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ISSUE 24





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### WELCOME TO ISSUE 24

Mountain Rescue is the membership magazine for Mountain Rescue (England & Wales).

Contributions should be sent to the editor at the address below.

Every care will be taken of materials sent for publication however these are submitted at the sender's risk.

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### NEXT ISSUE ISSUE 25

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Editorial copy must be supplied as Word document. Images must be supplied as high resolution (300 dpi) JPEG/EPS/TIFF/PDF

Advertising artwork must be supplied, ready prepared on CD or via email as font embedded PDF/EPS/TIFF (300 dpi) or Quark document with all relevant fonts and images.

#### FRONTPAGE

The Hummer H3, kindly donated for the year by General Motors  
Photo: Andrew Price

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles carried in Mountain Rescue do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales). We do not accept responsibility for information supplied in adverts/advertorial.

mountain  
rescue



## Rescue at any cost... a conflict of interests?

Several years have passed since Pete Livesey wrote along these lines and raised the question whether, under every rescue circumstance, all the ethics and principles of mountaineering could justifiably be abandoned. As then, there is still no easy answer to the question but as circumstances change it needs to be asked from time to time.

What prompts me to raise it again is the mounting interest in PLBs and the pressure for mountain rescue to support their introduction on the land.

Mountaineering is many things to many people. Most would agree that it enables us to get back to things that really count, away from the less attractive parts of modern life. Inherent also is the freedom to put oneself in a dangerous environment and then deal with it. What Peter Boardman called 'serious play'. It is not necessary to climb on north faces in high ranges to live these experiences. Navigating in bad weather and tackling relatively easy faces create risks that we learn to overcome. These experiences give great rewards and enable us to reinforce our identity and especially our capability for self sufficiency.

In modern society risk is becoming unacceptable. Anything is better than death, even a mundane existence in front of a television set. There are those who, as so often seen in the USA, would have society protect mountaineers against themselves. Sadly the views of Nietzsche, advising of the well being to individuals and society of 'living

dangerously' are no longer widely regarded.

The threats to this spirit of mountaineering come from many directions. Loss and erosion of the environment, greater density of people, and improved equipment are probably unavoidable. In addition, however, are the behavioural problems. The use of mobile phones clearly reduces the wilderness aspect of the mountain world. Happily there are many mountaineers who eschew their use and are comfortable to live with any consequences. Perhaps the day is close by when they will be denigrated for taking this approach. I hope mountain rescue has not moved so far away from its mountaineering roots that it will be first in line with criticism.

This leads on to the introduction of PLBs. Another tool to diminish the contracting wilderness and undermine the philosophy of self sufficiency in the hills? It is unlikely that mountain rescue alone will seriously influence the decision about their introduction but, before we jump on the bandwagon for their development, let's not forget our mountaineering heritage.

I was delighted to read Julian Carradice vigorously dismissing measures to make Broad Stand 'safe' after another accident there. Make people aware of the risks in the hills by all means. Taking away the risks and the self sufficiency; surely not?

David Allan Chairman

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mountain rescue



## EQUIPMENT NEWS

Mike Margeson reports... I am delighted to report that the first service and load testing has been completed under our new agreement with Lyon Equipment. I would remind teams that it is best practice to ensure service and up to date load test certification. Records would indicate a good number of team stretchers are out of service and load test certification date. This is a cost that the MR(E&W) meets on teams' behalf as we view this as particularly important.

## BELL STRETCHER PACK FRAMES

These, as you are aware, can be put together to make a small emergency additional stretcher. They will not be included in the load test certification process undertaken by Lyon. They are not for use in a vertical environment and are envisaged for use only in exceptional circumstances for a carry.

## BLACKS TESTING PROGRAMME

Following on from Judy's report in the last issue I have been working with Blacks to help facilitate a test programme. A set of waterproofs and boots are being issued to a number of MR members from every region. Those chosen will be taking part in a six month field trail. A questionnaire has been produced and those members taking part in these tests will provide critical and honest feedback to Blacks.

## STRETCHER QUESTIONNAIRE

We have received some 24 returns out of 54 teams circulated. If your team has not responded, we lose the opportunity to gain knowledge from your team's experience. Quite often, in this sort of research, it's the small,

seemingly insignificant ideas which are of most use. All the data from this survey will be analysed and published in the magazine and hopefully presented in the stretcher development track at the conference. If the form has not made it into your inbox, email [mmargeson@hotmail.com](mailto:mmargeson@hotmail.com) for a copy.

## UK MOUNTAIN RESCUE CONFERENCE IN STIRLING

I have just had confirmation from Dr Mark Taylor from Leeds University that he will present the latest data on helmets and testing, and is hoping to bring his helmet test rig. This presentation will fit well with the Fallen Climber Track. Paul Witheridge of COMRU and manager at Lyon will present load test and service info in the Stretcher Track and Phil Beard who runs our PPE and FPE equipment checking courses will do a session on standards and equipment checking. Kirk Mauthner from Rigging for Rescue will also be contributing to the Fallen Climber Track.

## EQUIPMENT EXHIBITING AT THE CONFERENCE

We still hope to widen the range of exhibitors at the conference. If you have any contacts or companies who might be interested, please forward their details to [mmargeson@hotmail.com](mailto:mmargeson@hotmail.com)

## EQUIPMENT STILL IN STOCK

We still have a number of vacmats in stock. I would like to circulate these so we can plan and order our next production run, later in the year or early 2009. The new lightweight casbag project is slowly making progress but we've had to spread the substantial price of this project over two financial year periods.



MEMBERS OF LLANBERIS MRT WITH THE HUMMER

To commemorate the landmark 75th anniversary of mountain rescue in England and Wales, Hummer has provided a specially modified vehicle to help our rescue and fundraising effort. The newly launched, right-hand drive Hummer H3 will carry both equipment and personnel in rescue situations, and featured on the Mountain Rescue stand at the Outdoors Show in March.

Hailed as the off road vehicle 'like nothing else,' the H3 is one of the most capable off road vehicles on the market today. Recently introduced into the UK, it is a smaller, more affordable and agile version of the larger H1 and H2 models. In addition to its iconic design, the vehicle boasts a number of advanced off road features, allowing the driver to enjoy full versatility in some of the most gruelling driving conditions nature has to offer.

The only vehicle of its size that can climb a 407mm vertical wall or 60% slope, traverse a 40% side slope and operate in up to 610mm of water, it's a sure-footed choice for mountain rescue and Hummer has further enhanced it with a number of specialist features. Grill and roof mounted spotlights aid visibility in treacherous conditions, and rocker panel protection gives added protection to the lower body and door panels against rock strikes and other strong blows.

Steve Catlin from Hummer says, 'We are delighted to provide such a tangible support to one of the country's most vital charities. The Hummer H3 is the ideal vehicle to tackle some of the toughest terrains and we hope it can provide a valuable support to the incredibly brave and courageous work the mountain rescue teams undertake throughout the year.'

## CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU CHECKS

A position statement, guidelines and background information regarding CRB checks have now been uploaded to the Members area of the website.

- There is currently no national requirement for CRB checks, routine or enhanced, for operational SAR volunteers engaged in SAR operations or team training for SAR.

- If an MR(E&W) recognised team, or members of such a team wish to be involved in activities outside SAR operations or SAR training, a possible requirement for CRB checks could exist and could depend upon

the type of activity being contemplated. Any decision to initiate CRB checks should be taken by individual MRTs and acted upon locally.

- The continuation of possible free CRB checks is under review by the Government and the indications are that charges might be imposed soon. All costs generated by CRB checks would be the responsibility of those MRTs seeking such checks.

- The statement 'failing in our duty of care to the public to not do more to protect the public we are serving' is not a valid argument in the context of SAR operations. It should

be a fundamental tenet that SAR operations are carried out by teams and not by an individual working in isolation.

- Routine outdoor activities lie well outside the scope of responsibility of mountain rescue and hence outside the scope of MR(E&W). Please note that if any MR(E&W) MRT is considering some specific activity, which they feel could indicate a requirement for CRB involvement, further advice can and should be obtained from Anthony Rich [anthony.rich@virgin.net](mailto:anthony.rich@virgin.net) and/or Mike France [mike.france@pdmro.org.uk](mailto:mike.france@pdmro.org.uk). Read more on page 14.

## First Response



### MORPHINE REGISTER

Thank you to the following teams that sent copies of their 'morphine' (Controlled Drug) registers for 2007 to me – Aberglaslyn, Bolton, Bowland Pennine, Brecon, Buxton, Calder Valley, Cave Rescue Organisation, Central Beacons, Derby, Duddon & Furness, Edale, Glossop, Gloucester Cave Rescue Group, Holme Valley, Kendal, Kirkby Stephen, Llanberis, North East Wales, Northumberland NP, Ogwen, Outward Bound Wales SRT, Patterdale, Penrith, Rossendale & Pendle, SARDA Wales, Upper Wharfedale and Woodhead.

You are all logged with me and form part of the Annual Compliance return I have to send to the Home Office by 31 January each year. (I am usually away for the last two weeks in January climbing frozen waterfalls. This year, like last, consisted of water and ice – global warming. I must go north next year!) I was impressed at the documentation sent. Very few registers could be criticised and the majority matched or exceeded the information set out in the guidance document – MorphineMRC07v2.rtf – in the Medical section of the MRC website. Some asked about logging drugs out and back in when going on callouts and practices. This is not essential for the register but shows a clear train of responsibility, which many teams feel is good practice. By all means continue recording these movements in the register if that works well. A separate book for these movements sounds a bit onerous to me! I

am sorry to say that the registers will need to be sent to me annually so please mark it in your diary – deadline is 15 of January 2009. I won't go away until after that date! On a related but separate matter, I want to mention the Opiate Study Day. This is a non-MRC training course run by myself, Mike Brookes (Swaledale MRT), Val Cochrane (Glossop MRT), Ian Johnson & Sonya Jones (Bangor Hospital) with the aim of teaching new methods of giving strong pain relief to casualties so that our previous gold standard of intramuscular (IM) morphine is slowly replaced by better techniques. The first course was held at Plas y Brenin in December and further courses are planned in the North East and Peak District in 2008. Participants need to be Casualty Carers that are ready to move on from IM morphine, so it's not for everyone particularly as there is homework before the course! We look at fentanyl lozenges, intranasal diamorphine and intravenous morphine, discuss the pros and cons and related issues such as treating nausea and vomiting, and respiratory depression. With ongoing local medical support, participants should be able to deploy their chosen technique in the field. We are hoping to set up a national audit to assess these new techniques by using a standard pain scoring system. This is really very exciting and an important piece of work to improve the care of our casualties.

**John Ellerton**  
MRC Medical Officer

**A request was made at a recent MRC meeting that the discussions of the 'executive' meetings be circulated. So here we are...**



...Tony said he'd like a steak sandwich with chips, Mike asked for the same. Penny said she wasn't very hungry but would have a ham sandwich. Ewan didn't know we were going to eat and would like chicken and chips. Andy asked for a steak sandwich without chips...

For a serious account of these meetings see page 13.

# Are you competent to inspect their equipment?



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The Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show in March was a roaring success for Mountain Rescue in general and Basecamp in particular. This year's event felt so much more buzzy than previous events, when footfall had seemed to be dropping year on year. But no, with zip wires screeching over our heads, aspirant cavers jumaring up and down imaginary caverns behind us and the unfailing magnetism of that big, shiny yellow thing (eyes right) there was definitely a buzz about the Mountain Rescue stand.

This was the first time Cave Rescue and SARDA had joined us at the event, and – as is ever the case – our four legged friends took centre stage drawing oohs and ahs in equal measure to the Hummer. So thanks to Ordnance Survey for giving us a corner space big enough to accommodate the two vehicles (Edale also had a team vehicle on display), plus ten or so mountain rescuers, a dog a day and a mini gazebo housing a variety of merchandise. OS had also supplied two complimentary tickets per team, prior to the event, and it was good to be visited throughout the weekend by colleagues, and their families, from across England and Wales.

The Hummer has been donated for a year, to be shared amongst a number of teams. Without doubt, the most hopeful question of the weekend (besides 'How many miles does it do to the gallon?') was whether this was actually a raffle prize... sadly not the case. But perhaps it's something we should think about? No pressure there then Hummer!

We were also able to deliver several presentations about the work we do. Andy Simpson and Graham Dalley (Rossendale &

Pendle MRT) gave an overview, and explained how to go about joining a rescue team; Bob Davey (Edale MRT) went through the life cycle of an incident; and John Coombs and Biscuit (the real star of the show) talked about search dogs.

As for Basecamp, the support group set up last year, it was great to see many who signed up at last year's show come back to say hello and give some very positive feedback about the magazine. And, of course, to welcome the ninety plus new members who joined our ranks this year. Basecamp membership now totals 200 and counting. A massive thanks to Burton McCall and Victorinox for their continuing support of MR, not least in the provision of a very sexy Altimeter Swiss Army Knife (worth £60) as a free gift to anyone signing up at the weekend. What that little beauty won't do isn't worth having!

Neil and I took the opportunity to chat to Matt Swaine, editor of Trail magazine, and he has agreed to dedicate their Trail for Sale feature to Basecamp for a year, starting in January 2009. They will also give us regular newsbites to promote the support group – which we hope will help spread the word and swell the membership.

We also met with walkingworld.com (not before having circumnavigated the entire show several frustrating times to find them, so incomprehensible was the floorplan – but more on that in a moment). The site is an online resource for walkers, which also encourages those new to the hills to extend their adventures with more than 4000 routes, contributed by over 200 walkers from around the country. The walks come in a unique format making them very easy to follow, with photographs to illustrate every important decision point and an OS map, so it's well worth checking out the site. We can already thank them for a clutch of new members who approached us following an item they ran promoting support membership.

It was good to meet our friends from the Orange House, who last year raised a substantial sum for mountain rescue in the UK with their Hard Rock Challenge. And, by happy coincidence, we were positioned next to HF Holidays, who have agreed to pop a Basecamp leaflet in every hotel room, in every outlet they travel to.

So where to next? 'Our aim is to continue increasing the Basecamp membership,' said Neil Roden, 'and the Outdoors Show has certainly

HUMMER MEETS VICTORINOX AT THE OUTDOORS SHOW



given us a good start. The idea is not just to raise funds to support all teams in England and Wales but to raise awareness of our work amongst walkers and climbers. So spread the word to your friends on the hill.'

And finally, thanks to all those who supplied some covetable prizes for the raffles on Saturday and Sunday – specifically Towsure, Warwickshire Clothing, Aquapac, Vaude, Jordans, Yoeman Outdoor Leisure, Activ8.com, Regatta, DMM, Montane, Nikwax, DemandDVD, Silva, Paramo, Keela, Oswald Bailey and Ellis Brigham.

So that was the Outdoors Show 2008. Plans and ideas are already taking shape for next year's event. Which brings me round to the only beef I have about the whole thing (echoed by others I met and, I feel sure, by many members of the public) – please can we have a floorplan diagram that's easier to read. I know my eyes might not be what they once were but, even with the 20:20 of my youth, I'd have been hard pushed to read the seemingly 0.5 point type on some of the smaller stands. Beef over! Great event OS – thanks for having us! Hope to see you next year.

Judy Whiteside Editor



walkingworld.com

We'd love Basecamp members to tell us their own personal experience of mountain rescue, here in the mag. So why not email [editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk) with your stories and images and watch this space in future issues?



▲ RAFFLE PRIZES DONATED BY OUR FELLOW EXHIBITORS

## Madillo - the new lightweight helmet from Edelrid

When you're out on a shout you certainly have enough to carry in terms of both weight and size, so anything to lighten your load is to be welcomed. And that's where the new Edelrid Madillo helmet comes in. Weighing in at just 380g, it's not only super lightweight but folds up as well, reducing the helmet's volume by 50% to take minimal room in or on your sack.

Manufactured, of course, to conform to EN12492, the Madillo shell is made from high strength, abrasion and impact resistant injected material. Two sorts of foam are utilised in the interior, EPP in the upper shell for its

shock absorption properties and EVA is used around the sides for comfort. The Madillo adjusts from 52cm to 62cm – easily achieved by gently pressing on the back of the helmet whilst in place on the head. The design of the rear of the helmet protects the neck, especially when the wearer is looking down. Oh... and it looks pretty good too!

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## LAKE DISTRICT

### WERE WE VICTIMS OF OUR OWN SUCCESS? WHAT HAVE WE DONE ABOUT IT?

Richard Warren writes... In the last issue we reported a significant increase in the numbers of call outs involving walkers venturing onto the Lakeland fells ill prepared, ill equipped, and lacking experience. The trend was a worrying one and something needed doing to halt the increase. The MR(E&W) national campaign to educate inexperienced walkers began in December 2007 with the partnership with Where-wolf grid reference finder cards, reported separately in this regional round up. The campaign came to a head during the last weeks of January when the national media

latched onto newspaper headlines 'Recruitment Crisis for Mountain Rescue Teams in the Lake District' and the tragic winter walking fatalities on Helvellyn. A number of the Lakes teams were approached to give interviews for radio, television, magazines and newspapers. On 18 January the message 'Map + Compass + Torch + Know how to use' was reiterated throughout national media, heard or seen by over 20 million listeners and viewers. But has this level of publicity worked? The stats for the Lake District are now in and 2007 has been the worst year on record for incidents. 428 call-outs concerning 557 people compared to 395 in 2006 – an 8% increase although it is not evenly spread across the twelve team areas. Wasdale MRT saw a massive 50% increase and Cockermouth 15% up on the previous year. Incident stats for 2007 are also in for England and Wales. North Wales reports a 4% increase in incidents and similar numbers of people rescued to those of 2006. Are the mountains becoming more popular, more accessible or just promoted more on the television?

At the time of writing (4 March) the Wasdale team were already experiencing a 30% increase on last year's incidents, having already taken twentyone '999' calls, nineteen of which required team members on the hill. Three of these occurred over a single weekend. Langdale Ambleside also seem to be spending more time on Crinkle Crags than anywhere else on their patch. The cause – ill prepared, ill equipped, ill experienced. Interestingly one of the their call outs, which occurred within ten days of the media reports, was due to an 'experienced' pair of walkers who were overdue, caught out by darkness whilst on Crinkle Crags. They had no torches but made their way slowly down the mountain by the glow from their mobiles until the Wasdale team found them, well down into Eskdale later that night. At least they were practising self-rescue and had not called the teams out themselves. So, what are we doing? LDSAMRA has partnered up with Cumbria Tourism to get the message across to visitors to the Lake District. Cumbria Tourism are sponsoring a booklet based safety campaign and also featuring mountain rescue on their website and in their Wainwright walks. They are even putting the MR(E&W) logo on the back of the buses which run between Kendal and Keswick, to make the public more aware of the voluntary nature of the service provided by mountain rescue. The messages are simple and clear – see left.

