

# mountain rescue

JANUARY 2010

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ISSUE 31



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## WELCOME TO ISSUE 31

Mountain Rescue is the membership magazine for mountain and cave rescue in England and Wales.

Contributions should be sent to the editor at the address below. Every care will be taken of materials sent for publication however these are submitted at the sender's risk.

### EDITORIAL

Editor: Judy Whiteside  
8 Bridgefoot Close, Boothstown  
Manchester M28 1UG  
0161 702 6080  
editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk

Publicity Officer: Andy Simpson  
0161 764 0999  
press@mountain.rescue.org.uk

Web: mountain.rescue.org.uk

Advertising Sales: Pat Starkie  
01204 888 151  
pat@vintagechikz.co.uk

### NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 32

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

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.

### FRONT PAGE

Langdale Ambleside vehicle during the floods  
Photo: Paul Burke

### EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles carried in Mountain Rescue do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Mountain Rescue England and Wales. We do not accept responsibility for information supplied in adverts/advertorial.

**mountain rescue**



As we move into 2010, we can look back on a year that can be described, at the very least, as 'eventful' for mountain rescue in England and Wales. Across the organisation people and teams have responded without fail to a variety of challenges.

The year began with a return of winter conditions particularly in the mountains of North Wales and the Lake District. True to predictions this produced a rash of accidents many of which were serious, both in terms of injuries to the casualties and the situations faced by teams. The accounts of rescues, notably those on Skiddaw and Snowdon, attest to the skills, commitment and tenacity of team members. It was also evident on some of these rescues how important the technological advances have been. No time seems to have passed since Paul Horder demonstrated early GPS mapping to an audience of team leaders in Preston. Rob Brookes and David Binks picked up the baton and ran with it until we have the valuable tool in use today.

The expanding possibilities of technology were again demonstrated at the excellent meeting in November, again in Preston. The forecast of Warren Berris comes to mind. 'The factory of the future will have only two employees, a man and a dog. The man will be there to feed the dog. The dog will be there to stop the man touching the equipment'.

2009 has seen a very significant rise in the number of incidents. For some teams this has been a dramatic rise. Despite this increase teams have continued to respond without fail, albeit with gritted teeth in the face of the repetition of basic errors of provision and foresight.

There have been a number of excellent meetings throughout the year, largely under the direction of the training subcommittee and it is refreshing to see new topics, such as the 'talking to the media' appearing on the calendar. All of the meetings have been

characterised by useful exchanges of views and openness over passage of information between teams.

'Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; argument is an exchange of ignorance' Robert Quillan.

Events of recent weeks have tested mountain rescue in its ability to respond to natural disaster away from the mountains and, yet again, teams have stepped up to this challenge and proved their adaptability to use their skills and resourcefulness outside their normal field of operations. Many teams have been involved and have performed exceedingly well, but the actions of Cockermouth MRT were outstanding.

In addition to all of this we have been engaging with the outside world in other areas. Thanks to the efforts of Mike France acting on our contacts at the Princes' Charity Forum we have established links with Centrepont and WellChild. A day out on Hellvellyn and on Ullswater allowed mountain rescue to reach out and offer to other people things beyond their expectations. The day was enlivened by the presence of Prince William, and thanks are due to Richard Warren and Martin Cotterill for the efforts they put in to make it happen. A similar event is planned for North Wales in summer 2010.

We are, therefore, entering 2010 on a high note. The only shadow is the economic backdrop. Homo sapiens has been replaced with Homo economicus in many walks of life. The challenge of the coming years will probably be to continue to retain the funding that enables provision of the valuable service we provide. There will be a responsibility to ensure that money is spent wisely and more effectively than at any previous time.

A quote from W H Auden seems an appropriate ending. 'We are here on earth to help others. What the others are here for I don't know.'

David Allan Chairman

### Features

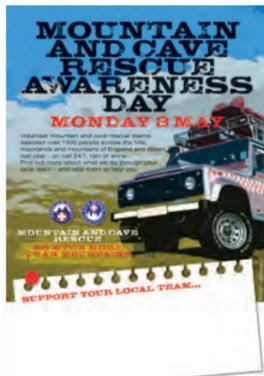
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## NATIONAL MOUNTAIN AND CAVE RESCUE AWARENESS DAY

May Bank Holiday (3 May) is set to be the first of these days, which we hope will become an established feature in the calendar. Think 'Lifeboat Flag Days'! The idea is that teams will organise their own events locally, to raise funds for their own organisations, against a background of nationally produced publicity, aimed at raising the profile of mountain and cave rescue across England and Wales. The purpose is not to raise funds for the national pot but to support teams in their own efforts. Posters have been produced –

including a white space for teams to write in details of their own events. These have already been distributed to teams but the artwork is also available as a pdf from the Members' area of the website, under Fundraising.

## TEAM LEADERS DAY SWALEDALE

The meeting, hosted by William Lumb and Swaledale MRT at their base, deep in the heart of Yorkshire, was one of the best attended and well presented to date, with a sharp focus on some currently very hot topics – swift flowing water, blue light driving and the sharp increase in callouts. Ewan Thomas gave an account of the current national position on water related issues, the importance of which was made clear by Mike Park's account of the floods Cocker mouth. [Read a full report from Mike on page 10.] There were many learning points – not least of all that radios and mobile phones are generally not waterproof! The waterproof phones used by Cocker mouth team members became the

only means of comms as radios failed. The value of mountain rescue being involved at Gold Command, both before and during the incident, was noted. Similarly the importance of mountain rescue taking a leading role in the review and future planning was recognised. Mountain rescue team members were the only people comfortable on the roof tops during evacuation of people by helicopter. The amount of debris in the floodwater was a serious, and to some extent unforeseen, hazard – tales of woolshop stock unravelling and knotting under the water, silently weaving a lethal cat's cradle of trip wires, or the full shop windowpane, pushed out by the torrent, pausing only to tilt slightly from the vertical before sailing off downstream on the tide... A discussion of the MR response to floods and swiftwater incidents in the future brought general agreement that this should be regional rather than team based. Ewan will take now this forward. Steve Hilditch and Robin

Knott of Derby MRT gave an account of a road traffic accident involving one of their Land Rovers on a blue light response three years ago – a case which took some two years of legal wrangling before reaching a conclusion. The importance of maintenance records for the vehicle, and training records for the driver were emphasised. The effect of the protracted nature of the episode on the driver and his family was highlighted. [Read the full story on page 34.] Adam Hearn talked about Teesdale & Weardale MRT and, in the light of the recent floods, it was interesting to note how well developed this team is in its response to water related incidents. The afternoon focused on the rising number of callouts experienced in some areas of the country. Ged Feeney produced figures illustrating a rapid rise for the Peak District and Wales but a less dramatic rise elsewhere. Within the Lake District, it appeared the burden of a very high rise was being carried by three teams but overall the district showed only a moderate rise. It was suggested that the publicity campaigns of previous years may have had a negative effect and led to more callouts. There was no evidence available to indicate that the preventative measures to date had produced any

effect. The use of other teams, particularly from outside the region, to ease the problem of the high work load was discussed and there was a degree of enthusiasm for extending this practice. Further talks between Mountain Rescue and the BMC on the topic of prevention and education were supported. It was recognised that more work on the figures is necessary in order to focus efforts of preventative work and fortunately there is now a volunteer willing to carry this out. The meeting in 2010 will be hosted by Derby MRT.

## EQUIPMENT UPDATE

Richard Terrell writes... This year has seen more teams applying to the equipment subcommittee – maybe due to the recession? We have run three equipment checking courses, in South Wales, the Peak District and the North East. We hope to hold three next year in the same regions – dates will be published in the new year. I would personally like to thank Phil Beard for running these courses. We currently have the Katie stretcher on loan from Scotland – this will be going round the regions over the next year. Finally, would you like to be involved with the equipment subcommittee? If so, we are looking for a secretary to take the minutes at the meetings. If you are interested, please drop me a line – richard@rterrell.orangehome.co.uk – giving a brief outline of

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yourself. You don't need to be an equipment junkie, but must be able to produce typed and clear minutes. All welcome to apply.

## TRAINING NEWS

Mike Margeson writes... It is again encouraging to report the autumn round of courses have been very well attended, well organised and well delivered. The Medical Seminar attracted nearly a hundred team members and medical professionals. The programme was well balanced between new information, update and review of what we already deliver. Perhaps the most notable for me came from the Long Falls session where the frequency of chest injuries was quite a surprise and one to be aware of, alongside the importance of vacmat, collar and oxygen use. The Team Leaders' Day also had the highest turn out I have seen, with an obvious emphasis on flood response and swiftwater rescue. A good variety of other inputs included the presentation about a road traffic collision, whilst on blue lights, involving a Derby team vehicle and member of the public. The most interesting action point for me was not just to check that driver records and training documentation are in order (I'm sure we all have that in hand!) but rather to take the

vehicles and have them weighed with kit on board. At the recent subcommittee meeting, we discussed the 'vision group' findings and the development of guidelines for a variety of topics, to sit alongside those we have for team member and party leader. We decided to bite the bullet and tackle perhaps the most difficult first with rope rescue. We would like to make progress and have a first draft for the May meeting.

## TRAIN THE TRAINERS

While we have many professional and highly competent folk in teams, delivering training in well focused, planned and executed training sessions, but you can always learn new skills. We will be looking at the content of such a day and for anybody who feels they could contribute, please contact Richard Holmes.

## WEBSITE TRAINING RESOURCE FOR ALL

We mentioned in the last magazine that we are really keen to develop this resource. Many teams have excellent information and training resources so let's share them. We do not need to keep recreating the wheel. Please send any training resource as a PDF to help develop a national downloadable library to [gary.srmt@google.com](mailto:gary.srmt@google.com).

**MR(E&W) SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING**  
Places: 80  
Date: Saturday 15 May (One day)  
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton  
Contact: Peter Smith 01706 852335  
secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

**SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT REFRESHER**  
Places: 30  
Date: 25–26 August (2 days)  
Location: University of Wales, Bangor  
Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE  
01248 716971 and 07811 041227

**SEARCH FIELD SKILLS**  
Places: 30  
Date: 27–29 August (3 days)  
Location: University of Wales, Bangor  
Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE  
As above

**SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT**  
Places: 40  
Date: 30 August – 3 September (5 days)  
Location: University of Wales, Bangor  
Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE  
As above

**JOINT IMRA & UK CONFERENCE**  
Places: TBA  
Date: 10–12 September (2 days)  
Location: Dublin City University, Dublin  
Contact: Peter Howells OBE MSTJ  
01633-254244 and 07836-382029

**MR(E&W) SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING**  
Places: 80  
Date: Saturday 20 November (One day)  
Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton  
Contact: Peter Smith  
As above

**TEAM LEADERS DAY**  
Places: 50  
Date: Saturday 4 December (One day)  
Location: Derby MRT HQ  
Contact: Peter Smith  
As above

**2010 training calendar**

...don't forget...

**MOUNTAIN AND CAVE RESCUE AWARENESS DAY**  
Date: Monday 3 May (One day)  
Location: Across England and Wales

**ORDNANCE SURVEY OUTDOORS SHOW**  
Date: 26 – 28 March (Three days)  
Location: NEC Birmingham

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- [WWW.PARAMO.CO.UK](http://WWW.PARAMO.CO.UK)



MAIN SHOT: DIFFICULT RESCUE ON CHALLONER STREET PHOTOS: COCKERMOUTH MRT  
INSET: CHECKING PROPERTIES ON MAIN STREET



## LAKE DISTRICT

### LAKES TEAMS SUPPORT THEIR FLOODED COMMUNITIES

Richard Warren writes... During the unprecedented rainfall which fell on Cumbria in November, over 400mm being dropped on the central fells, all twelve of the LDSAMRA teams were involved in the rescue operations, either directly or as back-up to their neighbouring teams. Over a thousand homes were evacuated over the period 29-30 November, primarily in the towns and surrounding areas of Cockermouth and Keswick. During this period, mountain rescue teams provided the initial and lead role response to rescues within the 'fast flowing' floods across the county. All the rescue work was under the coordination of Cumbria police and the Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service in Gold, Silver and Bronze Commands. LDSAMRA were well represented in Gold Command by Mike Graham of Penrith MRT who was called in to fulfil the important

role of mountain rescue team liaison throughout the five days, assisted by Ian Clemmett, Penrith team leader. Cockermouth Bronze Command was actually based in the Cockermouth MRT HQ and had strong representation from the Cockermouth team. Swiftwater rescue technicians from several teams performed invaluable work evacuating residents, checking properties and providing support for other emergency services and utilities workers. In the Keswick area, Keswick MRT were fully involved and pulled in additional support was from neighbouring teams in the North East, with teams from Mid Pennine and North Wales providing very important standby roles. The rescue teams involved are now calculating the cost in terms of damaged or lost equipment in urgent need of replacement, not only for use during further flooding events, but for regular fell or crag based rescues and searches. Several teams needed to restock radios, dry suits, buoyancy aids, throwlines, climbing hardware and other valuable and much-used equipment. At least two recently purchased team Land Rovers from two of the Lakes teams suffered significant flood damage whilst carrying out rescue work in the Cockermouth and Ambleside floods.

The Patterdale team base was flooded and its vehicles evacuated to higher ground so that the boat and Land Rovers were readily available for rescue response in the Glenridding and Pooley Bridge areas as the flood waters rose. In addition to replacing equipment, many teams are now looking to expand their swiftwater rescue capabilities, by providing additional training for team members and purchasing further resources.

*[An in depth article by Mike Park, Cockermouth team leader - who played a major role in the Cockermouth emergency response - and reports from Nick Owen, Langdale Ambleside team leader, and Paul Cheshire, on behalf of the Keswick team, on page 10 - with more anticipated in the April issue. Editor.]*

### WASDALE TEAM ACKNOWLEDGES LONG SERVICE

At the Wasdale MRT AGM, held 16 November 2009, four of the team's senior and long serving retired members were presented with long service awards along with engraved glass tankards.



LEFT TO RIGHT: BILL PATTISON (26 YEARS: 18 AS TEAM LEADER, PLUS SERVICE WITH THE NORTH EASTERN TEAMS PRIOR TO THIS. BILL RETIRED IN 1999 BUT REMAINS AS TEAM PRESIDENT; JOE MOODY RECENTLY RETIRED FROM THE TEAM (40 YEARS); DAVE BARRAS (26 YEARS: NOW RETIRED, AND AN HONORARY MEMBER); MAURICE PRINGLE (25 YEARS PRIOR TO RETIRING AS CHAIRMAN A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, ALSO A PAST SECRETARY AND NOW VICE PRESIDENT)

## BREWERY BRIDGE UNDER SEIGE



ASHLEY GILL PRESENTING THE MUD COVERED BOX TO STEVE BRAILEY, CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY LEADER COCKERMOUTH TEAM [RETIRED CHAIRMAN JOHN DEMPSTER AND RETIRED TEAM LEADER, JIM COYLE ARE IN THE BACKGROUND] WHILST PRINCE CHARLES MET OTHERS INVOLVED IN THE RESCUES. THE BOX IS TO BE KEPT IN ITS RESCUED CONDITION AS A LASTING MEMORY OF THE WORK DONE BY THE TEAMS DURING THAT DREADFUL NIGHT AND FOLLOWING DAYS

## On a lighter note...

...when Prince Charles visited Cockermouth to meet the gathered rescue organisations at the Cockermouth base, in addition to spending much time with the assembled team members and expressing his appreciation for their help, he was asked for a donation to the mountain rescue charity by local builder Ashley Gill, who found the Cockermouth MRT collection box buried in silt while clearing the Black Bull pub in the town. Mr Gill, a builder from Whitehaven, said, 'I don't think he had any cash on him. I thanked him for coming up to the area - it's much needed.' On his visit to other flood-hit parts of Cumbria, Prince Charles had highly praised the work of the emergency services and gave a particular mention to the work of Mountain Rescue in responding to the floods.



W BRO MARTIN STRAY (WEST RIDING MASONIC CHARITIES) AND JACK PICKUP (CRO CHAIRMAN) FLANKED BY MEMBERS OF WENNING LODGE (BENTHAM) BELOW: MEMBERS OF CALDER VALLEY SRT AT THEIR CHEQUE PRESENTATION

## MID PENNINE

### GANNETT FOUNDATION AWARDS ROSSENDALE TEAM £21,750

News of the very generous award - to enable the team to buy new waterproof kit - came through to Rossendale & Pendle MRT team chairman Graham Dalley early one November evening. And, needless to say, the bush telegraph was hot for hours! The Gannett Foundation is awarded via the Newsquest group who publish local newspapers across the country, including the Lancashire Evening Telegraph and the Westmorland Gazette. It's a nationally run enterprise whose aim is to support local organisations and charities in specific projects. Applications are invited twice a year via the newspapers involved, the final decision being made in London.

Team leader Andy Simpson, said, 'We have taken on twelve operational trainees in the last four years and it's been a very slow process to kit them all out because of our financial situation.

'Some of the waterproof kit that our members have been wearing is around thirteen years old, so its well past its sell-by date.'

The award will enable the team not just to replace the team waterproofs but to buy a whole new 'working wardrobe' for every single team member. So, many thanks to the Lancashire Evening Telegraph and the Gannett Foundation.

### BOLTON TEAM HOST FIFTH JOINT FOUNDATION COURSE

For the fifth year running, Bolton MRT organised a Joint Foundation Course in Mountain Rescue in October, based at Bibby's Farm Scout Campsite and Activity Centre, at Heath Charnock. The weekend is aimed at newer team members (6-12 months experience) and is intended to cover subjects not generally covered at a team level and to consolidate course members' experiences to date. Instructors were drawn from the teams attending, including three from Bolton, North East Wales SRT, Rossendale & Pendle MRT, Cheshire Lowland SRT and Calder Valley SRT. The 28 trainees had a constructive weekend, interspersed with the usual fun and games, hearty British breakfasts, liberal quantities of beer, and the

biggest bags of chocolate buttons known to mankind (apparently) - and in mostly torrential rain. The next course is over the weekend 15-17 October 2010, with all four participating teams from this year due to take part. Any other teams interested in taking part, please contact Garry Rhodes at vgr@boltonmrt.org.uk for details.

## NORTH EAST

### GO OUTDOORS STAFF AND CUSTOMERS SUPPORT CLEVELAND

This year has seen the staff and customers of Go Outdoors in Stockton working together to support their local team, Cleveland SRT, through sponsored walks, use of a mobile and an in-store climbing wall, as well as collection jar donations and even sales of team merchandise. Their sterling efforts have raised in excess of £2700 towards the 'CSRT Base Appeal'. Team members and supporters were delighted when the company also decided to sponsor the team's two Land Rovers and the Incident Control Vehicle with a further £4000. More recently Go Outdoors provided £1000 worth of raffle prizes in aid of the team for an event which was expected to raise a further £3500 towards the base appeal.



### RESCUE TEAMS RECEIVE £30,000 BOOST TO FUNDS

Members of Calder Valley SRT and the Cave Rescue Organisation were delighted to hear that each team was to receive £30,000 from the West Riding Masonic Charities during the Autumn. To celebrate 150 years of charitable works in the historic county\*, every Masonic Lodge was invited to nominate a charity for a grant, then one charity project was selected from each of the county's five areas, receiving a one-fifth share of £150,000.

Prince Frederick Lodge, of Hebden Bridge, nominated CVSRT's vehicle replacement project, while Wenning Lodge, of Bentham, nominated CRO's Depot redevelopment. The former enables the team to replace a 22-year-old, high maintenance, V-8 Land Rover with a brand new, specially adapted model, while the latter will pay for the completion of a new control room and extended training, garaging, equipment storage and visitor facilities, at Clapham.

\* For those too young to remember the changes of April Fool's Day 1974, the West Riding of Yorkshire stretches from Sedbergh to Sheffield and Slaidburn to Selby.



LIZ MACDOUGALL, MANAGER OF GO OUTDOORS PRESENTS A CHEQUE TO ALLAN MANN (TEAM TREASURER)

## SOUTH WEST

### JOINT WORKING WEEKEND

Nicki Lyons MBE, chairman of Dartmoor SRT (Tavistock) writes... Every May, 2500 kids in 400 teams are let loose on Dartmoor to take part in the Ten Tors Challenge. The four Dartmoor teams assist the organisers – the Army – by providing rescue cover for the two day event which, incidentally, celebrates its 50th year in 2010. Each team works from their own base – Ashburton are sited at Sittaford, Okehampton in the Army camp at Okehampton, Plymouth by the Holming Beam range hut and Tavistock on Amicombe Hill.

The 2009 challenge promised and delivered good weather. For this we became more thankful as the weekend's events unfolded. Friday evening had started with an off-moor callout to a missing seven-year-old, who was found, none the worse for his ordeal, very quickly by DSRT Ashburton. The teams dealt with a few incidents on the Saturday, with the evening proving to be a testing time for all.

A young lad had gone missing in the Eggesford area near the Taw river. The Dartmoor teams supplied both foot teams and four SARDA (England) handlers, Exmoor SRT provided members and a control role. Most of the Dartmoor members and SARDA handlers had been on the Ten Tors all day Saturday but, having had a few hours rest, joined in the overnight search. Devon Cave Rescue also providing available manpower. As daylight arrived, the lad had not been located.

Cornwall SRT, who were providing rescue cover for an event on Bodmin moor, provided two search teams. The Dartmoor teams sent additional manpower from Ten Tors cover and two further SARDA handlers joined the search. Some even got a lift to the search on a military helicopter released from Ten Tors cover. One of the search dogs located a tee-shirt in the river, in an area not previously searched and the police helicopter was immediately sent to the area. The lad was found alive in the river and recovered to dry land. A fantastic result and a clear demonstration of the excellent joint working of all the teams in Devon and Cornwall.

