

mountain rescue

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SPRING
2021 **76**



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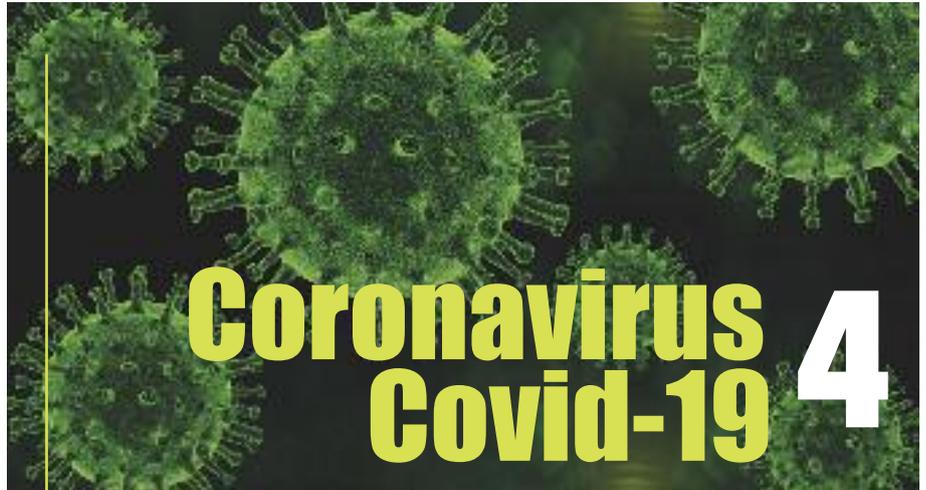
Buxton team carry a
young man who'd
dislocated his knee at
Halfway Rocks, in
Grindsbrook, down to
Edale © Dave
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MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE: COVID-19 GUIDELINE 1

UPDATED

INITIAL APPROACH TO THE CASUALTY



MREW Covid-19 Guideline 1: Mike Greene
Medical Director Updated October 2020. V4.0

Please note: These documents were updated in October 2020 to reflect UKSAR guidelines. These are guiding principles and will need to be implemented at a local level. This continues to be a fast-moving crisis and guidance can change. Further amendments will be posted in the MREW Moodle Covid-19 site.

MIKE GREENE

MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE: COVID-19 GUIDELINE 2

CHANGES TO CASUALTY CARE ABCDE MANAGEMENT

UPDATED

You **MUST** have done your risk assessment and have appropriate PPE for this rescue.

A

Make a risk assessment – use MREW Airway and Breathing Risk Assessment

- Turn a casualty with an 'airway at risk' into lateral position
- Avoid use of suction — use positional drainage if possible
- Use manual airway opening manoeuvres only after risk assessment
- Only use airway adjuncts — OPA/NPA after risk assessment.

B

Make a risk assessment – use MREW Airway and Breathing Risk Assessment

- Do **not** use a pocket mask or face shield
- Only use a BVM with good fitting mask and filter after risk assessment
- Use oxygen with a face mask according to clinical need. Avoid nasal delivery
- Use pulse oximeter to guide oxygen use if possible
- Use inhaler and spacer as first line (single use/dispose after use)
- If required, use nebuliser — lowest functional flow (approx 6l/min), do not use in enclosed space, rescuers to remain upwind.

C

Cardiac arrest:

- Use level 2 PPE (minimal requirement)
- Check for signs of life but do not listen for breathing or get close to mouth or face
- Cover casualty's mouth and nose with a face covering/mask
- If AED is immediately available apply before chest compressions
- Apply AED and follow instructions
- Perform chest compression-only CPR as instructed by the AED
- Do not ventilate or perform airway interventions (see MREW Airway and Breathing Risk Assessment)
- Consider use of mechanical chest compression devices if available.

D

- No change — record conscious level

E

- Avoid use of bivi shelter unless environmental or clinical need. Keep warm using alternative methods of insulation if possible.

MREW Covid-19 Guideline 2: Mike Greene
Medical Director Updated October 2020. V4.0

Coronavirus Covid-19

UPDATED

MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES AND SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE COVID-19 GUIDELINE 3

EVACUATION AND END OF RESCUE

EVACUATION

Consider:

- Minimise members involved — but must be operationally appropriate
- Face mask on casualty to act as a barrier
- Sledging may create more distance between members than carrying
- Wheel may be less stressful and helps to reduce breathing rate/high intensity exercise whilst wearing face mask
- Gloves — use washable gloves — medical gloves not required
- Do not touch face
- PPE is hot — consider adjusting layers of clothing/regular change of personnel etc.

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

- Inform other agencies of your risk assessment.
- Maintain your PPE and social distance when working with other agencies
- If uncomfortable, ask other agencies to respect your PPE and distancing.

END OF RESCUE AT ROADSIDE AND AT BASE

Dispose. Isolate. Decontaminate.

At roadside:

- Consider: Decontaminate as much as possible before leaving roadhead, setting up a decontamination zone at roadhead. Use of a buddy system.

Removing personal clothing:

- Do not touch face. **Clean hands between each step.**
- Remove gloves — turn inside out — dispose/isolate (if washable)
- Remove waterproofs — turn inside out — isolate in bags — wash (follow manufacturer's instructions)
- Remove eye protection — isolate/decontaminate
- Remove helmet/headwear — isolate/clean (manufacturer's instructions)
- Remove face mask — dispose
- Clean hands.

At base:

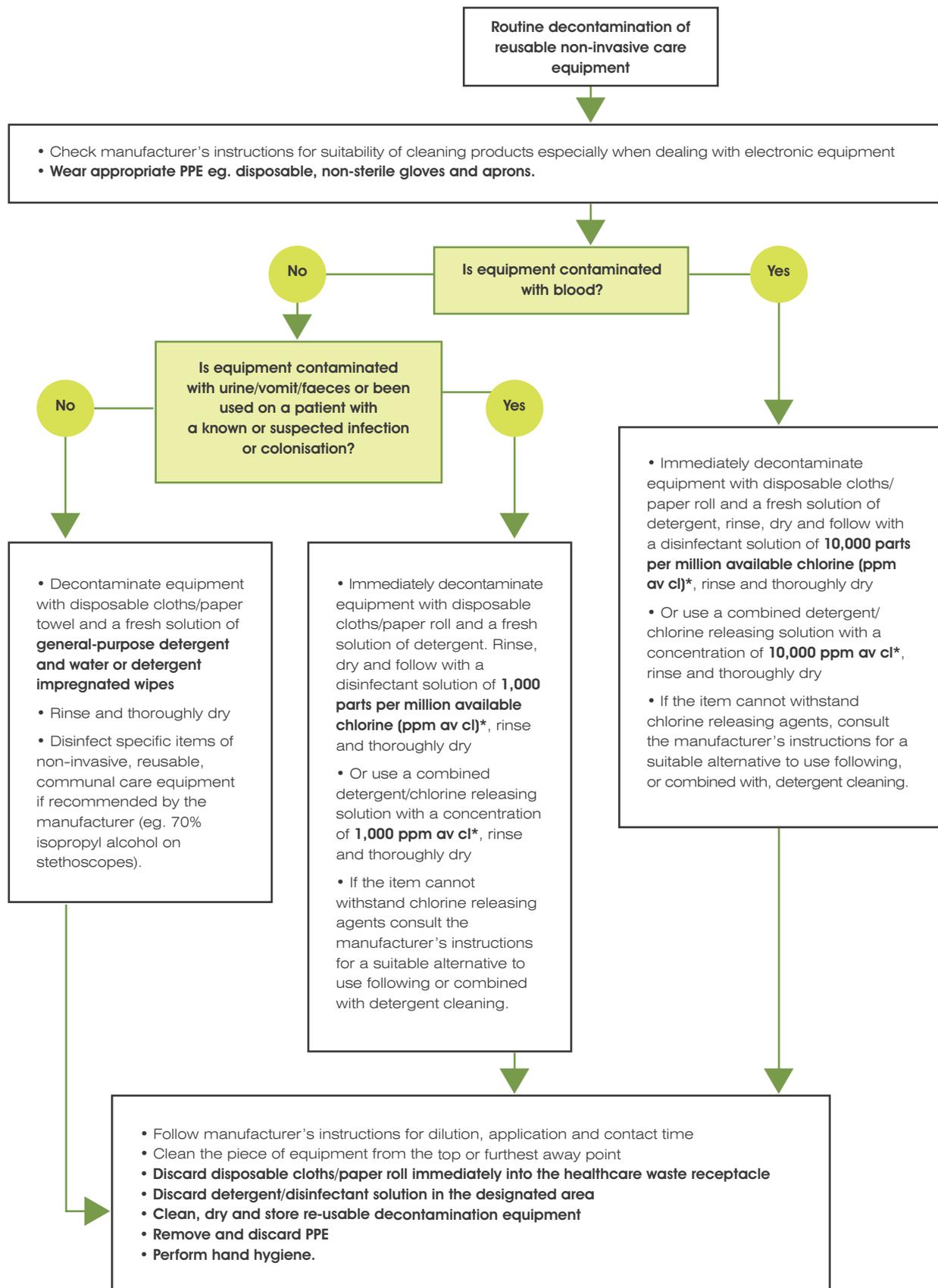
- Ensure you have a local procedure to decontaminate or isolate all equipment
- Refer to manufacturer's instructions as required
- Clean vehicles and base
- Ensure immediate access to hand sanitiser in base for all members.

DRUGS

- There is no proven link between Ibuprofen and worsening of Covid-19. Ibuprofen can be used for analgesia in MR casualties
- Only use Entonox with a viral filter to protect the system from contamination
- In HIGH risk casualty avoid the use of IND (risk of sneezing or coughing)
- Consider use of IM Morphine or Fentanyl Lozenge in these cases.

MREW Covid-19 Guideline 3: Mike Greene
Medical Director October 2020. V4.0

ROUTINE DECONTAMINATION OF REUSABLE NON-INVASIVE PATIENT CARE EQUIPMENT



- Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution, application and contact time
- Clean the piece of equipment from the top or furthest away point
- **Discard disposable cloths/paper roll immediately into the healthcare waste receptacle**
- **Discard detergent/disinfectant solution in the designated area**
- **Clean, dry and store re-usable decontamination equipment**
- **Remove and discard PPE**
- **Perform hand hygiene.**

* Scottish National Blood Transfusion service and Scottish Ambulance Service use products different from those stated in the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual

Covid-19

Lateral Flow Testing Advice for teams



ALISTAIR MORRIS
MREW MEDICAL DIRECTOR

In January, the government proposed asymptomatic testing, for businesses and local authority staff who cannot work from home, which teams may wish to access through their local council or resilience forum. Here is some advice on the practical aspects:

- The Lateral Flow Test is designed for testing of asymptomatic people only.
- Members should not test if symptomatic – this should be done with a PCR test through a testing centre.
- A negative test does not mean the person is not infectious. Approximately 25% of tests are negative when a person is actually positive. There is a significant risk that team members will assume that a negative test means that they can relax on PPE usage.

THIS IS NOT THE CASE AND PPE STANDARDS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED

- If a team member tests positive, they will need a formal PCR test and appropriate Test and Trace procedures. Isolation for other team members and their family should be undertaken awaiting the results of the PCR.
- Team members would need to test themselves on a regular basis (eg. twice a week) following the instructions here: <https://learninghub.nhs.uk/self-swab>
- Test results would need to be submitted back to authority as they make up part of government figures. The mechanisms for this would likely vary from area to area.

THIS IS A STATUTORY REQUIREMENT

- The test takes 30 mins for a result.
- Testing is voluntary – members should make their own decision.
- Tests should not be used for family members.
- Vaccination does not affect test results.



MIKE FRANCE
TAKES ON MREW
LIAISON OFFICER
ROLE

He may have stepped back from his work as SEO, but Mike continues to be very much a presence and voice nationally, thanks to a newly-created role liaising between MREW and the many outside organisations we work with. As he explains...

Over my six years in the chair, I spent time building contacts and, more importantly, a personal connection with people from many different organisations. Historically, we have changed the senior leadership and lost all the personal connections made. Hopefully, with this new post of liaison officer this won't happen.

The amount of work undertaken over the last few years by MREW on behalf of the membership, to make the organisation as professional as we can, has taken hours and hours of personal time for all officers. So when looking for a new SEO it became very clear, both to the trustees and the management team, that we needed to address the time pressure on the role for whoever takes it on.

The best way to do this was to reconfigure the role. Managing the day-to-day admin was the first thing we looked at and initial emails and enquiries are now either dealt with by Julian Walden or forwarded on to the relevant person. This task alone has taken a huge load from the SEO's shoulders — and I can say this with confidence as this process started before I finished so I could see the benefits.

The trustees asked me if I would consider undertaking a new role for the organisation, continuing to develop the great links we'd made with UKSAR, Lowland Rescue, Scottish Mountain Rescue and the British Cave Rescue Council, the NPCC and the College of Policing, the Royal Foundation and our patron HRH The Duke of Cambridge... the list goes on. Apart from the voluntary search and rescue organisations, all the others are 9-to-5 organisations, meeting during the day. The hope is that this new post will help keep continuity and, in my opinion, it will give us the best relationships possible. I was honoured to be asked and very happy to be still involved with MREW at a national level.

We still need to finalise a job spec, but I liaise regularly with the various MREW officers so I am very clear about the expectations for the role. With this, and the admin support, my successor will have time to develop our national strategy and make business plans, knowing that the day-to-day stuff and the liaison with other outside organisations are being managed.

REMINDER... HOW TO REGISTER WITH MOODLE

Go to <http://tiny.cc/Moodle4MR> and use a team email address to register but NOT a role specific one! If you've registered correctly, you'll receive an automated email within thirty minutes confirming your request has been received. Your account will usually be approved within a few days, but please be aware it may take up to a week. An email will arrive with a temporary password which you'll be invited to change when you first log in. Moodle will ignore duplicate registrations so if you have previously registered, try the 'forgotten password' link. Any queries regarding registration, please email moodlesupport@mountain.rescue.org.uk.



MIKE MARGESON ACTING SEO & OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Amongst the many challenges of the pandemic, the news of a very serious accident to a member of the Patterdale team whilst on a rescue – resulting in serious life changing injuries – was a shock to us all. As mountain rescuers this was a terrible and brutal reminder that what we do can in itself be dangerous. However skilled and however much we train, the mountains will still not be benign. Mountain rescue across the country has rallied round and is continuing to offer support.

The vaccination and testing roll-out programme has progressed incredibly successfully but is not consistent across regions and teams. The continued roll-out does, I believe, point to reason for optimism and the situation improving for us all during the latter part of 2021.

Operationally, however, the indicators are that, again, as lockdown measures are slowly lifted from Easter, there will be an increased pressure on the mountain rescue service. Just last week the head of water safety at the RNLI reported they had a 40 % increase in their call-outs during 2020 and they are expecting a very busy summer. Summer is inevitably our busiest time of the year normally, but with staycations, the concerns over foreign travel and, for many, the financial tightening of belts, we are clearly going to see increased pressures.

What the vaccination and testing programme has meant for many teams is that they have been able to restart face-to-face training in small groups, targeting essential core capabilities. Virtual online training has much to offer but is no substitute for face-to-face practical for the core skills required.

With the increasing expected summer pressures, our resilience is bound to be further tested. Our mutual aid and inter-team and regional arrangements are strong. JESIP principles have clearly never been more important, as have the significance of good strong and effective working relationships with our partner organisations.

The monthly Covid meetings and the medical and operations group key messages to members have not changed. Vaccination and/or testing does not mean that full PPE guidelines are any less essential. I

have spoken of the human error factor, complacency and over-familiarity before, this is what will catch us out. The guidelines are good and robust; we just need to keep to them.

We will be continuing the monthly national Covid executive officers meeting and the collection of data and reports from the regions. It continues to be incredibly useful. Thank you again to those at regional level collating and submitting this to Julian.

We continue close consultation with UKSAR and NPCC as well as MCA and Bristow. We have also been working hard through our media team to ensure our messaging is clear and liked up with partners like BMC and Adventure Smart.

Officer and trustee news: Dr Alistair Morris our new medical director has completed his hand-over transition with Mike Greene and also the required Home Office arrangements with our CD Licence. We still have a vacant water officer position and, once the SEO vacancy is completed, we will be re-advertising this officer role. Our new senior executive officer will be in place by the next issue of the magazine and will be introducing themselves to us all then.

I will finish by saying a huge thank you to David Coleman who has had to stand down as a trustee and lead of the CIO selection panel for personal reasons. I would like to say how much we have benefited from David's insight, wisdom and advice as an external trustee and we all wish him well. 🙏

HOW TO ACCESS THE TEAMS-ONLY AREA OF THE MREW SHOP JULIAN WALDEN

Over the last few months, we have been working on updating the MREW shop to allow better access for all teams to purchase selected merchandise at a reduced cost as well as team member-specific items such as car stickers. We have also taken this opportunity to incorporate the Covid-specific PPE items that are currently available to all MREW member teams upon request.

These items can now be ordered/requested free of charge through the online shop and we would like to ask that all future PPE request are submitted this way. As part of this process, we are updating team accounts to ensure that all teams have access to this area and that we have the correct shipping information.

To register your team, please email office@mountain.rescue.org.uk and include the details listed below for your team's designated purchaser, using an official team email address. An account will then be created for your team and any further information regarding the setting up of this account sent directly to the shop user. Information we will need is as follows:

- Full name of proposed team purchaser + Team name
- Email (must be a team-specific address)
- Postal address (must be able to receive post/parcels during the normal working day).

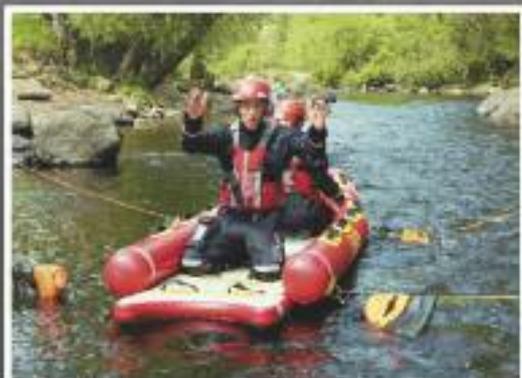
ANY QUERIES OR HELP REQUIRED, EMAIL OFFICE@MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK OR CALL 0330 043 9101 BETWEEN 08.30 -17.30, MONDAY TO FRIDAY (PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE IF CALLING OUT OF THESE HOURS).



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NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH



FEBRUARY: YORKSHIRE AIR AMBULANCE, NWS AND HM COASTGUARD WORK WITH OLDHAM TEAM TO ASSIST CASUALTY

Yorkshire Air Ambulance and NWS ground crews were requested when a man was reported by passers-by to have fallen from the Trinnacle on Ravenstones, near Dovestones, due to suspected serious injuries following a fall from height.

The air ambulance was first on scene and quickly assessed the casualty as being in a very serious condition. Because of the steep terrain and extremely blustery wind conditions, assistance from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency was also requested, with their larger helicopter and winching capability. By this time, Oldham members were arriving on scene to assist in the treatment of the casualty, whilst preparing for helicopter winching and landing sites. Some excellent flying by MCA R912 from Humberside meant the winchman could be landed at the scene, where the decision was made to lift the casualty in the team's stretcher onto the top of the crag. He was transferred to the air ambulance for onward transport to Sheffield's Northern General Hospital. Team members then escorted the passers-by back down to the car park before heading back to base to clean and sort the equipment.

STOP PRESS

MARCH: SELECTION OF NEW SEO NOW TO TAKE PLACE AT THE MREW AGM IN MAY

Three candidates put themselves forward for the post of SEO: Alun Allcock, Llanberis MRT, Mike Park MBE, Cockermouth MRT, and Dr Jon White, North Dartmoor SRT. Forty-seven teams are eligible to vote and, armed with CVs and statements from each candidate, teams were invited to vote by midnight on 14 March. The hope was that a clear winner would emerge, enabling the trustees to co-opt that person into the role, prior to the AGM in May.

However, the first round of voting proved inconclusive. No one candidate received 24 votes or more, a clear absolute majority, so voting went to a second round, on 21 March, this time between just Mike and Jon. This round too proved inconclusive. Forty-six of the teams voted and each candidate received 23 votes meaning that they both got 50%, resulting in a dead heat and something of a conundrum for trustees and teams alike.

