was due to take nine months. It took twelve. We operated out of our three bedroom terrace during one of our busier years. BT and Hayes Garden World allowed us to park our vehicles in their car parks. South Lakeland District Council even waived parking tickets for team members parked on their car park without a ticket during rescues! And now we've finished. It's warm, dry, spacious, bright and a joy to work in. We have garaging for four vehicles, a large drying room, excellent storage, comfortable operations rooms, kitchen, dining room, and a fantastic training facility.

A stained glass window panel, which was presented to the team in 1986, is now in pride of place in the new building. According to John Graham, writing in the 2002 Annual Report, the panel was the last piece of stained glass made by Mr B Dean Walmsley and was presented by his niece Mrs Dorene Furness on behalf of his estate, a year after his death. Mr Walmsley and his wife, Beatrice, were both artists in stained glass, oil and watercolour. Examples of the work of their St Annes Studio can be seen at Salmsbury Hall and in seven large windows in Queen Elizabeth School, Blackburn. In fact, the Queen Elizabeth School commission – made around 1925 by T B Lewis Esq, Governor of the School – is where the Langdale Ambleside window comes in.



So much work goes into making these windows that two were always made. The seven windows were comprised of one larger one, the Queen Elizabeth Charter Window, and six lights, known as House Windows. Each one of the House Windows depicts an incident in the life of six famous seamen. The profile of a rescuer depicted on the team's window is the same profile as Sir Francis Drake.

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Squeaky new and ready for action...



The way they were...

MID PENNINE

HANDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Bolton MRT continue the goodwill benefiting teams across the country, notably **Cornwall Rescue Group** and **Hampshire SAR**. Jim Gallienne and Andy Brelsford travelled up from Cornwall to collect an entire stock of 48 Buffalo jackets and 44 Sprayway Jackets. Meanwhile, Fred and Margaret Moore, associate members of Hampshire SAR, have taken delivery of a Renault Master T35 Ambulance, which has been with Bolton since its initial purchase from Staffordshire Ambulance Service in November 1998. It will be the lowland team's first vehicle, which they now intend to convert into a Control and Command vehicle.

NORTH EAST

TEAM GOES FOR IT

Teesdale & Weardale SRT has developed a unique computer programme to record the main events during a search. Originally intended to enter radio traffic against a date and time stamp, it has changed as its potential has been realised. Now at its fourteenth version, it is used to collect information on a search and produce reports from the printer in the team's control vehicle. The reports provide a complete record of events, which are incorporated into the search manager's report to the police. The 'clerk', directed by the team leader, records information from police, witnesses and team members. Printed reports – all linked to a unique search reference number – show missing person details, interviews, police details, pager messages, radio call signs, equipment in use, radio log, personnel on the search and, most recently, the key events. The system is particularly valuable in major searches where there is a large amount of information to store and review. The team has considerable expertise in this type of search and uses many sources to formulate the search pattern. These include police, family, colleagues, witnesses and missing persons' behavioural statistics. A second monitor in the control area of the vehicle enables the search manager to review the ongoing incident and allow easy handover to a new controller.

Reports are filed for record purposes and an extract given to the police, who have been impressed by the detail and format. They are able to incorporate these accurate and immediate records directly into the police log. The ability to look back over the records can reveal strengths and weaknesses in search patterns, thus contributing to the team's experience and training. Some early versions of the database – © TWSRT – were distributed to interested teams at MRC 2002. The plan is to demonstrate the latest version at MRC 2004. TWSRT intend to offer training in its use later this year.

TRIP TO ICELAND

Teesdale & Weardale SRT is one of only a few, if not the only, search and rescue teams in the UK with a youth section, unlike Iceland, where it's the norm. It was this that led to the team being awarded a grant by the North Pennines Leader Programme to visit some of the Icelandic teams in and around the Reykjavik area. The purpose of

the visit was to make contacts within ICESAR with the view to possible exchange visits between the youth sections.

Chris Roberts, Deputy Team Leader, Cadet Training Officer, Isabella Barnes and Russell Warne were treated to a rewarding week of Icelandic hospitality. They met representatives of Icelandic teams and sampled many of the experiences that Iceland has to offer. It became immediately clear that a future exchange visit would be a very exciting prospect. Chris Roberts says, 'Bearing in mind the relative speed in which the venture and programme were put together, our hosts in Iceland gave us a wonderful insight into the Search and Rescue (SAR) Organisation in Iceland, and also a flavour of the culture of the Country. On arrival we were met at the airport and taken to the SAR headquarters, where we immediately gained a first hand experience of the commitment to youth involvement within Icelandic SAR (ICESAR). Some 25 young people (aged 14-16 years) had been involved in a weekend first aid training session and were demonstrating their newly acquired skills. We were impressed not only by the number of young people involved, but also the enthusiasm shown by the group, who were composed equally of boys and girls.'

During the week they were taken to several SAR bases, including a training vessel run by ICESAR that delivers all aspects of maritime safety training to sailors around the country. At every base they were given a warm welcome and shown, always with great pride, around the facilities. They were continually impressed by the high profile that youth involvement took at each centre. Most teams have very active youth sections with dedicated training officers. One evening visit saw a youth training night in session. It has long been recognised by ICESAR that young people are the life blood of the organisation, so their youth sections are now well established. Clearly there are lessons that we could learn here!

Chris continues, 'Unlike rescue teams in the UK, many of the Icelandic teams are also responsible for sea rescue. We were lucky enough to be taken to visit such a base at Gridavik on the coast south of Reykjavic. Here again, there is a thriving youth section. However, what stuck in our minds about this visit was not being driven along the coast in a

superb 4x4 vehicle to look at past ship wrecks, or being driven up a mountain track in the pitch dark to look at the towns illuminated way below and the Northern Lights dancing above us. No, it was being taken back to base at 22.00hrs, invited to try on immersion suits, and then led to the harbour side to check out just how effective the suits are in the North Atlantic by leaping off the harbour!

'Our hosts not only gave us an insight into the operational side of search and rescue in Iceland, but also the environment in which the teams work. On two separate days we were taken out into the countryside to experience walking in the unfamiliar landscape that is Iceland. We are all experienced mountain walkers, but our two days out in the remoteness of Iceland was, without doubt, something that will stay with us. The country is very big, remote, and quite beautiful, it also hits the senses in other ways – there is often the smell of sulphur as evidence of the volcanic activity in the area. In a day's walk we came across mountain rivers, waterfalls, snow and ice, boiling craters, streams hot enough to bathe in, canyons, but not a single person!

'We were also taken on the tourist trips. We visited the site of the first Icelandic Parliament, the biggest waterfall in Iceland, and the Geysers. We went riding on Icelandic ponies with their unique stride, and we bathed at the Blue Lagoon. We watched with wonder as the Northern Lights played above our heads.

'All the activity aside, we still had some time to look around the town and get a flavour of the culture. There were many places we did not visit – the museums and galleries – which we can, hopefully, catch up on next time.

'I found the trip an extraordinary experience and would like to thank LEADER for the opportunity. I firmly believe that from this visit I can develop a project that will have a major impact on the group involved. The scope for experiences not available in the UK is clear. We sampled walking in an environment that was quite breathtaking. We saw sights that were totally new to us. We experienced a culture that is in many ways very different to our own, particularly the language, but at the same time with many similarities. The opportunity for learning new skills, particularly those involving snow and ice, is clear. I would like these same



experiences to be shared by others!' Chris remains in contact with Kolbrún Gumundsdóttir, Educational Department/Youth Supervisor for ICESAR. 'I know that she would like to develop links with us, and would welcome the opportunity to take part in some exchange programme.'