### DRG TRAINING WEEKEND

Dartmoor Rescue Group conducted its annual Weekend Training Exercise at Okehampton Battle camp on the weekend of 28/29 November 2009, with participants from all four Dartmoor teams (Ashburton, Okehampton, Plymouth and Tavistock), Devon and Cornwall Police, Devon Fire & Rescue Urban SRT, search and rescue teams from Cornwall, Exmoor, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Staffordshire, SARDA, Kimmeridge Coast Guard and Devon and Cornwall 4X4. During Saturday, the group conducted a multi-agency exercise based on an extreme weather event during a Ten Tors Dartmoor training weekend. Following severe rain, wind and then mist, 103 Air Cadets from Devon and Cornwall Air Training Crops had found themselves involved in various scenarios for members of the search and rescue teams to deal with. The rescues were coordinated by Devon and Cornwall Police, Devon Fire and Rescue Service and controllers from the rescue teams, working together to deploy 150 team



▲ MEMBERS OF DARTMOOR RESCUE GROUP ATTENDING TO EXERCISE CASUALTIES

members onto Dartmoor to find and treat the casualties. The exercise was a great success as this is the first time anything like this had been tried by all agencies involved, on this scale. Visitors to the exercise and weekend included The Rt Hon Geoffrey Cox MP, Cllr John Hockridge, Cllr Christine Marsh and Wing Cdr Mike Symons ATC.

On the Sunday there were various workshops for members to attend including search dog handling, micro-navigation, 4x4 recovery, river crossings, rope work, first aid and communications.

### CORNWALL TEAM FINALLY FINDS PLACE TO CALL HOME

Cornwall SRT has taken up a lease on an old fire station situated in the mid-Cornwall village of St Dennis and, after a lot of elbow grease and a lick of paint, the base is now open for business. Just off the A30, minutes away from Goss Moor and with the China Clay landscape on its doorstep (often referred to as The Cornish Alps) the team will have no shortage of good training venues close by. As a former fire station, the premises is ideally suited to the team's needs with a large space for vehicle storage, an office, crew room and plenty of storage space. One of the two vehicles will be kept there (although it is capable of taking both).

Members from other teams holidaying in Cornwall are welcome to pop in. Team training nights are Thursdays but you can stop by on other nights by arrangement. Contact the team leader, Jim Gallienne or chairman, Andy Brelsford (jim@chair@cornwallsar.org.uk) for more information.

### NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE SEARCH AND RESCUE AWARDS

It was with great pleasure that I, along with Tony Jones, attended this event on behalf of MREW. This is the second year of this very successful venture, hosted by Graham Maxwell, Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police. Mountain and cave rescue at both team and national level are very appreciative of the recognition that is afforded by the police on these occasions. There was a clear demonstration of the excellent relationship that exists in North Yorkshire between the statutory and voluntary services in search and rescue operations.

Awards were made both to teams and to individuals who had been nominated for outstanding service. The special awards in the latter category went to Pete Dean (CRO), Paul Smith (Cleveland SRT), Andy Crossley (Scarborough & Ryedale SRT), Mac Bryant (Swaledale MRT) and Harry Long (Upper Wharfedale FRT).

The awards to teams were received by CRO, Cleveland SRT, Scarborough & Ryedale SRT, Swaledale MRT and Upper Wharfedale FRT. It was encouraging to see the support from the police authority at the event and the awards were presented by Jane Seymour, chair of the Authority. Flt Sgt Spence Braithwaite from ARCC also attended the occasion in recognition of the support to SAR given by the RAF.

Although the event occurs under the direction of Grahame Maxwell, an enormous amount of work is required from Jon Rushton in order to bring things together. Jon also plays a significant role on maintaining and furthering the good operational links between the police and mountain and cave rescue. It was therefore particularly pleasing to see Jon receive recognition for this with an award from the teams within the area. Perhaps a step that other regions might note.

David Allan



by Paul Durham  
Bowland Pennine MRT

## Media skills course gets 48 hour baptism

On Saturday 3 October team leader Phil O'Brien and myself drove up to Patterdale team base in Cumbria for the Media skills course. Little did I know I'd soon be needing the skills gained so quickly.

We joined other team representatives from across the country, as far a field as the Peak District and Dartmoor.

Introductions over, we were asked to recall when we had last seen an interview with a politician who gave a direct answer to a direct question. The room fell silent and the beards grew even longer. These, we were to realise, were the skills we were about to be taught. We were given examples of poor interviews with the 'ball' being passed back and forth between the interviewer and the interviewee, question and answer, question and answer. Then recalling my footballing days of long ago when told your opponent can't score if he hasn't got the ball, it all clicked into place. Being asked a question by a reporter would be, from this day forward and for ever and ever amen, the MR equivalent of giving me the dribbling skills of Tom Finney, Jimmy Greaves and George Best. All of whom I have seen play on the hallowed turf of Deepdale (Preston North End) for all you south of the great divide, the M62. But enough of these footballing metaphors.

The purpose was to illustrate how to, when given an opportunity, get across to the audience your agenda and not just that of the reporter. Sticking in the words 'volunteer service' at every opportunity along with those other beauties such as 'no guaranteed funding', and 'we need money to buy new sawdust plaiting kits for every team member', you

beauty.

The rest of the day was spent in various media interview scenarios culminating in a filmed interview. Oh how the camera likes some more than others. Each of our two minute interviews were played back and critiqued – by all present. The day was very rewarding and generated confidence and reassuredness in our abilities to best represent ourselves, our teams and our service in equal measure.

I've heard it many times – 'if you don't use the skills, you soon lose them' but I hadn't even had the time to absorb them before they were needed for real.

At 20:30 on the Sunday evening, my pager began bleeping. A call to search the River Ribble in Preston following a report that two anglers had seen a female walk into the river only an hour earlier, saying to them as she floated by, 'Don't worry, I won't get tangled in your lines...'

On arrival at the RVP we were met by every available blue light owned by the emergency services in Lancashire. The Fire Service rescue boat had been deployed, as had two bank search teams.

Very quickly we were tasked with searching the remaining two banks, upstream and down from the RVP. This was the second time in four weeks we'd donned our new water search gear, dry suits, PFDs, and throw bags, and for the first time used these in conjunction with our newly acquired Lenser LED D14 searchlights.

The searches were conducted slowly and methodically, particularly as we were operating within the tidal reaches of the river, at night and on an outgoing tide. After three hours with

nothing found, we were stood down. No missing persons report being received by the police or other sightings, we packed up and headed home circa midnight.

Fast forward to 07:50 on Monday morning and my mobile rolled out its Nickelback ring tone ('I want to be a rock star' – what's wrong with that?!)

It was Radio Lancashire. 'Were you involved in the search last night, blaa, blaa, blaaa.' Twenty minutes later I'm talking live to Tony Livesey.

Having had the time to prepare and scribble a few notes on a piece of card (not paper, that makes a noise and can be picked up by the microphone – something else I learned).

Out came his first question. 'Yes we were their only voluntary organisation... able to support the emergency services... that was not the biggest problem... the biggest problem... was our lack of transport... that's why we're wanting money for a new minibus...' Then he cut me off.

The TL was listening and soon the sound of Nickelback filled the air once again. Complete success he reported.

I recommend the course to all in our service who are involved in generating PR/awareness/fundraising or wishing to get across to the media any operational issues surrounding our activities.

Finally, it was discussed that whenever fire officers are seen being interviewed, they always wear their helmets even when they are miles away from any form of falling debris! It was suggested we should all be interviewed with a radio ariel sticking up one nostril, finger nails encrusted with peat and a pristinely coiled rope draped around our necks. I await the arrival of the first photo.

Latest news from



We've had a really busy time finalising the many products we showed at the summer shows, but everything is coming along fine. The Torque Nuts have proved very popular indeed, and many people have added them to their winter racks. The Ultra O Oval carabiner has also been in big demand, coming as it does in all locking combinations, as well as a standard straight gate. This oval is definitely the nicest handling oval about, I-Beam back construction and keylock nose make it light and easy to use.

The Aero range has two additions, the Aero HMS and the Aero Screwgate. Billed as our entry level lockers, in reality these are two excellent value locking biners both of which are hot forged and feature keylock noses, which gives a whole new meaning to the phrase 'entry level.' If you haven't checked our range of pulleys and rigging plates yet, it'd be worth a quick visit to our website [dmmwales.com](http://dmmwales.com), as our range is greater than before – and all made in Wales. There is also a comprehensive range of steel and high strength biners with greater gate strengths for the industrial markets.



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# Ten days in Cockermouth



## Cumbria Floods 2009



Main Street - now a street river



Family of geese take up residence outside the hairdressers Main Street



Roof-top rescue service Waterloo Street



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF COCKERMOUTH MRT

Main shot: RAF over Cockermouth from Papcastle Inset: Team vehicle on Waterloo Street

by Mike Park  
Team Leader Cockermouth MRT

This is written from a personal perspective, as a diary of what the Cockermouth team did during the severe flooding that hit Cumbria in late November. Throughout, we were assisted by Wasdale, Keswick, Penrith, Coniston, Teesdale & Weardale and Swaledale MRTs, along with the Maryport Inshore Lifeboat. The team and I can't thank these teams enough for the valuable assistance they provided to us throughout this memorable week.

### Day One: Thursday 19 November

**5:30am** Up as usual – off to Cockermouth Sports Centre for the twice weekly early morning circuits. It's absolutely tipping it down, and I'm soaked to the skin, before we even get started on the gym gear.

**7:30am** Drive home down Main Street in Cockermouth and it's still raining.

**8:30am** Showered and changed and back on the road doing my usual commute to work over the fell road. Get the feeling this isn't going to be just an ordinary day – this rain is still coming down and the roads are starting to gather some water.

9:00am In the office, I switch on computer and start dealing with emails that don't seem to stop!

**9:30am** Call from the local police inspector, concerned about the rising levels of the rivers in Cockermouth. Wants me to consider calling the team out to deal with possible flooding. I agree to start things moving and to meet with him at our base at 11:00am. Switch computer off, and pop my head round the door to tell my boss that things aren't right in Cockermouth and I am leaving work again! (Understanding bosses – best thing since sliced bread!)

Driving back over the fell even more difficult as the flooding is getting worse. On the way over, I get in touch with the team's three deputies and most of the swiftwater rescue trained team members, to give them the heads up. Call in at home on the way to pick up my personal gear as I now have a feeling we are going to need everything available.

**10:15am** Arrive at base and, already, some of the team have showed up. We send out a voicemail to all of the team now, and start getting gear ready. A call from Mike Graham (Penrith MRT) at Gold Command, police HQ in Penrith makes me aware of the situation throughout Cumbria and the fact that Keswick is flooding, and Ambleside and Kendal are dealing with local floods. He has alerted all teams throughout the Lakes and given a heads up to teams from out of the county. We agree we will only move teams into different areas through the control of Gold Command.

**10:45am** Quick brief with our team – agree who will do what and where, and what equipment must be worn and used.

**11:00am** We walk down Station Street and onto Main Street, some of us fully kitted up in dry suits, most in buoyancy aids, feeling totally out of place amongst people who are going about their daily lives, shopping and going into the pubs for an early lunch. Continue down High Sands Lane, which leads from Main Street down to the river Derwent where the river Cocker flows into it, opposite

Jennings Brewery. Joined by two of our vehicles – traffic management is going to be a headache here. My wife phones to ask if I think the hairdressers will still be open in town. 'Should be,' I reply. Flooding or not, you can't stop your wife getting her hair cut! Local police are on Waterloo Street, which is at the bottom of High Sands Lane, running parallel to and bordering the Derwent.

Brewery footbridge crosses the Cocker here, and already the river is two blocks off the top of this bridge. Waterloo Street always gets the butt of any flooding in the town, and already residents have put 'floodgates' across their doors, and are piling up sandbags. There is an argument going on between two neighbours on who should have more sandbags!

I'm told the police inspector is tied up with flooding up river in Keswick and will be delayed. Police are now advising residents to leave their homes and go to a reception centre set up in the local secondary school. We begin helping police with door to door checks, advising residents and offering assistance and transport out of the street. However, these people have been flooded numerous times before, and another flood is not going to shift them again!

At least one in five of the people in this area were not going to leave their properties, and those that agree to insist on bringing bags and suitcases full of possessions. The team is accommodating, but this is eating into our time.

Work calls to ask if I intend turning up for a meeting started ten minutes ago! I reply in the negative.

**11:15am** The Cocker now rising rapidly – the Brewery bridge hit by several large logs and branches, shaking the entire bridge. We decide to cordon it off with police barrier tape. The walls of gardens, which are now holding back the river are showing signs of collapse, water streaming through the mortar. Try phoning the inspector, to advise him of the situation and the immediate threat to lives, but I misdial and spend three minutes shouting down a phone to a colleague at work about how the bridge is unsafe and walls are in danger of collapsing!

The water in the streets is now knee deep. We concentrate on moving people in immediate threat of being trapped in their homes. Also decide to move the vehicles out of Waterloo Street and up to the top of High Sands Lane, as we can't risk losing a vehicle in the rising waters. I'm asked for my first radio interview, by a reporter inappropriately

2-3 metres higher in elevation than Main Street, 200 metres to the north, so water now cascading down the streets leading from South Street, thundering towards Main Street at speeds of up to 25mph. Very real danger of being swept down these streets by the sheer force of water. Team immediately starts accessing properties through the bay windows along the street, plucking people trapped in ground floor rooms, unable to even get upstairs. Whilst carrying one elderly lady from her living room, one team member asks if she wants to take anything with her. 'Oh, you can bring me knitting if you wouldn't mind love,' she replies. Once South Street cleared, we move into the area of houses and flats north of South Street and south of Main Street. Challoner Street, leading off South Street and connecting down to Main Street, now

and electricity lines. The force of the water further down Challoner Street bends concrete lampposts flat and tears garage doors from their hinges. Street becomes a 'no-go' area for us – now have to evacuate people through the relative slacker water, back yards and over walls. Blocks of housing and flats are inaccessible islands unreachable to us and the other emergency services. **4:00pm** Leave team dealing with the evacuation north of South Street to attend meeting with police at base. I'm stopped by a lady from Sainsbury's worried about one of her colleagues who has turned up there after being in the water rescuing his grandmother. The young lad's soaked from head to toe, shivering violently and struggling to control his breathing. I march him the 100m up the road to our base where he's quickly put in the shower and

and the ambulance service – our first of many Bronze Command meetings. Quickly agree to split and map the flooded areas of the town into six areas. Most of these are naturally divided by actual rivers, or the 'street rivers' we seem to have inherited. Highlight our genuine concerns about properties along Main Street and Challoner Street regarding their structural stability against the force and weight of water. (Water on Main Street is chest high and rising.) Boats from the RNLI, fire and rescue and the Environment Agency have been launched on Main Street to evacuate residents still trapped. We work to the north of the Derwent, evacuating houses and flats on Derwent Side and Derwent Mills.

are having to deal on masts, on top of in. ig's return, during d look down and ssurance to people re chopper returns We move out. cup of soup. Gote now impassable could be trapped. into the fire HQ, may fail in our base. the helicopters – a ings have become ours. th police, fire and the Environment the Red Cross; here did all these I note to ensure we he team present in it mountain rescue om the sharp end. meeting, to discuss ad to accompany agencies in a 'risk But, before this, I



*Evacuating properties at the back of Waterloo Street*



*Sea King over the rooftops*

**Again the chopper returns, the winchman going through the window to pull out the older couple... amazing to watch as the crew have to deal with overhead wires and television masts, on top of gusting winds and continuous rain.**



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*In 2004, the Ambulance Service Association (ASA) and the Department of Health asked the ASA Civil Contingencies Committee to look into the feasibility of ambulance personnel joining other emergency personnel to work within the inner cordon (also known as 'the hot zone') of a major hazardous incident. This led to the establishment of the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART). A Y Morton & Co Ltd are delighted to announce that the HART team are putting twelve morton EUVs onto their fleet of emergency response vehicles.*

## Swiftwater rescue training in the Lakes or on your own patch

As we've seen from recent flooding events, teams are increasingly being called to give assistance in flood and swiftwater rescue situations. Training is essential to ensure teams operate in a safe manner alongside other agencies. The Gold Standard in this area remains the Technicians programme, training teams to operate alongside other agencies to established protocols, enhancing safety and providing team members with a recognised qualification.

Other programmes to consider are the Awareness and Bankside levels. These programmes match the fire services' team types and give provide an excellent starting point for team water safety. If you'd like any advice regarding water training you can contact Howard Crook who is actively training with the police, fire service, paramedics and extensively across mountain rescue.



Howard is happy to advise on cost effective options in terms of equipment and training and can provide all levels of mountain rescue programmes including train the trainer programmes for the new MR bankside syllabus. Howard offers an accelerated technician 3-day programme tailored to your team, run either in the Lake District or on your home patch, full PPE provided. For further information contact Howard on 01539 739050 or email [howardcrook@rethinktraining.co.uk](mailto:howardcrook@rethinktraining.co.uk)

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## Cumbria Floods 2009

stand up front in another chopper to guide another mountain rescue pod drop into a slack water pool, north of Main Street, adjacent to the now flooded police station. The risk appraisal flight takes place, during which I find us in a parking hover with two other Sea Kings, parked like taxis along the length of Main Street. The strobs are lowered for three women located by our pod.

### Day Two: Friday 20 November

**12:00am** Boats once again trying to launch on Main Street. Force of water may have slackened, but the level hasn't dropped and hidden obstacles prove hazardous. Our pod is recovered from the north of Main Street by RNLI.

**2:00am** Flying again. Dropped into Irene Court, a slack water pool north of Main Street, and south of Waterloo Street. Word comes from the RAF crew, that all crews are now showing signs of fatigue – they will stay on station, but should only winch for 'life threatening' situations. Winched down again, water feels colder than last time. We work our way through numerous yards and squares, reassuring trapped residents, and wading chest deep in extremely polluted flood water. Work our way north to Waterloo Street and find it totally impossible to cross to the houses and flats on the opposite side, bordering the Derwent.

Hear of the collapse of the Northside Bridge and loss of PC Bill Barker. The choppers are immediately called to Workington to begin searching for the police officer. I guess it doesn't sink in just what this tragic news means, but it lingers in the back of the mind to stay alert and watch out for each other. Later hear reports (false thankfully) of a further bridge collapse with several people seen falling into the river. Locate care home with ten elderly and disabled residents, plus three staff. Assess it safer to leave them till daylight and reassure them thus. Make our way to Main Street, sit on a car roof and eventually picked up by a passing inflatable. I have a shower to wash off my gear and warm up. Get head down for a couple of hours. A truly unbelievable day!

**9:00am** Bronze command meeting identifies the properties where we know for certain people are trapped. Prioritise vulnerable people and properties, and agree plan for evacuation. Day spent evacuating people with the aid of Wasdale's 'Ducky', an inflatable canoe which can carry three people – ideal for the narrow alleyways. Sea Kings on scene again evacuating people in the properties we still can't access. News this afternoon that PC Bill Barker's body has been found along the coast at Allonby. Manage a half hour break to spend time with my two daughters, aged seven and ten – walk down to the water's edge at the bottom of Station Street and stare out at what was a familiar scene, now so alien. Kids upset to see the their usual haunts, the toy shop, the baker's, the bookshop, now standing in a metre and a half of smelly brown water with litter bins and barrels

floating by. They find some police barrier tape and tie it round their heads 'karate kid' style. Back to work, we finally manage to get a boat into Waterloo Street and evacuate the remaining residents and pets. Early evening, we drive across the river to check out flats in Derwent Mills. Here we find a gentleman, on medication and with breathing difficulties. Decide to carry him, using our stretcher, a job made more difficult because some of the water still chest deep, and the patient can't lie down. Last job of the day is recovering a computer containing all of the medical records for Cocker mouth and the surrounding area, and £35,000 worth of drugs, from a flooded doctor's surgery. Gold decide to close all the bridges crossing the Derwent and Cocker. A number of roads also close due to landslides or potential landslides. Call it a day at around 11pm, but some of the team have to sleep at base as they can't get home due to bridge closures. I make it home, get something to eat. My wife is asleep, so decide not to disturb her and sleep in the spare bed in the kid's room. Have to smile when I find the girls' doors tastefully decorated with blue police barrier tape!

### Day Three: Saturday 21 November

**7:00am** Bronze meeting. Asked to provide local knowledge to a number of teams made up of police and fire officers to check and search 800 properties throughout the flooded area of town – massive task! Speak to Mike Graham in Gold to catch up with the bigger picture and agree to call Penrith MRT to cover for us in Papcastle, north of the Derwent, effectively another country, cut off from us due to the bridge closures.

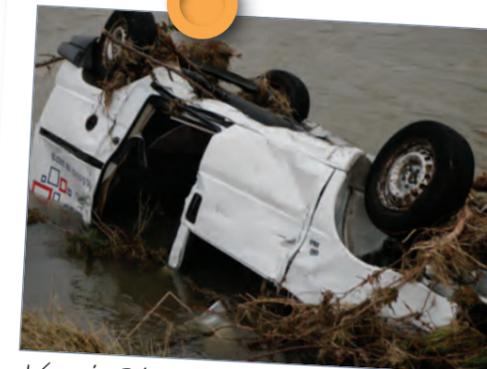
Gordon Brown visits. With Steve (team chairman) and Chris (a deputy), get a chance to chat to him. He enquires how long we've been involved, and seems surprised at the length of time mountain rescue teams have been working. We point out that, as volunteers, we can choose how long we work, especially as it's our town that's suffering. He promises to help, as best he can.

Early afternoon we're given additional task of checking out the rural communities and properties bordering the Cocker up to Crummock Water, and the Derwent up to Bassenthwaite Lake. I set a tight deadline on the team of 8.00pm to complete this work – helps focus their minds!

