

# mountain rescue

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**Cover story**

Western Beacons team members host PDMRO, DCRO and Holme Valley for rope rescue training © Henry Paisley

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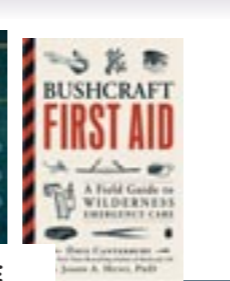
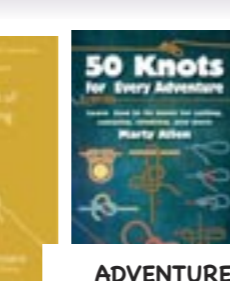
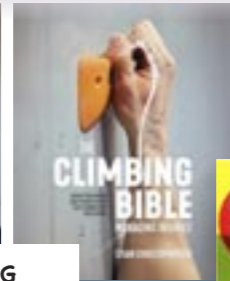


**NEW** in  
for summer

**Raising funds**  
for rescue

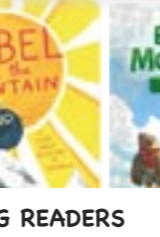
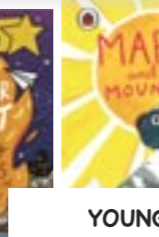
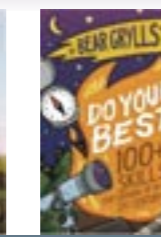
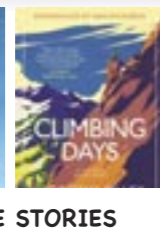
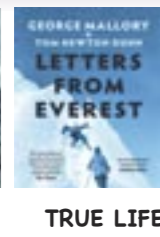
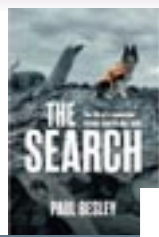


PUZZLES & GIFTS



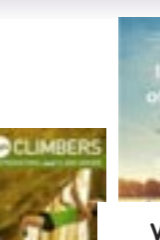
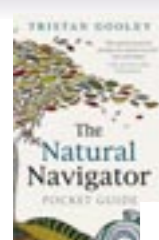
CLIMBING

ADVENTURE



TRUE LIFE STORIES

YOUNG READERS



NAVIGATION

WELLBEING

## HEAD TO OUR BOOKSHOP FOR SOME AUTUMN READING, GIFTS AND PUZZLES AND HELP SUPPORT MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Check out our bookshelves for additions to our range of titles and some old favourites, including wellbeing, true life stories, navigation, and fun books to encourage the next generation of hill enthusiasts safely into the outdoors. With each purchase you'll be making a very welcome donation to mountain rescue of around 30-40% of the cover price. Go to [shop.mountain.rescue.org.uk](http://shop.mountain.rescue.org.uk) and see for yourself.



### ANNUAL REVIEW 2025...

Put together by Sally Seed and Judy Whiteside, the review provides a comprehensive overview of how the mountain rescue year has unfolded across England and Wales. This year we elaborate even more on the national stats, thanks to our collaboration with Ordnance Survey. They've taken the numbers and crunched them into some fascinating graphs and illustrations, enabling us to really understand where we need to focus our future safety messages.

### GROWING OUR DIGITAL NETWORK...

We've had a LinkedIn presence for some time, but only recently begun to use it to best advantage to showcase our serious side. Check it out for updates on publications, stats and press releases.



### ACCESSING THE MREW ONLINE SHOP (TEAMS)

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. We require the following:

- 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).

EMAIL [OFFICE@MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK](mailto:OFFICE@MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK) OR CALL 0330 043 9101



**To access the digital bookshelf (in the digital version) click on any cover and go straight to that issue.**



### TEAM LOGOS, UPDATED BRAND GUIDELINES AND MOODLE...

Reminder that you can find all the logos – for teams who use the MREW roundel within their own team logo – plus the updated Brand Guidelines, in a folder on Moodle, under Publications. These include Welsh-language versions, plus Supporter and Fundraiser logos in both languages.

Moodle is an easy-to-access resource for medical, training and insurance information, in particular. Here's a quick tour of the key areas to see what you're missing plus guidance on how to register.

The key disciplines listed include **Medical, Search, Water, Safety, Technical Rescue, Leadership and Incident Management, Insurance** and **GDPR** and a few categories yet to be fully populated. Please note that some areas are restricted to those attending the actual course.

The **Medical** section addresses the legal and medical requirements for training and operations, and there's plenty of resources to download. You'll find stuff relating to the Casualty Care Certificate, a PDF of Casualty Care for Mountain Rescue Edition 2, 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. There's a section devoted to Recognition of Life Extinct in MR, and you'll find meeting minutes here too.

The **Insurance** category is worth a check for the policies and schedules applicable to mountain rescue, and a list of frequently asked questions.

The **Publications** section holds all the logos for teams who use the MREW roundel.

Finally, Moodle is going through a refresh so expect changes and improvements over the coming months to make it easier to navigate. Have fun! ☺

### TO REGISTER



Go to <http://tiny.cc/Moodle4MR> or scan the QR code above and fill in the form **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).



# A breath of fresh mountain air...

Mountain rescue team members are well accustomed to venturing into challenging terrain — it literally goes with the territory — but I think it's safe to say that, in late July, we collectively took our biggest leap of faith yet. We chose, to lead our national organisation for the next five years, a chap who has no previous experience of mountain rescue. Editor **Judy Whiteside** met up with our CEO-Elect Andy Buchan, in August, to discover more about what makes him tick.

Andy will 'shadow' the current CEO, Mike Park, for the next nine months, before fully stepping into the role in May 2026. When I chat with him in early August, he's fully expectant of steep ground ahead, but it strikes me he is more than ready for the challenge.

We talk about how, historically, the national body has been led by people long steeped in the world of mountain rescue. And I think we can all agree that mountain rescue tends to be embodied in the DNA. It's why people don't walk away when their operational time is up. It's also why we tend towards an older demographic average (but that's another discussion). So how can someone with no previous links to MR even think about taking on the role?

I learn that although mountain rescue per se isn't (yet) stamped through him like a stick of rock, the mountain environment most definitely is. He can still remember his first walk in the Lake District, aged five — along the banks of Conistone Water — one of many walking holidays with the family, to the Lakes, Snowdonia and Switzerland, with winter mountaineering trips to Scotland.

He and his wife, Isabel, have just completed the Wainwrights, saving Rosthwaite Fell until the last, on a Bank Holiday Monday earlier this year, in the company of a small group of friends and family. They've also recently walked Hadrian's Wall and St Cuthbert's Way, next in their sights the West Highland Way.

He's a climber too — although not, he says, so much these days. He started climbing at school, his first climb on Black Rocks in Staffordshire, and ran the mountaineering club with friends while he

was at college in Nottingham. And during a ten-year period living in Sheffield, he also did a lot of wall climbing.

One way or another, he's been around rocks and mountains all his life and it's instilled in him a deep respect for the outdoor environment and the benefits it brings.

'I genuinely believe that access to the mountains is good for everyone,' he says, 'for physical health and for mental wellbeing, so enabling and helping people to safely access the mountains would be a real privilege.'

## A SERIES OF COINCIDENCES

I'm intrigued to hear how he found out about the job vacancy and what made him take the plunge.

'I've recently stepped back from work — my wife won't allow me to say I'm retired! — and was beginning to think about what I could do next. I reached out to a couple of people to say I was interested in becoming a trustee and even wrote to MREW speculatively. Then a couple of coincidences happened.

'First, Mike Park appeared on breakfast TV over Easter, talking about the rise in call-outs and the change in the demographic of the people you rescue. To say that the chances of me watching TV in a morning are next to negligible would be an understatement, and what he said really resonated with me.

'Then the piece about MREW looking for a new CEO popped up on LinkedIn. The synchronicity was hard to ignore!

What was it about that TV interview that resonated so much?

'It was Mike talking about the swing from middle-aged warriors to young explorers, the TikTok generation. Once, near Derwentwater, my son and I were approached by a couple of girls dressed for a nightclub, asking whether there was a dam nearby. Clearly looking for a photo opportunity. They seemingly didn't have a clue where they were or what they were doing. I watched Mike on TV and thought, "Yes! I've met them!" On that occasion we directed them to a local coffee shop and I think they were both relieved and delighted!

'People are less responsible for themselves than they ever used to be. I grew up learning to use a map and not assuming someone would come get me if I got into trouble. I lived in the States for a few years, and if you get into difficulty in the mountains there, help might not reach you soon enough.

'We are massively blessed in this country, to have groups of people who want to go out and help others when they get into difficulty in the mountains — a free safety net, staffed by some very highly trained souls who provide a service without being paid. It's a huge benefit that's increasingly taken for granted.

'I am sufficiently well-off now to not have to work full-time and to be able to donate my time. That time might be in management, rather than the practical rescue skills, but we have to make sure the whole functions properly.'

## DOING THE RESEARCH...

And did he do his research, I asked (never one to waste the opportunity to plug the

magazine. Or one of my books!) Turns out he did, reading through some back copies of the mag (book to follow). But the essential point he wants to make is that his research starts here. With you.

'My ambition over the next nine months is to meet as many people as possible, over a cup of tea or a pint, and to hear their views. My intention is not to be an invisible CEO. I will visit teams, meet team members, listen to what they think and any gripes they might have. That's the only way to learn what an organisation thinks of itself.'

He fully understands there may be lingering concerns about his not being 'mountain rescue', but he comes across as a man who wants to steep himself in our culture and discover what makes us tick, whilst also maintaining an overview of how it all works — now and into the future.

'Of course, I haven't been at the sharp end, carrying a stretcher, but I have been involved in the mountain environment for a long time — even taken a face plant or three myself on my least favourite Wainwright! My skill set is very much management based, and I hope to use those skills to bring people together towards a common goal.'

His professional background is in building products, with a track record of delivering growth and operational activity. It's a business sector which necessarily demands a diversity of skills and disciplines from very disparate organisations, and an understanding — and ability to solve — often complex business problems. So the idea that there are 47 independent teams out there, sometimes pulling in different directions, doesn't faze him. The important thing being that we all have the same end in mind: a strong national organisation capable of supporting the teams to do what they do at the sharp end, safely and with confidence that they are operating at their optimum.

He reminds me that company structure typically resembles a pyramid, with the 'workers' at the lower, wider part, levels of management narrowing to the CEO at the pointy bit, up top. In a charity, he says, the trustees tend to sit in a box at the top of that pyramid. He will be looking to upturn that structure, with the 'trustee box' at the base, supporting the upturned pyramid, with the wider part (that's the teams and members) at the top.

He already recognises that there is a disconnect between 'senior management', and the teams at local level, adding that 'until we bridge that gap, we will always struggle'.

'We need to take people with us. My style of management is more coaching and mentoring, rather than issuing directives. The teams are the ones who do the doing, and I'm there to help empower them.'

## REMEMBERING TO LOOK THROUGH THE WINDSCREEN...

Given my interest in mountain rescue history, I was pleased to read in his bio that 'we learn a lot from looking backwards, understanding the successes and what has made this such a great organisation'. We shouldn't forget that it was the innovative spirit and drive of so many individuals in our past that has indeed brought us to where we

are now — from our beginning as the Joint Stretcher Committee, through Thomas, Bell and MacInnes, our Little Dragons and vacmats, any number of developments in casualty care, first aid training and availability of pain management, radio comms, and the technology we daily take for granted like SARCALL, SARLOC and MRMap...

'What brought us to where we are is hugely important,' he adds. 'History teaches us the future.'

But he caveats that too. 'My old boss gave me a cartoon once. It was a chap driving along, only looking in the rear-view mirror at the perfectly straight road behind, never through the windscreen — at the right-hand bend and the cliff edge ahead. So yes, we should be aware of how we got here, but our primary focus should be forwards, anticipating conditions, staying alert to potential hazards and reacting accordingly.'

## 'SAFE IN OUR HANDS'

He mentions recruitment in his bio. I wonder how he would approach that for teams, given that they are separate entities — and also how he'd encourage more team members to become involved nationally.

'Teams are by their nature local so they are fishing from a small pool, which will always be a challenge. And yes, of course, that's a team issue, but where we can support would be to increase recognition and awareness across the population in general.'

Does he have a grand plan for the next five years? He's honest enough to say not — 'I don't yet know enough for that' — but brings me firmly back to two key phrases: 'listen and learn', 'continuity and succession', adding 'that's how I will start. Everything after that can wait for now.'

He picks up on the words in the final frame of his initial presentation: 'Safe in our hands', a phrase he admits has been used many times before. His aim would be for an organisation that is safe for the future, both financially and practically, at national and local level, with greater public recognition and engagement — so that both you as rescuers and those who wish to explore the mountains can feel 'safe in our hands'.

And what would his parting message be to team members? 'Talk to me and tell me what YOU want the organisation to be.'

## MY CONCLUSION?

Andy truly will be a breath of fresh mountain air. His enthusiasm and passion for the mountains are palpable. I came away reassured that he fully intends to channel that energy into this venerable, but oft-times creaking, organisation — an organisation that, ironically, I sometimes sense has lost its own way. Maybe it's just what we need, that outside lens, someone who knows and respects the environment we work in and the benefits it brings, whilst also appreciating the logistical strains our teams are under. Someone who is capable of holding all that together without preconceptions and inspiring us to move forward, whilst holding our past in our hearts.

It's over to you now. Get in touch. Email him at [ceo.elect@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:ceo.elect@mountain.rescue.org.uk). Buy him a pint. Talk to him.

Incidentally, I have warned him that as he travels to meet the teams, he is likely to be strapped into more stretchers and pumped into more vacmats than he can shake a walking stick at... so please don't, whatever you do, let me down on that front... I expect (and will publish) photos... 📷



Opposite: View from the southern shore of Ennerdale Water. Inset: Andy Buchan. Above: Andy with wife Isabel, having completed their final Wainwright; dodging midges in Scotland; winter walking with his trusty old rucksack. Images © Andy Buchan.

## QUICK FIRE QUESTIONS

**Favourite crag?** 'Most exciting was South Stack on Anglesey, Dream of White Horses (categorised as Hard Very Severe to those who know about these things). Scared the living c\*\*\* out of me! Then there's Baggy Point in Devon and Wild Cat or Froggat Edge in the Peaks.'

**Favourite walk?** 'Sharp Edge. Without dog.'

**Favourite Wainwright?** 'Wetherlam. And Causey Pike. Longest loop, the Buttermere Round. Most hated? Great Calva with its descent through heather (scene of the aforementioned face-plants).'

**Favourite ski resort?** 'Les Arcs 1800.'

**Beer or glass of good wine?** (He pauses here,

for some time; it's clearly not straightforward). 'I do drink an awful lot of wine, current favourite is a Portuguese Douro... but then, Black Sheep beer... and cider in summer.'

**Curry or kebab?** 'Curry!'

**Chips or salad?** '...got to be salad these days.'

**Favourite book?** 'Shadow of the Wind by Spanish author Carlos Ruiz Zafón.'

**Favourite film?** 'For no other reason than it was filmed literally round the corner from where I used to live, *The Full Monty*.'

And on that note, we'll leave it for now...



# Harness, tactical style vest... or just pockets?

**PAUL SMITH** MREW EQUIPMENT OFFICER

Finding the best way to carry kit you need close to hand... When you're attending a call-out, where do you keep your radio, map, GPS device, torch, trail-mix and all the little bits you need to grab quickly? Over the years I've tried all sorts: the standard chest harness, a tactical-style vest and just stuffing everything into my jacket or trouser and rucksack pockets. Each has its merits, but some work better than others.



## CHEST HARNESS

The chest harness is the one I come back to time and time again. Very light and the radio sits high on the chest, out of the way of rucksack straps — and you can hear the radio clearly without digging around. Most designs have just enough room for a notebook and pencil too.

My current harness will even take a full-sized OS map, but only just — it's a very tight

fit and not something I'd want to be forcing in and out all night. Still, it's handy if you want to keep the map dry and close at hand.

The other benefit is that it doesn't interfere much when you've got a climbing harness on. It sits well above your waist, you can still access your gear and radio, plus you can still access belay loops and gear on your harness.

## TACTICAL VEST

I've used tactical-type vests on quick 'snatch jobs' and longer jobs, and I can see the appeal. You can carry loads: maps, gloves, torch, snacks, even a small first aid kit if you want. It's like having a mini rucksack on your chest.

However, they're bulky. In summer they get hot, and when you add a climbing harness into the mix, it can all feel a bit cluttered. Accessing gear loops can be awkward. For medics or team leaders who need a lot at hand, they're great — but for the average hill member, it can feel like overkill.

## JUST POCKETS

I've probably used the 'no harness' approach for the majority of my mountain rescue career, radio in the jacket chest pocket or clipped to my rucksack chest

strap, map in a thigh pocket, notebook shoved wherever it fits. It feels light and simple, but the reality is less convincing. Radios can and have fallen out, or end up muffled under layers, maps have got crumpled and torn, and finding things in the dark with gloves on is never easy.

And with a climbing harness on, it just gets worse: thigh pockets can be covered by leg loops, and suddenly the map you need is impossible to reach.

## WHAT WORKS BEST?

My personal preference is the chest harness and, for me, it is still the best all-rounder. It's light, secure and doesn't clash with a climbing harness when things get technical. Tactical-type vests have their place if you're carrying more kit or running comms, but they're not something I'd wear on every job. And while pockets can work in a pinch, I'd rather have a system I know I can rely on when the weather's grim and things get busy.

At the end of the day, it comes down to personal choice. Whatever set-up you choose, make sure your radio, map and notebook are always in the same place. When you're hanging on a rope or tramping over the fells in the dark, that muscle memory makes all the difference. ☘



# Mk 3 Bell stretcher: Enhanced handle inspection guidance

In June 2025, Bolton MRT discovered cracks in the extendable handles of a Mk 3 Bell stretcher, prior to a training exercise. No accidents or injuries occurred. Lyon Equipment Limited, in conjunction with MREW and Bolton team, conducted a thorough investigation. Attempts at explaining exactly what kind of scenario could have caused the cracks to form, through potential use and/or misuse, were inconclusive.

There are no other known reports of cracking in Mk 3 Bell stretcher handles, either historically or as part of the recent MREW call for inspection. We advise Mk 3 Bell stretcher users to implement an enhanced handle inspection regime on the area of the stretcher where the cracks were discovered as a precautionary measure.

## ENHANCED HANDLE INSPECTION

We recommend carrying out this inspection using a magnifying glass in a well-lit location. Mobile phones with a high-quality camera may also be of assistance as you can zoom in on photographs. Cleaning the inspection area with a toothbrush and clean water (<30°C) then drying well, will aid the inspection process.

The inspection guidance applies to all Bell Mk3 stretchers still in service. We recommend that Mk 3 Bell stretcher users carry out this initial enhanced inspection prior to their next deployment of the stretcher. This is in addition to your routine inspection schedule, including six-monthly thorough inspections and standard pre-use checks, during which an inspection of this area is also recommended.

As part of our investigation, we applied forces in excess of the loading expected in normal usage on a tensile test machine. We witnessed significant and permanent deformation of the handle prior to any cracking being evident. In addition to looking for cracks in the focus areas outlined in the green boxes, please check for any significant permanent deformation of the whole handle.

If you discover any cracks, or significant and permanent handle deformation, remove your stretcher from service and quarantine. Contact Lyon Equipment via [helpdesk@lyon.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@lyon.co.uk) — include your organisation name, contact details, stretcher identification number and attach photographs of the crack. For additional assistance, contact the Work and Rescue team on [wrsales@lyon.co.uk](mailto:wrsales@lyon.co.uk) or call **015396 24040, extension 2**.



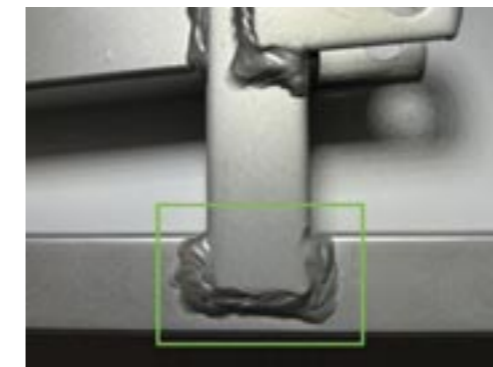
**Figure 1:** A crack on the vertical face of the Bolton MRT stretcher handle. The crack is in the 304 grade stainless steel square section tubular at the foot of the weld.



**Figure 2:** The cracks on the vertical faces in Figure 1 have continued to the underside (when deployed) horizontal face of the stretcher handle.



**Figure 3:** The green box is the focus area for the enhanced inspection of Bell Mk 3 stretcher handles. The same area is inspected on each of the four handles on the stretcher.



**Figure 4:** Inspect all welded joints and the surrounding material on both vertical faces of the handle including corners. Pay extra attention to the area outlined in the green box.



**Figure 5:** Inspect all welded joints and the surrounding material on both horizontal faces of the handle including corners. Pay extra attention to the area in the green box on the underside (when deployed) of the handle.

# equipment

## TEAM DISCOUNTS – HELPING YOUR KIT GO FURTHER

Keeping yourself properly kitted out for mountain rescue and going on your own adventures isn't cheap. Waterproofs take a hammering, base layers get worn thin and, sooner or later, tools and technical clothing need replacing. To help take the edge off those costs, the equipment subgroup has been working with several suppliers to negotiate discounts for team members.

These discounts aren't just random offers, they're agreed nationally on your behalf, so that everyone across the organisation can benefit. If you haven't looked at them yet, with the darker nights and colder weather around the corner, now's a good time.

**Helly Hansen – 50% Off:** Helly Hansen has been supporting mountain rescue for several years, and the current deal is an impressive one: team members can access 50% off their kit. That's half price on waterproofs, mid-layers and base layers that are built to withstand the kind of weather we all know too well.



**Machine Mart – 10% Off Clark products:** A new one for mountain rescue, not everything we do involves the hill. Sometimes its kit maintenance, vehicle checks or odd jobs around the base and that's where the Machine Mart discount comes in. Team members can claim 10% off tools and equipment, whether it's something for personal use at home or something to help with the endless repairs and tinkering that come with rescue kit.

**Montane – 15% Off:** Montane is known for their lightweight technical gear and, with a 15% discount available to team members, it's a good opportunity to upgrade jackets, trousers or packs without paying full price. For anyone who spends long days on the hill, Montane kit is worth a look.

**Grayl Geopress – 40% off:** Clean water is essential on long jobs, and Grayl's Geopress bottles are designed to make purifying it fast and simple. Thanks to a national arrangement, team members can now access discounts on Grayl products, making it easier to stay hydrated and safe on the hill.

**Fenix – various discounts:** Reliable lighting is critical on every call-out. Fenix torches and head torches are well regarded in rescue circles for their performance and durability. With team discounts available, upgrading or adding dependable lighting to your kit has become that bit more affordable.

**Opposite:** North of Tyne members in their team Helly Hansen kit © Nadir Khan.

## ACCESS THE DISCOUNTS

All the details on how to claim these offers and discounts are set out in the Equipment area in the MREW Moodle along with many more. That's where you'll find the latest codes, links and instructions. Discounts are for team members only, so please follow the guidelines to keep these benefits available.

## SAY THANKS ON YOUR SOCIALS

A quick but important reminder, when you make use of these discounts and get your new kit, please take a moment to say thank you to the supplier on your and your team social media channels. A simple photo or short post tagging the brand goes a long way. It shows that we value their support and helps

to keep those relationships strong. Many suppliers see this as part of the return for offering us a discount, so your posts really do make a difference.