In the absence of one candidate with a clear majority, the trustees do not have the mandate to co-opt so both candidates will now be presented for election at the AGM, each invited to address the members with a 10-minute presentation.

mrew

Raising funds for rescue

MARCH: FITNESS TRAINER TAKES ON TOUGH 'NAVY SEAL' CHALLENGE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE SCARBOROUGH & RYEDALE TEAM

Peter Nelson initially signed up for the intense challenge to test his own mental strength and resilience but, inspired by the accident in Patterdale in which a team member sustained serious injuries, he saw a great opportunity to raise some money for his local team, Scarborough & Ryedale, at the same time.

'These guys have been amazing for many years but since last lockdown and this pandemic started in March last year, they've had to face uncertainty. As volunteers they could get called out whenever needed and, with a 'stay at home' message for months, it was the accident in Patterdale that showed the true nature of their actions'. It occurred to Peter that the same thing could happen to any team member and 'with restrictions due to be lifted, more people will no doubt venture out and not think about the full risks involved'.

The 4x4x48 Challenge (created by Navy Seal David Goggins), totalling 48 miles over two days, is a representation of the physical and mental endurance needed to function under hard conditions, lack of sleep, risk of injury, even lack of food.

'Team members can be out for many hours after doing a full day at work. With gyms closed and no events it's my 'f**k it' moment and being inspired by a few others I have time on my hands and not much to do... so why not?'

In early March, Peter successfully completed his challenge, surpassing his target to raise £1,280. 'Well done Peter,' wrote the team. 'Fantastic effort and massive thanks to you and all who donated to your cause in supporting the team. Truly helping 'save lives in wild and remote places.'





VULCAN MRT WOMEN'S JACKET

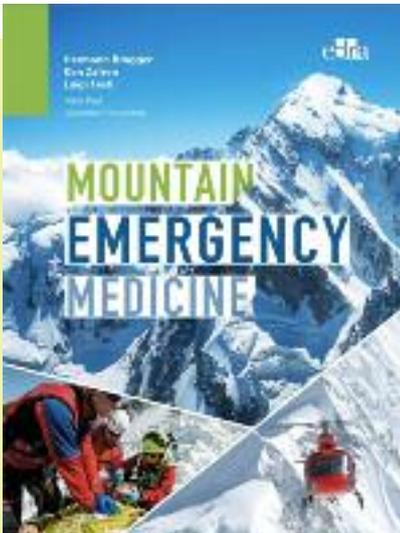
Beat the weather and battle the wind with
worldwide. The Vulcan MRT Jacket is built with
GORE-TEX® for those moments when
nothing else matters.

MADE WITH



NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH



'IN MOUNTAIN EMERGENCY MEDICINE IS FOUND THE SUM OF ALL IMPORTANT RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE IN MOUNTAIN MEDICINE. INDISPENSABLE FOR ALL MOUNTAINEERS, HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE DOCTORS.'
REINHOLD MESSNER

MARCH: MAJOR NEW BOOK ON MOUNTAIN EMERGENCY MEDICINE PUBLISHED

The book was initially proposed in 2017 at an ICAR meeting, building on the publication on a number of consensus guidelines published by ICAR Medical Commission and a large number of papers published in scientific journals by the ICAR medical team over the past ten years.

A major international collaborative effort, it crosses cultures and continents and shares knowledge and skills from 80 contributors from around the world. The authors have adopted a comprehensive approach based, as much as possible, on evidence. Where evidence is lacking, the editors have relied on the expertise of the authors to give guidance to rescuers. The introduction states that reading the book is not intended to substitute practical training, but 'to offer the knowledge base necessary for trained rescuers to provide medical care safely and effectively in the mountains'.

UK mountain rescue doctors have contributed considerably to the book. Outgoing MREW Medical Director, Mike Greene, wrote the chapter on Wounds and was an author for Education and Training. 'As a Consultant in Emergency Medicine, with a passion for mountain rescue prehospital care, I can recognise that this is an up-to-date, readable and comprehensive book that sets the standard for our care', he said. And John Ellerton, the previous MREW medical officer, who produced *Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue*, wrote the Preface as ICAR Med Com President. He is also an author for the chapter on Safety.

The book is published by Edra (<https://tinyurl.com/yj9gl2po>) and only available as an import at present, variously priced at \$191.40 and €139, so a substantial, though worthy investment. Mike also notes that none of the authors were paid for the work and do not take any commission.

Mike Greene was also involved in an open access paper published in late 2020, which brings together the literature on the assessment and treatment of seriously injured patients in the mountain environment. 'Multiple trauma management in mountain environments – a scoping review', is subtitled 'Evidence-based guidelines of the International Commission for Mountain Emergency Medicine (ICAR MedCom). Intended for physicians and other advanced life-support personnel'.

Each section of the paper summarises the current state of knowledge and provides a mountain rescue perspective. There are recommendations for practice that are evidence-based and graded according to an internationally recognised standard. Mike wrote the sections on head injury (traumatic brain injury) and spinal injury and contributed to several other sections. This too was a long time in the making, taking about three years from idea to completion. The paper is available at <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s13049-020-00790-1>.



FEBRUARY: PEAK DISTRICT STORYTELLER RAISES FUNDS FOR KINDER TEAM

Adrian Palmer raised £668, more than doubling his target, by reading 'To Build a Fire' by Jack London, for the team.

The Manchester-based walker decided to support the team in its 50th anniversary year because he had 'always enjoyed walking the Dark Peak with the Ramblers' organised walks.

The Zoom reading of the classic tale of the Great Outdoors was well-received while live and continues to be available via <https://youtu.be/x1tdqh10xyA>.

Raising funds for rescue



FEBRUARY: LOCAL ARTIST CRAFTS CAVING SCENE FOR CRO

Susan Osborne, artist, writer and member of the Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club donated a hand-crafted, sculpted miniature caving scene to be auctioned to raise funds for the Cave Rescue Organisation in Clapham.

The artist was hopeful that any bidders would be 'kind enough to consider not just the talent but the innumerable hours of patience and skill that went into crafting this piece'. By the time bidding closed in mid-March, the one-off creation had raised £150 for the team.

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CASBAG

BRENDAN SLOAN BCRC MEDICAL OFFICER

The cave environment in the UK is a hostile one: cold water, strong draughts and an ambient air temperature of 8–12°C mean hypothermia is an ever-present danger for those requiring rescue. There is a well-described increase in mortality from hypothermia associated with major trauma. It is also a risk to rescue team members, particularly those involved in less physically active elements of rescues – for example, manning underground communication stations. Over the years there has been significant progress in preventing and managing hypothermia, from the fabrics used in caving clothes, through the development of casbags and the Little Dragon, to the widespread use of bivvy shelters. The most recent caving casbag was produced after collaboration between BCRC, the University of Leeds and Aiguille Alpine, with the finished item distributed to teams in 2007.

Early in 2020, a small team of keen volunteers started looking at developing a new generation of casbag, utilising advances in materials that have occurred over the past fifteen years. Led by Ian Peachey (UWFRA) and Jim Davis (CRO), the initial work was to review the process undertaken in the development of the 2007 casbag, and look holistically for areas that could be improved. This initial investigation identified several key points:

- While the 2007 casualty bag is thermally effective, the main areas of complaint were weight, portability (especially in wet environments) and the cut and sizing which integrated poorly with larger casualties and bulky splints.
- Speed with which insulation reaches the casualty is critical.
- Head blocks are now the preferred C-spine management option and the

new bag should integrate well with these, as well as the new Slix stretcher spinal immobilisation system.

- There are limited options for warming cold but mobile casualties who do not require stretcher evacuation or who cannot be evacuated in a full stretcher because of the nature of the passage.

From this analysis the team decided to focus on reducing weight and pack size as well as improving the design of the bag to be as flexible for use in as many scenarios as possible. The project has branched out to include the design of a cas jacket for use with mobile casualties and to give a highly portable insulation option for use in searches. The team is also working on developing battery-powered heat pad systems and ways to integrate these with our designs so the new equipment will be compatible with modern equipment over the next twenty years.

A key concept was to design a complete hypothermia management system that would fit in a standard caving bag and weigh under 4kg.

THE CASUALTY JACKET

Similar in style to a belay jacket, it is designed to be put on over the caver's oversuit. It is intended as a compact, lightweight jacket that can be carried on searches when the casualty's condition is unknown. It can be worn by a mobile casualty, and potentially be used for a stretchered casualty, especially if it is known that they will need to be removed from the main casbag to pass a restriction. It can also be used by team members, especially if they are in a non-mobile role. Easy to put on, remove and repack, it could later be used by a casualty if required.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

- ❖ Hydrophobic synthetic insulation uses 133g/m² Climashield apex insulation.
- ❖ 6oz PU-coated nylon shell fabric — waterproof and robust enough to be caved in confidently.
- ❖ 2oz PU-coated nylon liner fabric creates vapour barrier with oversuit beneath.
- ❖ Open-sided design allows for wide variety in casualty size and application over arm injuries.
- ❖ Wide collar allows application over helmet.
- ❖ Pockets for heat packs (internally) and battery packs (externally), allow battery change without removing garment.
- ❖ Velcro fastening, with additional belt in case of Velcro failure due to muddy environments.
- ❖ Total weight including heat pack: 600g. With battery an additional 132g.





Ian, in conjunction with Beth Knight (Derbyshire CRO) has produced a few development models, which have been subjected to some field testing. Ten jackets, funded by BCRC, are currently being produced and distributed to teams for final testing and feedback. The intention is that, by summer, the design will have been finalised and teams will be able to order.

THE CASUALTY BAG

The new design, loosely based on the Aiguille Alpine lightweight MR bag, wraps around the casualty, is velcroed shut to prevent drafts, and tightened to fit the casualty with a series of straps. There is a drawstring at the foot end to pull the bottom of the bag shut, leaving a small hole for drainage of any water, a real issue in cave rescues. If the casualty is >6ft 6ins tall, their feet may protrude from the end of the bag, but the drawstring can be tightened around their legs instead. It has been designed to integrate with the new Slix stretchers used by many cave rescue teams, as well as head blocks and spinal splints. The previous bag had a fleece liner which was warm when dry, but easily became waterlogged, making the bag a lot heavier and less insulating. This bag is made of the same material as the casualty jacket, providing both insulation and a vapour barrier.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

- ❖ Hydrophobic synthetic insulation uses 133g/m² Climashield apex insulation.
- ❖ Currently trialling both 6oz PU-coated and 4oz Neoprene-coated nylon shell fabric — waterproof and robust enough to be cave-

proof, especially when protected by a stretcher.

- ❖ 2oz PU-coated nylon liner fabric creates vapour barrier with oversuit beneath, and prevents water ingress into the insulation.
- ❖ Detachable hood which integrates with head blocks and allows access to spinal splint attachment points.
- ❖ Arm zips allow casualty to have arms either in or out of the bag.
- ❖ Wrap design allows adjustment for all lengths and breadths of casualty.
- ❖ Velcro fastening allows easy access to casualty for safety ropes or clinical care, while preventing drafts.
- ❖ Velcro pads inside allow attachment of heat packs to prevent migration during rescue.
- ❖ Total weight, including hood: 1880g.

Ian and Beth are in the process of making some 'final' prototypes, which will then go to teams for testing. We hope a final version will be decided on by late summer, and can then start being produced for teams.

ELECTRICAL HEAT PADS

Chemical heat pads have been used for many years, and can generate a significant amount of heat while being robust and easy to transport. However, the heat generation can be erratic, and once the pad is exhausted it cannot be reused on the same rescue. Cave rescues can easily take many hours, so they may need to be replaced. There is also no way of monitoring or regulating their output. There are a number of electrical packs on the market which are being looked at. These have a number of appealing features. Light, flexible and low

profile, they can be applied to almost any part of a casualty without affecting immobilisation. The power packs can be kept outside the casualty bag, so can be changed without needing to unwrap the casualty. The output can also be regulated to provide different levels of heating.

Ali Garman (SMWCRT) and Ian have carried out a series of tests of different options. Commercially available options appear effective, with a battery life of between 2.5 and 7.5 hours, depending on output level. The intention is to develop our own system using non-proprietary and easily available components, which will allow us to create a rugged system, with the ability to easily swap out any faulty elements. This work is in a much earlier stage of development, but holds a great deal of promise for the future. The casualty jacket and casbag will be designed so that future battery-powered heat packs can be easily integrated.

The developments were shown to BCRC teams via Zoom, in December. That meeting is available at <https://tinyurl.com/2fz3u5dn>. Please use passcode: **D?x84!%#**

It should be noted that development is ongoing, and by the time of publishing there is likely to have been significant further progress.

As already noted, all of this work has been undertaken voluntarily and I am hugely grateful to Ian, Ali, and Beth who have devoted a lot of time to this. The intention is to develop something of use to all teams, so if you are interested in finding out more, or in helping with the development, please contact either medical@caverescue.org.uk or casbag@caverescue.org.uk. 📍



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SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE SIX-YEAR RADIO PROJECT COMPLETED



The project to replace radios for all 24 Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR) teams, which began in 2015, has finally reached completion. The replacement programme was by no means an easy task, and involved the hard work of many people, not only from SMR but also from the Scottish Government, Police Scotland, St John Scotland and Bridge Systems (Dunfermline).

A working group of experienced volunteers carried out initial research into the new technologies available and worked with the teams to find the best replacement options. It was agreed the new radios needed to provide the same key functionality as their predecessors: excellence in communications, robustness, ease of use and range, plus the potential of additional functionality.

In addition to the group's own research and testing, radios were given to a number of team members to test and approve.

'Members of my team have been working with the new radios during training and rescues for well over a year now,' said Mark Robson, radio officer for Dundonnell MRT. 'Any initial reservations about how this technology would compare to the old analogue radios were quickly dispelled when we discovered just how well the Hyteras performed across the remote and complex terrain that makes up our area. The new SFR and GPS capabilities are particularly impressive and, when coupled with real-time digital mapping in our mobile base, are proving a game changer in the way call-outs are managed.'

This entire procurement was only made possible by the support of other organisations, for which Scottish Mountain Rescue are incredibly grateful. SMR would like to say a huge thank you to St John Scotland, Police Scotland and the Scottish Government, whose funding contributions made the radio replacement possible.

'St John Scotland's support for Scottish Mountain Rescue teams over the past two decades has made a huge difference to their ability to carry out their duties safely,' said St John Scotland Chief Executive, Angus Loudon. 'As a charity we are committed to saving lives and helping communities be resilient, and we know that Scottish Mountain Rescue volunteers do a vital job in supporting their communities and the emergency services. We hope that by having access to these state-of-the-art radios, the teams will not only be safer, they'll be able to help even more people who need them.'

'This is another example of the hard work and dedication of our volunteers to make this project such a success,' added Damon Powell, Scottish Mountain Rescue chairman.



Top: An Teallach ©Dundonnell MRT. Above: Team members pictured with the new radios at the SMR Training Conference in 2019 © SMR.



SMR FEATURES ON CBBC NEWSROUND

Last year, Naomi Dodds of Aberdeen MRT and co-ordinator of Scottish Mountain Rescue national care training courses, was approached by CBBC Newsround to put together a short piece to camera: 'A day in the life of a mountain rescuer'.

The purpose of the video was to educate children on how to stay safe in the mountains. Given Covid restrictions, Naomi had to act as presenter, producer and editor. The finished article was very successful and well-received and is still available to view at bbc.co.uk/newsround/54102485.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

Three Scottish Mountain Rescue team members have been honoured with Distinguished Service Awards to recognise their unfailing commitment, hard work and contribution to mountain rescue.

David Tyson, who joined Galloway MRT in 1995, has worked tirelessly as both a call-out member and long-standing member of the committee, having undertaken virtually every role possible over the years, including team leader. His contribution to Galloway MRT has been unwavering and exceptional.

Having joined the Arrochar MRT in 1990, Moira Weatherstone, has served as training coordinator for two years and treasurer for eleven, in addition to being an active rescuer throughout her membership. She operates as a search and rescue dog handler and has been a SARDA assessor and trainer for several years. She instructs on the SMR search management course and holds the important post of SMR treasurer, having already clocked up nine years in the role.

Ken Weatherstone is team leader of Arrochar MRT, having served in many of the team roles over the years. A member of SARDA for 26 years and a founding member of SARAA, he qualified as one of the first pilots for the association.



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MARCH: FORTY YEARS IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE FOR 'DOG DES'

When Teesdale and Weardale's Des Toward achieved his 40 years of service as a full team member, it was the perfect culmination of what has been a lifelong experience of living and working in cold, remote environments.

For 'Dog Des', as he is known in the team, was born in 1963 during a snow storm, at the end of what had been the coldest winter in 200 years, on a small farm in upper Teesdale close to High Force, one of England's most impressive waterfalls. As a teenager he loved motorsport and spent many happy hours watching rally cars speed through local forests in the middle of the night, but it was one evening at the local youth club that was to change the course of his life. The event was a talk by a member of a fell rescue team, known then as the upper Teesdale and Weardale Fell Rescue Association.

At that time, they had a cadet group for 16 to 18-year-olds which Des joined as soon as he could. The cadets took part in training sessions and other activities, but not call-outs. As soon as he was eighteen, he applied to become a full team member and, after a probationary period, was allowed in and given a team badge, a prized possession he still treasures today. So he's actually been part of the team for 42 years!

In those days, the team had a dog handler who didn't really appear to be a part of the team. He would turn up on a job then wander off into the distance on his own, only reappearing at the end of the search for a brew.

At an early stage in his membership, Des saw a TV documentary about 'search dogs of the summits', featuring a search dog handler from the Yorkshire Dales, and a seed was planted. Shortly afterwards Des and his dog, Spot, attended a registration day with the then SARDA Lakes. Unfortunately, Spot didn't quite share his owner's enthusiasm so they headed home tails between legs but, after many hours of practice, Spot and Des were accepted to train as a search and rescue dog team. Another eighteen months of training and assessments and they joined the call-out list.

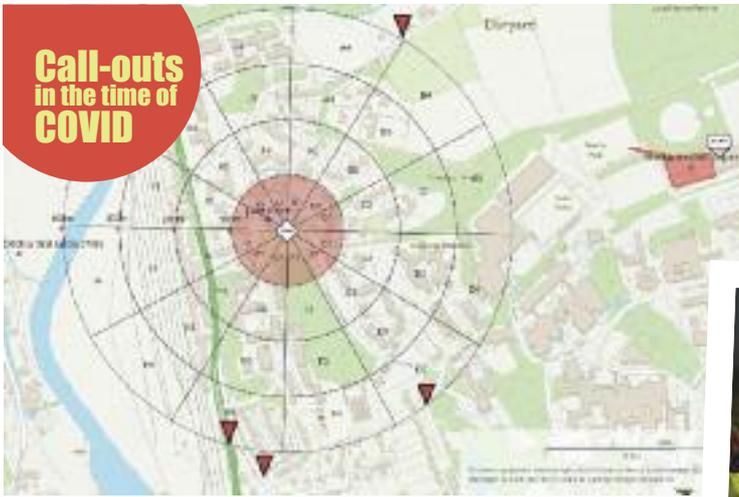
Their first real job was to search for a missing skier on Dun Fell in the High Pennines, teamed up with some dog handlers from the Lakes and, from then on, the jobs came in on a regular basis. At the time, there were only three search dogs in the north east.

One job which will be forever etched into Des's memory was when Spot found what appeared to be a human hand sticking out of the ground. After several panicked radio messages, he was instructed to see if the hand was attached to a body. On starting to clear leaves and debris from the area the body sat up! For whatever reason the man had tried to bury himself, giving Des one or two sleepless nights in the process.

Since then, he's come a long way. Now on his fourth search dog, Wisp, he has been SARDA England representative (now Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England), has travelled to Iceland to assess their dogs, given lectures to groups in California and South Africa, and is one of the most experienced and respected dog handlers in the country and still heavily involved in training handlers. He's had plenty of success with his own dogs and feels rightfully proud every time a dog and handler that he has helped to train is involved in a successful find, which often results in a life saved.

Top: Des Toward with Search Dog Wisp, supplied by Teesdale & Weardale SRT.

