

Mountain Rescue England and Wales

# Annual Review 2023

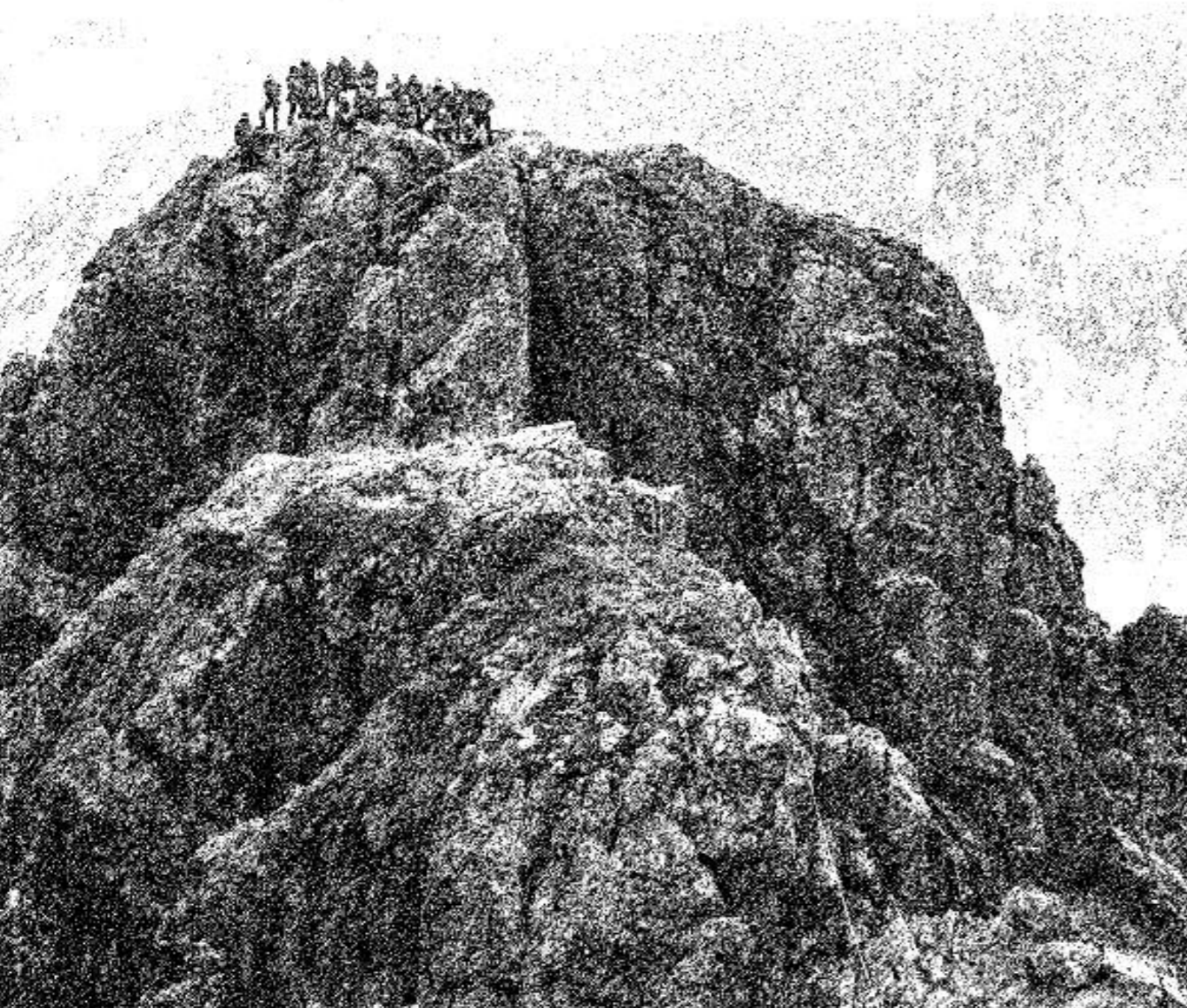


Published May 2023



# Foreword

## HRH The Prince of Wales



For my family, and for many of you, 2022 was a year that combined celebration, sadness, and change. As Patron of Mountain Rescue England and Wales, I was delighted to see mountain rescue volunteers among those honoured with the Platinum Jubilee Medal as part of the celebrations; and I appreciated the messages of condolence and support from teams and MR officers following my Grandmother's death.

It was also a year when many people found adventure and fun, solace and relaxation in the outdoors, some for the first time since the pandemic began. Thank you for your commitment to be available, equipped, and skilled to provide a safety net for those visitors and for your own communities too.

Most of us will never need to call on mountain rescue services, but it is reassuring to know you are there.

Thank you for all that you do.

Ar gyfer fy rheulu innau, ac ar gyfer llawer ohonoch chi, bu 2022 yn flwyddyn a gyfunai ddathlu, tristwch a newid. Fel Noddwr Achub Mynydd Cymru a Lloegr (MREW), 'roeddwn i wrth fy modd yn gweld gwirfoddolwyr achub mynydd ymhlith y rhai a anrhydeddwyd gyda Medal y Jiwili Platinwm fel rhan o'r dathliadau; a bŵm yn gwerthfawrogi'r negesuon o gydymdeimlad a chefnogaeth oddi wrth dimau a swyddogion Achub Mynydd yn dilyn marwolaeth fy Nain.

Yr oedd llynedd hefyd yn flwyddyn pan ddaeth llawer o bobl o hyd i antur a hwyl, cyfle i ymgysuro ac i ymlacio yn yr awyr agored, rhai am y tro cyntaf ers cychwyn y pandemig. Diolch am eich ymroddiad, sy'n golygu bod ar gael, gyda'r offer a'r medrau, pan fydd angen ar ymwelwyr neu ar eich cymunedau.

Ni fydd ar y rhan fwyaf ohonom byth angen galw ar wasanaethau achub mynydd, ond mae'n gysur gwybod eich bod chi yno.

Diolch am bopeth yr ydych yn ei wneud.



# Looking to the future for mountain rescue

Two years into his tenure as MREW Chief Executive Officer, Mike Park discusses how his 'vision' for the future of the organisation and the wider world of mountain rescue is shaping up. It's been two years of 'getting to know' team members, search and rescue colleagues and partner organisations to find out what makes them tick and forge new relationships. So what has changed, what has stayed the same and what are we in the process of developing?



Still enjoying the process of travelling England and Wales in his campervan, visiting teams, chatting to team members and discovering the different challenges they face, he's also a regular face at regional meetings, alongside his own national responsibilities.

'I wanted to meet every team and, optimistically, every team member, to better understand why people do mountain rescue and what mountain rescue means to them'.

His own belief is that all team members want the same thing: primarily, to help people who are having that 'bad day' in the outdoors, but also to work with like-minded people who know the power and value of working as a team. They want to spend as much time immersed in the outdoors as they can, and doing mountain rescue is 'just another excuse to prolong that time'.

He also recognises the social aspect of belonging to a team. 'We want to sit down at the end of a call-out with our mates, knowing we did some good together, before heading home safely to our family and friends.'

It's this 'social gel' that bonds teams together, and runs through every aspect of mountain rescue, not just within the individual teams, but in the subgroups and committees at regional and national level, and in our relationships with outside organisations and partners.

'Building mutually beneficial partnerships with outside organisations has been a major consideration over the last year. From an operational point of view this has meant continuing to build collaborative

relationships with our colleagues in the wider search and rescue community, through our work with Bristow and the MCA on helicopter provision, and in our representation at UK Search and Rescue (UKSAR) and the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR). Mike France, my predecessor and now MREW Liaison Officer, talks about the developments at UKSAR in more detail on page 13.

'We continue to develop commercial partnerships, the most recent of these with Ordnance Survey. We're also working closely with Helly Hansen to create a mountain rescue-specific insulator jacket, and our relationship with JD Foundation remains strong. (More about these relationships on page 11)

'Alongside this, both Keela International and the Outdoor Industry Association were instrumental in helping stage our first International Women's Day webinar. Quite a landmark for mountain rescue!'

On the subject of women in mountain rescue, he's very supportive of the work Penny Brockman, MREW Finance Director, has done in driving this initiative, and is keen to keep the momentum going.

'I very strongly believe that we can't be what we can't see. It's not just about acknowledging internally the role that women play in our mountain rescue teams and nationally, we need that to be clear to the outside world too. It was good to see so many women at the event, challenging us as an organisation and moving us forward in this respect.'