## WHY IT MATTERS

These discounts don't just save money, they show the value of the relationships we've built with suppliers who recognise the work mountain rescue – or you – do. Every time we make use of them, we're also helping to strengthen those links and keep the door open for future support.

So, if your kit is looking a bit tired or you've been putting off an upgrade, check the details in Moodle and make the most of what's on offer. These are benefits secured for you as a valued volunteer member of mountain rescue, and they're there to be used. ☘

# Comparison of edge abrasion effects on single and twin-tensioned rope systems: Part 1



Despite the name, the Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO) is one of Yorkshire's busiest mountain rescue teams. Team member **Chris Edmondson** is part of the MREW Rope Rescue Guidelines review group and combined his 30+ years of mountain and cave rescue experience with over 25 years working in industrial height safety to embark on a test programme devised to try to shine some more light on a common hazard: rope abrasion.



rope damage spread along the length of the rope, there is no standard method to measure or assess this or any evidence to quantify it. In addition, some ropes in the system may be fixed, such as ropes linking anchors, or the stationary side of a 2:1 hauling system, leaving them more prone to damage.

Edge abrasion is a significantly more likely occurrence than a high fall-factor fall onto both ropes. In fact, it may be argued that if a fall onto slack ropes is possible then the system is not twin tension (slack ropes are by definition not under tension), although this could happen in an edge transition if it goes badly wrong.

The aim of these tests is to provide comparative evidence of the effect of edge abrasion on single and twin-tensioned ropes in identical situations. It is not intended to imply the suitability, or otherwise, of a particular system in sharp or abrasive conditions. Protection from sharp or abrasive edges using the avoid, prevent, mitigate hierarchy of control remains key.

In order to provide repeatability, the following were used:

- A widely available EN1891 A, 10mm low-stretch rope, brand new with no pre-shrinking. The same type for all tests
- A concrete lintel as an edge with the same section used every time, as no damage was observed after each test
- Samples were dry and tested under ambient conditions with no pre-conditioning.

The tests were sufficiently repeatable for comparative tests but more specification would be required if they were to be duplicated elsewhere. The edge of the concrete lintel was quite variable so a section was chosen, marked and re-used; for repeated testing, a standardised, reproduceable edge would be needed.

## TESTS

To simulate working in a fixed position, e.g. treating and packaging a casualty on a ledge while connected to the lowering system two test situations were proposed. Each was tested with a load of 100kg, twin tension and single tension plus 10kg single tension as a control.

1. Stationary rope, swung from side to side.
2. Stationary rope, repeatedly apply and release load (to simulate alternating between standing and kneeling on the ledge).

reduction of stretch and therefore travel distance if just a single rope is loaded. However, it should be noted that industrial rope access systems, for both single-person and rescue loads, commonly use an un-tensioned back-up rope to help protect it from damage.

Tests have also shown improved resistance to cutting in a fall over a sharp edge (Mauthner K., (2016) *Dual Capability Two Tensioned Rope Systems*). However, as tensioned ropes are more susceptible to cutting and abrasion, logic would suggest that slowly built-up or chronic damage would be worse in DCTTRS in that both ropes will be affected to the same degree, ie. each rope in the DCTTRS system. Although both ropes are likely to be moving over the edge in a lower or haul, and any

## FOREWORD

This is intended as a technical paper and as such no consideration has been given to the legal position and application of the Work at Height (or other) Regulations.

Due to the huge number of variables, it is difficult to standardise the testing and so all tests are indicative and comparative (rather than quantitative).

## RATIONALE

Dual-Capability Two-Tensioned Rope Systems (DCTTRS) have various functional advantages over a single-tensioned rope with an un-tensioned back-up such as the damping effect of the two systems helping to provide a smoother lower, plus the



Twin Tension 50kg each

Single Tension 100kg

10kg

**NOTE:** Raising and lowering the mass via the rope would probably be more similar to the 'bounce' when prusiking or hauling but unfortunately wasn't possible.

## RESULTS

### SITUATION 1

Rope at 13° to vertical, 870mm from anchor point to edge. The twin-tensioned ropes were attached to the mass with a pulley to ensure perfectly even tension between the two.

Ten 'double' swings/cycles (to the opposite side and back) of 440mm (ie. 220mm each side from vertical).

Single tension cut through the sheath and damaged some cores. Twin tension cut through the sheath of both ropes and, although a few strands remained, these offered no protection to the core.

### SITUATION 2

Rope at 90° to vertical, 4.75m from anchor point to edge. As the rope only contacts a small part of the edge (compared to the swing in Situation 1), tests were carried out at 50kg (effectively twin-tensioned) and 100kg plus a 10kg 'control', all against the

same section of the edge. If twin ropes had been used, then each would have been in contact with a different section of the edge potentially leading to unequal results.

Load was applied and released 90 times. It was not possible to raise and lower the load due to friction over the edge and the difficulty of keeping the rope in contact with the correct area.

The damage extended over a larger area in the 100kg test as the increased load resulted in more rope stretch and also overcame more of the friction on the edge — both leading to more movement. Having the rope anchored further back from the edge would increase the amount of stretch and likely increase the area damaged.

No residual-strength test was carried out on the abraded samples. In most cases the cores remained intact and so the strength should be maintained (within reason), for the continuation of the rescue. The damage on the sheath will obviously cause problems if it needs to pass through a rope device, for example when hauling, it will also leave the exposed core more susceptible to further damage. Bear in mind that it is still possible to fall even if the sheath is cut and the cores remain intact. As rope devices only grip the

sheath of the rope the cores can still slide through on the inside.

Although Situation 2 shows the potential for damage of twin and single-tensioned systems in 'bounce' the damage was built up more quickly in swing (probably due to the lack of movement of rope over the edge). As such, Situation 1 was used to assess other loads.

Less tension means less susceptibility to damage, but does it still take out a sufficiently large amount of the stretch to provide a damping effect during lowering and perhaps more importantly reduce the fall distance significantly in the event of the load being held on only one rope?

It may be possible to have a twin-tensioned system, but with a smaller load on one rope in order to balance rope damage with stretch reduction to an optimal level, such as 90:10 or 80:20 rather than 50:50? In such a system the main rope with the higher load would 'lead' in the lower or haul and the secondary rope with the lower load would 'follow'.

Firstly, the comparative rope damage with different loads. The same test parameters as Situation 1 were used with a range of different loads.



50kg/Twin tension (core was visible after 70 cycles)

100kg/Single tension (core was visible after 40 cycles)

10kg

## SITUATION 2

ropes

ROPE ABRASION TESTS  
CONTINUED



### ROPE STRETCH VS LOAD

Tests on EN1891 low-stretch rope show that the amount of stretch decreases exponentially with load. The graph shows the typical load vs extension curve for new unused rope with sewn terminations (eliminating knots as a factor). The samples are quite short so we'll look at percentage changes. Performance will vary slightly with brand, model, age, condition etc but, in this example, 30% initial stretch is achieved with 4% of the peak load (1kN of 25kN) or, put another way, between a static load of 0 and 2 person (2kN), the rope will stretch around 40mm. 50% of this stretch (20mm) is achieved with 10-15% of the 2-person load (0.2-0.3kN). **NOTE:** these results are not based on the exact same rope used in the abrasion tests.

There will still be some stretch in DCTTRS when moving onto one rope as the load will double eg. increase from 50kg on each rope to 100kg on one.

Based on a single-person load (100kg) and the graph above, the total stretch would be around 40mm. An equal tension DCTTRS with 50kg on each rope would be around 30mm. A 20kg load will result in approximately 20mm of stretch.

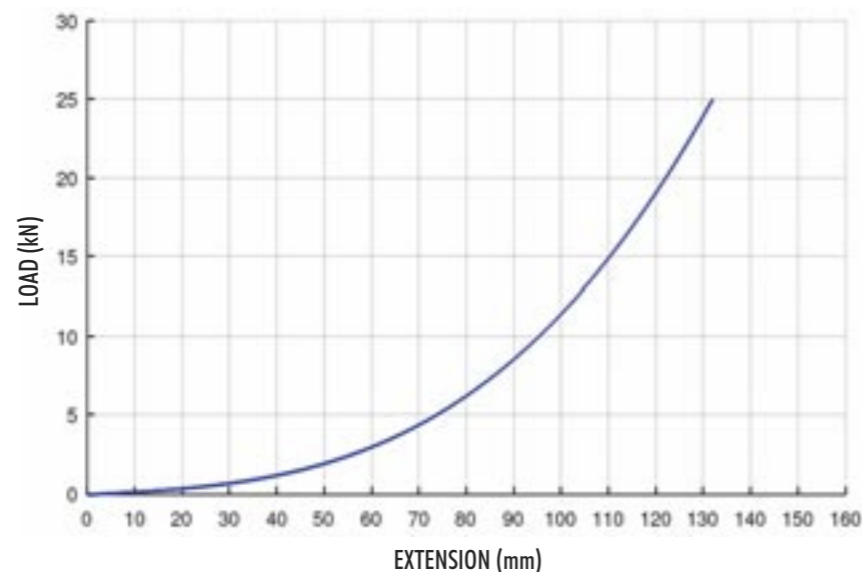
Therefore, in the event of the failure and all the load being transferred to one rope, an equally loaded DCTTRS would see a 33% increase in stretch, whereas an unequal twin-tensioned or 'lead and follow' system, with 20kg on one rope and 80kg on the other, would see a 50% increase if the load transferred to the secondary, lower-tension, rope. A larger amount, but is it significant?

### DISCUSSION

The application of the rope stretch results above is mostly theoretical, but worth further investigation.

With a 'lead and follow' system, main rope failure is more likely, as the main rope is under more tension than the secondary. If it was the other way around and the secondary rope failed, then the change in stretch would be negligible.

Lead and follow may sound complicated,



but it's easy to achieve in a haul. Pulling hand tight on the secondary rope with no mechanical advantage gives a load of 10-20kg.

As the rope stretch results are percentage changes, more tests are required to assess the practical implications. Used ropes also lose some of their stretch with shrinkage etc, so these also have an effect.

### CONCLUSIONS

Twin-tensioned rope systems are more susceptible to abrasion than single tensioned rope with lightly tensioned back-up in situations where the ropes are not moving through the lowering device.

Mountain Rescue England and Wales guidance mentions stabilising a casualty, ie. operating with stationary rope. Therefore, it appears advisable to reduce the tension on one rope when in this situation and reapply it when the ropes begin to move again.

No significant damage was observed in the first cycle of either test situation, suggesting that continuously moving ropes are not badly affected. However, this is the result of limited testing only and users should

be aware of the rope's susceptibility to damage. Remember that even in a moving rope system there may be sections of rope that are not moving, such as ropes linking anchors or the fixed side of a 2:1 pulley system.

### FURTHER WORK

With a 100kg load, it appears that a 10-20kg load on one rope would provide a significant improvement in abrasion protection whilst still removing a significant amount of rope stretch. The performance and practicalities of 'lead and follow' twin-tensioned systems will be examined in Part 2, along with two-person rescue loads and dynamic impacts. ☘

**CHRIS EDMONDSON**  
HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF CRO FOR OVER THIRTY YEARS, WITH 25+ YEARS' EXPERIENCE WORKING IN INDUSTRIAL HEIGHT SAFETY. HE IS PART OF THE MREW ROPE RESCUE GUIDELINES REVIEW GROUP

# news round

JULY > OCTOBER

## JULY: TEAMS JOIN ANNUAL ROPE RESCUE EVENT IN SOMERSET

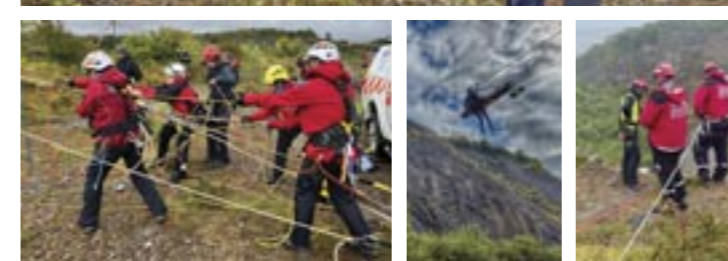
**Clive Bush** delivered the event. An Avon and Somerset team member, and Director of Prusik Rescue, Clive also delivers Work at Height and rope rescue training in the UK and abroad. He reports on a successful event.

The event was the south west's annual bringing together of rope rescue professionals from search and mountain rescue team members, HART, ambulance and fire services, and a team of all-female rope rescue operatives from various organisations (called Breaking Boundaries). This was the fourth such event to be delivered at the Quarry, in Sandford.

Teams took part in medical workshops delivered by a highly regarded medical professional, Andrew Gibson. These were conducted on the cliff edges during the technical rope rescue scenarios. Vernon Smith, an ISAR3 training provider from Plymouth, delivered a timely Artificial High Directional (AHD) session, also using the cliff edges. The scenarios consisted of tension line lowers and raises, where we saw teams build anchor systems from vehicles and a Twin Tension Rope System (TTRS) to achieve the task, then carry out the medical phase of the scenario.

Mendip Activity Centre, which owns the quarry, always supports these events, which helps strengthen the working relationship of rope rescue teams in the south west, something Prusik Rescue is enthusiastic about. The teams find the quarry a great training environment in which to sharpen their skills and this wouldn't be possible without the support of the centre.

Images supplied by Clive Bush, ASSAR.



## SEPTEMBER: BUSY YEAR FOR DERBY MRT DRONE TEAM

With over thirty operational deployments and numerous training, educational and promotional tasks, the Derby drone team members aren't struggling to maintain their flying hours! **Brendan O'Neill** reports.

**Operational deployments:** The team has a very good working relationship with the local police teams and is regularly requested to assist on out-of-area incidents. This year we have also been called on by fire and rescue services to assist on the growing number of wildfires in the Peak District. Prime use of the drones, however, is still on missing person searches – successfully locating three missing persons in the last twelve months, two of which were sadly deceased, the other a dementia sufferer missing for almost 24 hours. Search techniques have varied, given the specifics of the case and the terrain. Four deceased missing persons were found in areas searched by the drone team, but were not visible due to either thick tree cover or the casualty being under water. This emphasises the need to consider the best resources for any given task as the drone can't find everything.

Pilots employ a number of techniques when approaching a drone search. Screen-recording all flights, inflight thermal and visual scans, photographing the area in detail, automatic image analysis and manual image scanning combined give the best chance of finding the casualty. One search required us to manually scan a set of 900 images once the other approaches had failed. This revealed a set of trousers half buried in mud after a swollen river had receded. It transpired they weren't relevant to the case, but could easily have been.

**Training:** A monthly training schedule keeps the pilots' flight currency up to date, with different search techniques and emergency procedures. These sessions are attended by trained observers who take a significant amount of workload away from the pilot. We've also attended wider training events, both within the team and with external agencies. A number of multi-agency exercises have also been run with the fire service on wildfire response and water rescue. The real-time drone feed into their control vehicle has changed how they manage large incidents.

**Educational/promotional:** Demonstrations of our drone capability have been held at local schools, and businesses have provided a great platform to help people understand how the technology assists our operations. The team has been very fortunate in that some of this activity has resulted in funding for a new DJI M4T drone as well as the donation of a larger DJI M300 aircraft. We've recently consolidated our equipment and replaced the M30T and M300 with a pair of state-of-the-art DJI M4TD drones. We are assessing the real time inbuilt AI people recognition – so far it's done a decent job of identifying (uninvolved) people the pilot hasn't immediately spotted on screen.

**Safety Management systems:** Operating under an Operational Authorisation from the CAA, we needed an efficient flight planning and risk assessment tool, available to all pilots and with easily accessible data. DroneDesk has kindly given free access to their online flight planning tool to MREW teams to meet this requirement. When a call-out comes in at 3.00am, it is now much simpler to log in, enter the parameters for the operation and have the majority of the flight planning done before deploying to the scene. ☘



PR consultant and media trainer **Sally Seed** looks back at a busy summer for mountain rescue. And that's just the media activity!



## On screen and on message

The stats on page 44 will, I am sure, show another busy summer, probably record-breaking for some teams. As I am writing this, the stats for Q3 aren't yet available, but I'd be stunned if the trend upwards in North Wales, the Peak District and Lakes hasn't continued, with an increase in demand elsewhere too. It's also been busy on the social and legacy media fronts.

### SOS: EXTREME RESCUES

The five teams that cover parts of Eryri/Snowdonia were all featured in the new series on BBC2 and BBC Wales and rescues ranged from mountain bikers and walkers to rock climbers and quarry explorers. If you've not had a chance to watch the programmes, which were mainly

camera too. From my point of view, it was also great to see Max and Jurgen and a few of the others who've completed media training.

A key thing that stands out in the series is the impact of including the faces and voices of the rescued. If you have casualties (or friends or family of casualties) who want to keep in touch with your team after an

incident, it's worth making sure that someone on your team does keep in touch. Journalists, broadcasters and others often ask to speak to those who've been rescued and, as long as you've established the ground rules, have the contact details and

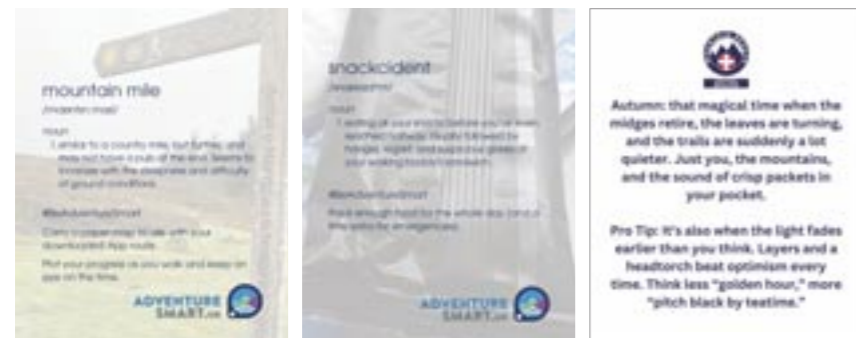
### SERIOUS NEWS COVERAGE

Back in July, Exmoor SRT was actively involved in the major incident after a school bus crash near Minehead that made national headlines. In a situation like this, my advice is to prepare a very short statement of concern or sympathy that also confirms the involvement of team members but points reporters back to the police.

That's exactly what Exmoor's team leader, Phil Sparks, did at the time — and he made sure everyone involved from the team knew the limits on what should be said too.

What was interesting was that Avon and Somerset Police made a point, in their subsequent statements, of mentioning the support received from skilled MR volunteers. That's how it should work, but it's always a relief when it does.

And that feeds back to the 'SOS: Extreme Rescues' series. So many of the incidents shown are joint efforts with MR involved alongside other partners, whether paid emergency services or other volunteer organisations. Celebrating effective joint working rarely detracts from MR's involvement — and viewers see MR volunteers as skilled, dedicated and respected.



Top: News type © Spaceheater via Dreamstime.com. Centre: Screen grab from BBC SOS: Extreme Rescues, Series 2; Exmoor SRT team members attending a coach crash in July. Above: 'Mountain Mile' and 'Snackident' AdventureSmart memes; 'Autumn Pro Tip' from Central Beacons MRT.

broadcast on Wednesday evenings, they'll be on iPlayer ([tinyurl.com/2trdm6re](http://tinyurl.com/2trdm6re)) for a good while yet and are well worth a watch.

Team spokespeople can familiarise themselves with some of the language used, the messaging and the techniques to

have all the permissions, it can be a powerful way of telling a story from two perspectives.

### NEW APPROACHES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

My column back in the Spring issue talked about trying to find new ways of using social media to get over the algorithms and to reach people who don't already know about MR and mountain safety. There have been some interesting approaches in recent months and there should be more to learn as the results come in:

- #BeAdventureSmart launched channels on Facebook and Instagram with an emphasis on having a great day outdoors by planning ahead and answering three questions about kit and clothing, weather in the mountains and developing skills and knowledge. There's still the challenge of getting these out beyond the usual suspects but sharing seems to have increased and the reach is improving.

- Central Beacons team's campaign (created by Carys Rees) also maintained its momentum of one 'Pro Tip' each week. There's humour in many of these as well as practical advice and encouragement. At least one post had over 1,500 shares — with many having 400-500 shares — so it's safe to say that some of those are definitely reaching new audiences.

- Tom Carrick (of the BMC as well as Llanberis MRT) led a Mountain Safety Forum campaign with a set of five videos about mountain safety and a lot of different organisations and partners sharing and reinforcing some common messaging. Tom and his colleagues are working on an analysis of the campaign and all five video shorts are still online on the BMC YouTube channel ([tinyurl.com/4spauzdy](http://tinyurl.com/4spauzdy)) if you want to continue to share.

- Working with influencers was also something that came up earlier in the year and Tomo Thompson at Edale MRT did some great work over the summer with Sam Culley and his Dad, Martyn. Not only did Martyn raise over £15,000 for MREW with his walk from Land's End to John O'Groats (and a big sum for Scottish MR too), but son Sam has been drip-feeding safety messaging out to his followers on Instagram... and there are over 450k of them! Find out more about Sam and Martyn's adventures on page 30.

As you may have spotted, almost all of this activity and most of the behind-the-scenes work has been done by members of the Media and Communications Network out in the regions and volunteering with teams. Thank you to everyone who has shared their plans and ideas, fed back on campaigns or simply reinforced communications over the summer months.

Now, what could we be doing for Mountain Rescue Awareness Day at the end of October? Please do get in touch ([pr@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:pr@mountain.rescue.org.uk)) if you have ideas that might make a difference. Thanks. ☺

# news round

JULY > OCTOBER



## AUGUST: MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS AT THE EDINBURGH TATTOO

Every August, a spectacle of military and civilian pomp, ceremony and artistic finesse is showcased on the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle. This year, for the first time, the creative direction of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo fell to former Holme Valley trainee, Army Reserves officer, and Yorkshire-based theatre director, Alan Lane (pictured top left). **Nick Slack**, Holme Valley MRT, reports.

Alan is still a keen supporter of HVMRT, and MREW as a whole, and wanted to acknowledge our service in a brand new feature for the Tattoo's 75th Anniversary: 'The Heroes Who Made Us'. Throughout the Tattoo season, volunteers and service personnel from across the military, civil and emergency services were highlighted and publicly thanked for the difference they make to their communities. A hasty party of representatives from MREW and our above-the-borders colleagues from Scotland were sent invites to join the ranks of visitors to the annual spectacle.

Phil Ridley (MREW training officer) and Paul Edisbury (Kinder MRT and also a military veteran) and I, joined Paul Russell (Tayside MRT) headed to the Scottish capital to smile and wave as actor, Terence Ra — in role as 'the storyteller', an ethereal Piper of Tattoos past, present and future — told the crowds of the voluntary service we all give freely.

Later, we were received in the Royal box, where we met officers from the British, American and allied militaries and diplomatic services. The Ukrainian Navy and US Air Force were particularly pleased to greet them, amazed at our free search and rescue services and the level of our training, commitment and professionalism.

'It is amazing,' says Alan, 'that in the UK if you get in trouble in the mountains it is a volunteer who is coming to rescue you. Our show The Heroes Who Made Us was a tribute to all those heroes, across all the public services and volunteer sector who are there for us when we need them. It was a privilege to honour the group when they attended the show. Heroes all.'