**Call-outs
in the time of
COVID**



NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH

MARCH: DARTMOOR TEAMS CALLED OUT AFTER WORLD WAR II BOMB DISCOVERED IN EXETER

The discovery of a 1000kg World War Two bomb in Exeter saw two of Dartmoor Search and Rescue's four teams called out to help in what was perhaps their most unusual call-out for years. Dropped by the Luftwaffe, most likely during the Baedeker Raids of April 1942, bomb disposal experts deemed this German bomb too unstable to move and as such an evacuation on a massive scale was required.

Team members from Ashburton and North Dartmoor teams were requested by police as part of the local resilience support to help evacuate people from 2,650 properties within a 400-metre cordon around the bomb. With warning coming in the night before, teams were deployed at 5.00am to Exeter University for a briefing from police. The operation was a huge joint mission with teams working alongside the coastguard, fire services, REACT volunteers, Devon 4x4 Rescue and the police. Team members were deployed to residential areas and student housing to ensure all occupants had left or were leaving by 8.30am, allowing bomb disposal experts to begin working on the SC1000 bomb in situ. The operation was swiftly and effective with teams leaving the site just after 9.00am. The bomb was detonated after 6.00pm with considerable impact. Many will have seen the explosion on the national news.

It was a clear example of the versatility of mountain rescue teams being called on to help local authorities in a quite unusual situation. David Stoneman, team leader of the North Dartmoor team, said, 'This incident was very unusual, but again shows how adaptable our team members are. It proves that the Dartmoor teams are a significant part of the regional resilience plan supporting the wider south-west community.' Ashburton team member Rebecca Ricks added that 'behind many of the doors we knocked were people who were, understandably, distressed at being asked to leave their homes for an unknown length of time with the thought of potential damage to their properties, and all in the middle of a pandemic. It was a moment for calm and sensitivity — of which all of our members offer in droves.'

Top: Map of the area where the bomb was discovered. **Above right:** Briefing at Exeter University. **Left:** Team members going door-to-door to alert homeowners about evacuating their properties. Images supplied by Dartmoor Ashburton MRT.



JANUARY: CLIMBERS WHO BROKE COVID RULES TO SCALE MUNRO ISSUED WITH FINE AFTER CALLING MOUNTAIN RESCUE



The pair, in their twenties, had to be helped off the mountain after one suffered a leg injury on their descent. They'd travelled from Oban to the Glencoe area to climb Buachaille Etive Mór and 25

members of the Glencoe team were involved in their rescue.

One of the team also suffered an injury during the operation. The injured climber was taken to hospital for assessment and both men were fined for breaching travel regulations. 'The men had travelled from Oban and found themselves in difficulty as the light was fading,' said Inspector Kevin Macleod, from Highlands and Islands Police. 'The rescue took 108 man hours and both men were issued with fixed penalty notices'.

In Scotland, at the time of the incident, it was illegal to travel into or out of council areas in Level 3 or Level 4 without a valid exemption, in efforts to limit the spread of the coronavirus. Police had the power to issue £60 fines to rule-breakers, halved to £30 if paid within 28 days.

Above: Buachaille Etive Mór viewed from the A82 © Doug Lee (Creative Commons-by-sa/2.0)

Below: Images © Braemar MRT.



FEBRUARY: BRAEMAR MEMBERS ASSIST SSE GETTING TO HILL SITES AND POWER LINES IN THE UPPER DEESIDE AREA



A word
from the
editor...

Editor... benevolent fund secretary... website... bookshop... so many mountain rescue hats... so little time...

I confess it's confusing some days. All these hats. Which one for *this* phone call, which one for *that* email? And just to confuse the issue a little more (sorry), I'm about to write about the Rescue Benevolent Fund (the hat for which reads 'Trustee'), wearing the one most people recognise me in: the one that says 'Mountain Rescue Magazine Editor'. (Maybe it's more likely to be read than one with the orange heart at the top, who knows?) I'll leave on the hatstand for now the 'Website' and 'Bookshop' hats alluded to last issue (although more on the latter opposite).

As detailed opposite, February witnessed a catastrophic incident in the Lakes, the like of which mountain rescue has not seen for many years and it led to a considerable level of communication, between me and my fellow benevolent fund trustees, about how we might or might not be able to help.

There was, perhaps, an expectation in the wider mountain rescue community, that we would. And, indeed, we were there, should our help have been needed, for Chris and his family, and continue to be there for anyone who may have been affected. In this instance, an independent fund was set up by the team, which we're happy to see heading towards the million mark.

about it. Apart from those individuals who have specifically allowed us to tell their stories here in the magazine.

And therein lies the rub. Flying under the radar as we do, it's sometimes hard to impress on people how much we can help because, well, how do we evidence that? So we thought it worth revisiting here and perhaps addressing some of the questions raised.

The Rescue Benevolent Fund was set up in April 2013, thanks to the collaboration of Mountain Rescue England and Wales and the British Cave Rescue Council. After several years of legal back and forth, the paperwork was sorted, an initial donation was matched by MREW and we were off. Since then, we've helped ten families in a variety of ways, from physical rehabilitation, through emotional counselling to financial support. Through our agreements with both the Fire Fighters Charity and the Police Treatment Centres, we can offer bespoke residential packages to help individuals rehabilitate and we have also worked with independent therapists locally where this has been more appropriate or convenient for the claimant.

The feedback we have from all of those ten claimants has been overwhelmingly positive but I guess you might question why there have been only ten? In truth, we've had more initial enquiries than that but often, mountain and cave rescuers being what they are, there's a sense that someone else might need help more than they do and the claim form never gets returned. This simply isn't true, of course. If you come to the fund and ask for help – and you fit our criteria – we will do everything we can to help you, so perhaps the only way to get over that characteristic self-effacement on the part of the average rescuer, is to keep getting our message out there: if you or your family need help due to physical or emotional injury or financial hardship resulting from a mountain or cave rescue-related activity, then we are here for you. Like it says in our strapline.

A concern has been expressed, more than once, that we appear to have 'very little money in the bank', but this is irrelevant. Firstly, we are required to have a minimum amount in the bank in order to continue as a charity, so we would never allow our account to be drained. Secondly, thus far, we have ticked over sufficiently to be able to help everyone we have wished to help, as fully as they needed. Donations come in, claims go out. And, should further funds be required for a particular case, once in receipt of a claim form, we could and would fundraise specifically towards that.

And then there's that other thorn in our collective sides – the persistent assertion that this is the 'MREW' benevolent fund. I'm really trying very hard not to sigh deeply as I say this: it is not. Just ask any MREW officer (apart from me!) if they know, off the top of their heads, how many claims we've had (without reference

to this article), how much we've paid out and received over our eight years as a charity and what sort of benefits we've offered. They likely won't be able to answer.

From the moment we were inaugurated, we were an independent charity, with our own declaration of trust, our own trustee board, our own bank accounts and our own application process – entirely free from any input or influence from the management teams and officers of either MREW or BCRC. Yes, every single trustee has been, or continues to be, involved with either mountain or cave rescue in some form or other, and that informs the decision making through personal understanding of how the organisations work. If anything, that makes us more objective, free from the internal politics which have often blighted relationships between individuals, teams and the national bodies. No agendas, no ulterior motives, no regional bias. Just a will to help people.

Okay, so... thorny questions dealt with, should you need to claim, how do you do that? In the first instance, email me at secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund and ask for a claim form. We can't do anything until we receive that and know what we're dealing with. Of course, I'm happy to hear from you via my editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk address, but be aware that I will transfer subsequent correspondence to the benevolent fund address for the purposes of retaining a confidential email thread.

Once a claim comes in, we aim to respond within a couple of days to acknowledge receipt and call a meeting of the trustees at the earliest opportunity. Depending on the complexity of the claim, sometimes we are able to make a decision within the week. Often, we involve the fund's regional reps, but they are only ever privy to a redacted version of the details, with all papers collected in after any meeting (or a spoken summary if we meet online) – again, to preserve confidentiality. Although the final decision lies with the trustees, their knowledge and professional experience can be invaluable in the decision-making process. If the claim is particularly complex, we may ask for more details before making a decision. Whatever happens, we aim to keep you informed every step of the way.

Worth repeating again: if you or your family need help due to physical or emotional injury or financial hardship resulting from a mountain or cave rescue-related activity, then we are here for you.

And finally, if you would like to donate to the fund, or raise money on our behalf, again just drop me an email and I will supply the bank details. A huge thank you to all who have donated already, either through single donation or regular standing order. Every penny is appreciated and put to good use. We couldn't continue without you, that's for sure, but we hope that our being here can help you continue too. ☺



But, no sooner had the fund been established, we found ourselves on the end of questions about why we weren't involved... not asked with any sense of malice, but asked all the same. And we, in turn, began asking ourselves whether there was still a need for what we offer. A fair amount of introspection later, the answer was yes. Very much so.

For us, the interesting thing was to realise how little the wider rescue community really knows about the work we do and how we do it. And, actually, that's a good thing. It means we've done our job and fulfilled our charitable purpose, helping team members and their families recover – physically, mentally, emotionally, and sometimes financially – from whatever mountain rescue-related trauma they were facing. Without anyone else knowing

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH



Left: Chris Lewis
© Patterdale MRT.

FEBRUARY: MAN DOWN FROM PATERDALE

As many will be aware, Patterdale team member Chris Lewis, was seriously injured in a fall, early in February, as the team responded to a casualty with chest pains who was wild camping above Red Screes, near Kirkstone Pass. Chris was airlifted to the Major Trauma Unit at the Royal Preston Hospital by HM Coastguard helicopter after suffering severe facial and spinal injuries.

In the hours, days and weeks since, everyone involved has received tremendous support and good wishes from mountain rescue colleagues, supporters and donors across England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and beyond. Neighbouring teams (particularly Penrith, Keswick, Cockermouth and Langdale Ambleside) and LDSAMRA, MREW officers and the trustees of the Rescue Benevolent Fund have given invaluable practical help, not only on operational matters but also on media support and other advice. The team would like to thank everyone.

'This is the sort of thing that no team would ever want to face,' says Mike Rippon, Patterdale team leader, 'and it has been a shock for us all. The first couple of weeks were hectic with everything seeming to be both important and urgent. Our first responsibility was to Chris and his family but we also needed to look after everyone in the team, to set up some sort of fundraising focus that could tap into the support for Chris and, of course, to deal with all the media enquiries flooding in. We're still reeling on a lot of this but the JustGiving Chris Lewis Support Fund alone is approaching £1 million (£847,702 at the time of going to print: Editor), and that has been a huge encouragement. I hope something like this never happens to another team but, in case that's too optimistic, we hope to share some of what we've learned in the months ahead.'

Chris is expected to remain in hospital for the foreseeable future. The fund to support him and his family in the months and years ahead is still open and can be found at www.justgiving.com/campaign/Chris-Lewis-Support-Fund-LDSAMRA-Patterdale-MRT.

NEW Titles
this month

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NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH



Left: The High Sheriff of Cornwall, Kate Holborow DL with team member Matt and Trainee Search Dog Merryn © West Cornwall SRT.

MARCH: HIGH SHERIFF OF CORNWALL VISITS WEST CORNWALL TEAM

A small group of team members, trustees and support members welcomed the High Sheriff of Cornwall, Kate Holborow DL, to their base for a socially-distanced tour in March.

They were able to talk about their work, show her the vehicles and kit, and explain how the pandemic has impacted fundraising efforts. The High Sheriff also made a surprise presentation to one of the team members, with the *Unsung Hero Award for Services to the Community*.

'It was a privilege,' she said, 'to visit West Cornwall today and meet some of the team, including one of the newest members Trainee Search Dog Merryn, currently one year into her very rigorous training. I was delighted to present an *Unsung Hero Award* to Merryn's handler. As well as giving up his time as a team member, he is dedicating many hours and personal expense to Merryn's training.'

Matt was put forward for the award by team members, including chairman, Andy Brelsford. 'Matt is a very busy man with a new baby and his own design business to occupy his time. However, he still manages to find space to volunteer and, as well as being an active call-out member, he can be found teaching the next generation of lifeguards at his local Surf Life Saving Club and helping as a Community First Responder, on top of other volunteering roles in the community. He also has a key role behind the scenes. He manages PR and social media and puts hours of his own time and money into designing the look and feel of the team branding.'

Matt himself described it 'an honour' to receive the award, saying he collected it on behalf of everyone involved in the team, 'as well as all of those from Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England, South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, Surf Life Saving Cornwall, the RNLI and the other organisations and charities I am grateful to be associated with.'

FEBRUARY: COMMENDATION FOR NORTH OF TYNE TEAM MEMBER

Mark Silmon was awarded a Northumbria Police Chief Constable's commendation by Chief Constable Winton Keenan and Superintendent Andrew Huddleston, writes **Rachel Smith**.

'This is a well-deserved award. Not only has Mark been a member of the team for over 25 years, during that time he has served as training officer, deputy team leader and team leader, returning to the latter roles again in recent years. He has been instrumental in moving the team forward in their technology, search and professional networks.

'Additionally, Mark is a regional silver controller and currently holds the NESRA posts of training coordinator and SPOC for HMCG, he also spends time developing and delivering national courses for MREW. He does all of this with commitment and enthusiasm for all involved. He is a credit to North of Tyne and mountain rescue in general, and he looks forward to many more years with the team.'



Photo: Mark Silmon receives his suitably socially distanced award from Chief Constable Winton Keenan © North of Tyne MRT.



DISCOVER EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES FOR RESPONSE AND RECOVERY AT **THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW** NOW SCHEDULED FOR 7-8 SEPTEMBER, NEC BIRMINGHAM

With over 450 exhibiting companies and two seminar theatres dedicated to vehicle innovations and emerging technologies, the show brings together the emergency and rescue sectors to discover innovative technologies and operational solutions, share experiences and take a collaborative approach to public safety.

Technology on display will include vehicles that serve as mobile comms hubs, satellite comms, ruggedised mobile computers tablets and phones, data, cloud storage, wearable tech, VR training, connectivity, UAVs, hybrid and electric vehicles, body-worn cameras and other video-capture systems. As important are the ICT applications being showcased, including control systems, data management, mobile apps for emergency service and public use and the technologies now being used to speed and aid collaboration throughout the emergency services.

The event offers an unbeatable learning opportunity for all visitors across the rescue and blue light community, covering the latest in emergency response,

technology developments, best practice and the sector's Covid lessons. For the first time, the show will be co-located with the Fire Safety, Health & Safety, Security and Facilities events and the National Cyber Security Show – the UK's largest event focused on the protection of people, places and assets.

In 2019, the Emergency Services Show attracted a total of 8,300 visitors from the emergency services and partner agencies, including mountain, cave and lowland rescue, HM Coastguard, Lifeboats and other first responders, making it the biggest event in its 15-year history. Entry and car parking at the NEC Birmingham are free.

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Hinkes thinks

Keeping cool, keeping warm and surviving...

Probably safe to say, **Alan Hinkes** knows a thing or two about keeping cool under the most stressful mountain conditions and keeping warm in the coolest of temperatures. This issue, he shares his thoughts on just that and takes a look at bivvy shelters.

My mantra for comfort in the hills and mountains is keep cool to keep warm. By that I mean don't overheat. If you are sweating, take off a layer, keep comfortable and put it back on as soon as you stop. I also mean keep cool mentally — as stressing out and getting anxious will burn calories.

Often, inexperienced walkers will puff and pant, get too hot and sweat, collapse in a heap when they stop and start taking off layers or their outer jacket. Soon they will be chilled, getting cold and uncomfortable at the other end of the heat/cold spectrum.

Unless it is a heatwave, keeping warm in windy, or wet and windy, conditions on the fells is often underestimated by many hill

walkers. If an accident should happen, keeping the casualty warm till the rescue team arrives is essential. Nowadays, a lot of people carry an emergency shelter, variously called a bothy bag, bivvy bag, Zardsky sac or KISU. These have literally proved lifesaving, protecting the casualty from hypothermia. Many outdoor companies manufacture these shelters in different sizes from two person to eight to ten-man group shelters. Essentially, they are nylon waterproof, windproof bags. There is no real need for breathability from a Gore-Tex type membrane. A two-person shelter can weigh less than 500g and a large ten-person-plus can be well over 1kg. As well as use as an emergency shelter, they can be

used for a lunch stop or general warm up in inclement weather. On wild, windy wet or sleety winter days, getting inside a bivvy bag shelter for a snack is a great morale boost. Mind you, in these Covid-19 times I wonder how sharing an emergency group shelter will pan out in the future.

KISU stands for Karrimor Instructor Survival Unit: the original made in the 1970s weighed 1070g, made from lightweight nylon flysheet tent fabric and was large enough for seven people — six students and an instructor. The original KISU had large sleeve entrances at both ends and adjustable draw cords; it was developed by Ken Ledward and Mike Parsons of Karrimor.

When I started hill walking, most people carried an orange heavy duty polybag for emergencies. I would go on survival courses on the North York Moors and spend a night out in one just to see how comfortable or uncomfortable they were. I even had a bivvy 70 feet up a cliff face on a narrow ledge one night, just for fun and practice, pretending it was the North Face of the Eiger. I was tied on to make sure I didn't slide off. With no draw cord and a big open entrance the wind and rain could blow straight inside a polybag, but they did provide some protection if you had a particularly big bag and could snuggle down and hold the opening closed. Polythene is very slippery and in winter on snow you had to be very careful you didn't slide away. It's not surprising that these survival bags would often be used for improvised sledging and perhaps snow sliding is the best use for them now there are better nylon-proofed emergency shelter bags. Most polybags were for single-person use, the advantage of the nylon emergency shelter/bivvy bag is that you can huddle together for warmth, rather than being alone in a shelter. The first time I went to Tibet in the 1980s I remember seeing Yak herders huddle together under Yak skins inside a basic cotton tent, no separate sleeping bags, only communal body heat for warmth.

Then there is the space blanket which folds into a tiny package. Really these are not much use in the hills as they are not a bag,



Above: Emergency shelter bivvy bag. Opposite: Emergency shelter with plastic window and air vents © Alan Hinkes.

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH

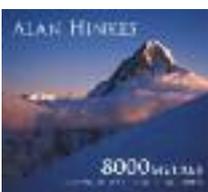


only a sheet of reflective plastic foil and can blow around and rip in the wind. Space blankets have their uses more in settled conditions such as inside an ambulance.

In the mid-1980s, I realised I needed a lightweight windproof bivy bag for Alpine style Himalayan climbing. A tent can be too heavy and not possible to pitch on small ledges or platforms hacked out of the snow and ice slope. In the Alps I realised that a polybag was impractical and had experimented with using a large rucksack with an extendable bivy extension. This was a bit bleak and cold and I realised it was best to huddle inside a bag with my climbing partner. I had a waterproof, neoprene coated nylon two-man bag sewn up for me which I nicknamed 'sweatbag'. It was a 7'x6' square envelope of fabric in bright orange, which you could pull over your body, with a draw cord at the bottom. The condensation inside was copious and sleeping bags would get very wet, but it kept me alive on many Alpine and Himalayan bivouacs. It really came into its own on a 6500m peak in the Himalaya when two of us were caught in a storm for several days and survived. It was uncomfortable, but kept the worst of the weather at bay.

Most emergency shelters are a posher version of my 1984 sweatbag and some have plastic windows and air vents or a slot for a trekking pole to help hold it up. All fulfil the essential criteria of preventing the wind from blowing the life out of a human body. My analogy is a hot sausage on your fork, if you blow on it long enough it will go stone cold. Obviously a human body is constantly producing heat, unlike an inanimate object such as a sausage. But eventually a human body would stop producing heat and go cold and die; so protect from the wind and survive.

