

mountain rescue

ISSN 1756-8749

£4.75



SUMMER
2020 **73**



THE **ONLY** OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND

Primetech (UK) Ltd Critical Communications Specialists

- ◆ Pay as You Go Satellite Broadband
- ◆ MultiNet Dynamic Roaming 4g Sim Service
- ◆ Wi-Fi Hotspot

Available for -

- ◆ Purchase
- ◆ Lease
- ◆ Hire

Applications -

- ◆ Disaster Response
- ◆ Temporary networks
- ◆ Greenfield developments
- ◆ Festivals
- ◆ Sporting events

For demonstration or quotation contact:-

Primetech (UK) Ltd
Tel: +44 (0) 3453 455734
Henry Walker - Sales Director
M: +44 (0) 7711 266773
E: henryw@primetech.co.uk
www.primetech.co.uk



Trailer

WELCOME TO
ISSUE 73:
SUMMER 2020

Mountain Rescue is the **only** official magazine for mountain rescue in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

Editor: Judy Whiteside
07836 509 812 • editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk

Media & Communications Director: Andy Simpson
07836 717 021 • media@mountain.rescue.org.uk

Ad sales: Caroline Davenport
01829 781 327 • caroline@media-solution.co.uk

NEXT ISSUE
ISSUE 74:
AUTUMN 2020

Editorial Copy Deadline:
Sunday 6 September 2020

Please supply editorial in Word and images as JPG, EPS or PDF (300 dpi)

Advertising artwork must be supplied as font-embedded PDF (300 dpi) unless otherwise agreed with the editor.

Cover story

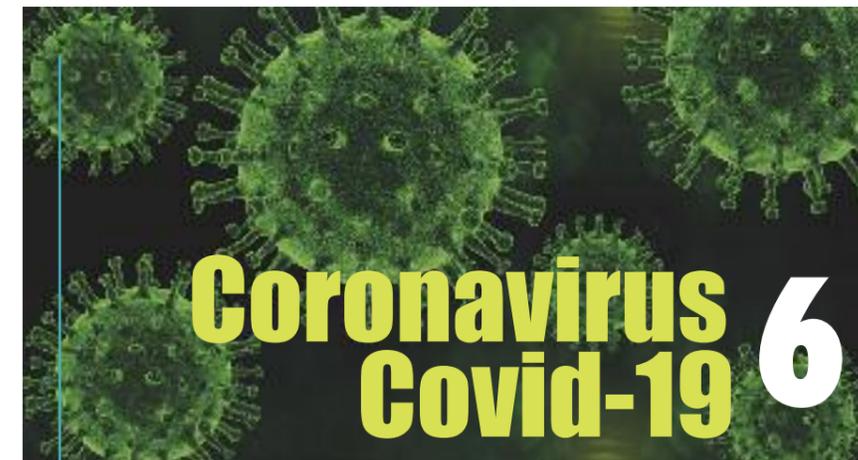
Buxton team members prepare to assist with an incident at Hen Cloud, the Roaches, in May 2020
© Delvin Poulter.



PLEASE NOTE

Articles carried in Mountain Rescue do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Mountain Rescue England and Wales. We do not accept responsibility for advertising content.

inthisissue



Coronavirus Covid-19 6

A collection of guidelines and information for teams and team members, relative to these challenging times



Video conferencing
Is there a best in class?
Neil Sinclair advises

12

Infection control: Will Kitchen and Jon Deardon take a look at the history of infection control and how we can deal with Covid-19

24

Caring for your PPE: Matt Nightingale explains how easily your kit can become damaged

34



38

Navigation: Nigel Williams talks about relocation skills and getting lost

what's in at a glance

CORONAVIRUS: 6-12

ALAN HINKES: 18

IN THE NEWS: 21

WELLBEING: 22

MEDICAL: 24-32

TEAM NEWS: 33>

EQUIPMENT: 34-37

FROM THE ARCHIVE: 50-59

NAVIGATION: 54

WHO'S WHO: 61-62



PROVIDERS OF
BESPOKE INSURANCE
 FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND & WALES



We provide insurance to MREW teams. Contact Chris Jones to discuss your teams' insurance:

D: +44 (0)161 419 3097 | M: +44 (0)7768 857 689 | E: chris.jones@tysers.com



TYSERS

www.tysers.com

Tysers Insurance Brokers Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The data office is located at 21 Fincham Road, London, EC2M 4ES. Registered Company in England: 2867027. Photograph © Daniel Collins, Central Beacons MR Team, R.13.6.2019



MIKE FRANCE
 MREW SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I hope you have had time to visit the new MREW website, we have talked about this project maybe for a couple plus years now. Taking talking to planning to design, to transferring and updating the content is a massive job, thanks to the media team, particularly Judy, for what I understand have been many hours of work. For those who ask where the members area has gone, that's now on Moodle [see below].

And, talking about the media team, I believe they got our press releases spot-on with Covid-19. I know some of you thought sometimes we were a little weak but, following government advice, we pitched our statements so we did not come over as saying 'you can't' but 'help us' which, from feedback, were well-received messages. This one is down to Sally and Andy.

Like you guys and girls, our mountain rescue life has gone on. For some of you, it appears you've been busier than usual and we've all had to adapt to video meetings. I quite like these — a lot less travel and they seem to stop any waffle! I have never completed meetings as quickly (not that I'm saying our management team waffles, of course!)

Meetings with UKSAR, SAR-H, College of Policing (the list goes on), are still happening, just all a bit differently. We have been invited to an online presentation shortly with the MCA about the roll out of the 'Second Generation' SAR-H known as UKSAR2G. We have no idea what's going to be in the presentation but with our knowledge of SAR-H, we now have a better understanding of our requirements.

You are continuing to send in your applications for membership to the new CIO which I understand is going well. At the last count

we had 31 requests. Can I ask: please don't leave yours until the end of the year. It's not just a box-ticking exercise. The assessment team, lead by David Coleman, are going through your applications in detail feeding back where needed. I know some have had feedback which you have thanked the team for.

I didn't want to say too much about Covid-19 in this report, but we ARE still in the middle of a pandemic so I will finish with saying, that when reporting to other national agencies and the Cabinet Office, how proud I am of all within mountain rescue. You stood up to the problem and got on with it. I hope you are all seeing the reports from our 'Gold Covid' meetings. These have been a great success because of your weekly input. A massive thanks to Mike Greene our medical director, for his knowledge and experience. It has been invaluable to us. I know your team doctors and medics have taken the national information and made it work for your teams, so it's also thanks to them. But, finally, it's thanks to you for just getting on with mountain rescue, I never expected you to be sitting watching TV. You've been volunteering all over the place, helping your communities delivering food, picking up medications — and some of you helping out on Covid wards too turning patients. Great job guys! 🙌



WHY NOT TAKE A MOOCH AROUND MOODLE? AND THE MREW SHOP, TOO...

JUDY WHITESIDE EDITOR

As Mike mentions in his introduction – and as detailed in my own piece on page 15 – the MREW website no longer hosts a dedicated Members area. Resources and documents are now housed in the Moodle VLE. So, if you haven't got round to registering yet, here's a quick tour of the key areas to see what you're missing...

Sign in and you'll be greeted with a Home page, with access to your personal Dashboard, Calendar, Files and Courses. Centre stage, the key disciplines listed include **Medical, Search, Water, Safety, Technical Rescue, Leadership and Incident Management, ICT, Insurance and GDPR** and a few other categories yet to be fully populated.

Perhaps most relevant at the moment is **Medical** which, from the start of Covid-19, has been regularly updated with information and resources relevant to the virus, added to periodically, as the government updates its own guidance and our own understanding builds. The Medical group addresses the many legal and medical requirements teams need to be aware of as they undertake training and operations, and there's a sheaf of resources to download.

Also in the Medical folder, you'll find information relating to the Casualty Care Certificate (Essential Documents, Medical Terms, CPR and AED, General Principles of Care, Patient Assessment, Patient Management, Trauma, Medical Illness, Environmental Medicine, Medications, Special Considerations and

Clinical Skills Video Resources). There's a free-to-download PDF of Casualty Care for Mountain Rescue Edition 2, plus an electronic version of Revision Notes for Casualty Care, and a section on Anatomy and Physiology containing materials to explain how the human body works and WHY we do what we do, rather than just WHAT we do. There's also a section devoted to Recognition of Life Extinct in Mountain Rescue from David Whitmore, and you'll find subcommittee minutes stored here too.

The **Insurance** category is also worth a check. Here, you will find all the policies and schedules applicable to mountain rescue, and a list of frequently asked questions.

To register, go to <http://tiny.cc/Moodle4MR> using a team email address (not role-specific). You'll get an automated email within 30 minutes confirming receipt and, once you're approved, you'll be given a temporary password, which you can change at first log in. Easy peasy. Any issues once there, email the MREW Moodle team via moodlesupport@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

ACCESSING THE TEAM SHOP AND TEAM DISCOUNTS

Some of you may also now be wondering where the Team Shop is hiding? With the old website, team admins would have walked through the same shop door as the public, before a log in box at the top right of the screen took them to their own department. Once logged in, a number of items are available to teams at discounted prices – and there are some things too which are unavailable to the public, such as collection boxes and member badges.

Essentially, the process is the same, you just walk through a slightly different door. Go to the Shop home page (mountain.rescue.org.uk/shop), scroll down past the five category boxes, and you'll find the line 'If you are a mountain rescue team admin, and wish to buy stock for your team, click here to visit the team shop area.' Click there and you'll be back on the old familiar log-in page.

Hope that helps... have fun mooching! 🙌

NIKWAX TECH WASH AND TX.DIRECT

Nikwax cleaning and waterproofing products have been used by mountain rescue teams for many years but now, more than ever, it is important to clean and reproof your gear regularly to help keep you safe and dry.

Tech Wash is the number one technical cleaner for outdoor clothing. It cleans effectively, reviving breathability and water repellency. Independent tests have shown it to be the most effective cleaner on different types of dirt across different materials.

Companion product TX.Direct is the number one, high performance waterproofer for wet weather clothing. It adds Durable Water Repellency and revives breathability – easy to use in your washing machine or you could choose the spray-on version.

Nikwax is the only aftercare company to have never used harmful aerosols or fluorocarbons in our products and our bottles are made from 100% recycled plastic.

TO FIND OUT MORE, VISIT:
NIKWAX.CO.UK



PAUL SMITH EQUIPMENT NEWS

ADVICE ON AFTERCARE OF OUTDOOR CLOTHING AND MASKS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

With the change in MREW guidelines regarding use of waterproofs as the barrier between you and the casualty, the need for proper garment aftercare has taken on even more importance. I have spoken with Nikwax and they have supplied the following information which should act as a simple guide for how to look after your outer wear during this pandemic. There are other manufacturers of garment care products and I would suggest contacting them for further information before use if you have any doubt of the effectiveness.

CLOTHING

High temperature washing has been demonstrated to destroy Covid-19, as are products containing soap, such as Nikwax Tech Wash, for example. Current NHS advice is to wash clothing at 60 degrees in order to safely destroy the virus on clothing. If the care label allows, wash at 60 degrees. If not, we suggest washing as per the care label instructions and leaving the jacket for 72 hours to ensure no contamination remains after cleaning and reproofing.

Certain types of garment construction and fabrics may not be able to withstand a high temperature wash. Please note that any teams who have Páramo waterproofs/windproofs (for example, the MREW-issue windproof), can wash these at 60 degrees safely. Washing with Nikwax Tech Wash will clean but also help restore the garments water-repellency.

WATER REPELLENCY

A garment with failing water-repellency will absorb moisture, and could form a 'fluid bridge' between pathogens on the surface of the garment and the wearer. This means infections can cross more

easily from the surface of the garment to the wearer. Often a Tech Wash is sufficient to restore a garment's Durable Water Repellency (DWR), and we would usually recommend reproofing after every 3-5 washes. However, during this pandemic we strongly recommend the wearer monitors the performance of the clothing, and reproofs it with TX Direct more frequently than usual.

MASKS

The global population are being encouraged to wear non-medical masks whilst in public, to reduce Covid-19 transmission in areas where social distancing is not practical. People are making their own masks — but some of them may increase the risk of infection, due to their lack of water repellency and improper cleaning.

These designs are based on surgical masks which prevent the wearer from spreading infection. They work by a tightly woven material catching tiny droplets carried on the wearer's breath, which may contain viruses and bacteria. Many people with the Covid-19 virus do not show symptoms and can significantly spread the virus without realising!

Water repellency is vital — whilst this type of mask is not designed to offer protection to the wearer, if they soak up water, viruses and bacteria can travel through the moisture from the outside of the mask to the inside and infect the wearer.

It is important to keep your mask clean and sanitised after each use to prevent infection. Use Nikwax Tech Wash to clean and sanitise by washing at high temperature. Alternatively soak the fabric in freshly boiled water for 15 minutes.

You won't need to proof your mask or face covering each time you use it. Test the fabric for water-repellency by dropping some water onto the surface. If the water 'beads up' the mask is ready for use. If it soaks into the surface, it is time to retreat the fabric with Nikwax TX.Direct (for fully synthetic fabrics) or Nikwax Cotton Proof (for cotton, polycotton or canvas).

REMEMBER...

Nikwax is designed for use on your outdoor gear.

- The chemistry in Nikwax is screened for safety but — as with all laundry products — there is a small risk of adverse reactions.

- Use of Nikwax products on face coverings and masks is entirely at your own risk — the products have not been designed or tested for this purpose.

- Using a face covering or mask does not replace the need for social distancing and frequent hand washing, these are still vital steps to staying healthy.

If you have any questions please contact sales@nikwax.co.uk.

***Please note:** No matter what garment, contamination from an alcohol-based sanitiser will seriously affect the Durable Water Repellency (DWR). This can, however, be rectified using the steps outlined above.



TESTED AND TRUSTED BY MOUNTAIN RESCUE FOR OVER 15 YEARS

Did you know? The Páramo Mountain Professional Scheme is available to certified mountain rescue team members. You'll receive a membership card, which entitles you to the top tier discount of 20% off RRP and a further 10% back in loyalty points to spend on future purchases. You can buy direct from Páramo via email, telephone or from our brand stores. Members will also receive special deals and clearance offers as well as opportunities to trial pre-production kit.

Simply go to paramo.co.uk/mountainpro to find out more and complete the application. Please ensure you mention which team you are a member of. If you are equipping a whole team, please contact Páramo's contract sales team who can help with bulk orders, custom designs and colours, plus badging and branding garments for your team's requirements.

ANY QUESTIONS, CALL 01892 786446 OR EMAIL
CONTRACT.SALES@PARAMO.CO.UK



INSURANCE NOTE REGARDING TEAM MEMBERS OVER-70 DURING COVID-19 PENNY BROCKMAN FINANCE DIRECTOR

A number of teams have contacted us for advice in relation to guidance for their team members who are 70+ years old, during the current situation with Covid-19.

The advice from our insurance brokers is that teams follow the government advice, outlined in Section 9 of the government advice with regard to social distancing and 'clinically vulnerable people'. (<https://tinyurl.com/y8k2aasz>), that those over-70 should stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, take particular care to minimise contact with others.

If team members over-70 don't want to follow the government advice quite so literally and wish to assist with their teams, the team should consider the government advice and take particular care in ensuring these members minimise contact with others outside their household.

The insurance will respond but please remember that it is negligence-based so teams need to find a suitable role for such a volunteer where they can follow appropriate social distancing and avoid contact with others.



MIKE MARGESON OPS NEWS

From the start of the pandemic, we've had two priorities. First, to ensure the safety of our team members and their families and local communities. Second, to ensure that the mountain rescue service was not compromised. Clearly the impact for the outdoor community is unprecedented, this being so ironic, with wider than ever recognition and appreciation of the value to health and wellbeing of time spent in the outdoors!

It is the very nature of our team members that they are resilient, used to making dynamic risk assessments and dealing with often uncertain circumstances. We are, as in other areas of life, having to reset and adjust to new ways of working. The feedback from regional operations leads on lessons learned has been invaluable. The most common feedback and learning being to step back and take a few moments to check what you are doing. Teams have worked incredibly hard to put in place new procedures to keep their members safe. Remember this is everyone's

responsibility — not just leaders. The confidence I spoke of in the last magazine, of good team and regional planning and mutual aid, was not misplaced. Despite some mixed messages and differing restrictions — which have undoubtedly been unhelpful and increased teams' workloads in certain areas like the Peak District and Pennines — our service has not been compromised. As I write on 8 June, we've had 302 incidents since lockdown began and 180 since travel restrictions were lifted. When lockdown is lifted in Wales, incident numbers will doubtless continue to grow. We face a continued challenge with the summer ahead of us.

Training 'skills fade' has been of concern — and rightly so — and face-to-face practical training has recommenced for most teams, in a controlled and measured way. The reality that our fellow team members are as much a risk to us as any casualty takes a little getting used to! PPE has been an ever-moving situation and Julian Walden has been managing that for MREW. He reports that we have two months' supplies under a normal workload, but please ensure you order replacement supplies in good time.

Officers have been working on their specialist areas behind the scenes as normal. Nigel Harling our new SAR-H lead reported this week that Bristow is tentatively planning to restart practical training with teams in October. He is also working with Bristow on the update 1a and 1b of ISAR.

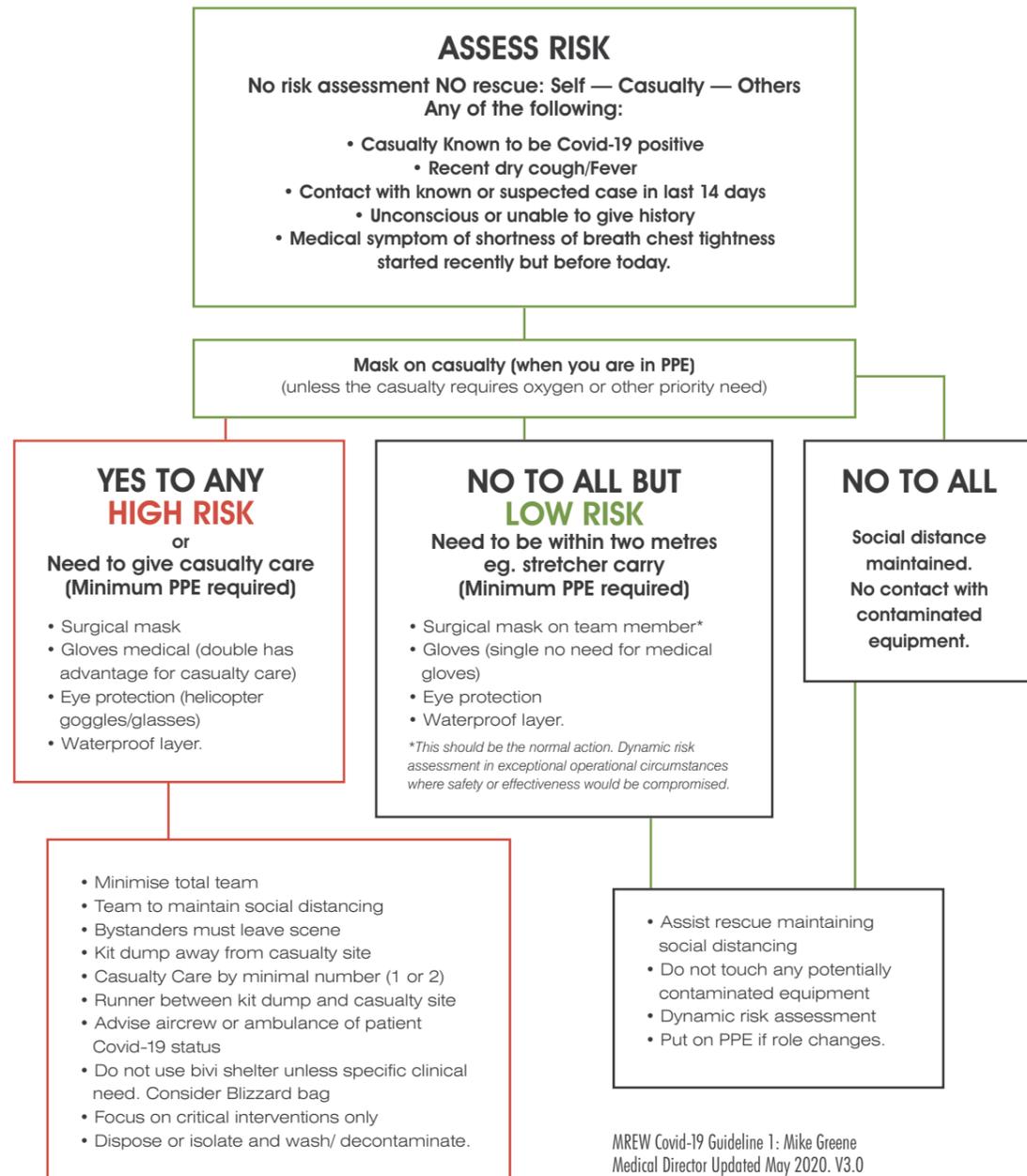
DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES: THE OPERATIONS GROUP WILL BE HAVING ITS NEXT FULL MEETING ON 11 JULY. PLEASE FORWARD ANY TOPICS TO YOUR REGIONAL LEADS.

FOR MOUNTAIN PRO COVID-19

You can access the latest information and guidance on everything related to Covid-19 and mountain rescue through the MREW Moodle platform.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE: COVID-19 GUIDELINE 1

INITIAL APPROACH TO THE CASUALTY



Please note: The advice contained in these three documents (MREW Covid-19 Guidelines May 2020) brings together the principles of management that have emerged in the past few weeks. These are guiding principles and will need to be implemented at a local level. This is a fast-moving crisis and guidance can change. Amendments will be posted in the MREW Moodle Covid-19 site.

MIKE GREENE MREW MEDICAL DIRECTOR, MAY 2020

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

CHANGES TO CASUALTY MANAGEMENT: APPLIES TO ALL CASUALTIES

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

- A**
- Do **not** use suction
 - Do **not** use airway adjunct — NPA, OPA
 - Assume all airway interventions are high risk and should not be performed by Casualty Carers. Should not be performed by HCPs without risk assessment appropriate PPE and training
 - Turn airway at risk casualties into the lateral position.
- B**
- Do **not** use a pocket mask — all patients
 - Do **not** use a bag valve mask — all patients
 - Only use oxygen according to clinical need. Use a pulse oximeter to guide oxygen use if possible.
- Nebuliser for asthma:**
- Use inhaler and spacer as first line (single patient use/dispose after use)
 - If required use nebuliser on lowest flow (approx 6 l/min)
 - Do not use in enclosed space
 - All rescuers > 3 metres away and up wind during treatment (**MUST** enforce distance).
- C**
- Cardiac Arrest:**
Use Level 2 PPE
- Check for signs of life
 - Do not listen for breathing or get close to mouth or face
 - Cover casualty mouth and nose with face mask
 - If AED is immediately available apply before chest compressions
 - Apply Defibrillator and follow instructions
 - Do not ventilate or perform any airway intervention
 - Perform compression only CPR as instructed by AED
 - Consider use of mechanical chest compression device if available.
- D**
- No change — record conscious level
- E**
- Do **not** use a bivi shelter unless it is clinically required
 - Keep warm using early alternative insulation if possible.

MREW Covid-19 Guideline 2: Mike Greene
Medical Director Updated May 2020. V3.0

Coronavirus Covid-19

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

EVACUATION AND END OF RESCUE

STRETCHER EVACUATION

Consider:

- Minimise members involved
- Sledging creates more distance than carrying and possibly less stressful
- PPE is hot: light underclothing clothing — change personnel — hydration
- Gloves: use washable gloves and decontaminate or disposable gloves
- Face mask for casualty to act as a 'barrier'/face mask for rescuer.

WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Always inform of your risk assessment and the Covid-19 status of patient and communicate to other agencies.

END OF RESCUE AT ROADSIDE AND BASE

Decontaminate team kit as much as possible before leaving RV, then use a 'Buddy System' and have someone read out the procedure below:

1. DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE

2. Remove gloves — turning inside out — dispose
3. Gel hands
4. Remove outer waterproof layer — turn inside out — bag wash at high temperature.
5. Gel hands
6. Remove goggles — bag — decontaminate
7. Gel hands
8. Remove helmet/headwear — bag — decontaminate
9. Gel hands
10. Remove face mask — dispose

11. DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE

12. Wash hands with soap and water at roadside or use hand sanitiser.

At base ensure you have a local procedure regarding to the following:

- Washing and decontaminating all equipment
- Base cleaning instructions and facilities
- Immediate access for hand decontamination for all members
- Team members will only need to isolate if they develop symptoms or has contact with a Covid +ve patient. **Note:** This is now much more fully explained in the Track and Trace document dated 19 June, also available in Moodle. Go to Medical > Covid-19.

DRUGS

- There is no proven link between Ibuprofen and worsening of Covid-19
- Ibuprofen for analgesia for analgesia in MR casualties is safe
- Use Entonox with a viral filter
- Do not use IND in high-risk casualty (risk of sneezing/coughing)
- Consider using Fentanyl Lozenge (self administered, no patient contact, dispose as contaminated material) or IM morphine.

MREW Covid-19 Guideline 3: Mike Greene
Medical Director May 2020. V3.0



The work has continued through regular video meetings and, following advice from the Heritage Lottery Northern Officer and from our consultant Liz Sutton, the project plan and budget proposal have now been reviewed, narrowed and tightened for submission.

MIKE MARGESON
MREW VICE CHAIRMAN

Mountain heritage update

The project steering group are confident our proposal is ready for submission as soon as the National Heritage Lottery reopens.

We spoke of seeking a regional champion/lead/rep to help coordinate and work with the appointed project officer. The reason for working on this now is to get these individuals on board and involved with the steering group. It is possible that preparation work can start right away, allowing us to move forward with the project efficiently. I am delighted that we have five regions already with reps in place: PDMRO (Roger Bennett), MPSRO (Pete Shanahan), PENMACRA (Paul Hudson), NWMRA (Chris Lloyd) and YDP (Howard Driver). Some regions are yet to be represented so, if yours is one of them, please do get in touch to find out more.