He's keen to encourage more team members to come forward to take on national roles, whether that's taking on

responsibility for overseeing a particular area within mountain rescue as an officer, or simply getting involved with the various working groups and subcommittees looking at specific projects.

'There's a huge reservoir of knowledge and fresh ideas out there and we need to tap into it more. But, equally, none of our ideas and plans will happen unless we all see the benefit of exploring them, and sharing the workload to bring them to fruition. If we work together, across the organisation and have fun while we're at it, we can achieve much more than if we work in silos or issue top-down edicts.'

The bottom line, he says, is always our 'customers': are we delivering the best possible service, achieving the best possible outcomes, whilst also keeping our team members safe? That customer base continues to change. No longer just the climbers and mountaineers of yore, now we're seeing the endurance runners, mountain bikers, paragliders, wild swimmers and canoeists, and simply more families enjoying the countryside, often equipped with little more than a mobile phone app. And more people in the outdoors means incident numbers continue to rise.

'Our history tells us that the future will be busier still. So we need to adapt, to challenge ourselves and be prepared to change, to innovate, and never forget that those customers are no different to us. They ARE us. They're just not having their best day. They always deserve and require our compassion, our empathy, our help and our smiles. And the best possible treatment we can give them.'

**Opposite:** Holme Valley team members during a multi-agency exercise in June 2022 © Pdraig Spillane. **Top:** CEO Mike Park in contemplative mood © Mike Park.

MREW team members clocked up

# 110,317

volunteer rescuer hours in 2022



MORE  
STATS  
NEXT  
PAGE

# 2022

## An overview of the year's statistics

**3361** call-outs resulting in **2663** deployments

Busiest months **June • July • August** with **35%** incidents

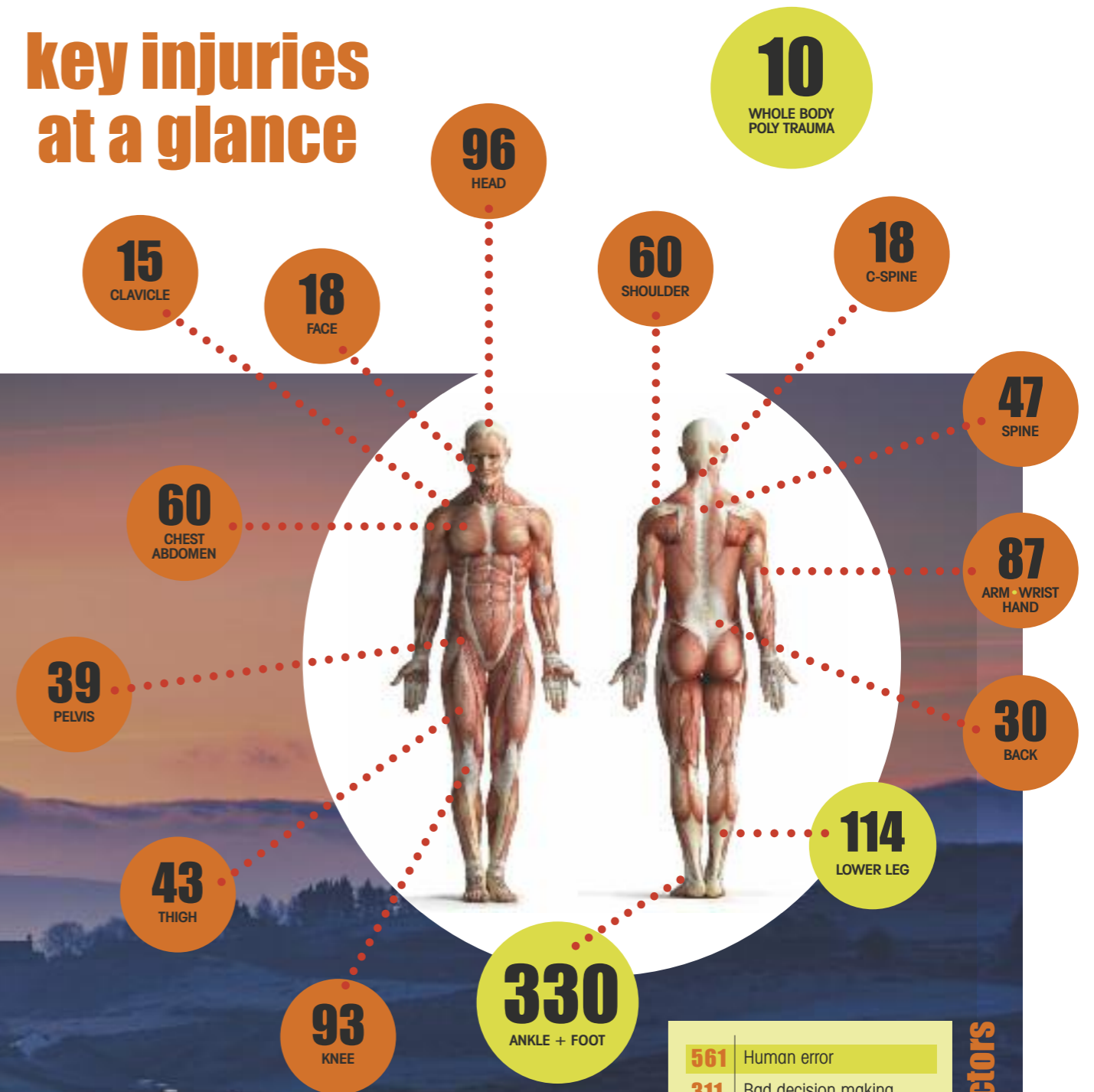
Busiest days of the week **Saturday • Sunday** with **42%** incidents

Subjects involved **57%** male **41%** female \*2% of subjects are recorded as either 'unknown' or 'other'

Age groups most frequently involved **46%** 25-60 years **23%** Over-60 years

Nature of incident **22%** missing persons **78%** casualties

### key injuries at a glance



**other reasons for rescue include: chest pain, collapse, exhaustion, fit, hypothermia, substance abuse and suicide**

Count	Contributory Factor
561	Human error
311	Bad decision making
244	Freak weather, heavy rain, snow, strong winds
289	Inexperience
172	Tired, fatigued or unfit
123	Inadequate footwear or kit
182	Ignorance of pursuit
127	Poor visibility
53	Ice
47	High temperatures
45	Inadequate communication
11	Equipment fail

contributory factors

Main photo: Pen y Ghent, Yorkshire Dales © Tim Hill | Pixabay.  
Above: Anatomical illustration © Cosmin4000.



# Celebrating women in mountain rescue

International Women's Day 2023 felt hugely significant for the women involved in teams across England and Wales, thanks to an MREW-hosted webinar dedicated to their involvement. Two hundred mountain rescuers — women and men — joined the event, with colleagues from Scotland and Ireland, UKSAR, the RAF, Ordnance Survey and a couple of kit manufacturers, to discuss the impact and importance of women in mountain rescue. **Judy Whiteside** went along to find out more.

This was a first for mountain rescue and it was with some trepidation that organiser Penny Brockman, MREW Finance Director and a former Central Beacons team leader, first mooted the possibility. Glance around social media and the wider press, and you'd be forgiven for thinking we are an entirely male organisation. Truth is that women have been involved at the sharp end from the very early days of civilian mountain rescue teams. But it's also true that women represent a very small percentage of team members: between 5% and 30% around the two countries. So, given that 51% of the population in England and Wales is female and 49% male<sup>1</sup>, we still have work to do.

Very far from a newfangled concept, International Women's Day<sup>2</sup> dates back to 2011, when Clara Zetkin proposed, at the International Conference of Working Women, that every year, in every country, there should be a celebration on the same day to press for the 'demands' of women. Since then, it has evolved into a global day (8 March), celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.

To make the webinar a reality, Penny worked with Aneela McKenna, who offers support and advice to businesses on developing inclusive cultures. On the night, Aneela guided discussions with support from a panel of women, comprising Carolyn Otley (Cockermouth), Maddie Langdon (North of Tyne), Jen Isherwood (Tweed Valley) and Kirsty Pallas (Oban). MREW CEO Mike Park also joined the discussion, 'grateful for those who are helping to move the organisation forward in this respect'.

As a team member for 36 years and team leader for ten, Penny is well-versed in the difficulties which can face women.

'The early days were extremely hard

and challenging,' she says. 'Often lonely.' She was grateful for the support of the 'amazing friends and allies, women and men' who supported and believed in her.

