

mountain rescue

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

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ISSUE 74:
AUTUMN 2020

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

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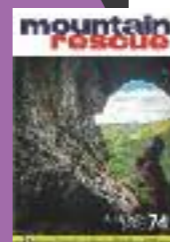
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Cover story

Derby team member during a call-out to four cragfast teenagers at Thor's Cave in Leek, in August © Derby MRT.

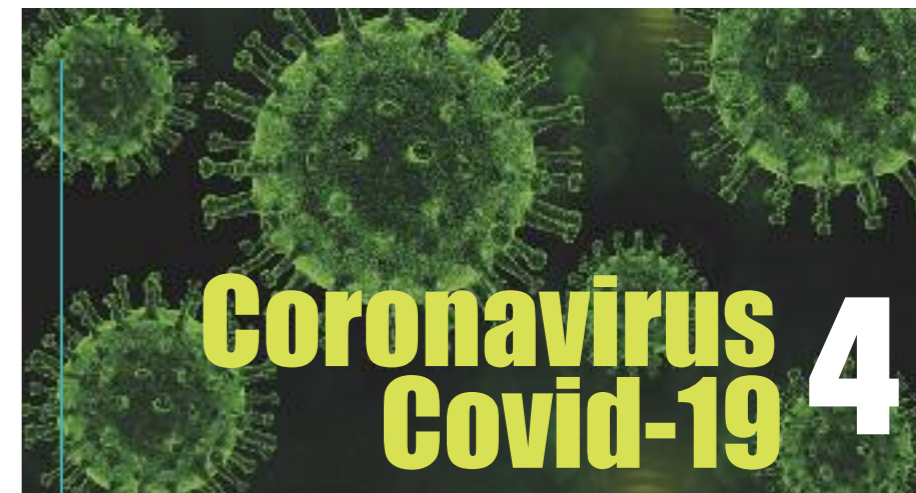


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A collection of guidelines and information for teams and team members, relative to these challenging times

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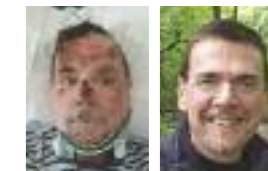


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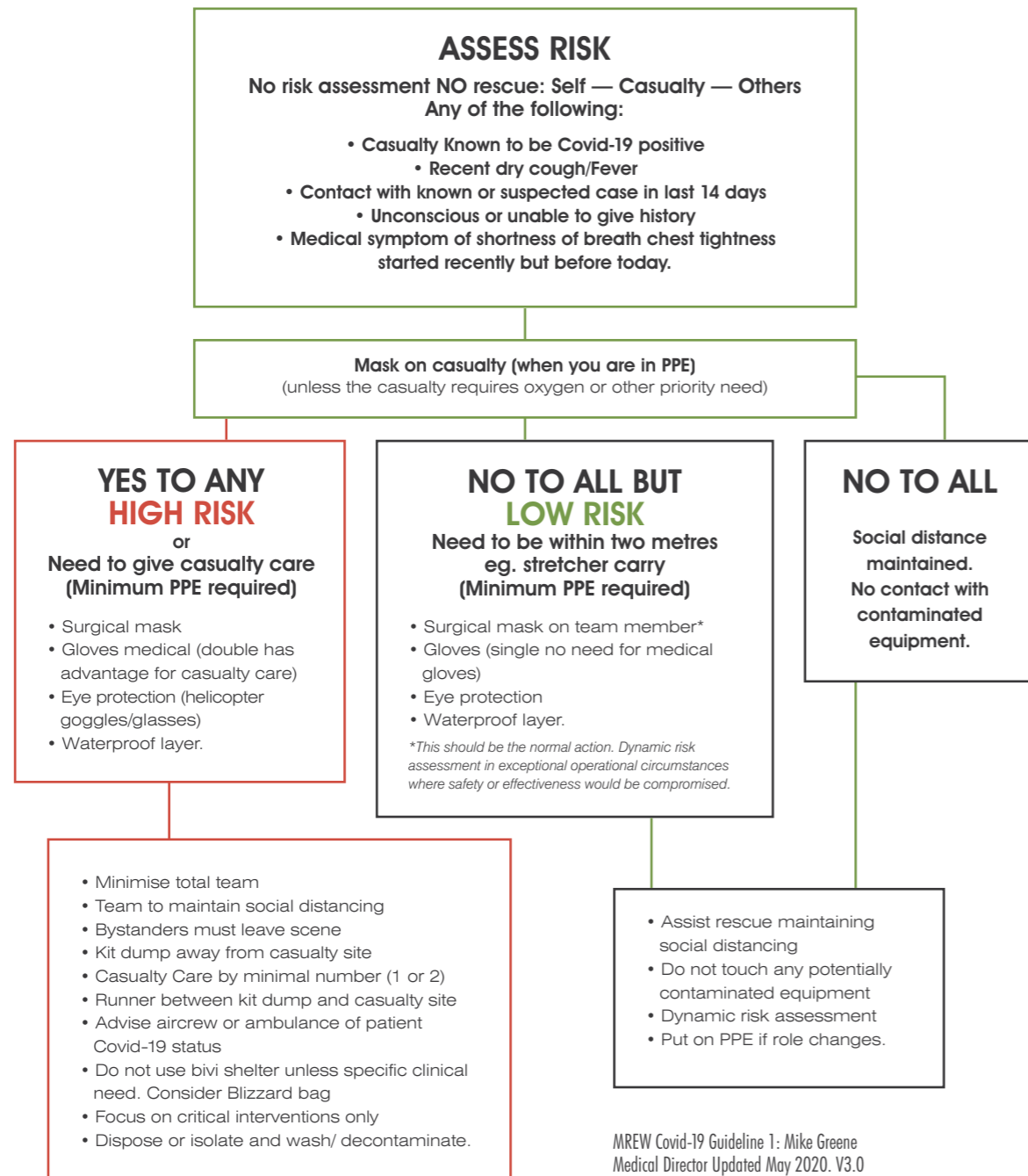
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MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE: COVID-19 GUIDELINE 1

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 — 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 have 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 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

Covid-19

Track and trace for mountain rescue volunteers

KEY MESSAGE

The key to mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on MREW volunteers, their families and teams is through social distancing where possible, and PPE where it is not.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The NHS Track and Trace system will follow up contacts in the following circumstances:

- *If you've had any close contact with anyone other than members of your household. We are interested in the 48 hours before you developed symptoms and the time since you developed symptoms. 'Close contact' means:*

- *Face-to-face contact with someone (less than 1 metre away)*
 - *Spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of someone*
 - *Travelling in a car or other small vehicle with someone (even on a short journey) or close to them on a plane.*
- (See www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works)

At UKSAR in June, I raised an agenda item concerning Track and Trace and how this might apply to our volunteers. This was raised direct to Public Health England. The following is a summary of the reply. The comments in italics are my own.

1: This relates to volunteer (*mountain*) rescue organisations only.

2: *Mountain rescue* teams have no right to access patient records, therefore you cannot determine if a patient has subsequently tested positive for Covid-19. This will be managed through the NHS Track and Trace System.

3: Contact tracing will be done at three levels called 'Tiers'.

- Tier 3 by call handlers who will only be able to give advice to isolate (*this is the 'normal' public level of contact*)
- Tier 2 call handlers are public health or related professionals with more relevant or tailored advice
- Tier 1 is for complex investigations carried out locally by public health professionals.

What does this mean?

Only Tier 2 and 1 can take into account the fact that you were protected by wearing PPE

and be able to advise against isolation if this is appropriate. If you are contacted by Tier 3 and you have reasonable grounds to believe this might have been on rescue team business you can state that you are a mountain rescue volunteer and this contact may have been as a result of these duties when you were wearing Level 2 PPE and request to be referred to Tier 1.

We do not know how well this system will work in practice.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

There are four circumstances in which a mountain rescue volunteer could become part of contact tracing:

1. They are **symptomatic and have tested positive** for C19, becoming the positive subject in contact tracing.
2. **Another rescuer has tested positive** for C19 and disclosed their fellow rescuers as contacts.
3. A **casualty has tested positive** for C19 and has somehow managed to obtain names / numbers for a rescuer to disclose them as a contact.
4. A rescuer is named as a contact by a **positive subject not connected to their rescue role** (eg. a family member, day job, colleague etc)

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Scenario 1: You would disclose your volunteering role if it's relevant.

If you haven't been to training or on a shout it's in the last 48 hours it is not relevant.

If you have been training or on a shout AND either social distancing OR level 2 PPE has been compromised then you must declare the contact with your fellow rescue team members. You can ask for this to be referred to Tier 1 for investigation and if PPE was not compromised, they would most likely not need to isolate.

Scenario 2: The positive subject from here would ideally have informed the call handler that the people they are naming are fellow rescuers, thereby triggering a Tier 1 case. As such Scenario 2 shouldn't happen.

If this contact occurred during training or on a shout AND either social distancing OR level 2 PPE has been compromised you will

need to isolated. If PPE was worn the most likely outcome is no isolation.

Scenario 3: This can be broadly be discounted because it's unlikely that a patient would be able to name their rescuers and give contact details for them at the start of the tracing process. If a patient disclosed that they had been rescued this would trigger a Tier 1 case at the start.

Scenario 4: This is where some uncertainty may exist. If you are contacted by Tier 3 or Tier 2, as a contact of a positive subject, you would be given advice rather asked questions as part of an investigation. As such you would not be informed who and how you had contact with the positive subject, and this may create some uncertainty as to whether it was related to your rescue duties and thus if you were protected by PPE at the time.

Why is scenario 4 complex?

In theory, if the contact with the positive subject occurred in a rescue context this would be covered by Scenario 1, Scenario 2 or Scenario 3 which are explained above.

As such a call from Tier 3 or 2 **should** only happen if the contact with the positive subject was in a non-rescue context.

However, if everyone in the team is getting a call rather than just one member this may be indicative that the system has failed to hit Tier 1. In these circumstances it is expected that team members would contact their team leader. This would enable the team leader to initiate communication with the local Health Protection Team (HPT) who sit alongside Tier 1 and they can check that this is handled at Tier 1.

If a single team member is required to isolate as a contact of a positive subject through this system this should not impact on the team unless that team member becomes symptomatic and tests positive, thereby triggering contact tracing on them as per Scenario 1.

Note that MRT members who are symptomatic can have a test as a key worker.

Contact details for the Health Protection Teams can be found at www.gov.uk/health-protection-team.

MIKE GREENE MREW MEDICAL DIRECTOR

MREW Track and Trace: Mike Greene Medical
Director June 2020. V1.0

Covid-19

Environmental Training Guidelines

COVID-19 infection continues to be a significant risk to mountain rescue team members, including catching it from fellow team members. COVID-19 infection could prove fatal for a team member, may impact their families and friends, and may also adversely affect the operational capability of the team (and possibly region).

- 1. Health:** Only well team members should attend training — if in doubt don't train.
- 2. Planning:** Plan training to reinforce the essential MR skills and integrate Covid-19 protection measures.
- 3. Alternative training methods:** Carefully evaluate if there are alternative methods of providing the training which does not require team members to be near each other.
- 4. Social distancing:** Maintain social distancing (2 metres) as much as reasonably practicable, clean hands frequently.
- 5. Space:** Avoid training that requires time spent near others, especially in enclosed spaces, avoid sharing vehicles for example.
- 6. PPE:** Team members should be provided PPE as suggested by UK national guidelines and used when required.
- 7. Training cohorts:** Consider splitting the team into separate training cohorts/groups (including separate trainers) so that it reduces the general mixing of team members.
 - a. Trainers can use web conferencing to confirm what they need to teach or have a lead instructor 'dial-in' with a local facilitator.
 - b. Have a clear programme for the groups so the membership of the group does not need to change.
- 8. Cooling off:** Once training is complete allow a reasonable cooling-off period to confirm no one becomes symptomatic and equipment and facilities become safer.
- 9. Equipment and facilities:** Equipment/furnishings and facilities must be cleaned and left in a safe state for the next users.
- 10. Test, Track and Trace:** Keep good records of who attends in case a team member tests positive.
- 11. Community impact:** Consider the wider community and the impact team members may have (for example, to vulnerable family members) if they were to become ill.
- 12. Key worker:** Some key workers may not attend training to protect their ability to work.
- 13. Third party training events:** Consider if there is a need to train with third parties. If there is, what is the plan before, during and after the training event? How many people need to attend?
- 14. Food and refreshments:** Reduce the usual congestion around tea and food times/venues.
 - a. Bring your own food and refreshments if possible
 - b. Maintain break time social distancing
 - c. Stagger the times for group breaks (so they are not trying to use the facilities at the same time).
- 15. Public impression:** Consider the public impact of any MR group training.



Note: This is Version 2 of Covid-19 Environmental Training Guidelines, 9 September 2020. Always check the MREW Moodle COVID-19 section for the latest updates to the guidance.

PRODUCED BY **ALISTAIR READ** MREW TRAINING OFFICER & TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 2020

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING GUIDELINES

Training of the skills and knowledge required by mountain rescue does need to continue, but should do so only when it is compliant with any legal or regulatory requirements, offers protection to the participants and reduces hazards to levels that are as low as reasonably practicable for the activity being trained. The risk cannot be totally eliminated.

Covid-19 remains present in our communities and they are subject to varying degrees of lockdown to prevent infection with national, regional and local rules being applied.

On 28 May 2020, MREW received confirmation from Inspector Adrian Wood, National Capability Manager, Search and Rescue, NPCC (DC Police) that:

'It's really disappointing that demand on services is increasing so rapidly, it feels as if it could be a really busy year but with the added and considerable demands of Covid.

'It is absolutely understandable that training is imperative for your teams and the longer the delay, the harder it becomes. Your 'return to training guidelines' are a positive measure in managing the challenges of Covid and the mitigation you've mentioned below helps.

'From an NPCC perspective we would certainly not object to you progressing training and furthering your resilience to respond to incidents. I know you will have based your plans on the current guidelines and would encourage you to remain vigilant to any changes that could impact on your plans.'

These notes aim to support and act as answers to questions about the guidelines. They are linked by paragraph number to the guidelines.

1. Health: Team members that feel unwell should not attend any training. In addition, if a household member is suspected or known to be suffering from Covid-19 infection, or been required to quarantine due to track and trace notifications, they must not attend any team training until they are clear of infection (usually 14 days after symptoms appear).

2. Planning: Carefully review what training is needed to maintain operational capability.

a. Identifying training that is deemed essential to capability or safety critical should be undertaken. Other training can be deferred to a later date but should be integrated into a delivery plan.

b. Train to meet the current MREW Covid-19 guidelines!

c. Face-to-face training in close proximity to each other does increase the risk of infection — maintaining social distancing is important.

d. Do most of your training outdoors or in large well-ventilated spaces.

e. Avoid training in group shelters or other similar confined spaces.

f. We are relying much more on individuals to do their own training; it may be worth considering a logbook, diary or online equivalent.

3. Alternative training methods: Careful consideration should be made of using alternative training methods that achieve most of the successful trained effect.

a. Online meetings can assist with some aspects of training, but skills are more difficult to achieve.

b. Reducing close personal interactions may make training viable without adversely affecting the learning outcomes if approached carefully.

c. Online training does have limitations — try to be aware of them and identify the key aspects that would positively benefit from more personal interactions.

d. Simulation and stimulation can be arranged to be controlled more remotely in some training.

4. Social distancing of two metres or more will be difficult to achieve without careful consideration.

a. Having fewer team members attend the training will reduce space and facility limitation.

b. Stagger the training timetable for different people (arrival, breaks and departure).

c. Marking out training areas or using separate rooms will help to reduce the unintended reduction of social distancing.

d. Have a person allocated to be the 'Social Distance Warden/Guardian' whose role is to remind people to stay apart.

e. For some activities it may be impossible to achieve social distancing requirements, and so PPE may be needed as a final level of protection.

f. Clean hands frequently and avoid touching your face.

5. Space: Whenever reasonably practicable avoid training near each other; this also includes travelling together, being on a rope rescue system, acting as a casualty and being a swimmer conducting live bait rescues with a real person.

a. If training does reduce social distancing, use training buddies or bubbles to keep small groups working together and avoid other personal interactions.

b. Wear PPE and remember to properly decontaminate.

c. Avoid clustering around common exercise materials, often used to support group exercises or tabletop exercises.

d. Have someone to remind participants to maintain social distancing.

6. PPE: Covid-19 PPE should be provided and worn by team members during training as indicated by the national PPE guidance.

a. All participating team members should clearly demonstrate the ability to don and doff the PPE, including decontamination and the safe bagging of their used PPE.

b. Training in PPE will also replicate any operations where PPE should be worn.

c. Additional PPE stocks for training should be obtained.

d. The PPE can adversely affect communications so think carefully about how safety critical warnings can be made. For example, waving a torch may supplement someone shouting stop.

e. Covid-19 PPE may actually be a hazard to team members — carefully consider when the PPE should be worn and when not.

f. The PPE should not kill you.

7. Training cohorts: Splitting the team into training groups or cohorts may reduce the risk of all the team members becoming infected at the same training event.

a. Local training groups may also help with teams that cover large areas, reducing the need for travel to attend centralised training events.

b. There should be no need to allow team members to migrate between groups.

c. Instructors should not cross-train groups, but if a lead instructor is required, they can make use of video conferencing to provide remote direction to support the group instructor(s).

d. Having instructor web calls ahead of the training will allow the sharing of good practice and maintain commonality of training between the groups.

e. A well-designed group-based training programme will help to avoid temptation to move across to another group.

8. Cooling off: Training will mean team members attending a venue, using equipment and/or vehicles.

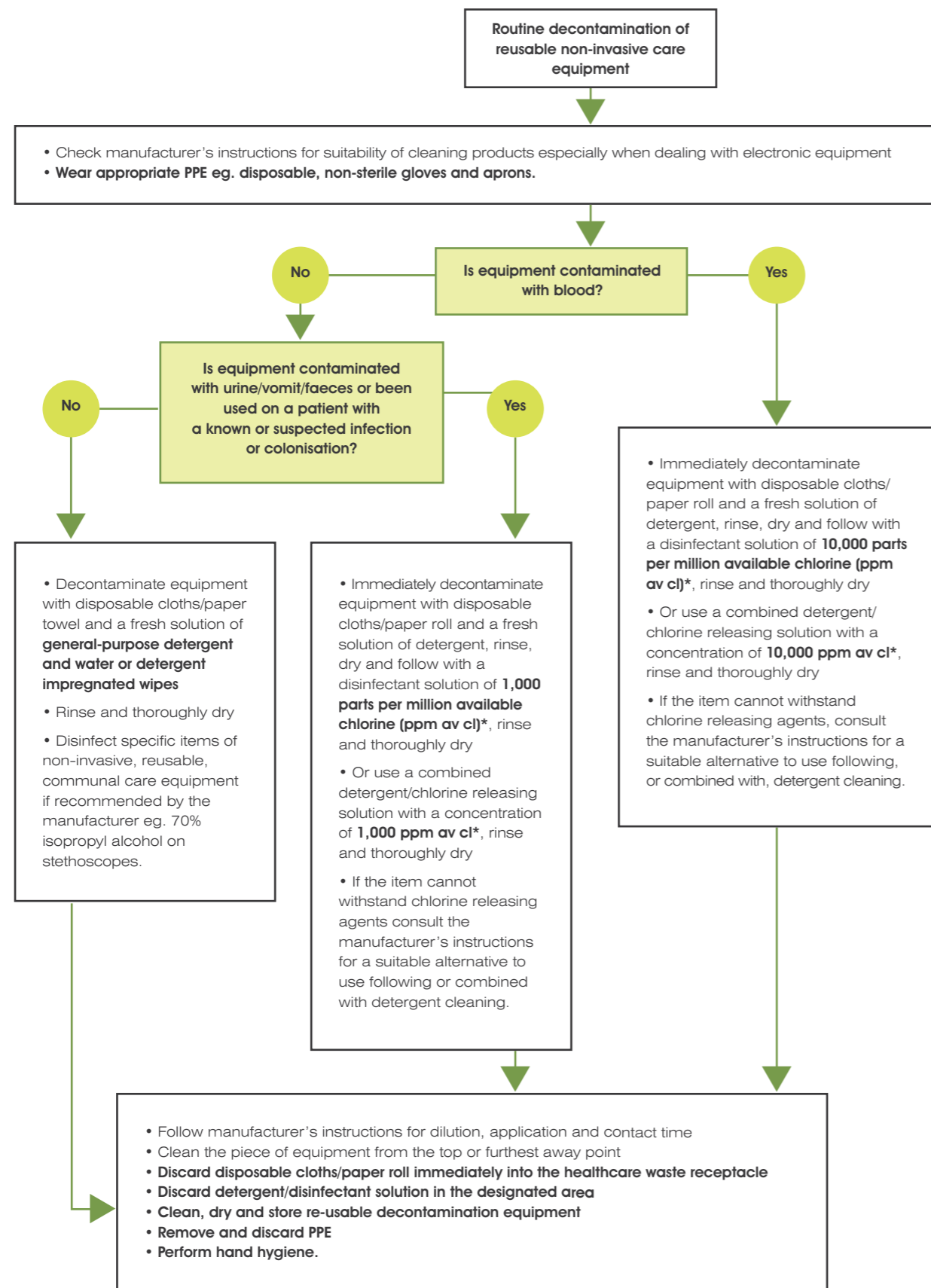
a. The Covid-19 virus does die off over time, but different surfaces will have a different time before they are deemed safe again.

b. Good decontamination is part of process, but it can also be improved by avoiding using the venue, equipment and transport for a period afterwards, ideally at least for three days.