**7:30pm** 912 properties now checked and searched throughout the town. Team, with help of Wasdale MRT, have checked out all the rural properties, 30 minutes ahead of schedule. Town now being guarded by an RAF squadron and thirty Civil Nuclear Constabulary police officers. We call it a day.



After the flood... removing tree from Cocker Bridge



Van in River Derwent

### Day Four: Sunday 22 November

**8:00am** Waters now receding and spend day doing more individual tasks. Bit more time available to start doing some housekeeping. A nightmare moment in the town – at the back of the Black Bull, checking out the damage now the water has gone, I notice there are people clearing out the debris in the pub. Wander over to chat and am invited in to see the damage. The water on the Thursday night was only 20cm from the top of the door, thundering into the back bar. Walking through the door, I notice the ceiling is another 20cm higher than the top of the door. But as I walk further in, the ceiling drops a good 50cm as I step down into the front bar. Pinned up on top of the bar is a heavyweight beer garden table and bench affair. I am quiet, as I contemplate how any of us could have possibly survived if we had been dragged into this man-trap. Leave the bar and wander back up the street.

David Cameron visits today. Again find myself chatting to a visiting VIP. He seems to have good understanding of how mountain rescue works – either that or he's been well briefed. Find him to be very sociable and genuinely concerned for the predicament of the area.

Today should have been the traditional 'switch on' of the Christmas lights on Main Street – usually a well supported event, and one the

team has rarely missed. It certainly wasn't going to happen on Main Street tonight, but it would be a shame not to do something to lift the town's spirits, so we decide to get our own tree and have a temporary switch on. Thus, at 5.30pm, team members, family, friends, a few civic dignitaries, and a hastily gathered brass band, switch on the lights around a 'temporary Christmas tree,' just until the real one can be lit.

**6:00pm** Police Superintendent Andy Towler (Silver Command) calls a meeting and a twelve hour partnership is formed, made up of the emergency agencies, United Utilities, the local and county council to remove, or make safe all significant risks from the streets of Cockermouth, to enable the public to go back to their properties and start the recovery process. This will be done before dawn tomorrow! Team sorts out a shift system to provide cover for the next 24 hours as we move into this recovery stage.

**10:00pm** Main Street now populated with numerous contractors and utility people. It's busy again but it's still a massive mess. Home to bed.

### Day Five: Monday 23 November

**6:30am** Head down Station Street and onto Main Street – can't believe the transformation. All the debris, the wool, the bins and barrels have disappeared, the streets are swept and all the glass taken away.

**11:00am** Provide downstream cover, whilst fire service oversee a crane removing three trees wedged into the Cocker Bridge on Main Street. Heaviest tree weighs six tonne and comes out of the river bed like a reluctant wisdom tooth. Then dangle two bridge inspection engineers over the river in a basket to assess the damage. We are gratefully relieved by Keswick and Wasdale teams. A massive salmon jumps in the water in front of us, swimming up the Cocker. Life goes on.

**3:00pm** Check out a white van, just appeared in the Derwent's river bed, on its roof, as the water has receded. We have to cross two fields to reach the van. Five days ago these fields were covered in straw stubble; today they're a desert covered in a metre deep layer of silt and rocks, cut through with deep channels up to 4m deep, where the water has taken a path of least resistance. Pools in the bottom of these channels teem with finger-length salmon fry. We head for the van – would be sadly ironic after all this time to find it occupied but, thankfully, it's empty. We

find out later that it has been washed down a mile from the Trout Hotel. Walk back, crossing what appears to be thickly insulated electric cables, 20-30 metres in length. On closer inspection they turn out to be complete tree roots!

### Day Six: Tuesday 24 November

**12:00pm** Rest of the county has officially moved into the 'recovery' phase. Cockermouth remains in 'rescue' phase with a further 130mm of rain forecast. Four team members still at the base throughout the day, monitoring river levels. Rest on standby.

**7:00pm** Time out to attend eldest daughter's Christmas play. Rain so heavy hammering on the school roof, the kids have to shout out their lines.

**9:00pm** Back in town, river levels rising, but still 'two blocks' from causing further flooding.

**11:00pm** We're happy there'll be no further flooding and I officially stand team down. Quick pint in the 1761, one of the few remaining pubs in town.

### Day Seven: Wednesday 25 November

Back to work – but, even now, interrupted by having to go for recommended immunisation injections. Both arms now really sore!

### Day Eight: Thursday 26 November

Half day at work, as afternoon spent meeting, Alan Johnston, the Home Secretary, at the temporary police station. Keswick, Wasdale and Penrith teams all get 'normal' callouts today.

### Day Nine: Friday 27 November

Attend PC Bill Barker's funeral with members from Wasdale and our team. Streets of Egremont lined with people wishing to pay their respects. Find whole event sombre and sobering (a little too close to home). Rest of day spent making arrangements for a Royal visit to the base tomorrow.

### Day Ten: Saturday 28 November

**8:00am** HRH Prince Charles visits town. He's to fly in, come to our base to meet civic dignitaries,

representatives of all the emergency organisations and have a private meeting with the family of PC Bill Barker, then walk down the street to meet the residents of Cockermouth. I've spoken to 'the Prince's people', explaining that I want to give the whole team the opportunity to meet the Prince. They're concerned a crowd might disrupt his schedule, and suggest I limit the team to two or three members! Well, maybe I'll be invited to spend some time in 'the tower', but I ask the whole team to come down to the base and form a 'crowd'!

After meeting the civic dignitaries, the Lord Lieutenant makes a mistake and directs the Prince to the right, instead of left, heading straight for the 'crowd.' He spends fifteen minutes talking to us, before finally moving on to representatives of the emergency services... couldn't have organised it better if I'd tried! Chatting with the Prince, he mentions that all the public he's met so far have said that mountain rescue were key to the whole incident, and he felt we hadn't had the recognition we deserved. He then gives a television interview, thanks all the emergency services, but specifically mentions the work that mountain rescue carried out.

**1:30pm** Attend the Mountain Rescue Search Management Conference near Penrith. One of the speakers, from the Met Office, has been providing us with excellent detail forecasts throughout this incident and to all Lakes teams for the last year prior to this. He mentions that 'exposed parts of Cumbria had 402mm of rainfall in the period 20:00 Wednesday to 09:00 Friday. Also 24 hour totals exceeded the UK's all time 24 hour record which had previously stood at 297mm in Dorset in 1955.'

Postscript: In the coming months, I'm sure there will be an official debrief and lessons will be learned from this. LDSAMRA will produce a report from this, which will appear in the April edition of Mountain Rescue magazine.

As I said at the start, this article has been written from my personal perspective and, no doubt, I will have mixed up some of the timings and missed who did what.... if this is the case, I apologise, it wasn't intended, it was my water soaked brain!

I've no doubts that this whole incident was carried out by, and wouldn't have been possible without, all of the mountain rescue team members involved, doing what they do best – working as a TEAM. Thank you.

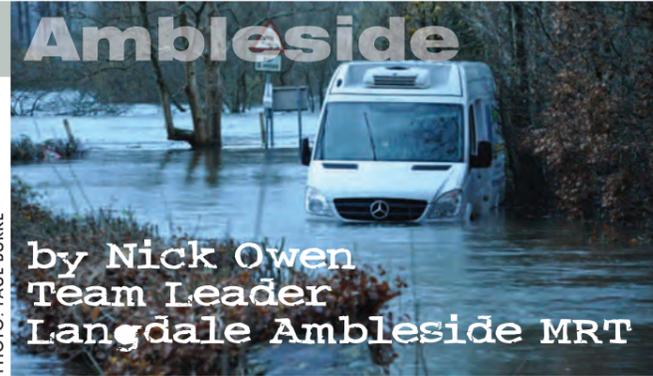


PHOTO: PAUL BURKE

by Nick Owen  
Team Leader  
Langdale Ambleside MRT

### Thursday, 8:00am

Many people woke up to extensive flooding. Homes and businesses flooded, cars washed away, boats sunk and many people stranded. Local ambulance station completely flooded – ambulance, police and fire service spent day operating from our base, with 4-wheel drive support being provided to the police and ambulance, along with swiftwater rescue back-up to police officers out and about. People rescued from flooded vehicles, various care workers transported to visit vulnerable people in the community and base used by Environment Agency and council employees working on limiting the damage, trying to clear drains and providing sandbags. Also became an information point for those trying to get in or out.

### Friday, 24 hours

With considerable difficulty getting about due to continued flooding and consequent damage, team continued to provide back-up and support to local police and ambulance. With many local roads still impassable, our vehicles' four-wheel drive and deep water wading capabilities continued to support local communities and visitors. The only access to The New Independent Island Republic of Ambleside via the newly commissioned Kirkstone Pass Road Bridge, and there was concern the surface may wash away. Thankfully it didn't. Unfortunately, one of our vehicles was badly damaged when part of a road collapsed. Luckily, the occupants okay, and vehicle narrowly avoided falling into deep water.

### Saturday

Continued to provide support to police and ambulance. Water levels receding and work to clear road access continuing – so able to reduce our commitment. Final job to transport a district nurse to home visit in Chapel Stile at 9.00am. Access continued to be difficult to some areas – floodwater still present and extensive damage to many road surfaces and edges. Clean up will take some

considerable time. The ambulance service will be resident in our base for some time, while their station is decontaminated, dried out and repaired. Rainfall has been described as 'one in a millennium' event, which, given it's only four years since we suffered a 'one in 100 years' event, is a bit of a worry! It would have helped considerably if people took notice of 'Road Closed' signs and didn't continue to drive into deep water without thinking through the consequences! Even the flashiest 4-wheel drive is still a car, not a boat. Boats tend to be pointy at the front, are waterproof underneath, and don't have doors that open below the waterline.

### Sunday

A district nurse transported to vulnerable patient in Langdale.

### Monday

The New Independent Island Republic of Ambleside has rejoined the mainland. Base still in use by the ambulance service because theirs is full of poo, being just down stream of the sewage plant. They'll be there for a while.

### Tuesday

A nervous day and night: more severe weather warnings. Base manned all day and drivers available for direct contact by NWSAS if required overnight. Passed without event.

To put things in perspective, we got away lightly compared with Cockermouth and Whitehaven. Some team members suffered property flooding, but seem fairly pragmatic about it. Some were frustrated by their inability to help, either because they couldn't get out of their houses, get to Ambleside or didn't fit the criteria we'd called for ie. swiftwater rescue techs and drivers (preferably both). I also received offers from two team members from the Avon area, on holiday in Langdale, but there was nothing they could do, since they couldn't get to Ambleside either. I kept their number in case anything kicked off in the valley and the team couldn't get through, but it didn't.

# MR or PR – Media Relations or a Plague of Reporters

by Andy Simpson  
MREW Press Officer

The Cumbria incident produced massive media activity over the weekend of the floods and since then in follow-up articles and programmes. From what I saw, mountain rescue had its fair share of coverage – regular mentions on television and radio by visiting dignitaries as the floods were happening, front page of The Times and several articles and mentions in the press, radio and TV, particularly by Prince Charles when he visited Cockermouth and Keswick a couple of weeks after the event. There are some who said we didn't get the coverage we deserved at the time but I think we did as well as can be expected. Arguably, when the public and team members who thought we hadn't been mentioned enough took time out from their own interviews and meetings with visitors to push MR to the front, there was a very positive knock-on effect in subsequent coverage. As I write (early in December) I'm still getting enquiries from the media, and all this at a time when questions are being asked in both Houses of Parliament as to what the Government is doing to support MR.

Mike Park and the Cockermouth team did a magnificent job of handling the media, with the team secretary given the job of co-ordinating enquiries and Mike giving interviews when it was convenient to him – the media got what they wanted and Mike was able to get on with his job. The only downside I'm aware of was a spurious call from a journalist who said she'd heard a report of someone injured on Skiddaw. The Keswick team were suspicious from the start but that didn't stop them deploying thirty people to the hill before the woman admitted she was just testing the system to see if mountain rescue could still respond to the mountains despite their commitment to the floods. I understand she has now been charged with wasting the time of an emergency service, something which carries a tougher penalty than wasting police time.

As press officer I found the situation incredibly frustrating in that I wasn't sure what my role should be. Should I go to Cumbria and risk being seen as the 'top table' muscling in on a local incident? Should I get someone local to try and take control of what appeared to be a media frenzy, which could either work for us or against us if we didn't handle it correctly? As it turned out I couldn't have got close to the action if I'd wanted to, the local person I might have asked to intervene was working in the floods anyway and the teams in question had it all under control. It does beg the question, however, would all teams and regions have the foresight to do what Mike did? I like to think that we can rise to any occasion but this usually relates to rescue situations. Does our flexibility extend to what might at first appear to be less important matters, but those which have the potential to raise or seriously lower people's perceptions of what we're about?

In the same way that flood and swiftwater rescue has come to the top of most teams' agendas due to the potential enormity of the incidents which might ensue, the media and how we handle them needs serious consideration, preferably before the next major incident. Do you have contact with your police force's press office? Do they know who to contact during an incident? Do you liaise with your LRF on media related matters? Is your team ready for the next media onslaught? I'm sorry to say that my team is probably as unprepared as any other, preferring to respond/react as the need arises. I think, as an organisation, we need to be a bit more sophisticated than that. For someone in your team, media training (and I too missed the last session) is important if we are to make the most of the opportunities (and bear traps) the media present to us.

The last media training session was well attended and well received by those who went. If there's the will out there I will happily arrange for another session and include a discussion on what our co-ordinated response might be to a given situation. Just let me know on [press@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:press@mountain.rescue.org.uk)



PHOTO: KESWICK MRT

by Paul Cheshire  
Keswick MRT

## ResQcraft to the rescue in Cockermouth

The now very real threat of catastrophic flooding caused by sudden rainstorms (and rising sea levels) means rescue services need effective new ways of rescuing flood victims. When the floods hit Cockermouth, Leyland-based SIT (Specialised Inflatable Technology Ltd) assisted Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MFRS), at short notice, to enable the new state of the art inflatable rescue craft to be deployed to assist in the operation.



Seaworthy inflatable craft were desperately needed for house-to-house rescues – and fast. Luckily, MFRS already had one new ResQcraft from SIT, another due to be delivered for testing. The company went into overdrive to complete the ResQcraft in just twelve hours and testing turned into real live rescuing, saving people trapped in their homes.

The new ResQcraft, supplied to MFRS with 40hp outboard motors, carry up to eight persons. John Lloyd Young, boat instructor and front line firefighter said the craft 'performed extremely well in testing conditions. Just what we needed. The main high street was under several feet of water and so we were able to deploy the engines too. These conditions certainly put it to the test! The results... excellent performance all round.'

SIT produces a range of rescue inflatables designed for the emergency and rescue services including sleds, paths, rafts, boats and air jacks – all developed to meet the requirements of rescuers in the current climate of high flood risks and the need to reach casualties in the fastest possible time.



For further information about SIT and its products, email [cchadwick@sitltd.co.uk](mailto:cchadwick@sitltd.co.uk).

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The scale of flooding and the challenges it sets for organisations often means that joint working is required. Boundaries between organisations are broken by the urgent needs in dealing with the response phase of flooding. Organisations with slightly different capabilities are forced into working together.

Breaking down these boundaries can occur at a much earlier stage than at the incident. Meeting and establishing a mutual understanding of each organisation's capabilities can be achieved before any operational need arises. To a large extent, this has already happened across many parts of the UK with mountain rescue team members training (and operating) with, and alongside, other emergency services at an operational level. Team members get to know who they are likely to interact with and how they can achieve the operational aims and objectives.

In larger scale incidents the role played by volunteers, such as mountain rescue, becomes more ambiguous. Team members are present on the front line, contributing to the operational aspects of the incident, but links back in to Silver/Gold Command are less well developed. At regional level it is not always clear who represents the voluntary emergency responder. Dealing with other teams from outside the area is more difficult because there is no single method of contacting teams or Silver/Gold Commanders representatives as yet. The capabilities of mountain rescue are not clearly understood by the other blue emergency services, but hopefully the experiences of recent flooding will inform and ensure we all work for the best outcomes.



Outreach is the longest established and widest range of specialist rescue courses available in the UK – call **01248 601546** to find out more.

## Experts in water rescue solutions to suit your needs

Given the trend towards wetter summers and flooding across the UK, regular training of personnel and appropriate water rescue kit is crucial. Water rescue response by all emergency services relies on the resources and capabilities of all the agencies involved, good operational arrangements between responders and the level of public awareness and education of the risks associated with open water. Currently a wide range of agencies, including police, fire and rescue, mountain rescue, HM Coastguard and the RNLI could be called upon to undertake a water rescue. Coordination is paramount and many authorities are currently undertaking a full review of their water rescue arrangements to ensure clarity on roles and responsibilities. Water rescue capability currently covers flooding, coastal water, rivers and streams, gorges, lakes, canals and abandoned industrial works.

Core to MFC Survival products is the range of rescue sleds. The original inflatable rescue sled is available in various sizes ranging from 3-15 man, and features a flat bottom, making it the perfect solution for rescue and evacuation in shallow water. The recently developed Motorised Rescue Sled, combines



all the popular features of the rescue sled with the added benefit of a motor – great for shallow water and ideal for use on inland waterways or flooded urban areas. Also in the range are the popular Airtrack inflatable rescue path, the RP3 rescue platform and the Fire Hose Inflation Kit.

To ensure teams are well equipped with the correct PPE, MFC Survival supplies a full range of water rescue kit, including life jackets, PFDs, drysuits and throw lines, available as a completely customisable kit, or as Level One or Level Two DFRMO kit. A fully bespoke design and manufacture service enables you to tailor equipment to your specific needs.

To find out more on MFC Survival's water rescue equipment, or to discuss a potential collaboration, contact MFC Survival Ltd on 01443 433075, or email [sales@mfc-survival.com](mailto:sales@mfc-survival.com) or visit [www.mfcsurvival.com](http://www.mfcsurvival.com)

## More REGIONAL news

### Active

outdoors in the Dales or just out for a casual stroll? In an emergency, would YOU know how to get help?

To be better prepared, ASK HERE for your free, handy card with what to do and advice on outdoor training and safety

### Going out in the Dales?

Take a piece of advice

Please do take a card (and keep it with you)

### Calling for HELP in the Yorkshire Dales

Our voluntary rescue teams don't just go to the aid of climbers and cavers. They go out more frequently to walkers and casual visitors, so be prepared - YOU should know what to do, if help is needed. Keep this and read it!

### DALES CAMPAIGN AIMS TO HELP PEOPLE GET IT RIGHT

The three teams of the Yorkshire Dales Rescue Panel are taking the initiative with a campaign to help people get it right if they need help away from a metalled road.

Tiring of the confusion which seems to exist in the public mind about what to do when the unforeseen happens in a remote location, the teams – Cave Rescue Organisation, Upper Wharfedale FRA and Swaledale MRT – decided to run a campaign in the Dales, targeting as many accommodation providers, shops, and information centres as possible. The initiative has been enabled by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and North Yorkshire Police.

Seasoned outdoors people know that, when they ring 999, for a rescue team, they should ask for 'Police', then for 'mountain rescue or cave rescue'. However, a high proportion of the people visiting the Yorkshire Dales are casual visitors, many of whom don't know how to get help if there is an accident or if someone is missing or overdue. Often, in that fraught time immediately after an accident, less experienced people ask for an ambulance, without thinking – and sometimes without telling the ambulance service dispatcher – about the remoteness or inaccessibility of the site where help is needed.

The campaign uses an A4 poster to promote a card which folds to credit card size, with dispensers provided for outlets. The card fits easily into a wallet, purse or, preferably, a first aid kit. Between them, the three teams aim to put posters and/or card dispensers into 300 outlets around the area, where operators are willing to help their local team to give appropriate advice. The advice given will be well-known to team members and MR magazine readers:

- If you need help, beyond the road network, you probably need a rescue team;
- Call '999', ask for 'Police'; ask them for a mountain rescue team
- If using a mobile, say which county you are in
- Give both grid reference and a verbal description of where you are
- Answer any other questions and stay by the phone, or where you have a signal, and keep the line clear, so you can be called back.

A second phase of the campaign, currently under development, will put links to training and safety advice on the teams' websites.

The idea for the card came from the one done by teams in the Lake District, but the purpose is slightly different. The Dales environment is not so harsh, so it was important to use illustrations that people could associate with their own activities. The snowstorm, Sea King and search dog imagery doesn't really epitomise a day in the Dales! The main message is aimed at helping people to get the best out of the emergency system, should they ever need it. After that comes raising of awareness of the three teams

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# Vikings of the North

by Gari Finch Cleveland SRT

We are Cleveland Search and Rescue Team, and our call sign is Viking. Not all of us look like Vikings; some do not have beards. And whether we behave like Vikings is for others to say!

We were formed in 1965 along with Scarborough and Ryedale Mountain Rescue Team, to provide cover for the North York Moors National Park. Our patch is the north western part of the moor with the conurbation of Teeside on our northern boundary. The moors average 1300 feet or so and are well used by walkers, climbers, mountain bikers, horse riders etc. Ironstone mining, jet mining and alum quarrying were, at one time, common activities and their remains can be seen at many locations.

We have always had around fifty to sixty members on our callout list; currently it is 53, with ages ranging from the early twenties to seventy. In our first ten years or so we were primarily a search team looking for lost walkers on the long distance walks like the Cleveland Way and the Lyke Wake Walk, which go through our area. Now, over forty years later, about three quarters of our callouts are rescues – the usual things: crashed mountain bikers, fallen horse riders, fallen climbers, crashed para gliders etc. Sometimes it's animal rescues, cragfast sheep and dogs (not usually together) and cattle that have wandered into the many ironstone drift mines. Once we were called to locate a pack of hounds that had followed a fox into a drift mine. The fox knew the way out, the hounds did not!

