

Mountain Rescue England & Wales Annual Review 2018





Foreword

HRH The Duke of Cambridge



Top: HRH The Duke of Cambridge © Chris Jackson. Main photo: The MREW Discovery being put through its paces off road © Julian Earmshaw.



From my experience of search and rescue, I appreciate something of the skills and commitment of mountain and cave rescue volunteers, as well as the multitude of challenges involved in their work.

The growing number of call outs is adding to the pressures on volunteers and their employers and families. Plans are in place to help tackle this with a campaign to promote planning ahead and taking safety seriously, while enjoying the outdoors. I wish every success to the many partner organisations involved in this campaign.

But the pressure on volunteers is not purely about time. MREW is also working with MIND to support the mental health of team members. This is an issue about which I care deeply and it is encouraging to see charities working effectively together to tackle such a complex subject.

As Patron of MREW, I once again offer my personal thanks to everyone involved in mountain rescue and thank all those who continue to support them in their extraordinary work.

O'm profiad o chwilio ac achub, gwerthfawrogaf rywfaint o fedrau ac ymrwymiad gwirfoddolwyr achub mynydd ac achub ogof, yn ogystal â'r llu o heriau ynghlwm wrth eu gwaith.

Mae'r nifer cynyddol o alwadau yn ychwanegu at y pwysau ar wirfoddolwyr ac ar eu cyflogwyr a'u teuluoedd. Mae cynlluniau'n barod i helpu ymgodymu â hyn gydag ymgyrch i hybu cynllunio rhag blaen a chymryd diogelwch o ddifrif wrth fwynhau'r awyr agored. Dymunaf bob llwyddiant i'r nifer fawr o sefydliadau cydweithiol sydd ynghlwm wrth yr ymgyrch hwn.

Ond nid mater o amser yn unig yw'r pwysau ar wirfoddolwyr. Mae MREW hefyd yn gweithio gyda MIND i gynnal iechyd meddwl aelodau timau. Mae hyn yn fater sydd o bwys mawr imi, ac y mae'n galonddid gweld elusennau'n gweithio'n effeithiol gyda'i gilydd i fynd i'r afael â phwnc mor gymhleth.

Fel Noddwr Achub Mynydd Cymru a Lloegr, cynigïaf unwaith eto fy niolch personol i bawb sy'n ymwneud ag achub mynydd a diolchaf i bawb sy'n parhau i'w cefnogi yn eu gwaith hynod.

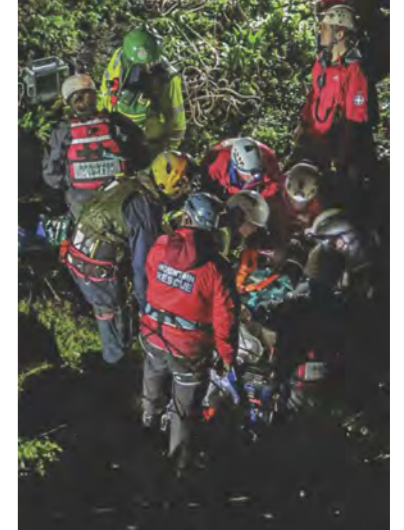


Being a voluntary organisation is still very important to everybody involved in mountain rescue and we work hard to protect and continue this ambition. We join MR to get out on the hill and help fellow walkers and climbers in difficulties. And when those walkers and climbers do get into trouble, the expectation is that team members will be highly skilled to carry out the task in hand.

We continue to improve our training standards to enable all our members to meet these expectations. Mountain rescue volunteers are used to dropping what they are doing to go into the hills to help someone in difficulty, over and over again. The majority of these call-outs are genuine accidents, but some could be avoided with a bit of better pre-planning.

safety campaign Adventure Smart Wales rolled out into England, giving you more information about how to stay safe and 'make a good day better'.

By running national training courses, we can ensure team members maintain their skills and standards. In return, the commitment from our members is that, once they have passed a course, it will need renewing in three years time and



to support the funding of training once the LIBOR scheme is finished. That's one issue we will be addressing later this year.

Keeping Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) current takes hours of administration time. This includes managing our insurance — another six-figure cost — moving the charity to a CIO, ensuring we give teams the right advice about the new data protection laws and that we comply ourselves. We're also working with the wider search and rescue community (UKSAR) to develop a national welfare strategy for all search and rescue volunteers, and we recently played a significant part in running workshops at the first UKSAR conference attended by search and rescue organisations from land, sea and air. The more we do engaging with these other organisations — helping, managing local and major incident events, being the main resource when looking for a vulnerable missing person in urban areas — the more the public expects of our voluntary search and rescue service. Which takes me back to the teams and team members on the ground — who give their time freely, to train and go out on the hill to carry out the rescues.

Despite the challenges of running today's still fiercely voluntary, but highly professional, mountain rescue service, the free insurance for all is that, should you get into difficulties in the mountains and moorlands of England and Wales, a mountain rescue team is never far away to come to your assistance.



The outdoors has become easier to access with better clothing, electronic mapping and mobile phones apps. However, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that some personal skills are also needed because, no matter how well planned your trip, it can still go wrong. Hopefully, this year, you will see the

they will need to keep their own records of their personal development — and they are volunteers!

The LIBOR grant scheme has been a great help in funding this training, but national courses cost us six figures every year to run. It would take a lot of pressure off us if the government would commit

Main photo: Peer review with Northumberland National Park MRT © NNPMRT. **Inset:** Mid Pennine teams refresh their water skills © CVSRT. **Top:** Upper Wharfedale FRA in action © Sara Spillet. **Right:** Graphics courtesy VARTA.