The TWSRT youth section is open to young people over the age of 16. Chris can be contacted on 01833 690268 or via email on chris.roberts@tinyworld.co.uk or at the TWSRT base 01833 630999.

NORTH WALES

WELSH LESSONS KEEP CLIMBERS ALIVE

Nikki Wallis, Snowdonia Park Warden and search dog handler, was out on patrol with her dog, Jacob, when she heard cries for help. She discovered one of two climbers in agony after shattering his kneecap in a fall from a ridge high above the Pyg track on Crib Y Ddysgl in wintry conditions. More than 50 team members from **Llanberis, Ogwen and Abergalslyn MRTs** battled through treacherous conditions and zero visibility for eight hours, as Nikki kept the pair awake, and hypothermia at bay, playing word games and teaching them Welsh. Two attempts by Llanberis troops – one from below the incident location (the Pyg track) and one from the side. (Bwlch Cock/Rock Step) – were seriously hampered by the high winds and snow storms and they were forced to turn back. Eventually, a strong team of Ogwen and Llanberis members managed to reach the location, a precarious scree slope just above a steep cliff, below an area known as the sheep track, which Nikki describes as 'an enticing little path which leads away from the Rock Step, but then peters out and ends in really difficult hazardous steep scree and gully ground'. A route that would have taken them straight down to the Pyg track if they had slid.

By this time, Nikki was preparing to stay with the boys overnight or, at least, until weather conditions improved. 'It had literally been a case of cutting bucket seats in the snow, using the wet snow to form a splint as far as possible for his leg injury, and supporting the casualty on the lower side so that he didn't slide down the mountain.' The casualty was finally stretchered to safety – although this in itself took some considerable time due to the conditions – arriving at the Pen Y Pass National Park Warden Centre in the early hours of the morning. 'Without the group shelter I was carrying – and which I always carry when I'm on patrol – the situation would have been a different matter.' And, just to up the ante, another rescue was going on in Ogwen Valley.

Fellow Warden, Aled Taylor, of Llanberis MRT, who helped co-ordinate the rescue said, 'It was horrendous for the rescue teams – everyone, who are all hardened mountaineers, came back absolutely shattered. They are lucky to be alive and Nikki did really well.'

Meanwhile, Jacob enjoyed all the 'fluffy' media interest so much that he has taken to signing (paw printing) autographed picture postcards. Nikki's other search dog, Caleb, the official SARDA dog and the qualified one, is understandably quite envious of the attention!



PEAK DISTRICT

40 YEARS OF LIFE SAVING WORK

Peak District teams are celebrating 40 years with a concerted effort to raise the profile of mountain rescue, both locally and beyond. Mike France, PDMRO Chairman, is keen to make the most of the opportunity to present a professional, united image with press releases to national papers and television.

The PDMRO was formed following the deaths of two climbers in an avalanche in Wilderness Gully, Chew Valley in the north of the Peak District National Park, and three scouts in a multiple fatal accident during the 1964 Four Inns Walk. Two were from Wells in Somerset and Lowestoft, Norfolk and linked with Birmingham Rover scouts. The other scout was from Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.

It may be only forty (some would say) short years since the regional organisation took shape but, it's fair to say, mountain rescue has been around within Derbyshire for far longer. An incident on 4 January 1925, when James Evans was reported missing on Kinder, showed how a call out should be done. An appeal was put out in the then Manchester Guardian for experienced ramblers to attend meeting points in Glossop, Hayfield and Edale. The president of the Rucksack Club would take charge from the Edale side of Kinder, the Police and Manchester Rambling Club would run operations from Hayfield and searchers were allowed cheap bookings by train between Manchester London Road and Glossop or Hayfield. The newspaper's 'special correspondent' in Hayfield reported, 'There is a need for a co-ordinated rescue scheme supervised by the police'. Mr Evans was found

dead on 10 January. The coroner recorded exposure as the cause of death.

The two tragedies in 1964 demonstrated a clear need for co-ordination and improved equipment – and the establishment of other teams. Today, there are seven Peak District teams – Buxton, Derby, Edale, Glossop, Kinder, Oldham, Woodhead and RAF Stafford – and the Search & Rescue Dogs Association of England and Wales (SARDA), is also represented.

Buxton MRT was formed in 1964, although an earlier RAF team was based at Harpur Hill during the war years. The team is actually a division of the St John Ambulance.

Derby MRT was also formed in 1964, as a direct result of the Four Inns Walk. Initially, the team consisted of members of the 51st Derby (St. Luke's) Rover Scout Crew who were the organisers of the Four Inns event and the team still retains its links with the Scout Association by affiliation.

Edale MRT traces its roots back to the formation of the Peak District National Park Warden Service in the early 1950s. For many years its members were recruited exclusively

from the ranks of the professional and volunteer wardens (later Rangers). Although in the early 1980s this entry route was widened to include those outside the Ranger service.

Glossop MRT owes its origins to a team of Rover Scouts formed in 1959, which merged with the Glossop Moorland Rescue Team in 1965 to form the present team.

Kinder MRT came into being in the late 1960s as a result of the amalgamation of the Sett Valley and the Goyt Valley teams.

Oldham MRT was started by the Scout organisation and was called the Oldham Rover Scout Mountain Rescue Team. During the 70s the team became independent and was made into a charitable trust.

Woodhead MRT was formed in the early 70s by the amalgamation of the Huddersfield Scout MRT, Stocksbridge Barugh Rovers and Sheffield Scout MRT. These three teams were formed as a direct result of the Four Inns fatalities in 1964.

The Incident Controller's dilemma

Mike France on a missing runner and hypothermic decision making

Each year, in early December, on what always seems to be a cold morning, Woodhead MRT meet to cover the Marsden to Edale Fell Race. About 9.00am, the race starts from the back of the fire station in Marsden. Runners set off up the Wessenden valley, crossing the A635 at Wessenden head, then over Black Hill and down Crowden to their first checkpoint.

We've always used the day to train newer members in radio and navigation skills. Because runners move so much faster than the team, members have to be off early to reach the high points, then sit about for long periods, which is one of the reasons MR members suffer from hypothermia! From Crowden, the runners set off up Torside Clough over Bleaklow, to emerge at Doctors Gate on the A57, then run down the road to their second checkpoint at Snake Inn. By this time, they are well spread out. We can still have team members sweeping behind the last runners on Black Hill when the front runners are going through the Snake checkpoint.

The team ambulance acts as control for the day, parked on Snake summit, a very cold, windswept place. My role, as Incident

Controller, is to work to the pre-plan, co-ordinating team members and making sure equipment and members are in the right place. Because the cold can affect your judgement, there are usually two or three people working in the control unit. (It has been said the reason I can't remember where people are is because of my age). Once the runners leave the Snake Inn they are off up to Seal Edge, across Kinder Scout and then down Golden Clough to Edale. On a good day, the first runner will be having a drink in Edale with their support team around noon, some three hours after the start.