We still get searches but, in common with many other teams, our searches often take

place in the peripheral lowlands and urban fringes. The number of despondents and Alzheimer's we now search for has steadily increased, so far this year we have had about eight in this category. Similarly over the years our number of callouts has increased. We now average the high thirties, and this year, up to November, we are at forty.

We work for two police authorities, Cleveland and North Yorkshire, and two ambulance services, North Eastern and Yorkshire. Both police authorities are very supportive and the callout system with them works very well. The callout system with the ambulance services is, after a lot of hard work on both sides, improving dramatically.

We have a base which, amongst the normal functions, houses two of our vehicles, a Land Rover and our large control vehicle. In addition we have a lock up garage a few miles from base, which houses our other Land Rover. Base is an old mining transhipment depot, which became a road depot for part of Cleveland County, and then was leased to us for fourteen years. The remains of the railway platform can still be seen (good for 'training'?) We managed last year to purchase the lease but it is in urgent need of refurbishment. We are currently trying to raise funds to achieve this refurbishment, and hopefully soon will have a base of which we can be proud.

We are part of NESRA and are frequently involved with the other NESRA teams, especially Scarborough our sister team. Inter-team cooperation is excellent, even if the accents of some of the more northern teams are difficult to understand at times! In essence, we are a bunch of busy, happy Vikings.



TOP: NORTH YORK MOORS LANDMARK, RALPH'S CROSS  
MIDDLE: PART OF THE TEAM OUT ON A TRAINING EXERCISE  
ABOVE: TRAINING ON ROSEBERRY TOPPING

page 19

and enhancing the value of their websites.

Between them, the teams have many anecdotal examples of how calls have been misdirected, through errors or lack of awareness on the part of the caller or through hitches in the system. Generally, if the initial call is properly directed and provides the right information, the right help will arrive more quickly.

The Phone Book lists mountain and cave rescue alongside the statutory services, but does not make clear that they should be called through the police.

How about the person who asked for cave rescue, at Malham, but was given Humberside Coastguard? Or the woman who knew she wanted a mountain rescue team but asked for all three of the options given by the 999 service (police, fire and ambulance). The local ambulance crew arrived to find two people in a whirlpool at the flooding Ingleton Waterfalls. At this point, a mountain rescue team was called.

The main first aid training organisations teach people to ask for an ambulance, without referring to anything different for remote locations. Mobile phone calls from high points may go to a mast in a different county. On one occasion a police helicopter was dispatched from one county, to a distressed walker in a second county, but ran into cloud in a third county. In another incident, someone calling for help to a collapsed walker gave a

good description, with place names and distances – fortunate, as the ten-figure grid reference provided to the MRT had one incorrect figure, putting it 20km out and into a different county!

One caver, having specified which police station he wanted to deal with a callout, spent so much airtime ringing 118 118 that the duty controller couldn't ring him back. When the controller reached him, by car, he was still on the phone!

Publication of the posters and cards was made possible by a 50% grant from the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, which has an interest in people's understanding and enjoyment of this special area, while the design work and printing were contributed at net cost by the print and design unit of North Yorkshire Police.

**Walking clubs and other outdoor organisations or groups wishing to supply cards to their members, please send a SAE, saying how many cards you need, to Going Out, Cave Rescue Organisation, Clapham, Lancaster LA2 8HH.**

**Any other enquiries to [goingout@cro.org.uk](mailto:goingout@cro.org.uk), [goingout@uwfra.org.uk](mailto:goingout@uwfra.org.uk) or [secretary@swaledalemrt.org.uk](mailto:secretary@swaledalemrt.org.uk).**

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# Mountain rescue's first sailing team?

by Carina Humberstone, Skipper

It's not unusual for Edale and Glossop teams to work together, but on a boat? Last April, five members of Edale and two from Glossop tested their teamwork and navigational skills as the first ever mountain rescue crew to enter the Emergency Services Sailing Regatta in the Solent. This event has been running for six years and is formally known as the UKFSC or UK Firefighters Sailing Challenge. However it is now open to all blue light emergency services and fire, ambulance, police, and now mountain rescue crews from around the UK compete annually.

My husband and I are both in Edale team and we are both keen sailors. He is a Cheshire firefighter so when I read about the regatta in one of his service magazines I endeavoured to find out if an MR team could enter. Once that was confirmed, it was all systems go: sort out time off work and then get a crew together. Although there were plenty of Edale team members keen to take part, unfortunately, some couldn't get time off work or had other commitments and I only managed to get five signed up. The boats are usually manned by a crew of eight and so we really needed to boost our numbers to have a fighting chance in the competition. I heard that some members of Glossop might be interested in joining us and finally managed to get a crew of seven together – Carina and Andy Humberstone, Trevor Lawton, John Coombs and Andy Cass from Edale with Rick Fry and Dave Morgan from Glossop.

It was a bit hectic on the first morning but thankfully the winds were light and the race was delayed, allowing us a bit more time to get sorted. When the race finally started we had two crew members, Trevor and Rick, down below listening to the instructions over the radio and plotting the course on the chart. Meanwhile the crew on deck was getting ready for a very competitive start. It is quite nerve racking being just feet away from up to 30 other yachts, under sail power alone; trying to cross an imaginary start line and avoid each other at the same time. The hooter went, we pulled the sails in tight and accelerated (slowly) into the wind. We shouted down below to find out what bearing we needed to sail on to get to the first buoy.

'Hold on!' came the reply. Hold on? I couldn't believe it! We needed a bearing now!

'How much time until we start?' the navigators asked.

'We have started!' I replied. Silence.

'Well just follow the boats in front.'

'We are in front, I replied. Silence again.'

The first leg of a sailing race always tries to get the boats to tack (or zigzag for you landlubbers), directly into the wind. So we sailed up into the wind as best we could until our navigators were up to speed.

Unfortunately, or fortunately depending on how you look at it, we were overtaken by other boats quite quickly. Sadly, we finished the race near the bottom of the fleet. The only positive point being that we were put in the bottom class for the rest of the races where we could compete for trophies on a more equal footing.

The other races were always exciting and great fun. We finally became a serious contender over half way through the regatta, when we realised that our propeller was being put in gear whilst sailing. This caused a huge amount of drag and slowed us down enormously. (I will mention no names, but all is forgiven as on his own boat, this action would fold the prop and thereby reduce drag). Suddenly we were coming mid-fleet rather than right at the bottom. The effect this had on the crew was very uplifting. We were back in the running again. We had always been very competitive throughout and nothing was going to dampen our enthusiasm, but now there really was no stopping us.

One of the most memorable aspects of the regatta was testing our nerve by crossing in front of a huge container ship constrained to a narrow shipping lane, rather than ducking round the back like most of the fleet. Thankfully we did have enough space and as a result of this very scary manoeuvre we moved towards the front of the fleet. Having to shout 'Starboard!' at other yachts bearing down on us because they hadn't seen us and we had right of way was another test of nerve. We managed to avoid any collisions but other boats were not so lucky. It was also very pleasing when our token dog handler, John, came into his own, with the navigation. It seems our navigator was the only one taking into account the strength of the tide. As we headed away from the other boats we soon started overtaking them as the flow of the tide took us towards the mark, rather than beyond it. Unfortunately these great navigational skills lay undiscovered until the last day of races. Seven MR team members living on a 37 foot yacht was also quite memorable, not necessarily for all the right reasons!

However, the long lasting memory is of how all the other emergency services welcomed us into the regatta. They were all intrigued as to how we heard about it and got ourselves involved. The regatta is aimed at bringing together the emergency services and encouraging novices to get involved in sailing. The organisers like to have some novices on the boats but all our team members had varying levels of experience on yachts and other boats, from a couple of days to twenty plus years. It was a fantastic regatta, great to be involved in the 'community' of the emergency services and have some friendly competition.



Out of 31 boats, our results were: 29th, 31st, 30th, 23rd, 18th, 17th, 27th and 19th. We came 26th overall and sixth out of eleven in our class. However we think we could do quite well next time, with the prop issue sorted out and individual strengths identified.

The 2009 UKFSC MR crew would like to publicise this regatta amongst MR teams across the country and hopefully get some other MR crews to compete against. If we can get three MR crews entered we can compete for our own MR trophy. We already have a lot more interest within Edale and Glossop teams and between us we hope to be able to enter two crews next year.

If you are interested in entering a team, the regatta takes place on 27/28/29 April 2010. Boats are usually crewed by a team of eight which means a cost of about £220 per crew member which covers the charter of the yacht, your accommodation (on the yacht), berthing fees at Cowes for two nights and two three course meals at Cowes. It is a fantastic regatta, particularly if you are interested in sailing but find 'big' regattas like Cowes too expensive or too scary. You have the option to sail with or without a spinnaker; the fleet was split roughly half and half this year. At the UKFSC regatta they even give the instructions out in layman's terms and give you tips on how to leave the marina and even how to sail! More information can be found at [www.ukfsc.org.uk](http://www.ukfsc.org.uk) Mick Stead is the organiser and a very approachable man who will help you with any queries.

**Postscript:** At present my employer has turned down my application for unpaid leave so it is not looking likely that I will be sailing or entering a Peaks team into the 2010 regatta. However, I hope that at least one other MR team will enter and that this wasn't just a one off but the start of an ongoing tradition. Please get in touch if you would like more information [chumberstone@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chumberstone@hotmail.co.uk).

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\*Compared to the average performance of 4 leading competitor tyres in the segment Tested by TÜV SÜD Automotive in March 2009; Tyre Size: 205/55R16; Car: VW Golf; Report #76236753. Tyres are responsible for an average of 20% of a car's fuel consumption. A 13%\* tyre related fuel consumption reduction results in a overall fuel economy of 1.9%\*

## What's on Offer

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including blister prevention, pocket survival packs, survival blankets and emergency bivvys. The Adventure Medical Kits Survival Blanket and Emergency Bivvy are officially recommended by the Duke of Edinburgh Award for use on their expeditions. For more information on DofE recommended kit visit [www.rfar.co.uk](http://www.rfar.co.uk)

Adventure Medical Kits were designed to help non-medically trained expedition team members to treat serious injuries in extreme outdoor conditions. Each kit is easy to use and packed only with essential products – some of the larger, expedition-sized kits are packed and labelled in a logical order (by injury) to help speed up reaction time in an emergency.

#### Light & Fast Series £15.99 – £33.99

For backpackers, hikers and families. Like the Ultralight and Watertight range, are made from the same material used in parachutes, which makes them tough, strong and lightweight. Easy Care first aid system means this kit is organised into injury specific compartments for fast and effective results.

For further information on Adventure Medical Kits visit [www.adventuremedicalkits.com](http://www.adventuremedicalkits.com) or call 0116 234 4646 for your nearest stockist.

'The US Adventure Racing Association chose the Adventure Medical Kit 7 as our official kit for several reasons. It's waterproof and ultra light yet contains all the essential first aid supplies we need.'  
*Troy Farrar, President of USARA*

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Large, comprehensive kits for expeditions and backcountry adventures. Includes a variety of medical essentials in an affordable, organised package. Clear view windows allow you to easily see and find items in the pocket. The windows are cold crack tested -28.9°C and heat tested to 60°C. Comes with a lifetime replacement guarantee.



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Adventure Medical Kits also produce a range of footcare and survival essentials



### LIFESAVING SNAPS REVEALED

Goodyear Brand Manager, Michelle Fisher said, 'We were overwhelmed at the standard and number of entries received. It's great to see so many people wanting to show their support for this lifesaving charity. We're delighted to be able to support Mountain Rescue by creating this calendar.'

Twelve photographs depicting the country's most stunning scenes have been chosen to appear in an exclusive calendar to raise awareness of one of the UK's vital emergency services. The Mountain Rescue 2010 calendar is made up of snapshots from across England and Wales, as seen through the eyes of outdoor enthusiasts and it's already selling like hot cakes! Tyre giant Goodyear, which supports Mountain Rescue England and Wales by funding the roll out of GPS navigational equipment, appealed earlier this year for those with a love of the outdoors to send in their most impressive snaps for a chance at inclusion in the calendar.

Andy Simpson, MREW Press Officer said, 'Our volunteers have access to some of the most breathtaking views, but due to the nature of search and rescue operations, they don't often get the chance to appreciate it.'

'This calendar is a fantastic way to draw people's attention to our organisation and raise the funds necessary for us to continue providing top level assistance to those that find themselves in difficulty.'

The Mountain Rescue calendar features landscape scenes ranging from the Lake District and Snowdonia through to views of lowland areas such as Dartmoor.

The calendar is available with a recommended donation of £5 (plus p&p) from [www.mountain.rescue.org.uk](http://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk) as well as through individual mountain rescue teams.

Sponsorship news

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What's on Offer

Thanks to the sponsors, suppliers and manufacturers who support us.

## THE OUTDOORS SHOW

26-28 MARCH 2010 NEC BIRMINGHAM

The Outdoors Show is back, and with a stunning speaker line-up and lots to see and do, it's set to be better than ever – packed with around 250 exhibitors, including many top brands, famous celebrity speakers, dozens of attractions (many of which are 'have a go' activities) and three participation events. And alongside the show is the exciting new TriLive 2010 – aimed at both experienced and first time triathletes, this is the only triathlon show north of London.

### Meet the people you read about!

Mountain Rescue's large stand will be a star of the 2010 show. Watch a team of six rescuers scale the heights of the NEC to perform an amazing crag rescue display. While on flat ground talk with experts offering first hand advice,

astounding stories and information on mountain rescue and how you can get involved.

### Kit, kit and more kit!

The Outdoors Show is the premier event to see and purchase the latest kit while experts will be on hand to advise on what best suits your needs, including clothing, tents, navigation, footwear, backpacks, camping accessories, safety and emergency gear and so much more, you can be sure to find everything you may need for any forthcoming outdoor adventures. There are always lots of great deals too, so be sure to bring a rucksack to get all your gear home, or just pick one up at the show!

### Celebs at the show!

Get your hands on what are set to be hottest tickets in town to confirm your seat for inspiring talks from top celebrities, with the show's strongest line-up ever – Sir Ranulph Fiennes, Kate Humble, James Cracknell, Ben Fogle, Simon King and Doug Scott, plus more to be confirmed.

### Not to Miss!

Stop by the SkyMasters as elite climbers scale the dizzy heights of the NEC whilst racing head to head over the unique climbing wall. Plus if you're an experienced climber; don't miss the opportunity to get involved with the Climbing Masterclasses, hosted by current British leading champion and British bouldering team coach Gaz Parry. The Wilderness Camp, brought to you by Bushcraft & Survival Skills Magazine will include 'have a go' activities including firelighting and axe forging, as well as talks and demos from bushcraft experts Ian Maxwell, the worlds best animal tracker and Tristan Gooley, an expert in natural navigation plus much more.

### New for 2010!

The Fit For Comfort Walking Zone is



Doug Scott back in his Everest days

designed to provide a textural and foot-feel area, in which to trial walking boots, insoles and custom-fitting options from leading footwear providers. Not stopping there, it will also host the Walking Stage in which respected walking authors Kev Reynolds, Paddy Dillon and Pete Hawkins are already confirmed to speak.

### Get Active!

Maybe you are looking for a new challenge for the new year? You want to do your bit in raising some money for charity? Sign up now for one of three events being hosted by The Outdoors Show and TriLive 2010; The Outdoors Show 100 Bike Ride, The Outdoors Show Run or The TriLive Duathlon. All three take place across the weekend and there is something for individuals of any level to participate in. Plus all competitors get a free ticket to the show!

### Show opening times:

**Friday 26 March 10am to 5pm**  
**Saturday 27 March 9am to 6pm**  
**Sunday 28 March 10am to 5pm**

Check out the website at [OutdoorsShowExtra.co.uk](http://OutdoorsShowExtra.co.uk) for more information, and to purchase your tickets, or telephone 01559 934 439.

Show details and content are subject to change. Ticket refunds are not available as a result.



Elite climbing in the SkyMasters



Sir Ranulph Fiennes appearing at the show

Sponsorship news

# Incident Management: Managing the Initial Response to a SAR Incident

## Courses

This course is a new addition to the courses offered by MREW and will be delivered in the north of England early 2010. We have been presenting this course throughout the UK since 2000, the date of the first Initial Response course, but only recently received recognition from MREW. The course was developed through a collaboration of SAR practitioners in the UK and USA.

### Background

- Statistics from past incidents show that in the UK around 95% of searches for missing persons are concluded within the first twelve hours, 80% in five hours
- This time period is referred to as the Initial Response Phase, and how it is managed can have an important bearing on the outcome of the entire incident
- Every incident has an Initial Response phase
- Search management training was becoming overly complex and not appropriate for managing this phase of an incident
- A new, more cohesive and logical approach was needed.

### The course

It is a practical, hands-on course that focuses on the needs of the individuals with the responsibility for managing the Initial Response phase of a search. It has been designed to meet the needs of those people who have the responsibility for managing the Initial Response phase of a search for a missing person but it is relevant to all involved in an incident so that everyone has a grasp of the 'big picture' which in turns helps with the overall success of the operation. This includes both volunteer and statutory bodies.

### The method

- focuses on the practical rather than theoretical
- is based on a set of procedures that are logical and sequential
- is supported by documentation that provides an audit trail of decisions made.

The two day course is based on the Six Step Process, which is a simple yet versatile template for a response to an operational problem. Participants work individually. The instructors provide the necessary theory and lead the students through a series of tabletop incidents supported by a manual and documentation designed by the authors. By the end, students are able to manage these incidents with the minimum of input from the instructors. Since 2000, the course has been further developed to incorporate UK Missing Person statistics, UK based map problems, UK based documentation that is acceptable to the police and used as a standard in Ireland.

We feel it is best delivered regionally with a mix of volunteer and statutory bodies to reflect a multi agency response to a SAR incident. This also provides an opportunity to customise courses to local needs and include local map exercises. Experience has shown that this is the most cost effective way of delivering this fundamental of search and rescue to a broad local group rather than restrict it to a small, exclusive group of individuals. It allows for a broader understanding of search management principles for a larger

group of individuals who will be involved in an incident so that everyone is involved and understand the process.

If a variety of local agencies who might be involved in a search incident attend, then much valuable liaison can be achieved during the course and any local issues dealt with. This local and bespoke approach is unique to the courses we offer.

For further information, contact Pete Roberts on [peteroberts@brinkburn.net](mailto:peteroberts@brinkburn.net) or for further details on the courses we offer and free publications, go to either [www.searchresearch.org.uk](http://www.searchresearch.org.uk) or [www.isaralliance.com](http://www.isaralliance.com)



PETE AND DAVE 'IN CONTROL' AT A RECENT NNPMRT EVENT

*Dave Perkins and Pete Roberts have been active members of Northumberland National Park MRT for some 35 years each. They are currently deputy leaders for operations and training respectively. In 1997 they formed a registered charity called The Centre for Search Research – [www.searchresearch.org.uk](http://www.searchresearch.org.uk) – and have presented their courses throughout the UK and Ireland, and are regular presenters at conferences in the UK, US and Canada. They co-author the UK Missing Person Study with Ged Feeney and are currently updating their Field Skills course and adding a new Search Group Leader course to their list of courses offered. Their courses are specifically designed to meet the needs of UK practitioners.*

## Don't forget you can find us on Facebook!

The fanbase continues to grow – fast heading towards 700. Who'da thought it, eh? And it's been positively heart-warming to read some of the messages of support left there over the last few months, not least of all during the time of the floods in Cumbria.

It just so happened that I was sat at my desk all through that Friday, having already had an update from a mountain rescue friend in the Lakes that things were hairy – and getting hairier. So, EyeTV set to Sky News in one corner of the screen, Firefox set to BBC news, and numerous tabs to other news sources, I was able to keep bang up to date and regularly update the Basecamp page. Messages of sympathy and support were very quickly being posted from rescue team members in other areas as well as non-team fans far from the mountains.

Another development seems to be that, finally, people feel they too can post news and stories to the page rather than waiting for me to do it – always a pleasant surprise when someone's beaten me to it! And, believe it or not, there are days when I'm not completely glued to the screen, and may not be able to update the news as it happens! Favourite postings since we started? Well there was the apparently mass suicide by 28 cows in Lauterbrunnen, in Switzerland. Thank God not quite under our mountain rescue jurisdiction! Speculation ran amok about whether wild dogs or other 'critters' had spooked the beasts. Or did they just have a bad case of the blues? Then there was the NZ SAR TV commercial alerting viewers to the fact that yetis don't actually exist and the mountain rescue service really is your only hope if things go wrong – so stay safe! 'They think they're indestructible', said the director. Mmmm, I think we might have met a few of those over here in the UK.

Elsewhere, the VAT debate rumbles on, and mountain rescue incidents continue to tot up, soliciting regular comment – not always entirely compassionate! And I hope we've also managed to persuade a few of fans to join the real Basecamp (only £24!!) to support all mountain rescue teams in England and Wales – we've certainly sold a couple of handbooks. I've also added a few 'favourite pages' to the Basecamp page, so you can keep tabs on some of the people who support us, like Grough and the Orange House.

So, thanks for your support and interest. If you're not already Facebooking, get yourself a profile and show your support by becoming a fan. Help us generate awareness and spread the word about mountain rescue.

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What's on Offer

Thanks to the sponsors, suppliers and manufacturers who support us.

## Macpac Gear Deal

Macpac has long been associated with making gear that lasts, with no compromise on design and materials. Our equipment is renowned for its durability – perfect for the tough use it gets from your team members. As a result we

would like to offer your team the following prices for 2009.

