

mountain rescue

ISSN 1756-8749

£5.50



SPRING
2023 **84**



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

WELCOME TO
ISSUE 84:
SPRING 2023

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

Editor: Judy Whiteside
07836 509 812 • editor@
mountain.rescue.org.uk

Media & Communications
Director: Andy Simpson
07836 717 021 • media@
mountain.rescue.org.uk

Ad sales: Caroline Davenport
07726 933 337 • caroline@
media-solution.co.uk

Proofreader: Gina Rathbone
ginarathbone.com

NEXT ISSUE
ISSUE 85:
SUMMER 2023

Editorial Copy Deadline:
Sunday 11 June 2023
Please supply editorial in
Word and images as JPG,
EPS or PDF (300 dpi)

Advertising artwork must
be supplied as font-
embedded PDF
(300 dpi) unless otherwise
agreed with the editor.

Cover story

Western Beacons
team members during
a photoshoot to
showcase their new
Helly Hansen kit
© Ed Smith.



PLEASE NOTE

Articles carried in Mountain
Rescue do not necessarily
reflect the opinions of
Mountain Rescue England
and Wales. We do not
accept responsibility for
advertising content.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES
IS A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND AND WALES NO: 1178090
REGISTERED OFFICE: C/O AZETS HOLDINGS LTD,
TY DERW, LIME TREE COURT, AULBERRY DRIVE
CARDIFF GATE BUSINESS PARK, PONTRENNAU
CARDIFF CF23 8AB



PETZL RESCUE SOLUTIONS

Every second counts in high-stakes situations — that's why technical rescue operations require skilled rescuers and the best equipment. It's also why rescuers train continually, as they're doing here on a via ferrata in Switzerland. They know that they can count on Petzl to provide high-performance tools.



A technical rescue solution including a STRATO VENT HI-VIZ helmet, DUO RL headlamp, new FALCON MOUNTAIN harness, MINI TRAXION progress-capture pulley, SPIN L1 pulley, and ROLLER COASTER rope protector. petzl.com

PETZL Access
the
inaccessible®



18

Celebrating women in mountain rescue

Following the webinar on the eve of International Women's Day, **Judy Whiteside** takes a look at where we are today, our aspirations for the future and how we hope to get there.

30 What would mountain rescue do?:
Sally Seed talks us through the recent
social media campaign

36 Working with families and friends:
Ed Kinnear explains how to use language to
inspire and reassure



Plus a whole lot of news, incidents and fundraising stories from around the UK

what's in at a glance

MEDICAL: 4-9

MREW: 10-27

INCIDENTS: 16

WELLBEING: 28-29

IN THE NEWS: 30

SCOTLAND: 33

SKILLS: 34-37

TEAMS & REGIONS: 43>

CAVE RESCUE: 56-59

WHO'S WHO: 68-70

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

GENERAL NOTES

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

Preventing respiratory disease transmission

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

PPE risks in the mountain rescue environment

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

Personal risk tolerance

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

Team member illness/testing

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

Risk determination of the situation

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



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

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

RISK DETERMINATION



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

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

Notes:

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

Updated December 2021 following UKSAR update for responders V4.

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

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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

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

Reusable equipment must be cleaned and decontaminated:

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

Decontamination of equipment involves two steps:

1: Clean

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

2a: Disinfection

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

2b: Quarantine

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

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

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

GUIDANCE

Contamination risk stratification

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



*Always follow manufacturer's recommendations

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

*** Quarantine time = see above



The Kongur MRT Jacket is built with GORE-TEX Pro, for those moments when nothing else matters.



3-layer GORE-TEX PRO 80D fabric with 150D fabric reinforcements

Fully adjustable Super Alpine HC Hood

3M[®] reflective detailing for visibility in poor weather and darkness



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

Medications in mountain rescue: seizures, fits and 'funny turns'

ALISTAIR MORRIS MREW MEDICAL DIRECTOR

A seizure or fit (both terms are used commonly to mean the same thing) is relatively uncommon for us to treat in mountain rescue – there were only nine recorded incidents in the MREW database from 2022.

Seizures are due to uncontrolled electrical activity within the brain. The commonest causes we will see are either due to an epilepsy (underlying susceptibility to having seizures), or symptomatic due to a stimulus such as head injury, low oxygen, heat or changes in body salts or sugars. Anyone can have a seizure if the conditions/stimulus is there to trigger one — we all have different thresholds. People with epilepsy have a lower threshold and can spontaneously have a seizure, or can be triggered by more minor stimulus than someone without epilepsy. Epilepsy is a diagnosis consisting of repeated seizures over time.

Whilst the electrical activity in the brain is uncontrolled during a seizure, there are patterns to what we see externally. However, there is a wide range of types of seizures or fits depending on a variety of factors. In seizures triggered in one area of the brain (focal seizures), the person may not lose consciousness but have visual disturbances, movement of one limb or odd feelings of fear, euphoria or déjà vu. In

seizures affecting the whole brain (generalised), there is loss of consciousness which may be short and temporary with pauses in awareness/movement and no collapse to the ground (absence seizure). Where there is stiffness of all muscles (tonic), followed by jerking of all limbs (clonic), this is called 'Generalised Tonic-Clonic Seizure'. In old money, these were called 'Grand Mal' and are the type we would generally talk about if someone asked us to describe a seizure. There are lots of good videos on YouTube of seizure types.

In those without an underlying epilepsy, seizures can be triggered by a range of factors. Probably the most common we will see in mountain rescue are after head injury, due the brain's response to swelling or bruising, low oxygen levels, low blood sugar due to exercise in those with or without diabetes, changes in body salts (particularly sodium — in table salt) due to over-hydration with water or excessive heat due to heat illness.

People can also collapse for a variety of

other reasons that are not a true seizure and these are described colloquially as 'funny turns' and won't have the patterns on the brainwave activity linked to seizures. These include faints and collapses and, even with these, it is possible to have jerking movements that look like a seizure, so it can be very difficult to tell them apart. If you are concerned something is a seizure, then do the initial treatment as below and then seek advice before giving any medication.

MANAGEMENT OF SEIZURES

The main elements of managing a seizure before we get to any medical treatment is safety (preventing the person from harming themselves further by falling or drowning), and ABC + DEFG.

Safety is why for those people with epilepsy it is recommended they climb roped with a helmet, cycle with a helmet, swim with someone watching them and shower rather than bath. In our environment, the risk of injury is higher and, therefore, we need to get them on the ground if possible

D | Don't
E | Ever
F | Forget
G | Glucose

KEEP THE AIRWAY CLEAR

STAY WITH THE PERSON. IF YOU LEAVE THEM ALONE AT ANY POINT, OR IF THEY ARE UNCONSCIOUS, PUT THEM IN THIS POSITION TO KEEP AIRWAY CLEAR AND PREVENT CHOKING

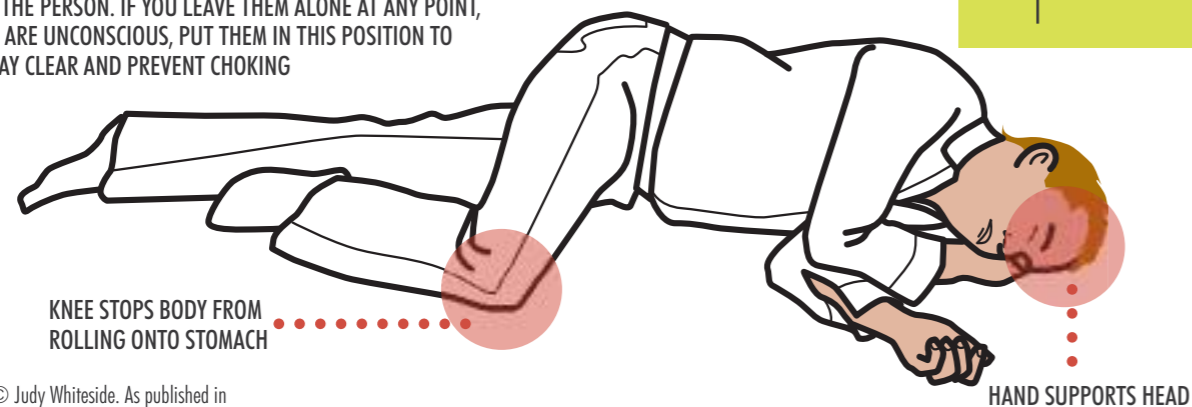
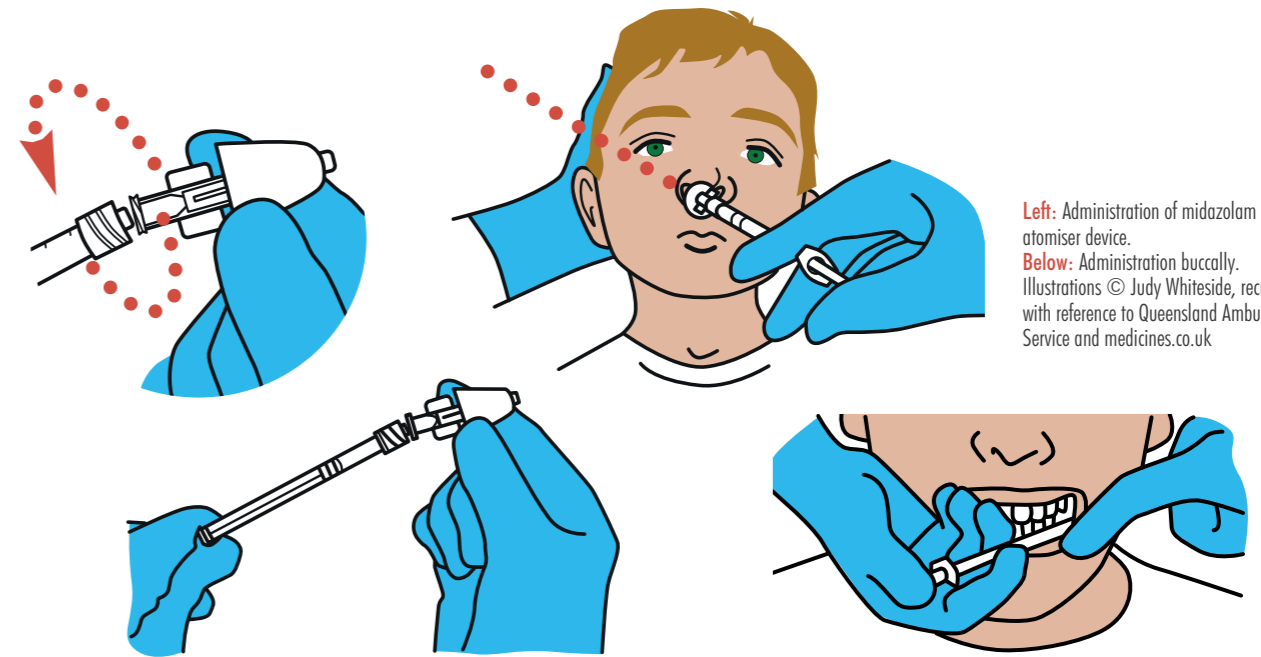


Illustration © Judy Whiteside. As published in 'Call Out Mountain Rescue'



Left: Administration of midazolam using an atomiser device.
Below: Administration buccally.
Illustrations © Judy Whiteside, recreated with reference to Queensland Ambulance Service and medicines.co.uk

and in a stable position that is safe for us as the casualty carer and them as the patient.

Whilst doing this it is important to remember our ABC and make sure they have an open airway. The best way to achieve this is the Safe Airway (or Recovery) position. You may struggle to insert an oral airway as the mouth may be clamped shut and you should never put fingers in someone's mouth due to risk of injury to yourself. A nasopharyngeal airway may be

They will terminate within five minutes and the person will often be disorientated and sleepy for 30-60 minutes afterwards.

If their sugar has been low, once they wake up and are more alert, they can be given additional sugary food. If it is due to heat illness, they will require rapid cooling.

Everyone who has had a seizure should be rapidly evacuated from the mountain — those associated with head injury or not stopping or unable to give midazolam should be urgent evacuation by helicopter if possible. If the person is a known epileptic and it was their normal seizure type and recovered then they should be advised to seek medical review but not need urgent evacuation.

USE OF MIDAZOLAM

If the seizure is ongoing for more than five minutes without stopping, or they are having multiple seizures (six over 30 minutes) without full recovery, we should consider given them some midazolam as treatment.

Midazolam is a drug that is one of the benzodiazepines which includes others such as diazepam or Valium. They have a sedative effect and so have been used as 'sleeping tablets'. Therefore, when you give this drug the person is likely to be sleepy afterwards. The main other side effect is slowing a person's breathing and we should be prepared for this with a Bag-Valve Mask and oxygen at hand before giving.

As with giving any drug, we should try to get a SAMPLE history — this may not be possible if there is no one who knows the person in terms of their medical conditions so we should look for alert bracelets or necklaces and any Emergency Medical Information on their mobile phone. Some people with epilepsy carry their own preloaded buccal midazolam syringes or rectal diazepam so it would be worth

checking their bag too. It is unusual that someone is allergic to a benzodiazepine — the main issue is around how much it affects someone's breathing and this varies with different people.

Midazolam can be given intranasally using an atomiser device with half up each nostril. Alternatively, it can be given buccally again giving to each side of the cheek ensuring it does not drip into their airway — or give to the lower side if the person is on their side.

The midazolam dose should work within around five minutes with the seizure subsiding and stopping. If it does not, then a second dose can be given after ten minutes from the first dose. With a second dose the risk of slowing their breathing increases so be more alert. The person should only receive a **MAXIMUM of two doses of any benzodiazepine** — theirs, ours or from the ambulance service (who use rectal or IV diazepam). If the fit is still ongoing after two doses maintain their airway, give oxygen, double check their blood sugar/give glucose and get urgent evacuation.

TREATMENT OF SEIZURES AFTER HEAD INJURY

For seizures after head injuries the treatment is the same — having a seizure increases the amount of oxygen and glucose used by the brain and risks secondary injury to the brain so need to be treated.

Giving midazolam to someone with low blood sugars may reduce the seizure but their blood sugars are still low and there will be ongoing brain damage — so DEFG — Don't Ever Forget Glucose!

Seizures are uncommon in mountain rescue but can occur due to an underlying epilepsy or response to a trigger. Keep the person and yourself safe and prevent further injury, maintain their airway (with the safe airway position), support breathing with oxygen, check or treat for low glucose and then treat with midazolam. ☺

S	Symptoms/signs
A	Allergy – due to this drug? – any other allergies?
M	Medications
P	Past medical history
L	Last meal
E	Events – leading to illness

an option if the safe airway position does not resolve the airway issue. Breathing rate can be difficult to assess due to the other movements, but is generally maintained to some degree if there is an airway. If you have oxygen with you, this can be given.

If someone is having a seizure, even if they have epilepsy, we should DEFG — Don't Ever Forget Glucose — and either check blood sugar or give oral glucose if we cannot measure. There is a risk with this and managing their airway, so the glucose gel can be put on a piece of gauze that goes against the inside cheek and not let out of sight!

For the vast majority of seizures, this is all that will be needed in terms of treatment.

Moodle reloaded...

log in or sign up now to check it out

The MREW Moodle platform has been used for a number of years for members to access learning and information from the organisation. There have been well-established areas around the training and medical aspects. Over the last few years, it has grown organically and currently acts as a central repository for all things MREW, from minutes of meetings to online videos and training.

The time had come to have a face lift and reorganisation of the material there. Moodle is a free online virtual learning environment and design primarily to host e-learning courses and, therefore, is less good at being a document repository which we are using it for as well.

There are three main areas to the update: new visual appearance, new structure and new functionality.

As soon as you reach the log in page you will see a difference (Figure 1). If you don't have a log in as an MREW member, see detailed instructions (right).

Once logged in, you'll see a change in the structure of the information. Each officer now has their own area with subheading of courses and documents to be able to display information to members (Figure 2).

The structure under each officer is replicated with courses (where relevant) and documents sections. Further work from officers will put more information in these sections for members.

Two new additions with the upgrade are the search function and favourites. These are visible in the top bar on the right by the users name (Figure 3).

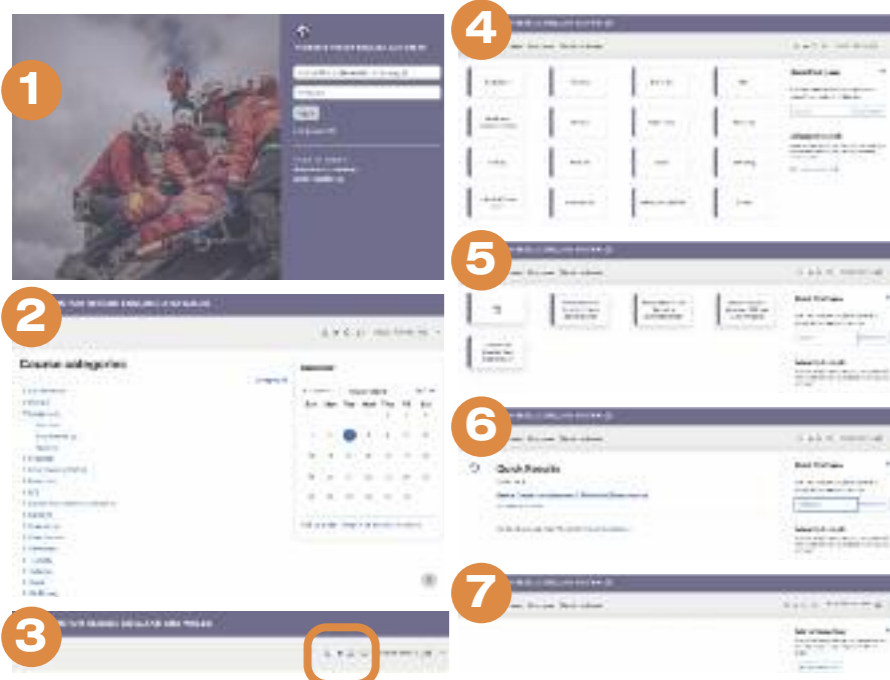
Clicking on the magnifying glass gives three ways of accessing information:

1. A clearer view of the sections, courses and documents
2. 'Quick Find' option
3. 'Advanced Find' option.

Clicking on the areas takes the users to the sections quickly and easily (Figures 4 & 5).

Under the Quick Find Menu, a single term can be added and course/document titles and content will be searched for that term — it's not as powerful as Google but it does make finding information quicker (Figure 6).

Once pages are found, if it is information you will want to return to, then they can be added to the 'Favourites' area on the menu (Figure 7).



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

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

The **Medical** section addresses the legal and medical requirements for training and operations, and there's plenty of resources to download. You'll find stuff relating to the Casualty Care Certificate, a PDF of Casualty Care for Mountain Rescue Edition 2, Revision Notes for Casualty Care, and a section on Anatomy and Physiology containing materials to explain how the human body works and why we do what we do. There's a section devoted to Recognition of Life Extinct in MR, and you'll find meeting minutes here too.

The **Insurance** category is worth a check for the policies and schedules applicable to mountain rescue, and a list of frequently asked questions. And now you can also find a selection of the presentations from the **MREW Conference 2022**.

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

TO REGISTER



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

ACCESSING THE TEAMS-ONLY AREA OF THE MREW ONLINE SHOP

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

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

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

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

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



MREW announces partnership with Ordnance Survey

MARK LEWIS
MREW ICT DIRECTOR

In January 2023, Mountain Rescue England and Wales was pleased to announce a new partnership with Ordnance Survey.

The new partnership comes with a number of key benefits:

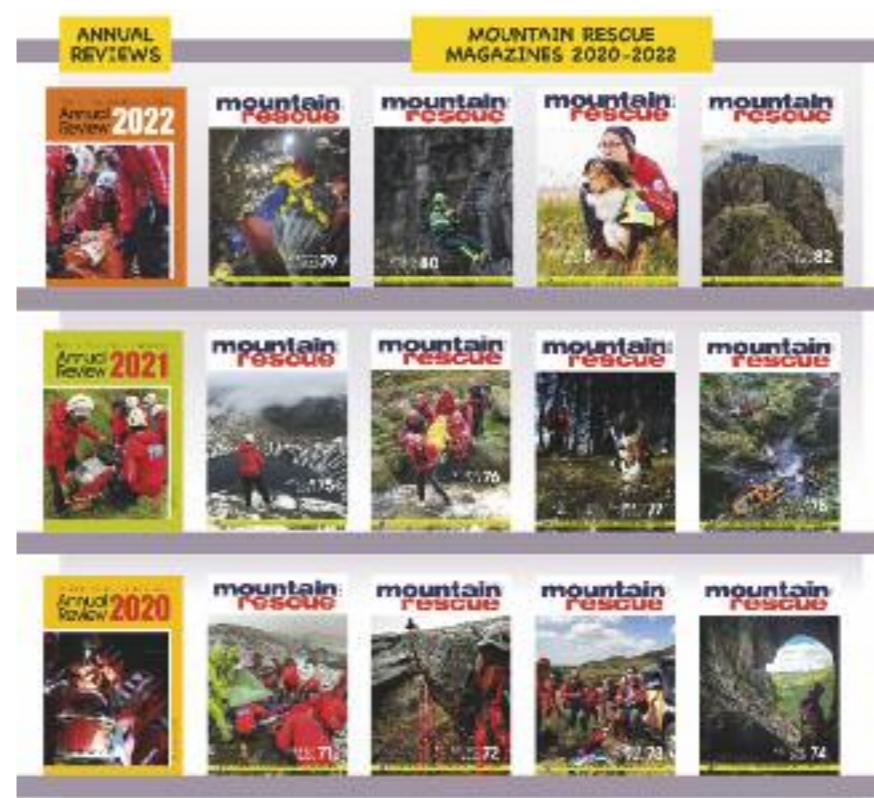
- All Mountain Rescue and Search Dog team members are entitled to free access to the OS digital mapping application, OS Maps: osmaps.com/en-GB
- Working with OS on the development of OS Maps to help benefit both teams and the public
- Producing and sharing of safety messages and educating the public
- Working closely with joint representation at shows and events.

In February, MREW and OS announced the partnership to the industry and, at the time of going to print, the plan was to follow that with a public announcement in March.

The legal contract for this partnership is between MREW and OS. Teams are required to sign a legal contract to take advantage of the new partnership, and before receiving a unique code so each team member can get hold of their free copy of OS Maps.

OS and MREW will form a working group with representation from each region to discuss feedback, future development, beta testing and so forth. During the interim period, please direct feedback and requests to os.feedback@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

Top: The OS app in use © Jessie Leong.



UPDATE TO OUR DIGITAL BOOKSHELF

The magazine has been digital for three years now, alongside the hard copies. One benefit is that we can share it more widely, but the fact that each issue has its own link means sharing more than one at a time presented something of a conundrum, but now we've gathered all our publications on one handy set of digital bookshelves, each one individually linked, all you have to do is click on the relevant mag or annual review front cover and hey presto! There you are. **This won't, of course, work with the hard copy.**

LINE-LOK®
The line tensioner to securely lock guy lines

Available in 4 sizes & 8 colours including Glow in the dark

Suitable for use in harsh environments from arctic cold to desert heat
Simply pull lines apart to release

cleats.co.uk

Leak Detection Spray

At the press of a button – GOTEK LDB is instantly ready to locate the smallest low pressure leaks from compressed air and every other gas – quickly, reliably, safely and conveniently.

- Non-inflammable
- With corrosion inhibitor
- Non-toxic and biodegradable
- Free from oils, halogens, soaps, metals & CFC's
- Propellant: Compressed Air
- Totally safe to use, equipment, environment & ozone layer
- Can with 360° valve – spray at any angle from upright to inverted
- NATO Stock No: 4910-01-050-4489
- For sub-zero ambient temperatures down to -45°C use GOTEK LT45

Gotec Trading Ltd
Boulton Road, Pin Green, Stevenage, Herts SG1 4QL
Tel: 01438 740400
Fax: 01438 740005
enquiries@gotetrading.com
www.gotetrading.com

SURF & TURF
INSTANT SHELTERS

Robust, high quality
Instant Shelters
for the Event, Exhibition
Market, Motorsport and Leisure Industry

SHELTERS • FLAGS • BANNERS
INFLATABLES • EVENT BRANDING

☎ 01925 819608
✉ info@surfturf.co.uk
🌐 www.surfturf.co.uk

AVAILABLE IN 5 GRADES, 12 SIZES & 24 COLOURS



EASY PULSE

Efficient and compact mechanical CPR thanks to technological innovation

- Unique combination of stamp & band enabling 3D compression
- Ideal for confined spaces
- Possible to use in head-up position
- Compact and lightweight (3.5 kg)
- 45 min single battery operation

Find out more...



SCHILLER UK Ltd. sales@schilleruk.com, www.schilleruk.com

Slishman STS-C Compact Traction Splint

BRAND NEW TO THE UK MARKET

- Exclusively available at DS Medical
- One of the smallest and lightest traction splints
- Can be applied in under one minute
- Single connected device
- One size fits all (from small children to large adults)



www.dsmedical.co.uk



WELLBEING INFORMATION

For the family and team members of mountain and cave rescue

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

YOUR TEAM SUPPORT NAME AND NUMBER IF YOU NEED A CHAT:

Name:

Contact number:

Other useful contacts:

Togetherall offers anonymous, 24/7 online mental health support for mountain and cave rescue team members. To register, go to:

togetherall.com/joinnow/rescuebenevolentfund or scan the QR code

The Samaritans: Call **116 123** for confidential emotional support, 24 hours a day

Blue Light Together offers support if you're experiencing a personal crisis, feel unable to cope and need support. Help with urgent issues such as:

- Suicidal thoughts • Abuse or assault • Self-harm • Bullying • Relationship challenges

Go to BlueLightTogether.org.uk or call **0300 303 4434** 08:00–20:00 daily

Blue Light Crisis Text Line: Text **BLUELIGHT** to **85258**

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

17:00–midnight to talk about any troubles you are feeling

MIND Mental Health Charity: Infoline: **0300 123 3393** Monday – Friday 09:00–18:00

Information and access to support services for:

- Mental health problems • Where to get help near you • Treatment options available
- Advocacy services

The Rescue Benevolent Fund: Email secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund or go to rescuebenevolent.fund to find out more

For when you need more structured therapy — either physical or emotional — with a defined treatment plan from a professional therapist, you can apply to the fund for financial support

Go to mrew-wellbeing.org.uk for the MREW Wellbeing page



MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES
BRITISH CAVE RESCUE COUNCIL

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

Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Training for Search & Rescue Teams



Amanzi Safety & Rescue Professional Safety & Rescue Training



Our Courses include:

- Safe Working in Water
- Lifejacket Competent User
- Water & Flood Awareness (Defra Module 1)
- Swiftwater & Flood First Responder (Defra Module 2)
- Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Technician (Defra Module 3)
- Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Boat Operator (Defra Module 4)
- Management of Flood Incidents (Defra Module 5)
- Basic Water Rescuer
- Rescues from Vehicles in Water
- SRT Advanced (Water) and (Rope)
- Instructor Training and Assessment Courses
- CPD, Refresher and Recertification Courses
- Rope Rescue Operator & Technician Training Courses

All of our training courses are accredited by Rescue 3 Europe.