The next couple of years will be a challenging time for fundraising and sponsorship of any kind but we are looking for any partners or sponsors who might be interested in supporting the project.

As I concluded with in the last issue, the project team is working hard but we need to get the membership on board and helping. This project belongs to all of us! 🙌

Coronavirus Covid-19

Most teams will now be well-versed in holding meetings online but it might still be worth checking out the official guidance for AGMs in particular, suggests **Tim Cox**, chair of Bowland Pennine MRT. He found the following advice from the Charity Commission useful, particularly as his team's constitution doesn't include the holding of committee (trustee) meetings online. Others may be in a similar position and need to consider their options for holding their AGMs.

POSTPONING OR CANCELLING ANNUAL GENERAL AND OTHER MEETINGS

Coronavirus is having a major impact on charity events and the government's health advice may lead to some charities having no choice but to decide to cancel or postpone their AGMs and other critical meetings. If as trustees, you decide it is necessary to do so, you should record this decision to demonstrate good governance of your charity. This is particularly important if it is not possible to hold your AGM which may make it difficult for you to finalise your annual reports and accounts. Wherever possible, we would ask you to try to get your annual reports to us on time. However, where the situation impacts on the completion of annual returns and accounts, charities with an imminent filing date can email us.

Please include your charity name and charity registration number when you email us: filingextension@charitycommission.gov.uk

HOLDING MEETINGS ONLINE OR BY TELEPHONE

In the current situation, it is becoming increasingly difficult to hold face-to-face meetings. Some charities have clauses in their governing documents that allow them to meet virtually or to use telephone facilities, so we advise trustees to check their governing document and see if they can make amendments themselves to facilitate changes as to how or when meetings are held.

Where there is no such clause in your governing document and you decide to hold meetings over the phone or using digital solutions, we will understand but you should record this decision and that you have done this to demonstrate good governance of your charity.

FOR UP-TO-DATE GUIDANCE, GO TO GOV.UK AND SEARCH 'CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) GUIDANCE FOR THE CHARITY SECTOR [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/Y7SUCE7U](https://tinyurl.com/y7suce7u)

EMERGENCY SERVICE AND CORONAVIRUS HEROES TO BE HONOURED WITH MEMORIAL

The Emergency Service Memorial will feature six figures representing the different emergency services and the NHS, each dressed in the uniforms they would wear responding to 999 calls, plus a search and rescue dog.

Sculptor Philip Jackson CVO DL has been commissioned to create this 'national symbol of gratitude, sacrifice and remembrance' in bronze. The featured figures comprise a male police officer, a male firefighter, a female paramedic to represent the ambulance service and other healthcare agencies like St John Ambulance, a female doctor to represent the NHS, a male maritime worker to represent HM Coastguard and Lifeboat Services, a male search and rescue volunteer and a spaniel search and rescue dog to represent emergency services animals.

The National Emergency Services Memorial Charity (NESM) has been set up to raise the £3 million or so needed to build the UK's first '999 Cenotaph' to honour all those who have served in the emergency services. The memorial has the backing of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who spent several days in intensive care with coronavirus earlier in the year, and is also supported by Arlene Foster, the First Minister of Northern Ireland, Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister of Scotland, and Mark Drakeford, the First Minister of Wales.

An exclusive launch piece, by Daily Express chief reporter Giles Sheldrick, revealed that the memorial, to be located in London, will be opened 'by the monarch in 2023 in memory of all who have served past, present and future'.

Serving Metropolitan Police Special Sergeant Thomas Scholes-Fogg, the founder and chairman of the NESM, hopes the monument 'will be a national symbol of gratitude, sacrifice and remembrance'.

TO FIND OUT MORE AND TO DONATE TO THE FUND, GO TO [NESM.ORG.UK](https://www.nesm.org.uk).

video conferencing

NEIL SINCLAIR IS NATIONAL CYBER LEAD FOR THE POLICE DIGITAL SECURITY CENTRE AND HAS BEEN RECOGNISED IN THE PROGRESS 1000: LONDON'S MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE 2019 FOR HIS WORK IN TECHNOLOGY & CYBER SECURITY. HE HAS WORKED IN UK COUNTER-TERRORISM POLICING FOR OVER THIRTY YEARS, INVOLVED IN MOST OF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE'S BIGGEST TERRORIST OPERATIONS. A KEY MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL TERRORIST FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION UNIT FOR 10 YEARS, HE IS AN ACCREDITED FINANCIAL INVESTIGATOR AND WAS THE LEAD FOR FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE AT GCHQ, PRIOR TO JOINING THE POLICE DIGITAL SECURITY CENTRE.



IS THERE A BEST IN CLASS OR IS IT ALL ABOUT BEING SAFE?

NEIL SINCLAIR

With social distancing and quarantine measures implemented around the globe, people quickly started searching for effective means of communicating with each other. The accounts that have risen to prominence are Zoom and Microsoft Teams although there are plenty to choose from. Houseparty saw an early surge but more for its social networking and game-playing capabilities, rather than as a serious business tool.

There are other older options out there that seem to have been left behind for various reasons: Google Hangouts (requires a Google account to set up a meeting), Skype (too old to handle current demand) or FaceTime (requires an Apple device) are probably available to us all but don't fit business needs right now.

With its reported ease of use and attractive pricing, Zoom quickly rose in popularity — and people quickly figured out that Zoom's developers weren't fully prepared for the level of scrutiny it would receive and flaws

came rapidly to light. The company handled the tremendous increase of workload seamlessly and quickly reacted to security researchers' discoveries. However, just like with each and every service, code updates will not address every complaint, but some issues are very much worth keeping in mind.

Microsoft Teams works very well within an Office365 environment but the interface is clunky and a meeting must be planned, inviting existing participants into a 'team' before you can start a meeting.

There are a number of other services

available and PC Mag UK provides an in depth appraisal.

The primary concern for all users is security. A huge number of unsubstantiated (and frankly libellous) derogatory comments ran wild on social media when lockdown took hold. Where genuine security weaknesses were exposed, the providers moved very quickly to repair them and there is little record of serious breaches as a result of the platform's vulnerabilities.

The first thing to remember is that, other than with Teams and Hangouts, only the

meeting organiser needs to have an account to access the platform. A major step to security therefore is that, if you don't need to have a registered account, don't! This will enable the great majority of security issues and considerations to sit with just the individual hosting the meeting. If you have an account of your own, your settings may override those of the host. For those who are sharing equipment whilst at home, it is worth bearing in mind that your children aged under-16 are not legally allowed to have a Zoom account. This will not affect any school requirements as the school is inviting pupils to a room.

HERE'S A LOOK AT THE 10 UBIQUITOUS SECURITY TIPS:

1. The single most important security measure for any online account is to use a strong and unique password, and protect your account with two-factor authentication, which makes your account harder to hack and better protected, even if your account data leaks (though so far that hasn't happened). Video conference platforms are just another account.

There's a Zoom-specific catch: After you register, in addition to your log-in and password you get a Personal Meeting ID. Avoid making it public. And because Zoom

offers an option to create public meetings with your Personal Meeting ID, it's quite easy to leak that ID. If you do, anyone who knows your PMI can join any meeting you host, so share this information prudently.

2. Use your work email to register. Sharing your work contact details with your real colleagues should not be a big deal. If you don't have a work email, use a burner account with a well-known public domain to keep your personal contact details private.

3. Don't fall for fake apps. The number of malicious files incorporating the names of popular videoconference services (Webex, GoToMeeting, Zoom and others) in their file names had roughly tripled in comparison with the numbers found month by month over the previous year. That most likely means malefactors are ramping up their abuse based on the popularity of Zoom and other apps of its kind, trying to disguise malware as video conference clients.

Don't fall for it! Use official websites — zoom.us — to download safely for Mac and PC, and go to the App Store or Google Play for your mobile devices.

4. Don't use social media to share conference links. Sometimes you want to host public events, and in many places online events are the only type of public events available these days. But even if your event is truly open to everyone, you should avoid sharing the link on social media.

If you knew anything about Zoom before reading this, you've probably heard about so-called Zoombombing. It's a term Techcrunch journalist Josh Constine coined to describe trolls disrupting Zoom meetings with offensive content. Right now, several chats on Discord and threads on 4Chan (both popular with trolls) are discussing targets for their next raids.

Where do the trolls get information about upcoming events? That's right, they find them on social media. So, avoid publicly posting links to meetings. If for some reason you still want to, make sure you don't enable the Use Personal Meeting ID option.

5. Protect every meeting with a password. Setting up a password for your meeting remains the best means of ensuring that only the people you want in your meeting can attend it. Recently Zoom turned password protection on by default — a good move. That said, don't confuse the meeting password with your Zoom account password. And like meeting links, meeting passwords should never appear on social media or other public channels, or your efforts to protect your call from trolls will be in vain.

6. Enable Waiting Room. Another setting that gives you more control over the meeting, Waiting Room — recently enabled by default — makes participants wait in a 'waiting room' until the host approves each one. That gives you the ability to control who joins your





EDELRID *e*

KA A

Versatile Strap-Based Haul System

This compact haul system is a genuine all-rounder. Whether for tree care, rescues, or rope access work, the KAA is a key piece of equipment on any harness. Depending on the positioning, it offers a 4:1 or 5:1 lifting ratio. The intelligent strap-based design also makes it the lightest and most compact system on the market.

www.edelrid.de

13 VIDEOCONFERENCING – IS THERE A BEST IN CLASS OF IS IT ALL ABOUT BEING SAFE? CONTINUED...

meeting, even if someone who wasn't supposed to participate somehow got the password for it. It also lets you kick an unwanted person out of the meeting — and into the waiting room. We recommend leaving this box ticked.

7. Pay attention to screen-sharing features. Every normal videoconference app offers screen-sharing — the ability of one participant to show their screen to the others. Some settings that are worth keeping an eye on:

- Limiting screen-sharing ability to the host or extending it to everyone on the call. If you don't need other people to show their screens, you know which option to choose.
- Letting multiple participants share screens simultaneously. If you can't immediately see why your meetings would need this capability, you'll probably never need it. Just keep it in mind in case you ever need to enable it.

8. Stick with the Web client if possible. Many apps have a number of what I would consider vulnerabilities by default and they may still employ shady practices such as sharing data with third parties.

For this reason I recommend using a Web interface instead of installing the app on your device, if possible. The Web version sits in a sandbox in the browser and doesn't have the permissions an installed app has, limiting the amount of harm it can potentially cause.

In some cases, however, even if you want to use the Web interface, you may find that Zoom, for example, has gone ahead and downloaded the installer, and there's just no other option to connect to the meeting but to install the client. In that case, you can at least limit the number of devices on which Zoom is installed to just one. Let it be your secondary smartphone or, say, a spare laptop. Choose a device with next to no personal information. I know that sounds somewhat paranoid, but better safe than sorry.

By the way, if your company already uses Skype for Business (previously known as Lync), then you have another option. Skype for Business is compatible with Zoom and can handle Zoom conference calls just as well — without the aforementioned flaws.

9. Don't believe in advertised end-to-end encryption. With end-to-end encryption, all communications between you and the people you're calling are encrypted in a way that only you and the people on the call can decrypt them. All other parties, including the service providers, cannot.

Most popular video conference services lack end-to-end encryption, although Microsoft Teams has a better record than most and meets dozens of national, regional and industry-specific security/privacy compliance regulations. Other more enterprise-centric platforms will offer encryption as an additional service. Nevertheless it is advisable to avoid discussing personal or trade secrets.

10. Think about what people can see or hear. This one applies to every videoconferencing service. Before you jump on the call, take a moment to consider what people will see or hear when you join the call. Even if you're home alone, they may expect you to be fully dressed. Basic grooming is probably a good idea.

The same holds true for your screen if you plan on sharing it. Close any windows you'd rather others not see, whether it's a surprise gift you're buying online for another person on the Zoom call or a job search your boss doesn't need to know about. I'll leave other examples to your imagination. ☺



A word from the editor...

Great website but... where have you stashed the members area?

You know what it's like when you're doing a bit of decorating, having a clear out... everything gets hauled out of the room (and when it's the office you're giving a wash and brush-up, there's a LOT to haul out, things you've forgotten even existed). You leave it all stacked up somewhere for days... weeks, even... while you set about planning, prepping and painting.

Then, skirting boards done, door furniture back in place, lampshades cleared of all those dead moths, you start carting everything back in, bit by bit, spend hours fretting over every last detail. Where should this bit go? How does this bit look with that? And it never goes back in quite the same way. Some stuff goes in the bin, other stuff gets greater prominence, still more of that stuff you'd long forgotten about see the light of day, its importance in the grand scheme of things (the bold new image you currently want to define you) reimagined.

Much, much later, weary with the unforeseen snags and interruptions, the last minute 'bright' ideas that took so-o-o much longer to implement than you anticipated, you sit back with a deep-felt sigh to enjoy the fruits of your labour. But it's short-lived because, moments later, the family piles in and says things like 'Ooh, I like what you've done with the room but... not sure I like the pattern on those new cushions'.

Or 'I like what you've done with the room but... I quite liked the moths in the lampshade. Can we not have them back?'

Or 'I like what you've done with the room but... where's that cupboard I used to keep all that stuff in? Yes <sigh> I know I haven't looked in it for years but I'm sure there was a really vital document in there... and I need it today... right this minute...'

Those of you who've smiled along with my ever-so-slightly rambling 'editor in-joke' will know exactly where I'm heading next. Yep, we launched a new MREW website in June and, with a notable handful of exceptions (to whom I say, thank you, your constructive comments were addressed and the website functions better for them), the overriding feedback from within the mountain rescue family appears to run along the lines of: 'I like what you've done with the website mate, but...'

That said, everyone outside mountain rescue — and let's face it, that's who it's aimed at — was glowing in their response. So job done, I'd say.

Winding back several months, to when I was asked to take on this daunting room revamp (aka new website project management), I was reluctant, to say the least. I know what you lot are like! The brief was clear: create a website that sells mountain rescue to the public and media, that focuses on our safety messages, makes it easier for people to donate and support us, and provides a vehicle for the shop. What wasn't included in the brief was a refreshment of the members area — largely because most

of the information that was on the members area is now in the process of being transferred to the Moodle VLE, with the exception of some very old, out-of-date documents. So, **if you're looking for the members area on the new website, you won't find it.** It's gone. Take a look at the box on the right for details of how to register with Moodle.

I hope that what you WILL find with the new site is that links to the mountain rescue regions and the mountain rescue teams that operate within them are much clearer. The key words here being 'mountain rescue'. And this is where I stumbled into another minefield as cave rescue conspiracy theories ricocheted around social media. I hate to disappoint but, honestly, there is no conspiracy. No ulterior motive. And I'm happy to discuss. Just drop me a direct email or pick up the phone.

The shop is still in Shopify but the Wordpress plug-in brings it into the site's brand styling. If you're a team admin who wants to access the discounted team rates for certain goods, click on the link on the shop home page and it'll take you to your usual log-in screen.

We've introduced a separate **magazine subscription** as we suspect a lot of people join Basecamp just for this. Subscribers will receive a hard copy of the magazine (once we're back in print). We also suspect that **Basecamp** members join because they wish to support us and the wider mountain rescue organisation, and would doubtless be horrified that a basic subscription actually gets eaten up in its entirety in the provision of their welcome pack and quarterly magazine production and delivery. So, in future, Basecamp members will only receive a digital copy. Time will tell whether our hunches are right on this...

And now for the thank yous, of which there are many — not least to the management team for trusting me to deliver this. Suffice to say, my forte isn't with the geeky, technical side of things, being prone to glaze over at the mere mention of 'search engine optimisation' and 'beaver builder' (please, don't ask). Before I could get to grips with the words and pictures and ensuring the shop still worked, the design and wireframes needed building. The site was designed and built by Neil Burnett, who I can only thank for his extreme patience with my need to have techie things explained in words of few syllables and also my frequent tweaking of the site's workings, as I second-guessed how things might impact mountain rescue sensitivities (you were always in my thoughts). I hope you will all agree he's done a stonking job and we now have a website which looks great and strongly reinforces our 'mountain rescue' brand. Thanks Neil.

Thanks also to Excluserv, our financial bods, who worked with me to ensure the subscription forms, donate button and shop worked as they should, and to the 'website media team' of Andy Simpson, Dave Freeborn and Jules Walden —



HOW TO REGISTER WITH MOODLE

Go to <http://tiny.cc/Moodle4MR>, 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. A Moodle administrator will usually approve your account 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, but forgotten, try the forgotten password link. If you can't see Insurance, GDPR or Equipment you are likely to have been an early adopter of the system or have been manually added for a specific course. In this case, and for any other queries, please email moodlesupport@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

plus Sally Seed, Mark Lewis and Ben Carter, who helped bring it to launch. But biggest thanks of all to the brilliant photographers we have within MR whose work has made this website the mountain rescue colour-fest it is. If I've inadvertently missed any of you off the acknowledgments on the Gallery page, please do let me know.

So there we have it, the mountain rescue 'salesroom' redesigned and redecorated, all bright and sparkling and fresh. No doubt we'll still get the odd moth in the lampshade but... can I just have a lie down now? ☺

fires 2020

Moorland fires in Northumberland © NNPMRT.

May Bank Holiday Monday: Simonside Hills, Northumberland

Northumberland National Park MRT (NNPMRT) members spent many hours following the May Bank Holiday weekend, supporting Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service in tackling wildfires on the Simonside Hills. Around mid-afternoon, a wildfire had started near Joe's Wood on Simonside and rapidly spread over the top to Old Steall Crag and down towards Selby's Cove. The swift actions of the fire service, with support from local gamekeepers, stopped the fire before it reached the trees in Harwood Forest but a flare up on the Tuesday night led to further damage below Simonside and round towards the main crag.

'We were asked to provide logistical support to the fire service overnight on Wednesday from 19.00hrs through until 08.00hrs the following morning,' says team leader Iain Nixon. 'We had five members spend the night on the hill, strategically located to spot flare ups. After midnight, as the wind changed direction a number of 'heat spots' were identified and team members escorted fire service personnel onto the hill. The fires were then extinguished.'

In the morning, the extent of the wildfire was then accurately mapped. 'The incident was a great example of partnership, with our team members working alongside fire service crews from Rothbury, Wooler and Alnwick during the night. We continue to support our other emergency services through the Covid-19 pandemic and are grateful that members of the public have continued to stay away from the hills and fells.'

Later that same week, the team spent a further eight hours supporting the fire service on the Simonside Hills when fires flared up again. One of the team's duty controllers, who is also a volunteer wildfire support officer, happened to be in the area whilst on a walk from home. As first on scene he was able to update the fire service control room on the situation.

'Fire crews from Rothbury, Alnwick and Amble dealt with the fire, helped once again by local gamekeepers, estate staff from across north Northumberland and Forestry England', says Iain. 'Throughout the day we provided logistical support to the fire crews on the ground, spotting flare ups and looking out for members of the public. In addition to this, one of our team members had to intercept a large group of walkers on Old Steall Crag just to the north of the wildfire. They had travelled to the area—from outside the national park—to climb Simonside, and were politely asked to retrace their route back to their car for their own safety. Had they continued, they would have put themselves in a very dangerous situation.'



Photos: NNPMRT.



Late March: Lancashire

Bolton team members assisted firefighters from Lancashire and Greater Manchester services when fire broke out on moors between Rivington and Belmont. Firefighters at the scene managed to contain the fire by getting water on the flanks of the fire as personnel from United Utilities, mountain rescue and other contractors assisted in getting water to the location by means of 4x4 vehicles with 10,000L water bowzers.



Photo: © Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (official).

Late May and early June: Darwen Moor

With the warm weather continuing, and despite appeals to the public not to light barbecues—let alone venture onto the moors in the first place—further wild fires were breaking out across Lancashire, with mountain rescue team members providing logistical support and safety cover.



Photo: © Oldham MRT.

Early June: Greater Manchester: Dovestones

Over several days, Oldham team members supported Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service who were tackling a large wildfire in the Ashway area. The team provided navigational assistance and medical cover for the firefighters on the moor, with the last personnel coming off the hill as darkness fell. Heavy overnight rainfall helped to significantly dampen the fireground, with only isolated hotspots continuing to flare.

Another multi-agency operation, involving Oldham team, GMFRS, Greater Manchester Police, North West Ambulance Service, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (Official), United Utilities, RSPB Dovestone and others.

CHRIS COOKSON

(ON BEHALF OF THE MREW
TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE)



The Training subcommittee (TSC) has tasked a working group with investigating an ongoing concern of the TSC, namely the role of training in duty of care and governance. The premise for this work is:

- To support and protect teams and team members
- To seek clarity
- To continue to review, develop, improve and find assurance in an ever-changing world.

The working group aimed to develop a workshop session for the National Training Officers' Day to be held on 7 June 2020. Covid-19 saw that event cancelled but the TSC was keen for work to continue during lockdown. The first task is to better understand two distinct areas:

- Any relevant laws
- The views of team members.

Tony Rich, whilst legal adviser for MREW, did some fantastic work in the 1990s and produced several documents that gave a view of the relevant aspects of law and the legal system in a mountain rescue context. This was updated in 2010, but it's due for another update which will help underpin what the working group is doing.

It is important to understand the views of all involved in mountain rescue, where duty of care and governance can be controversial and emotive topics. We need to understand why they are seen as controversial and why they generate such emotion.

Through several online meetings, the working group has developed a Google Form, that we hope you'll complete, so you can have your say. We want to canvass your opinion so that team members, team reps (by 'reps' we mean equipment, training or medical officers etc), regional reps and national reps can feed back from their different perspectives. The aim is to produce a discussion document on what 'Duty of Care' and 'Governance' are for mountain rescue from a training point of view, which can then be used as a workshop session at the National Training Officers day, whenever that is rescheduled.

The working group comprises Al Read, Graham Bailey, Rich Quinn, Phil Ridley and Chris Cookson. To contact the working group, please email training.group@mountain.rescue.org.uk

ACCESS THE FORM VIA [HTTP://TINYURL.COM/Y7G9Q770](http://tinyurl.com/y7g9q770). PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR VIEWS VIA THE FORM BY THE END OF JULY.



NEW PELI AIR 1465 EMS CASE

This latest addition to the Peli Air range offers a tough solution to protect medical kit without weighing you down. The 1465 EMS Case is split 50/50

between the base and the lid and the deep lid opens 180° for maximum stability, offering a wide base when in use. It features a three-level, fully customisable tray system to keep medical supplies safe and well organised. The trays can be lifted out of the case and are easy to wipe down and keep clean, and there is also a lockable tray section for secure controlled substance storage. For added security, the top tray and case lid work together as a seal that prevents tray compartment contents from spilling out into the case during transit. This model also comes with a padded nylon shoulder strap for quick response and to make carrying easy. Peli Air Cases are watertight, crushproof and dustproof and offer a lighter weight option when choosing a protective case. They are backed by the legendary 'You break it, we replace it' lifetime guarantee.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE FULL RANGE OF PELI PRODUCTS, GO TO PELIPRODUCTS.CO.UK

Hinkes
thinks



Lockdown reflections on surviving extreme adversity

The stresses of being isolated in 'lockdown' are very reminiscent of the self-imposed testing times high altitude mountaineers can face during long expeditions, away from home and family, the risk of death ever-present. On the anniversary of many of his own experiences whilst tackling the 8000-metre peaks, **Alan Hinkes** reflects on how he coped, and survived.



In the situation we currently find ourselves in, a lot of people are anxious and on edge, staying alert to the risk of catching Covid-19. Earlier, we were all in lockdown, mostly confined to our homes. In many ways, there are similarities with three-month-long Himalayan expeditions to 8000 metre peaks.

Generally you have to stay alert and avoid complacency, yet accept a level of risk from avalanche, rock fall, stormy weather and more. Often you can be 'locked down' in base camp for ten days or more. On some

of my expeditions I had to endure ten-day periods of 'festering' in a tent at base camp with only a couple of other climbers to chat with. In many ways it was good training for the Covid-19 lockdown. In many ways it wasn't. There were no regulations to keep me in my tent. If I wanted to go out and risk my life I could and, once you leave base camp and go on the mountain, the risk can be massive — especially after a big snowfall when the avalanche risk is high.

Over the lockdown period, when a lot of people were doing their gardens, painting

the house, walking as recommended, reading and 'Zooming', I got thinking about some of my expeditions. It was 15 years ago when I topped out on Kangchenjunga, my final 8000-metre peak, and 25 years ago when I summited K2. Kangchenjunga was 30 May 2005 and K2 17 July 1995. Both mountains are possibly the most difficult of the 8000ers. On both, I really 'pushed the envelope', getting to the summit late in the day and descending in the dark. Twenty-five years ago, I tried to describe the suffering and physical stress on the summit of K2:



'My head ached and my body felt like it was being crushed in a vice. Climbing at extreme altitude is agony. Torture. Yet even through that haze of suffering, my oxygen-starved brain was aware of the intense seriousness of my situation. No celebration was due yet. I was completely alone on the summit of K2, the world's second highest and possibly hardest mountain. Now I had to get down. Some of the world's best climbers have died descending K2. Many have been killed in good weather, with optimum conditions and in daylight. It was now between 6.30-7.00pm and the light was already fading fast. I would be descending in the dark.'

'I had to keep reminding myself: I must get down in one piece... no mountain is worth a life, or a finger or toe to frostbite... Returning from an expedition is a success. The summit is only a bonus. I had to concentrate on the descent back to the world, back to my daughter Fiona.'

'As the sun dropped and the temperature dropped even lower, K2 began to cast a huge shadow across the earth. The temperature was 40 below and in the bitter cold I realised frostbite was a real danger. I checked my head torch and, drawing on many years of mountaineering experience, started my descent.'

