

# mountain rescue

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



WELCOME TO  
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Mountain Rescue is the **only**  
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## Cover story

Emily Thompson of  
Holme Valley MRT with  
Trainee Search Dog  
Névé during a multi-  
agency training  
exercise in June  
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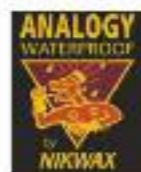
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## CHOSEN BY PROFESSIONALS



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# MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES BRITISH CAVE RESCUE • SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE RESPIRATORY ILLNESS PPE GUIDANCE

## GENERAL NOTES

- Covid-19 restrictions have been reduced nationally
- There may be future waves of Covid with differing transmissibility and severity of disease
- There will likely be other respiratory pandemics/epidemics eg. a virulent influenza, and require similar PPE, therefore **this guidance is no longer specific to Covid but ALL respiratory illnesses.**

## Preventing respiratory disease transmission

- The main principles to prevent respiratory disease transmission are:
  - Good ventilation and social distancing
  - Masks and eye protection when social distancing cannot be maintained
  - Good hand hygiene both using gloves and decontaminating
  - Vaccination against that disease
  - Initial screening of casualties about their current disease status/symptoms.

## PPE risks in the mountain rescue environment

- It is recognised in the mountain rescue environment that the weather may render the wearing of certain items of PPE of a greater risk to the individual than the risk of contracting a respiratory illness. For example:
  - Masks in heavy rain or high winds impairing breathing/safe movement
  - Eye protection misting impairing vision
  - Waterproofs causing heat exhaustion.

## Personal risk tolerance

- The tolerance of personal risk will vary between individuals and vary at different times for the same individual. For example:
  - Individual at increased risk due to their own medical conditions/age etc
  - Individual who strongly wishes to avoid the disease due to complications of the disease
  - Individual with close contact to vulnerable people and wanting to avoid onward transmission
  - Individual who has made travel/other plans who needs to remain disease free due to travel restrictions/requirements (eg. needing to be PCR negative).

## Team member illness/testing

- Team members who are acutely unwell with symptoms of a respiratory illness should come off call until their symptoms resolve
- If lateral flow tests for the disease are available then these can be used to aid decision making — remember if LFTs only detect Covid, if you are negative and you are unwell it is good practice to remain away from the team for own your personal health (significant exertion whilst unwell) as well as for team mates as other respiratory illnesses can have significant impact on another person or their contacts.

## Risk determination of the situation

- This version of the guidance tries to allow the individual/team to make a dynamic risk assessment of the situation in terms of the following areas of risk:
  - **Personal risk** — risk to the individual or their contacts
  - **External risk** — both in terms of the disease and the environment
  - **Casualty risk** — both in terms of symptoms and treatments
- As with most areas in life there are no black and white cut-off points for low/moderate or high-risk situations
- Following this, a decision as a team member, fell party, vehicle occupant or team can be made whether to use PPE in that situation
- Teams may wish to have predetermined plans for certain situations — eg. masks for all casualty and casualty carers interaction regardless of risk assessment and this should be decided within teams
- If a team member feels their personal risk is higher than their team mates then they should feel comfortable to wear additional PPE and for others to respect this and/or wear additional PPE too.



Document updated June 2022: Paul Smith, MREW Equipment Officer, Dr Alistair Morris, MREW Medical Director, Dr Brendan Sloan, BCRC Medical Director, Dr Alastair Glennie, SMR Medical Officer

# MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES BRITISH CAVE RESCUE • SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE RESPIRATORY ILLNESS PPE GUIDANCE

## RISK DETERMINATION



# MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES AND SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE GUIDANCE ON CPR FOR CASUALTY CARE CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

- Make a rapid dynamic risk assessment of risk of transmission of virus vs risk of infection to casualty carer as soon as possible
- Wear at least Level 2 PPE
- Check response and open airway (keep rescuers face away from casualty face) — if abnormal breathing/no signs of life, start CPR
- Cover the patient's face and nose with a surgical mask or oxygen mask with high-flow oxygen
- If an AED is immediately available, apply and follow instructions
- Default position is to provide chest compression-only CPR
- If dynamic risk assessment of viral transmission is low, ventilations can be achieved through use of supraglottic devices or Bag-Valve-Mask with airway adjuncts and tight seal
- Consider ROLE as appropriate.

## Notes:

- Rescue breaths by mouth-to-mouth or pocket mask should be avoided in all but exceptional circumstances
- For MR teams with access to a mechanical chest-compression device — early use allows the rescuer to withdraw to a safe distance away from the casualty during compressions and reduce any potential risk
- In more 'urban situations' where other emergency services may arrive quickly carry out a dynamic risk assessment on AED only + wait for professional help vs compression-only + AED resuscitation
- **Children:** Ask for advice and help early. Chest compression-only CPR may not be effective and consideration may need to be given to providing rescue breaths and ventilations with a suitable filtered ventilation device
- **Drowning:** Rapid risk assessment. Benefit may outweigh risk for rescue breaths due to asphyxia process.
- **ROLE:** Consider viability of resuscitation in persistent non-shockable rhythm when chest compression only CPR is greater than 15 minutes and in unwitnessed cardiac arrest.

Updated December 2021 following UKSAR update for responders V4.

# MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES BRITISH CAVE RESCUE • SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE: EQUIPMENT DECONTAMINATION GUIDANCE

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

There are a wide number of infectious diseases that team members and casualties should be routinely protected from which can be transferred by droplets or bodily fluids.

**Patient care equipment** should be single-use items where practicable.

**Reusable equipment** must be cleaned and decontaminated:

- After patient contact
- After blood/body fluid contamination
- At regular intervals as part of routine cleaning.

**Decontamination of equipment involves two steps:**

### 1: Clean

Wash off any physical dirt/debris, including blood, with clean water or wash according to the manufacturer's guidelines (ensure person washing wears PPE).

### 2a: Disinfection

- A combined detergent/disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1000 ppm of available chlorine **OR**
- General purpose neutral detergent in a solution of warm water followed by a disinfectant solution of 1000 ppm chlorine.

### 2b: Quarantine

If unable to disinfect due to the manufacturer's advice against the use of disinfectant products, then a period of quarantine can be used after washing. The length of quarantine is very variable depending on organism, level of contamination, ambient temperature etc.

**Respiratory and gastrointestinal viruses:** 48-72 hours will be sufficient for the majority of these viruses.

**Blood-borne viruses (Hep B, Hep C, HIV):** 7 days — these can survive in dried blood up to 7 days.

## GUIDANCE

### Contamination risk stratification

- **High Risk:** equipment in close proximity or contact with casualty/individual /bodily fluids
- **Low Risk:** equipment not in close proximity or contact with casualty/individual.



\*Always follow manufacturer's recommendations

\*\* If equipment can be decontaminated (wiped with detergent, alcohol wipes or chlorine-based disinfection) then does not need quarantine

\*\*\* Quarantine time = see above



**Document updated June 2022:** Paul Smith, MREW Equipment Officer, Dr Alistair Morris, MREW Medical Director, Dr Brendan Sloan, BCRC Medical Director, Dr Alastair Glennie, SMR Medical Officer

# Hypothermia research. Our casualties need your help

**NAOMI DODDS (SMR), MIKE GREENE (MREW) & LES GORDON (MREW)**

Our organisations have joined together to help the international mountain rescue community improve the management of mildly hypothermic casualties. We are asking your team to participate in a research project by providing anonymous information for a study. This is supported by the medical subcommittees of MREW and SMR.

Mountain rescue teams regularly assess and treat casualties who are challenged by cold and wet conditions and may have hypothermia. Statistics from the MREW database record that 4% of all casualties were considered to be hypothermic (2019-2021). In a study from Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR) in 2003, 14% of casualties were identified as suffering from the effects of cold or exhaustion.

All teams use a common protocol for hypothermia management that is consistent with ICAR recommendations. The original clinical method for staging hypothermia was based on clinical features and became known as the Swiss Staging System of Hypothermia. It was described by Durrer et al in 2003 and updated by Musi et al 2021. Both versions are designed to assist rescuers to make good decisions in the field, without the need for temperature measurement, both have been adopted by ICAR and are used by Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and SMR.

Walking the casualty off the mountain is a common method for evacuation for those with mild hypothermia (Swiss Stage One). However, research findings suggest that there is a theoretical risk of causing a cardiac arrest. However, these findings are not derived from casualties with accidental hypothermia in the mountains.

As a result, some experts have advised that the patient should be insulated and allowed to shiver and rewarm for up to 30 minutes, before being allowed to exercise.

The recent review endorsed by ICAR (Paal et al 2016) recognised these concerns:

'Some experts argue that hypothermic patients should neither stand nor walk for 30 min after rescue care commences due to concerns that exercise may exacerbate after drop and cause harm', but also offered the expert view that, 'in practice, patients who are awake and alert should not be prevented from mobilising if this will help the rescue.'

Whether such adverse outcomes occur in real rescues, and if so, how often is unknown. There are no documented cases in the literature and anecdotally we know of

many examples where walking has been done uneventfully.

### WHAT WILL THE STUDY DO?

This study will identify a series of clinically mildly hypothermic casualties who have been walked off the UK mountains. It will provide real-world evidence into the consequence of making this evacuation choice and give further insight into the guidance provided in the literature. The study has been endorsed by international experts and will be submitted to a peer review journal for publication.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

We would like each team to identify a member to champion the study which will last until March 2023.

#### We are looking to identify rescues in which:

- Mountain rescue personnel are called to assist a person in the UK mountains or remote locations
- The person cannot be reached by a land ambulance and is in cold, wet and windy conditions sufficient to produce hypothermia
- They have an AVPU (ACVPU) of 'A'
- The person is cold but is able to walk
- The initial decision is to walk the casualty from the hill immediately or within a few minutes.

The rescue team's working assumption is that the casualty is possibly hypothermic with Swiss Stage One hypothermia (ie. mild hypothermia; fully conscious; shivering).

For each casualty we would ask you to complete an electronic questionnaire that will take about four minutes.

The information can be drawn from the Casualty Report Form or SARCALL or individual team records.

#### Please note:

- We do not require any identifiable casualty or rescuer data and no attempt will be made to trace an individual patient or rescuer

• Whilst you can also report the data anonymously as a team, we would prefer an identified contact, simply to clarify any uncertainty in the returns

• The cases can be historic and drawn from past recorded rescues if sufficient data is available, or completed going forward until the end of March 2023.

We would ideally like each team to submit as many cases as possible, please, from the last five years to give a good-size of study population.

Regardless of how many cases you do submit, we thank you all for the effort and time taken to help in this important research project.

### WHAT CAN YOU TO NOW?

Please find time to send us the information on cases your team assessed and managed from 2019-2021.

**The link to the electronic reporting form is: <https://forms.office.com/r/nhL1B2xnDU>**

We are very happy to discuss this project or help answer your questions. **Contact the project team at: [mountainrescue.research@gmail.com](mailto:mountainrescue.research@gmail.com)**

### REFERENCES:

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- Paal et al. *Scandinavian Journal of Trauma, Resuscitation and Emergency Medicine* (2016) 24:111, *Accidental hypothermia—an update. The content of this review is endorsed by the International Commission for Mountain Emergency Medicine (ICAR MEDCOM)*





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## Service and repair of rescue stretchers

IN JUNE, THE LYON EQUIPMENT WORK & RESCUE TEAM ISSUED THE FOLLOWING **INFORMATION FOR CUSTOMERS**

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Lyon Equipment Limited has offered continuous support to the emergency services with the provision and maintenance of essential equipment. A part of this has been to ensure that our stretcher service and repair facilities remain open to those that need them. As such, special hygiene measures were introduced to ensure that stretchers arriving for servicing were free from sources of infection.

**Due to the receding risk of disease transmission via this route, we no longer require the removal of textiles from stretchers before sending them to us, or spraying with government-recommended disinfectant. We ask that anyone requiring work carried out on their stretcher follows the instruction below.**

- Contact us directly to confirm we have capacity and agree a date and method of delivery
- **Delivery in person to the Lyon site should only be made by prior arrangement**
- Remove all accessories (bags, connectors, separate pack frames etc.), they should not be sent
- Bridles may be sent for servicing but please notify us in advance
- Securely package the stretcher
- Clearly mark the package 'STRETCHER REPAIR'
- Contact us once the stretcher has been dispatched so we can prepare for its arrival.

The stretcher frame should be cleaned in accordance with your team's standard procedure, paying particular attention to areas where contaminants may be trapped, such as inside tubes, joint screws, locking pin holes or collars, handles etc.

Allow the stretcher to dry before packaging for dispatch.

If you have any questions, please contact us. We thank you for your cooperation.



## FOX OF GLENCOE by HAMISH MACINNES

Edited by DEZIREE WILSON. Reviewed by MIKE MARGESON OBE

I could not put down this biography of Hamish MacInnes and his lifetime of adventure around the world. Starting with a young Hamish soloing behind Lionel Terray, the famous Chamonix guide, and his client, on the Charmoz-Grephon traverse; having an abseil accident using the same in-situ sling anchor that Terray had just used and being rescued by Terray and some other guides gained my full attention. What would come next? I like the way that although presented as a chronological journey, each chapter is a full event adventure in its own right.

This is a huge book of 368 pages with wonderful illustrations and fitting of such a full life. Some material has been published elsewhere but the editing, which must have been hard, is excellent. Many will think of Hamish as an engineer and synonymous with mountain rescue due to the huge contribution he made in developing his stretchers. Also, the introduction and formation of the Search and Rescue Dog Association as well as many years as leader of Glencoe MRT. Those of us of a certain age will remember what a revelation for winter climbers the Terrodactyl short ice axes (or knuckle bashers) were and it was fascinating to read about their evolution. What I thought most important in this book is that it really recognises that Hamish was, first and foremost, a climber and mountaineer. Many of his projects as a film technical adviser or writing, were in many ways tied up with enabling the next adventure, feeding the rat; whether in the former Eastern Bloc, South America, New Zealand or closer to home in the Western Isles. We also get a window into some of his great contemporaries, climbers such as Joe Brown, Tom Patey, Don Whillans and Mo Antoine, just to mention a few. The editor refers to Hamish's very matter-of-fact descriptions of epic and hair-raising events followed by comic asides. This, I believe, is a product of much mountain rescue experience. Hamish almost thinks aloud through the text, his thought processes, judgements and decisions both good and bad are discussed openly. This biography is insightful, very funny at times, exciting, sad and, above all, full of a life of adventure. There are many mountaineering and adventure biographies on the bookshop shelves – one simply should not be missed.

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368 PAGES. ISBN: 978-1907233395. RRP £30.00

# books



## State of the nation, twelve months in...

### MIKE PARK SEO

At the MREW meeting in May, Mike updated us with where he's up to, after a year in the hot seat. With the meeting taking place in South Wales, he began with a 'Bore da' (with bracketed pronunciation notes) for his Welsh colleagues, and a 'Good morning' for his English colleagues. In keeping with Mike's belief that communication is key to everything at every level of mountain rescue, his intention was that this go out to every team member... so here it is...



Well one year in... has the honeymoon period ended? Oh, I think so... but I'm working on it and enjoying this new marriage. So, what have I done?

So far, I have visited 21 teams physically and attended three regional meetings virtually and my goal is still to meet the remaining 26 teams.

We held a management and trustee team 'Away Day' in February to discuss all the topics we need to progress. These were:

- Vision and strategy
- Branding and marketing
- Fundraising
- Officers' roles
- Wellbeing
- SAR-H
- Links to government
- Risk management
- Partnership/relationships

(Note: this is an ongoing development, which you will observe through our partnering arrangements with: Helly Hansen, Ordnance Survey and Promoting Safety Awareness).

- MREW membership
- ICT future provision
- The new normal
- Insurance and finance
- Media and communications.

A further such day in June focused specifically on the MREW Vision and Strategy and I expect this to be available in draft form by the end of June 2022 for review and sanction by regions, teams and team members.

What else have I done? I've met people. I've talked to organisations. I've listened and observed and learned. I have frowned, smiled and laughed. And, what have I

achieved? Well, I'm not going to answer that one yet, but you've read this article thus far, so continue to the end because you may be motivated to give me some feedback please...

So, now I am prepared to share with you my thoughts on what needs to happen over the next year and onwards. The MREW 'State of the Nation' address, if you like.

#### FIRST, WHAT NEEDS TO STOP?

- Being unkind to each other
- Not treating each other as equals
- Not giving each other respect
- Not listening and understanding that we have different views and opinions and feel things differently at various times from each other. Let's agree to call this 'Wellbeing' aka 'Shared Values, Wellbeing and Welfare'.

And for those of you who think: 'Oh Mike is talking about other people, another team, it doesn't concern me'. Well, you're WRONG. The culture we need to change runs throughout this organisation. Open your eyes, do not ignore it, speak out. Be kind!

#### WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

**Wellbeing:** We need to crack on with this and imbue a 'wellbeing' culture throughout 'our MREW'.

**SAR-H:** In simple terms this is working/partnering with helicopters, and their crews to deliver successful rescues and outcomes to our casualties. **They do not happen without our partnership.**

The objective is to help people as effectively as we can, however, the objective is also to return to our family, friends, loved ones, in one piece — both in body and mind. Both objectives can be achieved and are not

meant to work against each other. We really do need to consider the risk in this area in a cool, calm, manner (**not when we are on the rescue!**) and we need to set some parameters as to what an acceptable risk to the majority is. Be that **with** or **without** agreed and appropriate training.

**Fundraising:** We need to agree a national fundraising strategy. What do we aspire to provide and how much money is enough?

**Officers' roles:** We need to review the officers' roles to ensure they are fit for purpose, now and into the future. They need to be sustainable and have the ability to deliver benefit to our MREW. Finally, they need to be positions that people aspire to have a go at. There needs to be in-built succession planning and exit plans.