MRTs now have 'giant' group shelters for casualty care, but the individual shelters often carried by hill walkers are the first line of protection from hypothermia and casualty survival. ☺



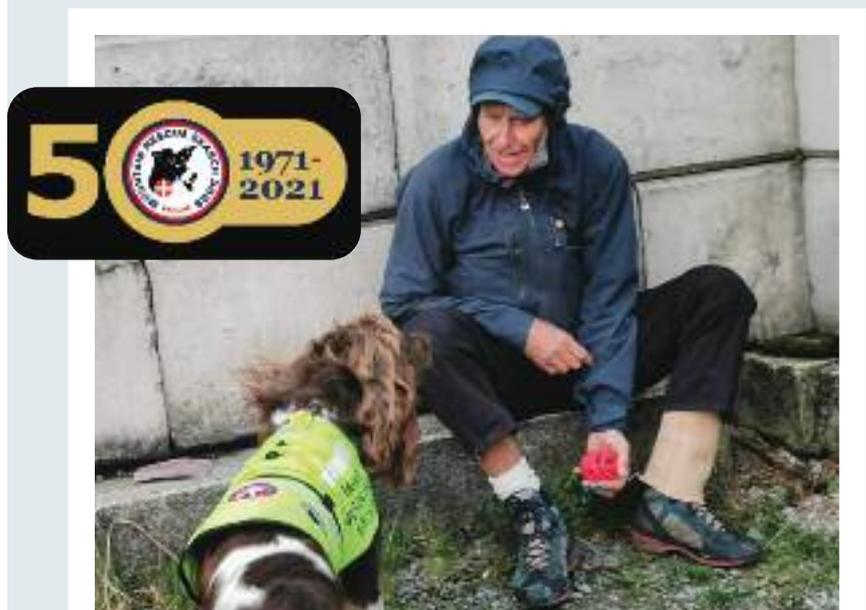
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FEBRUARY: MREW AMBASSADOR ALAN HINKES OBE TAKES ON NEW ROLE AS PATRON FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE SEARCH DOGS ENGLAND

Members of Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England (MRSDE) were proud to announce that Alan had taken on the patronage, following in the footsteps of the late Hamish MacInnes who had occupied the role since 2008.

Alan is already a familiar face with dogs and handlers, particularly in the north east, regularly playing out with them as a dogsbody, and he has worked as an ambassador for MRSDE, as well as Mountain Rescue England and Wales, for some years.



THIS YEAR: MARKING FIFTY YEARS SINCE THE FORMATION OF SARDA ENGLAND

The Search and Rescue Dog Association (SARDA) was formed in Scotland in 1965 by Hamish MacInnes, then leader of the Glencoe team. The association initially covered the whole of the UK but, by 1971, it had devolved into Scottish, English and Welsh associations. SARDA England changed its name to Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England in early 2019.

'MRSDE AT 50' AUDIO ARCHIVE PROJECT



Chris and Ellie Sherwin are creating an archive of interviews with handlers, bodies and members past and present. In time, these will be made available to members and supporters via the website and social media and join with resources at the BMC, Mountain Heritage Trust and MREW.

Having started this project at the outbreak of Covid, the chance to meet with handlers and bodies at courses slipped away but Zoom has brought a new dimension to the capability of this project, enabling the recording of live interviews.

Above: A misty dog search, with handler Dave Mason and Search Dog Megan. Top: Alan playing dogsbody with Search Dog Bracken. Images supplied by MRSDE.



MREW PR consultant and media trainer, **Sally Seed**, looks at an aspect of publicity and PR and suggests ideas to build on for the future. This time: **Back to media basics.**

I'm assuming there could be a busy few months ahead with more media interest than usual in MR teams, so I thought it worth focusing on a few of the basics of handling media interviews. Apologies to readers who've done media training and/or done a lot of interviews in the past but, even for the experienced, it sometimes pays to go back to basics.

Begin at the beginning – before the interview

Someone on the team has taken the media enquiry and passed it on to you for response. Or you've taken the call and you've asked for a bit of time to check on a few things before phoning them back. You want to get it right so it's worth some planning.

First, make sure you're clear on the journalist's role and the medium they're working for. If they give a newspaper or magazine title, check whether it's for online or print or both. If they're from radio or TV, ask whether it'll be recorded (and edited) or done live (where what you say is what gets broadcast).

Especially if it's live, find out as much as you can in advance about the topics to be covered and at least the first couple of questions. You're unlikely to be given all the questions in advance as the journalist will want to build on your early answers and make it seem more like a conversation.

The main thing is to work out your key message — and keep it simple. What do you need to say (and the readers or listeners or viewers need to hear) to make it a successful interview? How you look and how media savvy you seem is unimportant compared with what is remembered of what you said and how you said it.

For the months ahead, the message is something as simple as: 'We want everyone

visiting the mountains to enjoy them and take them seriously'. Around that core message, no one enjoys getting cold, wet and lost so taking responsibility for staying safe makes sense. Mountain rescue can offer advice (#BeAdventureSmart) and you can be sure we'll be there if you need us.

During the interview – say what you mean

My first piece of advice for any telephone interview is to make sure your body knows it's an important conversation. For TV, you'll have cameras and microphones to give you focus and to get the adrenaline going but sitting at home with a phone or a laptop might not have the same impact.

Sit forward, on the edge of your seat and let your body language reinforce to your brain that this is important. Not only will this add life to your voice but the adrenaline that comes with feeling a bit nervous or worried will help you to react and think quickly too.

The key thing is to say what you mean and then stop. There's no such thing as 'off the record' in most circumstances and it's much safer simply only to say what you'd want to see in print or hear on a broadcast.

If you don't say it, you won't regret it and they won't report it.

Even with editing of a recorded interview, only the most malicious of editors would fundamentally change the sense of something a MR volunteer has said — you're the heroes!

It's worth bearing this in mind with social media posts too. Those same words, attributed to 'a team spokesperson', can reasonably be used in an article and could come back to bite you. So, again, if you don't want to see your words appearing in other media, don't use them on social media either.

And try to plan answers to questions with a

full stop. Once you've said what you want to say, **stop!**

It's up to the interviewer to make things flow and the worst thing you can do is keep talking to fill any gap or pause — it's a great journalism technique to let you keep talking and see what else you'll say. If you've said your message and answered the question, **stop!** The silence might feel uncomfortable, but that's not your problem.

And finally, how did you do?

However you feel the interview has gone, it's worth being as objective as possible about the outcome. Was your planned message clearly communicated? If so, that's 90% of what you needed to do. If not, how would you do it differently next time? Were there phrases or terms that you should have avoided? How would you explain them or what would you say instead next time? And were there questions that you hadn't anticipated and could prepare for in future?

It's worth doing a review but it's hard to do it alone, which takes me to one final piece of advice: if you can, get someone else from the team to listen in and observe your end of the conversation. They'll pick up on different things to you and they'll remember things that you'll forget in the fog of being on camera or on microphone. If it's recorded, they can even chip in if they think one of your answers was unclear in any way. You can ask to repeat that bit of the interview and, in my experience, that's rarely a problem.

I hope that some of this advice is useful. If you've anything to add or recent experience to share, please get in touch with sally@stoneleighcomms.co.uk or via the editor or the MREW Facebook Group. Who knows, there may even be MREW media courses to come in the months ahead if you'd like to practice and learn more. Thanks. ☺

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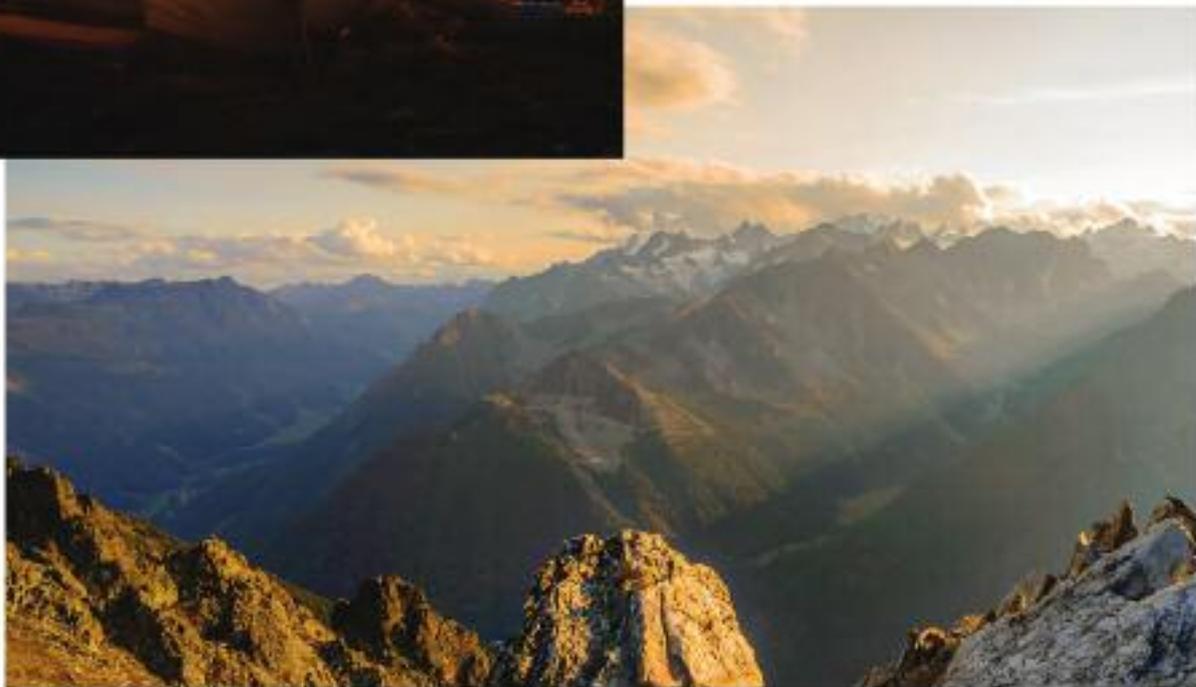
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OBITS



NEVILLE SHARP BEM CALDER VALLEY

Nev Sharp sadly passed away on 12 March. The thoughts of his colleagues in Calder Valley, and the wider world of mountain rescue, are with his wife, Lynn, his two daughters, three grandchildren, extended family and all his friends. Team members take a look back over his life.

In a celebration of his life, we would like to share some stories and memories of someone who will be remembered for being an inspiration to others, a man full of enthusiasm and dedicated to everything he was passionate for.

Nev had a long and full career in the police force. A strong theme throughout these years and beyond was his dedication to his work with search and rescue dogs. He was a dog handler for much of his time in the police force. His searches included the

infamous Lockerbie bombing in 1988. During this tragedy he was a police sergeant and spent a significant amount of time with other search dog teams, combing a 100-square-mile radius of the disaster area.

Nev's search dog at this time, Border collie Jan, was, we believe, the first dog in the north of England recognised as a specialist trained to detect dead bodies.

Their efforts and dedication on this search earned them both a special commendation. Over and above this, Nev was also awarded

six commendations with the police and, soon after his retirement, he was honoured with the award of the British Empire Medal.

As part of his time with the police, Nev was also involved in the search for Mr Robert Akrigg who, on a wintery morning in November 1965, set off from Gorple cottages to check water gauges around the area and never returned. This sad event led to the forming of Calder Valley Moorland Rescue Association, which later became Calder Valley Search and Rescue Team (CVSRT) and, while Nev only joined CVSRT a decade later, his links to the team can be tied right back to our inception.

In addition to being an operational member of the team, Nev's dedication with search dogs continued and, in 1991, shortly after his retirement from the police, Nev and search dog Gayle passed the stringent grading process to become a qualified handler and dog team with SARDA England (now Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England).

Nev continued devoting his time to both the search dogs and the team itself and, during his tenure as deputy team leader, he was part of a small group of people instrumental in the funding of the new, and still to this day, main base of operations for CVSRT, known as the Rescue Post, which opened in 1996.

In 1995 he was awarded life membership and, in 1996, became team leader, a post which he held for many years. During this



MIKE GRIMES OLDHAM

It was with an extremely heavy heart that Oldham team announced the passing of 'one of their own beloved past team members' in January.

'Mike joined the team, with his brother Noel and his friend Paul, in November 2002 and they fitted in immediately. Right from the start, he would have us all in stitches with his jokes and one-liners – which made training a whole lot more entertaining!

There are no platitudes here, Mike was everyone's friend. He had a heart of gold and a smile that could light up a room. If you ask any team member, we all have hundreds of wonderful memories of Mike, because that was who he was and we loved him for it. Even though he had left the team, he

stayed in touch. To hear that he has passed on is devastating and our thoughts are with Noel and his family, as well as all of Mike's friends at this impossible time. We will miss you so very, very much'. ✪

ALAN WISE BORDER SAR

Border Search and Rescue Unit was saddened to hear news in February of the death of their former team member. Alan joined the team after moving to Kelso from Cumbria to take up a post in the local high school and remained a team member until 2011.

During that time, 'Wisey' took part in a wide range of call-outs, from the Lockerbie disaster, several high-profile searches and many lighter-hearted incidents and memorable events. He would recount these stories in his heavy Cumbrian accent and with a fair helping of humour!

Alan served as team chairman for sixteen years – which no doubt tested his 'classroom control' more than his actual job, keeping order during team meetings! On his retirement, in July 2011, he returned to his beloved Keswick and his friendly nature, wide experience and dedication were sorely missed. He received the Scottish Mountain Rescue Distinguished Service Award for his long service.

His influence stretches far and wide. When one of his



Opposite top: Nev with Jan. **Opposite:** Nev with Search Dog Bracken. **Above left:** Nev with Search Dog Gayle. **Above right:** Assessment and debrief with SARDA England (as was) handler Wayne Thackray with his dog, Dodge.

time Nev oversaw significant developments to the team, its professionalism and its equipment.

This included the purchase of three new team vehicles (which he ensured were professionally kitted out for their required use), the roll-out of pagers to each member for alerting when the team had a call-out — this was state-of-the-art technology for its time — and raising the standard of the team's image with the introduction of new all-weather team clothing.

Nev can be credited with helping shape SARDA/MRSDE into what it has become today. He was well regarded for his support

of handlers old and new and spent several years as an official assessor. He was made honorary president of MRSDE in 2001 and held that position until his death.

Most recently Nev was working with MRSDE as they created a book celebrating 50 years of the organisation — this book has been successfully finished but yet to be printed (more about this next issue: Editor). Outside of his incredible and significant achievements with both the police and search and rescue, Nev was a keen ukulele player and also utilised his woodwork and leatherwork skills to restore and repair such instruments.

In true Nev style, following retirement he undertook a Masters in Forensic Science at Bradford University, being awarded a distinction. He was subsequently invited to lecture on the course to students, drawing on his unique experience throughout his career as a dog handler and experience of serious crime.

He was a truly inspirational man and will be missed by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him.

From everyone at CVSRT past, present, old and new, may you rest in peace, Nev. ☘

former pupils, Mark Tennant, returned to the Borders after university, to take up a teaching position, he met up with Alan for a pint.

'He knew I'd been involved in the mountaineering club at university,' says Mark, 'so asked if I would like to join the team. I was reluctant at first. I didn't think I'd have the skills, but Alan persuaded me to come along to the next training and I was hooked!' Mark ended up on the Borders team for almost ten years, and has since used his skills with both the Aberdeen and Ochills teams.

Another story typical of Alan but unrelated to the team is the 'cat incident'! A neighbour's cat got stuck up a tree near Mark's house in Kelso. The fire service don't come out to them for a number of days usually, so he asked Alan if he could use his MRT skills to help.

'He duly arrived with ropes and climbing gear and got up the tree fine, but the cat was having none of it. Despite toys and food being sent up, the cat wouldn't budge. Alan then saw the fire service were out training in their yard nearby, so he had an idea... he would cut the branch and get fire officers to catch the cat in a tarpaulin. The branch was tied off, the bemused firefighters took up position and Alan got



busy doing tree surgery. Finally, the cat moved... fifty foot downwards, straight into the tarpaulin, then took off at speed... straight towards the main road! Fortunately, it dodged every car, and we had a happy owner in the end!

Since his retirement, several team members have visited Alan in Keswick, often meeting in his favourite local, the Dog and Gun. 'It will be strange to visit Keswick now without catching up with him and hearing of his latest exploits. Stand down Reiver Wisey. Rest in peace'. ☘

Photos: Alan Wise with his DSA and on the hill, courtesy Border Search and Rescue Unit Facebook @BorderSAR .



The **Beinn Eighe** Lancaster crash, seventy years on

On 14 March 1951, a Lancaster GR3 TX264 bomber which had been converted for maritime patrol duties crashed near the summit of Beinn Eighe, in Wester Ross, Scotland. All eight crew, from RAF Kinloss in Moray, died. **Dave 'Heavy' Whalley** looks back at the story.

It is seventy years since the crash of the Lancaster GR3 TX264 on Beinn Eighe. I was told the story often and visited the site — situated in the most incredibly wild corrie on Beinn Eighe, in the north west of Scotland — on many occasions. It was a huge learning curve for the RAF mountain rescue teams, involving many changes that influenced most of the mountain rescue service in the UK. I have regularly spoken to a few of the RAF Kinloss team who were involved, taken relatives and family up to the site annually, and filmed up on the mountain. This place means a lot to me. Due to Covid I cannot visit this year but will when I can and for as long as my battered body allows.

The crash aroused curiosity and held the attention, and rumours circulated for some considerable time. The lines of communication in the early-fifties were still by newspaper, local or national, or the 'wireless'. Very few people had a telephone and television was in its infancy. The headline in the *Press and Journal*, Aberdeen ran: 'Search of hills for missing Lancaster, Missing plane sought in Sutherland, Aberdeen. Pilot on missing plane, where the missing bomber crashed, Plane wreck not yet reached.'

It's a sad story — as is anything of this nature, particularly for the members of the rescue teams involved — but it does indicate without doubt the 'special significance' or 'emphasis' on mountain rescue, with the extreme difficulties, along with mistakes, these teams faced then. A detailed description of particular places and local features from maps had to be the main concern and fully understood.

Beinn Eighe is an aggregated name for peaks similar to each other or bearing a definite relation to the one preceding it. In winter, this mountain is one of Scotland's great peaks, accessible only by mountaineers. The gully where the main wreckage lies is a loose, tricky ascent in summer and should only be attempted by mountaineers.

The following narrative relates the events of the crash, between 14 March 1951 until 27 August, a very harrowing rescue mission

undertaken by the RAF and civil mountain rescue services, all volunteers.

On 13 March 1951 at 18:04hrs, the Lancaster — call sign 'D' Dog of 120 Squadron — took off from RAF Kinloss, in a 'fog-free' climate off the Moray Coast between Lossiemouth and Nairn. The pilot was Flt Lt Harry Reid DFC, 24 years of age, with a total crew of eight with a second pilot, navigator, flight engineer and four signallers. It was a 'navigational exercise' via Cape Wrath, the very name a 'mingled feeling of anger and disdain' — this being the extreme north west point of the Scottish mainland and named after the Viking word 'hvráf' meaning a turning point, where the Vikings turned south to the Hebrides in the ninth century. The cape is isolated and its heathland untamed. Around midnight the aircrew flew over the lighthouse.

The last position, sent by radio was at 01:27hrs, 60 miles north of Cape Wrath. This was the very last message from the aircraft.

At 02:00hrs a boy living in Torridon, looking through his bedroom window on the east end of Upper Loch Torridon, saw a red flash in the distance, but didn't think any more about it until he saw the headlines in a newspaper, 'Missing Plane Sought'. This was two days after the aircraft went missing. He mentioned it to the local postmaster who immediately contacted RAF Kinloss. Similar reports had been received. An Airspeed Oxford was sent to search, concentrating on Beinn Eighe. The wreckage of the Lancaster was sighted on 16 March.

On 17 March, the Kinloss RAF Rescue Team arrived in the area and the next day approached Beinn Eighe from the North and into Coire Mhic Fhearchair from Loch Maree. Wreckage from the Lancaster was found after arriving at the foot of the Triple Buttresses and lying in the 'corrie'. A 'corrie' is a semi-circular hollow or a circular space in a mountain side. This particular wreckage had fallen, the bulk of the aircraft being much higher with the crew inside. At the foot of the Western Buttress were the port wing, undercarriage, two engines and various cowlings. On the following day, the starboard wing and some other parts had been blown down by the strong winds, but still no fuselage.

The next day another party managed to climb higher and spotted the fuselage, burnt out, but couldn't reach it. Further attempts were abandoned for the time being.

The weather over the whole period of the



search was 'exceptionally' severe for the time of the year. It was intensely cold with constant snow showers and high winds and temperatures well below freezing at night.