Despite acknowledging the challenges, the overwhelming mood of the evening was positive with panel members and others in the 'chat bar' describing the different influences that drew them to join mountain rescue. There was the more traditional route, of growing up with a father or mother already in a team, and those who'd watched injured friends or family being treated with kindness and skill by the rescue team. There were keen outdoorsy people, for whom mountain rescue seemed the obvious 'next step', and the professional mountaineering instructors for whom the mountains are second nature, who now teach their colleagues technical rescue skills. And there were medics who now help support the wider mountain rescue community with casualty care training.

A particularly hot topic was the sourcing of woman-shaped kit — not just clothing but helmets and harnesses, kit bags and rucksacks — the consensus that 'unisex' invariably means 'male'. Then there's the universal challenge of women needing to answer nature's call in the mountains during a prolonged rescue operation. The good news is that several manufacturers are working closely with teams and MREW to develop appropriate kit.

Childcare can often be a barrier to women joining mountain rescue, requiring a strong support network at home and within the team — frequently resolved by the mother of young kids taking a role in the control room, helping run the comms, handling the technology, their offspring somewhere close at hand. Or an older child might be called into service during training to act as the 'casualty', perhaps



inspired over time to join the team themselves.

'What was clear was that 'a lack of diversity fails to represent the community we serve'. For any female contemplating joining this male-dominated world, it can seem daunting, but those who do find it immensely rewarding. And there's an innate strength and capability to the women in mountain rescue.

'So yes,' says Penny, 'there's still a lot of work to be done, but perhaps as an organisation we can be an inspiration for women everywhere, whatever age. We can lead by example.'



And, from our national point of view, by demonstrating that women are involved in our teams at every level, through our social media channels and publications, we will inevitably attract more. A working group is now busy exploring how MREW, alongside the wider search and rescue world, can move this initiative forward.

'We may have come late to the party, adds Penny, 'but here's to International Women's Day 2024!'

**Opposite, top and inset:** Just a few of the women in mountain rescue. Images (in alphabetical order) courtesy of Kerry Harrison, David Higgs, Nadir Khan, Ed Smith, Padraig Spillane, Aberglaslyn MRT, Bowland Pennine MRT, Buxton MRT, Cave Rescue Organisation, Dartmoor Ashburton MRT, Glossop MRT, Langdale Ambleside MRT, Northumberland National Park MRT, Ogwen Valley MRO, Scarborough & Ryedale MRT, West Cornwall MRT and Woodhead MRT.

<sup>1</sup> (Office for National Statistics, Census 2021) <sup>2</sup> internationalwomensday.com



# Building partnerships with benefits...

Mountain rescue involves teamwork and partnerships — from our partnerships with the emergency services who call out the teams, to the connections and friendships within teams, and with their neighbouring teams and local communities. But there are some ‘partnerships with benefits’ where something tangible like gear or money is involved. At their best, these are the partnerships that can be a win-win-win for everyone involved.

## Helly Hansen

In 2019, the design team at Helly Hansen (HH) approached MREW about working together to design future kit. The approach was to collaborate with two teams — one in England, one in Wales — provide all their team members with test kit, then work closely with them to develop and fine tune ‘ideal’ gear for mountain rescuers. Since then, a group of volunteers, led by Paul Smith, MREW Equipment Officer, has been working with HH on the design specification for an insulator jacket and the prototype was available for inspection at our national meeting in November.

‘The work on a squad jacket and the head-to-toe kit with the North of Tyne and Western Beacons teams continues,’ says Paul, ‘and it’s been good to get a wider cross-section of mountain rescue volunteers involved in the project. We’re including comfort, with both men and women’s fit, and looking at whole-of-life responsible solutions and sustainable aspects too. I’d like to think we’re making history; mountain rescue volunteers working with a world-class manufacturer to design bespoke and sustainable MR clothing. And it’s not just history — we’re making some really top-notch kit for the future here!’

## Ordnance Survey

In amongst the debate about learning to use a map and compass, and the growth of location and navigation apps for people’s phones, Ordnance Survey (OS) approached us with the suggestion of a partnership that really should be a win-win-win — for MR, for OS and for the walking public.

Mark Lewis, MREW ICT Director, worked closely with OS throughout 2022 with the plan to enable free access to the OS Maps app for all team members. The aim then was to work on a joint publicity

and communications campaign for OS Maps, and for team members to feed back to the OS team to improve and develop the app itself.

‘There were a fair few legal hoops to jump, which delayed the distribution of the app,’ explains Mark, ‘but we got there in the end with all team members having access early in 2023, and the public announcement of the partnership just before Easter 2023.’

A group of regional representatives is working with OS to feed in suggestions from ‘mountain rescue’ experience and OS is, similarly, using that group to test new ideas and beta elements.

## The JD Foundation

In 2016, JD Sports approached us with the offer of a three-year contract giving a proportion of their stores’ bag tax money to mountain rescue. Some seven years later, the JD Foundation (JDF) is a major supporter and MREW has received over a million pounds from the bag tax and other giving. Given that the JD Group includes Blacks, Millets and Go Outdoors, as well as the George Fisher shop in Keswick, that’s a lot of stores with a lot of staff. And £1 million adds up to a lot of financial support too.

As part of this partnership, mountain rescue personnel have worked with JDF in running children’s adventure days — with teams in the Mid Pennine region making a big contribution of time and effort to these — and also been involved in regular product awareness events with JD staff.

Mike France, MREW Liaison Officer, has been involved in the connections with the JD Foundation from the beginning. ‘As well as the invaluable financial support, we also have the opportunity to talk with the 1,300 staff who attend these events. We always thank them for their support and everyone we talk with seems very happy that we get a donation from them.



And that familiarity and connection also means that they feel more confident explaining to their customers where the money goes.’

Keith Gillies of Bowland Pennine MRT has recently taken on the role as MREW Relationship Manager for JDF. ‘There’s room for us to build on this relationship in the future, and it certainly seems worth the investment in time to go to the staff events. After all, if their customers buy the wrong kit, they may become our customers in an emergency!’

‘At recent events, Julian Walden and Mike were able to explain the pros and cons of mobile phone navigation apps and the need for phone chargers, which can help them to upsell and helps MR teams in the long run too! I’m hoping we’ll be able to build further on all of this and looking forward to strengthening our existing links.’

These are just three of the many collaborators and partners supporting mountain rescue teams in their work. A huge thanks to them and to each and every one of our supporters, be they organisations, individuals or donors. We couldn’t continue our work without you.



**Opposite:** Western Beacons team in their Helly Hansen kit © Ed Smith. **Top:** The OS app in use © Jessie Leong. **Above:** JD Foundation staff in 2017, enjoying a day out with mountain rescue at the raging Cauldron Snout © TWSMRT.

# ...and building the bigger picture thanks to our links with UKSAR



In January 2017, a strategic overview of search and rescue in the UK was published by the UK government and United Kingdom Search and Rescue (UKSAR) was born. UKSAR brings search and rescue charities and voluntary organisations together with the emergency services and various government departments in a 'cohesive and cooperative partnership, the aim of which is the continued provision of an effective, cost-efficient national search and rescue capability'.



As you would expect, MREW is very much participating in UKSAR, as CEO, Mike Park explains. 'It's very important that MREW works alongside the volunteer organisations and other agencies at UKSAR. Our experience over the years in a range of search and rescue situations is invaluable to others across the country and, with effective sharing of that history and the pros and cons of past decisions, we have a voice that's informed.'

'Likewise, MREW and its member teams have an established culture of progression and improvement in everything we do. It's something I actively encourage and that attitude can be shared within UKSAR as an important contribution to that "provision of an effective, cost-efficient national SAR capability" noted in the strategic review.'

Mike France, MREW Liaison Officer, is an integral part of MREW's involvement in UKSAR. 'At the moment,' he explains, 'there are several groups, with just one representative from MREW at each: the Operators and Volunteers groups, the Medical and Communications working groups, along with Section 19 (which deals with driving in emergencies) and SAR-H (which covers working with helicopters).'

'Our previous experience has been that, when key people move on, it's easy to lose the continuity of information and the relationships with partners. So we're looking at ways to make ourselves less vulnerable to change and to ensure that the experience, expertise and knowledge from each person and group is shared effectively.'

Alongside this, UKSAR itself continues to develop and change.

- There are plans for two new groups, Wellbeing and Insurance, where MREW hopes to have two representatives from the start.