#### WHAT NEEDS TO CONTINUE?

**Wellbeing (again):** We need to continue to build on the good work our organisation has already started... at this point I would like it on record our appreciation for the tireless effort Elaine Gilliland has put into Wellbeing.

**Risk management:** This needs to run all the way throughout the organisation. It is here now at a national representative level and we are ready to filter this through to regions and teams.

**Partnership/relationships:** We need to continue to build on work already achieved in establishing true working partnerships.

**MREW membership:** There is further work required to now embed the various levels of membership of MREW and checks to make sure it achieves what was its intention.

**ICT future provision:** We continue to future-proof our ICT Provision.

**The new normal:** We need to keep on the

front foot so we can manage the curveballs society throws our way.

**Insurance and finance:** This will always be an area, always under scrutiny to ensure it delivers what is needed and is achievable.

**'Away days':** We will continue to hold these, but I want to expand on their concept to tap into the vast knowledge and fresh ideas that sits within and without the wider organisation.

**Communication:** This one never drops under the radar: communicate, communicate, communicate!

#### AND WHAT WE NEED TO START AND DEVELOP

**Wellbeing (yes, again):** We need to embed a 'wellbeing culture' throughout 'our MREW'.

We need to develop our **MREW vision and strategy.**

**Branding and marketing:** We are all still not making use of the potential of our brand. This must change, as it not only opens doors to untapped funding, it greases the whole MREW machine and helps it run more efficiently.

**Links to government:** Again this needs to restart after its temporary pause during Covid-19.

None of these topics will happen at the pace our organisation needs them to happen, unless we **all see the benefit of doing them and share the work.** Therefore, I kindly ask you, share and discuss this message within your teams and give 'our MREW' a hand.

Finally, I know I've set out a lot of work to be done. And I am totally committed to deliver it as I still have a personal commitment to 3500 team members across the country — to keep them safe, happy and motivated to 'do mountain rescue'.

But, as I mentioned earlier, we all need to have a plan for how we are going to do these roles. Likewise, we all need to have a plan on how we are going to get out of these roles and this applies to me just as much as everyone else.

So, all SEOs out there: there is a role here. Please come and have a chat with me. Let's start talking about what your aspiration for what 'our MREW' might be? Or email me your thoughts via [seo@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:seo@mountain.rescue.org.uk).

Diolch (de-all) and thanks. ☺

## YES, WE KEEP REPEATING THIS BUT, WITH MORE STUFF HEADING ONTO OUR MREW VIRTUAL LEARNING PLATFORM, HERE'S HOW TO GET REGISTERED...

For a few years, member resources and documents have been housed in the Moodle VLE. It's easy to access and a growing resource for medical, training and insurance information in particular. So, if you haven't got round to registering yet, here's a quick tour of the key areas to see what you're missing...

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

Perhaps most relevant currently is **Medical** which, from the start of Covid-19, has been regularly updated with information and resources. The Medical subcommittee addresses the legal and medical requirements for training and operations, and there's plenty of resources to download.

Also under the Medical heading, you'll find stuff relating to the Casualty Care Certificate and there's a free to download PDF of Casualty Care for Mountain Rescue Edition 2, an electronic version of Revision Notes for Casualty Care, and a section on Anatomy and Physiology containing materials to explain how the human body works and WHY we do what we do, rather than just WHAT we do. There's also a section

devoted to Recognition of Life Extinct in Mountain Rescue from David Whitmore, and you'll find meeting minutes here too.

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

#### To register...

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

## ACCESSING THE TEAMS-ONLY AREA OF THE MREW ONLINE SHOP

The MREW online shop currently allows teams to purchase Covid-19 specific PPE items as well as car stickers and badges. Access is available to all MREW member teams upon request. **Julian Walden** explains.

We would ask that all future PPE requests are submitted this way. As part of this process, we are updating team accounts to ensure that all teams have access to this area of the shop and that we have the correct shipping information on file.

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

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

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







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Above: Cover image © Holme Valley MRT.

## MREW ANNUAL REVIEW PUBLISHED

The 2022 review of the last year plus an overview of the statistics is available to view as a digital flipbook. A very limited number of hard copies were printed and shared with those who requested them for team archives or promotional purposes.

This year's edition carries a foreword from MREW patron, HRH The Duke of Cambridge and an introduction to our new SEO, Mike Park. We also take a look at the nature of injuries dealt with and the key contributory factors. There's a section on the impact of technology, screens and IT in remote places, including how drones are beginning to feature more in team kit inventories. The leader of a busy team talks about the level of commitment involved with being a mountain rescue team member and how this can affect any individual. Sure, we count the rescuer hours but then there's the preparation, training, kit readying and cleaning up to consider. All time-consuming activities. Finally, in our news round up, we give a flavour of the 'jobs' teams are now called to – often far from the hills – in support of their communities. Head to <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/102106300/> to view or (if you're reading this in digital format, click on the front cover image to the left).



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# Simon Thresher

## MREW Vehicles Officer

### Changes to Section 19 Road Safety Act 2006: due October 2022



At the AGM in May, Simon outlined some key changes to Section 19, expected to come into force in October 2022, which will be relevant to all mountain rescue teams. If you weren't at the meeting, or your team was not represented, please help bring these to the attention of your leadership and team members.

- The term 'Mountain Rescue Purposes' is to be removed from legislation and replaced with 'UKSAR Purposes'.
- The change brings with it the need for governance and **UKSAR will become the governing body for volunteer organisations**. A UKSAR Driver Training Advisory Group (DTAG) has been formed to oversee the use of UKSAR purposes.
- MREW has a prime seat within the UKSAR DTAG, currently in the shape of Simon Thresher, MREW Vehicle Officer and Mike France, MREW Liaison Officer.

- UKSAR DTAG are writing all the required policies and vehicle maintenance standards will be written into policy.
- Training standards will be mandated with four levels of training initially:
  - Level 1:** Familiarity
  - Level 2:** Advanced (Rospa, IAM, ADI etc)
  - Level 3:** Non-exemption response driving
  - Level 4:** Exemption-based driving NO SPEED exemption.
- **ALL** Blue Light vehicles will be on a central register maintained by the representative body. For MR teams, the register will be maintained by MREW. **ONLY vehicles that are owned, leased by, operated by and liveried in accordance with national standards will be permitted.**
- Response drives will be carried out based on calling authority tasking.

- FURTHER WORK TO BE DONE**
- Agree when UKSAR policy comes into force following legislative change. We are currently discussing a five-year period.
  - Legacy entitlements to be agreed for current response trained drivers and agree how any that don't meet the set standard can be upgraded.
  - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) required with AACE for using 'NHS Purposes' with agreed standards and expectations.
  - The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 to be reviewed and changed to assist and reflect UKSAR appropriately.
  - Funding for training — MREW and UKSAR are looking at this.
  - Agree appropriate use of EWE and response levels.

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR TEAMS?

- All teams will be required to apply to MREW for permission to fit and use Emergency Warning Equipment (Blue lights and sirens).

**Note:** There will be a session on Section 19 changes at the conference, delivered by the UKSAR DTAG group: head to page 17 for details on how to register.

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Policy details for all covers can be found on the 2022 MREW Tysers Flyer which can be accessed in the MREW Moodle. Should you have any policy enquiries please contact the team on [mountainrescue@tysers.com](mailto:mountainrescue@tysers.com). Please note that the policy cover is due for renewal on 1st July 2022, so please contact the team at the above email if the revised leaflet is not immediately available

[www.tysers.com](http://www.tysers.com)

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Mountain Rescue

# conference 2022



Snowdonia © Ian Kelsall

at Leeds Beckett University  
**3-4 September 2022**

Lead sponsor: Tysers. Clothing sponsor: Helly Hansen



The aim is to bring mountain rescue and the wider search and rescue community together to review, reflect and identify opportunities and challenges for the future, and to build even closer working relationships. **Julian Walden** gives a brief overview of the programme, speakers, sponsors and exhibitors.



External view from the main entrance; entrance of Carnegie School of Sport Building. Images supplied.

The aim is to bring the mountain rescue and wider search and rescue community together to review, reflect and identify opportunities and challenges in the future, as well as building even closer working relationships. The conference is open to all team members of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and our colleagues from British Cave Rescue, Scottish Mountain Rescue, Mountain Rescue Ireland, Lowland Rescue, alongside coastguard, police, fire and rescue personnel and the wider search and rescue community. This year, we are supported by our lead sponsor Tysers, and Helly Hansen is the official clothing sponsor. We have been able to keep the cost of attendance to the same rate as in 2019 for members of MREW and give a generous discounted rate to members of the other voluntary search and rescue organisations. The programme will be based on a number of themed tracks

running over the two days, including Medical, Environment and Sustainability, Governance Equality and Diversity, and Training. There will be a wide range of subjects taken from the suggestions put forward by team members who preregistered their interest in attending. Thank you to Helly Hansen and Keela, our track sponsors. The aim to keep it as current and fresh as possible and, as speakers are confirmed, we will make announcements so delegates can start to think about the sessions they would like to attend.

Alongside the conference sessions, we have a wide range of companies exhibiting including Elite, Helix, Helly Hansen, Keela, Land Rover Experience, Led Lenser, Lowa, Lyon, Pàramo, Petzl, R3 SAR and Tysers. As the programme is confirmed, the details will be updated on the conference registration site.

Saturday evening's dinner is included in the delegate fee and will be a great opportunity for informal networking. Dress code is casual.

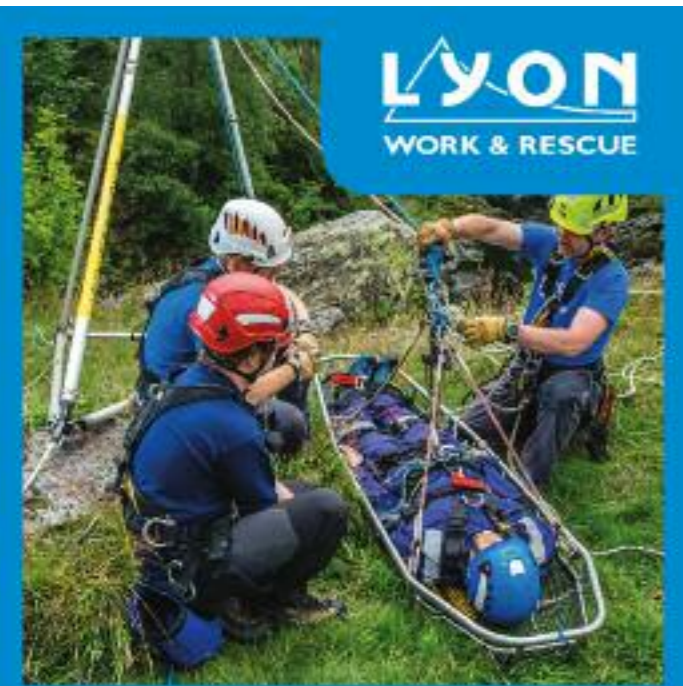
We are delighted to return to Leeds Beckett University's Headingley Campus. Set in 100 acres of parkland with easy access to Leeds city centre, with a rich history, over the years it has played host to visitors such as Winston Churchill, Oscar Wilde — and mountain rescue, of course. The conference will be hosted in the new Carnegie School of Sport Building with lecture theatres served by state-of-the-art technology and a full range of AV facilities.

There is a choice of accommodation, with a limited number of rooms at Leeds Beckett University. Offering single, en suite rooms for £50 and a range of local hotels. The Village Hotel offers a discount to people attending the conference — details on the conference site.

To register, go to [mrew-conference.co.uk](http://mrew-conference.co.uk)  
or scan the QR code







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Image from an earlier course.

### JUNE: 2022 PARTY LEADER COURSE

Iain Ashcroft reports on behalf of the Party Leader team. After three and a half years, it was great to welcome team members from all over the country back to the Kingswood Colomendy Centre at Loggerheads, North Wales for the MREW Party Leader Course, with 35 team members from 22 different teams attending, 17 instructors with many years' experience, just three of them totalling 93 years. We were also lucky to have assistance from the NEWSAR trainees to help as casualties.

Friday night started with a welcome address followed by team members meeting their group and discussing the qualities of a party leader. The evening continued with a talk from Detective Inspector Mike Waters from Cheshire Police and then continued with networking at the local hostelry.

Saturday morning started with five different lectures on the different aspects of being a party leader and, in the afternoon, they were able to put these into practice with seven very different scenarios, some of which I don't think they will forget! After dinner the evening talk was on 'Wellbeing' followed by leading a group near water. By the end of the day more networking was required.

Sunday morning began with a forensics talk and then a further seven practical exercises to put them through their paces. By the end of the course, they all had gained a lot of experience from their other group members and the confidence to return to their teams and lead a group on the hill.

The course cannot run without the huge support from all of the instructors from across the different regions who bring an enormous range of experience for which we thank them. If you wish to help out on the course, please contact us at [partyleader@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:partyleader@mountain.rescue.org.uk) as we are always looking for more help.

**Another course is due to be held on 25-27 November 2022, at the Colomendy Centre.** This last course was full within eight days of being opened, so please look out for notifications from the MREW secretary and on the MREW Facebook page to avoid disappointment.

### JUNE: OGGI TEAM DEALS WITH 'UNEXPLODED BOMB' SCARE

The Jubilee Bank Holiday started with a bang for Ogwen team... or could well have done, when a call came from North Wales Police regarding a walker who had found 'an unexploded bomb'.

The police requested that the team provides a clear picture and location to pass on to the Army explosive ordnance disposal team. Fortunately the informant was able to do this and no team deployment was necessary. The ex-soldiers on the team quickly identified it as an old two-inch smoke bomb. Panic avoided.



# NEWS ROUND

## APRIL > JUNE

### JUNE: BRECON TEAM LAUNCHES APPEAL TO BUILD NEW HEADQUARTERS

The team aims to raise £99,000 towards a new £1.1 million headquarters on the outskirts of Brecon. Previous fundraising efforts over the last ten years have raised £750,000, and now they are appealing for help to achieve their final target.

'We have never been busier,' says team leader, Dr Rob Powell, 'and we're hoping our community will show us their support and help us reach our target, so we can build a base that will benefit the whole region well into the future.'

The new headquarters will be designed to help the team respond quicker to emergency calls, store life-saving equipment properly and carry out more training exercises as a full team. Having a bigger training room will also enable other community organisations, such as Scouts, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and Ramblers Cymru, to use the new headquarters for educational purposes. The team's efforts are backed by TV presenter, Kate Humble, who lives in the region, and is the official ambassador for the campaign.

'As someone who has spent many happy hours walking in and around the Brecon Beacons National Park,' says Kate, 'I am aware of what an enormous privilege it is to have a team such as this in the local area. The work they do for this community and its visitors is vital and invaluable. I'm delighted to give them and their fundraising campaign my wholehearted support.'

**TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT BRECON MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM, VISIT [WWW.BRECONMRT.CO.UK](http://WWW.BRECONMRT.CO.UK). TO MAKE A DONATION TO THE NEW HQ APPEAL, PLEASE VISIT [GOFUNDME.COM/BMRT-NEW-HQ-999](http://GOFUNDME.COM/BMRT-NEW-HQ-999)**

*From top:* The assembled team members; the team's current base; artist's impression of the proposed new base; Kate Humble, campaign ambassador; the team in action with the Coastguard helicopter. Images © Brecon MRT.



### APRIL: LONG SERVICE AWARDS FOR DCRO TEAM MEMBERS

Four DCRO team members were presented with certificates for their long service to cave rescue by Bill Whitehouse, BCRC vice-chairman, together with DCRO chairman Allan Berry.

Congratulations to these four for all the years they have volunteered with DCRO: Lofty (Mark Loftus) has passed the 25-year mark, Alan Walker has passed 40 years and Steve Knox and Jock Rooney an amazing 50 years each with the team!

*From left:* Bill Whitehouse, Allan Berry, Mark Loftus, Jock Rooney, Alan Walker and Steve Knox © DCRO.



# Getting to know our Scottish Mountain Rescue colleagues...



Braemar in action in the snow. Photos supplied.



## Focus on Braemar MRT

by Malcolm MacIntyre, Operations Manager

Braemar MRT covers the southern part of the Cairngorms including Ben Macdui, the Cairn Toul/Braeriach plateau and across to Beinn a'Bhuird/Ben Avon, the Glenshee Hills and Deeside. We also get involved in call-outs throughout the old Grampian region through our long-standing relationship with the team formerly known as Grampian Police MRT, who are very much part of Braemar.

As might be expected, winter is very much our key time, though we get called through the seasons and, in common with other teams, find these entirely non-predictable and often at odds with what you might expect from the forecast or conditions.

Our history dates formally from 1965 and followed a period of time when the local keepers/stalkers, doctors and police were getting increasingly concerned with the

number of incidents occurring which needed their services, on the back of a rising interest in mountain walking and climbing. Of particular note in the early days was the Jock's Road incident involving walkers coming to grief between Braemar Youth Hostel and Glen Doll, in those atrocious winter conditions often found up here: soft snow, driving winds and blizzard conditions with short daylight hours. Throw in poor clothing, equipment and lack of shelter, and the outcome was a protracted search involving hundreds of hours of effort and eventual body recoveries in the spring thaw.

The team's annals also host the live recovery after a 22-hour burial in an avalanche of a walker on the south side of Bheinn a'Bhuird, remarkable given the time it would have taken to raise the alarm, get help and the lack of avalanche awareness

by victim or rescuer in those days, never mind casualty care skills.

Although nowadays equipment, clothing, communications, training and access have radically changed, every few years the team still seems to get protracted winter searches which draws in neighbouring teams, SARDA, the MCA and RAF teams for multi-day epics involving hundreds of hours of effort. Whilst some walkers still underestimate the seriousness of the Cairngorms in poor weather in winter, and the skills necessary to keep themselves safe in such conditions, the scale and relative remoteness of this area is a big factor.