I am fortunate enough to have survived 25 years more, with lots of great experiences in the hills to savour. K2 had taken me three years to climb. Three consecutive expeditions in 1993, 1994 and 1995. I dedicated — possibly donated — three years of my life to K2. I was not obsessed with K2, it was a worthy challenge that I'd set myself and determination, fitness, technique and stamina saw me through. After my climbing partner had retreated from about 7000 metres, back down to Basecamp, I was alone.

On the final push there was a team of two

Pakistanis and two Dutch climbers. On the summit, I managed to hand my camera to one of the Dutch to take a summit photo of me. Then I was left alone as all four set off down without a care or reminder to me to descend immediately and get out of the death zone. The summit of K2 is one of the most dangerous inhospitable places on the planet. There is very little anyone can do to rescue someone from 8611 metres. It's too high for helicopters, with the landing and operating ceiling around 6500 metres. There are no mountain rescue teams and, even if there were, it would take three weeks to acclimatise. In the death zone, you are on your own.

Ten years later, in May 2005 I was in a similar predicament on Kangchenjunga. My climbing partner dropped back and I continued on alone to the 8586-metre summit. This time I was totally alone with no one to hand my camera to for a summit photo. Fortunately, in 2005, I'd gone digital and held my compact camera at arm's length, the autofocus and built-in flash kicked in and it captured a sharp, bright picture in the gloom just before darkness set in. Essentially I took a 'selfie' on the third highest mountain — although, no one was calling them 'selfies' then, so I called it an 'arms-lengthie'.

You can see in the summit arms-lengthie that I look pushed. My face is iced over and I look stressed. I am a realist and I knew that this was a very serious situation that I was now in. It was dark. I was alone. It was



snowing, dumping vast amounts, making the avalanche hazard very high.

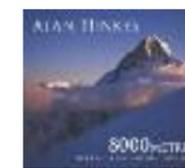
Suddenly the brutal reality of my predicament hit me. I was scared. I started hyperventilating and shaking. It was a panic attack brought on by the stark realisation that I was quite likely to perish and I had only myself to blame.

Somehow, I overcome the panic attack and fear and, with a grim relish, I attacked the situation. I had 30 years of stamina and skill to draw on. I had made it down K2 ten years before. I was determined to descend Kangchenjunga. I had the will to live. It was a close call, but, in many ways, a grand finale to all fourteen 8000-metre peaks.

I had 27 attempts on the 8000ers and I class that as 27 successes, not fourteen successes and thirteen failures. Coming back from an 8000-metre peak is a success, the summit is only a bonus.

On all my expeditions, not getting complacent and staying alert has kept me safe. Stay alert. Stay alive. 🙏

Opposite page: The summit of K2. **Top:** Prayer flags on the summit of Kangchenjunga. **Inset:** Alan's 'arms-lengthie' with a photo of his daughter and grandson, on the summit of Kangchenjunga. Photos © Alan Hinkes.



ALL FOURTEEN OF ALAN'S EXPEDITIONS ARE FEATURED IN '8000 METRES CLIMBING THE WORLD'S HIGHEST MOUNTAINS' — AVAILABLE TO BUY FROM THE MREW ONLINE SHOP. GO TO MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK/SHOP/BOOKS



KONGUR MRT JACKET.

Use rock stability and control by making your
weight on the Kongur MRT Jacket to lean with
GORE-TEX for better moisture when walking
downhill.

Guided
by
necessity

News type © Sporeheiter, Dreamstime.com



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: **Tough challenges ahead**

This issue's column looks at a difficult subject and one that, unfortunately, may become an increasingly tough challenge for MR teams in the months ahead. We need to acknowledge that sometimes mountain rescue teams and search dogs are involved in searches for people who are vulnerable.

A simple suggestion

In early April, an MR supporter, Jessica Wortley, got in touch with MREW through the website with what seemed like a useful, constructive and relatively simple suggestion:

I am a walker and climber based in NE England and I wish to draw your attention to the reporting of suicide. I know that MR teams are often involved in searches for missing people who are deemed vulnerable or at risk (of suicide). I follow (and support) several mountain rescue teams on social media, and have noticed that although various teams report on the search for missing, vulnerable people, and sometimes on the subsequent finding of a body, there does not appear to be a link to organisations that can help.

The Samaritans offer best guidance for the media with regard to reporting on suicide and I was just wondering if, as per their guidance, it might be possible at the very least to include references to sources of support such as Samaritans in MR posts.

Having explored this a bit more, I still think Jessica's comments are both useful and constructive — and the Samaritans guidelines for communications are really practical and specific. But simple? No.

Applying the Samaritans guidelines

To give them their full name, the Samaritans Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide (samaritans.org/about-samaritans/media-guidelines) are brilliantly reassuring and specific. There are background facts and context, best practice tips with do's and don'ts (including advice for digital media) and a really straightforward '10 things to remember'.

The guidelines advise on the language to use (and avoid) and reinforce Jessica's point about including references to support groups and places where vulnerable people can find help. Research by Samaritans and others has shown that this referencing really helps other people reading it who might be at risk.

I would recommend that anyone responsible for any MR social media or other communications or media activity should read them.

But... (there's always a 'but'...)

Being aware of the guidelines is one thing — and a very useful one at that. But when should you include a mention of Samaritans and their contact details or website address in one of your posts?

If you post a link and information only when you think someone has taken their own life, isn't that you making a judgement that isn't yours to make? **That judgement is up to the coroner.**

If you post links with every search for a missing person that might be a suicide, whatever the circumstances, that's not ideal either. You might not be seen as making a

judgement but how will your post be seen by the friends and family of someone who has simply wandered off? **You're generalising too much and that's not right either.**

I've discussed this dilemma with a couple of people who work in mental health and in suicide bereavement support. There are no easy answers — but it's worth you and your team being aware of the issues and thinking about your best approach.

Possible options

One suggestion would be to have a small paragraph on your website (possibly where you report on incidents), about support available to vulnerable people or anyone upset by any of your reports. This could be as simple as Samaritans contact details and a link to their website at samaritans.org.

And you could possibly make occasional posts on your social media with those details and perhaps those of a local MIND group too, indicating that the team is sometimes called out to distressing situations and appreciates that it's often good to talk to someone rather than just worrying.

The key thing is to make references to support being available but NOT linking it to specific incidents.

This is a difficult subject and there are no easy answers. But getting it right could make a huge difference so I hope some of these suggestions are useful. If you've anything to add or recent experience to share, please contact me at sally@stoneleighcomms.co.uk or via editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk or the Facebook Members Group. Thank you. ☺



THE HEADLAMP 200: MINIMALIST DESIGN, MAXIMUM COMFORT

A minimalist design which maximum comfort and fit, the HeadLamp 200 is a compelling entry into the rechargeable landscape. Delivering 200 lumens, the transparent polycarbonate front includes red and white LED's, allowing you to access four different lighting modes including a dimmable red lighting vision. The multi angle design is USB rechargeable and weighs only 50g. Featuring 3D slim fit construction, the integrated front sits front and central for no bounce for ultimate comfort and fit. Wherever you are and whatever you're doing, you'll quickly forget you're wearing it.

Easily prevent those lumens turning on in your pack by activating lock mode at the touch of a button, and with run times of up to 40 hours on a single charge, you can leave your disposable batteries at home. Available in four colours.

ORDER FROM BLACKS STORES
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT BIOLITEENERGY.COM
OR CALL BURTON MCCALL LTD ON 0116 234 4646.



A SPOTLIGHT ON MEN'S HEALTH

THE FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITY

Over the last few years, The Fire Fighters Charity has helped restore a number of mountain rescue team members to better health, through their arrangement with the Rescue Benevolent Fund. During the Coronavirus lockdown, they kindly offered to share some of the articles published in their online Support Hub. For Men's Health Week, 15-21 June, the charity shone a light on three of the more common health conditions that affect men and explain what to look out for.

KNOW YOUR PROSTATE

The prostate gland is part of the male reproductive system and is located just below the bladder. It is roughly the size of a walnut and is responsible for helping to produce the fluid found in semen. The prostate gland surrounds the tube known as the urethra, which passes urine from the bladder to the outside of the body, so any prostate disease or growth (benign or malignant) is likely to cause problems with urination.

Around 47,000 men in the UK are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year and approximately 11,000 will die of the disease. However, as men age many will develop problems in relation to their prostate that aren't indicative of cancer.

Indeed, many of the symptoms of non-cancerous conditions can be like those of prostate cancer, so don't panic if any of the following rings true for you. Symptoms of prostate cancer may include the following :

- Slow or weak flow of urine or difficulty starting to urinate
- Urinating more frequently
- Pain or burning sensation when urinating or unexplained urinary infection
- Difficulty getting or maintaining an erection, impotence or pain during ejaculation
- Constipation and altered bowel habit
- Blood in urine or semen
- Pain in the back.

These can also be caused by non-cancerous conditions, but if you're concerned, speak to your GP. The good news is that prostate cancer is a very slow-growing cancer and if caught early can be cured.

However, prostate cancer can also develop without you noticing any symptoms and there is currently no national screening programme in the UK for the disease. Diagnosis usually begins with a simple blood test to measure your levels of Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA), a protein uniquely secreted by the prostate.

These tests aren't definitive, so doctors will usually take several of them over time and follow them up with MRI scans and biopsies.

Your risk of developing prostate cancer increases with your age, with most men diagnosed in their sixties. But it can also affect younger men too, although less frequently. Other conditions also increase the risk, including race or ethnicity (unfortunately, black men have a higher risk), family history and your diet (too much dairy, processed food or red meat can also increase your chances).

You may be offered a PSA test at your free NHS health checks — at age 40 and every five years thereafter — and deciding to do so is an entirely personal choice. Some men may wish to know their baseline PSA levels, others may not, but the option is there for you.

As a rule, as with any form of cancer, preventative steps such as a healthy, balanced, Mediterranean diet and regular exercise are also worth considering. Research has shown that some foods such as tomatoes, pomegranate and green tea may also promote a healthy prostate, so there's no harm in adding a few of these to your diet too.

For more information, visit Prostate Cancer UK or Orchid – Fighting Male Cancer

TESTICULAR CANCER

Testicular cancer occurs when normal, healthy cells, which are carefully regulated by the body, begin to reproduce uncontrollably within an area of the body such as the testicles. It affects over 2,200 men every year and is more prevalent in young men aged 15-45, although it can affect men at any age. This might not sound like a very high statistic but, bearing the age in mind, it is far too many young men being affected by something that is entirely preventable if found early enough.

The good news with testicular cancer is that, if found early, there is nearly a 100% chance of cure (98% of men will

still be alive ten years after treatment). That's why it's so important not to delay seeing your GP if you have any of the following symptoms. It's important to check both your testicles in turn, looking out for any change in size or texture. Feel carefully for lumps, hardening, swelling or discomfort, a heaviness, dull ache or dragging sensation in the lower part of the abdomen, scrotum or groin, pain, and breast tenderness or back pain.

Again, these symptoms do not necessarily mean a cancer diagnosis as they are often associated with other conditions. But just by checking regularly and report any noticeable changes to your GP. And there's definitely no need to be embarrassed, or let pride get in the way of seeking help. They've seen it all before.

November has produced a great guide for checking your testes or for more information visit the Odd Balls Foundation or Orchid – Fighting Male Cancer.

BREAST CANCER IN MEN

We think of breast cancer as being a disease that only affects women, but this simply isn't true. So if you're asking can men get breast cancer? The short answer is yes. Men can and do get breast cancer. And while cases of breast cancer are fewer in men than woman, it is important to raise awareness of male breast cancer, as around 390 men are diagnosed with the disease each year in the UK alone.

Breast cancer begins at a cellular level when an individual cell mutates to form an abnormality. These cells then begin to divide and multiply, in time creating a cluster of abnormal cellular formations known as a tumour. Often this is what is felt when someone goes to their GP saying they've found a lump. It is important to note that not all lumps mean cancer and symptoms can be the same in breast cysts etc.

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in the UK, but its causes are numerous and diverse. Research has found that inherited

genes can play a role in someone developing it. While for women, around 3% of breast cancer cases in females are caused by faulty genes, in men, gene risk accounts for between 10% and 20% of cases. Age naturally increases an individual's risk of developing breast cancer too. For men this is the single biggest factor with most cases being reported in males between the age of 60 and 70 years.

Obesity, smoking, lack of exercise, alcohol and stress all have a negative effect on holistic health, so it goes without saying that these lifestyle choices also increase both men and women's chances of developing breast cancer. Reducing these in our lifestyle will help us take care of our health.

The most common symptom for both men and women with breast cancer is a lump in the breast area. This is nearly always painless. Other similar symptoms can include:

- Oozing from the nipple (a discharge) that may be blood stained
- Swelling of the breast
- Nipple that is pulled into the breast (called nipple retraction)
- Lump or swelling in either of your armpits
- Rash on or around the nipple
- Sore (ulcer) in the skin of the breast

The best thing you can do is to get to know your body. Figure out what is normal for you and take the time to check yourself. If you notice signs of any of the above or have any concerns seek medical advice as soon as possible. As with all cancers, the earlier it is found the easier it is to treat.

Treatment depends upon numerous factors, so the consultant will perform scans, bloods and biopsies to gain a better overall view and to gauge the type, size and cellular makeup and to gauge if the cancer has spread to any surrounding tissues. ☺

For more information, check out breastcancernow.org, macmillan.org.uk and www.cancerresearchuk.org.

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



TO FIND OUT MORE, GO TO FIREFIGHTERSCHARITY.ORG.UK. TO ACCESS THEIR SUPPORT LINE, CALL 0800 389 8820

WE ARE WHAT WE EAT...



CHICKEN TIKKA SALAD

Serves 2

This dish is simplified by using shop-bought Tikka mix so it's easy to make when you get home from work – or a call-out.

- 500g boneless chicken
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp Greek yogurt
- 1 packet Schwartz Tikka Spice Mix (available from supermarkets)
- 1 tbsp oil for basting
- 50g runner beans

1. Cut chicken into 1 inch pieces (or you can leave as whole breasts*)
2. Thoroughly mix the chicken with the Schwartz Tikka Spice mix in a bowl
3. Leave overnight in fridge or for 20 minutes if you want to cook it now
4. Preheat the grill on high
5. Either thread chicken onto skewers or place on a greased tray
6. Baste with oil and place under a grill, 4-5 inches from heat, for 5 minutes
7. Meanwhile lightly steam the runner beans
8. Now turn the chicken pieces, baste and grill for a further 5 minutes
9. Garnish with chopped coriander and serve with the runner beans.

* If leaving as whole breast: oven bake for 25 minutes on 190C



BEEF & PEPPER STIR FRY

Serves 3

Beef is high in minerals such as phosphorous, magnesium, selenium and copper which are all required for a healthy heart and central nervous system.

- 500g stir fry beef strips
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp dark soy sauce
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- Small bunch spring onion, sliced on the diagonal
- 200g roasted antipasto peppers in oil or vinegar, drained and sliced
- Boiled rice, to serve

1. To marinate the beef, place in a medium, non-metallic bowl and cover with the vinegar, soy and Worcestershire sauce. Leave for 20 minutes.
2. When the marinated beef is ready, heat a small dry wok until it's very hot. Tip in the beef, marinade and spring onions and stir fry for 2 minutes.
3. Add the roasted peppers, then stir fry for a further 2 minutes.
4. Divide the stir fry between shallow bowls and serve with some boiled rice.

How lessons learned in 19th century Vienna can help us during Covid-19

WILL KITCHEN INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL LEAD, HOLME VALLEY MRT

DR JON DEARDEN, MEDICAL GROUP
HOLME VALLEY MRT

If you asked ten different NHS staff the question 'Which single low-cost intervention do you think has had the biggest impact upon patient outcomes?' you would most likely receive ten very different answers, all with excellent reasoning behind them. If one of the ten was an infectious diseases specialist though, there's a high probability that they would point towards a sink and enthuse about Ignaz Semmelweis: the father of infection control.

Covid-19 has had enormous effects upon life across the globe, including for the volunteers of the UK's mountain rescue teams, and has made infection prevention and control (IPC) one of the most heavily discussed aspects of medical practice worldwide. PPE, decontamination and even lockdowns all fall within the remit of IPC. In this article we will discuss the key components of IPC and how they can be adapted for the mountain rescue arena, with special reference to the current coronavirus pandemic. We believe it vital that MR personnel have a solid understanding of the core tenets of IPC, as this will not only help to keep team members and casualties safe, but will also help MR volunteers understand why they are being asked to adopt lengthy and arduous practices every time they put on their red jacket. In addition, we hope to shed a little more light on Covid-19 itself and how we at Holme Valley MRT have responded to it.

THE ORIGINS OF INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL

Like any good story, the history of IPC starts with a hero: Ignaz Semmelweis. In 1847, while working as a junior doctor on the labour wards of a Vienna hospital, Semmelweis observed that there were startlingly different rates of infection with 'childbed fever' (now known to be a bacterial infection called Group B Streptococcus) across the institute's two obstetric departments. Clinic 1, staffed by

doctors and medical students who also worked in other areas of the hospital, experienced 3.5x more maternal deaths from this infection than Clinic 2, which was staffed by midwives who worked only in that clinic. It's worth pointing out here that 'germ theory', ie. the concept that infectious diseases are caused by tiny micro-organisms called germs or pathogens (viruses, bacteria etc), wouldn't be realised until decades later. It was instead thought that disease resulted from contact with bad smells or 'miasma', so no great effort was being put into keeping hospitals and their staff clean at this point in history.

Semmelweis noted that the Clinic 1 staff and students would often perform an autopsy on a woman who had died of childbed fever and then head straight to the clinic to examine expectant mothers, without first either washing their hands or changing their clothes. He deduced that these doctors were carrying the cause of the disease from the deceased to newly arrived patients on their dirty hands, precipitating the infection and subsequent death of these new patients from childbed fever. As the midwives were not in contact with childbed fever fatalities before examining new patients, they weren't passing on the infection as much, hence the lower death rate in Clinic 2.

Having concluded that the cause of these hospital-acquired infections was clinicians' contaminated hands, Semmelweis then introduced a policy of all staff disinfecting their hands with a chlorine solution (like many MRTs are currently using for

equipment and vehicle decontamination!) Over the two months before this change, 15.4% of Clinic 1 patients died from childbed fever. During the three months after, during which staff were washing their hands, only 1.8% died: a nearly tenfold reduction.

But what does a research study conducted nearly two centuries ago in Austria (and in the capital city no less, not a mountainous

Main picture: Hand washing via Pixabay. Right: Dr Ignaz Semmelweis, copperplate engraving by Jenő Doby. Right: Scarborough & Ryedale team members wearing PPE during recent call-outs © SRMRT.



infection prevention and control in mountain rescue

area) mean for us today in MR? The obvious conclusion to draw from Semmelweis's work is that we should wash our hands more often to stop the spread of disease, something we are hopefully all already aware of but may practice to differing extents. This work also demonstrated a second, wider reaching, point though: saving lives doesn't necessarily require

expensive pieces of kit and years of training. Sometimes what we need to do to prevent serious complications for our casualties is simple, fast and cheap. Of course, current events in 2020 demonstrate that these simple IPC measures can protect MRT volunteers as well as patients, with IPC work including PPE being central to protecting healthcare staff from the coronavirus.

HOW DO DISEASES TRANSMIT?

So, we know that pathogens cause disease and, thanks to Semmelweis, we know that even very simple interventions can stop diseases being transmitted. To more effectively block the transmission of germs, we next need to know how they move from person to person.

RED-2 MEDICAL
**CREDIBLE, EXPERIENCED
 & PROFESSIONAL
 EMERGENCY CARE, FIRST
 AID & CPD TRAINING.**

COURSES INCLUDE;

- First Response Emergency Care (FREC)
- Pre-hospital Immediate Life Support
- Minor Wound Assessment
- Casualty Care at Height
- Remote Casualty Care

Red-2 Medical
 pre-hospital care training

www.red2medical.co.uk

DS MEDICAL Supporting Professionals That Care Since 1979

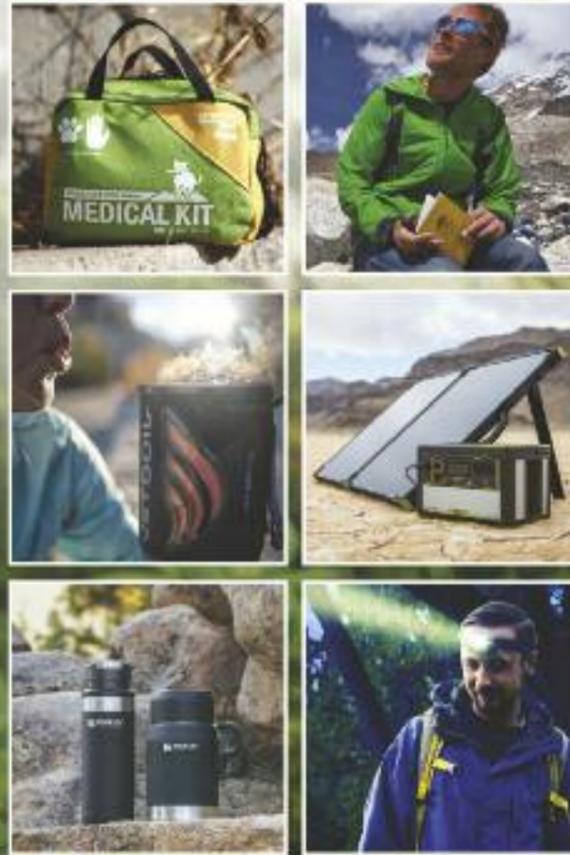
Introducing Rocksnake Rescue Bags

ROCK SNAKE
 rescue by circumstance

Shop online now at www.dsmedical.co.uk

Tel: 0116 234 4611
 www.burton-mccall.co.uk

Direct Account Opportunities



As a leading UK equipment distributor and a supplier to the emergency services, Burton McCall are now pleased to extend our trade pricing to Mountain Rescue Teams on world-class outdoor brands.

Please submit all enquiries via an official Mountain Rescue email account.



Email: sales@burton-mccall.com
 Tel: 0116 234 4611
www.burton-mccall.co.uk



The transmission of infection is a four-stage cycle, and the same model can be applied to all pathogens. First, the germ must escape the host it is currently living in, the host being the organism in which the pathogen lives and breeds. Once it has escaped, the germ must survive being outside while being transported to a new host, which it must then physically enter. There are four main routes via which entry can occur:

1. **Through a breach in the skin** (eg. a wound or needlestick injury).
2. **Inhalation** (ie. breathing it into your lungs: the respiratory route).
3. **Ingestion** (ie. eating it).
4. **Contact with 'mucous membranes'** (the sensitive linings of your mouth, nose, eyes and genitals. If infected bodily fluids — blood, vomit, faeces, fluid from burns etc — gets onto these membranes, the infection can pass through into your bloodstream).

Once inside the host, the pathogen replicates before escaping again to infect another host, with the cycle starting over.

IPC policies work by blocking the cycle of transmission at any or all of these stages, and, of course, the more stages you block the safer you, your teammates and your patients will be.

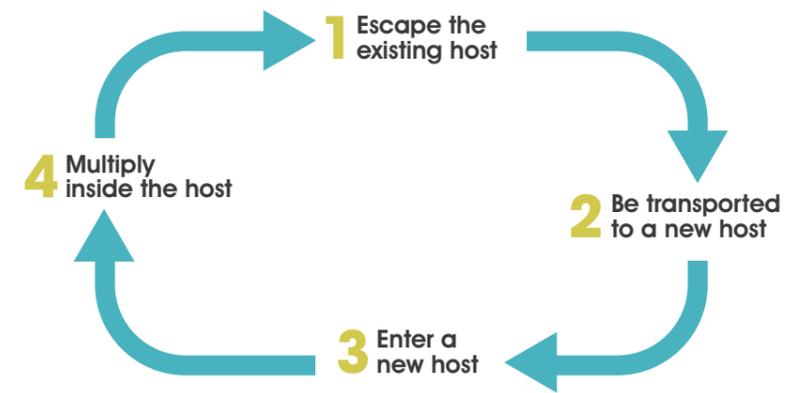
HOW CAN WE PREVENT INFECTION TRANSMISSION DURING MR ACTIVITIES?

All healthcare providers (including MRTs) should understand the concept of 'standard precautions', ie. the basic IPC measures that should be used when dealing with any patient at any time in any context. Each precaution combats one or more stage of the transmission cycle. Additional 'enhanced precautions' can then be added in if you are facing particular threats. For example, washing your hands is a standard precaution, whereas wearing a surgical mask to prevent you inhaling droplets containing the coronavirus (more on this later) is an enhanced precaution as it would not be necessary in normal times. The standard precautions are:

1. **Good hand hygiene, plus potentially being bare below the elbows.**
2. **Use of appropriate PPE.**
3. **Safe handling of sharps and proper care of any sharps injuries.**
4. **Effective decontamination of equipment.**
5. **Appropriate disposal of clinical waste.**

1: Good hand hygiene and bare below the elbows

At least up until March of this year, the most immediate infection control concern for most mountain rescuers was probably the very real possibility of stepping in a cow



Graphic shows the four-stage cycle of disease transmission.

pat on a nighttime search. While this 'foray into faeces' might result in a lingering odour and significant teasing from the other members of your party, it probably wouldn't harm you. That said, you might sustain gastroenteritis (an infection causing vomiting and diarrhoea), if you were to touch your contaminated boot and then put your fingers in your mouth, but you would hopefully know to wash your hands after cleaning your boots in order to stop this happening.

Hand washing is an example of blocking the entry of the pathogen into potential new hosts, ie. yourself or anyone you touch with your contaminated hands. As demonstrated

rings can rip a glove open from the inside.