We offer generous discounts for Search & Rescue organisations and charities. Please contact the office for more information.

Amanzi Safety & Rescue Limited. Company Registration No: 10235078

The Woodlands, Llanfaes, Beaumaris, Isle of Anglesey, North Wales, LL58 8RF

General Enquiries: + 44 (0) 8456 439499

Email: info@amanzisafetyandrescue.co.uk

VAT Registration No: 320 2399 34



Update from **Mike Margeson** on operational matters for teams in England and Wales

The recent high-profile missing person search in Lancashire emphasises the impact social media can have, clearly not always in a positive or helpful way. Contrast this to the local mountain rescue support activity for the police and ambulance service, carried out by teams in the recent periods of heavy snow, which received almost universally positive media coverage both local and national.

Clearly our media training and how we manage it is vitally important. As an organisation we are very proactive and work hard at developing both our interagency and partnership working, as well as our media control and profile.

The operations group met in January with many things on the agenda, perhaps most current being potential operational impact of the national ambulance strikes. A guidance document has been produced for teams by Alistair Morris, MREW Medical Director and Simon Thresher, MREW Vehicle Officer, outlining and clarifying the position on the transport of casualties in team vehicles; this was welcomed. I was encouraged that there was a good understanding and acceptance of both the possibility of mission creep and the sensitivity of the issues with our partner organisation.

Also, in January the SAR-H meeting with the MCA in Southampton was an opportunity to meet with Claire Hughes, the new director of the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) and positive progress was made in a number of directions. The meeting was also attended on behalf of the National Police Chiefs' Council by Chief Inspector Adrian Woon, and Bristow were, of course, present too. Perhaps most significantly, we currently have an MR SAR-H group. The intention is to set up a UKSAR MR SAR-H group. Work will also be underway to update the online ISAR training. Mike Park and Ms Hughes will review progress on an ongoing basis. We clearly need to achieve a clear understanding of the effective

risk management and safety of our team members. As has been said before, this will involve prioritising those most at risk both in terms of the terrain operated in and frequency of use. I would just like to say that the significant progress made could not have been achieved without the hard work on our behalf of Al Read, Nigel Harling and Mike Park.

There have been a number of team members expressing interest in the three vacant national officer posts. All those applying will go through an interview process and, if successful, go forward for the membership to vote on at the AGM in May.

Clearly our partnership arrangement with Ordnance Survey is really exciting and is a lot more than just the generous access to mapping for all mountain rescue team members. The opportunity through this partnership, to work together on safety messaging, is significant. Hopefully we can continue to work together to develop this.

Quick reminder again to all teams, that our team peer review programme is funded and running this year again with Tim Cain coordinating the process. I remain a strong advocate and would encourage any team that has not yet taken part to consider the very real value in the process. The many teams involved so far have reported back very positively. I know some teams who have already taken part are considering a day review/refresher process. If you want to know more, contact Tim Cain peer.review@mountain.rescue.org.uk.



An overview from **Mike France** on our changing role within UKSAR

After standing down from the CEO post, I was pleased to take on a new role, as national liaison officer. Historically, as senior and/or key people have moved on and we've lost the continuity of information and the relationship with their contacts. So this was a great opportunity for me to share my learning, around the police boards and UKSAR, with our CEO, Mike Park.

It's a role I thought would cease within a few years, but talking with Mike now, he thinks we should develop the role and bring others into the post. For too long, we have depended on a single point of contact that makes us vulnerable to failure. To address this, he would like more than one person attending UKSAR and police board meetings.

At the moment we have the existing UKSAR groups, with one representative from Mountain Rescue England and Wales at each. These are the Operators, Volunteers, Medical and Communications groups, along with Section 19 (the use of blue lights) and SAR-H. We have some work to do here. We can't just send another person — we need to justify why and get permission from the group members.

UKSAR is hoping to develop some new groups, including Wellbeing and Insurance, at which we will have two reps at each meeting from the start. We did this with Section 19 and that's worked well for us.

Following the great success of the concept of operations for water, it's been agreed by UKSAR that we should look at one for search and rescue. This is so UKSAR can help manage the many groups that just pop up saying they 'do search and rescue'. There

will be a standard to meet which will include who and how teams are called out. There will be new UKSAR subgroups created that will feed into this 'con ops for search'. These will be Search, Water, Search Dogs, Inland Water and Sub-Surface, Spontaneous Volunteers and Rescue Air: Helicopters, Fixed Wing and Drones. We hope to have our lead specialist attend these meetings, with a second person to give the continuity across all the new groups.

UKSAR is changing. Some MCA staff now have UKSAR-titled posts. As a member, we are helping to drive change, so it's very important for MREW that we work alongside the other volunteer organisations, and pass on the history of what's been agreed or rejected, so we have a voice that's informed.

We would like to take the same model we are looking at for UKSAR to the police boards. It needs agreeing that we can have two people at all meetings. We have the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Police Governance Board, the College of Policing and, finally, the Emergency Responders' group. It's so important we have a voice at all these meetings to maintain MREW continuity: the membership of these boards change, mountain rescue needs to be — and is at the moment — one of the stable partners.



Incident Figures: National Status Summary: January through to 30 March 2023 *

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

Lake District	North East	Peak District	South Wales
Cockermouth 5	Cleveland 16	Buxton 29	Brecon 15
Coniston 15	North of Tyne 12	Derby 14	Central Beacons 15
Duddon & Furness 10	Northumberland 13	Edale 33	Longtown 11
Kendal 15	Swaledale 7	Glossop 6	Western Beacons 9
Keswick 18	Teesdale & Weardale 3	Kinder 3	50
Kirkby Stephen 5	51	Oldham 5	
Langdale Ambleside 29	North Wales	Woodhead 14	South West England
Patterdale 7	Aberdyfi 10	104	SARA 9
Penrith 5	Aberglaslyn 1	Peninsula	Avon & Somerset 10
Wasdale 27	Llanberis 43	Cornwall East 3	19
136	North East Wales 18	Cornwall West 3	
Mid Pennines	Ogwen Valley 29	Dartmoor Ashburton 12	Yorkshire Dales
Bolton 9	South Snowdonia 6	Dartmoor Okehampton 4	CRO 16
Bowland Pennine 12	107	Dartmoor Plymouth 1	Scarborough & Ryedale 6
Calder Valley 7		Dartmoor Tavistock 4	Upper Wharfedale 12
Holme Valley 4		Exmoor 4	34
Rosendale & Pendle 14		31	Search Dogs *
46			MIRSD England 14
			SARDA Wales 3
			SARDA South Wales 1
			18

* No reports submitted by Lakes Dogs in period to 30 March 2023.

mrew

NEW in the online shop



JIGSAW PUZZLES

Raising funds for rescue



WELLBEING

WOMEN WALKING



COUNTRYSIDE

YOUNG READERS

IF THE HILLS AREN'T CALLING, MAYBE THE BOOKSHOP WILL...

Nothing better than a good book especially when it's blummin' cold out there. We've got lots of titles in the wellbeing genre, titles written by women about women in the outdoors, and some fun new books to encourage younger readers into the outdoors too. Or how about a good old-fashioned 1,000-piece jigsaw? While away those dark winter evenings with one of these beautiful new additions to our bookshop. And there's still plenty of the usual titles on navigation, skills and mountain adventures.

With each purchase you'll be making a donation of around 30-40% of the cover price. We promise. Or choose from our small but perfectly formed collection – from the hugely practical Adventure Medical kits, Sol Emergency Bivvy Shelters, torches for adults and kids, Silva compasses, through the fun-to-have useful additions to the rucksack like the Zoku Pocket Straw and the handy microfibre cloths for cleaning those glasses or goggles, to our favourite Fudge Bear. And just before Christmas, we added a new section catering for the needs of our four-legged friends. Go to shop.mountain.rescue.org.uk and see for yourself.

REDEFINE THE CHARGEABLE LANDSCAPE

BioLite's second generation range of headlamps redefines the rechargeable landscape. Exceptional lumen quality and USB rechargeable power are packed into compact and lightweight profiles with an unprecedented no-bounce fit. Designed for peak performance, their construction also delivers the best fit of any headlamp on the market. The range includes three new and improved models: HeadLamp 325, HeadLamp 425, and HeadLamp 800 Pro. Sitting mid-range, the HeadLamp 425, with an improved 425 lumens and seven lighting modes, combines an ultra-thin 9mm front with balanced weight and moisture-wicking fabrics to create a fit so comfortable, you'll forget you're wearing it. Go further and stay brighter with the benefit of five front modes, a rear red light, and a new 8-hour Reserve Mode. With a burn time of 60 hours on Low, and 3.5 hours on High, and a beam distance of 85 metres (Spotlight) and 15 metres (Flood light), the HeadLamp 425 is ready to illuminate your next adventure.

ORDER FROM BURTON MCCALL LTD: T: 0116 234 4611 E: SALES@BURTON-MCCALL.COM



BioLite

Celebrating the women in mountain rescue

#womeninmountainrescue2023

AN OVERVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WEBINAR HELD IN MARCH 2023

JUDY WHITESIDE

Mountain rescue eh? It's a funny old world. And when it comes to the topic of 'women in mountain rescue'. Well, it's arguably the most controversial topic in the MREW members group. Dare to post the most innocent of queries about, for example, the balance of male to female team members and tempers will fray, tangents will fly. And, let's just say, not everyone will respect our 'house rule' to 'maintain an atmosphere of unconditional positive regard'.



So it was heartening to have that same question greeted with such overwhelming positivity at the 'Celebrating women in mountain rescue' webinar in early March, on the eve of International Women's Day.

Over my own 25-year involvement, listening, observing, researching and writing about mountain rescue — the women I've met in that world have been strong, inspirational and very capable. Resilient. But, despite that, I've also spoken to female team members who've felt overlooked, excluded from discussions, their physical abilities discounted or disparaged. I've heard tales of fighting to have their voice heard. Being treated with disdain. Or dismissed as 'token blokes'.

Yet a quick glance around England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland tells a different tale. Central Beacons, Ogwen, Kendal, Coniston, Holme Valley, North of Tyne, Kintail (forgive me if I've missed any) have, or have had, female team leaders — every one of them, presumably, elected by their predominantly-male team membership. And that's before we get to the deputies.

Then there's the all-female stretcher parties. The female search managers, training officers, team doctors and advanced casualty carers. Female delegates on technical rescue rigging, response driving and swiftwater rescue courses. Female mountaineering instructors (who are also team members), delivering avalanche and rigging training. And let's not

forget the many female dog handlers around the UK and Ireland, by nature a self-sufficient, hardy bunch.

Many juggle mountain rescue with family responsibilities — sometimes single-parenthood — and demanding professional lives. Not that the blokes aren't doing all that too but, historically, it was more likely the case that wife and kids found themselves abandoned at supermarket checkouts and birthday parties, while dad shot out the door, pager bleeping.

There's another school of thought, that the women in mountain rescue don't see themselves as different, because... nothing to see here. These can-do, no-nonsense, perfectly-able-to-make-themselves-heard women just get on with it. They rise to the challenges, learn new skills and apply their traditionally 'softer' female skills to technical conundrums. They allow themselves to grow. Gain confidence. And those that don't, well they tend not to stay the course. But then, the same could be said of the men.

Yet perhaps too, women themselves haven't always offered a supportive hand to others climbing the greasy pole behind them.

So. What sort of organisation are we? Inherently open-minded or inherently chauvinistic? Equal opportunities or ingrained discrimination? Warmly welcoming or our own worst enemy?

LET THE CELEBRATION BEGIN...

At the March event, 200 mountain rescuers registered with Zoom to discuss all of this, and more. Behind the 143-strong onscreen gallery were individuals, husbands and wives, small groups of women, entire teams, and a good number of men.

The event was organised by Penny Brockman, MREW Finance Director, in collaboration with Aneela McKenna. Teams from across England, Wales, Scotland and



Images: Just a few of the women involved in mountain and cave rescue across the UK and Ireland. Please note this is by no means exhaustive, nor does it include every team, but rather reflects the many roles played by the inspirational women, across the age demographic, in mountain and cave rescue. Images sourced courtesy of team Facebook pages, unless otherwise stated.

Opposite: Holme Valley MRT © Kerry Harrison. **Top:** Northumberland National Park MRT, Cave Rescue Organisation, Aberglaslyn MRT, Woodhead MRT and Buxton MRT. **Above:** Tweed Valley MRT.



Ireland were represented, alongside the MCA, Lowland Rescue and RAF Mountain Rescue. Andrew Denton, of the Outdoor Industry Association, helped facilitate and opened the evening. There too were Sam Fernando from Keela, outdoor clothing manufacturer and long-standing supporter of mountain rescue, and Laura Bailey from OS, a more recent professional partner. MREW CEO Miike Park also joined the discussion. He was delighted to see so many there and 'grateful for those who are helping drive this forward'. His now-familiar mantra of this being 'our MREW' should

Penny and Aneela share a passion for the inclusion and value of women, both in the workplace and mountain rescue, and this lit the fuse for this event.

A CHALLENGING PATH

Aneela set up her consultancy and advocacy company, Mòr Diversity to provide businesses with support and advice on developing inclusive cultures. She's also a keen 'outdoors' woman. She welcomed everyone to the Zoom room and guided the evening's discussions with a panel of women comprising Carolyn Otley (Cockermouth), Jen Isherwood (Tweed Valley), Kirsty Pallas (Oban) and Maddie Langdon (North of Tyne).

She also asked that somehow very vexed, social media hot potato question about the male to female ratio in the teams represented. The lowest was 5%, with 25-30% at the other end of the scale so, given that 51% of the population in England and Wales is female and 49% male (Office for National Statistics, Census 2021), 'we still have work to do'.

A Central Beacons team member for 36 years, Penny described her progress from hill member to team leader, a role she held for ten years — ten years which saw the team through the darkest of times when a fire destroyed all their vehicles and equipment, and severely damaged their base. Then came Covid. So it hasn't always been an easy ride.

'It's had its lows, but it's had its highs too. The early days were extremely hard and

challenging. Often lonely. But I've made the most amazing friends — women and men. Allies who've supported and believed in me.'

She's witnessed a dawning recognition of the strength of a diverse team, recalling one incident in particular, a female casualty with a broken leg.

'She was desperate for the toilet. Luckily, we had four women on the call-out. The men politely turned their backs and moved away from the stretcher and, with as much dignity as possible, my friend Siân and I adjusted her clothing. Meanwhile Louisa and Sam kept her upright and looked after her injured leg while she did what she needed to do. It was already a humiliating experience, but could you imagine how much worse if it had only been men on the hill?'

Knowing nods all round at that. And, not surprisingly, the anatomic challenge for women answering nature's call on the mountains in general — exacerbated by that uniquely female characteristic, the post-partum pelvic floor — was a hot topic, 'drop-pant waterproofs' being generally acknowledged as a 'game changer'.

FAMILIAR FOOTSTEPS

Historically, there's often a familial link between team members. More often perhaps, it's been the sons. Used to a childhood getting under the feet of team members at team bases, while all that other stuff goes on between call-outs, adulthood confers a sort of heredity and they too join up. But our panel members offered a

different side to that story. Daughters too can pick up the baton.

Maddie joined North of Tyne, aged eighteen, because her dad was on the team, and remains one of their younger members. With a deep love of the outdoors, she started going along to help out 'and it grew from that'. Covid prolonged her training a little, but father and daughter spent many a happy hour in their garage or back garden, practising rope techniques and medical stuff.

But it's not always dads doing the inspiring. In the chat bar, another attendee volunteered that her mum had been an active team member for over thirty years, inspiring her to get involved. She remembered her mother relying on good friends and neighbours as she attended call-outs and training, and being woken and dropped off at someone's house in the middle of the night. 'A good community of friends and family was essential.'

Jen described another common pathway. A member of the Tweed Valley team for some sixteen years, she was inspired to join when her mum was rescued after breaking her leg. The Killin team carried out the rescue and the day 'had such a profound effect because she was in so much pain. Her casualty carer was such an amazing person who just totally looked after her.'

Since joining, she's been team training officer and a dog handler, 'now just a dogsbody', and works professionally in the outdoors, teaching climbing, skiing and biking. She's passionate about adventure and 'if we're going to have adventures, we need rescuers to help us when we have a bad day at the office!'

Carolyn joined Cockermouth team twenty years ago, after moving to the Lake District. It seemed a natural fit as a climber and mountaineer with an interest in first aid. When she joined, she doubled the number of women in the team. 'We're now up to three plus one probationer out of 40 team members so we've made some progress!'

Kirsty was nineteen when she joined Oban, almost ten years ago. Since joining she's been team training officer, deputy team leader and 'shout manager'.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE IMPORTANT...

The panel conversation kicked off with Aneela asking what had been Maddie's 'first impressions' of the team. 'I felt very young...

but everyone was very welcoming. There were a couple of other women on the team who made me very welcome from the get-go, stuck by me through my training.' That nurturing process was important to her, from both her male and female friends.

We know from the research that men are associated more with technical skills and women with the softer skills. But the experience of our panel members definitely challenges that assumption.

Maddie's dad was undoubtedly key for her. She also attended a STEM school, studying science and technology subjects, one of just three girls in her class, so the team environment didn't feel alien.

Kirsty too works in a predominantly-male environment, as a mountaineering instructor. In 2017, Mountain Training reported that only 19% of those who completed national mountaineering qualifications were women (Women in Mountaineering, Drs Jenny Hall and Adele Doran). Kirsty also instructs on the Scottish Mountain Rescue rigging and avalanche courses and, 'certainly for the rigging team', she notes, 'it's all men'.

Course participants can be 'a bit surprised' when they see her there as an instructor. At the avalanche rescue training in February, even the host of the accommodation said, 'Oh, do they allow you to work on these courses?' having assumed Kirsty was 'admin or something'.

Oban has a good gender balance which Kirsty attributes to being one of the more recently formed teams. They recognised early on that by having women in the team 'it was seen as an approachable team, so we've never had any issues recruiting women because there's always been a visible number on the team'.

This was a theme which echoed through the evening: if the number of women on a team is low, or drops from a previously higher figure, then it becomes harder to recruit more. And vice versa.

REDEFINING 'UNISEX'

Carolyn tackled the long-fought battle for woman-shaped team kit and the need, as noted in the chat bar, to 'redefine the word unisex!' When she joined, there was 'very much an assumption that we'd fit into a large men's jacket. Or you might be lucky and get a medium'.

The default position now is that every bit of Cockermouth kit will have a women's option. Often, it's a slightly different colour — itself a source of teasing by male colleagues for

'not having the right colour', but rather that than kit that doesn't fit. Progress perhaps came, she says, with the observation that if one size does indeed fit all, then perhaps the team should consider buying everyone a women's medium.

The chat consensus was that 'unisex' generally means 'male fit', and 'we have to push back on brands who make considerable profits off the back of clothing the emergency services'. It's also about 'lobbying manufacturers to make smaller helmets', 'kit bags, rucksacks and carrying systems for stretchers' and 'harnesses that fit women safely'.

In defence of the manufacturers of outdoor equipment, many ARE now listening. Helly Hansen, for example, who recently kitted out North of Tyne, Western Beacons, Dublin-Wicklow, Assynt and Arrochar teams. Three years ago, those teams pitched for the opportunity to receive a set of 'mountain rescue responder kit' for every team member. In return, their members played an integral role in its development, field-testing the garments in all weathers over a six-month period. That kit was delivered in July 2022.

A North of Tyne team member noted that 'everyone was measured individually and the kit fits really well for everyone'. Another added that Lyon 'do smaller helmets'. So progress is being made in some quarters.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Childcare can often be the biggest barrier to women joining mountain rescue, but many mothers do play an active role. So how do they cope?

For Carolyn, the challenge came when her kids were young, trying to keep up with the team. Much of the time she would be in the control room, even though she'd have loved to have been out on the hill. For her, motherhood coincided with rapid changes in incident management technology.

'When I joined, it was one phone, one radio and a hard-bound notebook. Now it's multiple computer screens, lots of radios and mobile phones. A lot of our team members who traditionally spent time in the control room found that a hard shift to make. So it worked really well for me. Also, because of that work, I've been involved in a lot of the major incidents in Cumbria — and we've had our fair share of those over the last 20 years!'

Jen believes community is important and dads feel the pressure of parenting too. 'A few years ago, a new intake of team



Top: Images courtesy of Cave Rescue Organisation, Buxton MRT, Longtown MRT, Glossop MRT, SARDA Scotland, SARDA Wales © David Higgs, Central Beacons MRT, Aberdyfi MRT and North of Tyne MRT © Nadir Khan/Helly Hansen. Above: Bowland Pennine MRT.

include everyone, he said. 'I strongly believe in the message that we can't be what we can't see! It's good to see so many women still challenging, still looking to move the organisation forward in this respect, and this evening will be a great springboard for that.'



Above: Images courtesy of Bowland Pennine MRT, Border SAR, North Dartmoor and Dartmoor SRT Ashburton.



members were predominantly men but with young families. So there was this wonderful social scene, with young kids coming to base, getting a sense of what it was all about.' Her own son acted as a 'casualty' from about eight years old. 'He's now doing a PhD in geology and he's in the mountains all the time, so I think there's probably a correlation there.'

MORE DIVERSITY IN TEAMS EQUALS BETTER TEAMS

Google the impact of diversity on team performance and you'll find much to indicate that if you have women on your team — and greater age diversity too — that team will perform better. One article¹, published by *Management Science* in July 2013, explored the impact of gender diversity on the

performance of business teams. Those with an equal number of women and men performed better than the male-dominated teams.

'One potential determinant of a team's effectiveness is its gender diversity, as the gender mix of a team may offer an assortment of knowledge and skills. Previous research has shown that mixed gender teams are more generous and egalitarian, and that teams with a larger percentage of women perform better by building meaningful relationships and creating successful work processes.'

In terms of leadership, a small Italian study into 'Teamwork, leadership and gender' in 2018², looked at whether individual performance in teams depended on the gender of the leader. About 430 university students took an intermediate exam that was partly evaluated on the basis of teamwork. They were randomly matched in teams of three, each with a randomly chosen leader tasked with coordinating the work of the team.

The study found 'a positive and significant effect of female leadership on team performance... driven by the higher performance of team members in female-led teams rather than due to an improvement in the leader's performance'.

Interestingly, they also found that 'in spite of the higher performance of female-led teams, male members tend to evaluate female leaders as less effective, whereas female members are

more sympathetic towards them', which may sound familiar. But that aside, these studies are focused on the corporate world. How does all this relate to mountain rescue?

Jen had attended the avalanche course run by Kirsty and another mountaineering instructor, Emma. 'I hadn't realised until then, how important it was to have female role models doing a job that's traditionally been done by men. They were outstanding. So professional and competent. I was dead proud that as an organisation we are normalising women in leadership. I know it's a hard gig for them, but if you want to know anything about mountains, Kirsty is somebody you want to get on a course with!'

Prior to the webinar, Jen had canvassed some of her 'guys'. What came through was that 'a lack of diversity fails to represent the community we serve'. If women feel equal they will feel empowered to share their opinions, and those opinions will be respected, regardless of your background, your experience, your gender. 'Groups which are more diverse have a greater sense of respect. And listening to others' opinions requires you to pay attention in a different way.'

WORDS OF INSPIRATION

For Penny, the important thing is to 'believe in yourself and build a culture in the team to support you.' To other young women interested in joining mountain rescue, Maddie says: 'Just do it!'



Top: Images courtesy of Dublin-Wicklow MRT, Gill Brailsford/NEWSAR, Glossop MRT, Lomond MRT, Ogwen Valley MRO, Bowland Pennine MRT, East Cornwall MRT and Kirsty Pallas. Above: Cockermouth MRT.

Lily and Andrew
IN-STORE EXPERTS

Patrol in support



TOGETHER WE HIKE

COTSWOLD
outdoor

20% discount in-store and online for Mountain Rescue volunteers.
Code: AF-MTNRESCUE-V2
Expires 31.12.2023. T&Cs online.

We're passionate about helping fellow explorers enjoy the outdoors responsibly, with the right kit and experts by their side.

That includes Mountain Rescue who play a vital role in our safety. Which is why we're offering a 20% discount to all Mountain Rescue volunteers in-store.

Thank you for helping us adventure safely.

Make the right choice with our in-store experts.



Carolyn agreed. 'Don't be afraid to give it a go. I've been thrown into all sorts of situations I wouldn't have gone into otherwise but I've learned a lot and grown in confidence. If other people are pushing you forward, take that as a vote of confidence.'

Kirsty thought it important to recognise that men do make up the majority, so they will have the biggest influence. So advocate for yourself. 'It's hard being in a minority group and also have to fight for your right to be there, so that's where allies come in.'

GOING UNDERGROUND...

What struck me as I watched the evening unfold was whether our female colleagues in cave rescue teams were fully represented. A quick scroll through the screens suggested that there were certainly delegates from the joint surface and underground teams but perhaps not from the purely cave teams. By the Law of Unintended Consequences, did that 'women in mountain rescue' hashtag appear to exclude them?