### THE WHERE-WOLF GRID REFERENCE CARD. 'GET ONE OR GET LOST'

The partnership with Where-wolf is progressing well but needs your help. The idea is to encourage members of the public and youth groups to buy these cards, which are no more than a simple and inexpensive aid to accurately estimating a grid reference. Once the person has bought a card, it quickly becomes obvious to them that they

will then need a decent map to get any benefit from it. This will then lead on to buying a compass and learning how to use it. Up to the end of February, Where-wolf had sold 648 of the special edition cards, generating over £300 for MR(E&W).

In addition, 100 of these were bought by an outdoor shop in Ambleside at £1 each, to be sold on at £2.50 with all profits to Langdale Ambleside MRT, and 100 by Wasdale/Cockermouth MRT. This method of purchase will bring in funding to the local teams rather than nationally and is something I would encourage you to do for your own team.

So, how can you get these cards, help the national campaign and raise some funding for your own team? If you visit the Where-wolf website and give Jenny a ring, let her know you are a bona fide mountain rescue team or mountain rescue team supporter, and she will arrange delivery at £1 a card for minimum orders of 100 cards (if you only want to buy 50, why not share the cost with an adjacent team). To get the most out of the campaign you should approach your local outdoor shops and ask them to sell them on their counters – they can buy direct from Where-wolf.

The national fundraising team are currently exploring the idea of getting these cards on all the Blacks counters. From a local perspective, I paid a visit to Rheged in January and spoke to their manager. They were happy to get in touch with Jenny and buy 300 there and then, with hardly any arm twisting required. When you have a good cause it is very easy to sell them. To find out more, just visit [www.where-wolf.com](http://www.where-wolf.com). You never know you might just save a life and, I am sure, reduce the growing number of 'avoidable call outs'. The next phase of the campaign is to expand the partnership with other safety related outdoor items such as torches, maps and compass and first aid kits (the ones shown on their site currently fall outside the campaign as they are not yet endorsed by Mountain Rescue but are being trialled by Where-wolf to test the level of interest). If you have any questions or comments on this article, or indeed any of the Lake District articles or statements, please contact me and I will ensure you receive a response.

### KESWICK'S THIRST RESCUE BEER REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

Keswick Brewing Co is set to go national with its support for mountain rescue, with the help of **Keswick MRT** and a launch event to be held during the Keswick Mountain Festival in mid-May. As the mountain festival is sponsored by Jennings Cumberland Ale, brewed in nearby Cockermouth, their local team may well be invited to join in the



proceedings, adding a little competitive edge to the fun. Details of the event are being kept strictly under wraps while the safety and feasibility are assessed!

Keswick Brewery was approached in early 2007 by the Keswick team to brew a special beer for the team's 60th anniversary. Phil and Sue Harrison at the brewery had been looking for an imaginative way to support the work of the team, so this was an opportunity not to be missed and the idea of 'Thirst Rescue' was born. Sue takes up the story. 'We were really pleased to create a beer for this special occasion. We decided upon the recipe and took up the team's suggestion for the name, Thirst Rescue\*. To start with, we made a small quantity



to try in a local pub until we knew how well it would sell, but we soon needed to make another brew! We were really pleased with the positive response we had to the beer, all the more so as we were also celebrating the first anniversary of Keswick Brewing Co.' (\*Almost all of the brewery's beers are prefixed 'Thirst', following a mix-up with the printers in the early days. The very first beer was to be called 'First Run' but, over the phone... well, you can guess!) The 4% ABV, malty bitter – with its golden colour and a balance of spicy hops – was launched to coincide with the inaugural Keswick Mountain Festival, in May 2007. During the last year, Thirst Rescue has sold up and down the country, all the way from Scotland to the Isle of Wight, raising the profile of mountain rescue, the Keswick team and the brewery. With so many pubs today having the flexibility to offer a guest beer it has proved to be a very popular choice.

Just one pub declined, fearing it might jeopardise the support and fundraising they provide to their local rescue team, which is fair enough. Sue has come up with a new idea for donations that overcomes this potential stumbling block, as pubs can also choose to support their local rescue team. The Dog & Gun in Keswick, where there are usually two or three Keswick Brewing Co beers on tap, regularly sold out during the summer of 2007 as it proved, so popular.

As planned, brewers Phil and Sue have since reinvented the Thirst Rescue recipe as they would like to add it to their permanent beer list. 'To complement our range, which includes many stronger and slightly darker beers, we've created a lighter, golden bitter at a lower strength of 3.7% ABV – a really good session ale. We've combined three types of malt and blended five types of hops, to give a special, golden bitter with aromas of citrus and exotic fruit.'

The new recipe will be relaunched at the Dog and Gun. The existing, darker and stronger Thirst Rescue recipe will run at least until the spring, when the brewery celebrate their second anniversary and Keswick's 60th anniversary year finally draws to a close.

The brewery are donating 5p from every pint sold of the new recipe beer. 'We hope some pubs will also contribute by matching or beating our donation.' The donation from the brewery can go to the regional body, MR(E&W) or Scotland. Any contribution from the pub itself can go to their local team or a team of their choosing or simply be added to the regional or national donation.

'The Dog and Gun in Keswick has a long history of supporting the Keswick team. They hope to put on Thirst Rescue as a regular beer and have already said they will match our 5p per pint donation!' added Phil Harrison.

The team are delighted that the beer can be sold and supported in this imaginative way to benefit rescue teams all over the country and not just in Keswick. The picture on the pump clips will be updated for the Thirst Rescue relaunch in May to reflect the wider MR community. Look out for it in a pub near you – or why not ask your local to get some in? Cheers!

### PENRITH VEHICLE SEEKS NEDDY TEAM

In May 2007 **Penrith MRT** set itself the ambitious target of raising a sum sufficient to fund the purchase of three new vehicles to replace the existing fleet. Through a combination of fundraising events, an unexpected bequest and two generous sponsors the team is close to achieving its

## DATES 2008

**MR(E&W) SUBCOMMITTEES, AGM AND BUSINESS MEETING**  
 Places: 60  
 Date: Saturday 17 May  
 Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton.  
 Contact: Peter Smith  
 01706 852335  
 secretary@mountain.rescue.org.uk

**PARTY LEADER COURSE**  
 Places: 30  
 Date: Weekend 30 May/1 June  
 Location: Hebden Bridge  
 Contact: Mike Marsh  
 01204 696383  
 mjim@boltonmrt.org.uk

**SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT REFRESHER**  
 Places: 30  
 Date: Tuesday/Wednesday 26/27 August  
 Location: University of Wales, Bangor  
 Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE  
 3 Maes Tyddyn To, Menai Bridge  
 LL59 5BG  
 01248 716971

**SEARCH FIELD SKILLS**  
 Places: 30  
 Date: Thursday to Saturday 28-30 August  
 Location: University of Wales, Bangor  
 Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE. As above.

**SEARCH PLANNING & MANAGEMENT**  
 Places: 40  
 Date: Sunday to Thursday 31 August to 4 September  
 Location: University of Wales, Bangor  
 Contact: Dr ASG Jones MBE. As above.

**UK MR CONFERENCE**  
 Places: 250+50 for speakers  
 Date: Weekend 5-7 September  
 Location: Stirling University  
 Contact: Peter Howells OBE  
 01633 254244  
 plhowells@plhowells.fsnet.co.uk

**EQUIPMENT INSPECTION DAY**  
 Places: 24  
 Date: Sunday, Autumn  
 Location: Oldham MRT HQ  
 Contact: John Edwards  
 01457 870734  
 jmemr@fsmail.net

**MR(E&W) SUBCOMMITTEES AND BUSINESS MEETING**  
 Places: 50  
 Date: Saturday 15 November  
 Location: Lancs Police HQ, Hutton.  
 Contact: Peter Smith. As above.

**TEAM LEADERS MEETING**  
 Places: 50  
 Date: Saturday 6 December  
 Location: Rishworth  
 Contact: Peter Smith. As above.



### What If... I get lost?

- \* Retrace your steps back to a known point on the map.
- \* Use map and compass to navigate yourself down.
- \* Seek help from other passing walkers.
- \* Do not follow streams down to the valley bottom unless you are sure there are no hidden waterfalls and ravines.
- \* If you are totally lost and in danger shout for help, 6 blasts on your whistle or 6 flashes with your torch.
- \* If no help is available and you are not equipped to safely get down, wait for visibility to clear or morning to break... if you are at serious risk, as a last resort use your mobile.
- \* Dial '999' and ask for POLICE then MOUNTAIN RESCUE.
- \* Give details of who you are, how many in your group and their condition, where you have been and describe your location.
- \* Wait to be contacted by the mountain rescue team and do not move unless asked to do so.
- \* Make yourself safe and keep out of the wind and rain.

## News from DMM

New DMM products are heading to the shops very soon, including the long awaited Offset Nuts (formerly made by HB Climbing). The Locking Revolver has been in great demand and is now available in all three locking versions. Also the new range of harnesses is also going to be available in the second week of February. The Renegade and Maverick now come in three sizes and benefit from Quick Buckles. The Viper is an excellent entry level harness which also has Quick Buckles, three sizes but no floating waistbelt. For the younger climber we also have a full body harness (Tomkitten) and a kid's sit harness (Tomcat). New chalkbags and ropebags complete the latest offerings for the Spring 2008.

Check out our website for details of the new forging press we are installing. It is a massive statement of our intent to not only maintain our manufacturing base here in Llanberis, but to enhance it, and make ourselves more efficient in production. For more information about our products please visit [www.dmmwales.com](http://www.dmmwales.com)



REVOLVER SCREWGATE



fundraising target and has placed orders for two modified Land Rover 110s and a modified Renault Master van. Now they wish to share their good fortune with any team that's in need of a vehicle but short of funds. They are offering one vehicle from the existing fleet free of charge to the first deserving team that contacts them. The vehicle will be available from the first week of June and interested teams should contact the team chairman. The Land Rover Defender 110s are modified for MR use and carry blue lights and livery but are over twenty years old. The LDV Minibus is likewise liveried and fitted with blue lights and is some thirteen years old. All three vehicles are low mileage.

Penrith MRT emphasise that the vehicles are being offered for use by another team, not for selling on! If interested, contact team chairman Peter Baker at Isobella Carlton House, Tynefield Drive, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 8JA. Telephone 01768 88286 or mobile 07 999 777 609.

## MID PENNINE

### TEAM LEADER GETS MBE

**Bolton MRT** team leader Garry Rhodes was awarded the MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours list. In his time with the team, he has attended more than 900 incidents, but says the one which stands out most was a helicopter crash on Brinscall Moor near Chorley in February 2000 when he was part of the first ground rescue team to reach the scene only to discover the three people on board had died. 'It was the first time I had seen the aftermath of a plane crash and it was horrible,' he said. A more lighthearted moment came when team members were called out as they were attending a Roman-themed fancy dress party. They rushed to the incident – a man who was injured after falling into the River Croal – still wearing togas beneath their waterproofs and make up. Soggy bedsheets all round then?

### EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTRE READY FOR ACTION

North West Ambulance Service Trust opened its new Emergency Control Centre at Broughton near Preston in January, a development which should prove key to the working relationship between mountain rescue and the ambulance service in Lancashire and Cumbria. The impressive facility, now one of the best in the country, aims to significantly improve the service to the customer. Key factors include improved speed and quality call handling, and a pledge to work in a more integrated way with their partner organisations. A dedicated Community First Responder/Mountain Rescue and Basics Doctor Desk will be responsible for deploying those resources. Once Call Connect is complete in April, the desk will also manage deployment of the Air Ambulance. The centre is now looking at developing new ways to deploy community first responders, utilising new communications methods.

## PEAK DISTRICT

### OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

**Buxton MRT** put their replacement frontline operational response vehicle into service in January and was en route to its first callout on the same day. The new Land Rover 110, which was funded by public donations, was delivered to the team in September 2007 and underwent significant conversion and fitting out. The result is a first class, off road vehicle capable of carrying all the necessary rescue equipment and five team members to an accessible position closest to a casualty site. Fitted with modern communication systems and incident lighting equipment, the vehicle can also safely transport a casualty on a stretcher down rough tracks to meet a waiting land or air ambulance. The Land Rover is also the first mountain rescue vehicle in the country to feature a unique roof loading system permitting safe carriage and dismounting of rescue equipment. Much of the conversion work was done by team members but was completed with the generous co-operation of several local suppliers and specialists.

Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) negotiated a scheme direct with Land Rover enabling mountain rescue teams to receive a substantial discount and Buxton were one of the first teams in the country to benefit from that. Purchase of the vehicle, which meets all the new ambulance and emergency vehicle regulations, was only possible with a great deal of public support and generosity. The team wish to say a big thank you to all those who contributed and particularly to the major sponsors, the Bingham Trust, Buxton Mayoral Charity, BT, Britannia Building Society Foundation, the Steele Charitable Trust and High Peak Borough Council which together raised the required £35,000.

Within twelve hours of the vehicle being declared ready for action the first callout of the year was received with both Buxton and Edale rescue teams responding to a call for help from a group of five people stranded in bad weather and darkness on Kinder Scout. One member of the group was suffering a medical problem so all the new vehicle's equipment was tested to the full as the lady was carried to safety.

The team responds on average to over seventy call outs a year so the cost of the new vehicle will be quickly justified and many patients will be grateful for all the public help and generosity that have put it on the road.

### PRIDE IN OLDHAM

**Oldham MRT** have won a Pride in Oldham Award for their work. The awards, sponsored by an impressive list of local companies and judged by an independent panel, pay tribute to the people and organisations that go the extra mile for the borough and its people. 'Being nominated in the first place', says the team's quarterly Bulletin, 'was both a pleasure and a surprise. Being told we had been chosen as one of the top prize winners along with an invitation to a special luncheon was a bigger one.'



## Inspired Bungee

What happens when a hobby inspires an idea, the idea becomes a range of products and these products lead to a successful business? Well... at some point, it's time to give something back.

This is certainly the case with Slidetite. A near accident with an old fashioned bungee cord whilst packing for a holiday led to the invention of a fully adjustable hook. In no time at all, Slidetite became a full range of products which guarantee you can secure loads of any size rapidly, safely and securely. Soon Slidetite products were circumnavigating the globe, being used by experts at the North Pole, South Pole and all points between.

Slidetite's owners, Pete and Anne Nolan, felt it was time to give something back. Being passionate hikers they were well aware of the work done by mountain rescue. The summer floods of 2007 brought the message even closer to home – Slidetite is based just outside Gloucester. This led to a collaboration with a Land Rover magazine to donate mini Slidetite Flood Kits to multiple mountain rescue and other rescue organisations across the UK. (See last issue of MR Magazine.)

A current competition in 'Land Rover Monthly' could lead to your team getting a bumper Slidetite kit! The competition is based on 'get one give one'. Winners get a bumper Slidetite kit for themselves and one is donated to a mountain rescue team of their choice. The competition ends on 30 April so keep an eye out for a parcel in the post!

To find out more about Slidetite, call 0141 416 3639 or email sales@slidetite.com.



Five team members attended the lunch, which turned out to be a glittering event delivered in a highly professional manner that would have done justice to any Oscars ceremony. The award was presented between the lunch courses and the three finalists in each group received a specially produced Oldham Chronicle 'Front Page' in a gilt frame. The presenters then opened a gold envelope to announce the category winner. 'For the group winner,' ran the spiel, 'the winners are... (a short pause is customary here)...' then

'Oldham Mountain Rescue Team', followed by the judges' comments that the team 'are an Oldham institution whose round the clock availability has saved many lives over the years. Worthy winners.' The trophy was then presented to delighted (understatement!) team members by John Sheridan, manager of Oldham Athletic FC.

## SOUTH WALES

### BIG BLACK MOUNTAINS CHALLENGE

Once again **Longtown MRT** will be running their Big Black Mountains Challenge on Saturday 17 May, sponsored by Trekkitt Mountain Sports and Cotswold Outdoor, all proceeds going to the team. For details of the three challenging walks/runs send a stamped addressed envelope to Big Black Mountains Challenge, Longtown MRT, PO Box 120, Abergavenny NP7 7WU.



## SOUTH WEST

### DARTMOOR RESCUE TRAINING WEEKEND, 14-16 NOVEMBER

**DRG** welcome all members of rescue teams to this annual training weekend, which is both a vehicle for sharing skills and an opportunity to enjoy ourselves. In their fortieth anniversary year, the team hope this event will build on the success of last year's event and bring the biggest training weekend ever. The plan is to make things even more interesting – no details of how as yet! The cost to all is £15, which covers the cost of the event including food, accommodation and other expenses. For further details and an application form, please contact Phil Hayter on drg.gensec@blueyonder.co.uk.



## Star dog joins Inland Search and Rescue Team

The Isle of Man Inland Search and Rescue team has a new member. Two year old collie Star, trained by Isle of Man Civil Defence volunteer training officer Jim MacGregor, has qualified as a novice lowland search dog, following a weekend of assessments by the search and rescue dogs organisation in Wales.

Jim, a geography teacher at St Ninian's High School in Douglas, started training Star when she was a twelve week old puppy.

He explained, 'The training is very play-driven, incorporating finding people using a scent for the reward of a toy. Star can now work in any location – mountain, coastal, woodland or parkland – anywhere on the Isle of Man.'

