

# mountain rescue

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## Cover story

Llanberis team on a stretcher carry-off from Yr Wydffa, one of three concurrent stretcher carries that summer evening  
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# inthisissue

# conference 2024

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closes  
Tuesday  
30 July!**

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# To engage, educate and entertain

# conference 2024

We're on countdown!

Booking closes Tuesday 30 July!



## JUDY WHITESIDE EDITOR

It's almost here: that 'snooze or you lose' point. By the time you are reading this, we'll be on final call for bookings, all the speakers and exhibitors will be confirmed, the dinner menus will be picked and I'll be looking at putting together the print programme.

So, on that first point. Where previous years have seen bookings trickling in right up until the last minute (literally), we're doing things differently this year. Bookings for a weekend stay with accommodation will close on **Tuesday 30 July** (as has been stated on the FAQ section of the conference website from the start). We have yet to confirm whether non-accommodation places will remain available through the website after that date, so please don't rely on that for a late shoo-in. So from the beginning of August, we really are rolling downhill to September.

As a reminder, MREW and BCRC team members are eligible for a discounted rate, paying £190 for the weekend, including a

room for two nights, or £130 for a non-accommodation place. If you haven't received the relevant discount codes for your organisation, either ask your team leadership/secretary (who should have these to hand), or drop me an email via [editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:editor@mountain.rescue.org.uk).

### THERE'S BEEN A LOT GOING ON SINCE APRIL...

Since the April issue, we have continued to confirm speakers. Most recently added are **Kate Denning** from the Advanced Life Support Group (ALSG), and **Mike Parsons** from the Outdoor Gear Coach. Kate will be outlining the joint venture with MREW to

design and pilot a Cas Care Facilitators course to develop the teaching skills of those that want to teach cas care, both HCPs and experienced cas carers. Mike will be talking about garment layering, the myths, marketing and user misunderstandings.

May saw a number of speakers join what is shaping up to be a varied and inspiring programme. **Dr John Ferris**, team doctor with Keswick MRT and a HEMS consultant with the Great North Ambulance, will be talking about Severe Hypothermia and ECMO. **Bryn Coleman** is National Fire Chiefs Council Lead Officer for Inland Water Rescue. He will be speaking on the Fire and Rescue Service response to water incidents. Langdale Ambleside team member **Matt Butler**, from Lyon Equipment, will talk about dealing with air sports incidents. **Keith Bennett**, currently seconded to the College of Policing as the Drones Manager SME, will explain the use of police drones, while Getac's **Will Hitch** will explore the value of rugged technology in the field.

In terms of building strong, cohesive teams, **Dr Stephen Hearn**s will look at how teams can achieve peak performance under pressure, while **Kerry Slater** and **Professor Divine Charura** from the Workplace Collective will update on the MREW Leadership Peer Support Programme which launched in December 2023, involving team leaders from across England and Wales. And speaking of teams, **James Lamb**, Keswick MRT chairman, will be on hand to

To find out more and book: [mountain.rescue.org.uk/conference](https://mountain.rescue.org.uk/conference)

### A REMINDER OF THE TRACKS AND THEMES

- The Frontline
- Building a Sustainable Future
- Wellbeing & Human Factors
- Safety Management



keynote speakers

### exhibitors



Top: Crib Goch © William Barton. Left: A flavour of this year's exhibitors. Above: Keynote speakers, clockwise from top: Sarah Furness, Alan Littlefield, Chris Turner, Oliver Patrick and Helen Nugent.

## How to secure your place:

Booking is easy, but remember to enter any discount code before you get to the point of payment — if you overpay and request a refund, please be aware that we are obliged to pay an admin charge to Eventbrite, and reserve the right to pass this on!

- Head to [mountain.rescue.org.uk/conference/book-now](https://mountain.rescue.org.uk/conference/book-now)
- Enter the relevant discount code, if any. **Click 'Apply'**
- Adjust number of places you wish to book at that price.
- **If applicable, scroll down and adjust the statutory ticket total to '0' (or you will be charged)**
- Proceed to checkout. Enter contact information. **Click 'Register'**
- You will be taken to a screen asking for more details: Enter name, email address, organisation and dietary requirements for EACH ticket holder. **Click 'Get tickets'**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

# conference 2024



explain a little more about the proposed Fairness Fund and how it will work.

Still a couple more names to pin down as I type, so keep an eye on the MREW Members group and the conference website. For the gallery of speakers so far, see the panel opposite. And for an at-a-glance list of speakers according to our four tracks, see below.

## EXHIBITORS AND SPONSORS

We've also added a few more exhibitors since April, so we're excited that there will be a range of specialities and expertise on display covering all your favourite topics and talking points: rescue kit, clothing, water rescue equipment, driver training,

technology and, of course, medical. Again, keep an eye on the website for updates, helpfully categorised according to their speciality. We're also pleased to report that Grubs Boots, already joining us as an exhibitor, have agreed to sponsor the delegate bags your conference goodies (such as they are) will be delivered in.

## REMINDER OF OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

And don't forget we've some stunning keynote speakers lined up, including Sarah Furness, ex-RAF combat helicopter pilot, Alan Littlefield and Oliver Patrick, each giving their own view on building cohesive teams and working under pressure. Chris Turner

will be advising us why being civil to each other, in an increasingly complex world, really does matter. And professional journalist and media trainer Helen Nugent, will be presenting a session on what the media wants as well as chairing our panel discussion about the sustainability of mountain rescue.

The conference is the ideal opportunity for team members to network and socialise with other team members, for newbies to chat to and learn from the older hands (and vice versa!), and for grassroots members generally to meet the people who hold national officer roles and represent them in the wider search and rescue community. So book your place now! While stocks last!!

## Speakers by track/topic: to date

### The Front Line

- Brendan Sloan (BCRC Medical Director)** Suspension Trauma and Crush Injury
- Dr Stephen Hearn (Scotland's Emergency Medical Retrieval Service/Arrochar MRT)** Peak Performance Under Pressure
- Dan Scoular (Cleveland MRT)** Hallmarks of a High-Performing Team
- Dr John Ferris (Keswick MRT)** Severe Hypothermia and ECMO
- Will Hitch (Getac)** Life and Death: The Value of Rugged Tech in a First Responder Environment
- Phil Geng (OS)** Mapping For Emergencies With OS

### Building a Sustainable Future

- Helen Nugent** What the Media Wants and How to Give it to Them
- Dave Binks** Automated Search Using Drones and MRMap
- Dr Steve Rowe (Edale MRT), Chris Lloyd (Ogwen Valley MRO) and Penny Kirby (Wasdale MRT)** Panel Discussion: The Sustainability of Mountain Rescue
- Mike Parsons (Outdoor Gear Coach)** Garment Layering: Myths, Marketing and User Misunderstandings
- Chris Turner** Civility Saves Lives Masterclass
- Paul Brain (MREW Statistics Officer)** Past, Present and Future of MREW Data

### Wellbeing and Human Factors

- Pat Holland (SEMRA)** Avoiding, Preparing For and Dealing with HR and Other Unexpected Challenges
- Edward Kinnear (Kendal MRT)** Working With a Casualty's Family and Friends
- Emily Bromiley (Togetherall)** Supporting the Mental Health of Mountain and Cave Rescue Team Members
- James Lamb (Keswick MRT)** Introducing the Fairness Fund
- Kate Denning (ALSG)** Training You To Train Cas Care
- Aneela McKenna (Mór Diversity), Jenny Hall (Cleveland MRT), Laura Davies (Calder Valley SRT)** Exploring Pathways for Inclusion
- Kerry Slater and Professor Divine Charura** (The Workplace Collective) MREW Leadership Peer Support Programme

### Safety Management, Indoors and Out

- Kirsty Pallas (Oban MRT)** The Non-Tech Path to Safety
- Andrew Lockey (Resuscitation Council UK)** Update on Guidelines
- Matt Butler (Lyon Equipment/Langdale Ambleside MRT)** Air Sports Incidents: Technical Rescue Considerations
- Keith Bennett (College of Policing)** Drones: The Story So Far!
- Bryn Coleman (National Fire Chiefs Council)** The Fire and Rescue Service's Response to Water Rescue Incidents in the UK
- Andy Hibbert and Chris Murray (Clyde & Co)** When the Unthinkable Happens

## Exhibitors: by category: to date

### Outdoor Clothing

Outwear, Mountain Equipment, Grubs Boots, Helly Hansen, Keela, Paramo, Hammond Drysuits

### Training

Amanzi Safety and Rescue, Beyond Driving, Helix, Lyon Equipment,

### Equipment

Edelrid, Lowa, Petzl, Schiller, Nebo, WRS International, Coast, Northern Diver, Simoco, Openhouse Products, Reflex Medical, Getac, Fletcher Stewart, Lyon Equipment, Helix, Led Lenser

### Member Support/Fundraising

Rescue Benevolent Fund, Adventure Buddies

# Update on the shared values project

The Shared Values Project really began to take shape in June 2021. Its aim was to clarify our shared values to bring clarity to and better inform our policies and communications. The then newly-appointed CEO, Mike Park thought it 'an important step in making MREW more inclusive on a practical level' and wanted to ensure that everyone in the wider mountain rescue community was engaged with the work being done. The idea had been bubbling for a while, sponsored by Finance Director Penny Brockman, and January 2022 saw the Shared Values group hold its first 'official' meeting, facilitated by Joe Tipper (Derby MRT) and supported by Dave Otter (Ogwen Valley MRO), comprising representatives from across England and Wales. **Judy Whiteside** gives an overview of the ICE Creates report presented in May.

The project edged slowly forwards and, in March 2023, MREW partnered with ICE Creates, a national behaviour insight specialist who were able to bring objective expertise and an external perspective to the project. The first step was to encourage all team members to participate in the initiative by means of a ten-minute multiple choice

questionnaire. This so-called Culture Map comprised three sections designed to understand the values of 'current self, current organisation and desired future organisation', providing data about the terms and behaviours that are important to members. Overall, 603 members completed Culture Map.

Finally, fast forward to May 2024 and the MREW AGM, and a presentation by Dave Otter and Jonny Read of ICE Creates outlining the process so far and the four emergent values: Teamwork, Excellence, Caring and Passionate.



Top: Gears © The Digital Artist via Pixabay. Above: The Culture Map sketch produced by Ice Creates. Top right: Icons produced to represent our Mountain Rescue Shared Values © ICE Creates.

## TEAMWORK

We work as one unit, sticking together to achieve our shared purpose

## CARING

We give our best with kindness and compassion, even when it's tough



## EXCELLENCE

We are highly skilled, needed and trusted. We always strive to get even better

## PASSIONATE

Our work matters. We take pride in our work and are committed to a job well done, whatever the challenge

### EXPLAINING THE WHY...

The ICE report explains why recognising our shared values is important. 'Shared values provide organisations with benefits for those inside and outside the organisation. Having clear values provides a robust method to vocalise an organisation's culture.'

'For MREW this means that members will have greater clarity of who we are, what we stand for, and the behaviours we demonstrate while working together. Having these values codified will also help potential members better understand what we are like before joining.'

'Thinking about our partners, stated values enable us to more easily communicate our principles and commitments to our behavioural standards as we deliver our mission. They help us communicate how we behave in all our activities and decision making, and give increased confidence that we are a good fit for their support.'

### ...AND THE HOW

Those four key values were chosen because they reflect our culture and how we work together. They reflect the spirit of MREW's membership.

Following the initial Culture Map data analysis, members were invited to join online design sessions to explore the meanings and metaphors most prescient for MREW as a whole. The resulting draft values were then finalised with members at an in-person session, in March 2024.

### ...AND WHERE WE GO NEXT...

So what happens next? First off, a huge thank you to Penny and Joe, Dave and Jonny and — perhaps more importantly — those team members from across England and Wales who have kept faith with this, attended the meetings, responded to the questionnaire and then came along to the session in March in person.

As for what happens from here, Mike returns to our now familiar topic of 'sustainability'. He firmly believes that by enshrining these values in our policies and procedures, and in the way we work together as teams, we can and will develop a more sustainable service.

'I am fully aware that those four values will come as no surprise to the majority,' he says, with that characteristic grin, 'but it was good to have them confirmed by the process. Looking ahead, it's the nuances of the more extended definitions which will define us — and that will be where the challenges lie too.'

There are still many 'out there' who question the value of questioning the values, but he's confident that this WILL strengthen us as an organisation. 'Mountain rescuers have always been a resilient and resourceful bunch, but we are all volunteers. We need to recognise when team members feel overwhelmed and let them know it's okay to take care of their own wellbeing. Those team members are our most valuable piece of kit.'

'We've made huge strides forward. I hope everyone involved will continue to advocate for these values in the months ahead — and help create a stronger, sustainable future for our volunteer mountain rescue service.'

**Sally Seed** spoke to **Jon White** (MREW Wellbeing Officer) and **Ian Bunting** (MREW Operations Director) for their take on how these shared values play out in their own areas of interest and expertise.

### Ian Bunting: Value: Teamwork:

As far as teamwork goes, it is the core of what we do. MR cannot operate without cooperation and teamwork amongst everyone within a team, the other MRTs they work with and the statutory services. That's the obvious application of the value but, even then, it's hard for me to know how it is working and where it can improve. I would need to know where everyone is on it to comment as an organisation — which I don't — so there are challenges of measurement and knowing where we need to improve. What I do see is the way teams are becoming more aware of their own strengths but also, especially as demands increase, their weaknesses. How we develop Teamwork as a broader organisation is going to be crucial in future.

### Jon White: Value: Caring:

For me, an organisation's values are very much about leaders walking the walk, not just talking the talk, but it's not straightforward to relate this to an organisation of volunteers where everyone has a role. Also, there's the potential for each team member to have their own ideas of caring and we need to focus on the definition that's come out of the Shared Values process. Those elements of giving our best even when it's tough, and doing that with kindness and compassion, go beyond just being civil and kind to each other. The extent to which we already have this value embedded in mountain rescue is difficult to measure but it is important, not only for casualty outcome, but also for volunteer wellbeing. The challenges ahead are going to be consistency and also knowing what progress we're making and whether it's enough.

**We intend to engage with other members of the MREW Management team for the October issue, looking at those other two values: Excellence and Passionate.**



mrew

# Incident Figures: National Status Summary: April through to mid-June 2024



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

<b>Lake District</b> Cockermouth 37 Coniston 32 Duddon & Furness 34 Kendal 31 Keswick 74 Kirkby Stephen 8 Langdale Ambleside 50 Patterdale 30 Penrith 21 Wasdale 72 <b>389</b>	<b>North East</b> Cleveland 24 North of Tyne 22 Northumberland 34 Swaledale 21 Teesdale & Weardale 14 <b>115</b>	<b>Peak District</b> Buxton 33 Derby 23 Edale 81 Glossop 34 Kinder 39 Oldham 20 Woodhead 26 <b>256</b>	<b>South Wales</b> Brecon 39 Central Beacons 21 Longtown 16 Western Beacons 17 <b>93</b>
<b>Mid Pennines</b> Bolton 16 Bowland Pennine 24 Calder Valley 21 Holme Valley 15 Rossendale & Pendle 16 <b>92</b>	<b>North Wales</b> Aberdyfi 17 Aberglaslyn 14 Llanberis 129 North East Wales 37 Ogwen Valley 88 South Snowdonia 22 <b>307</b>	<b>Peninsula</b> Cornwall East 16 Cornwall West 12 Dartmoor Ashburton 22 Dartmoor Plymouth 8 Dartmoor Tavistock 19 Exmoor 14 North Dartmoor 7 <b>98</b>	<b>South West England</b> Avon & Somerset 8 SARA 29 <b>37</b>
			<b>Yorkshire Dales</b> CRO 40 Scarborough & Ryedale 9 Upper Wharfedale 18 <b>67</b>
			<b>Search Dogs</b> MRSD England 30 SARDA Wales 17 SARDA South Wales 11 <b>58</b>

\* No 'closed' reports submitted by Lakes Dogs to mid-June 2024.

## MOUNTAIN RESCUE ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

Our latest annual review was published in May. Available as a digital flip book: scan the QR code to see the key incident stats for 2023 and to read an overview of mountain rescue activity across England and Wales, over the last twelve months. Once again, the emerging theme is of collaborative, multi-agency training and activity, nationally, regionally and locally, in all aspects of our rescue work.

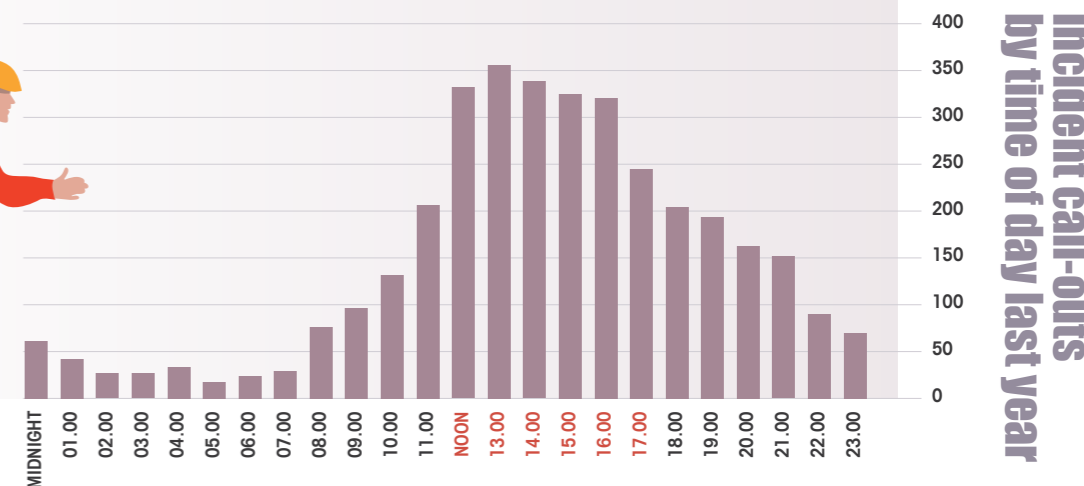


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## Training review

### Phil 'Rigger' Ridley MREW Training Officer

When I took over as training officer, my aim was to try and get an understanding of what the current regional requirements were by polling all regions and establishing a phased approach to the review.

**PHASE 1: REGIONAL REVIEWS** to be completed by November 2023

**PHASE 2: ANALYSE PHASE 1 FINDINGS** by May 2024

**PHASE 3: PRIORITISE and IMPLEMENT DELIVERY OF PHASE 2.**

Some of the main considerations were:

- **How to maintain Duty of Care** to reduce risk to self, team, casualties during training.
- **Ways to learn, develop, share and improve skills** to become more effective.
- **Ways to aspire to have relevant base skill level topics** with some sort of certified standards for today's operational members.

Thank you again to all who contribute to the Phase 1 review which was carried out in 2023. After analysing the results and with the aid of a small working group, Phase 2 common trends were identified and are shown in the table below. It's safe to say, Phase 2 is ongoing.

Some aspects of Phase 3 have already begun and will continue to be developed and delivered over the foreseeable future. This is an ongoing process, and operational requirements can change along with how teams respond to their training needs.

### WHAT I HOPE 'PHASE 3' OFFERS AND PROVIDES...

**Continue to develop a national structure and series of frameworks which can be delivered regionally utilising a number of methods, tools and trainers.** Hopefully this is evident across a number of topic areas, but to mention a few: water, search management, ropework and hill party leader. At the same time, some opportunities to review what is currently on offer can be addressed and possibly rethought. Driver training, for example, is one such area, especially with 4x4 off-road and how implementation of Section 19 will affect 'on-road' driver training.

**Have quality thought-out material and content easily accessible by all teams.** The recent launch of the on-line MOD1 Water Awareness module allows MREW to offer a standardised, core online resource while also providing a national record keeping data base opportunity for water-related

activity. It's accessed via Moodle allowing members the opportunity to complete annually at their convenience.

**Highlight topics, consider standards, guidance, legislation, record keeping and technology.** Aspire to have relevant 'base skill level' topics with certified standards for today's operational members.

**Future funding and sustainability.** LIBOR expires in 2026 and the final contribution has been awarded to MREW. Managing and allocating this funding continues to be an ongoing challenge.

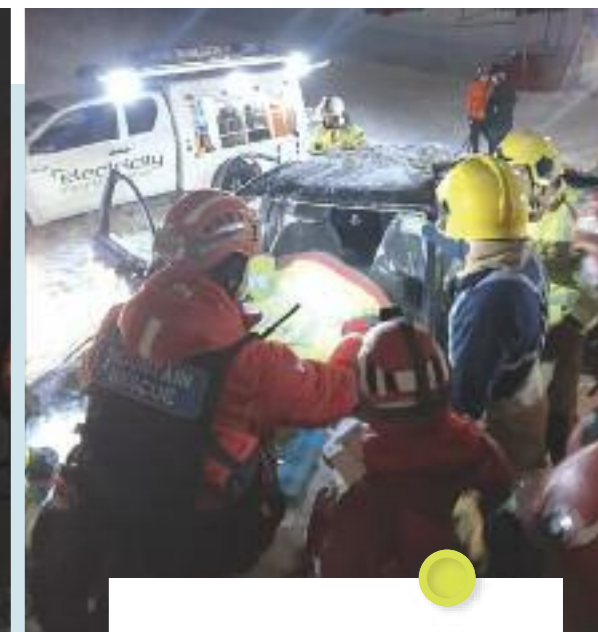
**Establish national training teams (regionally biased) to share, assist and deliver training successfully with continuity:**

The introduction of a **Rope Rescue Lead** has allowed the regionally collated working group to make positive momentum in updating existing guidance and looking at new project opportunities. **Search Planning and Management** continue to be developed and delivered locally. **Hill Party Leadership** and **Foundation Courses** are now allowing development of a wider range of opportunities, building on a core delivery team at both regional and national levels.