I asked Emma Porter, as secretary of the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC), to tell me about her own experience. She's been a member of Midlands Cave Rescue Organisation for 29 years and describes caving and cave rescue as 'a way of life'.

'Across BCRC, we have a strong core of female volunteers and, whilst in the minority, they are represented across all teams and involved in all aspects of cave rescue.'

'For me, joining a cave rescue team felt like the next step of my caving journey. I was a law student at the time and a university caver. I'd just been invited to a local caving club whose roots went back to being a rescue team for the mines in the area. The culture within the club was very much cavers rescue cavers, and rescue was an integral part of being a caver and — quite simply — our insurance policy.'

'For many years, I was the only female within the club and, from the outset, I was

encouraged to get involved in all aspects of caving, including the rescue side. I vividly remember one of my early rescue practices, when I was thrown into the deep end of being underground controller, and just how much I learned because of the supportive attitudes of my fellow team members.'

'I've seen the number of female cavers and, subsequently, the number of female cave rescuers increase considerably. Most caving clubs are now very family friendly, caving clothing is designed specifically for females, and we make up a considerable proportion of caving club membership, which is the primary source of cave rescue recruitment. Caving is a real leveller. Cave rescue team members come from all walks of life with different skills, experiences and strengths, and I am a strong believer that there is a role for everyone within a rescue team and we are all simply team members.'

SO... WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

How do we keep the momentum going? How do we attract more women into mountain rescue and inspire the next generation? What would we like to happen, now we've opened up the conversation?

Ideas from the break-out rooms included having a central platform to access unbiased support on how your team is performing in terms of equality, and access to mentoring and training which recognises the skills and sensibilities women bring. We should learn from and work with our colleagues across search and rescue to



promote diversity. Our social media should represent what a diverse team looks like — even if we're not there yet. Our recruitment process should reflect the variety of skills and roles in mountain rescue, and recognise that women and men respond differently to different sorts of things, so we need to think about the language we use. And we should reach out beyond the traditional routes, into universities and schools, and the wider outdoor community.

FINALLY...

Thanks should go to Penny and Aneela for creating such an inspiring event, and to those who contributed to making it a success. Thanks also to the 200+ mountain rescue team members who came along to listen and join in the discussion.

For me, the overriding impression was positive, with women and men speaking frankly about their experiences and

observations. How much of this was for the 'benefit of the tape', I don't know, but it's surely a start. 'In order to carry a positive action we must develop here a positive vision', as someone far wiser than me once said.³

In the wider world, I think we all know the banter and discrimination still exists. Maybe, as someone mooted, it's a generational thing and younger women feel more empowered than the older generation, but I'm not entirely convinced. Those women who joined mountain rescue back in the very early days (let's say 40-75 years ago) — and even their younger counterparts of the last 25 years or so — faced a much more discriminatory society than we see today yet they prevailed and thrived despite that. They didn't wait to be empowered.

Which comes back to my early point about that innate female strength and capability: they gave as good as they got. There's no

doubting it takes a certain sort of woman to be a mountain rescuer. Always has. And I suspect women have always had to lean just a little bit harder against those doors.

There's clearly still much work to be done both internally and externally, but together with the wider world of search and rescue, perhaps we can be a beacon of hope and inspiration for women everywhere, whatever age. We can lead by example.

As Maddie said: Let's 'just do it!' 🗡️

REFERENCES

- ¹ gap.hks.harvard.edu/impact-gender-diversity-performance-business-teams-evidence-field-experiment
- ² iza.org/publications/dp/11861/teamwork-leadership-and-gender
- ³ brainyquote.com/quotes/dalai_lama_446740

Turn page for a look at proposed next steps



Top: Images courtesy of Hebrides MRT, Midland CRO, Cave Rescue Organisation, Kirkby Stephen MRT, Central Beacons MRT, Langdale Ambleside MRT, Gloucestershire Cave Rescue and Upper Wharfedale. Above: Spine challengers from Cave Rescue Organisation.

'We have incredible stories to tell,' says Jen, 'because we put the effort in. And the things you're not good at: practise! Although that's not a gender issue, that's life.'



Top: Images courtesy of Kintail MRT, Oban MRT, Ochils MRT, Scarborough & Ryedale MRT and Derbyshire CRO. Above: Images courtesy of Western Beacons MRT © Ed Smith, Rossendale & Pendle MRT, Dartmoor SRT Tavistock, West Cornwall MRT and Aberglaslyn MRT.

#womeninmountainrescue2023



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The women's working group, put together by Penny to make this landmark event happen, will continue to look at how to take things forward both within and beyond mountain rescue. There's no doubting their enthusiasm to inspire change so 'watch this space' for future updates.

We also asked Mike Park, as CEO of Mountain Rescue England and Wales, how he believes the national organisation and the teams can help support their female members.

'It was good to be part of such a constructive meeting. For me, the meeting ahead of International Women's Day successfully brought together a much bigger network of women from across MR and its partners and there was lots of listening and challenging and some great stories that really contributed to the celebration.'

In terms of next steps and actions, he noted three areas — two 'very much down to MREW as a whole' and one that he was keen to throw back to this network of members for their action.

1. Create a team Equality, Inclusion and Diversity policy:

'I know some teams have these already and, rather than do this from the centre, I think it makes a lot of sense for some of those involved in the event to collate what we have, take the best from it and create a useful tool for other teams to use as a structure and template.'

2. Commit to purchasing from inclusive suppliers:

'I agree we can still improve on this and our buying power could help to encourage and leverage more inclusivity in design. I'll be looking at how best to incorporate this into our national procurement — and Penny's women's working group will, of course, be key to this.'

3. Add an assessment of equality practices and policies into the Peer Review process:

'This may need to follow on from the creation of that template (see above), but it seems an ideal area where peer review and learning from each other could have real benefits.'

He reiterated his thanks to everyone involved in organising the March event, to all those who took part and the teams who promoted the role of women in MR on IWD, the following day with that hashtag. 'The proof of the value of the meeting and that activity on social media will be in the months to come and I look forward to those next steps, and how teams represent their female membership. We can't be what we can't see!'



Above: Images courtesy of © Jen Isherwood, Brecon MRT and Buxton MRT. Inset: Ogwen Valley MRO.

MARCH: 'HILLWALKING HIJABI' APPOINTED RAMBLERS SCOTLAND PRESIDENT

While we're talking about women and the outdoors, in other Equality, Inclusion and Diversity news, Zahrah Mahmood, who is widely known on social media as the 'Hillwalking Hijabi', was appointed Ramblers Scotland's president at their AGM in March.

The 31-year-old chartered accountant from Glasgow is well known for championing diversity in the outdoors and climbing hills wearing her hijab head covering. Ms Mahmood, a Muslim woman of south Asian heritage, hopes to use the high-profile honorary role to break down barriers and encourage greater representation within the walking community. 'I feel honoured to be appointed to the role of

president. I have high hopes for my appointment and want to follow in the steps of my predecessors while putting my own stamp on the role. I'm looking forward to the next three years.' She succeeds Arran-based International Mountain Leader Lucy Wallace and follows in the footsteps of former presidents including the late conservationist Dick Balharry, countryside ranger Ben Dolphin and broadcaster Cameron McNeish. She's a huge advocate for the physical and mental health benefits of hillwalking, and believes she's also enhanced her spiritual health through the outdoors. 'Some of the factors stopping ethnic minorities enjoying the outdoors are the same for a lot of people regardless of background: finances, access, time and other priorities. But another barrier is fear of putting yourself in a situation where you know you will stand out in a predominantly white space. That unfortunately has a lot to do with the lack of representation from outdoor companies and brands, and not seeing someone who looks like you being represented in a meaningful way.'

'We've a lot to learn from Zahrah's success in encouraging more people to feel confident and empowered to enjoy all the health and social benefits of adventures on foot,' says Ramblers Scotland director, Brendan Paddy. 'Despite booming numbers of people walking in Scotland, and the success of our world-class access rights, participation in the outdoors remains unequal. For example, people in affluent areas are considerably more likely to walk than those in deprived parts of Scotland. Too many people still feel that walking is not for them, simply due to their background, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability or age. We look forward to working with our president Zahrah and others in the years to come to create an outdoors for all.'



KEELA: WORKING FOR THE WOMEN

The team at Keela are on a mission — to improve the accessibility of women's clothing in the outdoors and rescue sector — while still balancing performance and (finally!) a good fit.

For too long, rescue kit for women has been limited and ill-fitting, with users often having to resort to the dreaded 'unisex' fit. Frequent complaints in the sector include gorilla-style arms, impractical features or pocket positions, and overall baggy sizing. To solve those issues — with our 50/50 board and a female-led design team — we've been hard at work over the past few years, expanding our women's collection for mountain rescue teams.

Thankfully the days of 'shrink it and pink it' are long gone — with one of Keela's recent additions including the 133gsm PrimaLoft filled Solo Jacket — available in a women's fit, and with all of the same features as the men's — using the same fabric and red colour, so no more issues with matching the rest of your team!

We've been working on improvements, in a number of areas, including:

Maternity Panel

A simple but effective new innovation — the panel means you can keep using your existing waterproof jacket as your bump progresses. Available in different colours, you can either match or get a contrasting colour for something a bit different.

Expanding Size Range

We continue to expand our range of women's sizes throughout all items — and if needed, can offer a special measure service so you can get something made exactly for you.

Mountain Rescue for Women

There are also a number of new additions to Keela's Mountain Rescue range, including the previously mentioned Solo jacket and — coming soon — a women's fit version of the popular Stratus jacket.

Martin's Mountain

The team hasn't just been working on women's fit — we're aiming to improve inclusion in all areas for the outdoors. We recently worked with Martin's Mountain — Martin was the closest survivor of the Manchester Arena bombing and has been left paralysed below the waist. With his team he climbed Kilimanjaro to raise funds for the Spinal Injuries Association — but a climb like that needs good kit, which is where Keela came in — working with Martin to make him a special set of salopettes which would be comfortable in his wheelchair.

Keela continues to push inclusivity in the outdoors — so keep your eyes peeled for future innovations and adventures!



TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE KEELA WOMEN'S RANGE OF CLOTHING, EMAIL SALES@KEELA.CO.UK OR CALL 01592 777000 • FIND US ONLINE AT KEELAOUTDOORS.COM OR FACEBOOK [@KEELAOUTDOORS](https://www.facebook.com/KEELAOUTDOORS)





Images via Pixabay.

How we can look after our mental health during a time of financial stress

TOGETHERALL IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE RESCUE BENEVOLENT FUND

During a cost-of-living crisis, day-to-day activities can feel overwhelming and your mental health may be worse than usual. The Togetherall clinical team share some things you can do to ensure you're keeping well and getting the right support.

THE CURRENT STATE WITH THE COST OF LIVING

Inflation, energy bills, rising household costs — the cost-of-living crisis is affecting everyone in some capacity across the UK.

This is having a knock-on effect on our mental health, especially for people who may be struggling to afford to meet their most basic needs. According to the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute, over 1.5 million people in the UK are currently experiencing both problem debt and mental health problems.

Those who are supporting people's mental health are also seeing a rise in people affected by financial woes. According to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), two thirds (66%) of

therapists say cost-of-living concerns are causing a decline in people's mental health.

Money worries, especially long-term debt, or life-changing events such as a job loss, can often cause or exacerbate anxiety, depression, and stress. From here, it's easy to get caught in a 'vicious cycle' when a perilous position of financial stress can increase mental health issues, in turn making it harder to manage finances. Almost 40% of people with a mental illness say their financial situation worsens their mental health problems.

THE KNOCK-ON EFFECT TO YOUR WELLBEING

There are secondary issues that can arise when dealing with financial stress:

Sleep: One of the first things to suffer when encountering money problems is your sleep. Racing thoughts and anxiety about the future can impact your ability to both fall asleep and get a good night's rest.

Physical health: Financial worries can also affect your physical health. Prolonged stress, including financial stress, can produce physical pain and reduced pain tolerance, including headaches, abdominal pain, and loss of appetite.

Self-esteem: Feeling like you're unable to manage your money effectively can impact how you feel about yourself, for example, feelings of failure and unworthiness.

Drinking: As a way of coping or to 'escape' from the stress of money troubles, it can be tempting to turn to alcohol. As a depressant, alcohol can only worsen the issue and can also lead to impulsive spending.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WHEN YOU'RE WORRYING ABOUT MONEY:

SEEK HELP WHERE YOU CAN

Togetherall isn't a financial support service, but we are here to support the mental health of our community, no matter what they're experiencing. Our anonymous network of peers is here to offer words of comfort and advice, with qualified practitioners on-hand to ensure you're safe whilst seeking support.

Togetherall's extensive library of courses and resources can also help you to manage your emotions surrounding financial strain if you don't want to speak to others about your experiences.

We also have a free library of support articles that are accessible whether you're registered with us or not, focusing on a range of topics, including sleep, managing stress, or setting goals.

If you need financial advice, speak to your bank, your landlord, or one of the services below if you are struggling to get by financially.

PRIORITISE YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Be kind to yourself and make self-care a priority. Even if it involves taking five minutes

to take a walk and temporarily remove yourself from the situation, doing something that is going to positively impact your mental health can help break the cycle of negativity caused by financial worries.

Identify where you still have control. Debt and uncertainty can make us feel out of control, so maintaining a healthy routine can help give us a better perspective. We understand that anxious thoughts or depression associated with financial stress can make maintaining a routine difficult, so start small in building healthy habits and avoid triggers to both unhealthy coping mechanisms and impulsive spending.

FOR FURTHER SUPPORT

There are more resources available for financial help below.

MONEYHELPER

MoneyHelper brings together the support and services of three government-backed financial guidance providers: the Money Advice Service, the Pensions Advisory Service and Pension Wise to provide useful tools and impartial advice about your finances. You can find out more at moneyhelper.org.uk.

DEBTLINE

National Debtline is a charity providing free, independent, and expert debt advice to people across the UK. You can access National Debtline by phone, webchat, or get advice through the website. Find more information, including their cost-of-living hub at nationaldebtline.org.

CITIZENS ADVICE

We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. Citizens Advice believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice. Find more information and get help at citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money.

MIND

Mental health charity Mind has a library of free resources to help people who are struggling with their mental health. They have also created a specific resource for helping to manage your money and your mental health, which you can find at mind.org.uk.

GO TO TOGETHERALL.COM/JOINNOW/RESCUEBENEVOLENTFUND OR SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER ANONYMOUSLY BY CHOOSING AN NON-IDENTIFIABLE USERNAME



FIND US ONLINE AT RESCUEBENEVOLENT.FUND & VIA THE QR CODE OPPOSITE, OR ON FACEBOOK @RESCUEBENEVOLENTFUND



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



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

Togetherall is a digital mental health and wellbeing support service, available online, 24/7. Our community is completely anonymous so you can express yourself freely and openly. Professionally-trained Wall Guides monitor the community to ensure the safety and anonymity of all members.

Togetherall offers a range of activities that allow you to work through what's troubling you. Share your thoughts and join a Talkabout with fellow members to share and discuss what's on your mind, gain support and advice. You can do this with the whole community or form your own groups or one-to-one chats. Alternatively, make a 'brick' to express yourself and your feelings creatively through drawing or by uploading your own images.

In addition to Togetherall's online community, you will have access to a wealth of useful resources. Join our self-guided support courses covering topics such as anxiety, sleep and depression to assertiveness training and problem solving. Take self-assessments to help you understand more about yourself.

Find a library of information within resources which can help you understand more about yourself, how you are feeling, set goals and track your progress.

We are dedicated to bringing people together, encouraging everybody to look after their mental health, and we are welcoming to all.



PR consultant and media trainer **Sally Seed** looks at an aspect of publicity and PR and suggests ideas to build on for the future. This time: **Tell or sell, show or share?**



Above and right: Social media 'Winter Advice' campaign with graphics by Sarah Harvey.

appeal positively to their motivation to have a great day — most can readily appreciate their chances of getting cold and wet — then they just might put extra layers and waterproofs in their rucksack.

'Campaigns that aim to alter habits and behaviours in the long term are difficult to evaluate, especially in the context of increasing numbers of people heading to the hills. There's plenty of evidence from other fields, such as health, to suggest that the use of behavioural psychology can improve the effectiveness of safety communications.'

Show and share

Did you spot the first phase of our 'What would Mountain Rescue do?' social media campaign in January? As with #BeAdventureSmart, we're trying to sell good ideas, show practical tips and share best practice under a banner that's less 'tell' and more 'show and share'. We're also hoping these will go beyond the basics and reach more experienced walkers with a few tips and tricks that could still make a difference and are derived from real mountain rescue situations.

Thanks go to Sarah Harvey, a graphic designer by trade and a member of Kirkby Stephen MRT, who used the vague ideas,

took some great photographs and gave us striking graphics to catch the eye online. The first ones looked at:

- Carrying walking poles
- Maybe using two smaller flasks for hot drinks in cold weather
- Packing an emergency shelter into your sack for (the clue's in the name) shelter in an emergency or just for a warmer booty stop
- Thinking about your safety on the way to your walk and considering wheel chains or socks for snow and ice
- Carrying a conventional map and compass as a back-up to any phone apps.

That last one created the most comment online (as you might guess), but all of these posts generated interaction and far more shares on social media than many of our posts achieve. If the aim was to spread the safety word and give people new ideas, they seemed to work.

On that basis, we're working on more so, if you have a tip or trick that could be shared with others, please get in touch.

Convincing on social media

Anything to do with safety advice usually generates a lot of comment on social media, whether that's members of the

The psychology of safety awareness, and the way to offer advice that makes a difference, is a challenge for MR teams (and others) across the UK. Is it our job to tell people what to do and, if we do, is it at all effective? Are there better ways of selling safety?

Sell not tell

The #BeAdventureSmart campaign may not have been adopted right across England and Wales but the messaging and approach that's used in the Lake District and across Wales has strong research and psychology behind it. If we're looking for real behaviour change, there's a lot to learn from this campaign.

Keep it simple: People, especially those new to the outdoors, can be overwhelmed by lots of advice and information. Add in multiple languages and cultural differences and the simpler you can make your messaging, the better. #BeAdventureSmart covers lots of different activities, not just walking and climbing, but the approach is the same and uses the same three questions about weather, knowledge and skills, clothing and equipment.

Ask, don't tell: Getting people to think for themselves with the guidance of answering three questions is much more productive than telling them all sorts of things that they should be doing.

Emma Edwards-Jones (co-lead for the AdventureSmart.uk campaign) says 'A number of factors are recognised as influencing behaviour change. These include people's understanding of the risks they are exposing themselves and others to, their motivation to change their behaviour and their capability to do so. So, in trying to influence people to be more prepared for their outdoor adventures, it isn't sufficient simply to tell them what to do. We need to understand whom we want to influence, what their motivations and perceived barriers are and then carefully craft our messages. We also need to plan how and when they're delivered.'

Sell, don't threaten: One subtlety of #BeAdventureSmart is that strapline about making a good day better. If you stop and think about it, getting cold, wet and lost is not a great way to enjoy yourself outdoors. Thinking about the weather forecast, your navigation skills and what to wear and carry will likely make it a much better day for everyone involved. Why wouldn't you?

'People's ability to assess risk is often poor,' says Emma, 'and many will simply dismiss messages about the dangers and potential outcomes as "not relevant because it won't happen to me". However, if you can



public criticising the rescued, or some in MR wanting us to do much more (or even less) on safety communications.

We've had almost the full spectrum of feedback and comments in recent weeks and it's interesting to think them through. This might also help teams when responding to comments on their own social media posts.

'We shouldn't be doing this – leave it to the BMC (British Mountaineering Council)

It's true that the BMC do a great job on this, but the impact of people not taking care often falls on MR volunteers so we feel a responsibility to do something. That means reviews, partnership working and sharing of advice (and posts) from others, including BMC, Mountain Training, Plas y Brenin and others on behalf of the teams.

'We need to tell people to stay off the mountains in winter if they don't know what they're doing'

This sort of comment doesn't crop up a lot but it is an occasional tone. The more general approach is much more about MR not being the 'countryside police' so we should encourage people to get some training, invest in the right equipment and build their winter experience gradually. That emphasis on constructive advice is likely to be more effective too (see 'Sell not Tell' above).

'MR should be charging these people if they're so stupid'

This is so wrong and in so many ways! For a start, as most in MR know, not everyone who occasionally does stupid things is stupid. And accidents can happen to

anyone — and they do. Charging people for rescue would simply get in the way of an effective rescue service plus many of these casualties (and their families and friends), are the ones who raise money and become supporters in future... so some are paying without it being required.

None of this is straightforward and, as we know, no single approach works for everyone. The best we can do is to take expert advice, focus on approaches that will make a difference, share what we've learnt and reinforce the good stuff at every opportunity.

One last thought — when people bought their gear in a 'real' shop (as opposed to online), they'd often get advice from the salespeople and a bit of explanation about their options. Is there something we could be doing or encouraging to create that sort of culture for online retailers? I'd appreciate your thoughts.

Please get in touch with me via pr@mountain.rescue.org.uk on this or any other MR communications topic. Thanks.

PS. As mentioned in the last issue, if you or your team are planning comms campaigns around safety advice and looking for ideas, don't forget the *Call Out Mountain Rescue?* book, written by our magazine editor, Judy, and very much a pocket guide to safety on the hill. If you've never read it, have a look and then pass it on, or at least pass on some of the advice. It's available from the online book shop¹ and also as a digital flipbook² — of course! ☺



¹ shop.mountain.rescue.org.uk/collections/books
² online.flipfippingbook.com/view/449666983/



BEN NEVIS AND GLEN COE WINTER CLIMBS Selected snow, ice and mixed routes: Two-volume set by MIKE PESCOD

Reviewed by MIKE MARGESON OBE

This eighth edition, coming over ten years since the last edition, reflects the amount of change and development in winter climbing during that time.

The quality of information is reflection of the depth of local knowledge Mike has gained, living and climbing and working in the area as a IFMGA Mountain guide for over 20 years. There are two volumes — the Ben and Glen Coe — both small enough to carry. Stand out for me are the outstanding photo topos. There is of course standard info, grade route length and stars, approach times and route. Sections on equipment, weather and snow and avalanche and safety alongside update on recent history. The nature and style of routes are given with helpful little icons. In line with BAA guidelines key points on approaches and climbs and their descent are highlighted and info of known avalanche locations and potential terrain traps. There are also key bearings for topping out safely on the Ben and OS map inserts. Very useful is his detailing of different types, and the nature and style of climbs — the 'natural order of ice climbs' as Mike calls it — describes both what to look for and the weather and temperature that affects climbs, their build up and condition. These two guides are well laid out structured and researched.

BEN NEVIS AND GLENCOE WINTER CLIMBS PUBLISHED BY: CICERONE: WWW.CICERONE.CO.UK
 ISBN: 978-1-78631-100-9

books

the final send away

KENNY MACKENZIE MBE



A founding member of the Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA), Kenny died in February, peacefully at home with his family around him, after a short illness. He was 94.

This short tribute is written with thanks to detail in *Search and Rescue Dogs: Fifty Years and Counting* by Bob Sharp and Bill Jennison (published by NSARDA) and *The Press and Journal* obituary written by Lindsay Bruce.

In the late 1940s, Kenny served with the Cameron Highlanders as a piper and then with the intelligence service. After leaving the army in 1953, one of his first postings in the Northern Constabulary was to Invergarry where more than 1500 workers helped build the Quich dam. Also based at the dam was young nurse Mairi Chisholm from Cannich, who he later married. Over the years he and Mairi lived in Beaulieu — by which point their three children had been born — then on to Portree, Kinlochleven, Brora and back to Inverness in 1979 as a sergeant. Significantly, he introduced fundamental changes to the way police traffic officers were trained and equipped when dealing with stranded cars and people in bad winter conditions. However, Kenny's real passion was with mountain rescue and dog handling. He served on the then Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland for many years and played a pivotal role in developing the work of the search dogs in the 1960s and 1970s and, in 1994, he was awarded the MBE for services to SARDA.

Kenny was first attracted to the idea of using his Alsatian for mountain searches following discussions with Hamish and Catherine MacInnes in Glencoe in early 1964. Hamish had been training his own two dogs following the Swiss avalanche course and his enthusiasm was infectious. After the pilot course in Glencoe, that December they were being called out on searches on Ben Nevis, Glencoe and the Cairngorms, despite the dogs being relative novices.

Following the pilot course in 1964 and the formation of the association, it was decided to arrange an annual course for dogs and handlers nationwide. The response was fantastic and, a year later, thirty handlers assembled at Kingshouse Hotel in Glencoe on that first course.

Dogs trained by Kenny were used as part of the search and rescue operation after the Lockerbie disaster. That said, 'Support for the rescue dogs was not always 100%', said Kenny. 'A big problem in the early days was funding. On one occasion, we had little funds but were determined to go ahead with the course. One of our guests was Tom Weir of TV fame and, following the course, one of Tom's photos was displayed on the front cover of the *Scots Magazine*, along with a very informative article. Needless to say, we were able to pay our hotel bill that year! It was a natural progression and almost inevitable that police dogs would become involved in

mountain searches. In my own force, all five police dogs underwent SARDA training and subsequently qualified for rescue work, alongside police dogs already involved'.

Kenny also worked with Hamish to design a winching harness. For the first time, dog and handler could be winched safely together. In the 1970s, Kenny was the national call-out coordinator for SARDA Scotland. At the time there were twenty-six dog teams on the call-out list, all located within five different geographical areas: Lochaber, Highland, Cairngorm, Central and Borders. Kenny was of the view that 'whilst rescue dogs cannot perform miracles, a trained dog is the best available search instrument known to man'.