NHS staff are routinely 'bare below the elbows' whenever providing direct patient care. This is because the ends of long sleeves often hold bacteria, especially if rarely washed, as is the case for most MR jackets. Long sleeves also interfere with effective hand hygiene by stopping you scrubbing your wrists. It could therefore be argued that all MRT personnel should ideally be bare below the elbows when providing direct patient care. That said, the need for MR teams to operate safely outdoors means that prevailing weather conditions may render exposed arms inappropriate from a

At least up until March of this year, the most immediate infection control concern for most mountain rescuers was probably the very real possibility of stepping in a cow pat on a nighttime search. While this 'foray into faeces' might result in a lingering odour and significant teasing from the other members of your party, it probably wouldn't harm you... and you would hopefully know to wash your hands after cleaning your boots...

by Ignaz Semmelweis, effective hand hygiene is a key element of IPC, particularly in dirty working environments like ours. Contamination isn't just bodily fluids. Soil regularly harbours dangerous pathogens (eg. tetanus) that could cause significant problems for patients if they get into wounds, so ensure that you always clean your hands both before and after any patient contact, therefore protecting both the patient and you. Pay attention to easy-to-miss areas like your fingertips and wrists. Sinks are obviously hard to come by on the hill, so always carry alcohol gel with you. Hand washing still applies if you've been wearing gloves as gloves can rip, and fluids can also run inside them via the wrist. Ornate jewellery should be removed because it is hard to clean if contaminated and jewelled

hypothermia point of view. As such, we recommend that volunteers consider rolling up their sleeves before commencing casualty care, whilst recognising that this might not be possible in certain weathers. Use your judgement here. (NB: this does NOT apply for Covid Level 2 PPE, see below).

2: Use of appropriate PPE

As above, three of the main routes of entry into hosts are via the skin, mucous membranes and inhalation into the lungs. All personal protective equipment (PPE) works to prevent the entry of pathogens into the cascarer via one or more of these routes. The wearing of nitrile gloves during cascare is universal and is done because the glove forms a barrier, preventing any pathogens

getting onto your hands. In a situation involving copious bodily fluids you might like to also consider wearing eye protection, as these will prevent any infections reaching the mucous membranes of your eyes. Goggles are ideal as, unlike with glasses-style eye protection, there is no gap for fluid to pass through and, unlike visors, they won't be affected by wind. We'll cover 'respiratory PPE', which deals with inhalation, later as this is an enhanced precaution which historically had no major role in MR.

3: Safe handling of sharps and proper care of sharps injuries

A 'sharp' is any item capable of piercing your skin, potentially introducing an infection into your body if contaminated. This is how infections like Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV might be transmitted to a cascarer. Sharps include injection needles, but also less obvious things like glass drug ampoules and shards of bone protruding from open fractures. Needles can be present on scene for various reasons, including for administration of drugs for medical purposes by MR casualty carers, self-administration of insulin by a diabetic or as waste left over from recreational intravenous drug abuse.

The best way to deal with sharps injuries is to simply prevent them happening. The safest way to do this is to favour drugs that don't require injection, eg. choosing intranasal diamorphine as an analgesic rather than intramuscular morphine. Sometimes though, an injection is necessary. Those giving injections need to be properly trained and must wear gloves, as the gloves will act as a barrier against the needle, reducing the risk of the penetrating object piercing your skin and potentially removing contaminant from the needle's surface as it passes through the glove prior to piercing the skin. After use, the needle should be placed straight into the sharps bin by the person who used it (rather than passing the needle to someone else to dispose of it), and the box lid closed in case the box is knocked over.

In the unfortunate event of a sharps or 'needlestick' injury occurring, cascarers need to know what steps they should take

Because these droplets are relatively heavy, they will usually fall to the floor within less than two metres (hence the 'two metre rule' of social distancing), so the coronavirus is not truly an airborne virus. That said, certain 'aerosol generating procedures' or AGPs can aerosolise the virus, producing far smaller particles that can hang around in the air for a longer period of time rather than falling to the floor, increasing the infection risk.

next. At this point you need to deal with the 'replication within a new host' stage of transmission, so the key thing is to attend the nearest A&E department ASAP for advice and treatment. MREW strongly recommends that all members are vaccinated against Hepatitis B. Vaccines are not yet available for Hepatitis C or HIV, but highly effective treatments now exist for both these diseases.

4: Effective decontamination of equipment

Any equipment that has been in contact with the casualty may be contaminated, so decontamination is a way of killing the pathogen whilst it is outside a host, before it can infect anyone else. Your team should research how each individual bit of kit you own should be decontaminated: there's no 'one size fits all' solution. Suppliers will

usually provide cleaning instructions on their websites. If in doubt, disinfecting something with chlorine will be effective but high concentration chlorine can corrode some materials. Similarly, detergent wipes can damage climbing helmets and touchscreens, so instead wash these with soap and water applied to a cloth. Water environments are particularly risky, so water rescue personnel should be well trained in how to decontaminate their equipment.

5: Appropriate disposal of clinical waste

Lastly, most clinical equipment is single use for a reason: to stop other people using a potentially contaminated object and becoming infected. Materials such as used PPE and bandages should be disposed of into a clinical waste bag and delivered to an appropriate place for collection or destruction. Your local ambulance station may be willing to put your MRT's clinical waste into their waste system.

COVID-19: WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IT FROM AN MR PERSPECTIVE?

A central purpose of this article is to educate MR personnel on Covid-19 IPC considerations, in order to help them keep safe on the hill. Covid-19 is a new disease caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)

virus. There are many members of the coronavirus family, so named because of the crown-like spikes attached to these viruses' surfaces: corona is Latin for crown. Many coronaviruses are benign or only cause mild infections like the common cold, but the 2002-2004 SARS outbreak acted as a herald of current events, showing that coronaviruses have the potential to cause highly infectious, frequently lethal disease in humans.

One key concept that MR personnel need to understand is how people get infected. SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted via the respiratory route, in droplets of water emitted from an infectious individual's mouth or nose when they speak, cough or sneeze. These droplets enter a new host's respiratory tract either by direct inhalation or when the new host touches a surface contaminated by droplets and then touches their own face, infecting themselves. The coronavirus can survive up to three days on certain surfaces, hence the need for equipment decontamination after call-outs if we are to block this secondary route of infection.

Because these droplets are relatively heavy, they will usually fall to the floor within less than two metres (hence the 'two metre rule' of social distancing), so the coronavirus is not truly an airborne virus. That said, certain 'aerosol generating procedures' or AGPs can aerosolise the virus, producing far smaller particles that can hang around in the air for a longer period of time rather than

falling to the floor, increasing the infection risk. AGPs in MR include bag-mask ventilation, suctioning and intubation (including the use of supraglottic airways), all of which should now be avoided, particularly because these aerosolised particles are small enough to pass through a surgical mask. There is debate around whether various other aspects of resuscitation are also AGPs, but MREW considers Level 2 PPE to be sufficiently safe for chest compression only CPR and defibrillation, provided AGPs are not being performed.

An understanding of how Covid-19 presents is also important, if we are to be able to safely risk assess casualties. The symptoms of Covid-19 appear between two and fourteen days after exposure to the virus (hence the 14-day self-isolation rule if exposed) and are both numerous and highly variable. While some patients display no symptoms, many display some combination of fever, fatigue, cough, loss of smell and taste, shortness of breath, a sore throat and headache. A high temperature and low O2 sats are common vital signs in Covid-19 patients, although the respiratory rate won't necessarily be raised. So, seeing any combination of the above findings or discovering that your patient has recently spent any amount of time with a Covid-19 case should set alarm bells ringing. The most common risk factors (ie. cough, fever, shortness of breath and contact with a case), form the basis of the risk assessment

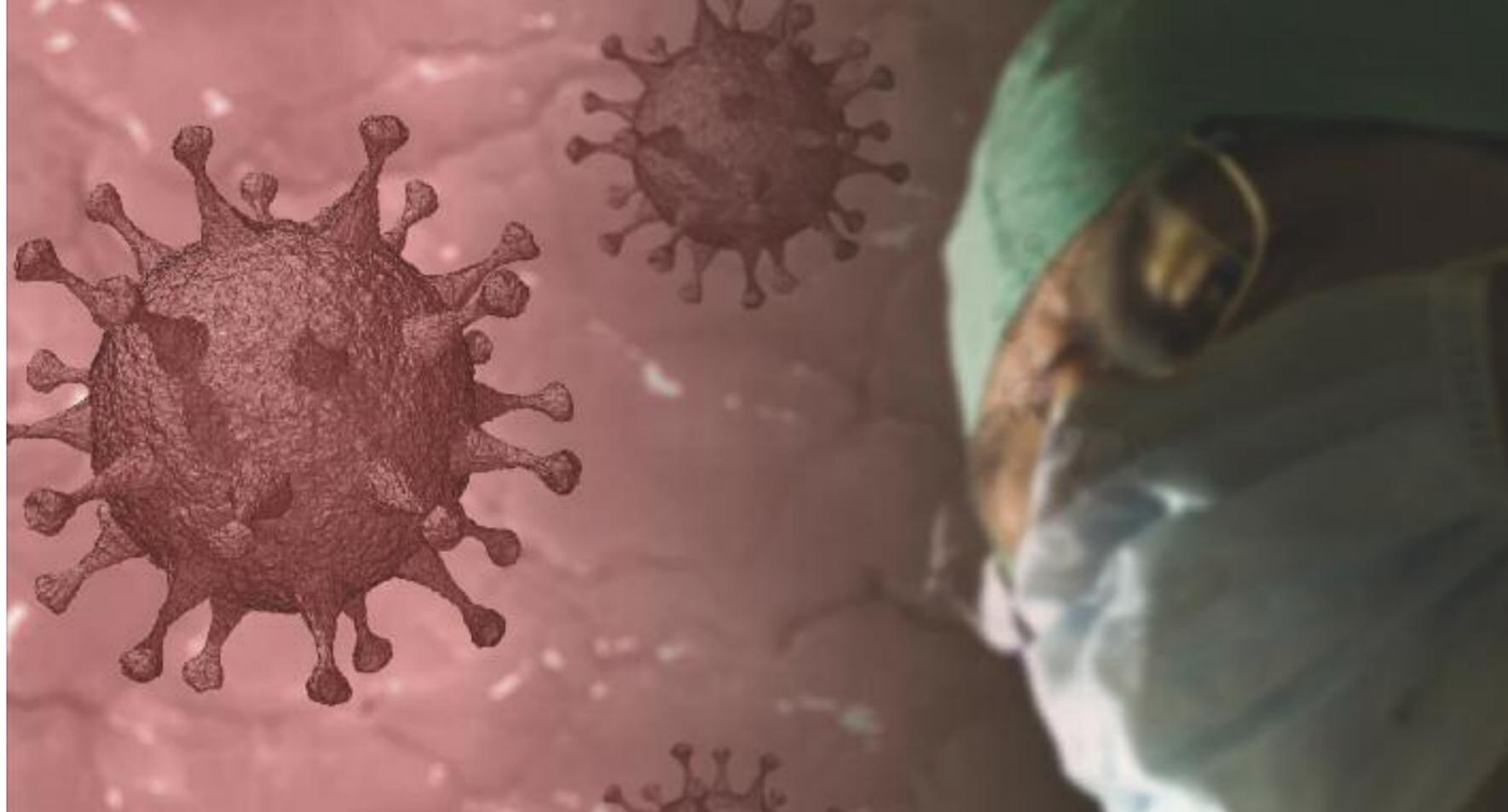
within MREW and Scottish Mountain Rescue's shared Covid Guideline 1: Initial Approach to the Casualty.

An advanced understanding of the medical care of Covid-19 patients isn't necessary for cascarers, but there is currently no specific treatment for Covid-19 and no vaccine approved so far, although major research efforts are ongoing. While many patients can care for themselves at home, some require hospital admission, focusing upon supporting the body's own attempts to fight the virus. Most patients receive simple pain relief, anti-fever drugs and supplementary oxygen, with more critical patients potentially requiring ventilatory support in an intensive care unit.

INFECTION CONTROL AND COVID-19

So, what does this new virus mean for MR volunteers? Here at Holme Valley we've learnt quite a lot very fast, with several team members working in local hospitals and the team being very busy operationally too, giving us ample opportunity to refine our Covid procedures. We are also lucky that several of our members have training in dealing with biohazards from past and present jobs in the NHS, research and the military. While this is uncharted territory for us all, we hope our team's experience may help others going forward.

Holme Valley MRT serves the southern half



Main picture: Covid-19 and PPE in the hospital environment via Pixabay. **Above:** From top: Holme Valley MRT members awaiting deployment, then during a lakeside stretcher evacuation © HVMRT.

...we need to consider when we are likely to meet Covid-19 patients... and the answer is 'at any time'... cases can often be asymptomatic. This means that screening questions only have limited use as there may be no sign the patient is infected, and there is of course the sad possibility that patients might not tell the truth, scared that they may not be rescued so quickly if responders are concerned about infection. We [should] therefore wear Level 2 PPE for all casualty care.

of West Yorkshire, a relatively urban patch with a population of roughly one million people, including much of the city of Leeds and several large towns in addition to the rural areas a mountain rescue team traditionally would serve. By 11 June (the time of writing), West Yorkshire had seen over 5000 confirmed cases of Covid-19, and no doubt thousands more unconfirmed. Like many other teams working on the rural-urban fringe we've had a very busy few months, driven by people heading out to the

LEVELS OF PPE:

Level 1: medical gloves.

Level 2: 2 pairs of medical gloves, mask, eye protection, full waterproofs.

Level 3: as for level 2, plus an FFP3 mask or equivalent.



From top: Holme Valley team members doffing their PPE by the NHS ambulance and team vehicle; team members decontaminate the vehicle following a call-out © HVMRT.

nearby hills in the hope of getting some socially-distanced exercise, and like all MRTs we've had to massively change how we operate in order to keep both our team members and patients safe. We believe that the MREW guidelines are clear and useful, so won't repeat them here, but we do feel it would be useful to expand on the reasoning behind the changes all teams have had to make.

First, we need to consider when we are likely to meet Covid-19 patients... and the answer is 'at any time'. As above, our area has had many cases, and we know cases can often be asymptomatic. This means that screening questions only have limited use as there may be no sign the patient is infected, and there is of course the sad possibility that patients might not tell the truth, scared that they may not be rescued so quickly if responders are concerned about infection. We therefore currently wear Level 2 PPE for all casualty care.

Let's now consider the various elements of Covid-specific IPC in the context of the transmission cycle. Starting from stage 1 (ie. the coronavirus escaping from its original host), the scene can be made safer by preventing droplets leaving the casualty's body in the first place. Providing them with a mask will place a barrier in front of their mouth and nose that will catch most droplets, reducing your risk of exposure. Coniston MRT has gone further still, working with a local high school to create a transparent isolation hood that fits over the casualty's head on the stretcher (see opposite page and page 33).

These measures aren't perfect though, and in any case the casualty will have contaminated their surroundings before you get there. This means that any equipment you take to scene (and any personnel who attend scene) need to be decontaminated. Decontamination is important because the virus can survive on surfaces for as long as three days so, if you do not kill the virus and then proceed to use the equipment for another call-out the next day, anyone who touches that item could be infected. SARS-CoV-2 is relatively easy to kill, with chlorine and alcohol both being effective. Simple soap and water is also useful for decontaminating more sensitive items like phones and helmets.

Lastly, PPE is used to prevent entry into new hosts (ie. MRT volunteers). As the virus

is droplet-transmitted, we need to prevent it contacting our mouth and nose if we are to stay safe. Enhanced precautions are therefore needed in terms of PPE. Gloves alone (Level 1 PPE) don't protect the mouth and nose, so we must protect that area with a fluid-resistant surgical mask, AKA a type IIR mask. The coronavirus can also infect us via other mucous membranes, notably the eyes, hence the need for eye protection. At this point it is reasonable to ask why we bother with gloves and full waterproofs, as they cover neither the mouth, nose nor eyes. This whole-body waterproof layer is needed to catch any droplets that do fall upon you, rather than having them strike your skin or clothes. If you were to then touch that area of skin or clothing during your drive home post-call-out, there is a good chance you could then touch your mouth and infect yourself. Instead any virus is removed when this outer layer is removed, but of course any doffing must take place carefully as errors could contaminate you. Fundamentally, having any exposed skin (including lower legs in shorts) is an increased risk.

It should be noted though that the smaller particles produced by AGPs can penetrate surgical masks, so for AGPs Level 3 PPE is needed. Level 3 PPE features high-quality respiratory equipment such as FFP3 masks, capable of filtering tiny virus particles from the air. As FFP3 masks are expensive, difficult to fit, extremely uncomfortable to wear (particularly during exertion) and currently hard to obtain, MREW has advocated temporarily removing AGPs from casualty carers' scope of clinical practice, meaning that Level 2 PPE is sufficiently safe in any casualty care situation. If AGPs are needed, then paramedics or air ambulance doctors with level 3 PPE can still be escorted to the scene to perform them, so patient care need not be compromised, but any mountain rescue team personnel in only level 2 PPE need to move away.

When we talk of entry to hosts, it's not only how easy it is for the virus to get into one person, but how many people it has access to in total. Splitting teams into sections and keeping people near the casualty to a minimum means the virus can transmit between fewer people, so if your team is involved in a job featuring a person infected by Covid-19 then the impact upon the team's operational capacity will be limited (with at least half the team being unaffected). Social distancing remains vital. Masks should be worn by all individuals within an enclosed space. Team members should not travel together in the same vehicle unless truly necessary, and if they do so then all involved should wear masks throughout the journey if possible.

This section will be most useful to team leaders, medical officers and IPC leads as it discusses effective implementation of IPC policies.

INTRODUCING IPC POLICIES IN YOUR TEAM

Having introduced the key concepts underlying both generic and Covid-19 IPC, we want to finish this article by returning to another vital lesson from the 1800s.

Whilst the life-saving benefits of hand hygiene are now universally accepted, the changes Semmelweis introduced in Vienna were thrown out after just a few months and would only be accepted years after his death when Germ Theory identified that there was actually something lethal being carried between patients on doctors' hands and causing infections. Semmelweis's theory was rejected because he failed to engage with the hospital's staff or widely publish his research, instead just imposing the new hand-washing rule across his department. Not taking the time to take on the opinions of his colleagues meant they didn't feel invested in the new approach. There's no denying that IPC is time-consuming and complex, and it's easy to lose motivation when you can't see the enemy you're fighting. Whilst we doubt MRT IPC leads will face the same extreme fate as Semmelweis (ridiculed, chased out of Vienna by the medical establishment, denounced as a crackpot and committed to a psychiatric hospital in 1865, where he died fourteen days later from an infected wound sustained during a beating by his guards), it is very possible that we all might relax as the pandemic goes on, placing ourselves and our families at risk. Strategies need to be put in place to stop this from happening.

It is recognised in the healthcare sector that adherence to IPC procedures can be poor, with the World Health Organisation stating that healthcare staff have an average adherence to recommended hand hygiene procedures of just 38.7% overall. This should perhaps be no surprise. Whilst things like washing your hands don't take long, when you're doing it repeatedly time does stack up and those involved can start to lose focus. This is why introducing and maintaining IPC policies can be difficult.

We recommend that teams adopt the World Health Organisation's 'Recognise, Explain, Act' model for IPC implementation so your volunteers feel involved in the process. Take the time to consult with your members and listen to their concerns, both as you implement new protocols and once they are in place. The best way to achieve compliance is to make them feel invested in



Above: Coniston's isolation hood in action © Coniston MRT.

COVID-19 LEVEL 2 PPE DOFFING CHECKLIST

1. Remove **OUTER** pair of gloves by turning inside out > Place in **clinical waste bag** for binning (can be a communal bag).
2. Clean hands (*but while still wearing the inner gloves ie. you're cleaning the gloves*).
3. Remove **waterproofs** by turning inside out > Place in **bag** of your **own kit** to decontaminate.
4. Clean hands/inner gloves.
5. Remove **eye protection** WITHOUT TOUCHING YOUR FACE OR EYES > Place in a **bag** of your **own kit** to decontaminate (*remove helmet first IF goggles below helmet*).
6. Clean hands/inner gloves.
7. Remove **helmet** WITHOUT TOUCHING YOUR FACE > Place in **bag** of your **own kit** to decontaminate.
8. Clean hands/inner gloves.
9. Remove **mask** WITHOUT TOUCHING YOUR FACE (if tie-on mask, undo top tie last and remove from face by holding the ties, not the mask itself) > Place in **clinical waste bag**.
10. Remove **inner pair of gloves** by turning inside out > Place in **clinical waste bag**.
11. Clean hands AND WRISTS. Doffing process ends here but take a **shower** and **decontaminate your kit as soon as you get home**.

Final note: Wash hands after decontaminating your kit later.

smidge

BITING INSECT REPELLENT



Developed and tested in Scotland by midge experts in the harshest conditions, Smidge biting insect repellent contains a dastardly ingredient that works by cleverly throwing the little bleeders off our scent.

It's scientifically proven to provide instant, sweat-proof protection for up to 8 hours and is DEET-free.

- SAFE for all the family, including pregnant women and children from 24 months.
- Repels midges AND mosquitoes and also works against ticks.
- Non-sticky and moisturising, with a pleasant fragrance, so not only will you dodge the midges, you'll smell good too!
- A unique, patented formula making it water and sweat resistant. Just remember to re-apply Smidge every eight hours, or more often following swimming, intense exercise or exposure to very wet or humid conditions.
- DEET-free.

BUY FROM SMIDGEUP.COM.
T 01382 561 696
E HELLO@APSBIOCONTROL.COM

CASUALTY CARE IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE (SECOND EDITION) IS DOWNLOADABLE FREE TO TEAM MEMBERS FROM THE MOODLE VLE (YOU MUST REGISTER TO ACCESS) AND AVAILABLE TO NON-TEAM MEMBERS TO BUY IN PDF FORMAT VIA THE MREW SHOP FOR £15.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS EDITION IS NO LONGER AVAILABLE IN HARD COPY FORMAT



To advertise, call Caroline Davenport on **01829 781327** or email caroline@media-solution.co.uk

the changes. Ask for their opinions and their solutions. If what they suggest is unsafe or not realistic then explain why. If it might work, try it! Formal peer review is suspended, but why not reach out to your neighbouring teams and compare procedures to see if there are lessons you can learn from one

Whilst we cannot accurately predict what will happen over the months to come, it is certain that IPC considerations will remain central to allowing us to operate safely and effectively...

another? Make things as easy as you safely can for your team members. Look for solutions to problems, for example by investing in disinfectants with faster contact times to speed up decontamination processes and by obtaining earloop mask holders to stop masks sliding down people's faces during call-outs.

Provide reminders and refresher training as needed, and don't be afraid to speak up if you see someone miss a step: you are keeping both that individual and all your team members safe. Supervised doffing with spoken instructions is associated with significantly lower rates of contamination than doffing without instructions. One study (Casalino, 2015) showed that experienced doffers wearing similar PPE to MREW Level 2 PPE made an average of 1.5 mistakes each during doffing if not instructed, but only 0.3 mistakes on average if verbal instructions were provided. At Holme Valley, we have harnessed this idea by utilising a buddy-led checklist system, with the clean buddy leading a group of people through the doffing process by reading out the stages and dispensing hand gel as required. Laminated versions of this checklist are available in all team vehicles and party kits to ensure that the checklist will be used

whenever and wherever doffing takes place.

Visual reminders have also been introduced at our base to remind people about key IPC policies, even if there alone. There are strategically-placed bottles of alcohol gel by all doors and signs promoting hand washing. HVMRT has a policy stating that all team members should wear masks whenever riding in a team vehicle (including when driving to a call-out), so masks are placed on each driver's seat and signs have been added to the vehicle bay doors and door controls to further encourage mask wearing.

Team members themselves also have a responsibility here. We all have a duty to remain disciplined in times such as these, and follow procedures to the letter even when tired, wet and cold at the end of a job. This isn't only for your own sake, but that of your team members and family also. Most importantly, if someone points out that you've forgotten something, try to take it in the spirit intended. Your teammate is just trying to keep you safe.

CONCLUSION

The first half of 2020 has been a massive learning curve for all members of mountain rescue, with enormous changes to every single aspect of how we operate. Whilst we cannot accurately predict what will happen over the months to come, it is certain that IPC considerations will remain central to allowing us to operate safely and effectively. Casualty care on the mountains may be substantially different for months — if not years — to come, but we are confident that the volunteers of Mountain Rescue England and Wales, Scottish Mountain Rescue and Mountain Rescue Ireland will — as ever — step up admirably to the task of adapting to and overcoming the challenges we face. Stay Safe. ☺

REFERENCES OMITTED FOR BREVITY, BUT AVAILABLE BY EMAILING THE AUTHORS AT william.kitchen@holmevalleymrt.org.uk



WILL KITCHEN IS A PATHOLOGY GRADUATE AND FIFTH YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE. HE IS INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL LEAD FOR HOLME VALLEY MRT.



DR JON DEARDEN IS AN ANAESTHETICS TRAINEE WITH MID-YORKSHIRE HOSPITALS NHS TRUST AND A MEMBER OF THE HOLME VALLEY MRT MEDICAL GROUP.



Megan Dixon, who is also development coordinator of KS3 Design Technology and STEM, has devoted herself to helping protect key workers and volunteers in her community, spending over five weeks in school every day making PPE with a team of art and design technology staff, producing over 2,600 face masks, ear savers and scrub bags as part of a national effort to produce PPE. Collectively, over 360,000 items have been distributed throughout the UK from over 400 schools. Not one to rest on her laurels, however, Megan also took it upon herself to help support the Coniston team, when approached by them with an unusual request. With the Covid-19 outbreak reaching unusually higher levels in the southern end of the Lake District in particular, it became apparent that the need for PPE to be fitted to the stretcher would be an important step in ensuring team member and public safety.