Hopefully these examples show that we are making progress in achieving and maintaining standards so that training remains current and fit for purpose.

Thank you to everyone contributing and helping to implement and deliver the training that allows teams to remain operational. With the increase in operational needs, one question that has been asked is, 'How is this new norm of operational activity having an affect with current training attendance, expectations, priorities and ongoing commitment and obligations for voluntary team members?'

This is something I am keen to hear from members about. It goes hand in hand with duty of care, wellbeing and overall expectations that everyone in MR appears to be considering. The days of the 'train hard, rescue easy' have gone. We need to be more selective and conscious in what and how we offer good quality, effective training if members are to be supported. Train smart to rescue easy. ☺



## Exercise Winter Storm 2024

With the focus on changing environmental conditions, Monday 10 June saw an extreme weather, multiagency regional training event hosted by Cheshire Police Rural Crime Team at Manchester's Chill Factor. Statutory and volunteer emergency services, all of whom operate locally, participated in Exercise Winter Storm 2024. The simulated -5 degree temperatures and snowy conditions helped replicate the severe conditions everyone could expect in the allocated scenarios.



This page: Winter Storm 2024 © Buxton MRT. Opposite top: © Bolton MRT. Right: © Kinder MRT.

I attended last year's exercise, which was well delivered and illustrated the benefits of joint multiagency training on a larger scale than what most are probably used to. It expanded on the typically held 'tabletop exercise' for this type of simulation and took it to the next level, by actually highlighting the practical issues and some of the myths of how people think others operate and what capabilities they bring to the party. It was a stepping stone for future exercises.

The focus of this year's 2024 exercise was to not only gauge how agencies respond and work collectively together for a variety of incidents in winter conditions, but also to look at what equipment and personal kit is issued to the different organisations, and its performance in a steady sub-zero environment. As you'll probably have gathered, mountain rescue teams have the advantage in many aspects, but we also welcomed the experience and skills from the statutory serves.

There were presentations by a number of guest speakers including Dr Daniel Grace, Jamie Pattison (Winch Paramedic and Northumberland National Park MRT member), and cold weather expert Sam Cox. A series of short round robin practical scenarios on the slope allowed participants to sample equipment and see how the different agencies and teams communicated and worked together. For many attending, this may have been the first time they had jointly worked with not just statutory service, but also the volunteers of mountain and lowland rescue.

Several academics have been asked to develop a data gathering survey to capture information on participants' experience, skills, knowledge, equipment and more importantly illustrate the benefits of holding joint training — which should prove interesting when it's published.

The final evening exercise (running in real time), replicated an incident on the infamous Cat and Fiddle road with all

agencies involved (and it had a few surprises to maintain the authenticity of the scenario). Around 150 participants were expected to be taking part in some shape or form. It allowed for various JESIP elements of command and control, deployment to casualty care, triage and extraction to be achieved successfully. With an exercise 'weather window of opportunity' in place, it definitely made the participants prioritise and triage the scenario with the urgency required. This was successfully achieved. Appreciation for carrying kit up and down the Chill Factor slopes added to the minor physical expectations and experiences. The time will come when we replicate an extreme heat scenario, and that could be just as challenging for all agencies.

Thanks to all those members from Cheshire Police, Buxton MRT, Kinder MRT, Bolton MRT, Cheshire Search and Rescue, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Student Paramedics from Liverpool John Moores University. Volunteers from the Rapid Relief Team managed to feed everyone ahead of the final exercise from their 'field kitchen' assembled in the venue's car park.

An excellent day, with plenty of learning and take away messages from everyone involved. I understand planning for 2025 has commenced, so who knows what will be in store for that. Knowing Sgt Rob Simpson from Cheshire Rural Crime Team, I think he'll be looking to deliver something even more challenging!

It would be great to hear about and see other similar joint training taking place nationally. After all, sharing knowledge, experiences and ideas improves our capabilities. One suggestion came from the attending staff at Liverpool John Moores University, where they would welcome more active involvement for their student paramedics with mountain rescue teams albeit as either a course presentation or practical exercise. ☺

## FINAL INCIDENT SCENARIO:

A 999 call was received by Cheshire Police from a north west electricity team who were up in the edge boundary area of the Peak District repairing lines as part of the effort to restore power to the local rural communities who were struggling with recent heavy winds and snowstorm.

While on scene, a vehicle had ignored the road closed signs and lost control, flipped over a few times, and come to rest tangled in electrical wires. The worsening weather had made some of the roads in the area impassable (especially the Cat and Fiddle area). Casualty details and further information were unclear at the time.

What the responding teams didn't know was that a third vehicle had arrived on the scene in the meantime. There were no casualties in that vehicle, but some very difficult people who demanded a lot of attention.

The weather had made the roads in this particular 'valley' impassable so all the teams would have to cross over the hill to get to them -100+ metres of accent at least twice - the second time taking the casualties and others with them.

An additional weather warning had been issued for deteriorating conditions and the expectation of a new snow front arriving in a few hours which would effectively close the area down for a further 24-36 hours.





## Technical Rescue Training for Search & Rescue Teams

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- Management of Water & Flood Incidents (Defra Module 5)
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- Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Technician Advanced
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#### Boat Rescue Courses Include:

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- Flood Rescue Boat Operator
- Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Boat Operator (Defra Module 4)
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- Safe Working at Height
- Rope Rescue Operator
- Rope Rescue Technician
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## Drone Deconfliction

### Brendan O'Neill MREW Drone Officer

As more teams are deploying drones at incidents and exercises, it is vital we do everything possible to avoid conflict with other air users. To this end, we've held a number of meetings with other agencies to understand each other's capabilities and the best ways of reducing conflict with manned aircraft. To this end, we should now be informing the following agencies when we are flying, even if they aren't expected to be attending the incident (as they may be transiting through the area).



NPAS systems and be visible to their pilots when they are planning their activities. The operator will typically request the nearest postcode, time of operations, maximum height and contact details.

### 3 AIR AMBULANCE

Operators should determine the air desk number for their local HEMS team and inform them of any drone activity. The operator will usually ask for a grid reference, times of operation, maximum height and contact details.

### 4 COASTGUARD

If the coastguard helicopter is requested, the request should inform them that mountain rescue may also have drones operating in the area. Direct communications would then normally be available at the scene through the normal channels.

### 5 OTHER LOCAL DRONE ASSETS

Mountain rescue drone operators should check before deploying to incidents if other drone resources are being deployed. This could include police, fire and rescue service, Lowland Rescue or other local resources. Local deconfliction procedures should then be agreed.

Informing the above agencies takes less than one minute per call and can be actioned by anyone in the team. It is strongly recommended that these notifications become part of the standard preflight checklist carried out by our drone operators for training and operational deployments.

Email Brendan via [droneofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:droneofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk) for NPAS contact details or assistance in locating your local HEMS air desk number.

### 1 RAF LOW FLYING CELL: 0800 515544

This line is manned when there is military activity. The military pilots will be informed of any activity pre-take off. This will not, however, reach them if they are already in flight. As such, it remains the drone operator's responsibility to 'see and avoid'. The app/website **ADSB Exchange** is useful for checking the current location of aircraft in your location and shows low-flying aircraft in red.

**Note:** Military fixed wing aircraft, including large cargo aircraft such as the A400M, regularly fly as low as 250ft and helicopters may be operating below this level. Aircraft will have very little room for manoeuvre, especially fast jets or those operating in valleys. The operator will usually ask for a grid reference, times of operation, maximum height and contact details. Advance notice is preferred where possible.

### 2 NATIONAL POLICE AIR SERVICE

It is now standard practice for police drone pilots to inform the NPAS control desk when they are flying (either operationally or training), and it has been agreed that we will follow the same process. The activity will be logged on



Above left: Police drone operator. Top right: RAF overfly Derby team members with the drone. Above: Police drone. Images Brendan O'Neill/Derby MRT.



## ACCESSING THE MREW ONLINE SHOP (TEAMS)

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.

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

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

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



\* To access the digital bookshelf in the Flippingbook version of each magazine, click on any cover and go straight to that issue.

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

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



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

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

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

The **Insurance** category is worth a check for the policies and schedules applicable to mountain rescue, and a list of frequently asked questions. 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](mailto:moodlesupport@mountain.rescue.org.uk).

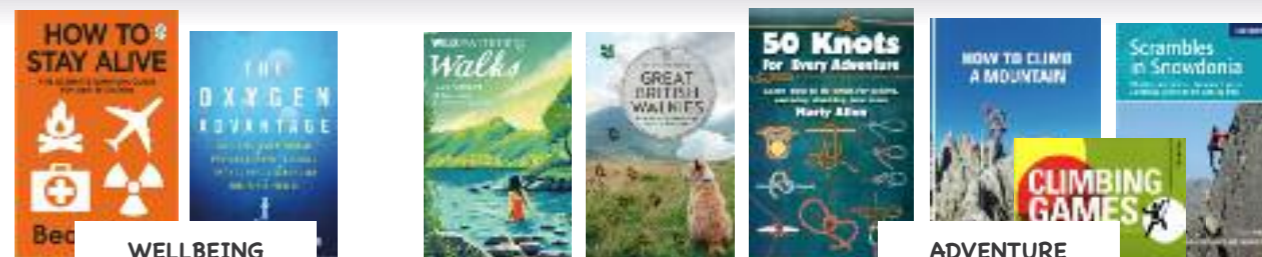


## NEW in the online shop

## Raising funds for rescue

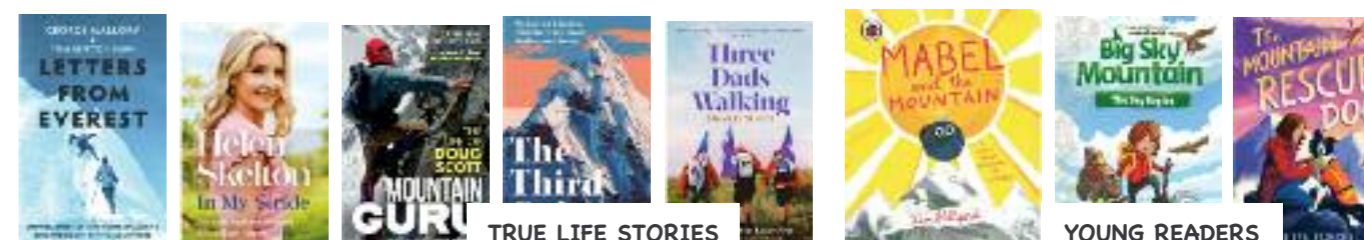


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## LOOKING TO PROTECT YOUR LIPS AND SHIELD THEM FROM THE ELEMENTS?

Whatever the weather, Carmex provides relief for lips exposed to dry air, sunlight, wind, low temperatures or even dust. Their SPF 30 Click Stick features sun defence, wind protection and 80 minutes water resistance. This cocoa butter enriched formula leaves lips soft, smooth, and protected. The Mini Tubes Trio pack features three flavours – Cherry, Strawberry and Pineapple Mint – providing soothing, moisturising, SPF15 protection. These 5g tubes are compact and easy to pack on any adventure. The Classic Pot is a long-time favourite and delivers a boost of hydration to quickly repair, relieve and restore lips, whilst helping to keep them protected and healthy-looking. A legendary cult classic lip balm that works! With pots, sticks, and tubes, and a cool host of flavours, like Strawberry, Pineapple and Mint, Carmex has got you covered.

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## MREW Casualty Care\* Instructor Training

ALISTAIR MORRIS MREW MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Casualty Care (or RRMT) training is provided by team and regions around the country. The core of this training is around knowledge and skills before pulling these together into scenario and simulation training. Training not only occurs for the course and exam, but is ongoing throughout the year in association with other team activities as part of ongoing development. Therefore, using LIBOR monies, MREW partnered with the Advanced Life Support Group (ALSG) to develop and pilot a bespoke Cas Care Instructor Training Day.

ALSG is a charity based in Manchester, one of the leading providers of training packages for healthcare professionals in the UK. Their courses run in hospitals around the country and use the model of identifying instructor potential from the candidates from a course and then providing instructor training in the form of the RCUK/ALSG Generic Instructors Course. Those individuals then become the faculty for future courses.

It was with this model in mind that I approached ALSG, and specifically Kate Denning, their Director of Education and Development, with a proposal to develop a course designed for mountain rescue volunteers who either currently teach, or want to teach, casualty care within our teams.

*I found the whole course very useful and a great opportunity to chat with other teams' medical officers as to how they deliver Cas care training*

The course runs over a day for twelve candidates. It looks to develop their training skills through a session on adult learning and then candidates trying a range of teaching modalities such as presentations, skills training and running a scenario and providing feedback. Candidates learn not only from their own practice and feedback, but also seeing the techniques used by others in their small groups. The aim of the course is to progress people forwards from their current training styles and techniques and empower them to try new ways.

We have now run two pilot courses, and a big thank you to Exmoor and Calder Valley teams for the use of their bases. We've trained 24 team members from 24 teams,

*My expectations were met and exceeded by the level of knowledge our instructors had, they both have very good non-verbal communication which was subtle but effective*

*The focus was on us practising and critiquing our peers instead of learning teaching techniques via Powerpoint lectures*

including both healthcare professionals and experienced casualty carers. The skills and attitudes learned on the course are not only applicable to medical training but many training activities within teams. Changes were made between the courses based on feedback and more are being incorporated prior to providing ongoing courses across the organisation.

We had a fantastic response to the initial request for participants with 56 applications from 32 teams. So, we plan to deliver two more courses this year and then two per year going forward. Details of these will be coming out in due course. Finally, a huge thank to all who have taken part, embraced the day and provided feedback to make this course even better — we have learnt a lot from you too. 🙌



Kate Denning will be presenting a session in 'Training you to train cas care' at the MREW Conference in September



# News from the Rescue Benevolent Fund

Feeling down? Overwhelmed? Just need a sympathetic ear to chat to? As a mountain or cave rescue team member you can access **Togetherall** free of charge

The Togetherall digital mental health and wellbeing support service is a completely anonymous community where you can express yourself freely and openly. Professionally trained Wall Guides and clinical professionals monitor the community to ensure your safety and anonymity.

Once you're registered and logged in, there's a range of activities that allow you to work through what's troubling you. Share your thoughts with other community members, gain support and advice or offer YOUR valuable support to someone else who needs it. Access a wealth of useful resources and join self-guided support courses covering the key topics which affect all our lives. Or take clinically-approved self-assessments to help you understand more about yourself.

We've been partnering with Togetherall now for two years and the number of team members who are accessing the platform has slowly begun to grow. In the last twelve months, the number registered has grown to

50. Added to this, those members are engaging in an increasing number of activities. The quarterly Togetherall report talks in terms of 'extending the reach of support and connecting at risk individuals that may not typically access traditional services', so to hear that increasing numbers are turning to and trusting this confidential resource is heartening news.

When you register on the platform, a series of questions help build a picture of who you are and how Togetherall might help you. A couple of years in, we're seeing some interesting feedback coming through. Of those registered, **60% are male and 25% are over 55 years old. 75% are not engaged with any other formal mental health support and 25% say they have no support at all outside Togetherall — including family and friends. 20% of responders admit to contemplating suicide and 10% have considered self-harm.** We should stress that the site is monitored by professional clinicians and they will be always

be alerted to any such response. Indeed, 22% have had one-to-one interactions with a Togetherall clinician and there have been no escalations reported.

In terms of what members report to be experiencing, the key issues are 'feeling on edge', 'feeling down or depressed', 'stress', 'sleep issues' and 'worrying in social situations'. The five categories tagged within the community conversations are Depression (the most frequently tagged), Anxiety, General Chat and Stress, with PTSD/Trauma the more recent addition, over the last three months.

The anonymous nature of the resource means we have absolutely no idea who you all are, of course (and we can't stress that often enough), but clearly there is a need in our mountain and cave rescue communities for this sort of mental health support. We've recently renewed the agreement for a further two years and registration is easy — just follow the guide below, and get chatting. You don't need to be alone. ☺

## Neil Woodhead RBF Chairman

'I am really amazed at how quickly you have dealt with this... it does take away the financial issue he and his wife were concerned about.'

That's what one team leader thought of the way the Rescue Benevolent Fund assisted a member of their team earlier this year. It's nice to be appreciated and wonderful that we can spring into action when needed to make a real difference to a family's life that has been impacted by their volunteering in a team.

By making a donation to the Rescue Benevolent Fund YOU can make a difference to the work we do and the team members and their families we are able to help. I encourage you to think about making a donation or ask your team trustees whether your team can.

We held our AGM in April and a number of regions had a representative or ambassador joining us online to see how the last year has gone. But did YOUR region? Some regions were not represented and, if not, can they explain to you why not? We are here for every single team member who seeks our benevolence and perhaps you should be making sure that your region is engaging with

us. If it isn't then I would question your trustees. Do you know who your regional representative or ambassador is? Please do make sure you are getting the information from them circulated around your region and team. Also keep an eye on our website and social media.

If you do need our benevolence then please get in touch. You may not need very much at all but that doesn't mean you can't ask us for help. We aren't here for just the big cases and those cases that you think may be more deserving than you, we're here for YOU. Contact us and we'll hold your hand through the application process, making it as easy as we can and keeping everything confidential.

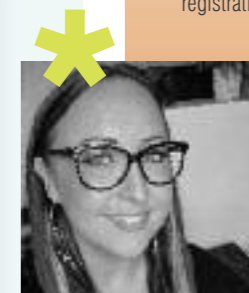
### SEE YOU AT THE CONFERENCE!

It isn't long now until the MREW Conference opens at Lancaster University. Your Rescue Benevolent Fund trustees will be attending and we look forward to chatting to you there. Make sure you visit our stand and find out more about what we do and the service Togetherall provides through us. Emily

Bromiley from Togetherall will be joining us on the stand this year which we're excited about. In today's hectic and stressful world we can all find things get too much for us, so Togetherall can help us all by being that safe place to get support and start to feel better. Your volunteering as a rescuer doesn't have to be the problem — we believe your volunteering will be better if you feel better, so the whole rescue community can benefit. ☺

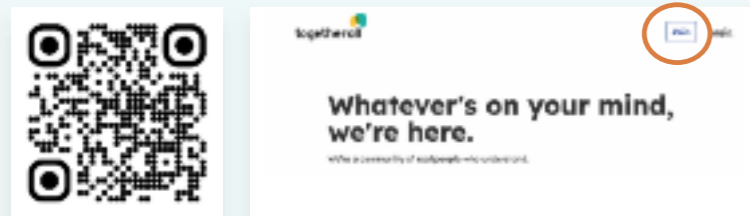
**JOIN US IN A TOGETHERALL AWARENESS SESSION: ONLINE TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2024, AT 7.00PM**

Emily will also be leading a 45-minute online awareness session in October, presenting an overview of the platform, its use within the wider community (in the MoD and NHS, to name but two), and how it can help support individuals. This will be followed by an opportunity to ask questions. If you fancy joining us, please register your name and email address with Judy, via [secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund](mailto:secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund) so we can share the meeting link. We'll also be taking registrations for this at the conference.

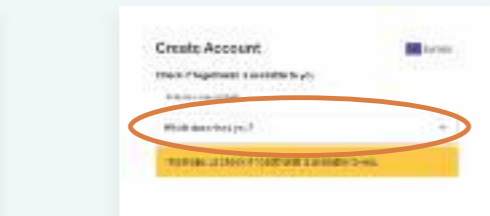


**Emily Bromiley will be presenting a session on 'Togetherall' at the MREW Conference in September**

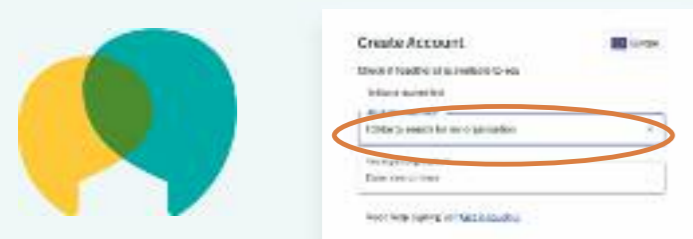
**1 Go to [togetherall.com](https://togetherall.com) or scan QR code. Click 'Join'**



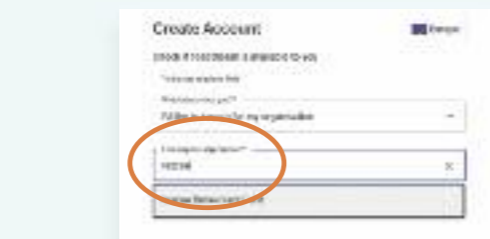
**2 To create account Select 'Which describes you?'**



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



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

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LOOKING AFTER YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING WITH ARTICLES COURTESY OF TOGETHERALL IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE RESCUE BENEVOLENT FUND



## What is body positivity?

Body positivity for any individual means cultivating an attitude of acceptance, appreciation and love towards their own body, regardless of its size, shape or appearance. Ultimately, body positivity is about fostering a healthy, respectful and loving relationship with one's own body. It involves:

- **Self-acceptance:** Embracing your body as it is, without feeling the need to conform to societal or cultural beauty standards
- **Self-compassion:** Treating yourself with kindness and understanding, especially when you experience negative thoughts about your body
- **Confidence:** Feeling confident in your skin and valuing yourself beyond physical appearance
- **Health focus:** Prioritising overall health and wellbeing over achieving a specific look or weight
- **Challenging those negative narratives:** Recognising and rejecting negative messages and stereotypes about body image perpetuated by media and society

— in addition to your own negative inner dialogue!