The Cairngorm's 'long walk-in' is still a factor as however you approach the high tops it will still be a big day out. Given this, the team has always been open to using vehicles to assist us and we currently have two ski bikes, an Argocat and two tracked vehicles which come from the same stables as ski centre piste machines — albeit with narrower tracks to fit up estate roads and hill tracks. The latter two are winter vehicles, which allow us to effectively operate a mobile bothy, keeping the rescue team in the area on all-night searches, as well as carrying equipment and ferrying the team around. One of these is getting pretty long in the tooth and dates back to Grampian Police days when the ski road over Glenshee was blocked in a storm, stranding skiers and motorists at the ski centre. Since then it has been used on numerous rescue call-outs, as well as assisting in winter storms and civil resilience. There is a similar question mark over our ski bikes: great when conditions are right, but increasingly winters seem more fickle. And they're not so good in the wrong type of snow! That said, the long walk in — or out — is still a factor for the team as we move forward with our future planning.

The team operates from a main base in Braemar and a smaller one in Ballater, where we keep 400m ropes for use on the Dubh Loch crags and Lochnagar amongst other things. The logistics of getting gear into the top of the crags for big lowers, particularly in winter can be a real challenge if conditions do not allow support from the SAR helicopters, as I am sure many other teams will recognise. A big part of our training focuses on technical rescues and readiness for winter, where conditions can be at their worst. Our recruitment reflects this. Despite the variety of outdoor adventurers around today, we still rely on good all-round mountaineering skills, particularly winter skills, and the ability to have something left over for the casualty, irrespective of the severity of the conditions we are out in. ☺

FIND BORDER SAR ON FACEBOOK AT [FACEBOOK.COM/BRAEMARMRT](https://www.facebook.com/braemarmrt) OR VIA THEIR WEBSITE AT [BRAEMARMOUNTAINRESCUE.ORG.UK](https://www.braemarmountainrescue.org.uk)



## WALK TO NOWHERE

A fundraising walk to Scotland's most remote point on the mainland.

On 31 December 2019, just before lockdown, Robin Haddow was on holiday with his family in Wester Ross. While out on a favourite walk from Poolewe to Slatterdale and descending down to the shores of Loch Maree, he caught his foot on some loose rocks, tumbled forward and landed on his side on a larger rock — breaking his hip. Owing to the location and the boggy nature of the terrain, the rescue helicopter had to winch him up and take him to hospital in Inverness. The hospital was extremely busy and it was two days before the surgeon was able to put him back together. Two and a half years later, he is almost back to total mobility.

Robin wanted to show his thanks and appreciation to all those who were involved with his rescue and set himself a fundraising challenge of walking to the most remote point in Scotland. According to Ordnance Survey, this is in the northwest Highlands, Grid Reference NH02020 77000, at a height of 610 metres on the side of a mountain among the Munros of Fisherfield Forest — a dramatically beautiful wilderness. Tackled over three days and joined by his friends Richard and Chris, they had a truly memorable time, raising over £1,700 plus gift aid for Scottish Mountain Rescue.

On behalf of each and every one of our rescue volunteers, SMR would like to thank the team for all of their efforts involved in undertaking their challenge — the preparation and the planning, as well as the fundraising. We are delighted to know Robin is well on the mend and able to undertake such an adventure.

## SUPPORTER STORIES

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

To mark his very significant contribution to Border SARU for 32 years, Seymour Haugh was presented with a Distinguished Service Award at the SMR meeting in Stirling, in March.

During those 32 years, Seymour (seen below with Damon Powell, SMR chair), has held several officer roles including secretary, training officer, deputy and team leader and he continues to be one of the last to leave the garage following team training or a call-out.



Fellow team member, Brian Tyson (above with his award), was also presented with a DSA at the meeting.

A member of the Border team for 36 years, Brian has held a variety of positions within the team, including training officer, equipment officer, vehicle officer and currently chairman (since 2013). His attention to detail and knowledge of team operations continues to keep everyone safe and on their toes.



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## 50TH ANNUAL SPONSORED WALK FOR ABERDEEN MRT

Aberdeen MRT held its biggest annual fundraiser on 11 June and this year marked its 50th annual sponsored walk. The weather was challenging, with strong blustery winds and intermittent rain showers for most of the day — just your typical June weather in NE Scotland then! — but a great time was had by all of the participants.

## SMR ANNUAL REVIEW AND STATS FOR 2021 PUBLISHED

...and what a year it has been, 'the busiest ever year on record,' says SMR chairman Damon Powell, 'in terms of the number of times teams were mobilised (951), separate incidents (660) or the number of hours volunteers spent on rescues (31,799). In fact, on 3 July 2021 there were twelve team activations.'



## MILES FOR SMR

Following on from the success of last year's Miles for SMR, we chose the month of May, National Walking Month, to run the virtual event once again with fundraisers getting their miles in by walking, biking, running and paddleboarding.



# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE



Images © Holme Valley MRT.

## JUNE: SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME FOR HOLME VALLEY MISPER SEARCH

The team was called to assist West Yorkshire Police with a search for a high-risk missing person. They utilised a mix of team assets including search management skills, the water team, Search Dog Willow and the technical rope team, to come away with a great result of finding the missing person and getting them to the help and support they needed. A great result.



## MAY: CLIMBER FALLS TEN METRES IN THE ROACHES NEAR 'CHICKEN RUN'

Buxton team members attended to the climber who had fallen whilst ascending a route near to 'Chicken Run', landing quite heavily at the base of the crag.

A passing walker raised the alarm and the team responded, alongside Midlands Air Ambulance, North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust and the West Midlands Ambulance Service. There was some initial confusion as to the exact location of the casualty, as the what3words placed the casualty in a different area. The air ambulance medics were first on scene and provided initial care, quickly administering pain relief as the casualty had suspected fractured ribs, wrist and complained of back pain. As team members arrived, the stretcher was assembled and the casualty was very carefully loaded onto it. With the help of all involved, including a local outdoor instructor, the stretcher was moved using a hand-over-hand method to the waiting helicopter.



Images © Buxton MRT/Darren Hunt.

## OBITS

### PETE BAINES WASDALE MRT



In May, the team said a sad farewell to a stalwart of the Wasdale team since February 1980. Pete Baines sadly passed away peacefully at home after a long illness earlier in the month. His funeral was held in Nether Wasdale.

In his time, Pete served as quartermaster, buildings officer, committee member, trustee, and latterly duty team leader. He was also a skilled and experienced casualty carer, providing first aid on the fell. He regularly took on additional tasks to make things run smoothly behind the scenes. Aside from that, he was blessed with a great sense of humour, and with speed on the hill, often arrived well in advance of the rest of the team.

The team estimates that Pete attended well over a thousand call-outs in his 42 years in the team, directly helping several thousand people in their time of need. The team's leadership would like to formally recognise their huge thanks and appreciation to both Pete and Janice, his wife, for their support to the team over such a long period.

'We were also very thankful to be able to give Pete a formal team send off with many team members, past and present, attending in their red team jackets. He was laid to rest in a team jacket, by his own wish. He will be sadly missed, both on and off the fell. So, for the last time: 'Wasdale Pete, Wasdale Pete, this is Wasdale Base. We thank you for your amazing service. Listening, out.'

### DOUGLAS PHILP ARROCHAR MRT



The team was sad to share the sudden passing of their friend and long-standing colleague, who had retired from team activity just when he reached his 75th birthday.

Active to the end, he attended his final shout just five days before he left and then spent the next three months updating the medical kit and handing over the reins of his role as medical officer to the next generation. Douglas was a giant of a man in so many ways — way taller than most of us in stature, fit and steady on the hill (as well as on his bike and in the swimming pool) and a font of knowledge on a wide range of subjects. He was also very much a man of his generation with traditional values and manners, and unwavering opinions delivered with courtesy, a true gentleman. In summertime, he would pitch up at the post in well-polished leather boots, a trusted red fleece he had worn for decades, and with nothing removed from a massive rucksack ready for every eventuality in all seasons! Over the years he was a deputy, secretary (twice) and medical officer and regularly contributed to team training sessions and fundraising. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland (now Scottish Mountain Rescue) in 2005.

Additionally, he never switched off from many years previously spent working in Health and Safety and did safety inspections at the post on a regular basis, not to mention any bunkhouse accommodation booked for training weekends over the years — just for starters, wet kit on radiators was definitely not allowed!

Douglas continued to contribute fully to team life and leaves a legacy of knowledge and skills, and a dry sense of humour, all of which he shared with many team members over 34 years. He will be sadly missed and we pass on our heartfelt condolences to all his family at this difficult time for them all. RIP Douglas.

## MARCH: PLYMOUTH WOMAN 'BLOWN OVER BY HELICOPTER' AT DERRIFORD HOSPITAL

The elderly woman, who sustained a serious head injury and later died at the hospital, was reported to have been blown over by the downdraught from the landing helicopter while on a footpath. Another woman, also in her 80s, suffered a broken pelvis.

The HM Coastguard helicopter was carrying a casualty from a separate incident when the first woman was injured. The second woman was in the car park when it is believed the downdraught caused a car door to slam shut while she was getting out of the vehicle, according to Devon and Cornwall Police.

A spokeswoman for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency said the helicopter was flying a patient to the hospital and 'as it landed, there was an incident which is now being investigated by the police and Air Accidents Investigation Branch. Our thoughts are with all those affected'.

Derriford Hospital opened the helipad in 2015 to accommodate larger helicopters.

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## 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: **Our next approach to media training**

One of the highlights of my work with MREW has been the media spokesperson training workshops, delivered with Dave Freeborn of Patterdale MRT (a videographer and graphic designer in his day job), and ex-journalist, mountain rescue team member and trustee, Steve Howe. I've also thoroughly enjoyed being part of the Party Leaders' courses with a media awareness session on the Sunday morning — early on the Sunday morning!

But times change, Dave and Steve are no longer as available and Iain needs to focus the programme as more and more is added to the Party Leader curriculum. So where do we go with media training? That's what this column is all about.

### Media awareness training

Media awareness and spokesperson training are very different, so I'll cover them separately. First, media awareness.

I am convinced that it helps for plenty of team members and fundraisers/supporters to be aware of how the printed and broadcast media work, how that links into social media planning and posting and how to pick up on stories in the team and elsewhere. It's not rocket science but it pays to ensure that people understand the implications of timing, media relationships and options, and content — text, images and video.

I tend to think that this is best done locally, either on a team basis or by regional organisations, but it might help to have a selection of core materials, guidelines and training ideas available nationally.

Do you agree?

What would help you and your team to include media awareness in your training for new recruits, supporters or even established team members?

Please let me know and, with other members of the Media and Communications Network, I can work on a plan.

### Being the spokesperson

Spokesperson training is a bigger kettle of fish and benefits from face-to-face training with a microphone and a camera involved.

Over the years, Dave, Steve and I have developed a range of news scenarios, trying to keep them as realistic as possible. To be honest, it's been slightly frightening to realise how media and public attitudes have changed and even mountain rescue heroes might be on the back foot and defending their actions in some situations.

Road traffic incidents, accusations of policing the hills in lockdown, major incidents and searches, flooding and more can all require careful handling from someone who understands the issue and implications, has the facts and figures to hand and knows how to get a clear message across, whatever the questions asked.

Most of those trained in the past have either been part of their team's leadership — likely to be the spokespeople in different situations — or people with a particular knack for handling media interviews and therefore a useful resource for their own team and possibly beyond in other aspects of MR.

I've been asked about new workshops and we included media spokesperson training in the most recent Libor bid, but we didn't get it. So where do we go now? I either need to gather a new training team and continue as we were with occasional workshops based in different regions or we need to take a new approach.

Has your team or region filled the gap in a way that could be useful elsewhere?

Do you have the professional video or

reporting skills to be part of a new national or regional training team?

I think we need to be working on a replacement approach and I am keen to hear from anyone across MREW who has something to offer, ideas, best practice, time or expertise.

### Immediate appeal

Apologies for the duplication but I have not been inundated with responses to the appeal in the April issue.

Mountain Rescue Awareness Day is the last Sunday in October (Sunday 30 October in 2022), usually at the end of half term. We've used that end of British Summer Time aspect and the need to plan for earlier darkness as the theme for communications for a few years now. It needs a refresh.

And coverage has been mainly online on social media — when we'd really like to extend the reach to 'new outdoors' walkers and new visitors to the National Parks through other media. What do you think? What ideas do you have? And could we start to plan now so that there's a better chance of making something happen? As the former Publications and Information Subcommittee (PISC) becomes the Media and Communications Network, please get in touch, join the network and let's start planning while there's still time!

So, not exactly my usual column — much more about recruitment and asking for help. But I am sure there are people in the organisation and reading this who could make a valuable contribution to the next approach to media training in MREW.

I just need to know who you are — so please get in touch. Email [sally.seed@stoneleighcomms.co.uk](mailto:sally.seed@stoneleighcomms.co.uk) or via [pr@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:pr@mountain.rescue.org.uk). Thanks. ☺



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## Incident Figures: National Status Summary: \* January through to 27 June 2022

\* Sorted according to geographical region and by closed incident reports. Dog associations listed separately.

<b>Lake District</b>	<b>North East</b>	<b>Peak District</b>	<b>South Wales</b>
Cockermouth 32	Cleveland 34	Buxton 47	Brecon 53
Coniston 20	North of Tyne 23	Derby 33	Central Beacons 60
Duddon & Furness 24	Northumberland 29	Edale 66	Longtown 21
Kendal 15	Swaledale 23	Glossop 22	Western Beacons 18
Keswick 65	Teesdale & Weardale 18	Kinder 26	<b>152</b>
Kirkby Stephen 5		Oldham 19	
Langdale Ambleside 45		Woodhead 30	
Patterdale 43	<b>North Wales</b>		<b>South West England</b>
Penrith 25	Aberdyfi 23		SARA 6
Wasdale 51	Aberglaslyn 16	<b>Peninsula</b>	Avon & Somerset 9
<b>325</b>	Llanberis 104	Cornwall East 3	<b>15</b>
	North East Wales 49	Cornwall West 1	
<b>Mid Pennines</b>	Ogwen Valley 81	Dartmoor Ashburton 19	<b>Yorkshire Dales</b>
Bolton 27	South Snowdonia 15	Dartmoor Okehampton 12	CRO 42
Bowland Pennine 29		Dartmoor Plymouth 6	Scarborough & Ryedale 19
Calder Valley 42		Dartmoor Tavistock 15	Upper Wharfedale 27
Holme Valley 20		Exmoor 18	<b>88</b>
Rosendale & Pendle 17			
<b>135</b>			<b>Search Dogs</b>
			MRSD England 17
			SARDA Wales 15
			SARDA South Wales 10
			<b>42</b>

### MAY: AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT AT LEE MILL QUARRY, ROSSENDALE

Rosendale & Pendle team attended a mountain biker with a suspected arm injury at Lee Mill Quarry to find that the 31-year-old casualty in question had sustained somewhat more serious injuries than initially reported.

On arrival, the scene appeared simple with the casualty sat, but in pain. Based on the mechanism of injury, the cas carer asked the casualty's friend to support his neck to prevent any further movement. He had lost consciousness a few times, had serious pain from his left collar bone, shoulder blade and around C3-4 of his neck. His vision was disorientated and there was numbness down his left side with chest pain when breathing. The cas carer updated team control and kept the casualty warm until back-up arrived ten minutes later in the form of two team members who are also HART paramedics. After a quick update and further assessment, the young man was given Entonox, IV liquid paracetamol and morphine to stabilise his pain. Once additional team members arrived, he was carefully placed in neutral alignment, his body stabilised in the vacmat and stretchered down from the quarry to the road head to meet the ambulance.

It was a day of mixed fortunes for this young man. He'd only recently bought his bike and had gone to the quarry to try it out, only to have this unfortunate accident. On the other hand, he'd also bought a brand new helmet that very day which, on inspection, probably saved his life as it had taken quite some impact on the corner when he landed on the rocky ground.

'There was nothing the casualty could've done differently,' said a team spokesman. 'We wish him a speedy recovery and hope to eventually see him back out on his bike enjoying the countryside in the near future.'



## NEWS ROUND APRIL > JUNE

Images: © Keswick MRT.



### JUNE: 'MIRACULOUS' OUTCOME FROM A JANUARY CALL-OUT FOR KESWICK

Keswick team members were delighted to share a remarkable update to their second call-out of the year, in January. Late afternoon on 6 January, just before the team's scheduled weekly training evening, the team received a call to Hall's Fell, Blencathra. A fell runner had experienced a 'delirious episode' whilst descending the fell and was unable to continue down to the valley. With no mobile phone, his companion left him in a bivi bag while he descended to summon help. Team members responded quickly, climbed up to the casualty, assessed and provided medical attention assisted by the coastguard helicopter and Penrith team members.

The initial incident report was kept deliberately scant of detail because, at that stage, nobody knew what the outcome would be. The 26-year-old fell runner was approaching the end of leg one of a Bob Graham Round training run, when he became unable to continue the relatively short descent down Hall's Fell to Threlkeld. The temperature all day had been around freezing point with strong winds, snow and sleet showers. His friend helped him into an emergency survival bag before he ran down to raise the alarm.

Two team members formed an advance party and went to investigate, armed with warm clothes and snacks to deal with what was expected to be a hypoglycaemic and cold fell runner. Around twenty minutes up Hall's Fell, the two discovered the survival bag empty but folded up with stones piled on top, and no casualty in sight. They continued on and discovered the casualty a little further up the trail lying face down and with no signs of life. Despite the fact that to all appearances the man was lifeless, current medical guidelines are that a casualty is 'not dead' until they are 'warm and dead' and should be treated as if still alive.

Whilst one team member started an assessment of the casualty the other reported the situation by radio and the urgent requirement for a helicopter evacuation. When the initial careful assessment showed no signs of life, CPR was commenced with the two team members rotating at regular intervals to maintain good chest compressions.