Megan worked closely with the team to draft design ideas and develop solutions from a range of materials using facilities at the school and using anthropometric data to produce adapted visors and shields for the stretcher. The hood comprises two pieces: a semi rigid clear plastic shield fitting snugly inside the stone guard and a flexible clear curtain giving access to the casualty but also protecting team members from contamination. The front curtain can be easily fitted on site and cut to size on site. Simple velcro patches and reusable microfibre velcro strips hold both pieces in place using the stone guard cabling as anchor points.

'We are extremely grateful to Megan for the design input and speed of production,' says Rob Ingham, Coniston team leader. 'The hood will provide an extra level of protection to our team in difficult circumstances, whilst on the hill'. As for Megan, she was 'happy she could continue to help the team stay safe. I felt just like one of my A-Level students again working through a design problem too!'

Top: Jeff Carroll and Rob Ingham with the isolation hood fitted to the stretcher © Coniston MRT.



Above: Team members treat and rescue Woody Allen © Aberdyfi MRT.



JUNE: WOODY ALLEN JOINS IN THE FUN IN NORTH WALES

Aberdyfi team resumed their outdoor training schedule, assisted by one willing 'casualty' with a very stiff knee.

The exercise was to help team members get a better understanding of Covid-19 PPE and address how the team would manage a rescue when unable to maintain strict social distancing, in waterproofs, gloves, masks and glasses.

EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW POSTPONED UNTIL APRIL 2021

In what has been the most challenging period in our event planning history, it is with great sadness, that we confirm the postponement of The Emergency Services Show, due to take place this September, to 27-28 April 2021. Thank you for bearing with us during this incredibly difficult time. Feedback for this September has been understandably mixed, ranging from 'supportive' to 'not sure' and 'prefer to postpone'. Also, our venue, at the NEC, requires authorisation from Government to open for shows, which at the time of this announcement, they unfortunately still do not have. Without this authorisation and guidance, we cannot commit to September as we are prevented from having sufficient time to ratify exactly what, and how, we can work with the venue and partners to finalise what a Covid-secure event looks like. Ultimately, safety must come above all else. Given this continued uncertainty, we are left with no option but to postpone.

We are confident that this postponement is in the best interests of all and will give us the best opportunity to deliver top-quality content and the best ROI for all participants. We love our shows, our sectors, and our team at Nineteen remain committed to going the extra mile for our communities. The new dateline also allows for the co-location of the existing show with Nineteen Group's other market leading event series creating the UK's largest event focused on the protection of people, places and assets. The following events will all co-locate in April, in adjacent halls at the NEC, and your pass will provide access to all five at no cost: The Emergency Services Show, The Fire Safety Event, The Security Event, The Health & Safety Event and The Facilities Event.

Visitor registrations will be transferred to the new dates, you do not need to do anything. If you've already downloaded and saved your e-badge, you can disregard these as we will re issue all e-badges nearer the show.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SHOW AND KEEP UP WITH OUR NEWS, VISIT WWW.EMERGENCYUK.COM



Caring for and storing your PPE for protection from falls from height



MATT NIGHTINGALE PENRITH MRT & COMRU LYON WORK AND RESCUE TRAINER

It hopefully doesn't need to be said that our kit gets a tough time. In the heat of a rescue there may not be time to look after our equipment to the same degree that we otherwise like to and the conditions we may work in are far beyond what most people would choose to be in on a mountain walk, or even in a lot of recreational caving. That said, we still need to look after our kit as best we can. And during a rescue we need our equipment to be at the top of its game. We don't want it to let us down. Particularly when it's not just ourselves relying on it. When that equipment is our personal fall protection equipment (PFPE) – the ropes, karabiners, harnesses etc preventing us from falling – then we need to know that we can trust them.

There are many seemingly benign acts that can have serious consequences. To go over all of these here would take far too long, so what follows are some examples to give you an idea of what to do and what not to do when storing PFPE.

STORE OUT OF SUNLIGHT

Awareness is growing of the fact that ultraviolet radiation from the sun can weaken textile (nylon, polyester, Dyneema etc) and plastic items. It's also not just sunlight: fluorescent lights, particularly older ones give out UV, as do welders etc. It is not possible

to tell you by how much UV will weaken your gear. Most people have heard stories of someone's mate who had in-situ abseil tat crumble in their fingers as they prepared to abseil of an alpine route? Well, simply put, zero UV exposure will have zero detrimental effect and serious exposure will cause a serious problem. Everything else is on a sliding scale in between.

So, avoid unnecessary exposure to sunlight (even on cloudy days). This doesn't mean don't ever take it outside — that would be absurd! Just don't leave it on the washing line while you go away for the weekend, or on the parcel shelf of your car so it's easy to

grab in an emergency. Have it outside when it needs to be and then store it in a place away from sunlight and strong artificial light sources.

DON'T LEAVE PFPE IN HOT PLACES

Excessive heat can have disastrous consequences. A melted textile product could easily snap under the weight of one static person.

Nylon (or polyamide to give it its generic name) can start to melt at 210°C, while Dyneema (ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene) starts to melt at just 130°C. However, changes can happen to the structures of these materials at far lower temperatures. Basically, if something feels too warm for you to be comfortable, it will be too warm for your PFPE.

Inset left, is an extract from the instructions for a Petzl textile sling. Notice the temperature range the manufacturer tells you to stay within both for when in use and for storage. If your PFPE is exposed to temperatures outside these ranges, it may have been subjected to damage that you can't see or feel.

Having your PFPE near a fire is clearly not wise. Sparks or hot ash may easily burn or melt causing severe weaknesses in your kit.

When storing your PFPE, keep it in a cool place where the temperature is quite well regulated and below 30°C. In a house would generally be fine.

A car in summer will not be kind to your kit. Lyon Equipment has a few examples of helmets that have been deformed by heat after being left on the dashboard of vehicles (even in northern England) and in close proximity to household objects that give out heat such as desk lamps.

If drying your PFPE, use a warm but airy room. Spread it out well and use a dehumidifier rather than placing it near a heat source such as a radiator.

KEEP IT CLEAN

As with so many things, it's a good idea to keep your PFPE clean. When dirt gets into mechanical devices it can impair their function and exacerbate wear. Dirty ropes may wear a friction device such as belay plate, an MPD or even a karabiner it is running over far more quickly than a clean rope would.

many other products the effect is unknown and not worth the gamble. Rinsing in clean cold water and gentle scrubbing with a soft-bristled nylon brush will not do any harm. Other than that, do what the manufacturer tells you. Manufacturers give advice on cleaning in their product instructions and probably on their websites too.

STORE IT DRY

Some products are weakened by being wet. For example, Nylon loses 10-15% of its strength when wet (which it then regains when it dries). This isn't a significant

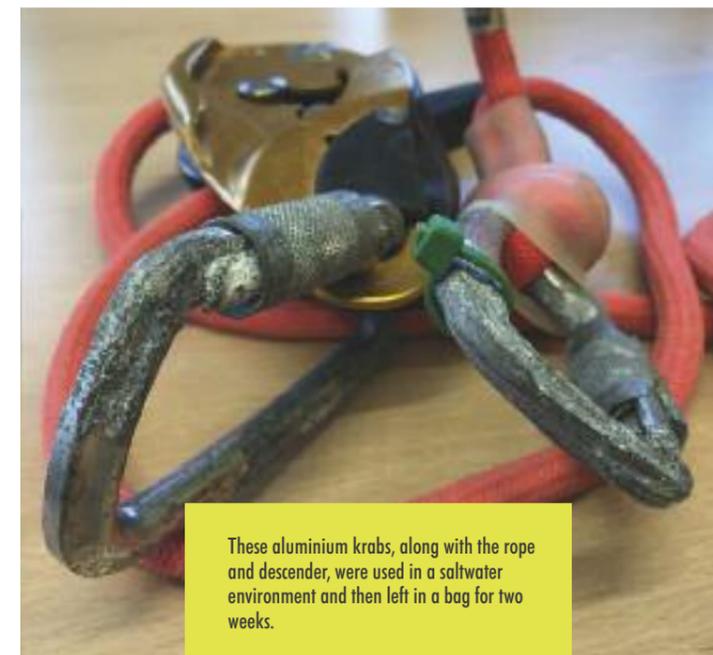
that may come into contact with your PFPE. A few of these, the obvious ones like water and the gases in fresh air, have been well tested on PFPE over the years, so we know their effect is minimal. But as for all the others, who knows?

There are some chemicals we should know are going to be harmful, yet some people still throw their PFPE in the back of their car along with the old lead-acid battery they haven't yet got around to taking to the tip.

There are many products that are approved for use on human skin that may have an effect on your PFPE. These include insect repellents and sunscreen. This won't



The deformation at the front of the helmet was caused by it being left in a vehicle on a hot sunny day.



These aluminium karabs, along with the rope and descender, were used in a saltwater environment and then left in a bag for two weeks.

The colour change in the webbing is caused by excessive exposure to ultra-violet radiation from the sun.



When dirt gets into textile products, then every time the textile item is flexed or stretched the dirt can abrade it by grinding away at the internal fibres — where you'll find it harder to spot any damage. It can also make ropes harder to handle and more likely to kink up as they will be stiffer. When it comes to you checking your kit it is easier to spot damage in clean kit. It also looks well cared for. If your casualty already has a raised heart rate, don't make it even higher by suspending them off a poorly-maintained rope or two!

It is best to try to avoid getting your items dirty in the first place. Yes, this is easier to say than do, but try not to stand on ropes and other kit, trampling it into the mud. When equipment gets dirty — as it inevitably will — clean it! You'll never get all the filth out of it, but it will help. Manufacturers give instructions regarding how to clean their products and may supply a range of cleaning products for their items. Hot water may damage some items. Some cleaning products have well-known detrimental effects on certain materials used in PFPE, for

problem. If it were, how would we operate in the rain?

Of more concern is the longer-term problems associated with PFPE being wet. But by longer-term it doesn't have to be all that long. Lyon has an example of a corroded aluminium karabiner left damp in a bag for a 'couple of days' after a sea cliff climbing trip. Salt water is particularly harsh on metalware, but fresh water can also increase the likelihood of corrosion and oxidation as well as exacerbating the rate at which it develops. Cleaning isn't part of this article (maybe one at a later date), but a gentle rinse in clean cold water won't be a problem — just dry it well afterwards!

KEEP YOUR KIT CLEAR OF CHEMICALS

PFPE is made of many different materials. There are a multitude of different plastics and finishing processes. There is a range of different textile materials, often used in combination with each other. There are then infinite combinations of different chemicals

come as any surprise to you if you've been left with a child's handprint indelibly marked into the paintwork of your car after they leaned on it with sunscreen-lathered hand. If you need to use these or similar products, avoid getting them on your PFPE. Also, give them time to soak into your skin before touching your PFPE.

Unless a manufacturer specifically states that a certain chemical is safe to use on their PFPE item then avoid getting it anywhere near. This is also true for inks, stickers, glued-on brackets etc.

DON'T SQUASH IT WHEN YOU STORE IT

In the short term this is going to be mostly, but not entirely, an issue for helmets — unless it's quite some force causing the compression! It's not hard to damage a helmet by sitting on it when it's in your rucksack or piling loads of kit on top of it when it's flung in the back of a Land Rover. Modern helmets are getting lighter both because people want them lighter and

because there is a requirement under the PPE Regulation (EU) 2016/425 that 'PPE must be as lightweight as possible without prejudicing its strength and effectiveness'. A lightweight helmet is probably more comfortable and then more likely to be worn. By 'strength' it is referring to strength when used correctly. Not when you park your van on it. It is worth remembering that a helmet is designed to work in conjunction with your

AFTER STORAGE

Remember that most PFPE items can only be stored for so long as they have expiry dates. We know that materials break down over time, even if they're never used. Manufacturers also know this and wouldn't want their equipment to fail in normal use due to this unavoidable deterioration. Therefore, they give their products lifespans.

manufacturers learn more about their products and the materials they are using through ongoing testing and experience, they can judge acceptable lifespans more accurately.

There will be a time when you decide it is no longer worth storing an item of PFPE. When you've finished with your PFPE it is probably because it's no longer fit for you to use. Destroy it beyond use and get rid of it.

The cracks on this helmet were caused by a DEET-based insect repellent – arguably harmless to the dreaded Scottish midge but deadly to PPE!

A little tricky to see due to the glossy finish reflecting light but this helmet has a blemish on the front caused by suncream. It is probably more than just aesthetic damage.

skull to protect your brain. They are not designed to protect your sandwiches when stuffed in a bag.

Even tougher items can suffer from long-term compression. The rope squashed down at the bottom of a rope bag can be harder to handle than that stored at the top. If you're leaving knots in ropes, untie and re-tie them periodically to allow the rope to recover and help ensure the knot doesn't become a permanent feature of that rope.

STORE SECURE

When you come to use your PFPE you want it to be in top condition and you'll want to have it all with you. Do what you can to ensure that you know where it is, where it's been and what has happened to it throughout its life. Probably best if you don't leave it on the floor at the back of the garage where it could suffer from going walkabouts, oil leaks, general filth or splashes of detergents from floor mopping.

If you have to leave it in a bag then a tamper-evident seal securing the bag is probably a good idea. Hopefully, it shouldn't be necessary to lock items away within your base or vehicle.

As we don't want our equipment to fail in normal use then we should accept these lifespans. For textile and plastic items, ten years from date of manufacture is not uncommon and many metal items have an indefinite life — meaning the end of their life is not determined by their age but by other factors such as them wearing out, breaking, corroding etc. However, the lifespans given here are only as an example. Check manufacturer's instructions for lifespans. There are some mountaineering helmets out there with a five-year life from date of manufacture. Some metal items have a ten-year life. Some manufacturers are kind enough to give a maximum lifespan in use plus a shelf life for storage prior to use. These lifespans are something you may wish to consider when you're purchasing PFPE. Also consider which manufacturers will replace the textile parts on items such as cams and hexes to prolong the life of what is otherwise a metal item.

Before we criticise manufacturers too heavily for trying to profit from items having to be retired, it is worth noting that lifespans on products are generally getting longer. Older metalware generally used to have a lifespan and many more textile and plastic items used to have a five-year life. As

You don't want to give it away because then you and your team will become the supplier of that PFPE. If it is damaged or out of date, then you are the supplier of damaged or out-of-date PFPE. Even if you don't think the PFPE is damaged and it isn't out of date then you're taking on a lot of responsibility to become a supplier of that item.

ONE FINAL NOTE

If we were professional users (ie. being paid and 'at work'), we would have to follow many of the regulations enabled by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. So as volunteers we may well consider it useful to view these regulations as best practice. One excellent piece of advice comes from the HSE's guidance document (L25 3rd Ed published 2015) for the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992.

Here (in Part 2, guidance note 85(b)) it tells us to 'Always use PPE according to the manufacturer's instructions' and goes on to say that 'PPE on the market must be supplied with relevant information on' among other things, 'storage, use, maintenance, servicing, cleaning and disinfecting'. So, if in doubt, find out from the manufacturer and do as they tell you. ☺



JUNE: LAKE DISTRICT MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS JOINTLY AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

The twelve Lakes teams were honoured to announce the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QVAS) in early June, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

The QVAS, which aims to recognise outstanding work by volunteer groups to benefit their local communities, was created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Winners are announced each year on 2 June, the anniversary of the Queen's coronation.

Representatives of the twelve teams will receive the award from Mrs. Claire Hensman, Lord Lieutenant of Cumbria later this summer and two volunteers from the group are invited to attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May 2021, along with other recipients of this year's award.

This award is an incredible recognition of the huge amount of work and commitment put into mountain rescue by the current 400 volunteers within the twelve teams and by all members from our 70-year history,' said LDSAMRA chairman, Richard Warren. 'We are all truly humbled by the nomination and look forward to the recognition it brings. Thank you to everyone who has supported our teams over the years.'



QVAS: THE INSIDE STORY

JOHN CARLIN LDSAMRA SECRETARY & PENRITH DEPUTY TEAM LEADER

Secretaries get all the rum jobs: minutes, admin, organise, post.... Well, not this time. This time it was a pleasure.

It began with a secretive email back in June 2019, innocently enquiring about the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association, often referred to and pronounced as 'L-D-SAM-RA'. I replied as usual, explaining we were an umbrella organisation for the twelve Lakes teams and pointed the enquirer to our website which at the time was embarrassingly dated. It turned out this was from none other than one of our esteemed Deputy Lord Lieutenants for Cumbria. The nudge was that LDSAMRA were worthy of nomination for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the often touted, 'MBE

for Voluntary Groups' and would I be able to assist. In my head it seemed somewhat far-fetched. Our organisation consists of three trustees who are a supporting umbrella for the twelve member teams and represent their interests externally, along with officers chairing subgroups. Surely the twelve teams should get nominated for the award?

I worked through the plot, twelve teams get put forward, some get it, and some don't. It was a nightmare scenario. Much better if the twelve teams were proposed and it was all for one and one for all, as they say.

LDSAMRA meetings are fortunately attended by a representative of Cumbria Constabulary and even more fortuitous is

that person is Superintendent Matthew Kennerley. He's always on hand to answer a query and give advice so I passed on the suggestion to Matt who was only too happy to take on the baton. I am told that two very kind letters or recommendation were also received by Cumbria Constabulary in support of the nomination from North West Ambulance Service and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. Armed with all the information he needed, I left him to it. Anyone can nominate a charity via a relatively simple web form that checks initial eligibility. The September deadline for submissions came and went. Meanwhile I set about doing something with that dated website...

The background here was that I had kept this secret up until now! So, when our chairman Richard Warren got an email from a different Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Cumbria (turns out there are a fair few), he got quite the shock. He had emailed to congratulate the Lake District teams on a nomination from Cumbria Constabulary and could we make progress on the vetting. This is where the graft starts. We — or rather I — had made a rod for our own back. Under usual circumstances a short visit was in order to check the group is above board, meets the criteria of the award, has good governance and is honourable in all things. Our assigned Deputy Lord Lieutenant (DLL) however is thorough and wanted to meet all twelve teams in what turned out to be an unusual nomination. Richard by this point was communicating intermittently from a cruise ship near Denmark and it now became clear that there was a mountain (of admin) to climb. We're good at that.

To help with vetting I was requested to compile annual accounts, addresses, annual reports, website details and call-out details for each of the regions teams and dug out a range of relevant policies on safeguarding and equality.

The deadline was January so there were now six weeks and the holidays to visit twelve teams. Getting the twelve teams to meetings is hard enough in the third largest county in England. I explained the situation to the DLL and suggested three gatherings where the teams could group. Asking for volunteers was no issue as Cocker mouth, Coniston and Penrith stepped up to the mark to host a visit and reduce the burden. Each invited the neighbouring teams to send representatives and put on a welcome. We're good at that too.

Do battle on home turf first, I thought.

Penrith had a winter prep training session at base so we met there with members of Cumbria Ore Mines Rescue Unit (usually referred to as 'COM-RU'), Kirkby Stephen and Patterdale teams. After much work on hypothermia and best practice with snow chains, we retired to the control room. A modest set up for Penrith, one of the first purpose-built mountain rescue bases in the country, it now seems little more than a shoe box and quite a squeeze for six people. The grilling began. No one wanted to mess up on the questions, as with everything in LDSAMRA, it was a team effort and eleven others were counting on us. What would be asked? Would teams contradict each other? Honesty is the best policy and as each team filed through, the DLL put us at ease and teased out the information. Maybe too well. Mountain rescuers can talk and talk... and talk about mountain rescue. The DLL jotted away on his notes to document the clear pride that was on display.

Secondly to Coniston team who, it turns out, have a good selection of biscuits. I'm not saying it was a game changer, but... Their training session was on hypothermia. The DLL didn't let on as he listened for the second time. I whispered it was the time of year! On this occasion the grilling was for Duddon and Furness, Langdale Ambleside, Kendal and, of course Coniston, to bear. I knew what was coming, my day job was a high school teacher and the similarities with an OFSTED inspection were not lost on me. Still the DLL smiled and shook hands and scribbled on about diversity, opportunity, history and training. Two down, one to go.

There was a date clash and I couldn't attend Cocker mouth's hosting of a training session on, you guessed it, hypothermia. The DLL said not to worry he knew what to expect now (I'm not surprised, third time round on hypothermia I chuckled to myself), and he thanked me for chaperoning him thus far. I forwarded details of the event and gave my apologies. It was all on Cocker mouth, Keswick, Wasdale and Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs (LDMRSD) but, as 2019 drew to a close, that was that. We would be notified by June. Wait and see.

All the nominated Cumbrian Charities were invited to a presentation by the Lord Lieutenant at an afternoon of nibbles in early March. The other charities were very deserving and showed the great breadth of the work that people are willing to commit to for each other in their communities.

In April came a letter to Richard. We'd got it. Congratulations to the Lake District mountain rescue teams from Her Majesty. It was thrilling really but, of course, we were sworn to keep shtum. Until the unthinkable.

Someone let slip to a team. I was amazed we had got this far without more coming out, but we stemmed the flow with an email to the team leaders holding back the tide and sharing the load of secrecy.

On 2 June, in the 350-year-old London Gazette was posted the following: 'Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Teams — providing a search and rescue response, saving lives and alleviating distress in our community'. Two relatively modest lines but well worth it.

When you get the award there's a raft of information that spills forth. Logo rules, timings, hurdles of media embargos and do's and don'ts. As I write this, I'm waiting for a query being answered by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport who administer the award to find out if a team can put the logo on their Land Rover. This summer we will be presented with a certificate signed by the Queen and a crystal award, we have already asked if we can have eleven more. I've no idea where we put just one!

The LDSAMRA trustees decided to purchase the commemorative pin badge for each of our 435 team members. Then the admin of posting them out to each team and one team want some extra. We are still in lockdown so they can't be distributed in our quarterly get-togethers. That reminds me, must get the agenda and minutes out for next week's virtual quarterly meeting held online. Emails of thanks to send and some admin to organise who gets to be the two representatives to go to next year's Buckingham Palace Garden Party. Does anyone else want to be secretary?

Just in the nick of time, the web developer came through with our rejuvenated, revamped and reinvigorated website. It was all worth it! Queen's Award for Voluntary Service: have a look at ldsamra.org.uk — it's only a small logo, hidden at the bottom, but it means a lot. Well done teams and thank you, Cumbria Constabulary, North West Ambulance Service and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. 🍪



Clockwise from top left: Cocker mouth MRT © Michael Lishman; COMRU © Rob Grange; Coniston vehicles © Coniston MRT; Duddon & Furness © DFMR; Kendal vehicle © Kendal MRT; Keswick MRT © Keswick MRT; Search Dog Rona (LDMRSDA) © Rob Grange; Wasdale MRT © WMRT; Penrith MRT © Petz; Patterdale MRT © Patterdale MRT; Langdale Ambleside MRT © Paul Burke; Kirkby Stephen MRT © KSMRT.



Call-outs
in the time of
COVID

MAY: DERBYSHIRE CAVE RESCUE IN JOINT RESCUE EFFORT WITH DERBY MRT AT THOR'S CAVE IN THE MANIFOLD VALLEY

WORDS AND PHOTOS: PETE KNIGHT

DCRO's duty controller received a call from Derbyshire Police after West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) received reports of two people stuck in Thor's Cave in the Manifold Valley. WMFS had themselves been contacted by Derbyshire Fire and Rescue from a mobile phone. The team was unable to reach anyone on this mobile number for other details and it is uncertain if it was the casualties' phone or a passer-by.

As is usual, the duty controller spoke to another member of the operational group to discuss the response and potential deployment of the team. From our knowledge of the venue, we couldn't think of any locations within Thor's Cave where a person could become physically stuck like a caver might become wedged beyond a tight section of passage or having accidentally slid into a rift or joint in the limestone. We could certainly envisage a situation where a person might have scrambled up onto something in the cave area and become stuck in place, or 'crag fast' as our MR colleagues might describe it.

We concluded that the likelihood was this was a surface job near Thor's Cave, but due to the word 'cave' in the location, we'd been contacted — clearly the appropriate thing to do was to act on the information supplied.

We decided to respond by sending some of our team members to the cave, but to also contact the PDMRO duty controller to see if the local MR team would be available if our suspicions of a surface rescue were confirmed on arrival. In line with our Covid-19 policy, the core team were put on standby using SARCALL, with specific instructions not to deploy to the location unless personally contacted. Using this approach, we can gather SARCALL responses for individual team member availability and then contact and deploy specific people to a shout. This staged method is one of the ways DCRO is controlling the number of team members potentially exposed to the virus.

Already on site when the first DCRO member arrived were members of the Derbyshire Police, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), a HART team, some Derby team members and the helicopter and crew of the Midlands Air Ambulance. On speaking to the SFRS incident controller and helicopter medic, it transpired the casualties had been found and checked over and were not injured. They were also not in a cave but located on a steep slope below the Thor's Cave landmark.

The couple had taken a rough track down from the cave, thinking it a shortcut to the valley floor footpath. The slope became increasingly steep and loose underfoot, before deteriorating into what can be best described as a mobile scree slope of marbles and soil. They attempted to return upwards, but one of the casualties slipped and slid down a short way. This was enough to shake her up and neither felt safe moving from their position. As there were no medical issues to deal with, we were asked to manage getting the casualties off the slope, something we were equipped and capable of dealing with — despite not being in the dark. Three DCRO members deployed to the site of the casualties with a hardware 'rig' bag, two 50-metre ropes and spare harnesses. A further four arrived nearby and remained on standby with other blue light assets ready to assist if needed.