- **Empowerment:** Feeling empowered to make choices that reflect your comfort and happiness, such as wearing what you want or engaging in activities without fear of judgement.

### HOW TOGETHERALL'S DIGITAL PEER SUPPORT CAN HELP

During the summer, when body image concerns may peak, Togetherall can be an invaluable tool for individuals to navigate their feelings and find solidarity.

The power of digital peer support lies in its accessibility and the strength of shared experiences. On Togetherall, individuals can connect with peers who understand their struggles with body image, offering mutual support, empathy and encouragement. This connection is particularly important in summer, a time that can feel isolating for those who do not conform to societal beauty standards. The anonymity of the platform ensures that people can express

their vulnerabilities without fear of judgment, fostering a more open and honest dialogue about body positivity.

### PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS ALL YEAR ROUND

- **Forums and discussions:** Members can participate in forums specifically focused on body image and summer-related anxiety. Sharing stories and advice helps to normalise diverse body types and experiences.
  - **Resources and articles:** The platform features a wealth of educational materials on body positivity, self-care tips to combat negative self-talk, helping individuals to build a healthier self-image.
  - **24/7/365 availability:** The digital nature of Togetherall ensures support is available around-the-clock — crucial for individuals who wish to seek help over weekends and through the night.
- Access Togetherall now and start getting the support you deserve (See page 22 for a handy guide). ☺

## REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS FOR TECHNICAL CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

We know your gear is important to you, and as a rescue professional we know it gets used hard. Rocky mountains, barbed wire and hungry puppies sometimes get the better of us. On top of it all, things don't always last as long as they should. That's why we are committed to delivering high quality repairs that extend the lifespan of your gear. We want your gear to take you as long and far as you would like to go, and in the process leave a smaller footprint on the planet.

Snowdonia Gear Repair provides zip replacements, seam sealing and sewn patches. We repair down jackets, waterproofs, tents, trousers and backpacks. For alterations and custom equipment please get in touch.

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# Embracing change with SAR TIER

**MARK JONES** BRECON MRT

When I took on the training officer role for the Brecon team in 1994 the expectations of a training officer were very different. Once every six months, I would produce a training timetable listing general subject matters for the focus of Wednesday evening training and a location for the monthly Sunday session. I would allocate a team member to run the session and what or how they covered the session was pretty much up to them. The concept of training records was 'relaxed' and standards were fluid.

As we moved through the years it was becoming evident that expectations from within the team, the national body and partner agencies were changing. A group of us sat down and wrote a list of 'training modules' we felt hill members and hill party leaders should train in, some of which were attendance-based, some assessment-based — quite a controversial concept in itself. These were things such as assessable navigation and fitness standards and demonstrating basic skills, like correct stretcher assembly. There was a distinct overlap with the then MRC (Mountain Rescue Council) Training Guidelines which stated: 'The list below contains the agreed statements of training required by a Full Hill Member of a Mountain Rescue Team.' Confident wording that we agreed with and were already covering.

In 2009, fellow Brecon team member Jason Sutton produced a basic online training platform that would help me keep track of who was maintaining the ever-growing list of training required by the team. We were now training in nationally

recognised training qualifications in many areas including driving, water rescue and Casualty Care. It was no longer possible to keep adequate training records on a spreadsheet in an increasingly professional organisation.

Within five years Jason's job had taken him away to England and it was evident that the software was not keeping up with our needs. I started looking around at what other teams were doing and I was hearing that the software they were using was 'OK, but...'

So I trialed a few options and agreed with the opinions I had received. I now had to strong-arm Jason into producing something that would work for mountain rescue teams. In late 2016, he cracked and TIER was born.

## TRAINING, INCIDENTS, EQUIPMENT AND REPORTING

These were the things we as a team (and I guessed all mountain rescue teams), needed to record. I was the training officer, I'd spent months persuading Jason to take this on, so I got first dibs and we started with

training. By the time he had finished, this is what I had for an online system that could be accessed on any device anywhere there was a signal:

A **Dashboard** (Figure 1) that gives team members information at a glance relating to their training, incidents and equipment. There is also additional information available for the various levels of administrator where they can drill down further into the data to see more granular information that is presented.

A **Training Schedule** (Figure 2) that shows the date and time of the session, the venue location which links to Google/Apple Maps, records who is facilitating the session, who is intending to attend and which modules we will be training in. This is presented in a list or calendar view, but most of the information can be interrogated further (see right).

Training modules are allocated to one or more roles allowing for role-specific training sessions or combined team training sessions where roles are acknowledged. Any of these can be defined as either 'Critical', 'Attendance', 'Assessment' or 'Incident' based.

If marked as Critical, the team member will show as 'lapsed' in that role if a critical module has expired. Attendance or Assessment definitions distinguish whether a module can be achieved just by attending a session or the team member has to demonstrate a particular standard. If assessment-based, the facilitator can either sign off the whole group or mark each member individually when they complete the session.

We are also able to attach certificates to modules so every team member who has an external qualification, in say GVC or DEFRA Module 3, has access to their certificates directly off their phone. This has proved very useful when operating with other agencies, in particular the fire and

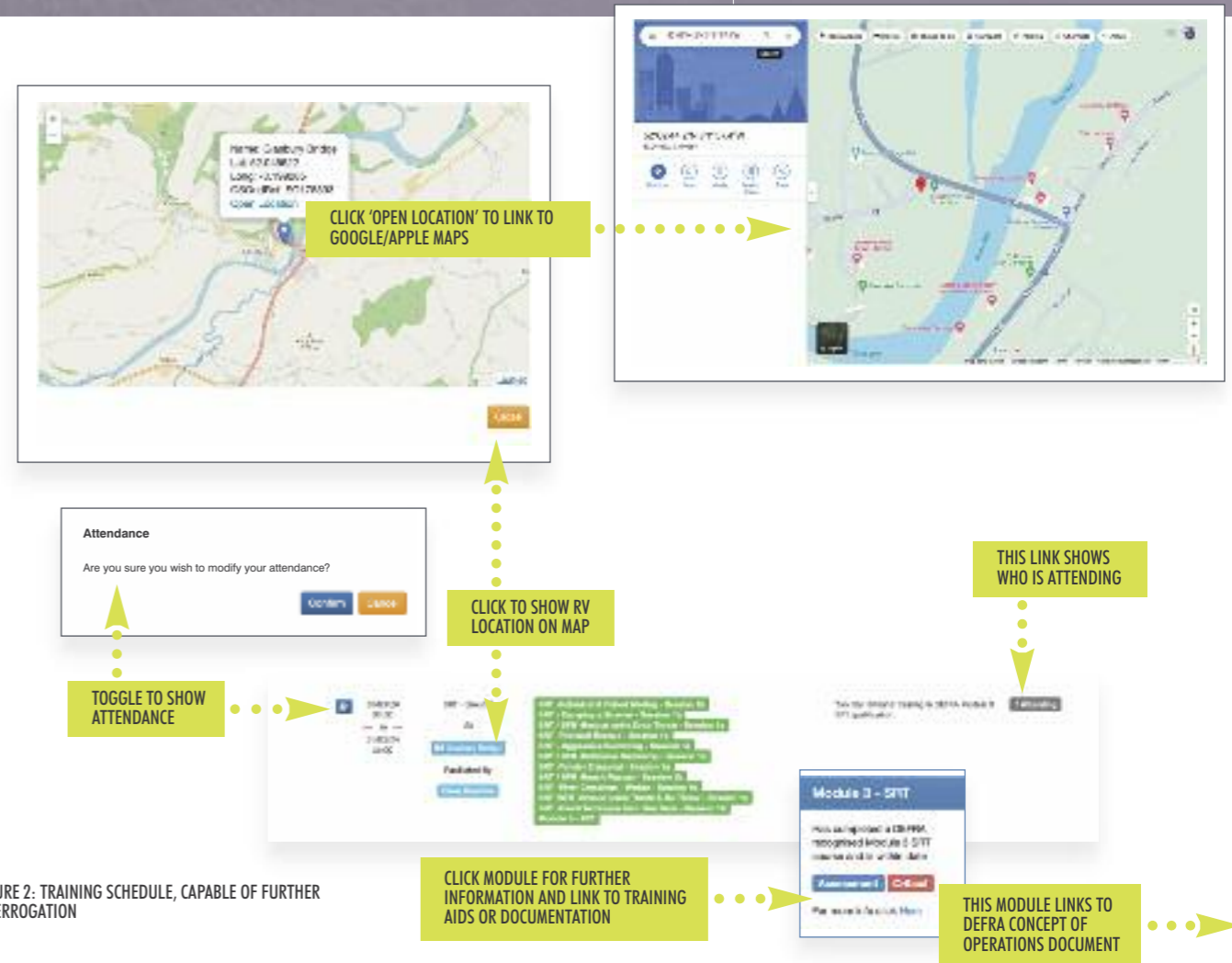


FIGURE 2: TRAINING SCHEDULE, CAPABLE OF FURTHER INTERROGATION

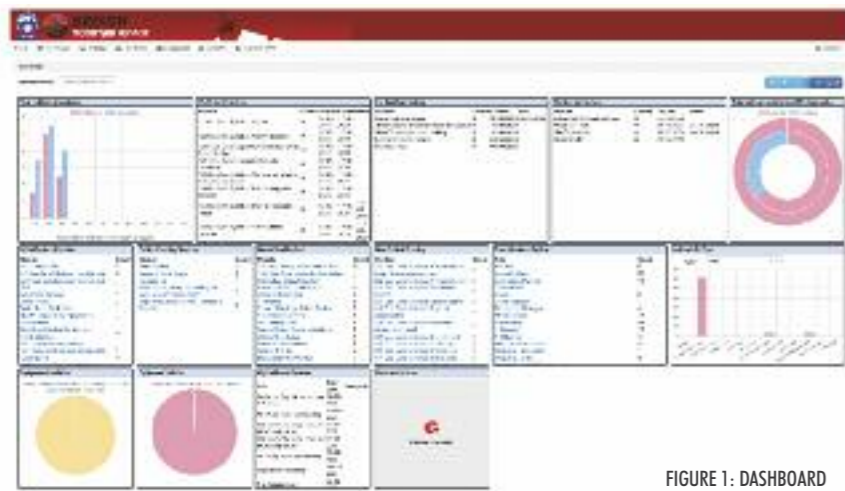


FIGURE 1: DASHBOARD

rescue service in water-related incidents where we can show our certification. This may also prove helpful as we transition from Casualty Carers to Remote Rescue Medical Technicians.

Any module has the option to link to a URL. This offers the option for members to link to training aides either from the schedule or their own personal assessment page. In Brecon we link the Casualty Care modules to the corresponding Moodle training resource, technical modules to in-house videos stored on Google Drive, online SAR helicopter training to the iSAR web page and so forth.

The administration interface is easy to use and even learns which sessions tend to get grouped together. TIER will then 'forecast' sessions we may need to consider scheduling and even suggest which modules are due for rescheduling and which modules often get scheduled together ie. '3.2 Cas Care Syllabus: Airway', '3.2.5 (a) Cas Care Logbook: Conducted Head Tilt' and '3.2.5 (b) Cas Care Logbook: Conducted Chin Lift'.

The **Incident** option of the module relates to which modules we want team members to be allowed to add as CPD when they show their attendance on a call-out.

This element has been designed to collect internal information relating to incidents and allows us to apply CPD to those incidents. Any module marked as CPD in an incident also allows the organisation to push back the retraining date of that module for that individual. There's a limit of 1-3 occasions this is allowed to happen before the team member has to retrain in that module. This helps relieve the training burden on the individual and also captures activity on incidents. It also allows us to produce some useful information on any incident data we record, such as heat maps of call-out distribution (Figure 3, over the page).

**Equipment** can also be managed on TIER. Brecon team issues an FPE pack comprising helmet, harness, karabiners, slings, belay device and prussiks, as well as clothing. This equipment can be managed in the same way as team-held equipment.

The system has been designed on a 'container' system ie. Krab XYZ is stored in the Team Rope Rescue System Rigging Bag 1 which in turn is stored in the team Land Rover. The system ties training records to equipment access meaning we can ensure only team members with verified competencies can use specific rescue gear. The software's maintenance tracking capabilities mean we can schedule regular checks for equipment, notify equipment managers of any damaged or lost equipment as well as any equipment that is flagged for maintenance. This prolongs the lifespan of vital equipment but, more importantly, guarantees that our equipment is in safe working order when deployed into an emergency.

The **Reporting** feature has six 'supplied reports' that cover the subject matter I most frequently seek a report on, but I also have the ability to produce my own tailor-made reports based on whatever information I

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## Providing Technical Rescue Solutions

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need from the system, be it training, equipment or incident related. The report builder can take any data you hold and produce a report. As a somewhat random example, Figure 4 shows when last year's calls started, the OS grid reference of the RV (other formats available), what type of operation it was and the temperature at the time. Not a particularly useful report in itself, but it demonstrates the point that you can run a report on anything! The report can be generated as shown and exported to CSV, HTML (Excel Compatible), Excel or PDF formats.

TIER and DroneDesk are working towards integration between their platforms and Jason is willing to work with other companies to integrate their software others in the SAR community, such as SARCALL, MREW reporting, iSAR and so on, to create even more autonomy and further reduce the workload on administrative tasks. We already use their built-in reporting software to provide key reports on call-outs, training and equipment.

They are also able to upload existing team data from a spreadsheet format if a team wanted to migrate from an existing system.

In conclusion, the shift from paper schedules to sophisticated software like TIER has not only saved me and the training team in Brecon MRT countless hours in administrative tasks, but has also enhanced our operational readiness. In 2018 our MREW Peer Review described our training record keeping on TIER as 'highly developed'.

It was suggested that we share its capabilities with the rest of the SAR community, but the equipment and reporting elements were undergoing further development. As we continue to embrace these technological tools, we are confident that with our commitment to saving lives comes an ability to demonstrate a high level of compliance and standards in our management of training, equipment and incident record keeping.

If any team training officer would be interested in discussing SartIER further I am happy to talk about my experiences of using this great piece of software or point you in the direction of the developers. ☺

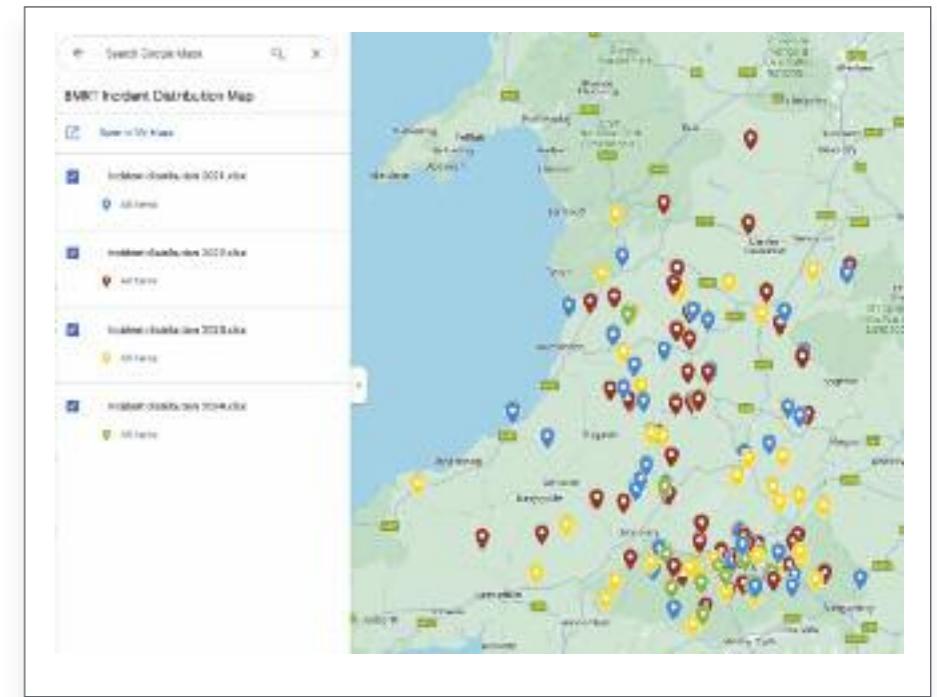


FIGURE 3: HEAT MAP OF RESOURCES

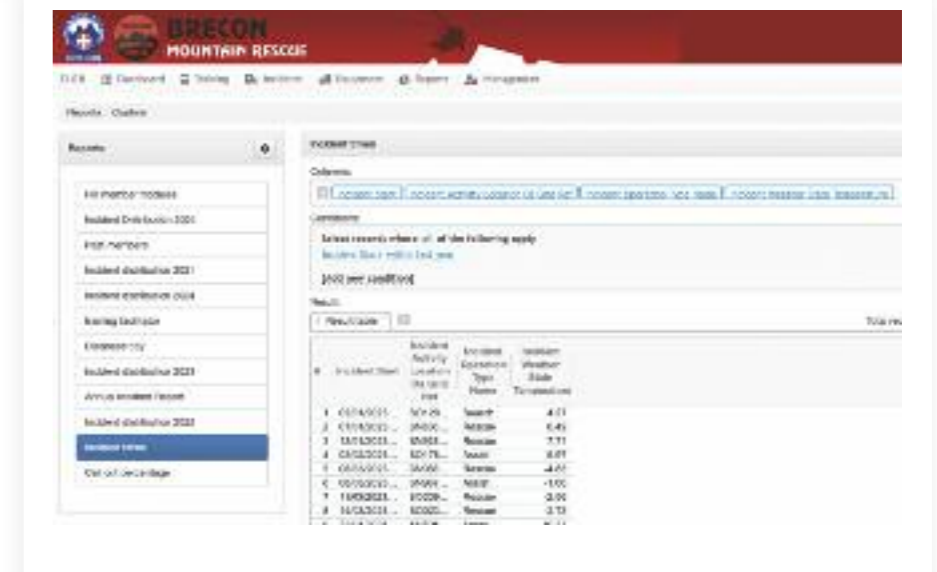


FIGURE 4: EXAMPLE OF REPORTING CAPABILITY. IMAGES FROM SCREENSHOTS PROVIDED.




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Jigsaw pieces © Flash Vector via iStock



## Understanding the value of allyship in mountain rescue

**DAN SCOULAR** CLEVELAND MRT

I wish I could say I haven't witnessed prejudicial behaviour or language in mountain rescue, but I can't. It happens, and it's necessary that we have a conversation about it. That conversation involves all of us, and the most important part of 'us' is the majority. People like me. Because people like me can choose to turn a blind eye, choose not to play a part, or choose to pretend it's not a problem. This isn't a guide to becoming an ally. It's my journey: where I came from, the attitudes instilled in me, and when I began questioning them. And it starts far from mountain rescue.

I grew up in London during the 1970s and '80s. My mother and stepfather were actors, sometimes appearing in film and TV, but mostly performing on stage. I would accompany them to work during school holidays, arriving at the theatre around 3.00pm for the night's performance. They'd let me roam backstage under the watchful eyes of stage managers, make-up artists, engineers, set designers, carpenters, electricians, dressers and others. These people made the shows happen and made my parents look good. They welcomed me, snuck me into the shows, let me play with their equipment, listened to my stories, and fed me chips and Pepsi. At the end of the night, they'd hand me back to my parents, who would express their gratitude, sign autographs at the stage door, and we'd head home in my stepfather's Renault.

When I wasn't at school, I spent much time with theatre people: a diverse group. Most were underrepresented — women, gay or black — and growing up, they were some of the safest, most caring people I knew.

Unfortunately, my family's attitude didn't reflect this kindness. Our household was steeped in racism, misogyny, classism and homophobia. My parents were wealthy, white and articulate, and they should have known better. Their prejudices were shared by many I encountered at home and school.

You'll recognise the language and attitudes if you're from my generation. As a child, I absorbed them, believing that being white, male and middle-class made me superior. This mindset was reinforced at school and persisted into adulthood, especially in corporate London, where I worked. Behind closed office doors, the prejudiced language flowed, influencing every decision we made, from hiring to promoting to firing.

I wish I could say things have changed, but

as a management consultant, I still see these attitudes in many clients. Recently, one client was willing to support neurodiverse workers, but not any other groups. They wanted to tick one diversity box, but ticking all of them was just a bit too much. Another client claimed he couldn't support equal pay for women because men are physically stronger and handle pressure better.

When did I start feeling uncomfortable with this behaviour? I wish I could say it was always, but it wasn't until 2017, at 46, when I became a Reservist in the British Army. I expected the Army to have unwritten rules similar to those of my upbringing. Instead, I found a modern environment where prejudicial behaviour is not only forbidden by policy, but actively challenged by leaders at all levels.

I've witnessed highly professional, diverse military teams working together to solve complex, dangerous problems. Teams that train to the same standards perform the same duties, operate the same weapons, and take the same risks, regardless of their backgrounds. I believe the Army recognises the moral and legal imperative of diversity and allyship but also sees diverse teams as better problem solvers who avoid group think.

Reflecting on the exceptional individuals I've worked with, I feel embarrassed by the language and behaviours I once tolerated or participated in. I'm ashamed that such

behaviour continues today, even in mountain rescue. There are many parallels between soldiers and mountain rescue volunteers. We face difficult work in harsh conditions, with no option to go home when the going gets tough. We must solve every problem we encounter because no one else is coming to take over.

When we use racist, sexist or homophobic language or behaviours, we send a clear message: 'You don't belong here, and you're not good enough to be part of my team.' Often, we do this subtly so we can deny it if challenged or accuse others of being oversensitive. It's not banter. It's not professional. It's an expression of our fragility and inferiority. And creating a toxic environment isn't the only danger: if the public or the media learns of such behaviour, our reputation and funding are at risk.