Packs	RRP	MR
Pursuit Classic (W, S2, S3)	110	65
Ascent Classic (W, S2, S3)	130	75
Ascent Classic XPD (W, S2, S3)	180	105

Sleeping Bags	RRP	MR
Sanctuary 900 XP	320	189
Sanctuary 700 XP	280	165
Sanctuary 500L XP	250	147

Tents	RRP	MR
Microlight	200	120
Olympus	370	220
Hemisphere	550	320

### Order Process

The order must originate from an officer of the team (Secretary/Equipment Officer) and is for the benefit of team members only. Orders can be made via email [jamesathompson@mac.com](mailto:jamesathompson@mac.com) or by post James Thompson, Macpac UK Agent, 32 Rivelin Park Crescent, Stannington, Sheffield S6 4GF

- Payment to be made with order
  - Cheques payable to 'Macpac' – these prices include VAT @ 15%
  - Postage will be free for orders over £250 – £10 for orders below
- James can also be contacted by phone on **07971 478063**, should you need to discuss any details with him.

## Goodyear tyres: discounts for teams and team members

Goodyear have pledged to supply a maximum of FOUR free 4x4 tyres to each of the mountain and cave rescue teams during each year of their partnership agreement, for those tyres that require replacement through wear and tear. This applies to tyres only and teams must pay for any charges for valves, balance and fitting.

How? Teams should first notify Penny Brockman with the team name and address, the name and contact details of the person responsible, details of the vehicles officially used by the team (make and reg no, tyre size (including

speed rating) and the terrain on which each vehicle is likely to be used.

### Additional Tyres

Any additional tyres needed by teams may (subject to availability) be bought online from [www.hiqonline.co.uk](http://www.hiqonline.co.uk) at 5% off the price specified from time to time.

### Team Member Purchases

Team members can also purchase tyres for their own vehicles (subject to availability) online from [www.hiqonline.co.uk](http://www.hiqonline.co.uk) at 5% off the price specified from time to time.

## Terra Nova discount

Secure yourself a team member discount on Terra Nova products – the process is simple. All you need to do is register an account using the link below, then email Terra Nova asking to be added to the Outdoor Professionals price list, including your name and address details so they can trace your account easily.

[www.terra-nova.co.uk/Checkout.aspx?action=register&redirectto=/Login.aspx](http://www.terra-nova.co.uk/Checkout.aspx?action=register&redirectto=/Login.aspx)

Terra Nova will confirm that you have been added to the price list and can buy through the site at the reduced rate. Prices will be displayed at the full RRP until a member logs in. You

can do this as soon as you revisit the site – when prices will change to the offer prices – or view the full RRP prices and log in at the check out. The offer prices will then automatically be updated.

Initial emails and any queries should be directed to [shopping@terra-nova.co.uk](mailto:shopping@terra-nova.co.uk) as more people pick this up and responses will be quicker.



## SAR Products

SAR Products is pleased to offer any mountain rescue team (except Oldham MRT and Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) who purchase equipment from SAR directly) 25% discount – at the end of the year, MR(E&W) will receive 10% of all MR sales. \*The deal does not include the Pro Alp as we only sell this at trade, but this may change in time.

For further information, go to [www.sar-products.com](http://www.sar-products.com) or contact Lee Allport, Product Manager, Specialist Access & Rescue Products Ltd. T: **+44 (0)1457 873400** F: **+44 (0)1457 872373** M: **07793 816627**



Any queries in relation to the above, please contact Penny Brockman via email – [treasurer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@mountain.rescue.org.uk) or telephone 01633 254244 or mobile 07775 851737. Or Andy Simpson via email – [andy@andrewsimpsonadvertising.co.uk](mailto:andy@andrewsimpsonadvertising.co.uk) or telephone 0161 764 0999 or mobile 07836 717021.

Wish you were there?

# SECRET COSTA BLANCA



by Rich Mayfield

The White Coast in the south of Spain has long been famous for its bolted sport climbing. With the driest and warmest Mediterranean climate in Europe, winter sun holidays from the UK are booming.

I've lived and worked there for ten years and one thing that has stuck me is the Arab/Moorish influence on the Costa. They invaded in 710AD and were finally ousted by the Spanish in the 1400s, leaving behind a wealth of fortresses, secret paths and infrastructure that still exists today. Slowly I've been visiting the secret places, far from the crowds and clip-up crags. So apart from the obvious what has the Costa got to offer?

The Gorges: The Moors explored these dark and dangerous places, knowing that once they were in them they would be untouchable, surrounded by huge cliffs and fast rivers. These one thousand year old secret paths they built are still used today to access the

gorges. Barranco del Inferno (Gorge from Hell) is the most popular, 600m deep and 6km long, it's well equipped and even has a small via ferrata at the end. But this is only the tip of the iceberg! I regularly descend four other gorges; some are dry whilst others have permanent fresh water running through, perfect for a hot summer's day. The new Cicerone guide lists many of the most popular trips. (ISBN 13: 9781852845087)

The Ridges: The Moors also climbed the highest peaks, seeking out easily defended vantage points in order to control the fertile valleys. The Serria Bernia ridge is the most popular, complete with Moorish fort. Three abseils, lots of easy but very exposed scrambling and one pitch of grade F4, makes it a tiring and brilliant day out. The Segaria Ridge, is spectacular on perhaps the best rock of any ridge I've done on the Costa.

El Realet has a small fort and is perhaps the oddest of all, with cliffs either side up to 300m tall, it doesn't feel high, because the mighty 1408m high Puig Campana with its 1km high cliff towers over you all day. People use the words 'knife edge' to describe Crib Goch, here we use the word 'knife edge' because you can't hold onto the top, it's too sharp! Two to three days is the usual time to complete this ridge, with easy scrambling— or take on the main challenge of the pinnacles with pitches up to F6c. There are over a dozen other ridges that I know of which get traversed regularly.

Via Ferrata: Okay so the Moors didn't build these, but it kind of fits in, FEDME



(BMC equivalent) and local town halls have funded these developments in order to capitalise on the tourism trade. If the Moors had been in Spain during the early 1900s, perhaps the birthplace of via ferratas wouldn't have been the Dolomites. The Costa now has three major lines – El Cid 450m, Sax 80m, and El Ponocho 250m.

El Cid is the oldest and longest, and a real adventure with some loose rock and spectacular views inland from Alicante. Sax is the shortest but does boast a wire bridge. El Ponocho, is the newest, best-equipped and perhaps the most spectacular/scary of the three, and can be extended via grade 3 scrambling to the very top. All are easy days taking no longer than three to six hours for a slow party.

**Best time to visit:** September through to May

**Best airports:** Alicante, Murcia in the South or Valencia to the North, all the cheap airlines fly to these destinations.

**Best way to get around:** You'll have to hire a car. Search online for hire cars at the airport. Small cars can be as cheap as €100 a week.

**Best place to stay:** The Orange House has camping, bunk rooms and posh rooms. A small shop sells maps and guide books, via ferrata lanyards and helmets are available to hire and we have an English speaking guiding service. [theorangehouse.net](http://theorangehouse.net)



I wanted to take my mind off the rain lashing against the window – an all too frequent occurrence in Fort William in the winter! Reaching for the latest copy of High Magazine I flicked to Mountain Info, longing for some words of wisdom from Lindsay Griffin, an escape to bigger and better things. Linger on a picture of Phari Lapcha in Nepal's Khumbu region, my pulse quickened. I looked at the north face, mentally tracing the lines of snow-ice dribbling down the wall.

A couple of days later my hopes were dashed. A chance meeting with Owen Samuel and Andy Turner in the Nevisport bar led them

to explain, in hushed voices, how they had already planned a trip to the face in the coming autumn.

Four years later, Andy Turner and I walked up the popular trekking route to Gokyo and rounding a corner the face came into view – the same blank canvas. Andy knew the approach well following his previous trip, which sadly ended wallowing in powder snow at the bottom of the face.

After a couple of days rest and acclimatising with a bivouac on Gokyo Ri, we were eager to attempt the face. A 4.30am alarm woke us seemingly minutes after the noise of the largest German trekking party had subsided. We made our own silent preparations before leaving the relative comfort of the teahouse. Making steady progress towards the bottom of the face, we were forced to struggle through the moraine to the bottom of the wall. Just after first light, we set foot on the mountain working slowly up the unconsolidated snow.

Looking up the face, a small ice pitch was guarding access to a second larger snow field. Moving together up this we would soon be making faster progress. Three pitches of Scottish IV and, much later than anticipated, we were wallowing in hard slab that was breaking up under our feet.

Recalibrating our approach to Himalayan alpinism, we took a belay in a cave on the left hand side of the snow field, Andy taking the lead allowing us to move together towards a steepening rock band. A weakness led up left with poor snow giving way to 'hero neve'; we

could do no wrong on this medium and casual swings of the axe led us swiftly upwards. The large face was giving up its secrets one pitch at a time gradually pulling us upwards towards success.

Next up was a steep ledge system, a weakness through the major rock band. It was my turn to take the sharp end, running the rope across the steep ledge. The snow resembled sugar, continuously collapsing and falling silently onto the snow field one hundred metres below. More tricky climbing followed with some tenuous high steps and some wobbly hooks allowing a pull onto what some folk might call a ledge. Tapping the large 'gift like' belay spike with my hammer, I watched dumb struck as it wobbled before I pushed it back, now useless for my intended purpose. Phari Lapcha's geology was again having other ideas as I tried to batter in a good peg, the placement ringing at the first blow, and the side of the crack falling off at the second.

Eventually a second peg and a belay. I shouted 'safe' – a woefully inadequate term for the situation! Andy followed, jettisoning more of the ledge onto the ice field, before moving around the corner and disappearing from sight. The climbing sounded hard – much scraping of crampon points and hammering of gear combined with the silent fear transmitted down the rope.

Andy's muffled shouts came around the corner. It wasn't good; Phari Lapcha's

# MIXED EMOTIONS IN PHARI LAPCHA

by James Thacker





## SuperPlasma Climbing Helmet

This Helmet has a fresh innovative design, light, compact, comfortable and well ventilated. Fitted with the KASK UP-n-Down technology which allows the wearer to adjust the inner frame both in terms of inclination and height combined with a rapid size adjustment system. This system allows size adjustment even with the helmet fastened on the head. The inner padding consists of two different pieces, head-band and disc, made of two layers of Coolmax and an open cell filter system. It is anti-allergic with a rapid moisture transportation system leaving the skin dry and resistant to odour. These parts are easily removed and washable.

The chinstrap is fixed to the outer shell without the use of metallic rivets. With quick adjustable buckles for easy adjustment of the retention straps and fitted with a special loop on the strap which allows the helmet to connect to a harness for easy transportation.



For further information on this product visit [www.fletcherstewart.co.uk](http://www.fletcherstewart.co.uk)

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Appointed UK Distributor



'expando-flakes' had slowed us down and were now slamming us into reverse. 'It's OK, I've got a couple of knife blades in,' came Andy's message as he carefully retreated to the belay. Sadly, we had to accept that our attempt was over and carefully descended the face with the aid of abalakov anchors and down climbing on the easier sections.

Late that evening we arrived back at the Gokyo teahouse, our enthusiasm deflated and uncertain of what to do next. After ample sleep and vast quantities of egg fried rice, discussions resumed. Should we attempt the same line again? Was the ice really that thin on the central line? Would the ceaseless tide of noisy German trekking parties ever end? Scoping the face again, we noticed the water ice of Snotty's Gully on the subsidiary peak on Phari Lapcha West and decided to make an attempt to repeat this Bullock-Bracey masterpiece.

Negotiating the moraine at the base of the wall again, we made steady progress up to the spot where we had cached some equipment, and quietly geared up, relieved it was still intact.\* More plodding allowed us to start up the large snow cone at the base of the gully, a small ice pitch guarding access to an easier series of snow ledges guarded by steep walls. Andy led quickly and quietly upwards as we started our second foray onto the face, his feet soon disappearing from view.

I nervously followed and we soon started moving together, both of us feeling insignificant amongst the massive walls at the base of the face. But any rhythm we'd gained soon diminished into wallowing in deep snow, a situation Andy was all too familiar with, given his previous attempt. More lung busting effort led us to a steep gully line cleaving through the upper wall, the obvious line for those who didn't want to attempt the obvious WI7+ challenge of Snotty's Direct!

Andy fired in a good belay before I led up and leftwards into the confines of the gully, revelling in excellent neve reminiscent of Green Gully on Ben Nevis. Sadly, any such enjoyment was short lived as I was forced to quit the now blank gully line by a ramp system to the left. This led enticingly upwards until I was rewarded with loose snow plastered on top of even looser rock! A bit of digging yielded some 'pseudo-protection' and I levitated upwards with a single knife blade interrupting the clean arc of the rope. Eventually a collection of slightly doubtful blocks constituted a belay and Andy followed before leading through on more 'Himalayan horror terrain.'

As we started the gully proper, more hero neve appeared, encouraging squeaky jabs of the axes with minimal effort. Time was now pressing on and we opted to dig a ledge to the side of the main gully line, carefully organising ourselves in a semi-recumbent position in the soft snow. Settling in for the night we watched the alpenglow over Everest, Lhotse and Makalu before thanking ourselves for choosing an objective under 6000m and covering ourselves in a lightweight bothy bag, our only protection from the continuous hiss of spindrift.

Slightly startled I woke up and looked at my watch; the luminous glow told the story... 2240. I had been asleep for about four hours. Adjusting my position, I tried to get back to a fitful night's sleep – the mark of any alpine bivvy. The restless night continued with much rubbing of my toes until daylight and eventually sun warming our small ledge.

I was first up, the breakfast pitch was all mine, and I managed an insignificant 40 metres before a belay combined with a screaming fit of hot aches brought things to a temporary end. Andy, led comfortably upwards on the iron hard water ice while I took myself into the office. We started to swing the leads before I belayed at the base of the final crux pitch.

This pitch was steep, and we were now just under 6000m. The effort was clear as I tensely watched Andy resting his head on his tools half way up the steep pitch. The 'Turnemator's' brief pause ended and he fired upwards disappearing from view. We soon started moving together again onwards into the sun and onto ridge just short of the summit. Sitting quietly we took in the view with the mixed emotions of failure and success, before down climbing to a small rib and rapping steadily to the glacier.

*\* Rumours travel fast in the Khumbu: we had already heard of Nick Bullock and Andy Houseman's expedition's premature end following the theft of all their kit!*

James Thacker is supported by Haglofs [www.haglofs.co.uk](http://www.haglofs.co.uk). Snotty's Gully ED1 WI5 M5+ c1000m. Phari Lapcha West (Dawa Peak) 5977m Third ascent. The expedition would like to acknowledge the generous support of The Mark Clifford Award, The British Mountaineering Council, The Mount Everest Foundation and The Alpine Club. As well as the continuing support from: Mountain Equipment, Haglofs, OMM, Camp Four, Lyon Equipment and CauseandFX.

# QUARTERLY INCIDENT REPORT FOR ENGLAND AND WALES JULY-SEPTEMBER 2009

The following is a listing of the number of incidents attended by MR teams in England and Wales during the period from 01/07/2009 to 30/09/2009. It is grouped by region and shows the date (day/month) the incident began. It is not comprehensive as many incidents have yet to be reported.

## Lake District

Cockermouth	01/07, 03/07, 12/07, 16/07, 21/07, 24/07, 27/07, 09/08, 17/08, 23/08, 24/08, 16/09, 29/09
Coniston	02/07, 07/07, 18/07, 05/08, 13/08, 19/08, 19/08, 25/08, 26/08, 27/08, 02/09, 13/09, 21/09
Duddon & Furness	01/07, 15/07, 27/07, 13/08, 25/08, 07/09
Kendal	25/07, 25/07, 11/08, 26/08, 28/09
Keswick	03/07, 05/07, 07/07, 08/07, 08/07, 16/07, 17/07, 17/07, 23/07, 24/07, 24/07, 25/07, 26/07, 27/07, 27/07, 28/07, 02/08, 02/08, 07/08, 08/08, 09/08, 11/08, 11/08, 13/08, 16/08, 19/08, 20/08, 23/08, 24/08, 28/08, 01/09, 02/09, 02/09, 02/09, 08/09, 12/09, 14/09, 16/09, 20/09, 21/09, 30/09
Kirkby Stephen	01/07, 15/08, 10/09
Langdale Ambleside	08/07, 11/07, 13/07, 13/07, 13/07, 13/07, 14/07, 16/07, 17/07, 17/07, 19/07, 23/07, 25/07, 25/07, 29/07, 08/08, 10/08, 11/08, 15/08, 16/08, 21/08, 24/08, 29/08, 30/08, 02/09, 05/09, 07/09, 09/09, 09/09, 18/09, 19/09
Patterdale	07/07, 11/07, 19/07, 23/07, 23/07, 24/07, 24/07, 25/07, 28/07, 28/07, 09/08, 19/08, 20/08, 26/08, 28/08, 06/09, 06/09, 06/09, 06/09
Penrith	23/07, 24/07, 24/07, 24/07, 28/07, 28/07, 28/07, 09/08, 14/08, 21/08, 02/09, 06/09, 12/09
Wasdale	12/07, 17/07, 19/07, 23/07, 27/07, 09/08, 09/08, 16/08, 02/09

## Mid-Pennine

Bolton	01/07, 05/07, 05/07, 07/07, 10/07, 12/07, 14/07, 15/07, 15/07
Bowland Pennine	05/07, 08/07, 10/07, 15/07, 06/08, 07/08, 14/08, 16/08, 30/08, 24/09, 29/09, 30/09
Calder Valley	17/07, 27/07, 10/08
Rosendale & Pendle	05/07

## NE England

Cleveland	03/07, 04/07, 11/07, 14/07, 23/07, 26/07, 27/07, 30/07, 15/08, 02/09, 08/09, 24/09
North of Tyne	01/07, 18/07, 13/08, 21/08, 22/08
Northumberland NP	01/07, 04/07, 18/07, 13/08, 21/08, 22/08, 29/08, 05/09
Scarborough	15/08
Swaledale	13/07, 19/07, 07/08, 21/08, 02/09, 15/09, 26/09
Teesdale & Weardale	07/07, 12/07, 14/07, 01/08, 23/08, 24/08, 06/09, 09/09

## North Wales

Aberglaslyn	18/07, 12/08, 14/08, 20/08, 12/09, 13/09, 26/09, 27/09
Llanberis	03/07, 18/07, 21/07, 01/08, 01/08, 01/08, 02/08, 02/08, 06/08, 08/08, 10/08, 14/08, 14/08, 14/08, 15/08, 15/08, 18/08, 20/08, 24/08, 29/08, 30/08, 02/09, 12/09, 12/09, 19/09, 19/09, 25/09, 26/09, 26/09
North East Wales	05/07, 18/07, 18/07, 19/07, 27/07
Ogwen Valley	04/07, 16/07, 18/07, 20/07, 20/07, 25/07, 09/08, 19/08, 25/08, 25/08, 27/08, 27/08, 29/08, 30/08, 30/08, 06/09, 09/09, 19/09, 20/09, 21/09, 23/09, 26/09
Outward Bound Wales	06/07, 27/08

Snowdonia Nat Park	14/09
South Snowdonia	01/07, 06/07, 20/08, 22/08, 19/09
<b>Peak District</b>	
Buxton	10/07, 13/07, 25/07, 01/08, 04/09, 04/09, 19/09, 19/09, 19/09
Derby	12/07, 21/07, 30/07, 11/08, 13/08, 13/08, 18/08, 23/08, 29/08, 30/08, 31/08, 01/09, 12/09, 20/09
Edale	05/07, 13/07, 22/07, 24/07, 25/07, 01/08, 01/08, 01/08, 24/08, 30/08, 04/09, 05/09, 09/09, 13/09, 13/09, 19/09, 19/09, 19/09
Glossop	24/07, 24/07, 04/08, 06/08, 05/09, 06/09, 09/09, 13/09, 13/09, 27/09
Kinder	11/07, 11/07, 06/08, 12/08, 04/09, 05/09, 05/09, 13/09, 13/09, 26/09, 27/09
Oldham	05/07, 12/07, 13/07, 02/08, 04/08, 08/08, 12/08, 12/08, 03/09, 11/09, 14/09
Woodhead	06/07, 21/07, 24/07, 04/08, 24/08, 13/09, 13/09, 19/09

## South Wales

Brecon	02/07, 11/07, 11/07, 12/07, 13/07, 16/07, 20/07, 21/07, 23/07, 28/07, 30/07, 01/08, 03/08, 06/08, 08/08, 27/08, 31/08, 17/09, 25/09, 25/09
Western Beacons	10/07, 13/07, 16/07, 30/07, 01/08, 03/08, 08/08, 17/09
Central Beacons	02/07, 10/07, 13/07, 16/07, 20/07, 21/07, 23/07, 30/07, 01/08, 01/08, 03/08, 08/08, 17/09, 25/09
Longtown	02/07, 11/07, 20/07, 21/07, 03/08, 28/08, 31/08, 25/09

## South West England

Cornwall	12/07, 20/07, 30/07, 19/08, 19/08, 23/08, 30/08, 01/09
Exmoor	01/07, 02/07, 11/07
SARA	21/07, 03/09

## Yorkshire Dales

CRO	04/07, 04/07, 04/07, 04/07, 10/07, 11/07, 12/07, 12/07, 18/07, 05/08, 06/08, 15/08, 30/08, 31/08, 02/09, 06/09, 12/09, 12/09, 15/09, 19/09
Upper Wharfedale	13/07, 17/07

## RAF

RAF Valley	21/07, 14/08, 21/09
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## SARDA

England	05/07, 04/08, 14/08, 16/08, 25/08, 30/08, 30/08, 22/08, 02/09, 03/09, 12/09, 13/09
Lakes	03/07, 17/07, 19/07, 06/08, 14/08, 14/08, 21/08, 28/08, 30/08, 16/09
Wales	06/07, 14/07, 18/07, 18/07, 21/07, 14/08, 30/08, 21/09
South Wales	02/07, 10/07, 13/07, 16/07, 18/07, 20/07, 21/07, 21/07, 28/07, 30/07, 01/08, 03/08, 28/08, 31/08, 03/09, 25/09

## Non specialists

	06/07, 01/08, 01/08, 13/09
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## Coastguard

	05/07, 10/07
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# Team Leaders' Day The Derby MRT RTC

by Judy Whiteside (based on their presentation)

Derby team leader, Steve Hilditch, and chairman, Robin Knott, presented a salutary tale for mountain rescue team members across the UK, not least those tasked to jump behind the wheel for a blue light response. Talk of the 'Derby RTC' has rumbled around now for three years, so it was good to hear the facts of the event and its excruciating dragging out over two and a half long years – at huge emotional (and potential financial cost) for both the driver involved and his team – including a false dawn, one year in.