Mairi retired in the early-1980s and when Kenny stepped



Top: Kenny MacKenzie with Sumba © SARDA England. Above: Kenny's dog Fran © Sandy Seabrook.

back from policing they bought a restaurant in Glencoe, the Clan MacKenzie, which rapidly became a favourite stop-off for bus tours and visitors. From there they bought a smaller guest house in Fort William, before eventually returning to Inverness. Mairi passed away in 2018 and Kenny's family moved to be nearer to him. Still walking into his late 80s, he loved to spend time with his two grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Speaking to the *Press and Journal*, his daughter Lesley said, 'My dad was such an easy-going man. He never got annoyed about things and was never confrontational. A very kind and compassionate man, who was good company, and always had good strength of character. We miss him terribly. To get to 94 in good health after the life he lived is a huge accomplishment. One we are very grateful for.' 🐾

smr

NEW YEAR'S HONOURS FOR TWO SCOTTISH TEAM MEMBERS

Alistair Hume. Photo courtesy Arran MRT.

Arran MRT were delighted to hear team chairman Alastair Hume had been awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours list. Meanwhile, across in Moffat, Wing Commander Graham Percival received the Royal Red Cross, Second Class, for his services to RAF Aeromedical developments and the initial response to the Covid pandemic.

Alistair Hume joined the Arran team in 1976, rising through the ranks to take over the position of team leader from his long-time friend and mentor Stewart Lambie in 1993. During his twelve years as leader Ali coordinated countless rescues and was also responsible for many developments in how the team operated — most notably taking a leading role in the design and build of the team's St Johns Base at Cladach. Perfectly situated at the start of the Goatfell track the new base transformed day-to-day operations for the team.

Still an active team member, he currently serves as chairman and regularly attends call-outs and training, passing on his fantastic local knowledge and skills to the next generation of team members. Everyone at Arran MRT would like to congratulate Ali on a lifetime of dedicated service, and thank his wife Shona, son Niall and daughter Amie, who have supported him throughout.

Graham Percival has a long history in mountain rescue. Both parents were involved with Cleveland SRT in the 1970s. His father, Larry, also trained a search dog and Graham bodied regularly. It was perhaps inevitable that he would also join the team, not long after his eighteenth birthday in 1980. Team training offered the chance to 'observe' in the local A&E on a Friday and Saturday night and this exposure to healthcare led to him beginning his

registered nurse training in 1981. He became involved with first aid training for the team and NESRA and, by 1984, was Cleveland medical officer, promoting some of the embryonic paramedic interventions into the MR world. With paramedic colleague Brian Wright — and encouraged by intensive care consultant Paul Lawler — he helped develop the belief that mountain rescue prehospital care was more than first aid. One winter's night in 1980, the concept of 'mountain rescue casualty care' was born, eventually leading to publication of 'Basic MR Casualty Care' in 1996 and 'Advanced MR Casualty Care' a year later.

Graham also took up the family legacy of search dog training and, in February 1985, passed the then SARDA England annual course with his Border Collie Woody, and was presented with the Novice Shield for the best newly graded dog that year. Graham and Woody enjoyed a long partnership, including attending the Lockerbie air crash.

In 1995, he and his family moved to Scotland for him to take up the post of clinical specialist in critical care at the Western General in Edinburgh. He joined Ochils MRT and brought the concept of MR Cas Care to Scotland. After a few internal courses underwritten by MREW, the idea was adopted within the Central Scotland region and subsequently throughout the country.

Just before his move to Scotland, Graham had been offered a nine-month-old Border Collie, the grandson of Woody. Mij would become his second search dog and have a successful search career with three finds — the first on his initial SARDA call-out with Ochils, during a night search for a missing DoE group.

Graham left the NHS in 1997. He joined the RAF Medical Reserves in 1997 at RAF Leuchars, and the RAF Regulars in 2003, which led to a temporary move away from MR, although he continued to contribute to courses. After officer graduation from RAF Cranwell, he spent ten years delivering critical and prehospital care during multiple deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and Mali. He left the regular RAF to join the Emergency Medical Retrieval Service in Glasgow as an advanced critical care practitioner but remained a reservist with 612 Sqn at Leuchars. He continues to undertake regular deployments as leader of the RAF Critical Care Air Support Team at RAF Brize Norton and was promoted to Wing Commander in 2022.

He joined Moffat MRT in 2022 when he and his wife Marion moved from Linlithgow to Auchengray near Lanark. 'We in Moffat MRT are lucky to have him on board and look forward to all he has to offer the team. Well done Graham!' 🐾



Graham Percival. Photo courtesy Moffat MRT.



FEBRUARY: OCHILS TEAM'S DOCTOR PAUL HEADS TO DISASTER ZONE

An Ochils team member and professional obstetrician, who also volunteers with frontline medical aid charity UK-Med, was deployed when earthquakes hit Turkey and Syria, as part of a UK Emergency Medical Team arranged by the British Government through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Paul Holmes was working in a field hospital in southern Turkey treating pregnant women caught up in the disaster.

30 YEARS' DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FOR 'GINGER'

Bill Glennie, SMR chairman, recently visited Moffat MRT to present George 'Ginger' McCall with a Distinguished Service Award.

Ginger has been a Moffat member for around 30 years, bringing with him skills in engineering and fabrication that have certainly been put to good use in his time. A (very) keen Land Rover enthusiast and skilled off-road driver, Ginger was voted onto the committee after only six months of joining the team and was instrumental in the planning and conversion of the team's first Land Rover. He was transport officer for 20 years and played a huge role in developing the fleet of vehicles the team holds today. As the only current serving Moffat team member to hold such an award, it was an honour for the team and Ginger's family to watch him be presented with his DSA. Moffat would like to thank Ginger for his continued dedication to the team and all he's contributed in his time.

working with family and friends

A WAY TO HELP YOU GET PEOPLE WALKING OFF THE HILL OR OUT OF A CAVE

EDWARD KINNEAR KENDAL MRT

Every team has certain members who are regularly tasked with, and are particularly good at, supporting the families and friends of casualties. Such skills – and they are learned skills – can be difficult to identify by even the team members themselves, let alone clarified and offered to other team members as a training opportunity. However, if there were a process that could be used in training (rather like medics train to use DRABCDEF), wouldn't this be a worthwhile opportunity to explore?

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Luckily there is a process that has recently been created for the adventure activities sector (providers of outdoor learning experiences in climbing, caving, canoeing etc) and that has already seen success on the hill with Families & Friends.¹

The Decision-Making Framework² (DMF)

is a cognitive process that adventure activity instructors can use to work efficiently and effectively in partnership with an individual with an impairment or disability. The DMF also works for MRTs because, whilst Families & Friends may or may not already have a pre-incident impairment, they are most certainly going to have some form of temporary impairment³ as they have been living and experiencing their casualty's incident for a period of time. Time often enough for the temporary impairment to be of significance and requiring potentially intensive support from MR team members.

The DMF was developed by drawing on the creators' combined 80+ years of professional adventure coaching (and a few in mountain rescue too) and from key elements of Attribution⁴, Self Determination⁵ and Self Efficacy⁶ theories; all culminating in a simple, trainable and field-usable process that can be utilised regardless of experience.

For mountain and cave rescue, **Interest +**

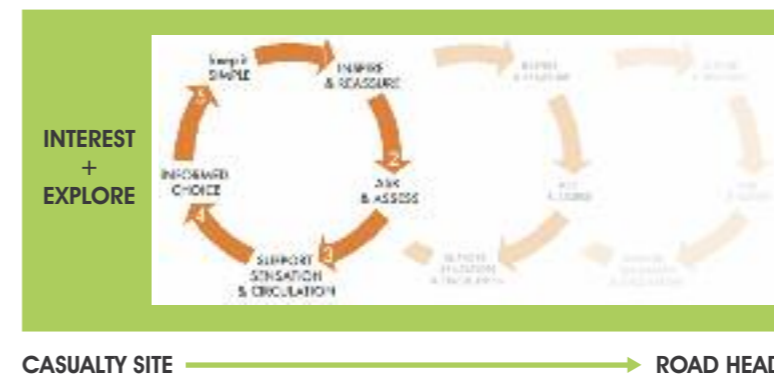
Explore has been added due to the situational challenges unique to rescues and not experienced in programmed adventure activity work. The five-stage DMF is then used for greater information gathering. Consequently the full 'MR DMF process' (Table 1) would start at the casualty site and then be fully rechecked at appropriate moments during the evacuation and at the roadhead.

BASICS CAN BE ENOUGH

Interest + Explore are arguably the two basic key words to take away from this article. They are about you as a volunteer rescuer and about your approach to the responsibility you have for Families & Friends. **Interest + Explore** should be at the core of a mindset to be adopted before making introductions.

- Stop. Take a deep, nasal, belly breath and establish in yourself a 'positive unconditional regard' mindset (one in which you are able to

Table 1: The full 'MR DMF' process.



express empathy, support, and acceptance to someone, regardless of what they say or do) and take an **Interest** in all of the individuals in front of you — an **Interest** that will require effort and energy on your part to build a good relationship.

- Be prepared to appropriately **Explore** what individuals can do, as well as the obstacles and interferences that can impair and impact them and their performance, for all the time they are with you. Like an iceberg, the obvious obstacle above the surface is obvious! It's the other 90% that you need to **Explore** and discover.

The words **Interest + Explore** are a simple entry point into a process that is constantly required whilst looking after Families & Friends. During team training, facilitated conversations and case studies can be used to delve into **Interest + Explore** in greater detail with various team members. We should all remember that, as simple as this mindset may appear, others in your team can and will find this role challenging for a wide variety of reasons.

THE GOLD STANDARD

So if **Inspire + Explore** are as far as you wish to go on this subject then great and thank you for reading this far!

If you want to explore in more detail, the ways to make your life easier on a call-out then read on. There are many abilities and interferences that individuals will have and they will not know what you need to know. Stages 1-5 (below and on the following pages), outline the DMF process, designed to gather the detailed information you need to make good decisions.

- The first column describes each of the five stages of the DMF and the appropriate **ten key words** to aid recall in the field:

Inspire, Reassure, Ask, Assess, Support, Sensation, Circulation, Informed Choice, Simple.

- The second column gives a wide range of 'in the field' thoughts and suggestions to hopefully improve the individual's temporary impairment, along with a variety of possible phrases to use in *italics*. There is no right or wrong here — just don't use them all on a single call-out!

Please note that the DMF's five stages can be used as either a formula to tick off or a 'handrail' to guide and support. Either approach is appropriate. While some stages can be undertaken concurrently, do make sure an appropriate amount of time for each stage is enabled.

FINAL REMINDER

By putting Families & Friends first and foremost in your thinking, and using the 'MR DMF process', you will be reassuring the individuals, yourself and your team's leadership that you are doing your best whilst the rest of your team focuses on the casualty.



Images by Dave Pheasey and Edward Kinnear.

STAGE 1. INSPIRE AND REASSURE

THE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

Rightly or wrongly, first impressions matter. Those initial moments of meeting Families & Friends can set the tone and success of the relationship during time ahead.

Consciously make the time to engage and appropriately explore their goals for the day, what happened during the incident and what they wish to happen now.

Engage also with the individual in front of you and (at this stage) not with their impairment.

Through direct statements of positive mountain rescue opinion, open questions and by directing your effort, energy and emotional intelligence into developing rapport, you can start to gather information that will inform initial decisions in the DMF and throughout the time ahead.

POSSIBLE 'IN THE FIELD' SUGGESTIONS

- Introduce yourself, look all Families & Friends in the eye and ensure you wear a genuine smile.

- Inspire and reassure each individual in equal measure through appropriately using a couple of open questions or positive phrases, for example:

'What was your plan? Where did you get to? How was that particular path today?'

'Good job in getting a phone signal out here and on keeping your friend warm.'

'You did well and they are now in excellent hands with our experienced medics and team doctor.'

'Be aware they will moan when we splint it... it is normal and the drugs will be taking away a huge amount of pain.'

'I like your boots! What do you think of them as I was considering buying some?'

STAGE 2. ASK AND ASSESS

THE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

When working with any individual – with an impairment or not – the process of understanding their current functionality is essential. Functionality (or ability) is about focusing on what the individual CAN do, as opposed to what they cannot. This is especially so with an individual undertaking a new experience.

Ask and **Assess**, as opposed to assume and guess, because the majority of individuals are willing to guide and explain their current functionality, given a suitable rapport and when questions are asked openly and with empathy. They are the experts about their world and their ability.

The more information that is appropriately shared with you (including interferences or obstacles to ability eg. pain, discomfort, distraction, fear, energy levels etc), the more information-rich you are to make better decisions.

POSSIBLE 'IN THE FIELD' SUGGESTIONS

- Start with an open question, such as:

'So, how are you feeling right now?' or

'How do you think you will do getting down this hill?'

- Explore further through empathetic questioning (**Ask**) and ability demonstrations (**Assess**) around each of the following headings. Areas of functionality that may be explored are included below each heading.

Level of support required for both mind and body?

Communication • Physical • Movement • Sensory
Emotional Learning • Environmental

Sensation and feeling – both inside and out?

Impact and implication of the environment and situation on all six senses

Circulation – their current and future health and wellbeing?

Warmth and cold • Pain • Medication • Diet • Skin care
Personal hygiene and privacy

- Probe a little deeper, in an order directed by the Families & Friends' responses. Whatever is talked about, do 'cover' all three headings.

STAGE 3 SUPPORT, SENSATION AND CIRCULATION

THE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

As a human being you are already making efforts every single day to ensure that these three powerful elements are being met, both for yourself and anyone else you care for.

Support, **Sensation** and **Circulation** cover a broad range of areas of functionality (as indicated in Stage 2) and they all inter-connect, with no one element working in isolation.



This stage of the DMF encourages you to make the time to ask and adjust around these three elements to prepare the Families & Friends for evacuation.

Fit any equipment being used to the individual and not the other way around. This ensures maximum functionality and minimises any negative after-effects.

If the Families & Friends have capacity, share your thoughts and reasoning around **Support**, **Sensation** and **Circulation** with them. This empowers them to work with you to make better decisions throughout the time ahead; something which is likely to improve their independence, control and performance.

POSSIBLE 'IN THE FIELD' SUGGESTIONS

Enable Support

- Using positive and encouraging language
- Remembering to use a chest harness as well as a sit harness
- Tightening up the hip belt, shoulder and chest straps of rucksacks, providing grab options for physical confidence and support.

'I like your route choice down that slope. Which way do you want us to go now?'

'Good footwork and balance! I'll just hold onto this shoulder strap to give you a little bit extra for the next section.'

Improve Sensation

- Using equipment that fits the individual properly
- Bringing in a search dog to comfort and distract
- Getting inside a brightly coloured bothy/shelter to positively change their sensory experience through:
 - reducing outside sound interference
 - removing sight of the casualty and adjusting the visible light spectrum
 - enhancing smell and taste experience
 - improving warmth and motor skills
 - potentially improving an individual's awareness of their body movement and situation.

'Let's just take a minute to get this fitting better.'

'Isn't being in here more pleasant than being out there?'

Ensure Circulation

- Changing wet clothing or use of a vapour barrier and extra insulation
- Remembering immediate and then regular food intake and morale-boosting hot drinks
- Ensuring the taking of prescribed medication or appropriate pain relief
- Checking exposed skin and eyes are covered
- Facilitating toilet and rest breaks.

STAGE 4. INFORMED CHOICE

THE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

The logical continuation is to now consider options that are appropriate to getting off the hill. There is no magic formula to be used here.

By recalling all the information gathered in the previous stages, the team member weighs up:

1. The individual's wishes and concerns
2. Their functionality
3. How much of their performance can and has been aided by you, the team and equipment
4. The advantages and challenges of the options ahead.

It is only now that an informed choice can be made for a Plan A, B and C.

POSSIBLE 'IN THE FIELD' SUGGESTIONS

- An example of an informed choice justification to a casualty site manager of a Families & Friends evacuation:

1. 'I believe Alex is in an ok place mentally. They've had a big day already and just want to get off this hill soon.'

2. 'They were certainly feeling cold and tired. Right side of body was numb after supporting the casualty's head and neck.'

3. 'Alex has been in the bothy, been fed, watered and wet clothes have been changed. Sensation has improved on their right side.'

4. 'Plan A is to walk off with me ahead of the casualty, on the route the team took up. We will take on regular snacks and I will provide close physical support at the rock slabs. Any functionality changes and my Plan B is to radio you, wait for the rest of the team to join us and reappraise the situation.'

STAGE 5. KEEP IT SIMPLE

THE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

All too often in the adventure activity sector – or in mountain rescue – if someone mentions that an individual has an impairment, various types of fancy gear and ideas get 'pulled out of the bag'.

In the author's opinion, the reality is often different and the absolute majority of individuals are unlikely to need more than good communication, warmth or cooling and possibly a confidence-boosting hold onto their rucksack.

If more is needed then work within your knowledge and experience.

As the expression goes: Keep it **simple** because it ain't rocket science!

POSSIBLE 'IN THE FIELD' SUGGESTIONS

- Good route choice pays dividends. Look well ahead and to each step

- After working through the five stages of the DMF at the casualty site, regularly revisit each stage during the walk out (as per Table 1). Functionality changes: sometimes very quickly

- Sharing why you are exploring the stages again gives the individual improved personal awareness of their skills, autonomy and a deeper connection with you. These can all lead to an improved hill performance and better wellbeing

- Arguably the DMF stages could be revisited beyond the roadhead, for example, at the individual's accommodation or when appropriate third party support arrives.

Any thoughts or comments? The author is open to chat via edward@earthlyedge.com

REFERENCES

¹ Disclosure; this article's author is a co-creator of this process.

² Gilligan, J. Kinneer, E. Morrison, G. Inclusive Climbing – a manual for inclusive adventure activities in climbing. 2022. Earthly Edge. www.earthlyedge.com

³ Temporary impairment refers to a

temporary functionality (ability) limitation within the individual for learning, mental, physical, sensory or social reasons.

⁴ The sharing and attribution that success is down to the individual's own effort and energy; success is not linked to you or others and none of it was merely down to luck.

⁵ Self-Determination theory covers

autonomy, competence, relatedness and benevolence; all well established as being influential in an individual's positive performance.

⁶ The belief in one's own abilities to complete a task or achieve a goal. The experience is not about the 'activity' but about the individuals perception and interpretation of the experience.



EDWARD KINNEER IS A DEPUTY TEAM LEADER WITH KENDAL MRT, A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MOUNTAINEERING INSTRUCTORS AND HAS MORE THAN 25 YEARS' EXPERIENCE AS AN OUTDOOR PROFESSIONAL. HE PROVIDES INCLUSIVE ADVENTURE SPORTS TRAINING COURSES, IS CO-CREATOR OF THE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK AND OF INCLUSIVE CLIMBING – A MANUAL FOR INCLUSIVE ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES IN CLIMBING; AVAILABLE FROM HIS WEBSITE EARTHLYEDGE.COM OR FROM [EARTHLY.EDGE](https://www.instagram.com/earthlyedge) ON INSTAGRAM

the final send away

RON JAMES
OVMRO



Ron James died peacefully at home, with his wife and family, on 1 March. He had suffered a severe stroke a few years ago which kept him from the outdoor pursuits he'd enjoyed all of his life. **Chris Lloyd** looks back over that life.

A teacher by profession, he worked in the West Midlands until he teamed up with fellow climber, Trefor Jones, to open a mountaineering school in Eryri (Snowdonia). Prior to that, he and Trefor were climbing on the East Face of Tryfan in the early 1950s, when they answered the plaintive cries for help from a stricken solo climber. They gave first aid to the minor injuries and lowered the young man to the Heather Terrace and from the mountain. That man was one Christian Bonington who became a successful and renowned mountaineer.

Ron and Trefor saw the opportunity to realise their dream when the famous climbers' guest house at Ogwen Cottage came up for sale in 1959 — but their dreams were nearly dashed when they found they were bidding against a large national brewery who planned to open a pub. Fortunately, a wealthy local land agent, Tony Mason Hornby, agreed to come in as the third partner. Just prior to the sale, Tony was able to name drop in earshot of the brewery representatives and they dropped their bid.

Famously, as Mrs Williams handed the keys to the new owner of Ogwen Cottage, she explained the responsibilities of being a Mountain Rescue Post. "You fire a red flare with this pistol and everyone comes from the hills to the car park. They are your team. And the man with the cleanest boots, you appoint as your team leader" (irrespective of any experience, training or skills!)

The Ogwen Cottage Mountaineering School became the base for the first civilian mountain rescue team in North Wales: Ogwen Cottage MRT. The school provided training for schoolchildren, students, families and even members of the Special Forces.

Ron, a keen rock climber, had 40+ first ascents under his belt and visited the Alps almost every year for 40 years. The Dolomites was his favourite area.

The Ogwen Cottage team earned a certain notoriety. On occasion, Tony Mason Hornby's Rolls Royce would be used to transport the stretcher. And then there was Ron's technique for extracting rock climbers with their leg stuck in a crevice. He'd ask them if they'd eaten their sandwiches. If not, he'd use the buttered face to lubricate the stricken knee, then attached a rope to the climber and climb a few feet above him before placing a solid running belay. He then jumped off and the taut rope would pluck the casualty from the crevice. Another time, he rescued a young couple from Soapgut, on the Milestone Buttress on Tryfan. One of them had suffered a very serious foot injury following a rockfall. Shortly afterwards, he was invited to their wedding.

Ron expanded the team's basic rescue kit by importing equipment made in Austria and used in the Alps. These included the Mariner stretcher, the Tragsitz rescue harness and the reels of steel cable with a winch, for use on the big cliffs of Craig yr Isfa, Black Ladders, Lliwedd, Clogwyn dur Arddu and Gogarth. He'd often tell the story about importing the Mariner stretcher to the UK in the boot of a team member's car — the HM Customs officer required much explanation before letting them through!

Despite best efforts and a lot of hard and dedicated work by Ron and his staff, Ogwen Cottage Mountaineering School foundered when their major customer, Birmingham Education Authority withdrew. The BEA then purchased the school lock,

stock and staff in 1964. That summer the staff were able to enjoy school summer holidays and went to the Alps leaving a young man to act as caretaker and collect monies for use of the car park. A keen rock climber, this young man was able to go climbing once his duties were complete. And one day he fell from Clogwyn Du in Cwm Cneffion. He was seriously injured and the Ogwen Cottage MRT were all in the Alps. He was rescued in the old-fashioned way by the man with the shiniest boots. Upon the return to the school, the staff realised that a mountain rescue team has to provide a 24/7 service, hence Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation was inaugurated in March 1965.

Ron continued to lead with innovation and asked the RAF if their Air Sea Rescue helicopters (fitted with a winch), would be able to winch people from the mountains. That was the start of a long relationship between 22 Squadron and mountain rescue, which lasted till July 2015. Ron told of one rescue when he was called from a 'suit and tie meeting' to be flown up onto Craig yr Isfa to stricken climbers. He was able to assist with a successful rescue and the helicopter flew the casualties to Bangor's C&A Hospital,



Top: Ron James pictured during an early rescue © Ken Wilson; at the team's 50th Anniversary dinner. Above: With the RAF helicopter crew. Images supplied by OVMRO.

leaving Ron with a pile of kit, in his suit and tie in the remote and desolate Cwm Eigiau.

In 1969, he left Ogwen Cottage to become the principal lecturer of outdoor education at IM Marsh College for Physical Education in Liverpool, where he stayed until retiring in 1985. He retired to his much-loved North Wales where he continued to climb both here and in Europe. He joined the Ramblers Association, led walks and instructed in navigation. He enjoyed cycling with his wife, Ginny, and thoroughly enjoyed his golf, playing at the nearby Maesdu Golf Club, Llandudno.

During his lifetime, Ron wrote a number of guidebooks to climbs in North Wales and the Dolomites. His *Rock Climbing in Wales*, listing his best 200 routes, was first published in 1970 and became the dedicated climber's 'tick' book.

His contributions were duly recognised. He was awarded a Certificate for Distinguished Service to Mountain rescue in 1971. In the Queen's Birthday Honours list in 2009, for his services to British Mountaineering, he was awarded the Member of the British Empire medal. 🇬🇧

BILL DEAN
OVMRO



his retirement party in April 2022, he presented a whistle-stop 45-minute tour of his mountaineering and mountain rescue activities. If you ever see a video that starts with a cockerel crowing, it's probably one of his! Bill was a generous, quiet and unassuming man, with a dogged determination. He inspired so many people to take up climbing and mountaineering. In recent years, he suffered some major medical setbacks, but always defied the odds by escaping to the mountains as part of his recuperation. Sadly, earlier this year, his nine lives came to an end. 🇬🇧

A member of Ogwen Valley MRO, from 1966 to 2022, Bill passed away in January, aged 81. **Chris Lloyd** looks back on his life and long service to the team.

Bill was an only child, born on a farm near Mold, Flintshire. At Aberystwyth University, in 1963, he joined the Mountaineering Club and here he met Margaret, his wife-to-be (in 1971) and Dr Tony Jones (of OVMRO fame). His wanderlust took him on some amazing trips in his Land Rover, first to Timbuktu (never arrived), and to countries such as Ethiopia, Central Sahara, the Middle East and beyond. Apart from his mountaineering and Land Rover expeditions, he enjoyed skiing and stamp collecting. The mountaineering club frequently held meets in the Ogwen Valley. Tony Jones developed his interest in mountain rescue and soon the climbing club was contributing to rescues. Club members would make themselves available for call-outs at the end of their days of climbing. Bill began teaching biology at Ellesmere Port Boys Grammar School in 1970. Wednesday afternoons were for 'sports' and he'd take his boys rock climbing on the crags of Helsby and district. School camps were also in the mountains of England and Wales. So many of his pupils owe their mountaineering interests to Bill. One such pupil is Russ Hore, ex-OVMRO and creator of SARLOC. Bill's passion for philately enabled him to leave teaching. As a free agent once more he was able to travel more easily and ventured to Denali, Patagonia, the Eastern Himalayas and even receiving an invitation to the king of Bhutan's coronation. He continued his commitment to the Ogwen team, taking on the role of treasurer for many years. Whilst everyone sat at the committee table with laptops and tablets, Bill would have a Farmfoods carrier bag containing all the finances of the team! As treasurer, he also assisted with the formation of the 333 supporters group and the annual 'Oggi 8' mountain challenge. He also had an interest in cine and video photography. At

his retirement party in April 2022, he presented a whistle-stop 45-minute tour of his mountaineering and mountain rescue activities. If you ever see a video that starts with a cockerel crowing, it's probably one of his! Bill was a generous, quiet and unassuming man, with a dogged determination. He inspired so many people to take up climbing and mountaineering. In recent years, he suffered some major medical setbacks, but always defied the odds by escaping to the mountains as part of his recuperation. Sadly, earlier this year, his nine lives came to an end. 🇬🇧

Chris was very much a pillar of many aspects of the Upper Wharfedale society, in the church at St Michaels and All Angels, Linton-in-Craven, where his father was the rector, and at Wharfedale Rugby Club. His father was also the local scout leader, so Chris became involved with outdoor activities in Grassington at an early age, and joined UWFR, on 23 September 1953. The team then was very much run by its founder Len Huff. Len was also station master at Grassington station and thus had secured accommodation for the fledgling organisation in an old goods railway wagon. Meetings took place on Tuesday evenings and consisted of equipment organising and taking groups caving. Some of the group were also involved with helping find new passages in the Stump Cross Caverns area. In March 1955, the secretary resigned and Chris stepped into the role, continuing to hold a position on the committee from that point until his death. His first report was to state that in the previous year there had been 35 rescues involving seven humans and 35 animals!