On behalf of the MR community, we'd like to extend our huge gratitude to the organisers of the Edinburgh Tattoo for the invites and for the support and recognition of our work across Great Britain.

Top: The Edinburgh Tattoo; Left to right: Paul Edisbury, Phil Ridley, Paul Russell and Nick Slack. Insert, top left: Alan Lane. Images supplied by Nick Slack.

## UPDATE ON SARCALL LIMITED

As announced in March, MREW's acquisition of SARCALL Ltd, has resulted in the creation of a new Board of Directors, chaired by MREW Trustee, Phil Benbow, along with Mark Lewis, (MREW ICT Officer), and Deborah Pourkarami (MREW Finance Director).

'A priority was to gain Cyber Essentials certification, which needed implementation of a two-factor (2FA), authentication system,' says Phil. 'This has been successfully rolled out over the past few months, due to a lot of hard work by Mark Lewis and the national and regional SARCALL admins, who are due a vote of thanks for their input in making it happen.'

Six months on there are a few other areas where SARCALL needs to be consolidated, and its reliability strengthened. 'Robustness is what it's all about,' says Phil. 'We're currently working hard to improve the structure to ensure this as we bed in the changes.' The next priority is the appointment of two more Board members. 'One external and one internal new member would probably be ideal, but we'll see how things develop. In parallel, as we move out of the consolidation phase, we will be engaging with teams and other users regarding ideas for future developments and improvements.'



## Training together, talking to each other and sharing ideas across borders...

**PHIL 'RIGGER' RIDLEY** MREW TRAINING OFFICER

Can we have more joint training and collaboration? There's not much difference in what we do, so why not collaborate and work together? Why don't we do more? Three questions I'm asked more and more these days. We all know it works. It's been proven. The enthusiasm and appetite by members is there. As an organisation we just need to talk to each other and share ideas more, to ensure we create meaningful, relevant and appropriate training opportunities that benefit everyone. Geography may be slightly different, but we all do the same thing.

There is still a bit more work to be done. However, I am very much encouraged by the increase in joint training opportunities which have continued to expand over recent months. It would be nice to have a few other contributors give their feedback on these joint ventures as I'm sure there would be plenty of 'takeaway' points which others may be interested in, even engage with.

Recently, I have joined colleagues from several teams at their various planned training sessions as an observer, to gain insight into how the national training content (or philosophy) is being disseminated and adopted to suit their particular team/regional mode of operation. Reassuringly, the consistency and similarities of skills, procedures and practices employed are, in the main, in keeping with the national suggestions. This has also illustrated the capability to carry out multi-team (and region) joint working becoming more acceptable and effective (and not just with MRTs, as other statutory rescue services are also actively looking to participate).

Preparations are well underway for reviewing a number of topics, all of which will be reported on hopefully over the

coming months. Thank you to all who have expressed interest and joined the various training subcommittee working groups tasked with these projects. All regions are represented by experienced members, which allows for a broad cover and interaction of topics. These include (to mention a few):

- Search planning and management courses
- Training record keeping, competency and CPD frameworks
- Technical rope rescue opportunities
- Training duty of care and governance documentation
- Foundation and Hill Party Leader courses
- Driver training.

Discussions with colleagues from Scottish Mountain Rescue are ongoing (albeit in early stages) for a number of potential collaboration training and sharing of ideas opportunities.

Back in August, it was a privilege and honour to be invited to attend the 75th Anniversary Royal Military Edinburgh Tattoo as one of several representatives. The theme 'The Heroes Who Made Us' also spotlighted colleagues from Holme Valley MRT

and the volunteering role they do for their community. Nick Slack writes about the experience on page 15 but, from me, thank you to Alan Lane (Creative Director REMT, and ex-Holme Valley member) for the invite.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge Dr Donald Cooper for his continued support and enthusiasm with delivering the Search Planning Management and Field Skills courses. A number of successful courses and planning meetings have been held over the last few weeks.

With LIBOR funding at an end, one of the challenges that face all teams is future training course costs. Over recent years, and with the demand from teams, MREW has managed to offer and subsidise a wide range of training courses. Going back to the 'Can we have more joint training and collaboration' question, the answer is obviously 'yes'. How we achieve this will depend on a number of factors, and continues to be a growing focus going forwards.

As a reminder, if you have any concerns or suggestions for how training topics can be developed or improved, please email via [trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:trainingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk)

## Joint rope rescue training with Glossop MRT

Glossop kindly organised a joint rope rescue training session for the Peak District teams in September. Members from Kinder and Buxton joined team members from Glossop, including several probationary members for which this was one of their first training sessions. **Paul Edisbury**, PDMRO Crag lead, reports on this final joint rope training session for this year.

Glossop took us to a location where they have been getting more call-outs recently. It was a tricky location and deep in heather with no natural anchors, so stakes were the only option for the anchor system. Glossop team has recently changed some aspects of their rope rescue set-up and how they distribute their equipment in different bags. The rescue was a success and everyone who attended got involved with the rescue which was good to see.

Having watched their set-up and rescue, it was apparent that theirs is not dissimilar to all the other teams we have done joint rope training with. Again, it shows another team following the MREW Rope Rescue Guidelines. Team members from Glossop asked for any feedback from all that attended. Knowledge sharing and ideas were put forward during the entire day, which is one of the many advantages of these joint rope training sessions.

As a summary for this year's joint rope training activities PDMRO members have had opportunities to work with multiple different teams and organisations. Starting from the first joint rope session at the beginning of the year, we first trained with Derbyshire Police, followed by a full weekend with Cockermouth team. This was then followed with a trip to Scotland to train with Scottish Mountain Rescue, which will hopefully bring further collaborations with SMR in the future. Following that, RAF Leeming MRT travelled to the Peak District to train with us. We then travelled down to South Wales for a full weekend of rope training which was provided by Western Beacons. The Glossop session finished off the year's activities. All these sessions have been invaluable; we have worked closely with other PDMRO teams, external organisations and two mountain rescue teams not in our region. The aim is to practise rope rescue techniques and share knowledge. This can only be a positive thing which will assist us in helping neighbouring teams on technical rope rescues, should any team require assistance on a call-out.

The plan is to continue with more joint rope training next year. If any teams from MREW would like to train together and have a joint rope session, please get in touch via [crag@pdmro.org.uk](mailto:crag@pdmro.org.uk).

**Right:** Glossop rope rescue training. **Below, opposite and right:** Gorge and canyon rigging in Scotland. Images © Henry Paisey.



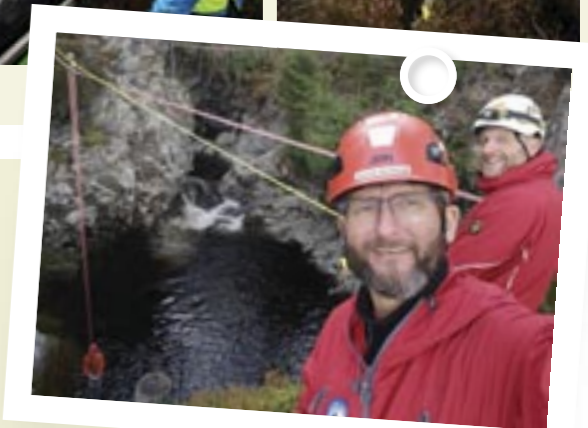
## Scottish Mountain Rescue Gorge and Canyon Rigging

In September, Toby Green (PDMRO Training Officer) and Paul Edisbury (PDMRO crag lead) had the privilege of joining Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR) for their gorge and canyon rigging course in Aberfeldy. **Paul Edisbury** reports.

The course focused on advanced technical rope rescue techniques and was designed to push our skills, challenge our thinking and build stronger collaboration between our teams. The central theme of the weekend was the Vortex tripod rescue method. This versatile piece of kit proved to be an outstanding asset for technical rescues, especially in steep, complex terrain. The course showcased its ability to create secure anchor systems, improve safety margins, and make otherwise difficult extractions much more manageable. In addition to the tripod work, we received training on the Tyrolean traverse method, an essential technique for gorge and canyon rescues. Being able to quickly and safely transport casualties across a span where no direct access exists is a vital skill, and it was fantastic to get hands-on time refining these set-ups under the guidance of SMR instructors.

Evenings provided the chance to relax and socialise with our Scottish colleagues. Sharing stories, comparing methods and discussing challenges allowed us to learn a huge amount about how both SMR and Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) operate. It was clear that joint training like this brings fresh ideas, new perspectives and strengthens cooperation across the border. Looking ahead, there are already discussions about expanding joint training opportunities, with SMR teams coming down to England and MREW heading north to Scotland for further shared exercises. This can only be a good thing for casualty care and rescue capabilities across the UK.

A huge thank you to Jon Sanders and Iain Murray, the course tutors, and to SMR for hosting us and making the weekend such a success. It was an incredible experience, and we look forward to working together again soon. If any teams would like to train together and organise a rope training session, please get in touch with us via [training@pdmro.org.uk](mailto:training@pdmro.org.uk) [crag@pdmro.org.uk](mailto:crag@pdmro.org.uk).



training

# TRAINING CALENDAR 2025

(AT TIME OF PUBLICATION)

# mrew

**MREW SPM2:**  
12-14 SEPTEMBER

**FOUNDATION: PDMRO**  
17-19 OCTOBER

**PREHOSPITAL TRAUMA**  
LIFE SUPPORT: 4-5 OCTOBER

**RRDI (LYON) COURSE 6:**  
LOSAMRA 1-2 NOVEMBER

## SEPTEMBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12

**MREW SEARCH**  
**FIELD SKILLS:**  
19-21 SEPTEMBER

## OCTOBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

**RRDI (LYON) COURSE 6:**  
LOSAMRA 18-19 OCTOBER

## NOVEMBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**RRDI (LYON) COURSE 7: MIXED TEBAY**  
29-30 NOVEMBER

**MREW HILL PARTY LEADER** 21-23 NOVEMBER

**MREW SPM1: NORTH WALES** 21-23 NOVEMBER

## DECEMBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11

**RRDI (LYON) COURSE 7: MIXED TEBAY**  
29-30 NOVEMBER

**MREW HILL PARTY LEADER** 21-23 NOVEMBER

**MREW SPM1: NORTH WALES** 21-23 NOVEMBER

## COMING IN 2026...

**PREHOSPITAL TRAUMA**  
LIFE SUPPORT: 7-8 MARCH 2026

**MREW PARTY LEADER:**  
20-22 FEBRUARY 2026

**ROPE RESCUE AWARENESS DAY:**  
PDMRO: 16-17 MAY TBC

**SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE**  
RIGGING GORGE & CANYON: TBC



## Beyond the Beacons...

## THE VALUE OF OUT-OF-AREA TRAINING IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE

For mountain rescue teams, training is not a luxury, but an essential commitment. While repeated practice in familiar terrain builds strong local knowledge and operational cohesion, out-of-area training introduces new challenges, encourages skill development in different environments and strengthens both individual confidence and team performance. Paul Taylor, Western Beacons MRT, reports on a recent trip to North Wales.

### STRUCTURE OF THE WEEKEND

- **Friday:** Travel north and an informal day of adventure to acclimatise
- **Saturday:** The main training day. Teams divided into small hill parties to tackle graded scrambles in Ogwen, with a focus on steep-ground movement, self confidence, navigation and personal security
- **Sunday:** A return journey south, with some members taking the chance for personal climbing before departure.

Accommodation at the Bethesda Army Cadet Centre provided a practical base and a communal environment for team building.

### THE CASE FOR OUT-OF-AREA TRAINING

There is strong evidence that learning in diverse environments accelerates the acquisition of complex skills. Research into outdoor and vocational training has shown that varied contexts improve adaptability, problem-solving, and confidence when learners return to their usual environment (Kolb, 2015; Beames, 2004).

For mountain rescue specifically, training in terrain that exceeds local challenges ensures members can:

- **Build steep-ground competence:** Exposure to sustained rock ridges allows team members to refine movement skills and rope systems under realistic conditions (MREW Training Standards, 2022).
- **Develop confidence under exposure:** Repeated safe practice in technical environments reduces anxiety and improves decision-making in real incidents (Ewert & Sibthorp, 2014).
- **Strengthen team trust:** Small-group tasks in demanding terrain encourage leadership, communication and reliance on one another — all transferable to call-outs in South Wales.

### TRANSLATING EXPERIENCE TO OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Not every incident in the Western Beacons requires rope systems or technical scrambling. However, the confidence gained from steep-ground practice translates directly into casualty management, navigation in poor visibility, and safety on exposed paths. The ability to operate calmly in technical terrain also reduces risk to both rescuers and casualties.

Out-of-area training therefore acts as a force multiplier: by preparing members for

the most demanding scenarios, it enhances safety and effectiveness across all rescue work.

### CONCLUSION

Western Beacons MRT's weekend in Eryri was more than a trip north — it was an investment in capability, confidence, and cohesion. As research and training guidance suggest, exposing volunteers to new environments is essential for skill progression. Out-of-area training should not be seen as supplementary, but as a core component of any mountain rescue team's development strategy. ☺

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- Ewert, A., & Sibthorp, J. (2014).** *Outdoor Adventure Education: Foundations, Theory, and Research. Human Kinetics.*
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- Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW). (2022).** *Training Standards and Competence Framework.*

Top: Western Beacons team members in training with Ogwen Valley MRO in Snowdonia. Images supplied by Paul Taylor.

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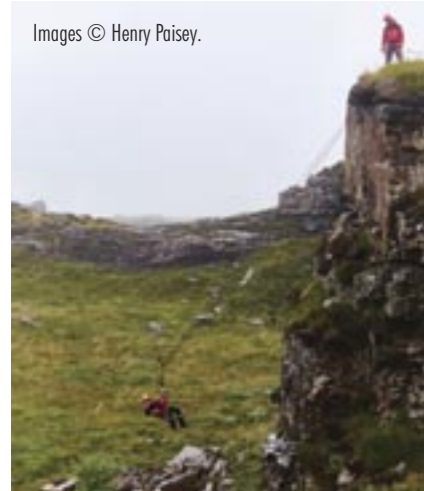
ULTRALIGHT / WATERTIGHT  
**MEDICAL KIT-7**

# news round

JULY > OCTOBER

## AUGUST: WESTERN BEACONS HOST MEMBERS OF PDMRO, DCRO AND HOLME VALLEY FOR A WEEKEND OF ROPE RESCUE TRAINING

Eight Peak District team members, one Derby CRO team member and a member of the Holme Valley team, joined Western Beacons team members in South Wales for a full, residential weekend of inter-national, inter-team training. PDMRO crag lead, **Paul Edisbury** reports, with input from Will Oliver, Western Beacons MRT.



Friday, was the long drive down to Ynyscedwyn scout hut, which was to be our accommodation for the next three days, with some of us in tents in the adjacent field. A warm welcome was given to all that attended the weekend and fantastic food was offered throughout.

Saturday morning, the group was split into two and we carried out two rope rescue sessions, run by Western Beacons.

Session One was a dual-capability, two-tensioned rope system (DCTTRS). Utilising stakes for anchors and using the rescue strop for a pick-off of a suspended casualty, which ended up being me. I was lowered down into position about halfway down the crag, then a rescuer came down and connected me safely to his DCTTRS. Once this was achieved, I disconnected from my system and we were lowered safely to the ground.

Session Two's DCTTRS utilised natural anchors, with a vertical and horizontal stretcher rescue. This was a good time to practise not just the stretcher set-ups but getting more hands-on, using boulders as natural anchors. This is something that changes on every rope rescue you do — so the more practice you can get the better.

On Sunday, we stayed as one group as numbers were slightly smaller. The morning session was an idea that myself and Gareth Williams (WBMRT) had been discussing for several weeks prior to this training session. The scenario we came up with was this: Could two members from Kinder team run a rope rescue using their own team's equipment and procedures, but using six members from Western Beacons, given that the parties had never met before and had no idea how Kinder set up their system or what equipment they use? We were about to find out!

I ran the rope rescue as site rope officer/crag officer. Andy Smith was our site safety officer. The session was a mixture of carrying out the pick-off rescue using a harness for the casualty, as well as teaching and explaining what it was, and what we were doing at each stage of the rescue to

the remainder of the team members in attendance. The scenario was a success: the system was set up with ease and the rescue performed in a short space of time.

Once again, it shows the interoperability of teams to work together. This was not a surprise as all the teams I have worked with in the last two years, both in my region and nationally, have had very similar rope rescue systems. All teams use DCTTRS and follow the MREW Rope Rescue Guidelines. The main differences I can see are the types of equipment they use for belaying and setting up a mechanical advantage.

The afternoon session was WBMRT setting up a guiding line to allow the rescuer to be lowered from the top of a vertical crag, but suspended away from the crag face and or features on the ground they needed to avoid. This was done very quickly and efficiently. It was good to see how easy this practice was and the types of scenarios it could be used in.

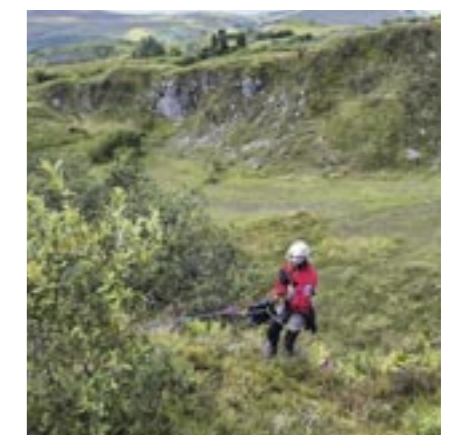
Overall, the weekend was a great success. I think all who attended the weekend got some real training value from all the various sessions. The passing of skills and experience between teams is invaluable and this was done in abundance over the weekend. It can only make team members and teams stronger and safer by doing these types of training activities.

Will Oliver, one of Western Beacons' deputy team leaders said, 'It was great to have MR colleagues from PDMRO join our training weekend in South Wales. It demonstrates that we can work extremely well together between teams and regions and that we can share learning across mountain rescue in England and Wales. Everyone who attended gave feedback that they found the sessions across Saturday and Sunday both useful and safe. We would welcome them back any time and likewise any others team or regions who are interested in visiting can get in touch.'

There are always enough volunteers to attend these events. From what I have seen in my own region, team members have been keen to further their rope rescue

experience and knowledge, and pass this on to their own team members. It makes us better and safer at what is a dangerous activity and more proficient at rescuing casualties. That, after all, is why we do this.

If any teams would like to arrange a rope rescue training day or weekend with team members from PDMRO, to gain some valuable knowledge and further their own team's rope rescue skills, please get in touch with me via [crag@pdmro.org.uk](mailto:crag@pdmro.org.uk). Thanks. ☺



training

Images © Henry Paisey.

# Glossop MRT takes a different road to vehicle conversion



After an intensive eighteen-month journey, Glossop MRT has just finished converting their two TDCI 110 Land Rover Defenders. The team's vehicle officer **Greg Blake** shares their experience of taking a different approach to conversion from the team's previous vehicles.

## VEHICLE SELECTION

The process started with the question to end all questions: 'What vehicle should we buy next?' A question I will hopefully never hear again during my time on the team! To answer that question, we formed a 'vehicle subgroup'. Fast forward over eight months of debate, 3,000 cups of tea, two visits to Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) and countless meetings, a decision was finally reached.

but, unfortunately, after countless meetings with JLR face-to-face and via Teams, the numbers and the overall ownership of the vehicle proved to be a significant issue. Due to the cost implications and significant uncertainty, the JLR Lease deal was deemed not viable for our requirements.

We were still stuck between an outright purchase of a new Defender and an older version. We set about narrowing this choice with a new 110 being taken off the list as it

have to up the budget per vehicle to secure our requirements in the right vehicle. Eventually we dropped onto a 16-plate 110 County XS with 10,000 miles on it, in the desired white, for £45,000. We were then very fortunate to find a barn-stored 16-plate utility back with only 800 miles on the clock, again in white, for the significant sum of £55,000 plus VAT (which we will claim back). Although we paid more and were now operating at the top of our budget, we felt the provenance and condition of both vehicles were of utmost importance.

## VEHICLE UPGRADES

With the vehicles now purchased, we effectively had £50,000 to convert two vehicles and upgrade our existing vehicles. As part of this budget, we also wanted to future-proof our existing 130 TDCI Ambulance back ex-Red Cross Defender and our 2011 110. These vehicles were both sent to 'Ice Blasters' in Northampton where both chassis were blasted with dry ice to take them back to bare metal, and then coated with an anti-rust base coat and Dinatrol top coat. 'Ice Blasters' provided a really great service and will hopefully ensure the longevity of both vehicles for many years. Both vehicles were then upgraded to Ludo McGurk vehicle charge systems, with auto-eject charge sockets, which replaced our rudimentary 12v trickle chargers.

## VEHICLE CONVERSIONS

With an ever-reducing budget, we set about the task of finding conversion companies for our two 110 Defenders. We contacted the usual well-known companies in the conversion world and were met with quotes of anywhere between £15,000 and £25,000 per vehicle, with what felt like fairly unreliable and distant build dates to start the work. We did settle on a conversion company, but were let down with postponed build slots. We therefore decided to take more of a DIY approach to the conversion by using local individual specialists rather than one single umbrella company.

This process proved to be a great success and overall, despite the amount of additional effort required, was a very enjoyable experience. We also managed to save a substantial amount of money, with each vehicle costing around £10,000. As we were able to work closer to the actual conversion, we realised that we now had the ability to

guide the project more efficiently, which is something that's been challenging when working with the larger conversion companies in the past. We were also able to specify and purchase our own requirements direct from manufacturers which resulted in the improved quality of parts often at discounted rates. It was a significant advantage being able to specify our own products over products the companies 'traditionally' use. For example, we were able to get in touch with Stedi UK who are an Australian market leader who manufacture light bars. By working closely with Stedi, they supplied us with some unbelievable quality products, at similar prices to what we would have been paying through the large companies for non-proven, unbranded lights.

By seeking out local suppliers and companies, we were able to get the majority of conversion jobs done locally, including vehicle electrics, livery and rear racking, and I would recommend teams to consider this approach with their vehicle conversions. By using vehicle electricians to install your blue lights, van signwriting companies to install the livery and local engineering companies to fabricate vehicle racking, the cost savings over the larger conversion companies are not to be dismissed. Yes, the additional work is also not to be underestimated, but I am more than happy with what we have achieved as a team and feel the finish is superior to many conversion companies out there — with a substantial saving to boot — thereby justifying the additional time demands. 🙌



Images of Glossop team's recent experience, replacing and kitting out their team vehicles © Glossop MRT.

As we all know, the landscape of the 4x4 vehicle market is changing and is now one that is no longer a simple choice. Because of this our subgroup wanted to ensure we got this decision right by reviewing all the vehicles available at the time. This included the new Defender 110/130 via outright purchase and JLR MREW lease deal, the old Defender, various pickups, Ineos Grenadier and the Munro, to name a few.

Our requirements at the time were focused around durability, payload, stretcher carrying, safety and cost. For our project we had allocated funds of £150,000 to replace our 51-plate TD5 and, funds permitting, to add a fourth vehicle to our existing fleet.

Based on criteria specific to our team, front runners soon emerged between the new and old Defender. Vehicles such as the pickups were not selected due to concerns about durability and stretcher-carrying ability, and the Ineos Grenadier was discounted based on its perceived lack of payload.