This was the first vehicle collision Derby team had experienced, in 45 years of mountain rescue response.

On the 29 September, 2006, the team received an urgent call to a casualty in Dove Dale at 13.23hrs. Seventeen minutes later, the message came through that the team Land Rover had been involved in an RTC. Ambulance Control called to check the team's viability for the response, in light of the collision. The answer was yes. Indeed, the first team vehicle arrived at the given RV point at 14.00hrs, the casualty was duly treated and evacuated by team members.

The Land Rover had been travelling north-west on Broadway – at an estimated 40-45mph in a 40 zone and under blues and twos. A black Rover 620 turned left out of Cumberhills Road into the path of the Land Rover, failing to 'give way'. It then proceeded to turn right into Winksworth Road, without indication – resulting in the Derby driver, having swerved to avoid it, hitting the offside of the Rover.

It should be noted that all Derby MRT drivers are 'approved'. The forty year old driver in question had eighteen years experience with the team under his belt, had been blues and twos trained for five, and was an advanced first aider and professional first aid instructor. His attendant was also male, with forty years as a Derby team member. The Land Rover 130 (2003) was registered as an 'Emergency Ambulance.'

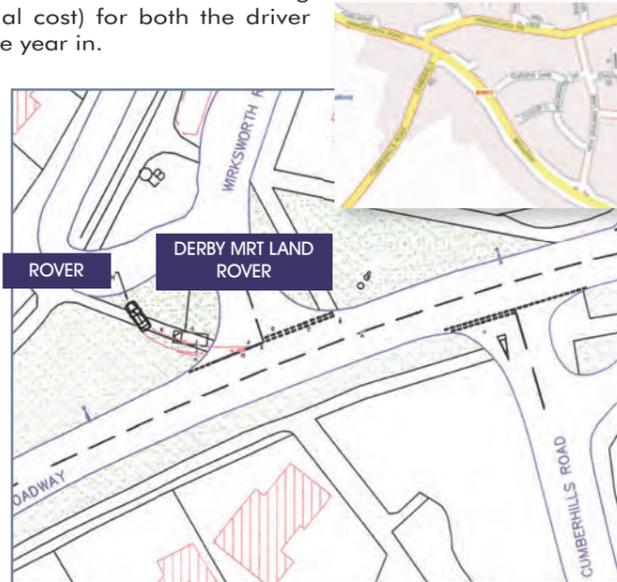
The female Rover driver sustained serious head, chest and pelvic injuries in the collision. The Derby crew were not injured but obviously in shock. In fact, the driver administered life-saving first aid to the injured woman. His

attendant called all three emergency services and the Derby team leaders. There started a chain of events which would preoccupy the thoughts and deeds of Derby team members for far longer than any could have anticipated.

The female was cut out of the car wreckage and taken to hospital. Meanwhile, police officers at the scene interviewed the Derby driver under caution. Steve Hilditch and Robin Knott travelled to the scene, deciding en route how they might best organise their efforts – Robin would look after the 'legals' and insurance, Steve would look after the team members.

This being a 'crime scene' (life threatening injuries involved) the Land Rover was impounded by the police for testing. But, with no way of knowing how long that vehicle might be out of service, what about all the kit therein? Steve and Robin managed to negotiate the removal of equipment and drugs not relevant to the RTC – which were duly weighed to be taken into account in the assessment of the overall weight of the vehicle.

Back at the team base, roles were confirmed



– Steve, as team leader, to look after internal stuff, and team members; Robin, as chair, to deal with any external agencies; the team secretary to deal with any press enquiries (anticipating an immediate response). The recovered equipment also needed sorting to remain operational.

Later that evening, all team members were informed by pager. The secretary contacted the insurance company. Robin called Tony Rich, MREW legal adviser; Andy Simpson, MREW press officer; and the Peak District MRO chairman; and drafted two possible press statements – one should the casualty not survive the incident, one should she live. Steve made contact with the team doctor and the team chaplain/counsellor (whose support they consider themselves very fortunate to have had), and pressed both the driver and

attendant for written statements.

The advice from Tony Rich was that the driver needed his own legal representation, and at his own cost – this was something the team could not finance from charity funds. However, MREW would act for the team, if required. They should obtain statements from the vehicle crew (already done!), and locate the Land Rover maintenance records. (Key point: could you, in a similar situation, put your hand on your team vehicles' entire histories?) The MREW Executive should also be advised.

Notwithstanding the advice that the driver should bear his own costs, the team agreed they did not wish to see him out of pocket, although it wasn't immediately obvious how they would achieve that. There followed much insurance and legal wrangling!!

On 4 October 2006, the Land Rover was released for repair and back in service six weeks later. On 12 October, the driver was formally interviewed by police.

Four months later, on 8 February 2007, the CPS charged the driver with 'Driving without due care and attention' – a major blow to everyone concerned. It would seem that mountain rescue being categorised as a 'professional emergency service' had actually raised the level a notch. The driver was to be treated as any other member of the emergency services would be under similar circumstances.

Three possible press statements were prepared – with the help of a professional press contact – acknowledging the charge; if found guilty; if found not guilty.

On 16 February, police interviewed the injured female driver – who could not remember anything about the crash.

In March, a barrister was appointed by the team's insurers but there were concerns about the fact that, living some distance away, he had no knowledge of the local system. And who was he representing – the team or the insurers?

The ante having been upped, the Derby driver also requested his legal representative appoint a barrister – but who would pay for that? More legal wrangling!

Between March 2007 and August 2008 (no less!) a series of court dates were set up and cancelled by the CPS (a situation which must surely have been nothing short of torturous for the team member concerned).

Increasingly exasperated and keen to resolve the situation, the driver's legal representative (prompted by the team, thanks to advice from Peter Howells) pushed the CPS to 'put up' or 'drop out'. Alleluia! On 10 January 2008, all charges against the driver were dropped (to the tune of around £2,500 legal costs.) Cause for celebration...

...or was it? Just when they thought it was all over, and breathing a collective sigh of relief, came a phone call and letter from the solicitors acting for the team's vehicle insurers. Three months had passed. Relative normality had resumed. Now came news of a civil claim for damages against not just the Land Rover driver, but also Derby MRT.

Once again, the team consulted Tony Rich as MREW legal adviser. It transpires that the level

of proof required in a civil case is lower than the criminal, so there was a real risk that liability could be put on the driver or team.

On 30 May, Derby team members met with solicitors and the claims manager – more statements taken. The team's Management Document was a significant factor in this evidence gathering. (Another key point: vast amounts of background paperwork were requested for the purposes of the civil claim – training records, team policies and guidelines.)

Two months later, on 28 July, a collision expert met with DMRT; a further six weeks on, in early September, team members met the insurer's QC in Birmingham (much more paperwork!!); and finally, on 27 March 2009, the case was settled out of court for what is believed to be a six figure sum. It was noted that most of this time involved the haggling and wrangling between insurance companies with little input by the team – apart, that is, from the mountain of paperwork they were required to produce!

Needless to say, there were many learning points from the experience. Steve and Robin stressed that, whilst the team had dealt well with many aspects of the situation, there were also things they could have done better.

## What they did well

- The team had strong management
- The team is a limited company
- Supported the driver and the attendant (medically and psychologically)
- Shared the workload between the team leader, chair and secretary
- Made early contact with MREW
- Had team member documentation and training records, including driver authorisation).

## What else they did well

- Prepared press releases in anticipation of need
- Found the driver a good legal representative
- Collated the paperwork
- Had a team benevolent fund with wide powers to make grants and managed to cover all driver costs from that fund.

## What they did not do well

- Have knowledge of 'best practice' at an RTC
- Did not take sufficient photographs of the scene
- Give enough support to the driver's family.

## Recommendations

- Make your team a limited company
- Set up a team or regional benevolent fund
- Carry an accident checklist in all vehicles
- Have formal procedures for driver approval and training
- Keep a vehicle log – who drives and when
- Keep training records
- In the event of such an accident, make early contact with MREW legal and press
- Identify a good criminal legal representative for your drivers to engage. (And don't wait till it happens! Have this in mind before it does!)

## Accident checklist

- Ensure that you and anyone else in the area is safe
- Only give your name, address, the vehicle owner/registered keeper (Secretary), insurance details and the vehicle registration number.
- Do not accept any fault or liability
- Notify the team leader, chairman, secretary and vehicle officer
- Do not give a statement to the police until you have legal representation, even if they arrest you for not doing so. (You are likely to be in shock and upset, and may use words which could later be interpreted differently to your intended meaning.)
- Take details of any witnesses
- Take photos, make notes, sketches and records of conversations
- Show this checklist to any police officer who may question your actions.

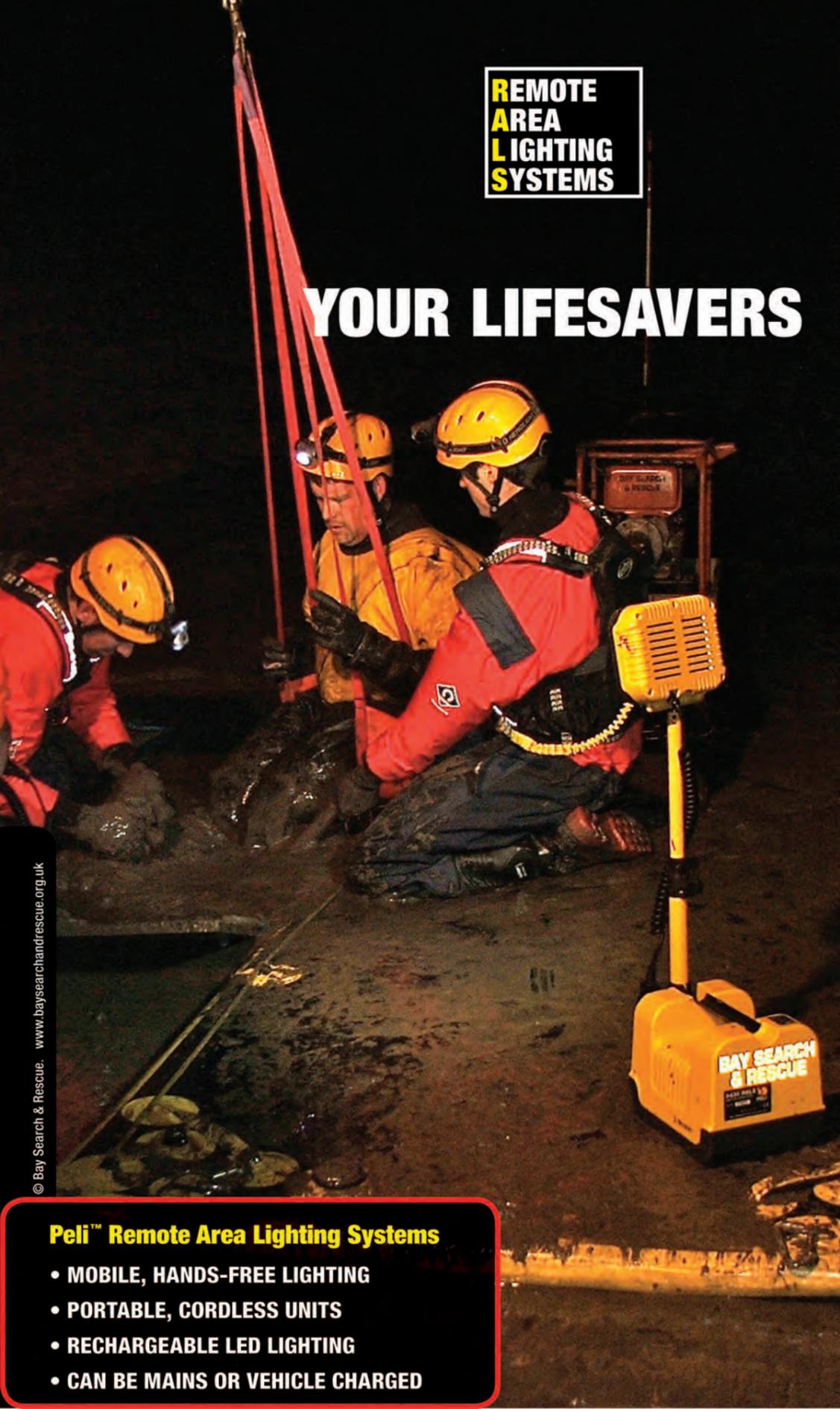
BELOW TOP: THE BLACK ROVER MIDDLE: TEAM LAND ROVER BOTTOM: SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT



ABOVE LEFT: THIRD PARTY DRIVER'S VIEW RIGHT: OUR DRIVER'S VIEW

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## Trek to Annapurna Sanctuary IN AID OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE 9-25 April 2011

Join us on this amazing trip in Spring 2011 and you'll not just have a holiday to remember, you'll be supporting mountain rescue teams across England and Wales. Our Basecamp to Basecamp trip to the Himalaya, in partnership with Community Action Treks, takes you right to the heart of some of the highest mountains in the world – the Annapurna Sanctuary.

We start out in Kathmandu – a place loaded with mystical promise which doesn't disappoint. It is a fascinating yet chaotic city with a complete mix of cultures and you'll have a full day here, at the start of the trip, to explore the temples, markets and streets of this fantastic city. Your

first impressions will probably be very different to the ones you have at the end of your trek!

From Kathmandu, we fly to Pokhara in the west of Nepal. A very different city, it's far more relaxed and a great place to chill out at the end of the trek.

The trekking begins on the fourth day, with a relatively easy five hour walk through forests to the village of Landrung. Days five and six take in a 6-7 hour walk following the Modi river to Chomrong, and a climb through bamboo forest to an altitude of 2340 metres via the Modo Khola valley. On day seven, we break through the 3,000 metre barrier, passing the famous Hinku cave where Sir Chris Bonington took shelter on his approach to the Sanctuary in 1970. Here you can expect to feel some signs of the altitude but your guide will give you plenty of advice about what to look out for and the precautions you should take.



Day eight takes us to the Machupuchare Base Camp (MBC) and the real gateway to the Sanctuary. A cluster of huts provide a basic village atmosphere but you are quite high and it will be cold at night. Next day, a short 2-3 hour walk takes us to Annapurna Base Camp

(ABC) where you will be surrounded by the really high mountains of the Himalaya. It's a great place to spend a night.

A well earned 'day off' then at ABC – feel free to simply rest and soak up the atmosphere, or visit a nearby glacier, before we retrace our steps over the next few days, via Dovan, Chomrong (feel the benefits of more oxygen!), Ghandruk (a pretty village surrounded by paddy fields) and the village of Birethanti. Back in Pokhara, you'll be in a comfortable hotel with the chance to explore this wonderful place. And there's nowhere finer to relax after a trek than Pokhara with its many bars, restaurants and German bakeries!

Then it's a short, early morning flight back to Kathmandu. Whatever you felt about this city before, it will feel like a metropolis now!!

**The guide price of £1200 (to be confirmed) includes:**

- Flights from Kathmandu to Pokhara and return
- Transfers in Nepal
- Accommodation for three nights in Kathmandu and one in Pokhara with breakfasts
- Full board on the trek to include all meals, camping equipment, service of porters (up to 15kg per

person), a Sidar (head guide) and kitchen staff.

- Celebratory dinner in Kathmandu to toast the success of the trip

**It won't include:**

- International flights
- Visa
- Meals in Kathmandu and Pokhara other than breakfasts
- Travel Insurance
- Tips (important in Nepal)
- Personal items like gifts, drinks, laundry etc

And the catch (if you could call it that)? Well, in return for this memorable trip, we ask you to pledge to raise a minimum of £500 in sponsorship for Mountain Rescue. Of course, there's no upper limit on how much you can raise – the more the better! So why not come along – enjoy the beautiful mountains of the Himalaya, store up some memories and support mountain rescue teams in England and Wales at the same time!

We need you to register your intent to join the trip, in order to finalise the details. If you're interested, or for more information, please contact Neil Roden via email at [neilroden@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:neilroden@tiscali.co.uk)

## Guinness World Record attempt at the Longest Climb THE HEIGHT OF EVEREST ON AN INDOOR WALL raising funds for Mountain Rescue

Tom Lancaster and Jonathan Briggs are attempting to set a new Guinness World Record with The Longest Climb, and hoping to raise a minimum of £10,000 for each of three charities – Mountain Rescue England and Wales, HeartUK and Amnesty International.

They plan to climb the height of Mount Everest – 8,848m – in one stretch, at the Westway Indoor Climbing Centre in London – a staggering 737.5 times each up the 12m wall! Racing against each other, the first one to complete the distance will walk away with a new Guinness World Record, and very sore arms!

Ridiculous? Impossible? Moronic? Perhaps. But this is not just a vain attempt to steal the limelight

and earn fifteen seconds of fame, this is two friends trying to do some real good in the world and, with your help, they can achieve it. Tom asks us to spread the word, and follow their training progress on [thelongestclimb.net](http://thelongestclimb.net) or search for 'thelongestclimb' on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to keep up to date with their latest photos, blogs and videos.

'We believe we can easily beat our target of £10,000, set a new world record, and really make a difference to our chosen charities,' says Tom. 'Please support us and help us make the world a better place!'

The Longest Climb happens on 26 June, and the boys are hoping to make a big event of it, with

bands and DJs playing throughout the anticipated twelve to twenty hour marathon attempt. If there's any way you can help them raise awareness of what they're doing, they'd really appreciate it.

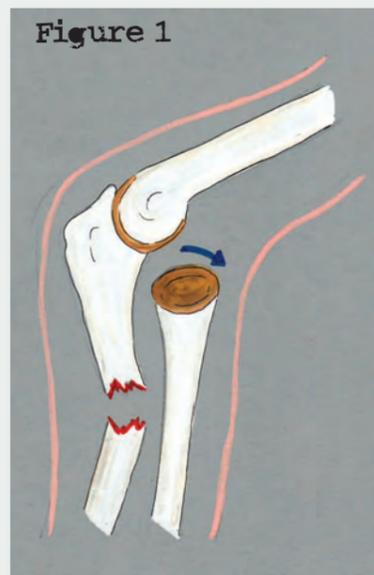
They're also talking to Blue Peter and The One Show about going on air to promote the event, and will be contacting radio stations nearer the time. So give them your support and help the fundraising effort.



TOM ON THE WALL

# A brief dip into eponymous medical terms 6

David Allan continues his examination of what's in a name



**Monteggia fracture**

This is an unstable fracture /dislocation of the forearm (Figure 1). It is sustained by a fall onto the outstretched arm with rotation of the forearm at the point of impact. Rather than a fracture of both the radius and ulna, the ulna fractures and the head of the radius is dislocated from the elbow joint. The presentation is that of a very painful unstable injury with some deformity of the forearm and inability to use the hand at all. It is not

possible to be sure of the exact diagnosis without X-ray evidence although, remarkably, Monteggia described the exact nature of this injury 100 years before X-rays were available. Vascular damage does not occur and the injury is best managed by simply splinting with a gutter splint, vacuum splint or similar. Operative internal reduction and fixation of this injury will almost always be required.

Giovanni Batista Monteggia was an Italian surgeon born in Milan in 1762. In 1795 he became professor of Anatomy and Surgery at the University of Pavia. He died in 1815 from syphilis contracted when he sustained a cut whilst performing an autopsy on an infected patient.

## Munchausen Syndrome

In 1951 Richard Asher introduced this term in an article in the Lancet. He used it to describe the group of people who feign illness or injury in order to gain hospitalisation, investigation and above all attention. Because they move on to avoid detection it has also been described as the 'hospital hopper syndrome'.

The 'patients' are very well informed about the conditions they mimic, and present with convincing stories to the extent that many have been admitted to ICUs and some have undergone surgery. Abdominal pain is perhaps the commonest clinical picture they assume but histories of trauma are well

documented and there are instances of people claiming to have been injured in the hills, diving etc. The large majority are male patients. A small group use children as the medium for presenting with symptoms of illness - 'Munchausen by proxy' and it is also recognised that animals may be used instead of children.

Karl Frederich Heironymus von Munchausen (Figure 2) was a German Baron who lived from 1720-1797. He served in the Russian Army and travelled quite widely. He established a reputation for relating stories of remarkable events always purported to be true. Riding to the moon on a cannonball and shooting stags with cherry stones are typical examples of his claimed exploits.

## Purkinje Fibres

These are the specialised cardiac muscle cells that are responsible for conducting electrical impulses around the heart. They travel from the sinu-atrial and atrio-ventricular nodes to reach all the muscle of the heart (Figure 3). As the impulses travel along these fibres they generate the P-wave and QRS-complex of the electrocardiogram. Myocardial infarctions that involve these fibres result in disruption of the regular rhythms of the heart.

Jan Evangelista Purkinje was a Czech anatomist and physiologist who lived from 1787-1869. He graduated from the University of Prague and went on to

become Professor of Physiology in Breslau where he founded the world's first physiology department. He was possessed of a very versatile enquiring mind, discovering sweat glands, doing the first work on finger prints and identifying plasma. For his work in astronomy a moon crater and an asteroid bear his name. At the height of his career, letters were reputedly simply addressed 'Purkyne, Europe'!