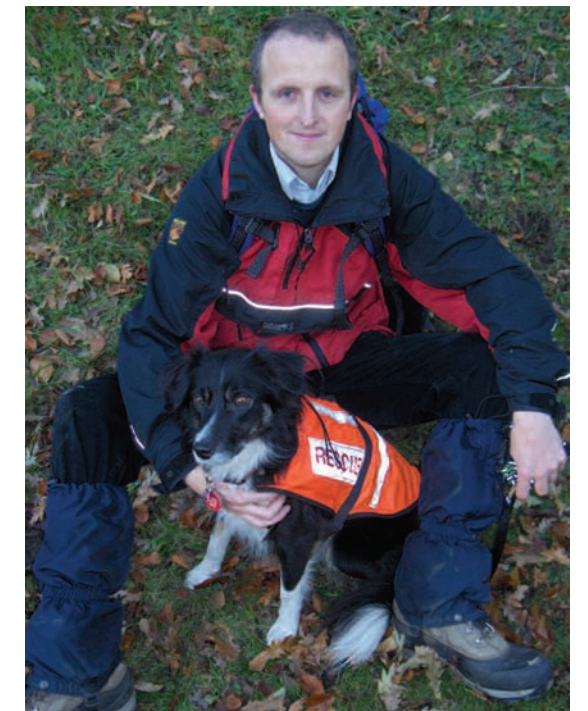
Star's assessment involved three tests over two days. Each time she had to find a body in a different location. 'She's now suitable to work on all Isle of Man terrain and will be reassessed in a year's time,' Jim went on. 'What makes her technique different from other dogs is the way she indicates a find – she'll go to the body, shuttling between me and the find until she gets us together.'

Star is IOM Inland Search and Rescue's second qualified search dog joining Lola, trained by former coastguard volunteer Matt Creer who recently took up a post with the IOM Constabulary.

The Island's Emergency Planning Officer Martin Blackburn, Head of the IOM Civil Defence, said, 'Search and rescue dogs are a very useful asset to the emergency services. They can cover a lot of ground very quickly and there have been numerous occasions when search dogs have saved the lives of casualties in the UK.'

Jim has been a very dedicated member of the Civil Defence volunteers and made a great personal contribution in terms of the time and money he has spent to get Star to this standard. We are also grateful to the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, which assisted Jim and Star to travel to Wales for training and assessments, St Ninian's High School for its assistance and understanding, and to Jim's team of volunteer dog's bodies who are essential for her training.'

The Isle of Man Civil Defence currently has 45 volunteers who train weekly to ensure the island community has assistance to deal with major incidents ranging from a chemical or biological threat to floods and storm damage. They also undertake searches for missing persons including hill search and rescue. For more information on the island's search and rescue dogs, visit [www.sardaom.org](http://www.sardaom.org).



SEARCH DOG STAR WITH HANDLER JIM MACGREGOR

## A hybrid of perfection

In the last few years the word hybrid has been thrown around a lot. Hybrid cars, hybrid plants and hybrid golf. There is now a new hybrid on the scene – the amazing new Scuffer Trousers by Keela. Constructed from our latest Stretch-Tec Advanced fabric, this latest innovation by Keela is half climbing, half walking, 100% outdoor trouser. Tailor fitted using action ergonomics to ensure maximum wearer comfort all day long, the Scuffer trousers are water repellent with 'feel it to believe it' quick-drying properties and special built in ankle reinforcement to prevent boot rub. Designed to be the ideal year round choice for outdoor enthusiast this hybrid combination has led to the perfect balance of outdoor requirements. Perfection has arrived.

Like what you've read? Send and email with your details to [competition@keela.co.uk](mailto:competition@keela.co.uk) and you will be automatically entered into a lottery draw for a chance to win a pair of Scuffer Trousers for yourself.

prize draw



# team profile. Bowland Pennine



Words by David Allan and Phil O'Brien

apparent. In fact two teams were born, both Preston based. The South Ribble MRT and the Northern Rescue Organisation operated side by side until 1980 when their merger produced the current team. This was an amicable merger proving to be of great benefit all round and many members of the original teams are still involved. No fewer than seventeen people in the team are the recipients of long service awards. In 2005 the team received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

Bowland Pennine MRT arguably has the largest geographical area of any team in England and Wales. Penrith team might well contest the point and there is no doubt both have large pieces of territory to cover. What must be less in dispute is the very diverse terrain in which Bowland Pennine operates. Vast tracts of moorland with a few isolated crags, rivers, lakes, canal, climbing quarries, urban parkland and extensive salt marshes are all here.

The current membership totals 65, of whom 40 are on the active call out list, eight are trainees and the others carry out vital supporting roles. Fortunately, recruitment is not a problem and difficulties are not foreseen. Perhaps a major factor is the close proximity of Preston, Lancaster, Blackpool and Chorley as reservoirs of potential new members.

Phil has been team leader for three years, having taken over from Tony Bond who very successfully steered the ship during the previous ten years. His involvement with mountain rescue goes back for many years having, like so many others, come into rescue from the Venture Scout movement. As a youngster he was introduced to the outdoor world by his father also a Scout leader and associate of Dave Lewis a well-known member of Bridgend MRT. His move from scouting to rescue occurred over a weekend when he found that his group in Carlisle had chosen to go on the hill with Ged Feeney and Penrith MRT. He decided to go along and find out more and, within a short time, was an active member of Penrith MRT. After three years, a move south meant leaving Penrith and joining Bowland Pennine. Quite quickly he became training officer, then deputy team leader for eleven years before taking on his current role. Team leaders are appointed for periods of three years with a maximum of three stints.

His job is made easier by having a strong

supporting cast, among them ex-Royal Marine Phil Hill as training officer and Iain Nicholson also prominent with radio communications.

Covering such a large area is made easier by having excellent working relations with adjacent teams, especially Kendal to the north and Rossendale and Pendle to the east. Regular joint training, which has also involved Holme Valley, Bolton and recently the Isle of Man teams, makes for smooth and seamless operations across nominal boundaries.

Within the team, special skill groups are recognised. There is a strong SARDA presence with three dogs in training. The policy is to involve dogs in every search call out. The team often calls on handlers from Kendal and the Cave Rescue Organisation. Iain Nicholson has also been having early success with using a dog in a trailing capacity, one of only two qualified handlers in the country, and it will be interesting to see this develop.

A crag unit of twelve climbers keep a full 'pick off' kit with them at all times. This is essential because of the widespread locations of crags and quarries. Individuals are thus able to make their way directly to the incident saving valuable time before they can be backed up by a full quota of team members.

An innovative group is the cycle unit of four members. There are within the patch many easy access paths through forestry, remote valleys, Roman roads and alongside the canal. A very rapid search of these can be achieved by using mountain bikes. At present the members of this group use their own bikes but the intent, now that it has proved its worth, is to have customised team bikes. More work for the fundraisers. (This should not be a problem if the article by Paul Durham in the last magazine is recalled!)

Another new idea which has yet to come to fruition has been the trial of 'tracking teams'. There have been a few problems with this but work is to go on to try and resolve the obstacles. The aim is to improve searching skills and clue awareness.

Search management is important and Phil has attended the national course in Bangor. Other members have also completed the missing from home managers course with Lancashire police. The team delivers a session on this annual course on the use and search abilities of MR teams in general.

Currently the team does not have its own doctor. Training in casualty care is however well provided by paramedics within the team and Robert Stokes, team doctor with Rossendale and Pendle, has been able to help out with examinations and assessments. The team strives to hold a casualty care course every year so there is always a regular medical skills refresh.

Along with many other teams across the country there has been growing awareness of the dangers of proximity to water during searches. It is believed that the riskiest area in which the team have been called to work is

the Ribble salt marshes and the team was called to the Morecambe Bay cockling tragedy. In addition the Lancaster canal and a collection of rivers, lakes and reservoirs are scattered across the patch. There is now an active programme to train ten members each year in water safety and again there is work for the fundraisers to provide the appropriate equipment.

Looking at the large area covered it is not surprising to find there are three team bases, although the one in Preston is basically a garage to keep a vehicle in the south of the territory. The new building in Garstang now houses vehicles and most of the equipment. It is also being progressively developed to accommodate meetings and training sessions. There is clearly a lot of work to be carried out but the building is perfectly located and the enthusiasm with which it is being developed leaves no doubt it will be completed to meet all requirements. Its size and convenient location also make it another ideal venue for meetings such as the national team leaders' meetings and the team would clearly be delighted to host such occasions.

Smelt Mill in the midst of the moorland is an example of astute forward planning. Having started with ownership of one of four terraced cottages the team now own all four plus a recent extension to house a vehicle. This is an almost unique base within mountain rescue, providing residential accommodation as well as an operating base and training facilities including a new climbing wall. The facilities are well used both within mountain rescue for team and regional training, and also by a number of related groups such as DofE. There is, however, unused capacity at Smelt Mill and the team would be delighted to see more use of the building by other mountain rescue bodies for training or meetings. The situation is ideal, with nothing but the prospect of hill and moorland in all directions and a collection of wildlife that keeps the RSPB interested. It is no surprise to find awards, such as that from the Lancashire Environmental Fund, displayed on the walls.

Phil is very confident of the team's ability to continue to deliver a high level of service into the foreseeable future and this confidence seems well placed. There are things he

believes can be improved. There is always the opportunity for better interteam training and working and the same applies to working with other services, especially in the realms of carrying out searches.

He is impressed with the GPS mapping that David Binks has developed and, having used this in anger, believes it will play a much greater part in many incidents.

Lastly it is pleasing to note the active involvement of the team with regional and national matters. The team has long standing members on the equipment and financial sub-committees in Pete Taylor and Ian Ordish respectively. Simon Harris chairs the GIS/GPS Group. At regional level, the team currently provides chair and training officer. The Mid Pennine representatives to the MRC have been regularly provided by Bowland Pennine and have participated in determining the course of mountain rescue as a whole.

TEAM LEADER PHIL O'BRIEN

TEAM ON EXERCISE ON ANGLEZARKE MOOR - NOTE USE OF TELESCOPIC LADDER FOR EASY ACCESS DOWN INTO THE MANY GULLIES IN AREA



TEAM HQ AT SMELT MILL PHOTO: DAVID MILLINGTON PHOTOGRAPHY LTD

Phil O'Brien was very unassuming about the relatively 'non-mountainous' nature of some of the patch but as we emerged from the Smelt Mill base into a freshening wind with rain and low cloud scudding over miles of deserted featureless moor the prospect looked daunting and as 'mountainous' as many higher hills in the country.

During 1962-63, the need for rescue services in this region of the Pennines became

## 'Executive meetings'

Although this term is in common usage, it is in fact incorrect. It is wrong for two reasons. Firstly, the group has no executive power to make decisions. This is entirely the remit of the main MRC meetings. Secondly, even the term 'executive officer' is a misnomer as this does not strictly exist and individuals do not have the powers implied by the label.

The meetings have, in fact, become occasions when MRC officers with various responsibilities can look at their areas of activity, compare notes and knock ideas about. Initially the meetings were arranged around the MRC meetings to ensure any necessary information was available and also to determine how decisions of the main meetings would be carried forward.

The membership at the outset was historic rather than rational. Some officers were included, others not. We have now moved to a position where all appointed officers are invited and the size of the meeting has significantly increased, which does have disadvantages in respect of time.

The frequency of meetings has been increased as it became apparent during 2007 that many issues were being carried over without the time to address them fully. There are now six meetings during the year. Some of these will be specific to topics such as strategic planning which is one of the subjects always postponed in a reactive rather than pro-active environment.

Formal detailed minutes are not kept but notes of the main pointers are recorded especially in relation to matters being referred from or to the main meetings.

So what has been discussed in recent meetings? In January a detailed look at anticipated financial positions was considered. In the past this was never necessary because a paucity of central money left little or no opportunity for planning to spend. The cautious success of national fundraising to date has changed the picture and we can now consider making suggestions about how monies will be used. In relation to this, the value of, and requirement for, national training events was aired. With the imminent appointment of a training officer it was suggested one of the first tasks of the post should be to answer these questions. Discussions also revolved around the potential savings that could be made by the central purchasing of items common to most teams' use.

The constitution has also occupied some time. There are pressing reasons from a Charity Commission perspective why some changes are necessary and it seems appropriate to consider the whole at the same time. There are the anomalies already referred to in respect of officers and some other matters of detail. Tony Rich will look at the discussion we held and turn this into proposals for change to be put to the main meetings.

The next meeting is the one which will look at strategic issues. Amongst these will be a detailed evaluation of our use (or not) of the website and how this might be improved. Each officer will be invited to present a five year outline of the aims, obstacles and demands of their area of involvement. There is always considerable cross over between the subcommittees' interests and this underlines one of the values of these meetings where these overlaps (and occasionally conflicts) can be aired and resolved.

It's our intention that the notes from these meetings will appear on the members section of the MRC website.

David Allan



# Criminal Records Bureau Checks

Mike France provides useful guidelines and background information for teams recruiting new members

What are the benefits for you as a rescue team of doing CRB checks? Well, it will tell you whether the person you are checking has been prosecuted for an offence with children, young people or vulnerable adults. But bear in mind, if someone has not been prosecuted it does not mean they have not committed an offence.

What other ways could you check the background of a person wishing to join your team without doing a CRB check?

Pick up two references, one from their current employer, and the other from a past employer. This also gives you the opportunity to let their employer know about our service, allowing the new member to get time off work to attend incidents. Only use a personal reference if they are a young person without a true work record.

Any employer that uses CRB checks will tell you it is only part of the checking process carried out on someone, it should never be the only check you do.

I hope all teams use a membership application form for new members. These should hold personal details such as next of kin, medical conditions, driving details and offences, if any. This document should be like any employment application form. It could have a section for references taken. It should be signed off to show they have been taken up, by whom and when.

If you decide as a team to take up CRB checks, here are some points to think about

**1:** CRB checks for volunteers are free (at the moment).

**2:** You need someone to countersign the applicant's form, your countersignature will need to be checked by the CRB and be given a countersigning number. This person's CRB check is more detailed than other checks because this person will be checking and recording the details given by the applicant on the CRB form. The countersignature will need to send their original documents to Liverpool for checking. Documents required are:-

- Passport
- Driving licence
- Birth certificate
- Marriage certificate
- P60 or P45
- Banking details

It's worth noting that CRB will not now let any organisation countersign if you are not checking more than fifty people per year, so you will need to use an umbrella group to do your checks. Question – would it be better for all the teams in your region to do checks through one person? *This would be a big job for that person.*

So you've decided you are going to do checks. Every existing member will need checking, then all new members, and this

check should be repeated every 'xxx' years – you will need to decide how often.

Team members will need to fill in the CRB application form, and provide three of the above list of documents for the countersigning officer to see, the officer will then take details from these papers. Only the countersigning officer can take these details from the original documents, copies will not do. The form will then be sent off to Liverpool for checking, which can take some weeks.

You need to remember once you have started this exercise you will need to keep it going. Within my region – PDMRO – we've looked at this in detail and have decided we are not going to do CRB checks for the following reasons.

Would/do we have members working with or giving medical care to children, young people or vulnerable adults on a one to one basis without any other person about? Maybe, but this would be very rare. I know it only takes one small window of opportunity for someone to strike but if you risk assess this, it is very low.

Would we have new members giving medical care or working with this group of people by themselves? I hope not.

We think the best way of checking new members is through references. And there are some good practices to follow if you are working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, as follows.

Under NO circumstances should mountain rescue team members:-

- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching in any form.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually proactive games including horseplay.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Let allegations made by a child or young person go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child 'even in fun'.
- Make sexist, racist or derogatory remarks.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or young people that they can do themselves.
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Use any physical demonstrations of affection.
- Take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- Take children to their home.

If any team member has any doubt about a colleague's behaviour or attitude towards children, young people or vulnerable adults, then it is vital these concerns are brought to the attention of their team leader and team chairman.

If you receive an allegation about a team member:-

- Immediately inform your team chairman.
- Record all the facts as you know them.
- Ensure no one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise.
- All allegations or suspicions must be referred immediately to the police.
- On receipt of a referral, the team chairman should liaise with the police who, in turn, will co-ordinate with social services.
- Internal discipline procedures should be instigated.
- Get support. Use your regional chairman or people like myself who are more than willing to give direction and advice, if and when required.

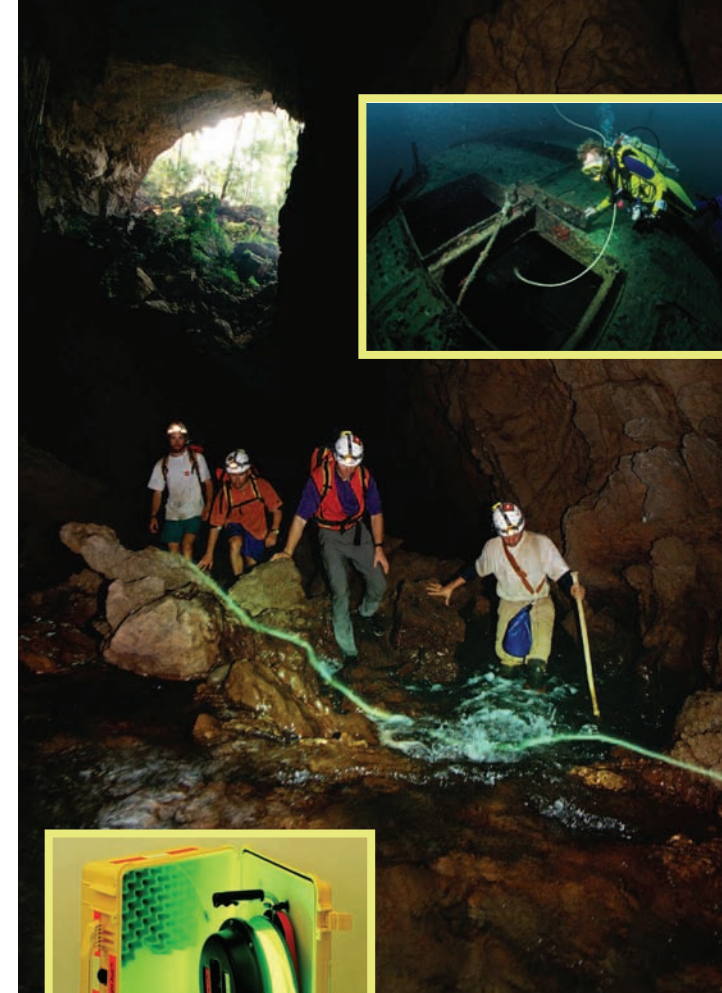
Mountain rescue is perceived by the community as a trusted public service with responsible adult people working in it. However members cannot rely on the good name of mountain rescue to protect them. It is vital that members involved with children, young people or vulnerable adults maintain a sense of vigilance and do not adopt the belief 'It could never happen to me.'