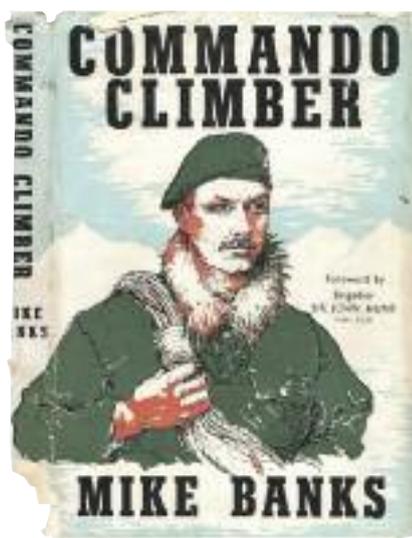
The north of Scotland is much closer, in fact 'considerably' closer, to the Arctic Circle than north Wales. Conditions in winter can be more 'Alpine'. They may be 'Arctic'. Between Beinn Eighe and Sail Mhor the weather was absolutely atrocious, with the wind coming over the ridge with such force it was virtually impossible to move, and the snow anything from one to four feet. The gully from the corrie was a solid sheet of ice.

It was certain that no one was alive in the wreckage, and in the opinion of the officer in charge of the team the wreckage was so situated it couldn't be reached by any members of the public unless they were 'highly experienced climbers'.

The CO at RAF Kinloss, in the meantime, had offers from the Moray Mountaineering Club, a doctor (John Brewster) with this club having considerable climbing experience in winter. This offer and another suggestion for help from the Scottish Mountaineering Club, holding their Easter meeting at Achnashellach to the south of Beinn Eighe were both declined.

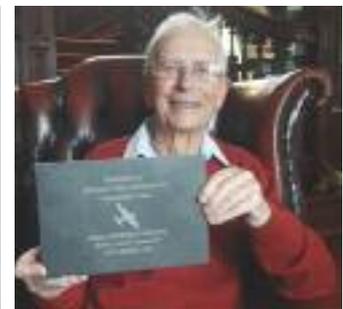
On 24 March Dr Brewster informed the CO that men from the Moray club were going to Beinn Eighe on their own initiative, the RAF team were ordered to return to base. Five men from the club arrived at Torridon and attempted to reach the aircraft but of no avail and didn't make a further attempt.

Another attempt was made by a Royal Marine Commando, Captain Mike Banks and Angus Eskine. After a really difficult time with the weather, particularly gusts of wind that brought the human body on all fours, these two reached the main bulk of the aircraft.



Above: 'Commando Climber' by Mike Banks gives his view on the accident and the recovery.

Eventually all unauthorised visits were stopped and the RAF team once again returned to Beinn Eighe and this time



Opposite page: Beinn Eighe Lancaster Crash, Sunday 18 March 1951. The whole of the Kinloss team in Coire Mhic Fhearchair. Above left: Joss's classic photos at the crash site. Above right: Joss Gosling with the memorial plaque; his boots on their final journey. Images from the Joss Gosling collection.

THE CREW:

PILOT: FLT LT H S REID
SECOND PILOT: SGT R CLUCAS
NAVIGATOR: FG OFF R STRONG
SIGNALLER: FLT LT P TENNISON

FLIGHT ENGINEER: FLT SGT G FARQUHAR
SIGNALLERS: FLT SGT J NAISMITH
 SGT W D BECK
 SGT J W BELL

reached the wreckage. It was most difficult and dangerous work recovering the bodies; three were actually in the fuselage. The last body was not recovered until 27 August.

Rumours, idle gossip as always, flourished that the crew had survived the impact but rescue being too late. It was obvious to the rescuers, and verified by the medical authorities, that death was 'instantaneous'.

After the last body was recovered, the team sent the large pieces of the fuselage and wing hurtling down the gully which later came to be known as Fuselage Gully. Much of it remains to this day. One of the propellers has to be climbed over and is used by climbers as a belay in winter. As recently as 2009, two well-known climbers were avalanched whilst descending from the gully and the wreckage stopped them being seriously injured as one of the climbers hit the propeller on his way down the gully. It made big news in the press.

Five of the crew of Lancaster TX264 are buried in Kinloss Cemetery, set in the peaceful grounds of the ruined abbey, they are Sgt W D Beck, Sgt J W Bell, Sgt R Clucas, Flt Sgt J Naismith and Flt Lt P Tennison, in a section reserved for many aircrew who have died flying from RAF Kinloss over the years.

THIRTY-FOUR YEARS LATER...

On 28 August 1985, a group of Officer Cadets led by Sgt Jim Morning and Sgt Tom Jones were airlifted onto the summit of Beinn Eighe by a Sea King helicopter from 202 Squadron.

One of 'D' Dog's propellers was recovered and put into a lifting net and taken by the helicopter to the road, then on to RAF Kinloss. The twisted three-blade propeller now stands outside the wooden Mountain Rescue Section building as a permanent memorial to 'D' Dog's crew. This memorial has been replaced and is at RAF Lossiemouth now where the current RAF Rescue Team is operational.

LOOKING BACK TO THEN, FROM NOW

The standard of a mountain rescue team, of even the rescue service as a whole, fluctuates considerably and, sometimes, alarmingly. Several factors contribute to this.

For many years, until 1960 (with the last national servicemen, those on deferred service, being discharged in 1963), there was National Service of eighteen months to two years. A man would be trained as a good mountaineer and when competent he would be lost to civilian life. Sometimes several members would be demobilised at the same time. Not only would it be imperative to find new volunteers but also men to train these novices. Also, the teams had to be commanded.

To say that they were sometimes led by incompetent men is unfair and misleading, but because there might be no experienced men available at one time, they were often led by officers and NCOs who would be incompetent to deal with emergencies, even those which might appear simple problems to the experienced mountaineer.

Sometimes, and by chance, the fault might be corrected. Time, tact and a good team could teach an officer his job (although no team will tolerate an inefficient NCO. Either the NCO will go, or the good men and therefore, the standard of the team). Tact was required on both sides particularly when life is in the balance, as it always is on rescues. Feelings ran too close to the surface. The fewer experienced mountaineers in a team, the more tolerance prevailed. As the service took shape, with experienced men in the majority, the teams worked more smoothly with, as it were, less emotional involvement.

At the start of 1951, teams were inadequately equipped and poorly trained, but where — in Wales — this knowledge was confined to the RAF, in Scotland the repercussions of the Beinn Eighe disaster were widely publicised. About this time, two medical officers, Berkeley and Mason, who had put forward suggestions for improved efficiency came to the notice of the Air Ministry. It was largely due to the efforts of these two that the organisation and training of the teams underwent a drastic change in the following year. One of the team members who was on the crash and has a unique account of what happened was Joss Gosling who lived in Fort William. He was only a young lad at the time and the crash affected him greatly.

Joss was a competent mountaineer as he had climbed previously before his National Service. He had some unique photos and a diary of events of what happened. He expressed how awesome it was to see the corrie for the first time and how he felt during the long days of searching and recovery. His description of the great corrie being like a cathedral always sticks in my mind and when the mist swirls in these great cliffs you can feel his words of that eventful time. He recalled that the 'ugly step' on the ridge caused problems as the kit they had was very poor but they did their best.

Joss was at the crash site on the 50th anniversary in 2001 and spoke with great



authority on the tragedy. The RAF Kinloss team put a small memorial on the propeller below the gully in 2001 in memory of those who died in this crash, 'lest we forget'.

I was very privileged to have my last weekend before I retired from the RAF in this area as a member of the RAF Kinloss MRT. By then, the 'Torrison Trilogy' of Beinn Eighe, Liathach and Beinn Alligin had become test pieces for team training, in both summer and winter. There were a few epic call-outs over the years, mostly not reported by the national press. I climbed Fuselage Gully on many occasions with team members during my 37 years with the service.

In early December 2007, with two of the young Kinloss team members, we had a special day — my last day with the RAF before retirement. It is a fairly simple climb by modern standards but I broke a crampon at the beginning and it made the day very interesting as we were being chased by a big storm as we descended. One crampon on the steep descent was thought-provoking and I can only imagine how the team in 1951 coped, with their simple kit. On my retirement I spend a two great years with Torrison as a team member. Since retirement, it is still a great privilege to return to and enjoy the beauty of this mountain, its ridges, corries and wildlife.

In 2011, on the 60th anniversary of the crash, a group of serving RAF and Torrison personnel went up to site. The weather, according to Joss Gosling, was very similar.



Top: The late Andy Nisbet, abseiling from the propeller © Andy Nisbet Collection. **Above:** Heavy at the wing, below the gully © Heavy Whalley. **Below left:** The propeller memorial © Heavy Whalley.

We had thigh-deep snow and the journey into the corrie took over three hours. BBC Radio Scotland accompanied us on the day and did a programme on the incident including a moving memorial ceremony complete with wraith. The Stornoway Coastguard helicopter flew over the site as the weather came in making it a very moving day. Joss — by then in his 80s — was interviewed at the hotel where the team had camped sixty years before.

More recently, Geoff Strong, a nephew of Fg Off Robert Strong, one of the crew killed in the crash, asked to visit the crash site. He lives down south and has now three times made the pilgrimage with myself and friends. We headed up again in May 2018, with Joss's daughter Heather with a new plaque to put on the propeller below the Triple Butress but it became evident that the old plaque was put on in 2001 to last and wasn't yet ready to be replaced.

Sadly, in November 2018, Joss passed away in Fort William surrounded by his loving family but his memory will live on every time we visit Torrison and Beinn Eighe.

We did finally complete the replacement of the plaque on Saturday 11 May 2019 and the family were with us. It was a special day.

This place, even after all these years, means so much to many. 🙏

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HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH? KNOW YOUR ALCOHOL LIMITS

THE FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITY

We all know mountain rescuers enjoy a cheeky beer or two, especially at conferences. Given that more than one in three adults drank more alcohol during the first lockdown, according to a University of Cambridge study (see opposite), two more lockdowns on seems a good time to ask exactly how much is too much. Welfare case worker for The Fire Fighters Charity, **Irene Ramsden**, dispels some of the myths around alcohol and how to spot the signs of addiction.



ALCOHOL IS A DEPRESSANT. IT MAY MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER AT FIRST, BUT ULTIMATELY IT WILL EXACERBATE ANY EXISTING MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS, PARTICULARLY ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Drinking is a part of life for many people, especially at certain times of year. When it's so common in society, it can be hard to tell the difference between someone who likes to have a few drinks now and then and someone with a real problem.

Considering the year we've all had, it's no wonder many of us are feeling a little more stressed or anxious than usual. But these feelings can cause our drinking to creep up, which can have both physical and psychological consequences.

THE IMPACT OF ALCOHOL ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Research from Alcohol Change UK found that over half of UK drinkers have turned to alcohol for mental health reasons during the pandemic, but of that figure, four in ten drinkers said turning to drink actually worsened their mental health. Their research also found that almost one in three people

have been drinking at increasing or high-risk levels over the past six months.

Alcohol is a depressant. It may make you feel better at first but, ultimately, it will exacerbate any existing mental health concerns, particularly anxiety and depression.

WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF TO HAVE DANGEROUS ALCOHOL HABITS?

There are messages we tell ourselves to normalise our drinking, which we need to watch out for. These include any of the following reasons:

- It helps me relax
- I deserve it, I've had a hard day
- I don't feel good and alcohol cheers me up
- My mates drink way more than me, my drinking must be okay
- Everyone I know drinks

- I can't stop right before Christmas... before my big birthday... before the team dinner... the conference... (pick your party)... that's anti-social...
- My drinking can't be that bad... I'm still functioning and going to work.

Knowing how much is too much can be confusing when it comes to alcohol. Most of us know when we've overdone it (usually the following morning) but it's the cumulative, long-term effect that can creep up on us. Before we know it, we may have developed a drinking habit without even realising it, and we may be drinking more than we like or should.

ALCOHOL ADDICTION

Alcohol addiction, also known as alcoholism, is a disease that affects people of all walks of life. The severity of the disease, how often someone drinks, and the alcohol they consume varies from person to person. Some people drink heavily all day, while others binge drink and then stay sober for a while.

It has no single cause. Psychological, genetic, and behavioural factors can all contribute to having the disease, and factors like genetics, sex, race, or socioeconomic group may predispose someone to alcohol addiction.

Addiction can show itself in a variety of ways, depending on the severity of the disease and how often someone drinks. But regardless of how the addiction looks, we typically say someone has an alcohol addiction if they heavily rely on drinking and can't stay sober for an extended period of time. Some symptoms of alcohol addiction are:

- Increased quantity or frequency of use of alcohol
- High tolerance for alcohol, or lack of 'hangover symptoms
- Drinking at inappropriate times, such as first thing in the morning, or in places like church or work
- Wanting to be where alcohol is present and avoiding situations where there is none

- Changes in friendships — someone with an alcohol addiction may choose friends who also drink heavily
- Avoiding contact with loved ones
- Hiding alcohol, or hiding while drinking
- Dependence on alcohol to function in everyday life
- Increased lethargy, depression, or other emotional issues
- Legal or professional problems such as an arrest or loss of a job.

As an addiction tends to get worse over time, it's important to look for early warning signs. If identified and treated early, someone with an alcohol addiction may be able to avoid major consequences of the disease.

It's important to note that alcoholism is a real disease, therefore it has serious effects on the body and your wellbeing.

Although alcohol initially makes you feel more relaxed, the more you drink can lead to inhibition and it distorts your judgement. It can cause increased anxiety, depression and aggression, which can lead to coordination issues and blackouts. This in turn results in confusion, stupor and even coma. At this point it can affect your heart rate and breathing.

There is also a link between alcohol consumption, some cancers, dementia and liver disease, not to mention being extremely high in calories.

SO WHAT'S THE ADVICE AROUND ALCOHOL?

We say to drink a maximum of 14 units a week. That works out around the following amounts:

Spirits: alcohol by volume (ABV) 37.5%: 14 single measures a week

Average-strength lager: ABV 4%: seven pints a week

Average-strength wine: ABV 12%: nine 125ml glasses, seven 175ml glasses or four 250ml glasses.

We also recommend you spread it evenly over the week, and not binge-drink it all in one go.

Remember, the following morning you're still likely to have alcohol in your system as well, so you shouldn't get behind a wheel. It takes one hour per unit to remove the alcohol from your system. So if you'd had five pints one night, you shouldn't drive until at least ten hours later. And women absorb alcohol faster than men and get rid of it more slowly.

If you'd like more information on alcohol, addiction, or knowing your limits, there are plenty of online resources available. 📱

OTHER RESOURCES:

NHS: [nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse/)

Alcohol Change: [alcoholchange.org.uk](https://www.alcoholchange.org.uk)

Alcoholics Anonymous: [alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

Al Anon UK: [al-anonuk.org.uk](https://www.al-anonuk.org)

Drink Aware: [drinkaware.co.uk](https://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

Alcohol Health Alliance UK: [ahauk.org](https://www.ahauk.org)

Covid-19 and lockdown measures drove some individuals more than others to use alcohol to cope with stress, according to the Cambridge University study, published in BMJ Open.

In early March, the World Health Organization declared Covid-19 a pandemic and many countries put in place drastic safety measures to control the spread of the virus, including an extended lockdown period. In the UK, the first nationwide lockdown started on 23 March 2020 and lasted until 1 June, when restrictions began to be eased. Since then more localised lockdowns have been implemented where necessary.

A team of researchers at the University of Cambridge has explored whether the stress of the pandemic and lockdown measures affected people's alcohol consumption. Between 14 and 28 May 2020, 1346 people around the world completed an online survey about their drinking habits before and during lockdown. The researchers used their responses to compare the amount of alcohol consumed during lockdown against that in November 2019, as well as their drinking severity (occurrences of problem drinking such as drinking to the point of memory loss or neglecting personal responsibilities due to drinking). They also assessed mental health factors such as depression and anxiety.

The survey revealed that while the units of alcohol consumed per week decreased during lockdown – down from a mean average of 8.32 units in November to 8.03 during lockdown – a substantial percentage of individuals (36%) increased their drinking during lockdown. In the UK, the units of alcohol consumed per week increased from 10.94 to 11.25 units.

Samantha N Sallie, the study's first author and a PhD student at the Department of Psychiatry, said: 'While in countries such as Canada and the USA people drank less during lockdown, in the UK there was a small increase in alcohol consumption.'

Older individuals tended to increase their alcohol consumption more than younger people during lockdown, from 10 to 11 units weekly. Age may play a particularly unique role in the context of COVID-19 due to the greater need for older people to have more stringent isolation, with potentially fewer support mechanisms, and hence a risk of greater isolation and loneliness, as well as concern about the impact of COVID-19 on their personal health.

Respondents with children reported a greater increase in alcohol consumption during lockdown, of between 0.54 and 2.02 units, though their depression and anxiety scores were lower than for those without children. The researchers say this suggests the additional burden of childcare and home schooling contributed to the tendency towards drinking, possibly in the context of stress relief, but the presence of children may also be protective against depression and anxiety.

'For parents having to take on extra childcare responsibilities during lockdown, possibly at the same time as having to manage changes to their work routine, it's possible that the extra stress increased their tendency to drink,' said Sallie. 'On the other hand, having children may mitigate against loneliness that has been highlighted as a major issue during the isolation of lockdown.'

The team found that essential workers – specifically healthcare workers responsible for taking care of individuals with Covid-19 – showed an increase in drinking amount of between 0.45 and 1.26 units, while those whose loved ones became severely ill or died from Covid-19 showed an increase in problem drinking during the lockdown.

'This demonstrates how the virus itself has affected alcohol consumption in those who have had close contact with the very real and devastating effects of Covid-19,' added Sallie.

Although men consumed more alcohol than women, they showed a decrease in both drinking amount and severity during lockdown, while women demonstrated the opposite trend, with women consuming an extra unit of alcohol a week during lockdown. This finding corroborates evidence that indicates women are more likely than men to consume alcohol in order to cope with stress.

Individuals who reported a change in their employment status or were isolating alone were more likely to have higher depression scores, but showed no change in their drinking behaviour. Those individuals isolating with others but reporting a poor relationship were more likely to have higher depression and anxiety scores. Dr Valerie Voon, senior author of the study from the University of Cambridge, said, 'As Covid-19 remains part of daily life, many of us are turning to alcohol to cope with stress. For many people, drinking in moderation can be help with stress relief, but for others it can be more problematic. Alcohol misuse is a major public health issue in the United Kingdom, costing £21-52 billion with NHS costs of £3.5 billion per year. Our findings highlight a need to identify those individuals who are at risk for problem drinking so we can offer them greater support during the ongoing pandemic.'

The researchers say there may be a number of reasons for the overall decrease in alcohol use and problematic use, including stringent lockdown measures leading to a decrease in the availability of alcoholic drinks within the immediate household and because people tend to consume alcohol in social situations, such as at the pub or when eating out.

Reference: Sallie, S N et al Assessing International Alcohol Consumption Patterns During Isolation from the COVID-19 Pandemic Using an Online Survey: Highlighting Negative Emotionality Mechanisms. *BMJ Open*; 26 Nov 2020; DOI: 10.1136/bmjopen-2020-044276

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TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE CHARITY,
GO TO [FIREFIGHTERSCHARITY.ORG.UK](https://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk)

The in-house rehabilitation programme offered by **The Fire Fighters Charity** is currently unavailable due to Covid-19 but will be accessible to mountain and cave rescue team members, via the Rescue Benevolent Fund, when guidance permits.





BUXTON TEAM INVITES YOU TO JOIN THEM FOR BMRT LIVE ON FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE 25 APRIL AT 7.00PM

Tune in for 45 interesting and insightful minutes with us, as we explain who we are, what we do and how we do it. With many mountain rescue teams having to adapt and survive during the pandemic we wanted to show how social media can be a great tool for us to educate, inform, entertain and fundraise. Thanks to our friends Luke Leutner and Sound Credit TV we're going live and we'd like you to join us.

In the autumn of 2019, the team was contacted by Luke Leutner, a final year student at Salford University, about an exciting project he had in mind. The idea for this project began when I had to come up with a programme idea for my final year university project,' says Luke. 'I'd already filmed a short documentary with the Buxton team and knew they were a great cause, so I wanted to do more to support them, as it was a cause I felt passionate about. It eventually developed into a live charity stream, broadcast on social media.