Thus began the difficult task of trying to decide between the new and old Defender. At the time of our conversations, the JLR MREW lease deal was doing the rounds. On face value, this appeared to be a good deal,

can't accommodate a split Bell stretcher in its rear load area with the rear seats up. We also looked at various older Defenders and conversion options of our existing TD5, deciding if this was to be an option we would like to have a vehicle with Anti Stall, ABS and Traction Control. This left us with XS model Defenders from 2007 onwards.

We were now down to two vehicles. A new Defender 130 on an outright purchase or a post 2007 XS 110 Defender. The 130 was dismissed due to its inferior payload and perceived reliability and longevity concerns. We thought a low-mileage late model Defender 110 XS would tick the majority of boxes and were hopeful we could almost buy two late-model 110s for the price of a new 130.

## ON THE HUNT

Despite having experience in purchasing used Land Rovers, I think we underestimated the difficulties associated with buying a low mileage XS 110 that was in good condition and not rotten underneath the vehicle. Our search took us up and down the country with various visits, to multiple car dealerships. In the end, we found we would



vehicles



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## Effects of a new Casualty Care Card on data collection



In early 2025, Central Beacons Mountain Rescue Team partnered with Cardiff University to support a student-led project. Yasmin O'Brien, a third-year medical student joined the team to undertake a period of research.

**YASMIN O'BRIEN, PATRICK CORNING & ALAN STONE**

Regarding her time with Central Beacons, Yasmin wrote: 'Medical schools across the UK allocate time in the academic year for students to undertake research or learn about special interests. These modules are known as student-selected components. I have a personal interest in expedition and wilderness medicine and reached out to my local mountain rescue team. The team were helpful and welcoming and, in addition to the project, facilitated attendance at team nights and observation of training exercises. Central Beacons had recently updated the formatting of their casualty care records and had started looking at how to efficiently capture and store data. I audited these cards, assessing if the level of information recorded had been impacted by this change. Following completion of the project, a write-up and medical poster were produced to display the results. We're aiming to present the poster at upcoming conferences in the latter part of this year.'

Central Beacons has maintained close links with the university and offered to supervise further students. We're hopeful this will lead to ongoing research with a positive impact on our team procedures, and will continue to promote mountain rescue within our local area. Universities are often looking for supervisors for student projects. If you have questions regarding our experience over the prior year or would like to speak with Yasmin directly, please reach out to Central Beacons.

An excerpt of our methodology, results and conclusions is included below:

'Casualty care cards between January 2022 and November 2024 were analysed utilising Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact tests. Thirty-nine used the old format, and nineteen the new. The cards were assessed for completion and legibility.

'No sections of the forms demonstrated statistically significant change in completion at the conventional alpha level of 0.05. However, some sections showed trends towards significance with p-values approaching this threshold, including documentation of casualty carer (p=0.058). Date & Time (92%/94%), Heart Rate (94%/94%) and Treatment (92%/94%) remained the most filled out sections of both forms (old/new). Blood Pressure (30%/22%), Temperature (30%/28%), and Casualty Details (61%/56%) remained the least. Legibility was subjectively similar across both cards.

'Despite substantial changes made to a card which had been in use since 2004, there has been no statistically significant adverse impact on the level of data collected. Positively, some areas of the form may show improvement although further audit with a larger dataset is required to confirm this trend.

'Blood pressure and temperature remaining poorly recorded is likely due to equipment and environmental considerations. Given the nature of mountain rescue incidents, some casualty details are often unavailable in critically unwell patients and full completion of this section would not be expected.

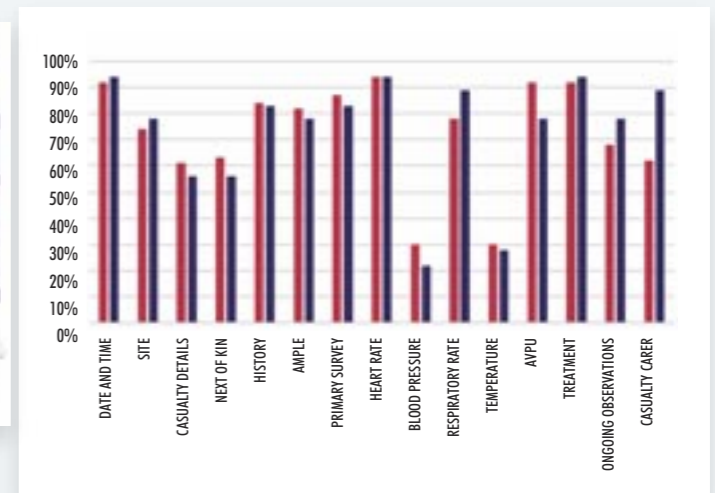
'New data boxes such as medication batch number and AMPLE assessments allowed recording of information not previously obtained. Both forms lacked an outcome box, defining when, where and to whom patient care was transferred. Future updates to the casualty care card will add this field.'



Top: The final report. Above: Central Beacons team members during a visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales in April 2023 © Sin Hart Photography.



Figure 1: Old (2004) Casualty Care card. Figure 2: New (2022) Casualty Care card. Right: ■ Old (2004) Casualty Care card. ■ New (2022) Casualty Care card.



casualty care data collection

# Feedback from the Remote Rescue Medical Technician (RRMT) CPD day, held in Swaledale in June

TIM CAIN SWALEDALE MRT



## Key points:

- Teamwork and role clarity
- Sharing diverse ideas
- Less is more
- Effective communication and feedback
- Coaching and peer review
- The MREW RRMT syllabus works, but lacks a teamworking element.



## What was the most thought-provoking aspect of the day?

• **Teamwork and interoperability:** Participants were struck by the seamless collaboration between multiple teams, highlighting the cohesiveness, clear communication and a shared commitment to best practices and positive outcomes. Observations included how teams, even when unfamiliar with each other, worked together as if they had always been a unit, perhaps a reflection of our shared values: Teamwork, Excellence, Passion and Caring.

key to fostering productive learning and improvement. The Set Up group providing a scenario — usually one from recent team call-out experiences — was well received.

• **Feedback and best practice alignment:** Peer review and observations reassured participants that teams were aligned in their practices — often using similar kits and methods. Differences in procedures, such as blood pressure monitoring and drug carriage, prompted reflection on best practices and the effectiveness of the MREW syllabus.

## What practice did you like most when observing RRMT in action?

• **Effective teamwork and collaboration:** Many responses highlighted the value of strong team interaction, especially in mixed teams, where members worked together calmly, avoided overlap and demonstrated great team spirit. The ability to anticipate the needs of colleagues and pre-empt actions or equipment was particularly appreciated.

• **Good communication** was frequently mentioned — including open discussions, reassurance to casualties and collaborative decision making. Verbalising thoughts and seeking input from others were seen as positive.

• **Defined roles and leadership:** Observations noted the effectiveness of those teams that assigned specific roles such as lead RRMT, supporting RRMT, scribe and HCP overwatch (Med Comms), which helped maintain clinical oversight and a 360° view of the situation, while allowing the RRMT to lead the cascare.

• **Innovative and simplified clinical practices:** Several comments appreciated the use of simplified drug set-ups (eg. IN Naloxone, EpiPens, asthma inhalers), creative med kit ideas and the scribe's use of casualty cards as a checklist. Also, quick-reference vital-sign values and equipment checklists, seeing

different approaches and learning from real-life scenario adaptations.

## Successful mountain rescue trauma care is a combination of individual knowledge and skills and trauma team communication, coordination and cooperation. In relation to this, what good things did you observe during the day?

• **Effective teamwork and collaboration:** Teams demonstrated strong cohesion, with team members supporting each other, self-organising efficiently and working seamlessly in both formed and composite groups. Leaderless teams were able to self-organise into effective units, and individuals readily assisted one another to achieve common goals.

• **High standards of communication:** Clear, open and frequent communication was noted within and between teams. Members had no hesitation in discussing approaches, sharing information and providing feedback, which contributed to smooth operations and effective problem solving. Noted as being of particular value was the use of summaries and 'one voice', especially 'Give me fifteen seconds' as a way of letting everyone know vital signs were being taken and quiet was necessary.

• **Demonstrated individual competency:** Team members exhibited a high level of individual skill and knowledge, applying standardised frameworks and best practices. This competence enabled teams to deliver high-quality casualty care and adapt to working with new team members effectively.

• **Efficient coordination and role assignment:** Teams coordinated actions well, often running multiple tasks in parallel to reduce response times. Roles such as incident site controller, scribe and assistants were clearly assigned, and critical decisions were made

efficiently, allowing for autonomy and flexibility within the team structure.

## What did you like about the 'Show and Tell' team stands?

• **Comparison and inspiration from other teams' equipment:** Participants valued the opportunity to compare their own medical and rescue equipment with that of other teams. Observing different types of splints, medical packs and specialised devices like the Schiller Touch 7 provided inspiration for potential improvements and adaptations.

• **Innovative storage solutions and vehicle organisation:** Many comments highlighted interest in how teams organised and stored equipment in their vehicles. Notable mentions included hydraulic stretcher systems, pull-out storage, side access and rationalisation of space to maximise efficiency and accessibility. Simplicity and a 'Less is more' approach to vehicle loading were noted as good practice.

• **Open communication and the sharing of knowledge:** Attendees appreciated the open and honest discussions about similarities and differences in both kit and approach. The willingness of teams to share practical ideas and learn from each other fostered a collaborative environment.

• **Practical improvements and efficiency:** There was a recurring theme of adopting practical ideas such as the 'less is more' approach and the use of grab bag systems. These strategies aimed to streamline team member deployment and improve the overall effectiveness of equipment usage.

## What piece(s) of equipment stood out as excellent?

• **The Slishman traction splint,** including short versions for lower leg injuries, was frequently highlighted as an excellent piece of kit for its utility in trauma care.

• **Stretcher systems and hydraulic mechanisms:** Stretcher systems and diverse wheel arrangements, hydraulic roof mounts and roof slide mechanisms were noted for their innovative design.

• **Customised medical kits and packs:** Customised medical kits — including cave rescue underground packs with clear compartments — were praised for their simplicity, accessibility and adaptation to specific environments.



• **Vehicle set-ups and support equipment:** Different vehicle set-ups, ambulance-style scoops and features like underground cas bag heating element pockets and Schiller monitors were recognised for enhancing operational efficiency and patient care.

## As a result of attending the day, is there anything you've seen that you will incorporate into your team's RRMT training or practice?

• **Enhancing teamwork and role delegation:** Emphasis on the clear designation of roles, confidence in delegating tasks and fostering a team-based approach to RRMT training. Suggestions include reflecting team dynamics in the syllabus and exams and balancing individual assessment with collaborative practice.

• **Improving scenario-based training:** Recommendations to use more realistic, real-time scenarios with clinical information and observations. Incorporating structured training, coaching and mentoring methods such as 'set-up, doing, coaching' and the pit-stop approach to better simulate real-

life situations. 'Move the cascare exam outside!'

• **Equipment and practice updates:** Some suggestions for updating or acquiring new equipment such as hydraulic systems, the Schiller Touch 7 device and Slishman splints. Practical tips include patient positioning and comfort in vac mats.

• **Communication and feedback:** Focus on improving communication within the team, both during scenarios and general practice. Highlights the value of feedback from peers and healthcare professionals, and the importance of clear reporting and handovers.

• **Application of pelvic binder:** Diverse views about the application of pelvic binders, especially when associated with femoral fractures, the consensus being towards the need for greater awareness of the indication for application of the pelvic binder in line with the FPHC Ed consensus statements.

## FEEDBACK FROM THE RECENT RRMT COURSE CONTINUED



Images supplied by Tim Cain/Swaledale MRT.

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### FEEDBACK FROM THE RECENT RRMT COURSE CONTINUED

● **Diverse ideas about application of the vacuum mattress to patients other than those who are supine:** Ideas including forming the mattress to conform to anatomical norms and the use of padding between the legs and under the knees and lower back.

#### What were the positive outcomes of the day for your team?

● **Enhanced teamwork and cohesion:** The day reinforced the importance of strong teamwork, cohesiveness and the ability to work effectively as mixed teams. Participants appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with other teams, recognising shared values, standards and operational levels, which fostered a sense of unity and interoperability.

● **Knowledge sharing and best practices:** There was significant value in sharing ideas on equipment, medical kits and best practice. The 'Show and Tell' sessions and open dialogue allowed teams to exchange knowledge, learn new approaches and reflect on their own methods, leading to practical takeaways for future improvements.

● **Increased confidence and professional growth:** Participants reported improved confidence, especially when performing in front of peers or being observed. Positive feedback and supportive environments helped individuals overcome nerves and encouraged personal and professional development.

● **Effective organisation and supportive environment:** The day was noted to be very well-organised, with suitable venues and well-structured scenarios. The safe, non-judgmental environment enabled open discussion, learning and focus on trauma care, contributing to a positive and productive experience.



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#### If Swaledale MRT were to run this event again, what content would you change to enhance the outcomes?

● **Increased hands-on practice:** Many requested more chances for participants to engage directly in casualty care and hands-on roles, suggesting additional scenarios, role rotation and minimal observer pressure to create a more realistic learning environment. 'Make the event a weekend.'

● **Structure enhancements and scenario design:** Suggestions included adding more scenarios, using dedicated mock casualties and refining scenario parameters to clarify expectations. Some recommended the use of demonstration scenarios to showcase best practice and facilitate discussion.

● **Improved coaching and feedback mechanisms:** Feedback highlighted the need for knowledgeable coaching and mentoring, possibly involving experienced mountain rescue doctors and the closer proximity of coaches to scenarios. Developmental feedback within mixed teams and ensuring effective feedback delivery were also emphasised.



● **Optimised team structure and interaction:** Respondents valued working in mixed teams and suggested forming these groups earlier in the day. Rotating roles and managing team composition to maximise learning and collaboration were suggested.

● **Logistics and event experience:** Minor suggestions included better weather, more

cake and logistical adjustments such as moving vehicles at separate times. Overall, facilities and faculty were praised, and the event was considered well-run.

#### Would you like the event to be repeated by Swaledale MRT?

● YES! ☺



Raising funds for rescue

## Walking from Land's End to John O'Groats in aid of mountain rescue: Part 2

As the Summer magazine went to print in July, we left Martyn Culley heading to Milngavie, to embark on the West Highland Way. Ten weeks into his amazing fundraising adventure, he was already closing in on his initial target of £15,000. We're happy to report that by the time he completed his journey — including cycling back home from John O' Groats, no less — he had raised getting on for £22,000. Plus Gift Aid. We join him now for a few of the highlights along the way (pun intended!!)

**Day 71:** After walking through so many interesting places without stopping, some well-earned 'R&R' in Edinburgh. A welcome opportunity to restock supplies before heading out to enjoy myself. What a great place! Lots of cobbled streets, lovely old buildings, statues and monuments — especially the Scott Monument, dedicated to Sir Walter Scott, and the National Gallery. And high above it all is Edinburgh Castle. I'm feeling totally at home so maybe I'm part Scottish.

**Day 73:** A tram to Leith then onto the Royal Yacht Britannia. A friend of mine served on board and his name is in the official book, so really pleased I got to see that. The history, the craftsmanship and the royal stories behind every detail make it well worth a visit if you're ever in Edinburgh.



**10 JUNE: BEAUTIFUL BENCH AT THE START OF THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY**

**Day 74:** A trip down Memory Lane at the Museum of Childhood. Bumped into my pal Paddington Bear, who I last saw at Land's End. He only has little legs so has done really well to make it to Scotland already — must be those marmalade sandwiches! Hoping to see him again at John O'Groats...



**13 JUNE: ALL ABOARD THE ROYAL YACHT BRITANNIA!**

**Day 77 to 79:** Time to get my boots on and continue my fundraising adventure with the 96-mile West Highland Way with Diana, a fellow Derby Mountaineering Club member. The start of the route is relatively gentle and feels like a good long-distance walking warm-up for my legs after the tourist miles of the last few days.

The Trossachs National Park is such an awesome area, with the mighty Loch Lomond, and Ben Lomond at 974 metres high. Tom Weir MBE must be very happy with the location of his memorial statue — a very fitting place for someone who was a climber, writer and broadcaster and introduced so many to the mountains to be remembered. The West Highland Way was officially opened in 1980 and he was one of the first to walk it.

Met up with members of Killin team and also spotted a novel Oban team collection box along the way.

**Day 83:** The day started with a bang, quite literally, with rain, thunder and lightning. But 'if it ain't raining, it ain't training', as they say, so waterproofs on and then all systems go to Fort William and the Man with Sore Feet bronze statue which has marked the end of this 'way' since 2010.

**Day 88:** First day of the Great Glen Way in the company of son Sam and it's still raining. Does anyone know Noah's telephone number because if it carries on like this, we might be needing a lift...

**Day 92:** It's goodbye to the Great Glen Way and hello to month four of my walk and the John O'Groats Way, the last 'my Way' of the journey! Say goodbye to Sam, quick haircut, stock up supplies, lunch washed down with Irn Bru and I was ready to go...



**18 JUNE: TOM WEIR: ONE OF THE FIRST TO WALK THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY**



**19 JUNE: MEETING MEMBERS OF THE KILLIN TEAM**



**20 JUNE: SPOTTED BY THE SIDE OF THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY**



**23 JUNE: EMPATHY IN ACTION, ALONGSIDE THE 'MAN WITH SORE FEET'**



**25 JUNE: TOUR OF LOCHABER TEAM BASE THANKS TO GAVIN**



**28 JUNE: MARTYN AND SON SAM AT THE START OF THE GREAT GLEN WAY**



**3 JULY: HAPPY 65TH BIRTHDAY STEAK DINNER WITH SAM**

**Day 93:** What a fantastic start to the day, waking up to the sounds of bird song and angels singing me 'Happy Birthday'. Thank you everyone for your kind words, generosity and helping me celebrate my 65th birthday!

**Day 95:** Day 4 of the John O'Groats Way and happy Fourth of July to the Americans I've met on my journey, those who follow my posts and thanks for the donations that have been made in US dollars!

Today has been one of the toughest days of terrain with the beach, shingle and rocks. Another damp day, so really slippy and a work-out for the legs. In the village of Helmsdale I passed the Emigrants Statue which commemorates the people from the Highlands and Islands who were displaced from their homes and either settled elsewhere in Scotland or started new lives abroad. There is a matching statue in



**5 JULY: ALMOST THERE...**



**14 JUNE: BUMPING INTO MY OLD PAL PADDINGTON AGAIN...**

Winnipeg for settlers who helped establish and grow the city. It's also the location of a triple murder committed by Isobel Sinclair in 1567 at the now demolished castle.

**Day 96:** Fifth day of the John O'Groats Way — at thirty miles, one of my biggest days yet.

**Day 97:** My walk from Land's End to John O' Groats is complete. It has been a roller coaster of emotions and weather, and I have so many people to thank!

Thank you so much to my amazing children. Firstly, my son Sam for completing this walk in 2021 and planting the seed of an idea, suggesting I raise funds for both Mountain Rescue England and Wales and Scottish Mountain Rescue Scotland, and for completing some of the walk with me. Thanks to Jodie, my daughter, for your good food and great ideas and training tips.

Thank you to the kindness of strangers I've met along the way, the businesses who have been so generous and to the great long-distance walking pals I've met. A special mention to Paddington Bear who was there at the start, the middle and the end!

Huge thanks to all the amazing people who have followed me on social media, interacted with my posts and been incredibly kind enough to donate. Your comments have made me laugh and helped inspire me. I feel like you've been with me every step of the way.

Finally, thanks to the awesome people who so freely donate their time to mountain rescue. You are fantastic and there to help people when they need it the most. So pleased I didn't need to call upon your services! It was great to meet so many teams along the way and I know every penny raised will be used well.

And just when we all thought it was over, Sam Culley appeared on the socials announcing that 'not only has dad just walked the entire length of Britain, but he's actually going to cycle home to raise even more money!!'

**Day 98:** What could be better than one fundraising adventure? Two fundraising adventures! The mountain rescue teams do such fantastic work I want to raise as much money as I can. The totally currently stands at nearly £18,000 from donations plus nearly £3,800 extra from Gift Aid. Awesome! Thank



**7 JULY: ... AND AGAIN AT THE END OF MY 97-DAY JOURNEY**

Images taken from Martyn Culley's Facebook page, which detailed his fundraising adventure.

you to everyone who has donated. Every pound really does make a difference. I've had quite a few notifications that I've been nominated for the Just Giving Awards 2025.



**8 JULY: JUST WHEN WE THOUGHT IT WAS ALL OVER...**



**27 JULY: ... IT IS NOW... WE THINK... WELL THIS ADVENTURE, AT LEAST...**

**Day 117 (27 July):** End of the adventure: 1,250 miles on foot from Land's End to John O'Groats... then another 700 miles cycling back! What a journey it's been: months of planning, countless footsteps, pedal strokes, and so many moments that (literally) took my breath away! From Cornwall's rugged coastline to the wild beauty of the Scottish Highlands, I've crossed the length of Britain under my own steam. I've discovered new places, met incredible people and been reminded daily of the kindness of strangers. It's been an adventure I'll never forget — proof that, with determination (and a few blisters), you really can go the distance.

**11 August:** A few people asked about the effect my big fundraising adventure had on my body. Well, I've just stood on the scales and I weigh 8kg less! I also lost two fillings (one quite early on in the journey) and had a couple of long-term blisters. My kit took a battering too — broken glasses, three pairs of boots and two pairs of socks worn out, two ripped coats to replace and a mouse nibble hole in my rucksack. After those protein balls there's a mouse out there with mighty muscles! A few running repairs and me and my tent are good to go again! 🐭

But then... just as we thought it was all over (again) there was Part 3... paddling with son Sam in a Canadian canoe, along the River Wye, from Hay on Wye to Monmouth...

MARTYN'S EPIC FUNDRAISING ADVENTURE CONTINUED

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**MARTYN'S EPIC FUNDRAISING ADVENTURE CONTINUED**

**15 September:** Set off from Hay on Wye in our canoe — Sam is the engine at the back and I'm the cameraman and navigator at the front. Least, I think that's how it's working! Today we're paddling about eighteen miles. So far, so good and we've not had a dunking in the water — or had to bail out the canoe. Long may that continue! The water has been quite calm despite non-stop rain, and we've successfully paddled through rapids. Hoping the weather doesn't get so bad that our adventure is cancelled for safety reasons.

**16 September:** Spoke too soon! Woke up to the news we didn't want! The wind meant there was a risk of falling branches and the river was pulsing through at a level too dangerous to paddle. Better safe and sound, so we took up the kind offer of a day in Hay on Wye. Knew we'd made the right choice when we ordered breakfast. The black pudding was a winner!



**15 SEPTEMBER: ALL SET TO PADDLE, IN OUR MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEES**



**17 SEPTEMBER: AND, THANKS TO THE RAIN, THE RIVER IS HIGH...**

**17 September:** Thanks to whoever did the 'Stop the wind and rain dance!' Big day of paddling to make up for lost time — amazing the difference 24 hours makes!

**18 September:** A bit of an anti-climax for the final stretch, but with the river rising by over a metre and a half and the weather turning against us, we called it off for safety. So instead, we're heading back home. ☹️

The last time we checked, Martyn had raised £15,177 for MREW and £7,573 for SMR — plus Gift Aid:

[justgiving.com/page/martyn-culley-1](http://justgiving.com/page/martyn-culley-1) (Mountain Rescue England and Wales)

[justgiving.com/page/martyn-culley-2](http://justgiving.com/page/martyn-culley-2) (Scottish Mountain Rescue)

From all of us, thank you, Martyn and thank you to everyone who donated.