A few minutes later the medical bag with defib arrived on scene. The pads were placed on the man's chest and shocks given but with no effect. More team members and, reassuringly, one of the team's doctors, arrived with various bits of kit and an evacuation plan was put into action, all the time with CPR in progress. Finally, with the autopulse connected, the casualty was loaded onto the stretcher in preparation for the winch evacuation to RVI Hospital in Newcastle in very blustery and showery conditions, accompanied by a team doctor.

On arrival at hospital, the casualty's core temperature was just 18.8 degrees. A specialist ECMO team arrived from the Freeman Hospital to 'plug' him into an ECMO machine, a device that removes blood from the patient, warms and oxygenates it before circulating the blood back into the body for gradual rewarming.

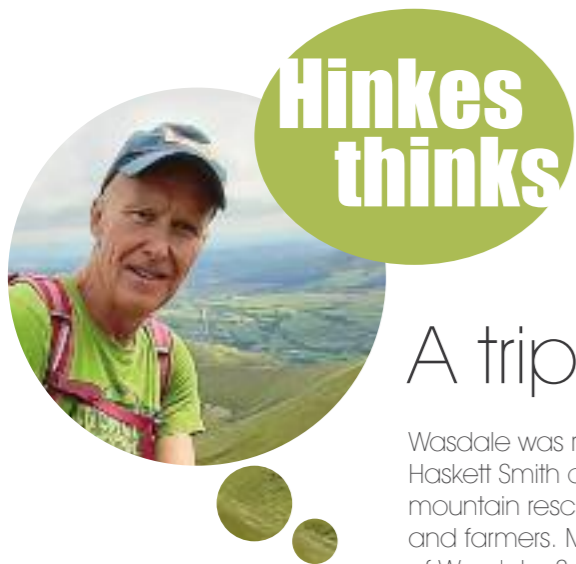
There followed a number of very tense days with the young man in an induced coma. Snippets of positive news about his progress, from the hospital consultants, were greeted with amazement from those who'd seen him on the hill, incredulous he could possibly be alive but, after five days, he 'woke up' and was asking what on earth had happened — as well wanting a Coke!

Five months on and the man who miraculously cheated death is making a very good recovery and has even managed some decent runs. This was one of the lowest body temperatures from which someone has survived — a truly remarkable survival story and a testament to the professionalism of all involved.

In their very informative release in June, Keswick took the opportunity to explain some of the processes used to support this gentleman which are, of course, familiar to mountain rescuers but perhaps not so to the wider public: the multi-team work and assistance of the coastguard helicopter, the need for CPR to be delivered continuously once started, the use of defib and autopulse technology, the nature of hypothermia. 'It is normal, they added, 'for fell runners to travel light, rapid movement creates heat that doesn't need much in the way of clothing — this is fine when things go right. Let's hope the story of our survivor is a wake-up call for those who venture lightweight into the hills. Spare clothing and a survival bag doesn't weigh much but could make the difference between life and death.'

Tommy, the casualty, is now raising money for Keswick MRT at [justgiving.com/fundraising/tommy-price13](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tommy-price13), including plans to run the London Marathon. At the time of writing, he had already raised an impressive £2,826 of his £10,000 target.





## A trip to Wasdale

Wasdale was recognised as the birthplace of rock climbing when Walter Parry Haskett Smith climbed Napes Needle on Great Gable in 1886. There were no mountain rescue teams then, only other climbers, walkers and locals, shepherds and farmers. Many of England's highest peaks are to be found around the head of Wasdale: Scafell Pike, Scafell, Great Gable and Pillar. **Alan Hinkes** went there for a stroll out and scramble.



Victorian Alpinists came to this area not only to train for the Alps, but for adventurous fun and exploratory first ascents of gullies, ridges, and rock faces. In the second half of the 1800s the railway system helped to make visits possible. Initially, it would have been a horse and cart or Shank's Pony from the railway station, probably Ravenglass or Seascale.

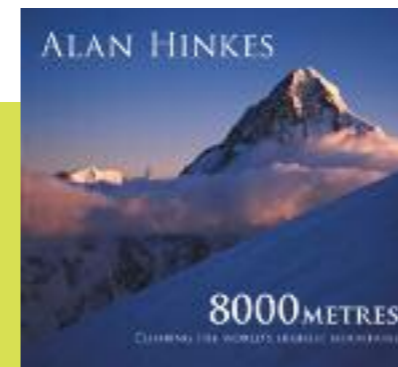
There was no option of car travel until well into the twentieth century. Now most of us drive, either from the north via Whitehaven, passing the nuclear plant at Sellafield, from

the south leaving the M6 at J36 and skirting the southern boundary of the Lake District National Park, or more arduously braving the narrow ribbon of tarmac over Wrynose and Hardknott Pass. This route is not to be recommended for the timid or faint-hearted driver. In winter it can be treacherous or impassable with the tarmac coated in sheet ice rather than blocked with snowdrifts. In the height of summer, it is often gridlocked by tourists burning out their clutches on the 1-in-3 hills.

For most people, Wasdale is a bit more

remote and takes more effort to reach than other Lakeland valleys, unless of course you live in south-west Cumbria. In the 1930s, a road from Borrowdale via Sty Head Pass was proposed to link the north and south Lakes. Fortunately, the Fell and Rock-Climbing Club of the English Lake District (FRCC) helped prevent it being built. Imagine Great Gable and Napes Needle being a roadside crag.

As well as great fellwalking, scrambling, and climbing there are also good places to stay, eat and drink. At the head of the valley



'8000 METRES: CLIMBING THE WORLD'S HIGHEST MOUNTAINS', ABOUT ALAN'S EXPERIENCE IN THE MOST CHALLENGING OF COLD CLIMATES, IS AVAILABLE TO BUY FROM THE MREW ONLINE SHOP: [MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK/SHOP/BOOKS](http://MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK/SHOP/BOOKS)

there is the iconic Wasdale Head Hotel, where the nineteenth-century mountain pioneers based themselves, a campsite and an FRCC 'hut' Brackenclough, which recently had a fire and is being rebuilt. Further down the valley there is a superbly positioned YHA with amazing views up the lake. The hamlet of Nether Wasdale has two good pubs, especially the Strands Inn and Brewery, one of my favourites.

In the summer, Wasdale is inundated with walkers ascending Scafell Pike, England's highest peak. A lot are 'Three Peakers' and Wasdale MRT can be very busy rescuing walkers on Scafell Pike.

Recently I visited Wasdale and took a group out on Yewbarrow. Their preference was for an ascent of Scafell, they had climbed Scafell Pike and wanted something more challenging, such as Lords Rake and West Wall Traverse. Thankfully they didn't expect Broad Stand, which is not an easy scramble and in wet conditions it can be very risky. Wasdale team have had many call-outs involving Broad Stand and sadly quite a few fatal.

I could see that Scafell was wreathed in orographic cloud with the cloud base down to 700/750m. It was totally socked in, there would be no views, just an arduous slog in the clag.

Meanwhile, across the valley, Yewbarrow was cloud free. It is one of the most striking fells in Lakeland, often overlooked as people drive past it to Wasdale Head for the bigger peaks of Great Gable or the Scafells. Yewbarrow is 628m (2060ft) high and its name is Viking in origin, derived from its shape, like an upturned hull of a boat or 'barrow.' Its keel is a long ridge protected by rocky scrambles at the bow and stern, making it one of the most difficult Lakeland fells to climb. Yewbarrow may be lower than the surrounding Wasdale giants, but what it lacks in height it makes up in difficulty and quality of views.

An obvious path heads north-west from near Overbeck Bridge, heading for the



Opposite: Looking down from Dore Head. Top: Yewbarrow © Peter Trimming (licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence); scrambling down Stirrup Crag; grassy summit ridge looking down to Wastwater and the Screes. Images supplied by Alan Hinkes unless otherwise stated.

steep prow of crags guarding the summit plateau.

As the ground steepened and got rockier and more rugged, I headed left towards Dropping Crag. I had to find an easy line through the crags. I didn't want to have to call out the Wasdale MRT — that would be embarrassing. My group of four were of mixed ability, we continued in a wide gully needing hands as feet for safe progression, up easy angled short corners, short gullies, and ribs of rock to reach Great Door and the grassy summit ridge. The group were suitably impressed. I often guide people out of their comfort zone, giving them confidence and developing skills. It is experiential learning, they were slightly stretched, out of their comfort zone, but did not tip over into their panic zone. I knew they were capable, and enthusiastic, only needing a little guidance, and encouragement. Looking back over Wast Water, the Screes and out towards the Irish Sea is a worthy prize of a view, which no one had noticed with their heads down concentrating on the scramble.

I'd kept quiet about the steep descent of Stirrup Crag at the north end of the ridge,

not wanting to cause any anxiety as we enjoyed the easy walk along the wide, grassy summit ridge. I felt confident that my group were competent and had gained scrambling skill on the ascent. Abruptly the steep exposed cliff of Stirrup Crag confronts you, a slip could be fatal. I led the way down, zig zagging through narrow chimney sections and lowering down short walls. My group was now more confident and enjoying the experience of easy scrambling and revelling in the exposure. Safely reaching Dore Head, we stopped for a snack and looked back up at the intimidating cliff face of Stirrup Crag. It looked impregnable and a solo walker was trying to ascend but, after some toing and froing, he decided to retreat. Always a wise decision, better to err on the side of caution.

From Dore Head we could see the route down Over Beck and we enjoyed a pleasant stroll on mostly soft ground with some bracken and boggy bits back to the Wasdale valley and a beer in the Strands Inn. Yewbarrow is a lovely Fell with a real mountain feel. ☺



## So much more than mountains... designed by volunteers for volunteers with Helly Hansen

**PAUL SMITH** MREW EQUIPMENT OFFICER

Following on from the Helly Hansen Mountain Rescue Squad Jacket and Head to Toe Rescue kit that is now in trials with two MREW teams, their design team asked if we would like to design an insulator jacket with them.

A small working group, comprising volunteers from across England and Wales, met up with the design team last November where a design brief was put together.

### THE DESIGN BRIEF

A 'best in class' insulator jacket with the following key requirements:

- **Warmth:** During general base and vehicle activities
- **Warmth:** While static at a casualty site
- **Warmth:** When holding position and at a belay point
- **Warmth:** Insulating layer, dry weather
- **Comfort:** Both men's and women's fit
- **Whole of Life:** Responsible solutions
- **Compliance:** Certified.

### THE PROCESS

We established a clear line of process, from creating the initial design brief through field testing, project workshops, and submission of the project design brief, to review and feedback involving the brand product team and MREW working group.

### THE SOLUTION

The result will be a unique, bespoke sustainable insulator jacket, designed by volunteers for volunteers, purpose-built for our unique climate and to an agreed product specification.

### THE NEXT STEPS...

- **Prototype one:** Review and feedback
- **Prototype two:** Final approval
- **MREW/Team sizing**
- **Bespoke team embellishment**
- **MREW/Volunteer rollout.**

We are making history: mountain rescue volunteers working with a world-class manufacturer to design a bespoke and sustainable jacket for our own volunteers. With its innovative design and a second-life solution, I believe it will be a trail blazer for future designs. If you would like to see the Insulator Jacket, we are aiming to have Prototype one ready for the MREW Conference at Leeds, in September. ☺



## JUNE: TEAM MEMBERS JOIN IN THE FUN FOR THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

**Rachel Smith**, of North of Tyne MRT, reports on a weekend in London, soaking up the Platinum party atmosphere.

In what was a whirlwind decision we were off to BBC Platinum Party at the Palace, courtesy of HRH the Duke of Cambridge, patron of Mountain Rescue England and Wales. Representing the North East region, Mark Silmon and I travelled to London from Newcastle and, after a wander through London, dropped off our bags, had a shower and decided it was definitely a 'shorts day/night'!

We joined the jubilant crowds heading towards Buckingham Palace, before bypassing them and heading to Trafalgar Square to meet with other regional representatives of MREW. Then, after a quick pint, headed to the party. This was our first opportunity to show off our new Helly Hansen goodies: a smart jacket for a smart occasion!

The evening was full of fun and surprises: seeing the palace become a stunning outdoor scene was breathtaking, as were the messages from Prince William, Prince Charles and the Queen herself, though absent only in person. The music was stunning with a range of performances that suited all, the crowds were exciting, lively and completely captivated in the atmosphere. My personal favourite — aside from Queen featuring Adam Lambert, of course — was Celeste. In the moment when she sang about what nature was all about, I was transported to happy times spent in peaceful natural environments... soppy I suppose, but a truly heart-warmingly suitable pairing of music and memories.

I thank all that made this possible — a new memory that will live on forever and such a perfect demonstration of how easy life can be when we all work together. A bit like a call-out really! To top it off the Queen demonstrated her humility, personality and true leadership skills in joining Paddington for a marmalade sandwich... a well-prepared bear that would never be caught out, in the hills!

★ **Head to page 38 for 'Party at the Palace' photos.**



Top: Platinum Jubilee celebration cupcakes and flags © TraceyAPhotos. Above: The Queen's Guards marching towards Buckingham Palace © Rahul Godse. Images via iStock/Getty Images.



## MAY: TEAM MEMBERS DIVE IN FOR JOINT WATER PRACTICE WITH THEIR LOCAL FIRE CREWS

Upper Wharfedale water team members joined colleagues from their local fire stations for the joint practice, to rehearse some of the possible scenarios they may encounter when working together in real life situations.

'There's a range of different skills and equipment available to everyone, so it's only by having joint exercises that we learn and understand how we fit together to be effective when we are called for real,' said the team. The fire stations involved were Grassington, Harrogate, Skipton and Lofthouse.



Images © facebook.com/UWFRA.





## MAY: CLEVELAND TEAM GET USED TO THE FEEL OF THEIR NEW WATERPROOF CLOTHING

In 2020, writes **Gary Clarke**, the team had identified the need to plan for the replacement of their waterproof jackets and trousers. Since then, as well as regularly being worn in bad weather, the jackets have doubled as a PPE barrier and Covid protection measure. And far more frequent washing and decontamination of clothing has accelerated the wear on some of the older jackets.

To cover the significant cost of providing each team member with replacement waterproof jacket and trousers of sufficiently high quality to enable them to operate in extreme mountain rescue conditions, we launched a fundraising project. Last year, team members trialed jackets from different manufacturers, culminating in a range of jackets and trousers from five different brands being made available for final evaluation. At the end of that evaluation period, Helly Hansen was the clear, preferred choice.

The team had previously just missed out on being chosen by Helly Hansen to be one of two mountain rescue teams from England and Wales to partner with the manufacturer in the development of professional-grade clothing for search and rescue teams. All mountain rescue teams had been given the opportunity to apply for a three-year partnership award with the brand which would see their entire team kitted out in Helly Hansen clothing, without having to raise the funds to pay for it. The Cleveland team finished in the 'top four' – a great achievement in itself – but the experience gained during that process provided team members with a great insight into the quality of the Helly Hansen products. So when it later came to the decision on which of the five brands to select, we were very confident of our choice.

'The people who work and live in the world's harshest environments have always been at the heart of the brand,' says Helly Hansen's James Millett. 'The insights drawn from these professionals have enabled us to produce professional grade clothing that helps people stay and feel alive. The mountain rescue application process gave us valuable feedback from across England and Wales which further supports our work in this area. We recognise that a tremendous amount of time and effort went into the second stage of the application process.'

Cleveland has now received 48 sets of Helly Hansen 'Squad' jackets and 'Action' trousers (which together form a waterproof outer layer) with base layers and insulation layers to follow.

'We need high performance clothing to help us work safely at all times,' says team leader Peter Smith. 'We expect our new kit will do this for many years and we've been impressed by their efforts to engage MR teams in the development'.

Local organisations and businesses were asked to contribute to the project costs and have together donated almost £9,000 – some in the form of grants, from the Arnold Clark Community Fund (£1,000), Persimmon Community Champions (£1,000), Two Ridings Community Foundation (£2,000), the Sofia Construction Community Fund (£1,000) and Services Support (Cleveland) Ltd Veracity Group (£3,000). Cleveland Cable donated another £500, supplemented by regular contributions from the Hardmoors Ultra Runners, who agreed that donations from their entry fees since 2021 would help fund the costs. The remaining costs will be covered from team funds which are, of course, derived from donations made by members of the public and other organisations so, in effect, all the clothing will have been provided by the local community.



Above: Cleveland's new Helly Hansen waterproof clothing © Cleveland MRT.

## Raising funds for rescue



### JUNE: ASHBURTON TEAM DOCTOR DAVE TACKLES TORS FOR TEAM

Dr Dave took on the epic challenge to run 100 miles, ascending 100 Dartmoor tors, non-stop (!!) to raise money for the team and Rowcroft Hospice. 'Naturally', ran the preamble, he was also planning to self-navigate 'over the moor with only a map and compass'. At the time of going to press, he'd raised a magnificent £3,680 for his efforts.

'The Dartmoor 100 in 100 fundraiser started at 9.00am on the Saturday morning at the rugby club, where a few team members kindly got up early to see me off. Before I got to Tor 1, our stunning Dartmoor released what would be two hours of rain, wind, thunder and lightning as I made my way up the Dart. There were checkpoints at Dartmeet, Saddle Tor and the Warren House Inn. Charlie and Dave Underhill were kindly in attendance, with Charlie accompanying me running too. By Saturday evening it was dry again with some reasonable visibility.

'The route then went north, ending up at Ivy Tor and Belstone before heading back down the west side. I underestimated in my route planning how un-runnable the north moor was off any mapped track (in comparison to the south) and

slowed considerably through the night, expending lots of energy bog-wading. The fog — with visibility often down to five or ten metres — and wind were consistent from 11.00pm to mid-morning Sunday.

'I continued south and met more team members who had kindly come out to support in the village of Lake. Following a reassessment of my progress, I finished on High Tor after 33.5 hours of running/walk/staggering. More wonderful team members were there for the new finish after 73 Tors, 93 miles and >5000m of ascent, at 6.30 on Sunday evening.