At about 14.00hrs we checked the number of outstanding runners with the race marshalls at Snake Inn. These were a 'vet female' (someone over 40 years!) plus five others. We knew who the last three were because the sweep teams had been tracking them all day and then two lads ran through the checkpoint, both OK. I needed to know where the female runner was. I checked with team members at the finish. Had she checked in there? Had she missed the Snake Inn checkpoint? When was the last time we saw her? Where was the last place we saw her? All these questions are

asked via radios or mobile phones. (What did we do before mobile phones?) It is now about 14.30hrs and, by 16.00hrs, it will be dark. It had been a good, clear winter's day, ideal for walking. The air temperature was about zero, a day when team members were saying they had been frozen just standing about.

At last, a message came back to me that the runner had checked in to Crowden at 12.15hrs, so she could still be on Bleaklow. If she has had an accident, knowing that fell runners only wear minimum clothing, in these temperatures she could be in real difficulty. Now the pressure is on and experience takes over. Time is now critical. I have about one and a half hours of daylight. If she's not found soon, the chances of her surviving out on the moor overnight are zero. All spare team members have been sent back onto Bleaklow to backtrack her route. Some were asked to drive down to the bottom of the Snake Pass and check the road up by the Derwent dams. The last three runners have just gone through the Snake Inn and they were asked if they had passed anyone – no!

Putting the search plan together, I called for

extra help from Edale MRT, who met at the bottom of Alport Dale along with their search and rescue dogs. Glossop MRT had also been called to RV at Snake summit and help Woodhead members already on Bleaklow. I had contacted Derbyshire Police to inform them of the problem and ask if I could have their helicopter. Within an hour, some 80 mountain rescuers, search dogs and a police helicopter were looking for this lady. Other members working in control had been logging all calls made and received, all tasking was now recorded, we had a search plan and time records of all tasks. We still had members in Edale that were covering the end of the fell race. They could not leave until the last runners had gone through the finish. The race organiser had been asked to check their records to find a home address and phone number for the missing runner. Like all races, the person with the names and addresses couldn't be found!

It's now well-turned 16.00hrs. It is dark and very cold and all manner of thoughts are running through my mind. Then the call came in, not from a hill party, but from the race

organiser. She was at home.

My immediate task now is to get all MRT members back off the hill safely, stand down the helicopter and the search dogs. When this had been done, I could then ask the race organiser what had happened. I was told, to my dismay, that the lady never set off that morning because she had not felt well. At the first checkpoint, she must have been checked in by accident. Accidents happen when people are cold. This is one for the race organiser to sort out for next year.

The Incident Controller's dilemma – did I raise the alarm too soon? When someone's life is at stake, how long can you wait? Should we have done all the checks first?

Not one team member complained about going out for no reason. If she had been on the moor in those weather conditions they could have saved her life. If she had been there and we had delayed our search she could, indeed would, have died. Every mountain rescue team member is there to help anyone who may be in difficulty, without question or complaint. (Well not many!!)



Buxton MRT on exercise

SOUTH WALES

BIG BLACK MOUNTAINS CHALLENGE

Longtown MRT run the Big Black Mountains Challenge, their main event, on 22 May. The event consists of three arduous walks/runs over 43k, 27k or 16k, between them taking in fifteen summits over 660m around the breathtaking scenery of the Black Mountains. Several of the valleys are crossed, which makes the challenge more like a mountaineering expedition. Good navigation and hill skills are essential. Rather than a minimum amount of sponsorship from each entrant, there is an entry fee, reduced for those preregistering before a specified date, with each entrant encouraged to raise additional funds through sponsorship. The setting of entry fees is reviewed each year and it should be noted that they have not changed for some three years as the team wish to encourage hill walkers/runners, young and those not so young. Team Secretary, Hazel Highfield says, 'We try to encourage a friendly atmosphere in order to make this as unique a charity event, as possible. Our formula seems to work, as we seem to attract regulars and newcomers, from near and far. At present, we attract some 600 participants from London, Surrey, Cambridgeshire, Midlands, Somerset, Wales and the neighbouring counties.

'As a way of showing our gratitude for the support that each entrant gives, we provide free light refreshments, in the form of tea/coffee and cakes, as they finish their route.'

Details are available from the team's website (www.longtownmrt.org.uk), via email (BigBlacks@longtownmrt.org.uk) or by sending an SAE to Big Black Mountains Challenge, PO Box 36, Monmouth NP25 5YZ.

SARDA

TECHNO DOGS LEAD THE WAY

Search and rescue dog handlers are to become the first volunteer rescue team in the country to use the latest digital mapping and satellite positioning technology to help them help find missing people. New equipment will help them navigate in their quest to reach casualties more quickly and safely.

The new equipment will be presented to the SARDA (England) dog handlers at a training weekend on Saturday 27 March. Around 30 dogs and their handlers from all over the country will be at Sowerby Bridge, near Halifax. The timing of the session means handlers will be trained and equipped with the new equipment just before the Easter holidays, traditionally the time when the fells and footpaths get busy with walkers and climbers.

Currently, team members use maps, compasses and GPS units to navigate and locate people. The products, from Holux-UK and Otterbox, will revolutionise the way search operations are conducted.

The **Hewlett Packard IPAQ 1940** is a small hand-held computer with a navigational software package, communicating to a wireless GPS receiver. This system gives a map on screen which locates the handler and keeps track of where he or she has been. It also allows the user to plan a route and follow it – essential in bad weather or poor visibility.

The **HOLUX GR230 GPS** locks onto satellites to give the handler a fix on their position. It transmits the information back to the IPAQ giving instant information about location, superimposed on an electronic map. **OTTERBOX** are

specially designed waterproof and shockproof cases, supplied by Rugged Peak for the IPAQ, that protects it from the elements, yet allows use of the touch screen system.

'This is a highly significant advance in search and rescue,' said Alex Lyons, SARDA Training Officer. 'It will revolutionise the way we conduct search operations and hopefully more lives will be saved as a result. Of course, we will still depend on the sensitive noses, stamina and intelligence of our dogs at the front line.'

'We are extremely grateful to the suppliers of this equipment. It's heartening to feel that all the hundreds of hours we put into training our dogs will be maximised when they have to go out there to rescue people.'

SARDA IN BORROWDALE

A joint assessment course organised by SARDA (England) and SARDA (Lakes) was held in Borrowdale in mid January, and enjoyed some interesting weather! On the Thursday, blizzard conditions with a visibility of about 50 metres made assessment, at times, nigh on impossible. Whilst on Friday and Saturday, bright sunny days made it a joy to watch new dog teams showing off their skills.

There was a variety of land for the handlers to work, and a well organised programme ensured all handlers, looking to either grade for the first time or upgrade, got a fair chance to prove their worth. Andy Colau, (CRO), Steve Ward (Woodhead MRT) and John Coombs (Edale MRT) all made the grade at Novice level and Helen Morton (Rossendale & Pendle MRT) successfully negotiated the upgrade hurdle.

The two Associations use different methods of assessment so neither of the Lakes dogs being assessed graded at this course, as it was only part of their continuous assessment over eight days. However, Penny Kirby (Wasdale MRT), Dave Benson (Kirkby Stephen MRT) and Pete Collins (Patterdale MRT) have all completed their assessments during the last few months, and that means SARDA (Lakes) have added five dogs to the Callout List during 2003. An up and coming group of enthusiastic trainees means that there's still plenty to do in the next couple of years.