**Meanwhile... Land's End to John O'Groats inspires other mountain rescue adventures...**



**5 AUGUST: MORRIS AT THE START OF HIS OFF-ROAD CYCLE THROUGH THE UK**

Retired Patterdale team member Morris Rodham is cycling an off-road route, taking in the UK's key mountain regions, to raise money for the team's Welfare and Social Fund. The fund, he says, allows the team to have social events, 'to decompress and spend team time together, especially following busy periods of rescues'.

His 'AMOR' (Adventurous, Mountainous, Off-Road) cycle covers 1,600 miles, with 170,000 feet of climbing. Morris was forced to retire from the team after a knee injury, but still enjoys cycling and says this will be his 'parting gift to the team'. Most off-road routes don't include all the UK mountain areas and miss out the Lake District fells, so after weeks of research, he designed the route to go over and/or through almost all of the major mountain areas of the UK mainland, as much as possible on tracks and off-road. He expects his journey to take nearly three months, from August to October, with rest stops along the way. As we go to print, he had raised £4,645 — already far exceeding his original target of £3,000. You can sponsor Morris via [justgiving.com/page/morris-lejog-amor-pmrt](http://justgiving.com/page/morris-lejog-amor-pmrt).



**4 AUGUST: 'HAL'S HIKE' SETS OFF FROM CORNWALL FOR NORTH OF TYNE**



**2 SEPTEMBER: PASSING THROUGH HOME TERRITORY, CAMPING KIT ON HIS BACK**

Hal Hodkinson, whose dad is a member of the North of Tyne team, has raised £2,260 for the team with his 'Hal's Hike' from Land's End to John O' Groats. His adventure took just over six weeks, carrying his kit on his back and camping every single night. He even resisted the lure of his own bed as he passed through his home county.



**JULY: 'GANG OF SIX' CYCLISTS SETTING OFF TO RAISE FUNDS FOR BRECON TEAM**

Brecon team member Chris Kerr was one of six cyclists who completed a charity ride from Land's End for the team, supported by 'The Crew' (Paul Cooper, Brian Evans and 'Gripper' Clinch), raising £9,544.

The 'Coast to Crest' Challenge set off in July for their 12-day trip. The self-styled 'gang of six' are from different walks of life — some are teachers, others are ex-military and three sing together in a male voice choir — but share a passion for cycling in the great outdoors, coupled with a desire for a 'later life' challenge, whilst also raising funds for a fantastic local cause.

**Raising funds for rescue**

# The call you don't hear



MATT FIELD KINDER MRT  
RESCUE BENEVOLENT FUND AMBASSADOR



As I write this, on World Suicide Prevention Day (Wednesday 10 September), I find myself looking back almost twenty years to the struggles that twice brought me to the edge...

That truth often stops people. They expect accounts of rescues, crag fasts, or long nights wading through peat. They rarely expect a mountain rescuer to say, 'I survived suicide, twice.' Yet if we are committed to saving lives on the hill, we must also be committed to protecting the lives of those who go there to save others. Suicide is an unseen danger because it hides in familiar places: the banter in a Land Rover, the 'I'm fine' text on WhatsApp, the teammate who never misses a call-out, but slips quietly away from the group photo.

## MY JOURNEY, AND WHAT HELPED ME RECOVER

My struggles began long before I joined mountain rescue. Life pressures, unresolved issues and the belief that coping meant hiding everything drove me into darkness more than once. I wore competence like armour and mistook silence for strength. On the outside I looked steady. Inside, I felt trapped.

After my first attempt, I convinced myself I could cope, but I was not ready to accept help. A year later, I found myself back in the same healthcare setting, this time knowing that I had to change my outlook.

The initial turning point came when I finally accepted professional support. A mental health team listened without judgement and offered practical tools. They showed me I did not have to face everything alone. The silence I had carried for so long began to loosen. Recovery was never neat. It was uneven, often painfully slow, but it was possible. And it still continues today, one day at a time.

That was the treatment phase. A decade later came the deeper work. Stuff still was not right. A conversation with a teammate

introduced me to a psychotherapist. This specialist guided me through the events that had shaped me, exploring not only the impact on myself, but also on those around me. Over two years we faced the triggers head on. It was the hardest period of my life, but running was no longer an option.

For years I had spoken of this only in therapy. That changed on a late Saturday afternoon at Crowden during the PDMRO Foundation Course. It was one of those long sessions when many students were struggling to stay awake. Having been asked to give a short talk on the risks of ignoring mental wellbeing, I had not planned to reveal much about myself, but when I stood up the words came out:

'Hi, my name is Matt, and I am a two-times suicide survivor.'

In that moment something changed. For the first time I was no longer carrying the weight alone. Speaking openly in front of friends and peers was frightening, but it brought relief and gave others permission to speak as well. From then on recovery became less about endurance and more about connection: teammates who checked in, a culture that allowed me to pause when needed, and the reassurance that honesty strengthens our place in rescue rather than weakens it.

## WHY THIS MATTERS TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE

We are part of the wider blue light community, even though most of us are volunteers. We witness things few others ever see, shoulder burdens that often go unnoticed, and do so while managing jobs, families, and the constant pull of the SARCALL ping. The media celebrate bravery and independence, but that same image can make openness difficult. Add

fatigue, workplace stress, winter pressures and financial strain, and you have a combination that increases the risk of poor mental health, even if it never shows in team photographs.

Talking about suicide is not about putting ideas in people's minds. When handled carefully, it reduces risk. Research shows that responsible, open and non-graphic conversations encourage people to seek help. Silence does not protect us; it keeps us stuck.

If you are reading this and something inside you whispers, 'That is me', please know this: I have stood where you are standing, and I am still here. The mountains will be there tomorrow. You can be too.

## SUICIDE RISK IN THE BLUE-LIGHT COMMUNITY: WHAT WE KNOW

Suicide touches every part of society, but evidence shows that those working in emergency services face particular risks. Recent figures highlight concerning patterns across police, ambulance and fire services, underlining the importance of open conversations and tailored support.

- **Police:** The National Police Chiefs' Council recorded 27 suspected suicides among serving and former officers and staff in a single year (February 2024 to January 2025). Earlier figures noted around 80 suspected suicides between 2021 and 2024.
- **Ambulance staff:** UK studies reveal higher levels of suicidal thoughts and attempts, compared with the general population. A 2022 review for NHS ambulance trusts confirmed an increased risk.
- **Firefighters:** Office for National Statistics data from 2011-2018 recorded suicides among serving firefighters. International

research consistently shows elevated risk in fire services compared with baseline populations.

## WHY THE RISK IS HIGHER

The higher risk in the emergency services does not come from one cause, but from a combination of pressures that build over time. The qualities that make people effective in these roles — resilience, responsibility, determination — can also make it harder to admit when things are not right. When you add trauma, fatigue and organisational strain, the weight can become overwhelming.

*If you are reading this and something inside you whispers, 'That is me', please know this: I have stood where you are standing, and I am still here. The mountains will be there tomorrow. You can be too.*

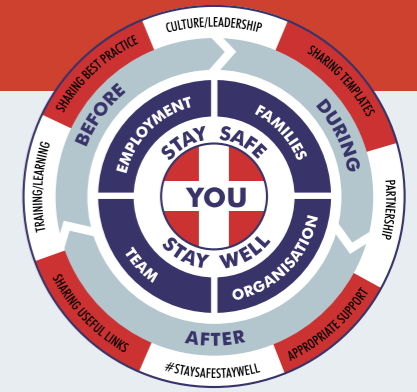
## IF YOU NEED SUPPORT NOW OR AFTER A DIFFICULT CALL-OUT...

The first step is often to talk with someone you trust in your own team. Speaking to a teammate, a section leader or your wellbeing lead can feel daunting, but many of us find relief once the words are spoken. At the same time, you may not want to share something so personal so close to home, and that is completely valid. What matters most is feeling able to reach out. If talking within the team feels too difficult, there are confidential services available day and night, ready to listen and help.

- **Samaritans 24/7:** 116 123 (free) or visit [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)
- **Shout (text support, 24/7):** Text SHOUT to 85258
- **GP/NHS 111** (urgent mental health option)

## FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE:

- Exposure to trauma (violent deaths, serious injury, child fatalities)
- Shift work and fatigue, disrupting sleep and mood regulation
- High responsibility with limited control, leading to moral injury
- Stigma around seeking help, reinforced by cultures of stoicism
- Work and family conflict from long hours and irregular schedules
- Financial and organisational pressures, especially for volunteers who bear personal costs.



## WELLBEING INFORMATION

Being a mountain or cave rescue volunteer can be mentally and physically stressful. Sometimes we can struggle to cope. It's important to seek help if you feel that you or one of your colleagues need it.

## USEFUL CONTACTS AT A GLANCE:

**Togetherall:** To register, see opposite and go to: [togetherall.com](https://togetherall.com)

**The Samaritans:** Call **116 123** for 24/7 confidential emotional support

**Blue Light Together:**  
[BlueLightTogether.org](https://bluelighttogether.org)

**Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide:** For adults affected by suicide, go to [uksobs.org](https://uksobs.org) or call **0300 111 5065**

**CALM: National Helpline for Men:** Call **0800 58 58 58**

**MIND Mental Health Charity:** Call Infoline: **0300 123 3393** Monday – Friday 09:00–18:00 (except for bank holidays).

**Rescue Benevolent Fund:** Email [secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund](mailto:secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund) or go to [rescuebenevolent.fund](https://rescuebenevolent.fund)

**MREW Wellbeing** on MREW website: [mrew-wellbeing.org.uk](https://mrew-wellbeing.org.uk)

## FANCY BECOMING A RESCUE BENEVOLENT FUND AMBASSADOR?

**Judy Whiteside** explains how... When we started out, in 2013, it made sense to follow the already familiar and well-established 'regional' structure with 'reps' appointed by their regions. In practice, this didn't work — not so much a lack of interest, more a reluctance for already busy people to take on another yet another 'responsibility' within their region.

So, earlier this year, the Fund trustees changed the structure and now invite ANYONE (irrespective of region) who has an interest in wellbeing, to help us spread the word about how the fund can help team members in need, when they need it. And we are happy to have more than one ambassador per region — or even team!

There's no remuneration, it's entirely voluntary, and any meetings we call are conducted online. The idea is that you liaise with those within your own team and region — the people you are close to and work with as rescuers — and feed back into us, as trustees. All we ask is that ambassadors are willing to assist potential beneficiaries in making applications to the Fund, and help promote the Fund to the wider mountain

and cave rescue community, encouraging those team members and their families who need support to make appropriate applications. Essentially, help us promote the Fund to a wider audience.

We also ask that all our ambassadors ensure that any information shared with them is regarded as confidential

irrespective of outcome (unless the applicant has expressly given their permission).

If you do fancy becoming an ambassador, please email me via [secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund](mailto:secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund) to chat some more. Look forward to welcoming you to our merry band! ☺



Rescue Benevolent Fund



We can all need help sometimes. Don't be embarrassed to ask for it.

Right: Take the time to pause and 'smell the coffee' Engin Akyat via Pixabay.

# Being 'present' by taking the time to slow down and smell the coffee

Are you always in a hurry, impatient in queues and flying off the handle at the slightest thing? Are you driven by a need to succeed and feel stressed-out most of the time? Find out how to slow down and enjoy life.

Psychologists have called this 'Type A' behaviour and the stress it causes has been associated with heart disease, high blood pressure and ulcers. The good news is that these characteristics are not fixed in stone as part of your personality, you can unlearn them. It just takes time and practice.

## Step 1: Identify your own 'Type A' behaviours

First you need to think about those Type A behaviours that apply to you. Does any of this sound familiar?

Do you... do everything at high speed (eating, talking, walking...)? Get impatient waiting in queues or traffic jams? Become easily irritated over minor things? Find it hard to listen to other people and finish their sentences for them? Drive fast, always overtaking and weaving in and out of the lanes? Create unnecessary deadlines and fill your calendar with appointments? Play games only to win (even against children)? Grind your teeth and clench your jaw?

Are you... constantly multi-tasking — trying to do lots of things at the same time (and thinking of what you're going to do next when you're working on something else)? Are you always late for appointments, very competitive — you always have to win or succeed — or over critical of everyone, including yourself? Are you a workaholic? Short-tempered?

Over the next week, make a note every time you find yourself doing or experiencing one of these things.

## Step 2: Stop and think: are your ways of behaving getting you anywhere?

Time is of the essence to Type As — the quicker they can do things, the better. But doing things faster doesn't always work — you may make mistakes that could have been avoided if you'd spent more time and consideration. Plus, some ways of doing things may not be effective as you think. Look at your list of the behaviours and consider a time when you acted in this way — and what the outcome was.

Are you actually achieving what you want to achieve? For example, if you're an impatient, fast driver, time yourself driving a familiar route in your usual manner. Then make the same journey again but, this time, drive without constantly overtaking and try to stay calm. How much time did you save by driving the 'fast' (and stressful) way? The chances are, not very much.

## Step 3: Think of ways to do the complete opposite

Take your list of Type A behaviours and for each one think of a way of doing the complete opposite to counteract it. These

don't have to be complicated: keep it simple. Here are some examples:

- 'I bolt my food' might be counteracted by 'I will take at least thirty minutes over a meal'
- 'I'm always driving at the top of the speed limit in the fast lane' might be counteracted by 'I will drive mainly in the slow lane'
- 'I constantly schedule in meetings back to back' might be counteracted by 'I will cancel some of my meetings and schedule new ones in, with enough time in between to get myself together'
- 'I always multi-task' might be counteracted with 'I will make myself concentrate on just one task at a time'.

## Step 4: Devise a weekly programme

Once you have a complete list, you need to draw up a weekly programme to put these opposites into practice. You won't be able to change everything at once, so approach it gradually. Choose seven different behaviours. For example:

- I'm always rushing everywhere
- I always play to win
- I clench my fists and jiggle my legs
- I find it difficult to listen to others
- I'm a workaholic
- I can't stand lines
- I'm constantly watching the clock.

Each day over the following week concentrate on dealing with just one of these



### THIS WEEK I WILL:

- MONDAY:** MAKE MYSELF WALK AT A SLOWER PACE ALL DAY.
- TUESDAY:** PLAY A NON-COMPETITIVE GAME WITH SOMEONE.
- WEDNESDAY:** TRY TO BE MORE AWARE OF MY BODY SO THAT I STOP CLENCHING MY FISTS AND NERVOUS KNEE JIGGLING, AND PRACTICE RELAXING THE MUSCLES IN MY FACE AND BODY.
- THURSDAY:** ASK A FRIEND ABOUT THEMSELVES AND WHAT IS GOING ON IN THEIR LIFE (WITHOUT TRYING TO STEER THE CONVERSATION BACK TO MYSELF).
- FRIDAY:** MAKE SURE I TAKE MY FULL LUNCH HOUR, LEAVE WORK AT THE CORRECT TIME AND NOT TAKE ANY WORK HOME WITH ME.
- SATURDAY:** DELIBERATELY SEEK OUT A LONG QUEUE AND JOIN IT PATIENTLY (TAKING A MAGAZINE ALONG TO BROWSE THROUGH WHILE I WAIT).
- SUNDAY:** TAKE OFF MY WATCH AND TURN CLOCKS TO THE WALL SO THAT TIME DOESN'T DOMINATE THE DAY.

behaviours. In your diary, write down what you're going to do — and then make sure you do it.

Once you've completed the first week, draw up a list for the second week, with more of the Type A behaviours you want to change. After this, draw up a list for the next month. Keep it simple and you'll stand more

chance of sticking to it. You'll find that, over time, your Type A habits will gradually change.

### Next steps

Learn more about Togetherall and the power of connecting with others who understand (see below and right).

Mental health support online, anonymous & 24/7.

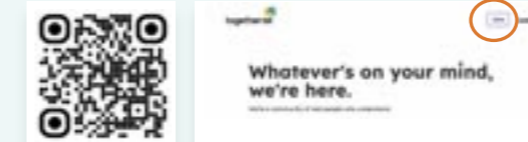
At Togetherall you can speak to someone who understands what you're going through, anytime & anywhere.

### AS A MOUNTAIN OR CAVE RESCUE TEAM MEMBER YOU CAN ACCESS TOGETHERALL FREE OF CHARGE

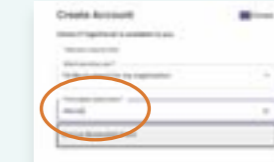
The Togetherall digital mental health and wellbeing support service is a completely anonymous community where you can express yourself freely and openly. Professionally trained Wall Guides and clinical professionals monitor the community to ensure the safety and anonymity of all members. Once you're registered and logged in, there's a range of activities that allow you to work through what's troubling you. Share your thoughts with other community members, gain support and advice or offer YOUR valuable support to someone else who needs it. Access a wealth of useful resources and join self-guided courses covering the key topics which affect all our lives. Or take clinically-approved self-assessments to help you understand more about yourself.

See below for instructions on how to register

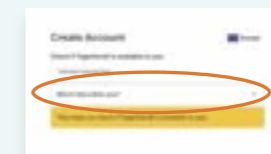
## 1 Go to togetherall.com or scan QR code. Click 'Join'



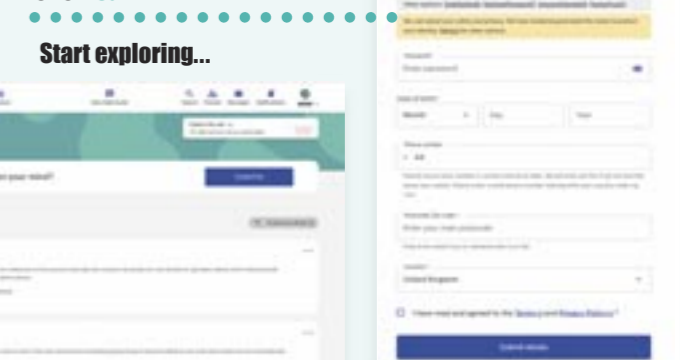
## 4 Enter 'rescue' to find Rescue Benevolent Fund



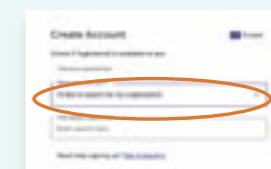
## 2 To create account Select 'Which describes you?'



## 5 Enter email. Create profile name. Enter details. Click 'Submit details'



## 3 Select 'I'd like to search for my organisation'



# books

## MASTERMIND: MENTAL TRAINING FOR CLIMBERS

by Jerry Moffat Reviewed by Chris Cookson

There's no two ways about it, Mastermind is a book about climbing, though the wisdom it contains can apply to many different walks of life. It's likely to be helpful any time you want to perform well, whilst under pressure, or fear is a factor.

Jerry Moffat was likely the best climber in the world in the 1980s. He climbed the first 8a (Masterclass) and then the first 8a+ (The Face). Following a two-year injury break, he came back and did the first 8c+ (Liquid Ambar). In the late-80s, when climbing competitions appeared on the scene, Jerry jumped at the chance to compete. To start with, the unfamiliar setting of indoor walls, plastic holds, and the other pressures of competition climbing meant he was disappointed with his initial results. A chance introduction to the book 'With Winning in Mind', by Lanny Bassham, changed all that. A studious application of Bassham's teachings, and Jerry started winning competitions. He won the first World Cup event in Leeds in 1989, and was ranked number one in the ASCI rankings when he retired from competition. Jerry was at home bouldering, sport climbing or trad – a real all-rounder.

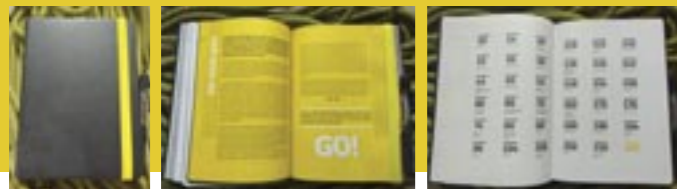
Throughout Mastermind, Jerry shares his experiences, what he learned from 'With Winning in Mind' as well as wisdom from top climbers, both past and present. Names such as Alex Megos, Adam Ondra and Chris Sharma appear

often. As do other non-climbing 'greats' such as Bruce Lee and Muhammad Ali. The book also benefits from the academic insights of Professor Lew Hardy, Professor of Human Performance at Bangor University.

The numerous mental skills, hints and tips are explained well, and real-life stories are used to illustrate them further and put them in context. There are chapters on dealing with pressure and avoiding choking, as well as specific chapters on bouldering, on-sighting, redpointing, soloing, competition climbing and trad climbing. The last section contains a number of inspirational stories to further embed the understanding of the mental skills discussed.

Climbing is often seen as more of a mental game than it is a physical one. So, if you're a climber looking to up your grade, enhance your understanding and enjoyment of this crazy pastime, or indeed if you're not a climber but are looking for ways to better deal with pressure and fear, then I'm sure you'll find lots in Mastermind to help you on that journey. ☺

**Editor's note:** Can I just say: what a stunning piece of design too!! (Judy)



MASTERMIND: MENTAL TRAINING FOR CLIMBERS PUBLISHED BY: VERTEBRATE PUBLISHING ISBN: 9781839811708 PRICE: £25

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## The role of a 'proper brew' in mountain rescue

In mountain rescue, we talk a lot about preparation: kit checks, route planning, fitness, training. But we rarely give enough credit to the quiet constant that supports us through it all: tea...

...or a proper cup of coffee. I do enjoy freshly ground coffee and never drink instant. I like that first caffeine hit from a cafetière to wake up the senses. But, in general, I tend to drink more tea, usually brewed from a bag, sometimes the real thing: loose leaf.

Walk into any mountain rescue base and you're guaranteed to find a kettle, a semi-organised selection of mugs, often branded with the team or sponsor's logo, and an assortment of teabags, Yorkshire Tea the staple, with Cumbrian Tea making inroads in, unsurprisingly, Cumbria.

As team members peel off wet layers after a call-out, tea will be there. It is drunk before dawn, or late at night while waiting for missing walkers to be located. Tea is there after long, cold training exercises, and even before them.

Tea is more than a drink in mountain rescue. It's a ritual. A revival. Sometimes, a reward. It's not about ceremony. It is about function — rehydration, warmth and familiarity after physical effort and psychological stress, reviving tired bodies and minds. That's the power of a proper brew and there is something sacred about the post-call-out cuppa.

Tea marks the transition back to base life. It gives people space to talk about what happened or say nothing at all. Just slurp and sup in peace and quiet contemplation.

You sit around, boots off, the kettle boiling, and you debrief naturally. This is important for mental wellbeing. Tea opens up space for reflection. Sometimes that is laughter. Sometimes it just means a quiet space.

In particularly difficult call-outs tea becomes more than a drink. It is a moment of shared humanity. And that matters.

Coffee has its place — especially at 2.00am, when you're woken up for a call-out. Coffee sharpens. Tea settles. Coffee to go, tea to come back to.

Loose leaf or teabags? Both acceptable. Organic or single estate is nice, but it is not essential. Milk? My preference is always whole milk — full fat. Forget your semi-skimmed nonsense. Whole milk is more nutritious, better tasting, and it helps the tea feel 'fuller.' No sugar. Sugar doesn't help rehydration — it spikes your blood sugar and then drops you faster than a slippery descent on Helvellyn. Brew time? Give it a few minutes if you want it strong and stewed. Twenty or thirty seconds should do for a teabag.