More importantly, it's wrong. I dislike writing 'female team members' instead of simply 'team members'. However, the women on our team are exceptional; they are indispensable, whether leading technical recoveries in harrowing circumstances or managing risk and reward while training in the winter gullies of the Northern Corries. It angers me to think such a member could be made to feel unwelcome or constantly have to justify their place.

If you're like me, white and male, you already have an advantage and an opportunity. How you use it is up to you. ☘



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**Dan Scoular will be presenting a session on 'Hallmarks of a high-performing team' at the MREW Conference in September**





# Peer review: Holding up the mirror

TIM CAIN

In April, fourteen teams met at Edale base to discuss peer review and look at options for the future. The purpose was to explore the way forward for peer review across MREW, including whether teams feel it is beneficial to continue with the process. Nineteen teams completed reviews between 2015 and Covid, since which there has been a pause. One team (Holme Valley) has decided to conduct a second review in the autumn of 2024 and two others have expressed an interest in running their own reviews.

'Governance' and 'Peer Review' are two different aspects of MREW performance. Peer review must not become an audit if teams are to be intrinsically motivated to seek internal growth and share good practice. The Question Set (QS) and peer visit process is intended to allow a 'mirror to be held up' for the team to gain greater self-awareness and perhaps expose some of the invisible unknowns.

In relation to governance, it was asked whether there might be a list of 'applicable things we (teams) should do'.

Peer review feedback is not a 'report' on the team conducting their own review. The process is entirely internal, owned by the team, for the team, supported by external peers who, acting as mentors and critical friends, ask second and third order questions arising from the team's responses to the QS.

Of the teams who have conducted a review all reported the positive value of the experience with only one team reporting that the process itself was 'like Ofsted'.

## A REVIEWER'S PERSPECTIVE:

The following bullets reflect the comments made by those who have been part of a review team.

- Privilege to see how other teams work
- Hard work with long hours
- Enjoyable
- Able to take some great ideas back to my own team
- Very talented people giving a lot of good practice
- Picked up good ideas
- Fantastic experience.

## THE WAY FORWARD

The session addressed two questions and generated a number of observations:  
**1. What could future peer review look like?**  
**2. What are the options for future peer review process structures?**

- How do we (teams) communicate and share good practice?
- Fear of 'failure' prevents teams engaging
- Teams don't know what they don't know
- Concern, what happens afterwards?
- How do we provide subject matter specialists to provide support?
- Being a reviewer is good preparation for a review of your own team
- How do we reassure people that peer review is a learning opportunity?
- Who could be involved? Regional peer review coordinators (would require training)

- Create a menu of peer review options, full weekend and short subject specific reviews lasting a few hours
- Form a pool of potential reviewers — training?
- Invite people to observe reviews — how can this be done without impacting on the confidentiality of the review?
- Use Moodle to spread good practice by having a dynamic resource pool based on the Question Set
- Rename the process to something with fewer preconceptions: Peer Mentoring?
- Possibilities for remote/virtual elements of a review
- How do we get the right people into the reviewer pool — not everyone has the skills to be a coach/mentor
- How do we break negative expectations? You expect Ofsted, you get Ofsted!
- Benchmarking with partner agencies (RNLI, Lowland) — remove MREW bias
- Make the peer review QS sections more subject-matter specific. There are currently seven sections: Policies and Procedures, Call-Out Process, Equipment, Technical Rescue, Medical, Wellbeing and Training. Suggested ten sections: Medical, Equipment, Call-Out, Organisational Resilience, Technical Rope, Water Rescue

- Vehicles, Training, Wellbeing and Search. Afternote: Leadership and succession planning? Sustainability? Governance? Risk Analysis? Policies and Procedures?
- Have the option to review all sections or a bespoke number of sections including a single subject as decided by the team
- 'Soft' review looking at limited scope of subjects or 'Full' review both are very worthwhile
- Embed peer review culture into the Party Leader course
- Regular feature in MR Magazine
- QS available on MREW MOODLE
- Conference? A summary of 'good stuff identified during the previous two years
- Feed into UKSAR, IKAR and to insurance brokers as a demonstration of MREW as a learning organisation
- Why not peer review MREW itself and

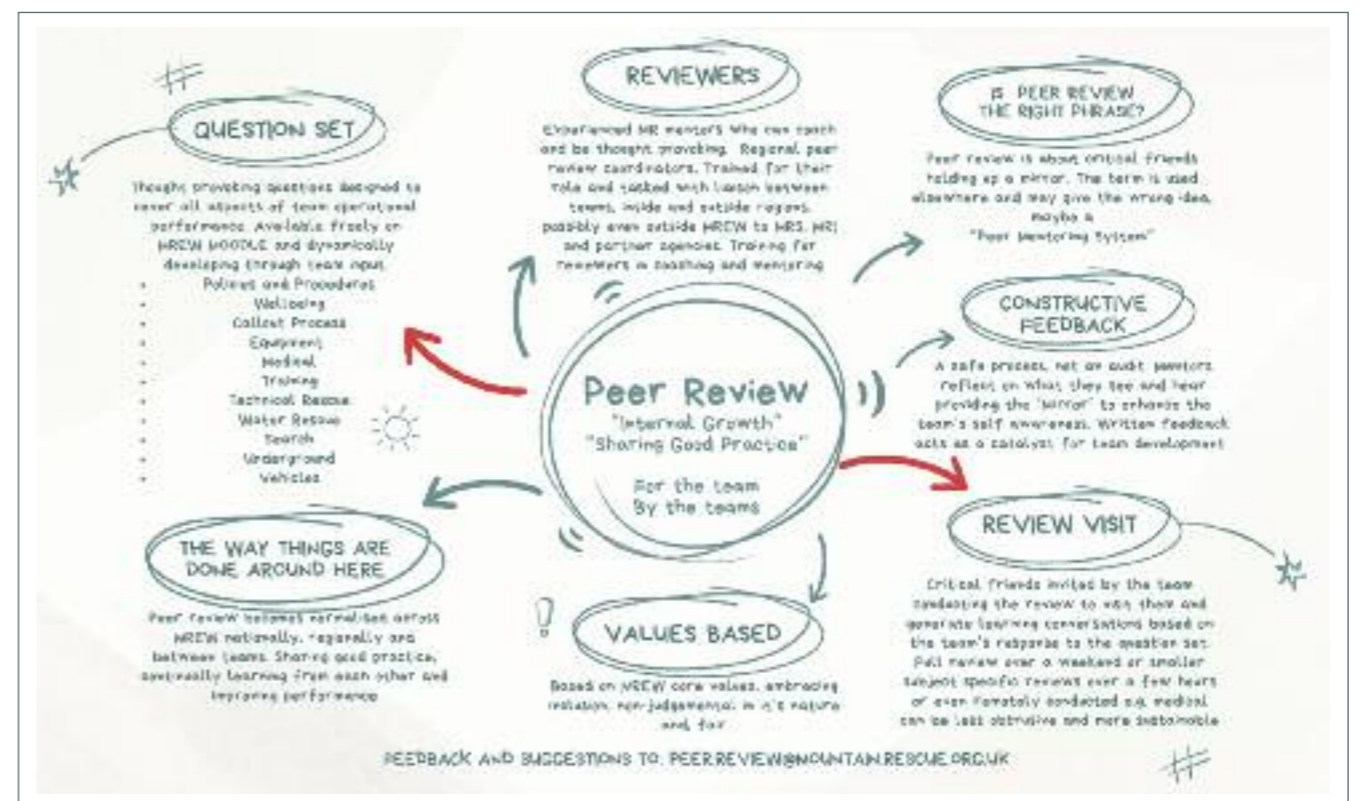
- the regions? Interaction with SMR, MRI and Lowland Rescue
- Training of reviewers in 'Soft skills' such as coaching and mentoring, psychology of performance, leadership
- Suggestion that the peer review aims are stated as promoting 'Internal Growth and Sharing Best Practice'
- Eighteen reviews in five years — none since Covid so we need to 'ramp it up again'. (Afternote: As noted, two teams are in the early planning stages and one will conduct their review in the autumn).

## AGREED ACTIONS ARISING:

- Write article for magazine!
- Share idea of peer review to neighbouring teams within regions
- Communicate the idea of short and long reviews

- Liaise with regional chairs to encourage teams to engage
- Revisit review feedback and identify any opportunities for re-review
- Brief on outcomes of the meeting and encourage teams who have yet to use the peer review to do their own review
- Find a sharing platform to share good practice
- Scope the creation of regional peer review coordinators and their training
- Create a pool of potential reviewers and provide training. ☺

Images show various teams during the peer review process. **Opposite:** UWFR. **Below centre:** Clockwise from left: Ogwen Valley MRO, Northumberland National Park MRT, Bolton MRT and Duddon and Furness MRT. Images © OVMRO, NNPMT, BMRT and DFMRT. **Bottom page:** Mind Map summarising the way forwards © Tim Cain.





## The Spine and mountain rescue

The Montane Spine Race follows the backbone of England, the Pennine Way. Participants follow this 268-mile route, in winter or summer, non-stop and self-sufficiently, the maximum time to complete this test of physical and mental endurance just seven days. Competitors often include rescue team members and many teams also provide safety cover.

The first Spine Race was in 2012, founded by Arctic expedition guides Phil Hayday-Brown and Scott Gilmour. It started in a small way with a handful of competitors and only three finished that first race. It was thought to be too difficult to organise and participate in, as it is mostly dark in winter. It now fields 650 people, with 150 on the full 268-mile Spine Race. It has expanded from the original Winter Spine to a Summer Spine and includes the shorter Challenger North, Challenger South and Sprint events which are roughly half the Pennine Way. The summer race should not be underestimated.

Summer weather on the high Pennines can be atrocious and wintery — or a heatwave and sun on the exposed uplands can bring the risk of sunstroke, heatstroke and dehydration.

Some might think the Spine is a recipe for major mountain rescue call-outs. Yet it is so well planned and organised that these are minimal. Arguably, more pressure on teams arises from the numerous summer mountain challenges such as the national Three Peaks, primarily involving Wasdale MRT on Scafell Pike and Llanberis MRT on Snowdon, and the Yorkshire Three Peaks,

involving CRO. Not to mention the charity and challenge events that run every summer weekend in most national parks.

Spine participants are usually experienced and seasoned hillwalkers. All entrants are well prepared and briefed by the organisers, and the whole event is meticulously planned and monitored. Participants carry trackers and the public like to 'dot watch' following the progress of the runners. There are twelve self-contained safety teams, including doctors, paramedics, nurses and off-duty MR personnel. These safety teams actively advise and monitor the 'Spinners' whilst they are en route. Minor 'rescues' can be undertaken, usually with 'walking wounded.' The organisers do consult with the teams along the route and, if there is a serious casualty or stretcher case, mountain rescue will be involved. There have been a couple of incidents over the twelve years of Spine challenges which resulted in a call-out, but the pressure is taken off the various teams on the route by these safety teams.

The participants are #AdventureSmart by necessity. All the entrants are vetted and experienced. They have the necessary skills and knowledge of the route. They're aware it's nearly 300 miles of rugged terrain. They will expect the worst from the weather and prepare for harsh conditions. They'll have appropriate, lightweight gear, suitable for the extreme conditions.

I have been involved in many of the Spine races, getting out on the hill, taking photos rather than competing, and I am always amazed at the determination of the participants, as well as the organisers' logistic skills (not unlike running a military campaign). There are a lot of regular volunteers and the general ambience is friendly, enthusiastic and energetic. Everyone involved, from helpers to participants are good-natured and all give 101%. As a thank you to mountain rescue, any masochistic team member can get a reduced entry fee of £100 instead of the usual £600 on the Challenger North or South races. Get training and I might see you in the Pennines next winter! 📸

Left: A selection of images from previous Spine challenges, winter and summer © Alan Hinkes.



### MAY: GRUBS SUPPLIES BOLTON TEAM WITH ESSENTIAL FOOTWEAR

Grubs Boots, based in Bolton, handed over footwear to every member of Bolton MRT as the company felt its footwear would be of great benefit in rescue situations where members are out in all weathers, battling unforgiving terrain.

On behalf of the team, leader Chris Greenhalgh thanked Grubs 'for their very generous donation of a pair of lightweight boots or walking trainers for every member of operational volunteers. This new footwear should see team members through many rescues, training exercises and a whole host of other team activities which we undertake every week. Team members have, over our 56 years, always bought their own boots, so it is amazing to be supported in this way by a Bolton-based business. We hope this will lead to a long-standing relationship with Grubs.' 'Our family have been an integral part of Bolton life for over 200 years,' says David Foster, of Grubs. 'My great-grandfather was a founding member of Bolton Harriers, the local running club. My grandfather was involved in starting Bolton Lads' Cub. It's an amazing honour for my daughters and me to be able to support Bolton Mountain Rescue Team. Our footwear is ideally suited to their needs and it's a large cost for the volunteers, so for us to be able to support them is a privilege. The work they undertake daily, saves lives, and allows us all to enjoy the wild places of areas of Greater Manchester and Lancashire knowing that they are here should we get into difficulty.'

Grubs will be exhibiting at the Mountain Rescue Conference in September and also sponsoring the delegate bags.

### JUNE: BOWLAND TEAM MEMBERS RIDE WITH AMBULANCE CREWS

Several Remote Rescue Medical Technicians (RRMTs) from Bowland Pennine team took the opportunity to go out for a ride-along shift with one of their team colleagues and got to experience what it was like to work on a 999 ambulance, attending all the calls they received.

For many, this was very different to their regular jobs, and the remote settings they operate in as part of the team. Describing it as an 'eye-opening experience', they batted off a variety of questions about why mountain rescue were standing in a patient's house. Everyone who went out got involved in any way they could, chatting with families, patients and ambulance colleagues. Working closely with North West Ambulance Service, team members used this opportunity to promote the team and meet some of the clinicians they meet on jobs.

The team members attended a variety of calls, most of which had some underlying social aspect. Although there were no 'big jobs' reported, the chance to come along and see what it was like to work in the community was a day they'll remember. With team members recently passing their RRMT exam, these ride-along shifts will continue throughout the year for as long as members continue to express an interest.

Right: Team member with NWAS ambulance © BPMRT.



# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE



### Raising funds for rescue

### JUNE: FOOTBALLING BUDDIES RAISE £1,500 FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

On a sunny Saturday in Tamworth, two football teams – one representing Adventure Buddies and one from Hiking Buddies UK – met to raise funds for Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW).

Adventure Buddies won the match (score was 7:3), but the real winner was mountain rescue as this event raised almost £1,500 for MREW. Thanks go to Keith Jones of Adventure Buddies and everyone else involved in organising what turned out to be a great event and a grand day out for lots of people too. Future plans include Light Up walks in October, a Fundraising Ball in North Wales in November, and various walks and meet ups over the summer. They are also promoting the Derby MRT abseil event at Cromford.

If you've not come across these two groups on Facebook, they have a combined membership of over 50,000 and not only raise money and awareness for mountain rescue but are also great advocates for #BeAdventureSmart and other aspects of mountain safety. Huge thanks to all of their members for continuing to explain, educate AND enthuse about the outdoors.

And we've now added Keith to our Who's Who as an official 'MREW ambassador'.



Top: Adventure Buddies team celebrate their win. Above: Left to right: Marlon, Monty, Steve Kenyon (NEWSAR) and Keith Jones. Right: MREW ambassador Keith Jones. Images supplied by Keith Jones/Adventure Buddies.



Images © Woodhead MRT.



## WOODHEAD TEAM CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY AND KING'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

It's been a momentous year for Woodhead team, as they turn fifty in the summer. **Andy Bassinder**, the teams social media and press officer, reports.

To celebrate the team's anniversary, we have been taking a weekly 'social media' look at how the team has adapted over the past five decades. Woodhead came into existence in 1974, although its founder members already had many years of experience in mountain rescue. One of the first recorded rescues within what was our area in the early days, was in 1928 at Laddow Rocks in the Crowden Valley, Derbyshire. Edgar Pryor fell whilst climbing and broke his leg. He was carried off the hill using a farm gate as a stretcher by members of the Rucksack Club and local farmers — the beginnings of the 'mountain rescue stretcher'.

Woodhead was an amalgamation of various teams in the northern end of the Peak District: Stocksbridge Rover Scouts, 29th Sheffield Rover Scouts, Barugh Boys Brigade MRT and Huddersfield Rover Scouts. Ex-team leader and chairman, and current PDMRO controller, Barry Gregory MBE, and ex-team member Dave Crossland, were original founder members of the Huddersfield team which developed after the Four Inns tragedy of 1964.

'In those days,' says Barry, 'there were no mobile phones or radios, and only about 20% of the team had access to vehicles. Organising a call-out could take anything up to an hour, and then you had to get to the RV point!'

From the early days to the late 2010s, Woodhead was predominantly a team that dealt with searches, averaging about 30 calls in 2010/2011, mostly for missing and injured persons on the moors, and assisting the police with searches for vulnerable missing persons in lowland areas. More recently, the team has averaged 80 call-outs a year, with a large number of incidents assisting Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) where paramedics may be on scene, but are unable to transport the patient back to the roadhead — for example a YAS assist to an injured mountain biker in Wharnccliffe Woods. Nevertheless, with team members trained as search managers, Woodhead is still able to provide assistance to the police and other agencies to search, locate, treat and evacuate missing persons.

In late 2022, we received a visit from the South Yorkshire assessment committee on behalf of the King's Award for Voluntary Service Team. In October 2023, His Majesty The King approved the KAVS National Committee's recommendation that we should receive the King's Award for Voluntary Service 2023, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK and equivalent to an MBE. Woodhead MRT is one of 262 local charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service recognises outstanding work by local volunteer groups to benefit their communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee and, following his accession, His Majesty The King emphasised his desire to continue the Award. Recipients were announced on 14 November, his birthday.

Representatives of Woodhead will receive the award crystal and certificate from Lord-Lieutenant Dame Hilary Chapman of South Yorkshire later this summer. Two volunteers from Woodhead were also invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May, along with other recipients of this year's award.

'We are extremely proud to be awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service,' says Simon Rippon, team chairman. 'Like any other mountain rescue team, we rely on our fundraising efforts and the generosity of local people and businesses to keep operating. This award is positive recognition of all the team members past and present and their dedication.'



# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE



## Raising funds for rescue

### APRIL: DARTMOOR TEAM JOINS FORCES WITH LOCAL BREWERY

Ashburton team joined forces with family-run Bays Brewery in Paignton to launch their limited edition 'Tracker Ale', with 5% of every pint and bottle sold going to the team to help fund the replacement of its oldest Land Rover.

The charity total came to just over £1,000, with the charity ale a hit among beer drinkers across Devon who were keen to raise a toast to a great local cause.

'As a family-run brewery, that is passionate about flying the flag for the local area, we're always looking at how we can give something back to our community,' says Peter Salmon, director of Bays Brewery. 'Tracker Ale was a great way to say "Cheers" to a charity close to our hearts. We were thrilled to work with the Ashburton team — a group of volunteers who respond to incidents in Torbay and beyond, and without whom the emergency services would not have enough resources to search for those in need.'

Sold in bottles, cask and beer boxes, the smooth pale ale uses a blend of UK and American hops, with tropical aromas 'as mysterious as the moorland landscape'. Members of the team were treated to a behind-the-scenes brewery tour to see how Tracker Ale was made. Ashburton's Kevin Chamberlain added that it is 'great to have the support of local businesses like Bays Brewery with our fundraising, and especially as their product, a great range of beers, is an important part of our team building after training and incidents.'

Top: Tracker Ale bottles with Ashburton and team vehicles © DSRT Ashburton.



He has lived in Colorado Springs in the USA since the 1990s and the reunion was organised by his wife, Tracy, who had liaised with the team to make it happen during a family holiday in the Lakes. 'We were staying in Ambleside and Simon knew we were taking our children and his father, Neville, over to Patterdale for the evening, but neither of them knew I'd been in touch to organise a meet up,' says Tracy. 'Both Simon and Neville found it very emotional and it was great to be able to talk about the incident and for our children to see the rescue centre and find out more about mountain rescue.'

It was an emotional evening for four rescuers too. Dave Freeborn, still a member of Patterdale MRT and the team's president, was one of those involved in the rescue, as was former member, Syd Burns and former chairman, John Williams. Another current team member, Mark Tomlinson, was rescued from Nethermost Pike just ten years after Simon's rescue so he joined the reunion too.

'We were able to dig out the logbook from 1984 and familiarise ourselves with the details,' says Dave. 'Although a rescue like that, with three fatalities and three seriously injured young people, sticks in your mind.'

'Several teams were involved, not only Patterdale, as we also asked for support from Langdale Ambleside, Penrith, Kirkby Stephen and Kendal teams, as well as RAF Linton who were in the area. There was a huge amount of snow on the fells at that time of the incident and the rescue itself took over eight hours. I also remember it took us a few days to retrieve our team Land Rover from the snow drifts after the rescue!'

The evening ended with tea and cake, provided by Kate Tomlinson (Mark's wife), and a lot of conversation and shared memories.

**Top left:** Rescuers and rescued, left to right: Dave Freeborn, Syd Burns, Simon Ellis and John Williams. **Left:** Left to right: Tracy Ellis, Neville Ellis (Simon's father), Wes Davis (Emily's partner), Jacqui and Dave Freeborn, Emily Ellis (Simon's daughter), Jonathan Ellis (his younger son), Syd Burns, Robin Brunner Ellis (Simon's brother), Simon Ellis, Christopher Ellis (Simon's elder son), John Williams and Mark Tomlinson. © Patterdale MRT.