- Work is being done to develop agreed 'concept of operations' documents, building on the success of this approach for water-based rescue. It is hoped that some of the best practice developed in mountain rescue, over a range of events and operations, can be shared effectively and contribute to continuous improvement across the UKSAR network.

- And there are plans for new UKSAR subgroups: Search, Water, Search Dogs, Inland Water, Subsurface (mines and caves), Spontaneous Volunteers and Rescue Air (covering helicopters, fixed wing aircraft and drones).

'We hope to have our lead specialist in each area attending these meetings, ideally with a second person to give the continuity,' says Mike France.

Overall, mountain rescue is well placed

to contribute to the development of UKSAR and play an active part in shaping search and rescue in the years to come.

'MREW and the individual teams are viewed by society simply as mountain rescue,' says Mike Park. 'That's our brand and we need to make the most of that broad perception. Having a strong voice at UKSAR because of our national scale is one of the advantages. Obviously, teams still need a high profile with their local communities — that's where they recruit members and raise a lot of their financial support. But we need to make the most of the wider view too. It's not something we should back away from, but something we should actively develop and manage.'

'It's because of this we can embrace and actively engage with UKSAR as an equal partner. And with that comes a responsibility to not rest on our laurels, but be prepared to listen and learn, and to actively engage for everyone's benefit. We all share a commitment to serving the public in search and rescue situations and there's lots more we can do to fulfil that role.'



**Opposite:** Buxton team members working with the Midlands Air Ambulance crew in May 2022 © Buxton MRT. **Top:** Northumberland National Park team members deploy their drone to assist Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service during wild fires in August 2022 © NNPMRT. **Right:** Calder Valley team members working with HM Coastguard Rescue helicopter © CVSRT.



# Looking after our volunteers' wellbeing

As incident number continue to rise, so do the demands and challenges faced by team members — volunteers who give their time willingly, often abandoning family plans or work commitments to help someone in need in the hills, mountains and moorlands. So, increasingly, our focus is on the wellbeing and welfare of those team members, and the values we share, and quite a lot has happened over the last year to move this forward.



The 'shared values project' is a key component in supporting the welfare and wellbeing of our volunteers, and both Penny Brockman and Mike Park are keen to engage as many team members as possible, across England and Wales, in the process. Penny was instrumental in gathering together an initial group to discuss the project, in January 2022. That meeting was facilitated by Joe Tipper, of Derby MRT, and Joe has since worked with leadership coach Dave Otter, and Penny, to develop a framework for MREW.

'For me, this runs alongside my passion for the recognition and celebration of women in mountain rescue,' says Penny. 'Shared values are fundamental to us all as mountain rescue team members. They underpin and run through the whole organisation.'

'We wanted to create a group that represents the membership at all levels, leadership and grass roots, and across the regions, so we can become more inclusive on a practical level. It's so easy to dismiss these things as not really being applicable to us. But, far from being some fuzzy idea of doing good, having — and acknowledging — our shared values enables us to operate more effectively. Like a well-oiled machine, without friction.'

'For example, new team members will be drawn to a particular team because that team perhaps resonates with their own values. And, once they're in, it's important to know that everyone shares the same values so we can work together as a cohesive unit.'

Recently, team members have been invited to feed back with their thoughts about the values they see as important, encouraged by Mike Park to engage with the process. We hope the work will continue to gather pace through 2023.

Alongside this, the wellbeing group was revitalised this year with the appointment of Jon White, a GP and member of the North Dartmoor team, with a particular interest in wellbeing and mental health.

He is also involved internationally, with the ICAR medical commission, looking at the issue of psychological stress amongst mountain rescuers.

'Team members and leadership should work together to create a culture where everyone feels supported and knows where to access support if they need it,' says Jon. 'It's certainly not a case of one size fits all — different team members will be drawn to seek help in different ways.'

With this in mind, a wellbeing poster is now available for teams, listing useful contacts and links to a range of mental health charities, services and helplines, as well as the Rescue Benevolent Fund, a separate charity set up to support our volunteer team members (see below).



## Rescue Benevolent Fund: providing wellbeing support for mountain and cave rescue team members

The Rescue Benevolent Fund has been helping team members and their families since 2013. Set up through a collaboration between Mountain Rescue England and Wales and the British Cave Rescue Council, it is a separate charity, with independent trustees, working alongside mountain and cave rescue in complete confidentiality. Over the last ten years, the fund has supported team members through physical and mental rehabilitation after sustaining injury or trauma as a result of an incident, helped in times of financial hardship and also covered funeral costs for team members who have died in service. Rehabilitation care, psychotherapy and counselling have been provided by means of a short residential stay at one of The Fire Fighters Charity centres around the country or through locally-sourced therapists known to the applicant.

Always looking at ways to support team member wellbeing, in 2022, the fund committed to providing ongoing mental health support to all operational team members, through a partnership with Togetherall. This online provision is completely anonymous and monitored by clinical professionals — and available 24/7 (just like mountain and cave rescue teams!) to any member who registers with the site. Together, we're supporting our members in an ever-busier, ever-more challenging world of rescue. To find out more about the fund and how it supports our members, head to [rescuebenevolent.fund](https://rescuebenevolent.fund).

**Opposite:** Central Beacons team members working with the emergency services to rescue a walker who had sustained injury to head, leg and abdomen, May 2022 © CBMRT. **Top:** Brecon team assists with a lower leg injury in March 2023 © Brecon MRT. **Inset:** Dartmoor SRT Plymouth during water rescue training © Collin Sturmer.



# News snips

from around England and Wales

Team members can be called to assist the emergency services and the wider community in a variety of different situations, after casualties (mainly human but frequently canine and ovine), take tumbling falls down steep drops. Sometimes with tragic outcomes.



# tumbles...



## MAY 2022: Man saved by sapling after 100 foot fall at concert in Peak District cave

Edale team members had a call with a difference when comedian John Shuttleworth's gig in Peak Cavern (AKA the Devil's Arse) was unexpectedly interrupted by an unfortunate gig-goer.

After a couple of calls to the team that had led to nothing, over the previous twenty-four hours, this seemed likely to be a third. Initially, some people who'd heard shouts for help thought it part of the show, until a team member at the concert confirmed that there was indeed someone hanging by his fingertips above the entrance to the cave — a significant drop. To complicate matters further, several hundred gig-goers could be at risk of falling rock once the rescue got underway. Thankfully, the audience were happy to disperse in good humour and the man was rescued from his precarious position without a hitch, save for a few cuts and bruises. It transpired he had been using Google maps to navigate his way to the concert, crossed two barbed wire fences, and continued on before lost his footing, slipping and tumbling down the slope before grabbing hold of the very last sapling before the vertical drop. One very lucky gig-goer!

**Opposite:** Peak Cavern (AKA the Devil's Arse cave), by daylight and during the incident © Edale MRT. **Centre:** Lucky sheep rescued from her somewhat precarious position © Aberglaslyn MRT. **Below:** Roxy rescue © Scarborough & Ryedale MRT. **Right:** Ogwen team members await the helicopter landing © OVMRO.

## JULY 2022: Sheep rescued after ten days stuck in mine

Aberglaslyn team members went to the aid of a local farmer whose sheep had been stuck down a mine shaft for ten days (and counting), amid concerns that after such a long time without food, the animal would be seriously depleted and might die there.

After a good deal of discussion about the most practical way to rescue the sheep without spooking her further, two team members were lowered into the shaft. After a short struggle with the sheep, which was still surprisingly robust despite her ordeal, they managed to secure her in a bag and recover her to the surface and on to the farmer.



## NOVEMBER 2022: Lucky terrier rescued from fifteen-foot ravine

Two-year-old Patterdale terrier Roxy fell fifteen foot down a ravine in Cropton Forest, after reportedly being distracted by a squirrel. Members of the Scarborough and Ryedale team worked with North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue to recover her to safety.

On a dark, wet and foggy night, fire service personnel were able to provide on-scene lighting and help clear shrubs from the crag edge before a rescue team member was lowered down, armed with treats. He managed to coax Roxy into a rope bag before the pair were hauled back up the crag, no worse for her unexpected adventure.



## FEBRUARY 2023: Tragic start to the year in the Ogwen Valley

Sadly, not all those who take tumbling falls survive with only minor cuts and bruises to show for the experience. Often, when a call comes in about a particular location or a particular set of circumstances — a deterioration in the weather, perhaps, or the way a potential casualty's companions report their concerns — team members know there might be a very real possibility they will be dealing with a fatality. And also dealing with the friends or family so recently bereaved — not to mention their own mental health and wellbeing.