## Raynaud's Phenomenon

A G Maurice Raynaud was a French physician who described the condition bearing his name in 1864.

The condition is characterised by constriction of the small arterioles in the extremities, most commonly the fingers, leading to pallor or cyanosis (Figure 4). In mild cases this appears simply as an exaggerated response to cold exposure. As the condition worsens, the attacks may occur without exposure to significantly cold conditions. Initially it was believed that was a disease in itself but, more recently, the view is largely held that it is an indicator of an underlying condition although twenty years may elapse before it is fully manifest. The commonest causative disease are arthritis linked, but trauma and cold injury - particularly frostbite - may be responsible.

The condition usually appears between the ages of 18 and 30 years and is much commoner in females. Cigarette smoking and caffeine aggravate things. Most cases can be managed simply by avoiding cold exposure.

# How has the new MR CasCare MCQ exam performed?

by Jonathan White

Those of you who have taken the Casualty Care exam in the past year will have noticed that the format of the MCQ has changed from simple true/false answers to 'most correct answer from a choice of five.' This brings the exam in line with most other medical exams taken in this country. We have now got an exam which is better at testing medical knowledge, rather than the ability to guess the right answer - but then surely this is what the exam should be doing.

We have also requested that all answer papers be returned to us to allow analysis. This allows us to see how the questions are performing so that we can make adjustments to the paper in future years. And we can see whether there appear to be gaps in the knowledge of particular teams. We are now going to start feeding this information back to teams.

I am aware there have been concerns that the new exam would be harder than the one it replaced. It is certainly harder to pass the exam if your medical knowledge is lacking. However, virtually all of the questions are based on only two basic texts. If you learn sufficiently from the student notes produced by NESRA (a teaching media for Mountain Rescue Casualty Care) then I am sure you will pass the MCQ exam. If you supplement that learning with 'Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue', edited by John Ellerton, then you should do extremely well. It will also be beneficial to be familiar with the 2005 Resuscitation Guidelines. Basing the questions on these standard texts

helps to address the problem that medical experts not infrequently disagree with how things should be done, which I am sure can be confusing for the non-medical.

The November meeting of the medical subcommittee considered the problem that this exam is now used by a variety of organisations, including Cave Rescue, Mountain Rescue of Scotland, and some ALSAR teams. There will be different priorities and specialist areas for these different organisations, but we have decided that, as this is the MREW Casualty Care exam, we will not be providing different exams for different organisational requirements.

Statistical analysis of the answer papers over the past year has shown that, of the three hundred or so we have received approximately, 90% have passed. Although it is not easy failing someone, it is unfortunately inevitable if we accept we have to set a certain standard of attainment. The MREW Casualty Care qualification is certainly not a 'simply turn up and collect your certificate' type of qualification. We are also aware we haven't received all of the answer papers which have been completed, which gives us sub-optimal statistical analysis. We would urge all examiners

to ensure that they return to John Whittle all completed MCQ answer papers. This will enable us to improve the paper further.

I have publicised widely the need for help in writing the MCQ questions. As we are limiting the questions to the MREW Casualty Care syllabus there will be a natural limit to the number of different questions which can be constructed. In view of this, it is essential that past and current MCQ question papers should not be made public, nor used for revision or practice. I am still looking for more questions and, if you are keen to help, the following instructions will help to write ideal questions. Please email any suggestions to me via [jcwhite@doctors.org.uk](mailto:jcwhite@doctors.org.uk).

1. Each item should focus on an important concept, and focus on problems that would be encountered in real life.
2. Each item should assess application of knowledge, not recall of an isolated fact.
3. The stem of an item must pose a clear question, and it should be possible to arrive at an answer with the options covered.
4. All distractors (ie. incorrect options) should be homogenous, ie. they should fall into the same category as the correct answer.
5. Avoid technical item flaws that provide special benefit to testwise examinees or that pose irrelevant difficulty. And finally, in case you were wondering, we currently have no plans to alter the practical exam.



Figure 2

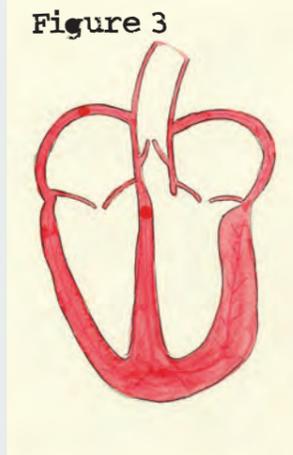


Figure 3

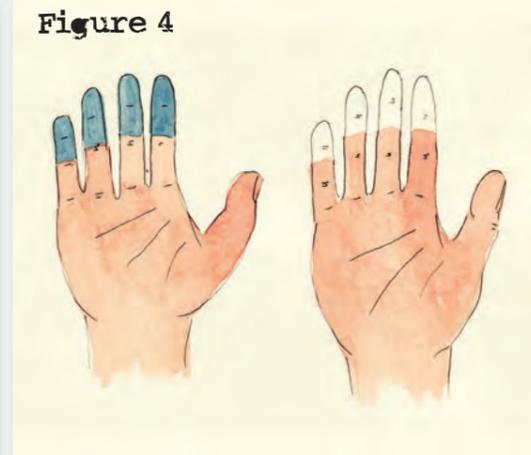


Figure 4

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# Medical Symposium 7 November 2009

by David Allan

Held in Ambleside, this was arguably the best and most informative medical meeting we have held. The quality of presentations was uniformly high and very relevant to mountain rescue. It was encouraging to see team members in the audience from Lochaber to Southern Ireland but a puzzle to understand why there was no representation from teams closer to the venue.

Since the meeting there have been suggestions and requests to make this an annual occasion rather than alternate years. Those with long memories will recall that in the early years we attempted to do just that but, after three consecutive years, it ran out of ideas and there was then a gap before we could re-establish the event. Things may have changed and if there is good support then we can revisit this. Your thoughts please.

The day began with Mike Greene talking about fracture dislocation of the ankle and using this to illustrate evaluation of practice and audit. He compared the incidence of the injury in the hills with that at sea level and demonstrated a significantly higher occurrence in hill going accidents. He also showed that fracture dislocations carry a much higher risk of complications than undisplaced injuries and that failure to reduce the dislocation at an early stage further increases that risk. Some graphic video clips demonstrated the procedure of reducing this injury.

Professor Mike Tipton gave another entertaining lecture filled with vital information for anyone going near water. He gave lucid explanations for the survival of children in cold drowning situations and very clearly outlined all responses to immersion in cold water. The video clip of a Royal Marine 'volunteer' failing to get a flare out of its

polythene wrapper after only a few minutes in cold water carried the message in a graphic if not worrying way. He addressed the issue of hydrostatic pressure and its importance to rescuers once the casualty has been in the water for more than a short period. It was particularly interesting to hear the work he and his department are doing on the problem of casualties who die after

involving the post-retirement group and it was therefore very timely to have an account of the issues that are raised. In addition to a concise presentation of the illnesses occurring he dealt with the drug regimes they may be taking and their effect on injuries that may be sustained.

Linda Dykes, A&E Consultant in North Wales, talked through the deaths that have

**...arguably the best and most informative medical meeting we have held.**

rescue against expectation. Perhaps the reassurance offered in these circumstances is misplaced. This lecture was full of important messages and in the light of recent weeks was very pertinent indeed.

John Ellerton presented an update on the analgesic study currently being conducted under the auspices of MREW. It was encouraging to note the number of returns received and, provided this level continues over the next twelve months, it should be possible to draw some significant conclusions and recommendations. It is good to see that mountain rescue is conducting proper studies that will lead us to evidence-based practice and away from anecdotal decision making.

Alan Barton, Consultant in Medicine for the Elderly, gave an account of the common problems likely to be encountered in the older population on the hill. All teams have recorded an increased incidence of incidents

been recorded from falls in the mountains of Snowdonia over the past ten years. This has been part of a study to answer the question, 'Would having a higher level of medical care at the incident site improve outcomes?' The answer very clearly was no. Out of 46 casualties, 43 were dead on arrival in hospital, two died within hours of arrival and only one died after a few days. Post mortem examination revealed all to have extensive injuries incompatible with survival. Head injuries predominated but, rather surprisingly, chest injuries were present in 60% and spinal injuries in 30%. It may not be safe to assume that the survivors of falls will have the same pattern of injuries but, if it were, we need to look for chest injuries more carefully. Virtually all the deaths were in males under the age of 25 and winter conditions accounted for the majority of falls.

John Williams looked at the pharmacokinetics and dynamics of different routes of

drug administration. He principally considered this in relation to analgesia and sedation. This was especially relevant in the light of the study being conducted by John Ellerton. Interesting information on the half life of commonly used analgesic drugs was provided and we were reminded that although i.v.i drugs give a very rapid effect their half life is short compared with those given by intra-muscular injection.

Paul Savage, training officer with the RNLI, presented a thought-provoking account of the way in which they have restructured and simplified their casualty care training. The mechanism for identifying serious life threatening conditions, labelled simply 'Big Sick', and distinguishing these from 'Little Sick' where no intervention is deemed necessary was interesting and may have considerable value as we look again at all first aid and casualty care teaching in mountain rescue. Working conditions for mountain rescue are difficult but at least the ground is usually stationary. The prompt cards that have been developed are produced to a very high standard and were of great interest to many of the audience.

Theo Weston looked at a number of long falls in the Lakes and North Wales. The cases presented by team members from Llanberis and Langdale Ambleside were drawn from year round but winter predominated. It was of concern to see that only 23% of these seriously injured individuals received oxygen on site and only 34% were evacuated in a vacuum mattress. The circumstances were difficult but, nevertheless, these are disturbing figures that fall well below our expectations. IKAR unequivocally states that all those seriously injured in the mountains must be evacuated in a vacuum mattress. Head injuries again were the commonest injury and some debate took place on the pros and cons of removing these casualties directly to specialised hospitals.

The final presentation came from Steve Rowe, medical officer with Edale MRT. He presented the case of a climber who had fallen on a Derbyshire edge and sustained a compound fracture of the iliac bone of the pelvis and was bleeding profusely. The bleeding was controlled with pressure plus the use of the 'haemostatic agent' Celox. He reviewed the use of this product and showed the manufacturer's video of its use in an animal experiment. The jury is still out on this one. There are a number of anecdotal testimonials to its efficacy but an absence of any clinical trial data to date.

## Snippets from the Journals

### PREHOSPITAL USE OF KETAMINE IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Bredmose et al<sup>1</sup> have published an excellent indictment for the use of ketamine in the prehospital phase; a study of 1030 patients is impressive. Mountain rescue is a small specialist area of prehospital care in which many physicians have acknowledged the benefits of ketamine for many years<sup>2</sup>. Its versatility and, with careful use, its ability to dissociate analgesia from airway compromise are particularly appealing. For example, having to use simple airway adjuncts after the administration of a drug will frequently preclude many of the rapid extrication techniques such as helicopter winching that the patient desperately requires. The

risks of 'escalating' to intubation, for example, at sub-zero temperatures with patients half-buried on a 45° ice slope or 20 metres down a crevasse, require careful consideration. A few additional points are worth noting.

► Intranasal S-ketamine (~2mg/kg) has its advocates in extreme conditions in which parenteral access is impossible, although concerns remain on the reproducibility of the effect.<sup>3,4</sup> High intranasal doses can produce high plasma concentrations of ketamine. However, the amount swallowed varies and leads to a high variability of effect.<sup>5</sup>

► Bredmose et al<sup>1</sup> report approximately 100 patients sedated with midazolam >5mg.

We warn against using excessive midazolam doses for sedation, as this may impair upper airway control. In our practice 1-3mg intravenously is sufficient to sedate adults for up to one hour. As in this study, most mountain rescue physicians routinely use midazolam and rarely see emergence phenomena. However, they do occur and may require additional midazolam, particularly if helicopter evacuation is imminent.

► In many countries, 'ketamine' is S-ketamine – the active S-enantiomer unlike the racemic mixture of R and S-ketamine used in the UK<sup>6</sup>. Therefore practitioners elsewhere may need to reduce (up to a fourth) the doses quoted.<sup>6</sup>

► In patients with traumatic brain injury, the use of ketamine is still controversial, although many mountain rescue physicians use it in preference to other induction agents in the mountain setting.

► As of January 2006, ketamine became a controlled drug in the UK under the Misuse of Drugs Act (it has been controlled in many other countries for years). As a schedule 4 part 1 drug, it does not require the physician to keep a controlled drug register nor obey the safe custody criteria of a schedule 2 drug, but non-NHS organisations will require a Home Office licence to possess it.

**J Ellerton<sup>1</sup>; P Paal<sup>2</sup>; H Brugger<sup>3,4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Penrith Health Centre, Penrith, Cumbria, UK; <sup>2</sup>Department of anaesthesiology and Critical Care

Medicine, Innsbruck Medical University, Innsbruck, Austria; <sup>3</sup>Innsbruck Medical University, Innsbruck, Austria; <sup>4</sup>ICAR MEDCOM, Bruneck, Italy. *Emerg Med J* 2009;26:760-761. Doi:10.1136/emj.2008.072561

### AVULSED TOOTH BROUGHT IN MILK FOR REPLANTATION

A short-cut review was carried out to establish whether avulsed teeth should be stored in milk to improve the chances of successful replantation. Eight studies were directly relevant to the question. The clinical bottom line is that storing avulsed teeth in milk or a dedicated storage medium does improve the successful replantation rate.

Three part question: In [a child with a traumatic avulsion of a tooth] does [transport of the tooth in milk or

some other medium as opposed to being kept dry] improve [survival of the tooth after replantation]? Clinical scenario: A healthy 14 year old boy involved in an altercation with another boy sustains an injury to his jaw and two of his incisor teeth are avulsed. He attends the emergency department with his teeth wrapped in tissue paper. The nurse at triage asks whether we need to put the teeth in milk immediately. You wonder whether this is 'nanny advice' or evidence based? 45 papers were found. There were three relevant case reports and three retrospective cohorts. Two further papers were found from the references. Comments: A viable periodontal ligament (PDL) is important for

prolonged physiological healing of replanted teeth. One of the critical factors affecting outcome is the way the tooth is handled during the extraoral period. A suitable storage medium should have the physiological osmolality in order to keep the PDL cells in as healthy a condition as possible. Milk has an osmolality within physiological limits. In-vitro studies suggest that it is superior to saliva and to Eagle's medium and other media in terms of PDL cell viability. Milk appears to be the storage medium of choice in an emergency situation, although a new storage medium, Propolis, may be better. It has been reported that the length of time that a tooth spends out of the mouth significantly influences the incidence of root resorption. 90% of teeth replanted

within 30 minutes did not develop resorption, whereas 93% of those replanted after 90 minutes of dry storage did. A statistically significant relationship has been shown between the success of treatment and the medium in which the tooth was stored. However, even when teeth were stored dry, some were still treated successfully, showing that dry storage is not an absolute contraindication to replantation. Given the importance of rapid storage in an appropriate medium, it has been suggested that locations where tooth avulsions are likely to occur should be provided with tooth rescue boxes containing such a medium.

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**Online mountain medicine**

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) has come to the aid of trekkers, climbers and mountaineers with a new online resource full of expert medical advice on keeping fit and healthy in the mountains. A team of medical advisers has gathered a wealth of information for people all levels of experience in the mountains.

David Hillebrandt, Medical Adviser to the BMC says, 'The site is packed full of potentially life-saving advice and acts as a portal to external information sources. Whether you're an experienced climber or a novice embarking on your first trek, you'll find lots of relevant information and advice.' The website includes advice on:

- What to do in mountain incidents
- Climbing injuries and injury prevention
- Travelling at high altitude
- Nutritional considerations
- Frostbite - how to avoid it and to treat it
- Specific guidance for Kilimanjaro trekkers
- Accessing the Medex network of doctors for personal advice

Included in the helpful resources are:

- Accident report forms to download and keep in your first aid kit
- A series of mountain medicine advice sheets produced by the UIAA (the international body for mountaineering)
- A list of essential websites, courses and books for mountain medicine
- Free downloadable Medex booklet - Travel at High Altitude

The site helps to answer questions such as:

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- Can I take my child to high altitude?
- What should I do if I get a tick?

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**Mountain rescue. So... why do YOU do it?**

by John Dutton

A few months ago I was lying on the Malvern Hills on a dark and drizzly night, waiting for my trainee search technicians to find me as part of a training exercise. During what seemed like an interminable wait, I started to consider why I was there and, more importantly, why I was involved in search and rescue. This is not a new thought but not being used to deep personal introspection I have not taken this thought beyond a superficial examination; those that have asked have always got a quick glib response. However, due to a change in my personal circumstances I have for a change thought quite deeply about this question.

The normal (or perhaps not?) quoted motivator is that those who do SAR enjoy outdoor activities. They join a team to combine these interests with helping others who experience problems undertaking similar activities. This is possibly partly true in my case, my principle penchants are canoeing and hiking, but I'd have a lot more time to enjoy these activities if I was not a member of a SAR team! Also as a member of a team which operates in a lowland area I am more likely to respond to vulnerable person searches and flooding incidents than those involving people getting into difficulty doing the activities I enjoy.

Of course, the love of the outdoors, or more precisely, outdoor activities, is indispensable. At the risk of being politically incorrect and putting noses out of joint, some of my current (and past) team colleagues are disadvantaged as they do not have this background. But does this equip me to attend the various meetings, fundraising events and other miscellanea that come with the territory? I know that these are essential activities without which the team would not be able to operate but I would be hard pressed to call them enjoyable, although I do have to acknowledge that some fundraising can be fun.

So maybe the answer is that being involved in SAR is enjoyable, the social and the sense of 'adventure' or 'excitement' of being involved in a callout. But then again, the reality of a callout is far from all-out excitement. Who likes to be rudely woken in the early hours to undertake a search in the dark, cold and wet? And doing a search in thick undergrowth in the heat and humidity of a summer's day is not much better! The social intercourse is of course a vital component; the after-training drinks an essential constituent of team building! However, this alone does not warrant being a SAR team member, such social interaction being available elsewhere and I for one tell my new land search trainees that if this is their main motivation they should find somewhere else to socialise.

It is perhaps unfashionable to be altruistic in helping others in these days of personal reward, pseudo-celebrity and an overtly materialistic society. In times of local emergency it is understandable to develop a social conscience, during the 2007 floods of the Tewkesbury area many people helped those whose lives were disrupted. However, to volunteer during 'normal' times is seen as odd, if not outright abnormal. Trying to explain to a group of teachers and lecturers, by definition a (supposedly)

educated group the need for a lowland search team, let alone the motivation to volunteer for such a role is difficult enough (and I'm not sure I succeeded). Getting the wider public to understand the concept of helping others with no personal reward sometimes seems nigh impossible.

Of course, there is the issue of the prestige of being involved in SAR, although for lowland teams this is rather less evident than those from mountainous areas. We rightly despise those who aim for personal glorification or who develop 'ego issues'. But we also tend to shy away from recognising the prestige of being involved in such an activity. As a lowlander I respected (and still do!) the members of mountain rescue teams who I saw whilst hiking the mountains and always thought I'd join such a team if life ever took me to a suitable geographical and topographical location. I was thus enthused to learn of ALSAR and the existence of lowland search teams and this led to my involvement in SAR. My personal self-esteem, however battered through other life events, remains strong as I know that I'm willing and qualified to respond when others won't.

Of course I need this type of motivation to encourage me to participate in the regular training (and meetings) required to maintain the skills to a professional (albeit unpaid) standard, such as the aforementioned Malvern Hills event. My self-esteem is boosted by my daughters who understand that their daddy 'helps other people' and once exclaimed 'that's what you do' whilst watching a television programme involving a helicopter cliff rescue (I did try and explain the slight intricate differences!)

So why do I do it? I guess it is a case of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. I cannot identify one single motivator for my involvement but certainly the outdoor activity, the social 'crack' of being with like-minded individuals and the associated banter, the unfashionable altruism of helping people in need and the professionalism of maintaining training levels are all important constituents. However, one of my strongest motivators must be my daughters. In the early days of NorLSAR one of the members said that SAR would become more personal once I had a family; never a truer statement was made. When on callout or standby for any misper searches, but especially those involving youngsters, my thoughts are of my daughters and when anyone now asks why I do SAR I tend to end my reply with 'if one of my daughters went missing I'd want someone like me to help.'

**Getting the wider public to understand the concept of helping others with no personal reward sometimes seems nigh impossible.**

*Dr John Dutton is a member of SARA's Tewkesbury Station where he holds the position of land search manager. He was a founder member and team leader for NorLSAR and was vice-chair of ALSAR from 2000-2004. As a 'real' job he is a Senior Lecturer in Ecology at the University of Worcester.*



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**Iain Nicolson**  
Bowland Pennine MRT

teams have also started fitting the GPS systems into some members' vehicles so that they can too be tracked (which sometimes makes interesting viewing on MR Map!) Panorama have recently introduced an antenna that was primarily aimed at police systems, but provides an ideal combined GPS/VHF antenna for mountain rescue. It's available in both a panel mount and mag mount version, the latter being ideal for personal vehicles. Within the team we've had the

## Orange smoke

Quicksilver UK Limited are currently supplying an Orange Handsmoke (SOLAS approved) for £9.75 + VAT (most PDMRO teams have supplied a VAT exemption form). The project in the Peak District came from the concept of collective purchasing to get the price down. Through my company Quicksilver we buy and hold all the stock and sell on to the PDMRO at a minimal profit. Because the cost of sending pyrotechnics by carrier legitimately is very high (£25+) I generally hand deliver to teams at meetings (I also take a box of them with me for those who forgot to order). It would be great to take this scheme 'national' as it could (a) benefit other teams and (b) increase volumes and keep prices down. I am sure via team reps attending national meeting etc we would be able to get deliveries to other regions without incurring the cost of carriers. While orange smokes have been the most popular product we have supplied parachute illuminating flares and miniflares to other teams (POA) and can arrange safety training and disposal of out of date (OOD), damaged or failed products. For further information call 0161 320 7232 or mobile 07973 426531. Or email [darren@quicksilversfx.co.uk](mailto:darren@quicksilversfx.co.uk)  
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# Who delivers and why?

by Bob Sharp

This is the final part of the four-part series on mountain rescue training. To recap, the first part looked the aims and purposes of training. The second part examined the criteria for deciding what to include in the programme. The third part focused on some well-known principles for guiding programme delivery, including ideas about how best people learn. This final part looks at who should deliver the programme and some of the issues and concerns surrounding the thorny matter of assessment.