In 1958, he helped set up the 'panel' meetings of similar emergency services in the area and on the resignation of the previous search leader, Chris was elected to this role. He also became involved in organising insurance cover for team members on call-outs through the Mountain Rescue Council. In 1960, he once again became secretary and assistant search leader. In the early 1960s, the team moved into the old Grassington signal box, removed 500m from its working location to a more accessible position near the road. Sadly, just after this, the Mossdale Caverns disaster happened, with the loss of six of the 'caving tigers' of their generation. A huge effort by UWFR, CRO and numerous other clubs and organisations was to no avail. Chris helped coordinate the surface team response, assisting Len Huff. Following on from this, as 'tighter' caves and pots were discovered in Wharfedale, he helped Len build up a 'tight hole' team of very slim sporting cavers with one underground practice in Langcliffe Pot (near Kettlewell!) lasting 24 hours.

In 1971, he was one of the first 'incident controllers' and also became chairman. The following year, British Rail sold off the old station land and UWFR lost their base. Chris was instrumental in negotiating the current site, adjacent to the Yorkshire Dales National Park offices in Grassington. Estimated to cost £10,000, the new building eventually cost £18,000, with Chris leading the search for funding. Thus, in 1978 as chairman, it was he who hosted the then Prince of Wales at the new base opening, still known as 'The Hut', his rugby-playing stature being noted by the Prince's security team as a great asset!

Chris was never a tiger caver nor climber. His skill was in ensuring the right kit was in the right place at the right time. The 'go-to-guy' with the contacts. Even when no longer controller he was well known for waking up local shopkeepers in the night to buy pies and chocolates for team members on a call-out. A former committee member noted that whilst Chris was chairman there were a number of very strong characters on the committee, yet he was able to keep the peace and keep the meetings flowing. After 31 years, he stepped down from the chair to steer the team to CIO status and became company secretary and assistant treasurer. He came up with the idea for an annual event which started off as 'The Frolics' at Burnsall with, amongst other things, a home-made ducking stool, a cracker-eating contest and a model cave to explore. This led on to the annual Broughton Hall Game Show which ran for almost 30 years, co-hosted by CRO, and bringing in much-needed revenue.

There were few days he didn't visit The Hut to pick up mail, bank donations, write thank you letters or certificates to donors, or visit local shops and hostels to empty donation boxes. He was never made a Life member as he was always an active member. He held the Queen's Gold and Diamond Jubilee medals and was very proud when the team received the Queen's 'Unsung Heroes' Jubilee Award in 2003. Never one to seek the limelight, he was always there supporting the team and will be greatly missed. With his activities on many rescue committees and panels over the years, with kindred organisations, he was well known throughout the UK, though sadly there are few of his generation still around. Finally, thanks to the many team members who provided the details of Chris's long back-story. 🇬🇧



CHRIS BAKER UPPER
WHARFEDALE FRA

Image: Chris pictured at the front during early stretcher carry training © Upper Wharfedale FRA.

Chris passed away in January, aged 90, after 56 years as an active member of the Upper Wharfedale team — still a very active assistant secretary. **John Helm** paid tribute to Chris and his 'very full life' on behalf of the team.

the final send away

MIKE MEREDITH CAVE RESCUE ORGANISATION



Left: Mike bivvying in Benarat Caverns, Mulu in 1984. Image courtesy of John Wooldridge.

Mike Meredith was an enthusiastic caver and a former CRO controller. He was found dead at his house in Kuching, Sarawak, on the morning of 11 January 2023, aged 79. **Ben Lyon** CRO President, writes about Mike's remarkable life.

Mike was born on 19 July 1943 in Hereford. At the age of 11 he obtained a scholarship to Monmouth School, and went on to Cambridge University, gaining a 2.2 in Natural Sciences in 1965. He then took a year out, first teaching English as a Foreign Language to immigrant children and then working on an assembly line at Cadbury's, followed by a year gaining his PGCE, starting work as chemistry master at Burnley Grammar School in 1967. Boys in the sixth form introduced him to caving — his initiation down Boggarts Roaring Hole — and he soon became a leading light in the Burnley Caving Club, with his Morris Minor Traveller loaded with cavers and equipment most weekends.

In 1970, disillusioned by Burnley Grammar School dropping the Nuffield approach to science teaching, he spent the summer 'temping' at Whernside Manor Scout Caving Activity Centre in Dentdale, before applying for the job of chief instructor. During his interview there was consternation: the Scout Association could not appoint someone who did not 'believe in God'! Fortunately the issue was fudged, and Mike duly appointed! He spent the next five years as my deputy. As well as doing pretty much every cave system in the Dales, most of them many times, Mike was a very active member of CRO. I remember in particular a time we were called over to the Lake District, where a youth had fallen down a particularly nasty open mine rift above Coniston. Mike was the volunteer lowered with a stretcher to the jammed boulders 70 feet down, and then hauled back to the surface with the casualty.

In 1973, we organised two caving expeditions to the Vercors and the Chartreuse in France, and en route called in on an old man, Fernand Petzl, making ascenders and descenders in his domestic garage. Mike returned on his motorbike and came back with panniers bulging with them. But by this time he was fed up with the lousy pay and, in 1974, quit his job and left for a life in France. Caving continued to be central to his life. He played a major part in the difficult rescue of the bodies of two French cavers from the Gouffre Berger in 1975. After learning French at Grenoble University in double quick time — Mike became a superb linguist — he started work with Petzl, still a small but rapidly expanding company now run by Fernand's sons, Paul and Pierre. He continued caving, doing much exploration with the Furets Jaune de Seyssins. Mike was at the forefront of developments in caving techniques and equipment, publishing his book 'Vertical Caving', with English, French, Spanish and German editions. In 1978 he moved to Austria, becoming Petzl's representative there, and caving with the Salzburg Caving Club, making some good discoveries, in trips of several days each, notably the connection between Gamsloecher and Kolowratshoehle, with a whole system of horizontal passages on the way.

My own connection with Mike continued. On annual trips to France, and later Austria, we were able to call on his local knowledge to make through trips of the Dent de Crolles system,

and many others. I was able to repay Mike by inviting him on to the 1980/81 Sarawak Expedition to the caves of Mulu. He made a breakthrough in Benarat Caverns which resulted in the opening up of a vast system, plus many more discoveries, well documented elsewhere.

Mike was President of the UIS Cave Rescue Commission from 1981-87. In the meantime, returning to Europe, Mike resumed work with Petzl in France, then in 1984 came out to Mulu again. While I floundered around like a red hot beetroot in the tropical heat, he took to it like a duck to water. At the end of the expedition he and I sat down with the head of national parks, Dr Paul Chai, and asked what the department wanted us to do next. Paul replied that they wanted one person to come for several years and help them develop tourist facilities in Mulu. Mike jumped at the chance! Funding was tricky as the Sarawak government had no money for it. But, back in France, the winter of 1985 was really cold, and impelled Mike to leave for Malaysia that March. The



next year was spent teaching English as a foreign language at Sekolah Menengah Sains in Raub, Pahang. Finally, in September 1985, his Mulu job gained the funds required and he set to work. In the next five years, among many other projects, he opened up Deer cave, Wind cave and Clearwater cave to visitors, and became the 'go to' person for any and every expedition planning to visit Sarawak. With Jerry Wooldridge providing the photos, they published Giant Caves of Borneo in 1990.

In 1990 he handed over the baton of Mulu project officer to another British caver, Dave Gill, and spent a year working on a commercial venture with Richard Hii. Tropical Adventure aimed to expand tourism in Mulu and, Mike being Mike, he backed this up by working on an MBA from Durham University. However, his real skills lay in conservation work and, from 1991 until his death he worked on a continuous succession of projects for various agencies, not only in Borneo but also in Laos, Madagascar and including a visit to North Korea to advise on the establishment of national parks. He was especially proud of his work in assisting aspiring conservationists to gain professional qualifications. At the end of his life he was working on statistical models of rare animal distributions, notably tigers.

A modest and unassuming man, he will be sadly missed by his many friends and family. ☹️

SEARCH DOG BUTE LAKE DISTRICT MOUNTAIN RESCUE SEARCH DOGS ASSOCIATION



© Christyne Judge.

Search Dog Bute passed away suddenly in January. Handler **Christyne Judge** remembers her companion.

At the grand age of thirteen, Search Dog Bute retired from working as a search dog in September last year, during a training weekend in Langdale, standing to one side to allow my other recently graded dog, Search Dog Lewis, to fill her large paws. Not prepared to grow old gracefully, she continued to help out and attend fundraising events for the team, and to play her part in demonstrating the work the search dogs do. Unfortunately, in January, Bute unexpectedly and very suddenly passed away — a huge shock as she had shown no sign of any illness.

Bute came to me at eight weeks old, from a farm in the Wasdale valley in 2009. In September that same year she passed her introductory test, which enabled her to start training. We passed our final assessment in January 2012, also on the Langdale training weekend course. She was a very gentle girl, who absolutely loved searching for people and articles. On approaching a casualty she'd gently bounce up and down whilst

barking and looking very pleased with herself. I feel incredibly lucky to have been a part of Bute's life for nearly fourteen years. We had a great life together, going through the training process, working together, camping, biking, kayaking and wild swimming. She also loved to sit on my paddleboard on sunny days on the lake. We were lucky to share lots of adventures together over many, but not enough, years.

Bute lived an active life right to the very end and that is why it came as such a shock. Myself, Bute and Lewis went for a lovely low-level walk the day before she passed away. She'd not been poorly in any way and showed absolutely nothing that would give me cause for concern. As always, she went with me to feed the chickens and sort them for bed. I can count on one hand how many times Bute didn't attend to the chickens with me in the six years I've had them — in fact, I think she thought they were actually her pets! I'm so very proud of her as a pet, a search dog and a great companion, a little dog that made me a better person and taught Lewis the ropes. Rest easy Bute, now with your big brother, retired Search Dog Skye. ☹️

PETZL REVAMP FALCON HARNESS RANGE

Petzl have revamped the entire range of FALCON harnesses. Designed for rescuers, the new harnesses are lightweight and comfortable while offering increased mobility for rapid movement during operations. Having the choice between several different models allows you to choose the best fit for different environments that may be encountered in the field: FALCON for suspended rescue, FALCON ASCENT for efficiency when ascending a rope, and FALCON MOUNTAIN for rescue operations using climbing techniques. The new CHEST'AIR chest harness utilises the same 3D foam padding design and is compatible with the FALCON and FALCON MOUNTAIN.

Comfortable, lightweight design

The semi-rigid and slim waist belt and leg loops with 3D foam padding provide the range of FALCON harnesses with an optimal comfort-to-weight ratio to limit bulk.

Compact side attachment points

The textile side attachment points on harnesses in the FALCON range are designed for occasional use and limit bulk and weight.

Easy to adjust

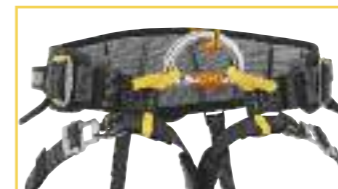
FALCON harnesses feature DOUBLEBACK or DOUBLEBACK PLUS self-locking buckles on the waist belt and FAST LT buckles on the leg loops of FALCON and FALCON ASCENT, making them quick and easy to put on and adjust.

Equipment loops and slots

The range of Falcon harnesses features equipment loops on the sides and at the rear of the waist belt. Each harness also has slots designed for the CARITool tool holder and the TOOLBAG tool pouch.



Above: CO38DA FALCON.
Below: Far left/left: CO38DA FALCON; Centre: CO38EA FALCON ASCENT; Right: CO98AA00 CHEST'AIR.



TO FIND OUT MORE GO TO [PETZL.COM](https://www.petzl.com)



LEDLENSER

P18R SIGNATURE PREMIUM SEARCHLIGHT WITH ICONIC X-LENS TECHNOLOGY

P18R Signature

- X-Lens Technology – merges multiple lenses and synchronises their individual light beams into a single perfect beam
- Advanced Focus System focus the beam as a spot or flood, without losing light quality
- Battery status and charge indicator plus a low battery warning so you always know where you stand on power
- Optional backup mode to conserve your light once you hit less than 25% battery
- Transport Lock to prevent accidental battery drain

4500lm max
220m max
70hrs max

Contents

- P18R SIGNATURE Torch
- Rechargeable Battery Pack
- Magnetic Charging Cable
- USB Mains Plug

www.ledlenser.co.uk
45% Discount Code: BrightBeam45

LEDLENSER ARE A PROUD SUPPORTER TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS ACROSS THE UK AND INTERNATIONALLY

RAF Mountain Rescue Service 80 years

1943-2023
ROYAL AIR FORCE MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE

The Royal Air Force Mountain Rescue Service (RAF MRS) is a blue-light emergency service for the provision of medical aid in the mountains, whether rescuing downed aircrew, missing military personnel or civilians. Since humble beginnings in 1943 at RAF Llandwrog, Gwynedd, the MRS has rescued and saved many lives at Aircraft Post Crash and Incident Management (APCIM) call-outs, and by assisting civilian MRT counterparts.

corpuls¹

UP TO 8 HOURS MONITORING | OR 200 SHOCKS AT MAXIMUM ENERGY LEVEL

All-weather dependability, -20°C - +55°C

LEASING OPTIONS AVAILABLE

An extremely compact but fully fledged defibrillator/patient monitor. Emergency Backpack available. **2.2kg** Basic equipment incl. battery

corpuls aed

Five year battery life and automatic self-testing guarantees reliability. **1.9kg**

ORTUS MEDICAL

www.theortusgroup.com
E: hello@ortus.co.uk
T: +44 (0)845 4594705

Time and equipment may have changed significantly throughout the last 80 years, but the people and mindsets haven't. In early 1942 an RAF Station search party, whom at the time made their own ad hoc arrangements to locate and provide medical treatment for downed aircrew, found direction under Flight Lieutenant George Graham, Station Medical Officer at RAF Llandwrog.

A year later, after Flight Lieutenant Graham realised the equipment and expertise were inadequate to counter the number of aircraft crashes in Eryri (Snowdonia), the RAF saw the inauguration of three station MRTs for the coordination of aircrew rescues. Despite the loss of 571 lives in 220 aircraft crashes in 1943, the foundations of the MRS had been laid. The experience, hard work and enthusiasm of the early pioneers has remained pertinent over time that has seen RAF MRTs based in Cyprus, Hong Kong and the Middle East, and being deployed on overseas call-outs including Borneo, Albania and Alaska.

In the early years, many of the teams were not trained for technical rescues on crags. The nucleus of the teams consisted of fell and hill walkers rather than climbers and mountaineers. Experience showed that a practical knowledge of mountaineering was essential to the success of rescues. Thus, the development of individual rock and winter climbing skills has been actively included within the MRS's training syllabus, having a substantial impact on the climbing abilities of MRS troops. This was demonstrated in 2001, when Flight Sergeant

Dan Carroll and Corporal 'Rusty' Bale reached the summit of Everest by its North Ridge during the RAF MRS millennium expedition.

Although the MRS's primary defence roles are APCIM and searching for missing military personnel, an integral part of our operational capability lies in our interoperability with civilian MRTs throughout the UK. Working alongside other MRTs helps build our troop skills and organisational relationships, as one day we may find ourselves on a multi-agency effort for an aircraft crash and rely on one another's expertise.

In 2021, RAF Leeming MRT introduced the MRS's Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS, aka 'drone') capability. RPASs have increasingly become an essential part of mountain rescue call-outs for their usability in arduous terrain when searching for missing people. For the RAF MRS, it has redefined what is possible during our primary roles of APCIM and search for

missing military personnel, by providing thermal imaging capabilities, 3D-mapping of aircraft crash sites and, furthermore, lock and tracking of people and vehicles.

Officer Commanding MRS comments, 'It is a privilege to command the RAF MRS in the year of its 80th anniversary, a role which would be impossible without the deep skill set and dedication of all MRS troops. It is not lost on me that our current and future operational capability, and safe practices, are the result of eight decades of innovation from all our predecessors, and for this we should be extremely thankful. The interoperability I see on call-outs, alongside civilian MRTs, is outstanding — for our mutual benefit — and I encourage all MRTs to consider reaching out to the RAF MRS when our presence can help to reduce risk to life.'

POINT OF CONTACT:
RAF MRS MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS
EMAIL: 85WG-MRS-MEDIA@MOD.GOV.UK



Top: RAF MRS troops, February 2022. Inset: June 2021. Above: Left to right: RAF MRS Leuchars 1950; RAF MRS on Mount Cook on Exped to New Zealand, also with RAFMA (Mountaineering Association) 1972; RAF MRS SAR Exercise Iran 1966 courtesy of NEJAT 2. All images supplied.



February: Coniston celebrates 75 years as the first civilian mountain rescue team

Over the years, mountain rescue has seen many changes in both the equipment and methods used during rescues. From the early bamboo-framed Neil Robertson stretcher, to the iconic Bell and the more recent, lighter-weight titanium Titan, equipment gets lighter and more efficient. And with each development, teams have to make a decision: retire the old kit to a darkened, cobweb-filled corner of the base; destroy and then skip the obsolete equipment or donate these items to another team. **Liz Ribchester** looks at Coniston's history and how the team has dealt with this particular dilemma.

Since our inception in January 1947, Coniston team has collected a small museum's worth of artefacts that, until recently, could be found scattered around the corners of base: a pair of hobnailed boots buried under spare kit in one loft, a pile of old photographs and newspaper articles in a box in the training room, a Mk1 Bell stretcher gathering dust above a garage. We genuinely had no idea what treasures lay abandoned in the shadows of our lofts. That is, until we were approached by a local museum.

To mark the end of our 75th anniversary year, The Ruskin Museum in Coniston wanted to put on an exhibition telling the story of the team — cue many hours getting dusty as we searched high and low for as many interesting objects and associated stories as we could. By the time we'd finished our search, the exhibition was well stocked with memorabilia and we were able to tell our story.

For many years, the good people of Coniston and the surrounding area have rallied to the rescue of those in need. Whether this was crashed aircraft during the war, or mine workers avalanched in the winter, every effort was made to aid those in peril. Yet this was always informally done,

groups gathered by word of mouth or a knock on the door, maybe even a shout into a local bar room. Stretchers were, quite literally at times, no more than a five-bar gate, casualties transported by whatever means were available. This all changed in the winter of 1946.

On 20 December that year, 41-year-old Ernest George Harris Sivyler, from Middlesex, arrived with his wife at the Holiday Fellowship Association hostel at Monk Coniston, where he had recently accepted a post as resident walking guide for the following season. In preparation for assuming this role, Mr Sivyler planned to spend some time exploring his new home. The conditions were cold and icy, but Mr Sivyler was experienced. Unfortunately, by nightfall, he'd failed to return. His wife contacted the police.

Despite having established that Mr Sivyler had headed into the Yewdale fells, it still took three days of searching, in atrocious conditions, to find his body. He was discovered on 24 December, close to the waterfall known locally as the White Lady. His camera was open and hanging by its strap round his neck, prompting the authorities to speculate that he had been trying to take a photograph and had slipped on frozen ground.

Over 50 policemen from across Lancashire had been joined in the endeavour by bloodhounds and local farmers and climbers (including Jim Cameron and Tommy Usher). They had struggled on through the increasingly appalling conditions, wearing clothing that, even at the time, was described as being inadequate.

Following the tragic conclusion of this search, at a meeting of the Coniston Parish Council on 24 January 1947, it was agreed that a more formalised rescue group was needed. The aim would be to provide what many police officers from across Lancashire could not: a swifter response to incidents by rescuers providing on-the-spot experience of the area, thus enabling a greater chance of a positive outcome for those in difficulties in the fells.

Despite the Parish Council being unable to fund such an enterprise, twenty local volunteers, led by Jim Cameron (and including many others who had been involved in the search for Sivyler) gathered in the bar of The Sun on the evening of 31 January 1947. Together they formed the first civilian mountain rescue team in the country: the Coniston Fells Rescue Party.

As many people associated with the team will know, our first official rescue was

certainly one for the history books! On 13 April 1947, word reached the village that a climber had fallen some 90 feet from Dow Crag. Considering this was more than a decade before the creation of the first proper climbing harnesses, and at a time where many climbers were still using hobnailed boots, the outlook for the casualty wasn't good.

To make matters worse, it transpired that the casualty was their team leader, Jim Cameron. Going to the rescue of one of your own is always going to be challenging, but knowing the extent of the fall he'd taken must have made the rescue unimaginably hard for the team. Luckily for Jim, although rendered temporarily unconscious by the fall, he'd sustained nothing more serious than a broken ankle. Once recovered, he went on to lead the team until 1975.

In the years following these inaugural events, the team has developed a reputation for professionalism and efficiency, helped in no small part through the use of equipment that was at the cutting edge of its time, many examples of which were displayed in the recent museum exhibition.

Amongst these pieces of equipment was an early Thomas splint. This original type of traction splint, invented in 1875, comprises a padded ring fitted up against the groin, which allows you to apply pressure to reduce the fracture by putting a bandage around the ankle and foot and tightening against the bottom of the metal frame. Highly effective in its day for reducing the mortality rate from long bone fractures, but definitely not as compact as the current Kendrick Splint now carried by the team!

Another piece of equipment that has seen some dramatic changes over the years is one used for assisting a casualty who is unable to breathe unaided. Unlike the changes in traction splinting, where it could be argued that the technology has become more complex in its construction, the administration of oxygen to a non-breathing casualty has actually simplified. While today we use a simple bag valve mask attached to an oxygen bottle, the earliest modern resuscitation ventilator (the PneuPac ventilator/resuscitator) was contained within a cumbersome box that could not have been easy to haul uphill.

The team is also in possession of a

veritable timeline of stretchers. Starting with the very earliest Neil Robertson Stretcher (originally developed in the early 1900s and made of bamboo and canvas), we then have a particularly rare Split Thomas Stretcher — potentially one of only twenty original design Thomas stretchers that were converted by Peter Bell around 1968.

After the Thomas came the now iconic Bell, a design still in use by many teams. In addition to the modern Bell stretchers the team currently carry, we have an original Mk1, along with an early casualty bag. Finally, more recently, the team has started using the dramatically more lightweight Titan. No longer do we need two team members to carry a stretcher split between them, one person can carry the entire thing!

And so, as we come to the end of our 75th anniversary year, we find ourselves looking forward as much as looking back. In recent years we've come to realise that our current base no longer fits the purpose for which it was originally designed.

Built in 1982, then extended in 1988, 1998 and 2004, our headquarters is somewhat disjointed in its layout. To get from one garage to another, we have to walk through the training/meeting/family room — a potentially disruptive action when there are either casualties or their families waiting in there. Nor do we have a specific briefing room, individual team kit room or single storage space in which to efficiently organise the increasing range of more technical equipment needed by a mountain rescue team.

With the increasing development and deployment of the resilience group within Coniston, it has also become essential that we are able to provide a hub out of which external agencies can work in times of local emergencies, such as Storm Arwen. We would also like the local community to have access to a room within our base, available for use by local clubs and other organisations, as well as providing welfare facilities for Cumbria Police when operating in the area.

As such, we are developing plans to completely rebuild our base. They are ambitious plans, but ones that should ensure the preservation of our heritage and allow us to maintain our reputation for professionalism and efficiency for the next 75 years. 🍷

JANUARY: WASDALE COUPLE NOTCH UP OVER A CENTURY



Congratulations to Wasdale team members John and Susan Noake who, by the end of 2022, had notched up an amazing 101 years of mountain rescue service between them.

John is still fell-going, and has given 51 years, and Susan 50 years of continuous and committed service to the team. John has been team treasurer for many years. Susan now looks after cash donations, organises winter training in Scotland and helps train the probationers.

'The couple held a family celebration last summer and graciously invited the team to join them all,' says John Bamforth. 'We had a wonderful afternoon and evening on the shores of Wastwater in glorious sunshine and presented them with a photo montage with some historic photographs of their time in the team. We look forward to their continued membership for a good few years yet. Thank you both!'



Top: Coniston MRT pictured 2021; Early team members outside The Sun in Coniston, 1952. Above: Clockwise from top left: The Coniston exhibition at the Ruskin Museum; Neil Robertson stretcher; Kendrick Splint; Mark 1 Bell stretcher; Split Thomas with casbag; Bag Valve Mask (BVM) and various bits of 'breathing' kit. Images © Coniston MRT. Opposite: Coniston MRT 1986.

FEBRUARY: JUNGLE RUN (SAVING LIVES WITH WILD AND REMOTE ANIMALS)

Always on the look out for imaginative ways to raise funds, Scarborough & Ryedale team recently partnered with Flamingo Land Zoo to hold a 'Jungle Run' within the boundary of the zoo. **Ian Hugill** reports.