'As part of it, I filmed several short films to be shown on the programme, including the story of a climber, Oli, they had rescued from a really bad fall. Spending all this time with the team and the people they rescue enforced the fact they have a genuinely positive impact on people's lives.

'Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus pandemic, we had to postpone the broadcast by almost a year. I'm no longer a student, but I still wanted to finish this project and show the world all the excellent work the team does. Sound Credit TV was kind enough to let me use their broadcast kit, making all of this possible.'

After months of planning and hard work we were only a few weeks away from the broadcast date when Covid-19 put us all on lockdown. We were worried we had missed this opportunity but, throughout the last year, the team has been busy producing educational content for our emerging YouTube channel and been at the forefront of creating dynamic, engaging Covid-safe team training. We also kept in touch with Luke with a hope to still make the show.

'We are delighted to be working with Luke and his team,' says Neil Carruthers, Buxton team leader. 'We very much hope that BMRT live will give all the viewers an insight into the work our volunteers do. I hope you find the event interesting and informative and we look forward to hearing from you during the event.'

FACEBOOK: @BUXTONMRT

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH

FEBRUARY: CLEVELAND TEAM PART OF VIRTUAL ROYAL VISIT TO NORTH YORKSHIRE AND CLEVELAND

HRH the Earl of Wessex paid a virtual visit to Cleveland and North Yorkshire via Zoom, in an event hosted by the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire including colleagues from Cleveland Police, local health services and others. He was interested to learn how the various services had coped with the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges ahead. Cleveland MRT was represented by one of the team's deputy team leaders, Mike Gallagher.



Mike was asked to talk about how mountain rescue had responded to the pandemic. He explained that the first lockdown period was busier in some regions although relatively quiet for Cleveland, but was soon followed locally by lots of call-

outs before they steadied to a near 'normal' rate later in 2020. The challenges of PPE, social distancing and decontamination of vehicles and equipment were raised, together with the team's work with floods and water incidents in 2020 and earlier this year.

Mike also highlighted the difficulties of fundraising last year, how that had been addressed and the funding challenges moving forward in 2021. The earl acknowledged the contribution of mountain rescue teams and thanked all those present during the event for their contribution.

A video excerpt of Cleveland MRT's contribution to the call (courtesy of the Lord-Lieutenant's office) is available on the team's YouTube channel: <https://tinyurl.com/y3cpsb5m>.

AUCTION SUPPORTS CHRIS LEWIS FUNDRAISING EFFORT

As with the whole MRT community everyone at Cleveland team was deeply saddened to hear about Patterdale's Chris Lewis. To support the fundraising effort, one team member, a keen photographer, donated for auction a large canvas photographic print of Wastwater.

Listed on the team's eBay site and advertised via social media, the canvas attracted a winning bid of £310 from North Yorkshire farmers Brian and Julie Cook. Team members also wrote personalised handwritten messages to Chris which were photographed and printed onto a card for Chris.



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DAFYDD LAWRENCE CENTRAL BEACONS MRT

In a time before everyone was required to limit themselves to local exercise and stay mainly within the four walls of their house or workplace, an acquaintance was walking with their sister on a 15km walk over moderate terrain involving an easy hill climb. At some point not far from the end, the weather closed in a bit and the 5-way junction of a footpath (or was it sheep trails?) they had arrived at didn't seem to correspond to what they were expecting on the map...



With limited visibility to get further identification, they tried a few paths, even trying to convince themselves the compass was wrong (although they weren't particularly experienced in the art of navigation). The OS map started to disintegrate due to the rain and, although not in a tremendous panic, they decided the best thing at this stage was to retrace their steps and take a different route off. This involved a 6km detour. They didn't want to cause a fuss and didn't call me for advice despite having a phone signal.

On another occasion I've heard a story of a 999 operative (not MR-related) trying to help a lost person and, after having recently had 'the briefing' from a company who is trying to market their proprietary location system, had proceeded to explain over the phone how to download that company's app and open it up to get a location phrase that they could then convert into a GPS location that could be used by the 999 control centre's mapping service. This whole procedure took about 25 minutes due to a slow network connection and careful explanations, and was heralded as a great success story, helping the poor soul.

In MR we are all accustomed to the ease of use of SARLOC and PhoneFind to get someone's location with a few easy steps, and we ourselves will probably have a number of apps to show us mapping data, grid locations, route directions and some of you are probably able to navigate certain areas blindfolded in a whiteout at night just by the feel of the rocks under the soles of your B2 boots.

However, in the situation where MR is not yet involved and the 999 location systems (which some control centres have access to) are not available such as the situations previously mentioned, I thought that the user could just visit the web and quickly get their current grid reference... easy? They can let someone else know, they can look at it on the map to get a sense of their location. However, I couldn't find a suitable website. They were all either advertising-heavy, had loads of images, plenty of tracking cookies, weren't great on mobiles or had awkward URLs that would then be required to be spoken down the phone to a friend in need.

So, I created a very simple, easy to

remember, small in size, mobile-friendly website (more of a webpage), with no requirement for revenue streams, advertising, tracking etc. It is designed to do one simple job: visit an easy-to-remember website with a limited data signal and give a clear GPS location and grid reference you can relay to someone you may wish to inform of your location.

Whereami.uk isn't particularly pretty, I'll admit, but it allows the following features:

- Shows your current GPS (Lat, Long) and grid referenced location with an estimation of GPS accuracy
- It will spend 60 seconds trying to get an accuracy below 6m
- There is advice on how to contact mountain rescue and essential information to state to the police when you call
- You can text, copy or WhatsApp the location to someone else and a link to view your location on Google Maps or the OS website (the latter would require a good data signal and is the OS vector maps

rather than the Raster 1:25k that would be preferable)

• If the site is visited in advance there is an option to save it to your app drawer (or equivalent) on a mobile and then the site will work completely without a phone signal (albeit the links to share your location will be compromised, of course).

• There are links at the bottom of the page to solicit donations to MREW and/or the local team of the user.

This site isn't designed to replace any other app, technology or advice that may be given. It is another tool in the box that may be useful and may just help someone one day in a difficult situation — just ask them to put their phone on speaker and visit whereami.uk.

At the moment it is being tested but feedback so far has been great. If anyone would like to try it out and give further feedback, that would be much appreciated. Send comments good, bad or inquisitive to MR@whereami.uk. ☺





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As of 1st March 2021 all Personal Accident insurances have been renewed, the policy details for this and all other covers can be found on the 2021 MREW Tysers Flyer which can be accessed in the MREW Moodle. Should you have any policy enquiries please contact the team on mountainrescue@tysers.com.

www.tysers.com

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH



Photos courtesy of Duddon & Furness MRT.

Call-outs in the time of COVID



MARCH: DUDDON & FURNESS TEAM MEMBERS HELP RESCUE QUADBIKER FROM SIXTY-FOOT SINKHOLE IN FIELD

Team members were able to assist Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service extracting the casualty using safety lines and a rope system. The casualty was then transferred to the North West Air Ambulance for transport to hospital. Quite the multi-agency effort by all involved!

MARCH: ABERGLASLYN TEAM MEMBERS CELEBRATE THEIR VIRTUAL MREW LONG SERVICE AWARDS



Team chairman Gethin Edwards was delighted to virtually present four team members with the MREW awards for their years of exemplary service to mountain rescue.

Jon Dobson Jones received his 40-year-award, having served over that time between the Moelwyn, South Snowdonia and Aberglaslyn teams.

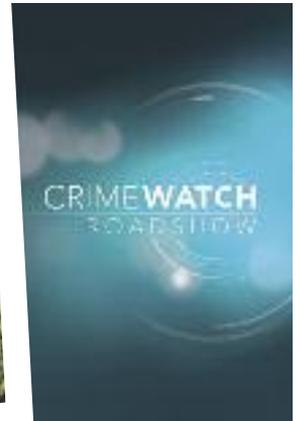
Paul Jones received his 25-year-award, having been a founder member of Aberglaslyn in 1996.

Dion Jones was also celebrating 25 years with Aberglaslyn but, as a

former member of South Snowdonia MRT, he has served 30 years.

Finally, David Evans has been a team member for 25 years. Previously a member of both the Rhinog and South Snowdonia MRTs, he celebrates a total 34 years of service to mountain rescue this year.

Clockwise from top left: Dave Evans, Dion Jones, Paul Jones and Jon Dobson Jones © Aberglaslyn MRT.



MARCH: BBC'S CRIMEWATCH ROADSHOW FEATURES INTERVIEW WITH CENTRAL BEACONS TEAM

We're used to seeing Central Beacons team members and their vehicle gracing our screens as the BBC ident but, in March, team leader Penny Brockman (who is also MREW Finance Director and trustee) and deputy team leader Huw Jones were interviewed in a short feature on the crime show, talking about the additional measures the team has had to put in place during the pandemic. It was a great opportunity to bring awareness to the work of mountain rescue everywhere and Penny was keen to get across both the 'stay local' and the 'stay safe' messages.

As team members assembled kit and stretcher, Huw talked about the logistics and discomfort of wearing PPE for a call-out, particularly in warmer weather, and Penny gave a confident overview of the impact on the team over the twelve months and the high number of call-outs, despite the various lockdowns – all sentiments which will resonate across England and Wales.

In January, in one of many calls for the team, despite lockdown limitations, team members were asked to assist with the rescue of a gentleman on the mountain above Aberaman, Aberdare. The exact circumstances were unknown but the gentleman was believed to have been out there all night during the afternoon who raised the alarm.

Given the sub-zero temperatures, the gentleman was very seriously cold and treated for prolonged hypothermia by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust HART team. Then, in a joint effort involving HART and South Wales Police Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend officers, the man was packaged onto the stretcher and carried off the mountain to a waiting ambulance.

With a slightly unusual twist to the tale, while all this was going on, residents close to the rendezvous point approached team members to help a neighbour who was experiencing a medical issue. Two of the team's casualty carers took first aid equipment to assess the person and looked after him until the arrival of WAST paramedics in an ambulance, which then took him off to hospital for further treatment. All in a day's work it would seem.

Above: Central Beacons team members during the call-out to a severely hypothermic casualty in January 2021 © Central Beacons MRT.



Andy Mollins, Putherside MRT

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NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH

JANUARY: A PIECE OF HISTORY COMES TO LIGHT FOR THE BORDERS SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT

In 1975, writes **Seymour Haugh**, the unit acquired – from the Mountain Rescue Committee – two Thomas stretchers. The team no longer had these stretchers or any records to suggest what became of them until last November.

A Kirk Yetholm friend of team member, Scott Thompson, spotted an old stretcher and mentioned it to Scott. It was an item in a farm sale at Hethpool, Northumberland. Investigation and a conversation with the farmer, Bill Elliot, established it had been given to him by the team about thirty years ago, after the team had acquired a new stretcher, presumably a MacInnes. The Elliot family withdrew the stretcher from the farm sale and kindly donated it to the team.

Interestingly, the chairman of the Mountain Rescue Committee in 1975, when the team received the Thomas stretchers, was Noel Kirkman FRCS, whose father was William Harold Kirkman owner of a wrought-iron works. When Peter Bell started converting Thomas stretchers in 1968, the manufacturer of the Thomas stretcher was W Kirkman of North Street, Manchester 11.



Left: The BSARU Thomas stretcher. **Right:** Team member Scott Thompson and the Elliot Family with the Thomas stretcher © BSARU.



Top: Morecambe Bay courtesy of Bowland Pennine MRT.

JANUARY: SEVENTEEN YEARS SINCE THE COCKLE PICKER SEARCH

Bowland Pennine team marked the anniversary of the tragic incident for 35 cockle pickers in Morecambe Bay via social media, lest it ever be forgotten, sending thoughts and prayers to the families and friends of those who were lost that night.

'This was one of the most distressing and demanding events that any of our volunteers have ever had to take part in and is still felt today. Many of those who attended are still in the team'.

Nothing could have prepared team members for that night and the awful tragedy they witnessed. Sixteen cockle pickers were found safe on the shoreline having either made their own way out or being rescued from the treacherous waters. Unfortunately nineteen bodies (seventeen men and two women) were recovered during the night and the following day.

That night, Bowland Pennine noted that they alone had logged over 300 rescuer hours. They had worked alongside search dogs, RAF and police helicopters, Lifeboat crews, police, fire and ambulance personnel, and members of both the Duddon and Furness and Kendal teams.

JANUARY: TEAM MEMBERS ASSIST IN GETTING THE VULNERABLE VACCINATED



Kinder team members assisted in the national effort to get the vulnerable vaccinated against Covid-19 during heavy snowfall, using their vehicle to transport vaccination staff and patients.

The team responded when they could not take people to the vaccination centres, in Chapel-en-le-Frith and New Mills. 'If it's the adverse weather that is stopping these vaccinations taking place then we are very happy to use this vehicle to help our local communities,' said team leader Neil Woodhead. The team Hi-Lux was particularly busy that week, also responding to flooding in the area.

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MARCH: CAVE RESCUE ORGANISATION PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF A TEAM COLLEAGUE, KILLED DURING A RESCUE IN 1986

As the UK reflected on the passing of twelve months since the first lockdown, on 23 March, CRO team members remembered their friend and colleague, Dave Anderson, lost the same day 35 years before – a day the team will never forget. Dave's tragic death was recorded in the team's 1986 incident report, the first member of the organisation to be killed on a rescue.

The entry from the incident report read: 'Sunday 23rd March 1986 (1.35am). Rowten Pot. While searching for missing cavers, CRO co-opted underground controller (m27) slipped from a traverse into a gully near bottom of last pitch and drowned under the force of water'. In their book about the beginnings and history of the Cave Rescue Organisation – 'Race Against Time, a History of the Cave Rescue Organisation', published by Lyon Books in 1988 – Jim Eyre and John Frankland told the story of the rescue 'in memoriam'. We include the extract below...



On the evening of Saturday 22 March 1986, the Cave Rescue Organisation was holding its annual general meeting at the Clapham rescue headquarters. Outside, the rain was lashing down. Just a few miles away in Kingsdale, a party of university students was in trouble. At half-past ten, meeting over, the CRO drifted into the bar of the New Inn next door for a pint and a chat. A few minutes later, CRO member Harvey Lomas came in. He had missed the meeting, but had just driven down through Kingsdale in what he described as a cloudburst, and had seen a cavers' minibus parked on the lonely road close to the entrance of the popular Kingsdale Master Cave.

The inevitable call came through to the police at Settle just before 11.00pm. A number of students had gone into the Kingsdale system at 2.00pm. Two of them were aiming to go upstream and dive through the short sumps which connect with the bottom of 400-foot deep Rowten Pot, one of the main feeders for the Master Cave. As water levels below ground responded to the heavy rain above, their companions were able to escape from the flooding cave, but the two divers did not return. In settled dry weather, their objective was not unreasonable, even for a first cave dive. To attempt it that day showed a certain lack of understanding of the effect of the rainfall on our Pennine Caves.

from the ARCHIVE

The weather through into evening was appalling. The rescue team did not know where the missing cavers would be. They could have reached safe haven inside the cave in a side passage, trapped by flooding in the Master Cave, or just been swept to their death in the mile-long sump at the downstream end of the cave. There was just a possibility that they had got through to Rowten Pot. To check that out meant descending its shafts from the top. In flood conditions this is a hazardous business. Rowten Pot takes a large stream which, when swollen by floodwater,

thunders down the shafts with a great roar, scouring everything in its path. When the water is only just above freezing, as on that night, the numbing cold adds yet another problem.

Down at valley level, the normally dry entrance to the Master Cave was chest-deep in running water. Five hundred yards into the cave, the main drainage tunnel could not be reached in the normal way by climbing down for twenty feet as this would have led straight into eight feet of fast-flowing water and instant death. Teams prepared to tackle both entrances.

Phil Pappard (CRO chairman and an underground controller), set off up the hillside towards Rowten Pot, together with Dave Anderson (CRO equipment officer and also an underground controller), and three assistants. All five were laden with the ropes and other gear necessary to rig and descend the Pot using modern 'single-rope' techniques.

A larger party went to the valley entrance. It was passable and the weather forecast indicated that the rain would ease off for a few hours before another front with more rain and renewed flooding. There would be urgency to complete the search during this weather window. Reaching the junction of the entrance passage and master-cave stream way this party began the difficult but vital job of fixing a traverse line to safeguard the only way on, above the torrent just below.

Phil and Dave, half a mile away and 400 feet higher, began their descent. A route existed whereby the ropes could be tied from bolt to bolt, in a mixture of descents and traverses, to avoid the main force of the water. Two hundred feet below the surface, their route took them along a narrow ledge in a rift, past a huge weight of falling water which almost filled the gap. Phil went across and fixed the traverse line at the far end. There was no way to communicate with Dave because of the deafening roar of the waterfall, but he saw him start the traverse.

Down below, the most rapid and dangerous part of the stream had been traversed. Cave rescuers had forced their way upstream towards the base of Rowten Pot, but the sumps, normally less than 50 feet long, now extended for more than ten times as far, and could not even be approached. Side passages leading up to Swinsto and Simpson's pots – other inlets to the Master Cave – were searched with difficulty through their flat-out crawls against heavy water. Both were empty.

One second Phil saw Dave moving towards him, clipped to the traverse line by a short stop and karabiner for safety. Next time he looked Dave had gone. The traverse line was now taut, angled down into the full force of the water. Phil could see Dave's light, struggling within the white spray. He tried everything possible to haul the rope up, but it was hopeless. The pressure of the great mass of falling water battered down with inexorable force, and it was impossible for Phil to do more. After thirty seconds or so it was all over. Some time later, he retraced his path along the ropes, shattered. He was able to relay the news to the surface from the top of the big 150-foot pitch before surfacing with his three helpers.

Communication on rescues are normally good-humoured, but it was an abrupt and untypical message which reached Jane Guilbert, operating the Molephone down in the Master Cave. She had contacted surface to say that nothing had been found and in return was instructed to clear the hole at once.

The disconsolate party, sensing something was wrong, crawled out of the cave entrance at 3.00am. Chief Controller Jack Pickup met them. 'We have had a fatality. Dave Anderson has been drowned down Rowten.'

Mixed anger, disbelief and total gloom contrasted with the usual rescue atmosphere of cheerful purpose. But there was still work to be done.

Two of the team's hardest men, Ian Watson and Geoff Crossley, re-descended Rowten Pot and organised the recovery of Dave's body. This was only possible because the flood had decreased by this time, and even so they had to cut through the rope holding Dave as the knots securing it were almost fused solid by the force that had battered them. Geoff Crossley then continued to the bottom of the pot. He found the two lost students sitting it out above the sump, cold and wet but unharmed. They had managed to dive through the short sumps, but rising floodwater had prevented their return. It was not until they had been brought to the surface that they were told of the death of Dave Anderson in the search for them. ✪

Top left: Dave Anderson, image courtesy of CRO Facebook @CaveRescueOrganisation. **Inset:** Front cover of 'Race Against Time' by Jim Eyre and Dr John Frankland. ISBN-10: 0950687448 ISBN-13: 978-0950687445



MARCH: KEEP WELL. STAY SAFE. LOOK AFTER YOURSELF. TAKE CARE.

An updated Countryside Code 2021 has been published, following a government consultation, focusing on three key areas: 'Respect everyone', 'Protect the environment' and 'Enjoy the outdoors'. **Sally Seed** took a look at the code to inform a new blog post for the MREW website.

The Code covers several things pertinent to mountain rescue. For instance, the 'Respect everyone' strand includes a request that people shouldn't block gates, tracks and roads. MR teams know from experience that abandoned vehicles can mean a struggle to get to an emergency. Similarly, sticking to clear paths when out exploring is important for first-time visitors to the hills and mountains, not only to protect the landscape but also to stay safe.

However, the big element for mountain rescue is about planning ahead and being prepared, including advice which resonates with our #beadventuresmart messages about checking the route and local conditions (weather, tide and water), planning the adventure and knowing what to expect and what to do if things go wrong and, finally, urging hillgoers to enjoy their visit, have fun and make memories.

MARCH: AWARD-WINNING PHOTOGRAPHY AUCTIONED IN SUPPORT OF CHRIS LEWIS

Some of the UK's most renowned landscape photographers have come together to donate their stunning imagery, with all profits going to the Chris Lewis Support Fund. At the time of writing, the auction – at jumblebee.co.uk – had raised an impressive £7865.