On reflection, it's not the advertised numbers, but objectives A and C were achieved (increasing the team profile, raising funds, and navigating with map and compass only). The event made ITV news on Friday eve and Monday lunchtime, was published in some local papers, and raised >£4,000 (so far including gift aid) for two charities so close to my heart. I also brought eleven ticks (and counting...) home with me, and memories of some fairly bizarre hallucinations (the marching knight in full battle armour on Kitty Tor was a particular highlight).

'Along with my wife Kate and my folks Steve and Adey, the huge support certain team members have provided has been really humbling. You know who you are, and it means so much to me. THANK YOU.'

Opposite left: Doctor Dave Hutchins in action, at work and on the moor © Dartmoor Ashburton SRT.



### APRIL: EASTER DUCKLING TAKES AN UNEXPECTED DIP IN DRAIN

After an uneventful and rescue-free Easter weekend, one Rossendale and Pendle team member took part in a daring rescue mission on her way home from a cracking day at the Easter Egg Hunt on Pendle Hill.

A distressed mother duck had lost one of her ducklings down a drain. The intrepid team member rescued the duckling and reunited it with the mother duck. A happy ending for all.



# \* JUNE: Celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with medals

Over 1,700 mountain and cave rescue volunteers were honoured to be recognised and included among the frontline emergency, armed forces and prison service workers across the UK to receive the Jubilee Medal in celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Congratulations to Her Majesty from everyone involved in mountain rescue on an unprecedented 70 years of service. In a message to mountain rescue teams, the National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Search and Rescue (SAR), Glen Mayhew, expressed admiration for 'the professionalism and commitment team members display as SAR volunteers. The commitment, high level of skill and outstanding passion for this role makes such a difference, and this medal is being awarded as a token of the nation's thanks. I appreciate that call-outs will occur at most inconvenient times and that SAR volunteers are reliant on supportive and understanding families, friends and employers. We are honoured to have such dedicated and professional volunteers working alongside the statutory authorities.'



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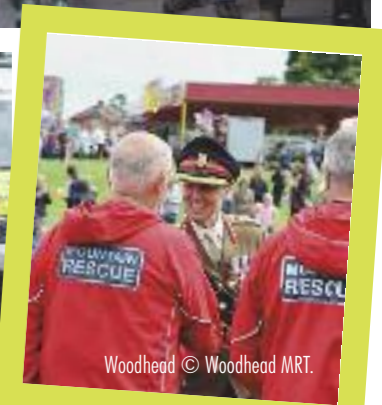
Please note: This is just a small collection of the images we had available at publication. Not all teams are represented here.



...and a few more...



and in Scotland, too...



Feeling proud...



...and then there was this...

## Party at the Palace



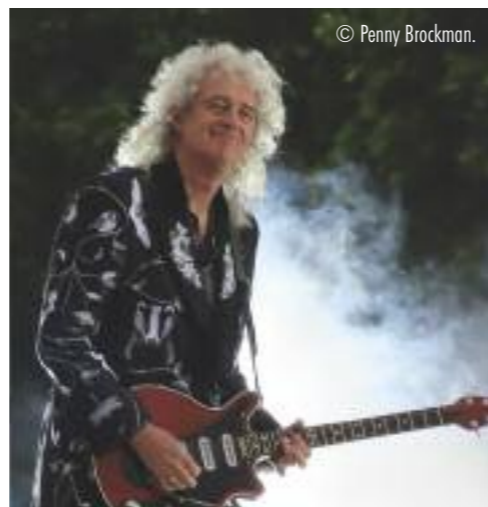
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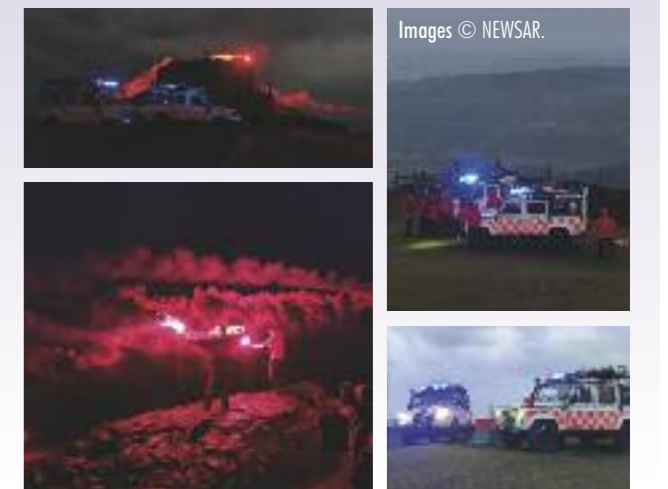


Penny Brockman and Huw Jones © CBMRT.

## JUNE: NEWSAR TEAM LIGHTS BEACON ON MOEL FAMAU

Team members and supporters set off flares – which briefly lit up the summit of Moel Famau and could be seen from miles around – to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

This wasn't an official Jubilee Beacon, but there were concerns that a lot of people might congregate anyway as there has been one there in the past. The team agreed to attend to support Denbighshire County Council in case there were any injuries, working out a plan to make their own beacon as they were up there anyway! As it turned out the night was wet and not too many people turned up but, with twenty or so flares to use, it was quite a show!



Images © NEWSAR.

JUNE: CENTRAL BEACONS AWARDED QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

The team is absolutely delighted and immensely proud to have their fifty-nine years of service to the community recognised with this QAVS, the highest accolade for any charity.

'This is a testament,' says team chair Penny Brockman, 'to the dedication and commitment of team members, past and present, who have remained on call 24/7, throughout the year – whatever the weather – to help those who are injured or need help in the hills and localities of South Wales.'

# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE





# MAKE LIKE A FLAMINGO AND RETRAIN YOUR BRAIN

JUDY WHITESIDE

So what do YOU do every night before climbing into bed? And bear in mind this is a family show. How about standing on one leg at the end of the bed, the other knee bent up at right angles, shin and foot dangling, hands crossed shoulder to shoulder, before closing your eyes and counting?

I've stopped doing this now. Too many bruises. But for a short while it was definitely de rigueur in this house — him in the bathroom with his toothbrush, me crackin' my shins on the bed post. On a good day, I might make it to eight seconds before hopping and teetering across the bedroom floor like a thing deranged. Then I'd do it all again on the other side. Over and over again, telling myself 'it will come. All it takes is practice'. For when first I started doing this, my time pre-teeter was a mere two seconds.

'Pah!' you're probably thinking. 'I can stand

on one leg for AGES! What's the matter with the woman?'

You might especially be thinking that if you were born, say, twenty or thirty-odd years after me. And that's okay because I would have done the same once.

The key thing here is not the standing on one leg, it's the closing of the eyes that counts, according to Ben Wolff, a yoga teacher who also happens to be a clinical hypnotherapist and neuroscience geek. It's a pose he named the 'Flamingo', for obvious reasons.

If you're one of those yoga or Pilates

people who heads unthinking to the safety of the wall as soon as the teacher suggests so much as lifting a foot off the floor, rather than face the ignominy of wobbling off balance, this article might just be for you.

Yoga teacher disclaimer: There may be very good reasons why you need that support — physical injury and instability or inner ear issues, for example — but it can also be about fear. Fear of vulnerability, and fear of looking foolish and ancient in front of an entire class who, you imagine, could balance on a fingernail on a barbed wire fence for several minutes at a time with very

little effort. I know this because that fearful person has been me.

## SOBERING NEWS...

An 'Ageing and Exercise' paper by Roy J Shephard<sup>1</sup>, published in 1998, still makes a sobering read. Left to their own devices, he suggested, our bodies begin their inexorable journey towards that great good night sooner than you might think. Muscle strength? That peaks at 25. Calcium? 30. 'Maximal oxygen intake' also begins to decline at 25. 'Ageing,' he said, 'leads to a progressive decrease of muscle strength and flexibility.' That's before we factor in the eyes and ears, and any clinical conditions and injuries we might pick up on our journey through life — including the still-emerging after-effects of any Covid infection. All of which might contribute to balance, of course.

In 2017, a study looking at physical performance across the adult life span (aged 30 through to 90+), correlating age and physical activity<sup>2</sup>, found that whilst 'men performed better than women across all ages, the decrement by age group was similar between genders'. Worsening

physical performance was observed as early as the fifth decade for chair stands and balance and in the sixth decade for gait speed and aerobic endurance. Loss of balance, it would appear, is not just a problem for the oldest old. Strength, agility, muscle mass — and, inevitably, balance — begin declining in midlife.

And with many mountain and cave rescuers staying operational (and ostensibly still fighting fit), into their fifties and sixties (and even beyond), this is surely something we all need to think about.

## HOLDING BACK THE YEARS

One minute we're off to the gym in our high-cut leotard and feel-the-burn leg warmers (or whatever your gender-appropriate equivalent), balancing on one leg for hours on end, wondering what all these old people are dithering on about. The next — in the blink of an eye, it seems — we're the ones doing the dithering, reaching for the wall, tripping over our own feet, wondering where it all went.

If coming into yoga teaching as a more mature yogi has done anything, it's brought me face to face with my own incipient frailty because, given the probable need to demonstrate a range of balancing postures with some level of conviction, it was likely to be a tough job if I couldn't. And, I'm not ashamed to admit, there's many a class where the 'balance section' is more an exercise in watching the teacher fall over.

Oh and I know how much you think you're holding back the ravages of time with your body-punishing triathlons and mind-blowing gym routines, your yomping up hills with half an operating theatre strapped to your torso, but what about that Flamingo?

Which brings me back to Ben. He reckons the ability to stand on one leg with our eyes closed is the most important thing any of us can strive for — more important even than hour after hour of pavement pounding, hill scaling, bicep curling and hamstring stretching. It's also a handy guide to our functional age.

Manage it for four seconds, he says, and your 'balance-based real age' is estimated to be 70 years. Seventy! I hardly dared ask what my mere two seconds signified. By nine seconds, you've turned the clock back to 50. Keep it going for 28 seconds and you're back in your late-twenties.

In a recent piece in BBC Science Focus Magazine<sup>3</sup>, Dr Michael Moseley quotes different figures for expected age-related balance times. With closed eyes and under 40, you might manage fifteen seconds, thirteen aged 40-49. But the decline becomes more marked from fifty onwards. Up to 59, you might expect eight seconds, four up to 69, and aged 70-79 just three seconds with eyes closed. Very slightly more generous than Ben, but you get the picture.

'The health benefits are staggering,' says Ben. 'You feel your whole system recalibrating, which is kind of the point'.

Thinking it at first an 'esoteric secret', he came across the pose in 2009, in an article about Zhong Li Ba Ren's book, 'Self Help is

Better Than Seeking Doctors' Help', which considered the pose Jin Du Ji Lu to be 'all you need for complete body and brain health'.

'From a Qi Gong or Tai Chi perspective, it targets the six important meridians in the leg. In neuroscience, this makes complete sense because the longest signalling pathways run from foot to brain and back again. Not only that, but for any animal to have a sense of where it is in space is crucial, and this works both our internal interoceptive systems and our external proprioceptive systems of spatial awareness.'

He admits that he too could only manage two seconds at the start but now he's not only lifting a leg, crossing his arms shoulder to shoulder and closing his eyes, he's cleaning his teeth at the same time — and holding the pose for two minutes each side.

## WHAT ELSE CAN IT TELL YOU?

Being able to stand on one leg has been linked to increased levels of physical activity<sup>4</sup> and decreased risk of falls<sup>5</sup> as well as being associated with longevity and quality of life. According to the World Health Organisation<sup>6</sup>, falls are the second leading cause of unintentional injury deaths worldwide, with adults over sixty suffering the greatest number of fatal falls.

As already noted, there might be many contributory factors to a fall: muscle weakness, poor balance, visual impairment, the effects of medication, environmental hazards, inner ear conditions, failing to wear the right footwear or simply tripping up over that pesky tree root. The NHS reports that around 1 in 3 adults over 65 and half of people over 80 will have at least one fall a year and about half of these will have more frequent falls.

Current government guidance<sup>7</sup> ranks falls as the ninth highest cause of disability-adjusted life years in England with short and long-term outlooks for patients being generally poor following a hip fracture — an increased one-year mortality of between 18% and 33% — along with negative effects on daily living activities such as shopping and walking (they don't list the ability to walk up hills). A review of long-term disability found that a surprising 20% of hip fracture patients entered long-term care in the first year after fracture.

Admittedly, they recommend activities such as Nordic walking, circuits, resistance training and exercising with weights at least two days a week to mitigate your risk — so all that running up and down hills carrying heavy loads may go some way towards saving you — but my own observation is that we still need that vital 'listening to the proprioceptive messages' element to maintain the balance wiring in the brain.

## PREDICTING MENTAL DECLINE

One more thing. The ability to stand on one leg isn't just about guarding against future falls — it can also be an indicator of brain health. A small Japanese study in 2014<sup>8</sup>, had nearly 1,400 women and men, with an





average age of 67, attempting to stand on one leg for at least a minute. The test was conducted eyes open, with the standing leg selected by the subject — my assumption here is that we instinctively choose our dominant leg and that this would be a factor. Those who lasted less than 20 seconds were more likely to have already suffered a small stroke<sup>9</sup> and may already be suffering mental decline. The study, published in 'Stroke', concluded that 'postural instability was found to be associated with early pathological changes in the brain and functional decline, even in apparently healthy subjects'.

## TOO YOUNG TO BOTHER YET...

You may well still be young and vibrant. You may still be able to run up a hill at speed with karabiners clanking about your climbing harness and a stretcher on your back. You may even consider yourself a long way yet from that sixty-year slide into decrepitude.

But, as Roy J Shephard hinted way back then: 'You're already sliding. Wherever you are in your rollercoaster ride through life, the ability to stand on one leg is seeping inexorably away from you. Along with a lot of other things you'd perhaps have liked to hang on to. You just haven't noticed it yet. One day, someone like me will invite you to stand on one leg whilst cleaning your teeth and you'll think 'Whoa!' what happened there?' Ask a physio if you don't believe me.

And the good news? Well if you develop that awareness now, the likelihood is you'll stave off the seepage. And, better still, even if it's temporarily gone, with a bit of practice you can get it back. Persuade your brain that you're still 35 after all.

## HOW BALANCE WORKS

A number of factors feed into our ability to maintain postural control, stay upright and move through space. Our central nervous system takes in the sensory information coming at it from our eyes, ears, muscles and joints and essentially orchestrates our body's response.

But you don't have to be standing like a big pink-feathered bird — or even cleaning your teeth — to tune into proprioception. Just stand one bare foot behind the other, heel to big toe, weight evenly distributed between front and back (see exercise right) for several minutes.

Or imagine yourself collared by the local bobby, whilst en route home from a particularly boozy do, and try walking heel, toe, heel, toe, along a straight line. (Although my own local bobby pal suggests they rarely do this. 'You'd be surprised,' she says, 'how many drunks can walk in a straight line.')

## TRY THIS SIMPLE EXERCISE TO TEST BALANCE AND CONNECT TO THOSE PROPRIOCEPTIVE MESSAGES

Yoga teacher Roger Cole PhD<sup>10</sup> sums up the essentials of balance as 'the alignment of the body with gravity, the strength to hold and adjust alignment and the constant attention to continually monitor and correct alignment'. This simple exercise is a great way to test all three.

- 1 Stand with feet hip-width apart, roughly an arm's length away from a piece of furniture (back of a dining chair say, or a kitchen surface) — just far enough to have the tips of index, middle and ring fingers of both hands touching that surface. You should be standing crown lifted, eyes open, gaze forward, not leaning onto the fingertips.
- 2 Bring one foot in towards the midline of the body so it's directly under you, in line with your belly button and nose.
- 3 Bring your other foot in front of that one, heel to big toe.
- 4 Now spend some time observing how the body feels. You might feel twitches in the soles of your feet, the ankles might start to wobble. Perhaps those sensations will head up the legs to the gluteal muscles. And keep that gaze forward. Wobbles are good. It's just your brain working out where you are in space.
- 5 Now lift one finger on each hand. Now two. Each time pausing to observe how this feels.
- 6 Lift one hand away and bring it to your sternum. Hold here. Lift the other hand to the sternum. Hold again. Each time tuning in to the twitches and wobbles.
- 7 Finally, lift one arm at a time to reach the fingertips to sky, creating a 'Y' shape. Hold for a few breaths then bring your palms together as if in 'prayer' and slowly lower the hands down through the midline.

About five minutes each leg should be enough.

Easy peasy, yes? Okay, now do that whole routine with your eyes closed and see how different that feels, now you've removed from your brain the sensory message of sight.

As a teacher, watching a class of strong, fit and healthy individuals of different ages going through the eyes-closed bit is fascinating. Where with eyes open, they all effect to be perfectly in balance, wobbles



barely noticeable — 'Nothing to see here!' — ask them to close those eyes and I can actually see each body fighting with itself to find equilibrium, to varying degrees.

## NEVER TOO EARLY OR LATE

A work in progress and something to aim for then. Go the full Flamingo by all means but my advice is not to stand on a slippery floor, and practise well away from sharp corners. Rather choose somewhere you can teeter towards something soft. I'd also recommend breathing slow and low in the belly, in for six and out for six, to really ground yourself.

It's never too early, or too late, to start. Whether you're in your 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s or 60s. But starting now is always the better option. ☺

## THANKS

Huge thanks to Dina Cohen of [dynamicflowyoga.com](http://dynamicflowyoga.com) for passing on Roger Cole's simple but effective balance exercise and Ben Wolff for sharing the 'Flamingo'. Thanks also to Howard Smedley, retired oncologist, for pointing me in the direction of notable research into balance and Dr Alistair Morris for his read-through and feedback.