Profits were shared equally between team operational running costs and Rainforest Africa. Our usual challenge events, Ravenscar Coastal 1/2 marathon/10km and Dalby's Inferno, are firmly aimed at established adult runners. Jungle Run was more for those new to running and for children, with 5km and 3km events. Prizes were given for first male and female in each class along with prizes for the best fancy dress. Finishers received a medal and all competitors had free entry to the zoo for the day. It's not every day you can win a guided tour of a White Rhino enclosure with the head keeper (and team member) Sam. Very much a test event this year, still with in excess of 70 entries, we think this will grow into a popular annual event!



Raising funds for rescue



Photos © OVMRO.

FEBRUARY: A BUSY START TO THE YEAR AND TRAGEDY IN THE OGWEN VALLEY

It was a busy start to the new year for Ogwen Valley team members, as **Chris Lloyd** writes. And, sadly, call-out number eight ended in tragedy after one casualty took a long tumbling fall from Y Gribin.

The year had begun with a search of the lower Mawddach river from Dolgellau, for a young man who'd entered the water upstream, just before Christmas. The regional response to that call involved using a couple of inflatable rafts to search the banks and islands of this swollen river, with nothing found. The next call was to reported shouts for 'Help!', the first of the numerous calls for and by goats. Next, a couple became cragfast on the notorious Bristly Ridge in winter conditions. They were lowered to safety.

The first call to Tryfan was for a couple trying to descend via the East Face. Whilst all paths on Tryfan lead to the top, not all paths lead to the bottom and this one didn't. A couple and dog descending the north east ridge of Y Garn were concerned about the winter conditions beneath their feet, so telephoned for advice. They were directed to descend to Nant Peris and then take a taxi back to Ogwen. The second for Tryfan was an experienced hill walker who slipped just before the north summit and fell a short distance incurring a head injury. The Coastguard deployed and, while casualty care was being carried out, lifted a small party from base to assist with lowering the casualty to an area from which she could be winched.

Call-out number seven saw team members heading to a remote farmhouse on Anglesey to carry an elderly lady from the first floor and deliver her to hospital in Bangor as no ambulances were available. Call-out number eight came on Saturday 4 February.

Three young men, regular and experienced hill walkers, had driven from Yorkshire to wild camp on the Glyderau

mountains. They set off from Ogwen early in the afternoon, in good weather, to walk up Y Gribin, the ridge/arête which separates Cwm Idwal from Cwm Bochlwyd. Towards the end, the ridge steepens to a scramble. By this stage, the forecasted weather front had arrived. Cloud level dropped almost down to the valley. The rain and the wind came. One of the three pulled up on a rock that thousands have pulled up on over the years. This time it pulled away and he followed the rock down the steep, loose and craggy back wall of Cwm Cnefion. Alone on the mountain, in dense cloud, the other two scrambled down this awful terrain, calling for their friend.

Now cragfast and without a response, they called for mountain rescue around 5.00 pm. The team was mobilised and helicopter assistance requested. The crew flew beneath the cloud to creep into Oggi base, but the prospect of searching the mountains, or even ferrying team members up, was not an option. Three rescue parties were deployed: one to search for and rescue the cragfast two; the second to walk up into Cwm Cnefion and search the back wall for the missing man. The third party carried the stretcher, casbag, vacmat, 100-metre ropes and technical rescue kit.

The two were located and brought back up onto the ridge, and on to base. Amazingly, through the cloud and drizzle, a

team member caught a glance of something blue amongst the rocks, high up on the back wall. He climbed up to find the casualty. Sadly, he had not survived his long and tumbling fall. It was decided that to reduce the risks of a recovery from this location, it would be carried out the following morning, in daylight and after the weather front had passed. His friends returned to the sanctuary of their homes in the early hours of Sunday. No one could imagine just how long that journey would have felt.

Early next day, Rescue 936 ferried three parties up to the Cwm, including a team member who manages North Wales

Police drones unit. While some team members 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 located the missing rucksack. Rope systems brought the casualty down on a diagonal line to the foot of the crag, with other belay stations at 80-metre intervals down the loose scree, boulders and crags for the 300 metres or so to the back of Cwm Cnefion. Then it was a short stretcher carry over soft ground to meet Rescue 936. Once the casualty was handed to the police and kit hung up to dry, team members were able to enjoy a very late breakfast of pizzas and tea, prepared by the equipment manager. ☺



Above: Cockermouth team members past and present gathered at base; team patron Eric Robson unveils the new slate sign © Cockermouth MRT.

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH

FEBRUARY: COCKERMOUTH TEAM CELEBRATES 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Team members past and present gathered as Eric Robson unveiled a new sign, carved from Honister slate, to commemorate the anniversary.

The team came in to being at the Central Café on Cockermouth's Main Street, after Rusty Westmorland, George Fisher and Mike Nixon, members of the existing Keswick MRT, came to speak to interested mountaineers about the requirement for a new team to operate in the western valleys of the Lake District. The third team to be formed in the Lakes, the intention was for Cockermouth to 'look after' the Lorton, Buttermere, Ennerdale, Wasdale and Eskdale valleys. Since then, the team has seen some 250 members, with levels of service of up to 63 years. Over the years, team members have attended some 2,900 rescues, the majority to individuals who have sustained injuries or become lost on the fells. But there has also been the extreme flooding in 2009 and 2015, severe snowfall events, downed aircraft, a plethora of cragfast sheep, a raven and on one occasion a horse stuck in a bog!

The team's base was completed in 2003, and opened by patrons Eric Robson and Joss Naylor — and long overdue a sign. '70 years is a lifetime,' said team leader, Andrew McNeil, 'and that's exactly what you get from this team: a lifetime of call-outs, experiences, friendships, laughs and a feeling of being part of something you just don't want to leave.'

Team member **Bob Liddell** recalls one particular tragedy in a high place

Call-outs and rescues come in many guises. There's the common ones that may involve pain or discomfort but have a good outcome, there's the ones needed. And then there are tragedies. In the almost 50 years of attending call-outs, I have witnessed all of these many times but one incident was, to me, the very definition of tragedy. It was on a late-November evening that we were asked to assist in the search for two missing persons in the Helvellyn area. Apparently two families had ascended the mountain arriving on the summit plateau in thick mist with snow and ice underfoot. The report was that one man and his six-year-old daughter were walking hand in hand one minute and nowhere to be seen the next! Teams were deployed to search the whole area and its approaches, but in poor visibility and darkness the search was both difficult and inconclusive. After some hours the search was halted to enable a fresh start at first light. Teams retreated back to the valleys but, Cockermouth team being near the summit at the time, we decided to stay put and get into bivouac sacs to be ready to resume searching the moment it became light. Not the most comfortable side of the mountain. It was on the steep slopes of Brown Cove that we spotted two motionless figures and our hearts dropped. The pilot hovered as close to the slope as he dared and we jumped out, thankful to have ice axes in our hands and crampons on our feet. Father and daughter had fallen a considerable distance having apparently walked over the snowy cliff edge in the mist. We lifted the bodies into the helicopter, the little girl feeling so small and light, and off it went. Our job was done but the tragedy is as vivid to me now as it was then.



THE LOWA PROFESSIONAL LINE: QUALITY AND SAFETY

Since 1923, shoemakers LOWA have manufactured excellent products and strived for perfect fit, quality, function and innovation, the cornerstones of our company philosophy and the foundation of our success. You can place your trust in these values. We are 100% 'made in Europe'. We know the value in good craftsmanship, comprehensive know-how and commitment to quality as well as in highly flexible production processes. As an outdoor brand, at home in the mountains, we know that safety and reliability are precious in the mountains. Which is why we have equipped top athletes for their expeditions for a very long time. These decades of experience have been built directly into the LOWA professional line. Our 'Task Force' collection is now the 'Professional' collection, perfectly suitable to different surfaces, climates and terrains. For real work situations, comfort and fit are deciding factors — and quality is of vital importance. Several of our products have become real classics, such as our ZEPHYR model, which enjoys an outstanding reputation beyond military circles. We are offering **15% discount for Mountain Rescue team members.**

E: SALES@TASKFORCEDISTRIBUTION.CO.UK
T: +44 (0)1752 344355 W: LOWAMILITARYBOOTS.COM

LOWA
simply more...

A YEAR OF BUSKING FOR LAKE DISTRICT SEARCH AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS



Raising funds for rescue

Samba reggae carnival drumming band Batala Lancaster set about raising funds for the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA) 'because their volunteers are there to help in all weathers'.

In March, the band put on their penultimate show in Bowness, home territory for the Langdale Ambleside team. On behalf of all their colleagues within LDSAMRA, the team later posted a thank you on their Facebook page. The band's final fundraiser was set to take place on 16 April and billed as 'a mountain adventure drum' which would see them climbing up from Kirkstone Pass to Caudale Head on the west side of Stoney Cove Pike with their drums, to play at the top. You can still support their drumming efforts, and the Lakes teams, at [justgiving.com/fundraising/batala-lancaster-2022](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/batala-lancaster-2022).

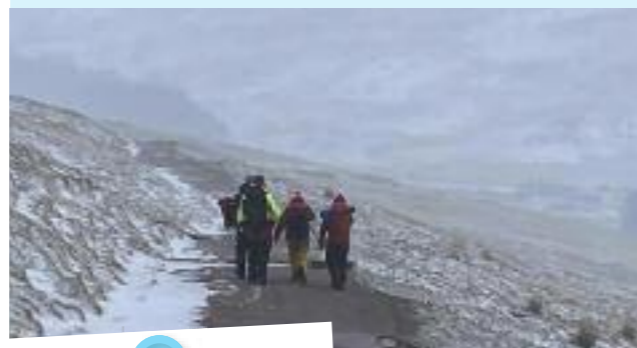
MARCH: WILD CAMPER RESCUED IN EXTREME WEATHER

Central Beacons team members had an early wake up call with a 4.10 am call from Heddlu Dyfed-Powys Police about a 20-year-old man needing help on the summit of Pen y Fan.

The young man had gone up the day before, intending to wild camp overnight but experienced difficulties with the weather in the early hours, and called 999 for mountain rescue help. Given the location and time of day, the team called in the support of neighbouring Brecon and both teams responded. He was assessed by an MR paramedic and treated for hypothermia before being helped off the hill and on to join his family members. A small party of team members went on to recover his equipment from the summit.

En route home, a group of team members came across a two-vehicle RTC involving injured passengers, so available resources were directed to provide medical assistance and scene management whilst the statutory services were alerted and able to respond.

Below: Photos © Central Beacons MRT.



Photos © Edale MRT.



MARCH: EDALE TEAM CALLED TO INJURED BOULDERER IN WORSENING SNOW CONDITIONS

The team, East Midlands Ambulance Service and the Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance, were called to assist the fallen boulderer near Stange plantation. He had sustained an open lower leg fracture after falling from a tricky move.

The air ambulance team were first on scene and treated the very nasty injury, managing to get it into a splint and reduced. Unfortunately, due to the weather conditions the land ambulance was unable to get near to Stange edge. The weather deteriorated significantly with poor visibility and snow, so the helicopter had to depart and head back to its base. The team sledged the patient down from the edge to the road at the plantation car park, where they were transferred to a 4x4 vehicle for transport down to the waiting ambulance in Hathersage.



MARCH: TEAMS GO TO THE AID OF STRANDED MOTORISTS DURING HEAVY SNOW

Team members across the north of England were called to help transport motorists to safety during the heavy snow. These included Duddon & Furness, who assisted in the transfer of patients aboard an NWS NHS Trust ambulance that had become trapped in a snow drift, to another waiting ambulance. A local farmer had helped free the stranded vehicle.

The team was also asked to check the Birker and Corney Fell roads for stranded motorists. They called Wasdale team members in to assist in evacuating several motorists, passengers and a dog from their vehicles, and transport them to somewhere warm for the night. Weather and road conditions were very localised, constantly changing and very challenging.

Across in West Yorkshire, Holme Valley and Calder Valley teams assisted West Yorkshire Police Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust with multiple call-outs as roads became impassable, despite drivers' best attempts.

Right, top: One of many stranded vehicles, the morning after the night before © Holme Valley MRT.

Right: The stranded NWS NHS Trust ambulance © Duddon & Furness MRT.



MARCH: PEAK DISTRICT TEAM MEMBERS KEPT BUSY IN THE SPRING SNOW

Team members from Derby and Buxton assisted Derbyshire Police with stranded motorists in the snow, their initial job to locate a stranded motorist and her three children.

On the way they came across various stranded motorists requiring assistance, some who required some transport, one had been in an RTC and required assistance from the police. The final part of the journey to reach the motorist and her children was undertaken on foot as the roads were impassable, the family were found and walked out to the team vehicles. A big thank you to the local farmer who helped get their vehicle off the main road. Team members returned home in the afternoon after a very long, cold, blustery night serving their communities. Meanwhile, Glossop team members were kept busy assisting the NHS Community Nursing Team, transporting staff to patients in difficult weather conditions, helping get vital medication to those who needed it.



Opposite: Team members help stranded motorists in the snow © Derby MRT. Above: Glossop assist the NHS Community Nursing Team © Glossop.



JANUARY: WHAT BETTER WAY TO BLOW AWAY THE COBWEBS?

Images from a 'fantastic morning' for Aberglaslyn team members who attended winch training and aircraft familiarisation with HM Coastguard Search and Rescue 936 at Llanberis LZ. Cobwebs gone!

FEBRUARY: RESCUERS FIND BODY OF MISSING GLENCOE WALKER

Glencoe team members were joined by colleagues from Lochaber, Oban, Arran and Tweed Valley teams, alongside SARDA Scotland, RAF Leeming MRT and Police Scotland MRT, in the six-day search for missing walker Kyle Sambrook and his dog.

It appeared that the 33-year-old had tragically fallen nearly 100 feet as he tried to carry his pet dog in 'appalling' weather. Mr Sambrook and his beagle Bane went missing on Sunday, February 19 in Lost Valley. Their bodies were found the following Saturday in Glencoe in a deep gorge that runs below the peaks Bidean nam Bean and Stob Coire nam Beith. Due to the terrain, they were lowered and carried off the hill by hand. Police Scotland said the family wish to thank all involved in the search and added there do not appear to be any suspicious circumstances.

Below: Glencoe team members pictured during the search in February © Glencoe MRT.



Raising funds for rescue



FEBRUARY: LOCAL FELL CHAMPION RAISES £1,200 FOR UWFRA

Upper Wharfedale team is once again indebted to their local fell rescue champion, Ted Mason. Ted is a staunch supporter of the team and, through events he's organised this year, he has raised just over £1,200.

His first event, Runners vs Riders, staged in January, which sees runners and cyclists race head to head on a course over the farmers land — a cleverly-devised terrain handicap — is always an exciting spectacle. His latest event, in true Yorkshire style, was the annual ferret racing contest held at The Craven Arms. Hundreds flocked to see the heats, followed by a grand final in the cruck barn.

Top: Ferret racing © Ben Mounsey; Ted Mason (left) with Ken Robinson (UWFRA team member) © UWFRA. **Above:** Cyclists © Brian Stallwood.

JANUARY: STRANDED SPANIEL RESCUED AFTER LONG FALL DOWN STEEP CRAG

North Yorkshire Police had been contacted by a walker whose dog had fallen over Whitestone Cliff from the Cleveland Way national trail, near to Sutton Bank on the North York Moors. The location was within a few metres of a previous call-out for the Cleveland team so, anticipating the need for a technical rope rescue, a couple of Land Rovers set off from base, whilst other team members began making their own way to the crag.

Team member Ian Ashby happened to be working nearby, so he met up with the dog's owner, Rowena Adamson, at the national park visitor centre. They made their way back to the point from where the dog had disappeared. The owner's friend had stayed there with one of the North York Moors National Park wardens, Paul Christie, who by that time had managed to get down to the bottom of the crag and located Eddie, a Cocker Spaniel. Ian made his way down to meet up with Paul and together they carried Eddie back to the top and on to the visitor centre, taking turns to carry him. Once at the visitor centre, Eddie was able to stand unaided and, once the team had reunited Rowena and her friend with their cars, Rowena was able to travel home to have Eddie checked over by a vet. Thankfully his injuries proved to be relatively minor.

Right: Cocker Spaniel Eddie reunited with his owner Rowena; the steep drop over which Eddie fell, Paul Christie just visible at the base. Images © Cleveland MRT.



JANUARY: MRT CHALLENGER RACERS RAISE THOUSANDS FOR TEAM FUNDS

Congratulations to Clare, Abby and Ruth, three members of the Upper Wharfedale team who took on the gruelling Spine MRT Winter Challenge, a non-stop 108-mile race between Edale and Hawes with a time limit of 60 hours, raising an impressive £6,906.69. The money was split, with £4,058 going to the team and the remainder going to mental health charity Mind.



MARCH: CLIMBER CRAGFAST ON TRYFAN IN WINTER CONDITIONS



Ogwen Valley team members were called out in the early afternoon, to a young man cragfast above Y Gully. After summiting, he realised he wasn't equipped for the winter conditions so tried to take the easiest route back to the car park.

This led him down the west face until he was stuck on a small ledge. Unsure what to do, he phoned a family member who called West Midlands Police. They called North

Wales Police, who called the team out. The casualty was now really cold so the Coastguard helicopter was requested but they were unable to winch him due to the risk of blowing him off the crag. Six team members were winched onto the hill and set up a handline to the casualty. He was lowered three metres before being walked back to safe ground and then back to the car park.

Photos © Tim Harrop, Charlie Allen Beale, Chris Thomas/OVMRO.

John and Jordan
MOUNTAIN LEADERS

Proud to support



TOGETHER WE CLIMB

SNOW + ROCK

20% discount in-store and online for Mountain Rescue volunteers.
Code: AF-MINRESCUE-V2
Expires 31.12.2023. T&Cs online

We're passionate about helping fellow explorers enjoy the outdoors responsibly, with the right gear and experts by their side.

That includes Mountain Rescue who play a vital role in our safety. Which is why we're offering a 20% discount to all Mountain Rescue volunteers in-store.

Thank you for helping us adventure safely.

Make the right choice with our in-store experts.



Raising funds for rescue

MARCH: MASONS HELP SUPPORT NEW KIT FOR CLEVELAND TEAM

When Pat Palmer took over the leadership of his masonic lodge in Saltburn last year, he wanted to find a local charity or organisation that could benefit from his fundraising efforts during his year of office. Pat was aware that Cleveland MRT was asking for donations towards new waterproof clothing, so he contacted the team to ask if he could help.

Although the team had recently equipped their members with a range of Helly Hansen, they told Pat that when last year's probationers became full team members in January, they too would need kit. Handyside Lodge set themselves a target of £1,350 to provide three sets of clothing, which they soon achieved. That was later topped up by two additional grants, one from the Yorkshire North and East Ridings Freemasons (£450) and another from the Masonic Charitable Foundation (£900). In February, a cheque for £2,700 was presented to the team, enabling them to place an order for up to six new sets of clothing. 'Our new Helly Hansen clothing has proved to be a tremendous benefit to our members and now our latest intake can also benefit in the same way,' says Gary Clarke, on behalf of the team. 'We'd like to say a special thank you to Pat for considering us as his nominated charity and for inspiring all of these fundraising efforts through his local lodge, plus the regional and national masonic organisations.'

Top: Left-right: Dan Scouler, John Mortimer (Handyside Lodge, Worshipful Master for 2023), Kev Wheatley, Denis Stubley (Assistant Provincial Grand Master), Jordan MacSween and Pat Palmer (Handyside Lodge, Worshipful Master 2022 to Feb 2023). Photo © Handyside Lodge.



JANUARY: NEW YEAR HONOURS FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUERS

Three mountain rescuers were awarded MBEs in New Year Honours. In England and Wales, it was Nick Owen, team leader of Langdale Ambleside MRT, and Tony Hood of Edale MRT who received the honour and, in Scottish Mountain Rescue, Alistair Hume of Arran MRT (see page 33). Congratulations to all three!

Top left: Nick Owen © Langdale Ambleside MRT.
Left: Tony Hood © Edale MRT.

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH

FEBRUARY: MULTIAGENCY SEARCH FOR INJURED WALKER MISSING FOR TWO NIGHTS ON SKYE HILLSIDE

Skye MRT, with over fifty search and rescue colleagues including Kintail MRT, SARDA Southern Scotland and Police Scotland search dogs, North Police MRT, RAF Lossiemouth MRS, the Mallaig Lifeboat, and the Stornoway Coastguard helicopter, took part in the search for Dr John Pike. The previous night, wind speeds of 95mph had been recorded.

Dr Pike had been reported missing on the Friday, when he failed to check out of his accommodation, having last been seen in Portree about 8.30 am on the Thursday. Extensive initial searches were suspended overnight, with clues recovered suggesting he had made his way into the Cuillin. Temperatures plummeted on the Friday night, with fresh snow falling on the hills so it was with huge relief that team members found him cold but alert, around 10.30 am on the Saturday morning. Skye MRT said Dr Pike had suffered a lower leg injury on the Thursday, leaving him unable to continue. He was said to have 'prepared somewhat for walking in the conditions and was carrying some supplies' and the team took the opportunity to recommend that anyone walking in remote or coastal locations carries a means for calling for help such as a personal locator beacon.



Missing hillwalker Dr John Pike © Police Scotland.



FEBRUARY: NEWSAR MEMBERS COMMENDED FOR SEARCH WORK

The commendation was in recognition of their assistance during a search for a missing person in the Lyn Brenig area in November 2022.

Temporary Superintendent Owain Llewellyn extended his thanks to the team for their dedication to serving their community. 'During this particular search, their involvement was crucial to locating a high-risk missing person. North Wales Police greatly values the partnership, working with volunteers at NEWSAR and the other mountain rescue teams across the region, who are always willing to assist us no matter the weather conditions or time of day or night.'

'It is great to be recognised for the work we all do,' says team leader Chris Griffiths.

Above: Left-right: Tony Haigh, Andy Rooke, Louise Pickford, Dave Jones and Temporary Superintendent Owain Llewellyn.

A night with the unsung heroes of mountain search and rescue

Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England has been saving lives for 50 years – but it couldn't carry out its priceless work without a dedicated breed of unsung heroes. Journalist **Peter Barron** joined them for a 'balmy' night of training...

✦ First published, 22 February 2023, in The Northern Echo thenorthernecho.co.uk

Why on earth am I lying on open moorland, looking up at the stars on an eerily dark winter's night, when I could be at home in the warm, watching telly? It's a very good question, and the answer is that I'm finding out what it's like to be a 'dogsbod'.

Beside me in the undergrowth, on the edge of Swaledale, is veteran mountaineer, Alan Hinkes, patron of Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England, and we're waiting to

down, blowing a gale, or they might be in a blizzard, but these guys still give up their time.'

There are five other volunteer dogsbodies hidden somewhere out on the moor tonight, and they're being tracked down by two handlers from military backgrounds — Cassie's owner, Tim Cain, and Mike Needham, who's with his Border Collie, Tarn.

'I can't believe what a balmy night it is for

the jackets that mountain search and rescue dogs wear while on duty.

'Away, find!' shouts Cassie's handler, Tim Cain, and the red light dances closer.

'Warmer, you're getting warmer,' I say in my head, but then the firefly suddenly moves off in another direction as Tim lets out more cries of 'Away, find!' and 'Show me!'

A cheer goes up, followed by 'Good girl, Cassie!' She's found another dogsbody in the darkness a few hundred yards away. Her reward is having a ball thrown for her to chase, before Tim gets her back to work.

The firefly hovers ever closer, then circles us, before Cassie bursts through the grass and barks, triumphantly, at her second discovery of the night. More cheers, more enthusiastic praise, and Cassie gets to chase her ball again.

Having been discovered, Tim asks if I want a go at being a handler. My job is to work with Cassie to find Ron Allan, a local government officer, from Thornton-le-Beans. Perhaps it's down to my expert handling, or more likely Cassie's experience, but we find Ron relatively quickly, over by what Alan tells me is known by the volunteers as 'Scary Wood'.

'Why's it called Scary Wood?' I ask. 'Strange happenings,' he replies. I decide not to ask for details.

Despite her enthusiasm for the job, Cassie has arthritis, and, at eight-and-a-half, she realistically only has a couple of years left as a search and rescue dog. Therefore, Tim is training up another sheepdog, one-year-old Gem, to step into the breach.

It's Gem's turn to carry on her training, so Tim returns to the car park to give Cassie a rest and to collect her protégé, so she can come and find us. It's a big test for Gem because, four months into her training, this is her first night-time search.

While we wait, I ask Ron what makes him volunteer to be a dogsbody. 'I've seen what these dogs can do — they save lives,' he explains. 'On top of that, I get to see bits of the countryside I'd never see otherwise. It gets me out of the house and it's good for my mental health.'

Another bell tinkles, a red light appears, and shouts of 'Show me' are heard. Gem's passed her test and she's very pleased with herself, barking frantically and demanding that Ron throws her ball.

Training's over for another night, so it's time to warm up back at the George and Dragon, in Hudswell, where the dogs enjoy well-earned pork scratching treats, and I get to chat to the dedicated team over a beer.

Tim, an infantry officer with the King's Regiment for 30 years, was awarded the MBE in 2004. Both he and his wife, Helen,



are members of Swaledale MRT. Mike, ex RAF, is from Teesdale and Weardale MRT.

The dogsbodies are introduced one by one: alongside Ron Allan, there's Ian Wharton, Deb Southwell, Austen Floyd, and Sam De Belle, who's travelled furthest because she's a zookeeper at Flamingo Land, an hour-and-a-half away at Kirby Misperton.

'The value of dogsbodies can't be underestimated,' declares Tim. 'They're every bit as important as the handlers and the dogs. Without them, we can't operate.'

To be a dog handler, you have to have been a dogsbody, and Tim and Mike have both served their time hidden in the undergrowth.

'It's a huge commitment from everyone and the volunteers put their hearts and souls into it — often missing family occasions and holidays,' adds Mike.

It can take between two and three years to train a dog, developing its ability to find a person over progressively more difficult pieces of ground, culminating in an arduous, three-day mountainous assessment in the Lake District or South Wales before they are 'graded'.