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NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH



MARCH: BOLTON RIVER RESCUE ON FILM FOR BBC AMBULANCE

Bolton's rescue of a woman who'd fallen in the Roddlesworth plantations, sustaining an upper-arm injury was caught on camera thanks to a crew from Dragonfly Productions who were accompanying the NWAS ambulance crew, filming for an upcoming new series of BBC Ambulance.

Team members were quickly on scene, and found that the casualty had slipped into the River Roddlesworth. She had managed to get out of the water but was sat on the opposing bank, somewhat difficult to access from above.

Nineteen team members assisted the two NWAS ambulance crew to treat and extract the casualty across the shallow river bed whilst carrying her on a stretcher. Fortunately, after a few days' good weather, water levels were very low but, nevertheless the riverbed was incredibly slippery. As a precaution a rope system was used to protect the casualty and rescuers. The incident was concluded with the casualty en route to hospital for further treatment. Look out for Bolton MRT appearing on a TV set near you in the not-too-distant future!

Top: Bolton team members during the rescue of a woman who'd slipped into the River Roddlesworth © Bolton MRT.

The siege of Beinn Sgulaird. A bad day in the mountains



I've heard it said that a bad day in the mountains is better than a good day in the office. But we were lost high on a small peak surrounded by cliffs and mist too thick to see anything. We didn't have a map, didn't know which way to go and there were four hours to go until dark with at least five hours of descent ahead of us. I was exhausted, frustrated, and scared and would have given anything to be sat on that swivel chair in front of my PC.

This was the situation that my brother Abel, his climbing partner, Lynn, and I found ourselves in by the time we reached the summit of Meall Garbh on the way to the top of Beinn Sgulaird. During the three attempts that it took us to reach the summit of Beinn Sgulaird, that moment during our second attempt, was the low point for sure.

On our first attempt, we had only just climbed out of a ravine that cuts through the mountain at around 1600ft when I had decided to turn back. With the return to the car from that point being very straightforward, Abel and Lynn had agreed that I could turn around on my own and keep in touch using the walkie talkies we were carrying. Before I'd even got back to the ravine, the clouds rolled in and a torrential downpour started. I crossed the ravine and called Abel on the radio to see if they were continuing up. With Gore-Tex over my entire body, I was warm and dry despite the weather, but the radio had not been so lucky. It was waterproof but only to a point. Over the next few hours, we only managed intermittent comms. They were still going up.

The weather had cleared for me at ground level by the time I had reached the car. Unknown to me at the time, it was still pretty wild high on the mountain. After a few long

boring hours sitting in the car, Abel's voice broke through on the radio again. They had just crossed the ravine on the descent having failed to make the summit. On that occasion Abel and Lynn had made it to the bealach just past Meall Garbh but were forced to abandon the final ascent of the mountain due to high winds. The final ascent of Beinn Sgulaird is a ridge with lots of steep ground, some cliffs, and some scrambling. If you're not steady on your feet, it's too dangerous to continue.

A few weeks later, we started our second attempt at summiting Beinn Sgulaird. By the time we approached the first of the three summits which need to be achieved to reach the highest point on the mountain, I had decided to turn around. My intention had been to make a solo descent and let Abel and Lynn push for the summit. Our walkie talkies had recovered from their soaking on the previous attempt, so I felt we'd be able to keep in touch as we went our separate ways.

Both Abel and Lynn advised against this. On our first attempt, I hadn't got up this far, but they had. They knew the area was rocky and required frequent scrambling. It was potentially very dangerous to navigate on your own. They had proposed that we all

turn around. I decided to keep going. If we were going to stick together, we might as well go on. I wasn't in any physical distress and I knew how much they wanted to summit having missed it the last time. As the three of us ascended towards Meall Garbh mist had closed in around us. On reaching the top, Abel asked me for the map so he could determine where to descend to reach the bealach before the final ascent.

We are all experienced mountaineers who always carry a map and know very well how to read one. But, on this occasion, the conversation went along the lines of how we each thought the other had brought the map, but no one actually had. I had a GPS on my watch and had keyed the route into it to follow for the day. Abel asked what it was showing. It showed that we were off the path. I needed to start walking in any direction to indicate where the path would be. I took a step forward and Abel yelled at me to stop. He had a point. In this terrain and these conditions there was every possibility of me walking off the edge of a cliff looking at my watch. Just then we became aware that we were actually standing right beside another group of climbers.

It transpired that these guys were also



Opposite page: Beinn Sgulaire Ravine. **Above:** The summit cairn and a selfie, having finally reached the top. **Inset below:** The view across to Loch Creran. Images © Sean McBride.

heading for the top of Beinn Sgulaire and they agreed we could follow them. My heart sank. It was already 4:30pm and it would be dark by 9:30. I was exhausted and was sure we'd need that full five hours, moving at my pace, to get back down from where we were just now. I kept my disappointment to myself, however, and followed on. I knew we'd missed this summit before and didn't want to let Abel and Lynn down. Abel asked if I was ok to continue and I said I was. We were soon on our way off the summit of Meall Garbh on a steep rocky descent of a hundred feet or so. By the time we reached the Bealach at the bottom, it was very apparent I couldn't keep pace with the others. Abel darted forward to the last man of the other group. They had a quick conversation and then he came back to me and Lynn and said we should turn around.

As we scrambled back up through the rocks to start our return journey, I was nervous but relieved at the same time. We were going to be descending in the dark for sure, but we should be off the top, on a familiar path by the time darkness fell. We all carried head torches and walking in the dark was nothing new to us. I knew there was the steep grassy ravine which cut through the lower half of the mountain that we'd have to cross on the descent but, as long as we could make the other side of that ravine in relative daylight, we should be fine. Back on Meall Garbh, we gathered our thoughts and prepared for the long return to the car. The mood was generally one of disappointment and frustration. None of us liked missing a summit. To fail to make the same one twice was a major disappointment. We'd have to come back and do all this for a third time.

By the time we got back to the first summit, the sun had started to set, but I knew it was a short and relatively straightforward walk to reach the ravine and I was confident we'd make it in daylight. We climbed into the ravine at dusk. There was still enough light to see and scramble down the path and follow it up the other side. Darkness fell as we took a short rest just after the ravine. There was about 1000ft of descent along a steep but straightforward path to get to the walk out. My legs by this time were getting weaker by the step and our pace was agonisingly slow. I tightened up the knee supports I was wearing on both knees, we strapped on our head torches and continued our descent.

Except for the low cloud, the weather had been good to us that day. The night was clear and dry as we plodded on down towards the walk out. Abel and Lynn had the patience of a saint with my slow pace. They

both stayed with me and Lynn kept a lively conversation going, full of encouragement as always.

A few weeks later, with my youngest daughter Julia a welcome addition to our team, we summited Beinn Sgulaire on our third attempt. Because of my own lack of fitness, the pace was extremely slow but, by this time, we were well used to it. We would need twelve hours. Six up and six down. As the attempt was mid-summer, we had the daylight to get up and back down past the ravine before dark. The weather was good, and we were able to stick to our schedule. Abel had brought the map this time but, apart from him giving some map reading lessons to Julia, we didn't need it.



Looking back, I would say it had been something of a siege to make the top of Beinn Sgulaire. The lack of map had cost us but there weren't too many other mistakes besides that. A lot of our decisions erred on the side of caution and meant additional ascents of the mountain, but changing any one of those key decisions could have led to a much worse outcome.

- Had they persevered with the first attempt, Abel, Lynn, or both could have suffered a serious fall, off balance in the wind.
- Had I turned back solo at the first summit on the second attempt, I could have got lost, suffered a fall or both resulting in injury to

myself and putting Abel and Lynn at risk trying to find and help me.

- Walking anywhere off Meall Garbh in extremely poor visibility without knowing where we were going had a high likelihood of a dangerous fall.
- Lingered too long high on the mountain during any of the attempts would have meant crossing a steep grassy ravine with 100ft drops in the dark. Again, creating a significant risk of a fall.

With every scenario above comes the risk of death or serious injury and, of course, puts others, such as the emergency services or mountain rescue at risk, having to retrieve what would have been left of us. For Abel and I, and anyone we climb with,

this is why we tend to turn back when things start to go off. Trying to avoid the frustration of an extra attempt on a mountain could result in a tragedy. Like Beinn Sgulaire, we normally get our mountain even if it takes a few attempts. You don't need to touch the top of a mountain to enjoy the challenge and escape of climbing in them and every day is a lesson, summit or not. The mountains, as they say, will always be there another day. 🗡️



SEAN MCBRIDE IS A FREELANCE WRITER WITH A PASSION FOR TRAVEL AND MOUNTAINEERING. HE IS BASED IN KILMARNOCK, SCOTLAND. THIS ARTICLE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEER, AUTUMN 2020.



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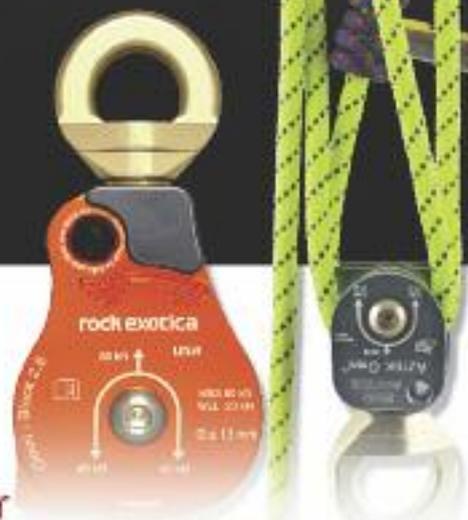


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MARCH: EXPERIENCED WALKER TELLS OF HER SIX-HOUR MOUNTAIN ORDEAL AND THE PERILS OF RELYING ON THE WHAT3WORDS APP

Dyfed Powys Police issued a stark warning after a fifteen-minute 'stroll' turned into a terrifying six hours lost on a mountain in thick fog and rain for the walker, who is 'usually prepared for all eventualities'. She later thanked the police and Western Beacons team members for finding her when she thought all hope was lost and her story was shared online to help educate others in how easily things can turn awry. Needless to say, the story also reignited discussion amongst the mountain rescue community about the dangers of relying on the what3words app!

She urged people not to assume that walking in isolation is a safe way to exercise during lockdown restrictions and effectively put others at risk as a result. 'Everything that could go wrong did go wrong on that day, and I'm just the luckiest person in the world to be here today. The really hard part to come to terms with is that I'm so aware of the dangers of the mountain. I've always been aware of how easy it is to get lost, and I had to admit I was one of those people who went out unprepared.'

'Not only did I put myself at risk, I put the police and mountain rescue team in danger too. For them to have to come out in those conditions to look for me, but also with the risk of Covid, just made me feel so guilty.'

The mother-of-two had headed out for a quick dog walk on the Black Mountain near Brynamman, leaving behind the safety bag she usually carries for a longer hike. With it, she'd have been prepared with a phone charger, food, water and other supplies in case of an emergency. Parking in a familiar spot, she began walking a route they'd covered many times before. Unaware there was a weather warning in place, she was quickly caught out by forceful wind and torrential rain.

'I tried to turn back, but the wind physically knocked me over. That happened a few times, and totally disoriented me. Then the rain started, hitting my face like bullets. I was trying to get back to the car, but I just couldn't find it. After a while, we hit a boggy area, which I knew from previous walks was nowhere near the car. That's when I realised we weren't going to get back.'

By 6.00pm, she was unable to see more than a few metres, and with her phone

battery down to 19% she knew she had to call for help. Hunkering down in a hole to protect herself from the elements, she checked the what3words app, which generates three words to allow users to share their precise location, and dialled 999. However, she had no idea that due to poor mobile signal, the location generated by the app was inaccurate — sending police and mountain rescue volunteers in the wrong direction.

'I got up every few minutes so I didn't get hypothermia, and shouted 'hello' in case anyone was around. I couldn't see a thing. Everything below was pitch black, and above was thick fog. I phoned 999 again to tell them I was still where I'd said I was. They sent a link to find my GPS coordinates, but my phone just wouldn't load it. I checked the app again and realised I was in a completely different place to where they thought I was. Then the call cut out.'

A few minutes later she received a call from the team, just as her phone battery died. She walked out into the open to be more visible, but the terrain was rough, and visibility so poor, she was forced to give up.

'In the short distance we walked, I fell over so many times, and couldn't risk continuing. In the end, we just laid down on the grass. I thought we were going to die there.'

Eventually, she heard a slight noise, but couldn't work out where it was coming from. Then she saw a tiny light in the distance.

'I grabbed the dog and just started running towards the light. By that point I was screaming and shouting, and suddenly there were more lights. One of their torches had caught a flash from the dog's eyes, otherwise they wouldn't have seen me. I had

this overwhelming relief that I would see my kids again.'

After a 40-minute walk back to the road in treacherous conditions, she was finally on her way home — six hours after leaving her car. Describing it as the most terrifying ordeal of her life, she wanted to share her experience as a stark reminder of the dangers of mountain walking and how quickly conditions can change.

'The whole time I was thinking: why didn't I bring my bag? It's the biggest mistake I've ever made. I was like one of those prats I shout at on the news for climbing Snowdon in flip flops. It will never, ever happen again, and I will forever be grateful to the police and volunteers who put their lives at risk to save mine. If anyone takes anything from my story, please let it be that they won't make the same mistake I did.'

'The conditions on this particular evening were absolutely treacherous,' said Sergeant Dylan Davies, of Dyfed-Powys Police, 'and we as police were forced to call off our search. Our thanks go to the Western Beacons Mountain Rescue Team who were able to continue, and who managed to find her despite all odds.'

'In reminding people of the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic we are often asked what the risk is of walking in isolation where people are unlikely to come into contact with others. This incident is evidence that while you might think you are safe, you could well end up putting yourself and others at risk.' 📍

Above: Western Beacons team vehicles pictured in October 2020 courtesy WBMRT Facebook: @westernbeaconsmrt. Story courtesy of www.dyfed-powys.police.uk

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NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH



JANUARY: DOOR-TO-DOOR RESCUE FOR RESIDENTS DURING FLOODING

With flooding affecting many parts of Wales and England in the early part of the year, team members around the country were called on to flex their water rescue skills. In North Wales, NEWSAR team members assisted North Wales Fire and Rescue Service with a number of incidents in late January.

These included rescuing residents of flooded properties with the team's inflatable rescue sled, going door to door with fire crew checking on residents affected by flooding, and the rescue of a motorist from the roof of his car near Wrexham Industrial Estate.

Events continued into a second day, the first task to evacuate a lady from a remote property near the River Dee, east of Wrexham Industrial Estate, which involved paddling the rescue raft for over half a mile to the house, across the massive area flooded by the river. Once team members had accessed the site, the lady was carefully collected and brought to safety. Team members subsequently carried out some door-to-door reassurance activity alongside the police and fire service. Fortunately, after several hours, water levels slowly began to fall, the team was stood down, grateful to the various local householders along the way who had kindly supplied sustaining tea and biscuits.

Photos © NEWSAR.

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NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH



JANUARY: PEAK DISTRICT TEAMS ON STANDBY DURING STORM CHRISTOPH

On the Wednesday evening, Derby team's Swiftwater Rescue Technicians were deployed to Bakewell Fire Station, along with Kinder and Buxton team members to make up three water teams, their task to assist in monitoring the local situation through the night. In the event, they were not required to deploy.

The teams swapped out on the Thursday morning, handing over to Woodhead and Edale team members for the day shift. However, as the handover was in process, Derby team members were deployed to a stranded driver at Ashford in the Water.

On arriving the driver had managed to self-rescue and the team recovered the car. Derby team were themselves on alert to potential flooding at their own garage which has been prone to flooding in the past, and the vehicles were returned to an alternate location. Fortunately, the water level only just breached the garage resulting in a small amount of water inside, but no damage. On Thursday evening, team members were stood down as no more flooding was expected.

Top: Kinder team members during flooding events © Kinder MRT. **Below:** Edale team vehicle © Edale MRT. **Bottom:** Woodhead team members await deployment © Woodhead MRT.



JANUARY: CLEANING KIT GIFT HELPS SUPPORT BUXTON'S FLOOD EFFORT

As have many teams, Buxton has made a point of adding details to their social media posts of the Covid protocols in place for cleaning of vehicles and kit. This caught the eye of a local company HGV Direct, shortly after the team featured on Sky News, on standby during the wet weather to help with the local vaccination programme.

The company's employees were inspired to make the very generous offer of specialist cleaning equipment and disinfecting materials for use in the team's vehicles. Their purchasing manager, Fletcher, met with Matt, Buxton's logistics officer, to hand over the supplies, which have helped streamline the process of preparing the vehicles for the next call-out and prevent the potential spread of infection. As the team later noted, 'an excellent example of the community coming together to fight the spread of Covid-19, and we are extremely grateful to Fletcher and HGV Direct'.

Top: Buxton team members at work during the flood effort. **Above:** Fletcher and Matt with the vehicle and cleaning kit © Buxton MRT.





floods

JANUARY INTO FEBRUARY: HEAVY SNOW AND FLOOD CONDITIONS BRING CALL-OUTS FOR NORTH EAST TEAMS

The first two months of 2021 saw a similar level of call-outs compared to the same period last year for the Cleveland team, writes **Gary Clark**. On the face of it, a disappointing level of call-outs during a lockdown, given that in the same period in 2020 we weren't in lockdown.

However, this year a number of our call-outs have been weather-related due to flooding and snow, including six to assist to NHS ambulance crews, district nurses, and a mental health carer.

We were called in the early hours of one morning to go to the assistance of a carer whose car had become stuck in heavy snow in a remote, hilly part of the North York Moors. She had driven to collect one of her clients, a high-risk vulnerable person who she was endeavouring to take to a place of safety. A team Land Rover with two team members was deployed and, separately, two other team members who live in the area made their way there. The carer's vehicle was eventually recovered to a

level section of road and escorted back to a main road to continue her journey with her client.

Later that week, the team again deployed to the Moors in the early hours – this time to a report of a vehicle partially submerged in flood waters at a ford. On arrival, the police asked us to check that there was no-one in the car. Due to the force of the water, the team's SRTs were unable to enter the water but searched from a nearby footbridge using long-reach poles. Once reasonably satisfied the car was empty, they carried out a bankside search immediately downstream of the car. After a few hours with nothing found, and in liaison with the police, the search parties stood down for the night pending further enquiries. It was subsequently discovered that the vehicle had contained four men from out of the area who had been seen to get out safely some time before.

Within a few days, a similar call-out involved a vehicle in floodwater at a ford on the Moors. The Environment Agency was concerned that with further heavy rain forecast the vehicle could be swept downstream causing flood damage to other

areas. After discussions with the other agencies, it was agreed that as it wasn't possible to recover the vehicle, it would be secured in place for later recovery. The team set up a high-line and two SRTs floated across on a rescue sled, passed a strop through the vehicle and secured it to a tree.

We later responded to a succession of call-outs to support district nurses, the first to help a nurse get through flooding to treat a patient in Loftus, near the East Cleveland coast. Two team members in a Land Rover transported the nurse to and from a property on the outskirts of the town. After standing down for the night, another call to assist with transport for the overnight district nurse to visit the same patient came through in the early hours of the following morning. In the weeks following these two call-outs the patient's family set up a fundraising scheme to say 'thanks' to the team, raising over £400.

A few days later, we assisted another district nurse struggling to reach her patients – this time due to snow. She had tried to turn back in heavy snow on the North York Moors but her vehicle

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH



FEBRUARY: MOUNTAIN RESCUERS BATTLE THROUGH DEEP SNOW DRIFTS ON FOOT AND SKI

The epic seven-hour deployment to reach a remote farm in the Upper Coquetdale Valley, Northumberland, involved Northumberland National Park and North of Tyne team members dusting off their skis.

Team vehicles reached as far as they could, driving through snow to a point where they couldn't progress any further. Conditions were extremely difficult with the temperature dropping below -12°C . On arrival, the patient was quickly assessed by a mountain rescue team medic and, given the seriousness of the situation, the decision was made to request a Coastguard helicopter. Team members assisted with a stretcher carry-out to the helicopter, with additional members ready to help carry out the patient if required.