9. Equipment and facilities: Once training has been completed, a full clean and decontamination of equipment, furnishings, spaces, and facilities should be made.

a. Various methods can be used, and the UK Government has published guidance for non-healthcare settings: 'Covid-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings outside the home'.

ROUTINE DECONTAMINATION OF REUSABLE NON-INVASIVE PATIENT CARE EQUIPMENT



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

REMINDER... HOW TO REGISTER WITH MOODLE

Go to <http://tiny.cc/Moodle4MR> and use a team email address to register but NOT a role specific one! If you've registered correctly, you'll receive an automated email within thirty minutes confirming your request has been received. 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 have any queries regarding registration, please email moodlesupport@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING, FACE MASKS, AND EYE PROTECTION TO PREVENT PERSON-TO-PERSON TRANSMISSION OF SARS-COV-2 AND COVID-19 FROM LANCET PUBLISHED ONLINE JUNE 2020*

This systematic review and meta-analysis investigated the optimum distance for avoiding person-to-person virus transmission and assessed the use of face masks and eye protection to prevent the transmission of viruses in healthcare and non-healthcare such as community settings.

The authors obtained data for SARS-CoV-2 and the betacoronaviruses that cause severe acute respiratory syndrome and Middle East respiratory syndrome, from 21 standard WHO-specific and Covid-19-specific sources.

Their search identified 172 observational studies across 16 countries and six continents, with no randomised controlled trials and 44 relevant comparative studies (25,697 patients).

They found that the transmission of viruses was lower with physical distancing of one metre or more, compared with a distance of less than one metre and protection was increased as distance was lengthened.

Face mask use could result in a large reduction in risk of infection, with stronger associations with N95 or similar respirators compared with disposable surgical masks or similar (eg. reusable 12-16-layer cotton masks). Eye protection also was associated with less infection.

Their interpretation was that the findings support physical distancing of one metre or more and the optimum use of face masks, respirators and eye protection in public and healthcare settings should be informed by these findings and contextual factors.

* Full paper, with attributed authors, available in Moodle VLE, Medical Covid-19 > Medical Resources

(Available at <https://tinyurl.com/s6lwvat>)
b. The training is not over until everything is clean and safe for the next user.

10. Test, Track and Trace: Keeping records of who attends the training event is good practice, and will help the team manage any Covid-19 infection impacts.

a. Team members can arrange testing which is available to them as a key worker group.

b. Notify the team to allow follow-up tracing actions to be undertaken, with other team members self-isolating/testing using the current guidelines.

11. Community impact: Team members are also at risk of infection from other team members; they may become a vector for infection in the wider community. Some training events may attract members of the public who could stand in clusters with reduced social distancing; it may be worth considering allocating a team member to manage this external influence.

12. Key workers: Covid-19 remains in our communities and some key workers may not wish to participate in training, depending on the nature of their employment and the risk of cross infection.

13. Third party training: Training with third parties will increase the risk of Covid-19 transmission. Where the training is considered essential, greater care should be exercised to ensure that only essential team members are put forward.

a. Only send the minimum number of team members to the training.

b. Identify the key members who need the training: As an example, the SAR-H Stage 1b and Stage 1c training should be limited to team members who are most likely to need the training, usually this would be based on the past history of attending incidents.

c. Provide and use PPE as required by the training event.

d. Where training is provided by third parties on a commercial basis, confirm what arrangements the training provider has in place to protect team members.

e. Developing a plan for third party training that includes:

- Processes to identify team members who have an essential need to go to the third party training

- What happens if a member becomes infected

- What follow-up activities are needed after the training (for example if they used team equipment on the course, that now needs decontaminating)

f. Is there a need to share a team vehicle when travelling to third party training?

14. Food and refreshments: With any training event there will be pinch points where people may lose the social distancing spacing, usually inadvertently. Stopping for food and refreshments being a typical example, where people may cluster close together, whilst waiting to use the facilities.

a. Get everyone in the group to wash/clean their hands before and after each break.

b. If smaller groups are established, they can have breaks staggered to avoid too many people gathering in any one location.

c. Careful room marking will help remind of social distancing.

d. Bringing your own food and drink reduces the need to use venue facilities for longer periods of time.

15. Public impression: The range of regulations and guidance can be confusing to many, and groups of MR team members training together may be seen in an adverse manner by members of the public and adversely impact the team's reputation.

a. Give careful consideration as to how you would deal with a member of the public approaching the team at a training venue, should that happen.

b. Have a clear message to provide to the press and social media channels.

ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE GUIDELINES?

If you have any questions, doubts, or concerns then please contact your team medical officer, MREW Medical Officer or MREW Training Officer.

REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

These guidelines are subject to regular review and suggested amendments should be made to the assistant-secretary and national training officer. Always check the MREW Moodle Covid-19 section for the latest updates to the guidance. 📢

NIKWAX WAS PROUD TO SUPPORT MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS DURING LOCKDOWN

Nikwax supported two mountain and lowland rescue teams during lockdown by providing free samples. The teams were in need of support as they found themselves washing their kits at the end of every call-out to minimise the chance of Covid-19 being left behind on garments. This quickly affected the durable water repellent coating on the kits making them susceptible to wetting out.

During these challenging times, many teams have had to cancel events that usually bring in much needed funds. The Nikwax donation meant team members didn't have to pay for their own cleaning and waterproofing products. 'The Nikwax donated will enable us to stay safe whilst replenishing the waterproofing, an absolutely invaluable resource and we cannot thank you enough', said Jake Anderson Môn-SAR.

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



What is governance?

JAKE BHARIER
CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

When I was reading the papers for our Trustee meeting in July, I noticed that the word 'governance' appeared in several reports. I also noticed that the intended meaning in each case was different. Of course, context matters: for example, 'clinical governance' would be well understood by doctors. However, when an official of the Department for Transport tells us that MREW must '...have governance in place for drivers who are responding on Blue Lights....' what do they mean? It seems that they are asking for an audit trail. And both of these usages are different to that of 'charity governance'. For MREW and our member teams, they form a part, but not the whole story.

So what is the whole? Governance is the process that enables an organisation to:

- do what it was set up to do — fulfil its purpose
- do it responsibly — meet legal and ethical standards
- do it well
- show that it does all of this — demonstrate accountability.

The governing document — the constitution, or memorandum of association if the organisation is a company — will set out the purpose, and the processes for meeting the purpose. In particular, the governing document will define who owns the organisation (its members), and how those members delegate responsibility to a group of people (the Trustees, or directors, or management committee), to govern the organisation on their behalf, and how that group will be accountable for governance.

The governing document will also set limits on what the organisation can do: for example, a charity cannot distribute profit to its members and MR teams have defined geographical ranges.

As part of the process of MREW converting to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), we realised that we needed to clarify who were our members and set up a membership application process. I was asked to provide advice to the Membership subcommittee on the governance aspects of applications. I have looked mainly at whether applicant teams are clear about who governs on their behalf, on whether they are meeting basic legal requirements such as reporting to the Charity Commission, and how far they demonstrate accountability, especially, but not exclusively, for finances.

We have now reviewed about two-thirds of expected applications, and I can see some trends.

First, it is plain that teams are trying to do governance well, though some are more successful than others. For instance, nearly all applicants submit their returns to the Charity Commission in time, and have done so for at least five years. All hold annual general meetings for their trustees to report back to their members, and there seems to be a high level of engagement of members in most cases. This inward accountability is important and seems to be a strength of all teams. I think this reflects the huge commitment of team members to the work and to doing it well.

However, a number of teams are less good at outward accountability. We can only work because many other people support us in many ways, though mainly by giving money. And outward accountability is how we show the world that we have good governance.

The Charity Commission gives guidance on the technical aspects of reporting (what must be in a report) — see www.gov.uk/guidance/prepare-a-charity-trustees-annual-report. However, it's well worth looking at what other (non-MR) charities do to show that they are doing what they were set up to do.

Teams should be proud of reporting to their supporters on what they do, and how they apply the support. We should never take their support for granted. So, although it's yet another thing that takes a bit of time, it's well worth preparing an annual report that is addressed to supporters, as well as to members. ☺

Access all the latest information and guidance on everything related to Covid-19 and mountain rescue through the MREW Moodle platform.

INSURANCE UPDATE

PENNY BROCKMAN FINANCE DIRECTOR

Over the last few months I have been working closely with Tysers (previously Integro) to renew our insurance policies — not an easy task with the current market and given the bombshell, a few weeks before renewal, that the premium was likely to increase threefold. In the last few years, Hiscox has provided cover for all aspects of our insurance (other than personal accident and vehicle insurance). We now have a mixture of insurance, comprising: **Burns and Wilcox** Combined Liability; Public /Products Liability; Employers Liability; Abuse; **CNA Insurer** Medical Malpractice; **Hiscox** Trustee Indemnity and Professional Legal Liability for MREW and Teams; **Markel Cyber** (MREW only); **ARAG** Legal Expenses (MREW only); **AIG Europe**. We have also made a change in the policy increasing public liability excess layer from £5 million to £10 million. If a team wishes to purchase a Legal Expenses policy, they should contact Tysers direct.



MIKE MARGESON
OPERATIONS NEWS

Although while in lockdown some regions continued to have considerably more activity than they should or would have expected, it does appear that what we predicted and forecast in the last magazine for the summer has occurred. By the start of September, statistics indicated we were the same or just above last year's figures for the same point. Now this is with having a period of lockdown and clearly indicates how busy the regions have been in the summer and holiday period.

It is my view there have been both staycations and different new demographics visiting and using the hills that have helped contribute to the high call-out figures. I am not sure that these figures will decrease quickly or dramatically till later in the autumn. We may also see a busier than normal half-term period with weather and hours of light also playing into the mix.

I commented in the last magazine on good strong regional plans and mutual aid arrangements between teams. This has been a quite striking feature of a good number of our incidents across the regions, but our resilience has been tested at times. We initially had concerns around skills fade, however, the careful and well-structured return to training and the amount of real time call-out activity has removed this concern. Cas care training and assessment is recommencing, although it looks significantly different to ensure it is Covid-safe. With more Casualty Care certificates expiring and the potential impact on operational effectiveness, there are now extensions until the end of February allowing the training and assessment process to slowly start working again.

It was reported by Nigel Harling, our SAR-H lead, that Bristow were tentatively hoping to restart practical training with teams in October. This is now not the case as the MCA and Bristow crews have, like us, been incredibly busy and there is not the capacity to deliver this at present. It is looking more like the new year before live, on-the-ground practical training might commence with the Bristow crews. Team members should of course remember to keep their ISAR 1A up to date.

PPE has been on the radar for many, particularly access and stock for team members with their increasing workloads. Fortunately, probably thanks to good preparation and planning, this has not become the issue it was feared it might do. Julian reports he keeps a good stock but please allow sufficient time for delivery when ordering.

I spoke in the last issue about MREW having two key objectives through the pandemic: protecting the safety of our team members and families and ensuring that our mountain rescue service was not compromised. We have achieved both of these through these unprecedented times. However, the Covid pandemic is not over and the virus has not gone away. I have noticed worrying images on some team social media. It is all too easy for us to fall into the trap of becoming complacent about safe working practices with other team members. Without being Big Brother, I would urge you all to redouble your efforts to implement the guidance on safe working with each other. ☺

DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES: NEXT SCHEDULED OPERATIONS GROUP MEETING: EARLY JANUARY. IF YOU HAVE ANY TOPICS YOU WISH TO DISCUSS, PLEASE FORWARD THROUGH YOUR REGIONAL OPS LEADS. WE HAVE HELD A COVID-19 TOPIC ONLY ADDITIONAL VIDEO MEETING AND WILL DO AGAIN IF REQUESTED OR DEEMED NECESSARY.

CAS CARE TRAINING ASSESSMENT AND INSURANCE

MIKE GREENE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Covid-19 caused a halt to MREW Casualty Care training and assessment. It has taken several months to re-establish training and regions are in different places with this at present.

Therefore, **all Casualty Care Certificates that would have expire during 2020 will be extended until 28 February**. In order to remain insured, team members delivering Casualty Care are required to demonstrate that they remain up to date by undertaking suitable training such as the use of the Moodle VLE.

Covid-19 virus will be present in the community for the foreseeable future. It is essential we have a cohort of trained and certified members to provide Casualty Care to our patients. It is proposed that teams and regions should now plan to restart training for the Casualty Care Certificate and other levels of First Aid in the second part of 2020.

Following the MREW Medical Sub Committee meeting in early September, the amended documents are now available on Moodle site. By the time you read this, a Casualty Care Assessment process will be available. Guidance will be provided for exam organisers. There will be an alteration in the method of examination to minimise close contact with 'patients', however, a Primary Survey will still be required during the examination.

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SEPTEMBER: GRASSINGTON DOUBLES AS DARROWBY FOR 'ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL'

Upper Wharfedale fans – and lovers of James Heriott's televised memoirs – may have spotted their local patch doubling up the vet's stomping ground, with Grassington standing in as the village of Darrowby for the long-awaited Channel 5 remake.

The whole series has been filmed in the stunning Upper Wharfedale area with scenes filmed at Arncliffe, Langstrothdale, Barden Bridge and Kettlewell. The rest of the series aired on Tuesdays at 9.00 pm, with a Christmas Special due to follow.



SEPTEMBER: MIKE FRANCE AND MIKE GREENE STEP DOWN FROM NATIONAL ROLES

It was with great sadness the announcement was made in late September that both Mike France and Mike Greene would be standing down from their respective roles of senior executive officer and medical director for MREW.

SEPTEMBER: SEARCH DOG SKYE RETIRES AFTER ELEVEN YEARS' SERVICE TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Now aged a grand fourteen and a half years old, Skye leaves behind the title as the 'oldest working search dog in the Lakes' and the UK.

'It wasn't an easy decision to make with a dog who would still love to be out there and searching', says handler John Leadbetter. 'But, although the head and heart are willing, the body is decidedly weaker and searching takes too much of a toll nowadays'.

She's made many friends along the way, as a puppy with Bowland Pennine, then as a Trainee/ Graded Search Dog/Team Member (muddy paws) with Duddon and Furness, then Langdale Ambleside and, more recently, with Kendal, but also by befriending supporters and public at the many talks, demonstrations and fundraising events.

Born 2 May 2006, from breeder Sue Jones, Skye graded in 2009 shortly after her litter sister, the late Search Dog Kitt (handler Olly Benson, Langdale Ambleside). During training the two always had a competitive edge but found time to play. On searches together they made 'an unstoppable team'.

Skye has been involved in many searches across the Lakes, Lancashire, the Pennines and Scotland. She has been an ambassador for the Lake District Search Dogs, with sponsors Burns Pet Nutrition, and has demonstrated her skills to international search dog organisations. She was awarded her ten-year long service award at this year's association AGM and completed her last call-out, a search with Kendal MRT, in September.

'Thank you to all those who have hidden, advised, helped and generally made her life as a search dog a succession of brilliant adventures,' says John. 'Well done, Skye for all your loyalty, faithful work and support, my mountain companion, my special girl. Here's to a happy and fulfilled retirement full of fun, exploration and enjoying the hills'.



Right: Search Dog Skye © John Leadbetter. **Inset:** The now almost iconic image of John with Skye on winter training with the search dogs © Daryl Garfield.



Raising funds for rescue

SEPTEMBER: PALS RIDE LAND'S END TO JOHN O' GROATS

Gomer, Gutun and Tomos set off from Land's End arriving in John o' Groats twelve days later having covered 1,020 miles and climbed more than 50,000 feet, with £3,080 raised for Aberglaslyn, their local team. Great effort!



DESIGNERS TURN TO MAKING MASKS TO RAISE FUNDS FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Coronavirus has certainly spawned some innovative fundraising ideas, around the UK. Atticus Interior Design spent lockdown producing a range of cloth masks, raising £700 for the Tweed Valley team in the process.



SEPTEMBER: DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE LAUNCHES EMERGENCY RESPONDER SENIOR LEADER BOARD

In early September, HRH The Duke of Cambridge convened the first meeting of the newly formed Emergency Responder Senior Leader Board.

- Daren Mochrie, Chair, The Association of Ambulance Chief Executives
- Gill Scott-Moore, CEO, Police Care UK
- Dr Jill Tolfrey, CEO, The Fire Fighters Charity
- Karl Demian, CEO, The Ambulance Staff Charity
- Mike France, SEO, Mountain Rescue England and Wales
- Paul Farmer, CEO, Mind

Speaking the following day at the Police College in Belfast, to staff taking part in the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Wellbeing Volunteer Training course, the Duke said, 'Yesterday, I convened a meeting of senior leaders including the heads of emergency services and their respective charities from across the UK. I was encouraged and heartened about their desire for tangible and lasting change – with new and better collaboration and training.'

Above left: The Duke of Cambridge speaking at the Police College in Belfast to staff taking part in the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Wellbeing Volunteer Training course © Kensington Palace.

The Board is the first of its kind, bringing together leaders from across all of the UK's emergency services on the issue of mental health. It will promote collaborative working across the nation's emergency services to ensure that all emergency responders receive the mental health support they need. Attendees at the meeting included:

- The Duke of Cambridge
- Professor Nicola Fear
- Martin Hewitt, Chair, The National Police Chiefs Council
- Roy Wilsher, Chair, The National Fire Chiefs Council



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Tysers are pleased to confirm that MREW insurance policies have recently been renewed. A new flyer summarising all of your limits of indemnity and policy information will be emailed to the teams by 1st October - so keep your eyes peeled!

www.tysers.com



CHRIS COOKSON

(ON BEHALF OF THE MREW TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE)*

First of all, thank you to all those of you that took the time to complete the Google Forms survey. We published the request to participate in the survey to all team members via a number of means...

- An email from Julian Walden (MREW Assistant Secretary) to All Team Leaders, All Chairs and All Secretaries mail groups, for onward distribution to team members
- Via the MREW Facebook Members group
- Via the Moodle Training Subcommittee (TSC) forum
- Via the July/Summer magazine.

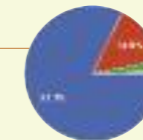
As a result, we received 196 responses. The group is now starting to analyse the information received. Having had a quick read through some of the responses, it's clear that some are well thought out, well-rounded views whilst others are shorter, sharper and more emotive. So, in short, a complete mix — as we were expecting and hoping for. We'd like to thank people for their openness, honesty and frankness, as well as for the time and effort they've put into completing the survey. We'll be able to send out more details once the analysis is complete. In the meantime, below are some stats on the various demographics from the responses received.

* 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

Question:

Are you responding as a team member, team rep, regional rep or national rep?

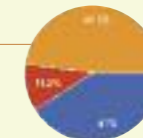
Team Member	161
Team Rep	29
Mountain Rescue Regional Rep	5
Cave Rescue National Rep	1



Question:

How long have you been a team member?

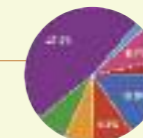
Longer than 10 years	77
Less than 5 years	66
Did not specify	35
Between 5 and 10 years	18



Question:

Which region do you operate in?

PDMRO	76	NWMRA	12
Did not specify	35	NESRA	11
LDSAMRA	25	YDRP	5
MPSRO	15	PENMACRA	3
SWSARA	14		



SKYE'S CUILLIN RIDGE TRAVERSE

BY ADRIAN TRENDALL
REVIEWED BY MIKE MARGESON

This excellent new guide, to what is surely the most complex adventurous and challenging mountain areas in the British Isles, is quite simply an incredible resource. Departing from the normal Cicerone format, the guide is divided into two volumes, one particularly covering the ridge traverse and other covering ten classic scramble days out on the ridge. It was the latter element that really impressed me as the Cuillin are so much more than ticking another challenge off a list. The notoriously complex topography is made clearer using excellent Harvey map sections. Adrian has used useful photo route topos at every key difficulty. There is frank and honest debate and discussion of the difficulties and potential avoidance options. Also covered are techniques, experience, route choice and advice on equipment to be carried. There is even discussion whether best to travel from west to east or vice versa. There is simply a vast amount of information gathered from Adrian's massive experience of the Cuillin. This is an outstanding guide for anybody visiting the Cuillin, whether doing the traverse or not. A final observation: various rope techniques referred to (moving together and shortening the rope), require a high level of skill and experience and the Cuillin is not the terrain to practise them!