One such incident saw Ogwen Valley team members heading out on their eighth rescue, in a busy start to the year. Three young men, regular and experienced hill walkers, had driven from Yorkshire to wild camp on the Glyderau mountains. In good weather, they set off to walk up Y Gribin, the ridge between Cym Idwal and Cwm Bochlwyd, which steepens to a challenging scramble. As the forecasted weather front brought with it wind and rain, dense cloud lowered down the valley. One of the walkers pulled up on a rock that thousands have pulled on before but this time it pulled away and he followed the rock down the steep, loose and craggy back wall. His friends scrambled down this awful terrain, calling for their friend, without response.

With the rescue team alerted, the two were found and being guided back up to the ridge when, by chance, through the cloud and drizzle, there was a glimpse of something blue, high up amongst the rocks. A team member climbed up but, sadly, the casualty had not survived his long, tumbling fall. His two friends returned home in the early hours — a journey which must have been immensely difficult — but it was the following morning, in clearer weather, before their companion could be recovered by team members, assisted by Rescue 936. While some climbed up to carry out the Fatal Incident Protocol and secure the casualty to the stretcher, the police drone surveyed and recorded the fall line, and found his missing rucksack. Rope systems helped move him safely down to the foot of the crag, for a short stretcher carry, over more forgiving ground, to the helicopter.

# ...and tragedy

so much more...

Top/Inset: Water training scenario for Northumberland National Park MRT © Karl Wait/NNPMRT. Below: On scene at the rescue operation for a car in the river © NEWSAR.



**MARCH 2023:** 'Missing kayaker' and 'brother' rescued

Okay, so this was a training exercise but quite an effort on this very cold night, for Northumberland National Park team members and their volunteer 'casualties' (including their local councillor, so a spot of community relationship-building also going on). The scenario was that a kayaker had been reported missing by his brother. Then, partway through the search, it transpired that the brother too had gone in the river whilst trying to help! Having quickly found both casualties, one with a 'dislocated shoulder and broken lower leg' and both suffering with 'hypothermia', the pair were extracted from the water. Good effort!

Never a year goes by, it seems, without a team member or two appearing on our prime time television screens. And whether we're just 'extras' lurking in the background, or up front and centre stage, it helps promote 'mountain rescue' to a wider world. Off screen, it's been business as usual with calls to injured and lost walkers, stuck climbers, missing persons, lost kayakers and stranded drivers. Different incidents demand different kit, different expertise, different training and different commitment to volunteer time. And often they are technically, physically and emotionally challenging.



**DECEMBER 2022:** Water operation after car crash

NEWSAR members assisted North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and North Wales Police after a car crashed into the river at Llandrillo. Two people were extracted from the car using water appliance tools before being passed on to paramedics.



**JUNE 2022:** Water search for vulnerable missing person

Holme Valley team assisted West Yorkshire Police with the successful search for a high-risk missing person using a mix of team assets, including search management skills, the water team, technical rope skills and Search Dog Willow.



**JULY 2022:** Intoxicated male rescued from Cadair Idris

The twenty-year-old was reported to be 'intoxicated and unconscious'. One of a group of eight, he had collapsed on the mountain and his companions, also possibly intoxicated, had left him there to raise the alarm and ask for help. It later transpired a third party was also missing.

In unseasonably poor weather, the first man was located, by now back on his feet, and was duly escorted down. Meanwhile, team members and search dogs continued the search for the second person who was found unwell in difficult terrain, having sustained significant injuries in a tumbling fall.



**AUGUST 2022:** Trapped behind the air conditioning

It was certainly a request with a difference when the Oldham team was called to assist North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust with this rescue.

A woman had fallen from a wall in the grounds of a hotel, becoming trapped behind an air-conditioning unit and suffering a head injury in the process. Team members helped with the delicate evacuation on a specialist scoop stretcher.



**APRIL 2022:** Hanging out with Gordon

Two Lakes team members enjoyed a bit of haute cuisine when Gordon Ramsay headed to Honister Slate Mines to film an episode of BBC's Future Food Stars.

Top left: Vulnerable missing person search © HVMRT. Top right: Air conditioning rescue © OMR. Left: Rescue on Cadair Idris © Aberdyfi MRT. Above: 'Keswick Dave' (left) and 'Cockermouth Alan' (right), with Gordon Ramsay at Honister © Keswick MRT.



than mountains



# Capturing memories, recording heritage

Mike Margeson, MREW Operations Director, and his team of regional heritage advocates across England and Wales continue to make progress on a mountain rescue heritage project, in spite of funding setbacks and other challenges. A highlight of the past year was the capturing on video of the story of the Bell stretcher, a key piece of mountain rescue kit since the 1960s.



The Bell stretcher is named after the key person involved in its development, former MREW President, Peter Bell. It is a story that gives a structure to the narrative of development in the later decades of the twentieth century and the recording of Peter's memories of this, and his many other invaluable contributions to mountain rescue, was a priority for the project.

'It was my awareness of the urgency of capturing Peter's memories that focused our plans,' says Mike. 'With the Heritage Lottery Fund application still waiting on post-Covid changes and new criteria, I was keen to go ahead with this element of the project, and a grant from Lyon Equipment made it all possible. Myself and videographer Dave Freeborn (a member of Patterdale MRT) met Peter at Lyon's premises in Tebay in November.'

Mike's conversations with Peter captured his memories of the development of the Bell stretcher and much more. Not only was he a founder member of the Langdale Ambleside team, but Peter also invented the REVIA warm air rebreathing machine for hypothermic casualties, and the Fell Bouncer motorised stretcher carrying device, and made significant contributions to work on radios and relay systems.

The venue at Lyon's headquarters and the support from the company enabled the day to include much more.

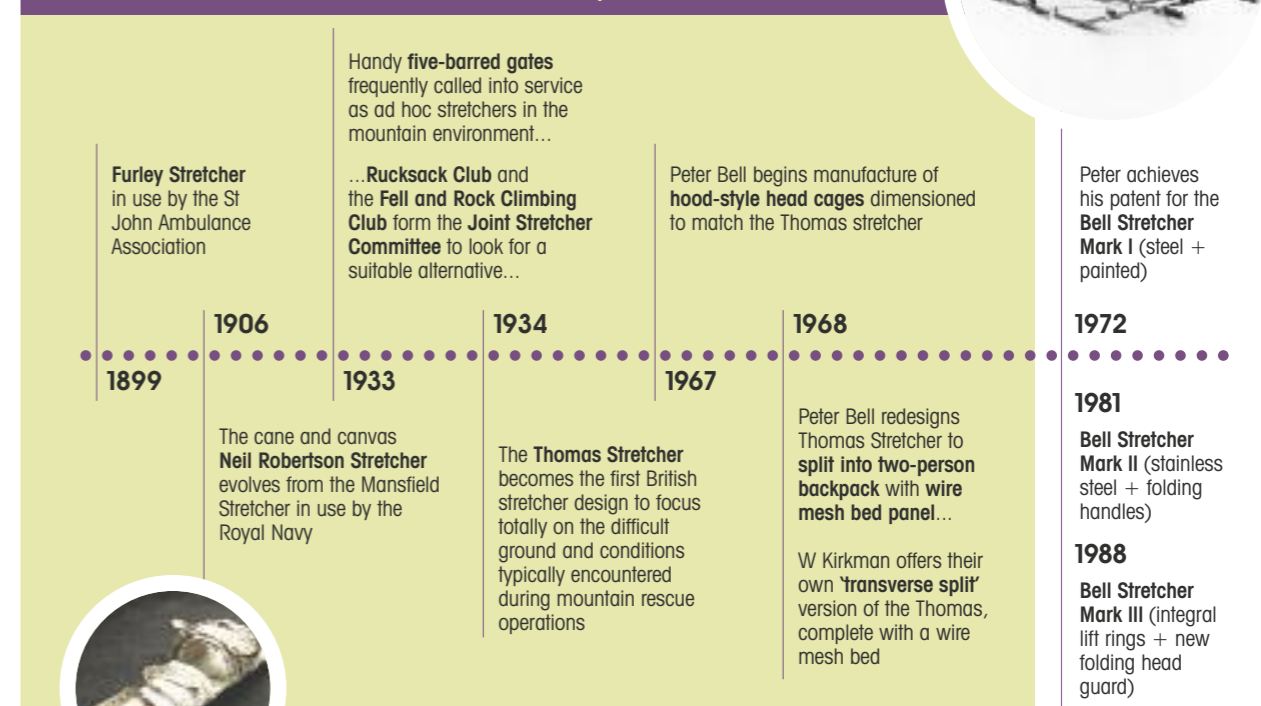
'Peter and I were given a tour of the workrooms and facilities,' says Mike, 'and he was able to meet the people who are continuing his work on specialised stretcher design for mountain rescue. It was fascinating to hear his questions of

the Lyon team and to see just how much of today's equipment still uses the principles of Peter's ideas from over fifty years ago.'