## JUNE: CASUALTY MEETS HIS RESCUE TEAM... FORTY YEARS ON

Simon Ellis, who was reunited with three of his rescuers at a surprise gathering in June, was one of six Venture Scouts involved in an avalanche on Nethermost Pike on 14 January 1984, when he was just seventeen.



## MAY: LAKES DISTILLERY RAISES A GLASS TO MOUNTAIN RESCUE

A new limited edition gin created by the Lakes Distillery is set to raise thousands of pounds to support the work of teams across the Lake District.

Gearing up for peak tourist season, the Lakes Distillery, at Setmurthy near Bassenthwaite Lake, designed the new Lakes Mountain Strength Gin as a special release to raise funds and help educate visitors about being 'Adventure Smart'. Extending the reach of the teams' safety messaging, the distillery will target the 30,000 people who visit their Brand Home, with special neck collars on the gin. The distillery has already provided £10,000 to the Lake District Foundation for investment in mountain safety messaging. With a further £5 donated to mountain rescue for every bottle sold, they will have raised £25,000 to support initiatives that help to decrease avoidable call-outs and promote mountain safety awareness. At 51% ABV, the alcohol by volume in Mountain Strength Gin represents the increase in annual call-outs the Lakes teams have seen in the ten years since the distillery opened in 2014 and highlights the increasing demands on mountain rescue.

The Lakes Mountain Strength Gin was launched at a special event at the distillery in May, to which members of all twelve teams in the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA) were invited. James Pennefather, chief executive of the distillery, said it was 'a wonderful opportunity for our team and guests to learn more about the AdventureSmart campaign and meet some of the amazing volunteers who respond to calls in all weathers and times of day'. Available throughout Cumbria, including the George and Dragon, at Clifton, and The Inn at Grasmere, the gin will retail at £38.50 (70cl) in Booths, independent outlets, and direct from the distillery.

**Top:** The Lakes Mountain Strength Gin on display at the Lakes Distillery. **Below:** Cockermouth and Keswick team members at the distillery launch in May © LDSAMRA.



## Raising funds for rescue

## JULY: TEAM MEMBERS PREPARE FOR EPIC CYCLING CHALLENGE

Penrith team members, Ceri and James Bicknell are all geared up for Europe's longest ultra cycling event, the North Cape 4000, aiming to raise over £4,000 for their rescue team.

The North Cape 4000 starts near Verona in Italy's Trentino region on Saturday 20 July. Initially heading through the Alps, participants have a maximum of 21 days to complete the 4,140-kilometre route. With checkpoints at Munich, Berlin, Copenhagen and Rovaniemi in Finland, the route runs through seven countries and finishes inside the Arctic Circle at North Cape on the northern tip of Norway. Riders in the event are unsupported, needing to carry all their own kit.

'We like to challenge ourselves,' says Ceri, 'but this one is double the distance of any of the other endurance events we've done. It seems a daunting adventure, but it's exciting to think we'll be riding our bikes over mountain passes, alongside lakes, through big cities and past vast Scandinavian forests. The scenery will alter so much and we'll meet many different people, both on the event and as we travel through communities. Hopefully it will be an incredible journey that we can share.'

The pair will be carrying very limited kit, including a lightweight tent, sleeping bags, wet and cold weather clothes, a spare change of cycling outfit and some bike tools. And beyond the obvious challenge of riding over 200km a day for three weeks, James has upped the difficulty by deciding to ride a heavy Cargo bike. This has a front trailer and would usually be found on the streets of Copenhagen transporting children to school and doing everyday deliveries, the weekly shop and so on.

'We're expecting the bike to create a lot of interest,' says Ceri. 'At 22kg, it weighs over twice that of my standard bike and will then have the ten kilogram of luggage as well. And there's no electric motor. Quite probably no one has raced a Cargo bike on the event before and we may be about to find out why!'

To support, go to: [penrithmrt.org.uk/donate](http://penrithmrt.org.uk/donate) and follow the link to their North Cape 4000 Just Giving page.

**Top:** Ceri and James Bicknell with their bikes – including the unusual Cargo bike – ahead of taking on the North Cape 4000' © Penrith MRT.

## COAST SET TO LAUNCH NEW PRODUCTS FOR WINTER 2024

Coast Torches will be attending the MREW Conference for the first ever time this year, showcasing three 'first-to-market' innovations: the XPH40R and XPH80R rechargeable ultra-torches, the RL35R voice-activated rechargeable headtorch and our Coast 'ZX' rechargeable batteries.

**XPH40R and XPH80R rechargeable ultra-torches:** With incredible light outputs of 8,000 and 15,000 Lumens, these two models are ideally suited to the search and rescue environment. The unique innovation is achieved through the addition of Coast's POWER iQ feature, where exact remaining battery life is displayed on an in-built OLED screen in precise hours and minutes, instantly changing up or down with the choice of different light modes, so you can always be sure you have enough runtime. Batteries can be charged inside or remotely from the torch. Extra batteries can be added for added back-up and a Power-Out port enables emergency recharging of other powered products such as phones and satnavs.



**RL35R voice-activated rechargeable headtorch:** Another huge market first is this 1,000 Lumens headtorch, offering the option of traditional button-operated use, or the alternative voice-activated control, allowing hands-free use, whilst adjusting the chosen light mode from Spot Beam, Flood Beam, Max/High, Medium, Low, with added options of red, green, blue and a wide/soft-glow we call 'Arc'. These choices offer tremendous finesse in the selection of the light output. A rear red safety light can be operated in solid red or flashing-red modes which can be easily removed and clipped onto a belt/pocket, connected via an extension lead, whilst full 360-degree visibility is aided by reflective side panels. Coast logos wrap round the sides of their quick-release headstrap, also featuring 360 degree silicone strips designed to grip securely onto any form of safety helmet.

**Coast 'ZX' rechargeable batteries** effectively reinvent rechargeable batteries, to guarantee safety, optimum performance and run time in any device, and they are designed for use with an Alkaline AAA or AA battery cell. This breakthrough technology enables lithium-ion batteries to mimic the output of traditional alkaline cells, combining in a series of major benefits: Much longer battery run times; speedier, easier recharging; huge cost savings; environmental benefits; and an instant upgrade to any older battery-powered equipment into rechargeable, with extended run time!



BBB INVESTMENTS LTD, A3 HARRISON ROAD, AIRFIELD BUSINESS PARK, MARKET HARBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE LE16 7UL T: 01858-410551 E: [LEISURE@COAST-TORCHES.CO.UK](mailto:LEISURE@COAST-TORCHES.CO.UK)



# books

## HAROLD RAEBURN: THE STEPS OF A GIANT

by PETER J BIGGAR Reviewed by MIKE MARGESON OBE

Harold Raeburn is described by some as perhaps the most prominent Scottish climber and mountaineer of the late 19th, early 20th century. Peter Biggar has researched a fabulous and comprehensive insight into his talented, inspirational and complex life.



Any climber or mountaineer, whether summer or winter, will have come across Raeburn routes all over Scotland. Harold started his climbing apprenticeship by the fact he lived close to Salisbury crags in Edinburgh as well as his keen interest in wildlife and the collection of bird eggs from crags and sea cliffs. No doubt this involved climbing solo and the critical honing of the young Harold's climbing skills. Following his adventures, so well researched, the sheer level of activity, physical energy and drive at times is quite staggering. There is such a huge body of first ascents and attempted, many in winter, that today's climbers would be happy to have climbed with the modern equipment and clothing we now enjoy. Of the 30 new routes on Ben Nevis between 1899 and 1921 fifteen have Harold's name on. These include Observatory Ridge and Buttress, North East Buttress and, perhaps most significant, Green Gully winter ascent still a good Grade 4 climb, achieved with no crampons, step cutting with one long axe. Biggar writes, 'There is so much more than the determined climber to Harold Raeburn'.

He also speaks about Raeburn's love of nature, particularly birds, but also animals and plants. He is also a literary man and lover of Tennyson and Coleridge and a man that described a winter scene on Ben Nevis as having 'a fairy like loveliness'. Raeburn was admitted to the Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC) in 1896 and the Alpine Club in 1904. His accounts of new routes in the SMC journal are often very modest and understated in relation to his achievements. He climbed with many partners and members of the SMC, yet would invariably put himself on the sharp end and lead routes. Some of the descriptions make very clear the seriousness of many of his climbs with belays often more psychological than of use if they had been put to the test. His Alpine and greater ranges adventures are perhaps less well known, but are equally as impressive as those at home. Characteristically, unlike many other Alpine climbers of the time, Harold chose to climb without a local guide or guides which was very much the practice of the time. He also chose to explore less climbed and visited areas of the Alps. He clearly demonstrated his drive and desire for real adventure with ascents such the Zmutt Ridge on the Matterhorn and first solo Traverse of the Meije in the Ecrin. Raeburn also ventured further field to the Caucasus and extensively in Norway where he climbed with another great climber and adventure of the era, a man dubbed 'the father of Norwegian mountaineering', Cecil Slingsby.

In 1921 Raeburn led two reconnaissance expeditions in the Himalaya to clarify previous route information and possibilities for ascents of Kangchenjunga. On return, he was chosen to be climbing leader by the Everest Committee of the reconnaissance expeditions of which a young George Mallory was a member. Sadly, this was Harold's last trip and ended due to both poor health and expedition politics. This in-depth biography not only celebrates a remarkable climbing talent, but illuminates the whole era of Edwardian mountaineering and climbing. I completely agree with Peter Biggar's final observations that Raeburn's achievements are equally as impressive as those who followed: WH Murray, Robin Smith, Tom Patey, Jimmy Marshall, Hamish MacInnes and Dougal Haston. A fascinating must read for anybody interested in mountaineering and climbing history.

IN THE STEPS OF A GIANT: HAROLD RAEBURN BY PETER BIGGAR PUBLISHED BY: SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING PRESS ISBN: 978-1-907233-50-0

## JUNE: FELL DOG MAKES INNOVATIVE USE OF RETIRED ROPE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR RESCUE

The company has teamed up with teams across England and Wales to make good use of their retired rescue rope and help support the charity through the creation of knotted rope dog toys.

Founder Carolyn Harker has built a career as a Technical Clothing Designer for humans. With over twenty years of design experience, she is a self-confessed kit nerd and lover of all things outdoors. Working with many globally recognised outdoor brands has given her the skill and expertise, to build a performance brand specifically designed for dogs. Fell Dog was forged in a wild moment on a Lake District fell. When the weather rolled in, Carolyn realised that her dog Tilly was wearing inadequate gear for the harsh wet environments they found themselves in. The storm passed, but Tilly's collar remained wet for hours and soon smelt pretty bad which seemed a basic design fundamental to produce a quick-drying and stink-free solution. This was the beginning of the design journey and with that the Fell Dog brand was born.

Each dog toy costs just £15 with 20% from each purchase donated back to Mountain Rescue England and Wales. You can find the toys at [felldog.com](http://felldog.com)

Raising funds for rescue



## JUNE: SEARCH DOG ISLA RETIRES

After much deliberation and with mixed emotion, handler **Martin Bell** reports his sadness that it was time for Isla to 'rest up and retire from the operational call-out list' on her twelfth birthday. He looks back over her search career.

Isla, a relative of several search dogs before her such as Ginny, Skye and Einich, was born on 2 June 2012. Breeder Lorna taught her well during her first few weeks, and picked her out for me as a potential search dog from the litter of six, as she showed calmness and a 'very good nose', even at the age of four weeks: traits which she has kept. She moved in with the family at ten weeks and settled well, picked up the obedience training over a few short weeks and went on to become a trainee search dog with the Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs at six months old. It took a while us to work out exactly how to work together but, finally we graded as a search team in December 2015.

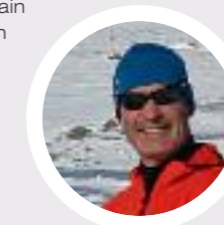
I haven't kept detailed logs on the number of call-outs we made as a pair, but there's been a few and Isla had several finds during her time — one on our very first call-out up above Kirkstone Pass. Perhaps the most notable find was on New Year's Day 2024, near Styhead, for which she earned a TV appearance and much media coverage. She'd gone off on her own whilst several team members and I were discussing the next phase of our search strategy. Turned out the next phase was to walk the casualties off the hill! So it was extra treats that night...

In another find, one cold wet night on Glaramara, Isla made the strike from a long way off, indicating very strongly to bring me to the pair of lost walkers — much to everyone's relief. Of course, the bulk of a search team's work is to clear areas of hillside with no finds at all. As I worked with Isla and did a lot of this, I was confident she had done the task in the areas we were asked to work in.

Much has been made of Isla being 'a Labrador in Collie clothing', as she is very food-oriented, always looking for her next biscuit. On training events our dogsbodies have tried in vain to engage Isla in play with a tennis ball or similar, but she would just sit and wait for food, no doubt thinking 'What's this fool doing messing about with a ball?' This trait will doubtless continue as she seems to know exactly how to get a treat from almost anyone.

It is arthritis in her paws that has been the decision maker with the retirement of Isla, the mind is still willing and she's still as keen. Every time the phone goes with the dedicated rescue team tone, she's at the door, tail wagging. But, alas, the pain is just becoming unmanageable on the rough terrain we're generally asked to work in. May the terrain now be soft and easy-going underfoot, and the treats be all the more tasty. Happy retirement my beautiful girl.

Top: Search Dog Isla. Right: Martin Bell. Images supplied by Martin Bell.



# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE



© Keswick MRT.



## JUNE: VALUABLE LESSON IN TAKING DOGS ON ROCKY TERRAIN

A Keswick team post in June raised an important point about taking unconditioned dogs into the hills. This was not the first time such an incident has occurred. In this case all four paws had damaged pads.

The team was called to assist a party with a large four-year-old German Shepherd that could not walk because its hindquarters were weak and its paws sore. The party had done a long walk over high, rocky ground and were descending into Gillercomb when the dog refused to go any further. This dog gets regular exercise, but walking on grassy fields is no preparation for rough and rocky fells. A difficult descent down Gillercomb and Sour Milk Gill was made, back to Seathwaite, with the dog on a stretcher. The dog's owners were extremely upset and concerned about their beloved dog and were happy for the team to use photos to educate anyone considering taking their dogs into the fells.



## MAY: LATE LOCAL ARTIST WILL BE SADLY MISSED

Keswick team members were saddened to hear of the recent passing of local artist Venus Griffiths.

From 1999 to 2020 Venus provided an original painting of a local landscape for the front cover of their annual report. The painting itself was then sold by Venus's daughter Sally at Derwent Frames, Keswick, with the proceeds going to the team. A collection of the reports, including those featuring Venus's paintings, can be found at [keswickmrt.org.uk/history/](http://keswickmrt.org.uk/history/)

Above: Lining Crag by Keswick artist Venus Griffiths, as featured on the Annual Report 2017



## JUNE: RESCON 2024 – WELCOME TO NENTHEAD

The British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) Conference was held over the weekend of 7-9 June, hosted by Cumbria Ore Mines Rescue Unit (COMRU). BCRC Conference secretary **Tracey Binks** reports.

Approximately 100 representatives from thirteen of the sixteen cave rescue teams in the British Isles, assembled at Nenthead in Cumbria for a weekend of practical activities, peer-to-peer learning and a huge amount of networking and catching up with old friends.

'Technical underground rescue requires complex skills sets,' said Gavin Stewart, BCRC training officer. 'It was fantastic to see so many teams working together developing the core competencies required for the unique challenges of underground rescue.'

Nenthead, one of England's highest villages, was a major centre of mining in the North Pennines and Nenthead Mines have been conserved to enable others to understand the history. Significant elements of the surface infrastructure are still in place as well as access tracks and safe paths. Most of the valley is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

'COMRU members had been working at Nenthead for several months to design a programme that made the most of what we hoped would be an ideal all-weather underground space for the conference,' said COMRU leader, Chris Jones.

Friday evening saw most people safely in Nenthead and enjoying a pie and peas supper, followed by a talk from Peter Jackson, chairman of the Nenthead Mines Conservation Society. Saturday was underground, with sessions covering digging and shoring, hypothermia, crush injuries (with Brendan Sloan, BCRC medical adviser and Alistair Fale, Duddon and Furness MRT), use of vacuum mattress and technical rigging for hauling underground. This was organised as a round robin of sessions and delegates spent the best part of six hours or more underground. The Saturday evening talk was a fascinating glimpse into the work of The Durand Group (durandgroup.org.uk), the leading archaeological group reopening and recording the WW1 fighting tunnels of northern France. Thanks must go to Paul Allison for his presentation. His experience in these trenches and tunnels is unique and everyone seemed to enjoy the talk as well as the Hogg Roast and bar that accompanied it!

Sunday morning was spent on the surface covering rock splitting (by blasting and the use of plug and feathers), catastrophic bleeding, the use of Pentrox, use of the Larkin frame (including powered winches), and an ICT session that covered a variety of topics, including electronic T-cards and incident logging, MRMap, Zello-VHF gateways, COMRU's gear logging database and SARCALL. Thanks go to Paul Taylor of Gloucestershire Cave Rescue, Dave Binks of Duddon and Furness MRT, Adrian Verity of Kirkby Stephen MRT/AVIT Research Ltd and Samuel Carradice of COMRU for their presentations, and also for their willingness to answer all manner of queries and questions about their tools and systems.

As well as trade stands from Lyon, Starless River and Skylotec, we were fortunate to have a visit from the Spot robot dogs and a LIDAR capable drone from Sellafield Ltd. 'Who knows?' said Chris. 'In ten years' time, this kind of technology may become a reality for some aspects of both underground and surface rescue!'

COMRU's thanks go to all the delegates, some of whom travelled long distances to be with us, to the Conservation Society and Nenthead mines, to Nenthead Womens Institute for great breakfasts, to Alston Stone for the supply of rock, our sponsors — particularly Cubby Construction and Cavendish Nuclear — and to the Nenthead community who made us so welcome.

**The next conference will be hosted in 2025 by CRO, in the Yorkshire Dales, and will form part of their 90th anniversary celebrations.**



## UNDERGROUND LAKES TEAM CELEBRATE 300 YEARS' SERVICE

Fifteen COMRU members were presented with long service awards by BCRC chairman, Peter Dennis.

Julian Carradice has amassed forty years, thirty year awards were presented to Colin Agnew, Alasdair Brock, Paul Witheridge and Chris Jones, twenty year awards to Peter King, Tommy Cubby, Alistair Myers and Karl Fern and ten year awards to Paul Allison, Sally Allsop, Matt Nightingale, Vic Seed, Samuel Carradice and Phil Hall.



COMRU team leader, Chris Jones, said, 'When you tot those up and realise it represents over 300 years of voluntary service, it's worth shouting about and we were really pleased Peter was able to present them up at Nenthead. Everyone on that list had also contributed to the success of the conference so it seemed doubly appropriate.'

Also over the weekend, BCRC officers and teams expressed appreciation to Jim Davis for his 32 years of continuous service as BCRC training officer and committee member, after he stepped down at the AGM in April. His tireless contribution to the administration of training grants for teams, facilitation of training events and team peer review was all in addition to Jim's active and continuing role within his 'home' team, CRO. To mark the occasion Peter Dennis presented Jim with a Distinguished Service Award certificate and the cave rescuers attending the conference, representing most of the BCRC teams, assembled with Jim beside Nenthead Village Hall to record the occasion (bottom opposite page).



**Opposite page and top:** A selection of images from the weekend showing some of the many topics covered: From top opposite: crush scenario, digging and shoring, more from the crush scenario, technical rigging, plug and feathering, hypothermia scenario and group shot outside Nenthead Village Hall. **Left:** Spot the robot dog. **Inset above:** BCRC chairman Peter Dennis (left) presents the Distinguished Service Award to Jim Davies © Paul Taylor. Images credited to COMRU unless otherwise individually stated.

# the final send away

RAY DAVIES MBE  
GLOSSOP MRT



It was with great sadness that members of Glossop team heard that founding member and Life President Ray had passed away on Friday 19 April. Team leader **Dave Stowell** looks back at his life

Ray was the driving force in establishing mountain rescue in Glossop. He was involved in the creation of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation (PDMRO) and served nationally as secretary to the Mountain Rescue Council (subsequently Mountain Rescue England and Wales).

On 20 April 1957, a group of Glossop Rover Scouts met to investigate the creation of a local rescue team, with Ray taking the role of team leader. The first recorded call-out of this group was on 4 July 1959 to evacuate a female with an ankle injury. In the early days it was not widely known that a mountain rescue team had been formed, but that changed with the Four Inns tragedy in spring 1964. During the annual 40-mile hike for Scout groups, the weather deteriorated significantly with heavy snowfall, and poor visibility. A number of groups became lost in the Alport Valley area and, tragically, three Scouts died from hypothermia. During the search and evacuation Ray himself took a tumble and injured his ribs and shoulder.

Following Four Inns, new mountain rescue teams were established across the region and the Rover Scout Crew merged with the Glossop Moorland Rescue Team to form Glossop Mountain Rescue Team. Ray continued as leader and his

knowledge and dedication shaped the team's direction and effectiveness. He also played a significant role in the establishment of the PDMRO and became one of its first regional controllers. After stepping down as leader, he served as chairman of the team for an incredible 35 years before being appointed as Life President.

Ray's contribution and influence extended to the national level, serving first as assistant secretary and then secretary to the Mountain Rescue Council, the precursor of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) from 1979 to 2004. His mountain rescue service was rightfully recognised with a Distinguished Service Award in 2002, and external honours of the Freeman of the Borough of High Peak and MBE in 2007.