## POSTSCRIPT

We'll talk about riding the Zeitgeist! Just before going to print, a further study<sup>11</sup>, caused something of a stir in the mainstream media with its findings that 'the inability to complete ten seconds in one-legged standing in middle-age and older participants is related to a higher risk of all-cause mortality and, consequently, to a shorter life expectancy'. Don't say you haven't been warned. ☹

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> [sports-science.org/encyclagingex/agingex.html](https://www.sports-science.org/encyclagingex/agingex.html) <sup>2</sup> [academic.oup.com/biomedgerontology/article/72/4/572/2629941?login=true](https://academic.oup.com/biomedgerontology/article/72/4/572/2629941?login=true) <sup>3</sup> [www.sciencefocus.com/the-human-body/dr-michael-mosley-standing-on-one-leg/](https://www.sciencefocus.com/the-human-body/dr-michael-mosley-standing-on-one-leg/) <sup>4</sup> [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30729129/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30729129/) <sup>5</sup> [who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/falls](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/falls) <sup>6</sup> [gov.uk/government/publications/falls-applying-all-our-health/falls-applying-all-our-health](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/falls-applying-all-our-health/falls-applying-all-our-health) <sup>7</sup> [ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/STROKEAHA.114.006704](https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/STROKEAHA.114.006704) <sup>8</sup> [webmd.com/stroke/news/20141218/can-you-balance-on-one-leg-you-may-have-lower-stroke-risk](https://www.webmd.com/stroke/news/20141218/can-you-balance-on-one-leg-you-may-have-lower-stroke-risk) <sup>9</sup> [rogercoleyoga.com](https://www.rogercoleyoga.com) <sup>10</sup> [press.psprings.co.uk/bjism/june/bjism105360.pdf](http://press.psprings.co.uk/bjism/june/bjism105360.pdf) <sup>11</sup>

JUDY WHITESIDE HAS BEEN TRYING VERY HARD NOT TO FALL OVER IN FRONT OF STUDENTS FOR THREE YEARS NOW, AS A CERTIFIED YOGA TEACHER AND BREATH-BODY-MIND TEACHER. AS WITH LIFE, IT CONTINUES TO BE A WORK IN PROGRESS, A NEVER ENDING CIRCLE OF LEARNING: SOMETIMES FUNNY, SOMETIMES FRUSTRATING, AND NEVER, EVER DULL.



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Opposite page: Avalanche training © NNPMRT/Will Close-Ash.

## ONLINE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT WITH TOGETHERALL

The second thing we're excited about is our new offering from Togetherall. We generally take the view in any application to the fund that it must be related to an applicant's involvement with mountain or cave rescue activity — for example, to support physical therapy and rehabilitation for injury sustained during a call-out or training, or therapeutic counselling for distress following emotional trauma. We've also provided financial support with funeral expenses of team members who have died in service, and for hardship suffered through loss of 'working time' due to injury.

But what about the day-to-day stuff, the spectrum of emotional and mental wellbeing that runs from 'feeling a bit low today' through to the challenge of post-traumatic stress, and the effects our relationships both within the team and at home or work might be having on us? Maybe that old saw about heading to the pub and chatting things through with your mates isn't quite working for you — just pushes the issue further beneath the surface — or maybe that's part of the problem and you're now worried about how many beers or cheeky glasses you actually need to feel human. There can be any number of reasons for needing support, at any time.

Togetherall offers an anonymous support community, which is safe and stigma-free, the opportunity to chat online with people who are going through, or have gone through, similar experiences to you. There are guided courses on a range of issues, with peer-support involvement, and NHS-approved self-assessments in just about every aspect of health and wellbeing. And a host of resources to tap into.

For me, a key plus point is the 24/7 availability because, as any of us who have ever had anything to worry about will know (and I'm guessing that's anyone reading this), the worst time of day is the middle of the night through the early hours of the morning. And whatever the experts might advise, those pesky devices are never far from reach (we're on call 24/7 too, right?) — so let's turn that into a positive.

I also can't stress enough that this is anonymous. A dedicated URL (see top right) will take you straight through to registration with Togetherall, where you'll be invited to register with a screen name. Using real names and anything that might identify you or pinpoint your location to other users is discouraged so you can feel safe to share your thoughts and feelings. Once registered, you can either visit [togetherall.com](http://togetherall.com) and select 'login' at the top of the page, or

Togetherall can be saved as a shortcut on your mobile or tablet to look and feel like an app for ease of access. So when you find yourself stuck in the interminable darkness of those early hours, help is just a click away. You're not alone.

The URL is available for all operational mountain and cave rescue team members and nobody — even the trustees of the benevolent fund — will have details of who is using it.

The partnership launched in early July and by the end of the month, there will be a landing page and button on the new website to take you directly to [togetherall.com](http://togetherall.com). We also have the facility to 'prescribe' Togetherall, just in case you miss the many hints and reminders we'll be dropping around the place. So if you have a concern, key individuals within mountain and cave rescue, and the benevolent fund trustees, will be able to 'prescribe' the resource as a benefit. Clearly, this will mean that we are aware of who you are initially but, once on the platform, you will be completely anonymous and you and your actions and words unidentifiable.

Although this strays a little from what the fund usually does — effectively help patch people up once an issue has arisen — we believe this will help support the current 'wellbeing' and 'shared values' drives within our organisations, to perhaps prevent things reaching that level of extremis. Nip things in the bud, as it were. And the better a team member feels about themselves, their relationships with others and — most importantly — their mental and physical health, the better they are likely to perform as a team member.

## RESET PROGRAMME THROUGH THE FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITY

Which brings me to a third thing! Through our partnership with The Fire Fighters Charity, we already offer both in-person and online therapies, including four-day residential stays at Jubilee House in Penrith, Harcombe House in Devon or Marine Court in West Sussex. And now we're also able to offer their 'Reset Programme', which is aimed more at resilience and mental wellbeing. A residential stay at Harcombe House might be just what you need to tackle symptoms of stress, lack of sleep or post-injury pain following a mountain or cave rescue incident. The programme is group-based with expert practitioners, with tailored



TO REGISTER WITH TOGETHERALL, GO TO [TOGETHERALL.COM/JOINNOW/RESCUEBENEVOLENTFUND](http://TOGETHERALL.COM/JOINNOW/RESCUEBENEVOLENTFUND)

workshops, exercises and group activities to help build resilience in your everyday life, including everything from goal setting, gym and pool sessions, tai chi and yoga through to walks and relaxation sessions.

## HOW DO YOU APPLY?

Applying to the fund is simple. Fill in the website contact form or email [secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund](mailto:secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund). And please get in touch if you want to know more about any of these developments. Remember, we were set up BY mountain and cave rescue FOR mountain and cave rescue. 🗝️



## What's new from the Rescue Benevolent Fund?

JUDY WHITESIDE SECRETARY, RESCUE BENEVOLENT FUND

A recent comment during our AGM in June got me thinking. Younger team members, it was suggested, might not know what 'benevolent' meant, much less 'benevolent fund'. And, to be honest, I wasn't exactly sure what the dictionary definition was either. So, in the interests of clarity, I looked it up. And according to my trusty Oxford Dictionary of English, when used as an adjective, it means 'well-meaning and kindly'. In conjunction with the word 'fund' it applies to 'an organisation serving a charitable rather than a profit-making purpose'. Which gives us a useful start point, but there's a lot more besides. So what have we done lately to live up to our name?

Well, two things we're really excited about: our brand new website and the new-forged partnership with Togetherall, a safe, online community where people support each other anonymously to improve mental health and wellbeing. In fact, the ONLY online peer-support community that is moderated 24/7 by fully-trained mental health professionals and led by an on-duty clinical team.

### NEW BENEVOLENT FUND WEBSITE LAUNCHED

First then, to our website. The old version was looking a little jaded and simplistic — and we've evolved so much since we and it first launched — so we were long overdue for an overhaul. The idea was to create a space through which potential applicants

and donors could easily navigate to information about the fund, how to ask for support, and how to donate. Alongside this, we wanted to develop a resource for anyone wanting to find out more about how to look after themselves physically and mentally, and perhaps find a way out of a challenging frame of mind.

Whatever it is that's concerning you, the 'Useful links' section will take you to organisations that can help — with a brief description of the services they each provide, including key web pages, relevant helplines and email contact addresses.

Under 'News and stories' you'll find an archive of articles previously published in the magazine from a variety of sources and neatly divided into 'Mental Wellbeing' and 'Physical Wellbeing'. And under 'Resources'

you'll find all our downloadable information in one handy place. There's an updated FAQs, our application form and a Gift Aid declaration amongst others. We've even got a 'books we've read and recommend' section. We'll be adding to all these as we go, so if there are any useful links or resources you think we've missed — or if you'd like to write an article about health and wellbeing, or even recommend a book you've found inspirational, let me know.

And, finally with the website, a handful of those we've previously helped have offered to write testimonials about their experience.

I invite you to take a look at this revamped site, find out a bit more about what we do and how we do it. And as ever, a huge thank you to those whose images have helped create our stunning new online presence.

## PARTNERING TO DELIVER PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING SUPPORT TO MOUNTAIN AND CAVE RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS



**BUT DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT...**

*'(The Rescue Benevolent Fund has) given me hope of getting where I want to be without surgery...'* Peter Rigby

*'On good days, I can support others. On bad days, when I need supporting, I can find information to understand how to deal with it.'* Anonymous Togetherall member.

*'(The Rescue Benevolent Fund trustees) were approachable and supportive and I can't recommend them highly enough...'* Sue Mitchell

FIND US ONLINE AT [RESCUEBENEVOLENT.FUND](http://RESCUEBENEVOLENT.FUND) & VIA THE QR CODE OPPOSITE, OR ON FACEBOOK @RESCUEBENEVOLENTFUND





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# health&wellbeing

## Odyssey: How outdoor activity is helping support cancer patients



It's surprising where links with mountain rescue will pop up. **Howard Smedley** was a Canterbury-based oncologist who regularly used outdoor adventure activities for the purposes of staff development and training. Some time in the early-1990s, it occurred to him that something similar might benefit many of the people he saw as patients. Later that very evening Howard, Steve Gough and Charles Lyster got together over a couple of pints in a dark corner of a Gillingham pub, and the idea for Odyssey was born. Along the way, he's made connections with a number of outdoor people and mountain rescuers, finding his way here via the Rescue Benevolent Fund! Over to Howard...

Unlike most ideas developed in such circumstances, this one looked even better in the morning! Six months of research and planning followed and, in September 1994, sixteen bold people met for the first ever Odyssey course.

Two years before, I had been working in a cancer department in Kent when the local BMI Hospital appointed a new executive director, Steve Gough, who came from a background as a manager and instructor in Outward Bound.

Shortly afterwards, he invited ten consultants to attend a short course at Outward Bound Ullswater. None of us were sure what to expect but, for me, it turned out to be a life-changing experience.

We had the usual tasks and challenges, and set about confidently to overcome any situations. As problem-orientated people, the actual tasks were relatively straightforward. Making a raft out of oil drums was the realm of the surgeons, who were pretty good at knots but then, one or two of them weren't so confident on the water. And the water people didn't always like height, and so on...

Cooperation and encouragement became the currency of everyday language, and I have never seen naturally competitive doctors all being so helpful to each other.

So the penny dropped that it wasn't the task in itself, but the reserves and determination which were brought to the surface was the learning point. And all done in the majesty of the outdoors. So we are all capable of more than we think we are. You won't know what you can do until you're tested. That involves going out of your comfort zone — and who wants to do that?

When I returned to Kent, I was able to access some charitable money, and over the next few years, sent over 30 members of staff to Ullswater as part of their development plans. The benefits were

obvious to me, and to a wider NHS, as several participants had increased self-confidence to apply for promotions elsewhere.

Chatting to Steve one day, I remember saying that the outdoors had been good for doctors, nurses, physicists and admin staff, so wasn't it a pity we couldn't do something for patients. I now know outdoor types will hear anything like that as a challenge, one that must be attempted.

We made contact with another OB person, Charles Lyster, and asked him to design a course in Kent. His first reaction was that there wasn't enough dramatic scenery in Kent to recapture the OB experience. However, he soon came up with a programme playing to the strengths of Kent and possible physical limitations of the participants. And that programme is largely unchanged after 25 years.

I should explain at this point that this is not in any way a part of a person's cancer treatment. Conventional treatment has never been better and more successful than it is today but it can be very demanding in terms of side-effects, and also duration. A commonly used treatment for breast cancer might go on over a year, or even longer. Some effects, like hair loss, are well known, but lesser-known effects on energy, stamina and so on, can get lost in the big picture of getting rid of the cancer.

It can be very hard to remain positive throughout, especially when the media like to use military terms like 'battle' and 'brave' so much. Many people will tell you they don't feel very brave most of the time.

So, we invited a group of eighteen people who had completed primary treatment a few weeks previously. The key element was to tell them as little as possible about what they would actually do. If you list all the activities planned, most people will smile nicely and say, 'That's not for me'. Odyssey is about



The Odyssey Bike Ride August 2019 © Odyssey.

discovering you can always do more than you think you are capable of.

The best time to learn anything is when you're ready to start enjoying yourself, and after a year or so of cancer treatment, most people are ready for a bit of enjoyment, and maybe fun. And with other people who know exactly how you might be feeling.

Since then, we've run courses in Kent, Wales, Scotland, the Midlands and the Lake District. Well over 1,000 people have attended courses, and they are now our best ambassadors, recruiters and fundraisers. They understand the need for some mystery around what actually happens and encourage people to trust us.

Steve and I have retired from day-to-day involvement now, and the current director, Robin Clark, continues to take the charity forward. In a nutshell, Odyssey aims to restore zest for life, using the majesty of the outdoors.

But don't take my word for it — see what past participants have to say. Visit [odyssey.org.uk](http://odyssey.org.uk) and see for yourself. ☺





# An accidental collaboration

The Church on the Hill by Jon Kidd.

## POPPY SEAS

*In poppy seas we march and wade,  
To see our comrades fall and fade,  
As up that hill we battle higher,  
And fight to take that distant spire.*

*Then our costly walk is done,  
And on that ridge the silent gun,  
Stands witness o'er that glorious view  
Surrounded by the lucky few.*

*We that lived and still draw breath,  
Ponder on that bail of death,  
That dimmed the lives we could not save,  
As they rest beneath that poppy wave.*

I met many characters in the team, dedicated to the role of rescuing people in difficulty on the hills, good people all. One was Jon Kidd: a really nice guy, outgoing, friendly and always smiling and we became firm friends. In December 2012, I'd been carrying out the role of team training officer for around six months when I was enticed away from mountain rescue — and from my home in Leek — to take a job as fire crew chief, protecting a NATO airbase in Kandahar, Afghanistan. I remained in that role for two years.

On return home, I took a part-time job in a local special needs school and never looked back. I didn't return to mountain rescue, mainly because, well frankly, I'm getting on a bit and arthritis is starting to creep in.

## HARRY STARKEY

In March 2010, I retired from Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service after 35 years of uniformed service: five in the British Army and thirty as a firefighter. After a short holiday, I joined Buxton MRT, in April 2010. For years, my hobby had been hiking and wild camping in the hills of the Peak District and my childhood playground, the Lake District. So, it seemed logical to combine my knowledge of hillcraft and navigation with my experience in the emergency services, and the best place to do that was with mountain rescue.

I'm friends with Jon on Facebook but didn't really communicate much with him, wishing him happy birthday and so on but not much else. I was aware he moved to Wales not long after I returned from Afghanistan. He's a very keen photographer and I'd noted he was studying for a photography degree, so was pleased to read he had earned a First Class honours degree.

When Jon posted a link to his YouTube channel, I followed the link expecting to see his photography, but to my surprise it was a video of him painting. I didn't know he painted and, as he painted, he talked about his dark days and breakdown in 2015. Not only had I not known about his painting skill, I hadn't known about his mental health issues either. It was obvious to me that much

of his work was inspired by those dark moments, tortured, dark and foreboding pieces of art, but on the other hand some of them were bright and full of light.

One piece stood out to me, appealing to the military man I'd once been: *The Church on the Hill*. It looked like a series of poppy fields sloping up a hill to a church spire in the distance. I've always liked the war poets — Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves — and this picture brought to mind the poem *In Flanders Fields* by the Canadian poet John McCrae.

I began to type the opening lines to the poem, but it didn't quite fit. The second line mentions crosses:

*In Flanders Fields where poppies blow,  
Between the crosses, row on row.*

But there were no crosses in Jon's painting! So, I deleted what I'd typed, and tried to think of another appropriate poem, but couldn't quite think of one that was right.

I've never really written poetry. I did write the *Exhortation for the Fallen* which is read out every year at my annual regimental reunion, something I'm very proud of, but that's it — the sum total of my work. I do often think of a verse or two in my head, but never write them down. Oh, the volumes of lost work!

But Jon's painting was talking to me, inspiring me to write something down, so I did and posted it on his Facebook page. He contacted me and told me he liked it, which pleased me. I started looking at his other paintings, and sure enough some of them talked to me too, inspiring me to write more stuff down.

Slowly a germ of an idea was starting to form. Jon suggested a collaboration: his art and my poetry. We discussed it, and not

being a prolific poet I thought it reasonable I might be able to produce twelve poems inspired by his artwork over time, and from that came the idea to make a calendar which we plan to sell and all profits to go to the mountain rescue team. It's early days but we're aiming for 2023.

I did turn it around on Jon at one point. I've written seven poems so far, all inspired by his art, but then I wrote one poem unbidden (with a mountain rescue theme) with none of his artistic influence. I sent it to him and challenged him to paint a picture inspired by it, which I'm pleased to say he did.