Training a Search Dog does rely on a constant, committed group of volunteers – the 'dog's bodies' – who are prepared to lie out in all sorts of weather, and then be assaulted by enthusiastic hounds who wish to bark in their ears, steal their sandwiches and get inside their bivvy bags! Anyone considering training a search dog should try it – you'll learn a lot about the process. All handlers recognise and acknowledge the value of these selfless folk during the training process.

This course was the second successful joint assessment course run between the Associations, and the next will be hosted by SARDA (Lakes) at Coniston in September.

Mick Guy (SARDA Lakes)

SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH FUNDING

Since the last issue, the First Minister for Scotland has announced that all Scottish MRTs will, henceforth, receive direct funding on an annual basis from the Scottish Executive. 'This represents a giant leap forwards for Scottish teams', writes Bob Sharp, MRC of Scotland Secretary. 'It is the first time ever that all teams have gained guaranteed funding.' The money will be directed through the eight police forces but will be ring-fenced for MR. The mechanism by which the money (£400k per annum initially) has been divided has been the source of some debate and much anguish. Briefly, it has been split into two parts. A smaller part (around 25%) has been divided on an equal basis and the larger part on a 'call out' basis. This has not pleased some teams, but is acceptable to others. The next tranche of money becomes available in the new tax year and fuller discussion will take place in deciding the formula.

RADIOS

The Scottish Executive has been very helpful on another front. The MRC of S, in response to the new radio Bandplan, has been working on the supply of hardware to all teams through a single supplier. A company was appointed to examine the most appropriate units and a decision will shortly be made on make/models. In regard to payment, the MRC of S has a large bequest dedicated to this project and the Scottish Executive has pledged another £300k. There may still be a cash shortfall and, at the time of writing, that has yet to be resolved. A decision also has to be made about whether the MRC of S should buy the new radios outright or lease them through a deal that also includes replacement and maintenance.

NEW MACINNES STRETCHER

The Stretcher Committee continues its work to design and develop a replacement stretcher for the MacInnes Mk 6. But, quite separately, Hamish has produced a new Mk 7 which is made of the latest lightweight materials and weighs only 11kg. 'Sounds very good. We are all looking forward to seeing it in action. A couple of teams have already worked with it and report it to be very good.'

CASBAG

Finally, Bob reveals that 'developments are also taking place with CASBAG the Journal of the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland. We are hopeful that, with the appointment of Design and General Editors, this much revered publication will go from strength to strength.'

If any English or Welsh MRT would like a complimentary copy please contact Bob Sharp on lomondbob@talk21.com

Clean, Green Campin' Machine!

Introducing the Greenheat Ecostove Range comprising the Base Camp, the Backpacker and the Picnic Cooker. Each with its own unique features and ready for anything – from a day in the park to an expedition.

Greenheat Base Camp is the most developed model in the Greenheat Outdoor range, yet still remarkably easy to light and simple to operate. A butterfly valve in the shield makes it fully regulating and it sits on four removable feet to ensure safety and balance. This powerful stove has approx 3.5 hours burn time and is resealable and, despite its diminutive appearance, suitable for all outdoor camping and cooking requirements.

Greenheat Backpacker is ideal for all ages and levels of expertise and suitable for all sorts of cooking – from boiling water to frying your breakfast. It's remarkably easy to light and regulate and resealable, for those on the move. Each tin has a burn time of around one hour and a heat regulation function via a windshield.

Greenheat Picnic Cooker is a compact, lightweight and disposable stove that comes with three Greenheat Organic fuel cells. It's ideal for picnics and all outdoor pursuits such as hiking, fishing and walking. The pack contains three stove fuel cells plus a lightweight aluminium base that folds out to create a windshield and a stand for the fuel cells. Each fuel cell has approx 30 minutes high heat burn time and a ring-pull lid.

All Greenheat products are 100% organic and 100% safe. The fuel is manufactured from harvesting sugar cane, is non-explosive, non-toxic, non-spill and non-flare, produces no fumes except carbon dioxide and water which the plant absorbed in growth. It's unaffected by cold, wet, wind and altitude – ideal for any thing the great outdoors can throw at you!

The range is used by people from all walks of life, pursuing many different activities – from competitors in the Marathon De Sables (the world's largest sand marathon across the Sahara) to Special Forces and K2 mountaineers. It was also used as the sole source of catering fuel for the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg.

The Greenheat Base camp has an RRP of £19.99 (refills are just £3.50), the pack of 2 Backpacker has an RRP of £7.99, and the pack of 3 Picnic Cookers is just £5.99. Please call 0116 234 4644 for stockists.



Kit crit:1 Jotron AQ-5 multi-purpose strobe light

Teesdale & Weardale SRT tested four units of the Jotron personal strobe light during a helicopter exercise in November 2003. The units are self contained, waterproof to 50m and are around cigarette packet size. They operate on two AA batteries and include both a high intensity Xenon strobe (6 miles visibility) and a white torch LED. The battery life is 12 hrs as a strobe and 60 hrs as a torch.

Use of the strobes was discussed with the RAF Sea King crew who considered them useful for locating

search groups from a distance, although their use near the helicopter at night would interfere with the crew's night vision systems. The strobes also proved useful during the team's night navigation exercise, allowing Control to identify teams over a distance of some 800+m by asking them to use the strobe. Reaction of team members to the units was very positive. For the cost of around £35 each, they are a very useful and lightweight addition to any search group's equipment.

In addition to the three standard units that we tested we also tried one of the new designs with a modified belt clip. The new design of clip appeared to work better than the existing design. In general, the units were carried inside team members' rucksacks and the belt clip was not used.

A personal review by Adam Hearn Equipment Officer Teasdale & Weardale SRT

COMPETITION RESULTS



Well, what an apathetic bunch you are! Last issue we had 5 sets of SealSkinz socks and gloves to give away (that means FREE)... and were we overwhelmed

with entries? Were we heck. In fact, the postman struggled up the path with a meagre two. Fortunately for the judges, both entrants answered correctly. So at least there'll be two sets of waterproof hands and feet out there.

Our winners are Iain Cairns, of Thirsk, North Yorkshire and the mysteriously named 'Little dragon' of Rossendale, Lancashire. In case you can raise yourself from a slumber, the answers were...

1 7 products in the SealSkinz range

- 2** Merino sheep
- 3** 40°C

And finally... **What would they do in theirs?**

I had a pair of SealSkinz, They really were the best. After caving down Jingling Pot, I came out and had a rest.

And, alas, that's where they were left. Iain

What would I do in mine?