This paper has been put together to assist mountain rescue teams recruiting new members. I've included some 'good practice' members should adopt when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Bear in mind that other child care professionals may advise you differently – always seek advice if you are unsure.

Mike France is chairman of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation and child protection officer/CRB countersigning officer for National Children's Centre.

Childline: 0800 1111

## Light Roll Enhances the Way Rescue Teams Use Emergency Lighting



The Light Roll, a new emergency lighting concept using electroluminescent wire, provides a compact, flexible and portable lighting solution for emergency responders. Brought to the UK by Surelight, it's set to revolutionise the

way lighting is used on rescue missions, and help increase the capabilities of emergency services in a variety of different areas. A heavy duty cord reel carrying 50 metres of illuminated wire with a karabiner attached to the end, provides a completely portable lighting solution in any low light situation, including search and rescue missions, evacuations or diving.

Key features:-

- Powered by AA batteries (2 sets of 12)
- Life of up to 16 hours (based on two sets of batteries)
- Bright way guidance system and demarcation line
- Can be relocated quickly and easily to indicate the quickest and easiest path or exit, as well as indicating hazards.

It can be handled as easily as a typical cable reel, packing away into a compact, sturdy and portable case which protects the spool when not in use and will even float if lost overboard. The wire itself can be unwound, stepped on, bent, and tied many times without any damage and is also waterproof, allowing it to be used for underwater and diving applications. The Light Roll system is an incredibly versatile tool that aims to improve the overall safety of responders and survivors alike.

For further details please contact Katie Trowse, Sales and Marketing on +44 (0)114 236 1606, email [katie@olmec.co.uk](mailto:katie@olmec.co.uk) or check out [www.surelight.com](http://www.surelight.com).



Leaders in comfort and performance



## Warm as toast!



Base layer, mid layer, shell has been the conventional layering mantra for years. Consequently, most walkers and climbers carry a mid layer for extra insulation - more often than not a fleece jacket. However, this iconic piece of kit, carried for extra comfort and security is, in practice, often a serious weakness in the clothing system.

The wetter the fleece gets, the less it insulates and getting it on and off is a complicated and uncomfortable manoeuvre, especially in high winds and heavy rain or snow. Even if you can find a sheltered spot to remove your shell, you still lose most of the heat stored in your base layer - just the opposite of what's needed.

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Following the retirement of Paul Baxendale as webmaster, we urgently need to recruit someone with the necessary technical and interpersonal skills to take his place. You will be working with the Publications and Information Subcommittee (PISC) but expected to operate within a small group of experts, both technical and editorial, to take our website to the next level. Currently the MR(E&W) site and services are hosted from a server which is owned by us but sits in a computer room owned by Zetex plc in Oldham. They kindly provide this service, together with power, aircon, security, internet connectivity etc, free of charge as a service to the community. This is a unique position as it means we can do whatever we like, without incurring cost or having to work through an ISP.

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**If interested, please contact Andy Simpson at [press@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:press@mountain.rescue.org.uk) or call on 0161 764 0999 (W), 0161 764 5211 (H), 07836 717021 (M).**

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EXPLORER FLASHLIGHT

### Now you can enjoy the perfect hillwalkers' pint - bottled and kegged!



TRAIL READER BOB AVERY ENJOYS A BOTTLE OF TRAIL ALE ON A WALK TO ANGLE TARN

Trail magazine has bottled a new walkers' beer – Trail Ale – following the success of the draught version launched in November last year. Designed with the help of readers' suggestions, the ale is now on sale in 500ml bottles and 5 litre kegs. The unique hillwalkers' brew from the Great Gable Brewing Co is also still on tap at the Wasdale Head Inn. Head brewer Howard Christie describes Trail Ale as 'a light, bright, 3.8% alcohol, easily drinkable session ale designed to refresh and rehydrate thirsty mountaineers after a testing adventure.'

5p from every £3 bottle goes to Wasdale MRT and the kegs – retailing at £25 – will also raise money for the team, the exact amount to be decided soon. Team chairman Richard Warren said, 'Trail Ale on tap has already raised £540 for mountain rescue, and we are thrilled that beer-loving hillwalkers and climbers can continue to support us by buying the bottled version.'

Follow the instructions on the label on the back of the bottle, and you can get three copies of Trail magazine for just £3, saving you £8! Trail's editor Matt Swaine said, 'It's great for walkers to be able to support the Wasdale team while they celebrate their latest hillwalk with a pint, bottle or keg of Trail Ale from the Wasdale Head Inn.'





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# Preparing for the unexpected



When a major incident occurs how can you be sure your organisation is ready to respond efficiently and professionally? The key lies in ensuring all members of your response team are adequately trained and have exercised their skills in a safe learning environment. The Health Protection Agency's Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response provides exactly those conditions through its extensive training and exercise programme, all elements of which can be tailored to meet your requirements and at a cost to suit your budget.

The course gives an overview of the potential threats and the role of key players, using tailored case studies in an interactive way.

### Health Emergency Planning (Fast-track)

Building on the success of the Emergency Planning Officer's training modules for Acute and Mental Health Trusts, Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities, the HPA, in partnership with the Emergency Planning College, now offer this five day training course covering the principles of emergency preparedness and its relevance to the organisation, an understanding of the development of emergency plans and guidance on the internal audit and evaluation of emergency plans. The course is suitable for those who wish to enhance knowledge of health emergency planning procedures.

### Emergencies on Trial

This one day course provides an insight into giving effective evidence from the witness box, designed for all who deal with emergencies. Delivered by an experienced lawyer, delegates will learn their responsibilities and accountability at public inquiries and in proceedings when their actions are on trial.

### Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

GIS technology is increasingly used to bring together geographically referenced data (data that can be 'mapped') into an integrated system for emergency response and

situational awareness. This one-day course is designed to introduce delegates to the concepts of GIS and its applications in emergency response. It will provide an introduction to the types of commercial systems available, sources of data and types of analysis that might typically be used and delegates will have the opportunity to see an operational GIS in action.

### Exercises

The Health Protection Agency's Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response also offer bespoke exercises to test the responses of organisations during incidents. These are designed to meet the needs of your organisation in testing, both the staff and the emergency procedures and may cover a range of scenarios ranging, for example, from flooding to avian flu.

Previous clients have included the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales where exercises were developed to test responses to a deliberate release of biological agents, SARs and pandemic influenza.

In February 2007, the Agency was responsible for designing and facilitating 'Exercise Winter Willow', the largest command post/tabletop exercise ever held in the UK. This exercise was based on an influenza pandemic and tested the responses of over 5,000 personnel from across Government departments and allied agencies.

Other bespoke commercial exercises also included 'Exercise Phoenix' which was a two day command post exercise for the world famous bi-annual Farnborough International, the world's largest business air show. Exercise Phoenix tested the responses of the organisers and associated agencies to a series of incidents during the seven day event.

The exercise team who design and deliver bespoke exercises have a vast range of experience across the whole of the commercial spectrum, from small to medium sized enterprises through to multi-national companies across the globe. Exercises range from off the shelf products, tabletop, command post and communications, to live exercises of any size or complexity.

Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response, Health Protection Agency, Porton Down, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 0JG.

### Training

The Emergency Response Training Team delivers a range of courses which seek to improve the emergency services' ability to respond to incidents and emergencies.

Flexible solutions are offered where the length, structure, content and emphasis can reflect the needs and requirements of any client organisation. Bespoke courses such as those detailed, can be held in-house to assist both public and private sector organisations to equip themselves and prepare for the unexpected.

### Loggists' Course

A day and a half intensive course on the importance of evidential records and documents in any post-incident legal proceedings. Notes are reviewed using objective assessment criteria and constructive feedback is given to strengthen writing skills.



**For more information on these or any other training courses please contact the Training Team on 01980 619900. Fax 01980 612968. For the Exercises Team call 01980 619954 or email [emergencyresponse.training@hpa.org.uk](mailto:emergencyresponse.training@hpa.org.uk) or see the HPA website at [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)**

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Lastly a special thanks. Over the years, our UK course has had tremendous support from the Patterdale, Penrith and Keswick teams, as well as the air ambulance. Their knowledge and training has brought a real insight into remote medicine and has been inspirational for all our course attendees.

**Saturday 5 July 2008  
Rossendale Way in a Day**

A challenging 46 mile circular walk around the beautiful Rossendale valley. Also a Halfway linear walk of 22 miles. Entry £12.50 for adults, £7.50 for under-16s includes pie and pea supper, certificate and badge. All proceeds to Rossendale & Pendle MRT with the option to raise further sponsor money for the team. For further details contact Tim Richardson on [tim.richardson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tim.richardson@hotmail.co.uk)

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Safequip worked with a number of personnel within the emergency services in the development of the Rescue Pro, with one major goal being to achieve the new ISO12402-5 certification (Personal Flotation Devices), the new standard after EN393 was made obsolete for approval in March 2007. During the approval process, the Rescue Pro boasted up to an impressive 147N of buoyancy and gained its ISO certification in September 2007.

Success has followed since its launch with a number of high profile fire and rescue services purchasing the Rescue Pro for their operational activities. In fact, the PFD is rapidly becoming the market leader within this sector.

For further information on this product and all Safequip's other water rescue equipment please view our online catalogue on [www.safequip.co.uk](http://www.safequip.co.uk) or contact sales on 01786 478651 or email [sales@safequip.co.uk](mailto:sales@safequip.co.uk).



**Forthcoming Events**

**Saturday 17 May 2008  
Big Black Mountains Challenge**

Sponsored by Trekkitt Mountain Sports and Cotswold Outdoor, all proceeds going to Longtown MRT. Entry £15 for adults, £5 for under-16s includes tea and cakes and certificate on finish. For details of the three challenging walks/runs send a stamped addressed envelope to Big Black Mountains Challenge, Longtown MRT, PO Box 120, Abergavenny NP7 7WU or go to [www.longtownmrt.org.uk](http://www.longtownmrt.org.uk)

**Saturday 27 September 2008  
Nine Edges Endurance**

A 20 mile off road event over rough moorland and along gritstone edges, with about 600 metres height gain. Some navigational ability required. You choose whether you walk, run or climb the route, a traverse from Fairholmes to the Robin Hood pub near Baslow. Transport back to the start provided free. Entry £20 includes T-shirt and pint (or soft drink). All proceeds to Edale MRT with the option to raise further sponsor money for the team. For further details go to [www.nineedges.co.uk](http://www.nineedges.co.uk)



**Suspension trauma**

Steve Giles on harness induced pathology

What is suspension trauma? Well think of long hot days in June, you're watching the trooping of the colour at the Horse Guard parade ground in London and, for no apparent reason, one of the motionless guards suddenly collapses to the ground. Why would a normally fit and healthy soldier suddenly collapse?

Well for a start, the clue is in the word 'motionless'. The guardsman has been standing for quite some time without exercising his legs and using the body's lower limb muscles to aid the pumping of the blood back to the heart (venous return). So, in effect, the blood begins to pool. Blood that pools soon becomes oxygen free (stagnant hypoxia), and a natural build up of toxins, which are unable to be excreted, gathers in the lower limbs.

According to Dolan B & Holt L 2000 'this type of hypoxia can occur at a local level where vascular obstruction causes a reduction in blood flow distal to the obstruction'. This sudden collapse or pre-syncope condition is actually the body's own personal fall protection.

On at least two occasions I have experienced this phenomenon myself, once when I had been standing in the same position for what seemed like ages, on a practice with the Upper Wharfedale team. Fortunately, I was aware what was going on and shuffled about till the faintness subsided but, if it happened to me, it could just as easily happen to you!

The mechanics of suspension trauma? Basically, the venous return is affected, pooling of the blood occurs in the lower limbs due to gravity and loss of muscle pump, and this can consume a staggering 20% of the casualty's circulating volume. This soon leads to cerebral hypoxia which is fine if, like me, you were stood still in a safe place, once you collapse to the ground your blood auto transuses back into your circulatory system and you regain consciousness, a shift of that 20% back to where it is needed. However if you're stood near a rift, on a ladder, and not secured to any safety equipment the potential for disaster is raised.

Now add to this equation that you're a climber on a cragfast rescue, your harness is tight and ill fitting (too many out of date Mars bars!) and very narrow material. This begins to dig into your femoral veins and, after some time, begins to have a tourniquet affect on your lower body affecting your thoracic pressure. It's at this point that it moves from what was a simple faint (syncope) to a suspension trauma. It could be that the casualty is suspended vertically unconscious and/or injured, unable to move due to fear,

hypothermia or hypoglycaemic. There may be other factors putting you more at risk, include traumatic injury, causing hypovolaemia, dehydration and pain. Or he could be just old fashioned stuck?

Now add prolonged vertical suspension of over thirty minutes to what we have already discussed and a different problem arises altogether. The pathology of prolonged circulation deprivation can cause a build up of pressure, hazardous toxins and electrolyte imbalance. In essence it is similar to a prolonged crush injury, or compartment syndrome. The body contains many individual compartments and it's these that are affected. In the case of major femoral blood vessel obstruction, the worse case scenario is that toxins are released back into the blood stream without being diluted or a controlled release, which can cause global organ failure and death. This has been documented in the past in a totally innocent fashion, where the rescuer hasn't taken into consideration the pathology of the incident.

The groups at risk? First and foremost we are potentially at risk. Of course our casualties are at risk but, if we can identify early the potential hazard of this condition occurring, it's one more string to our bow when considering how best to initiate treatment of the casualty. Keep moving and don't have your harness too tight – remember the best protection is our own intellect.

Methods of extrication? If the suspension has been short in duration, less than thirty minutes, then a simple rescue lowering them to the ground and elevating the limbs would suffice. However this is unlikely, by the time the team is mobilised and arrives on scene, it could well be over forty minutes. So it at least warrants a passing thought.

Something to take into consideration when one suspects crush syndrome, associated with suspension trauma – according to Wyatt, Illingworth, Clancy, Munro & Robertson, 2004, 'symptoms depend on the underlying cause but muscle pain, tenderness and swelling may not be present at the time of admission'. They go on to say, 'adequate pulses distally do not rule out a compartment syndrome.'

If the casualty is found to have been there for over thirty minutes our treatment must take a fairly radical change. Try to keep

the casualty's head higher than his/her legs (let gravity keep the toxins in the lower limbs for now at least), avoid ischemic heart failure, and overloading of the right ventricle, by avoiding sudden venous return.

'The casualty must be returned to the horizontal position very slowly over a period of 30 minutes' ([www.remotemedics.co.uk](http://www.remotemedics.co.uk)). This minimises the effects of the toxins released back into the vascular spaces. In effect you are treating the casualty as though he/she has a crush syndrome injury.

The normal ABCs and primary survey need to be undertaken, plenty of observations written on the cascard. It is prudent to keep a track of time scales, when dealing with such a case. Furthermore, high concentration oxygen therapy needs to be initiated as soon as practically possible. If you have access to team paramedics, nurses or doctors, then initiate intravenous access and IV fluid management to assist in diluting the toxins on release and effective analgesia. On the worse case scenario the casualty may require resuscitation, so IV access is a must.

The most suitable method of casualty evacuation would be RAF SAR to a regional trauma unit.

The chance of us coming across a suspension trauma is slim and it is only a potential risk, however, it is still some thing to take into consideration next time you're just hanging about.

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*Steve Giles is an active member of Upper Wharfedale FRA and an ambulance paramedic, giving specialist support to the team in first aid and medical training.*

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## Thoughts on the casualty care exam

David Allan BSc FRCS on twenty five years of teaching and examination of casualty care in mountain rescue

More than 25 years have passed since mountain rescue in England and Wales decided to establish an in-house system for the teaching and examining in first aid relevant to usage on the hills. Although quite daunting in the early stages, the venture has proved to be immensely successful. In those early days we seemed to look for a thorough grounding in leg injuries, pain relief, hypothermia and a passing acquaintance with matters relating to medical conditions. Since then, the knowledge base has changed and expanded enormously and will undoubtedly continue to change as new information emerges.

The written paper is simply an exploration of this knowledge store. The format of the questions on the paper has progressively changed and, I think, improved. Although far from perfect it does continue to get better and the vast amount of work undertaken by those who write and collate the questions should be acknowledged. Most people who sit the written paper have little overall difficulty. The grasp of facts has largely progressed in step with the expanded knowledge base and the scores on the papers have steadily risen to reflect this. I do not believe there is any evidence that the questions have become easier.

The practical examination is a test of the ability to apply the knowledge to good purpose. This part of the examination causes much greater difficulties and virtually all those who fail, do so on this section. Any practical test has a certain aura of unreality with a play acting casualty whose skills in this department may vary. There is, however, good reason to believe that the stresses of an examination situation do bear close relation to those of a live situation and the ability to rationalise thoughts and actions is tested in the same way. Given this tenet then, the observations I make about the examination apply equally to the management of real casualties.

One of the unavoidable aspects of mountain rescue casualty care is the inherent delay in reaching the victim in most cases. In common with the examination this should allow time for some advanced thoughts. In particular, given the nature of the incident, a pecking order of probabilities can be mentally assembled. This requires a working knowledge of injury patterns. There are a finite number of damages that result from a fall on the outstretched hand, for example, and a fall onto the heels is likely to lead to a regular pattern of possibilities. Having a good grasp of the mapping of injuries makes the task of establishing a diagnosis so much easier.

Another advantage of the inherent delays is the fact that most casualties will have reached a degree of stability allowing for careful evaluation rather than immediate hurried intervention. (I am referring to the conscious casualty throughout. In some ways

dealing with an unconscious patient presents fewer challenges in diagnosis and the focus is on practical matters of the airway etc.)

Establishing the diagnosis is the most difficult part of most clinical situations. I have little doubt that, given the diagnosis of a fractured tibia and fibula, almost everyone on a call out list will make a very adequate show of treatment. Neville Marsden recognised this many years ago when he wrote his excellent text 'Diagnosis before First Aid'. Almost all the people I have witnessed coming to grief in the examination have stumbled at this fence.