We have accidentally ended up in a piece of collaborative work, and I'm really looking forward to the finished article.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT JON'S WORK AT [JONKIDD.CO.UK](http://JONKIDD.CO.UK) AND AT [YOUTUBE.COM/CHANNEL/UC5F8KVOZQJAU79EBQ9TQIQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5F8KVOZQJAU79EBQ9TQIQ)



## Raising funds for rescue

### A CRY IN THE WIND by HARRY STARKEY

*Dedicated to the women, men and dogs of mountain rescue teams everywhere*

*The path was sound and the sky was clear,  
As we made our way up here.  
The air was cold, but we couldn't tell,  
We've got warm clothes, we're wrapped up well.*

*We reached the top, took in the view,  
I was bothered by a leaking shoe.  
Still can't complain, just keep on,  
Goodness, where has the time gone?*

*It's wonderful here, a national park,  
But this time of year, it soon gets dark.  
We have no torch, no source of light,  
We'll be in trouble in the night.*

*No, we'll be fine, we know our way,  
We'll follow that path, we took today.  
Now where is it, it's whereabouts,  
Now we can't find our way out.*

*We struggle on, it's all a fumble,  
Then I take an awful tumble.  
A terrible pain, an awful ache,  
I think I heard something break.*

*We're stranded now, cold and lost,  
This walk has come with a high cost.  
It's dark and cold, and I'm in pain,  
The wind is fierce and here comes the rain.  
She makes a call on her mobile phone,  
At least we didn't leave that at home.  
It's a long way up, so response is slow,  
We'll keep in touch, but the battery is low.*



*For miles around while people sleep,  
Some folks are disturbed by an insistent bleep.  
From their beds, they take it in,  
They all respond to the pager's din.*

*Make your way to a remote car park,  
There are people hurt, lost in the dark.  
And with a peck on a partner's cheek,  
They quickly dress, it's the third time this week.*

*The team heads out into flying bail,  
Time is critical, they must not fail.  
They need to reach these people fast,  
If this night is not to be their last.*

*They will come from all around,  
To search over this sodden ground.  
In rain or snow, hail, or fog,  
They'll even bring their special dog.*

*Teams are formed, dressed against the chill,  
They head on out and up the hill.  
Headtorch beams slashing though the clag,  
Searching up the treacherous crag.*

*An hour later, in a bowling gale,  
A rescuer bears the faintest wail.  
It isn't loud or very clear,  
A call of 'Help. We're over here'.*



*We're carried off, mile after mile,  
A little banter even makes us smile.  
Now we know we will be well,  
This team has saved us from this bell.*

*It's what they do, this isn't rare,  
To help the injured, that's why they're there.  
Going onto the hills shouldn't make us scared,  
But next time we will come prepared.*

## ELLIOT BROWN WATCHES RAISE £21,000 FOR MREW

As people who live for hills and trails, it was a goal of the co-founders of British watch brand Elliot Brown, Ian Elliot and Alex Brown, to give something back to those who volunteer for Mountain Rescue England and Wales, selflessly keeping the outdoors safe and enjoyable.

Since 2015, Elliot Brown has raised £21,000 for the charity through sales of its special edition MREW Canford watch. A reliable, robust timepiece that easily fits the criteria of the watch required on the member's kit list. Priced at £385, 10% of the sale of each watch is donated to MREW. Mountain rescue members get £100 off the price of the watch on confirmation of full team membership.

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# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE

## JUNE: TEAM CRAG RESCUE ROPE TRANSFORMED INTO A 'FLOWER TOWER' FOR THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE

The beautiful celebratory display for the Platinum Jubilee was at St Thomas's Church, Biggin, each 'flower' knitted, crocheted and stitched by residents of the village — including some using old Buxton team crag rescue rope. The flower tower net took several months to complete, sustained by regular sessions of tea and biscuits and, no doubt, plenty of amiable natter.

Left: The Platinum Jubilee flower tower at St Thomas's Church in Biggin © Buxton MRT.



## MAY: LONG SERVICE AWARDS IN LONGTOWN

Longtown MRT was finally able to run their biggest fundraiser event in person in May, after a two-year break due to Covid. It was amazing, writes **Dan Mazhindu**, to see, meet and chat with team supporters. The weather was phenomenal, and even though we had over 800 people on the hill, it still felt intimate and friendly.

However, for the team, the highlight was the presentation in the evening to two of their most respected members, Tim Potts and Mike Jones. This is their 30-year anniversary, an outstanding achievement. Both have given so much to the team and the wider MREW community.

This is what our team leader, Neil Rothwell-Hughes, had to say about them: 'Mike and Tim's long service to those in difficulties on the hill for in excess of thirty years as active members of Longtown MRT is remarkable enough in its own right. However, the mere arithmetic of years of service does not begin to do justice to the contributions of these two stalwarts of mountain rescue.'

'Mike has been a safe, measured and highly competent search manager for most of his thirty years with the team. He has also been a trustee, treasurer and team chairman. Most importantly he is regarded affectionately by team members of all seniorities as the father of the team. He has often been the first to greet new members starting with the team, and to offer wise and supportive mentoring to them.'

'Dr Tim Potts is also a search manager, trustee and current chairman, having held that post with distinction twice. In addition, in his time as team doctor, he has ensured that the highest standards of casualty care are maintained, both in the team and also in South Wales, through his inspired work as medical director of the South Wales Area Association casualty care course. Casualties throughout the South Wales area owe a debt to Tim for his work in training us all so well.'

'Finally, as only the latest in the long line of Longtown team leaders to benefit from Mike and Tim's sagacious support and advice, may I on behalf of us all thank and congratulate them both.'



Above: Tim Potts and Mike Jones receive their Long Service Awards from Neil Rothwell-Hughes (above, right) © Longtown MRT.

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## JUNE: COULD THAT REALLY BE WHO WE THINK IT IS DOING A SPOT OF DOGSBODYING?

Perhaps it was the ideal opportunity to escape from all that partying at the Palace with the Platinum Jubilee celebrations and find a moment's peace away from the crowds... whatever...

In what can only be described as a 'bit of a coup', Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England (MRSDE) somehow managed to convince the Queen to undertake a spot of #dogsbodding in the Peak District, over her party weekend. There was even a crown and, of course, a dog or two in attendance (albeit not Corgis). Although... as they do say, perhaps not quite the look Her Majesty might be aiming for, what with her 'jaw' hanging off... which was due to the rain and being soggy apparently, rather than Trainee Search Dog Ebba licking her face off. Not quite Paddington Bear but close enough we reckon. Thank you for all you do Ma'am.

Left: The 'Queen' and Trainee Search Dog Ebba MRSDE.





## THE DEVIL'S ARSE

'Man saved by tree stump after falling off 100ft cliff at comedy gig in Devil's Arse cave'. Thus ran one of the less opportunisticly comedic headlines when performer John Shuttleworth's show was interrupted by an unfortunate gig-goer in May. **Ian Bunting** reports.

Over the previous twenty-four hours Edale team had received a couple of spurious calls that had led to nothing. The first to a walker with an injured leg on a road who thought that we may be able to respond quicker than the hours given by the ambulance service. Needless to say, we didn't. The second, to a walker with a head injury, who by the time the job had come through the system was making his own way off the hill with a passing nurse, thus not requiring our services. So when the call came from the police at around 9.00pm, reporting that a man was hanging by his fingertips above Peak Cavern (AKA the Devil's Arse), and that was all the information available, it sounded like it was going to be three in a row.

The duty leader tried making contact with the informant number which was the landline for the cavern office, but no one answered, so the team was dispatched to see what was going on. Whilst en route, the DTL was contacted by a team member who was attending the concert and they confirmed there was indeed someone in a precarious position approximately 30 metres above the entrance to the cave. Another team member arrived shortly afterwards and was tasked with going to below the casualty to find out what was going on and running that end of the job. He quickly reported back that our man was hanging by his fingertips above a significant drop and that he was in contact with him.

To complicate matters, there were also several hundred concert goers that would be put at risk by falling rocks once the rescue was underway. We made the obvious but delicate decision to ask the organisers to stop the event and ask the audience to leave. Despite the disappointment they all cooperated and left quickly and with good humour. Initially, some people who'd heard the shouts for help had thought it part of the show.

Meanwhile, the rest of the team and kit had started arriving. The bulk of team members with crag kit were sent to the top of the crag to set up and carry out the rescue, a small section to the bottom with medical kit in case things didn't go to plan at any stage. East Midlands Ambulance Service also provided back up and responded with their full array of resources.

The rescue itself consisted of a simple one-man pick-up with both rescuer and casualty hauled to the top of the crag – complicated by the fact it was now dark and that the crag top section could not see the casualty and were reliant on instructions from below on where to set up anchors. One of our newer team members drew the short straw to be lowered down a very steep scree slope covered in trees and vegetation to the casualty. Again, he was reliant on instructions from below to direct his descent as he couldn't see the casualty until he was only a few metres away. The rescue itself went without a hitch and the casualty was brought to safety with only a few cuts and bruises from his ordeal.

It transpired that he was himself en route to attend the concert and following a route on Google Maps, which most people found hard to believe – until they tried it on Google Maps! Despite crossing two barbed wire fences, he'd carried on regardless, lost his footing, slipped and tumbled down the slope before managing to grab hold of the last sapling before the vertical drop. He wasn't able to raise the alarm himself but fortunately was heard and spotted by someone below.

As for John Shuttleworth, comedian Graham Fellows, a return visit to the Devil's Arse is planned in September to play the second half of the gig. A new song is also in the pipeline based on the events of the evening. Sure to be a number one! The following day most news organisations had picked up on the incident via our social media feeds. With a few claiming to grab the best headline 'Man rescued from the clutches of the Devil's Arse' taking pride of place. The incident was also mentioned on that week's *Have I got news for you*. 🍷

## JUNE: FATHER DIES OF INJURIES SUSTAINED IN FALL FROM BORROWDALE CRAG

A father and daughter were climbing on Raven Crag above Comb Gill when a climbing guide and his client, on an adjacent climb, witnessed the man fall some distance. The guide called 999 and requested mountain rescue before abseiling down to offer help.

A Coastguard helicopter and the Great North Air Ambulance attended alongside Keswick team members and members of RAF Leeming MRT, who happened to be in the area. The rescue teams approached from below and were able to reach the man in Raven Crag Gully but despite their best efforts, the man died from the injuries sustained in his fall. His daughter was examined by the team and crew of the air ambulance, and flown to Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle by the Coastguard for a thorough check. She was released the following day. Keswick and RAF Leeming then carried the father by stretcher to the valley floor. 'Our thoughts are with the family and friends.'



## APRIL: LAKES TEAM MEMBERS HANG OUT AT HONISTER WITH GORDON RAMSEY IN THE BBC'S FUTURE FOOD STARS

'Keswick Dave' and 'Cockermouth Alan' enjoyed a bit of haute cuisine with food guru Gordon Ramsay 'while the rest of us have to make do with flapjack and crisps' said their teams.

Both had a good chat with Gordon who was really interested in mountain rescue and the Lake District. Check out the first fourteen minutes of Series One, Episode Three on BBC iplayer for a restaurant with a view at Honister Slate Mine. Spoiler alert (and something of a well-trodden joke now): the red team won. Of course they did.

Right: Keswick Dave (in the red jacket) and Cockermouth Alan (in the blue) with Gordon Ramsay (in the middle!) © Keswick MRT.



## MAY: LABRADOODLE BITES OFF MORE THAN SHE CAN CHEW IN A SOUTH WALES CAVE

Not for the first time, South & Mid Wales team members found themselves dealing with an over-adventurous dog, intent on a spot of cave exploration. Duffy, a miniature labradoodle had definitely bitten off more than she could chew exploring the caves of the Llangatock Escarpment. After a strong team effort, and several hours' hard work, she was reunited with Martin, her owner, for a cwïch and a ride home.



## MAY: SAD OUTCOME TO CONISTON CALL-OUT

It was a cloudy and showery morning when the team were called by Cumbria Police about a dog that had fallen approximately 45 metres into the main quarry at Hodge Close. Team members quickly located Findlay. A gentleman who had been climbing in the quarry was with him.

Sadly, despite being given CPR, Findlay could not be resuscitated. Team members set up a stretcher and rope lift system to move him up to the entrance of a water-logged tunnel where they could walk out. Beautiful Findlay was nearly three years old, a much loved and happy boy, we are told, who was also a therapy dog, helping children and adults with his calm and friendly nature, and big heart. Our thoughts are with his owners, as well as his extended family.

Image via facebook.com/ConistonMountainRescueTeam

## MAY: LONG SERVICE AWARD ASHBURTON

Chairman Neil (pictured left) presents the award for 25 years' service to Dartmoor SRT Ashburton team member Dave Tutty (right).







## MARCH: DARTMOOR SRT PLYMOUTH ACCEPTED ONTO DEFRA NATIONAL ASSETS REGISTER

Words by water officer **Howard Otton**. Edited by team chairman **Steve Rose**

In March this year, Dartmoor SRT Plymouth water team was accepted onto the National Assets Register. We can now be called on to assist at any water-related emergency event across the country. This huge achievement for Plymouth – a first for the Penmacra region – is the result of a ten-year journey, and we thought it would be interesting to reflect on how we got to this point.

Images © Dartmoor SRT Plymouth/Colin Sturmer.

About ten years ago, we became more aware of flooding incidents around the country, and that mountain rescue teams were being used within these types of emergencies, and began to discuss the possibility of having our own swiftwater rescue element to the team. We had no kit, few skills and no idea what we would need to achieve this, and quickly came to realise how poor our water operating procedures and judgements were.

Only a year before, during the annual Ten Tors event, the hasty team had been sent to Redlake to assist in the large evacuation of young people due to major flooding on the moor. En route we had to cross the River Plym, which was in spate. With no knowledge we just got in and went for it! We were very lucky on that day not to lose at least two members of our team. Until we started to train, gain experience and do the courses, we didn't give our water safety a second thought.

The first training we attended was with Howie Crook from Rethink, who travelled to Plymouth from the Lake District to provide our training. There were ten of us with very little knowledge or skills but a strong

determination that this was the way forward for our team. We had to borrow all the kit we needed for the course from Howie. This training was a huge wake-up call for us all but we also began to realise what a huge benefit the knowledge from this course would be for our team as a whole.

After successfully completing the course, we bought our own secondhand dry suits (at this point with very little funding to pay for any kit), we made our own throw bags, managed to get a company to buy us PFDs and used our own walking boots. Every training session was a huge learning curve and also fairly unpleasant as every suit leaked and we finished each session getting very wet and nearing hypothermia! As time went by, we managed to beg, borrow and procure as much kit as we could, and our skill levels and knowledge began to increase. We soon became more experienced and more established. It was a huge commitment for everybody involved.

Three years on, money was still tight so we were very lucky when a local company paid for our first revalidation course, again with Howie, and he was impressed with the level of skill and knowledge we'd achieved. When

the Libor grants became available, we put a huge amount of time and effort into the application process and, amazingly, received two grants over several years probably totalling over £40,000-worth of kit. We'd tried hard to incorporate equipment that could also be used by the whole team, not just in the water, and this has worked really well for us. The grants paid for the purchase of two titanium stretchers, a stretcher wheel, Petzl IDs, an AED, LED scene lighting, Manta water helmets, a Saviour Technical stretcher and lots of other nice 'Gucci' kit! As a water team we were also able to purchase all the inflatable rafts and rescue sleds we required. This was over £10k alone and it still didn't include all the other water kit we desperately needed.

Just before we received the Libor funds, we were contacted by the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) and asked if one of its members could join the team for a short while to see how we worked. The firefighter allocated to Plymouth was Alex Hanson. As a team we were very wary at the start and wondered what the fire service would want from us in return. However, we soon realised what a huge

boost his presence gave to the team with all his experience, knowledge and contacts. Along with the donation of two Land Rovers, we were also able to attend a large number of courses provided by DSFRS which greatly increased our knowledge as well as saving us a lot of money for training and revalidating our water team. We can honestly say that, if it wasn't for Alex, we wouldn't be this far forward, and the fact we're now on the National Assets Register is essentially down to a combination of his skills, knowledge and contacts as well as fantastic team commitment.

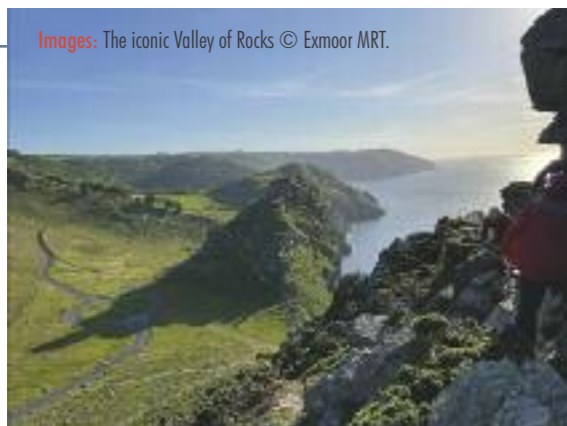
Other team members who were also heavily involved in this development process were Dave Northcott and Steve Lang. Their expertise and patience have proved that we can achieve anything with determination.

The original ten members of the water team have changed over the years, with some moving on as well as new members joining. Nowadays our water team has grown to consist of eighteen fully qualified SRTs, supported by a good number of Mod 2 qualified members. Looking back, we're unsure how we've managed to get to where we are! Our modern, large, fully kitted-out

water team has been established via a combination of spending money from team funds and grants, team skills, knowledge and contacts... as well as having a good dose of self-made luck and good fortune!

Many congratulations to all those who have been involved over the years as well as a huge thank you to all the water team members for showing such great commitment to the training and during water call-outs. We need to remember that all this amazing kit and equipment doesn't grow on trees and, as there are no more Libor grants, any damaged or lost kit will need to be replaced out of team funds. Our water team members are reminded that if they look after their own equipment and the team's kit, it will look after them and should last a few years, as well as giving us good value for money. This journey has been long but, in the end, it has been worth the effort. It's also a fantastic achievement to be the first Penmacra team to be accepted on the National Assets Register, the whole team is very proud. We now await our first national deployment (with a touch of nervous energy!) ☺

Images: The iconic Valley of Rocks © Exmoor MRT.