Wade through streams. Squelch through bogs. Climb up waterfalls. Reach the summits. Protect myself whilst helping others... and live life to the full. Little dragon





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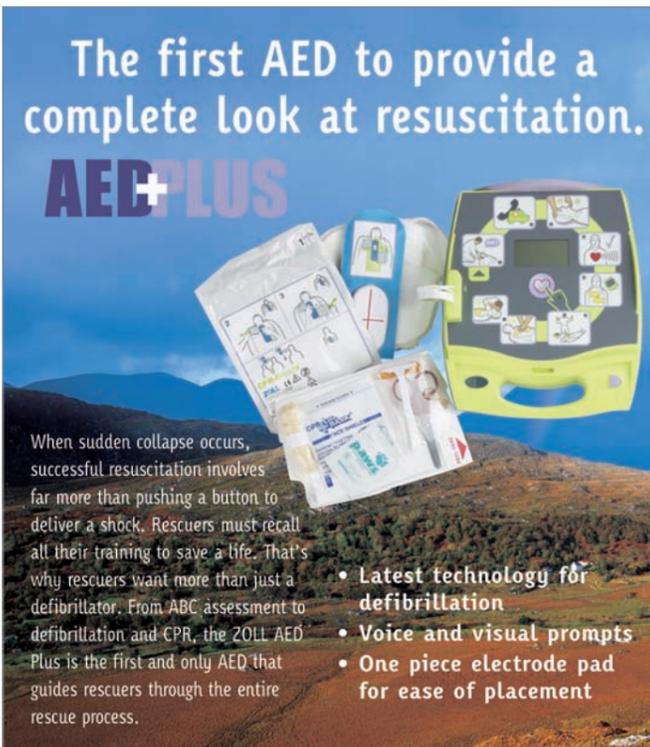


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SEEMS LIKE ONLY **YESTERDAY**

FROM ROCK TO STEEL

THE FIRST OFFICIAL ASCENT
OF BLACKPOOL TOWER

Stewart Hulse loses his marbles
in Blackpool



In April 1975, Peter Greenall, Leader of the Langdale Ambleside team, was contacted by officials of a convalescent home in Blackpool, which gave assistance and shelter to ex-servicemen. The British Limbless Ex-servicemen's Association (BLESMA) was reliant on voluntary donations so, every year, they would have a week of intensive fundraising. Pete called a few of us together to see if we were interested in climbing Blackpool Tower for a very worthy charity. We all agreed it would be an unusual challenge and we'd be helping a worthwhile cause to raise a few bob.

Our only concern was that we would be attempting something that was completely new – climbing on steel girders without a rehearsal. Our sanity was questioned. As a friend of mine bluntly put it, when he heard I was going to climb the tower, 'Have you lost your marbles Hulse?'

Mind you, this particular mate of mine would sit in a pub from morning till night, exercise was a dirty word and he thought Scrabble was a contact sport!

This climb hung in the balance for weeks, as it would only go ahead if the directors of the Blackpool Tower Company eased their rigid stance of not allowing anyone, no matter who they were, to climb the tower. Many had tried, but all had been refused.

To cut a long story short, permission was granted, but with conditions. First we had to sign individual indemnities, relieving the tower company of all responsibilities. There would not be a live person in the mock mountain rescue stretcher lower and a doctor and two nurses must be in attendance at the foot of the tower in the case of an accident.

The last condition made us all chuckle a little. If we did happen to fall off during the climb, we thought a refuse lorry and a few plastic bags would be more appropriate!

Pete had previously outlined the climbing plan and who would climb with whom. He then said he wanted a volunteer to be barrowboy on the stretcher lower. Quick as a flash, he said 'Thanks,

Stewart. You've done it many times before for real, this one is a piece of cake!' I've cleaned his comment up somewhat but, to this day, I don't remember putting my name forward for this task. Having been in the Army doing my National Service, it was instilled in me 'never volunteer for 'owt.'

Early on Monday 21 July 1975, we made our way from the Lake District to Blackpool. Our rendezvous point was the Winter Gardens. We were to parade down the promenade with our escorts from the show business world. They would collect donations from the thousands of people lining the road to the tower while we would walk behind the circus elephants, desperately trying to avoid the giant mounds of brown stuff our African friends had deposited all over the road.

The crowds of locals and holiday makers on the prom below the tower were, according to police, numbered in their thousands. In fact, the road would be closed for the next hour and a half.

Our communications officer, Tony Richards, would keep in radio contact with us all from the mountain rescue Land Rover, situated on the prom. At this point, Tony informed us that the parachute display had to be cancelled, because the wind speed was beyond the parameters of parachuting and not within the safety margins allowed.

However, we all thought the blustery conditions, although not ideal, were acceptable to us. Little did we know then (and not until we were well into the climb) that we would all experience a deterioration in the weather. The wind had picked

Little did we know then (and not until we were well into the climb) that we would experience a deterioration in the weather. The wind had picked up, there was a hint of rain on the horizon and a light sea mist was making the steel girders quite slippery.

up, there was a hint of rain on the horizon and a light sea mist was making the steel girders quite slippery.

...continued on page 22

13,533 FEET UP WITHOUT A PARACHUTE

Andy Simpson takes his bivvy bag to the Breithorn



TEMPTATION

No, I didn't use a helicopter but, for those with high ambitions and low technical abilities, it is possible to impress your friends with your alpine exploits and get back without frostbite.

For me the discovery came quite by accident with a lone visit to the Alps in 1998, a fantastic view from my tent and the kind of weather you only see in holiday brochures.

Gazing up the Matter Valley from Täsch, in Switzerland, you expect to see the Matterhorn but it remains tantalisingly hidden, as the valley sweeps west at its head. What you do see, however, is the dome top of the Breithorn, 4164 metres and reputed to be the easiest of the 4000ers to climb.

Given that this was only my second visit to Switzerland, and my only previous experience of any kind of 4000er was either Cairngorm, at

just over 4000 feet, or my overdraft, my borrowed guide book proved to be an invaluable source of useful tips on how to tackle something that big.

The main point was, before tackling a 4000 metre mountain, one should acclimatise to the altitude by climbing or walking at over 3000 metres. Clearly addled by camping in the elevated valley floor, at 1230 metres (which, incidentally, I'm positive was the cause of two weeks' worth of very vivid dreams and nightmares) I decided that 4000 metres was over 3000 metres and, therefore, climbing the Breithorn qualified as an acclimatisation climb for... climbing the Breithorn.

In need of a map and a weather report for the next day I made my first foray into Zermatt, walking the 4 or 5 miles up the valley in glorious sunshine and seeing the Matterhorn for the first time. The map was easy to come by but the weather report proved a little more difficult. A visit to the alpine centre didn't help, nor did the alpine guide booking shop (I don't read German).

My only clue was a snatch of overheard conversation between a couple of English pensioners, who were firmly convinced it was going to rain. In the middle of one of the hottest days I've ever experienced – and without a cloud in the sky – I took

the ill-gotten information with a generous pinch of salt.

More useful was the fact that there was a cable car service all the way up to Klein Matterhorn, right next to the Breithorn and, at 3500 metres, nearly all the way up it!

The following morning saw a cloudless sky, save for the merest wisp of a cloud just peeking over the tops to the west. Old people really do talk bollocks sometimes!

A fifteen minute train ride saw me walking through Zermatt towards the Klein Matterhorn lift, feeling a bit of a tosser dressed, as I was, in winter boots and sweating under a rucksack with just about every bit of spare kit I owned in it. Three quarters of an hour later, I was resplendent in crampons and buffalo shirt, brandishing an ice axe, and walking down the

ski slope towards the glacier, convinced I'd left one of my lungs in the tent. With a fantastic day in prospect, the only metaphoric cloud on my horizon was the fact that this was the highest I'd ever been.

I was on my own (if you don't count the other fifty people up there) and, despite the fact that the lift drops you at 3500 metres, you walk across the head of the Breithornpass, then drop down a couple of hundred feet. Which still

It wasn't long before the man was dressed in my spare clothing, his leg splinted with an ice axe, being slid down the hill inside a big orange bivvy bag. I don't know if it really made a lot of difference but he looked a hell of a lot better.

leaves you with a fair old climb to get to the top – a bit like climbing Snowdon whilst breathing in and out of a paper bag.