SKYE'S CUILLIN RIDGE TRAVERSE IS PUBLISHED BY CICERONE PRESS
CICERONE.CO.UK ISBN 978-1-78631-043-9
PRICE £19.95



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A word from the editor...

How times change... or do they? Twenty years on from the launch of 'MRC News'...

Looking back through the archives and back copies of the magazine for inspiration and, in the spirit of keeping in memory the things that formed our organisation, it dawned that I've been doing this job now for just shy of twenty years. So much, you might think has changed in that time – not least that so many of the youngsters once running round team bases after their intrepid 'rescue hero' fathers (and, far less frequently, mothers – so there's one thing that's changed substantially), and generally getting under the feet of the grown-ups, are now pretty damned grown-up rescue heroes themselves. Some of them even have proper 'mountain rescue' beards.

And yes, a great deal HAS changed in those twenty years – very quickly, compared to the previous twenty or thirty. Take the publication you currently hold in your hand, be that paper or pixel in form. Younger team members might now take for granted that the organisation has a magazine which, I'm proud to say, other organisations have occasionally aspired to but never managed to sustain in quite the same

when I first began approaching teams for news and stories for the then 12-page 'newsletter'. Fewer then had an email address for a start, so I was forced to forage where I could. And it was several years later before we mooted the idea of social media (now a fantastic editorial resource) to a frankly horrified national meeting. (I mean, heaven forbid we should tell anyone what we actually do!)

My upbeat requests for information met the now familiar wall of wary cynicism about the national body (no change there then), and even greater wary cynicism about me, a relative unknown nationally, and my ability to sustain the effort required. My declared plan was to create a newsletter 'representative of all the regions, a vehicle for news, information, comment, opinion, discussion', maybe even a letters page 'if readers had something they wanted to get off their chest' (without the dirty linen washing). My intention was always to be about the exchange of ideas and experience and I hoped people would trust my editorial integrity.

These days, I'm happy to say, news items and potential articles regularly drop into my inbox unsolicited. Every team has a social media presence and just about everyone is at the end of an email address. Twenty years ago, images were always an issue. Ideally, the bigger the image, the better – more for me to play with on a page – and where once I'd have been lucky to get a 72dpi postage stamp, the standard now is infinitely better (that coveted front cover spot forever in your sights). So 'thank you' to all those who've helped turn that shy little tot of a newsletter, into the all-colours-blazing grown-up magazine it now is.

So what were we talking about back then? Anything different? Well, no. Not really. Our front page revealed news of the newly-formed Publications and Information subcommittee, PISC for short – an acronym we've spent twenty years trying to shake off. In vain. The brain loves a rhyme, you see, and mountain rescue in particular loves a jaunty acronym.

Besides the 'newsletter', we were in the process of developing our first national website, a technological development still hailed in some quarters as closely akin to black magic (you'll be spotting the pattern now), and that wary old cynicism scratched its beard again when the MRC (as we were then) dared to suggest that teams adopt mountain rescue-formatted email addresses to align with the website and make communication easier and more secure – something we still haven't fully resolved twenty years on! The brain, it turns out, also loves a conspiracy theory, 'They Seek to Control Us' being right up there with 'Faked Moon Landings' and 'Elvis is Alive and Well and Working in a Chip Shop'.

Another thing was spookily similar too –

although this wasn't reported until Issue 2. No sooner had the first issue of MRC News hit the presses in February 2001, than Foot and Mouth took hold, much as Covid-19 did, following our January 2020 issue. With fundraising and training events cancelled and the mountains closed for business, team members took to painting bases and investigating new ways to raise cash. According to a report in July, there was even a malicious rumour that 'some team leaders were actually washing their socks'! A claim not a single team leader denied, so draw your own conclusions!

There were many stories of walkers heading to the hills, oblivious to (or uncaring about) the restrictions and despite the bristling closure signs on public rights of way and access points to open country, but only one reached the press. Two walkers spotted on Skiddaw were reported to the police who proceeded to publicly disinfect them. Not sure how that would play out today.

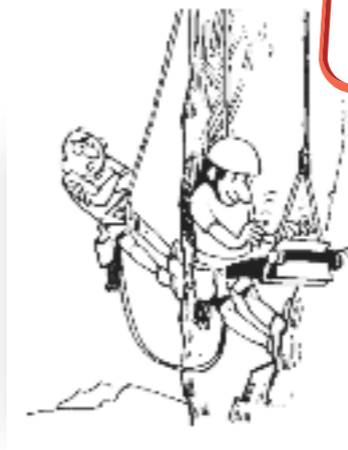
Oddly, the little old ladies and gents and children previously hell-bent on leaving home appeared to have second thoughts about it all, at least through the worst months of the crisis. Inevitably, though, this fearful hiatus passed and people returned to the hills in their droves, along with their propensity for falling over and getting lost. And even then, teams were railing about the exponential increase in incidents...

But, back in that first edition, the thorny issue of 'national' fundraising was beginning to rear its head, with teams (once again) wary that any national endeavours would take away from local efforts. Indeed, twenty years on, we sometimes feel to be having the same old conversations with teams, suppliers and potential sponsors about the importance of branding and the value of that MREW roundel so thank you to those who DO get it. One day, maybe, everyone will.

As for the incidents, these were remarkably similar. As I write this, the tale of Harry Harvey, who turned up after three days missing in the wild, was making national news. The 'regional news' section of Issue 1 revealed several tales with less happy outcomes, bodies turning up long after they were reported missing. On one occasion, three years later.

Colin Patchett had regularly featured in training exercises for the Rossendale team, as well as calls to assist the police in searches, following the identification of new search areas, but the three-year mystery of 'the missing milkman' was finally solved in July 2000, with the discovery of his body by a farmer rounding up his sheep on moorland near Coldwell Reservoir in Lancashire, close to the spot Patchett had last been seen.

Team members were called to assist with the retrieval of the remains, by now well and truly wedded to the earth, the gentleman's specs still resting on his chest. The 'casualty', who had apparently threatened and attempted suicide on several occasions and was believed



CAN'T YOUR ARTICLE WAIT TILL WE GET TO THE TOP?

From Issue 1 MRC News, February 2001

to be suicidal when he vanished, was identified by dental records but no cause of death was established.

With typical mountain rescue black humour, some dismay was expressed that CPR was not attempted and that no use was made of the team's latest gizmo, the pulse oximeter.

In the Lakes, two climbers on Aspirant, a winter climb on Great End, found the almost totally buried body of a man in his late-60s, reported missing in Borrowdale four months earlier. At one stage, 153 rescuers from eleven teams, seventeen search dogs and a helicopter were involved: 3390 rescuer hours in total (although we were still calling them 'man hours' then!)

And it wasn't all about the mountains. In late summer, Furness MRT was involved in the widescale search for Barrow fisherman Michael Jackson, missing from the Morecambe Bay area during a night of very poor conditions and 35 mph winds. Sadly, neither Jackson nor his 16-foot day boat were found and his body was washed ashore two days later.

Calder team members had been called to an unusual and urgent evacuation in August. A heart-pounding climb through early morning mist revealed a tent and two rather shocked lads who had been undertaking the Pennine Way. Whilst cooking their breakfast at 6.30 am they were confronted by a man, covered in blood, asking for help. Apparently, he and his partner had attempted suicide the previous night by taking pills and slashing their wrists. Having woken still in the land of the living, they now wanted help. With Xray 99 and the RAF scrambled (remember them?) the casualties were quickly evacuated, reportedly somewhat chastened by their experience.

Still on the theme of fatalities, at a North Wales regional meeting, the police had outlined the implications for mountain rescue teams of the new Human Rights Act with the future plan to investigate all mountain fatalities as possible criminal situations. The first to be treated in this way was a fatality on Tryfan Bach when Ogwen team members were interviewed at great length. An early step perhaps towards the need for greater 'governance' with much

closer inspection and reporting of the incident site, forensic photographs taken and a much tighter control of paperwork.

I never mind admitting my mistakes – and over the years there have been a few – but one of those was, frankly, a whopper, requiring a Herculean feat of earth moving on my part. It was Mike Long, of Exmoor SRT, who brought this to my attention, in the kindest possible way, in time for Issue 2.

'The newsletter was well received by the team members,' he wrote. 'But could we be in the South WEST this time. Our lads and lasses think the patch we have is big enough without having most of the south of England too...' Oops.

A letter from John Whiting, of Devon Rescue Group, also published in July, referred to the article about the IKAR 2000 Conference in which the writer had noted that 'the central European stranglehold on mountain rescue is gradually breaking. No reference is made', he said, 'to the northern England stranglehold on mountain rescue in this country'. Ouch... and some might say this was still the case.

Elsewhere in Issue 1, the first edition of Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue, published in August 2000, was receiving good reviews, third party insurance cover was secured for teams for the first time, a Missing Persons Behaviour study was launched by Ged Feeny and the creation of the UK Search and Rescue Strategic Committee finally gave mountain rescue a real voice at government level.

There were plans to introduce Canadian Kirk Mauthner's technical rope rescue training to England and Wales with a forthcoming 'Rigging for Rescue' weekend (as it was then called), a course which was said to require 'a clear, open and receptive mind'.

And Paul Horder reported from IKAR, on an innovative system which used GPS data to track the movements of a rescuer on the hill, in real time. Routes taken could be plotted with 'snail trails' on a computer screen, each rescuer identified in a different colour. Clicking on any rescue would bring up specific data about that person – such as what kit he was carrying, whether he was a doctor and so on. The project had come to a halt the previous year due to issues with GPS data accuracy and the difficulty finding anyone prepared to develop the idea into an acceptable unit which would be robust and weatherproof, and the right price. With the lifting of so called 'selective availability', a number of suitable devices had begun to appear on the market and the rest, as they say, is history.



Now we're routinely following those snail trails around multiple screens in rescue bases and control units, and locking onto casualty locations with remarkable accuracy (most of the time) thanks to the development of Sarloc, PhoneFind, OS Locate and – whisper it softly – What3Words.

Twenty years then, gone in the blink of an eye and so many of the things mountain rescue takes for granted now, were only just tottering into maturity back then: the magazine and website (now, if memory serves me well, in its fourth incarnation), social media and location technology, the developments in Casualty Care, assessment and certification, technical rope rescue and swiftwater rescue training, the centralised purchasing and insurance cover, the inter-connectedness of teams and the greater SAR community, the government and Royal support... every single thing accomplished despite the constant rattle of wary cynicism thrumming away in the background.

Whether that's reassuring or not I'll let you be the judge. ☺



I SEE YOU'D RATHER BE DRIVING THE HELICOPTER

From Issue 2 MRC News, July 2001

Hinkes thinks

It's a dogsbody's life...

Thursday night in North Yorkshire is hide and seek night. It sounds like fun and can be, but it is serious training that can be lifesaving. **Alan Hinkes** joined in the fun with Swaledale and Cleveland dogs and their handlers, and the dedicated dogsbodies.



Opposite & top left: Mike Needham and Tarn (TWSRT). Top centre: Martin Haigh, dogsbody. Top right: Martin Haigh with Bracken, Claire Starkey's dog (Cleveland MRT). Left: Tim Cain with Cassie. Centre left: Search Dog Ollie. Photos © Alan Hinkes & Tim Cain.

Swaledale and Cleveland search dogs and their handlers practise searching on the Catterick military ranges on the edge of Swaledale. The terrain is rugged, varied and testing, there are trees and woods, buildings, bogs, streams, heather, rocks and quarry faces, rough arduous ground to test the fittest dog and handler's stamina. As for the weather on a Thursday evening, it can often be inclement and, October to March, it is mostly dark.

Ian, Tim and Claire are the regular dog handlers, sometimes with guests from other teams, but the unsung heroes are the dogsbodies — the volunteers who willingly go out in all weather conditions, hide and wait for the search dog to find them. Sometimes they may be waiting over an hour, usually it is a lot less as the dogs do a round-robin search practice.

You need a good sense of humour and I guess it is best to like dogs if you are going to hide and wait for a dog to find you. Be prepared to be slobbered over and ready to play, throwing the dog's ball once you are found. Perhaps have a little treat, like a biscuit or cocktail sausage for the debrief.

Having a mat to lie or sit on will improve your comfort and a bivi bag is excellent bit of kit. If you are wrapped up and insulated well, even lying in the heather on a dark winter night with cold rain blowing in your

face can be a pleasant experience, a lot nicer than late summer midges.

Fresh dogsbodies are always welcome to come along, and it is good for the dogs to have a new scent to search for. I reckon the dogs can get complacent and think 'I know this person — I've searched for them before'. Even a search dog might fall into a heuristic trap if not handled skilfully. The dogs love the training sessions and are always raring to go and find the dogsbody.

Recently I asked a friend to come along, Becca is an experienced hillwalker and loves dogs so I thought she would be interested in experiencing a training night.

'Do you fancy being a dogsbody?' I said. Luckily she knew what I meant, and I received an enthusiastic reply, 'Yes. That's not something you get asked every day. It sounds like fun. Will I be hiding in the hills?'

'Sort of,' I replied. 'Bring warm and waterproof clothing. It's going to be damp'.

Indeed, it was a penetrating drizzle and thick hill fog enshrouding the thigh-deep heather in the selected training area for that night. As a newbie dogsbody Becca was instructed to find a hiding spot, get low and stay low. It might have been very wet and thick clag, but the ground was still warm from the previous hot summer days. Snuggled up in a bivi bag it was not too unpleasant to wait for the search dog to find

her. Waiting in the fog for over an hour reminds you how disorientating it can be and the sound of the dog searching, and the handler's calls is very reassuring. It is always good to be found followed by a playful session with the dog. The search dog loves a bit of active friendly play.

And then there is the exercise debrief, sometimes in the pub, often round the cars with a few snacks and non-alcoholic beers.

Dogsbodies are the unsung heroes of mountain rescue. Some have been dogsbody-ing for decades. They are rarely recognised for their input to the training programmes but without them the training would be far less effective and assessment impossible. The realism they bring to a training exercise is invaluable. That both dog and handler can train to the high standards they achieve, is only possible because these people are prepared to endure some pretty awful conditions for the greater good. If anything, the dogs get rewarded more than the dogsbodies!

If you fancy being a dogsbody, get in touch with your local dog handler or via mountainrescueresearchdogsendland.org.uk. You should have a fun time and will experience rescue operations from the misper perspective. 🐾



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 AND IF YOU WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SEARCH DOGS AND THEIR HANDLERS, WE'VE GOT THAT ONE TOO! GO TO MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK/SHOP/BOOKS



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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: **Christmas is coming!**

It's been a tough few months for most of you reading this — not only dealing with the pandemic's impact on your own families, jobs and communities, but also tackling the associated challenges for mountain rescue (MR). It's tempting for me to write about avoidable call-outs, pictures with PPE and other aspects of the Covid communications challenge... but I'm resisting. Instead, and please bear with me, let's look ahead to fundraising issues and plan for Christmas!

Growing your networks

Cancelled fundraising events, lack of donations in collection tins, tighter personal purse strings and increasing job uncertainties are all contributing to a really tough fundraising environment at present. MR teams have significant advantages over the big national charities in that they've got established community connections, a positive local profile and are perceived as an essential volunteer service. But we need to make the most of those advantages and build on them.

The priority for the next few months is to make sure as many people as possible are aware of the needs and nature of MR and to extend your contacts and connections as much as you can to give yourselves the best chance of continued support.

An MR marketing funnel

Some of you may have come across a marketing abbreviation that describes how a sales process happens. AIDA stands for Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action and I think there's an equivalent for donations to mountain rescue. I'd sum it up by Facebook Friend to Website Browser to Team Shop Buyer and One-Off Donor to Regular Supporter. The trick is to work out how to

move those thousands of Facebook followers along that line.

So here's one very easy first suggestion: as well as a Facebook Giving button, add a link to the Donations page on your website to just a few of your social media posts and see what happens. With luck, you'll begin to build that relationship and move it on.

Christmas media activity

Many local newspapers produce shopping guides and Christmas supplements around the end of November/early December. They're designed to attract as much advertising as possible but also need a bit of feature material to make them readable.

Find out what your local paper has planned and offer to contribute. It might be a brief piece about the team's work in the past year, it could be a shameless plug for a few of the items you have for sale online or perhaps you could suggest some gift ideas for those planning to take to the hills in 2021.

Things like a compass or a new map or a power pack to recharge a phone in the outdoors, or even a navigation course with a local guide or expert. You can make the #BeAdventureSmart connection in a constructive way AND plug your local outdoor gear shops in the process.

Another frequent approach is that the paper does a series of standard questionnaire pieces with local people. Get in early, ask if they're planning anything along these lines and offer a team member to take part. Think about the message you want to get across and pick the right person — it could be your team leader but could just as well be a probationer (if you're trying to recruit), your vehicles officer (if you're raising money for a new vehicle) or one of your fundraisers (talking about different ways to support you).

New Year opportunities

In a similar way, local media (radio, magazines, newspapers and online) often plan ahead for items for that slow week between Christmas and New Year. It's a good opportunity to supply something in plenty of time as it's also when all the journalists want to be on holiday and there's an urgent need for non-Christmas content (and pictures) so you're giving yourself the best chance of coverage.

Invent some New Year resolutions that would work for you and then suggest them to the journalist. 'Get fitter' or 'Spend more time outdoors' are obvious ones but what about getting involved in a local charity to meet new people or raising a certain amount of money for a good cause during the year?

Join it all up

As with any PR and media communications, you have little control over what's used. You can do the best job possible in getting to know your local media and finding out what they might use but it still comes down to space and the sub-editor.

I suggest you plan how to use these same ideas in parallel in the media that you CAN control: your own team's social media. Think about the pictures you'd use, work out how you can best schedule those posts to make a difference and have a look at which posts work best, in terms of engagement and, ideally, in clicks through to your website. Then do more like that!

I hope this is a useful thought starter well before December deadlines get too close. And I DO realise that you're all pretty tied up with the tough stuff at present. If I can help or advise on any of that, please let me know. Keep going, keep well and keep in touch. 🍀



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DO YOU TAKE YOUR BALANCE FOR GRANTED?

THE FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITY

How often do you think about where your place your limbs? Many of us take it for granted, but when you suffer with balance issues, every foot placement can be a struggle. Senior Exercise Therapist **Rachel Rees** is here to explain what we can do to improve our balance.

Many of us take it for granted that we can find our balance. We move around without thought, effort or fear of falling. That is, until we lose our ability to balance. There are two different reasons why people may lose their balance: after injury or with age. But why do these factors affect our balance?

To understand why we lose balance, first we need to understand what balance actually is.

Balance is the body's ability to achieve a state of equilibrium through an equal weight distribution. Sounds easy enough to understand, right?

But there's also a word you may not have heard before, which is key to understanding why we lose balance. And that word is proprioception, which means the sense of knowing where your specific body parts are within a specific environment.

For example, while walking on uneven ground on a stony beach, you need to sense where your ankle is while walking. Proprioception allows your

AS WE GET OLDER WE NATURALLY LOSE MUSCLE MASS, BUT THIS DOESN'T WAIT UNTIL WE'RE ELDERLY... THE PROCESS BEGINS IN OUR THIRTIES...

body to respond to stimuli and control your limbs without having to consciously think or look at them. So while walking on a beach, your body places your foot in a certain way while navigating the stones to stop you from turning your ankle and injuring yourself. Proprioception information includes an ability to detect joint position, movement, direction, amplitude (the extent of your range and quality of movement) and speed of motion.

As this is something most of us do without even thinking, it can be a tricky concept to understand. But when you lose balance, you become acutely aware of your proprioception.

Now we understand what governs our balance, we can begin to understand why injury or age may lead to a loss of balance or proprioception.

LOSING BALANCE AFTER AN INJURY

When we injure a joint in our body, our proprioceptive skills can be weakened. For example, if you roll your ankle and sprain your ligaments, your proprioceptive capabilities may reduce, so you may experience an unstable sensation in the joint and your ankle may give way seemingly without structural reason. But why?

A decreased sense of proprioception through a trauma (ie. an injury) can be caused by tissue damage in that particular area, the presence of oedema (swelling) or increased nociceptive inputs (pain). In turn, this reduces our proprioceptive capabilities, which is our body's natural way of trying to protect the injured joint by not preventing us using it. This is helpful in the short term, but not when we need to start using it again.

In the meantime, your brain sends electrical contract or relax messages to your muscles, as your joint movement response is detected by your sensory nervous system, which continually reports back to the brain for fine tuning and improvement. After injury, these messages can become distorted so are less clear.

That's why it's so important to retrain your balance and proprioceptive reaction after injury, so you are more able to adapt to stimuli and transition back to subconscious movement decisions. An efficient subconscious proprioception and balance system is important in everyday life, especially for sport. For example, if you're a runner wanting to get back to running on even ground after injury, you don't want to be constantly thinking about your foot placement. You want it to become normal and automatic, so you don't need to remove speed to increase your focus.