The raw video footage is being edited for archiving and a shorter film will be created and made available online so the story of the Bell stretcher can be told first hand.

'Other elements of the project may take a little longer to come together,' says Mike, 'but we've made a start. I'd like to give a huge thank you to Paul Witheridge and the team at Lyon Equipment for their generous hospitality and involvement and, of course, for the funding that made it possible.'

## The iconic Bell Stretcher: a very brief timeline



Opposite: The Coniston Fells Rescue party (Coniston MRT), the first civilian mountain rescue team in the UK © The Picture Post 1947. Top: North of Tyne team working with the team's Bell stretcher © Nadir Khan. Left: Neil Robertson stretcher. Right: A late Mark I Bell stretcher with modified handles for use with RAF Wessex helicopters © Peter Bell.



# A year in the life of the medical director

Alistair (Al) Morris took on the national MREW Medical Director role in March 2021 — just after the worst of the pandemic but with a long list of priorities for his attention. **Sally Seed** looks back on what he's been doing over his two years in the role, the growing network of support from fellow team medical officers, individuals and teams across England and Wales, and his vision for the future of casualty care in mountain rescue.



A part-time A&E paediatrician in West Yorkshire, he also runs a charity teaching in Africa, contributes to several medical training and healthcare committees and has been an operational member of Calder Valley SRT for ten years (including five as a deputy team leader). He is also on the CRO list to go underground to provide medical support.

The Casualty Care qualification is the core of medical work in mountain rescue and Al recognises it as a priority. A big part of his role is to ensure it is maintained and strengthened to be the best it can be.

'It's about making sure the teams can offer the best care on the hills,' he says. 'Cas Care has to be fit for purpose in our environment. It's our delivery mechanism for medication and the governance around this is important too. I see part of my role as making sure that teams across England and Wales understand their responsibilities around medications as well as the practicalities. I then need to support them in getting things right, not only in practice, but also recording accurately so we can demonstrate our expertise when we need to.'

Given those support and governance elements to his role, he's spent a lot of his time since appointment visiting teams across the country. 'In some cases, I've met the medical officer, but in others I've met a range of team members and officers and visited bases to see how they operate. As far as I'm aware, there is just one team left on my list.'

The normality of most MR activities has resumed since Covid but he is keen to ensure that learning from the pandemic is integrated into team practice. 'It's important to protect our team members so we've converted the Covid guidance and PPE requirements into a broader

approach to all respiratory diseases as well as blood-borne illnesses.

'There are other recent changes too: alongside Scottish Mountain Rescue and the British Cave Rescue Council, we're reviewing the Cas Care syllabus to make sure it continues to meet our needs. And we've recently reviewed our guidance to teams about repeat dosing guidance for medications given the pressures on ambulance services.'

That 'we' is significant. 'There's a great network of team medical officers who are keen to be involved,' says Al, 'and I'm working to strengthen the role of the regional medical officers. There are also other key people (and teams) who have specific expertise and funding to help in particular areas.'

'For instance, Sally Armond at Ogwen Valley MRO has developed the MREW Drugs Aide Memoire, with the Ogwen team funding copies for casualty carers. Langdale Ambleside MRT has funded the latest reprint of the Cas Care revision notes to the benefit of all team members,

and it also funds the biennial national medical conference.'

There is a medical conference scheduled for later in 2023. 'Traditionally, this has been quite lecture-based,' says Al, 'but I'm working with the organising team to bring in more skills development and practical aspects too. There's a lot we can learn from each other as well as from speakers and we need to make the most of every opportunity when we gather together.'

Two years into his term as medical director, Al is a familiar face and, for many, a trusted colleague and expert adviser. With a syllabus review, network strengthening and a medical conference coming up in the year ahead, the volume of work shows no signs of abating.

'There's nothing too daunting ahead given the support across MREW and the shared understanding of what we're doing,' he says. 'My offer to teams is to please invite me back for another visit or to help with training — it's what I enjoy most!'



**Opposite:** Edale team working with the Coastguard S92 helicopter over the Easter 2023 Bank Holiday weekend © Edale MRT. **Top:** Calder Valley SRT assist Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust in the treatment and 'packaging' of a casualty with a lower leg injury, February 2023 © CVSRT. **Above:** Keswick team members attend a hypothermic casualty and deliver CPR in early 2022 © Keswick MRT.

# News snips spring snowfalls

from around England and Wales

Stormy weather and the impact of heavy snow continue to be a regular feature in mountain rescue team incident reports, with teams regularly on standby to support their communities as storms approach, often helping stranded motorists.



Above and inset: Derby team members help dig out stranded motorists © Derby MRT. Top: Glossop team members assisting the NHS Community Nursing Team © Glossop MRT.

## MARCH 2023: Team members kept busy during spring snowfalls

In the Peak District, members of Derby and Buxton teams assisted Derbyshire Police with stranded motorists, their initial task to locate a stranded mother and her three children.

En route they came across others requiring assistance, one of whom had been involved in a road traffic collision. The final part of the journey to find the stranded family was undertaken on foot as the roads were impassable, even for mountain rescue vehicles. Glossop team members were busy assisting the NHS Community Nursing Team, transporting staff to patients and helping deliver vital medication where needed. Meanwhile, in the north of England, Duddon and Furness team helped transfer patients from one ambulance, trapped in a snowdrift, to another ambulance. And in West Yorkshire, Holme Valley and Calder Valley volunteers attended multiple call-outs to rescue motorists from their snow-blocked vehicles.



## SEPTEMBER 2022: Mountain Rescue Conference brings mountain rescue community together

The conference, held in early September at Leeds Beckett University, was attended by delegates and speakers from across the UK and beyond. With tracks that covered all the key pieces in the 'mountain rescue' jigsaw, including training, medical matters, governance, media and communications, the twin themes were very much focused on equality and diversity, environment and sustainability.

Mohammed Dalech from Cumbria Fire Service, talked about the work he has been doing with the Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO) and the Upper Wharfedale team (UWFRA), in encouraging ethnically diverse communities in the outdoors. Aneela McKenna, who helped inspire the celebration of women in mountain rescue for International Women's Day, was there to talk about leading effectively on the diversity issue. And after-dinner speaker Jamie McAnsh inspired by recounting his own very personal experience of overcoming adversity, after waking up one morning paralysed, by taking on every single challenge put in front of him. The event was generously sponsored by four of our professional partners, some newly-minted and some long-established friends of mountain rescue, so thanks must go to Tysers, Helly Hensen, Keela International and Ordnance Survey. There was plenty of support for the Rescue Benevolent Fund too, with team members taking their chances in the Saturday evening raffle of a diverse selection of goodies — donated by the exhibitors and sponsors there to support us — and the proceeds going to the fund to support team member wellbeing. Two inspiring days of laughter and learning, thought-provoking ideas and introductions to innovative kit, and a welcome re-establishment of that mountain rescue instinct to network that's been far too long in hibernation. Here's to the next one in 2024!

Above: Clockwise from top left: Goodie bags sponsored by Tysers © JCW Associates; Ethnic diversity filming with CRO and UWFRA teams © Sara Spillett; Practising CPR on Resusci Annie © Sally Seed; Jamie McAnsh © Jamie McAnsh; Gathering team members at registration © Sally Seed; Keela and Helly Hansen exhibitor stands © JCW Associates. Centre: Ordnance Survey exhibitor stand © JCW Associates.

Community isn't just about teams supporting their own neighbourhoods, on and off the hill. It's also about team members meeting together, sharing information and learning experiences, getting inspired by new ideas. Thanks to Covid, it's been a few years since we held our biennial conferences, so autumn 2022 was a good opportunity to get back into the habit.

Community

# News snips

from around England and Wales

Teams often work together with their immediate neighbours on incidents, but some operations also involve teams from other counties and countries, plus multiple emergency service agencies. And all these organisations train together too, so each is aware of the others' capabilities.



Above and right: © Wasdale MRT.