## MAY: 'GREEN SPACE, DARK SKIES' COMES TO EXMOOR

The project comprises a series of 20 large-scale outdoor artworks in some of the UK's most outstanding landscapes as part of the UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK festival, running between April and September. The artworks are designed to 'celebrate the countryside and how people can explore it' and to encourage 'responsibility to take care of it for future generations'.

The Exmoor event was held on 28 May in the iconic Valley of Rocks on the northern coastline of Exmoor National Park. Local artistic productions company, Red Herring Productions, designed a beautifully choreographed light display celebrating the natural environment using Smart Lights (wireless programmable low impact lights with the ability to be animated through geo-positioning). At dusk, around 350 volunteers walked, danced, cycled or abseiled with these lights, creating a weaving river of light through the valley, congregating in changing coloured 'whirlpools' at the foot of Castle Rock with musical accompaniment – all against the backdrop of illuminated cliffs and a spectacular sunset. Exmoor team was on hand to provide medical and rescue cover and also got involved in the placement of lights amongst the crags. See [greenspacedarkskies.uk/films](http://greenspacedarkskies.uk/films) for more.





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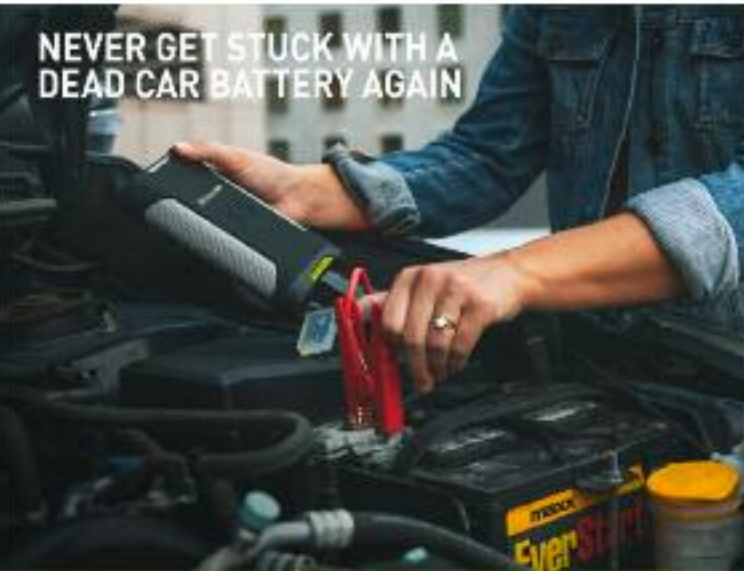
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NEWS ROUND  
APRIL > JUNE



MAY: SAVES, SEARCH AND RESCUE AND THE SHERIFF

A number of casualty carers and healthcare professionals from Exmoor SRT took part in a training session alongside members from Somerset Accident Voluntary Emergency Service (SAVES), South Western Ambulance Service, Central Medical Services staff and community first responders all under the watchful gaze of the High Sheriff of Somerset.

The evening comprised of a round-robin of three action-packed scenarios with live actors, realistic wound make-up and simulation equipment. The scenarios included a serious head injury on a building site, a head injury from an RTC and a patient with multiple stab wounds – perhaps not directly applicable to mountain rescue, but with an injury pattern similar to climber fall, mountain bike injury or ice axe injury. With mixed teams it provided the opportunity to work alongside different agencies and explore their capabilities and specialities. Throughout the evening, the High Sheriff of Somerset, Jennifer Duke, and her husband, Nigel Duke, were escorted by SAVES trustee Andy Newland and Somerset Ambulance County Commander Steve Boucher as they observed the scenarios and had the opportunity to talk to individuals about the work they do for their community.



MAY: HANGING OUT WITH THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

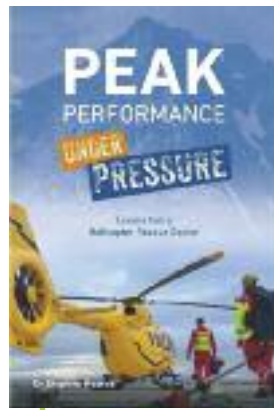
Exmoor team members travelled to the Mendip Hills to participate in a multi-agency cliff training exercise to increase familiarity with the different equipment and working practices.

In lovely sunshine it was a great opportunity to work with colleagues in a pleasant setting rather than on a dark, wet night during a rescue. Kit wish lists were being made up, with the Lyon marketing team presenting some of their latest equipment. Sunshine and food always makes the day better and thanks must also go to Rapid Relief Team UK for ensuring everyone was fed and watered. Partner agencies in attendance: Avon and Somerset Police, Devon & Cornwall Police, Hampshire Constabulary, Avon Protection Fire, Devon and Somerset FRS, Gloucestershire FRS, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust, Avon & Somerset SAR, Severn Area Rescue Association and Specialist Group International.



Top images: Exmoor team members working with SAVES. Above: Multi-agency cliff rescue training. Images © Exmoor SRT.





**STILL PLACES AVAILABLE!!**  
This course is available to ALL TEAM MEMBERS, not just those with leadership or officer roles.

## MREW HUMAN FACTORS + PERFORMANCE UNDER PRESSURE ONLINE COURSE

We've featured this before, but it's worth repeating again. Not only are there still places available, but we have the curious situation that a number of team members have registered to do this course yet still not logged in some months later. All you need is to get your Moodle log-in sorted...

All participants receive a copy of Dr Heams' book, 'Peak Performance Under Pressure' and an option to attend a live-streamed session that will include the opportunity for Q & A (on a first-come, first-served basis). If you have further questions, email [humanfactors@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:humanfactors@mountain.rescue.org.uk). To book onto the course, please complete the Google form for each attendee at <https://forms.gle/M2x9CbNVLsdTabbu6> using the email address you are registered with on Moodle. If you aren't yet registered with Moodle, Go to <http://tiny.cc/Moodle4MR> and use a team email address to register, but NOT a role-specific one! Any queries regarding registration, email [moodlesupport@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:moodlesupport@mountain.rescue.org.uk).

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## MARCH: 68 YEARS OF COMBINED SERVICE TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Border SAR team member Brian Tyson (36 years) pictured with Marion and Seymour Haugh (32 years) shortly after receiving their Distinguished Service Awards at the Scottish Mountain Rescue meeting.

Brian, who was involved in the search and recovery operation following the Lockerbie disaster, is currently chairman, having held the positions of training, vehicle and equipment officer. Seymour has been secretary, training officer, deputy and team leader and is currently equipment officer.

Image © Border Search and Rescue.



## MARCH: ARROCHAR TEAM LAND ROVER DEFENDERS AT SCALE

Great images of these models of Arrochar team's Land Rover Defenders at 1/10 scale. The remote-controlled models are made by a member of a local RC crawling club who shared the images with the team.

Images via [facebook.com/ArrocharMRT](https://www.facebook.com/ArrocharMRT)



## JUNE: LONG SERVICE AWARDS FOR CLEVELAND TEAM MEMBERS

On the eve of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee the Lord-Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Jo Ropner, visited Cleveland team base to present Jubilee medals to team members and took the opportunity to present Long Service Awards to Dave Cook and Gari Finch (fifty years' service each) and a 25-year award to Peter Smith. Carl Faulkner has also been awarded for his 25 years with the team but was unable to attend.

Elsewhere over the weekend, Cleveland team members managed to squeeze some loose change out of Chancellor Rishi Sunak MP when he visited their stand at the Great Ayton Village Fete, contributing to the £403 raised on the day. Mr Sunak is MP for the area.



Above, top: From left: Peter Smith, Dave Cook and Gari Finch. Above, right: Rishi Sunak MP with the team's medical officer Craig Sewell looking on © Cleveland MRT.



Image © Katie Simmons/Facebook.

## JUNE: SADNESS AT CLIMBER'S DEATH AFTER SIGNIFICANT FALL

NEWSAR team members were saddened to hear of the death of a former team member in a climbing incident. Many had served alongside Tom Furey between 2010 and 2014. Tom had been found injured by two climbers, at the foot of the Cneifion Arete near Llanberis.

# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE

Ogwen team members attended the incident, after the climbers reported finding a man's body at the foot of the climb. The team deployed to site and conducted first aid while the informants were brought down to base. The coastguard helicopter landed in the cwm and the casualty was lifted to Ysbyty Gwynedd as fast as possible but sadly did not survive.

Tom was a local outdoor instructor with many friends in the rescue community including some on site. A NEWSAR post said: 'We remember a bright, cheerful and capable young man who went on to become an instructor, who then passed on his skills to so many people. Above all he was loved by Katie and his family. Our thoughts are with them at this time. We thank our colleagues Ogwen Valley MRO and the helicopter crew, who tried so valiantly to save him.'

Katie Simmons, Tom's fiancée, shared her heartbreak on social media saying he was 'My fiancé, my soulmate, my person, the absolute love of my life. We cherished every day we had together, never missed a moment and told each other how much we love each other every day. We are all unbelievably shocked and absolutely heartbroken but he was doing something he loved and that is what's important.' She included a link to a fundraiser for the Ogwen team which has raised over £2,600.



Huge thanks to Manchester University Mountaineering Club who climbed the height of Everest (8848m) in just twelve hours by either lead climbing or top roping, to raise funds for Mountain Rescue England and Wales. Their efforts raised £1,028 plus Gift Aid and also, we hear, earned them the title of 'JustGiving Fundraising Legend'.

## MARCH: CLIMBING THE HEIGHT OF EVEREST FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

**Raising funds for rescue**

## MAY: WALKING ALONG THE PENNINE WAY FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Thanks also to Stephen Russell, from Kingston-upon-Thames, who walked the Pennine Way in early May, raising funds for mountain rescue along the way.



He chose to do it in an arguably more comfortable style than many before him, staying in B&Bs and hotels rather than 'camping or roughing it' – some in villages and towns along the way and others much more remote and off the route. In his backpack, he carried an emergency kit (flare, first aid pouch and survival bag), changes of clothes with base

and mid layers, waterproofs and essential toiletries and up to 2.5 litres of water.

Thanks to the OS Maps App, he was able to map the route from the start point in Edale, Derbyshire, door to door to his accommodation each night, ending in Kirk Yetholm in Scotland.

He'd planned his walk for some time but previous efforts had been postponed and, rather than do it 'just for the hell of it', he aimed to raise £500 for Mountain Rescue England and Wales. At the time of publication, he had raised an impressive £957 plus Gift Aid. Thank you Stephen – great effort!

Inset: Selfie taken during his walk © Stephen Russell.



# NEWS ROUND

## APRIL > JUNE

### APRIL: DRONE CAPABILITY ARRIVES IN THE LAKES THANKS TO A £72,000 DONATION TO THE REGION'S TEAMS



Representatives of Masonic Lodges from the north west of England attended a demonstration on 2 April at Hodge Close Quarry, Coniston to watch the drones in action and meet the team members who have benefited from their very generous donation.

The money has enabled LDSAMRA to establish a fully operational drone capability, with eleven search and rescue drones plus Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) training for nineteen pilots. All pilots must be fully operational mountain rescue team members with their own teams due to the terrain through which the drones will be deployed, and the need for the required

mountain rescue skills. The funding also includes the purchase of a specially designed safety-caged drone for underground mine rescue operations.

The teams wish to express their appreciation to the Mark Benevolent Fund who work for the Province of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and to the senior masonic officers who attended the demonstration. Thanks also to drone pilots from both Coniston and Kirkby Stephen teams who provided the exercise demo, successfully locating and evacuating the casualty from the quarry environment. The demonstration was also attended by officers from Cumbria Police's drone group and members of the press and media.

## Drone exercise ends in unexpected incident

Hodge Close Quarry, near Coniston, is a big hole in the ground, often filled with a 150-foot deep pool of dark water and it was here that Coniston team hosted a demonstration, using the day as training in the search for a reported injured person. Also present were members of the Cumbria Ore Mines Rescue Unit (COMRU) and Kirkby Stephen MRT, who are leading the region's drone capability.

Coniston team leader Janice Hamilton explained the scenario: the team had received a call from a member of the public to say they'd seen a person slumped at Hodge Close, an area with poor phone reception and with numerous tunnels and caves. The Lake District drones have infrared cameras as well as conventional ones, to help locate casualties, which come into their own in difficult terrain. Hodge Close Quarry was a prime example, with its steep rocky sides.

The gathering was also an opportunity to demonstrate the drones to representatives of the masonic lodges who had donated the £72,000 towards their purchase.

Richard Warren, Lakes chairman, believes that drone technology is improving constantly and he could foresee a time when UAVs would be able to airlift life-saving equipment such as defibrillators, with rescuers able to reach people in need more quickly.

Increasingly, they are being used by teams in searches and rescues, proving an invaluable 'eye in the sky', able to ascend quickly to sites such as rock faces where casualties might be cragfast, as well as

covering a large area in less time. The drone Richard uses has a speaker which can be used to issue instructions and support to casualties and even quiz them on matters such as their current pain score. It was also invaluable in picking out the best route for rescuers to use in reaching people on steep, technical ground.

The drones can only operate in certain weather conditions — and that doesn't include when it's raining — a not insignificant consideration in the Lake District! As reported in the last issue, about the work Buxton MRT have been undertaking with Evolve Dynamics and Catapult Connected Places, some drones are now weatherproof, but they cost considerably more: £30,000, compared with the typical cost of a mountain rescue drone of £5,000 — definitely one for the wish-list.

It's also possible to deploy drones underground, fitted with a large, lightweight cage to protect the rotor blades. Unfortunately, the day came to an unexpectedly premature end when the COMRU drone, piloted by a member of the Kirkby Stephen team, and without its cage plunged into the deep pool of the quarry. The pilot was demonstrating the heat-source images of a 'casualty' and their rescuer at a cave in the bottom of the excavation, when it became clear the drone was drifting of its own accord towards the quarry walls. Despite attempts to lift the aircraft, it failed to respond, hit the rock face and disappeared into the depths.

The pilot was subsequently required to file an incident report with the CAA and it's still

a mystery why the drone went out of control. In addition to GPS receivers in the unit, the Mavic 3 drone has collision-avoidance sensors and ground sensors, none of which seemed to be able to stop the incident happening.

'There seemed to have been a complete loss of communication with the control unit,' says Richard. 'It reminds us all as pilots we do need to recognise that things can go wrong. There will be an investigation by our lead drone pilot and we'll be putting in a report to the authorities because it's the equivalent to a near miss, though this is actually a hit where a drone has been damaged while out on an operation.'

He puts this down to a 'freak accident' — and admits it was a tad embarrassing too, given that this was a demonstration of the usefulness of drones — but it was also a timely reminder of the costs of keeping a mountain rescue team up and running.

They are undoubtedly another tool in the mountain rescue toolbox. As Bob Smith reported on [grough.co.uk](http://grough.co.uk), 'if you're unfortunate enough to need the services of one of the Lake District's mountain rescue teams, the first voice you hear might be the disembodied words of Richard Warren drifting across the fells from the small, unmanned aircraft hovering overhead!'

**Above:** LDSAMRA chairman Richard Warren receives the cheque from Keith Hodgson. **Opposite:** Images from the day of the demonstration at Hodge Quarry. Images © LDSAMRA/Bob Smith.



# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE



## MAY: NEW TEAM VEHICLE FOR CLEVELAND

Four years ago Mercedes-Benz of Teesside provided Cleveland MRT with an on-loan Mercedes GLC SUV which proved to be a huge help transporting the team's then search dogs, supporting search and rescue operations, and as a key resource for their support members' fundraising activities.

That was replaced by another SUV in 2020, a Mercedes GLB, which continued to be a great asset, particularly during the pandemic in supporting the local community, often called upon to transport bulk supplies of PPE and other essential goods to local care services. As with the previous model it proved excellent off-road and in bad weather, with the added benefit of being surefooted when pulling the team's water and flood rescue trailer. Both vehicles were ideally suited to supporting the diverse roles of a mountain rescue team.

In May, Jon Crewe, of Mercedes-Benz Teesside, handed over the keys to a brand new replacement Mercedes GLB SUV. Team members Carl Faulkner, Claire Starkey, Jordan MacSween and Gary Clarke were on hand to receive the new SUV and thanked Jon and everyone at the dealership for their generous and continuing support of the Cleveland team. Key fundraising member (and formerly trainee search dog) Bracken was also there to give the car his seal of approval!

**Above:** Carl, Jon, Bracken, Claire and Jordan with the old vehicle being returned (on the left), new vehicle on right © Cleveland MRT.



## APRIL: OGGI PREPARE FOR PADDLER RESCUES WITH HIGHLINE TRAINING

A number of team members completed their Rope Rescue Technician's course with #rescue3europe, culminating with a highline across Conwy Falls where the team routinely rescues paddlers who get stuck.



Images © Morry Walli.



## JUNE: MULTI-AGENCY EXERCISE SUCCESS FOR HOLME VALLEY

The team took part in a multi-agency exercise above Marsden with colleagues from West Yorkshire FRS, West Yorkshire Police, Cheshire SAR, NEWSAR, Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust and MRSDE Trainee Search Dog Neve.

The exercise involved practising and assessing medical skills on fourteen casualties and a new born baby, in the water and on the hill. The amazing images from Padraig Spillane speak for themselves.



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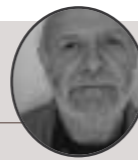
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## PETZL RESCUE SOLUTIONS

Every second counts in high-stakes situations — that's why technical rescue operations require skilled rescuers and the best equipment. While training in the Gave River in Gavarnie, France, the CNEAS and CRS rescuers from the town of Larnhemazan know they can count on Petzl to provide the high-performance tools they need.



A technical rescue solution that includes the MAESTRO S descender with integrated progress-capture pulley, and SPIN S1 and REEVE pulleys. [petzl.com](http://petzl.com)

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