BALANCE AFFECTED BY AGE

As we age, our sensory feedback — which is detected by our muscles, tendons and joints — slows down. The contract and relax messages being sent by the brain become slower and just aren't as clear. The less good your balance as you get older, the more likely the risk of falls and injury. So it's important we focus on balance training to deal with underlying causes.

Our sensory feedback, detected by our muscle's tendons and joints slow down as we age, the contract relax messages become slower and just aren't as clear. Balance problems in older people increase the likelihood of falls, which is why it's so important to focus on balance training.

Let's take a look at some of the underlying causes that affect our balance as we age, so we can begin to deal with those we can.

LOSS OF MUSCLE MASS

As we get older we naturally lose muscle mass, but this doesn't wait until we're elderly to happen. Known as sarcopenia, this process begins in our thirties with weakened muscles compromising our ability to remain steady on our feet.

Alongside sarcopenia, many of us tend to be less active and spend more time sitting down as we get older. Whether it's desk jobs or sitting down more in retirement, evidence shows that over half of older adults spend four or more hours a day sitting down. This number is likely to have been even higher over the last few months as so many of us self-isolate at home to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

But being sedentary leaves us at risk of various health conditions including obesity, Type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, increased risk of pain and stiffness and, as we've discussed, poor balance and an increased risk of falls.

The phrase 'use it or lose it' is key here. If we don't regularly challenge our

balance, strengthen our muscles and move our joints, our musculoskeletal system (ie. our muscles and bones) will become weak and deconditioned.

The good news is that you don't need to be a serious gym-goer to be active and there is a difference between being

become fearful of falling again, so we limit our activities and may become isolated or depressed to a lower self-esteem, which can cause physical decline.

Visual cues tell us a lot about our environment, as our eyes help us to see and prepare for potential dangers and obstacles. Have you ever tried to balance with your eyes closed? Older people may have deteriorating eyesight, which can affect their balance and cause them to become unsteady.

People with hearing issues may also struggle with their balance, as the inner ear contains a fluid-filled, semi-circular canal that tells us the position of our head and its movement in space in relation to gravity. (It's a bit like a spirit level you might use in DIY, but for our own body!) Degenerative hearing issues such as vertigo, labyrinthitis, BPPV or Meniere's disease can all affect someone's balance.

HOW DO WE IMPROVE OUR BALANCE?

Balance-strengthening activities are not exclusive to recovery from an injury, they should be just as much a part of your routine as cardiovascular or strengthening exercises. Proprioception exercises are required to improve your proprioception feedback circle and improve your balance. You can re-teach your body to control the position of an injured or deficient joint.

The good news is that they're not particularly complicated. For example, if you stand in a narrow stance with one foot in front of the other, or you stand on one leg and hold it for a while, that's you taking part in proprioceptive and balance exercise.

As you progress, you can work equipment into your activities, to further challenge your balance. You could create an unstable surface like a wobble board or balance trainer, or even use make-shift options such as standing on a rolled-up towel or standing on a hot-water bottle (using cold water, and not too full). The unpredictable movements that these types of equipment creates progressively re-educate your body to quickly react to the wobbly movements without having to think about them too much.

To make these exercises even more challenging try closing your eyes. The wobbly feeling is your body making balance adjustments based on feedback from proprioceptors located in muscles tendons and joints.

Remember practice makes permanent. You will get better at whatever you practice every day and this will eventually mean perfect proprioception! 🧘

BALANCE-STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE TO RECOVERY FROM AN INJURY, THEY SHOULD BE JUST AS MUCH A PART OF YOUR ROUTINE AS CARDIOVASCULAR OR STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

physically active and exercising. Rather than think about spending time exercising, think instead about reducing the amount of time we spend sitting down. Being active is key to keeping healthy and maintaining independence. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) have developed a brilliant 'Love Activity, Hate Exercise' campaign to help get people moving (and not just for our older population).

Balance-strengthening activities are not exclusive to recovery from an injury, they should be just as much a part of your routine as cardiovascular or strengthening exercises. If we can keep our muscles nice and strong, we can activate them quickly and prevent falls.

OTHER FACTORS THAT CAN AFFECT OUR BALANCE IN OLDER AGE

Long-term medical conditions that affect the nervous system such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and MS all have an affect on our balance.

Postural hypertension, a drop in blood pressure when you rise from a bed or chair that causes light headedness can make you feel dizzy and disorientated, which in turn affects your balance.

Nerve damage in your feet (neuropathy) is a long-term side effect often seen in conditions such as diabetes. If you can't feel your feet you are more likely to trip over them.

Some medications (like some antidepressants) can cause side effects such as dizziness, which may cause a person to become off-balanced and fall.

Like injury, arthritis or joint problems cause painful, swollen and stiff joints, which can cause our body to go into protection mode to try to prevent us from using it. This causes reduced sensory input and proprioception deficiency.

Cardiac conditions and renal problems can all contribute to unsteadiness. For example, both health conditions can cause fluid retention in the ankles, which can distort feedback information and reduce your proprioception.

Our balance can also be affected by our psychological state. After a fall, we can



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

After the call-out: Trauma Risk Management (TRiM)



GARY SMITH CALDER VALLEY SRT

So that's it then, you've washed the vehicles back at base and re-packed the kit so they're ready to roll when the next shout comes in. You've also made it home, got away with the apology for missing another family event and your own sweaty clothing is doing laps of the washing machine. Today's job is all over, or is it?

It's a fact of life that bad things happen to good people, sometimes through a traumatic accident and sometimes at their own hands having fought long and hard against mental illness and believing they had no other option. Mountain rescue volunteers come from all walks of life and we assist the ambulance service and the police in both these instances when the terrain requires. Through dignity and respect we don't always publicise details of every incident if the outcome has been one of those that silences even the most sarcastic amongst us — ok, fair enough, that's usually me but at least I'm consistent. No pictures on social media, but what about those images stuck in your mind?

The usual clichés of 'providing closure' or 'at least it would have been quick and there would have been no suffering' are bounced around during the debrief, but it's now a couple of

hours later and you're no longer stood chatting with your mates. Instead you're listening to the sound of the washing machine doing its thing while mysteriously losing one sock in the process and the day's events are going around and round your head just like the spin cycle that's about to start.

You've been told 'it's good to talk', but who do you talk to? Are you on your own and thinking the pub sounds a great idea, but how do you answer that question 'How's your day been pal?' Your partner? Mine's a primary school teacher so that's a completely different world (that she's welcome to as I find 30 kids as scary as it gets).

Anyway, would she really understand what it was like to be first on the scene, or hold someone's hand at the end? Probably not. Would it be fair to try and possibly only drag them down to your

level? So you do what works best, you tell yourself to man-up (other genders are available), offer a few sarcastic remarks in the type of humour only military and blue light services would dare class as funny. If you've been there, you'll know the script. That medicine that's dark humour but is about as funny as pi\$#ing on an electric fence. Yet you laugh along nonetheless because you have a thick skin and everyone else is fine.

Fine. That's the same word you use to answer that question in the pub about how your day's been, and thankfully everyone accepts it and goes back to their pint because it was only really a polite filler of a phrase, not really a question, and certainly not a question you're going to answer honestly. You're fine. You always have been. You always will be. See where this is going?

In 2016, Calder team — along with friends from other teams in the Mid

Pennine region — nominated people to undertake a programme of training in Trauma Risk Management, TRiM, as a way of identifying people who were at risk of bottling things up and later going on to develop PTSD or depression, both of which are far from signs of weakness and can be very impactful on a person's daily life.

I have worked in blue light services for over 20 years and in that time, there's been a much needed sea-change in the way mental health is viewed. We're great at making sure the vehicles are ready for the next shout, but what about our most important asset, our people?

TRiM is peer support, so rather than trying to talk to a partner or a mate down the pub, neither of which we share confidential detail with anyway, it's actually a way of talking things through with someone who 'gets it', having faced similar events themselves. It's not counselling or therapy and it's also not a debrief, although it is a structured process that came originally from the military when it was recognised that a lot of soldiers were returning to civilian life with 'baggage'. Baggage that far too often (once is too often) leads to a knock at the door of a loved one by someone in a uniform. It's now used widely in the fire, ambulance and police services along with the air ambulance, lifeboats and mountain rescue.

I'm sure most of us have seen the hashtag #it'soktonotbeok in the aftermath of someone famous taking their own life, but the beauty of TRiM is that it recognises that the perfectly normal reaction to a traumatic event is to think 'this is \$#!t!' immediately after an event, followed by a whole host of other emotions flying around your head in the first 72 hours during that 'washing machine' phase.

Having run a number of TRiM sessions both in my paid and voluntary roles it's a great way of normalising emotions and switching that hashtag round to #it'soktobeok for most of us. Yes, it will always be a bad day and a bad outcome, but most of the time TRiM assists us to recognise that we will get over things without intervention. What it also allows though is the early identification of those most likely to need a bit of extra help getting over things in the early days rather than just burying things for a few days that soon become years and allowing the long-term condition of PTSD to get a toehold. PTSD is a perfectly normal human reaction to abnormal events that, were it not for the job we were doing at the time we would have run a mile from (100 metres in my case, I'm not built for running). The difference between MR and my day job is that the close daily contact of the latter

allows for us to pick up on the tell-tale 'presence of the abnormal, absence of the normal' of personality change that's an indicator that something's wrong. Within MR we head home to our washing machines and our routine day jobs and lose that close contact of peer support.

We may not see each other again for a couple of weeks, by which time we assume it's all been and gone. Broken crayons still colour and it's all too easy to put the game-face on when everyone else seems to have moved on and you only need to keep the act up for a couple of hours.

Rather than sheep-dipping everyone at every incident and almost convincing those who have perfectly good coping strategies that they need to talk, TRiM relies on an open atmosphere where there's no stigma to admitting to mental health concerns and seeking support. This open atmosphere where 'Are you ok mate?' isn't just a polite filler, and is instead a genuine question where people wait for the answer, encourages people to be honest with themselves and team leaders can also highlight people who may benefit from contact. It's an entirely optional process and is also completely confidential.

This year coronavirus has affected the resilience of many people as normal social support networks are disrupted and, while TRiM is by no means a magic wand that fixes all forms of mental health, this peer support is part of our duty of care to our own volunteers who sometimes deal with unpleasant things.

Fortunately, it's not all bad news and, although broken ankles hurt a lot, we usually manage to smile on the stretcher and there are a lot of positives to being in the team. There is an increase in rates of self-harm and suicide across the country though.

If you are currently fighting your own battles there's no need to feel alone during these difficult times. You may not be able to see your way out right now, but it will come.

Keep fighting. It's not easy but nothing worthwhile ever is. 🙌

**USEFUL LINKS: SAMARITANS.ORG
NHS.UK/CONDITIONS/STRESS-ANXIETY-
DEPRESSION/MENTAL-HEALTH-HELPLINES**

GARY SMITH IS A MEMBER OF CALDER VALLEY SRT. HE AND HIS DOG, ORION ARE MEMBERS OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE SEARCH DOGS ENGLAND (MRSDE).

OBIT



SEARCH DOG BESS

North of Tyne team members were saddened in July to lose one of their devoted team members, a beautiful Border Collie called Bess. Bess was an operational search dog for over ten years working with her handler, Pete, involved in around 150 searches across England, Scotland and Wales.

Bess was Pete's second operational search dog, his first being Hamish, her half brother. She originated from a farm on Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland and was known far and wide as 'Sensible Bess', who never put a foot (or paw) wrong. Sadly, she lost her battle with cancer, but not before leaving a legacy.

Bess was very proud of her brood and four of her pups went on to train and work as search dogs. From left to right, we've got Roy and handler Paul also from North of Tyne, Tess and handler Brian from sister team Northumberland National Park MRT, Blythe and handler Paul from neighbouring team Teesdale and Weardale SMRT and Blitz and handler Jess from the Devon and Cornwall area. Thank you Bess for your many years of service.



It's always hard for a dog handler to lose such a close friend, but with succession planning in mind, Pete is starting to train his fifth search dog, Freya. She originates from a sheep dog trainer in Allendale, Northumberland and is getting on like a house on fire with Pete's other search dog, Rona. We're sure Rona will be a great mentor to Freya, who has already been out on team training exercises, covering great distances in the remote Northumbrian landscape. Thank you Pete for your dedication to training search dogs and for your contribution to the team for 15+ years — and thanks also to Paul Mitchinson (Roy's handler) for the photos. 🙌



JUNE: HEBRIDES TEAM MEMBERS ATTEND GRAVITY-DEFYING LAMB

The Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) called for assistance in the rescue of a trapped lamb near Stoth beach, Ness. The team responded with minimal personnel based in the local area. The lamb was quickly rescued and reunited with its mother. The novelty of having to apply sunscreen on a rescue in the Hebrides apparently still hasn't worn off!



Photos © HebSAR



SEPTEMBER: ROB RUNS LENGTH OF OFFA'S DYKE FOR THE CENTRAL BEACONS TEAM

Central Beacons team member Rob Smith set off from Prestatyn to 'run' to Chepstow, along the full length of Offa's Dyke and, to make things a little more 'interesting', he aimed to do this completely self-supported following the Spine Race definition of 'no crew, no drop bags, no pacers, only using facilities available to the public'. His efforts raised a useful £764 for the team.

Raising funds for rescue

AUGUST: UXB FOUND IN PEAK DISTRICT

A former Woodhead team member made contact with the team to say he'd come across the UXB high up on Cut Gate, providing an accurate grid reference of the site.

The duty controller deployed a team member with knowledge in this area to investigate. After a short inspection it was apparent it needed to be dealt with by Royal Logistics Corps (RLC) Bomb Disposal. The area was cordoned off and protected whilst the call was made to South Yorkshire Police and RLC and, at the same time, a small team of Woodhead personnel were mobilised to guide in the police and RLC. It was deemed safe to remove the UXB and detailed analysis found it to be a barium nitrate compound tracer, poisonous to mammals.



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NEWS ROUND

JUNE > SEPTEMBER



SEPTEMBER: NEW WHEELS FOR CLEVELAND SEARCH DOGS

Two years ago, Mercedes-Benz of Teesside provided Cleveland team with a Mercedes GLC SUV on long-term loan and the vehicle proved to be a huge help in transporting trainee search dogs to training venues locally and throughout the country, supporting search and rescue operations, and as a key transport resource for the team's fundraising activities.

Photos © Cleveland MRT



During the height of lockdown, it was at the forefront of the team's efforts to support the local community, for example to collect and distribute bulk PPE for use by council care services.

Earlier this summer, the team took delivery of a replacement on-loan vehicle, this time a new Mercedes GLB SUV, a versatile and compact vehicle ideally suited to continuing the supporting role of its predecessor. Needless to say, team members are delighted that the dealership is once again helping them in such a generous way and would like to record their thanks to the management and staff at Mercedes-Benz of Teesside.

SEPTEMBER: OUTDOOR TRADE SHOW MOVES TO LIVERPOOL

Britain's largest trade gathering for the outdoor industries is moving to Merseyside, with next year's event set to take place at the Exhibition Centre Liverpool.

For the past two years, the show has been held at EventCity, just outside Manchester, but the venue is due to close by March next year and plans for the construction of a new facility have been withdrawn due to the economic climate. The event attracts major outdoor brands from across the UK and Europe, with an opportunity to display their latest products to retailers, journalists and others in the industry.

This year's Manchester-based show was cancelled because of the pandemic. Event organiser Marta Williams said, 'We were obviously disappointed, as this has been a great venue over the past two years, and we had to move quickly to find a replacement venue that would work for the show.'

'We were impressed by Exhibition Centre Liverpool, with facilities that exceed those in Manchester and a very accommodating team who worked with us to ensure we could keep the same rates for our exhibitors.'

'Our main priority now is to work with our exhibitors to allocate suitable space in the halls and release the floor plan to encourage new bookings as soon as possible. Our team of contractors will continue to support the show and offer exhibitors their familiar services.'

Plans for next year include a new climbing area and organisers say the location, on the banks of the Mersey, next to Queen's Dock, will be ideal for watersport brands to become involved too.

AUGUST: ROBBIE TAKES ON TOUGH CHALLENGE FOR DARTMOOR TAVISTOCK TEAM AND DEVON AIR AMBULANCE

The West Devon man took on the extreme Dartmoor challenge in a jaw-dropping eight days in aid of two local charities.

The Tavistock Times Gazette reported that 'Robbie Evans – a self-confessed outdoor adventurer – had completed his All The Tors Challenge Walk of 187 miles across Dartmoor and across 119 tors, through all weathers', raising £1359 in the process.

'The challenge was first completed by Emily Woodhouse in ten days in September 2018 and was devised as a way to celebrate her 25th year and Dartmoor Rescue's 50th year in existence.'

The ex-serviceman completed the extreme challenge on his own in one continuous circuit for seven nights and eight days. 'Dartmoor is a place I love', he says. 'We're an outdoorsy family and I ride a motorcycle and have friends that are horse riders which is why I chose Dartmoor Tavistock and the Devon Air Ambulance as my charities.'

He averaged 24 miles a day using only a map and compass and carried a heavy bergen with all the clothes and equipment he'd need to survive along the way, including a gas stove, candles, radio, water bottles and food – mostly consisting of Wayfarer boil-in-a-bag meals. On his last day, he was met by his wife, two children, friends and his uncle at the final tor: King's Tor.

At one stage, his justgiving page noted that he was 'currently waddling along, with very sore legs, monster blisters and being eaten by ticks!' so we reckon this was a challenge very well-met!



Photo courtesy of Tavistock Times Gazette.

Raising funds for rescue

Reflections on the pandemic (or Phew! What a year that was!)

ANDY BRELSFORD CHAIRMAN,
WEST CORNWALL SEARCH & RESCUE TEAM

It's funny when you look back on things with the benefit of hindsight. Knowing how things are going to work out gives you the luxury of being able to view them with a sense of calm detachment. But back in late March/early April, it was a very different story...

Like teams up and down the country, West Cornwall Search and Rescue Team (WCSAR) are now emerging, blinking, into the light of a brave new world and significantly changed by the Covid-19 pandemic which has swept the globe. And like many teams, we have had to find new ways of doing things, things that we previously took for granted — like training and vehicle maintenance.

But unlike most teams, we had to do it as a fledgling team with very little in the way of financial reserves to fall back on and as chair, the fundraising nightmare gave me some sleepless nights.

I should explain, for those not familiar, that back in March of 2020, WCSAR were the new kids on the block, so to speak. We were registered as a CIO in July of 2019 and our application to join the new MREW CIO in our own right (following the splitting of Cornwall Search and Rescue Team into two separate CIOs), was accepted in January

2020. Having previously been involved in the early years of Cornwall SRT, I had accepted the invitation to do it all over again as chair of the newly-formed West Cornwall team and, as 2020 began, everything seemed to be progressing according to plan.

We already had a fully functioning team, a base, vehicles, kit and members because the Cornwall team had been running as two sections for several years by this point. But with the decision to formalise this arrangement as two entirely independent bodies, we had worked up short, medium and long-term plans, rewritten and updated policies and strategies and were busy preparing for a Peer Review Assessment later in the year. And then came Covid!

I had been aware that something significant was on the cards as my day job involves working closely with the NHS and the local authority in Cornwall. So with my work hat on, I was planning the largest (peace-time) mobilisation of volunteers that

Cornwall had ever seen. But always on my mind was how this would affect WCSAR. Operationally, of course, I was confident that the team could cope. But what if the virus spread within the team? We are somewhat on the extremity down in West Cornwall, our only direct neighbour being the also newly-formed East Cornwall Search and Rescue Team, so resilience could have been an issue.

But what I hadn't fully grasped, in those early days, was how our income would all but dry up as the country went into lockdown. Like many MR teams, we rely heavily on traditional forms of fundraising like collection tins, sponsored events, pub quizzes, talks to the WI etc. And we had a full programme planned for the year — all of which was suddenly put on indefinite hold.

Being part of a team means you share with your colleagues — share the tasks, share the decision-making, share the responsibility. But as chair, you can't help but feel that people are looking to you to have the answers — and I don't mind admitting that at that point I felt pretty unclear on how this would play out. What if we run out of money? What if the team just fizzles out before it's really got going?

At our next trustees meeting, which was now virtual (which in itself is a strange experience when you are used to sitting round a table to thrash things out), we took the only decision we felt we could and put an immediate stop on all expenditure unless specifically approved by us. Having only just issued officers with their annual budgets a matter of weeks before, it felt like a draconian measure but needs must in a time of crisis!

But working in the voluntary sector does have its advantages and when the Charities Aid Foundation Emergency Covid Fund crossed my desk, I decided to make an application on behalf of the team. The process was relatively simple and fairly quick and within weeks, we had been awarded a grant which gave us some breathing space.

I said all of our fundraising was put on hold but that's not quite true. We have within our

Main picture: West Cornwall vehicle, on duty July 2020. Other images: Team members in action (pre-Covid pandemic) © West Cornwall SRT, via Facebook.



team some enterprising individuals and one of them saw an opportunity to turn the pub quizzes into a virtual event. These ended up proving very popular and bringing in several hundred pounds of much needed funding for the team.