## FEBRUARY 2023: Lost lone walker 'lucky to be alive' on Scafell Pike

The 24-hour rescue in 'exceptionally difficult' conditions, after an initial call to Wasdale team from Cumbria Police, ultimately involved over seventy rescuers, from teams across the Lakes, Lancashire and the North East, five search dogs and two drones. Colleagues from the Coastguard and Great North Air Ambulance were also on hand but prevented by the bad weather.

The walker, who had reported himself lost in the early evening, on the ridge between Scafell Pike and Great End, in thick mist and rain, was asked to stay where he was and shelter from the wind. By the early hours he had still not been found and teams reluctantly came off the hill, having done all they could overnight in extremely cold and wet conditions. He was eventually found the following day on the east bank of Piers Gill – a notorious accident black spot – hypothermic, with knee, leg and foot injuries, but thankfully alive. The incident raised concerns about the use of Google maps as a navigation tool in the hills: they lack what could be vital, life-saving detail and become inaccessible when the mobile battery dies.

Above: The dog-leg ravine of Piers Gill © Karl and All via Creative Commons license.

## MAY 2022: Casualty carers train with other services on Exmoor

Casualty care-trained team members and healthcare professionals from the Exmoor team trained alongside members of the Somerset Accident Voluntary Emergency Services (SAVES), South Western Ambulance Service, Central Medical Services staff and community first responders, under the watchful gaze of Jennifer Duke, the High Sheriff of Somerset.

The action-packed scenarios used actors, realistic wound make-up and simulation equipment to practise dealing with a serious head injury on a building site, a head injury sustained in a road traffic collision and multiple stab wounds. Perhaps not the injuries normally associated with mountain rescue incidents, but the injury patterns were similar to climber fall, mountain bike and ice axe injury, so very relevant.

A further multi-agency cliff training exercise, to increase familiarity with the different kit and working practices, involved the statutory emergency services, the Maritime Coastguard Agency, alongside members of the Severn Area and Avon & Somerset teams, both associate members of Mountain Rescue England and Wales.



## JUNE 2022: Multiple casualties in multi-agency training

This joint exercise saw team members from Holme Valley MRT and NEWSAR working alongside lowland rescue team Cheshire SAR, Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England, West Yorkshire Police and Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

There was plenty of opportunity for participants to practise their casualty care assessment and treatment skills — not to mention personnel organisation and logistics — with fourteen injured and distressed casualties, including a new born baby, in scenarios both on the hill and in the water.

Top: Exmoor team working with SAVES © Exmoor SRT. Left: Joint exercise, above Marsden in West Yorkshire © Padraig Spillane. Below: Joint water training for Upper Wharfedale and local fire crews © UWFRA.

## MAY 2022: Joint training with local fire crews from four stations in the Dales

Upper Wharfedale 'water team' joined colleagues and fire crews to rehearse some of the possible scenarios they might encounter when working with real life situations.

Dealing with incidents in swift moving rivers and waterways demands a range of different skills and equipment — and time is of the essence — so it's hugely important to learn and understand how all the available resources fit together in readiness for being called to action for real.



SO much more...



### DECEMBER 2022: When a team pulls together...

After descending through Lower Long Churn into the 'awe inspiring' Alum Pot in North Yorkshire, a 38-year-old caver fell five or six metres on the bottom pitch, sustaining suspected spinal and pelvic injuries. The Cave Rescue Organisation was called to assist in his rescue.

Alum Pot is 'a magnificent shaft', says the team's Martin Holroyd. 'Over ninety metres deep, it can be descended almost in its entirety by a single pitch with a short final pitch of seven metres'. It was at this point in the shaft that the accident had occurred, requiring the timely coordination of both cave and surface resources to access, treat and recover the caver.

CRO members descended to the casualty, assessed his injuries, used a group shelter and heated waistcoat to warm him, gave pain relief and then packaged him in a whole-body splint before securing him on a stretcher. This was then hauled up the shaft by team members and firefighters from the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service station in Settle. Once on the surface, still secure in the stretcher, the casualty were passed over the surrounding wall to Yorkshire Ambulance HART personnel and other CRO members who worked together to carry

Not all rescues undertaken by a 'mountain rescue' team occurs above ground, and not always in the mountains. Within Mountain Rescue England and Wales, we have five teams who are joint cave and mountain teams — often having started out, as was the case with both the Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO) and Upper Wharfedale, as teams who focused more on rescues below ground. The fells were simply a means to get there!



him to a team Land Rover. He was then driven down to Selside, whence the waiting road ambulance took him to hospital. The haul up the shaft involved a technical rope system called an 'English Reeve', which involves a high-line across the top of the shaft with a pulley system which can be moved to different points along the line. This allows the stretcher to be hauled up the centre of the shaft (even though the shaft may change shape), and pulled to the edge at the top, making hauling the weight easier.

To read a full account of the rescue and a more detailed description of the English Reeve system, check out [Mountain Rescue magazine, Issue 83, January 2023](#) by scanning the QR code below.



Opposite top: CRO team members training at Alum Pot. Left and above: The incident in progress © CRO.

### MARCH 2023: Underground search for missing person

Swaledale team members assisted Cleveland team with an ongoing search for a missing person in the Great Ayton area, bringing their specialist skills and dual capability as a cave rescue team.

Team members were tasked with searching the network of underground caves and mines in the search area. RAF Leeming MRT was also involved in the search. Sadly, the missing person was found deceased.



Left: Missing person search © Cleveland MRT/ Swaledale MRT. Below: West Cornwall training below ground © WCSRT.

### DECEMBER 2022: Specialist training with a mine rescue drill for West Cornwall team

Mining is central to Cornish history, the landscape pitted with shafts, some capped, some open, and a small number of call-outs every year are to dogs and people who have fallen down mine workings. In preparation for all eventualities, West Cornwall team members carried out some specialist training, with a mine rescue drill, which included practising moving a casualty in a confined space stretcher.



than mountains



# A year of too many 'final send aways'

It's inevitable that, as teams across England and Wales begin to clock up ever bigger anniversaries, the passing of time brings sadness as well as celebration. For those who date their beginnings back to the 1940s, many of those early pioneers have long been bade a fond farewell. Sadly, this year we've said goodbye to many of those who laid the foundation for their teams in the 1950s and '60s. And we've lost some canine 'mountain buddies' too...



Without exception, those who have passed were the epitomy of 'mountain rescue': steeped in the outdoors and their voluntary ethic, always ready to turn out at the ping of a pager, day or night, whatever the weather. Innovators and challengers, they made a difference, thinking on their feet to help those in need with whatever means they had to hand. And not just locally, but in the wider world of mountain rescue.

When Ron James set up the Ogwen Cottage Mountaineering School, the first civilian mountain rescue team in North Wales, he inherited the instruction from the previous owners of Ogwen Cottage that, when an incident occurred, he was to 'fire a red flare' with a pistol, wait until everyone gathered, then appoint 'the man with the cleanest boots' as leader, irrespective of expertise or experience. Thankfully, this system no longer survives.

His technique for extracting one rock climber with his leg stuck in a crevice became the stuff of legend. Taking what remained of the climber's sandwiches, he used the buttered face to lubricate the stuck knee, before attaching a rope to the climber, ascending a few feet higher to place a solid belay, then jumping off, plucking said casualty from the crevice in his wake.

Buttered knees aside, Ron led with innovation, importing rescue kit from the Alps and pioneering the relationship with the RAF helicopters to winch people from the mountains. He died peacefully at home in March.

A fellow Ogwen member, Bill Dean also enjoyed a long service with the team until his death, aged 81. A member since

1966, he served for many years as the team treasurer. During his time, he helped set up the team's '333' support group — often seen as the 'gold standard' in support groups — and also the Oggi 8 mountain challenge, one of their major fundraising events.

Meanwhile, over in Yorkshire, Upper Wharfedale mourned the loss of Chris Baker, in January 2023, aged 90, still active in his role as assistant secretary. A member since 1953, he was instrumental in setting up 'panels' of similar emergency services in the area, to collaborate and share information, an idea others copied. He helped organise insurance cover for team members on call-outs, through the then Mountain Rescue Council, and gained a reputation as the 'go-to-guy', always ensuring the right kit was in the right place at the right time. He was also well known for waking local shopkeepers in the dark of night to buy pies for team members on a call-out. Ironically, he never made 'life member' because he was always active.

And then there were the search dogs, inspiration for our retitling of the obituary tributes in Mountain Rescue magazine as 'The Final Send Away'. This year we said goodbye to more than one of these

dedicated 'mountain buddies', too many to mention them all. But, as Lake District handler John Leadbetter noted, there were more than a few 'tear-drenched keyboards'.