There are three steps to use. Ears, eyes and hands in that order and virtually never any other. The temptation to begin examining the patient in advance seems to be irresistible to many and is common to the early stages of medical student education. Early in my training I was taught by a very experienced surgeon that if you are not close to the diagnosis when you have finished talking to the patient, you probably never will be and this has proved to be true. An accurate history of events is essential in all trauma situations. Too often the unqualified word 'fallen' appears on casualty records. Alone its value is non-existent. Kerb edge, stile, or off Napes Needle? The patient will, in most situations, be able to tell you what is wrong and equally what is not. Talking also pays other dividends. The person who is able to converse in unimpeded sentences has no major chest injury.

One note of caution must be inserted here. The existence of distraction injuries causes grief in and out of the examination. The distraction injury we are concerned with is that of a relatively unimportant but exquisitely painful injury obscuring another injury of more serious import. A fracture dislocation of the ankle will not produce haemodynamic shock. Look elsewhere. The other related issue is that a patient in extreme pain may well feel disinclined to make much conversation with you. Consider relieving the pain and then re-addressing the history. Admittedly a few patients will remain inherently disinclined to talk at any stage.

Looking comes next. The general appearance of the patient is very revealing. Anxiety is an important marker for shock.

Appearance can also be reassuring. The pink patient with no difficulty breathing has no significant chest injury. Much can be seen beyond the face and the skin. Simply look at the position of the limbs. Are the knee cap and the big toe pointing in the same direction?

Only having exhausted the two previous lines of enquiry should you proceed to the third. The first thing to examine is the radial pulse. It is a most reliable monitor and a casualty with an easily palpable slow pulse is unlikely to be in serious difficulty. Have a system of examination which you adhere to. When it comes to examining the limbs, again invoke the help of the casualty. Asking him, or her, to move each limb in turn will tell you more at the outset than grabbing hold of the arms or legs yourself. The patient will almost certainly localise the site of injury more rapidly and accurately. The ability to elevate the arm and to grip your hand firmly without pain means it is unlikely that you will find much wrong during further examination. When you do examine the limbs and other areas such as the chest, be familiar with and rely on bony anatomical reference points to decide whether there is an abnormality. Always take an opportunity to compare right with left if you are unsure about the degree of deformity and swelling, for example, at the ankle.

The next step is treatment but, in addition, a cup of coffee is most useful. This should be seen as an opportunity to think about your findings and consider any discrepancies in the picture you have formed. Remember also that things may change. Be prepared to have a second look at intervals and do not be afraid to revise the diagnoses you have made.

Be familiar with the approach you are going to use. In both the examination and real life, this will come over as confidence. This will impress your examiner and more importantly reassure your patient. Take every opportunity to practice diagnostic steps. You will use these with every casualty you encounter.

This is an assembly of personal observations from many years of practical examinations and is by no means a comprehensive guide to either the examination or casualty assessment.

medical stuff



# Keswick MRT in Coronation Street cliffhanger!!!

So, for one week at least at the beginning of January, I have to admit I was addicted to Coronation Street on ITV1. Why did I gather around the telly with a group of mates at 7.30 nearly every evening you might ask. Well it was to catch my 15 minutes of fame as a soap star!

I initially found out about the opportunity to appear in front of the camera from an email sent out by our team secretary. It asked whether anybody would be available for a couple of days in November. Little did we know what was going to happen next...

Six of us gathered at base early on a Monday morning to take the Land Rover up to Honister Slate Mines. We rolled up in the misty drizzle to find the usual car park taken over by various trucks, pick-ups and the all important catering van. We quickly found ourselves a brew and sat down to wait for the rest of the crew to arrive.

We soon found out that this was the biggest outside location filming Coronation Street had ever attempted, as more and more vehicles and people started to arrive. It took a while for it all to get organised but, as we were just starting to think about another cuppa, we were called up the hill to take our positions.

The first scenes they wanted to shoot involved our initial search for the casualty. Not in our usual style but more akin to Benny Hill chasing a young milk maid! Two actors were brought in to play our team leaders (the first time Mark has had a stunt double!) and we were asked to provide them with rucksacks. Dutifully we handed over the 600ft ropes insisting this was something we always carried on a job. The actor struggled to even pick it up and when asked if we could take something out to make it lighter we pointed out there was only one rope in it!

After shooting a couple of scenes, everyone headed back down the hill for lunch. The generous portions were enjoyed by all and the suggestion was made that a catering van should be made available for all future call outs.

Day 2 was the big day with the RAF Sea King coming in to film the big winch. It was still pretty damp and everyone was beginning to realise just how big a task this was turning out to be. The crew finished filming a couple of scenes up top while we began rigging the ropes on the chosen crag. I was finishing up on the ledge when the Sea King

hovered over head to get a closer look. This was a fantastic training day with the opportunity to do the winch over half a dozen times. Everything was incredibly slick and a large crowd had gathered below to watch the action. Being able to work alongside the RAF is always very exciting and it was great to see everything go to plan.

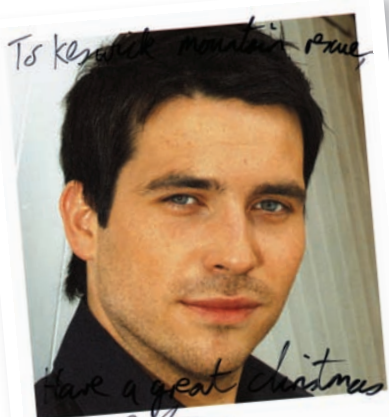
After the action of the previous day, we returned to film everything again in close up. This involved dangling the winch man from a JCB in the quarry while we worked around him! The actor Rob was left strapped into the vacmat, casbag and stretcher between takes, despite desperate pleas to let him out to go to the toilet.

All that was left was to race over to the location hotel at Ullswater where they wanted to film our arrival with the blue lights flashing and sirens going. We thought this was the end of our bit until we were asked if it would be possible for us to be available again in couple of weeks as they were going to have to return and finish off a few bits and pieces.

So back we went at the beginning of December to film a big abseil to create more action and a few other bits at the top of the crag. It was too windy up on Fleetwith Pike so this was recreated down in the car park. Continuity was important and it was interesting to see the photos they had taken previously, despite attempts by some to wear a different hat on every take.

By the time you read this the storyline will have aired and 'Liam' will be well on the way to recovery. In total, we spent four and a half days filming, having to redo several scenes a number of times. It was a great experience and we all learnt a lot. Around 20 million people watch Corrie each week and we hope mountain rescue's profile will have been raised across the country because of this. Most importantly I should add that the dog was alright and came to no harm!

Nick Jones Keswick MRT



Rob James Collier  
CORONATION ST



Samia Smith  
CORONATION ST



# QUARTERLY INCIDENT REPORT FOR ENGLAND AND WALES OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2007

The following is a listing of the number of incidents attended by MR teams in England and Wales during the period from 01/10/2007 to 31/12/2007. It is grouped by region and shows the date (day/month) the incident began. It is not comprehensive as many incidents have yet to be reported.

## Lake District

Cockermouth	26/10, 17/11
Coniston	02/10, 06/10, 11/10, 12/10, 13/10, 24/10, 28/10 07/11, 09/11, 11/11, 06/12, 09/12
Duddon & Furness	08/10, 24/10, 26/10, 26/10, 17/11, 17/11, 06/12 20/12
Kendal	26/10, 26/10, 03/11, 23/11, 27/12, 30/12
Keswick	01/10, 04/10, 08/10, 08/10, 12/10, 12/10, 26/10 28/10, 28/10, 01/11, 09/11, 14/11, 18/11, 20/11 23/11, 25/11, 29/11, 11/12, 14/12, 22/12, 30/12 30/12
Kirkby Stephen	13/10
Langdale Ambleside	03/10, 03/10, 06/10, 07/10, 07/10, 09/10, 12/10 12/10, 24/10, 26/10, 26/10, 26/10, 26/10, 27/10 28/10, 29/10, 02/11, 11/11, 15/11, 17/11, 23/11 25/11, 27/11, 09/12, 19/12, 23/12, 27/12, 30/12 31/12
Patterdale	05/10, 06/10, 06/10, 07/10, 07/10, 10/10, 23/10 25/10, 26/10, 29/10, 04/11, 10/11, 10/11, 12/11 17/11, 08/12, 15/12, 15/12, 16/12, 25/12, 27/12
Penrith	17/10, 29/10, 30/12
Wasdale	05/10, 06/10, 08/10, 08/10, 15/10, 26/10, 05/11 13/11, 17/11, 04/12, 23/12

## Mid-Pennine

Bolton	06/10, 08/10, 14/10, 20/10, 21/10, 14/11, 14/11 18/11, 03/12, 04/12, 09/12, 14/12, 16/12, 22/12 22/12, 23/12, 29/12, 30/12, 31/12
Bowland Pennine	13/10, 13/10, 28/10, 01/11, 06/11, 07/11
Calder Valley	11/10, 14/10, 21/10, 14/11, 09/12
Holme Valley	05/08, 09/09, 23/09, 25/10
Rossendale & Pendle	01/10, 01/10, 14/10, 16/10, 20/10, 01/11, 25/11 09/12, 09/12, 12/12, 24/12, 24/12, 30/12

## NE England

Cleveland	01/10, 07/10, 02/12
Northumberland NP	03/10, 03/10, 14/10, 14/10, 15/10, 16/10, 18/10 26/10, 26/10, 31/10, 03/11, 13/11, 18/11, 23/11 30/12
North of Tyne	03/10, 14/10, 15/10, 18/10, 26/10, 26/10, 31/10 03/11, 13/11, 18/11, 23/11, 30/12
Scarborough & Rydale	18/07
Teesdale & Weardale	05/08

## North Wales

Aberglaslyn	14/10, 27/10, 02/11, 27/11, 04/12
Llanberis	05/10, 10/10, 12/10, 13/10, 20/10, 26/10, 27/10 01/11, 03/11, 05/11, 10/11, 25/11, 01/12, 04/12 11/12, 27/12
North East Wales	14/10, 08/11, 15/11, 24/11, 27/11, 22/12
OB Wales	31/12
Ogwen Valley	21/10, 24/10, 25/10, 30/10, 10/11, 21/11, 29/12 31/12
South Snowdonia	01/07, 05/07, 28/08, 12/09, 15/09
Snowdonia Nat Park	14/10, 27/10, 02/11, 27/11

## Peak District

Buxton	04/10, 13/10, 14/10, 15/10, 20/10, 24/10, 01/11 04/11, 04/11, 04/11, 06/11, 10/11, 17/11, 17/11 25/11, 26/11, 09/12, 16/12, 18/12, 21/12, 26/12
Derby	13/11, 07/12
Edale	04/10, 06/10, 13/10, 14/10, 16/10, 20/10, 01/11 04/11, 04/11, 06/11, 10/11, 02/12, 17/12, 18/12 26/12
Glossop	21/10, 20/11
Kinder	14/10, 24/10, 04/11, 17/11, 21/12
Oldham	03/10, 13/10, 20/10, 25/10, 29/10, 04/11, 03/12 20/12, 29/12, 30/12
Woodhead	06/10, 25/10, 02/11, 20/11, 02/12, 07/12, 17/12

## South Wales

Brecon	01/10, 13/10, 20/10, 21/10, 23/10, 25/10, 27/10 30/10, 03/11, 10/11, 17/11, 18/11, 01/12, 04/12 11/12, 15/12, 16/12, 19/12
Western Beacons	13/10, 20/10, 23/10, 25/10, 17/11, 01/12, 11/12 16/12
Central Beacons	13/10, 20/10, 21/10, 23/10, 25/10, 30/10, 17/11 01/12, 11/12
Longtown	20/10, 23/10, 25/10, 30/10, 03/11, 10/11, 01/12 04/12

## South West England

Cornwall	06/10, 07/10, 13/10, 19/10, 24/10, 27/10, 01/11 04/11, 04/11, 09/11, 19/11, 01/12, 16/12, 16/12 24/12
Dartmoor	24/10, 23/11, 16/12
Exmoor	06/10, 06/11, 15/11, 18/11, 22/11, 22/11

## Yorkshire Dales

CRO	23/11, 08/12, 21/12
Upper Wharfedale	21/10, 29/10, 30/10, 27/11, 30/11, 10/12, 27/12 30/12

## RAF

RAF Valley	26/10, 27/10, 05/11, 04/12
RAF Leeming	04/08, 11/08

## SARDA

SARDA (England)	13/10, 14/10, 06/11, 07/11, 10/11, 27/11, 06/12 07/12, 07/12, 30/12
SARDA (Lakes)	07/10, 08/10, 08/10, 13/10, 13/10, 26/10, 28/10 01/11, 09/11, 17/11, 17/11, 06/12, 23/12, 31/12
SARDA (Wales)	25/10, 27/10, 27/10, 15/11, 24/11
SARDA (South Wales)	13/10, 20/10, 21/10, 01/12, 04/12, 11/12, 16/12

## Non specialists (Non MR)

	24/10, 15/11, 27/11
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## ALSAR

Cheshire SAR	14/10
Staffs SAR	14/10

### Support Mountain Rescue - Join BaseCamp

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# Forensic strategy for mountain rescue

Gyles Denn provides guidelines for team members attending a suspected scene of crime

## Terms

**Casualty:** for the purposes of this document, any person or persons, Missing From Home or victims of criminal activity, requiring medical or general care.

**Deceased:** Person or persons where life is extinct.

**Scene of crime:** The area in and around where a criminal activity is suspected to have taken place, inclusive of actual casualty or deceased.

## Priority list

- 1: Safety of self.
- 2: Safety of all other persons in attendance at the scene ie. team members, other attending services personnel, general public.
- 3: Safety, preservation of life, medical and general care of casualty.
- 4: Maintenance of integrity of scene and forensic evidence.

NB. the priority list must be adhered to with no exception. Integrity of scene and forensic evidence contained within can be maintained to a high level, whilst providing FULL safety and medical attention but the priority list must be adhered to.

**At no time can safety or proper medical care be sacrificed to maintain scene or forensic evidence integrity.**

## Procedure

### If a deceased is located:-

#### Treat as a scene of crime

When a deceased is located assume a scene of crime until otherwise stated by an appropriately authorised person ie. coroner, investigating officer. Adhere to the following procedure (omitting casualty care.)

### If a casualty is located:-

**AND** a scene of crime is suspected **AND** safety, medical care and general care of casualty are underway ie. once a casualty carer or medic is in attendance with the casualty.

## Personnel not involved in immediate cas care

**Establish a single entry/exit point** – a single pathway in and the same pathway out of the scene of crime/casualty location.

**Mark single entry/exit point and log location.** Log the location of entry/exit points via sketch notes and grid reference if practical.

**Limit access to scene of crime to ONLY the single entry/exit point.** Regardless of rank, status or seniority, all access must be restricted to the single entry exit point.

NB. If multiple entry points to scene were used during initial location of casualty ie. as a result of a line search, log all points via sketch, notes and grid reference (if practical) and ensure further access is by the single entry/exit point.

**Establish a cordon of the scene of crime.** Make the cordon as large as possible – think in tens and hundreds of metres not metres. Further investigation teams such as CSI and others can reduce the size at a later time, but forensic evidence may be lost if the it needs to be enlarged at a later time.

**Limit access to scene to essential personnel only.**

**Log initial arrangement of scene.** Sketch, photograph and note how you originally found the scene, location and the orientation of any items contained within the scene.

**Log all access of personnel to scene of crime.**

**Log all equipment taken into the scene of crime.**

**Log all interruptions to the scene** including any movement of items, and the introduction of items such as medical paraphernalia.

## Casualty carer and persons involved at cas site

**Wear Gloves.**

**Log initial findings at scene.** Utilise a scribe to log via sketch and notes your initial findings such as location and positioning of casualty and injuries.

**Avoid contact with anything contained within the scene unless essential to safety or medical and general care.** This includes the casualty.

**Log all contact with items contained in the scene (where practical).**

**Log all actions within the scene (where practical).**

**Take only essential items into the scene of crime.**

**Remove only essential items from scene of crime.** It may be essential to remove casualty from the scene, but do not remove any other items found ie. any clothing no longer worn by the casualty. If casualty's clothing must be removed for medical examination etc, it is advised these are left at the scene of crime (if practical).

**Cut binding in areas away from knots and joins.** Binding such as ligatures, and bodily bindings such as rope, should be removed by cutting through areas that are not knots or original joins and never untie knots.

**Mark cut ends of bindings.** These can be marked with adhesive tape, or link the ends with string/cord (ie. tie string/cord to both cut ends so they are linked via a length of string/cord).

**Cut clothing in areas away from original damage** – do not cut clothing through puncture marks such as knife slashes, weapon puncture holes or tears already present on the clothing.

**Do not destroy items used within the scene.** If it is essential to remove from the scene of crime items such as soiled bandages, needles gloves etc, do not destroy but preserve for future analysis and investigation.

**At all times adhere to priority list.**

## All personnel

**Do not enter the scene of crime cordon unless essential to safety or medical care or instructed to do so by an appropriately authorised person** such as the crime scene manager.

**Do not come into contact, remove or add any item to a scene of crime unless essential to safety or medical care.**

**Be prepared to surrender any item that is suspected of entering the scene** as it may become subject to future investigation. This could include items such as medical equipment, personal clothing, rucksacks, boots.

**Be prepared to provide elimination samples.** You may be required to provide samples for elimination purposes such as boot prints for footwear mark analysis, clothing for fibre analysis, mouth swabs and hair samples for DNA analysis, finger prints for fingerprint analysis.

## SARDA

**Once a crime scene is suspected:-**

**At all times adhere to priority list.**

**Establish single entry/exit point.** Note the route you used to access the scene of crime.

**Log route of search dog into scene of crime.**

**Limit contact between search dog and casualty.**

**Limit access to the scene of crime to ONLY the single entry/exit point.** Regardless of rank, status or seniority all access must be restricted to the single entry exit point.

**Remove search dog from scene of crime** at the earliest practical time.

**Follow guidance for cas carer** – when assuming role of casualty carer (initial or prolonged) follow the previous guidance for casualty carers.

## Forensic evidence

It is not within the scope of this document to list all types of forensic evidence. The following are points to remember/consider.

- Every action taken in and about a scene of crime has the potential to compromise forensic evidence.

- Every item taken into a scene of crime has the potential to compromise forensic evidence and any item has the potential to add new/false forensic evidence to the scene of crime through shedding etc.

- Every surface type has the potential to hold DNA and fingerprints.

- Absolutely any item alien or non alien to the scene of crime has the potential to provide forensic evidence.