It was a great relief to all concerned when, thanks to superb flying, Rescue 199 from Prestwick was able to land, despite the difficult location and conditions.

'Conditions were incredibly challenging in the National Park,' said team leader, Iain Nixon. 'This is a great example of how crucial the role of mountain rescue teams is during extreme weather events and, thanks to some brilliant inter-agency teamwork, we were able to deliver the best outcome for the patient. We'd like to thank the paramedics from North East Ambulance Service and the crew from HMCG Prestwick.'

became stuck whilst manoeuvring. We managed to get her vehicle back onto the road and escorted her to lower ground and on to gritted roads. Alternative arrangements were made for the patient's treatment.

Over the next few days, the team was called out twice more to assist Yorkshire Ambulance Service crews unable to safely reach patients at home due to snow and ice on the Moors.

Towards the end of February the floods and snow had largely gone but the weather caused one last call-out for that month, this time due to high winds, called to go to the assistance of two women who had walked to the top of Roseberry Topping, a local landmark. Having reached the summit they became worried about being blown off due and called for help. As they were in contact by telephone with the team's call-out officer there was a reasonable degree of confidence about their location so a small party of team members set out to find them. The women were soon found safe and well, and escorted back down to ground level to continue their journey back to their home town – well out of the local area!

Opposite: Checking out for persons in submerged car, from the footbridge; Securing a second submerged vehicle to a tree. **Top:** Transporting the district nurse through floods. **Above:** Assisting another district nurse, stuck in snow on the high moors, back to lower ground and gritted roads. Images © Cleveland MRT.

Top right and bottom right Team members accessing casualties through deep snow © Northumberland NPMRT.





DECEMBER: ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY AWARD FOR NNP MRT TEAM MEMBER STUART KING

Stuart King was awarded a testimonial on vellum for putting himself in considerable danger to save the life of an injured climber in the Cairngorm Mountains in Scotland in February 2020. The testimonial was awarded by HRH Princess Alexandra, who is president of the Royal Humane Society.

Stuart was out climbing with three friends on Creag Meagaidh on a cold, snowy day in February last year. Conditions were cold but clear as they prepared to start their climb up a steep ice gully. They met another group who were climbing ahead of them and Stuart's group passed them on the way up the gully.

Part way up their climb, they heard a cry of alarm from the lower group and looked down to see one of the climbers tumbling down the gully at great speed, unable to use his ice axe to arrest his fall.

'One of the climbers must have slipped and started falling back down the gully', says Stuart. 'He ricocheted off the gully walls as he fell and, being without a helmet, we didn't expect him to survive.'

The man eventually came to a stop back at the bottom of the gully, cut off from his friends.

'Our group made some quick decisions. A couple of the lads began to climb out of the gully to get a better phone signal so we could contact local mountain rescue and then head down a safer route, back to the bottom of the gully.'

However, knowing they had no rescue equipment with them, and that the helicopter was being dispatched but would be some time, Stuart realised that if the

man was going to survive, that time was critical. He took the decision to climb back down the icy gully on his own, descending as quickly as possible some 300m on steep ice without the aid of a rope. Given the steepness of the gully and the nature of the ice, this was a perilous prospect, not without considerable risk.

'I realised that if I fell here, I would become a casualty and compound the problem, but I also knew that time was critical for this man.'

So, he continued his difficult climb down the ice to give first aid. The man had suffered major trauma to his head and torso, breaking his wrist, fracturing his ribs and damaging his ankle. Stuart opened and maintained his airway and then attended to his wounds, removing the man's rucksack which was restricting his breathing. Shortly afterwards one of Stuart's pals also reached the scene and, together, they got the man into a survival shelter and worked to make him as comfortable as possible.

Once the helicopter arrived, Stuart and his friends helped the winchman load the man into the helicopter and he was flown to hospital where, after a considerable time and a number of major operations, he has made a good recovery.

'It was a real team effort. Without the other lads calling for help and also coming down, he'd not have survived. I am delighted to accept this award on behalf of all of us,' he adds.

The award was presented to Stuart with his family present in his garden, by Northumberland National Park team leader, Iain Nixon.

'The presentation was on behalf of the High Sheriff of Northumberland, Tom Fairfax who, because of Covid regulations, was unable to be present,' says Iain. Instead, the High Sheriff and the Chief Constable of Northumbria Police, Winton Keenen, both sent video recordings congratulating Stuart. The mountaineer, author and speaker, Nigel Vardy also sent Stuart a message. All three praised his selflessness and dedication to saving lives.

'I am incredibly proud to have Stuart and his three colleagues in the team,' says Iain. 'Whilst we recognise it was a team effort in helping keep the casualty alive and call in the emergency services, without Stuart's incredibly brave climb down, it's highly likely the climber would not have survived. Stuart thoroughly deserves this award.'

Top: Stuart receives his Royal Humane Society certificate from Iain Nixon © NNP MRT.

TWO FURTHER NNP MRT TEAM MEMBERS ALSO RECEIVE THANK-YOU CERTIFICATES

Russell Emmerson and Jamie Pattison received their certificates of thanks from Tom Fairfax, the High Sheriff of Northumberland.

Russell, until recently a deputy team leader, received his in recognition for the significant time he's put into ensuring the team's vehicles and kit have stayed operational throughout the pandemic, including the decontamination and quarantining.

Jamie, also a deputy team leader and the team's medical officer – and a frontline NHS paramedic in his day job – was praised for his work in ensuring that Covid-secure protocols and procedures have been implemented and in place across the team.



Photos © Ray Talbot.

JANUARY: OGGI SRTs RESCUE MAN STUCK ON CAR ROOF

The Ogwen team received a call after reports of a man seen stuck on the roof of a car having been washed away in Storm Christoph. He'd tried driving through the river ford along the road from Llandygai to Bangor but became stuck in deep water.

The water rescue team from North Wales Fire Service arrived first and, supported by the team's SRTs, deployed a rescue sled to bring the man safely back to dry land. The cold casualty was checked by casualty carers but was thankfully uninjured.



Photos © NEWSAR.

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH

MARCH: 'BODY' OF DOG JUST A 'VERY CONVINCING PLASTIC BAG'

North Wales Police requested NEWSAR assistance, following multiple reports of a body of a dog in the river, downstream of the Sarn footbridge between Hope and Caergwrie.

The team shared the same concern as NWP that eventually a member of the public would go into the fast-flowing water to recover the body and this meant there was a future risk to life. As such, it was thought appropriate to deploy the team's SRTs, with two members set up for recovery in the river plus further downstream support. But, when the two members got right up to the 'body' it was found to be a very convincing plastic bag, complete with a tail wagging in the flow! The bag was recovered to stop any further concerned calls to the police and to prevent someone else going in to find the same thing!

At least it provided a bit of light relief for the team's social media feed. 'So a bit of practice for the SRT group and no harm done. We did all laugh... best bit is no dead dog and no sad owner and we got some plastic out of the water course! That said, we're not quite sure how to categorise the 'victim' in the incident report...'

FEBRUARY: LOCAL COMMUNITY RAISES FUNDS FOR DIGITAL RADIO REPEATER

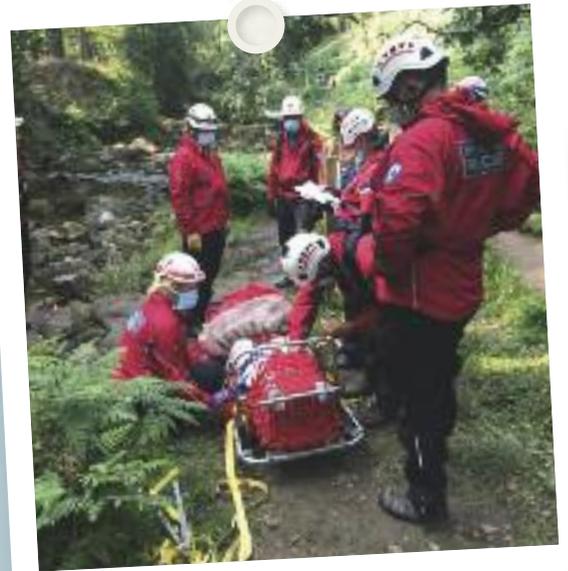
Scarborough & Ryedale team offered a 'massive thanks' to all those who have supported their digital radio repeater appeal throughout February, by shopping at the Co-op and nominating the team in their Local Community Fund scheme.

On the appeal page, the team noted their regular searches for missing vulnerable adults, on and off the hills, whilst providing support to their families. Some searches can last several days, so having the best communications facilities in place is essential in managing the search effectively and ensuring the best possible outcome for the missing person. At the time of writing, the appeal had raised £1961.29.

Right: Scarborough & Ryedale team members during a call-out in August 2020 © SRMRT.



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Eponymous medical terms: Part 1: Achilles Tendon to Alzheimer's Disease

In February 2012, we began a review of the many eponymous terms knocking around in the world of medicine, casualty care and mountain rescue. So, for those who may not have been in mountain rescue at the time, here's **David Allan** with a recap...

Recent years have seen changing attitudes to eponymous medical terms. Having, in many cases, survived for centuries, they came under attack and calls were made for their removal. A more ambivalent view now prevails and, where they carry an accurate description of anatomy or disease, their presence is largely accepted.

Some have been abandoned for lack of clarity. Pott's fracture of the ankle is an example. The rather uncertain nature of the fracture which Percival Pott described has rendered the term unhelpful. In contrast the

description of the wrist fracture by Colles remains accurate and the eponym lives on.

Eponyms are found to be a useful aide memoire by many people and certainly add some peripheral interest to the subject. I will visit some of the eponymous terms relating to trauma and other conditions encountered within mountain rescue casualty care in the hope that one, or both, of the above are achieved.

ACHILLES TENDON

The alternative term for what is the biggest and strongest tendon in the body is the calcaneal tendon. It attaches the powerful gastrocnemius calf muscle to the calcaneus (Achilles: 1). It enables the muscle to flex the foot at the ankle and carries enormous forces, especially in those of an athletic disposition with well-developed calf muscles.

The name arose from Greek mythology. Thetis, the mother of Achilles, received a prophecy of her son's death and, in attempt to avert this, she dipped him in the river Styx, an act which was believed to carry immortality. To avoid losing him altogether she held onto his heel leaving this small area untreated. He subsequently succumbed in battle to an arrow injury to this heel. The river Styx was an interesting body of water.

Despite its life-preserving properties, any of the gods drinking from it were rendered speechless for nine years. (I have, without success, tried to obtain a quantity of Styx water for mountain rescue meetings).

Injury to the tendon occurs when it is subjected to great force lifting the body weight onto the toes of one foot (Achilles: 2). It is a common injury in tennis and squash players and the like. Within mountaineering circles it is most likely to be encountered in fell runners. Lack of fitness and some medications such as steroids make the injury more likely.

Injury to the tendon may result in an incomplete tear (Achilles: 3). This is a very painful event. Casualties will commonly feel that they have been struck on the leg and often look round to seek an offending object. They are still able to flex the foot, albeit with considerable pain, but will find weight bearing difficult to impossible. Immediate care requires only simple packaging and non-weight bearing evacuation. Most of these injuries will heal with a prolonged period of rest.

Complete tears are relatively pain free. The same feeling that a blow has been received is present. A palpable gap in the tendon can often be felt quite easily (Achilles: 4). These patients are completely unable to flex the foot. Squeezing the calf muscles produces no movement of the foot. Again walking is all but impossible and the same immediate care is required. Many complete ruptures will need surgical repair.

ADAM'S APPLE

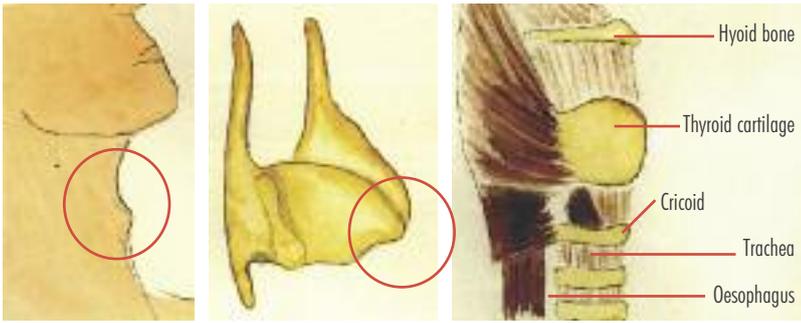
Adam's apple is the anterior prominence of the thyroid cartilage seen in the adult male. It is a very easily detected surface anatomical point (Adam: 1). The cartilage develops during male adolescence and is linked with voice changes of that time.

The origins of the eponym lie in the Garden of Eden. Adam's indiscretions with the serpent, the apple and Eve resulted in a part of the apple lodging in his throat as a permanent reminder of his wayward nature.

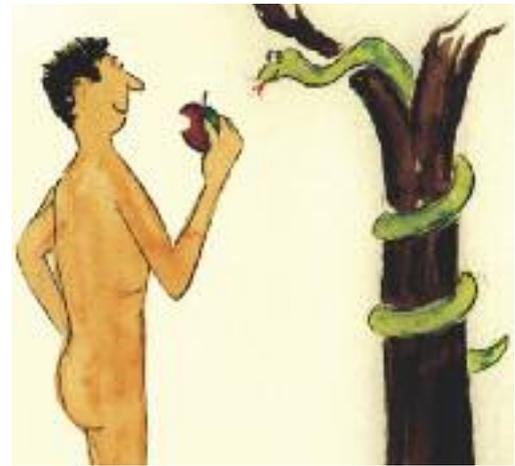
The thyroid cartilages, right and left, are joined to form the main structure of the larynx. (Adam: 2). Injury to the larynx in civilian practice is fortunately rare. When such injury occurs it does so from a direct blow to front of the neck. In youth the cartilage is flexible and more resistant to



Above: The young Achilles gets dipped. Then clockwise: Achilles 1; Achilles 2; Achilles 3; and Achilles 4. Illustrations © David Allan.



Above: Left to right: Adam 1; Adam 2; Adam 3; Adam with his apple in the Garden of Eden.



damage but with increasing years the elasticity diminishes and 'fractures' of the larynx are more likely.

A severe injury is likely to lead to collapse of the thyroid cartilage with loss of the airway and rapid silent asphyxiation. Inspection of Adam: 3 shows that the only successful way of managing such an injury is to establish a new route into the airway below the thyroid cartilage with a tracheotomy or cricoid airway. Intubation in severe laryngeal injury is often impossible.

A less severe blow to the larynx may simply result in air leaking into the neck. Hoarseness, loss of voice and surgical crepitation in the neck are pointers to this state of affairs.

Rapid evacuation with oxygen should be pursued as there is a risk of the airway becoming compromised.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Often referred to as 'pre-senile dementia' this is a degenerative organic mental disease. It results in progressive atrophy of the frontal and occipital lobes of the brain.

Some 5% of the under-65 population are affected. This rises to 20% in the over-80 age group. Women are twice as likely as men to develop the condition.

Cerebral vascular disease is believed to be at the root of the disease and there are a number of predisposing factors, namely obesity, cigarettes, high alcohol consumption, hypertension, diabetes and severe head injury.

The symptoms largely affect the mental state of the patient. Those which bring the condition into frequent contact with mountain rescue teams are unpredictable behaviour with a tendency to wander aimlessly, confusion of time and place, recent memory loss and muddled reasoning. Others include depression, anxiety, restlessness and self-neglect. Loss of speech and difficulty walking may eventually occur. Most patients die from pneumonia, heart attack or a stroke. Although a number of treatments are being evaluated there is currently no cure for the disease.

The disease takes its name from Aloysius Alzheimer, a German psychiatrist and

neuropathologist, who is generally regarded as the founding father of neuropathology. Born in 1864 in Markbreit, Bavaria, he studied medicine in Würzburg. A 51-year-old patient came under his care in 1901 and exhibited the above symptoms. When she died in 1906 he carried out the post mortem and identified the changes in the brain typical of the disease. In 1910 one of his colleagues attached the name of Alzheimer to the condition.

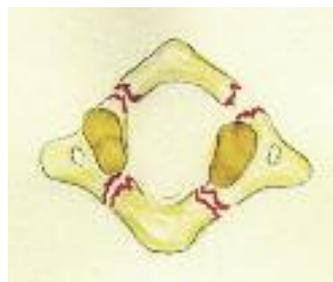
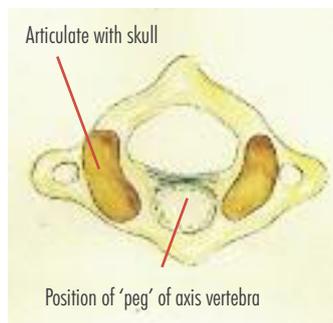
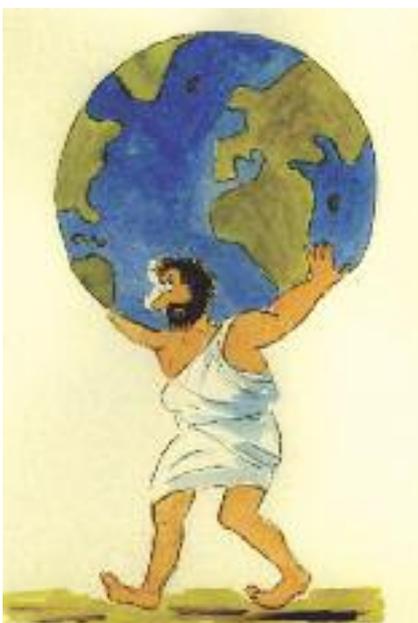
Alzheimer was able to pursue a very extensive research programme, apparently as the result of being financially supported by his wife. He made important discoveries in the study of vascular disease in the brain and in the neurological manifestations of syphilis.

His laboratory motto remains relevant today, 'Excessive reservations and paralysing despondency have not helped the sciences to advance nor are they helping them to advance, but rather a healthy optimism that cheerfully searches for new ways to understand as it is convinced that it will be possible to find them'.

ATLAS VERTEBRAE

The Atlas vertebra is the first cervical vertebra linking the skull to the rest of the spinal column. It is specially adapted to this role. Two large areas on its upper surface articulate with the base of the skull. (Atlas: 1). This link allows for the nodding movement of the head. Rotation is achieved through the link between the atlas vertebra and the second vertebra (the axis). The 'peg' of the second vertebra sticks upwards and the atlas rotates around it.

The role of this vertebra in supporting the head was likened to the role of Atlas in Greek mythology in supporting the celestial sphere. Atlas had the misfortune to cross the path of Zeus who punished him with the task of carrying the Heavens on his back. Over time this became corrupted to the celestial sphere and later the earth. Confusingly the atlas, or globe, of geography comes from a different source. This was the mythical King Atlas of Macedonia who is credited with drawing the first maps.



Above: Atlas carries the weight of the world on his shoulders. Above right: Atlas 1. Above: Atlas 2.

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59 EPONYMOUS TERMS CONTINUED...



Above: Atlas 3; and Atlas 4.

Along with mobility comes reduction in strength. (Compare the shoulder joint with the hip.) Thus the Atlas vertebra sitting like a washer between head and neck is vulnerable. It is particularly at risk from crushing or compression injuries (Atlas: 2). The ring of the vertebra is likely to be disrupted (Atlas: 3). This is known as a Jefferson fracture. Another eponym here.

Geoffrey Jefferson was a British surgeon, practising at Manchester Royal Infirmary and widely regarded as the father of the specialty of neurosurgery. This is a very unstable fracture. Casualties may well have recognised this instability and taken to supporting their head (Atlas: 4). Do not dissuade them from this until you have a better system of cervical spine immobilisation in place. If patients with this injury do not sustain irreparable cord damage at the time of impact they will usually make a good recovery. ☺

NEXT ISSUE: EPONYMOUS TERMS TO BE CONTINUED, STARTING WITH BATTLE'S SIGN.

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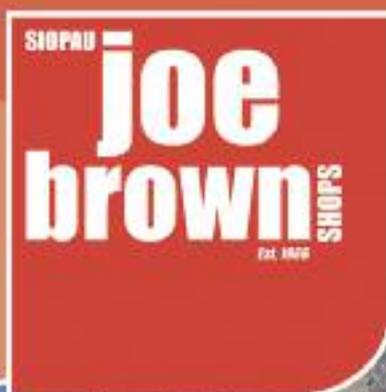
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