Meanwhile, we were also looking at the local authority Business Rate Grant scheme and, after sorting out some technical issues, we were also successful in that. The bank

balance was now looking a lot healthier (more so than when we started the year, in fact).

Although the pandemic is far from over, and as I write, local lockdowns are in place in other parts of the UK and a second wave is a very real possibility, we are keen to learn lessons from our experience.

We know we need to diversify our income streams for the future with online options playing a greater role. We also need to

review our reserves policy to ensure we have enough in the bank to get us through any disruption.

But we're not taking any chances and we have already added an Emergency Planning Officer to our Board of Trustees. As she likes to remind us, it's always good to be prepared — and next time, we will be! 🙌

SEPTEMBER: LANGDALE AMBLESIDE TEAM MEMBERS CELEBRATE FIFTY YEARS BY LIGHTING UP THEIR 'LOGO' ON THE LANGDALE PIKES



Team members and other volunteers lined up along the Langdale Pikes skyline, taking in Pike of Stickle, Harrison Stickle, Loft Crag and Gimmer Crag, using high-powered mountain rescue torches to bring the team's logo to life, visible for miles around.

'It allowed us to recognise 50 years of rescuing those in need from the fells in Langdale, Grasmere, Ambleside and Windermere,' says Sarah Anderson, deputy team leader, 'and to thank those who helped make it happen'.

The event was supported by Lakeland Mountain Guides, who organise a series of Lake District Light Festivals every year, and team members were joined by a film crew from BBC's Countryfile — and presenters Ellie and Joe — for a programme that aired 27 September. Ellie interviewed Sarah generally about being in MR, the history of LAMRT and suggestions for good items to pack for a day on the fell. They also interviewed a previous casualty from last year. An eye catching and fitting end to a year of celebrations, despite the limitations imposed by the sudden appearance of Covid-19.

As their Facebook post noted, it has been '50 years of late nights, missed meals, relieved relatives, humbled adventurers, long carries, short breaths, working with other teams on the hill and arriving back at base to hot pies and tired eyes. And it all started with a bunch of folk who knew what it was like to come a cropper on the fells, who stopped what they were doing and made time to help out others as they'd once been helped themselves.'

AUGUST: DOG RESCUE LANGDALE AMBLESIDE: BARNEY THE FLATCOAT GETS A STRETCHER LIFT TO GRASMERE

Couldn't resist the image and wishing Barney a full recovery after his rescue. He and his owners were recovered back to Grasmere by Langdale Ambleside team members.

He was reportedly very well-behaved throughout his ordeal and the team took the opportunity to remind their social media followers that 'it's as important to keep your animals hydrated as it is your humans'.

Top: The Langdale Pikes lit up under a moody sky © John Shedwick Photography. **Above:** The walk up into position © LAMRT. **Right:** Barney enjoying the ride back to Grasmere via stretcher © LAMRT.



SEPTEMBER: MISSING YORKSHIRE DALES WALKER FOUND BY WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER

Eighty-year-old Harry Harvey was reunited with his family at the Tan Hill Inn, after going missing for almost three days. He was reported missing after heading out for an organised walking and camping trip with a group in Swaledale. He was found when wildlife photographer Annette Pyrah spotted him waving at her near Keld and realised it was him.

Harry went missing on the Sunday afternoon, in the area between Gunnerside Gill and Tan Hill, after he became separated from his walking group. Swaledale and North of Tyne team members were joined in the search by personnel from RAF Leeming and a national Police Air Service helicopter also joined the operation. Rescuers searched through the night and into the next day, in cold, wet and windy weather conditions.

The hope was that Harry — an experienced walker who was carrying all his camping equipment with him — had sought shelter somewhere during the night. Farmers and gamekeepers were asked to check barns and outbuildings.

When he was finally spotted, he was about six miles from where he was last seen. Speaking to journalists at a press conference, Harry said 'I just got separated by getting caught in a really heavy hailstorm, a howling gale of wind. By the time I got my kit on, it was getting really dark, so I missed what I would say was a turning. I had a Plan B straight away: find somewhere safe to camp, put my tent up, keep warm and that was it.'

'The biggest problem I had was getting to Tynemouth from Keld because I only had £21.05 in my pocket!'

He went on to say that he'd had 'three good nights wild camping' after finding a safe place to do so and was never worried as he had 'all the kit and all the training' adding that he would rather not have all the attention which he said was 'not my scene at all'.

His family described the previous three days as 'torture', saying they know he is experienced 'but not three nights. That's taking it a little bit extreme'.

Throughout the search operation, the Tan Hill looked after Harry's family and the 100+ mountain rescuers, seven search dogs and handlers involved, so a huge thank you to them.



Top: The Tan Hill Inn © North of Tyne MRT; Searchers in the mist © Swaledale MRT.

Left: The area between Gunnerside Gill and Tan Hill © Peter McDermott.

NEWS ROUND
JULY > SEPTEMBER



JULY: DOG RESCUE MERTHYR TYDFIL: LOUIS THE SPANIEL RESCUED FROM AN EIGHT-METRE DEEP SHAFT

South and Mid Wales CRT assisted South Wales Fire Service when the seven-year-old spaniel disappeared down a deep hole near Merthyr Tydfil.

Working with the Fire Service rope rigging team, a team member descended to Louis who was at the bottom of a loose and meandering shaft, eight metres deep. A quick clip and haul and Louis was back with his family.

Raising funds for rescue



TACKLING THE BIG 4 AT 40

In August, Ross Jenkin took on a challenge which he believes has never been done before: to do all four national 24-hour mountain challenges, only resting on the drive between them.

The plan was to begin with the Paddy Buckley Round in Snowdonia, then on to Northern Ireland for the Dennis Rankin Round, back to Scotland for the Ramsey Round and finishing on home turf for the Bob Graham — a total of 387km and 31,800m of ascent! Sadly, he had to call off his challenge before reaching the BG but, undeterred, he's already considering how he can complete it — maybe even do the whole thing again!

'I wanted to do something to raise some money for causes which mean a lot to me,' he says, 'and when I thought of this, I couldn't get it out of my head.'

His hope was to raise at least £15,000 for CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably), Dogs Trust, Lagan SAR, Lochaber MRT and MREW. By mid-September, he had £6,688.75 and counting, including Gift Aid — <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/RossJENKIN2>. We hope to bring you a fuller story of this epic challenge in our next issue. Meanwhile: fantastic effort Ross!



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SEPTEMBER: RECOGNITION OF THE INVALUABLE SUPPORT KEEPING RESCUE TEAM ON THE ROAD

In recognition of Chambers Garage's generous support over many years, Patterdale team has presented the Tirril-based business with a Business Supporter plaque and a special letter of thanks. The presentation was made by Mike Childs, the team's vehicle officer.

Chambers Garage services and maintains the team's rescue boat trailer as well as its fleet of four Land Rover Defender 110 rescue vehicles. One of the team's rescue vehicles, known as Mobile 3, is now sixteen years old and it is testimony to the company's quality of service that it has served four years more than the usual twelve years for a Patterdale MRT rescue vehicle. Consequently, the team and trustees took the decision just before lockdown to purchase a Land Rover New Defender 110 as a replacement vehicle. A fundraising campaign was launched earlier in the summer to raise £85,000, £55,000 for the vehicle and another £30,000 for specialist modifications to convert it to a rescue vehicle.

So far, thanks to a significant bequest and the generosity of members of the public, the team has raised £20,000 towards this target and is anticipating that the proceeds of the sale of the old vehicle will boost this soon too. However, that still leaves them with almost £50,000 to be raised.

Top: Patterdale's Mike Childs, presenting Chris and Ian Chambers with a Business Supporter plaque in recognition of their support for the team.

NEWS ROUND

JULY > SEPTEMBER



AUGUST: RESCUERS RESUME SEARCH FOR MISSING WALKER

Dundonnell team members returned to Fisherfield Forest in an effort to find West Yorkshire man Martin Rhodes, missing since May, but without success.

The team had pledged to Mr Rhodes's family that they would continue to search the remote area of Wester Ross after having to curtail the operation during lockdown. The 46-year-old was reported missing after failing to return to his holiday accommodation in Kinlochewe.

The area, often referred to as the Great Wilderness, contains several of the most inaccessible munros in Scotland and the team said it was believed he intended to climb at least one of those peaks before returning to his hotel.

Despite repeated searches conducted at the time by the Dundonnell team, Torridon MRT, Search and Rescue Dogs Scotland and Coastguard and Police Scotland helicopters Mr Rhodes was not found.

Above: Fisherfield Forest © Andy Beaton, Dundonnell MRT.

GREAT NEWS!!!

ITCHYROBOT have been shortlisted in TeesTech Awards 2020 in the 'Tech for Good' category.

TeesTech
AWARDS 2020



SHORTLISTED



AUGUST: TRAINING APP PROVIDERS SHORTLISTED FOR AN AWARD

Itchyrobot, the company that supports Cleveland MRT with their IT needs, was shortlisted in the Tees Tech Awards 2020, in the 'Tech for Good' category.

Itchyrobot adopted the team as their nominated charity some years ago. Rob Adams, the company's technical director, even joined Cleveland's operational support team and is currently IT/Comms officer, so team members felt a special stake in the shortlisting. Although they didn't win at the final stage, to have been recognised in such a prestigious event was a great achievement.

The team's training data used to be managed in a variety of ways, both computer spreadsheets and paper records. Rob was asked to bring these into a standard format that could be collated into useful reports to allow the team leader group to make informed decisions.

The company developed an online Training Management System, now used to record all training events, each with a set of defined competencies, providing a log of all training. It's also used to record attendance at call-outs, linked to the competencies demonstrated during the incident.

Team Leader Carl Faulkner said, 'We can now easily track members' training, prioritise resources and plan for the future more efficiently.'

The system is also now in use by twenty other MR teams with other areas showing interest and has proved to be a huge boon, eliminating the unwieldy system that went before it and allowing the team to identify training gaps on an individual and group basis.

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NEWS ROUND

JUNE > SEPTEMBER



JUNE: BBC COUNTRYFILE FILM SARAS FIRST SWIFTWATER RESCUE TRAINING POST-COVID

The segment featured Kate Humble's visit to the team's first swiftwater session since coronavirus took hold and demonstrated the difficulties of using PPE in the water environment – and how important it is to hang onto to one end of a rope. It is available to view at <https://youtu.be/zmmVXB7MgL8>



SEPTEMBER: LIGHTER FOOTPRINT FOR CRO

The Cave Rescue Organisation's three white Land Rovers are an all-too-familiar sight around the Yorkshire Three Peaks and Malhamdale, going mainly to the aid of injured or lost walkers. But the end of production of the iconic Land Rover Defender has left CRO – like many other teams – with some crucial questions.

Part of CRO's answer, in the short term at least, is a Honda Pioneer, 4-seater UTV (Utility Terrain Vehicle, sometimes known as a 'side-by-side ATV'). This was supplied by Paxtons of Bentham and the purchase made possible by part of a very generous legacy. Over the next year or so, the vehicle fleet will be reviewed and a decision made as to whether the oldest of CRO's three Land Rover 130s should be re-built or replaced by something with a lesser capability, off-road.

CRO members are acutely aware of the potential for causing damage to sensitive routes and terrain, particularly with a heavily-loaded 4x4. Since its purchase, last November, the Pioneer has seen service taking equipment up to Gaping Gill, so that cave rescuers were able to walk up, unencumbered by extra kit and has delivered members further up the fell to lost or injured walkers than was possible with a Defender 130. It has also been used on several animal rescues, sometimes returning stock to the farmstead in the owner's sheep trailer.

Several members have gained LANTRA ATV-driving certificates, having been trained and assessed at Coniston Off-Road Centre, at Coniston Cold, Skipton.

Right: Colin Ellison of Paxton's hands over the keys to Sean Whittle, CRO chairman © CRO. **Below right:** The Pioneer in action at Coniston Cold. Photos courtesy of Coniston Off-road Centre.



AUGUST: BULLOCK CHARGES COUPLE IN THEIR EIGHTIES AS THEY CROSS FIELDS

The couple were knocked to the ground by the bullock while enjoying a Sunday afternoon walk along a path through fields near Braithwaite, Keswick.

The animal turned on them, leaving the man with a hip injury and in need of hospital treatment. They managed to get to the next field where they called for help. Keswick team members were already dealing with a complex rescue at Great End, in the Scafell region, but managed to mobilise additional team members.



NEWS ROUND

JULY > SEPTEMBER



JULY: NEW CHARITY PALE ALE HELPS UPPER WHARFEDALE TEAM

The Littondale-based Lamb Brewing Company have created a new Charity Pale Ale and will be donating 20p a pint to the team, to help weather the storm of this year's fundraising challenges.

Head Brewer Thomas Crapper said, 'I've been aware of the fantastic work of our local fell rescue volunteers for a while now, and wanted to do something to help raise funds and some awareness for this important charity. The Upper Wharfedale team provides an essential emergency service in the Dales, and this year they need our support more than ever.'

Returning from a call-out in early July, team members Matt and Mick stopped to check on the progress of 'the team's beer' and Thomas Crapper broke off from barreling the brew to pose for a photograph with them.

The Charity Pale Ale is reported to be a light, easy-drinking pale ale, suitably refreshing after a long walk in the dales! Lamb Brewing Company was established only last year, and operates from the Queens Arms in Litton. The team's CPA will be available at the Queen's Arms in Litton, the Craven Arms in Appletreewick and a number of other local pubs.

Top: Left to right: Matt Richardson, Thomas Crapper and Mick Ellerton outside the Craven Arms © UWFRA.



JULY: ADAM 'SUMMITS EVEREST'

July saw Upper Wharfedale team members start very limited, socially distanced, face-to-face training for the first time since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak but, like some of their colleagues around the country, one or two individual team members had kept themselves very active over the previous three months, including Adam Collinge.



As part of his daily lockdown exercise regime, Adam ascended Baildon Moor more than 100 times, via many different routes. Once he'd achieved 8,900 metres on the 89th ascent, he had 'summitted' Everest and enjoyed a suitable, socially-distanced, summit celebration with a few teammates.

Top & left: Photos © Adam Collinge & John Shackleton.



JULY: FORMATION SWIMMING AND UNIMPRESSED DUCKS



Cleveland team resumed water training at Cod Beck Reservoir in the North York Moors. On their way back to the water's edge, a few team members decided to try their hand at formation swimming which was 'maybe a work in progress' they think. The ducks didn't seem to be overly impressed either... You reckon?

Raising funds for rescue



JULY: RUNNING A MILE FOR EVERY HOUR OVER 24 HOURS RAISES £1,191 FOR CLEVELAND TEAM

Nicky Francis and her three children Eva (14), Stan (13) and Angus (10) undertook the challenge and, considering their ages, the stop/start nature of the hourly runs and the overnight sessions, this was no mean feat.

Some team members joined them for the final hour at Skinningrove on the north-east coast and, between them, they raised a phenomenal £1,191 for the team: a great effort by the Francis family!





AUGUST: CASUALTY VISITS COCKERMOUTH BASE, BEARING THANK-YOU BICCIES

A handful of Cockermouth team members gathered one bright August morning to meet the chap they'd last seen five months before, on 5 March, heading away from an avalanche strewn slope on Pillar Rock, in the care of an HM Coastguard helicopter crew. His reflections on the incident – and commentary from a crew member – formed the basis of a substantial article in Issue 72, Spring 2020. **Judy Whiteside** went along on the day to chat to Richard Tiplady and his wife, Irene.



On that fateful day, Richard and a pal had been climbing Pillar Rock when he slipped and fell some 200+ metres. By the time he somehow came to rest amongst avalanche debris, just metres from the edge of a steep cliff above West Waterfall, some 250 metres below, he had sustained extensive injuries including deep lacerations to his scalp, a broken bone in his neck, a chipped elbow bone and a fractured right ankle.

The visit to Cockermouth base was an opportunity to meet some of his rescuers and chat over what had happened on that day — all part of his continued catharsis and remarkable recovery. Also there was Richard's wife Irene, to whom he attributes a large part of his ability to recover so speedily — that and his deep Christian faith. Richard trains priests for The Scottish Episcopal Church, and seeing not just how he survived such an accident in the first instance, but how he has recovered since and his unfailingly positive demeanour — and notwithstanding the veritable army of medical care he's received since — you

to see a recovery as well documented as Richard's has been, what with his own social media updates and a variety of radio and TV appearances. Or as speedy — and with little or no visible reminder of the trauma he suffered.

Claire Nicholson is one of his students in training for ordination in the Scottish Episcopal Church. But she is also a consultant neurosurgeon at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle where Richard was treated, working in adult and paediatric neurosurgery and subspecialising in spina bifida, tumours, movement disorders, epilepsy and chronic pain. She wasn't Richard's surgeon that day (although she does carry out the sort of neck surgery he had), but she was in communication with the team in Newcastle who were looking after him.

Having seen Richard looking so chipper (although he did admit to shaking as he replayed his memories of the day with the handful of team members there to meet him), I asked her what sort of recovery she would normally expect from a patient in terms of the injuries sustained and the time since the accident, compared with the relative speed of his actual recovery.

'It's complicated,' she says, 'because speed of recovery depends so much on attitude of mind. In

terms of rate of healing and time taken to get back on his feet, Richard followed the advice he was given by medical staff and from that point of view his recovery was much as would be expected for a fit person of his

age. What I think is more significant was his determination to get back in the hills, which he did just under five months after his accident (and would probably have done sooner had it not been for coronavirus).

'At that time he still had a lot of pain and stiffness in his neck and his ankle. People tend to assume that persistent pain means your body is telling you not to do something but this is not necessarily so. Following a fracture, it is very common to find that a joint/bone never feels quite the way it did but this does not mean you should spend the rest of your life on the sofa in case you hurt yourself. It is crucial for your mental and physical health that you start exercising again.

'During his convalescence, Richard was reading books on mountaineering (I am responsible for his reading of Edward Whymper's 'Scrambles amongst the Alps' — I was reading it in Zermatt while Richard was recovering from his neck operation and kept texting him photos of the Matterhorn), and dreaming of being back in the hills.

'Physical recovery depends greatly on mental and emotional recovery and I think this is the reason why Richard got back to hill walking so quickly. My husband is exactly the same — numerous fractures from falling off/down mountains but he loves the hills so he puts up with the pain and gets on with it. Less determined people faced with the same injury recover much more slowly and may never get back to what they did before.

'Pain processing in the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) is complex. The signals the CNS receives from an injured limb are determined by the nature of the injury, but what happens when they reach the higher centres in the brain will vary

greatly from one person to the next, both in the short term and in the long term. Think of the many stories you will have read about mountaineers who suffer terrible accidents and yet somehow manage to get themselves back to safety — they seem superhuman and, in a sense, they are. The expression 'mind over matter' is absolutely true in this context — consider how differently we react to pain depending on our state of mind. Neurobiologically, this is reflected in chemical and physical changes in the pain processing pathways. There's a great deal of evidence that pain can become hard-wired in the CNS and that this phenomenon is highly dependent on the emotional response of patient to their situation.'

As he fell, Richard reported feeling very calm, almost matter-of-fact, watching himself sliding down that slope in slow motion, thinking about what he should be doing. When he came to rest, he was able to calmly assess his situation: Was he secure? What were his injuries? How best to call for help? Repeated blowing on his whistle, exactly as he'd learned, to aid discovery by the rescue services. Only really feeling the extent of his injuries when he knew he was safe, his rescue in hand. But how could he remain so calm?

'It's well known,' says Claire, 'that adrenaline and the various other chemicals released into the bloodstream following significant trauma give the casualty a window of relative freedom from pain and a clarity of thought that allows them to remain calm and manage the situation.'

'This window is usually relatively short and I have no doubt that it must have been exceptionally uncomfortable to be winched into a helicopter with a broken neck and a broken ankle. The nerve pain that results from the sort of neck fracture Richard sustained is most unpleasant. His scalp injuries, although relatively minor in the overall scheme of things, would have been very distressing because the scalp tends to bleed profusely and this is very alarming. The way he dealt with this is an example of the ability to remain calm in a crisis — you cope because you have to — the survival instinct is strong'.

Although not directly involved in his treatment, Claire kept a close eye on Richard's case throughout.

'I work closely with the orthopaedic surgeon who operated on Richard and I knew he was in good hands. Neurosurgeons and orthopaedic surgeons both deal with spinal trauma — which specialty you are admitted under depends on who happens to be on call for spine when you are admitted'.

Indeed, Richard takes every opportunity to sing the praises of all who worked to save his life, both in the immediate aftermath of the accident and the months since — including a number of press and

'remarkable work done by the maxillo-facial chap at Cumberland Infirmary, plus the added bonus of a chemical peel (or equivalent) provided by a face-down 250-metre slide on firm névé!'