'I cried when Tarn was graded,' admits Mike. 'Your emotions run wild because so much has gone into it.'

But the commitment is worth it. The charity had more than 150 call-outs to reports of missing vulnerable or injured people across the North East last year, with dogs deployed in around a third of the cases.

'We can't thank the dogsbodies enough for the priceless part they play — and we're always on the lookout for more volunteers,' adds Mike.

It's home time, but they'll be back for more next week — whatever the weather. ☺

Dogsbody: *Oxford English Dictionary: a person who does all the boring jobs that nobody else wants to do, and who is treated as being less important than other people.*

Dogsbody: *Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England: a person who does a crucial job and whose selfless contribution to saving lives is immensely appreciated.*

To find out more, go to mountainrescuesearchdogsendland.org.uk

NEWS ROUND JANUARY > MARCH



JANUARY: ISLA'S NEW YEAR'S DAY FIND

Already on the second call-out of the year – the first having been carried out in the early hours of New Year's Day in impressively unpleasant conditions on Green Gable – it was a successful find for Lakes Search Dog Isla. Her handler and search buddy, Keswick team member **Martin Bell**, tells the tale.

At 5.30 pm, the phone pings with a text from the police requesting the team retrieve a couple from the Styhead tarn area of the central fells. Information was scant as the only conversation with the couple was the initial 999 call which was picked up by the Isle of Man Police. From this we knew their car was at Seathwaite and they were just down from Seathwaite tarn. They stated they weren't lost, there were no injuries, but one was having a panic attack and would not move any further.

Armed with this information, this call-out seemed like a simple retrieval from the path up to Styhead pass. So, an ideal chance to give Isla a walk out as I'd not got to bed until 6.00 am following the previous job and had been in bed most of the day...

No further contact could be made with the party, hence no exact location could be plotted. A small group from the team headed up the main track from Seathwaite to Styhead searching on the way. Campers were questioned as we passed the tarn, but nothing seen. This remained the case until we reached the stretcher box at the top of the pass. At this point the five of us regrouped to plan our next moves, and report back to base that nothing had been found thus far and our intentions from this point.

Had the party mistaken another tarn for Styhead tarn, where could they have made an error and where could this have taken them?

At this point I notice Isla had her nose in the air, actively investigating something. A quiet word of encouragement from me to 'Go on then!' saw her gather speed and disappear into the gloom, making a beeline for our lost walkers who were about 150 to 200 metres down a narrow gully on the Wasdale side of the pass. A volley of excited barks marked out the find, and soon Isla had led us to the pair. Apart from being cold and tired the pair were very relieved to see us and able to make their way back to Seathwaite and their car with only words of encouragement and reassurance from the team members.

Isla fairly bounced down the hill after much praise and many treats, enjoying a very successful evening out! The area in which the party were would not have featured highly on our initial search plan and, although they had torches and were reasonably well equipped, we would have been hard pushed to locate them without the nose of Isla. ☺



Top: Martin Bell with Search Dog Isla.
Inset: Isla © Martin Bell.



Photos © Peter Barron.

February,' whispers Alan, as we hunker down against a drystone wall that's seen better days. 'We've got it easy-peasy. Not a breath of wind — I don't even need my gloves.'

Balmy? It's all very well for him to call it 'balmy' but this is a fella who's survived temperatures of minus 40 at the top of Everest. Granted, we're lucky the weather's not a lot worse, but it's 8.25pm, we've been 'missing' for nearly an hour, and I'm starting to wish the rescuers would hurry up so we can get to the pub.

'We must be barking mad,' I suggest to my fellow dogsbody.

'Shhh... I think they're coming,' replies Alan, like an excited childhood pal in the middle of a game of hide and seek.

Just then, the silence is broken by the distant tinkling of a bell, and a red dot — like an angry firefly in the blackness — can be seen zig-zagging towards us. It's the light on

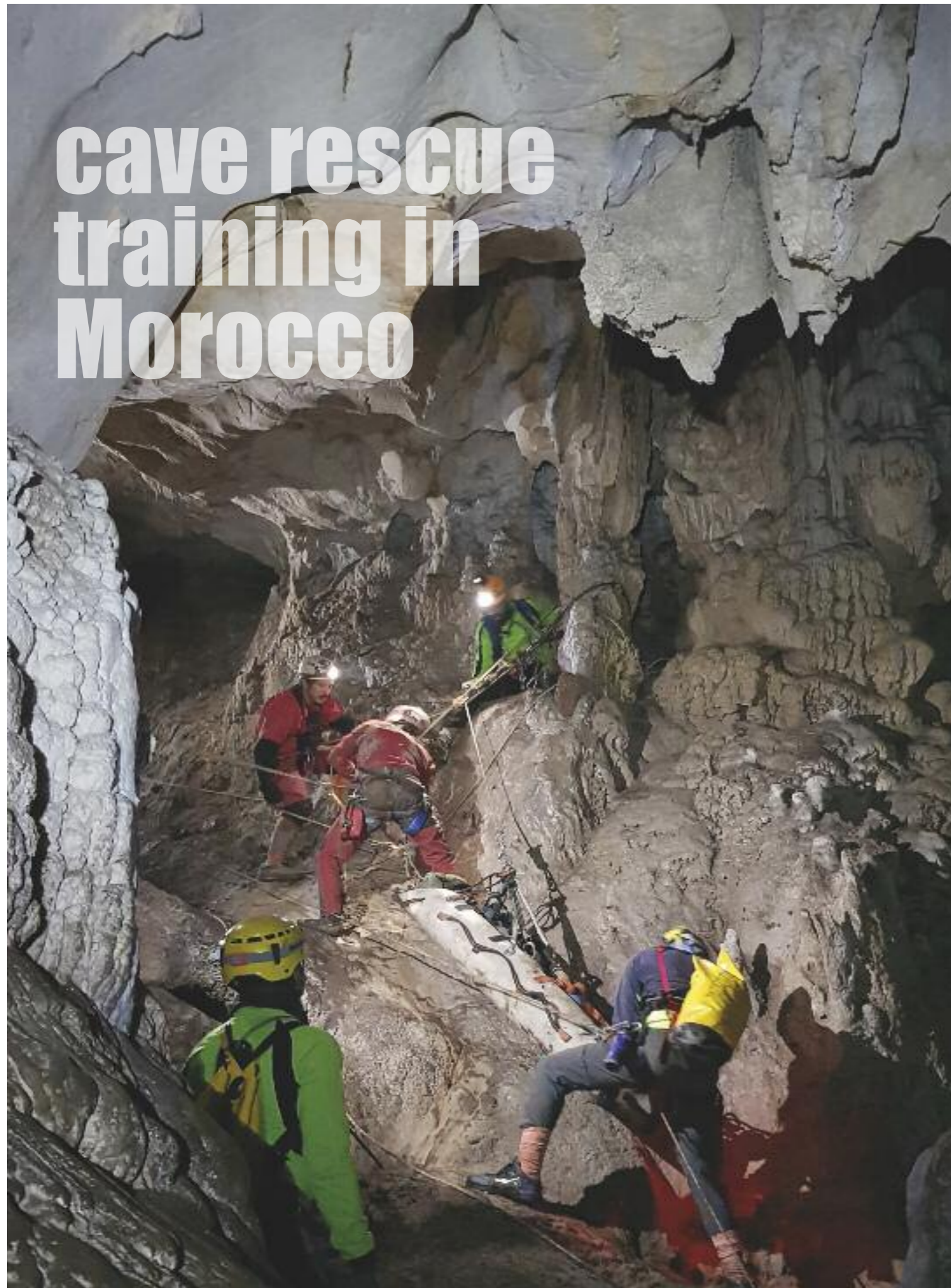
be rescued by a working sheep dog, called Cassie.

Dogsbodies are selfless volunteers who give up their time, in all weathers, to help train the dogs that are a vital part of mountain rescue services across the country.

Alan, the first Briton to climb the world's fourteen highest mountains, has been an ambassador for the charity for ten years, and patron for three. On average, he volunteers as a dogsbody once a month.

'I just love getting out into the countryside, looking up at the Milky Way, and enjoying the craic,' he explains. 'It can be lashing

cave rescue training in Morocco



The beautiful mountains, fascinating caves, intriguing medinas, hidden riads and colourful souqs, the hustle and bustle, cacophony of life being lived, amazing food, incredible hospitality and the friendship of the Moroccan cavers, memories that were still vivid and fresh, when the unexpected messages came in:

WhatsApp 30 October 2022:

Ayoub: Hey Em, a cave incident happened today in a cave in Taza. The local team is almost done with the rescue.

WhatsApp 1 November 2022:

Amine: Hi sister, yesterday our caver friend was with us, he fell from the top of the cave 20m of deep. We did rescue as we learned from you it was a good operation. We did the operation in the English way and it was successful.

We had been back in the UK less than two weeks after delivering our third time cave rescue training programme in Morocco, when we received the news that the Moroccan Cave Rescue Association had just had their first underground rescue. We had a rapid exchange of messages, some parts lost in translation, but we understood the casualty was out safely, the one stretcher in the country had fortuitously been in the Taza caving region and the rescuers were all okay. Phew!

It was in 2009 when Mike Clayton (BCRC Equipment Officer) and I circumnavigated the Mediterranean in our Defender, on our Cave Now Work Later! expedition across North Africa, through the Middle East and back via Europe, when we first met the local cavers in Casablanca and Taza. The Moroccan caving scene was similar to that of Tunisia, with a number of caving clubs and a national caving organisation but no cave rescue organisation or teams. One of the side objectives of our expedition had

been to take some cave rescue equipment to Lebanon, a country we've frequented for caving, and it planted the seed with some of the Moroccan cavers.

Fast forward to 2018, and not only had the Moroccans heard about the training we'd been delivering in Tunisia but the world's media had been in overdrive sharing the news about the Thai cave rescue and, in November 2018, we took a team of six from Midlands CRO and one Gloucestershire CRG team member to deliver the first cave rescue training programme in Morocco.

Located in the lower foothills of the Rif and the Middle Atlas, Taza is one of the oldest towns in Morocco, founded in the eighth century by a Berber tribe. Our base was an impressive riad, owned by the family of one of the cavers. Amongst Moroccans, hospitality is more than a tradition, it is an honour, and we were treated to the most amazing food with every meal having been carefully prepared to ensure we had the chance to consume as many of the top Moroccan dishes as possible! The cavers had come for the weekend, from all the key caving areas of Morocco, to stop at the riad for the training, with a mixture of caving experience and skills, but what was overwhelming was their thirst to learn and their enthusiasm.

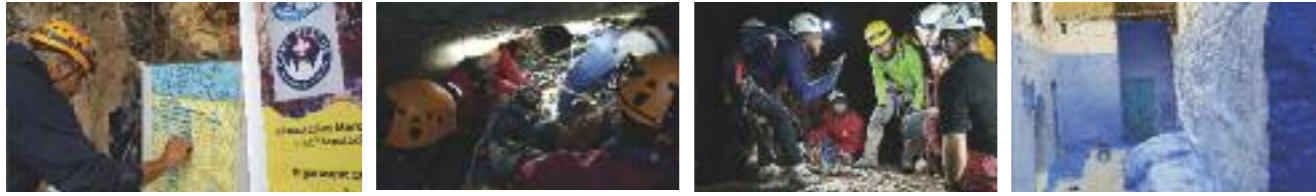
The languages of Morocco are Arabic and, in some areas Berber, with French, Spanish or English frequently being second languages. Fortunately, one of the cavers had lived in Canada for some time, and we all had a fast-learning curve working with a translator. We spent the first day in the classroom, covering the basics of cave rescue, different roles, the importance of surface control and underground control and communications, leaving the group to think about how they would set up a national cave rescue organisation in Morocco. The second day saw multiple activities taking

place in an old quarry, with stretcher packaging and handling, rigging and bolting practice and a small underground exercise. We ended the programme with a full underground training day, complete with TV interviews on the surface.

During our first training programme, we'd heard the friendly but competitive banter between the caving clubs, and which caving area we should go to next, and in October 2019, we found ourselves in one of the prettiest towns, Chefchouan, that can only be described as blue! The caves we were going to be training in and around were in the Rif mountains, and after a couple of



Opposite: Mechroha Cave. Top: Outside Mechroha Cave. Above: Using the Micro HeyPhone outside Tinouine Cave © Emma Porter.



Above: Left to right: The control at the entrance of Mechroha Cave; stretcher handling in Tinouine Cave; inside Mechroha Cave; the blue town of Chefchaouen © Emma Porter.
Below: Left: The first cave rescue training course in Morocco; Right: October 2022, the third cave rescue training course (photographers unknown)

hours of off-roading, we pulled up outside a hostel in the midst of cannabis fields, the air heavy with the smell, and the only crop for miles around. Communications had been a real discussion point at our last visit, so we decided this would be the focus for the weekend, as well as stretcher handling. Despite only having the standard luggage allowance of two people, Mike and I had managed to bring out two Micro HeyPhones, all our personal caving kit, including wetsuits, a cave rescue stretcher, as well as other equipment kindly donated by BCRC teams.

The fields of 'grass' provided plenty of surface training, before we spent the second day in Tinouine Cave on a rescue exercise. This cave had the additional hazard of hosepipes hanging down the pitch and strewn throughout the cave, stealing precious water from the cave to feed the thirsty cash crop. The exercise involved setting up and managing control, lowering the casualty down the pitch in a stretcher, moving the stretcher through the cave and use of the underground radios, which worked extremely well. And, very fortunately, we got through the airport security okay, despite our slight concern about what our caving equipment smelt of!

Due to Covid, our much-anticipated return was delayed until October 2022, when a team of four from Midlands CRO headed to Tetouan via Tangiers to meet many familiar faces, and some new, including the first female participant. During the lockdown period, we had been sharing advice, knowledge and documents and the Moroccan Cave Rescue Association

(MCRA) was established. MCRA officers from all the key caving areas and over thirty cavers attended the training. On the Friday evening, we showed the excellent BBC documentary, *The Rescue: 54 Hours Under the Ground*, which demonstrates so many aspects of a cave rescue, the different roles and the importance of teamwork, and we knew from the excited and animated discussion afterwards, just how well received it was. Saturday was a day above ground, recapping on the management of a cave rescue, communications, stretcher packaging and rigging. These skills were all then put to the test in the most serious and competitive, beer-free Saturday evening stretcher-handling competition we've ever known! Both permission from the police and civil guard were required for the underground exercise on the Sunday, and the entrance was guarded by the local village 'sniffer', who was keeping an eye on us and updating the police. This was by far the most complex training for MCRA to date, with considerably more ropework, stretcher handling and surface work to a waiting ambulance and TV crew.

It has been a privilege to have contributed to the setting up of MCRA, to be able to share our experience and to witness first hand their development and progress. Many will have seen the news in February 2022, when a five-year-old boy, Rayan, was trapped in a well for four days, and these very same cavers participated in the early stages of the rescue attempt. Unfortunately, the well was too tight and dangerous. The rescue of the caver from Tamerchalt Cave on 30 October 2022, two weeks after our

visit, used all the skills and knowledge the cavers had acquired from our training, and much more. The caver was in a party of nine, and had fallen 20 metres down a narrow pitch but managed to slow his descent (he was not attached) by grabbing onto the rope that had been rigged, and had sustained a minor crack in the spine, dislocation of the heel joint and bruised ribs. Nineteen MCRA members attended the incident, and many of the rescuers adopted the same roles they had been in during the recent practice, including the underground controller, Amine. A standby message went out to the cave rescuers across Morocco, before they were eventually stood down. The local authorities recognised the expertise of MCRA and worked together with them. The rescue had taken 8 hours 45 minutes, including a 1.5 km stretcher-carry to the ambulance, and the caver has made a full recovery.

We would like to thank the team members of Midlands CRO and Gloucestershire CRG who have travelled with us to Morocco and contributed to the training, which has all been personally funded. We would also like to thank the British Cave Rescue Council teams who have kindly donated equipment to Morocco (this includes radios, stretcher and hardware), most of which was used in their first cave rescue. Finally, we are looking forward to a return visit soon, *inshallah*, and already have some donated equipment to take out. If any teams have surplus equipment in reasonable condition, then please contact us by email, Emma Porter secretary@caverescue.org.uk or Mike Clayton equipment@caverescue.org.uk.



JANUARY: LONG SERVICE AWARDS FOR CAVE RESCUE

The South and Mid Wales CRT (SMWCRT) AGM saw a number of team members picking up BCRC Long Service Awards, in recognition of their many years of service to SMWCRT and other teams.

A 50-year Long Service Award was presented to Paul Taylor, for his 52 years with both Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group and SMWCRT. 40-Year awards were presented to Paul Tarrant (49 years), Toby Dryden (41 years), Hywel Davies (41 years) and Tony Baker (40 years). 25-Year awards were presented to 24 team members. Some team members also received Distinguished Service Awards for exceptional contributions to the team. Congratulations and a big thank you to all for their hard work over the decades.

Top: Paul Taylor in Otter Hole Cave, Hall of Thirty, using a drill driver to operate a winch that was attached to a camera rig filming © Steve Woolven'.

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH



MARCH: TEAM SADDENED BY NEWS OF CAVING STALWART'S PASSING

Cave Rescue Organisation team members were saddened to learn of the passing of Ian Hopley, a prominent figure in the team and the local community of Ingleton and Settle.

He was a member of the Bolton Speleo Club with which, in the 1960s and 1970s, he did his early caving. Through them, he was introduced to the rescue team, remaining a member for more than thirty years. He did excellent duty as an underground controller and

then became a duty controller, highly regarded by his colleagues for his no-nonsense approach to rescues, his hands-off control of the situations, and his ability to use his contacts and building experience to arrange novel solutions to cave rescue problems. The team's thoughts are with Ian's family and friends.

Left: Ian Hopley, featured in 'Race Against Time: A History Of The Cave Rescue Organisation' by Jim Eyre and John Frankland, courtesy of CRO.



MARCH: COMRU JOINED BY BCRC TEAMS FOR PEER REVIEW

The team's practice session in March saw them at Nenthead Mines, in a change from their usual format. It was their Peer Review where colleagues from other BCRC teams join in the fun and have a look at how the team does things.

The day started with some classroom teaching on crush injuries, followed by an underground scenario. This involved using the knowledge gained in the morning to extract a person trapped by a slab and get them to surface.



Raising funds for rescue

A NEW ENDURANCE EVENT

REFLECTING THE ENDURANCE THROUGH HARDSHIPS EXPERIENCED BY ALL

THROUGH THE DARKNESS

NORTH DARTMOOR
6PM – 6AM 1-2 JULY 2023
HOW FAR CAN YOU GO?

You can hike, run or try and break 100km. How many 12km loops can you conquer between 6pm and 6am, 1-2 July 2023 in Northern Dartmoor National Park?

Through the Darkness - Raising money for MREW, a new endurance event reflecting the endurance through hardships experienced by all.

Across the UK, volunteers within MREW are seeing a change in the frequency and nature of call-outs. With an increase in attending to aid those in need and support of mental wellbeing, rather than trauma incidents.

So much more than Mountains!

Money raised will be split equally amongst all 49 MREW teams.

What's included?
Overnight camping and parking at Okehampton Camp, timing chips, safety cover, Trees for Tees, bespoke medal and cooked breakfast including vegetarian and vegan options.

WWW.THROUGHTHEDARKNESS.CO.UK



SO MUCH MORE THAN MOUNTAINS

Jenny Doe, of the North Dartmoor team, explains how this new fundraising event came about and how important it is to help raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing, for both our own members and those we are tasked to search for.

We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health, and like physical health problems, we can suffer from mental health problems too. Mental health problems are difficult internal experiences that make it harder to live our daily life as we'd like to. Experiences can range from mild to severe distress and it's often those in severe distress we are tasked to look for.

Certainly, in North Dartmoor team, we've seen an increasing trend in the percentage of call-outs relating to mental health issues, with 50% of our 2021 call-outs mental-health related.

Of this number, 30% we didn't reach in time. Sadly, we are increasingly recovering loved ones, not rescuing them, and this has a huge impact on the mental health of team members too. And, as we all know, mountain rescue team members do what they do on a voluntary basis, often having to switch back into 'normal life mode' immediately after a call-out, without the space to process a distressing event.

The general public have very little knowledge about this darker side of mountain rescue work. They imagine the 'cool' ropes access and swiftwater rescues that more often feature on our social media.

THROUGH THE DARKNESS

I have been extremely fortunate, in my career as an osteopath, to have travelled the world working on multistage ultramarathons — from 125km races on the volcanic islands of the Azores, to 250km desert races in Jordan — but the pivotal moment came when a 250km race in Mexico was cancelled and rescheduled to Bradford-upon-Avon in November 2021. Not quite my idea of winter sun!

This particular event was raising money for

a charity called Big Moose. The Big Moose (bigmoosecharity.co) mission is to support people suffering with mental health problems through therapy and early intervention with the aim of suicide prevention. Their founder is the incredibly humble mountaineer and ultra-runner Jeff Smith, who has summited Everest and, more recently, Aconcagua. I had the pleasure of talking extensively with him across the week, about all things mountaineering and running, but especially about the parallels between our charities and how we were linked through mental health, specifically suicide, and the lack of public awareness around this aspect of mountain rescue call-outs. So, after working on nine international ultramarathons — competing in three myself — and one lengthy discussion with Jeff Smith, the Through The Darkness event was conceptualised and created.

Through The Darkness is a challenge for everyone. It is a looped course of 12km on the military tracks (mix of gravel trail and tarmac track) of northern Dartmoor. The aim is to complete as many laps as you can between 6.00 pm on 1 July and 6.00 am on 2 July 2023. Participants will be pushing

through the darkness and into the light, reflecting going through the darker times of mental health struggles, but knowing there will be lighter times ahead. For some, two loops will be a worthy challenge, but we've already got contenders for breaking 100km! There will be camping facilities allowing participants to rest as/when they need to, and a participants breakfast early on the Sunday. Friends, family, and supporters welcome.

The event is open to all but we'd love to see what talent fellow MREW members can bring to the event! All money raised will go towards supporting all the MREW teams — so the more money we raise, the more teams will benefit, so please spread the word and share the JustGiving campaign.

We are also actively seeking sponsors for the event, so if you know of any companies or individuals that might be interested, please email jenny.doe@ndsart.org.uk

For more information about the event, head to throughthedarkness.co.uk

Far left: Look out for and share the 'Through the Darkness' poster on social media and help to spread the word about the event © North Dartmoor SRT.

LATE DECEMBER: DARTMOOR TAVISTOCK IN SEARCH FOR INJURED DOG AT BURRATOR RESERVOIR DAM

'Sometimes in life you are totally humbled by the efforts of strangers when you are desperate need of help. Today is one of those days.'

It proved an interesting last call-out of 2022 for the Tavistock team, when the call came in on Boxing Day, following a request from Devon & Somerset FRS to help in the search for an injured dog. A 20-month-old black Labrador, Oban, had vaulted the parapet of Burrator Reservoir dam and fallen around 50 feet into the valley below. He was spotted by a member of the public but then disappeared. Within minutes of the team beginning their search, and some six hours after his initial disappearance, Oban was spotted and his owners escorted to him. He'd suffered a serious injury. After assessment by a team member who is also a veterinary surgeon, he was carried to a team Land Rover and on to a veterinary practice in Yelverton for treatment. A happy end to Boxing Day, in terms of a successful find, but the start of a very long journey for Oban.

'We were delighted to hear an update from Mark, Oban's owner,' says the team's Christine Palmer. 'The vets had inserted a plate into his rear leg. He'd sustained life-changing injuries, but because he is young and strong, their hope was for a speedy recovery. The family had been overwhelmed with kind messages and Oban had featured on the news many times. "We owe his life to the Dartmoor team," they'd said. "You are amazing". On the 29 December, Oban was back home with his owner, resting before the long journey ahead of him.'

'Fast forward to the start of March, and we received another update. Despite the best efforts of a canine physiotherapist, canine hydrotherapist and the amazing vet team who'd worked on him from the start, Oban had undergone the amputation of his injured limb. However, this has not slowed him down. He is already enjoying walks again and desperate to run free on the moors again! We've loved hearing about Oban's journey. The kind words quoted by Mark (above), really sum up why we do this. We are always happy to help those in desperate need of help.'

Left: From top: Burrator Dam, where Oban is thought to have fallen over; Oban being evacuated back to the car park; Oban home post-surgery on December 29th. Images courtesy of Dartmoor Tavistock.



JANUARY: PENRITH TEAM DOCTOR SPEAKS AT ROYAL COLLEGE EVENT

Penrith GP Tim Sanders spoke at the Royal College of General Practitioners event about his role as both a medical professional and a member of Penrith MRT. The online event was the first in a series being organised by the Royal College to look at the extended roles undertaken by GPs in their communities.

'Tim's talk focused on his experiences working as a GP in the Eden valley of Cumbria, and of taking on two extended roles, one of these with the Penrith team, where he is currently the only doctor. The other is leading the University of Central Lancashire's MSc course in Mountain Medicine. This unique course combines postgraduate academic study and the development of clinical knowledge, with teaching in the practical skills required to ensure the safety of team, casualty and clinician in challenging mountain environments.'

'My talk was titled Extended Roles: Want to know more about mountain rescue? Get lost!, which was a bit tongue in cheek,' says Tim. 'These are challenging times to be working in the health service but, through my work with the team I find energy by volunteering my time with other like-minded people. As a university lecturer, I feel so lucky to be supporting my students to learn about a topic they are passionate about whilst developing the transferrable academic skills necessary for them to become NHS leaders of the future.'

Above: Tim Sanders. Image courtesy Penrith MRT.




MARCH: CENTRAL BEACONS TEAM MEMBER TAKES ON NEW ROLE

Search Dog Dill, who works with handler Katie (SARDA Wales & CBMRT), has also taken on another potentially life-saving role as a wellbeing and trauma therapy dog, as part of Katie's 'day job' within the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust.