- Footwear marks (boot prints) can be quite unique due to weight distribution of individuals, wear and tear and tread pattern. Once a scene of crime is suspected, be aware of every step you make (where practical) ensure you are not stepping on marks that are part of the scene of crime.

- Foliage disturbance – not always an evidence in itself but often a good indicator of travel, this can often lead to forensic evidence. Do not travel along routes of original foliage disturbance. If there is only one original access point to the scene of crime ie. only original gap in foliage etc, do not travel along this route (where practical).

- Blood spatter patterns, formed by blood falling, spurting etc, are good indicators to what actions took place. Do not disturb any blood found at the scene of crime (where practical).

- Body fluids – body fluids such as blood and semen are excellent sources of DNA evidence. Do not disturb body fluids found at the scene of crime. Record the location of body fluids (where practical). Record and alert investigating teams to presence of semen ie. on casualty's clothing.

*Gyles Denn is a forensic toxicologist and expert witness to the criminal justice system. He has been employed by the Forensic Science Service since October 2000. Although he specialises in toxicology, he also has the vast resources of the FSS, which covers all the spectrum of forensic science, to draw upon. His colleagues in other departments such as evidence recovery, who are leading persons and highly respected in this field, have advised and checked the strategy. Gyles is also a member of Bolton MRT.*

## Pocket-sized soups that pack a big taste

Celebrity chef Ainsley Harriott has teamed up with Drinkmaster to create a new range of tasty instant soups especially for the outdoor enthusiast.

The new soups join the range of Drinkpacs – the well known pocket-sized sealed drinks from Drinkmaster. Like every Drinkpac, Ainsley's soups will store perfectly in all manner of conditions and be ready to enjoy when a hot, tasty pick-me-up is needed.

Ainsley's single-portion soups will be the newest to join the wide range of over fifty varieties of Drinkpacs. Thanks to their robust packaging, lightweight and small size Drinkpacs give outdoor enthusiasts a practical alternative to sachet drinks.

The new soups are exclusive to Drinkmaster and contain no artificial colours or preservatives. They are available in four varieties – chicken, mushroom, tomato and vegetable.

The soups have been developed by Ainsley Harriott in conjunction with Symington's, the company which invented instant soup more than 150 years ago, and which sustained British troops in the Crimean War and was used by Scott during his Antarctic expedition.

To celebrate working with Ainsley, Drinkmaster are running a sizzling prize draw. Every person ordering Ainsley's new soups will be entered in a draw to win a top of the range barbecue and accessories, and an autographed copy of 'Ainsley's Ultimate Barbecue Bible.' Three runners up will receive an autographed copy of Ainsley's newest book 'Low Fat Meals in Minutes.'

**For full details about the prize draw and to order Ainsley Harriott Drinkpac soups, visit [www.drinkmaster.co.uk](http://www.drinkmaster.co.uk) or call 0800 373 515**

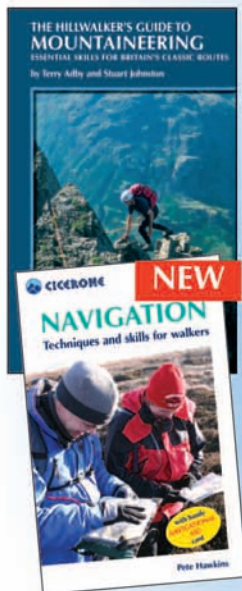


prize draw



# NAVIGATION

skills for safety on the hills



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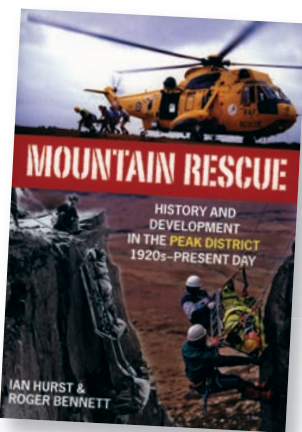
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## reading matters

**MOUNTAIN RESCUE. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE PEAK DISTRICT. 1920s – PRESENT DAY**  
by Ian Hurst & Roger Bennett  
Review by Judy Whiteside



With something in the region of 80 odd years involvement and service with mountain rescue in the Peak District between them, Ian and Roger are well qualified to tell its story. With the aid of some canny archive photography (including, we are told, the very moment, they first met as National Park warden and police officer respectively, to discuss the future book they might write several decades down the mountain road) they trace the growth of an organisation which today incorporates seven teams – and forms an integral part of the wider mountain rescue service – from its early beginnings to the present day. Their tale begins before the title suggests with the development, in the late nineteenth century, of a social interest in the English countryside, when the train stations of the Peak District regularly welcomed the gentlemen and ladies of society who could afford the time and money to adventure into the hills and moorlands. Across the UK, the subsequent growth of mountaineering clubs encouraged still more into the hobby. It goes without saying that more people on the mountains brings more potential for accidents. In fact, it was an accident on Laddow Rocks in 1928 – to one Edgar Pryor of the Rucksack Club – that led to the eventual formation of a national mountain rescue service, and the provision of rescue posts to key areas, three in Derbyshire. Amazingly, it was another 36 years before a mountain rescue service as we know it took shape, but the journey was never dull. (And, one imagines, it's not over yet!) From the formation of the first national park, and the fight for access to the moors, through the development of the individual teams – more often than not from a local scouting group and always triggered by a particular, often tragic, incident – it's all here. Incidents and accidents, newspaper clippings, black and white archive images, dogs, equipment, training, vehicles, macramé stretchers and some very dodgy bobble hats and breeches. They've even got Pam Ayres. So, if you have more than a passing interest in what went on before the luxury of radios you can hold in your hand, or the pressing need for the equivalent of a small aircraft hangar to house the several team vehicles (what team vehicles?) – to name but two of the many accoutrements of rescue we now take for granted – then this is a book for you.

Published by Tempus Publishing Ltd. ISBN 978-0-7524-4091-0. Paperback. Price £12.99. Profits from the book will be split between Buxton MRT and PDMRO.

### Great Mountain Days in the Lake District

Just in time for Spring, Cicerone has published an inspirational and detailed guide to fifty memorable expeditions on the high fells of Lakeland. Written by Mark Richards, these circular routes have been chosen with the moderately adventurous walker in mind but the graded walks make the guide suitable for both the less experienced walkers and those more familiar with the region looking for new summits and undiscovered areas. At £16.99, it is slightly larger than Cicerone's standard guidebook and, at 288 pages, is more likely to be a reference book rather than one to throw in the sack.

Cicerone, already supporters of the Tourism and Conservation Partnership's 'Fix the Fells' project, will be making further donations based on every copy of the book sold. Copies will be available throughout the Lake District so keep an eye out for it next time you venture that way.

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## Kit crit Alocsaks Dry Bags with Attitude

When you're carrying mobile phones, digital cameras, GPS units or your top of the line ipod and the weather refuses to play ball you need something to protect those expensive toys without adding too much weight to your rucksack. For the past few months we've been using some waterproof bags called Alocsaks and our initial impressions are that they are a really useful and lightweight way to protect your kit from water and dust.

We've seen Alocsaks described as 'ziplock bags on steroids' and that's a pretty fitting description. They were originally designed for storing hazardous waste (including anthrax!) and more recently all kinds of outdoor people have realised their potential – especially adventure racers who seem to love keeping food in them! Alocsaks are made of a super tough, slightly stretchy plastic and close with a liquid tight ziplock mechanism. Just to reassure buyers even further the manufacturers (Watchful Eye Designs) quote US navy tests approving them to be watertight for long-term submersion to depths exceeding 60 metres. In fact, Watchful Eye even claim they can be used for operating digital cameras underwater but we've been too scared to try that out!

The bags come in a wide range of sizes but we've only tried the three sizes that best suited our needs. The Alocsak #1 (4.5 x 7in) is our favourite and fits things like mobile phones or small digital cameras perfectly. The Alocsak #2 (6 x 9in) is great for larger GPS units, travel documents or maybe a compact first aid kit. Finally, the Alocsak #4 (12 x 12in) is good for larger guidebooks or maps. We have



heard of the larger bags being used to store clothes and we've successfully stored things like midweight fleeces in them but, in our opinion, these bags work best with flatter items as they tend not to stress the ziplock mechanism so much. Clothes would be better stored in lightweight drybags like the brilliant ones made by Exped. Watchful Eye also makes a range of bags called Opsaks with a 'gusseted bottom' (ouch!) that may suit bulkier items but we haven't tried those yet.

To seal the bags all you need to do is run your fingers over the seal a few times and hey presto! We had worried the seal might pop open in use but we've never had this happen. It seems to be very important that you take care to

expel all the air from inside the bag before sealing as this helps to stop it getting 'squashed' open. Another way to keep them sealed is to pack them carefully amongst items like clothes rather than giving them the space to move around and gradually open. One feature that was really useful in a full on blizzard last winter was that you can operate buttons on some equipment through the sealed bag – we used a mobile phone easily and you could probably do the same with many compact digital cameras. In terms of durability we have been using the same bags for a few months now and they are still serviceable. You could extend their working life by keeping them inside another bag such as a nylon stuffsack. This will undoubtedly help protect them from bumps and scrapes in the top of your rucksack but all adds extra grams to your load!

Alocsaks aren't that easy to get hold of in the UK and can seem quite pricey for what is effectively a beefed up plastic bag. They are currently sold by [www.backpackinglight.co.uk](http://www.backpackinglight.co.uk) and [www.hike-lite.co.uk](http://www.hike-lite.co.uk) in various sizes (both excellent sites with lots of useful information on ultra light backpacking) but we got ours from good old ebay at prices ranging from 99p for the smallest to £1.99 for the largest. The seller we found was happy to bundle a selection together as one lot to save on postage. Just google 'Alocsaks' and you'll find reviews that go into far more detail than we have here – just don't tell anyone you've spent hours of your life reading about the pros and cons of plastic bags!

A personal view from Paul Lewis Mountain Instructor

### Peli EMS Case - Next Step in First Response



This new line from Peli is the perfect solution for EMS professionals to protect, store and organise medical gear while transporting it safely. Housed in a watertight, crushproof, Peli case, these new EMS Kits include a padded divider set, offering cushioned protection for fragile medical equipment. These nylon dividers, with Velcro® sides, enable flexible and changeable configuration of internal compartments to suit the contents perfectly. The lid organiser features transparent storage pockets for easy accessibility and inventory of vital equipment. Peli EMS Kits fit the mid range Peli cases – 1500, 1550 and 1600 sizes, priced at £186.16 for the 1500 case and kit, £247.76 for the 1550 version and £293.96 for the 1600 case with EMS kit (excluding VAT). Peli cases offer total equipment protection, in the harshest conditions and are available in a choice of 32 sizes. All are covered by the legendary 'You break it, we replace it' lifetime guarantee.

Peli Products (UK) Ltd. 01457 869999. [www.peliproducts.co.uk](http://www.peliproducts.co.uk)



### Astron Soft Shell From Mountain Equipment

The Astron Hooded Jacket is one of Mountain Equipment's lightest soft shell jackets to date, able to fend off the elements and breathe in less cold conditions, yet still light and packable.

Constructed predominantly from a lightweight version of Polartec® Powershield®, using a perforated membrane technology laminated to the fleece, it will block 98% of the wind, repel rain and snow and is considerably more breathable than other traditional soft shell fabrics.

The slim, active cut features Polartec® Powerstretch® panels and flat locked seams to eliminate bulky and uncomfortable seams in a garment that's comfortable over base layer or microfleece. The generous helmet compatible hood is fully adjustable. So, whether you want shelter from the wind on exposed belay ledges or have simply been caught out in an unexpected shower, you can easily immerse yourself in the Astron. Two large pockets, positioned high on the torso, are easily accessible whether carrying a rucksack or wearing a climbing harness. The Astron is suited to a multitude of environments – perfect for climbing, scrambling and mountaineering.

Sizes: S, M, L, XL. Colours: All Black, Cobalt Blue/ Black, Black with Red Zips. RRP: £120. Also available in this series: Astron Jacket and Pull-On and Astral Jacket (for women).

For further info on the Astron Hooded Jacket and other pieces in our soft shell collection see [www.mountain-equipment.co.uk](http://www.mountain-equipment.co.uk).







## One life (left)... Live it!

Paul Lewis on travelling to Jordan and, thankfully, making it back again

My mate Al has a radical approach to superstitions. If Al sees a ladder he strides right under it, he dances carelessly over pavement cracks and even waits till someone else is on the stairs just so he can cross their path. Well Al is hardcore and he's lived to tell the tale, but I've lived by a far more wimpish code – I religiously pick up pennies, buy lucky heather and even get hot sweats if I don't salute the magpie! I'm also a firm believer in the old nine lives theory despite it sitting rather uncomfortably with a love of all things adventure.



▲ PAUL AFTER THE ACCIDENT  
TOP: WADI RUM VILLAGE FROM JEBEL RUM  
ALL PHOTOS PAUL LEWIS

I first lost a life back in 1985 when my friend Dave and I got avalanched in number 4 gully on our first winter trip to Scotland. Number two fell to an accident in Pembroke, a third to a very close encounter with a gnarly croc on the Zambesi River and four when I got persuaded to paddle the River Ogwen in spate as my second river descent. Last, but certainly not least, life five (and probably my closest call) was lost to a stupid 'end-of-a-long-day' error in the Ecrins when I pulled 50 metres of rope across my belay sling and found it had completely melted through, leaving me attached to the mountain by just a few strands of thread!

Now I might be a total wuss about superstitions but I'm pretty good at reasoning things out. So I've really had no problem justifying to myself that all these precious imaginary lives simply fell to bad decision making and stupid mistakes – and five lives down with 25 years of risk under my belt still leaves me a reasonably healthy four in the bank – or at least it did until my trip to Jordan...

The four of us boarded the plane in the dampness of Manchester and stepped off into the dry heat of early evening Amman. New smells, new language, a new culture –

the way all great adventures start. After picking up our hire car in very suspicious circumstances (a shadowy figure in a dark corner of the airport – you get the picture!), we were forced into a decision to drive through the night (because the reservation for the hostel we had booked had been 'lost' and we couldn't find any other accommodation in the city). The car was a decrepit Ford Cortina that reminded me of something from a B grade American road trip movie. Neil (my best friend and the most enthusiastic person you will ever meet) kicked off the driving. Natalie (Neil's partner and one of life's great carers) sat next to him. Cal (my partner for twenty something years and my emotional rock) lay on the back seat with her head in my lap. That just left me (all round rock god and Brad Pitt lookalike – and a little prone to exaggeration!).

Somehow Neil got us out of the city but he had taken some dodgy allergy pills on the flight and started falling asleep at the wheel so I took over. Some time into my third can of keep-me-awake Red Bull a small monkey darted in front of the headlights and went straight under the front wheels. The adrenaline surge ensured I didn't need any more Red Bull but I drove on despondently. Fortunately my

spirits lifted with the rising sun and soon we were driving up the long desert road that leads to Rum village. I've been lucky enough to visit quite a few places but the impact of this place is absolutely unique. Huge glowing sandstone domed towers rise from the flat expanse of the desert floor and black Bedouin camel hair tents dot the horizon as camels amble around sedately – it really is a special place.

Our first week passed in an adventurous

side of the mountains called Barrah Canyon. After collecting together as much food and water as we could, we piled into the back of the ramshackle Landcruiser ready for a pleasant meander through the desert. No chance! Our driver Suleiman obviously knew exactly where he was going but some of the places he took that vehicle were miles outside my comfort zone.

But of course we made it and first

**And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years. Abraham Lincoln**

blur and we got a selection of excellent climbs under our belts. 'Fear of Flying', 'The Beauty', 'King's Wall' and 'Rum Doodle'. Evocative names for awesome climbs. The sandstone is full on friable, the route descriptions sketchy, the rock loose and there's a feeling of isolation I haven't normally felt in the mountains before – you soon realise Wadi Rum isn't for the faint hearted.

By the start of our second week we were keen to see somewhere new. We bartered with a local driver to get us to a venue on the other

impressions of Barrah Canyon didn't disappoint. A vast cleft with towering walls silhouetted against the deep blue Jordanian sky. We pitched the tents in the shade of the canyon walls, shared some syrupy mint tea with Suleiman, arranged for a pick up in three days using hand signals, waved him off, then prepared for action. There were a number of must do climbs on our list but, straight after arriving, I found myself drawn to an unclimbed crack line near the campsite. The walls here are massive and I guesstimated the line to be around 300 metres long – so starting it with nowhere near enough time to top out before dark defied logic... but a lot of the decisions I made that day defied logic.

Neil and Natalie headed off to explore the canyon as I tied in below the route. 'Don't forget your helmet,' Neil shouted as they disappeared round the corner. What he didn't realise was that Cal and I had decided to not wear helmets today. Why? I've absolutely no idea. We had used helmets on every other Jordan climb. We knew the rock was unpredictably brittle. We knew it all, yet still decided against. How was I to know that I would soon have sandstone blocks raining down on me? Another life lost



◀ CAL FOLLOWING PITCH 3 OF THE UBER CLASSIC 'THE BEAUTY' JEBEL UM ISHRIN



▲ PAUL STARTING A NEW ROUTE ON ABU AINA TOWERS

and a decision I will never take again!

I kissed Cal and chalked up. A final gear check, a quick 'say it all' glance at each other and I pulled onto the rock. Straight away it felt wrong and I should have stepped back down, but I don't really do stepping back down half as often as I should. It probably didn't help that the first section was the sort of steep technical slab climbing I love and soon I had reached a small convex ledge at ten metres. The featureless rock below me had not offered any gear placements and I was getting seriously intimidated by what lay ahead. I fumbled around with my gear and eventually managed to place a Rock 6 and a large cam. Then I took the cam out again. Why? I decided I would probably need it higher up. How was I to know that this single wire would soon be the only thing left to stop an 18 metre fall? Do I lose a life for that?

I chalked up and moved up into the crack above. The rock steepened, I weakened, but the only way was up. I knew I needed more gear but nothing would fit. I tried, moved up, tried again, moved up – things just weren't working out. Above me a large flute of rock enticed me with the promise of a rest. Even better, I was sure that cam would fit perfectly into the crack next to the flute. Let's just go for it.