Half way across the glacier, all was going reasonably well until I noticed that everyone in front of me had stopped and was either hurriedly dressing or looking down towards Zermatt. What they'd seen was the most enormous cloud hurtling up the valley towards us which, when it hit, turned a delightful summer day into the depths of winter in about two minutes flat! I should have listened to the crumbles in Zermatt but, instead, found myself scrambling about in my rucksack in the middle of a raging white-out.

Still, I'd come this far and, having got over the shock of the storm, I carried on up the mountain, as did most of my fellow climbers. Things had settled a bit weatherwise although, by the time I put my head over the summit ridge, there was a 60 mile an hour wind blowing up from Zermatt, making a traverse, at best, a really stupid thing to try.

At this point I met a trio of Spanish climbers who very kindly offered to let me clip into their rope for the descent, something I did with a sense of relief, given that my crampons didn't have anti-balling plates and were, by now, collecting lumps of snow the size of footballs.

Half way down we happened upon a climber and his guide, both sat in the snow and clearly waiting for something. It turned out that the climber had broken his leg and his guide was trying to summon help on his radio. Unfortunately for them, the weather meant that a helicopter couldn't get this high so they were waiting for a snowmobile to come and get them, and had been for some time. I don't know if it was the state of the casualty or whether my training had actually sunk in but this chap looked to me like he was in danger of dying from his broken leg.

Aged around 55, he'd been sat in the storm for almost an hour, dressed in the same clothes he'd been climbing in despite, I learned later, having a rucksack full of spare clothing. In addition, every time the wind got up the spindrift 'sandblasted' any exposed skin and left him rocking back and forth in agony. Now I knew why I'd carried all this spare kit!

It wasn't long before the man was dressed in my spare clothing, his leg splinted with an ice axe, being slid down the hill inside a big orange bivvy bag. I don't know if it really made much difference but he looked a hell of a lot better now that something positive was happening. And I felt better for having done something rather than leaving it to his inanimate guide.

After a couple of hundred yards, the snowmobile arrived. The casualty was given first aid and dragged off in the bloodwagon. By now, I was absolutely knackered, so it was a real bonus when the snowmobile returned for the guide and offered me a lift back the last half mile to the cable car.

All in all it was a pretty good day out, marred only by the fact that I'd missed the summit by about 150 yards distance and 10 metres height.

I've been back to the Breithorn twice since then and, on both occasions, the weather has been absolutely superb, giving me the chance to reach the summit without the drama of the first outing. It's listed in the local guidebooks as a hiking route but, just to put it into perspective, the two foot wide summit ridge exposes you to what looks like a 4000 foot drop on one side and a 1500 foot, 60 degree slide on the other, the kind of thing that would put you into an uncontrollable cartwheel if you caught a crampon. Indeed, relaxing in front of the telly one Saturday evening, I saw a woman attempt the ridge on one of



Unfortunately, most of the imprints must have been left by the local wildlife, something which became only too apparent as I slid to a halt at the top of a thirty foot cliff, from which the local ibex would, no doubt, have simply jumped, before darting over the next rocky outcrop. I was now in serious trouble and not about to ring for a rescue team, some of whom knew my face after my previous outing. I even tried to hide from a passing helicopter...



SCENE OF A NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE. DOM IN THE BACKGROUND ON THE LEFT, TASCORN ON THE RIGHT... I THINK!

these 'challenge of a lifetime' programmes – and fail.

Nevertheless, if you've got a head for heights it could be one of the most exhilarating experiences you're ever likely to have – and if you don't fancy the ridge you can always get to the summit by going up the other side of the mountain. Either way, it's bloody hard work but no worse than climbing Scafell on a rain soaked day in July. And, with all due respect to the Lake District, if you get the weather, the views are unbelievable.

Anyway, back to the plot. Having made a hero of myself on my first 4000er, I thought I'd set my sights a little lower over the coming days with a trip to the Ober Rothorn, at 3400 metres a mere stroll by comparison. I also decided to make a proper day out of it by walking what looked like a stunning ridge path, back in the direction of Täsch, and then cut directly down to the campsite – all this decided from the safety of the valley floor.

Again, in this skiers' paradise there's a cable car or lift of some description going almost everywhere, so it wasn't too difficult, other than for my wallet, to get to the top of the Unter Rothorn. But, as with all things hilly, you drop 500 feet or so before you can begin the climb up.

The Ober Rothorn really is like climbing Scafell, or Pen-y-gent, or anything else you've ever slogged up, the only difference being the size of the surrounding mountains. I was even getting used to the reduced oxygen supply. Gaining the top after a couple of hours, the views were again superb and the drop off the east side of the mountain something

to behold, as you try to pick out a hut or a person, anything to give you some perspective as to how high you really are.

A quick brew and a fag later I started on the ridge, heading North towards a village called Ottovan, directly above Täsch and my tent. As it's all devoid of vegetation up there the best you can hope for when route finding is to follow the worn bits or imprints in the shale, which I duly did with the enthusiasm of a teenager on the way to his first date.

Unfortunately, most of the imprints must have been left by the local wildlife, something which became all too apparent as I slid to a halt at the top of a thirty foot cliff, from which the local ibex would, no doubt, have simply jumped, before darting over the next rocky outcrop. I was now in serious trouble but not about to ring for a rescue team, some of whom now knew my face after my previous outing. I even tried to hide from a passing helicopter. If nothing



IF YOU COULD JUST HOLD THIS FOR A MINUTE...

else, it's an interesting predicament to be in, a rescuer needing rescue, and I bet the same doubts cross our casualties' minds as did mine – 'Surely I can sort this out?' – before they fall off leaving one untidy mess at the bottom of the crag.

Luckily for me I was able to find the only hold on the mountain which didn't come off in my hand and managed to scramble back up the scree to where I'd come from two hours before. I was now faced with retracing my steps down the mountain and then heading off between the Ober and Unter Rothorn to work my way down.

Five hours later I reached the tent – it's unbelievable how far you can walk down in the Alps!

As I said before, I've been back to Zermatt several times since the first holiday, and revisited everywhere I went, with the exception of the Hornli Hut on the Matterhorn, as well as tackling plenty of others. And on each of the subsequent visits, I've always taken someone sensible with me (usually Graham Dalley, team mate and best friend since we were 10). Which is how I managed to get off the Riffelalp – another 'easy' climb according to the guidebooks – without injury when he questioned why I was climbing without a rope, when someone had previously gone to the trouble of hammering a piton in place just above where my hand was (if it was good enough for them...?)

All of the above might suggest a certain naivety – some might say stupidity – on my part but it's worth saying that most of my Swiss travels

have involved nothing more dangerous than catching a mountain train or cable car to a very high place and then walking down. If you can put up with oxygen starvation for the first half of the day and finishing up with sore knees and missing toe nails, it's a brilliant thing to do. What is more, your mates all think you've been on an Alpine expedition, the like of which they wouldn't dream of undertaking for fear of falling off something, and despite the fact that the mountain are littered with restaurants, all too well placed to ignore as you pass by.

Not everywhere is as well served with lifts as Zermatt but places like Chamonix, Saas Fee, Grindewald and most of the popular climbing/skiing resorts offer something to help you on your way.

You could of course walk, but with a strict training regime of pizza, beer and fags in the weeks running up to any expedition it would be a shame to waste all the hard work!