His knowledge of the Glossop patch was legendary, he was highly respected and a mentor and friend to many within the rescue community. He inspired, nurtured, shared knowledge, skills and experience in the development of generations of team members. Ray worked in the textile industry and used this experience and contacts when the Glossop team researched and improved the mountain rescue casualty bag, introducing pile fabric and full zip closure, and ensuring it was large enough for two bodies for re-warming purposes.

Countless rescues have been conducted and lives saved from the enduring dedication, activities and organisation Ray was fundamental in building. Stand down Ray, Rescue complete! 🇨🇪

Top: Glossop team in the early days, Ray Davies on far left © Glossop MRT.

## CHARLIE WILKINS EXMOOR SRT



It was with great shock and sadness that members of the Exmoor team heard that team member Charlie had passed away, aged just 33 years old. **Julia Balmford** writes.

Charlie joined the team as a trainee in July 2019 and was badged as an operational team member in November 2022. In his short time with Exmoor, he had a huge impact. He will be remembered for the enthusiasm with which he threw himself into many activities, always with a huge smile on his face, and for his kindness towards everyone involved in the team.

While still a trainee, Charlie set off on a fundraising challenge, walking the Two Moors Way in aid of the team. He was joined by team members for parts of the route and finished — still smiling — with blisters of legendary size. Once on the team, his background in sports science and his job as a physiotherapist made him an obvious choice to join the casualty care section. Here he quickly started leading training sessions, sharing his wide knowledge and happiest when he was acting as a casualty, covered in fake blood, testing and encouraging the other casualty carers. Charlie was first in line when the water rescue section called for casualty carers to join them and he had recently qualified as a swiftwater rescue technician. At the team's AGM in February he was elected as honorary secretary.

One of Charlie's last big adventures was the Arctic Spine Race in Sweden in February. He signed up as soon as the opportunity to attend

arose. In an interview filmed in Sweden, Charlie cheerfully admitted that he'd had no idea what the Arctic Spine involved when he decided to go, but when he found out, threw himself into training and could be found pulling a car tyre along Saunton Sands for hours on end. This attitude was typical of him, willing to give anything (and virtually everything) a go and, of course, he loved his time out there.

Charlie died having suffered a brain haemorrhage from which he didn't recover. He joined the team because he wanted to help people, and continues doing so — he was an organ donor, and lives on in those people whose lives he has saved as a result of his kindness and thoughtfulness.

A memorial service was held for Charlie in April and the number of people who attended from many stages of his life was a testament to the fondness and esteem in which he was held. Those attending included staff and players from the rugby clubs he had previously played for, his work colleagues and representatives from other charities he had been involved with. Our thoughts are with his partner, his family and friends and all those whose lives he touched. 🇨🇪

Left: Charlie Wilkins during the Arctic Spine. Image supplied.

## PAUL HIGGIN ROSSENDALE & PENDLE MRT



Paul Higgin had been involved with the Rossendale and Pendle team since 1965. Ex-team colleague and long-time close friend **Helen Dickson** writes.

Paul joined the team (Rossendale Fell Rescue Team as it was then) as an eager seventeen year old from Accrington, with his best friend Russell Harrison. Since his school days he'd been a keen outdoors-loving lad with an eye for adventure, looking to put something back into the pastimes he loved. After learning the ropes, so to speak, he established himself as a born leader and rose up through the ranks to deputy team leader and, eventually, chairman.

Being a down-to-earth Lancashire bloke, Paul would talk to and get on with anyone. It didn't matter if you were a busy detective inspector managing a major incident or a lost child, everyone got the confident reassuring words and Higgin smile. He was methodical, a super organiser with an instinctive nose that could rustle up a search party and have them deployed on a hill before some of us had even switched our pagers off.

But it wasn't all work, he was one of the most sociable people I ever met. Many team members will fondly remember the annual 'Chairman's Camp' in Ingleton, Yorkshire and the ever eventful December trips to the bunk barn and nights in the Vaynol pub, Snowdonia. These long weekends spent walking, drinking and eating and, of course, there was the singing which he was particularly good at.

One such night in Snowdonia we had all retired to the pub and Paul was at the bar where he overheard a conversation taking place. Basically the local search and rescue team didn't have enough members available to respond to an incident taking place at that moment, so Paul quickly introduced himself and explained that he had a number of experienced team members with him and could they help. We drank up, went back to the camping barn to collect our kit and within a few minutes we were in a Sea King helicopter flying up to the summit of Snowdon to commence a search. Paul was naturally in his element organising the various search parties and doing what he did best.

Even after Paul had retired from the team, he still enjoyed many holidays walking, skiing and loving the great outdoors. The hardest bit about writing this was realising I now have to talk about Paul in the past tense and that just isn't right. He was part of mine and many other people's lives for many years and he was a joy to know and be around. I recently saw a photograph of Paul's 40-year long service award from his employers. They'd used the hashtag 'team player' and that is exactly what he was. He was always, always there for you. Paul will mean many things to many people and we are going to miss him so much. 🇨🇪

Top: Paul Higgin during a night exercise. Above: Paul (left) with fellow team member Andy Ellis during a search. Images supplied.

# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE

In April, Bolton team members expressed sincere condolences to Tony's family and friends, following his death, aged 82.



Tony joined the team in 1991. He gave fifteen years' service as an operational team member holding the post of chairman from September 1992 through to March 2006. During his tenure, Tony's efforts led to a number of success stories that had an enormous and beneficial impact on the team, including applications to the National Lottery which led to two successful grants, one for £5,000 for the purchase of waterproof salopettes and another for £49,000 for the purchase of the '1999' fleet of Land Rover Defenders. Two of these vehicles are still in service with mountain rescue teams to this day.

Throughout 2003 and 2004, Tony was instrumental in establishing the team's base at what was then the headquarters of Greater Manchester Ambulance Service, at Ladybridge Hall in Bolton, and before that their presence at Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, Bolton Central. He also established processes to claim tax relief on some charitable donations well before the Gift Aid scheme existed, which further boosted fundraising through the 1990s.

When Tony stood down from operational membership and his chairman role, in March 2006, he was appointed the position of Life Vice President and continued to steadfastly support the work of the team behind the scenes, for well over ten years. Tony was also instrumental in helping the team achieve the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in June 2016.

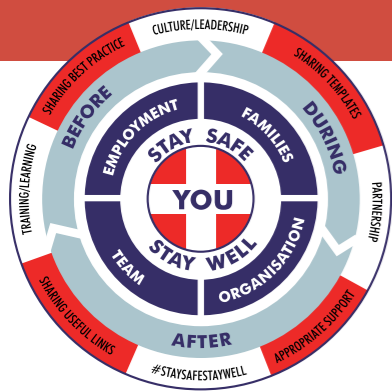
In later life Tony moved from Bolton to nearby Worsley, where he became involved in a number of community events. He often invited team members to attend these events which they were very happy to support. His contribution to the team is remembered at the base he helped to establish twenty years ago. In recognition of

his exceptional contribution, one of the current Land Rovers (call sign 'BM1') is the second team vehicle to bear his name. 🇨🇪



Top: Tony (left) receiving his 20 years' long service award from the then team leader Garry Rhodes, in 2006. Left: The second team vehicle to be named after Tony. Images © Bolton MRT.

## TONY MCNALLY BOLTON MRT



# 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](https://togetherall.com)

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

**Blue Light Together** is a new resource for members of the emergency services. Help is available with issues such as:

- Stress and Burnout • Trauma and PTSD • Financial Wellbeing • Healthy Lifestyles • Your Family

Go to [BlueLightTogether.org](https://BlueLightTogether.org)

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



Above: Rob Small and Kate Devonport from Edale MRT with Paul Turner © Edale MRT.

## Raising funds for rescue

# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE

## JUNE: 1000 MILE WALK RAISES FUNDS FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE ENGLAND AND WALES AND MIND

Congratulations to Paul Turner, who recently completed his 1,000-mile walk in aid of MIND and Mountain Rescue England and Wales.

Paul is no stranger to the fells, having completed the 214 Wainwrights several times, the 443 Nuttalls in England and Wales and the 282 Munros in Scotland, as well as various national trails. It was completing Wainwright's Coast to Coast and the Pennine Way which gave him the inspiration to devise his 1,000-mile walk, taking in both routes (walking each twice), and finishing with the Yorkshire Dales Centurion Walk.

'To my knowledge,' he says, 'it's not been attempted before and it forms a rather nice cross on the map with a circle around its centre. It has the same ascent as climbing Everest five times and equivalent to walking from London to Edinburgh three times.'

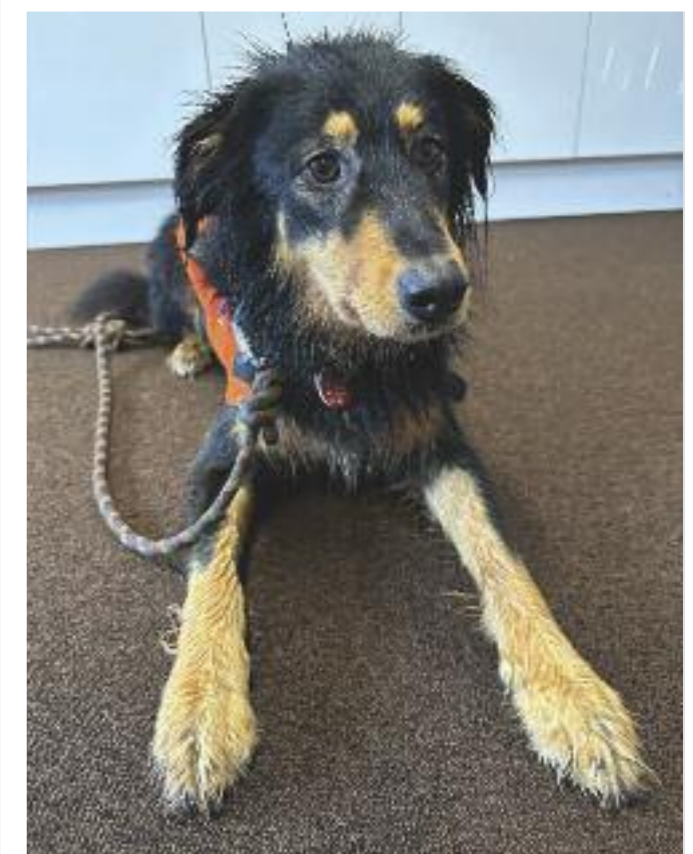
To up the ante, he also carried his tent and all he needed in the rucksack on his back. His walk started on 27 April, finishing on his birthday, 24 June, and Edale team members were there to meet him at the end and wish him happy birthday. Paul's total so far stands at £5,731 — substantially more than his original target so thank you Paul, and a belated happy birthday!

## MAY: MULTI-TEAM SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON – AND SEARCH DOG BRAMBLE'S FIRST FIND



Keswick team was asked to help locate a missing person who could have been anywhere around the Keswick area. With heavy rain and a complex area to search, further help was sought from colleagues further afield.

Initially the obvious local paths and lake shore were searched, until darkness prevented effective searching. This resumed the following morning with many more teams given specific areas to search. Andrew Jenkins and Search Dog Bramble, from Northumberland National Park MRT, had been tasked to search the lower slopes of Lattrigg above the River Greta and Bramble made the find — her first — in very dense wet bracken and foliage. The missing person was cold, but well. The 18-hour operation involved 25 Keswick team members plus many more from the other teams and organisations, voluntary and statutory. Teams involved alongside Keswick MRT were Cockermouth, Penrith, Duddon and Furness, Kirkby Steven, Wasdale, Kendal, Langdale Ambleside, Coniston, Northumberland National Park and the Lakes search dogs. Other agencies included Whitehaven Coastguard, Cumbria Police, North West Ambulance, West Cumbria Search and Rescue and Maryport Inshore Rescue.



Above: Search Dog Bramble after her first find. Inset left: Heavy rain and darkness affected the search. Images © Keswick MRT.





## Exmoor team members participate in the Norwegian SAR Games

On a dank day in February, a curious email appeared in our info@ message box. Would Exmoor SRT be interested in participating in the newly revised Norwegian SAR Games (SAR Games – Svelvik Røde Kors SAR Games). This competition has been running since 1975, previously under the guise of Colargol, but had lapsed back in 2012. Under new stewardship, an energetic group from the Svelvik Røde Kors team had decided to get it going again – as a way for teams from different search and rescue backgrounds to get together for friendly competition, but really as a means to exchange knowledge and build friendships. **Eoin Murray**, Exmoor team chairman reports.

As a Scandiophile, my first thought was whether we could make this happen. Sadly the team definitely couldn't afford it, but perhaps individuals might pay their own way if we could pull it together on a low budget. And what an honour it would be to be the first international team to compete. After sharing the idea with the team leadership, it quickly became apparent there was enough enthusiasm to field a team. The team members that showed interest were now waiting with anticipation as to whether they would get selected to represent Exmoor SRT at an international level, with the sad passing of Charlie Wilkins and one of our team having to drop out as he had forgotten he had made dinner plans that weekend (yes, this actually happened), we had the numbers to enter two teams. After discussing this with the organiser Sverre, and getting the green light, all we had to do was get ourselves there.

In short, in late April, eight of us made the journey to Heathrow from Devon and Somerset very early on a Friday morning, and a planes/trains/automobiles style journey followed. We decided to travel in our hill kit, firstly as a bit of PR for the socials, but also to save weight in our hold bags. Chris's smug satisfaction of wearing thermals in an airport car park at three in the morning, quickly wore off upon landing in Oslo on a bright spring day at a clement 16°C. The downside to wearing the red jacket was the first Norwegian passenger to chat with us expressed surprised that Exmoor has a mountain rescue team as 'there are no mountains'.

The upside: we were easily recognisable and found ourselves getting a very warm welcome from our hosts at Drammen station who ushered us into a fleet of team vehicles for the last leg of the journey. This would set the benchmark to which Svelvik

Røde Kors would live up to and continually exceed all weekend. After a touring of their Rescue Centre (literally 'Rescue House' directly from the Norwegian), as all good SAR professionals, we allowed ourselves to be wowed by the kit (skidoos, ATVs etc), and embarked on a tour of the town in its beautiful fjord-side setting. Comparing notes, it was abundantly clear teams had far more in common than different between us.

We were taken to the local secondary school, our accommodation for the weekend, and as more teams arrived, we exchanged gifts and compared gear. Frank, an intimidating figure at first sight, looking like an extra from a Thor movie, came over to present us with a packet of Kvikk Lunsj (Quick Lunch) which is very similar to our KitKat only nicer and interestingly it has the Fjellvettreglene (the Norwegian Mountain Code) printed inside every wrapper. He received a pack of Tunnocks caramel



# NEWS ROUND

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wafers in exchange. We got ready together, with us eagerly glean any details of what may lie ahead from our new friends.

That evening, after a safety brief at the rescue house, the SAR games began in earnest with ten stations laid out in a six-kilometre loop. We would have five minutes to read the task and plan, ten to carry out the task and five to debrief before moving on. All this was coordinated over the radio, testing search techniques, throw-bagging, map reading and dealing with various scenarios. Nervously waiting in the forests above Svelvik, watching the sunset over the beautiful pristine lake we could hear the final preparations being discussed in Norwegian over the radio. As we larked about it in the remnants of the winter snow that held on in the shade of the conifers we reflect on just how lucky we were... then it was on.

The level of organisation that must have gone into what we had just experienced was staggering. A highlight for both teams had to be the mountain lodge, where multiple casualties were in varying states of psychosis to unconsciousness. On opening

the door to the outhouse, we were confronted with a big Norwegian swinging an axe and a bat, while shouting and very committed to the role. It was a welcome adrenaline shot, we'd been awake for more than 24 hours and, as we crawled into bed at 2.30am, thoroughly tested and made to feel incredibly welcome, our thoughts turned to what lay ahead and how they could possibly top the first round.

And top it they did. Day two was split into a series of trauma incidents in the morning, and other medical complaints in the afternoon, all sorted around the town. This gave the whole event a true community feel about it, members of the public were stopping to say 'Velkommen' to the visiting teams which was very touching. To give an example of how integrated the Røde Kors is, one of the scenarios, a car crash complete with four casualties, a local paparazzi and smoke machine to really give a sense of urgency, was set up in the middle of the local car boot sale! Again, the organisation and logistics, the actors and make up artists from the local amdram and drama college

were just phenomenal. A local helicopter tour company was in town, doing some promo work and three of our team were lucky enough to get to see the fjord from the sky too.

In the evening, everyone swapped their reds for more casual wear and we enjoyed a banquet meal and the prize giving ceremony. Based on clarity of roles and objectives and disciplines of good handrails and handovers, we hoped we'd done ourselves justice. One of our team was selected for a special award for the funniest comment heard by a judge — 'I don't want to taste it, I just want to smell it'— uttered by a sleep-deprived Daisy when offered coffee at 1.00am. Big Frank won the wooden spoon for following his throwline into the lake, but I think we were stunned to learn that our two Exmoor teams had been judged first and second in the overall competition. The real win though was the camaraderie and the friendships we made. We look forward to hosting Norwegian teams over the next couple of years. 🍷

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**NEBO**

# Taking training from the Tweed Valley to the Falklands



In 2021, Tweed Valley Mountain Rescue Team (TVMRT) was contacted by a former team member who was working on contract in the Falkland Islands. His ask was for remote support to establish a search and rescue function within the remit of the Falkland Island Defence Force (FIDF). That simple, yet unexpected ask, culminated with a contingent of TVMRT members travelling to the Falklands in March 2024 to deliver an intense seven-day training programme to both FIDF volunteers and their partners in Falkland Islands Police, Fire and Government services. **Paul Cathrow** reports.

The Falkland Islands present some unique and curious challenges when it comes to provision of search and rescue. They have a small population of under 4,000 people, but a national responsibility for all levels of emergency and resilience functions. An often-heard phrase is that they are both a village and a country. The small, close-knit and friendly community is bolstered by a visiting cruise ship industry that can see the island population double in a single day as people disembark to visit Stanley, the capital, and undertake day tours mostly relating to the islands diverse wildlife or the 1982 conflict.

Their extreme remote location, and 'challenging relationship' with their nearest geographical neighbour demands a level of resilience and self-sufficiency rarely seen elsewhere. Logistical considerations we take

training. Our luggage when travelling (via RAF Brize Norton and Ascension Island), included 40kg of ropes and rigging gear procured for the FIDF in the UK and based on kit lists required to train our Scottish Mountain Rescue best practice rigging techniques. This extra luggage, on top of our own personal kit, raised eyebrows at RAF Brize Norton when we came to discuss baggage allowances at check in, but the staff were extremely helpful and managed to get us checked in without issue.

First impression when leaving RAF Mount Pleasant for the 45-minute drive to Stanley was how utterly remote we instantly felt once away from the airfield. The drive was on the islands' only tarmac road outside of Stanley and the landscape was windswept and broken by striking hills, small farmsteads and numerous very rugged looking sheep. The hills we passed would become very familiar to us over the next week from both geographic and military history perspectives.

We delivered a training programme including search management, incident management, hill party leadership and rescue rigging. Much of the hill-based training was delivered in the area on or around Tumbledown and Wireless Ridge, both key battlegrounds in the 1982 conflict. The SAR crew at RAF Mount Pleasant delivered both ground and air-based training on AW189, including winch training. The South Atlantic SAR contract operates differently to UK with the contract primarily for aircrew recovery, but the air asset will be made available to support civilian SAR incidents if available. In addition, we worked

with the Government and police to review national emergency plans and processes. This included tabletop exercises on various scenarios including management of incidents on remote and hard-to-reach islands. The nature of the Falkland Islands is such that they regularly rely on external expertise being brought in to deliver training. Our trip coincided with a visit by a senior officer from London Fire Brigade who was reviewing major incident readiness and working with both local fire service and Falkland Islands Government with a particular emphasis on wildfires, an emerging threat to Falklands resulting from an increasingly dry climate. The combined efforts of both training teams was recognised by Her Excellency Alison Blake, Governor of Falkland Islands, during a lunch reception at Government House in Stanley (pictured inset, left).

The training programme was packed but did allow for sampling and shopping in the world's most southerly gin distillery, a pint or two at the local brewery and a guided sea kayaking trip with sea lions, elephant seals and dolphins. A fortuitously delayed return flight then allowed for a long 4x4 outing to see the king penguins at Volunteer Point.

The team is grateful to the Falkland Islands Government for the opportunity to visit, and train with, the Falkland Island Defence Force. We will continue to support them remotely with online training and look forward to sending another team contingent to the islands to deliver further training in the future. 📍

Images © Paul Cathrow/Tweed Valley MRT.



for granted must be factored in at each stage of their activity. Tweed Valley donated two MacInnes stretchers which had to be shipped six weeks in advance of the

# NEWS ROUND

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Above: Rick Mobbs, Henry Poisey and Patch Haley test out the jet suit © Buxton MRT.

## JUNE: THREE HAVE FUN IN THE COUNTRY WITH A JET SUIT...

It all started with a question about the colour of someone's trousers. This simple, innocuous interaction has led to a very exciting few months for the Peak District MR teams. The owner of these striking red trousers was Rowan Poulter, a pilot for Gravity Industries, the inventors and producers of the jet pack. Buxton's **Patch Haley** reports.

A few weeks later I found myself in a car with Henry and Rick of Buxton team driving down to Goodwood race track near the South coast for an open minded meeting about how this new technology could help in a mountain rescue setting. Within a few minutes of arriving, we were strapped into a suit and making our way into the stand. The power held in each hand as the rocket fuelled jets kicked — surprisingly gently — into play was a bizarre feeling as my feet disconnected from the ground. The control over my own movements as I hovered above the platform was more precise than expected. After we had all had a good go, we were treated to a demonstration by the professionals of the ability of the suit on the

race track which was a real treat to witness and certainly sparked our imagination about how this could be used in the Peak District.