I've seen it many times on expeditions too. Locals in the Himalaya drink tea hot, sweet and milky. I have drunk tea on every Himalayan expedition I've been on. It's the drink of altitude and attitude.

Sherpas make a well-boiled, strong brew, often with added salt. Tibetans lace tea with rancid Yak butter. The smell and taste are difficult to describe, but imagine someone's sweaty socks brewed in a teapot. In the Himalayan foothills, tea is boiled, with milk and sugar and sometimes spices such as cardamom or ginger. Some tea comes in hard blocks the size of a house brick, from which chunks are broken off to boil up.

Even in the hot, humid lowlands, a drink of hot tea can refresh and revive. Either way, it's essential for hydration, warmth and ritual.

You drink tea in base camp. You drink it in high camp. You sip it in the mess tent, wrapped in down jackets.

Up on the mountain I take teabags, which sometimes must be used more than once if I'm storm-bound and low on supplies. Often I'll brew the bags in a pan of bubbling hot water for a few minutes to achieve a fuller flavour, as the boiling water is not as hot as at sea level. After a climb, on return to Base Camp, I associate the first mug of hot milky tea with a feeling of relief. I know I'm safe and can relax. I'm often asked what it feels like to have climbed an 8,000er. My reply is that I only appreciate a true sense of achievement when I am safely back in base camp with a mug of warm, milky tea.

So here's to the humble cuppa, the unsung hero of mountain rescue. ☺



ALAN HINKES OBE WAS THE FIRST BRITON TO CLIMB ALL FOURTEEN OF THE WORLD'S 8,000-METRE PEAKS. HIS BOOK '8,000 METRES. CLIMBING THE WORLD'S HIGHEST MOUNTAINS' IS AVAILABLE TO BUY FROM THE MREW ONLINE SHOP.

# We need to talk about the conference ...an update



**JUDY WHITESIDE** CO-CHAIR OF CONFERENCE 2024

Huge thanks to those of you who responded to Mike Park's article in the Summer magazine, regarding whether or not we have a conference (ever again), by filling in the online Google form or emailing me direct via the conference address. Sadly, the number of you who did so might best be described as 'vanishingly small'. Just seventeen!

I confess to a somewhat Luddite dislike of online questionnaires myself (hence the paper version last September, post-conference, which received a far more enthusiastic response). Don't know about you, but my various inboxes are rudely assailed by online feedback forms in one shape or another on a daily basis. Let's just say the delete button is regularly employed.

appetite out there for a national conference (whether that's true in practice or not), I'm now saddened to report that there is a similar lack of appetite at trustee level.

### SO, NO CONFERENCE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE...

I tried and failed (because you're reading the words now) to resist the temptation to use the phrase 'with a heavy heart', but that is indeed how this feels. As someone who has been involved with our mountain rescue conferences for over 25 years — several in collaboration with colleagues in Ireland and Scotland — I still believe that these are fantastic opportunities for grassroots team members to meet colleagues across the rescue community, and to meet those who represent them at national and government levels. They're an opportunity to learn new tricks, broaden minds and share ideas.

### BUILD A BETTER MOUSETRAP, AND THE WORLD WILL BEAT A PATH TO YOUR DOOR...

A well-worn trope maybe, but I have no doubt that we've consistently reinvented — and improved — the symbolic 'mousetrap' that is our mountain rescue conference, year on year. To great effect. Last year (okay I'm a teensy bit biased), continued to raise the bar by focusing on the sustainability of our service and the wellbeing of team members, and engaging experts in their field from both outside and inside our organisation.

So where do we go from here? 'The MREW trustees would be happy to consider any proposal from the membership', says Mike, 'to organise a conference with an

accompanying business plan'. And therein lies the rub. Because it's always been a given that conferences are a financial risk. A cost, not a profit opportunity.

It's a fine balancing act between signing up sponsors and exhibitors, selling advertising space in the programme, securing the venue and booking quality speakers — and enticing delegates (who will, inevitably, leave it till the last minute to demonstrate any enthusiasm whatsoever for attending). It's an event put on FOR the membership but, because of the need to sign contracts and commit to costs, it has necessarily been underwritten by MREW.

But how about we change that model? Some of the wealthier teams already support initiatives for a wider membership beyond their own — would they be prepared to underwrite to some degree? Is there a sponsor out there who would be prepared to underwrite in exchange for greater collaboration and consequent return? Would team members be happy to pay more for their tickets (historically always substantially discounted from actual costs)?

Is there an individual — team member or otherwise — who would be happy to take on the responsibility of preparing a business plan which might satisfy the trustees? Do we extend the remit of our conferences to reflect the wider volunteer search and rescue community, taking in not just our colleagues north of the Border and across the Irish Sea, but in collaboration with Lowland Rescue, Coastguard, Lifeboats et al?

I hope, like all (but one) of those who responded to that blasted Google form, you're not yet ready to give up on the conference concept, but you need to let me know. And PDQ! Email me via [conference@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:conference@mountain.rescue.org.uk)



Top: Crib Goch © William Barton. Above: A small reminder of September 2024 © Scott van der Zanden.

So I get the lack of response. But my firm belief remains that if you put one on, the people will come.

However, given that the vanishingly small response indicates an apparent lack of

# news round

JULY > OCTOBER



### AUGUST: MOBILITY SCOOTER NEEDS RESCUE AFTER ROLLING OFF TRACK

A couple of friends on mobility scooters were travelling along a forestry road when one of the scooters had a brake failure. This resulted in the scooter rolling back and off the edge of the road. After a backward somersault and being flipped off her scooter, the female rider came to rest about ten metres down the slope, trapped underneath the hefty machine.

Miraculously, she was unharmed as she was fortunate enough to end up in the footwell between the seat and handlebars. The police were first on scene and managed to move the scooter off the woman. Keswick MRT assistance was requested to extricate her to an ambulance where she was checked over by the paramedics and subsequently discharged. Keswick team members then went on to retrieve the scooter.

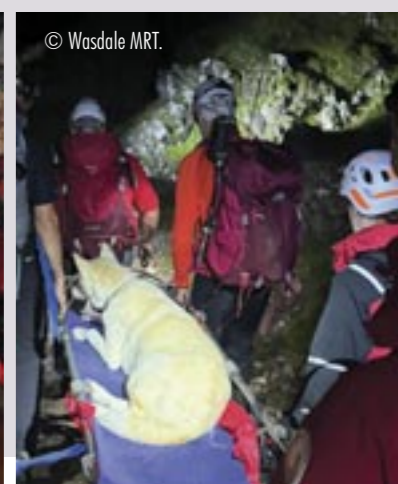
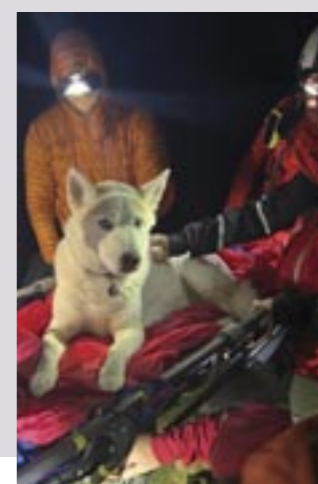
Left: Keswick team members assist in the recovery of a mobility scooter and trapped rider beside a forestry road © Keswick MRT.



### AUGUST: FEELING A BIT HUSKY...

The call came in to Wasdale, from Cumbria Police: a lone walker was exhausted and starting to fall around on steep ground, about halfway down from Scafell summit. He'd been carrying his 35kg Husky, Prince, since the summit of Slight Side, after a long day on the fells.

Prince had cut his paws and was unable to continue. When his owner finally realised he wouldn't make it down to the valley floor without hurting either himself or Prince, he wisely called for help. Team members made their way towards Burm Moor Tarn, with the walker still descending slowly. Prince was as good as gold and happily accepted the stretcher carry back to Bracken Close, along with much attention from everyone present.



© Wasdale MRT.



### JUNE: NORTHUMBERLAND TEAM MEMBERS: BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

Northumberland National Park and North of Tyne team members had the pleasure of attending the Royal Garden Party at the Palace of Holyroodhouse near Edinburgh, in recognition of them receiving The King's Award for Voluntary Service last year.

Northumberland team leader, Jamie Pattison, and duty controllers Iain Nixon DL and Andrew Miller were joined by North of Tyne leader, Keith Briggs. 'Attending the King's Garden Party at the Palace of Holyroodhouse on behalf of the team was a great honour and a deeply humbling experience,' says Jamie. 'It was a powerful moment to reflect on the selfless commitment, skill and resilience shown by every member of Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team. This recognition is not about one individual, it belongs to the entire team, past and present, who continue to give their time voluntarily to help others, often in the most challenging conditions. I was incredibly proud to represent such an outstanding group of people.'

Keith echoed Jamie's sentiments. 'The day was a chance to celebrate the King's Award for Voluntary Service which, having been awarded to both teams, really highlights the service and dedication of all our volunteers.'

Left: Left to right: Keith Briggs (North of Tyne), Iain Nixon (NNPMRT), Val Miller, Jamie Pattison (NNPMRT), Lydia Nixon, Andrew Miller (NNPMRT) © NNPMRT.

# FENIX LIGHTING FOR EXTREMES

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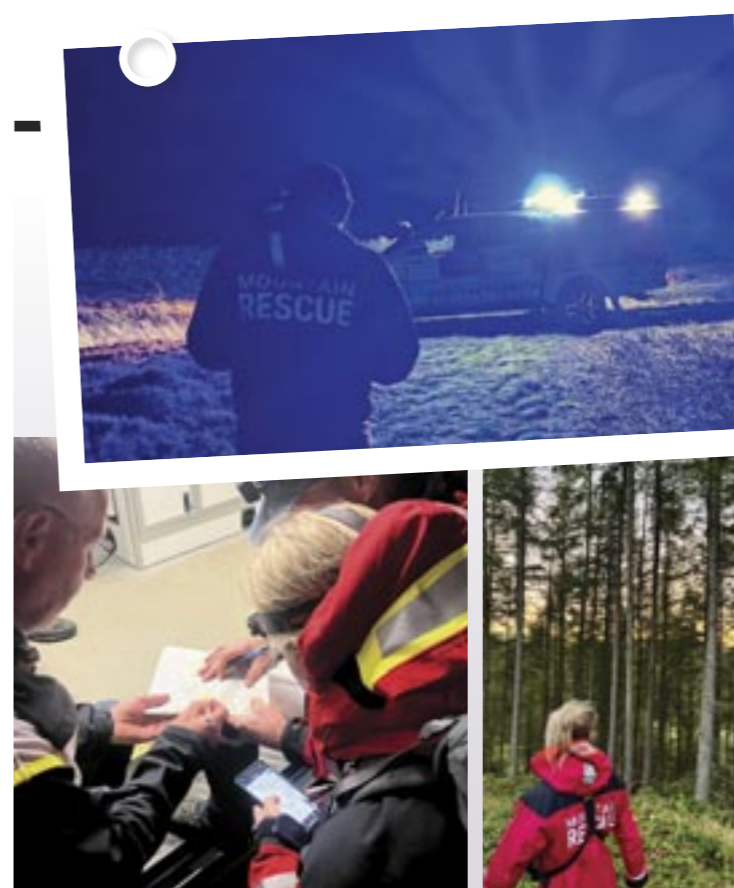
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# news round

JULY > OCTOBER

## SEPTEMBER: MISSING MAN FOUND SAFE AFTER THREE-DAY SEARCH OP FOR NORTH EAST TEAMS

Northumberland National Park and North of Tyne teams were called out by Northumbria Police on a Monday evening in early September, to assist in the search for an 88-year-old man from Stockton on Tees.

Over three days, more than seventy rescue team members and specialist dog teams from the Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England worked alongside officers from Northumbria Police and the National Police Air Service (NPAS). The search effort was further strengthened by members of the local community, shepherds and gamekeepers on quad bikes, and the gentleman's family, who gave their time and energy to help.

'This was a long and complex search over three days,' says Dave Harris-Jones, Duty Controller. 'The terrain around Wooler Common and the surrounding hillsides is extremely challenging, with thick vegetation, steep slopes and difficult access points. Coordinating and managing multiple search groups required a huge collective effort. I am very grateful to everyone who contributed to the search.'

Mountain rescue teams were first deployed on the Monday evening and continued through the night until 3.30am on Tuesday morning. Searching resumed mid-morning Tuesday before standing down at dark, and again on Wednesday afternoon,

covering extensive ground. Searchers utilised handheld thermal imaging units and drones to aid the search.

Late on Wednesday afternoon, Mr Fletcher was located by members of the public on a steep hillside to the south-east of Wooler. After being assessed and treated by a North East Ambulance Service Paramedic and mountain rescue medics, he was evacuated on a stretcher using a steep slope rescue system to a footpath, then carried 300m to the waiting ambulance.

'I was immensely proud of the resilience and commitment shown by our volunteers and our colleagues in North of Tyne MRT,' says Jamie Pattison, NNP MRT team leader. 'The strength of support from the local community has been invaluable throughout. We were absolutely delighted to see Alan found safe and well and reunited with his family.'

'This really was a true community effort from everyone in Wooler Parish Council,' says Keith Briggs, North of Tyne leader. 'From those who joined the search to the many who provided food and refreshments to keep our teams going during long hours on the hill — we cannot thank you enough.'

**Top:** Images from the missing person search in September. **Below right:** Jamie Pattison with his award. Images © NNP MRT.

## SEPTEMBER: NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK TEAM LEADER AWARDED KING'S HUMANITARIAN MEDAL

Jamie Pattison received the award in recognition of his role as part of the UK International Search and Rescue (UKISAR) response to the devastating Morocco earthquake two years ago. Jamie received his medal at Aintree Racecourse, presented by the King's representative Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside, Mark Blundell, along with Chief Fire Officer for Merseyside, Nick Searle QFSM.

In September 2023, a 6.8 magnitude earthquake struck the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, causing widespread destruction, the devastation of remote villages and thousands of deaths. Jamie deployed with 62 UKISAR specialists, providing medical assistance and helping in the search for survivors in extremely challenging conditions of heat, altitude and collapsed infrastructure. 'I am incredibly proud and humbled to receive the award,' says Jamie. 'I am privileged to spend my life surrounded by exceptional people who — though they would never say it themselves — are the definition of heroes.' Congratulations, Jamie.





# January to 20 September 2025

PAUL BRAIN MREW STATISTICS OFFICER

Lake District	North Wales	South Wales
Cockermouth 68	Aberdyfi 47	Brecon 89
COMRU 1	Aberglaslyn 46	Central Beacons 50
Coniston 47	Llanberis 267	Longtown 33
Duddon & Furness 21	North East Wales 43	Western Beacons 30
Kendal 54	Ogwen Valley 141	<b>202</b>
Keswick 109	South Snowdonia 25	
Kirkby Stephen 23	<b>569</b>	
Langdale Ambleside 111		<b>South West England</b>
Patterdale 68		Avon & Somerset 26
Penrith 36	<b>Peak District</b>	SARA 30
Wasdale 126	Buxton 79	<b>56</b>
<b>664</b>	Derby 75	
	Edale 128	<b>Yorkshire Dales</b>
	Glossop 49	CRO 68
<b>Mid Pennines</b>	Kinder 55	Scarborough & Ryedale 28
Bolton 33	Oldham 36	Upper Wharfedale 48
Bowland Pennine 52	Woodhead 54	<b>144</b>
Calder Valley 32	<b>476</b>	
Holme Valley 36		<b>Search Dogs</b>
Rossendale & Pendle 62		Lake District MRSD 7
<b>215</b>	<b>Peninsula</b>	MRSD England 68
	Cornwall East 18	SARDA Wales 12
	Cornwall West 14	SARDA South Wales 20
<b>North East</b>	Dartmoor Ashburton 23	<b>107</b>
Cleveland 65	Dartmoor Plymouth 8	
North of Tyne 38	Dartmoor Tavistock 23	<b>Drones</b>
Northumberland 36	Exmoor 21	Lake District 15
Swaledale 36	North Dartmoor 8	<b>15</b>
Teesdale & Weardale 56	<b>115</b>	
<b>231</b>		

\* Sorted according to geographical region and by closed incident reports.

# news round

JULY > OCTOBER

## COMING IN DECEMBER: ADVENTURE BUDDIES BALL IN AID OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE

This event may seem a long way off, but it's always a huge relief to organisers of something like this to see those tickets getting sold. Last year, the Adventure Buddies Charity Ball raised £8,814 for MREW and we know Keith Jones is keen to make it past the £10k in 2025, so spread the word! The evening is set to take place at Lion Quays Resort in Oswestry, Shropshire, on 6 December, from 6.00pm till late. Tickets are £85 per seat. And, it goes without saying, a huge thanks to Keith and all those who buy tickets and support mountain rescue — from everyone in MR.

Tickets are available at [ticketebo.co.uk/adventure-buddies/adventure-buddies-charity-ball-2025](https://ticketebo.co.uk/adventure-buddies/adventure-buddies-charity-ball-2025)



Raising funds for rescue



## JULY: EDALE SUPPORTER TAKES ON THE PENNINE WAY FOR THE TEAM

Fundraiser Dave Allen decided to take on the walk in celebration of his forty laps around the sun by taking on the Pennine Way.

Not one to 'normally follow the trend', he decided to tackle the route starting from the finish and heading back towards home. As a fundraising supporter of the Edale team, he says it was an obvious choice to choose them as his charity. He set off on 4 July, aiming to complete the adventure on 20 July, his birthday. Dave was joined for the final few days by fellow support member Kevyn Burns, in what they described as 'interesting weather'. Their efforts have raised £814 for the team.

Above: Kevyn Burns (left) with Dave Allen taking on the Pennine Way for Edale team © Dave Allen.



## JULY: TWO CENTRAL BEACONS TEAM MEMBERS TAKE ON EPIC CHALLENGES IN AID OF TEAM

Paul Harvey and Pete Spearing took on their own personal challenges to raise money for Central Beacons (because, as the team noted 'saving lives apparently wasn't quite enough for them').

Paul set off from Cardiff to Scotland on 8 July 2025 on his so-called 'Wee Walk'. It was an opportunity to visit his grandchildren but also, he says, a chance for him to reflect and embrace mindfulness after facing health and fitness challenges over the last year. He's so far raised £2,238, surpassing his original target.

Pete tackled the Beacons Way Ultra 100, a brutal 100-mile race across Bannau Brycheiniog, over a weekend in late July. His efforts towards the team's Heartbeat Appeal, set up to replace urgently needed defibrillators. He totally 'smashed it' in less than thirty hours, battling through pain, blisters, sleep deprivation and some seriously tough climbs, somehow finding the strength to keep pushing on and cross the finish line in 29 hours, 55 minutes and 34 seconds. The Heartbeat Appeal aims to raise £9,000 and currently stands at £2,778. [justgiving.com/campaign/heartbeatappeal](https://justgiving.com/campaign/heartbeatappeal).

Above: Paul Harvey (left) and Pete Spearing © CBMRT.

## AUGUST: MONTANE LAKELAND 50 AND 100 DONATES £6,000 TO LAKES RESCUE

Thankfully, they say, they didn't need the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA) this year, but there will undoubtedly be a year when they will. So they've made this, their annual donation, to be split twelve ways between the teams which cover Cumbria. 'We should perhaps stipulate,' they add, 'that £50 of that must go on dog biscuits for the search dogs.'

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### JUNE: A SUMMER SOLSTICE STROLL WITH HELLY HANSEN AND NORTH OF TYNE MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

In June, the team's official partner, Helly Hansen, visited the wilds of Northumberland as part of Open Mountain Month to encourage people to access the great outdoors safely. **Helena Samsum** reports.

Together, we planned a stunning summer sunset hike one evening around the time of the solstice. The event sold out, with thirty fabulous people joining us for a sociable stroll around the Simonside hills. Thankfully the weather fully cooperated, with fair skies, light wind and the chance to watch the sun go down over the beautiful expanse of Northumberland.

We were also joined by photographer Stephen Pemberton (@NorthernPixl) to capture incredible images and video footage of the hike. Stephen joined the hike as a volunteer, and big thanks to his employer Erudus for allowing Stephen time off work to add social value through a volunteering day.

We all convened at Lordenshaws car park for a meet and greet, where all hike participants excitedly received their goody bag from Helly Hanse — including a waterproof jacket! Following a briefing, we set off in a south westerly direction along St Oswald's Way.

At several points along the route, we were treated to a 'Fence Post Talk' from team member Graham, who shared vital top tips about

staying safe in the great outdoors. One such top tip included a demonstration of a storm shelter in use — a vital piece of lightweight equipment we recommend everyone carries in the hills.

The route reached Harwood Forest and then snaked its way north to the foot of Simonside hill. After another Fence Post Talk — or in this case, a Boulder Talk — we started the steep climb up to the top of the hill, in time to catch the stunning sunset.

As we descended back to the car park, the darkness started to creep in, providing a timely reminder of the need to carry a head lamp (or two) even in the middle of summer. With everyone safely off the hill, it was time for all to head home, ready for a good night's sleep after a good dose of fresh air and great conversation.

Last but not least, we'd love to say a big thanks to Helly Hansen for their support, with all hike fees paid by participants being kindly donated to our team. 🍷

**Opposite and top:** Images of the day © Stephen Pemberton @NorthernPixl.

## the final send away

CLIVE LANE NEWSAR

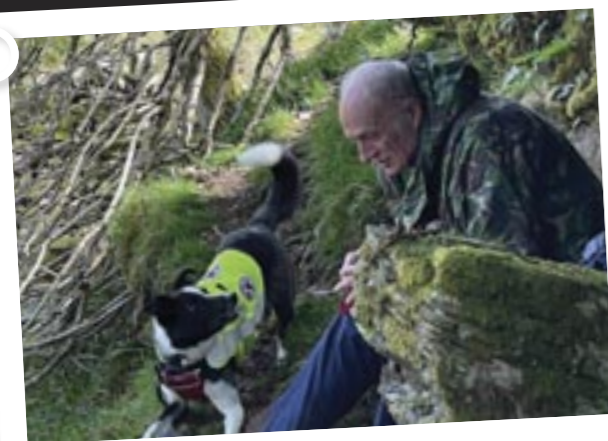


Tributes were paid in June to Clive, a 'highly respected' NEWSAR team member, who died after almost 30 years' helping to save lives in North Wales. Clive had remained operational into his 70s, regularly attending call-outs. He held the role of team training officer for a number of years, and was a well established First Responder and search manager.

Clive was an active member of Casualty Care, hazardous ground and water team groups in the past and his passion for NEWSAR and its values never ended. 'Even as he entered his 70s, he continued to be a regular attendee at both call-outs and training sessions, right up until his recent illness. His knowledge of all aspects of search and rescue was extensive and his character in the team will long stay with us.'

The funeral at the end of June was described as 'a sea of red jackets, attending to pay their respects, not just from NEWSAR, but also from other North Wales teams and Search and Rescue Dogs (SARDA) Wales with which he had a strong connection.'

Clive had been a great supporter, dogsbody and advocate of SARDA and a friend to all — one of the longest-standing bodies — and over the couple of decades his dedication to bodying, come rain or shine, had played a significant part in the training of many search dogs. 🐕



Images courtesy of NEWSAR/SARDA Wales.

## ROY COOKSEY CONISTON



It was with great sadness, in September, that Coniston MRT and the wider Lake District mountain rescue region and community acknowledged the passing of former Coniston team leader Roy Cooksey MBE.