Do you have a travel tale, with a mountain rescue twist? Send it to the Editor with pix and get yourself in print. Stories should be approx 2000 words and pix must be minimum 300dpi and large enough to reproduce at good quality, potentially at A4 (210mm x 297mm) 72 dpi ain't good enough! Or send hard copies to scan.



WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH...



Work at height regulations – major changes, or not?

Paul Witheridge takes a look at the proposed regulations and their implications for mountain rescue teams, based on currently available information, February 2004

There's been a lot of discussion in mountain rescue circles recently about the new 'Work at Height' regulations. Some say that this proposed new legislation heralds the beginning of the end for mountain rescue as we know it, that teams will now have to become professional, not just in outlook, but in fact. Those of the opposite view say to ignore it all because it is just not relevant.

Where does the truth lie?

Firstly, a bit of background. In 2001, the EU introduced the 'Temporary work at height' directive (2001/45/EC). This amended a previous directive from the council in 1989, which concerned the minimum safety and health requirement for the 'use of work equipment by workers at work'. As a member state, the UK was obliged to review its legislation in light of these directives and make changes where necessary.

In Britain each year over a quarter of all workplace deaths are caused by falls from height. The HSE has taken this review as an opportunity to look closely at all the areas in current legislation where working at height is considered, and proposes to bring much of it, together with some important new additions, into one 'stand alone' regulation, applicable to all areas of work, whatever the height.

So what's the problem for us?

People working in outdoor activities, like all other employers and employees, have always had to comply with Health and Safety legislation. Carrying out risk assessments, doing regular inspections on various items of equipment and providing personal protective equipment are examples of such compliance. The currently proposed work at height regulations have, however, placed some further demands on these activities, and those who provide them.

Far greater consideration now has to be made for adverse weather conditions (high winds, mist, snow), 'fragile surfaces' (snow, ice, scree), inspection of the area before 'work' commences, marking off of danger areas etc. The use of single rope suspension for access or positioning is also ruled out except in exceptional circumstances.

If we put our rescue work within the scope of these proposed regulations we find a number of obvious difficulties in trying to comply.

But do we have to comply?

The regulations, like all health and safety law in the UK, apply to all 'employers and employees'. Employment law, and the definitions used, can be extremely confusing. Generally, to be an employee there has to be a contract between the person requiring the service (employer)

and the person providing the service (employee). This may be verbal or written. Some form of payment or reward from the employer for the service rendered is also required. This may not necessarily be hard cash. It could be food, clothing or equipment.

Much has been made about our relationship with those who ask for our assistance. In the majority of mountain and cave rescue cases, the police are the people who contact us for help in dealing with such incidents. This relationship varies from area to area but historically has been one of employed, paid police officers and unpaid, non-contracted volunteers.

However, in some counties, to obtain insurance cover for volunteer rescuers and to give those volunteers special 'privileges', this relationship evolved into one where team members became 'special constables' when called out.

In Scotland the situation is somewhat murkier. Teams over the border have a far closer relationship with the police. Some teams have serving police officers that may attend incidents as rescue team members whilst on duty, and the recent announcement of a large cash injection into Scottish mountain rescue could be viewed as creating a contract.

When the question of mountain rescue compliance was put to the HSE at a recent seminar (Lyon Technical Symposium, 22nd October 2003) their initial response was that volunteer rescue teams would not have to conform, as they were not employees at work. But, when the relationship between MR teams and the police was described more fully, they then felt that teams operating at the request of, and on behalf of the police might indeed have to follow the new regulations.

Since that seminar, there have been a number of meetings between HSE and those bodies representing the outdoor activities sector. During one of these meetings, on the 18 November, HSE expanded on their original statement with regard to 'professionals and volunteers'. They restated their original position that the regulations clearly applied to anyone at work but did not apply to volunteers. Police officers, national park wardens, coastguard members and Fire & Rescue Service members are 'at work' when on duty and are doing the 'work' that they are contracted to do when involved with incidents during working time. However, mountain rescue team members attend incidents in a voluntary capacity with no obligation to attend, and so in this context the regulations would not apply.

Conclusions...

At present, guidance from HSE seems to indicate that volunteer rescue teams will not be legally required to follow

the new Work at Height regulations when they come into force. Some may see this as being of little importance, as many areas of the new regulations could have been complied with without much change to established procedures, especially if the revisions proposed by the outdoor associations are accepted.

But what is really important is that in deciding that voluntary MR is outside the remit of these regulations, voluntary MR by definition is seen by HSE as being outside all of the regulations under the Health & Safety at Work act.

Employment and health and safety law does not allow 'cherry picking' of regulations. If one applies, they all apply. Personal protective equipment regs, workplace (health & safety and welfare) regs, management of health and safety at work regs, display screen regs – the lot! How many teams would have the finances, skilled personnel and time to comply with all those?

This does not mean that we should ignore the work done by the HSE. Just as when the PPE regulations came into force, these new regulations could be used as a useful benchmark for us to compare our current thinking and technique against. They have their basis in accident reduction and prevention – something we are all interested in.

Being seen to take a pro-active stance can only do good in any future discussions with those who might seek to impose rules upon us.

Paul Witheridge has been involved with mountain rescue for nearly 20 years, initially as a member of Outward Bound Ullswater MRT and then a Deputy in Penrith MRT. He is still active with the Penrith team and is Team Leader of the Cumbria Mine Rescue Unit (COMRU), a small specialist team (approx 20 members) who work alongside teams in Cumbria to recover those in difficulty underground in the many abandoned mine workings that cover the county. Currently, he is General Manager for the Work & Rescue department of Lyon Equipment. Nearly 50% of the department staff are actively involved with rescue teams in England and Wales, a position which gives them an insight into current methods and gear in use, and the concerns that teams have on a number of issues.

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A PERSONAL VIEW

NOSTALGIA... IT'S NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE

Neil Roden takes us back...

You don't have to have been in mountain rescue very long to appreciate just how quickly things change. It seems that every week there is new equipment, a new rescue technique or, these days, a new way of raising funds. Personally, I feel that the pace of change has increased a lot over the last few years.

I write as the chairman of Edale Mountain Rescue Team, based in the Peak District, and we have an interesting mix of work but, predominantly, it is known location call outs.

We have just had our annual budget meeting, much the same as I imagine all teams go through at this time of year and the committee have agreed an expenditure budget of a little over £30,000. Obviously we hope to spend significantly less than that, but the decision was made on what the team thought that they needed to carry out the work we are called to do and what we thought we could raise. This level of expenditure started me thinking about how mountain rescue had changed over the years.

One of my keen interests is mountain literature and, in a second hand bookshop recently, I stumbled across a book called 'Climbing in Britain' by J E Q Barford. The edition was printed in 1947. At the time of printing it cost one shilling. It cost me £1.50.