'It's only now, as I reflect, that I'm struck by the speed of my recovery. This photo [below right], was taken in a local nature reserve on the edge of my village in early July, when a 6km wander felt about the right level. On the last Friday in July, I climbed a 2,900ft mountain, and two days later I did a 14km wander down Ennerdale. Not huge exertions in the grand scheme of things, but I find it enormously encouraging and a testimony to the incredible care and



Opposite: Left to right: Martin Pickavance, Tom Durcan, Phil Gerrard, Dan Roach and Richard Tiplady © Steve Brailey. Inset: HM Coastguard helicopter leaving the scene following the rescue © Cockermouth MRT.

Above: Top left: Richard's scalp wounds, before and after stitching; Post-accident, visible recovery over a matter of just a week and, in July, hair fully regrown and very little sign of scarring; X-ray showing fusion of C6 and 7. Images © Richard Tiplady.

radio interviews, and television appearances on the BBC's 'Close Calls: On Camera' with Nick Knowles and, in late September, a spot on More 4's 'Emergency Rescue: Air, Land and Sea'. He's been a passionate advocate for mountain rescue, seeking to use the story of his accident to raise awareness and funds and help spread the safety message.

He shared some of the images which chart his recovery: the scalp lacerations before and after stitching, and his remarkable 'shrinking head' (over a matter of days, post-accident), compared with one taken four months in, with no visible scars on his forehead and hair fully regrown — thanks, he says, to the

support I have been given at every stage of my injury, recovery, and rehabilitation'.

Two more months have passed since, and progress continues. A neck surgery review in early September showed that his neck bones (C6 and 7) are fusing nicely, well enough to warrant discharge by his consultant. 'Some ongoing physio,' he says, 'but otherwise all is good'.

Call it what you like — divine intervention, the practised care of a legion of medical expertise, or just sheer bloody-minded determination on his part (or a serendipitous combination of all these factors) — Richard Tiplady knows he is one helluva fortunate guy. Stay safe Richard! 🍪



NEWS ROUND

JULY > SEPTEMBER

AUGUST: EDALE TEAM AVERAGES ALMOST A CALL-OUT A DAY AS VISITORS FLOCK TO AREA POST-LOCKDOWN



The team was called out 30 times over the one month and dealt with four more alerts that didn't prompt a full deployment of team members. It was a situation echoed through national parks across England and Wales...

SEPTEMBER: #999: MOUNTAIN RESCUE CELEBRATES EMERGENCY SERVICES DAY AS CALL-OUTS RISE ACROSS THE COUNTRY

At 9.00am on the 9th day of the 9th month, the UK emergency services raised flags, posted on social media and honoured those, past and present, involved in the various paid and voluntary emergency services. Shortly after the day itself, **Sally Seed** wrote a blog on behalf of MREW, reflecting on the impact coronavirus, the lockdown, and its lifting over summer, have had on incidents.



When the final 2020 stats are analysed, the contrast between spring and summer will be striking. After a locked down spring with few people on the hills, the three months of June, July and August saw some teams with the highest demand ever for their services. Not only are the numbers up but the proportion of avoidable

call-outs due to inexperience and a lack of preparedness is also up and the weight of demand has fallen particularly hard on a few teams. There were over 900 call-outs in those three months.

- June saw 194 incidents, with **NESRA** teams the busiest at 78 call-outs.
- In July and, as lockdown relaxed and staycations became everyone's favourite holiday option, there were 324 call-outs and both the **Lake District** and the **Peak District** regions saw around 70 call-outs each.
- August was even busier with 386 call-outs. The **Peak District** and **Lake District** were still the busiest regions but two teams, **Llanberis** in North Wales and **Edale** in the Peak District account for 57 and 34 call-outs respectively.

Those August figures mean that, in practice, mountain rescue volunteers were out almost every day, somewhere, often more than once a day.

AUGUST: SEVERAL YEARS LATER... BUXTON TEAM MEMBERS FINALLY RECEIVE THEIR BLUE PETER BADGES

It was a remarkably busy week for the team operationally, but they still managed to find time to head to Tegg's Nose Country Park in Macclesfield, to crew up with the good ship Blue Peter!

The BBC programme makers got in touch with Mountain Rescue England and Wales about making a secret film where a presenter must challenge themselves doing something they fear. What better way to put that talent at ease than hanging out with the team for a day's training?

'It was a pleasure to film with the Blue Peter team', said a team spokesman. 'And it doesn't matter how old we are, we were all grinning like Cheshire cats whilst recording the action!'

The programme aired in early September, when YouTube star Adam B was revealed as the 40th Blue Peter presenter in the programme's history, and team members were delighted to help him with his first challenge for the world's longest running children's television series: a stretcher abseil!

Team members Neil and Kerry talked to Adam on camera about the work of mountain rescue and how visitors to the Peak District National Park and other rural areas of the UK can best prepare themselves for adventures that hopefully don't involve mountain rescue.

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AUGUST: WILL AND ADAM HIKE THREE PEAKS AND DALES WAY FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

During their Gold Duke of Edinburgh expedition to the mountains of Snowdonia, when they were introduced to team members at Ogwen Mountain rescue base, William Duke and his pal Adam Childs were inspired to hike the Yorkshire Three Peaks (39.2km) followed by the Dales Way (128.7km) in just four days, in aid of mountain rescue.



Both experienced hill walkers, their initial plan was to set out in June but Covid-19 put a stop to that and the pair set off in late August instead.

Taking in Ingleborough, Whernside and Pen-y-Ghent on the first day, then heading to Ilkley in Yorkshire's West Riding, to walk the Dales Way in the remaining three days – covering on average 32km per day – they finished in at Bowness on Windermere in the Lake District and managed to raise a grand £1,510 along the way! Great effort!

Left: William Duke (on the right) and Adam Childs.

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Raising funds for rescue

JULY: TRI-NATION TINY TROTTERS TAKE ON THEIR SUMMER TROTATHON FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE



After the huge success of tiny horse Angus trotting out his first 50k running week in the recent 'MRathon', stablemates Page Boy and Titan joined him for a new challenge: the Tri-Nation Trotathon. The three tiny horses each represented a country and mountain rescue organisation, and fans were invited to follow their progress over a week, as they totted up the miles to raise cash for mountain rescue in England, Wales and Scotland – all thanks to super-fan and fundraiser Tina Page.

Angus (codename: Tyson Fury) made his name during his 'MRathon' challenge, earlier this year. Representing his birthplace of Wales, he continued to support his nominated team, South Snowdonia SRT. Angus is described as 'a mini powder keg: feisty, full of energy, determined, single minded and prefers to always do things his way! He's a fast-footed front runner and prospective podium placer though often jeopardises his chances with his crazy antics, tantrums and regular spoiling for a fight. He's mastered the wild style of Burro Racing and running with him,' says Tina, 'is a full-body workout, more demanding than a HIIT session!'

Page Boy (codename: Camelface) has an all together different character. Representing England, he was running for his local team, Calder Valley SRT. 'He is generally super chill and a keen middle-of-the-pack social runner', says Tina. 'He doesn't care too much for speed, just enjoys being out on the

trails and paces along with his head held high. Running with Page Boy gives you a steady and consistent tempo or easy run and, given he doesn't waste any time larking about, he can often come in ahead of speed-demon Angus, although he does struggle to pass by any tasty clump of vegetation!'

Finally, Titan (codename: The Tank or The Aberdeen Beefcake) was the gentle giant of the tiny horse team, there to support Scottish Mountain Rescue and represent his birthplace and homeland of Scotland. 'Titan is the gentleman of the three and likes to follow my lead', says Tina. 'He will usually pick up the pace as soon as I move and patiently stop and wait if I stop, never trying to push his own agenda or take off in a different direction. With a little more life experience, he demonstrates a more mature attitude than the other two, most content just gently jogging along at the back of the pack!'

By the time the final scores were on the stable doors, a week after trotting out, Tina (the Tiny Horse Team's self-styled 'clip-clop chaperone') had clocked up a whopping 83 miles on her own two feet including a decent 3,422 metres uphill – remarkably, the heights of the highest mountains of England, Scotland and Wales combined!

Podium places were awarded on gold medals only which means a three-way tie as all the tiny trotathletes snaffled two gold medals each!

Summing up the adventure, Tina sent out 'a huge thanks and virtual fluffy pony hugs to everyone for joining in the frivolitousness and helping raise some shiny coins for these great mountain rescue causes. Between them, our three tiny horse tributes have raised over £500 so far in total!' Not a bad trot out!

Top: Page Boy meets Tim and Al from Calder Valley SRT who stopped by with a congratulatory carrot © Tina Page/CVSRT.



Oops... nearly but not quite...

A member of the OVMRO support group, **Peter Tyson** happened to pick up a copy of Mountain Rescue magazine a couple of years ago and noted how we are now actively promoting safety before rescue. 'I have long felt work like this was needed,' he says. 'I have rambled for nearly as long as the mountains have been there, most years in the Alps below glaciers and serious rock. Although mainly self-taught, I do tend to be very careful since I am usually alone, avoid Paddington-Station-at-2,000m routes and realise that phone companies find alpages uneconomic for masts. I have decided, now aged 77, that I must prioritise getting down over getting to the top but life is by no means boring. I've had few hiccups along the way but after one recent incident decided I would write down the details in the hope it might be of interest to rescuers, notably the psychology...'

PRIDE ...

It had all gone so well. Here I was, standing at the top of the St Bernard Pass, having cut twenty minutes off the walking time indicated on the fingerpost, way down below. I had done everything right: left the tent nearly two hours before the sun would show itself over the rim of the mountains, drunk regularly and carried a reduced, but adequate, load in the sack. A quick cup of coffee and I was practically bouncing with enthusiasm as I set out for the gravity-assisted leg. Two and a half hours should see me back at the tent, with most of the afternoon before me.

...COMES BEFORE A FALL.

Of course, we don't note converging paths when we navigate a simple outward route

and, about an hour later, I came across a fork which had not been there in the morning. I was mulling over something along the lines of whether electromagnetic waves can do work when they shine on a road (honest) and for some inexplicable reason decided I didn't want to bear off to the right, despite a sign indicating the footbridge I had passed in the morning. This was my first mistake.

It didn't take long for me to realise I was climbing far too high up the mountainside. However, there were a number of parallel tracks on grassy slopes below me, so I started to drop down. When I reached quite a respectable one I decided that, sooner or later, there was sure to be an offshoot which would descend to the footbridge, since there were few river crossings along this stretch of the road. Wrong. The track continued for some way until it hit an electric fence running

down the mountainside and bordering some woods. These, in turn, looked as if they filled a deep gully.

Mildly irritating, but not to worry — an electric fence obviously meant cows, and their owners obviously made tracks as they yodelled their way to work. Besides, it was a long way back. The slope was steep, covered in grass and scrub. It seemed wiser to work upwards since downwards might suddenly end in dangerous slopes, if not cliffs. The steepness of the hillside was possibly approaching critical and its irregularities added to the difficulty. Grass slopes, even when dry, can be deceptively slippery — early peasants in the Alps sometimes used a style of crampon — but at least I could get a good edge with my boots. I grasped the occasional shrub the way rock climbers never, never do. Irritation, though, was giving way to concern. I knew

the rough profile of the mountain but each time I aimed for an obvious place for a track I would draw a blank. There were faint tracks akin to the Snowdonia goat tracks, but probably made by marmots which, if they got lost, could simply dig a hole and hibernate. The traces quickly died out anyway. I found a splash of blue paint on a rock, but the path it marked entered a thicket and became overgrown, and I wasted some time forcing my way through what seemed to be its route.

By now, my having gone so far on difficult terrain, going back was no longer a realistic option and, after constantly gaining and losing height, I was now beginning to tire. All this height would need to be lost safely as it was a long way down to where I knew the proper track lay and I started to get seriously worried. I did have in my favour good visibility, plenty of water, hours more of daylight and a knowledge of the general lie of the land. I couldn't remember there being any streams to cross on these slopes but, if there were, at least rain and snow-melt would not be an issue.

And, of course, I had the map and GPS gadget. Except that, when I got the map out of the rucksack I discovered that, in my dreamy state when packing, I had included the wrong one... Trudging onward, I was soon getting seriously tired and seriously worried. Logic told me that eating lunch would give me energy and a rest, but worry drove me on and I settled for a choc bar. I thought about phoning a friend below who would assume, if I wasn't back by nightfall, that I was somewhere on the waymarked track. However, although he was local and I could give him a grid reference, no vehicle could get anywhere near me and there was little he could do at this point. The nice red helicopter could pluck me off in a trice if the worst came to the worst, but hopefully, if I took care with my footing, the situation wouldn't warrant 112 for a while yet. The gadget and headtorch were there if the need arose.

More thickets running down the slope constantly got in the way. I figured that at least I was visible if I skirted them, but this made for a meandering route as I struggled northwards on slopes which still refused to ease off. Hitting yet another bunch of trees, I looked at the lie of the land and gambled that a way through was more likely if I picked my way carefully down a boulder field. Fortunately, the rocks were big enough that they would not easily slip underfoot, and a descent on this was preferable to one at the edges where long grass concealed holes and rocks from the unwary. I was only too conscious that a twisted ankle would remove any doubt as to the need for the air taxi.

Indeed, as I had hoped, the woods weren't quite as dense at the bottom and I heard the

sound of running water. It was not difficult to locate a small stream which cut a narrow path down through the trees. I considered following it, holding on to the bushes at the sides, but quickly abandoned this idea when, predictably, Vibram proved itself quite unequal to moss and wet rock. (On the other hand, with nailed boots..?)

Then I tried just off to the side, in dense, high and sodden vegetation, falling a couple of times and frankly no longer strong enough to cope with a slight stumble. Worse, I was approaching the point where I didn't really care any more.

So I checked out the other side of the stream where, mercifully, I broke out of the bushes and looked down some way towards an abandoned building I knew well and which lay beside the blessed track. Happily also, I had lost most of the height I needed to and, although the descent was steep, it involved only a mixture of dry grass and small rocks. A final, careful and weary ten minutes found me regaining the tourist route maybe a mile and a half from where I left it, after a miserable and anxious two hours on the mountainside.

I was well-nigh exhausted. However, after half my lunch and fifteen minutes' rest I was able to walk fairly comfortably the rest of the way down to camp. Suspected blisters proved to be only pieces of grit in my boots and all I had to show from this traumatic experience was a few nettle stings. Well, aside from a badly chastened ego.

WHY...

Not a month earlier I had passed scathing remarks on people who, never having climbed on snow, leave modest altitudes and immediately pit themselves against twelve thousand feet of Mont Blanc. My first reaction after my own escapade was that this was the time to hang up my boots, but later I thought of many previous excursions quite free of incident, such as one the previous week when I had turned back just in time to miss the kind of thunderstorm only the mountains can throw at you.

The decision which led to all the consequences was a careless one, born, I suppose, of complacency after fifty years of trotting up and down mountains pretty much unscathed but for a twisted knee sustained on ice in the Malvern Hills: I felt good, the route was easy and I had already walked it on several occasions. My descent was to follow the same recognised tracks as I had taken on the way up.

The decision not to turn back as soon as the mistake was noticed was questionable. The one not to do so when there was no guarantee of a track ahead was a bad one. This was the crux: after one minor error things had slowly but inexorably gone from

bad to worse. Most decisions were based on a judgement, but on guesses, not on firm knowledge. I didn't panic and knew all along that there was the mobile as a last resort — at least if I could get a signal. I was scrambling over dubious slopes on a green mountain, not a grey or a white one. It was, though, very unlikely that there would be anyone else within perhaps half a mile and the fact that I had left notice of my intended route may even have misdirected any search had I not been able to phone for help since, in rescuers' shoes, I would certainly have started a search on the other side of the track, by the river. It was stubborn pride which held me back from the precaution of phoning my friend to warn him roughly where I was just in case I had a serious fall. Late in the season, as it was now, I was fairly fit, otherwise my usual precaution of allowing two hours of reserve energy may have left me severely stretched.

I had deliberately lightened my pack before departure since conditions looked good and settled (and, to be fair, Europeans in the Alps do tend to use quite small day sacks). Nobody will ever know whether I could have survived a night in early September at five and a half thousand feet, although I suspect the answer is 'probably'. Judging by experience in the campsite, the temperature would most likely have descended to around freezing point and the wind remained light. Certainly I had waterproofs, a foil blanket, the gadget-which-you-can't-possibly-get-lost, sultanas as emergency food, a little water, headtorch and phone. And a whistle — after reading of a girl who lay injured for six days in deep undergrowth after falling off the Appalachian trail I had replaced the whistle I earlier took out of the sack because anything without batteries is sooth yesterday. Strangely, the cost of a Swiss rescue helicopter never entered my head, and undoubtedly the small print of my travel insurance makes the reasonable assumption that I would never venture into a remote landscape of grass, rocks, holes, woods and cliffs, all at an angle of thirty degrees.

So, dear reader, this was the thinking of one rambler who might so easily have entered into the statistics, if not achieved stardom in the media, one who could have dragged volunteers out of their beds and offered armchair experts the chance to write indignant letters. I wrote the story itself immediately on my return because I felt that, whilst the outcome was a non-event, the psychology was interesting. The discussion was written some time later when emotions had dimmed somewhat. Other titles considered ranged from 'Oops!', through 'There, but for the grace of God', to 'How could anyone with experience have been so stupid?' You be the judge. ☺

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SEPTEMBER: NORTH EAST TEAMS AND PARTNER AGENCIES PUSH #BEADVENTURESMART MESSAGE

As the nights began to draw in, Northumberland National Park and North of Tyne teams joined Northumbria Police, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, Forestry England and Northumberland National Park Authority in asking hill goers to #BeAdventureSmart.

'Over recent weeks', said Chief Superintendent Janice Hutton, 'Northumbria Police has received a number of calls requesting mountain rescue and the two volunteer teams have been more than willing to respond. However, a number of these call-outs could have been avoided by members of the public planning ahead before they enjoy time in the hills, moors and forests of Northumberland.'

Tony Gates, chief executive of Northumberland National Park Authority, recognised that staycation holidays have introduced a new and very welcome type of visitor to the National Park, but 'whether you are new or even a regular visitor to the outdoors, it is important you know how to stay safe'.

Autumn can be stunning in the forests of Northumberland, with the many waymarked trails an ideal starting point for exploring the Northumberland countryside on foot, by bike or on horseback. Kevin May, of Forestry England, reminded people that the mobile phone signal can be limited, particularly in the forests. Paul Hedley, Chief Fire Officer for Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, urged 'anyone visiting our beautiful countryside to follow all local guidance and not to start any campfires'.

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AUGUST: SPOT THE WINCHIE!!

Three women made a frequent error when descending the North Ridge of Tryfan and, when the cloud came down, decided not to complete their scramble to the summit. A passerby told them the gully below the Notch was an escape route (only for those who know the mountain well), so they scrambled down Y gully until a point of no return'.

'Fortunately,' says OVMRO's Chris Lloyd, 'we were just completing a rescue of a large family group from another gully on the West Face, further north and not as treacherous. In addition, Rescue 936 was passing over en route home from the Lake District for a refuel. Initially, the crew were unable to get to the three women, so collected 'the walrus' (Jed Stone, seen right) and three team members, winching them on 50 to 60 metres of wire onto steep ground below the gully.

'As the conditions had improved slightly, the crew decided to attempt to recover the three girls. One by one, they were plucked from the rock face and deposited on the steep ground with we waiting team members. Once the helicopter had left us in the peace and tranquillity of an evening, high up on the West Face of Tryfan, we walked the ladies to the A5 and their cars. They were most apologetic as they'd made good preparations for the day and were reasonably well-equipped. But this is a frequent error and they did exactly the right thing by not descending further.

Right: Winchie barely visible in the gully above Jed Stone © Chris Lloyd/OVMRO.



JULY: FIVE YEAR OLD RAISES £165 FOR TEAM

Fundraisers come in all shapes and sizes but rarely this young! When Cleveland team members assisted Lucy Atkinson after a fall on a muddy hill track above Gormire Lake leading up to Sutton Bank in North Yorkshire, little did they know it would inspire her son Teddy to raise valued cash for the team with a bake sale. Lucy had been out walking with Teddy and a friend, when she fell. A few weeks later, Teddy and his childminder Jenny put on the sale 'for the team that saved his mummy'.

Raising funds for rescue

The men and women who made mountain rescue (Oracle: History): **Wilson Hey**

David Allan, when MREW chairman, was amongst several who contributed articles to The Oracle, a published resource which was intended to be the fount of all mountain rescue knowledge. Sadly, The Oracle is no longer 'live' but its many tales are still worth telling. Many of these people – and the sacrifices they made – laid the ground work for the mountain rescue service we know to day. In this issue, we bring you two of them...



Cartoon © David Allan. Right: Wilson Hey.

Within mountain rescue, Wilson H Hey is most well known for his stance over the use of morphine by mountain rescue teams. It is, however, arguable that his chairmanship and leadership of the group that brought organised mountain rescue into existence in the UK was his greatest contribution.