Roy joined the team in 1970 and quickly established himself as a key player, especially in crag rescues where he brought his extensive mountaineering expertise into play. He had spent significant time in the Alps and the Dolomites as well as Scotland and was a long-time member and ultimately president of the Barrow Mountaineering and Ski Club. He also spent an extraordinary amount of time walking in the Coniston Fells and climbing on the crags — extensively on Dow Crag, but also those in and above the Coppermines Valley, as at home on snow and ice as on dry rock.

Exuding calm and authority on a rescue, Roy became team leader in 1981 when John Anderson stepped down, remaining in the role until 2007 — the team's 60th anniversary — having completed 26 years' service in the role. He was succeeded by Anthony 'Robbie' Robinson, but stayed on as team president and was awarded the MBE in the 2008 New Year's Honours, receiving the award from HM Queen Elizabeth II.

After-rescue wind downs were something of an occasion under Roy's watch — and it wasn't unusual for him to get his guitar after a few beers and sing a few folk songs, his rendition of 'Whisky in the Jar' a particular favourite!

Roy's wife Lillian also joined the team along the way and attended numerous rescues, an accomplished mountaineer in her own right, eventually standing down alongside Roy. Sadly, Roy's health deteriorated, and it must have been a real wrench not to be able to walk and climb on the hills he so loved. 'It was really good,' said the team, 'to see him at the team's 70th anniversary celebrations. A character who is and will be sorely missed — as they say, they don't make them like that any more!'

A small family funeral was followed by the scattering of Roy and his late wife Lillian's ashes at Dow Crag. May they rest in peace together. 🍷

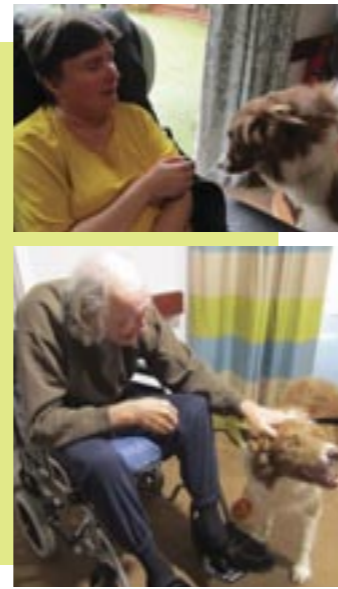
**Left:** Roy and Lillian Cooksey; Roy receiving his MBE from HRH Queen Elizabeth II. Images courtesy of Coniston MRT.

### SEPTEMBER: SEARCH DOG TEGORS SUPPORTS ACRE CENTRE

As part of Emergency Services Day on 9 September, Search Dog TegOrs (Cornish for 'handsome bear') and handler Nicki Lyons, from East Cornwall Search and Rescue Team visited Kernow House Care Centre which provides care for older people including those living with dementia, as well as younger people with physical disabilities.

He met residents, had cuddles and brought smiles to many faces. It was a great experience for the residents, carers and TegOrs. As he was such a good boy he was rewarded with a new toy and biscuits.

**Right:** TegOrs during his recent visit to Care Centre © Nicki Lyons.



### SEPTEMBER: ALL FOUR DARTMOOR TEAMS SUPPORT INAUGURAL DARTMOOR OUTDOOR FESTIVAL

Representatives from all four of the Dartmoor Rescue Group teams took part in 'An Evening with Dartmoor Search and Rescue' event at Princetown village hall as part of Dartmoor Outdoor Festival.

Over the evening there were talks on things that happen on the hills and how to prepare for them, an interactive call-out quiz, stories about calls over the years (including the Dartmoor teams who deployed to flooding in York and other joint incidents) and an opportunity for the audience to look at rescue equipment and talk to team members over drinks from the bar. Hannah Durdin co-director of the Dartmoor Outdoor Festival said, 'We were delighted to be able to hold this fundraising evening for the Dartmoor Search and Rescue teams as part of Dartmoor Outdoor Festival. It was a really interesting and enjoyable event and lots of those that attended shared that it gave them a greater appreciation for the work of the vital work that they do.'

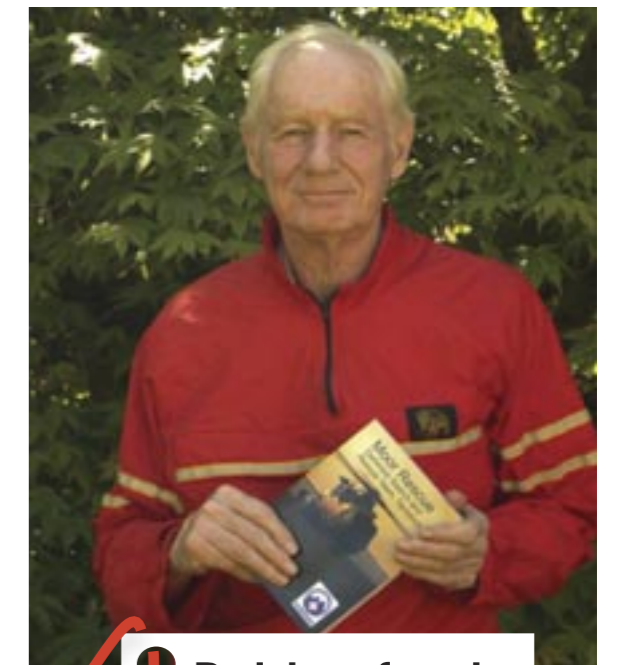
Craig Scollick, team leader of DSRT Ashburton said, 'We appreciated being invited to hold this fundraising evening as part of the inaugural Dartmoor Outdoor Festival and share some of our experiences with the audience. We look forward to being able to support it again next year.'

**Above:** The current DSRT Tavistock team vehicle. **Right:** Henry Guly pictured with his book 'Moor Rescue', in May. Images © DSRT Tavistock.

### DARTMOOR BOOK RAISES FUNDS TOWARDS NEW RESCUE VEHICLE

'Moor Rescue' tells the story of the Dartmoor Search and Rescue Team (Tavistock). Life member Henry Guly charts the history of the team from its formation in 1968. Henry served for 36 years before retiring from hill party duties in 2023.

The book details the team's early operations, its evolving capabilities and the role of technology in rescue work. Reported in 'The Moorlander' to be 'a must-read for anyone who loves Dartmoor, is interested in or been involved with rescue work or local history', the book also features accounts of memorable rescues, notable team members and includes a range of photographs. 'Moor Rescue' is available for £15 by emailing Alice at [books@dsrt-tavistock.org.uk](mailto:books@dsrt-tavistock.org.uk).



### SEPTEMBER: DARTMOOR TAVISTOCK TEAM SUPPORTS ANNUAL TORS CHALLENGE

A beautiful early autumn day was the reward for the participants in the DSRT Tavistock Eleven Tors Challenges. **Steve Ayres**, team member and event organiser, reports.

The challenges are designed to include as many folk as possible, from a first timer on the family-friendly route covering a little over five miles and five Tors, to the Marathon route covering 26km. However most folk took on the 'main challenge', a route covering eleven Tors in eleven miles.

With blues skies and only an occasional shower, the intrepid challengers made good time and enjoyed the best Dartmoor National Park has to offer. The routes mix ancient roads, old railways and open moorland to give participants a feeling of exploration and achievement. 'We wanted to celebrate the wild beauty of Dartmoor whilst keeping our amazing trekkers as safe as possible,' says route planner Andy Hodges. 'We had regular checkpoints and even a refreshment tent this year. We always plan our routes with safety, enjoyment and a little bit of learning involved.'

This year saw the team trial a new checking system. We listened to feedback from previous years and the biggest challenge for us is checking teams through with minimal delay. As a software engineer, I designed an online system for the team to use. We trialled it at a weekly training event and it worked very well during the event, meaning teams were able to pass through checkpoints with virtually no delay. This typifies the synergy of DSRT Tavistock, a group of volunteers who bring their skills and knowledge from their workplaces to create a highly skilled, diverse team.

With over 450 entrants, the event is Tavistock's biggest fundraiser and also supports Dartmoor National Park 'Donate to Dartmoor' campaign to protect and manage the fragile landscapes. The event raised around £7,000 for the team. Next year's event is already being planned with an anticipated mid-September date as usual and promises to be as much fun as everyone has come to expect.



### Raising funds for rescue



### SEPTEMBER: 'CUMBRIAN OF THE YEAR' ANNOUNCED

Huge congratulations to Wasdale's Richard Warren OBE, on being named Cumbria Life's 'Cumbrian of the Year', pictured (above left) with his wife Carole. Most will be familiar with the many hours of dedicated work Richard has given to his team and the Lake District region. Well-deserved recognition!



### AUGUST: TEAM MEMBER CYCLES COUNTRY FOR TEAM

Calder Valley team member Ed Holliday set off on his 1,000-mile bike ride from Land's End to John O' Groats, to raise funds for two charities very close to his heart: his own team and men's health charity Andy's Man Club.

Andy's Man Club groups are volunteer-led and run nationwide. Male suicide is the biggest killer of men under 54 and these groups are friendly and welcoming spaces where men can speak openly about their mental health in a judgment-free, non-clinical environment.

'Over the last year,' says Ed, 'Andy's Man Club has really helped me – and thousands of other men – to cope with difficult mental health challenges.' His ambition was to raise at least £1 per mile cycled. At the time of going to press that total stood at £745. You can still support Ed's efforts and donate at [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/edward-holliday](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/edward-holliday).



### Raising funds for rescue

### AUGUST: BBC LOOK NORTH FEATURES COMRU UNDERGROUND TRAINING

Team members hosted Alex Challies from BBC Look North, who went underground with them to film a training session in Nenthead and Carrs mines, and talk about all things rescue, including the Big Build fundraising project.

Big Build is Penrith MRT's initiative to raise funds towards the building of a brand new mountain rescue base for the team – which will also include space for their cave rescue colleagues in COMRU. During filming, Alex also talked to team members about some of the possible risks people face when they venture into abandoned mine workings. If you missed it live, you can catch up on iPlayer or follow the link: [bbc.co.uk/news/videos/cvg3knnr5k5o](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/videos/cvg3knnr5k5o).

**Left:** Team members during filming with BBC Look North © COMRU.

# Awareness Dates

FOR YOUR DIARY:  
NOVEMBER 2025  
TO JANUARY 2026

## November 1-30 November [uk.movember.com](http://uk.movember.com)

Movember is the leading charity changing the face of men's health. As they say 'We know what works for men – and what doesn't'. Since 2003, they've been comprehensively taking on mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer, funding more than 1,250 men's health projects worldwide, 'challenging the status quo, shaking up men's health research and transforming the way health services reach and support men'.

## Trustees' Week 3-7 November: [trusteesweek.org](http://trusteesweek.org)

Trustees' Week is a time for us to come together to celebrate the achievements of nearly one million trustees across the UK. Throughout the week, take the time to connect with other trustees, share your experiences or find out how to become a trustee.

## Remembrance Sunday 9 November: [britishlegion.org.uk](http://britishlegion.org.uk)

A must in the calendar this is a national opportunity to remember the service and sacrifice of all those who have defended our freedoms and protected our way of life through the last century and this. Take time to 'remember the Armed Forces and their families, from Britain and the Commonwealth, and the vital role played by the emergency services and those who have lost their lives as a result of conflict or terrorism'.

## National Philanthropy Day 15 November: [afpglobal.org/NPDLove](http://afpglobal.org/NPDLove)

National Philanthropy Day recognises and honours 'the impact of philanthropy and those who work to make a difference in their communities and around the world. It's a time to celebrate the countless ways individuals, nonprofits, businesses, and communities come together to create lasting change through generosity'.

## International Volunteer Day 5 December: [un.org/en/observances/volunteer-day](http://un.org/en/observances/volunteer-day)

This day began as an international observance mandated by the United Nations General Assembly in 1985, to acknowledge the work of volunteers and the spirit of volunteerism at local, national and international levels.

## Cervical Cancer Prevention Week 20-26 January 2026: [eveappeal.org.uk](http://eveappeal.org.uk)

We started at the top with a month for the chaps, let's end on a week for the women. Cervical screenings are estimated to save 5,000 lives a year in the UK. Check out The Eve Appeal to find out more about how you can look after yourself and those you love in the face of this pernicious disease.



## JULY: TRAINING TURNS LITTER PICK FOR CENTRAL BEACONS

A team training session turned into quite the litter pick — with plastic bottles, crisp packets, BBQs and broken glass strewn across the landscape a 'heartbreaking' sight. Training paused as team members gathered as much rubbish as they could safely carry out. Sad to see.

Above: Litter pick © CBMRT.

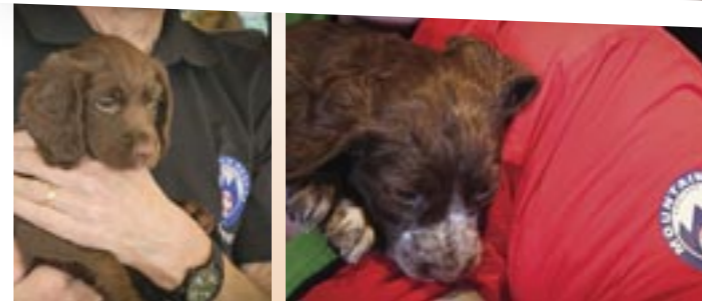
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# news round

JULY > OCTOBER



Figgy and pups pictured with Derby team members and the team drone © Derby MRT.

## OCTOBER: FIGGY RETURNS TO MEET RESCUERS, WITH HER THREE PUPS!

In April 2023, Derby team was involved in the rescue of Figgy, after she fell from the top of the 400ft cliff above Thor's Cave. Fearing the worst, a rope system was set up to allow the crag to be searched but, after two hours with no sign, hopes began to fade. **Brendan O'Neill** reports.

The drone team was called in, and just ten minutes into the first flight, a thermal signature was detected, 250ft below the cliff top. There was Figgy — almost five hours after falling — trapped in thick vegetation, but calmly watching the proceedings from the cliff face. Rope systems were quickly re-established, and a team member abseiled down to reach her. Figgy was carefully secured

into a backpack and lowered to the valley floor for an emotional reunion. Fast forward to 2025 and Figgy is fit and well, and the proud mum of three very cute puppies, prompting a surprise reunion for those team members who attended the original call-out. As well as being a heartwarming story, Figgy's rescue marked a turning point for our drone use. For those who remained unconvinced, the speed and precision with which the drone located her spoke volumes. Since then, the drone team has had three more successful finds in missing person searches and been deployed thirty times in the last twelve months alone. Many thanks to Brailsford Golf Course for hosting the reunion and for selecting Derby team as their chosen charity this season.

North Yorkshire Police donated three drones to the Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team, to assist with search and rescue operations.

The team now has access to four sets of heat-seeking 'eyes in the sky' which will allow them to scour large open areas from above. The four drones have been upgraded for newer models to ensure deployment with the most up-to-date technology. North Yorkshire Police's Chief Drone Pilot, PC Tom Joyce said, 'Police drones are now a fundamental part of policing which is why it is important that we invest in the latest equipment. We have a close working relationship with the team, so it's a way of saying thank you for the assistance they have provided to us on various tasks. There are many instances where a drone has played a significant role in resolving an incident. I look forward to hearing how the four drones that we have donated can improve the already fantastic work from Cleveland team.'

Right: Team members take delivery of new drones. Image courtesy of North Yorkshire Police/Cleveland MRT.



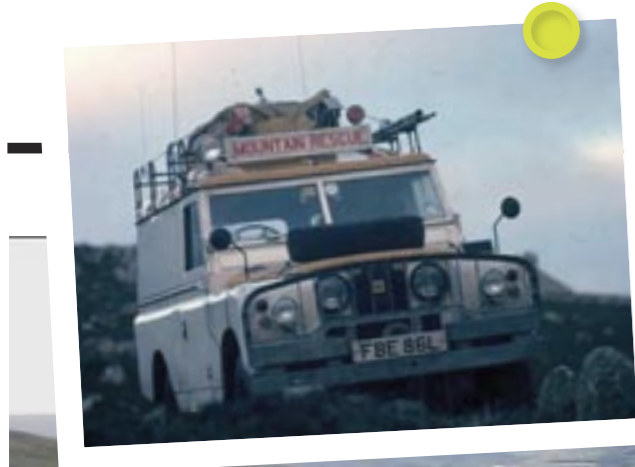
## JULY: NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE DONATE DRONES TO CLEVELAND TEAM

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## Celebrating sixty years

## Scarborough and Ryedale Mountain Rescue Team's 60 years of service

There might not be any mountains in the North York Moors or the Yorkshire Wolds, but there are still plenty of places where people can get into trouble — from open moorland and coastal paths to river banks and forest trails. And luckily for them, a committed group of volunteers are on standby, ready to come to the rescue. **Ryan Sargent** reports.

### ESTABLISHED TO SERVE THE NORTH YORK MOORS

Two dedicated 'Search and Rescue' teams — for Scarborough and District, and Cleveland — were established in 1965, following an increase in the popularity of walking on the North York Moors, particularly those attempting long-distance challenges like the Lyke Wake Walk.

Back in the 1950s and 1960s, required to complete this 40-mile challenge route from Osmotherley in the west to Ravenscar in the east in under 24 hours, participants were often ill-equipped and inexperienced in navigation. North York Moors National Park Wardens, many of whom were volunteers, were undertaking an ever-growing number of rescues, primarily misplaced walkers. As a result, the decision was taken to establish two rescue teams.

Originally just twelve members-strong, the Scarborough and District team had its baptism of fire on 26 October 1965 when six youngsters from Teesside went missing on Fylingdales Moor whilst taking part in the Lyke Wake Walk.

In 2006, we changed our name to Scarborough and Ryedale Mountain Rescue Team to more accurately reflect our operational area and role within search and rescue in the UK.

Today, the team has around fifty operational and support members. Operational members are highly trained and well equipped, able to assist with a much broader range of incidents than sixty years ago. Now extremely professional, and operating more closely with police, fire and ambulance services, our rope and water skills, and medical capabilities are far more enhanced. Typically responding to an average of around 78 call-outs a year, these range from lost walkers and missing vulnerable persons to severely injured casualties, including mountain bikers tackling Dalby Forest's MTB trails, or dogs, to major flooding incidents, such as the 2015 York floods.

Like other teams, our members come

from all walks of life, and all have one thing in common: a love of the outdoors and considerable experience in looking after themselves in the hills. Andrew Priestley, a project manager in the oil and gas industry and a stalwart of Scarborough and Ryedale since 1990, says 'each recruit brings something different to the team — and you can always learn something new from everyone'.

Ironically, 2025 has also seen the team involved behind the scenes with a significant and devastating moorland fire on Fylingdales Moor, which continues to impact on the Public Rights of Way network, including the Lyke Wake Walk and Coast to Coast routes.

Whilst not putting boots on the ground, we have made a significant contribution to this major incident response, providing advice and liaison through daily meetings of the multi-agency Tactical Coordination Group. We have used our local knowledge and

involved. We are incredibly grateful to the assistance provided by the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association, Duddon and Furness, Penrith, Northumberland National Park and North of Tyne mountain rescue teams.

### 60 YEARS AND BEYOND...

Providing the training, equipment and vehicles so we can offer a professional, world-class service when and where needed, is an expensive business. With the team reliant on donations, fundraising events, and other income sources to cover our annual costs, 2025 has also seen our first foray into corporate sponsorship via product tie ups, starting with coffee and beer of course!

Forge Valley Roasters are donating 10% of proceeds from their Mountain Blend coffee while Brass Castle Brewery are donating 20p from every can of their Call-Out beer



experience to advise on things like access to certain areas, specific risks to the public using the North York Moors National Park, and identifying potential evacuation routes for areas at risk.

Being part of the MREW family, we have been able to mobilise support from other teams, similar to the 2015 York floods. This time we have pulled on drone resources to help monitor the fire and provide good situational awareness to all agencies

sold. As Brass Castle say: 'nothing beats a beer after a day out on the Moors, so join us in raising a glass to these heroes'.

While the next sixty years will bring new challenges, the team will no doubt evolve and adapt to face whatever comes our way. 🍷

**Opposite and above:** Scarborough and Ryedale team through the years, featuring vehicles old and new, water training and flood watch, working and training on the hill and off and, of course, fundraising with coffee and beer. Images © SRMRT.



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# news round

JULY > OCTOBER

## AUGUST: SOCIAL MEDIA HELPS SOLVE A RUCKSACK MYSTERY

An abandoned rucksack presented something of a conundrum for three mountain rescue teams but, thanks to the power of social media, the mystery was solved, avoiding the need for a full-scale call-out.



Images © NNP MRT.

At just after 9.00am, one Friday morning in August, a message popped up on Northumberland National Park team's Instagram account: a walker had spotted a full 'rucksack' on the Pennine Way near to the Hanging Stone. But this wasn't just any bag. It was a dry duffel on a frame with oversized wheels, and something about it didn't sit right.

A call to the police was also rightly made by the walker. With no missing person reports and the heat soaring over the previous few days, the situation seemed like it might involve a walker in distress, maybe dehydrated and in search of water so, following a call to Police Scotland, Border Search and Rescue Unit (BSARU) agreed cross-border action with North of Tyne and Northumberland teams.

Having worked through a few scenarios, including that the owner had purposefully left the 'trolley' and was safely off the hill, a limited response was initiated to locate the bag and investigate. Team members from

the Scottish side combed the area near Cheviot Burn and the Hanging Stone while, on the English side, a team response vehicle drove along nearby forest tracks and walked an 'escape route' up onto the hill to the Hanging Stone. Writing on the bag initially seemed to provide a name and address, which was passed to the police. The bag was then dragged four kilometres by a Border Search member, down the hill to Hexpeth Gate, the nearest 4x4 vehicle access.

It was at this point the power of social media kicked in. Matching descriptions of a man seen earlier in the week, pulling and carrying a 'trolley' were confirmed in Wooler, Hethpool and then on the Pennine Way over Auchope Cairn. Information received also suggested the 'trolley' had broken and on closer look at the bag the scrawled message was 'cart broken', not a name! Real breakthroughs came at 5.20 and 6.00pm, when a builder confirmed he'd given a walker a lift from near Kidlandlee in

Kidland Forest to Alnwick. A member of staff at a retailer in Alnwick confirmed a man had been in to buy a holdall to carry some of his kit back home. In both cases, the walker mentioned he had ditched his 'trolley' in the Cheviots.

At this point the three teams stood down from further searching and, shortly before 7.00pm, police confirmed the man had been traced and was safe, albeit not at home, and eager to have his trolley and its contents back!

The teams thanked everyone who had shared the social media posts and provided vital information, helping to piece together what had happened. Police Scotland and West Mercia Police, they said, had done a great job at tracking down the mystery owner. The incident involved eleven members from the three teams for just over nine and a half hours. Two drone pilots from Search and Rescue Aerial Association (SARAA) had also been on standby.

## INCHREE MOUNTAIN CABINS SELF-CATERING ACCOMMODATION

Inchree Mountain Cabins offers quality self-catering accommodation in the West Highlands. Long-established and family-managed, we're perfectly located for mountain-sport and training, being exactly midway between Ben Nevis and Glencoe. The nine refurbished cabins sit within spacious and naturally-wooded grounds, with panoramic loch and mountain views. We can offer special tariffs for MRT groups from September to April. Please just get in touch with any group requirements you have.