The ascent from river level was very steep and very loose underfoot. Once at the casualties' small ledge, our team spoke to the member of SFRS who had arrived with the couple before us, evaluated the situation and began setting up ropes to belay the casualties down to the valley floor. The female casualty was at the base of a 4-foot-diameter tree, which was used as a belay. A rope was tied around the tree and a Petzl RIG set up as a belay/lowering device. The gully was very steep with a bend part way down, and the casualties approximately 70 metres above the riverbed. As the team would not have a line of sight from the tree belay to the base of the gully, one of the DCRO team leaders descended and set up another belay part way down from another large tree. The female casualty was then helped into a helmet and Petzl Pitagor rescue harness and attached to the belay system. She was accompanied on the descent by one of the DCRO team acting as a walking jockey. As they drew level with the second belay tree, they were attached to the second operative's belay line, and their weight transferred from the top belay. The second DCRO operative then lowered the casualty and jockey the remaining length of the gully to valley level. The system was reset, and the harness and helmet carried back up to the second casualty.



Just as the first lower-off was about to begin, a Derby MRT medic appeared to assess the casualties. Soon after, around half a dozen Derby team members arrived at the site from above. After a quick check in with them, the DCRO team continued with the evacuation method rigged. The second casualty was about five metres horizontally away from the top belay tree, and a little above. As this was likely to make getting them safely into position under the tree rather tricky, Derby team members assisted us by rigging one of their very long ropes further up the gully. This allowed the casualty and DCRO jockey to be attached from above, instead of needing to descend before they could load the rope. Once the Derby team operative had lowered them to the DCRO belayer at the second tree, the casualty and jockey were transferred to the other rope and lowered to the valley floor as before.

The long Derby MRT rope was tied off at the top, and the combined forces of dozen or more MR, fire and rescue and DCRO personnel handlined/abseiled safely down to the bottom of the gully and returned to their respective vehicles and stood down. This was, of course, completed whilst wearing the full Covid-19 precautionary PPE. An extremely hot undertaking!

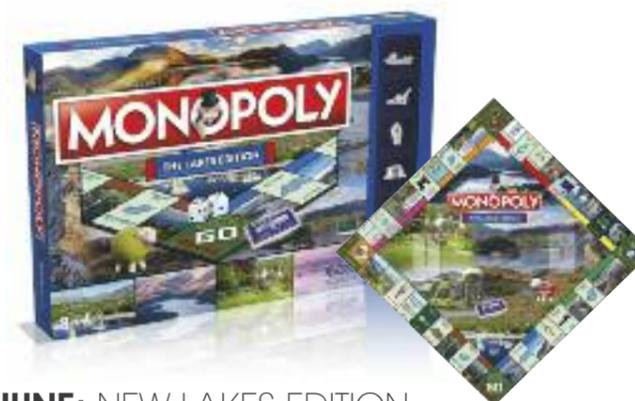
Meanwhile, other DCRO team members and MR personnel were directed to park in a field, when the farmer appeared and asked the police when his field would be clear of vehicles as there was a contractor coming to spread some muck! When he realised these were rescue team vehicles, he was happy for them to remain there as long as necessary. Humorously, there was a chance he might have set the contractor to work in the field anyway, if no-one had been around to explain the situation, thinking the vehicles were members of the public parking inconsiderately on his land! Thankfully, no team members returned to cars covered in manure.

It was a pleasure to work alongside so many different services to achieve a good outcome at Thor's Cave. There's no doubt to us that this rescue was really a mountain rescue job, not a cave rescue, although it is entirely clear why we were called. The fact that our duty controller thought through the likelihood of the incident requiring the attendance of a mountain rescue team, meant Derby MRT was also contacted. Like many other teams, they were beginning to see a steep increase in their number of call-outs, and we were more than happy to help ease the burden.

Hopefully, we demonstrated at Thor's Cave that we can contribute to a rescue effort even when no underground element is needed. Our medical capability is similar to our mountain rescue colleagues, we are well-practised in the management of stretchers in difficult terrain and have a technical skill set that can be used in surface locations as well. Notably, we do not train with climbing-style protection, but are experienced in the use of natural anchors, as well as the placement of artificial anchors for rescue if needed. 🙌

NEWS ROUND

MARCH > JUNE



JUNE: NEW LAKES EDITION MONOPOLY GAME LAUNCHES

Billed as 'the perfect lockdown luxury' by Cumbria Crack, and featuring Lake District mountain rescue, the special edition launched in June, with Windermere, Scafell and Aira Force as key landing spots and players able to choose a motor home or racing car token whilst building their empires — neither option being particularly popular in the Lake District during lockdown! But at least they've included an umbrella.

The classic London sites have been given over to Lake District landmarks and the Chance and Community Chest cards are heavily themed — one 'assessing' not street repairs (as in the classic) but repairs to 'dry stone walling'. The most expensive property set goes to Windermere and Scafell Pike and Castlerigg Stone Circle and Aira Force occupy the brown squares. The Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (taking over the Electric Company square from the game's classic original) is one of four charities to feature in the game, following a huge public vote. The other three are the Brathay Trust (landing on a Community Chest square), the Cumbria Community Foundation (also Community Chest) and the Lake District Foundation (a Chance square). The game is available now online and in stores.

MARCH: NEW DOORS FOR HOLME VALLEY AFTER RAM RAID

Team members offered a huge thanks to Portcullis Site Services and OSA Door Parts, just before social distancing became obligatory, for the provision of new doors — completely free of charge — following the ram raid at the team's base earlier in the year which damaged two of the four vehicle bay doors.



Above: A big thank you Portcullis Site Services staff for their generosity © HVMRT.

www.rescuenortheast.com

Water Related courses (MIRA Certified)

- Water Awareness
- First Responder
- Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Technician
- Management of Water & Flood Related Incidents
- Rescue from Vehicles in the Water
- Casualty Intervention & Considerations in Water

Technical Rope Rescue Courses

- Technical Rope Rescue Operative
- Technical Rope Rescue Supervisor/Party Leader
- Technical Rope Rescue Instructor

Industry Related Courses

- Working at Height Awareness
- Working at Height & Rescue
- Safe Working at Height
- Confined Space Training
- First Aid
- Manual Handling
- Fire Awareness
- Life Jacket Awareness
- Safe Working in and around Water

Rescue North East is a dedicated nationwide training provider delivering specialist training to the emergency services - Police, Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance Services, Search and Rescue Teams and Mountain Rescue Teams. We pride ourselves on our expertise and the quality of our training.

Visit our web site for a full range of courses

01207 297175
07525794000
admin@rescuenortheast.com
www.rescuenortheast.com

Training Professionals

OUTREACH RESCUE

A range of courses are available to meet the unique requirements of the mountain rescue teams within the UK. All our staff have considerable experience within civilian and military Mountain Rescue and understand what your needs and expectations are.

Courses include:

- Water Incident Management
- Search Management
- Emergency Care in the Outdoors (ECO) Levels (1/2/3)
- Advanced Casualty Extrication
- Water Safety/Water Technician

www.outreachrescue.com Call us on 01248 601546

satmap

EXCLUSIVE PSMA BUNDLE FOR RESCUE TEAMS

active 20
THE ULTIMATE SPORTS GPS

- TOUCHSCREEN AND BUTTONS
- FAST GPS PERFORMANCE
- LARGE 3.5" HI-RES SCREEN
- LONG BATTERY LIFE (7 HRS)
- BLUETOOTH AND WI-FI
- WATERPROOF (IP67)
- SHOCKPROOF (IK7)
- GPS/BLOM3S/GALILEO
- BAROMETRIC ALTIMETER

Available online and from leading outdoor stores
satmap.com/psma-sar | sales@satmap.com | 01372 869 070

NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE



JUNE: RESCUE TEAM TRUMPS AND SPECIALLY CRAFTED PLAQUES AS LANGDALE AMBLESIDE TEAM MEMBERS CELEBRATE THEIR FIFTIETH YEAR

Congratulations to Dave Barrington, Mo Richards and Geoff Bowen who celebrated their own personal milestones during the team's 50th Anniversary year, themselves achieving an incredible 50 years of service to mountain rescue.

Team leader Nick Owen and chairman Mark Bains presented the sprightly threesome with long service certificates and the beautifully crafted plaques made by team member Chris Bramall to commemorate this fantastic achievement — all undertaken under the social distancing guidelines in place at the time, with most of the team watching via a live video link. After the presentation, the three answered questions about their experiences in mountain rescue and offered advice based on what they had learned during that time. And, incidentally, the unanimous answer to the question 'Which is worse: wet socks or wet underwear?' was, perhaps predictably, 'Wet underwear!'

Earlier in the year, the team announced the launch of a newly-created game of Rescue Team Trumps for the 50th anniversary year and incorporating the #BeAdventureSmart message. Each pack contains 41 playing cards and a rules card and the proceeds help support the team. Each card features a caricature, a list of items including Years of Service, Rescue Skill, Rescue Snack, Favourite Mountain, a Safety Tip with scores for each. The aim is for players to compare scores in order to trump and win your opponent's card. Who will be YOUR favourite character? Visit the team's website at lamrt.org.uk to find out more and buy.



Top: Dave Barrington, Mo Richards and Geoff Bowen with their plaques. Above: Sarah Anderson with her character card © Paul Burke/LAMRT.

MAY: BLUE PETER BADGES FOR POPPY AND FREYA

Meanwhile, when the team's 50th anniversary celebrations were put on hold due to Covid-19, Poppy and Freya, enterprising daughters of team members Nick and Kingsley — and keen participants in the team's #BeAdventureSmart mini-MRT film series — wrote to Blue Peter to tell them about the team's anniversary and Rescue Team Top Trumps. They were rewarded with a Blue Peter badge each for their efforts! Who knows... maybe a future visit from a Blue Peter film crew? Watch this space...

Opposite, left to right: Poppy and Freya with their Blue Peter badges. Photos with kind permission of their families.



June: New leader for Kinder team



Kinder MRT saw a significant change in leadership at their AGM this year, with Neale Pinkerton stepping down after nine years at the helm, to make way for Neil Woodhead, former deputy team leader.

During his nineteen years with the team, Neale has also served as training officer. The last couple of years have been quite tough on the team with the deaths of a couple of team members and some traumatic rescue situations, all of which he has handled with compassion and sensitivity. He hands over the reins of a team in a very strong position and with high morale.

Neil Woodhead joined the team in 2012, from Rossendale and Pendle MRT, who he joined in around 2005. At the time of his departure, he was their chairman. Neil has always provided a strong guiding hand and, as with all changes at the top of organisations, his election to the leader post opens a new chapter for the team with a fresh set of ideas and possibly a slightly different direction.

'Thank you Pinky, from all the team,' writes Mike Potts. 'You may now take a seat at the back of the room, relax and heckle at the appropriate time!'



APRIL: DAVE DELIVERS FLOUR TO THE COMMUNITY AND TAKES UP STAIR CHALLENGE

What did half the country do, whilst stuck at home unable to get to the hills? Bake, apparently... Or that was certainly how it seemed to Dave Harris-Jones, of Northumberland NPMRT – who also happens to be the miller at Heatherslaw Corn Mill in Northumberland.

'We saw a huge increase in the number of people wanting our flour,' says Dave. 'We were producing in one week what we'd previously be producing in a month before the lockdown'. And he set about delivering flour the length and breadth of Northumberland; from Blagdon in the south to the Scottish Borders, to local shops and bakeries. 'I was just pleased that more people were taking to baking and that we could support our local community.'

In addition to increasing his workload at the mill, Dave also took the opportunity to raise funds for the team, carrying a 20kg bag of flour up and down the stairs in the mill 136 times — a total of 4352 steps, 815 metres of ascent — the equivalent to climbing to the summit of Cheviot from sea level. He was inspired to take up the stair challenge after hearing that a good friend, a stalwart of the local community, had been diagnosed with cancer. Tom Hammill, in his 70s, was a prolific mountaineer in his youth and the pair had hoped to climb his local peak, Humbleton Hill, before he took ill.

'Like many of us who couldn't get out into the mountains,' says Dave, 'I wanted to do something meaningful and I know Tom will appreciate any funds I can raise for the team'. As of mid-June, his efforts had raised £1240, considerably higher than his £815 target ([justgiving.com/fundraising/Dave-Harris-Jones](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Dave-Harris-Jones)).

Above: Dave Harris-Jones with one of his many bags of flour © NNP MRT.

Raising funds for rescue

JUNE: TEAM PINS FUNDRAISING HOPES ON THE CALLE RURAL COMMUNITY FUND

Like all teams, Northumberland National Park MRT has seen a huge drop in potential fundraising with the continued effects of Covid-19 virus, losing out on an estimated £15,000+ through cancelled events.

They've applied to the Calle Rural Community Fund and need as many likes, shares and pledges on the page (communityfund.calor.co.uk/nnpnprt), to be in with a chance of getting a £5000 grant from Calor. Unfortunately, voting closes on 16 July so, by the time you read this, it may be too late — but there may still be a few days left! The team will get one point for likes/shares and ten points for a donation. There will be a leaderboard once it goes live, and they need to stay in the top ten to show the judges how important the team is to the local community. Let's hope we're reporting here in October that they were successful!



JUNE: HILUX FOLLOWS NEW TEAM LEADER ACROSS THE PENNINES

Kinder team members took delivery of a new addition to their fleet, thanks to their mountain rescue colleagues in the Rossendale Valley with a vehicle which appears to have (belatedly) followed new team leader Neil Woodhead from one team to the next.

The team's existing Land Rover Defenders were starting to show their age, and with an increased requirement for the water rescue team availability in the event of a major flooding incident, it became apparent that a third, more modern, vehicle would be a useful, and necessary, addition to the stable. Quite by chance, Rossendale and Pendle MRT was in the process of selling their low-mileage Toyota Hilux so it was too good an offer to refuse as the alternative — buying and fitting out a brand new vehicle — would have been significantly more expensive.

Neil, collected the vehicle from Pete Goble, who was Rossendale team leader at the time Neil left them to move to the Peak District. No doubt the Hilux will prove its worth in the years to come, being capable of carrying and pulling a significant load whilst also having a degree of very useful 4-wheel-drive off-road capability.

Above: Pete Goble (left) hands over the Hilux to Neil Woodhead.

NEWS ROUND
APRIL > JUNE



Llyn Caseg- Fraith © Adam Harris.

MAY: OGWEN ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF CALENDAR COMPETITION

The iconic Ogwen calendar – and the competition to select the images to be featured – is now something of a tradition, as well as being a key fundraiser for the team (always a sell-out).

Out of the 230 images entered, John Rowell has chosen twelve gorgeous pictures to illustrate the beauty of the Ogwen Valley and surrounding areas through the year, plus an additional image for the front cover. Congratulations to the winners: Adam Harris, Aaron Crowe, Jan Knurek, Janet Baxter, Rebecca Wright, Sandra Roberts, Neil Stevens, Zoe Huff, Ian Williamson, Allanah Fenwick, Richard Walliker, Tanya Liepins and Phil Corley. The cover photo (shown) is thanks to Adam Harris. The team anticipated having the calendar on sale in their online shop during June: ogwen-rescue.org.uk.



Adventure training instructor Jo White has set himself an ambitious challenge, hoping to raise £365,000 over 365 days for three charities close to his heart – Cancer Research, Combat Stress and Mountain Rescue – with an impressive itinerary.

He hopes to cover a distance of 8000km, walking or running, and to climb and/or scramble a total of 50,000 metres in elevation by tackling the '100 best and biggest scrambles' in the UK, and climbing Mont Blanc (4810 metres), Elbrus (5642 metres) and Kilimanjaro (5895 metres).

Jo is both a cancer survivor and cancer sufferer. Since 1998, he has worked mainly with the Military as a civilian instructor, both improving people's fitness and rehabilitating civilian and military personnel after injury. He was inspired to take up the challenge by his own experience of bowel cancer. Diagnosed in 2014, he lost a portion of his bowel, liver, duodenum and the whole of his pancreas. Last year, he learned he had a secondary tumour in his liver. He takes enzyme tablets with every meal to allow his gut to digest food and his cancer is currently controlled by drugs.

'Life is short,' he says. 'Cancer can strike anyone down whatever your lifestyle. The way I've dealt with it is to grit my teeth and get on with every day, taking each as it comes knowing the clock is ticking — thanks also to my family, friends and medical staff who've kept me alive. I live for the outdoors and help others along the way and I want my 365 Days Of Action to raise awareness of cancer and show others you should never give up. And, in the process, I want to raise money for the charities who've helped myself and others along the way.'

'I will need support in the form of equipment, travel expenses, planning, social media, marketing and promotion to help raise the crazy target I've set myself. And I hope people will join me along the way. Maybe I could teach them a thing or two about improving their fitness and mountain navigation, inspiring them to never give up despite what curve-balls life throws at you'.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT JO'S PROGRESS VIA [FACEBOOK.COM/OLDBOYSTRAINING](https://facebook.com/oldboystraining)

MAY: '365 DAYS OF ACTION' AIMS TO RAISE £365,000

CLIMB INTO BED

Great value accommodation in the Cairngorms for up to 56 people across our Ardenbeg Bunkhouse & Glenbeg Bunkhouse & Bothy.

visit cragganoutdoors.co.uk or call 01479 873 283



active
first aid training

CANINE FIRST AID
EMERGENCY CARE FOR YOUR DOG IN THE REMOTE LOCATION
www.activefirstaid.co.uk

INCIDENT NO: TWELVETY THREE: FROM HIGH IN THE UPSTAIRS MOUNTAINS OF CALDERVILLE, LONG, LONG AGO IN THE TIME OF THE GREAT LOCKDOWN, COMES A LONELY CRY FOR HELP. IT'S CUDDLY BEAR AND HE'S STUCK. BUT WHO WILL HEAR HIM?...

OH NO! ... SOMEONE NEEDS MY HELP...

HELP! I'M STUCK... AND I'M ALL ALONE

...AND I'M VERY COLD

...AND IT'S WAY PAST MY BEDTIME...

DON'T WORRY CUDDLY BEAR, I'VE GOT YOU. WE'LL BE DOWN IN THE VALLEY SOON...

...BUT, LUCKY FOR CUDDLY BEAR, RESCUE PAUL HAS HEARD HIS CRY FOR HELP. SOON, ARMED WITH THEIR TRUSTY IRONING BOARD STRETCHER, THE RESCUE TEAM IS ON ITS WAY UP THE MOUNTAIN PATH...

...AND BEFORE TOO LONG, JUST AS RESCUE PAUL HAD PROMISED, THEY WERE BACK IN THE VALLEY. A QUICK CHECK OVER AND CUDDLY BEAR WAS SOON TUCKED UP IN BED AT HOME, SAFE AND WARM AND WITH PLENTY OF TALES TO TELL. **THE END**

THANK YOU RESCUE PAUL... YOU SAVED MY LIFE...

POST SCRIPT: THERE ARE MANY, MANY TALES OF HOW RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS ACROSS THE UK KEPT THEMSELVES OCCUPIED DURING THE TIME OF THE GREAT LOCKDOWN. THIS HAS BEEN ONE OF THEM.

Photos © Paul Taylor/CVSRT with kind permission of Cuddly Bear who has now learned just how important it is to #BeAdventureSmart.



JUNE: CLEVELAND CROWDFUNDING APPEAL RECEIVES WELCOME SUPPORT

The appeal, via the Aviva Community Fund, received welcome support in June, following a base visit from Simon Clarke – MP for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland – to learn about the many challenges faced due to Covid-19, such as the additional work involved in rescues and the adverse effect on fundraising.

Fundraising is an issue facing every team, with regular events cancelled and so many charities fighting for the same pound in people's pockets. Cleveland needs to raise on average £42,000 each year and, whilst a number of local organisations have generously provided a range of grants to support them, they need to raise more to cover an expected shortfall. They've set a modest target of £2,000 and have until 15 July to achieve this but would like to raise more as they anticipate the shortfall will be around £15,000. The appeal got off to a good start, with £574 raised within two days of the launch, so not a bad start!

'It was an absolute pleasure to visit Cleveland team (and Bracken the trainee rescue dog)', said Simon Clarke. 'They do amazing work on our behalf, covering the area from Tees Valley down as far as Scarborough. And they couldn't be a nicer group of people'.

VISIT THE APPEAL PAGE VIA [HTTP://TINYURL.COM/YCHQAQHK](http://tinyurl.com/ychqaqhk).

WHALEBONES WALK ROUND THE GARDEN BOOSTS FUNDS

With the team's annual Whalebones Walk cancelled, one of the team's keen supporters, Emily Beedle (aged 15), decided to do the 22-mile walk anyway – but in her family's back garden. A grand 1,111 laps! The walk took place on the date originally scheduled and the team publicised her progress via social media at regular intervals through the day. Emily completed the walk in 8 hours 35 minutes through rain, strong winds and even hailstones and raised an impressive £710 plus Gift Aid – nearly a quarter of the amount the average number of entrants (around 50) normally raise. A superb achievement by Emily!



Top: Left to right: Mike Gallagher (who put the Aviva appeal together), Claire Starkey with Bracken, Simon Clarke MP (Middlesbrough South & East Cleveland and Pete Mounsey, team secretary).



MAY: BABY STEPS IN CLEVELAND TOWARDS TEAM TRAINING

Meanwhile in Cleveland, outdoor training had resumed in limited fashion in May with socially-distanced pairs getting back on the hills, to undertake a series of tasks involving navigation and communication skills.

And, although the instruction was strictly for no more than two people together, the team did make an exception for their latest 'recruit' Ryan Alfie McManus, who has been out training with his proud parents, team members Rachael and Adam McManus.

So, adding to our now regular Hello-style 'team member wedding shots' — and knowing how active many team member offspring are (often right down to the dinky red jackets and knitted climbing helmets) — ladies and gents, let us introduce 'team member baby shots' with young Ryan, born on 11 May 2020, and weighing in at a healthy 9lb 3oz. Welcome to the mad, mad world of mountain rescue Ryan!



JUNE: LUKE GOES LITTER PICKING FOR A DAY BEFORE HEADING UP KINDER SCOUT IN A TU-TU

Kinder team supporter Luke Cook – a local resident and keen fell runner – undertook a 24-hour litter-pick in early June, along the lanes and byways of the Peak District, to raise funds for the team. Sadly, with grim predictability, after weeks of glorious sunshine, the weekend of Luke's endeavour saw the arrival of heavy rain showers but he was undeterred.

Off he set at 6.00am, supported along the way by a small army of supporters and, the following morning, footsore and exhausted, he completed his marathon challenge, having filled somewhere in the region of 25 to 30 council bins and up to ten black bags left along the way to be collected the next day. He had set a fundraising target of £3000 and, as the target figure approached, the donations appeared to stall, prompting Luke to promise (threaten?) to run up Kinder Scout in a pink dress if the target was met. 'Donations surged in after this,' says Mike Potts, the team's press officer, 'and we now all look forward, with keen anticipation, to his cross-dressing fell running antics. Indeed, Luke has now applied to join the team so we look forward to seeing his more suitably-attired figure at base'.

Left: Luke during his 24-hour litter-pick and later with team members outside Kinder team base, sporting his fetching pink tu-tu © Kinder MRT.

Raising funds for rescue

MAY: AMELIA RAISES AN ANOTHER INCREDIBLE £520 FOR CALDER VALLEY TEAM WITH A HAIRCUT

Two years ago, young Amelia raised an incredible £1600 for Calder Valley SRT and the Little Princess Trust by having her lovely locks snipped. Amelia and her family are well known to the team, as her dad Richard was a team member until he sadly lost his battle with cancer in 2018.



Once again, she has donated her hair to The Little Princess Trust who create wigs for children and young people suffering the devastating effects of hair loss — and she wanted to raise funds for the Calder Valley team, in memory of her Daddy.

That haircut, two years ago, was her first for charity and Amelia has been growing her hair ever since. Amelia's mum, Natalie, thanked everyone for their amazing support and encouragement saying that Amelia is now sporting a cute bob and 'looking forward to hair brushing being less painful'. Well done Amelia!

Opposite page: Amelia before (with lollipop) and after the cut. Left: Amelia's Daddy, Richard © CVSRT.

NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE



Raising funds for rescue

MAY: TENACIOUS TEAM TACKLE #MRATHON TO RAISE FUNDS FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Undaunted – inspired even – by the absence of the actual Virgin London Marathon in April, an enthusiastic bunch of search dog handlers, trainees, dogsbodies and supporters teamed up with various animals and items of sports equipment to run a #MRathon in support of mountain rescue teams across England and Wales, running, walking, cycling or crawling to complete a ‘from the front door’ 26-mile marathon (in line with the government lockdown and social distancing guidelines in place at the time).

Over forty eager runners and non-runners dusted off their trainers and adjusted their buffs to clock up the miles from their own front doors over one week from 23 May. And, perhaps inevitably, one or two search dogs muscled in on the action too – along with a tiny horse. Anything went, with ‘entrants’ mixing and matching to suit themselves, walking, running, swimming, trotting – whatever they could squeeze in around family and work commitments. For example, Chris and Ellie Sherwin achieved their goal with a combination of walking and cycling marathons, with Chris adding in a running marathon between the Sunday and Thursday, while Ellie cooled off with a 26-metre swim, mid-cycle ride! Tony from Dartmoor, a brand new body with Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England completed his #MRathon with a bikejor and his four dogs running in relay. A ‘bikejor’, for those who don’t know, is the sport of cross country biking with your dog attached to your bike – much faster and more exhilarating apparently than canicross (cross country running with dogs) and particularly suitable for dogs who really embrace running. (You learn something every day). Tina Page, whose fundraising challenge to Run the Summits has also been temporarily halted, supported little Angus the pony, as he clocked up the four-legged miles around his local lanes above the Calder Valley. And there were many, many more besides! Well done everyone who entered into the spirit of things, and not only got moving but kept on moving!

Total raised to date, including Gift Aid, is £8,072.43 – considerably higher than the target set – to be shared between Calder Valley, Cleveland, CRO, Dartmoor Ashburton, Dartmoor Okehampton, Dartmoor Tavistock, Derby, East Cornwall, Edale, Exmoor, Northumberland National Park, North of Tyne, Rossendale and Pendle, South Snowdonia, Swaledale, Teesdale and Weardale, West Cornwall, Western Beacons, Woodhead and Upper Wharfedale.