I turned to the chapter about Mountain Rescue and First Aid and was fascinated to read what was considered 'standard mountain first aid equipment'. The piece said that there were equipment sites at principal mountain centres in Great Britain and at these centres, in addition to a stretcher, you could expect to find two rucksacks. The rucksacks would contain:

Rucksack 1

- 1 eiderdown bag (or blankets) with detachable waterproof cover
- 1 Balaclava helmet
- 1 iron Thomas leg splint with spat for attachment to boot
- 1 case of medical appliances
- 2 tubonic ampoule syringes
- Cube sugar in jar

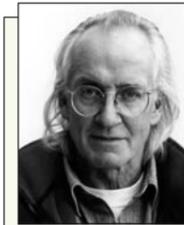
Rucksack 2

- Folding Glacier Lantern
- 6 candles
- 2 kettles
- 3 hot water bottles
- 3 cups (2 drinking and 1 feeding cup)
- 1 Monitor stove to be kept filled with paraffin
- Meta fuel
- Spare jet and jet key
- Small spoon
- Jug
- 2 Thermos flasks

This list makes interesting reading and is worth comparing with what a team today would take on the hill. Of course in the 1940s there would have been far fewer people who would have needed mountain rescue and no doubt those who did need help did not have the same expectations of people today. Progress is essential in all walks of life and mountain rescue is no exception and, whilst I fully support progress, the budget required to meet the equipment list above would be very welcome.

The book is full of interest to anyone who enjoys the mountains and wants to look back at how those who went before us approached 'climbing in Britain'. If you can get a copy it's worth £1.50 of anybody's money.

One final point. The Mountain Rescue First Aid in the Peak District in 1947 was based in the village of Hope, which I think was rather optimistic!



DOUG SCOTT PRESENTS ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

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23rd	Ipswich. Corn Exchange	
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November 2004

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ALL LECTURES COMMENCE AT 7.30PM unless noted otherwise

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Kit crit 2

Keela Munro Waterproof Jacket

This jacket has been around on the MRT circuit for about 3 years. Quite a few teams have already adopted it as team kit but, having just spent 12 months researching new waterproofs for Bowland Pennine MRT, (we may not get as much snow as some teams but we sure get the rain!) I thought we should share our findings on this jacket.

I first used a Keela Munro 5 years ago through work. So impressive was the performance, we issued them to our field staff. It has never leaked and is still in daily use.

The style of the Munro is very similar to most other technical mountain jackets with pit zips, double front flap, map pocket, 2 chest pockets, 2 hand warmer pockets, waist and hem cords and a hood that fits over a helmet. It comes in a host of colours. Red and black appears to be the most common for MRT use. The main difference between this jacket and others out there is the way the fabric is utilised. The Munro has 2 waterproof layers. The outer is waterproof and breathable, then there's an air gap and, next to the wearer, another waterproof layer with a wicking face fabric.

This is how Keela explain it:- Weather conditions affect the breathability of a garment. During heavy rain, when the outside temperature is low (0°C to + 10°C) breathable waterproof garments experience the 'Occurrence of dew point' (Cold bridging) and a rapid build up of vapour condensation occurs. System Dual Protection uses 2 hydrophilic membranes, which is best compared with the principal of double-glazing. The outer of the system uses a waterproof, breathable fabric with a hydrophilic laminate. The inner layer is a high wicking one (which acts like a sponge in absorbing the moisture) laminated onto a hydrophilic. Once the inner moisture is absorbed through the lining, it cannot wick back as the waterproof laminate will not allow moisture back. This is then passed through the air gap and escapes through the outer at its own rate.

However, like all things there's a down side - the Munro doesn't pack down quite as small as some jackets but this is a small price to pay compared to its excellent waterproofness and wearer comfort.

Keela have a special price for these jackets and Alpine trousers when bought as a mountain rescue team. and, for an additional cost, they will also embroider your team badge. For details contact Keela International on 01592 777000

A personal review by Alan Woodhead
Equipment Officer Bowland Pennine MRT
(we've just bought 40)

Got the travel bug? Itchy feet?

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ExpeSkills is for anyone keen to develop the skills required for remote adventure travel, particularly those aspiring to lead expeditions. Intensive five-day courses will equip you with the knowledge and skills required to play an effective and safe role in arduous expedition environments. Focus is on practical outdoor skills such as communications, ropework, navigation, equipment and clothing, leadership and teamwork, safety and risk assessment. Courses culminate in a team challenge event with an overnight exercise based around a remote mountain bothy. ExpeSkills Winter takes the standard ExpeSkills Summer course to new limits putting all of the above and more into practice in extreme winter conditions.

ExpeMed, expedition medicine training

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For further details see www.voyageconcepts.co.uk or contact Becca Logan on becca@voyageconcepts.co.uk or call +44 (0)20 8399 9090



FIRST ASCENT OF BLACKPOOL TOWER ...continued from page 15

Pete Greenall and Eric 'Spiderman' Penman led off the proceedings, their aim to climb from the base of the tower to the observation platform at the top. Then Eric would free abseil down some 500 feet. Pete would descend in a more leisurely way by means of the lift. Mike 'Ossy' Osman and Roy Harding would follow on the same route but terminate their climb just above the halfway. Tom Redfern, Colyn Eamshaw, Mo Richards and myself would make our way up the tower by the metal stairs inside the structure, to a height of 350 feet, climb outside and rig up our gear to lower the stretcher (the 'body' would be made up of spare rucksacks) and myself to the ground below.

By this time, Pete and Eric were nearing the top of the tower, having given the many thousands of onlookers below a master class in speed climbing. As we prepared to delight the crowds below with our simulated mountain rescue stretcher lower, Mike and Roy were about to finish their climb, just below us.

It wasn't until I was descending with the stretcher that I recalled Pete's impish comments that this part of the demonstration would be a 'piece of cake'. It dawned on me that this was stretching the truth a little too much. It took all my strength, once the lower had begun, to keep the stretcher and myself from being forced inside the concave structure. About 200 feet from the bottom, I had to hook my feet around the steel girders every foot of the way, to keep in contact with the outside of the tower. This, and the strong wind, the ground could not come quickly enough! The press and television, gathered to witness this climbing extravaganza, heard me mutter under my breath, as Pete's words echoed in my ears. 'Piece of cake', he said. 'Piece of cake, my arse,' I said. I was physically knackered and ready for a drink!

Two minutes later, the crowds were given a grand finale treat, when Eric abseiled the full length of the tower, a fitting climax to a great day. Then it was off to the mayor's parlour for something to eat. Our collective thoughts were that the Blackpool Tower does move/sway (call it what you will) in the wind and there's no protection whatsoever from the prevailing weather conditions.

My personal thoughts were that I'd enjoyed every minute. It had been an honour, in the company of such a well respected group of climbers, to be included in the team that climbed Blackpool Tower, officially, for the first time. It was a strange experience climbing on steel and, if

we had to grade the tower in climbing terminology, I'd think it could range from the Diff-V.Diff-V.S and so on. I apologise to the modern climber for using the old fashioned guide book jargon but hemp and tricouni are my era.

I'm led to believe that there was only one other recorded planned attempt, in 1939. When George Formby, well known Lancashire comedian and film star, took on a £500 charity bet to make the attempt, his insurance company forbade it.

Our charity climb was an experience, which I'd not have missed for the world. The show business razmatazz was a bit daunting and a little overwhelming but we did our little bit for people who were less fortunate than ourselves.

But, in all honesty, it was nice to get back to the peace and tranquillity of the Lake District and be on the rock again. Let's face it – there's no substitute.

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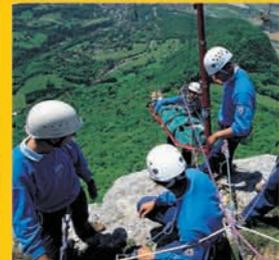


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