I leant back off the flake and just kept leaning. I have no idea at which point I realised





laying on the sand and Cal was hugging me close and I could taste the salt of her tears on my lips and her hair caressing my cheek. Neil and Natalie are just the people you need at a time like this and I knew then it was going to be alright. Natalie gently taped wound dressings to my knee, arms and hands while Neil ran to get help. But what help? An hour later we heard an engine and there was Neil. He had waved a wad of Jordanian dinars at a passing 4x4 and soon we were heading to an unknown village where apparently there was a hospital.

The 'hospital' was a single room with a white coated nurse and a bed. Neil was told to wait outside but he instinctively knew I needed him with me and pushed his way back into the room. Over the next 30 minutes I must have squeezed the life right out of Neil's hand but he never complained. Cold water and stitches with no anaesthetic. Neil reckoned he could have done a better job himself and I wish he had. Luckily, we'd brought painkillers and antibiotics but I still had a badly infected leg by the time I got to a British hospital. Neil offered money to the nurse but she just smiled and shooed him away. A group of giggling children had gathered outside. Our driver had long gone. More of Neil's bribes and soon we were heading back to camp.

Three hours later, shock set in and I lay shivering inside my sleeping bag. Four hours and my back was in spasm, every movement agony and my breathing laboured and shallow. There were lots of whispered conversations I couldn't quite hear. It turned out the others feared internal injuries but thankfully they told me nothing. I had enough to think about in my own little bubble of pain. I was worried and wanted to be at home but was a long way from it. I didn't sleep that night but fell asleep in the breeze of the morning and slept for twenty hours. The others packed. I slept. Suleiman arrived and stroked my head. He drove gently with me lying in the back of

▲ NEIL BELAYING ABOVE THE DESERT FLOOR ON GULAB TOWER, ABU AINA TOWERS (THE BLACK DOTS ARE BEDOUIN TENTS)  
ABOVE RIGHT: THE FAMOUS WADI RUM REST HOUSE

I was falling rather than leaning but then many things about that fall don't make sense. Did I slice my leg on the convex ledge? Where did all those grazes come from? Will this fall ever stop? Well yes, I can answer that one. I came to a stop upside down with my face staring at the sand one metre below me. Each of my double ropes was coming from a different side of my harness and I was concertinaed between them – the breath ripped from my lungs by the vice like stopping force. But at least it's over. Or maybe it's not.

I had heard a deep cracking noise as I leant on the flake and it turned out the whole piece of rock was coming down to join me (amazingly the freezer size block hit the ledge and shattered on the way down, which undoubtedly saved my life). Brick to breeze block size – they all wanted to join the gravity party. Unfortunately, I was hanging upside

down directly in their path. Several pieces hit my back and legs – not a single piece hit my head. Any lives left?

As the rocks cascaded down I'd been aware of another sound strangely reminiscent of the squeal of the monkey as it disappeared under the car all that time ago. Cal! It's Cal! Cal's screaming. Cal's hurt. Oh God no. I twisted round to see Cal's beautiful face contorted, panicked, afraid. But her fear was for me. She had managed to run far enough to the side to hold my fall without me hitting the ground. Far enough to the side to miss the barrage of rocks. But not far enough so that she didn't have to witness my fall and the blood falling on to the sand.

Neil and Natalie also heard the fall, the screams and then the returning silence. They were well out of sight but knew we needed them now. By the time they arrived I was

the flatbed. The kind of journey I had wanted on the way out and now got but couldn't enjoy.

We made a pre arranged stop at the famous Rock Bridge of Burdah. We had all planned to climb up to it but now three did and I didn't. The others offered to skip it but why should they suffer for my misfortune? I slid under a shady overhang while Suleiman collected wood and made tea. I gave him the climbing ropes. After a fall like that I wouldn't climb on them again but they would be useful to him for tying down his tent when the sandstorms came. We couldn't share a common language but we connected.

I looked around at the gorgeous expanse of desert and everything seemed so right. Recent memories flooded my mind. Only then did my tears start to flow. First little splashing droplets, then deep convulsing sobs. But not sorrow sobs. These were tears of joy. Tears of relief. Tears that looked forward to a great future. The happiest tears I have ever cried. The fall had stripped everything away and I was stronger than ever. I may only have one life left but it's mine for the taking – you bet I'm going to live it!



▲ THE BOTTOM OF THE ROUTE SHOWING ROCK SCAR FROM WHERE THE ROCK FELL

## Jordan fact file

### History

Wadi Rum's certainly been around a while. The granite and sandstone geological formations belong to the pre-Cambrian period of around 55 million years ago. It's also been impressing people for a while. Evidence shows that prehistoric man was living there over 200,000 years ago.

Rather more recently, the majesty of the place was brought to public attention when T E Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), famous for his part in the Arab uprising of 1916-18, started documenting his fascination with Wadi Rum in his book 'Seven Pillars of Wisdom' published in 1922 (well worth reading before your visit).

The important bit of history, from a climbing point of view, came in 1984 when Di and Tony Howard made the first exploratory visit at the invitation of the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism. When they first visited, only one climb was documented (although Bedouin had been scrambling over the peaks for centuries) but, after several subsequent visits, they wrote the first climbing guidebook in 1987 (Trek and Climbs in Wadi Rum) and the potential of the place was officially out.

### Wadi Rum's People

The Bedouin are the inhabitants of Wadi Rum. Many still live a semi-nomadic lifestyle grazing their sheep and goats for several months before moving to pastures new. Most still live in the traditional black goats' hair tents called 'beit sha'ar' (translates to 'houses of hair') which you will see dotted throughout the desert.

They are a proud and independent people who, if treated with respect, will reward your visit with friendliness and openness. We found them amazingly welcoming – we were invited into their tents for delicious sweet tea and enjoyed some life enhancing evenings sat with family groups under magical starry skies.

### Transport

Wadi Rum is easy to access. Several airlines fly to Amman's Alia International Airport and from there you can take a bus or taxi to Rum. Many of the bus routes involve taking one bus to the coastal resort of Aqaba (70 kms from Rum) then another to Rum so if there's a group of you it's certainly worth considering bartering a good taxi deal instead.

Once in Rum you don't need a car because much of the climbing is within walking distance and if you want to access places like Barrah Canyon you can use local Bedouin 4x4 transport (or go Lawrence style and hire a camel!) Having said that, if you want to travel to some of the other Jordan sights like the Dead Sea or Petra a hire car may be worth considering.

### Accommodation

Easy! Use the campsite at the back of the Wadi Rum Resthouse, either in your own tent or one of their pre-pitched ones. There are loads of hotels available to suit all budgets if you are staying in Amman, Petra, Aqaba or any of the other tourist centres during your stay.

### Food

Rum village has a few small shops selling a limited range of basic provisions if you want to cook yourself. If you are travelling via Aqaba it's better to stock up on provisions there (particularly fresh food). Of course, you do have the far more relaxed option of eating the reasonably priced food in the Rest House Restaurant for your main meals instead!

### Weather

September, early October, January, February and March are said to be the best times to visit for climbing. We went in mid April and it was already very hot but manageable – if you do decide to go in one of the hotter months leave a day or two at the start of your trip to get your body used to the heat and watch out for dehydration.

### Climbing

Climbing in Wadi Rum does best suit climbers with a love for adventure and a head for friable sandstone but don't let my little tale of misadventure put you off! In reality it's awesome climbing and should be on everyone's must visit ticklist. There are climbs of all grades, climbs of all types, climbs that can be accessed in a few minutes, right through to some that require expedition style planning... and everything in between. Enjoy!

### Equipment

Your standard UK climbing rack will do the job but it's worth having a good supply of medium to large cams and hexes and plenty of slings. It's also a good idea to take plenty of abseil tat as some of the stuff you find in place will most likely have been seriously weakened by abrasion and UV. Bolts are being used more often and you will also find abseil rings or chains on many of the most popular descents. Don't forget your helmet too!

Loose fitting lightweight clothing rules. It's important to respect local cultures by keeping legs and shoulders covered near Bedouin encampments but you can dress a little less restrictively near your own campsite. Approach shoes are fine for all the desert trekking you're likely to be doing. It does get cold at night so don't leave all your insulating clothing at home.

Camping stuff is camping stuff but it's certainly worth considering what type of stove you take because gas will be very hard to find. We used petrol stoves which worked great. Lastly, if you head out to camp in the desert you'll need to take plenty of water. We took plenty of those wine box inner bags with us and we had plenty of capacity. It's also a great excuse to guzzle plenty of wine before you go!

Finally, if you retrieve a Rock 6 when you're climbing a new Barrah Canyon route I really DO NOT want it back – but I'd love to hear what grade you gave it!

**Rum the magnificent... vast echoing and godlike.**

T E Lawrence. Seven Pillars of Wisdom



# Ten Tors report Team 44 Redlake

Nigel Stainer on a major team fundraising event

Redlake, Saturday 12 May. A good start to our weekend, the weather was bright and showery, neither too warm nor too cold, ideal for a trip out to the heart of southern Dartmoor to the old Redlake Clay pit. The forecast was for a fair Saturday declining to wet on Sunday. A slightly uneasy feeling amongst the team, all were acutely aware that the eyes of the world were upon us that weekend, following the tragic death of Charlotte Shaw earlier in the training season.

Our military driver arrived on time. He had with him all the kit we had requested. We quickly loaded our personal and team gear into his trailer and were off. The journey was uneventful, the long slow chug up the track of the old railway to Redlake gave us a little time to get to know our driver, this one was a TA Corporal. As with most we've been given over the years, he seemed a decent sort and had a good, military sense of humour.

Redlake was, as usual, deserted. It was clear others had been there since our last visit and a little litter was soon collected up to make way for our tent. It turned out our driver had been something of an instructor of new recruits into his regiment, so our attempts to erect the standard issue army 12x12 tent were under particular scrutiny. We succeeded with no mishaps.

Once camp was set, I radioed in to receive our first task. Unsurprisingly we were asked to check out the rivers, starting with the Blacklane Brook. Our driver elected to stay behind and guard the tent. It was a pleasant and brisk walk out from Redlake, a 2K stretch over good ground, crossing the Erme Stone Row and Dry Lake, and skirting south of Middle Mire. Finding the brook to be running strongly at the top of its banks but passable without great difficulty. We crossed and made a cautious report of our crossing place.

Next down to the Erme. The river was also running strongly within its banks. We noted it was fordable at two or three points between the Blacklane and Redlake brooks. Returning to Redlake we found the first teams beginning to pass our base. They seemed to be a little later than previous years but were clearly going strongly. A friend's son was spotted in a team going south west. He seemed to be in good spirits and going well. I noticed later a surreptitious report being made (by one of my team) to mum.

Preparing to inspect the Avon we were tasked to check out the land between Heap of Sinners (the cairn on top of Huntingdon Warren) and the check point at Pupers for a team that was some three hours late arriving

there. This task enabled us to look at both the Avon and the Western Wella Brook and also enabled an investigation of the team we had minutes earlier spotted coming over the top of Huntingdon Warren, stopping, and then retreating.

As with the other water courses we'd looked at, the Avon was running strongly although crossable without difficulty at Broad Falls, the point to which most teams seemed to be making. We found a couple of teams there and for one moment of rising hope thought we had found the missing team. As the lad we were talking to read out his team number all of the hoped for digits one by one fell into place. Excitement was dashed with the final digit, a five instead of a one. We logged up to Heap of Sinners with some determination. Not a team in sight between there and Pupers, we chased down to the footbridge over the Wella Brook. This stream was also running well. Climbing to Pupers, we got to within a couple of hundred metres of the checkpoint and, with two squaddies watching us with some curiosity, received news from control that we could relax. The missing team had just arrived at Pupers, from Snowdon.

We asked to see the team. Two of their number were struggling and had decided to drop out there. The remainder would merge with another team and go on. Just as we got to talk to the two casualties, they were whisked away from us by the army.

We reported to control what little we had been able to learn and commenced our return journey, taking the recognised Ten Tors route around the north of Huntingdon Warren, with the intention of crossing both the Walla Brook and the Avon higher than on our way out, to give us a chance to check the water levels there. With only a third of the northern boundary wall to go on our descent off Huntingdon Warren to the Avon, we received news that the army had asked us to stop all Q, R, W, X, Y and Z teams passing through our vicinity and to keep them safe by us overnight, with the promise that checkpoints would be

open early the following morning subject to a review of the river states.

We spotted teams going southwest and crossing the Avon both higher and lower than us. We split up, 44 going north and 44a south.

From then on we did not stop. Just as we thought we could take a break, get some food and check out the teams for condition and identity, other teams started coming up from the south west. My final chase of the day was out to an all female team spotted at Crossways. They reported a team camped by the Erme. Our driver had come with me on this run so I sent him back to base with the girls and set out down the Abbots Way, to check out the situation by myself. I found a pair of blue tents camped by the Erme, a good spot sheltered from the winds and above the high water mark. The team members were all well. They'd fed themselves and were settling in with the intention of an early start. I told them of the army's instruction and decided that, as they were safe and sound, they could stay where they were. My final word to them was to ask them to report to us the following morning, to ensure they were not walking in to danger.

I returned to base to find my team had now fed themselves and were worrying about our charges. It seemed several were suffering from blisters, one lad had been sick and one group had fallen out. Two members of that team were showing some signs of dehydration and hypothermia, were not talking to the other three, and were refusing to eat and drink. 44a had already prepared hot blackcurrant juice and a supply of chocolate for the potential hypothermics, some fresh clean water for the lad who had been sick and were just going out to render first aid to all. I asked them also to prepare a complete schedule of the teams now in our charge.

Another team appeared on the western horizon. Our driver was now fully motivated and had set off to assist 44a, so one of team 44 headed out to stop what turned out to be the last team to arrive that day. It was then beginning to get dark so, with tired

anticipation, I prepared a hot meal for myself, realising that lunch somehow seemed to have slipped me by.

Control radioed in, asking us to search at a given reference for a team an army helicopter had spotted there. It came as a pleasant surprise that the team number reported to me was the one I'd been talking to on the banks of the Erme. After a second to double check the number against my record, I reported the team safe and well. Control asked for a more prompt response next time. Some people are never pleased!

Refreshed, I set out to find out how my charges were doing. 44a reported that the hot drink, chocolate and fresh water were well received and the lads concerned were reacting more rationally again, several blisters had been treated and they were two thirds of the way through creating a list. Control chased for a report so I took what had been prepared so far, climbed the tip for a telephone signal and rang control at Holming Beam.

The news was interesting. There was a strong possibility the whole event would be pulled. Whatever, I was asked to hold all teams until 08:30 Sunday morning. We might then be asked to walk them off. Possibly to Pupers, possibly to the Avon dam or, alternatively, we might get a helicopter. I reported our list and just in time, was joined on the hill by 44a to add the final teams to the list. In all we had 22 teams, 40 tents and 110 team members safely sheltering, on the northern slopes of the tip, from the strong southerly wind. We were asked not to inform the teams of the army's considerations at that stage so retired ourselves, secure in the knowledge we had just told 110 kids the checkpoints would be open from 05:30 if the rivers were okay.

Sunday 13 May 04:25am. It was still dark. When did I last see that time of day? Two lads were rattling our tent. 'Can we go now please, mister?' As we gave them the bad news we'd been asked to keep them till 08:30, our 04:30 alarm calls sounded.

I sent out my team to settle the event teams down and pass on the news they were to stay put. We hoped to be able to tell them more by 08:30. As expected the teams were very disappointed. They'd slept well, had eaten and were displaying levels of determination to complete the challenge we all wish the press could have seen. These were most certainly not the feckless youth local media so love to complain about.

The Redlake Hilton is renowned for its breakfasts and this year was no exception. Fresh duck eggs fried with sausages, bacon and black pudding, bread and butter, and hot tea. I don't know how I did it all on a two ring burner but my team cannot say they are not well looked after, if a little earlier than they normally require on a Sunday.

Discussions with control during the early part of the morning confirmed the event had indeed been called off and also revealed some military indecision as to what precisely to do with our charges. Neither the Avon Dam nor Cantrell Gate provided easy access to larger military vehicles. Nor were we happy with the prospect of the seven mile slog down the Redlake Tramway with 110 despondent kids. We could hear the helicopters evacuating Pupers. It was by then raining heavily, winds had dropped from the night before to 'light to fresh' and visibility was down to perhaps 200 metres although beginning to show signs of lifting. Eventually, control advised we were to be given a helicopter, that we'd be given thirty minutes warning of its arrival and not to get excited at the sound of Pupers evacuation.

My last experience of control telling me a helicopter would arrive in 20 minutes time was that it arrived two minutes later. We were galvanised. We stripped out our tent to act as a holding bay and whilst 44a set out to get ready the first twenty evacuees, 44 tabbed out across the peat bog that surrounds Redlake to the only firm dry ground, suitable for a helicopter to land, in the vicinity of the workings. We took a GPS reading and reported this to control whilst also reporting that our driver claimed to have had training in helicopter landing.

We chased back to the campsite to assist 44a and, whilst they took the first stick around to our tent, we advised the next twenty to get themselves ready, fully dressed and with as much kit stowed as possible then to wait in their tents. Control advised they were sending out 45 to help us. We returned to the shelter of our tent to try to keep the kids amused, helped by a wind change requiring the closing down of one side of the tent and the opening of the other. We waited some more. Control, finger on the pulse as ever, advised we make our tent available as a holding lounge. Eventually 45 arrived and soon after news of the imminent arrival of the helicopter. I sent out 44a, our driver, one of 44 and one of 45 with the first stick to the landing zone, to marshal the kids and the helicopter

in a safe manner, ensuring that all standing orders re loose clothing and backpack items were adhered to.

Leaving two of 45 in the tent to receive the next stick, 45 leader and I set out to get that group ready. With one stick in the marshalling area and one in the holding lounge we then warned the next batch to be ready. We heard the helicopter arrive and shortly after were fed the news that the first flight took only eighteen and a second machine was on its way, ETA any time now. We instantly galvanised the third stick and, by the time they were on their way to the holding area, the second stick, this time nineteen, were being lifted off. That helicopter had brought its own ground control who took the decision to bring the next few machines in at a point much closer to our tent. They also advised that the kids were being taken to Bickley Marine barracks rather than Okehampton Battle Camp, hence a swift return was likely. The new landing site was very soft and uneven ground and we all watched with trepidation as the next machine settled deep into the peat. (I wonder what future archaeologists will make of these peculiar ground markings?)