## Who delivers the training?

### In-house

Most (if not all) teams have a training officer who has overall responsibility for team training. It would seem that most teams also have a training committee comprising individuals with relevant expertise and interest. It's likely these and others in the team will be involved in delivering the training programme. Indeed, the recent national survey of training showed that, in most cases, training is delivered by a wide variety of people most notably members of the team itself together with a wide variety of outside agencies. Very few teams leave delivery to a single person such as the Training Officer or Team Leader although there are teams that adopt this strategy.

In-house delivery is the bedrock of team training. This makes sense because it uses the abundant talent within a team and is cost effective. It also reflects the principle of self reliance which characterises volunteering. Further, team members are on hand and well versed in the particular needs and challenges of their own team. So, for a variety of reasons, the delivery of training sessions by team members is common practice and obviously effective. However, this doesn't mean that it's always effective or the best approach. Indeed, in some cases, in-house training may disadvantage a team and hold it back from developing key skills within the wider context of UK mountain rescue. And, even worse, depending on the skills (or lack of) within a team, it may lead to the perpetuation of dated or incorrect practices. I'll return to these matters shortly.

Ideally, team members should be able to deliver their subject in a style that is informative, enjoyable and effective. It's been mentioned before that technical competence is no guarantee of effective delivery and teams should always reflect on whether those given the task of training are the best to do it. Because someone has great technical expertise in say, setting up a stretcher lower or managing a search, it doesn't necessarily follow they are equally competent in showing others how it's all done! There may be other team members who are less knowledgeable but more effective communicators. So, those responsible for training should not make assumptions about technical expertise and good instruction. And team members who are

technically skilled also have a responsibility to reflect on their own teaching/communication skills and not step forwards automatically to take a lead delivery role when their subject is the focus of attention. In some cases, they might better serve as a technical backup to somebody else who is a more able instructor, but perhaps less skilled.

It's worth referring back to a point raised in the first part of this series about how a team develops and how individuals gain experience in areas they're not familiar with. It can be very useful to use 'non-experts' to deliver particular subjects. This may sound rather odd but it's an accepted method used in some areas of sports coaching and education in broader terms. The method is one that puts people on the spot and, temporarily, takes them out of their comfort zone. It's based on a well-tryed teaching maxim, 'See one, do one, teach one.' Step one of this process is where somebody sees a demonstration of a new skill or procedure (eg. how to tie a prussik knot). Step two is where they physically practise the skill. Step three quickly follows and is the stage where the learner endeavours to pass on the skill to other learners. As a caution, a more experienced member of the team would oversee all of this. This technique really focuses everyone on the skill in question but it also reminds everyone of the problems of initial learning which someone who is well practised often forgets. How many times have you been taught by someone who talks fast, gives too much information and skips over the fundamentals? Using learners to teach learners tends to avoid problems like these. It's also been shown this helps learners better understand how skills are performed as well as their appreciation of the underlying principles. This is obviously 'quality' learning and a bonus of this approach is that it may reveal (communication/teaching) skills in newer members that might otherwise go undetected. Sounds like a win-win situation!

### Outside experts

Many teams use outside agencies and instructors to deliver parts of the training programme (eg. avalanche awareness, swift water rescue, first aid). This was confirmed by the national training survey. Outside agencies come in many forms – other MRTs, technical rescue providers, driving instructors, military helicopter flights, medical professionals, mountain instructors and so on. The list is very

wide and varied. This seems a sensible way to cover topics where there's limited expertise within the team or where external validation is required – as in first aid. One would also expect outside experts to be well versed in the latest information and skills and therefore bring a level of currency that may be unavailable within the team.

For these reasons, the use of outside expertise is absolutely vital to the health and advancement of any team. An over reliance on in-house expertise can lead to a programme that is sterile and unimaginative. People from adjacent teams or other mountaineering organisations can help kick start new ideas, introduce new techniques and generally help keep the team abreast of modern developments. It's possible to employ experts to help the team with its particular needs, by engaging them in the actual training programme. For example, many teams in Scotland employ instructors from the British Association of Ski Patrollers (BASP) to run qualifying first aid courses. Instructors run courses on the team's own patch which allows them, to a degree, to adapt the material to suit the team's operational requirements. Similarly, several teams across the UK employ experts from Lyon Equipment Work and Rescue to provide courses in rescue techniques in steep and difficult to access environments. Many other examples could be given.

Some teams pay for members to attend courses at the national mountaineering training centres and other training organisations. The Emergency Service Times has recently published a guide to relevant training courses for the emergency services which lists many 100s of different types of courses run across the UK, several of which are pertinent to mountain rescue. The mountain leadership and instructor scheme is a well-established feature of some team's training programmes. These teams believe that qualifying members as mountain leaders benefits the team's overall level of technical and leadership competence. Typically, courses are taken at residential outdoor centres such as the national mountain training centres in Scotland and Wales. It is critical that individuals who attend courses like this bring back ideas and technical expertise to share amongst their colleagues. Training officers/committees have a responsibility to ensure that opportunities are created within the training programme (and perhaps less

formally) for those who attend courses (in any subject) to pass on their knowledge to other members. Often, skills and ideas brought back to the team encourage members to look critically at their own practices. This may result in change or serve simply to confirm good practice. So, for many reasons, the use of outside expertise is critical in shaping the future operation of a team.

### National associations

Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland (MRCofS) both offer courses and seminars, which are available to all members. For example, MREW offers courses in search management, which operate on a residential basis and are open to members from all UK MRTs. Similarly, the MRCofS has recently initiated its own courses in technical rigging. The expectation is that those who attend not only improve their own experience, confidence and performance in key skills but also pass on their knowledge to colleagues. Courses like this provide opportunities for people to share ideas and pick up information and skills from recognised experts in the field. They also help to promote high standards as well as a common and consistent approach towards search and rescue. And from a practical standpoint it should be more cost effective to organise and deliver courses at national level rather than do these repeatedly at local level.

Having said this, there are mixed views on the value of nationally delivered courses. The national training survey showed that courses like this are important but that they should remain optional and certainly not dictate the way things should be done. A common feeling expressed in the survey was that national courses should reflect the requirements of teams and focus on practices important at operational level. The survey revealed that the best kinds of courses delivered at national level are those where the principles and techniques are virtually common across all mountain rescue teams. So, topics such as swift water rescue, first aid, radio communications, civil contingency, search management and emergency driving are those where national effort is best directed. There was a strong view in the survey that teams should not be dissuaded from practices that work on their own patch, even if they conflict with national provision.

One final point, which is very important. We should all recognise that formal training is not the only way team members learn. Learning to be a team member is much broader than the skills and information picked up attending courses and team training sessions. Whilst learning is enhanced through participation, it should not be forgotten that knowledge acquisition, attitude change, communication ability, leadership, etc – which are all part of the learning process – are facilitated in many other ways. For example, there are numerous resources available to team members in printed and electronic form. The recently

revamped MREW website and this magazine are two obvious examples. MREW is currently working on a comprehensive resource facility for all teams in the UK, to be available as a web resource so that teams can download sections appropriate to their needs. And we shouldn't forget that our own personal mountaineering experiences, instructional work, membership of relevant mountaineering bodies, and so on all play their part in the learning process. It's vital to accept that training alone is only one route (albeit important) to becoming a professional and versatile mountain rescuer.

### Other MRTs

All teams work in conjunction with other teams for joint exercises, training and sometimes on call outs. Watching another team carry out a task (eg. setting up an abseil) or working alongside members from other teams on routine procedures (eg. line search) can be very revealing and sometimes lead to significant changes in a team's procedures and understanding. For example, an adjacent team working in a similar environment might adopt very different procedures or use different equipment for solving the same problem that may never have been considered by the visiting team. Other teams may have different perspectives on how safety is managed or how risks are assessed. Incorporating new ideas and learning from other teams can only enhance a team's training programme as well as its operational capability. No team should consider itself beyond criticism. Even the 'celebrity' teams can learn from the 'minnows'.

Indeed, training sessions where members from different teams get together are vital to the development of mountain rescue. Debate and discussion in mountain rescue is of fundamental importance in clarifying and modifying ideas on issues of central concern. When team members get together, they often find that someone else doing a similar job has a much better way or a different way of doing it. They can take that idea back to their own team, try it out, and they may discover it works a lot better than their own way. This is another reason why courses, seminars, conferences and other events organised at national/regional levels are so important for everyone.

### Assessment Issues

This final section might turn away a few people and I might even lose a few friends! What's assessment to do with mountain rescue? Why do we need to be assessed? We're volunteers and we don't need that kind of hassle! I'm sympathetic to these kinds of

concerns and I know the vast majority who enter mountain rescue do so in the expectation that they will not be sitting examinations, grilled through interview or graded in some way. Ok, we expect to endure some discomfort, hardship and stress, but not the kind of stress that accompanies assessment. So, what's all this about? Well, in actual fact, it's quite simple and quite logical to understand, although I suspect it may be difficult to convince some people. Let's go back to basics. Training is all about people acquiring new skills, developing expertise in a wide number of areas and becoming competent members of their team. The key point is how do you know these have been achieved? How do you know that people have reached the required level of competence? How do you know members can apply all they've learned in training when it comes for real on a dark miserable night when the chips are down? One answer is that you wait for the rescues to come along and note how people perform when they suddenly find themselves at the sharp end. I wonder if many teams adopt this approach? If so, then I have to say it's a highly unprofessional way to do things.



*The team leader will generally carry out regular appraisals...*

It's an approach that should be consigned to the archives and replaced with one that is proactive and looks at the expertise (or lack) of members well before they get to the rescue stage. So what am I suggesting?

Let's focus on some fundamental principles about learning and assessment. These have been touched on in previous articles.

### No assessment – no learning!

Firstly, training has aims and purposes. The only way to determine if these are met is to assess members in some way. Training by itself is virtually useless. Assessment tells you about the effectiveness of learning and training. It demonstrates whether or not learning has taken place and helps shape the training programme. Assessment completes the learning-feedback loop (see article in issue 30) and provides evidence about success and failure.

### Assess everything

Training attempts to change people in different ways – to improve their technical competence, their knowledge base and perhaps their attitude. If teams are serious about each of these components then each must be assessed. So, if a team is serious about developing leadership skills and invests time and effort in this direction, it needs to find a way to monitor them. Similarly, if the training programme involves sessions on how to deal with deceased casualties, it should test whether members remember what to do in these circumstances.

### Tools for assessment

If assessment conjures up images of people in rows sitting written examinations or writing lengthy assignments then you need to think things quite differently. For assessment to work in mountain rescue it's very important to 'think outside the box'. There are many and

has to analyse and question the learning process. There must be some kind of interrogation about what has been learned. This could be, quite simply, the individual member reflecting on what they have done and comparing what they did with what they should have done – an internal thought process. This approach is highly subjective (and lends itself to error particularly if the individual is prone to delusions of success!) but acceptable just the same. Indeed, it's probably a very natural thing that learners do anyway. In another situation, team members might watch each other do something and just provide feedback. You could do this with most practical skills – first aid, radio comms, rigging etc. There's no need for this to be highly stressful. If you're working alongside fellow team members in a relaxed, congenial atmosphere there's no reason why this method cannot be critical and constructive. And it might even feel like assessment.

### Assessment by different people

I've already alluded to this but it's still important to note that different people can be involved in the assessment process – peers, outside experts, the training officer, self monitoring and so on. It might be good to use several people. This not only spreads the workload but also engages everyone more fully in the learning/training process. And this is all part of good team work.

That's enough about assessment for now – I know the subject is to be raised again in the next issue. I am hopeful the subject will generate a few questions and perhaps raise a few hackles – all healthy signs of progress!

### Finally

The Editor has given me the opportunity to express quite a lot about training, instruction, learning and assessment in mountain rescue. Looking back at what I've written I can see that many readers might think it's all a load of

academic nonsense! Well, I've been an educationalist for forty years but, for most of that time, I've also been involved in mountain rescuer, instruction and climbing. So, I've had an opportunity to link the two parts of my life together and especially relate my academic know-how to the real world of training in mountain rescue. If I could distil the last four articles into a small number of practical bullet points, what would I say? What would be the most important things? Well, these are the key points I would wish members to reflect on and take back to their own team.

- Training is more than practical skills; it's about imparting knowledge, changing attitudes and identifying special skills that may be dormant within the team.
- Training content should accurately reflect the team's operational needs. It should not be biased or dictated by individual enthusiasm and prejudices.
- Training is much wider than the formal programme. It's about applying personal mountaineering experience, reading, meeting other people, watching others perform and above all, accepting that formal training as only part of a much larger whole.
- All team members should own training – its development, delivery and assessment. Everyone should feel a need to be involved and be given opportunities to help.
- The best training methods are those that actively engage learners and provide them with an opportunity to question and analyse. There is little place for 'chalk and talk'.
- Make sure people learn. The ability to perform once is no guarantee of learning. Return to the same topic often and ensure members repeat things time and time again.
- Quality learning is better than quantity provision. Bearing in mind the last point, be prepared to exclude topics from the annual programme so that others can be consolidated. Return to the missed topics the following year.
- Everything the training programme plans to achieve should be assessed, be it informal self-analysis or formal examination. Methods should be devised that are valid, sensitive to individual differences, non-intimidating and enjoyable.



© David Allan

*Yes... well when I wrote that you had absolutely no aptitude for casualty care, what I really meant was...*

extremely varied ways to assess people. And it's important to recognise that many techniques can be devised in-house to suit particular purposes. Consider the following list of general methods – peer observation, self assessment, discussion between colleagues, group presentations, personal logbooks, written questionnaires, practical performance and so on. The key thing is that each technique – whichever approach is used –

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# Flash and the Magic Bivvy Bag

by John Coombs



This article is really about the training technique that I believe is the bricks and mortar of building a search dog. The inspiration for this came from Matt Robertson the SARDA (England) Stage 1 training co-ordinator, and the Wickes 'Good Ideas' leaflets. (My wife thought they'd give me something better to do than training yet another dog – but for once she was wrong!) What follows is just the first couple of months of a year long process – the initial work you do is critical – it stays with a dog all of its life. I did similar things with my three previous dogs but with a few changes from Matt. The principle is simple: we extend the dog's favourite game so she will bark at a person hidden in a bivvy bag who she thinks has got her toy.



- \* The dog must be really good at playing and barking freely at other people as well as the handler
- \* It's essential to have skilled dog trainers to act as assistants and bodies
- \* The handler must have learned skills and timing and have a good connection with their dog

I lay on the bite roll with the bag over my head so Flash couldn't get it until I decided the moment was right to allow her to play. It is so important to get this right first time that I rehearsed first without a dog!

If the dog has enough 'drive for its game' the first time it tries, it will dig, pull, head butt and jump on the bivvy bag in an attempt to win the toy.

It is important to get the timing right and don't let the dog have the toy unless she barks. We repeated the exercise and, each time, two or three barks were enough for Flash to earn a reward.

I thought if I kept her barking too long she would lose faith in the 'speak' as a means of winning her prize.

Soon Flash had abandoned the thuggery and intimidation in favour of a lot of noise. Now to use someone else in the bivvy bag, and it must be an experienced trainer. I knew if we got this right, Flash would always believe that any bivvy bag with a human smell would contain a playful friend with a toy.

The body had to ensure she knew the only way to get the toy was by standing off and giving voice. Flash was so bombed out on barking to get her toy before we used the bivvy bag, that we only had to use a speak command once – the first time we did it – as soon as Flash got the idea, just seeing and smelling the bagged human was enough to trigger a bark.

Timing the moment of reward is all important – if the dog wants its toy it will get the idea after two or three goes, but several training sessions to give twenty or thirty successful

So we didn't want to start this until Flash was totally obsessed with her toy. Her experience with the Balabanov game meant that once she had won it, she wanted to bring her toy to 'tug' with me and the bodies – so we were an essential part of her play, and in control of it. (well at least thinking ahead of her!??)

With Flash I started the Magic Bivvy Bag by bodying myself. I teased her with the toy, ran off and then got ready in the bag with the toy protruding. Next I got an assistant to release her. I snatched the toy into the bag just before the dog got to it. It has to be hidden out of reach.



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repetitions are usually necessary to get the dog into a 'habitual response.' The number of barks before reward can be increased – it's difficult for me to say how – a good dog trainer has a feel for timing that I haven't figured out how to describe.

The big advantage of the bivvy bag is that, once the initial training has taken root, the dog is not reliant on any inducement or input from the body. Any dogsbody can be an exciting reward by just laying with the bag over their

head and popping out to play with the dog after a pre-arranged number of barks.

So after some expert help to start the dog off, I could grab some unsuspecting team members and go off on my own. That's what I did. Fortunately, Flash is a lot of fun to work with and there has not been a shortage of volunteers from the Edale team.

Readers who know about mountain rescue search dogs will be wondering about the return find sequence we all use. With Flash,

we developed searching and air scenting finds for about six weeks before we started to train the return. That was trained later by introducing a second toy to the game we played with the dog after I arrived at the dogsbody.

We also had to get her used to bodies that were not in a bivvy bag.

The foundation work seems to have paid off so far. Flash and I look like being ready for operations and assessment in the spring.



\* Now the toy comes out for a game



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# Maliphofu School, Lesotho

## With your help we can make a real difference

Report prepared by the MREW organising team and Sentebale Maliphofu School project team

Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW), in partnership with the charity Sentebale, has set out on an ambitious project to help a community of children in the Kingdom of Lesotho. Lesotho is a land-locked country about the size of Wales, bordered on all sides by South Africa. Sentebale was set up by Prince Seeiso and Prince Harry to help Lesotho's orphans and vulnerable children. The princes set up the charity in memory of their mothers, who both worked to improve the lives of children in need.



THE SMALL VILLAGE OF HA LETUKA WHERE MALIPHOFU SCHOOL IS LOCATED

MREW is privileged to have Prince William as its royal patron and, as a continuation of the partnerships already established between MREW, Wellchild and Centrepont, the Sentebale Maliphofu school project is now starting to take shape. The project involves the improvement of an existing, single classroom school in the small village of Ha Letuka, located high in the Lesotho Mountains at around 2,300 metres altitude. The design for the new classrooms is the responsibility of Sentebale's Capital Projects, Design and Sustainability Team, and is taking into consideration use of local materials and optimal site orientation to help cope with the harsh climatic conditions that this area faces. The aim is for a group of volunteers drawn

from the mountain rescue teams across the country, to travel to central Lesotho and build a new double classroom and toilet block. The existing schoolroom has no electricity, no heating, no lighting and no insulation to protect the children from the harsh and very cold winters. 136 children in years one to six, from a catchment area of around fifteen square miles, struggle to learn simultaneously in a single classroom no bigger than a double garage.

Around twenty volunteers from across the regions will bring skills ranging from bricklaying, joinery, plumbing and electrics, but will also be accompanied by logistical skilled staff, team doctors, paramedics and nurses. These MREW medical team members, in addition to providing medical support to the team members working on the new building, will spend time at the local Anglican Mission clinic in the adjacent village supporting staff in their battle against respiratory diseases, HIV, malnutrition and other life threatening illnesses. Some very basic medical equipment is in short supply and the mountain rescue team medics may be able to help in some way, in addition helping look after some of the 8,000 patients that visit the clinic for treatment each year and transferring skills to the local doctors and nursing staff.

A further part of the overall project will be the provision of warm mountain clothing and outdoor survival education to the local herd boys who suffer great hardships from the very cold Lesotho winters when looking after the sheep and cattle in the mountains. During the winter, which begins around May when our teams will still be out there, temperatures fall to well below freezing so the volunteers will require self sufficiency for their two week stay in the village.

A visit to the area was undertaken by two of the mountain rescue organisers in late December 2009.



THE EXISTING MALIPHOFU SCHOOL FOR 136 CHILDREN, YEARS 1 TO 6

This proved highly valuable, meeting Sentebale staff, key government department officials, village elders and school teaching staff, builders and building suppliers, and visit local hospitals. A number of potential pitfalls and problems were also identified that can now be avoided. Funding for the project will be separate from MREW funding and secured through external donors and sponsorships in addition to money raised by participating volunteers.

The above article is a very brief introduction to this extremely interesting project. Subsequent issues of the Mountain Rescue magazine will provide a more detailed progress report, as preparations proceed and team members begin to mobilise for the start of in-country work, April and May 2010.



THE MALIPHOFU SCHOOL IS LOCATED IN THE OPEN AREA TO THE LEFT OF HA LETUKA VILLAGE



## STUNNING SHOT JANUARY:

Derek Spink, Dartmoor Rescue Group (Plymouth)  
The image was taken, during a helicopter exercise in September, from Peat Cott, just south of Princetown on Dartmoor. The helicopter had just landed. The same evening I took a shot of the moon with a telephoto lens. With the magic of good old Photoshop I put the moon in the picture, to fill up the dark sky really, and was quite pleased with the result.  
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