Hey was born in September 1882. In 1905, he qualified with an MB ChB from medical school in Manchester and, by 1908, had obtained his FRCS. He continued his surgical training in Manchester and took up a consultant post at Manchester Royal Infirmary in 1914.

At the outbreak of war he enlisted in the RAMC, serving in France and rising to the rank of major. He was made a chevalier of the Legion of Honour for his treatment of French soldiers. During this time he published papers on the treatment of battlefield wounds.

In 1919, he returned to his post at Manchester Royal Infirmary, also working at the Christie Hospital and the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. He pursued a very active and successful career as both a clinical surgeon and as a teacher of surgery. His operating lists had a reputation for being both instructive and full of entertaining anecdotes.

It is difficult to pinpoint his first forays into the hills but, in the 1920s, he was climbing regularly across the UK and in the Alps.

'It is probably true that a single journey in the high Alps can produce in us every emotion that possesses the heart of man'. This was written by him on return from an alpine trip and reveals his passion for mountains and climbing.

He became president of the Rucksack Club and served on the council of the Alpine Club. His energies were also directed to the establishment of the Manchester University Mountaineering Club and he served as its president for several years. Through this club he took great delight in organising sorties into the mountains for both students and colleagues, possibly arranging the first geo-caching with his notorious navigational treasure hunts on Kinder Scout. There is credible anecdotal evidence that prior to climbing trips he would utilise coffee breaks on his operating lists to hang from the window sills to strengthen his grip!

In 1933, he became a leading player in the group that recognised the need for organised mountain rescue. In 1939, he took the chair of what had become the Mountain Rescue Committee and held that position for some seventeen years.

Perhaps the experiences of his military service had instilled his insistence on good splintage and pain relief. The Thomas stretcher and morphine were the immediate answers. Until 1950, he supplied morphine to Mountain Rescue Posts personally and

funded the venture. It was not until 1949 that the law caught up with him.

He declined the request to discontinue the practice, writing to the Home Office, 'If you will not give your permission to supply morphine please take legal proceedings against me'. The authorities did exactly that and he was fined £10 after a high profile court appearance. Massive support was forthcoming and the Rucksack Club paid his fine. The Scottish Mountaineering Club even offered to pay his fine!

This was, however, not the outcome he had wanted. He had anticipated a higher profile court case with a term in jail in order to publicise the cause. Happily a large body of support including politicians, leading figures from the Royal College of Surgeons and peers of the realm entered the fray and, in 1950, the law was changed to allow non-medical members of mountain rescue to hold and administer morphine.

What has been forgotten is that the local papers ran headlines 'Surgeon on drugs charges' and this did considerable damage to his professional life.

He died on 15 January 1956 at the age of 73, having passed the reins of the MRC to Fred Piggott and to one of his own surgical and mountaineering students, Noel F Kirkman. ☘



JULY: DAISY THE ST BERNARD RESCUE DOG RESCUED FROM SCAPELL PIKE

Four-year-old Daisy had collapsed whilst descending Scafell Pike. Her owners reported that she was showing signs of pain in her legs and refusing to budge.

Her owners had kept her well-hydrated and fed until Wasdale team members arrived and, fortunately for her rescuers, she was extremely placid and compliant for the stretcher carry off the mountain. It was important to get Daisy off the mountain quickly as the weather was due to deteriorate later that evening.

Wasdale team would like to thank both West Lakeland Veterinary Group and Galemire Veterinary Hospital who got in touch and gave valuable advice and support.

Above: Daisy gets a four-star ride down the mountain with Wasdale team © WMRT.



SEPTEMBER: WESTERN BEACONS SAY THANK YOU FOR NEW WHEELS

The Masonic Benevolent Fund of South Wales donated two Lyon Equipment stretcher wheels and four Aiguille Alpine Equipment medical gas

rucksacks to the team. 'The wheels,' they say, 'will certainly make carrying a casualty over long distances a bit easier'.

Above: Left to right: Gareth Watson, Patrick Pattison, Martyn Ridge and Caleb Bowkett © Western Beacons MRT.



JULY: OUTLYING FELLS GUIDEBOOK REPUBLISHED

The guide which author Alfred Wainwright once said he would never write has been republished by the Wainwright Society.

First published in 1974, the guide covers walks on hills on the edge of the national park, including Orrest Head, which is said to have first inspired the author's love of the Lake District. The reissue is of the second edition revision by Chris Jesty, which includes amendments to the first and coincides with the 90th anniversary of Wainwright's first visit to the Lake District in 1930.

NEWS ROUND

JULY > SEPTEMBER



SEPTEMBER: INJURED YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS WALKER FOUND BY POLICE AT HOME 60 MILES AWAY

The Cave Rescue Organisation was called out shortly after 9.00pm on a Saturday evening, when a walker called 999 to say her friend had fallen and injured herself while the pair were attempting the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge.

But, before any further details could be taken, the call ceased and contact could not be re-established. The phone network information suggested the caller was on Simon Fell Breast, on the descent from Ingleborough towards Horton in Ribblesdale and the completion of the traditional route. However, attempts to confirm the location were unsuccessful as North Yorkshire Police and CRO calls, texts and Phonefind messages all went unanswered.

Team members, including search dog Kez, began by searching the area of Simon Fell Breast, extending the search area systematically to cover all other routes off the hill, but despite their best efforts, no missing walkers were found. In passing, they did come across a number of individual wild camps and later apologised via Facebook to any of the campers whose 'peaceful night under the stars' was thus disturbed!

A police helicopter was due to be deployed at first light. Then, at 2.30am, police contacted the team to say the original caller's home police force had found her almost 60 miles away, having arrived home shortly after 1.00am. The mystery of how someone who was injured had escaped discovery and made their way home, was solved to some extent the following morning, when a CRO controller who had stayed at home during the evening, phoning and texting the caller's number, woke to find an apologetic text had been left on his phone at about 2.30am, explaining that the phone had died and thanking the team for their help.

'It's inevitable that people will get into difficulties on the hills,' posted a CRO spokesman on the team's Facebook page, alongside details of the incident, 'and, regardless of circumstances and weather conditions, we will do what we can to assist.'

They went on to use the incident to ask that if walkers do ever find themselves in difficulty and call upon any of the emergency services, that they please let the relevant service know at the earliest opportunity if circumstances change, for the better or the worse. They also asked that followers were considerate towards those who get into difficulty by being kind with any comments below the line.

Top: CRO vehicles outside their Clapham base © CRO.

The men and women who made mountain rescue (Oracle: History): **Wilfred Noyce**

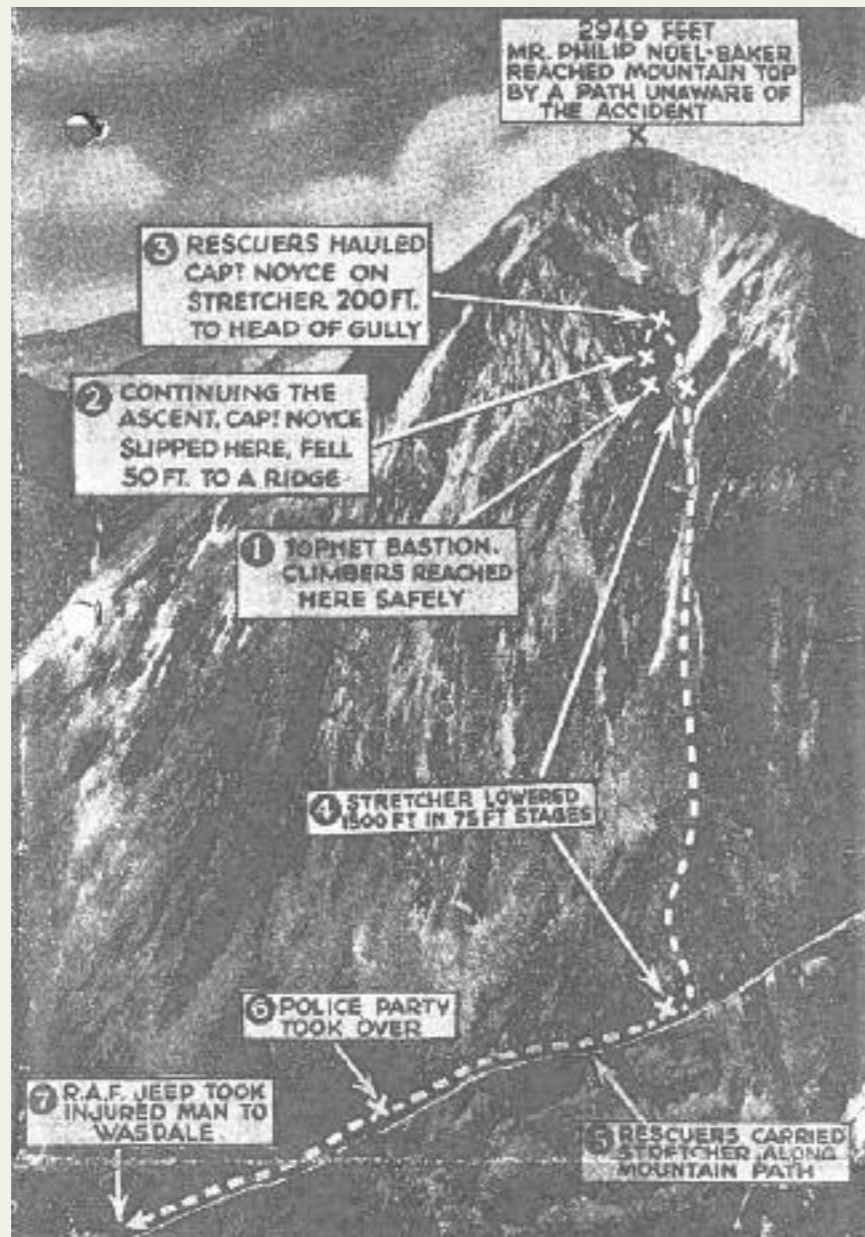
When 28-year-old Wilfred Noyce set off to climb the Shark's Fin, Tophet Bastion, on Great Gable, in April 1946, little could he have known that his fortunes that day would figure so prominently in the mountain rescue history books. Indeed, they were key to the very future of mountain rescue in the Lake District.

It was Noyce's fall, and his protracted rescue — in which a few brave men worked without food and light, through foul weather — coupled with the recent formation of a rescue team in Coniston, which inspired Rusty Westmorland to push for a similar group in Keswick. Noyce may have been catalytic in the development of a more 'joined up' rescue service but he was, in fact, an accomplished and well-respected climber, later to become a key member of the 1953 Everest expedition.

Cuthbert Wilfred Noyce was born in India on 31 December 1917, the son of Sir Frank Noyce, of the Indian Civil Service. He attended Charterhouse School and went on to read modern languages at King's College, Cambridge. Following graduation, he first taught modern languages at Malvern College before returning to his old school, Charterhouse.

Before the outbreak of World War Two, he was already gaining a reputation as one of our finest climbers. A cousin of Colin Kirkus, reputed to be 'one of the most influential climbers Britain has ever produced', Noyce was introduced by Kirkus to British rock climbing, as a boy.

In their tribute to Noyce in the *Alpine Journal*, entitled *Wilfred Noyce 1917-1962: Some Personal Memories*, John Hunt and David Cox wrote: 'At King's he was



Above: Front page of the Daily Express, 26 April 1946, illustrated the place where Noyce fell and his subsequent rescue.

exceptionally fortunate in that the generosity of one of its Fellows, A C Pigou, who was a great lover of mountains, made it possible for him to climb for two meteoric seasons with two great guides, Armand Charlet in 1937 and Hans Brantschen in 1938, each of whom must have been delighted to have such a client. At home he was already

climbing intensively with Menlove Edwards, the leading British rock climber of the later 1930s. It might be thought that he was extremely lucky to find himself climbing in this sort of company, but the fact was that his talents were altogether exceptional and that other people spotted this very quickly.'

Noyce's climbing partnership with Menlove

Edwards proved to be a formidable one, pioneering a number of new routes, but not without incident.

Hunt and Cox noted with some dismay that although 'Wilf moved easily, and seemingly without effort, when climbing on all but the most difficult rock,' he would frequently 'stand with his hands in his pockets on narrow, sloping ledges where other people would have been eagerly looking for a handhold, or wanting to drive in a peg for a bit of security.'

They speculate that a failure to fix a belay after a long run-out on the East Buttress of Scafell in 1938 may well have been responsible for the seriousness of the accident in which Menlove Edwards saved his life. On that occasion, on a very wet day, Noyce had fallen from Mickledore Grooves on Scafell. In hospital in Whitehaven with severe facial and other injuries, he underwent plastic surgery later to deal with the facial problem. In 1939, he fell climbing on Ben Nevis in winter but escaped with minor injuries.

A letter sent to his rescuers, some time after his fall from Tophet Bastion, by Noyce's father, indicates that he and his mother had been worried on more than one occasion by their son's climbing misadventures, thinking 'Wilfred had done it this time for good and all.'

During the war, he was commissioned as 2nd Lt. in King's Royal Rifle Corps. He taught mountain survival in Wales and worked for some time at an aircrew training centre in Kashmir alongside John Hunt (who later led the 1953 Everest expedition), climbing Pauhunri in the Sikkim Himalaya. He eventually became a captain in the Intelligence Corps and, after teaching himself Japanese, was responsible for significant breaking of Japanese codes.

FRONT PAGE NEWS

The war over, Noyce returned to England and continued his climbing career. It was on 24 April 1946 that he fell from the Shark's Fin. A gust of wind had apparently blown him from his stance, causing him to fall some distance onto his leg, which he described as having crumpled and broken under him. The story was front page news on 26 April 1946:

'Fifteen hundred feet up on Great Gable, the 2,900ft Lakeland peak, six climbers struggled all night in a blizzard, with an almost spent torch as their only guide, to lower an injured mountaineer to safety in a stretcher.

'Tonight, the mountaineer, Captain Wilfred Noyce, 28-year-old son of Sir Frank Noyce, former Indian civil servant, was reported 'comfortable' in Whitehaven Infirmary. He had lain for fourteen hours with a broken leg in a gully of Great Hell Gate on Great Gable.

'Colonel H Westmorland, 60-year-old member of the Alpine Club, and Mr C Elliott, 58-year-old headmaster of Eton, with three other schoolmasters and an Army captain were the men who got the stretcher to the valley.

'For the 15,00ft descent, they had ropes only 120ft long. They worked in 75-foot drops. Two climbers with the torch guided the stretcher down the boulder-strewn mountainside. Two paid out the rope and two remained above as anchors.

'At every step there was danger of sending an avalanche of boulders racing down the mountain on the injured man. It was just before dawn, after eight hours of darkness, that they reached the path, desperately tired, and began to carry the stretcher towards Wasdale Valley.

'There they were met by a police party who took over until the stretcher could be loaded on a jeep from the RAF mountain rescue squad at Birthwaite Farm. The jeep took Captain Noyce another mile to the ambulance.

'Captain Noyce left Buttermere yesterday with his sister Rosemary, Mr Philip Noel-Baker, the Minister of State and Mr Elliott.

'Mr Noel-Baker said today: 'Mr Elliott and Captain Noyce decided to climb the Tophet Bastion and Shark's Fin Ridge. I have not done so much climbing for some time, so I decided to follow the path over Great Gable with Miss Noyce.

'When we reached the top there was no sign of the others, so we left a prearranged signal and walked down to Buttermere. It was some hours later before we heard of the accident.'

'Meanwhile, in bitter cold and a blustery wind, Mr Elliott and Captain Noyce climbed Tophet Bastion and began the ascent of the ridge.

'They were roped together, Captain Noyce leading, when at about 3.00pm, a gust of wind blew him from the ridge and he fell 50 feet until he was stopped, his leg broken, on a grassy saddle.

'Mr Elliott lowered him fifteen feet, to a sheltered ledge, made him as comfortable as possible and secured him with the rope, before beginning a seven-mile journey, much of it running, to get help.

'On the way down, he told two boys of the accident. The boys later met Colonel Westmorland, returning from a day's climb. The boys had a blanket and Colonel Westmorland climbed down the ridge to wrap this round Captain Noyce before he, too, went for help.

'Colonel Westmorland met two other climbers who agreed to go to the ledge and wait with Captain Noyce.

'On the way down to Borrowdale, Colonel Westmorland met Mr Elliott returning from the Scafell Hotel with Mr Robert Files, a Lancaster schoolmaster, and Captain James Yule.

'When they reached the injured man, a blizzard was blowing. Mr Files splinted the broken leg and strapped Captain Noyce to the stretcher.

'Then began a 200ft haul up the rock face to reach the head of the steep gully.

'The six climbers heard hails, but their answering cries were unheard. As darkness was falling, the blizzard was growing worse.

'The six men carried on. It was so cold that even in their thick clothes with the warm work of hauling the stretcher, they shivered.

'Colonel Westmorland spent his sixtieth birthday in the rescue.

'Captain Noyce is an experienced mountaineer.'

LESSONS LEARNED

A long letter from J R (Bobby) Files (a copy of which was kindly supplied by his nephew, Keith Files) adds further detail to the story. 'By all accounts,' explains Mr Files, 'it was [my uncle] who administered first aid, applied a splint to Noyce's leg and strapped him to the stretcher. He was one of the six climbers who then manhandled the stretcher to the Sty Head path.'

The letter was addressed to A S Pigott, the then chairman of Mountain Rescue Committee, and dated 30 May 1946. It contains a detailed description of the rescue and his observations and suggestions.

'Dear Mr Pigott. You may care to have further details of the rescue after the accident on Shark's Fin. I was not present at the accident and first heard of it on arrival at Seathwaite from Glaramara at around 5.00pm. I could not obtain definite information of the exact location of the accident which was said to have occurred on the Napes Needle and also on the Shark's Fin. There were many walkers at Seathwaite who said someone had come for help and had returned with a large rescue party and equipment.

'I set off for the Napes as soon as possible, asking my wife and a friend to follow with flasks of hot drinks and hot water bottles wrapped up in rugs. I caught up with the stretcher party which included Mr Elliott, Col Westmorland and Capt Yule. We pushed on with the stretcher and the one first aid rucksack present. Our intention was to render first aid and to get the injured man off the rock before dark while others stood by to help afterwards or went for food and lamps.

'We reached the injured man about 6.30pm. Two other climbers, Messrs Jones and Yewbank, staying at Middle Row, were already there. It was bitterly cold, raining hard and snowing. The injured man was lying on a grass ledge at the foot of the Shark's Fin, protected by a blanket. I applied the Thomas splint and bandaged his hand and we roped Noyce securely to the stretcher. We arranged two hauling ropes, each handled by two men, one of each pair taking a rock belay. The remaining two men climbed with the stretcher. We found it extraordinarily difficult to haul the stretcher to the top of the ridge.

(Lowering the stretcher down Tophet Bastion was not considered as we did not consider the stances and belays on the climb suitable for lowering the stretcher in the very grim conditions — our hands were almost completely numbed and Capt Yule had to have medical treatment for frostbite afterwards.)



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with most commendable fortitude and good spirit.

'All the supporting parties had gone home. It must be admitted that it was a foul night and that the six climbers took a long time over the job of getting Noyce off the ridge but food, lamps and fresh men would have been of indescribable help to us, as would warmth to Noyce. Incidentally, when we arrived at the Shark's Fin, it was a blow to find only No 1 Rucksack present.

'As we got down to the Sty Head path at the foot of the scree, Col Westmorland pushed on ahead to send support while the remainder of us attempted to carry the stretcher. We made slow progress and were, I fear, on the point of collapse when two policemen from Burnthwaite arrived to take over our burden, handing over very soon to the RAF mountain rescue squad.

'We shall always be grateful to Mrs Ullock of Burnthwaite who had tea ready, followed by hot baths, dry clothes and breakfast. The RAF Mountain Rescue squad had been out earlier in the night looking for us and had spent the night in Wasdale hut but alas! we did not know that they existed (see suggestion 3).

'Noyce was in good spirits, his injuries limited to simple fracture of the right tibia and to his left hand, but he must have suffered as it was not until 5.00am that we arrived at Wasdale. I believe the accident was at 3.00pm the previous afternoon. Noyce was conveyed in the RAF ambulance to Whitehaven. The four of us from Borrowdale were warmly clad by the RAF and brought back by Jeep, well smothered in blankets.

'I think a special mention should be made of the fact that Col Westmorland was celebrating his sixtieth birthday and that Mr Elliott is within a very few years of sixty.

'Mrs Ullock of Burnthwaite rose nobly and hospitably to the occasion. Mrs Edmondson of Seathwaite, as usual on these occasions, provided hospitality to all and sundry who might be assisting in the remotest way with the accident.

'Suggestions:

'1. The new type of stretcher is excellent up to a point. We all agreed it would be much improved if the skids were bent at each end, in a manner resembling ski tips.