Above: Search Dog Dill with team member and handler Katie. Image via facebook.com @CBMRT.

training professionals

OUTREACH RESCUE



A range of courses are available to meet the unique requirements of the mountain rescue teams within the UK. All our staff have considerable experience within civilian and military Mountain Rescue and understand what your needs and expectations are.

Courses include:

- Water Incident Management
- Search Management
- Emergency Care in the Outdoors (ECO) Levels 1/2/3
- Advanced Casualty Extrication
- Water Safety/Water Technician

www.outreachrescue.com Call us on 01248 601546

www.rescuenortheast.com

Water courses: (DEFRA Compliant)

- Swiftwater & Flood Responder
- Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Technician
- Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Advanced
- Rescue from Vehicles in the Water

Water & Flood Team Leader

- Management of Water & Flood Related Incidents

Technical Rope Rescue Courses:

- Safeworking at Height
- Technical Rope Rescue Operator
- Technical Rope Rescue Supervisor

Medical/Trauma Courses:

- First Aid (Full range)
- Outdoor First Aid
- FREC Level 3 – 5
- Safe Administration of Life-saving Medicine

Instructor Courses:

- Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Technician Instructor
- Technical Rope Rescue Instructor

Rescue North East is a dedicated nationwide training provider delivering specialist training to the emergency services: Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Ambulance Services, Search and Rescue Teams and Mountain Rescue Teams. We pride ourselves on our expertise and the quality of our training. Visit our website for a full range of courses.

Book Now with Rescue North East
Call: 01207 297175
Email: admin@rescuenortheast.com
www.rescuenortheast.com



Providing Technical Rescue Solutions for the Emergency Services

Specialist Training and Equipment for Work at Height and Rescue Operations

Lyon Equipment offer class leading products and technical support to people who work in challenging environments.

We provide high quality training and consultation for work at height and rescue in vertical, steep and difficult-to-access environments.



LYON
WORK & RESCUE

Lyon Equipment Limited Tel: +44 (0) 15396 24040 Email: info@lyon.co.uk Web: www.lyon.co.uk

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH

JANUARY: MOUNTAIN SAFETY GROUP OFFERS FIVE-POINT GUIDANCE FOR USING PHONES FOR HILL NAVIGATION



With an increasing number of hillgoers – one in ten – now said to be using their phones or GPS units to help them navigate, the Mountain Safety Group issue the guidance in January, following a survey conducted by Mountaineering Scotland.

The Mountain Safety Group includes Scottish Mountain Rescue, Police Scotland, Mountain Training Scotland, Glenmore Lodge, Developing Mountain Biking Scotland and Snowsport Scotland. The survey asked 4,000 people if they used these devices when on the hills, and whether they had experienced problems with them. Of those, 87% said they used electronic devices at some point while out walking and four out of ten said they had experienced a situation where their device had stopped working in some way. Mountaineering Scotland, which represents hillwalkers, mountaineers, climbers and ski tourists in Scotland, subsequently issued the #SmartNav guidance, a simple five-point plan devised with other members of the Mountain Safety Group. The five key points are that hillgoers should:

- **Charge:** Start with 100% battery charge and charge your device while you travel if you're using it for music or road navigation
- **Protect:** Protect your phone from the elements and keep it close to your body when not in use to help it stay warm and dry and save battery life
- **Download:** Download all the maps you might need so you don't need to rely on mobile data to be able to access maps on your walk
- **Extend:** Switching your phone to 'Flight Mode' makes your battery last a lot longer and take a fully charged power bank to recharge on the go if needed
- **Take a backup:** If your phone or GPS fails, you'll need another way to navigate, such as a map and compass, and the ability to use them effectively. Consider also carrying a simple back-up phone for emergencies.

'When going out into the hills at any time of the year, it's important to look after your phone as it not only gives you additional information to help with your hill and mountain navigation,' said Mountaineering Scotland safety adviser Ben Gibson. 'But, your phone is also your lifeline to contacting the emergency services in the event you or a group member finds yourself in a serious situation. Remember, if you're downloading your route from an app, it's always worth checking it against other reliable sources to make sure it's safe and suitable for your level of experience and ability.'



JANUARY: LAKES TEAMS URGE CAUTION USING MAPPING APPS IN THE MOUNTAINS

Rescuers in the Lake District continued to warn of the perils of relying on digital mapping software after two call-outs in quick succession to hillgoers following routes on an app.

Above: Rescuers help the walkers down the slope on Barf © Keswick MRT.

In the first, Keswick team was alerted, late afternoon, when a walker got into difficulties on Causey Pike. He had been following a recommended walk around the tops above Braithwaite using the AllTrails mapping software app. As it was getting dark, he decided to take a shortcut back by following a path on the app, from the summit of Causey Pike northwards to Stonycroft Beck. With increasing darkness, he became confused and lost as he could not find the path even with his head torch. He called 999 to ask for mountain rescue help.

Once he had messaged a screenshot of the map, showing his position, the cause of his confusion became apparent. There is no path in this location – the software was incorrect. He was guided over the phone to the correct path and made his way down to be met by a small Keswick team to ensure he made his way to safety.

The following afternoon, the team was called out to Barf when three women and their dog became cragfast after following a circular walk to Lord's Seat from the parking around Powter How, using the AllTrails app. The app had recommended a route via the steep face of Barf.

'There is no path via this route,' said a team spokesman, 'only lines of scree, which also require the walker to negotiate the rocky outcrop of Slape Crag, the scene of previous call-outs. With fading light and poor visibility, they wisely asked for mountain rescue help.'

A small group of team members began a search by ascending the slope from the bottom of Barf. The party were soon found and given harnesses and helmets before being tied in to short ropes to help them descend the scree to the parking area. Successfully down and uninjured, the three and their dog were able to return home in their own vehicle. The team goes on to note that Alfred Wainwright, in his sixth volume of Pictorial Guides to the Lakeland Fells, describes the route as: 'Not a walk. A very stiff scramble, suitable only for people overflowing with animal strength and vigour.'



Images © Karl Wait, NNPMRT.



MARCH: 'MISSING KAYAKER' AND HIS 'BROTHER' SUCCESSFULLY RESCUED FROM THE RIVER COQUET BY NORTHUMBERLAND TEAM

Okay, so this was a training exercise, but quite an effort by Northumberland National Park team — and their volunteer 'casualties' — nevertheless. The scenario was that a kayaker had been reported missing by his brother. The police contacted mountain rescue and asked them to assist the fire and rescue service in searching the River Coquet between Thropton and Rothbury. So far, so relatively straightforward. Then part way through the search, the team received an update from the kayaker's brother giving his location — and he too had gone into the river when trying to help!

Team members quickly located both men and began to rescue them from the river. One had sustained a 'dislocated shoulder and broken lower leg' and both were 'suffering from mild hypothermia'. Team members not only had to extract both men but deal with their injuries on what was an extremely cold night. They'd like to thank both the volunteer 'casualties', one of whom was the local councillor from Rothbury and Coquetdale. Good effort.



Right: Bandaging up the 'big cats' © Edale MRT.

FEBRUARY: PEAK DISTRICT DOG HANDLERS HONE THEIR ANIMAL FIRST AID SKILLS IN EDALE

As well as having a number of Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England handlers within their ranks, Edale team also attends a number of dog-related incidents each year — some of which require them to adapt their more 'everyday' casualty care skills.

Fortunately, they have an 'in house' vet on hand who specialises in emergency medicine, in the form of one of their team members. February saw them hosting their first 'K9 Casualty Care' course for the team's dog handlers and other operational handlers from around the region. The prerequisites were, be a competent mountain rescue casualty carer and to like dogs, so they ticked the box. A very intensive day included how to perform a primary survey, CPR, control of bleeding, splinting, bandaging, recognise and deal with other medical conditions that dogs may encounter and how to adapt the equipment the team carries for use on dogs. The more advanced ones progressed on how to deal with big cats, as the picture shows. Another course is planned soon, for other team members to extend their skills.

NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH

FEBRUARY: SCOTTISH RESCUE STALWART DAVE 'HEAVY' WHALLEY WINS COVETED MOUNTAIN CULTURE AWARD

Organisers of Fort William Mountain Festival named Heavy as the winner of this year's Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture. An ex-RAF MRS member, he has taken part in more than 1,000 rescues and eighty aircraft incidents in mountainous areas over forty years in mountain rescue and mountain safety education.

Heavy was team leader at RAF Leuchars and RAF Kinloss, and deputy team leader at RAF Valley on Anglesey and spent the last four years of his RAF career working in the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) at Kinloss. He's been involved in some notable incidents. Following the Lockerbie air crash in December 1988, he was senior team leader at the site. He was also involved in the hunt for survivors of a Chinook helicopter crash on the Mull of Kintyre in 1994 when four RAF crew and 25 terrorism experts were killed. In the 1970s, he was initially rejected as a search and rescue team member because, at seven stone and only 5ft 4ins, he was deemed 'too skinny'. However, as the veteran of countless rescues, he quickly earned his 'Heavy' nickname, for his huge spirit. After the RAF, he joined Torridon and Kinlochewe MRT, serving with them for three years until his retirement. Heavy is the sixteenth recipient of this award, a previous winner being Hamish MacInnes. He has also been the recipient of an MBE and the British Empire Medal. He was a member of the executive of the Scottish Mountain Rescue Committee for over twenty years, for five years as accident statistician and three as chairman. He also holds a distinguished service award for his service to mountain rescue. He is both an honorary member of the Torridon and Kinlochewe MRT and president of SARDA Scotland.

LATE DECEMBER: GRASSHOPPERS PERFORM 108 SUN SALUTATIONS IN AID OF CLEVELAND TEAM

In a fundraising effort with a decidedly yogic twist, the hardy souls of Grasshoppers Yoga Studio in Redcar took part in a sunrise yoga session performing '108 Sun salutations' on the beach at Marske-by-the-Sea on the North East coast, a few days before the winter solstice.

The group meet every Sunday morning on the same beach to practise yoga, followed by a dip in the sea and, for this last meet of 2022, they raised a very healthy £254.70 for Cleveland MRT. One of the team members is also a regular at the studio and the group has been invited to run a session at the team's base during 2023 as a 'thank you'.



Raising funds for rescue

SPRING IS HERE AND SO ARE THE TICKS!

Did you know that ticks can be found in every county across the UK? They can carry dangerous infections such as Lyme disease, which can be transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected tick.

Ticks can be as small as poppy seeds, so they can easily be missed. It's important to check yourself, children, and pets for ticks after outdoor activity. The charity Lyme Disease UK is running a national 'Wake Up To Lyme' campaign this May. Their campaign aims to raise awareness of how to prevent tick bites, and what you should do if you're bitten. There are many ways to take part this May, including:

- Purchasing tick repellent to wear outdoors
- Sharing Lyme Disease UK's awareness materials online, or by ordering free hard copies of leaflets and cards
- Booking a free online awareness talk
- Sharing Lyme Disease UK's awareness animations on social media
- Submitting photos of ticks with a location for the LDUK #TickWatch feature.





March: Never off-duty... Dartmoor rescuers help save a life in North Africa

ANDY HODGES DARTMOOR SRT TAVISTOCK

Dartmoor may not be known as a hot spot for AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) nor an area where crampons and ice axes are part of hill kit but that doesn't mean the team members are flat earthers! Six members of DSRT Tavistock recently went on a 'mates trip' to the Atlas Mountains for a week's change of scene. Red jackets and badges were left at home. We were expecting cold weather and to suffer from altitude related conditions but, what a week we had!

After the mountain being 'closed' by the police for a week (there are now a number of police checkpoints along the route and groups attempting the approach to the two mountain huts at around 3,100m are required to engage a local guide), we lucked out as we arrived on the same day as the route was reopened.

A tough approach trek from Armed, 10km and 1,300m ascent from a starting point of 1,900m, means many folk arrive at the hut in need of some help. On arrival our O² sats were hovering around 72% and resting heart rates about 40% above normal, around 100bpm — enough to cause a medical professional to be seriously worried in a normal setting. When we entered the communal room it looked like a MASH unit: a couple of people were physically sick, one was losing consciousness, whilst another sat in front of the fire wrapped in a blanket shivering violently.

Dr Adam, one of our team who had been 'badged' for call-out duties only a few days before our departure, provided advice and assistance to the person struggling with consciousness. It seemed she'd eaten and drunk virtually nothing on the ascent as she didn't want to 'wild wee' on the route. Sugary food, a couple of bottles of drink, a loo visit and raised legs quickly brought her blood sugar up to more realistic levels.

Our recent BICO (Baby It's Cold Outside) based hypothermia team training came into its own. The shivering chap was offered hot water bottles to tuck under his armpits and encouraged to eat and drink. The blankets were wrapped around him, preserving heat retention (the BICO principle points out that insulation of a cold casualty can keep them cold. After all, insulation hinders heat transfer — so the chap in question was being

insulated from the warm room whilst having minimal heat sources near his body). Following our advice, he rapidly improved.

Day two: having completed WML training in recent weeks, Andy and Emily led six hours of quality snow and ice refresher and skills training around the hut whilst also allowing our bodies to acclimatise and practising skills which are not an integral part of Dartmoor training! Sadly, many commercial groups seemed to skip this in the drive for long weekend adventures. They went for the summit the day after arriving and then returned all the way to Armed or Imilil. It's a big ask to go from sea level to 3,100m in a day, then on to 4,167m and back to 1,900m on the second day.

With our O² sats improving, but still only around 85%, we were ready for our summit bid. The climb from the hut was steady. We set off around 8.00 am. Most folk had set off a couple of hours earlier as they had to descend to the valley after summiting. We crossed the reasonably steep initial slope, passing above an icefall that has seen accidents from folk slipping in the past. We were taking it steady and at the opening of the South Cwm (as the map refers to it) we stopped for a break. The wind was stronger than expected, forecasts may not be as reliable as we're used to, but at least it was on our backs, helping us onwards. We were at 3,550m and going well. Some groups, having abandoned their attempts, were already descending and we noticed an odd group of three. The middle person was either holding hands with one person or was being supported. Then she stumbled, had she just caught a crampon strap? (The guides had to fasten most clients' crampons onto their trekking boots at the refuge.) As they got nearer, her footsteps were looking



less and less coordinated, her head lolling. Then she fell into the snow and didn't move.

Instinctively, we leapt in to offer help. She was taken into the shelter of a large rock (later christened Casualty Rock). Steve got a group shelter out, flask and food quickly followed. The local guide produced some energy gel. Andy, one of our cascarers, and Adam took on the role of first aid. Energy gel was rubbed into her gums, her legs were raised by AI, another cascarer, and she began to regain consciousness. Warm mint tea was offered (it was Morocco after all!) and she began to recover. Our AMS meds were administered and she began to look capable of making the descent. Once we were all convinced she could be supported to the hut by her group we continued.

The summit was a tough climb but the mountain gods certainly took pity on us. The wind helped us up the steep back wall of the South Cwm and then, just as it was going to become a cross wind on the ridge, it eased. Having completed the ridge the cloud obediently parted to reveal the summit. We popped out above the cloud layers to a perfect summit vista.

'There's the Anti-Atlas,' said Mohammed, our official guide, 'and there's the Sahara.'

There really is nothing as spectacular as standing in temperature of -15°C in deep snow whilst looking at one of the largest hot deserts on earth. The mountain gods certainly paid us back for our impromptu rescue efforts. ☺



NEWS ROUND

JANUARY > MARCH

JANUARY: WINTER SKILLS TRAINING IN SCOTLAND TURNS INTO A RESCUE FOR NORTHUMBERLAND TEAM

The Northumberland National Park MRT (NNPMRT) annual winter skills weekend in the Cairngorms was temporarily interrupted in January, when two mountaineers took a significant fall from near the top of the Goat Track to the corrie floor. Luckily, an NNPMRT group on the Fiacail ridge witnessed the fall and contacted Police Scotland and Cairngorm MRT. **Dave Harris-Jones** picks up the story.

We had several groups working in the Northern Corries that day, with one group only half a kilometre away, on the other side of the corrie. As we were contacting the police, I called one of our members in that group and asked them to head towards the incident. I could see that other mountaineers had reached the casualties, who were not moving and assumed the worst.

The second group took the call and immediately stopped their training and moved quickly across the corrie floor. Dave Manson set off towards the casualty site with a hasty team, consisting of a team doctor and paramedic. We were very lucky in that we had some of our most experienced medics in that group. An initial assessment was made and along with other team members who had arrived on scene, medical intervention and care was provided to the two mountaineers. Due to the potential seriousness of their injuries, helicopter assistance was requested and was quickly above the scene.

'Once we'd stabilised both casualties,' says Aaron Duke, a paramedic with the team, 'one was supported to the helicopter while the other was packaged on a stretcher before being carried to the helicopter for onward transport to Inverness. We had help from other team members, a team doctor and a couple of other members from Cairngorm MRT, and the mountaineers who were first on scene.' Aaron was also flown to Inverness with the casualties to provide continuity of care. 'Once the casualties were safely in hospital, I was given a tour of the HMC base at Inverness, while I waited for one of our team members to drive up and get me.'

Left: Team members help carry on of the injured mountaineers to the helicopter © NNPMRT.



FEBRUARY: 24-HOUR RESCUE FOR LONE WALKER ON SCAFFELL PIKE GREAT END

Wasdale team were alerted at 6.26 pm to a lone walker who had reported himself as lost on the ridge between Scafell Pike and Great End. Mobile phone reception was very poor, but a location was quickly established and, although the weather was fast deteriorating with thick mist and rain, he was asked to stay where he was and shelter from the wind.

Under these conditions, a 'talk-off' with rapidly-declining phone battery and areas of known no signal at all would have meant the team leader losing contact with him, and an impossibly large area to search in very dangerous ground.

The team responded quickly as they were already at their rescue base for a training night. Two fast team members, travelling very light with immediate first aid, warm clothing and a shelter, were dispatched as there was concern that the casualty would already be very hypothermic. Back-up parties followed with additional equipment.

The lost walker was not found at the original location, and contact had been lost so a search was mounted in exceptionally difficult conditions. As we'd expected to find him at the

original location, many team members were carrying heavy loads, including stretcher halves and an auto pulse.

Keswick team members and Cockerthorpe search dogs were requested and they approached the area from the north. By the early hours of the morning, teams reluctantly came off the hill having done all they could overnight in extremely cold and wet conditions. The search continued at first light with more team members and search dogs from across Cumbria and the North East. The weather remained wet and very misty, making searching in bad ground very challenging and negating the use of helicopter support. He was eventually found at around 2.30 pm, as teams were making their way off the hill, on the east bank of Piers Gill. He was hypothermic, with

knee, leg and foot injuries. Teams brought a stretcher and necessary equipment up to the scene and, after treatment, he was stretched off the hill and taken to hospital.

Over 70 rescuers from nine teams were involved in the incident, along with search dogs and team drones.



Above & right: Searching on the Monday night and early Tuesday morning; casualty evacuation from Piers Gill © Wasdale MRT.

who?

Mountain Rescue England and Wales
@mountain.rescue.org.uk

MREW team



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & TRUSTEE: MIKE PARK
CEO@

Member of
Cockermouth MRT



FINANCE DIRECTOR & TRUSTEE: PENNY BROCKMAN
financedirector@

Member of
Central Beacons MRT



OPS DIRECTOR & TRUSTEE: MIKE MARGESON
opsdirector@

Member of
Duddon & Furness MRT

MEDICAL DIRECTOR & TRUSTEE: ALISTAIR MORRIS
medicaldirector@

Member of
Calder Valley SRT



ASSISTANT SECRETARY: JULIAN WALDEN
assistant-secretary@

Member of
Derby MRT



PRESS & MEDIA: ANDY SIMPSON
media@

Member of
Rossendale & Pendle MRT



TRAINING: AL READ
trainingofficer@

Member of
OVMRO



VEHICLES: SIMON THRESHER
vehicleofficer@

Member of
Calder Valley SRT



ICT: MARK LEWIS
ictdirector@

Member of
Western Beacons MRT



EQUIPMENT: PAUL SMITH
equipmentofficer@

Member of
Oldham MRT

specialist advisers (non-elected)



EDITOR: JUDY WHITESIDE
editor@



PR SUPPORT: SALLY SEED
PR@



PEER REVIEW: TIM CAIN
peer.review@
Member of Swaledale MRT



WATER: WILL OLIVER
waterofficer@

Member of Western Beacons MRT



WELLBEING: JON WHITE
wellbeingofficer@

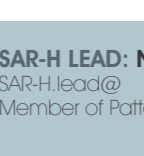
Member of North Dartmoor SRT

specialist advisers (elected)



LIAISON & TRUSTEE: MIKE FRANCE
mike.france@

Member of
Woodhead MRT



SAR-H LEAD: NIGEL HARLING
SAR-H.lead@
Member of Patterdale MRT

president/vice president



PRESIDENT: RAY GRIFFITHS
president@

Member of
Patterdale MRT



VICE PRESIDENT: PETER DYMOND
peter.dymond@

trustees

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES: MATT DOOLEY
matt.dooley@

Member of
Glossop MRT

MIKE PARK (CEO)
PENNY BROCKMAN (FINANCIAL)
MIKE MARGESON (OPS)
ALISTAIR MORRIS (MEDICAL)

INTERNAL TRUSTEES:

PHIL BENBOW
MIKE FRANCE

INDEPENDENT TRUSTEE:

VICTORIA PICKLES victoria.pickles@

ambassadors



PAT PARSONS



ALAN HINKES

Rescue Benevolent Fund
@rescuebenevolent.fund

who?

We're here to help you

Find us at rescuebenevolent.fund
To donate, go to rescuebenevolent.fund
and click 'Donate'



CHAIRMAN: NEIL WOODHEAD
chairman@



TREASURER: SHIRLEY PRIESTLEY
treasurer@



SECRETARY: JUDY WHITESIDE
secretary@



TRUSTEE: HUWBIRRELL
huw@



TRUSTEE: BILL WHITEHOUSE
bill@



TRUSTEE: BRENDAN SLOAN
brendan@

REGIONAL CONTACTS: LAURA CONNOLLY (LAKES), KEITH GILLIES (MID PENNINE), CARL FAULKNER (NORTH EAST), BECKY ASHCROFT (NORTH WALES), ROB JONES (PEAK DISTRICT), ROGER KING (PENMACRA), BOB SCURR (YORKSHIRE DALES), CHRIS JONES (CAVE RESCUE)

Mountain Recreation
Norway Ice Climbing
Winter Skills Scotland
ML, BCI and CWI
Navigation Skills Training
Rock Climbing and Scrambling
Alpine Walking and Trekking

Mike Margeson
mike@mountainrecreation.co.uk

active
EMERGENCY CARE FOR YOUR DOG IN THE REMOTE LOCATION
www.activefirstaid.co.uk

ACTION PACKED ADVENTURES
Llangorse
Indoor & Outdoor Activities in the Brecon Beacons!
Rock Climbing • Horse Riding • Sky Trek • Challenge Course • and more!
0333 600 20 20
www.activityuk.com

TO ADVERTISE IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE MAGAZINE:
CALL CAROLINE DAVENPORT: 07726 933337
or email: caroline@media-solution.co.uk

British Cave Rescue @caverescue.org.uk

who?



CHAIRMAN:
PETER DENNIS
chairman@
Member of South & Mid-Wales CRT



VICE CHAIRMAN:
BILL WHITEHOUSE
vicechair@
Member of Derbyshire CRO



ASSISTANT CHAIR:
GARY MITCHELL
assistantchair@
Member of South & Mid-Wales CRT



SECRETARY:
EMMA PORTER
secretary@
Member of Midlands CRO & Gloucestershire CRG

TREASURER:
ROGER KING
treasurer@
Member of Devon CRO



MEDICAL:
BRENDAN SLOAN
medical@
Member of Derbyshire CRO



INFORMATION:
ROGER KING
informationofficer@
Member of Devon CRO



TRAINING:
JIM DAVIS
training@
Member of CRO



EQUIPMENT:
MIKE CLAYTON
equipment@
Member of Midlands CRO & Gloucestershire CRG



COMMS:
TONY HAIGH
communications@
Member of North Wales CRO



LEGAL:
TOBY HAMNETT
legal@
Member of South East CRO+ South & Mid-Wales CRT



DIVING:
CHRIS JEWELL
diving@
Member of Mendip CR

Scottish Mountain Rescue @scottishmountainrescue.org



CHAIRMAN:
BILL GLENNIE
chair@
Member of Tweed Valley MRT



VICE CHAIR:
DONALD MACRAE
vicechair@
Member of Dundonnell MRT



SECRETARY:
IAIN BRYDON
secretary@
Member of Tweed Valley MRT +SARDA Southern Scotland



TREASURER:
MOIRA WEATHERSTONE
treasurer@
Member of Arrochar MRT +SARDA Scotland



DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE LEAD:
YASMIN HARROWER
yasmin@



HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT:
ELSIE RILEY
elsie@

Mountain Rescue Ireland @mountainrescue.ie



CHAIRMAN:
JONATHAN SHIELDS
chair@
Member of North West MRT



SECRETARY:
KENNY ROBERTS
secretary@
Member of Dublin Wicklow MRT



TREASURER:
EVA MARIE O'BRIEN
treasurer@
Member of Dublin Wicklow MRT



JOIN THE PÁRAMO MOUNTAIN PRO SCHEME & GET 20% OFF CLOTHING

If you are an operational Mountain Rescue or Lowland Rescue team member you can apply to join Páramo's Mountain Pro Scheme and get 20% off Páramo clothing plus a host of other benefits. Membership applies to you as an individual, so you can change team and still retain your membership.



HOW DO I JOIN?

Search for 'Páramo Pro Scheme' online or scan this QR code. Terms apply.

www.paramo-clothing.com



TESTED TRUSTED CHOSEN

Ambleside: info@climbers-shop.com Tel: 01539 430122

CLIMBERS-SHOP.COM



Image: Mountain

Proud to be Retail Partners for:



Proud to support Mountain Rescue Teams

Discount available for MRT Members



JOE-BROWN.COM

Llanberis: mail@joe-brown.com Tel 01286 870327
Capel Curig: capel@joe-brown.com Tel 01690 720205

Image: Rab