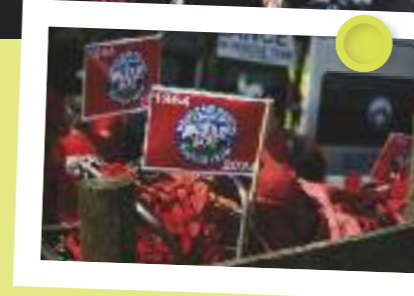
A few weeks later we decided to call a meeting and asked Rowan, who works locally, if she would attend. This was an opportunity open to all the teams in the region to ask all the burning questions about who would be involved, how everyone imagined the collaboration working and how much it might cost.

The inventor/company director behind Gravity Industries then brought his inner circle to meet us at a Goyt Valley farm for a live demonstration for all team members who wished to attend. The capabilities of the jet suit were clear, with it covering our 25-minute walk (all uphill!) in 1 minute 35 seconds. The possibility of getting life-saving treatment to our casualties in these quicker time frames is one which we certainly think is worthy of further investigation. We are still exploring the interoperability with the various stakeholders in this project, but are excited to update you all with the results of the next stage.

## JUNE: EX-COCKERMOUTH MEMBER TAKES ON TEAM LEADER ROLE FOR TWEED VALLEY MRT

Pete Hall (right) has been involved in mountain rescue since 1985 when he joined Cockermouth MRT. His dad was also a long-term member so mountain rescue is well and truly 'in the blood', having been brought up as a regular training 'casualty' and dogsbody for the first Lakes search dogs. 'As a Lakes lad,' says Pete, 'fell running and rock climbing are also in the blood and after several years away in non-mountainous areas, we found ourselves in the Scottish Borders and Tweed Valley MRT... and now as team leader.'





## MAY: BUXTON SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISING STRETCHER CHALLENGE

As we've documented before on these pages over recent issues, the 1964 tragedy which led to the death of three Scouts while they were attempting the Four Inns Walk was a major factor in the formation of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation. Buxton Mountain Rescue Team (BMR) fully take to heart the emotions that drove those volunteers sixty years ago so the anniversary of the team's founding was always going to be marked by a big event. **Paul Deane** reports.

And big it was: a sixty-kilometre stretcher carry through team's operational area, to raise funds for a badly needed replacement vehicle. The event was months in the planning with nothing in the huge undertaking left to chance. By the time the team showed up on 18 May, completing the route was all that remained to do.

The Saturday morning dawned fine and dry, and an excitement was in the air at Pavilion Gardens, as over fifty team members supported the event in various capacities. Many were there to complete a few stages of the walk or help at the various stops en route, but some hardy souls had volunteered to attempt the whole route and nervous in case they were unable to follow through on their bravado. To the sound of applause, the stretcher party and its procession of Buxton members wound its

way through the park, and out into the countryside to White Hall Outdoor Centre.

At some point the atmosphere relaxed, laughter was heard and it became clear that this event, while sure to be tough, would also provide an opportunity for the team to properly talk to one another. Weekly training at Dove Base, Buxton Fire Station or out on the hill, is interesting and often fun but always busy — while the atmosphere on a real call-out is professional and a little bit tense. There's rarely time to talk, and conversations are generally brief, to the point and prone to being interrupted by important tasks or instructions. Here were twenty-four hours with nothing to do but walk and talk in incredible scenery lit by a blazing sun with patches of shade from the fluffy white clouds. Spirits were high.

Morale increased still further when we

arrived at our first stop, the lovely school and community centre in the beautiful village of Combs. A barbecue had been laid on, cake was on offer and some of the local children were waiting to cheer the team in. 'Mountain rescue! Mountain rescue!' chanted by four little girls on the road outside the school was the highlight of the day and set the whole team smiling. After a quick trip to the Beehive Inn to sample freebies, the procession set off again to Chapel-en-le-Frith marketplace. Where the friendly staff of the Old Cell again encouraged many team members to break a lifetime habit by turning down free beer — there was a long way to go!

The long pull up to Rushup Edge was taken at a canter and team members on the stretcher were so keen they outpaced the following entourage. Lord's Seat whisked by in a sunny blur and, just before Castleton, in the heat of the broken road, a surprise visit by Ian Bunting, MREW Operation Director and friends from Edale team brought welcome choc ices in the history of choc ices. Castleton on a sunny day is always busy. Hundreds of people were enjoying the sunshine and their reactions to the team were another morale boost, the collection buckets quickly filled by people happy to hand over their cash to such a worthy band of volunteers. The George pub treated us to snacks and even reserved seats for us in their busy beer garden.

Cave Dale is always a formidable climb out of Castleton and was achieved with much enthusiasm and the sunset at the top was so beautiful that the team almost forgot that it presaged a morale sapping darkness. It is testament to the strength and unity of the team that the nighttime hiding of the amazing views of the Peak District was taken in their stride. The march continued and it became obvious that this challenge would be seen through. Stopping at 2.00am in Miller's Dale for delicious fresh pizza supplied by the amazing Cavendish Kitchen,

the welcome break gave us time to regroup, for naps to be taken and for the team treasurer's dog to disgrace itself. The cleanup was in full swing as the team again whisked the stretcher away.

Dawn at last showed itself as a finger of light above the horizon just before the stretcher arrived at Earl Sterndale and full sunlight warmed bodies and minds just before Harpur Hill. The team were full of hopefulness as this felt like the home straight, but we reckoned without the short, sharp 200-metre ascent up to Solomon's Temple. The path was narrow, the grass was wet with dew, and it seemed as though the stretcher had to be passed over an infinite number of stiles. In reality there were probably only four stiles but, at this stage in proceedings, molehills could swiftly become mountains. Strong arms and willing hands eventually conquered the mighty peak and, after a pause for photos at the folly, the procession strode on. Poole's Cavern fell behind and photo ops were taken outside the many friendly businesses in Buxton who host collection boxes. The triumphant arrival back at Pavilion Gardens felt like a true celebration, everyone full of smiles and in awe of the challenge, conversation punctuated by the clink of coins and the rustle of notes in the collection buckets.

Writing this a couple of days later, my prevailing memories are of being lucky to be amongst happy, interesting people doing (an awful lot of!) what they love in the warm sunshine. The reactions of passersby were hugely cheering and the fact that a decent percentage of the money required to buy a new vehicle was raised over one weekend is extremely satisfying. Writing about dragging the stretcher out of Earl Sterndale, into the light of the brand new day makes me wish I was back there with those special people. When's the next challenge? ☺



## JUNE: NEW BOAT MARKS A NEW ERA FOR PATERDALE TEAM

Patterdale team has taken delivery of its brand new rigid inflatable boat (RIB). In service on Ullswater, the boat will have a major impact on the team's rescue response times and capabilities.

The old boat, Patrick Scotty, has been in reliable service for years, but had its limitations in terms of speed and capacity. David Gracie was one of the team members who have been pivotal in bringing the new boat project to fruition, thanks to specialist boat builder Ribcraft, in Yeovil. 'The new boat is about 6.8 metres long and half a metre wider than Patrick Scotty. It's also equipped with more powerful engines allowing it to reach speeds up to 40mph, dramatically reducing response times across the lake.'

Funding was a major collaborative effort, combining contributions from anonymous private donors, local organisations, and notable donations from a generous family who have supported the team previously and from the Freemasons. HM Coastguard also offered advice, but a key player in the process was Bob Elliott, a Powerboat coach and adviser to boat builders, who advised on the spec and capabilities needed for the new vessel. The upgrade meant that team members who would be handling it out on the water also needed to upgrade their skills.

The new boat features seating for eight people and space for a stretcher, and advanced technology, including sonar scanning capabilities, will aid search and rescue operations, but speed is perhaps the biggest difference with the new boat able to reach all parts of the lake in half the time it used to take. The RIB has yet to be officially named and launched, but it has already proven to be a vital asset during training. Patterdale plans to decommission Patrick Scotty and fully transition to the new boat in the coming weeks. 'It's been a long journey but seeing the new boat in action makes it all worth it. We're excited to see how it will improve our rescue operations and play its part in keeping our community safe.'

Top: Patterdale team members with their new RIB © Patterdale MRT.



Images © Buxton MRT.

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## JUNE: NORTHUMBERLAND TEAM LEADER APPOINTED DEPUTY LIEUTENANT

Northumberland National Park MRT team leader, Iain Nixon has been appointed a Deputy Lieutenant by His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of the County of Northumberland.

Over 35 years, Iain's commitment to mountain rescue and his community has been exemplary. As a team member, he has served in various operational roles including search dog handler, duty controller, deputy team leader and, for the last ten years, team leader. His leadership and expertise have been instrumental in numerous search and rescue operations, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of countless individuals in Northumberland National Park and beyond. His appointment also helps bring recognition to the invaluable work of mountain rescue volunteers and teams across the north east region.

In his professional life he works in the education sector as a vice principal at Education Partnership North East, a regional college group which includes Northumberland College. His dual roles in academia and mountain rescue showcase his unwavering dedication to service and education in Northumberland. This prestigious role will see him supporting the Lord Lieutenant, Dr Caroline Pryer in performing duties at local ceremonies and events, further highlighting his commitment to public service.

'I am deeply honoured and humbled by this appointment,' says Iain. 'Being a part of the team has been a significant part of my life, and I am thrilled to continue serving the community in this new capacity.'

'Iain brings with him a wealth of professional expertise, community knowledge, kindness, consideration and goodwill,' says Dr Pryer. 'We very much look forward to working together.'

Top: Iain Nixon pictured by a Northumberland National Park MRT vehicle © NNPMRT.



## MAY: KING'S MEDALS FOR CRO

The King's Coronation Medals have been awarded to eligible members of the Armed Forces and emergency services, including mountain rescue teams across the country.

Cave Rescue Organisation team members gathered together to celebrate receiving theirs in an evening hosted by the team chairman Martin Colledge. Following a meal and an opportunity for team members and their families to catch up, medals were presented by team president, Ben Lyon. 'We'd like to thank Ben for his continued support of the team and we'd also like to thank our support members and our families for everything they do to ensure that we are able to be available 24/7 throughout the year.'

Above: CRO team members after receiving their King's Coronation Medals © CRO.



## JUNE: NATIONAL FINANCE DIRECTOR APPOINTED OBE IN BIRTHDAY HONOURS

MREW Finance Director and Central Beacons team chair, Penny Brockman, was appointed in the King's Birthday Honours List, in recognition of her services to mountain rescue.

Penny came into mountain rescue in 1986, when she was introduced to the Central Beacons Mountain Rescue Team through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. She married the late Peter Howells, one of the team's founder members and team leader who also served nationally as assistant secretary.

Over the years Penny has held a number of operational and leadership positions including team leader and treasurer. Notably, she was leader at the time of the catastrophic fire of 2017 and her work ensured the team's swift return to operational readiness. This crisis-management experience subsequently stood her in good stead through the Covid pandemic. She has also been a consistent and energetic fundraiser which have resulted in major funds for the team.

Penny said she was thrilled to receive the honour. 'It absolutely reflects all the support from the team over the years and, in particular, from Peter. I love to think how he would have grinned and chuckled with pride had he still been with us'.

For twenty years, she has held the post of national financial director — a role she will step down from in November this year — addressing the financial challenges, particularly of recent years, through working closely with professional advisers and focusing on enabling teams across the country to perform and serve more effectively.

She has also influenced and driven development in other areas, including establishing the Women in Mountain Rescue group and being a strong advocate for the organisation's ongoing Shared Values project.

'We are proud and grateful that Penny has served and supported the national body so broadly and for so long,' says Mike Park, MREW CEO. 'This recognition is well deserved for her committed service to mountain rescue, not only in MREW but also as a member, team leader and now chair of trustees of the Central Beacons team.'

Top: Penny Brockman OBE © CBMRT.



Above: Chris Lloyd receives the Mantell Gwynedd award from Bethan Russel Williams, on behalf of Ogwen Valley MRO.

Below right: flying the start flag. Images © OVMRO.

Chris Lloyd was one of two Ogwen team members who attended. 'We made our way into a baronial hall filled with 70 people or more,' says Chris. 'The event was presented in Welsh with a word-by-word translation service via head-sets. Bethan Russel Williams, the chief officer of Mantell Gwynedd introduced the event, before handing over to the CEO of St David's Hospice, in Llandudno. He spoke at length on the importance of volunteers in society. Citations were read out and individuals came forward to receive their certificate and to be photographed. The voluntary works varied from walking neighbour's dogs, to assisting with mental welfare of the farming community. After the final certificate was presented, Bethan Russel Williams spoke at length about the volunteers of the mountain rescue teams of Gwynedd and their contribution to the community. She then invited each team to receive their certificate and an engraved glass trophy. Sadly, only Llanberis and Ogwen teams were represented on the day. Both of us were well received by the audience as many of them had watched the BBC programmes. It was a surprise and a privilege to receive this award. The engraved glass trophy now sits on the mantel shelf in the crew room of Oggie base.'

## JUNE: THE ANNUAL THREE CASTLES CAR RALLY

In another 'knock-on effect' from the BBC series, this annual four-day car rally, based in Llandudno, chose the Ogwen team as its charity for this year's event. Chris Lloyd went along to fly the starting flag.

'Starting just after 7.30am, on a windswept Llandudno promenade, the main organiser, Ian Crammond, introduced each much-cherished car and crew, adding information about the team 'as seen on SOS Extreme Rescues'. The marshal handed the starting instructions to each navigator and I waved the Ddraig Coch/Red Dragon flag. After visits around Ynys Mon (Anglesey) and the Llyn (Lleyn Peninsula), the cars drove up the Nant Ffrancon from Bethesda along the single track old road, passing a carefully parked Ogwen Valley team vehicle with a couple of team members, and returning to Llandudno at the end of the day. On the final day, Ogwen team member Chris Thomas and his partner Jane attended a dinner at the Imperial Hotel, Llandudno and received generous donations totalling £4K.'



## APRIL: TECHNICAL TRAINING AT 25-METRE LIMESTONE CRAG

Cleveland team's technical rescue personnel trained at Peak Scar on the North York Moors, their objective to establish an efficient stretcher rescue from Murton Cave, a fissure running the full height of the face. With lines set up from tree anchors, Rescue 1 was lowered to the cave mouth to establish a belay and handrail, and to perform a risk assessment, followed by Rescue 2 who was lowered with the stretcher.

Further personnel were then roped up the scramble into the cave to assist with moving the casualty and loading the stretcher, which for this exercise involved a discussion around various options and practicalities. Two rounds of this were performed to embed the sequence and help develop a Standard Operating Procedure for rescues at Peak Scar.

Left: Cleveland team members training at Peak Scar in the North York Moors © Cleveland MRT.

# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE

## JUNE: OGWEN TEAM RECOGNISED AT MANTELL GWYNEDD AWARDS

Following the exposure for North Wales mountain rescue on BBC's 'SOS Extreme Rescues', teams were invited to the Gwynedd Volunteer Awards, at the Italianate village of Portmeirion. Nominations are invited from groups who wish to recognise hard-working volunteers at this annual event, hosted by Mantell Gwynedd.



## FEBRUARY'S PLYMOUTH BOMB IN MORE DETAIL

The 500kg bomb was discovered in the back garden of a residential property in Plymouth, on Tuesday 19 February, prompting one of the largest evacuation operations since the end of the Second World War. On 23 February, the Ministry of Defence reported that the device had been safely removed by bomb disposal experts from the British Army and Royal Navy.

Around 30 of the Armed Forces' most experienced bomb disposal specialists worked around the clock to assess the condition of the bomb before it was successfully removed from a densely populated residential area, and towed out to sea. The munition, identified as an air-dropped German bomb from World War Two – designated SC-500 – was assessed as posing a significant risk to public safety, prompting the evacuation of residents within a radius of approximately 300 metres.

Plymouth City Council, with support from Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Devon and Cornwall Police, and members of the Armed Forces, led a major operation to safely evacuate over 10,000 residents from 4,300 properties within the 309-metre cordon, then along a 300-metre corridor along the city roads to a nearby slipway. Members of the four Dartmoor teams (Ashburton, Tavistock, Plymouth and North Dartmoor) joined Exmoor, East and West Cornwall teams, along with Devon Cave Rescue, in the evacuation effort, bringing together over 1,000 volunteers to support the local community.

'It was another example of the diversity and adaptability of our mountain rescue skills,' says Vicky Coumbe, of Dartmoor SRT (Plymouth). 'We were the only group who didn't need to be escorted and we had a much better success rate of getting people out of their properties. The event showed the trust the public put in mountain rescue.'

Plymouth team member Julian Settrington was Plymouth City Council's on-call civil protection officer on Tuesday 19 February. 'Shortly before 11.00am, I received a phone call from the local police inspector telling me the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team were with the police at a garden in Keyham. I

contacted our duty tactical commander and Civil Protection Service colleagues and together we activated the council's emergency response arrangements. Over the four-day declared major incident, council staff, including the Civil Protection Service worked alongside our multiagency partners and the voluntary sector to both lead and support the response efforts for the community of Keyham.'

Following the event, Devon and Cornwall Police expressed their 'sincere thanks for the response from mountain rescue teams. The impact we had was significant and ensured that the exclusion zone was clear for the transport. Well done and thank you.'

The then Defence Secretary Grant Shapps also expressed his thanks to all involved in the highly complex operation, noting that they had 'worked both night and day to keep the public safe and minimise the risk of damage, as well as the public for their patience and cooperation'.

This was the second time in recent history that mountain rescue teams from across the south west had come together to support the evacuation of residents. The first was in Exeter in February 2021, when another unexploded WWII bomb was discovered near student flats. The region was heavily bombed during war for its strategic value, with the docks positioned along the south coast. Exeter and Plymouth were both heavily impacted at the time, so it is possible that similar unexploded devices might emerge for years to come.

Top: Images courtesy Dartmoor teams Ashburton, Plymouth and Tavistock.

## MAY: FROM PEAT BOGS TO INJURED HORSE RIDERS: ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Glossop team members went to the aid of a small group who were facing mobility difficulties on the moor. One member of the party was unable to move after being immersed in a peat bog.

After a short while rewarming and fuelling the group, they were able to walk off with assistance. Once again demonstrating the ever-diverse nature of mountain rescue call-outs, as team members approached the Snake summit, the team vehicle was tasked to help Edale MRT with the evacuation of an injured horse rider from near Lockerbrook farm.



Right: © Glossop MRT.



# NEWS ROUND

APRIL > JUNE

## Raising funds for rescue



### STEVE'S SEPTEMBER FACEY FIFTY CYCLE CHALLENGE: 3,366KM CYCLE, 9,000M+ ELEVATION OVER 50 LOCAL CLIMBS

On 14 September, Holme Valley team member Steve Eastwood will be taking on this challenge to raise funds for the team. The fifty climbs feature in a book by local cyclist Richard (Dick) Facey and the planned route does them in order.

'Never one to turn down a challenge, especially on two wheels,' says Steve, 'the challenge was – and still is – to ride them in one ride. However, this was done by Ed Wolstenholme a few years ago. So I needed to go a few steps further. My route will complete all fifty in sequential order as in Dick's book. But it doesn't end there, I will only descend back onto the valleys via any road once and only making U-turns twice, at Castle Hill and Holme Moss. All other climbs will see me loop round via a different descent or looping round roads near the top of the climb just completed.'

LIVE TRACK STEVE ON THE DAY THROUGH [OPENTRACKING.CO.UK](https://opentracking.co.uk) AND FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CLIMBS VISIT [FACEY-FIFTY.UK](https://facey-fifty.uk)

Above: The planned route and Steve © Steve Eastwood/HVMRT.



MAY/JUNE:



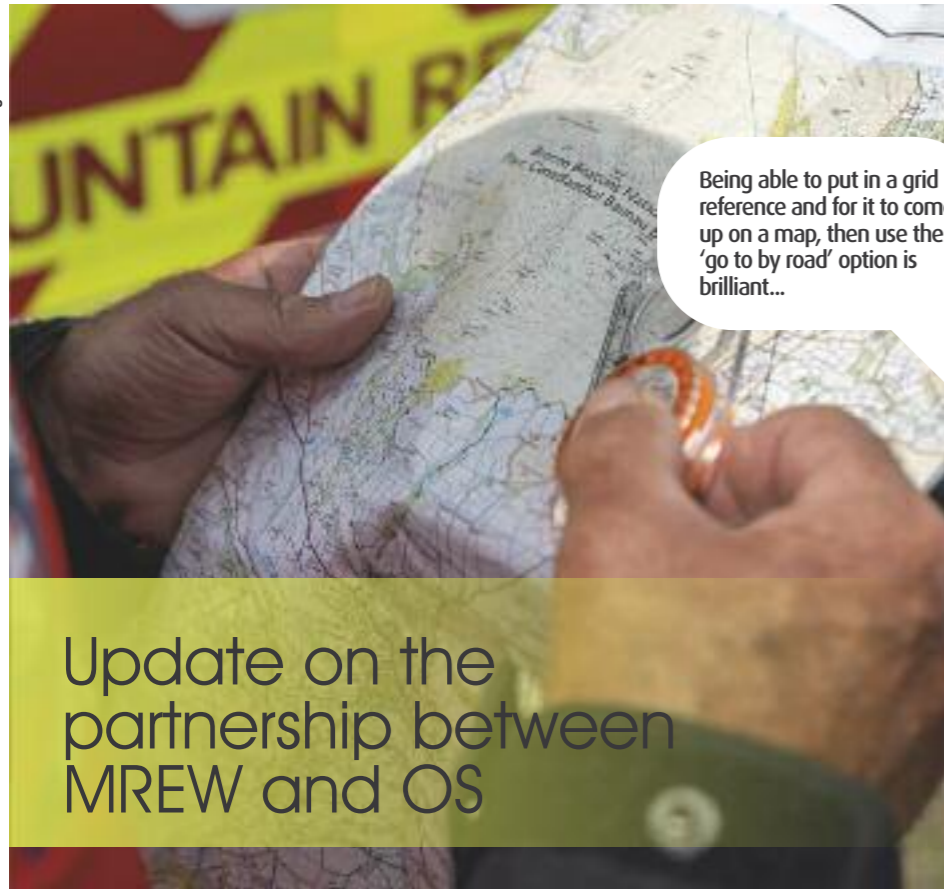
## RAISING FUNDS AND AWARENESS ON DARTMOOR

In May, North Dartmoor team members featured in a BBC Radio Devon programme when presenter Caroline Densley shared her experience of a search and rescue training exercise with the team on Dartmoor. The team also heard they had received the Mayor's Recognition Award 2023/24 from West Devon Borough Council, in recognition of their work.