John lost sixteen-year-old Skye in August 2022, after a long career in mountain rescue. During her time, she had 'worked fellsides, forests, mountains and valleys, won hearts, helped train the team in how to work with the dogs and starred at talks, fundraising events and demos', even appearing on BBC Breakfast. Summing up the unique bond between dog and handler, John describes them battling 'the fiercest of storms', with Skye always knowing when to offer 'the comforting paw' to reassure him.

In the Peak District, team members bade a sad farewell to Search Dog Flash in September 2022. Flash, who had been with handler John Coombs for fourteen years, was an independent character. Over the years, she had made many finds and been instrumental in saving many lives — no doubt, like Skye, inspiring many others to train her successors.

All these personalities — both human and canine — dedicated themselves to mountain rescue and the service of others. May they rest in peace.



**Opposite:** Lake District dog handler John Leadbetter with Search Dog Skye, winner of the PDSA Order of Merit © Stuart Walker/PDSA. **Top:** Peak District dog handler John Coombs with Search Dog Flash © John Coombs. **Inset:** Ron James (centre) with the RAF helicopter crew. Image supplied by Ogwen Valley MRO.





# Playing our part in national events

Throughout 2022, mountain rescue volunteers were involved in a number of national events, including celebrations, condolences and a special day in honour of the emergency services across the UK.



## First, celebration...

In February, Her Majesty The Queen became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking seventy years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realm and the Commonwealth. To mark the occasion, 1,724 mountain rescue team members were honoured to be included among those who received the Platinum Jubilee Medal. The medal was presented to frontline emergency, armed forces and prison service workers across the UK and MR volunteers were thrilled to be amongst those honoured for their service in this way.

Over the summer, presentations were made at various gatherings, often by the

Lord Lieutenant, High Sheriff or similar local representative of The Queen. And, in June, our social media published a 'thank you', including the message: 'Congratulations to Her Majesty from everyone involved in mountain rescue on an unprecedented seventy years of service.' Also in June, a number of team members from across England and Wales were lucky enough to be invited to join the 'Party at the Palace'. We believe a good time was had by all!

## ...then condolences

Of course, later in the year, we also marked the death and funeral of Her Majesty and expressed our collective condolences via our Royal patron, Prince

William. Various MREW officers, including the president, Ray Griffiths, wrote directly and CEO Mike Park wrote on behalf of everyone in the organisation:

'Your Royal Highness. I am writing to offer you, your immediate family and household and your extended family our deepest condolences at this sad time. Her Late Majesty The Queen honoured many members of mountain rescue over the years and our volunteers were privileged to receive her Platinum Jubilee Medal in June.

'At this time, remembering her decades of committed service and her tremendous example should be a comfort for us all. Please be assured that we are all thinking of you and your family at this time.'



## And finally, a dedicated '999 Day'

One other national event involving mountain rescue team members was postponed to 19 October, as it would have clashed with the funeral of The Queen. This dedicated day, which has always been very much supported by the Royal Family, has been held on 9 September for a number of years, with events scheduled for 9.00 am on the ninth day of the ninth month.

'999 Day' promotes the many different careers and roles available within the NHS and emergency services, and celebrates the two million people across the country who work or volunteer serving their communities. Flags are flown from team bases and other locations to mark the day, along with team and MREW social media posts carrying the '999 Day' branding.

'It's a privilege to see mountain rescue volunteers so closely associated with the paid emergency and public services,' says Mike Park. 'We are seen at the highest levels as serving our communities with expertise and professionalism — and I know that the past year has brought that home to many of us.'

Opposite: Platinum Jubilee celebration cupcakes and flags © TraceyAPhotos. Top: The Queen's Platinum Jubilee medal © Konstantina Frasia Photography.

Above left and centre: Party at the Palace photos © Northumberland National Park MRT. Above right: An unofficial Jubilee Beacon on Moel Famau © NEWSAR.



# Staying safe and supporting our teams

## Browse our digital bookshelf

Our quarterly magazine and the annual review are available in digital format for anyone to view – great for sharing with a much wider readership, and helping teams to spread the word about mountain rescue.

The drawback is that every issue has its own link so sharing more than one at once presented something of a conundrum. But, if you're reading the Flippingbook version of this particular publication, you can find all our digital publications on one handy bookshelf. Just click on any front cover image and you'll go straight there. And if you fancy subscribing to the magazine to receive your own print copy every quarter, head to [mountain.rescue.org.uk/magazine-subscription](https://mountain.rescue.org.uk/magazine-subscription) and sign up.



## Helping you stay safe in the hills, mountains and moorlands

While you're browsing our digital bookshelves, how about taking a look at our 'Call Out Mountain Rescue. A Pocket Guide to Safety on the Hill', also available as a handy flipbook?

This second edition remains as valid as ever, taking you through preparation and route planning, what to take with you and how to pack it, how best to stay safe in the mountains and what to do if you have an accident. If you do hit trouble, there's a run down of the mountain rescue call-out procedure and how to relay the relevant information to the emergency services. There's an illustrated first aid guide to recognising the nature of any injuries and keeping the casualty comfortable as you wait for the rescue team, a foreword from Mountain Rescue England and Wales patron HRH The Prince of Wales and a potted history of mountain rescue. Plus some useful advice on publications, websites and organisations with which to hone your skills before setting out. You can find the online version at <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/449666983/>

It's essential reading for the aspirant outdoor enthusiast! And if digital really isn't for you, you can find print copies available in our online shop at the reduced price of £4.99: Head to [shop.mountain.rescue.org.uk/collections/books](https://shop.mountain.rescue.org.uk/collections/books)

**Opposite:** Llanberis and Ogwen Valley team members during a joint search and rescue helicopter training exercise on Y Cribin, in the Ogwen Valley © Jethro Kiernan. **Top right:** Mountain rescue vehicle illustration © Judy Whiteside.



**Thank you. We can't do any of it without your help. Here's how you can support us.**

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**Leave a legacy:** A gift to us in your Will allows you to support our future — even a small gift can make a big difference. And it's the surest way to fund the equipment and training for the years to come as gifts are exempt from inheritance tax, capital gains tax and income tax, so the charity receives the full value of your bequest.

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# MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES

## SO MUCH MORE THAN MOUNTAINS

### Lake District Search & Mountain Rescue Association

Cockermouth  
Coniston  
Duddon & Furness  
Kendal  
Keswick  
Kirkby Stephen  
Langdale Ambleside  
Patterdale  
Penrith  
Wasdale

### Mid Pennine Search & Rescue Organisation

Bolton  
Bowland Pennine  
Calder Valley  
Holme Valley  
Rossendale & Pendle

### North Wales Mountain Rescue Association

Aberdyfi  
Aberglaslyn  
Llanberis  
North East Wales  
Ogwen Valley  
South Snowdonia

### South Wales Search & Rescue Association

Brecon  
Central Beacons  
Longtown  
Western Beacons

### Peninsula Mountain & Cave Rescue Association

East Cornwall (Mountain + Cave)  
West Cornwall (Mountain + Cave)  
Dartmoor (Ashburton)  
Dartmoor (Okehampton)  
Dartmoor (Plymouth)  
Dartmoor (Tavistock)  
Exmoor

### North East Search & Rescue Association

Cleveland  
North of Tyne  
Northumberland National Park  
Teesdale & Weardale  
Swaledale (Mountain + Cave)

### Yorkshire Dales Rescue Panel

Cave Rescue Organisation (Mountain + Cave)  
Upper Wharfedale (Mountain + Cave)  
Scarborough & Ryedale

### Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation

Buxton  
Derby  
Edale  
Glossop  
Kinder  
Oldham  
Woodhead

### ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

Avon & Somerset SAR  
Severn Area RA

### Cave Rescue

COMRU  
Derbyshire CRO  
Devon CRO  
Gloucestershire CRG  
Mendip CR  
Midlands CRO  
North Wales CRO  
South East CRO  
South & Mid Wales CRT

### Search Dogs

Lakes District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs  
Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England  
SARDA Wales  
SARDA South Wales

### RAF

RAF Leeming MRT  
RAF Valley MRT

If you require mountain or cave rescue assistance: Dial 999. Ask for 'Police', then 'Mountain Rescue' or 'Cave Rescue'



Find us online at [mountain.rescue.org.uk](http://mountain.rescue.org.uk)

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