All images taken from the Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England Facebook page, with thanks.



JUNE: ROACHES BANNER RAISES AWARENESS OF FIRE RISK

Buxton team members worked with the BMC, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue and Staffordshire Police to place the banner on the crag so various media outlets, including the BBC, could film the project and spread the fire safety message #DontBeBlamedForTheFlames.

Once all the photographs and interviews had taken place, the banner was removed from the main crag and placed on a boulder below the Don Whillans Memorial Hut.

Photos © Carney James-Turner.



Training in the time of COVID

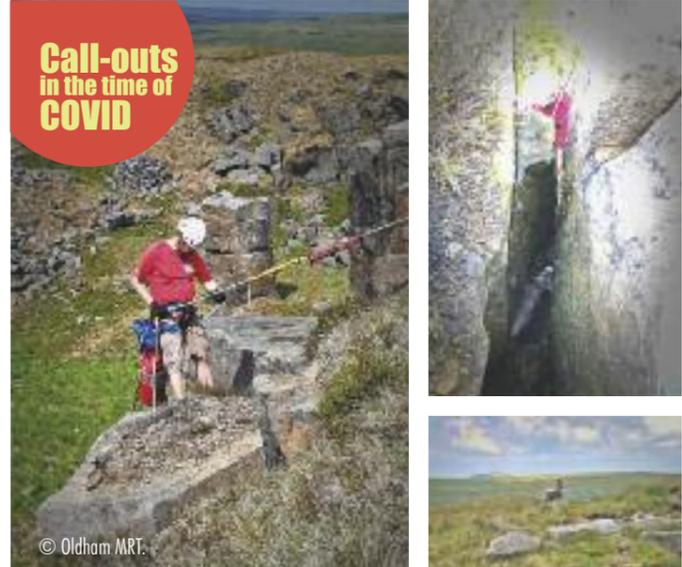
JUNE: OGWEN TEAM RESUMES OUTDOOR TRAINING, WITH PPE

Over two evenings mid-month, team members came together to practice working in the PPE they need to use during rescues to mitigate the Covid-19 virus, including the different levels of PPE required (depending on the role being undertaken during a call-out) and a very formal decontamination process post-rescue. As befitting summer in Snowdonia, the weather was terrible but, they report, ‘the selection of underpants on show during decontamination certainly brightened the mood’.

To aid social distancing, team members are asked to remain in their cars on arrival at call-outs and training and receive instructions over their radios. The team later also took to Facebook to explain that team members would be using their own cars more, and parking in lay-bys – in accordance with North Wales Police directives – and that their cars may not be readily identifiable as mountain rescue, after a member of neighbouring Llanberis MRT had their unmarked car damaged by an overzealous local assuming they weren’t adhering to the rules.

Later in June, the team completed a further training session on Covid-19 PPE under the watchful camera-eye of Tom Laws from Save Our Rivers, who gave up his time to film and edit the morning’s session into a training film so team members can use it for revision until such time as the process is reviewed.

Top: Initial evening training © OVMRO. Below: Final training morning caught on film by Tom Law of Save Our Rivers © OVMRO/Tom Laws.



Call-outs in the time of COVID

© Oldham MRT.

JUNE: NOT ALL OUR CASUALTIES ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT HELP..

Following our tradition of unappreciative sheep-related rescue stories, here’s one from Oldham who received a call, via Greater Manchester Police, from a member of the public concerned for a lamb that had become stuck in a crevice in a local quarry.

A limited number of team members attended and, after a lot of coaxing, eventually managed to persuade ‘Dave Junior’ to come out of his hiding place to safety. As soon as he was free, as is the norm, he ran off into the distance to his mum, with barely a backward glance or word of thanks. Still, it keeps the rope skills up. Four team members were involved for an hour and 45 minutes.



The battle to find four lost boys

The day seemed so good, Easter 1973



Rescuers assembled: Image courtesy of Stephen Attwood, one of the four 'lost boys'.

Four teenaged schoolboys from Hertfordshire kept themselves occupied with sing-alongs and snacks from their rapidly dwindling rations, when they found themselves marooned in the mountains for three days and nights in April 1973, on what should have been a very different weekend. It was the final stage in their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, a four-day trek, over fifty miles of challenging terrain and the culmination of many months of training — an exercise for which they were well-prepared.

All of them had some experience with map-reading and compass work and with them they carried a tent, food, two primus stoves and emergency rations. Each boy had a polythene survival bag, sleeping bag, anorak, waterproof over-clothing, a change of dry clothing, first aid kit, map and compass, torch and whistle. But Stephen Attwood, Terry Hankin and Graham Brown, aged sixteen, and fifteen-year-old Christopher Dell survived because they remembered their first lesson on walking in the mountains: when in difficulty, just 'sit tight'.

At 9.00am, on Good Friday morning, 20 April, they were all set to leave Capel Curig. The weather was 'quite fine', confirming an earlier forecast from the BBC. But what the boys didn't know was that the Manchester Met Office had painted a very different picture — with temperatures in the

mountains dropping towards freezing, cold rain and hill fog throughout the day. With characteristic bluntness, Tony Jones was later to remark that the boys should never have been allowed out in such conditions. 'It was cold, wet and horrible and when you are only fifteen or sixteen, you do not have much in the way of reserves, either mentally or physically, if things go wrong.' Thankfully, these four boys proved themselves to have plenty in the way of reserves.

The boys were in the charge of 29-year-old Roger Baldwin, Youth Officer for South East Herts, with other instructors on hand as assessors. Confident that reasonable weather was assured, Baldwin saw the boys off from Capel Curig, along the old drovers' route to the track junction and down towards Llyn Crafnant and Trefriw in the Conwy valley. Five miles and three hours later, they were seen by one of their assessors, all in good spirits.

From Trefriw, they were to climb steadily to Llyn Eigiau, then more steeply up to Foel Grach, a lonely mountain refuge, where they were due to meet two of their assessors at 5.00pm, and bed down for the night. At 3.50pm, they were reported to have been spotted by other mountaineers, some way off-course by the side of a stream and 'less than half way' along their planned 16-mile route for that day. And the weather could no

longer be described as 'quite fine', as the boys faced driving wind and rain and plummeting temperatures.

Cold and tired, they struggled on through fog-shrouded rocks and deepening gullies, as the rain turned to sleet, then snow, their way forward barely visible. Finally, an hour after they should have checked in at Foel Grach, and with one of the youngsters, Christopher Dell, showing signs of hypothermia, they reached an agreement: to pitch their tent and 'sit tight'.

They settled down in their tent to eat the last of the day's food supply — sausages, peas and potatoes. All they had now were their 'iron rations' — Kendal mint cake, chocolate, glucose, soup and condensed milk — the same kind Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing had taken to the summit of Everest. But surely they would not be there long?

When they woke the next morning, six inches of snow lay on the ground. It was foggy and freezing. Realising they were safer where they were, again they reached agreement: to ration their remaining food and continue to 'sit tight'.

In his later statement to the police, Graham Brown noted that at noon, he and Terry left the tent to attempt to find the mountain refuge hut but were unable to because of the dense mist. They retraced their footprints back to the tent, arriving there about 12.30pm. At around 6.00pm, he said, they heard voices outside. 'Thinking it was our instructors we called out and I went to the front of the tent, opened the flap and saw it was a man and a woman. The man said 'We are lost'. I laughingly said, 'So are we.' He got out his map and I too got a map. We compared where we estimated we were and agreed.

'I cannot remember the exact conversation, but the man and his wife told me they were making for Bangor and hoped to continue over the summit. I think I mentioned that Christopher wasn't feeling so well but I can't be sure. I certainly did tell them we were working for our Gold award. About this time, visibility improved slightly and we could see quite a distance downwards, although it was still misty above. The man went down the slope looking for a landmark. Stephen and I walked down to where he was, about 200 yards below, and saw a track in the valley, about half a mile from where we were standing.

'He told us he didn't think the weather would improve and was considering going

down and leaving by way of the track. We walked back to the tent, leaving the man and woman outside and didn't see them again. At no time did we tell the couple we were worried about our position — we were not worried and quite confident we'd be able to move off the following morning.'

Meanwhile, when the boys failed to arrive, Baldwin and the other staff members grew concerned for their safety and carried out their own 'minor search operation' along the route the boys should have taken, to no avail.

As Saturday night came and went, the weather began to ease. Keen to continue on their way, the boys began to retrace their own steps, back to lower ground but, two miles on, the weather closed in again and it started to snow resulting in 'white out' conditions. Good sense prevailed and once again they resolved to stay put, pitching their tent on the Sunday afternoon on the Gledrffordd plateau. There was nothing more to do but sleep, listen to the small transistor radio which Graham Brown had taken with him, and sing their favourite hymns — including, somewhat appropriately, 'Guide me, Oh Thou Great Redeemer'!

Throughout Saturday and Sunday, Baldwin and his group of assessors continued to search as best they could but who could rule out the possibility that one of the boys had fallen ill? Or simply fallen? So, at 3.45pm on Easter Sunday afternoon, they were forced to admit that 'it was bigger than they could cope with' and reported the situation to Ogwen Cottage.

There was little that could be done in the failing light, bar a low level search by Ogwen and RAF Valley team members and local police officers, with a large-scale search planned for first light. Tony Jones and Ron James would be the search coordinators. By then, seven mountain rescue teams had been drafted into the task, alongside SARDA, the RAF, helicopters from C Flight and the North Wales Police. On the second day, an informal 'search panel' was set up, including the search coordinators and representatives of all the organisations taking part, to plan the most effective use of all the resources available. It was a pivotal point in the way mountain rescue is organised in North Wales. The experience gained in this extensive operation proved invaluable in the setting up of a more formal search panel by the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association, in November 1973.

On Easter Monday, fifty people searched the Carneddau in very poor weather, joined later in the day by search dogs and the helicopter. Alistair Haveron, one of the RAF Valley party leaders reported over the radio at 10.30am that conditions were 'just about a white out' and too bad for a line search of the easterly slopes leading up to Foel Grach. News very quickly spread. The press and BBC were quick to pick up on the story, keen to discuss the implications and, almost immediately, more volunteers began to arrive at Ogwen Cottage, climbers and hill walkers from across North Wales.

Multi-agency, multi-team operations have become more commonplace in recent years, but not in the 1970s. The sheer numbers involved in this search (which gave rise to it being dubbed 'The Easter Riots') required significant organisational skill: briefing and debriefing, establishing search areas, liaising with the police and the RAF, dealing with willing 'outsiders' wanting to throw their weight into the search effort. Not to mention engaging with the families and those who had been instructing and assessing the boys.

The incident highlights too, the changes in communication technology which have radically altered the way missing persons are reported, searched for and communicated with. With the advent of the mobile phone, 'lost' and injured persons can not only report themselves as such and continue to communicate with the rescue team but, thanks to smartphones — with

area was gradually being expanded to cover the possibility that the boys had travelled further than had been thought.

'After a day's searching, the search parties returned to base perplexed that they had found no trace of the boys. Every news bulletin from then on carried up-to-date information about the progress of the search operation and, at 6.00am on Tuesday morning, Stephen Attwood's father, who knew that the boys had a small transistor radio with them, broadcast a message telling the lads there was an extensive search going on and they must carry out their survival procedures and wait for help to arrive.

'The message was heard inside the tiny tent. It gave Stephen quite a jolt to hear his father's voice, but it cheered them up to know that a lot of people were out looking for them. Any thoughts of making another attempt to rescue themselves were



On their way down: With the RAF crew (left to right) Stephen Attwood, Graham Brown, Terry Hankin and Christopher Dell. Ogwen's Tony Jones in the foreground. Image courtesy of Stephen Attwood.

their integral GPS capability — and the SARLOC app, a lost person can be located to a precise grid reference, enabling rescuers to go direct to that location.

Bob Maslen-Jones, in 'A Perilous Playground', describes the process in some detail in his account of the incident. 'As they arrived, each group or individual was asked to report to a command centre manned by the police where details of their experience, age, fitness, home address and so on were recorded, and each group of twelve people was briefed by Tony Jones to carry out a detailed search of a given area. The search

forgotten and knowing that it could not be long before they were found, they just sat and waited.'

At 7.00am on the Tuesday morning, 483 searchers, five search dogs and their handlers gathered at Ogwen Cottage for their briefing and, by 8.00am, the first parties were on their way to their allotted search areas.

With the cloud base still low, the RAF helicopter was initially restricted to searching lower down the mountainside but, as the cloud lifted, they were finally able to fly higher up. And as the clock ticked through



Eye in the sky: RAF Whirlwind helicopter searches the area. Image courtesy of Stephen Attwood.

to mid-morning, still huddled together in their tent, the boys heard the distant rumble of the Whirlwind helicopter. Knowing their tiny shelter would barely be visible, shrouded in the mist, Stephen clambered out of the tent and headed towards the noise. It was almost a mile before he emerged from the mist, waving his arms above his head.

The boys were found at Gledrffordd Ridge, half a mile up the Carneddau range, in what was described as 'a courageous piece of airmanship' by the pilot, Flight Lieutenant Gordon Mitchell, navigator Flight Lieutenant Stan Burt and Master Aircraftsman Stan Ormiston.

They had taken the aircraft along a corridor only twenty foot high, between the snow-covered ground and the low mist — with visibility less than 100 yards. 'I suppose it was a bit tricky', said Mitchell, modestly. 'We went to have another look today at areas we could not reach yesterday because of the low cloud. I suddenly spotted an orange object on the ground. We landed near it and it turned out to be the cover of some sort of equipment. We thought we would search the area more thoroughly. Almost immediately, my winchman saw one of the boys running down the hill waving something over his head'. The boys were duly picked up and flown to Ogwen Cottage and the curative properties of hot soup.

The team's newsletter, later that year, recorded the grateful thanks from the boys and their parents. Mr and Mrs Attwood expressed 'very great feeling of relief', thanking the team for the tremendous amount of work and personal hardship they endured to rescue their son and his three

friends, a sentiment echoed by the other parents. The boys themselves said they would 'be eternally grateful for the marvellous work', apologising for the 'large amount of trouble' they had caused. Other thanks came from Lord Snowdon, Private Secretary to the Duke of Edinburgh, the Hertfordshire Education offices and the BBC.

Debate continued for some time afterwards. Ron James speculated that the boys may have survived 'perhaps another four or five days', adding that they had done just as they had been instructed to do. However, he was critical of the hike itself.

'Fifty miles is an awful long way for teenage boys to go in these mountains at this time of year. This is the most appalling part of the episode — that the 50-mile walk is laid down in the rules for the gold medal. Perhaps,' he suggested, 'the rules should be looked at again. Fifty miles on Dartmoor in June is one thing. Fifty miles in Snowdonia in wintry conditions, is quite another matter.'

There were concerns about the delay in reporting the boys missing and Baldwin's reliance on a seven-hour-old weather forecast. Had he taken heed of the updated forecast, the boys might never have set off or, at the very least, been able to halt their hike at Trefriw. But there was no doubt that the boys' decision to sit tight had saved their lives. There was speculation whether the boys would be required to re-take the expedition section of the award scheme, possibly in Derbyshire. An official of the Hertfordshire education authority said it was possible that they be granted the award anyway, because of the initiative and courage they had shown and the fact that

they had obviously absorbed their training. One of the rescuers was reported to say he thought it unlikely they would gain the award, because they did not report back by 7 o'clock on Sunday night and did not finish the fifty miles,' adding that 'they should have the medal for their sheer guts'.

In fact, the boys were offered the Gold award but, with great strength of character, chose to repeat the expedition the following Easter 1974, again in North Wales, along a different route — as Stephen Attwood confirms.

'Our 'retake' corresponded with the BBC's 'Tuesday's Documentary' feature 'The Day Seemed So Good', filmed in the October half-term of 1973 in North Wales, and timed for the first anniversary of our little adventure.'

The programme aired on 9 April 1974, at 9.25pm. A further note in the team's newsletter, in May 1974, reads that 'comment from lay people suggested that it was well received.' However, 'the two tone sirens were by courtesy of the BBC — no one else knows anything about them!' Perhaps a degree of artistic licence had prevailed, yet Stephen Attwood confirms that the reconstruction of the actual expedition and their life in the tent held pretty true to events. And, finally, the boys had achieved their Gold awards. They remain in touch to this day and, certainly for Stephen, the episode had done little to curb his enthusiasm for the mountains.

'After successfully completing the Gold expedition, I and several others went on to complete the Mountain Leader Course Summer training and were associated with further John Warner School expeditions in North Wales as instructors for many years. Summer 1988 saw a group of these expedition helpers have their own two-week walking holiday in the Austrian Alps. I went on to follow groups around the North Wales countryside until 1989, when work took me to the US for several years.'

Now back in the UK, both Stephen's children have achieved the Gold Award and he celebrated his 50th birthday by walking with his son from Rhyd Ddu through the old mine workings — very familiar ground — to meet his daughter. She had just finished a week in Wales for her Silver Expedition at the Herts Snowdonia Centre at Nant Gwynant, where he used to stay 35 years before.

'I still love walking,' adds Stephen, 'and completed the 40-mile Lyke Wake Walk (a sixteen-hour trek) a couple of years ago with a group of work friends, more than 25 years after completing it the first time'.

•



TAKEN FROM 'RISKING LIFE AND LIMB' BY JUDY WHITESIDE AND PUBLISHED IN 2015 AND AVAILABLE IN THE MREW BOOKSHOP.



JUNE: CALDER TEAM SEES BUSIEST DAY SINCE TEAM FORMED IN 1966

Thursday 25 June was the hottest day of the year and saw Calder team members experiencing their busiest day (not including major incidents during flooding and adverse winter weather conditions) in their 54-year history, with four call-outs within twelve hours — a total of 284.2 team member hours.

'As with all incidents, the casualty's safety and efficient evacuation is paramount,' says Jonathan Cole, CVSRT team leader, 'and I'm very proud of my team members who coped admirably with all four incidents and worked seamlessly with our mountain rescue colleagues and the statutory emergency services to achieve this. This day proved especially challenging given the intense heat.'

'Certain factors do make the task harder than it needs to be. We are seeing many incidents where visitors are trespassing or parking cars irresponsibly, making it difficult for emergency vehicles to access the scene. Discarded alcohol cans, broken bottles and used BBQs littering beauty spots is becoming a huge problem. It's really sad to see the lack of respect from some people of all ages — although, as we see daily, our region is not unique.'

JUNE: HIGH SHERRIFF AWARD FOR DR PAULA COOK

The High Sheriff of Cumbria has recognised Paula, a Langdale Ambleside team member, for her exceptional contribution to the community during the Covid-19 pandemic, helping keep the county's rescue teams and casualties safe. Congratulations Paula!

Right: Dr Paula Cook. Photographer: Gavin Hopkins © Tern TV.



MAY: FLIPPING ANNUAL REVIEW PUBLISHED ONLINE

Following the magazine's temporary migration to flipping form in April, this year's Mountain Rescue Annual Review is also available on the online platform. Find it at <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/221807/>

NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE

THE RISE AND RISE OF THE ONLINE MEETING: WILL WE EVER BE THE SAME AGAIN?

Whether it's looking at ways to keep up the skills, raising funds or just generally hanging out with our mates, Covid-19 has certainly stirred the creative juices amongst teams and individuals around England and Wales. Whilst some took to walking up and down the stairs several hundred times to raise money, others enlisted the odd cuddly toy into simulated rescue scenarios (page 46, if you missed it).

Some took the view that team members might enjoy a well-earned respite from call-outs and training, others dipped their toes — tentatively at first — into online sessions, just to keep the brain cells moving. Doubtless neither camp expected it all to go on quite so long as it has. And it appears that online learning may be here to stay, even once we're 'back to normal' whatever that is, what with money saved on heating meeting rooms, boiling kettles and filling the cupboards with biscuits and milk, and team members saving the cost of fuel while 'training' from the comfort of their sofas. One thing that's clear, however, is the importance of the social 'buzz' team members get when they're training or responding to call-outs. It's the glue that holds us together.

One or two teams have shared details of what they've been up to. Aberglaslyn team, for example, encouraged team members to touch base and check in on each other regularly. 'Our team WhatsApp group has been on fire,' says Nia Jenkins. 'We've used Google Meet to run training sessions and meetings, and Friday night became Quiz Night. It's been a great way to catch up with the team and make sure everyone's doing okay.'

'We've had various 'virtual' training sessions with topics such as casualty care and navigation. Dion Jones, our training officer, has also been sending various images of our patch, asking team members to guess the location.'

Dave, the team's casualty care officer, believes virtual meetings are the way forward, that 'even when the pandemic is over, Google Meet will be a valuable tool we can use for group training'. And team member Rogan saw it as a valuable opportunity to discuss the negative aspects of non-physical training during the pandemic, allowing everyone to voice their opinions and share concerns.

In Cleveland, online training comprised a series of multiple choice 'tests', put together by the team's medical officer, Craig Sewell, and training officer, Derek Birtwhistle, starting with a test about the team's Covid-19 procedures. Similar tests focused on water rescue, technical rope rescue and, of course, casualty care. 'That way,' says Gary Clarke, 'our training and medical officers were able to monitor knowledge levels across the whole team to see if there were any gaps. Plus, individuals received instant feedback on any areas for improvement as they completed each test'. The team also ran written tests, covering incident-related topics ranging from the correct response to Sarcall, getting to the RV, action at the RV, stretcher carrying, navigation methods and so on.

Meanwhile, in April, Kayleigh Jayne of Holme Valley shared a Friday night Zoom quiz with all the teams which proved popular and, in June, she and Nicola Ingle set up an 'MR meet-ups group' on Facebook. 'If this current situation has taught us anything,' says Kayleigh, 'it's how important our MR buddies are, so why not share that? Then hopefully when things start to return we can benefit from it'. Amen to that. Check out the MREW Members group to find the link.



navigation

THE AUTHOR OF 'TEACHING NAVIGATION', NIGEL WILLIAMS IS A FREELANCE INSTRUCTOR, AND FORMER HEAD OF TRAINING AT GLENMORE LODGE. HE HOLDS BOTH MOUNTAINEERING AND ORIENTEERING AWARDS.



Relocation skills for the lost or cartographically challenged

To be fair this may well have been ingrained in the earliest humans — wilderness was all around, they probably hunted in groups, becoming separated and disorientated was a truly life-threatening experience.

Neurological studies suggest that the brain is hard wired to explore new areas following line features before adventuring into the open. This should match our navigation teaching progressions and of course it relates to search methods.

A sense of being lost often triggers life preservation reactions, namely fright and flight, heart rate goes up, adrenaline goes to the legs and off we go with no rational plan, groups may split as well. Some people may simply become rooted to the spot and terrified to move. Mentally we experience a massive and sudden loss of confidence which blocks rational thought and decision making and we could, of course, get into a whole world of heuristic biases. We are out of control and it's not a good situation to be in.

We don't like admitting to any level of being misplaced or lost. Sharing and reviewing the experience with the map is so helpful, and

offers others a learning opportunity. You can be completely certain that your colleagues have had these experiences perhaps just not admitted them — yet. A confession session may reveal some interesting insights into the strategies people used and if a simple clue might have been overlooked in the stress of the situation.

This is one of the reasons orienteers are effective navigators, they exchange their errors and tactics on individual legs at the finish and learn from them. They talk about 'reducing the error'. In other words, it is normal to be misplaced at times. It happens, we all do it so let's try to make light of it when training and assessing others in order to build resilience and confidence.

RELOCATION SKILLS

The teaching of navigation seems to lack a framework to help us through the challenge of being lost. Relocation skills are often our weakest skill set yet we rarely work to develop or practise it. Being taught random navigation theory and skills without terrain or

contextual progressions is often the root of the problem for many folk. A framework can offer a helpful sequence for the brain to lock onto in emergency. Could a common UK approach to teaching it reduce call-outs?

CONFIDENCE

A wise old navigator once said that navigation is broadly 25% map reading, 25% compass work and 50% confidence in the other two.

Skills and practice = confidence. Confidence plays a big part because a lot of navigation is actually decision making.

In the past 50 years neurologists have made many discoveries about how our brain works when navigating, often linked to Alzheimer's research. (The book *Wayfinding* by Michael Bond is worth a read). The complexity of the brainwork required to navigate and the importance of confidence is frequently mentioned in neurological studies.

If lost 'Don't panic' is the usual starter but it requires confidence to overcome panic. Take a break, eat and drink something — it will slow you down and give more time to study the map and review when and where you last knew your location. Is backtracking an option?

SKILLS SEQUENCE

With GPS and a digital map pinpointing our location it's easy. Even with a free locating app such as OS Locate there is a grid reference. It also gives an altitude, on a linear feature that may be quicker to confirm your location reading contour heights as they cross the feature. Saves opening up the map to find grid numbers and remembering the order they go in.

With map and compass we cannot easily confirm our exact location until we are at a recognisable point on the map and ground. We need a strategy to find one.

I coined the phrases 'Move to prove' or 'Travel to unravel'. Think of relocation as detective work, an interesting challenge to sort out, you cannot do it by standing still.

The vast majority of point features on a map are on linear features, a junction or ruined building, for instance. Working out which one it is on the map requires confirmatory evidence. Setting the map with a compass needle, studying the surroundings, maybe listening for running water and checking along handrails making it easy to retrace your steps.

If on a line feature or handrail, check the direction it is running — map setting may be sufficient, or a quick bearing along it — then check the map for examples of that feature running in approximately that direction. Decide which way to follow it to an obvious change in direction or junction, and then confirm that point feature as above.

If we walk away from line features a higher level of relocation skills is required. Lost in an open area, the chances of pinpointing your



location by standing in the same place in the mist will be negligible. A plan would be to move to a recognisable line feature to then follow the process above. It might simply be walk east to the road, often a moorland option. The technical skill needed now is to be able to take a bearing off the map and follow it. Estimation of speed and distance of travel requires practise and confidence. Holding one's nerve on a long leg in poor visibility can be a challenge, a sudden loss of confidence may lead to possibly disastrous changes of plan.