The last day of June saw celebrations and coming together with the local community in the form of Concerts in the Cloud, thanks to Hatherleigh Silver Band. A fundraising concert on Dartmoor was followed by a second concert at Rowtor where team members were presented with King's Coronation Medals by Deputy Lieutenant Stephen Hindley CBE DL on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant of Devon. Several team members also received Long Service Awards. Meanwhile, the team was delighted to hear that Sanctuary Freemasons Lodge had donated £15,000 to help replace the team's waterproof clothing and water equipment PPE. The donation came about following a legacy left to Sanctuary Lodge by member, Len Jones, a former Marine who loved Dartmoor. Over time, the lodge membership has declined, so the group decided to close and disburse the funds to charities that support Len's values.

Above: BBC Devon's Caroline Densley out with the team on Dartmoor; Hatherleigh Silver Band with team members. Right: North Dartmoor team members in action. Images © NDMRT.





Being able to put in a grid reference and for it to come up on a map, then use the 'go to by road' option is brilliant...

**98%** VIEW OS AS AN APPROPRIATE PARTNER FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE

**79%** FOUND IT VERY/QUITE EASY TO:  
 • GET STARTED USING OS MAPS (NEW USERS)  
 • ADJUST TO NEW OS MAPS CHANGES

**87%** OF THOSE WHO SIGNED UP IN 2023 HAVE RENEWED MEMBERSHIP

**KEY STRENGTHS**

- 85% SHARING A ROUTE
- 83% PRINTING A MAP
- 83% DOWNLOADING DIGITAL MAP
- 83% 3D VISUALISATION
- 79% STUDYING MAPS

Update on the partnership between MREW and OS

At the MREW AGM in May, **Josh Warren** gave a brief presentation, outlining the relationship with OS and where we're up to now.

The partnership was set up with two aims: to coordinate safety messaging, promoting responsible access to the outdoors, and to support OS with the further development of the OS Maps app, recognising it is a commercial app for the general public.

In the last year, the partnership has really taken off, with several joint events (also including our Helly Hansen partners), media and social media campaigns. OS has also released a new version of the OS Maps app, a complete rewrite of the app which has laid the foundations for future new features by redesigning the layout and bringing the iOS and Android versions into alignment. It also introduced the Home screen, where content such as safety messaging can be placed.

In April, all MR volunteers who had redeemed their OS Maps Premium code were asked, by OS to complete a survey on their experiences with the app and partnership. Some of the headline results of the survey are shown opposite. It shows that we are heavy users of the app and are generally happy with the experience. However, the two feature requests that come through very clearly are Points of Interest/Pins and improving the offline performance. I want to assure you that your feedback has been heard and is being acted on:

- The current OS roadmap is to complete development of 'Locate Me' (with similar functionality to the OS Locate app) during the summer and Pins in early autumn. OS have said that these features may be initially soft-released (updated without advertisement) or beta-released (a separate test version released) prior to a full release to the app. It should be emphasised that these dates are targets and not deadlines and are obviously subject to any changes in priorities that the OS development team receives.
- Regarding improving offline performance, OS is actively working on this, but it is not possible to give a date on when work on it will finish.
- The possibility of some tutorial videos is also being explored.

There have been some questions around the use of the OS Maps app on shared team devices such as tablets within team vehicles, using a single shared account. It is recognised that this would be a useful way to be able to access the app, and it would be helpful to understand how many teams would want to use this — please contact me if you would like this so we can understand demand.

Finally, we are always interested in hearing from you if you have any ideas for the partnership, particularly reaching new people rather than preaching to the converted. The 18-30-year-old demographic has been identified by OS as a key target. As always, resourcing is the difficult bit, so if you'd like to volunteer to produce some content (blog post, social media post etc) that would be amazing!

If you have any further questions, please contact your regional OS reps (your region should be able to point you in their direction) in the first instance, otherwise feel free to contact me directly via [josh.warren@mountain.rescue.org.uk](mailto:josh.warren@mountain.rescue.org.uk)

Make it really easy to drop a pin by entering a grid ref and reading out the grid ref of a pin or the user's location...

**AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT, BASED ON FEEDBACK**

**34%** POINTS OF INTEREST/LOCATION PIN

**24%** IMPROVE OFFLINE USE

**17%** NAVIGATE TO, KNOW OR PIN GRID REFERENCE

**23%** SPEED OF LOADING

Lacks basic functionality such as making pins on maps easily and storing them whilst navigating...



**NEWS ROUND**  
APRIL > JUNE

**JUNE: GLASTO LITTER PICKERS RAISE FUNDS FOR RESCUE TEAM**

People raise money for mountain rescue across the board, in an ever-imaginative number of ways, but this one possibly counts as one of the more unusual...

During this year's Glastonbury Festival, from 26-30 June, a team of 22 festival-goers collected money for Cockermouth MRT at the same time as picking up litter, as part of an overall team of around 3000 people!

This year, over 8000 items were reported found, including several wallets and many random items of clothing — and a few of them, perhaps unbelievably, were even successfully reunited with their owners. A big thank you from Cockermouth to all those involved!

Left: Glastonbury in all its littery glory. Image courtesy of facebook.com/cockermouthmrt.

**JUNE: WASDALE TEAM PAYS TRIBUTE TO 'KING OF THE FELLS' JOSS NAYLOR**

Wasdale team members joined a wealth of outdoor folks online, paying tribute to the legendary 'King of the Fells', who passed away in June, aged 88. Naylor had served for many years as honorary vice president of the team and, in September 2018, was guest of honour to officially opened the team's new purpose-built base, near Gosforth.

'Rest in Peace Joss Naylor, a legend of fell running and the Wasdale valley. You were a huge inspiration to Wasdale team members past and present. Our sincere condolences to his many friends and family.'

Right: Joss Naylor in action and in 2018 opening Wasdale team's new base © Wasdale MRT.



**JUNE: MID PENNINE TEAM TRAIN WITH COLLEAGUES IN CONISTON**

A group of Rossendale and Pendle team members, including some of the technical rope team, travelled north to meet their colleagues at Coniston MRT and spend the weekend training together at Hodge Close in Little Langdale.

'It was great to spend quality time together, see how subtle differences work for each other with how we each approach rescue. It was also good for recent members to get quality time building, running and understanding rescue rope systems. Highlight of the day was when one of our members hopped on a rescue with Coniston, to then be diverted to another job, and wound up helping run the casualty care medical side with Coniston.'

'At the end of a long day it was tea and medals back at The Bull before heading home on Sunday, after a brilliant weekend and built some strong bonds with other members. We'd like to say a big thanks to all at Coniston for making us feel so welcome and we look forward to more joint training in the near future.'

Left: Rossendale and Pendle team members during a joint training in Little Langdale with Coniston MRT © RPMRT.



## SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE WELLBEING INFORMATION

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

**STEVE PENNY** SMR WELLBEING OFFICER

Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR) aims to support teams to embed an understanding of personal resilience into the volunteer experience from recruitment to retirement, including how to support colleagues and what to do following incident trauma exposure. The Lifelines Scotland (NHS project) model of informal peer support reflects the evidence that early and ongoing support such as reassurance, information and kindness, ideally from people who know us — family, friends, and colleagues — helps to challenge stigma, normalises reactions and promotes the expectation of recovery. Most responders, most of the time, cope well.

**Lifelines Scotland:** [lifelines.scot](http://lifelines.scot) provides emergency service staff and volunteers with the knowledge, understanding and skills to look after themselves and their colleagues, allowing them to function well in their roles and for this experience to be both positive and rewarding. There are resources for family, friends and others (eg. employers who have staff who volunteer as responders). Lifelines runs facilitator-led learning opportunities for emergency response volunteers.

If you are looking for resources to support someone, it will help to try to listen carefully to them and explore what type of support will best suit their needs. You can also call/text the helplines for advice when supporting someone. You can call on someone's behalf with their permission since making that first call can be very difficult.

The SMR Team member wellbeing pages include a number of useful links as well as those signposted in this summary. You will find phone, text and web links as well as SMR specific support videos. There are also details of the SMR Benevolent Scheme. (Password available from your team): [scottishmountainrescue.org/team-pages/wellbeing-support](http://scottishmountainrescue.org/team-pages/wellbeing-support)

**SPEAK** If you, or the person you are supporting, wish to speak to someone:

- **999:** Call 999 if there is immediate threat – especially if taking own life has been attempted
- **NHS:** Call 111 for urgent medical advice (or contact/advice GP if less immediate urgency)
- **Samaritans:** [samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org) or call **116 123**
- **Breathing Space:** [breathingspace.scot](http://breathingspace.scot) or call **0800 83 85 87** (Also piloting a web-chat option)
- **Police Scotland Employee Assistance Programme (EAP):** Call **0800 011 6719**
- **Working Health Services** (for self-employed and small organisations): [healthyworkinglives.scot/workplace-guidance/Pages/Healthy-Working-Lives-services.aspx](http://healthyworkinglives.scot/workplace-guidance/Pages/Healthy-Working-Lives-services.aspx)
- **Able Futures:** [able-futures.co.uk](http://able-futures.co.uk) provides up to nine months of support: see website for details. Call **0800 321 3137** Monday to Friday 08.00 – 22.30

**TEXT:** If you, or the person you are supporting, prefer text support:

- **SHOUT:** [giveusashout.org](http://giveusashout.org) Text the word **BLUELIGHT** to **85258**

**READ/WATCH/LISTEN:** If you, or the person you are supporting, wish to access online resources:

- **Lifelines Scotland:** [www.lifelines.scot](http://www.lifelines.scot) (An NHS project specifically for the emergency service community in Scotland)
- **Police Scotland EAP:** [policescotland.yourcareeap.co.uk](http://policescotland.yourcareeap.co.uk)
- **National Wellbeing Hub:** [wellbeinghub.scot](http://wellbeinghub.scot) (Aimed at Health and Social Care sector in Scotland)
- **NHS:** [nhs24.scot](http://nhs24.scot) Links to NHS Inform and NHS 111

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



## Initial Response Search Management Course

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2024

Our popular annual course held in Northumberland  
Based at the Holiday Inn - close to the A1 and Newcastle Airport

Cost:-  
£80.00 - volunteers  
£100.00 - statutory organisations  
includes all course materials plus  
hospitality (Tea, Coffee, Lunch)



Full details at:  
[Annual IR Course - The Centre for Search Research \(tcsr.org.uk\)](http://AnnualIRCourse-TheCentreforSearchResearch(tcsr.org.uk))  
To book a place email:  
[contact@tcsr.org.uk](mailto:contact@tcsr.org.uk)

Follow us on at <https://www.facebook.com/TheCentreforSearchResearch/>

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From Head to Toe

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Keela Trousers

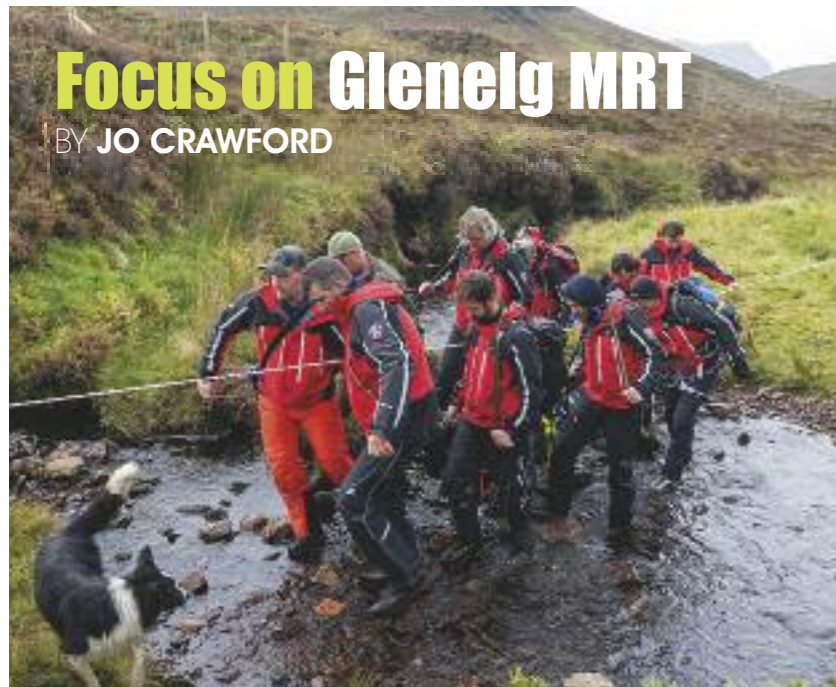
Contact us for more details  
[sales@keela.co.uk](mailto:sales@keela.co.uk)  
Lets get social @keelaoutdoors

[keelaoutdoors.com](http://keelaoutdoors.com)

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

## Focus on Glenelg MRT

BY JO CRAWFORD



The Glenelg Mountain Rescue Association was established in 1973 by the late Dr Catherine MacInnes (the then local GP) to cover the Parish of Glenelg. It completed its registration as a charity in 1974. Our patch takes in the Glenelg peninsula jutting into Loch Duich, then heads east as far as the south side of the Saddle, taking in Arnisdale, and stretching as far south as Loch Morar, covering Kinlochourn, Barrisdale and Knoydart, an area of approximately 550 square kilometres. Some of the Knoydart peninsula is also covered by our colleagues in the Lochaber MRT because it is such a remote and complex piece of ground.

The team was originally made up of shepherds, stalkers, forestry workers, a doctor and people who generally worked outdoors. This is still the case, with a mix of mountaineers, rope access workers, boat masters and various other professions. There are normally 20 to 30 members on the team — a very large percentage of the community considering the local area has a population of less than 300. Our volunteers know the area really well and have intimate knowledge of the mountains and glens we cover. Last year, we celebrated 50 years, with special recognition going to Johnny Cameron, who has been a member since the beginning and continues to be so.

The team has established good relationships with the neighbouring teams of Kintail, Skye and Lochaber, often supporting each other on protracted call-outs. We have regular training exercises with SAR and RNLI which contribute to the speed and effectiveness of responses in an area bordered by the Atlantic and numerous loch inlets as well as challenging mountain ranges. The team has successfully shared the workload amongst the members with a committee of officers including medical, communications, training, equipment, vehicle, health and safety, and helicopter liaison. We train locally twice a month and share regular training opportunities with Kintail which has helped to develop a close working relationship with them.

The team is currently looking to build a permanent base in the local area. The need for a fit-for-purpose base to safely house the Land Rover, equipment and administration has long been recognised and has become more essential than ever in recent times. Developments in search and rescue technology, drone equipment and digital mapping systems require specific storage conditions which the team do not have at present. Much equipment is currently stored in member's homes. We have ring-fenced grant funding and some of the donations

from members of the public to pursue this aim. Finding a suitable plot continues to be problematic, but we continue the search, optimistically.

The Glenelg community and team members work well together. In fact, a large percentage of our team work in the local fire service as well. In our local area, where the mobile signal can be patchy, we tend to know where folk are because we communicate effectively together and as a result can muster a team for a call-out fairly rapidly.

In recent years, a short video was made about our team in response to Glenelg MRT being awarded Emergency Services Hero of the Year 2019 at the Highland Heroes Awards. The video can be seen on YouTube via [youtube.com/watch?v=9jQmk6aUVKA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jQmk6aUVKA), or by searching for 'Men of the Glen — Glenelg Mountain Rescue Team'. The awards recognise people throughout the Highlands who make a real difference to their communities, and we were justly proud of the acknowledgement. 🙌

FIND GLENELG MRT ON FACEBOOK  
@GLENELGMRT OR VIA  
GLENELGMOUNTAINRESCUE.ORG.UK

## POST-TRAUMA SUPPORT FOR SMR MEMBERS

Email Steve Penny  
via [wellbeingofficer@scottishmountainrescue.org](mailto:wellbeingofficer@scottishmountainrescue.org)

Scottish Mountain Rescue is finalising an agreement with the Rivers Centre for Traumatic Stress to cover post trauma support to volunteers and staff. The centre has over twenty years' experience working with the emergency services in Scotland. 'This agreement will build on the support available through the Police Scotland Employee Assistance Programme (EAP),' says Steve Penny MBE, SMR Wellbeing Officer. 'The two-year pilot, starting in July, will be open to all team members in Scotland and will look at what we do before, during and after potentially traumatic events. Over the last eight years, SMR has developed an approach to wellbeing that involves working closely with others. Our proactive approach from recruitment to retirement starts with the knowledge and skills available through Lifelines Scotland training and resources which build understanding and confidence in self-care and supporting colleagues. We've also benefited from the support of Police Scotland and access for members and their families to their Employee Assistance Programme. We look forward to this partnership with the Rivers Centre.'

# smr

SUPPORTER STORIES  
MILES FOR SMILES

Now in its fourth year, Scottish Mountain Rescue's Miles for SMR virtual fundraising event has raised a record-breaking £12,500 this year.

Throughout May, our 75 fantastic fundraisers logged their miles from wherever they were in the world, from the far north coast of the UK all the way to New Zealand! Together, they clocked up nearly 8000 miles by running, walking, cycling, swimming and paddle-boarding. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to this monumental achievement! Elsewhere, our fundraisers have taken on some truly epic cross-country routes and long-distance walking trails, as well as the ever-popular Glasgow and Aberdeen Kiltwalks, and the Edinburgh Marathon to name just a few. A big thank you to all our wonderful fundraisers!



## News from Scottish teams

The sunny weather towards the end of Spring brought about a very busy period for SMR teams, with some recording their busiest ever month this May.

**Skye MRT** encountered an exceptionally busy bank holiday weekend in early May, with a continuous 32-hour stretch of demanding call-outs, including five Cuillin-centric incidents. It began at noon on Saturday when a team member witnessed a climber's fall in the Cuillin, prompting a deployment of eight team members and a helicopter rescue, with the casualty thankfully sustaining only minor injuries. Simultaneously, another distress call for stranded walkers was managed by the coastguard, followed by a hiker with a lower leg injury at Loch Coruisk. The team stretchered the injured hiker onwards for medical attention with the assistance of neighbouring **Kintail MRT** and the local **Bella Jane Boat**. Just as the team were returning home, they received another call-out to the east of the Cuillin for a suspected upper leg fracture. The casualty was located and transported by the team to Broadford Hospital.

However, the weekend wasn't over yet. A walker had fallen from the southernmost Cuillin Munro; Sgurr nan Eag. Fortunately, **RAF Valley MRT** had just arrived on Skye for a week's training and were able to assist, along with the coastguard helicopter from Prestwick. Despite incoming clouds, the helicopter successfully dropped off a paramedic and uplifted several team members to assist with the evacuation. The casualty was airlifted to hospital, and team members were finally off the hill by 9.30pm.

**Dundonnell MRT** had a notable call-out at 10.30pm on a Saturday night in May for a cragfast climber on Sgurr an Fhidhleir. The climber was stuck on Pitch 7 out of ten. In challenging weather conditions, the team carried all their equipment — including 700 metres of rope and belay bags — to the

705-metre high summit, arriving at 3.00am. A technical rescue was performed to secure the climber and their partner, who were then safely hoisted to the top and given warm clothing and food. The team spent fifteen hours in total through a cold, wet night to bring the operation to a successful conclusion.

In April, **Oban MRT** had two very similar call-outs in quick succession to the same location on Ben Cruachan for walkers who became disorientated descending in poor conditions. The team stress the importance of navigation skills as hillgoers are increasingly using modern technology to navigate.

In lighter news, **Lomond MRT** successfully rescued a Border Terrier who had fallen over a crag edge and into a quarry above Aberfoyle. The team rigged up a rope system and the 'wee dug' was soon retrieved with nothing worse than a sheepish look from the fall.

**Top:** Fundraisers Connor McLean, Merel van de Haak, Lisa Pierce and Roy Bowlenwell. Images supplied.

**Right:** Border Terrier rescued by Lomond after a fall over a crag edge © Lomond MRT; Skye team during an exceptionally busy May weekend © Skye MRT.



The Scottish Mountain Rescue Annual Review and Stats Report highlight another exceptionally busy year for Scottish teams, with 976 call-outs and 32,762 volunteer hours dedicated to rescues — up from 906 call-outs and 29,804 hours in 2022.

HEAD TO [SCOTTISHMOUNTAINRESCUE.ORG](https://scottishmountainrescue.org) TO DOWNLOAD A PDF



MREW team

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MREW leads

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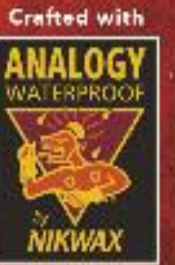
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