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### OCTOBER: 36-HOUR RESCUE OF THREE CAVERS FROM DOWBER GILL PASSAGE

Over a hundred team members and other volunteers were involved in the difficult rescue effort, led by Upper Wharfedale, including CRO, Calder Valley, Derbyshire CRO, Royal Air Force MRS and Swaledale, along with an extended cavers list. It was a fantastic team effort as cavers turned out in appalling conditions to rescue fellow cavers.

The call came in from North Yorkshire Police at 9.00pm Thursday 2 October, following a report of three experienced cavers who had entered Dowber Gill passage via Providence Pot to attempt a traverse to Dow Cave and were now overdue. The cavers had entered the system in the morning in good weather and should have completed the trip that afternoon, 36 hours before the bad weather was forecast.

Given the scale of the task, UWFR contacted neighbouring caving teams to ask for assistance. Surface comms were quickly established as team members entered the cave from both entrances.

At approximately 2.30am on Friday morning, the missing cavers were located below the high-level traverses on the approach to the 60ft Rift, towards the Dow Cave end of the system. Unfortunately, by the time the party was found, the good weather had passed and heavy rain on the surface had caused water levels to rise, blocking the easiest exit. The only option was to retrace their steps and exit via Providence Pot.

Whilst the search for the cavers was still ongoing, team members on the surface had to endure appalling conditions to maintain comms with the underground teams via the Cave Link messaging system. Driving conditions to Hag Dyke were becoming increasingly difficult as cavers and equipment were transported up to the cave entrance.

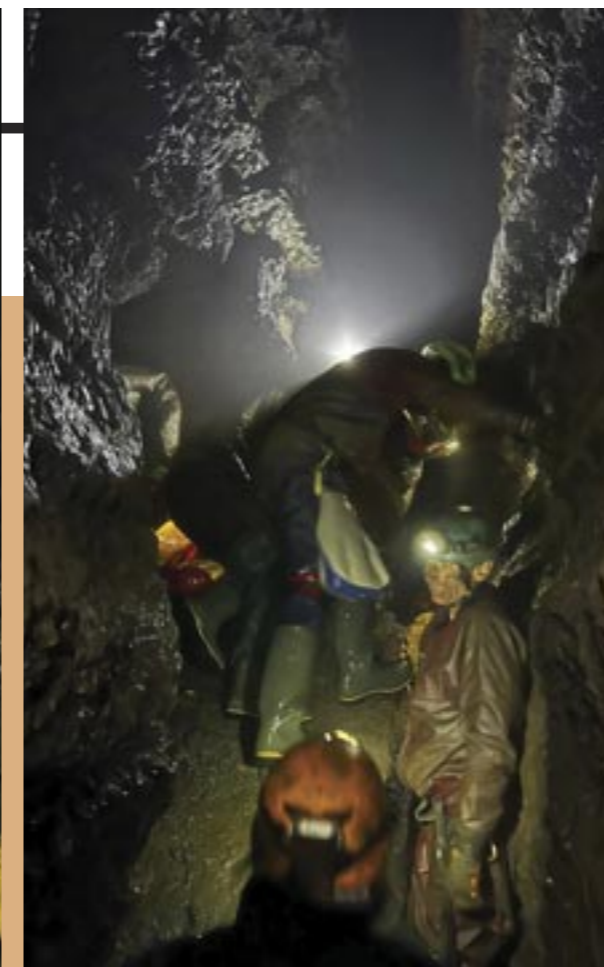
The underground teams worked in relays to bring the tired cavers back towards the Providence Pot entrance as the exit via Dowber Gill junction into Dow cave was now flooded. As the beck at Providence Pot entrance was rising alarmingly, team members laboured to construct a dam and used plastic sheeting to carry the flood water past the cave entrance.

At 3.30pm the first missing caver was brought out of the cave and taken

back to Kettlewell. The remaining two were still being moved slowly out of the system. By 6.00pm they had reached Bridge Cavern, but rising water levels were making the traverses difficult. The cavers reached Stalagmite corner at 11.30pm on the Friday evening. The cavers split into two separate groups and the second missing caver was finally brought to the surface at 2.30am on Saturday morning. The third missing caver was moving more slowly, but with a lot of help finally made it to the surface at 4.30am and was stretchered to the warmth of Hag Dyke before being taken down to Kettlewell at 5.40am for onward transport to hospital by ambulance.

The team finally stood down at 7.45am, leaving only a mountain of wet equipment to dry out and sort ready for the next call-out.

'We would again like to thank all the volunteers who turned out in appalling conditions to assist in this long and difficult rescue. We'd also like to express our gratitude to the NYFRS welfare van and wardens at Hag Dyke for the use of their building as a forward base, described by many team members as a life saver in those conditions. Finally, we wish the three missing cavers a speedy recovery from their ordeal and hope it hasn't put them off caving!'



Images © UWFR.

# news round

JULY > OCTOBER

## SEPTEMBER: CEO ELECT ANDY STOPS OFF IN COCKERMOUTH ON HIS FACT-FINDING TOUR OF TEAMS

Andy's ambition, while shadowing Mike Park, current MREW CEO, is to visit as many teams across England and Wales as possible, to really get to understand what makes mountain rescue tick. That's all of you, from grassroots members through team leadership, regional chairs and those who work at national level to represent the wider interests of the mountain rescue.

Mike being a Cockermonth team member, the first Monday in September saw Andy popping into Cockermonth base to the regular monthly team meeting.

Left: Mike Park CEO with Andy Buchan CEO Elect © Nick Lumb.



© Wasdale MRT.



## AUGUST: RELUCTANT DOG RESCUED

Wasdale team members were called to help when the 30kg dog refused to move on the Wastwater Screes. The boat team was deployed and they duly returned the dog and two walkers to the landing area, to continue their walk back to their campsite.

## SEPTEMBER: SEARCH DOG MORAG MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Morag was among the winners at an award ceremony in Penrith, celebrating people who had made life better for others in their communities.

The BBC Radio Cumbria Make a Difference Awards featured stories of kindness, resilience and dedication, with winners announced in eight categories, including being a 'great neighbour' and a 'young hero'. Morag won the Animal Award. With handler Matt, she is an integral part of the Penrith team and Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs. She was adopted by Matt from an animal rescue centre and, despite now being twelve, remains ready to get up and go when a call comes through. Congratulations Morag!



Image courtesy of LDMRSD.



## JULY: INJURED SEARCH DOG HANDLER GETS BACK TO THE HILLS

As we briefly reported in the Summer issue, back in May, Lakes Search Dog handler and Kendal team member John was on a normal training circuit with his dog, Trainee Search Dog Jura, when he slipped on some wet rock, sustaining significant lower leg injuries.

Thanks to the swift actions of other handlers, bodies and Keswick team members, he was quickly recovered and taken to Furness General, where he remained as an in-patient for over seven weeks! In late July, Lakes Dogs shared an update: 'We are pleased to say that John is doing great! He is very grateful for everyone's support and get well wishes and can't wait to be back out on the fells with Jura as soon as possible.'

He certainly appears to have been getting out since he returned home, spotted out and about with Jura and enthusiastically supporting events to promote the work of the search dogs. May your recovery continue to go well, John!

Top: John leaving hospital in July, with Search Dog Jura and at an event at The Old Dungeon Ghyll in August © Lakes Search Dogs.



The vandalised box © Penrith MRT.



## JULY: COLLECTION BOX AND ITS CONTENTS STOLEN

Penrith team posted images on Facebook of the remains of their Mardale Head box. Having spent twelve hours on call-outs the previous day, team members had arrived for their Sunday team training to find the box, (which was set in a stone wall), vandalised.

Within 48 hours, they were back on social media thanking supporters for their generosity. Donations since the first post had seen a substantial £2,500 (and counting) boost to team funds so it was 'a big thank you' from them.

## Raising funds for rescue

## OCTOBER: SERIES OF EVENTS RAISE FUNDS FOR TEAM

The Financial Management Bureau, based in Kendal and Cockermonth, has raised £2,000 for the Kendal team so far this year, with a varied programme of activities including gin tasting, sponsored car wash, a 24-mile Settle Saunter walking challenge and a guided walk in torrential rain in the Grisedale Valley.

In October, the firm hosted a charity hoedown at the Ibis Sports and Social Club, aiming to raise a further £2,000 for the team. 'Mountain rescue provides an incredible, life-saving service, from a dedicated team who devote their time and skills to keeping others safe,' says FMB director of operations Ruth Power. 'It's been a real pleasure and lots of fun to run these events throughout the year in such a good cause.' They were, she said, inspired to run the event by the fact that everyone at work seems to be watching the TV series 'Yellowstone'. Yee hah!



Above: Kendal team members during February 2024 © Kendal MRT.



Holme Valley team with their Stotts Coach © HVMRT.

## AUGUST: COACH COMPANY SUPPORTS HOLME VALLEY TEAM

Holme Valley team gave 'a huge shout out' to local company Stotts Coach Travel for transporting team members to Humberside airport for their training with the Coastguard Helicopters (UK Wide).

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



## SMR STATS REPORT AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF 2024

### Focus on Dundonnell MRT

KEITH BRYERS



The Dundonnell area covers some 6,600 square kilometres of the North West Highlands of Scotland, taking in 39 Munros and another 125 hills of note in areas such as Coigach, Fisherfield, the Fannichs, Ben Wyvis and iconic An Teallach, as well as lengthy glens including Glen Affric and Strathfarrar. We have a base at Dingwall with smaller bases at Dundonnell and Ullapool and vehicles stationed at Cannich and Mellon Charles.

The team celebrated its 50th birthday in 2021 and currently has 36 call-out members, four trainees and eight reserves. Ten members are RRMTs and three are SARDA dog handlers. Though we are 'one team', given the extended travelling times which are often required, some call-outs are dealt with by deploying only members living on either our West or East coast. We collaborate with our neighbouring teams: Assynt, Torridon and Kintail and occasionally also the Hebrides and Cairngorm teams. We have a good relationship with the RAF Lossiemouth team and regularly work with HM Coastguard rescue helicopter crews based at Inverness and Stornoway.

Following on from major investments between 2012 and 2021 in a new East Coast base at Dingwall and several replacement vehicles, DMRT has raised sufficient funds to supplant aged equipment as well as continue to invest in new, more modern kit. Besides the tasks required to ensure proper administration of our charity, including compliance with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups legislation, we use asset management software to ensure regular inspection and tracking of safety-critical items such as ropes, slings, harnesses, helmets etc.

Within our area are several spectacular river gorges, such as Corrieshellach and Blackrock thus, in 2023, the team responded to the need to be better able to respond to call-outs in these locations by setting up a canyon section within the team. This has nine members and required substantial investment in specialised training and water rescue equipment, including drysuits, rescue sled etc.

Recent new equipment to highlight includes our Traverse Titan stretchers — though a tight fit for some larger size casualties, the Titan's comparatively light weight is much appreciated by those having to carry them up the hill. Our Arizona Vortex



frame has proved to be a great help in long lowers and hauls whilst the availability of the excellent PHD Alpha down belay jacket, as part of members' gear allowance, has been very popular. Acquisition of a Schiller Easy Pulse CPR machine has improved care of casualties needing life support whilst being stretchered off the hill. The SARCALL

system has revolutionised the task of call-out management, such that the team leader knows the resources at his disposal within minutes of initiating a call-out. All our avalanche transceivers were replaced in 2023 with the Mammut Barryvox S model. Many of the above, and other items, have been 100% grant-funded through diligent applications by our fundraising officer and we are very grateful to our generous donors.

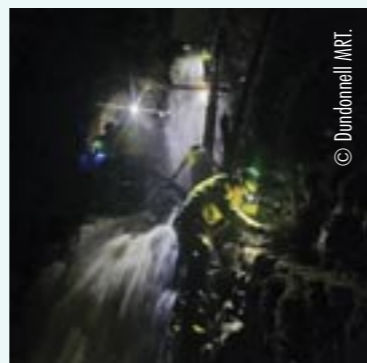
Some call-outs have arisen from walkers getting into trouble on the long-distance walking routes which cross through our patch. We have seen an increase in mountain-biking and ultra-running incidents and from multi-Munro expeditions, such as the 'Mullardoch Twelve'. Hill-goers attempting these arduous routes regularly bite off more than they can chew and find themselves in difficulty.

Physical injuries are most often to lower limbs due to slips and trips but these can nevertheless entail a lengthy stretcher carry to reach an ambulance or helicopter evacuation site. Besides physical injuries and medical emergencies, typically, call-outs are due to poor navigation, poor preparation and inadequate equipment, as well as underestimating the time and effort to achieve planned objectives. The team is also sometimes tasked to search for missing persons in more urban environments.

Dundonnell's annual call-out figures have been remarkably stable over the last ten years at 35-40. Clearly, this is a small number by comparison to many other teams, but it belies the number of hours put in by team members as many can take a full day, extend overnight or even over several days, in remote and very rugged terrain. Often forgotten are the many thousands of hours of training effort that lie behind the

team's ability to respond quickly and effectively when Police Scotland call for our help and we are fortunate to have enthusiastic and dedicated training officers. ☘

FIND DUNDONNELL MRT AT [DMRT.ORG.UK](http://DMRT.ORG.UK) AND ON FACEBOOK @[DUNDONNELLMRT](https://www.facebook.com/dundonnellmrt)



© Dundonnell MRT.

## SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE WELLBEING INFORMATION



Looking after your own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others in your team

STEVE PENNY SMR WELLBEING OFFICER

Scottish Mountain Rescue aims to support a culture where our volunteers and staff enjoy a positive and rewarding experience throughout their journey from recruitment to leaving or 'retirement'. This applies to whatever roles we play throughout the broad spectrum of providing a world-class mountain rescue service. We recognise that the risks associated with psychological injury arise from both operational and organisational stressors. The organisational stressors are linked to the general challenges of being a volunteer responder and, together with the pressures of managing teams and the national organisation, these stressors can often be greater than the risks from operational trauma exposure. We are committed to managing these organisational and operational risks, and to have support in place should it be required.

Through the training we offer, and the support we have in place, we continue to make progress in how we embed an understanding of personal wellbeing and resilience — how to support colleagues and what to do following incident trauma exposure — into our complete (recruitment to retirement) volunteer experience: Preventative and early intervention rather than reactive post-event approach to volunteer wellbeing and resilience.



### TOOLKIT : Managing the Risks of Psychological Injury

We want to get upstream, and our focus is on prevention and early intervention, giving people the knowledge and skills to look after themselves and their colleagues.

As well as helping people when they're in the river, or over the waterfall, we want to teach them to swim, build rafts and put up fences at the risky parts of the riverbank.

#### Tools for regular use:

- Capacity Self-check tool
- Post-incident Self-check tool
- Also helpful: Coping Guide

#### The Lifelines Scotland Model: imagine a river and waterfall



How we manage the risks of psychological injury, and any recovery journey, involves a number of key partners as well as every volunteer, member of staff, colleague and our personal social networks. Our key partners are Police Scotland and the Rivers Centre (NHS Lothian). All our volunteers and their families have access to the Police Scotland Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which offers a wide range of services. Since September 2024, we also now have an agreement in place for post-trauma support from NHS facility The Rivers Centre. The staff there have many years of experience in working with emergency service staff and volunteers (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland). The Rivers Centre team also created the Lifelines Scotland resource and the training that forms part of their overall ethos of taking a public health approach to how we manage the risks of psychological injury. You can find details of our approach in the SMR toolkit: Managing the Risks of Psychological Injury.

Please use the QR code at the top to access our general wellbeing information and support page, together with our toolkit for managing the risks of psychological injury.

Please address any questions regarding this page to: [wellbeingofficer@scottishmountainrescue.org](mailto:wellbeingofficer@scottishmountainrescue.org)

The Scottish Mountain Rescue Annual Review and Stats Report for 2024 highlight what was an exceptionally busy year for our mountain rescue teams — for the first time recording 1,000 call-outs (including continuations, which are linked call-outs over several days). Teams continue to be around a third busier post-Covid. Our Annual Review serves to highlight the dedication and

enormous resilience of the teams, who continue to do more with less. Also featured in the Annual Review are team member profiles and a challenging rescue story from a snowy Torridonian wild camp.



MEET OUR SUPPORTERS



This year, 36 brilliant fundraisers donned their tartan and took part in Kiltwalk events across Scotland — in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee and most recently Edinburgh — to raise vital funds for Scottish Mountain Rescue. The walk is Scotland's biggest mass-participation walking event, with routes to suit all abilities including the 20-mile Mighty Stride, the 11-mile Big Stroll and the 5-mile Wee Wander.

It's a special day filled with community spirit, music and a sea of tartan, where every step helps support charities close to people's hearts. A huge thank you to all our amazing fundraisers who took on the Kiltwalk this year — raising thousands of pounds in support of Scottish Mountain Rescue and our volunteer teams.

Top: Kim and Lee at the Aberdeen Kiltwalk. Above: Alice MacSporran at the Glasgow Kiltwalk.

# Rescue realities on Goatfell

LUCY WALLACE ARRAN MRT



View of Goatfell at last light. Team members descending Goatfell. Images © K Smith.

Most teams will have their call-out hotspots, and ours, unsurprisingly, is Goatfell which, at 874m, is the highest mountain on Arran. Between 2017 and 2023, incidents on Goatfell accounted for over 35% of calls.

This popular Corbett is clearly visible from the mainland, and accessible for hillwalkers on day trips from the Central Belt of Scotland. As well as having a couple of maintained paths to the summit, Goatfell is ringed by rocky ridges and steep ground, most notably the western slopes above Glen Rosa and the ridge of Stacach with its tors. On a clear day, the views from the summit are magnificent. Each year, over 12,000 people set off up the most popular route from Brodick, and the vast majority enjoy a great day out without problems.

Of those who do require our help, lower leg injuries such as sprains and fractures make up around 40% of incidents where someone is hurt or unwell. These are usually the result of slips and trips, most often during descent on uneven ground when people are tired. Medical issues are also common: Goatfell is a popular, but demanding mountain that attracts a wide range of visitors, and inevitably a small number become unwell due to pre-existing conditions, exhaustion, or a mix of both. Hypothermia is also frequently a factor we have to consider, as casualties may have been sitting still in cool conditions and on cold hard ground for a while when we arrive. Even the best-equipped people, in reasonable weather,

are likely to be feeling cold after an hour or more of waiting.

In the past, even relatively minor injuries or medical issues would have required a long and difficult stretcher carry. In recent years, however, the addition of two Argo Cats to our fleet has transformed rescues, speeding up deployment and allowing casualties to be evacuated quickly when their condition permits. The Argos are especially valuable in technical rescues, carrying team members and heavy equipment up to 'the shoulder' at 500m above sea level, thus ensuring fresh legs and minds for the demanding work once on scene.

While not everyday occurrences, technical rescues benefit hugely from training and preparation. Our volunteers commit significant time to practising ropework skills such as stretcher lowers, in awkward locations around the mountain. When these types of call-outs do come, they may involve cragfast people attempting to descend via the ridge of Stacach, or walkers who have fallen from steep ground and sustained traumatic injuries. When weather allows, support from the Coastguard helicopter is invaluable, but it can't always be relied upon and, in poor conditions, these rescues can be prolonged and complex.

Sadly, some accidents do result in fatalities. Goatfell has its own accident black spot in the 'Watershoot,' a steep and loose gully on the mountain's western slopes overlooking Glen Rosa. People who take the

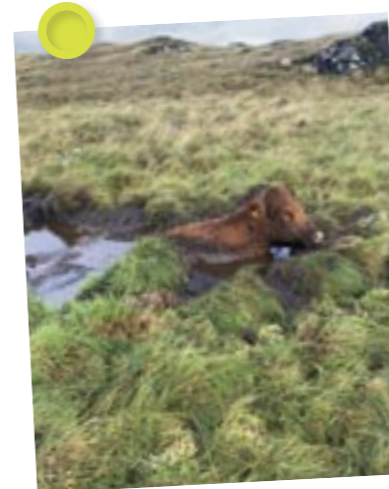


wrong direction when descending from the summit can be drawn into this area. We are always grateful when walkers have the good sense to stop and call for help before venturing further, and tools such as Sarloc/PhoneFind have proved invaluable for pinpointing their location.

Even on the main paths, people can and do get lost. The route can be easy to miss in poor light or winter conditions, and every year some walkers are caught out without a torch or the navigation skills needed to relocate themselves. Sometimes these call-outs can be resolved with simple phone guidance and a hasty party meeting them partway. Other times, they can escalate into complex, time-consuming searches involving the whole team.

Goatfell may not be the biggest or most remote of Scotland's mountains, but it demands respect. With preparation, the right equipment and a little mountain sense, it offers an unforgettable day out. Without them, it can quickly become a place where things go badly wrong. ☹️

**FIND ARRAN MRT AT ARRANMOUNTAINRESCUE AND ON FACEBOOK @ARRANMRTFUNDRAISING**



## SEPTEMBER: UDDERLY STUCK COO RESCUED BY TEAM MEMBERS

Glenelg MRT found themselves deployed to an unusual and somewhat muddy incident in early September, when a cow became 'udderly' stuck in a bog near Bernera.

Using a mix of crofting experience and rigging skills, ten team members armed with spades, strops, a quad bike — and an enticing bag of hay — managed to free the almost fully submerged cow and reunite her with her calf. Ultimately, 'a successful outcome, a happy heifer, and a fine training exercise for the team'.



## Scottish teams had a particularly busy summer with the hot dry weather bringing with it continued wild fires and a number of heat-related call-outs.

**Kintail MRT** faced two major incidents on the hottest day of the year, attending walkers suffering from heat-related illness on the South Shiel Ridge and the Five Sisters — two classic steep-sided ridge walks. One casualty with suspected heatstroke was thankfully airlifted to hospital by Coastguard helicopter R151, while a smaller team made their way up the hill with lots of water to assist the rest of the party off the hill.



Many teams across Scotland responded to similar incidents in the heat this summer, with **Assynt MRT** team leader Ben Dyson warning, 'We always talk about the risk of hypothermia in the Scottish mountains with hyperthermia something that is quite rarely encountered,

but this is something that is now becoming more of a risk.'

**Torridon MRT** faced a challenging technical rescue this summer when a climber fell in the Sword of Gideon area above the infamous Bealach na Bà. Given the potential severity of the injuries, Coastguard helicopter R151 deployed straight to the scene. However, the location of the casualty meant that winching was unsafe. Team members assembled to

begin a significant technical rescue involving a long stretcher lower from the ridge above the climb.

Equipment and personnel were shuttled up, and a small group identified a suitable anchor point to build a secure rigging system. A

Remote Rescue Medical Technician (RRMT), stretcher attendant, medical kit and stretcher were then carefully lowered through 200m of loose, broken ground to reach the casualty.

The volunteers managed to stabilise multiple serious injuries before carefully packaging the casualty for extraction. Once the stretcher had been lowered to safer ground, the casualty was transferred to the Coastguard helicopter for onward travel to hospital. A demanding operation, requiring immense teamwork.

Through the summer, team members upskilled in Incident Management, Gorge and Canyon Rescue, Rigging (Foundation, Practitioner and Advanced) and Casualty Care. Congratulations to **Hebrides MRT** who in September qualified their first RRMTs, significantly increasing the level of life-saving intervention the island team can provide in a pre-hospital environment. 🙌

**Above:** Challenging lower above Bealach na Bà © Torridon MRT. **Left:** Sunny day on South Shiel Ridge © Kintail MRT. Newly qualified Hebrides RRMTs © Hebrides MRT.

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