Contours also provide linear features such as sharp changes in slope angle. Slope aspect skills are invaluable in hill terrain, narrowing down your whereabouts eliminating large areas you cannot be in. A prominent change in aspect often provides a linear feature which combined with an altimeter reading could be enough to relocate with.

Once on the move we can discern changes which may be identifiable on the map, or a glimpse of a prominent feature may help us relocate before we reach the line feature.

SUMMARY OF A THREE-STAGE FRAMEWORK

- If at a Point feature: Confirm position (Key skills: observation and map setting).
- If on a Linear feature: Plan and move along it to a Point feature (Key skills: map orientation and simple confirmatory bearing).
- If in an Open area: Plan and move to a linear feature (Key skills: take and follow bearings and slope aspect).

This may not get us out of every situation and there are other factors to take into account in winter, for instance, but it offers a rational framework.

Interestingly searches usually start with point features — likely places of shelter, then

along linear features before deploying teams into open country. Following the relocation process is also likely to be the best way of being found by a search team.

Back bearings and drawing 'cocked hats' on the map as a method of relocation when lost are not viable. Good visibility is required for a start and we are not lost if we recognise things on the ground and on the map. But that is not to say it doesn't have its place on occasions.

PRACTICE

Ideally, practise with a partner. In a forest with an orienteering map is an ideal starting point to work through the progressions with more opportunities for practice and feedback in a short time. One takes the map and leads a random walk through the wood to any line feature then hands over the map for the partner to work through the process of relocation, then swap roles. Same exercise again but now stopping in the middle of the wood. This exercise can then be moved into context of hill or moorland, have a GPS as a back-up or confirmation tool. Poor weather or night would be a more advanced practice in either environment.

Orienteering is a great way to practise navigation skills. It isn't the mountains but it is navigation, practice and building confidence going solo. Then at the end an opportunity to review and share strategies and decisions with others. Avoid running and being competitive, practise and experiment with the skills. Hopefully you might get lost and have to work out a relocation strategy in a calm and considered manner building up confidence with the process. The environment is far less threatening than the hills and can be more confusing but safety is not far away. Local clubs advertise events on line and you don't have to be a club member, wear lycra or run. So I recommend you get lost! 🗺️

A short history of stretchers: Part 2

The search begins...

PETER BELL

At the end of Part 1, in the last issue, we'd left poor Edgar Pryor and his broken leg the unwitting catalyst for the formation of the Joint Stretcher Committee.



Right & opposite: Eustace Thomas and his original drawing.

even of orthodox types, have been found in practice to suffer from serious defects, such as excessive weight or inadequate strength, or they do not allow for the load to be borne fairly by the bearers. And no stretcher suitable for transporting a patient over really rough mountain country, in bad weather, or for lowering him down a crag, could be found.

'The increasing importance of this problem led in 1932 to the appointment of a stretcher subcommittee to investigate the matter. In 1933, this body joined forces with a similar body appointed by the Fell and Rock Club, thus forming the Joint Stretcher Committee (JSC). We were particularly fortunate in being able, between us, to command expert advice on the medical and surgical requirements, and also on the engineering difficulties which soon became apparent. It may at first sound strange to suggest that specialised engineering knowledge is applicable to the design of a stretcher, which to most people is simply a piece of canvas and two poles. If anyone cares, however, to attempt to solve the various conflicting requirements for a mountain stretcher, he will find, when he gets down to details, that they are not easily reconciled. Stated briefly, the more important of these requirements are:

- a) minimum weight
- b) quite exceptional strength and rigidity under varied strains
- c) provision for the loaded weight to be shared by more than the usual two bearers
- d) provision to allow the bearers to walk in file on the level and to advance in line on a steep slope
- e) portability (ie. it should be possible to take the empty stretcher apart in case of need)
- f) means to hold the patient in position with the least discomfort even when being lowered down a vertical face
- g) means to keep his body from contact with the rock under such circumstances.

'As regards first aid equipment, it will be realised that for the special circumstances of mountain accidents, bandages and dressings may not cover all, or possibly even the main needs.

'The committee continued its deliberations so far beyond the normal period of gestation that ribald spirits suggested that it was barren. Some were taken for a ride in experimental stretchers and silenced. But much work was being done behind the scenes and, by Easter 1934, a new design was so far advanced, and the experimental model so comfortable, that even one of our

most energetic past presidents became patient and lay down quietly — but this is recorded elsewhere.

'The committee's report was issued at the beginning of this year, and the first stretchers are now available. One, with its special first aid set, is being installed in the Lake District by the Fell and Rock, and several of the first aid sets are being obtained by them for existing stretchers in that area. We have installed a complete equipment at Tal y Braich.

'The general design and construction of the stretcher can be seen from the drawing [opposite page] and it will be apparent that there are a number of novel features. The report emphasises that the present design is not considered to be in any sense final, and that further improvements can probably be made. The design, however, is based on practical experiment and experience over a long period, and it is the writer's personal opinion that the most fruitful line of improvement is likely to be in the evolution and perfection of details rather than in any radical revision of the general design.

'Before the committee decided that a new pattern of stretcher was required they had considered carefully existing designs of stretcher and of any similar devices which they were able to trace. These included:

- Furley ordinary and telescopic handle pattern
- Lowmoor jacket
- Neil Robertson stretcher
- Dr and Mrs Wakefield's stretcher
- Universal stretcher sheet
- Swiss Army mountain stretcher (as used and recommended by the Swiss Alpine Club Central Committee)
- Parachute harness
- Fell and Rock design of 1931.

'On the first aid and medical side, the report gives a detailed list of the items which, it is considered, should accompany the stretcher. It is not necessary to record the entire list here, as much of it refers to the usual first aid material and appliances. All the items are packed and kept in two rucksacks. The more specialised items include ropes, arm and leg splints, feeding cup, sugar and other material for hot drinks and for the relief of pain; also slit eiderdown bag with detachable waterproof cover, hot water bottles, kettles, and a paraffin vapour stove. (It will be realised that, in the case of a badly injured man, warmth may be one of the most essential requirements).

'The stage that we have now reached, therefore, is that the JSC has given us a working solution of the problem put before them, namely, a specification of what appear to be the most suitable appliances and equipment to have available against mountain accidents. It remains to arrange for the provision of such equipment where it is most likely to be needed. A first step is being taken, as previously mentioned, in the provision of several stretcher and equipment sets in the Lake District, and one in Wales. There are other centres, however, both in these areas and elsewhere, at which such rescue equipment should be available, and it is hoped to interest other mountaineering and kindred clubs or organisations in the question. Steps in this direction are now under consideration.

'The work done by the JSC has been very painstaking indeed. Whether further experience calls for much modification of their findings or not, their labour has been fruitful. We are all in their debt for the great amount of time and trouble spent in investigating and working on the problem. The committee comprised C P Lapage (chairman), B S Harlow, Wilson H Hey, A S Pigott, L H Pollitt and Eustace Thomas'.

EUSTACE THOMAS

Eustace Thomas (1869–1960) was the principal technical expert on the Joint Stretcher Committee. He studied at Finsbury Technical College, then moved to Manchester in 1900 to join Bertram Thomas (Engineers) Ltd, his brother's company. He joined the Rucksack Club in 1909 and the Alpine Club in 1923, and was the first Englishman to climb all known Alpine summits over 4000 metres, numbering 83 peaks in 1928.

Such was his enthusiasm on these Alpine holidays that sometimes, when his energy exceeded that of his guide, he would find it necessary to hire a second guide as replacement.¹

So, as a direct result of the work by the JSC, the well-established Furley stretcher was, at least in the mountain rescue environment, superseded in 1934, by a purpose designed, Thomas mountain rescue stretcher. This was the first British stretcher design to focus totally on the difficult ground and conditions typically encountered during mountain rescue operations.

Note: it was Dr Hugh Owen Thomas (1834–1891) who invented the various types of Thomas splint, not Eustace. Hugh Thomas, a British surgeon, is considered by many to be the father of orthopaedic surgery.

THE THOMAS STRETCHER

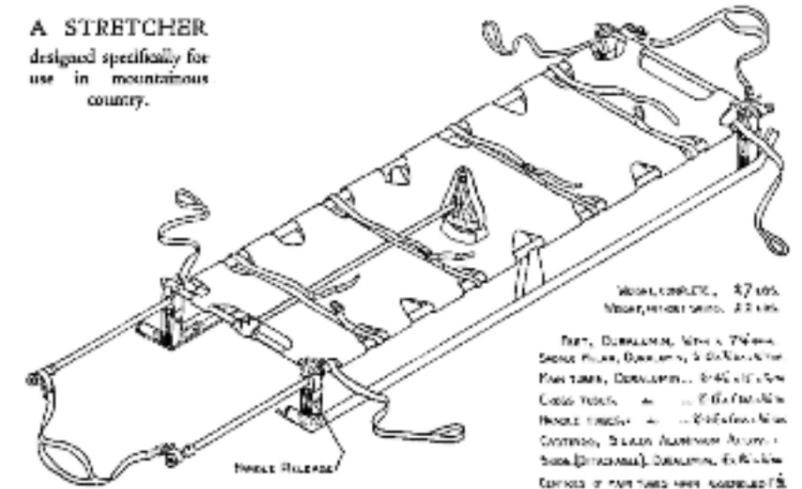
The Thomas was fundamentally of aluminium construction, having a canvas bed panel, extendible handles at each corner and wooden skis to permit sledging and to lift the casualty well clear of the ground. In much the same style as the Furley stretcher, which was designed to collapse

sideways into a narrow load for easy carrying, so too was the Thomas stretcher originally designed to collapse sideways, again to make it easier to carry by two people along narrow paths and tracks. This facility was later eliminated to reduce cost. Consequently, the Thomas became a rigid one-piece stretcher and more cumbersome to carry out to the scene of an accident than was originally intended by the committee.

This design had many aspects designed specifically for open country remote rescue. Two purpose-designed shoulder carry

main side tubes of the stretcher so as to prevent their inadvertent loss. Wide straps and simple buckles were provided to secure the casualty to the stretcher.

Originally, the JSC Thomas stretcher was fitted with narrow (1.5 inch x 1.25 inch) angled aluminium alloy skids, which were detachable. Before long, these were replaced, one each side, by wide, full length wooden ski-like skids having curved up ends. These curved up ends were to assist dragging procedures over rough ground and the width underneath the stretcher sides



Above: New style head guard in use during a display by Keswick MRT for the Duke of Edinburgh © D J Evans.

harnesses were provided for the stretcher bearers, one at each end. To aid visibility at the rear and to provide clearance between the casualty's feet and the front stretcher bearer, extending telescopic handles were fitted. These could be locked into place once deployed and were also captive within the

helped to reduce sinking into soft mud. (Technical note: ski width does not influence drag resistance if the ground is hard enough to support the weight of the loaded stretcher). Herein lies the only fundamental design

¹Reference: Sid Cross and Joe Walmsley.

INSTANT SHELTERS

Robust, high quality *Instant Shelters* for the Event, Exhibition, Market, Motorsport and Leisure Industry

AVAILABLE IN 5 GRADES, 12 SIZES AND 24 COLOURS

INCLUDING A WIDE SELECTION OF OPTIONAL EXTRAS TO MEET ALL YOUR PROMOTIONAL NEEDS

With design and print branding options to suit every individual or organisation...

HIGH END, FULLY BESPOKE, FULL FLOOD COVERAGE
OR
ECONOMICAL, IMPACT AREA, THERMAL PRESSED VINYL

01925 819608 **SURFTURF**.co.uk info@surfturf.co.uk

Pennine Outdoor Fabrics Ltd
SPECIALIST FABRICS & HABERDASHERY

Water Resistant Breathable • Fleece & Technical Fabrics for Clothing • Tents Bags • Rucksacks Awnings • Covers

Wide range of Buckles • Webbing Cord • Accessories Seam Sealants Waterproofing Reflective tapes Patterns • Zips

MAKE OR REPAIR YOUR KIT & CLOTHING

www.pennineoutdoor.co.uk
sales@pennineoutdoor.co.uk • 015242 63377

Leak Detection Spray

- Non-inflammable
- With corrosion inhibitor
- Non-toxic and biodegradable
- Free from oils, halogens, salts, metals & CFC's
- Propellant: Compressed Air
- Totally safe to user, equipment, environment & ozone layer
- Can with 360° valve – spray at any angle from upright to inverted
- NATO Stock No: 4610-99-030-4489
- For sub-zero ambient temperatures down to -45°C use GOTEK LT45

Gotec Trading Ltd
Boulton Road, Pin Green, Stevingage, Herts SG1 4QL
Tel: 01438 740400
Fax: 01438 740005
enquiries@gotectrading.com
www.gotectrading.com

At the press of a button – GOTEK LDB is instantly ready to locate the smallest low pressure leaks from compressed air and every other gas – quickly, reliably, safely and conveniently.

LINE-LOK
The line tensioner to securely lock guy lines

Available in 4 sizes & 6 colours including **Glow in the dark**

Suitable for use in harsh environments from arctic cold to desert heat
Simply pull lines apart to release

cleats.co.uk

ACTION PACKED ADVENTURES Langorse

Indoor & Outdoor Activities in the Brecon Beacons!

Rock Climbing • Horse Riding • Sky Trek • Challenge Course • and more!

0333 600 20 20
www.activityuk.com

ALWYCH
ALL-WEATHER NOTEBOOKS
Serious Climbers rely on their 'ALWYCH' NOTEBOOK

Order direct on
0141 352 6816
or click:
www.alwych.co.uk

Mountain Recreation

Norway Ice Climbing
Winter Skills Scotland
ML, RCI and CWI
Navigation Skills Training
Rock Climbing and Scrambling
Alpine Walking and Trekking

Mike Margeson
mike@mountainrecreation.co.uk

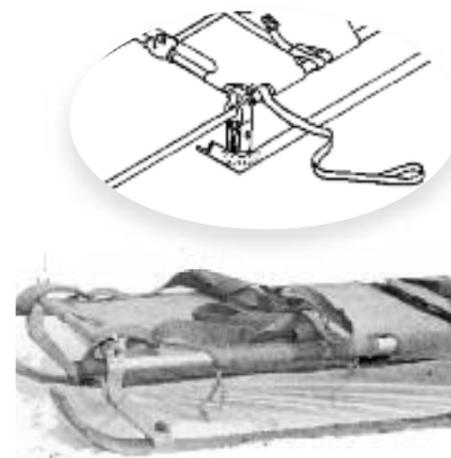
To advertise, call Caroline on
01829 781327
or email **caroline@media-solution.co.uk**

01904 630 686
wildtalk.com/sar

Team Channel Repeater

- Quadruple Coverage
- Fits in your Pocket
- Repeats Team Channels
- No Channel Changing
- SD Card Voice Recorder

wildtalk.com



Left: The original Joint Stretcher Committee design. Below: The later modification.



flaw which was not originally present. The main frame of the stretcher was lifted up above the ground by about eight inches, by means of shaped aluminium castings. The flaw originated from the moment these corner vertical support castings were modified, possibly to accept the new wide wooden skis.

Why this was never eliminated at the early trials, remains a mystery. It was to the bottom of these four castings that the flexible wooded skis were securely attached. So, as the skis flexed, quite appropriately, under the weight of the casualty as the stretcher was dragged over rough ground, they applied a bending force on the casting foot leading quickly to early stress, metal fatigue and premature breaking. Many examples of exactly this damage have been observed. This was not part of the original design as a close study of the original drawing shows.

The canvas bed wrapped around the main side tubes, tensioned by means of cord underneath. So, if contaminated, the bed could be removed for cleaning, although in practice this was seldom done.

Gradually, cost cutting was extended, various other components of the original Thomas were either eliminated or downgraded. The facility to enable the stretcher to collapse longitudinally had already been completely removed. The cost of each of the four corner castings was thereby reduced dramatically.

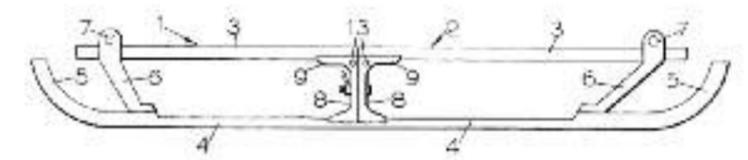
Next, the 'cost-cutters' struck at the telescopic handle mechanism. Much of this was internal and thus hidden from view. An ideal 'economy' target one might say. The original components provided to retain the handles, be they stowed away or extended, were also gradually downgraded. This degradation soon led to operational problems and the handles would be difficult to extend, or if already extended, could be difficult to push back into their respective main-frame side tubes. Again, not as the committee had originally intended.

It could be argued that, if the JSC had remained active for some time after completion of the original design work, they would have prohibited some of these cost reduction measures and fine-tuned the corner castings to accept the now more flexible, wooden skis. Had this been achieved and the cost-cutters thwarted, the Thomas stretcher might well have continued

to give good service right up to the present day. Sadly, this was not the case.

One could argue that, if these so called cost-cutters were occasionally lowered down an exposed crag strapped to a stretcher that they have degraded by cost reduction, then this might focus their thoughts, to the advantage of the casualty rather than upon the bank balance. But not every cost-cutting procedure necessarily degrades design or function. There is economy to be found by batch production and the associated build up of a stock of new stretchers for subsequent issue as required.

Around 1965, a 'string vest' style bed panel replaced the original canvas, lighter and less wind resistant when the stretcher was being carried empty — there being no longer any scope to collapse the stretcher longitudinally.



Top: From the 'stretcher apparatus' patent document, submitted by Peter Bell 15 February 1967. Centre and above: The 'Split Thomas' stretcher.

IN PART 3, WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT THE INFLUENCE OF KEY FIGURES SUCH AS DONALD DUFF AND, OF COURSE, HAMISH MCINNES, AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS SINCE.

PETER BELL

In 1967, Peter Bell began the manufacture of hood-style head cages from welded aluminium tube dimensioned to match the Thomas stretcher. In 1968, George Fisher, then team leader of Keswick MRT, sought Bell's guidance on the possibility of dividing the Thomas stretcher across the centre to enable a two-person independent or backpack load — but he had already devised a way of achieving this.

Part of this redesign involved the introduction of a wire mesh bed panel for the first time on mountain rescue stretchers. Bell carried out about twenty such conversions until the further supply of new Thomas stretchers for conversion was refused by the then manufacturer of the Thomas stretcher — W Kirkman, in Manchester. Some four months later, they offered their own 'transverse split' version of the Thomas, complete with a wire mesh bed.

In an article in the Alpine Journal, 1968, (Number 317), Ron James (one of the founders of the Ogwen team) compared the mountain rescue stretchers in use in Britain and expressed a strong preference for the official Thomas built by Kirkman's.

With outstanding orders to fulfil, Bell had no choice but to design and manufacture his own stretcher to satisfy them. This he achieved, obtaining a full patent in 1972. And thus began the 'Bell Stretcher phase'. ☺

THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW

HALL 5 | NEC | BIRMINGHAM | 27-28 APRIL 2021

The event dedicated to transforming our emergency services

Be part of The Emergency Services Show 2021 to demonstrate what the future holds for the emergency services industry. Sell to the buyers and specifiers at the UK's leading annual showcase of the blue light sector.

- Use The Emergency Services Show to:
- > Meet buyers and specifiers of equipment and services
 - > Network with the market
 - > Launch new products
 - > Maintain your brand awareness
 - > Keep ahead of your competitors
 - > Collaborate with other suppliers and services
 - > Raise your profile in the industry



Meet visitors from every UK Fire and Rescue Service including Airports, Defence, Private Sector and Government, PLUS Police and Ambulance services all with active buying requirements for:

- > Fire safety equipment
- > Medical and first aid
- > PPE, protective clothing and uniforms
- > Training and training equipment
- > Vehicles and ancillary kit
- > ICT
- > Road safety services and kit
- > Infection control
- > Control rooms
- > Facilities
- > Health & safety
- > Emergency planning/resilience
- > Recruitment

GET INVOLVED NOW WWW.EMERGENCYUK.COM



> 10,000+ VISITORS



> 450+ LEADING SUPPLIERS



> 15th SHOW

“ We are here to hear about new training procedures. Making new contacts and exchanging experiences, knowledge and training with the UK. ”

Lt. Col Portela
Brasilia Fire Brigade

who?

Mountain Rescue England and Wales
@mountain.rescue.org.uk



SEO: MIKE FRANCE
seo@



OPERATIONS DIRECTOR:
MIKE MARGESON
opsdirector@



ASSISTANT SECRETARY:
JULIAN WALDEN
assistant-secretary@



FINANCE DIRECTOR:
PENNY BROCKMAN
financedirector@



MEDICAL DIRECTOR:
MIKE GREENE
medicaldirector@



VEHICLES:
SIMON THRESHER
vehicleofficer@



PRESS & MEDIA:
ANDY SIMPSON
media@



TRAINING:
AL READ
trainingofficer@



ICT: MARK LEWIS
ictofficer@



EQUIPMENT:
PAUL SMITH
equipmentofficer@



PRESIDENT:
RAY GRIFFITHS
president@



VICE PRESIDENT:
PETER DYMOND
peter.dymond@



WATER:
MIKE GULLEN
waterofficer@

specialist advisers



EDITOR: JUDY WHITESIDE
editor@



STATISTICS: ROB SHEPHERD
statisticsofficer@



PR SUPPORT: SALLY SEED
PR@mountain.rescue.org.uk

CIO trustees



CHAIRMAN:
JAKE BHARIER
chair@

CIO TRUSTEES:
PHIL BENBOW
DAVID COLEMAN

ambassadors



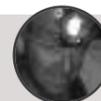
ALAN HINKES



PAT PARSONS

British Cave Rescue @caverescue.org.uk

CHAIRMAN:
PETER DENNIS



VICE CHAIRS: BILL WHITEHOUSE & GARY MITCHELL
vicechair@ assistantchair@



SECRETARY: EMMA PORTER
secretary@

MEDICAL: BRENDAN SLOAN
medical@



TRAINING: JIM DAVIS
training@



INFORMATION: ROGER KING
informationofficer@



EQUIPMENT: MIKE CLAYTON
equipment@



COMMS: TONY HAIGH
communications@



TREASURER: HEATHER SIMPSON
treasurer@

LEGAL: TOBY HAMNETT
legal@



DIVING: CHRIS JEWELL
diving@



Irish Mountain Rescue @mountainrescue.ie

CHAIRMAN: ALAN CARR
chair@

SECRETARY: RAY BRADFIELD
secretary@

TREASURER: JEROME HOPKINS
treasurer@

PRO: RUTH CUNIFFE
pro@

STATS OFFICER: LORCAN O'NEILL
stats@

PEER REVIEW OFFICER: DERRY CULLEN
peer.review@

SARCALL REGIONAL ADMIN: DONAL MACNAMARA
sarcall.admin@

Scottish Mountain Rescue @scottishmountainrescue.org

CHAIRMAN: DAMON POWELL
chair@

VICE CHAIR: KEV MITCHELL
vicechair@

SECRETARY: AL ROSE
secretary@

TREASURER: MOIRA WEATHERSTONE
treasurer@

HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT: ELSIE RILEY
elsie@

DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE LEAD: YASMIN HARROWER
yasmin@

Rescue Benevolent Fund @rescuebenevolent.fund

CHAIRMAN: NEIL WOODHEAD
chairman@

TREASURER: SHIRLEY PRIESTLEY
treasurer@

TRUSTEE: HUW BIRRELL
huw@

SECRETARY: JUDY WHITESIDE
secretary@

TRUSTEE: BILL WHITEHOUSE
bill@

YOU CAN CONTACT ALL THE TRUSTEES TOGETHER VIA trustees@rescuebenevolent.fund

REGIONAL REPS:

LAKES: LAURA CONNOLLY **MID PENNINE:** KEITH GILLIES
NORTH EAST: CARL FAULKNER **NORTH WALES:** BECKY ASHCROFT
PEAK DISTRICT: BRIAN BAILEY **PENMACRA:** ROGER KING
YORKSHIRE DALES: BOB SCURR **SOUTH WEST:** VACANT
SOUTH WALES: VACANT **CAVE RESCUE:** CHRIS JONES

Rescue Benevolent Fund We're here to help you



There's never a 'good time' to have an accident. Right? But accidents happen, we know that.

Sometimes, they happen to team members while they're involved with rescuing someone else. And, more often than not, they've put their own lives and families on hold to help someone in need. Quite apart from any physical or psychological injuries, that accident might impact on their ability to earn. Their family might struggle, both financially and emotionally.

The Rescue Benevolent Fund is there to help team members and their families when they need it, with the physical rehabilitation of broken limbs, emotional support through access to counselling and even immediate or longer term financial support.

It could just as easily be you. So if you feel you could benefit from our support, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

To donate, go to justgiving.com/rescuebenevolentfund



W: rescuebenevolent.fund E: secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund



MAESTRO® S

Descender for technical rescue with built-in progress capture pulley, facilitates manipulation of heavy loads, and may be used as a primary system or as a back-up belay. www.petzl.com

PETZL RESCUE SOLUTIONS

The challenge of the rescue professional is their ability to adapt, facing the unexpected in every situation. In order to always be prepared, the members of the Centre National d'Entraînement à l'Alpinisme et au Ski (CNEAS) train on a daily basis, for example here, on the cliffs above Lake Annecy, France.



Access the inaccessible®

 LEDLENSER

7
YEAR
WARRANTY

MH11

  Bluetooth®

 1000 lm max

 320 m max

 100 h max

FLAGSHIP HEADLAMP
SMART CONTROLLED!



To take advantage of special
Search and Rescue pricing contact us on

mail@ledco.co.uk
01344 876 222



HEADLAMPS | TORCHES | LANTERNS

www.ledlenser.com

#LightEngineeredBetter