'2. Communications by shouting and whistling was extremely bad. We therefore suggest that some type of light signal (eg. a Very pistol with cartridges or the type of signal used by the RNAS with the small dinghies) should be included in the first aid equipment.

'3. The existence of the RAF Mountain Rescue at Barrow, and the possibility of calling out their rescue squads should be made widely known. I have made contact with the officer in charge — he is very helpful.

'4. Pressure to be brought to have telephones installed at Wasdale Head and Seathwaite. We have felt strongly about this after previous accidents. In this connection, I might mention that my wife came up to

Gable on the evening of the accident and, realising the foulness of the weather, returned to Seathwaite to bring back a party with dry clothes and food. She was met on the way back to Gable by the returning supporting parties who, not hearing any shouts from the rescue party, had apparently given up and had, herself, to give up hope of helping us that night.

'Thinking that we might have been forced to remain on the crags all night, she organised another party from the CHA Guest House at Seatoller to bring us food and dry clothes at day break. By this time, we were in Wasdale, but were unable to prevent this party from going to the top of the Napes to look for us. Many of the party had been out the previous night and we are very grateful for their efforts to bring help, fortunately not required, in the morning. May I add, perhaps in confidence, that the Keswick police and their helpers were not present on this occasion (ie. in the morning), nor did the police send a message to Seathwaite via the Keswick police to save this party the trouble of going to the Napes again, although my wife had told them the previous night that she would be underway at daybreak. Telephone communications between the two valleys would have saved all this trouble and worry.

'We checked the Borrowdale First Aid Equipment out after the accident. The skids of the stretcher are badly worn by the long journey down the scree and the canvas is muddy and slightly cut from contact with sharp boulders.

'Rucksack No 1: Eiderdown bed and cover missing, two blankets present; Thomas splint is at Whitehaven; 1 x 6-inch bandage used; Forceps, dressing missing; Sugar consumed; Brandy flask missing; Scissors rusty; Towel dirty; Forceps, clamp rusty; Rucksack dirty; Holdall dirty; Printed instructions damp and dirty.

'Rucksack No 2: 1 x kettle missing; Windscreen ribs broken; Items marked missing or rusty were apparently missing or rusty before this accident. I suggest the provision of two glacier lanterns and a dozen candles in each rucksack. Could a clear printed card be supplied instructing rescue parties to take both rucksacks as a matter of course, the card to be hung in a prominent place with the equipment.

'I am afraid that I have written at very considerable length. We six members of the rescue party are very conscious of the fact that a too-long period of time elapsed between the accident and the arrival of the injured man in hospital, that the injured man and also the rescue party had a grim, cold, wet and tiring experience and we hope that valuable lessons may be learned from this.

'If there is any point on which you would like more information, would you please let me know and we will do everything possible to help.'

As the history books show, Rusty Westmorland was seriously disturbed at the lack of any organised rescue service and the

A short history of stretchers: Part 3

The search begins...

PETER BELL

At the end of Part 2, Peter Bell had secured the patent to produce his stretcher design. The Bell would become staple kit for mountain rescue teams across England and Wales but, over the years, others have put their engineering skills and rescue experience to use with their own designs and there have been other versions of Bell stretchers too.



THE DUFF STRETCHER

An exception to the dominance of the Thomas stretcher was that designed by Dr Donald Gordon Duff. The Duff stretcher was in use during the 1950s and '60s and a few were taken on the British Everest Expedition in 1953.



Left: An older version of the Duff. Above: Donald Duff on Sheep Fank Wall, Glen Nevis with the Duff stretcher, circa 1956.

Dr Duff (1893–1968) spent some time in Denbigh, North Wales before becoming a consultant in Fort William. He was one of the pioneers of mountain rescue in Scotland.

His first stretcher (Patent 579493) was filed in 1944 and was, essentially, a wheeled stretcher. The wheel device was detachable. In March 1950, he adapted his stretcher design for use as a combined load carry device, handcart and stretcher. (Patent 678108).

This stretcher had a tubular steel frame and no handles. Channelled steel runners extended along two thirds of the stretcher and a wheel and undercarriage could be added. For transport to an incident, the runners could be detached and the remainder folded in two for backpacking.

There were various other stretchers designed for especially difficult conditions — many originating in Europe and America — and, occasionally, one would migrate to the UK. Many patents have been sought over the years both in Europe and the USA but it was only the Stokes, Mariner and Piguillem stretchers, which filtered across the seas into Britain in connection with the mountain rescue environment.

Clearly these external influences had an impact upon the design of stretchers in Britain. For example, it would seem that the Piguillem folding stretcher made a distinct contribution to the design of the Alpin folding stretcher (detailed later). The European influences will be described in A Short History of Stretchers Part 4.

SCOTLAND AND THE MACINNES MK1 THROUGH TO MK 7, TOGETHER WITH ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS TO STRETCHER EQUIPMENT

In parallel with the Thomas stretcher, Hamish MacInnes in Glencoe began to create an effective solution to casualty carry procedures, based upon an aluminium tube concept.

Hamish MacInnes OBE BEM, climber, explorer, innovator, author and rescuer of worldwide renown, was a founder member and former leader of Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team.

When Hamish came to live in Glencoe in the late 1950s technical rescues were becoming more frequent, yet there was no means of equipping the local volunteers. At the Clachaig Hotel, Glencoe on 19 December 1961, Hamish called a meeting with the purpose of forming an official mountain rescue team. It's interesting to note that the only other climber to attend that meeting was his friend, the late Dr Donald Duff FRCS, one of the early pioneers of Scottish Mountain Rescue and founder of the Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team.

After approximately two years' trial, the first folding, all aluminium alloy stretcher, the MacInnes Mark 1, provided with 3" wide skis, was produced for the Glencoe MRT. This Mark 1 stretcher was introduced shortly after the Glencoe team was founded, and replaced their Thomas stretcher in 1961.

The early Mark 1 had folding handles and a net style bed. DeHaviland Aero constructed the frame, which was partly welded. Shortly after, a single 28" wheel, complete with hub brake, was added. The sub-frame to support this wheel was also formed from aluminium alloy tube.

Three years later (17 August 1964), based on operational experience, telescopic shafts were introduced instead of the original folding handles. Carrying yokes were provided front and rear and an integral 4-point sling set for winching was added — total weight 14kg. And thus, the original Mark 1 was upgraded to Mark 2.

There followed a rapid process of advancement spanning over the next twelve months or so.

Next (still in 1964) came the Mark 3, distinguished by the addition of Day-Glo fabric with overlaps for casualty protection. Casualty attachment was upgraded to 1" wide nylon straps, together with a stirrup, to provide additional support for the casualty during vertical lowers.

The Mark 4 saw the change from 1" to 2" wide casualty straps. A twin wheel assembly was introduced comprising two spherical wheels mounted in tandem. Soon after, now 1965, the Mark 5 evolved, also characterised by a twin wheel assembly, but this time with the wheels side by side.

Some interesting developments occurred between 1965 and 1968. Hamish devised a prototype shell-style capsular stretcher. Mo Anthoine of Snowdon Mouldings constructed this for MacInnes using glass fibre. This novel design was found to be heavy and not exactly wind-friendly and never went into commercial production.

About the same time, MacInnes made a

batch of lightweight aluminium alloy stretchers for the Red Cross but these were not designed for, nor were they intended for, use in mountain rescue environments.

1974 saw two ultra lightweight stretchers, built for use at high altitude. Also that year, he introduced a motorised sub-frame based on a single wheel and a two-stroke engine.

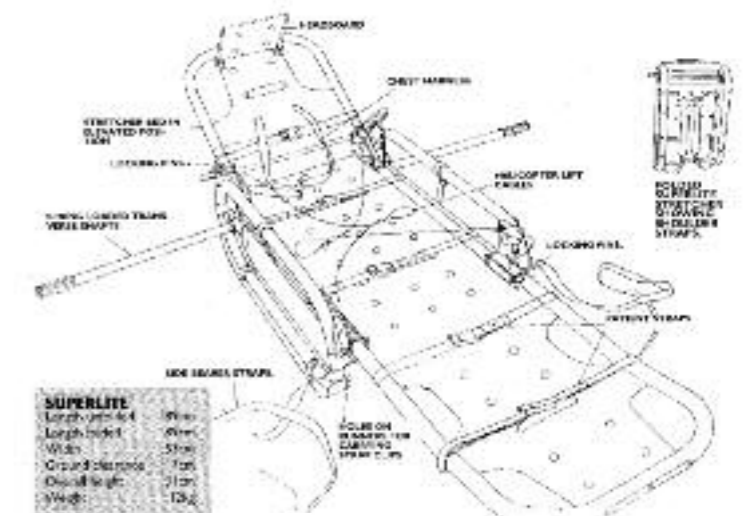
1979 saw the introduction of the Superlite.

ORIGINAL DRAWING FOR THE MACINNES SUPERLITE STRETCHER

The lightweight stretcher was developed due to the extensive use of helicopters in mountain rescue work throughout the world. It can be carried speedily to the scene of an accident by one person and is ready for use in seconds. There are no projecting parts to foul when being winched by helicopter and lift wires are standard.

Even though this is one of the lightest MR stretchers ever developed, it can still be used for the rough and tough carry-out situations, should helicopter assistance fail to materialise. It is equally suited to cableway and cliff use. The alloy patient bed gives maximum protection together with excellent rigidity for spinal/neck injuries. A fold-flat head protector is standard. Patient contact surface is coated in closed-cell foam.

The superlite has adjustable back and optional spring loaded transverse shafts. The transport wheel clips onto the runners with hook bolts. Stainless steel drop pins are used for locking the stretcher in position.



Inset, right: The basic frame of the Superlite. Right: The Mark 6 with single wheel and alloy headguard.

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A one piece folding aluminium stretcher provided with 70mm runners. No carry shafts but a set of transverse shafts could be added if required. A four-leg lift harness (usually fixed to the frame) was also included.

There followed a development gap, as the existing range of stretchers was providing good service. That is, until 1994, when the Mark 6 was introduced. This was a split stretcher, based upon the design of the earlier models, still constructed from aluminium alloy tube but all welding had now been eliminated. A foam bed layer was fixed to the alloy bed panel. A six leg, stainless steel, sling set having colour-coded legs was included for the first time. This sling arrangement was similar to earlier versions but took into account a requirement for additional support at the middle of this new split stretcher.

In 1996, backpack carry frames were added, which also facilitated the downhill carry of the loaded stretcher. A 'flip back' stainless steel head guard was added; the length of the bed area was increased and a new type of puncture-proof alloy wheel introduced, mounted on a folding sub-frame with rapid attach mechanism.

In parallel with the development and deployment of the Mark 6, Hamish also created a totally new stretcher based on a three-section concept.

THE MACINNES MARK 7

Composite fibre materials were introduced in conjunction with Titanium alloy where feasible. The stretcher shell is constructed from a high-strength composite material having high resistance to abrasion and low temperatures with an inner lining of carbon fibre. The bed shell is sandwiched with high impact foam.

Essentially the bed area is in three sections, with both ends folding over onto the central portion, reducing bulk considerably and making it compact for backpacking.

At both the foot and head ends are mounted carry shafts and grab handles made from titanium tube. Anchor points are provided for the 6-leg, colour-coded, sling lift facility as on earlier MacInnes stretchers.

Various wheel devices were introduced and continue to be available — most can be fitted on scene in a few seconds. This design is aimed principally at rescue operations where lightness and speed is paramount and is equally suitable for high altitude mountain rescue and conventional mountain rescue operations.

BELL STRETCHER RANGE 1972 ONWARDS...

All Bell stretchers are quite similar although, over the years, there have been innovations.

To summarise, the Mark 1 was constructed from steel and painted; the Mark 2 was essentially the same as the



Top: Sid Cross, founder team leader of Langdale Ambleside MRT, with the first Mark 1 Bell stretcher.
Above: Bell stretchers have always split into two halves with a symmetrical joint

Mark 1, but constructed from stainless steel and fitted with folding handles; the Mark 3 was the Mark 2 fitted with integral lift rings; and, finally, the Split Tangent comprised a stainless steel frame with rounded corners and detachable extension handles.

THE MARK 1

These early Bell stretchers had short, rigid handles, finger guards and nylon coated wire mesh beds fixed to the ends of the stretcher halves, half-inch casualty attachment straps and an aluminium head guard. Later, extension handles were supplied. The Mark 1 stretchers were made of steel and usually painted blue.

A move to stainless steel created the Mark 2 range in 1981.

THE MARK 2

All Bell Mark 2 stretchers were made from stainless steel. Folding handles were introduced and the bed panels were attached at the corners only to provide

clearance for handlers and improve the shock absorption characteristics of the bed.

In 1984, the handles were increased in length and the uprights replaced the side wires that were getting in the way when the stretcher was used horizontally as a working platform. These uprights also improved the rigidity of the stretcher frame.

THE MARK 3

1988 saw the introduction of integral lift rings and the new Bell folding head guard.

In 1994, to reduce weight further, the square tube was changed to round tube on the head guard, uprights and handles, and the handle length was decreased to 700mm — these changes did not result in loss of strength.

The last Mark 3 was made in March 2002. It weighed just less than 15kg without handles or head guard.

A modular upgrade to the Mark 3, was introduced in 2001.

THE BELL SPLIT TANGENT STRETCHER

The halves of the Split Tangent can be nested for easy storage and transport and one person can easily backpack both halves, using a Bell carry harness.

THE 'OGWEN' STRETCHER

The Ogwen is a multi-part stretcher, designed by members of the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation in 1989. It was intended for rapid deployment, within a rucksack, to an accident site. The frame and associated bed panels were then assembled on scene ready for casualty evacuation. This was found to be a good arrangement for some situations but was not universally suitable.

KESWICK MRT AND THE THOMAS STRETCHER

To special order, in 1995, Peter Bell constructed four brand new Thomas-style stretchers for Keswick MRT. A few modifications were incorporated and these 'new' Thomas stretchers were almost indistinguishable from the original design concept. Most of the cost-cutting modifications, introduced after the original JSC design, were eliminated except for the original lengthways collapse facility.

THE ALPHIN STRETCHER

The Alphin stretcher (patent GB21 75216A) was designed by David Allport and Dr Andrew Taylor of Oldham MRT and produced by Troll Safety Equipment in 1986. Designed as a folding one-piece stretcher, it has a polycarbonate bed and short spinal protection strip below the bed. Its narrow shape, useful for constricted spaces, means it is popular with industry and the Fire Service.

THE KATIE STRETCHER

More recently, Scottish Mountain Rescue were able to develop a new stretcher thanks to the generosity of benefactor George Smith¹ whose daughter, Catherine, tragically died of altitude sickness in 1991, during her honeymoon trip to the Himalayas.

On his death, he asked that part of his estate be used by a Scottish charity in pursuit of research into altitude sickness and mountain safety in Scotland. The subsequent £40k donation came with three requirements — that it be used for charitable purposes, was administered in good faith, and that the name of Catherine Smith be associated with its development.

The new stretcher — officially called the Catherine Smith Casualty System, but more commonly referred to as the 'Katie' stretcher — has a three piece load bed, with a quickly detachable head guard and wheel unit.

The lower half of the load bed is a composite shell structure for dragability, while the top is a lightweight metal frame

structure providing lift and tie-on points. The load bed incorporates storage for gas bottles and casualty insulation. The wheel unit utilises a rubber torsion suspension system, with a cheap and durable wheelbarrow wheel.²

Initially, a subcommittee was formed, of interested members from across Scotland, with a remit to design a new system based on a very comprehensive specification of desirable features. The first prototype Katie was completed in February 2004, and development work continued, with input and feedback from the majority of Scottish, and some English teams, led by Jamie Kean of

Kintail MRT. Snowsled Polar Ltd completed the project at the production stage.

The stretcher is light, immensely strong and incorporates a number of unique features such as the ability to split into three sections which stack together — which means the entire stretcher is a one-person rather than a two-person carry to the cas site. Storage space requirements are reduced and even the length of the stretcher can be adjusted. Features include an effective head guard and locations for the carriage of oxygen and Entonox bottles. The smooth exterior eliminates the problem of catching on obstacles such as rocks and



Top: This late Mark 1 has modified handles for use with RAF Wessex helicopters. **Centre:** The stainless steel Mark 2. **Above:** The Mark 3 Bell stretchers all had integral lift rings.

Opposite page, top: The Bell Tangent stretcher: shallower and having rounded corners. **Centre:** The 'new' Thomas stretcher, purpose-built for Keswick MRT in 1995. **Bottom:** The Scottish Mountain Rescue 'Katie' stretcher.



trees and enables sledging when conditions allow. The stretcher has flotation properties, a unique capability for water-based incidents. There is also a wheel system which fits inside the three stacks when the stretcher is being transported to the cas site or in storage.

MOTORISED UNDERCARRIAGES

Three different devices have been located during research, but possibly there are more out there somewhere.

Hamish MacInnes, Peter Bell and Mike

Mitchell all constructed and trialled motorised units based on a lightweight chassis and two-stroke petrol engine. The so called 'Fellboulder' designed and built by Peter Bell for Ullswater OBMS went into a short production run but was not economically viable. ☹

IN THE FINAL PART 4, WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT OTHER INFLUENCES FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND LOOK TO THE FUTURE.

¹Mountain Rescue by Bob Sharp & Judy Whiteside.

²Casbag, September 2008

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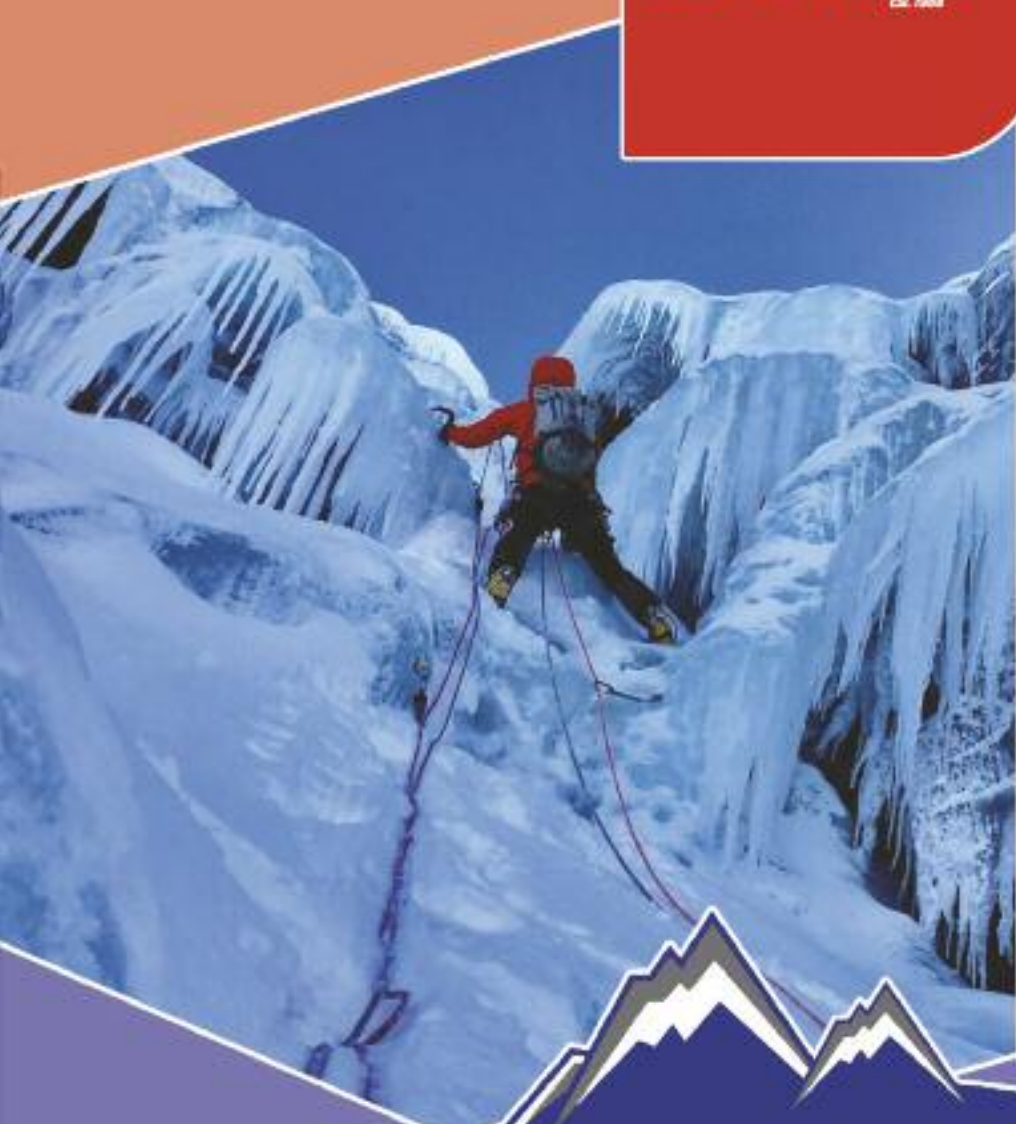




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