By now the process of getting teams ready had become an efficient blur and I took a moment to organise one of my team to take some photographs of the event for our website. The editor, a member of 45, had forgotten to bring his camera with him!

Flights three and four seemed routine and we decided to move in to the holding bay the final two sticks together, rather than leave the last few kids on their own around the back of the tip. For one brief moment we had 34 kids in our holding bay. At least they were warm and dry.

The last two flights went without hitch and 45 also departed soon after. So too did the rain and cloud and, by late morning, the moor was deserted. We sat atop the tip scanning the horizons with just sunshine and the quiet beauty of the moor to entertain us.

I must thank my team. That was, perhaps, the busiest Ten Tors we at Redlake have ever seen and throughout the weekend it was a joy to be with them. No matter what was thrown at us they never flagged, quibbled or dithered. I strongly commend each and every one of them, John, Rob and Mike, for their own Ten Tors medal. I look forward to working with them all again next year.



# Who's who?

Judy Whiteside talks to Mike France, Chairman of the National Fundraising group

Two years in as chair of the National Fundraising group and Mike France is modest about his group's achievements. Far too modest, I might say, with income so far hovering at the £80K mark and targets set for substantially more. On a national level Blacks, Burton McCall, Audi and General Motors have supported us with donations, discount deals and the Hummer, the Hard Rock Challenge brought in thousands for mountain rescue in England and Wales, and there are many more possibilities in the pipeline. Perhaps most significant is the setting up of Basecamp, the national supporters' group, which is already seeing exponential growth.

The group is an active and enthusiastic one, and Mike is perhaps uniquely placed to sit in the chair, bringing many years of professional experience – with the National Children's Centre and various charitable initiatives – to the table. For the last twenty years he has worked to improve the lives of children, young people and vulnerable adults through parental and general training, achieving changes of policy through the piloting of projects and ensuring written reports are seen in the corridors of power.

Projects such as the Pass it On scheme, whereby unwanted, but still viable, furniture and household items otherwise destined for the tip are recycled to those who need them. Or the Danger Rangers training, in co-operation with the emergency services and local authority groups, which aims to reduce childhood accidents in Kirklees through safety awareness.

A respectable CV in terms of fundraising and helping the community then, but what about mountain rescue? In common with many rescuers of his generation, Mike was drawn into the mountains by a youth, teens

and early twenties spent in cubs and scouts. Following the Four Inns disaster in 1964, when three young rover scouts lost their lives in appalling weather conditions, demands for a more structured rescue service in the area gathered pace. Many of the scout groups ultimately morphed into the rescue teams we know today, so joining a team was a natural step to take and Mike joined the Woodhead team in 1970.

As is often the case, once in its grasp, mountain rescue has a way of holding you there. Those who put their hands up to volunteer frequently find they can't ever quite put them down again! And so it was with Mike.

In the early years, he trained black Labrador Fri to the first stages of grading before the demands of other responsibilities took over – deputy, then team leader, chair of the PDMRO then his own team, regional rep to the MRC, incident controller, team leader yet again (and to this day) and now chair of fundraising – gathering a fistful of awards on the way. Chief Constable's Commendation, Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and an invitation to Buckingham Palace.

And there's been some notable moments. Like Lockerbie. En route home, after four hard days searching up, down, up, down, in and out of the wooded, sodden ground of the Keilder Forest – 'I never want to go near that forest again!' – came the call to divert. Another plane had gone down on the M1 at Kegworth. 'You're having a laugh!' was the not unreasonable response, as Mike insisted on taking the 'prankster' police officer's number so he could call him back. Sadly, it wasn't a joke.

Is mountain rescue the same now as it was then? 'Heck no, it's not the same organisation. We were very amateur – we've had to become more professional, more businesslike. We've had to move on and that brings more work.'

But what, I have to ask, has mountain rescue brought to Mike,

beyond the fulfilment of a passion, the satisfaction of helping others? Well, I've done things as a civilian I would never have done otherwise. I've been to Buck House, I've met the Queen and her grandson, I've ridden in military aircraft, I've undergone advanced training in A&E units, I was called as expert witness in a murder trial...'

Tell me about that. 'Rosie McCann\*. It was my party that missed her on the piece of land we searched. The prosecution asked how long I'd been in rescue. Twenty years, I said. Commendable, he said, and in all that time you've undertaken hundreds of searches and yet on this piece of land, ten foot square, you missed the child?'

'You're on the back foot! We were looking for a five year old. She'd been stuffed into a flight bag and very well hidden. But he'd blown my trumpet, egged up what an expert I was, then bam! There's not a lot you can say.'

So where to now with national fundraising? 'It's a proactive unit but we couldn't have achieved what we've done in isolation. It's about working with the other subcommittees to make it work. And it's a slow progress. Basecamp, for example. We're aiming for an income of £5000 per annum by the end of this year – it's not a lot but it grows. It's a good base.'

'We're looking to bring financial stability. If we have some money as an organisation, we can choose what we want to do, what we want to buy into.'

And MR in general? 'It might be controversial but it'll be interesting to see how long it is before we have paid staff, because we won't be able to carry on without. The admin side of things – treasury, fundraising, press, media – everyone wants to speak to us, see us, nine to five. The days of five in the afternoon to midnight are going. We have to move on and do it.'

\* Five year old Rosie was abducted by her mother's boyfriend, murdered and hidden in a derelict building. It was several weeks before her body was found. 500 mountain rescue personnel had searched in vain for her body over several days.



... and now Judy Whiteside talks to herself. No change there then.

With greatest apologies to my own team members and, indeed, anyone else who knows me, but I was asked to do this... so here goes.

To paraphrase my own words on the back of the cartoon book (below), I didn't so much join mountain rescue – over my designer suited body! – but find myself slowly and relentlessly sucked into it in the manner of quicksand. And the more I struggled to escape, the deeper I found myself entrenched.

Alongside my colleagues at Mountain Rescue business meetings, I'm a rookie. Not for me the several decades of dedicated service. Not for this 'dyed in the cashmere' townie the inevitable segue from woggles, toggles and dib dib dob to stretchers, ropes and fractured fingernails. I can't even claim a childhood spent dragging my reluctant feet around the hills after parents determined to share their love of the hills.

The nearest I ever got to familial encouragement in the outdoors department was dear old Auntie Bessie who, as lifelong Brown Owl and guiding devotee, kitted me out in little brown frock and neat yellow tie, and took me under her wing. Don't get me wrong, the Brownie bit was great. All that skipping around pretending to be pixies, learning to make tea and knotting newspaper was great but, when it came to the 'flying up' bit (where she and Tawny grabbed an arm and a leg each and literally 'flew you up' to the guides) I bottled. Something to do with having to sleep in a tent on pack holidays. Didn't do tents.

And the only memory I have of Brownie trips to Waddow, was the time I ventured barefoot into a cowfield (I've no idea why) and came back with a very smelly cowpat squozed between my toes.

No, I preferred to hole myself up in my bedroom, armed with sheafs of paper and any number of coloured pencils, sketching anything my imagination conjured up.

What, you might ask, could I possibly bring to mountain rescue? Well it's a funny thing but there came a day when the crayons had to step aside and make room for another toy. A battered old 'sit up and beg' typewriter.

Lots of inky ribbon, wonky keys and a return arm that went 'Brrring!!' when I got to the end of a line. Eat your heart out kids! Being an avid reader and the proud owner of a set of Arthur Mees Encyclopaedia (family heirloom), not to mention countless comics and school books, I had a rich source of reference material. It was only a matter of time before I was threading carboned layers of paper through the rollers and tapping out 'Judy's News', a collation of stories, jokes, cartoons and school information. Of course, the limitations of the typewriter meant I had to reproduce my efforts several times over in order to produce sufficient copies, but that was all part of the fun. Then, papers sorted and stapled, I'd take them off to school to sell in aid of one of the few high profile charities at the time, the NSPCC (blue papier maché egg-shaped moneybox and little blue badges of achievement). So there I was, a newsletter tycoon at the tender age of eleven. And for a charitable organisation!

Strange then that many years down the line I'm asked to produce the MRC News, the official newsletter of the Mountain Rescue Council – which, after seven years' gradual development, is now the Mountain Rescue mag you hold in your hands – a collation of stories, news, cartoons and information!

But, as my friends will testify, it hasn't all been coloured pens and Tippex. It was in my twenties that I discovered the mountains, through a skiing holiday in Austria, and fell in love with them. I've skied fast and furious in most of the European resorts and in Canada, and there's been some hairy moments. Like the time I skied recklessly backwards off a cliff in Banff (not intentionally, I might add!) taking the bungee fence with me, to find myself frozen in mid air, like a character in the Wacky Races, my life flashing before me. Ask me about it sometime – it gets better with a glass of something chilled! Suffice to say, I survived intact. And ski considerably more carefully these days!

So... what do I bring to the party? Well, there's my thirty plus years' experience in advertising and marketing. As a freelance designer, illustrator and writer, I've worked for the big agencies and a whole range of clients, producing brochures, ad campaigns, magazines, TV storyboards, packaging and brand design – taking projects from the design process right through to print management. As mountain



I, TOO, CAN POSE ON A MOUNTAIN RESCUE VEHICLE!  
PHOTO: CHRIS BOYLES

rescue grows more businesslike, so it becomes more important we present a professional, slicker image to the public. And that's where I come in.

I've been a support member of the Rossendale and Pendle team for ten years now, secretary for five. I might not be operational but let's just say I sometimes wonder how I fit the day job in! Besides the magazine and my duties as team secretary, I've raised funds through sponsored walks – both as walker and organiser of my team's biggest event, the Rossendale Way in a Day and represented the team and the MRC at a variety of events, spreading the word about mountain rescue.

I've collaborated with Bob Sharp, my colleague in Scottish mountain rescue, to write a book – the first of several, we hope – and produced a cartoon book with David Allan. I'm currently writing the Safety Handbook, to replace the old handbook, directed at the wider public.

But why? Without the buzz of the callout, what does MR give to me? Different things on different days. Frustration, when I'm wearing my professional hat, that we don't have the budgets to really market ourselves as we should. There's only so much you can do with a shoestring! But many more positives. Satisfaction at a job well done. The chance to put something back. The opportunity to write more – and get published! Many, many new friends and contacts across the UK. Presentation to Prince William. Some great people whom I genuinely admire and respect for their ability to get out of a warm bed at 2am, in the teeth of winter, to help another human being. To name but a few. Oh, and mud on my boots!

And the future? The magazine continues to develop. We now have a commercially viable product which enhances our brand and presents a professional face to those who might support us. The quality of articles and images coming through is excellent but is the time coming, I wonder, when we're able to commission articles and photography?

Anyway, I've run out of space but I think that about covers it. And, in case you're wondering, I still don't do tents.



MIKE ON THE LEFT WITH SEARCH DOG FRI OTHER TEAM MEMBERS IN SHOT ARE MICK STEELE AND STEVE JAGO, WITH BARRY GREGORY LEANING ON THE CAR NOTE THE OLD GEC RADIO – 'WE THOUGHT WE WERE THE BEE'S KNEES WITH THAT!'



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# IMRA Update

Paul Whiting reports on the IMRA National Conference and AGM

This year saw the Mayo team host the event at the Westport Woods Hotel over the weekend of 19/20 January.

### National Conference

Saturday morning kicked off with two stimulating talks in Session One. Dr Paul Grout (A&E consultant, member of the College of Rescue Medicine and a doctor on HM Coastguard rescue helicopters) spoke on why rescue medicine is different to other forms of first aid and the issues and considerations for practitioners of rescue medicine. Jonathan Hart (Vice chair of the MRC of Scotland and member of the Lochaber team) spoke on the pros and cons of the various approaches used in technical rope rescue, based on experience gained with his own team and during a winter sabbatical with mountain rescue teams in the Yosemite and Grand Canyon national parks. Both Paul and Jonathan had spoken at the Shell Seminar in November 2007 and came highly recommended by one of our members who attended.

Session Two saw three breakout sessions – a media training workshop to aid teams in working with the media and in promoting their activities; a training and development subcommittee meeting; and a medical subcommittee meeting. The formation of the subcommittees is a major step forward for mountain rescue in Ireland. It means all teams receive the same information and have a say in the activities and recommendations made by the subs.

After an excellent lunch, there were a further three parallel breakout sessions.

Session Three consisted of three meetings – team leaders, treasurers and fundraising, and VES (Voluntary Emergency Services). The first two allowed the elected officers of the teams to discuss issues at a national level, while the third allowed attendees to look at the opportunities and areas still to be developed in working with other VES. This is particularly important in regards to the National Emergency Management Framework being developed between the three major emergency services – the Garda, Health Service Executive and the fire services.

Session Four saw the Mayo team take the bold move to offer attendees 'something different', not at all related to mountain rescue. Probably we've all attended a training event, exhibition or conference where, at the end of the day, we've walked away being mentally drained by the amount of information we've had to absorb. With this in mind, the Photography, Salsa Dancing, Horseriding or History of Westport Walk proved to be very popular.

Session Five in the late afternoon consisted of two topics – a Reek

Sunday/National Exercise SWOT Analysis and GPS Radios Workshop. Each year IMRA has a national operation – 'Reek Sunday' – hosted by the Mayo team and a national exercise rotated amongst the teams, which provide a great opportunity for teams to work together and learn from each other. In late 2006, IMRA purchased GPS radio microphones for teams, enabling them to make use of the MR map software being developed by David Binks. This workshop was an update on the technology and launch of the technical manual for the system.

In the evening, a dinner was held with the annual presentation of awards. The teams nominate team members whom they wish to recognise for their contribution to the development of their team. The recipients for 2008 'Distinguished Service Awards' were Hannah Cuddy (Glen of Imaal MRT), Don Murphy (SARDA), Dave Goddard (Mourne MRT), Tim Long and Tim Murphy (Kerry MRT), Liam and Fran Lynch (Sligo Leitrim MRT) and Ollie Geraghty (Mayo MRT).

In addition, IMRA presented three Certificates of Recognition.

• Mayo MRT presented an award to a local Westport family. The Herraghty family have a farm on the back side of Croagh Patrick and, for a number of years, have given the Mayo team permission to set up their rescue base for Reek Sunday on their land. This entails allowing the teams to camp overnight and having the Air Corps helicopters landing and taking off from the field directly in front of their house. They have also allowed land to be levelled for portacabins and the parking of team vehicles. Unquestionably a huge inconvenience and they selflessly and generously ask for nothing in return.

• Tony Jones MBE, of Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) for his ongoing support of IMRA and commitment to the mutual support of IMRA and MR(E&W).

• Norman Fullam of the Irish Coast Guard for his ongoing support of the IMRA.

### AGM

AGMs can be difficult things to report on. Besides the obligatory reports from the teams and elected officers, what really allowed this AGM to stand out from others was the report from IMRA chair, Liam McCabe. Liam claimed that 2007 has been one of the most successful years for IMRA in regards to its development. His report centred on the message 'Look what we can achieve when we work together'. He avoided singling out any one person for praise and really acknowledged the work done by all the officers and the executive. The highlights for 2007 include:-

• Multiple national training events including Equipment Officer, Party Leader, Tracking, Training the SAR Trainer courses, National Operation for Reek Sunday and National Exercise.

• A comprehensive and satisfactory insurance package for members.

• Winning a grant from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to cover the insurance package.

• Production of 'Call Out', our new, high quality magazine, and the 'Mountain Rescue Book of Knowledge', which allows all teams to share their organisational and operational documentation.

• A permanent home and address (thanks to the Mountaineering Council of Ireland).

Another aspect of this year's AGM was the presentation by Seamus Bradley, of the Donegal team, on some special software he's been developing for IMRA called SAROPS. Briefly, this software allows teams to keep a record of members' training and operational activity and to generate standardised risk assessments for all training and operations. This will be released to the teams during 2008.



irish rescue



# MR in profile...

## Publications & Information Subcommittee (PISC)

What has the MRC ever done for you? Well for a start, you are the MRC. It's team members just like you who go along to the national meetings to discuss how best we all might move forward. In training, publications, fundraising, equipment, communications. And they do it by sitting on the subcommittees. But, just so you know what goes on behind closed doors, in the first in a series profiling exactly what the subcommittees do for you, chairman **Andy Simpson**, talks about PISC.

In past years, the Publications & Information Subcommittee (PISC) seemed to restrict its activities to periodic production of the MRC Handbook and the issue of information of general interest, usually in the form of a brick of paper that dropped on various people's doorsteps containing press cuttings, memos and minutes from subcommittee meetings.

I'm glad to say the whole thing has become a bit more sophisticated. When Ian Hurst of PDMRO took over as chair in the late 90s, he quickly realised the need for the MRC to communicate and become more accessible to its grass roots membership. He actively recruited and encouraged members to come forward who not only represented their region but brought professional skills to the group.

One of his first projects was to establish the MRC website, making sure the right people were in place to get something up on screen. This was quickly followed by the MRC News, forerunner to the hugely successful Mountain Rescue mag we all know and love today. The net

result is that every team member in England and Wales now has access to more information than ever before – both in print on a quarterly basis, and more immediately through the website. Neither medium is perfect but, as we develop, the readability, accessibility and quality of the information provided makes the MRC in particular, and the wider MR world, far more within reach of ordinary team members.

In addition, the Handbook – comprising a directory of contact details for each team and other organisations, and more general information about mountain rescue – has now evolved into an online directory and a separate printed handbook. A new version of the Handbook is being worked on at present with a view to promoting mountain rescue to a wider public and increasing our profile amongst those who ultimately pay for the service.

Other projects included the recognition of a need for some kind of corporate profile for MR. For many, this concept didn't sit too well at the time, and still doesn't with some but, as a national

organisation, the establishment of corporate guidelines was necessary to achieve physical recognition operationally (the lines of mostly red jackets attending major incidents), and the more ethereal recognition needed amongst the public to help us compete locally and nationally for the elusive charitable donation. Combine this with the PR and commercial partnerships we now have, and we see a far more visible organisation with a valuable brand, able to bring in funding for training and equipment which benefits every team in the country.

PISC works very closely with the national fundraising group, acting as marketing consultant in their quest for funding from the public and commercial sectors. A final point, perhaps worth making, is that rather than looking for regional representation for the sake of it (although it is always a bonus) we prefer to recruit those people from within mountain rescue who can bring a particular skill to the group and further develop the projects we undertake.

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