Front cover: Calder Valley SRT carry out a rescue at Lumb Bank © CVSRT.

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Chairman Mike France

Mountain and Cave Awareness Weekend
27/28 October 2018

As the nights draw in closer and the weather turns colder, it's a great opportunity to get to know your local team and also learn a few tips to keep you safe. To find out more about how you can stay safe over the winter months, why not download one of our free guides? Find them at mountain.rescue.org.uk/stay-safe-out-there.

6 Key facts and figures 2017

Some of the increase in call-out numbers can be attributed to better and more comprehensive reporting from some teams over 2017, most notably in South Wales. However, the Lake District teams have seen a genuine increase and for the more centrally serving teams – significantly so. Report from **Rob Shepherd**, MREW Statistics Officer.

NUMBER CRUNCHING

2396 call-outs from **35** statutory agencies of which **2110** resulted in mountain rescue deployment
1722 persons assisted

Total volunteer hours: **97,208**
(Operational hours, not including training or administration).

Rescuer hours:
Rescuing: **62,026** hours
Civil incidents: **15,236** hours
Searching: **19,946** hours

KEY FACTS *

Only 9 days in 2017 without a mountain rescue call-out in England and Wales.

2017 Breakdown and comparison against the previous five years mountain and non-mountain incidents and accidents for teams in Mountain Rescue England and Wales

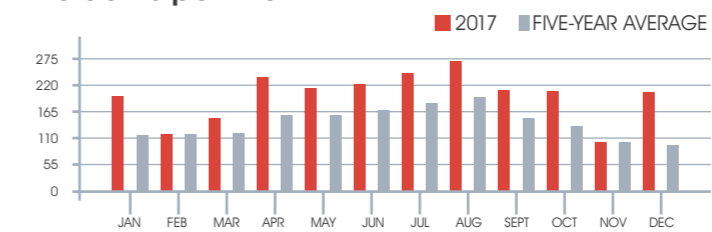
Year	Number of call-outs		Persons assisted		
	Mountain	Non-mountain	Serious or fatal	Minor or unhurt	Total
2017	1467	643	348	1374	1722
2016	1281	530	360	1218	1578
2015	1179	470	364	1254	1618
2014	1052	434	406	1196	1602
2013	1027	485	413	1075	1488
2012	1080	458	467	1137	1604

2017 Incident duration

Up to 4 hours	1690	80%
Between 4 and 8 hours	321	15%
Over 8 hours	99	5%

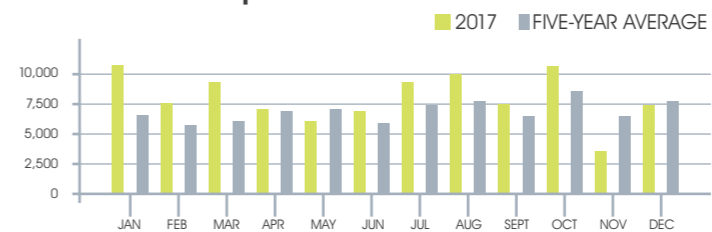
The most significant observation is how much busier the summer holiday months were in 2017, when compared to the average from the previous five years

Incidents per month



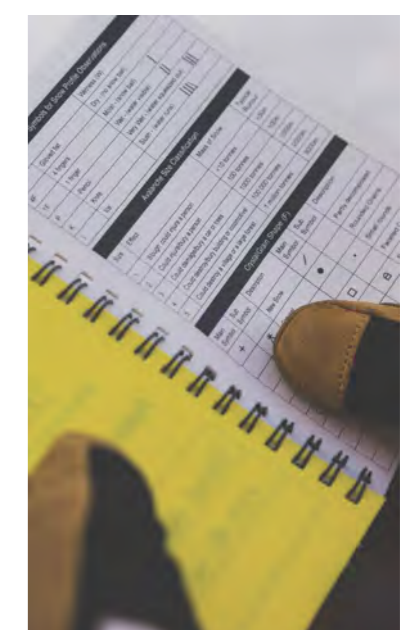
COMPARING THE MONTHLY INCIDENT OCCURRENCE IN 2017 WITH THE PREVIOUS FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE

Rescuer hours per month



COMPARING THE MONTHLY TIME EXPENDITURE IN 2017 WITH THE PREVIOUS FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE

Main photo: The Roaches, Peak District © Jan Kelsall | Creative Commons.
Right: Winter skills training in Scotland with Northumberland National Park MRT © Neil Irwin.





Mid Pennines teams refresh their water skills © CVSRF.



National support, national fundraising

National fundraising enjoyed another strong year in 2017 with funds raised for a number of key areas, including digital radios and insurance. It is, of course, important that Mountain Rescue England and Wales diversifies its sources of income to ensure stability for the organisation but it was also a good year for strengthening relationships with our existing supporters.

Supporters

The JD Foundation (see last year's Annual Review) continued to be a huge contributor in 2017 and VARTA Consumer UK also continues to support MREW and every team across England and Wales. Thanks to our patron, HRH The Duke of Cambridge, we were also awarded 50% of the funds raised at the BMG Foundation Polo Cup, in July.

Members of the public continue to support mountain rescue at all levels through numerous events, including the Virgin Money London Marathon and the Great North Run. Thank you, too, to those who support the organisation through membership of Basecamp, a scheme that includes a subscription to our quarterly 'Mountain Rescue' magazine and enables us to keep in touch with our core support.

National support for local priorities

A priority for the use of national funds has been subsidising or covering a few of the less glamorous team costs such as vehicle insurance and saving money through joint procurement, and a new arrangement with specialist insurance broker Integro, is proving an ideal route for this sort of national support. Teams can have confidence that MREW is covering a vital cost on their behalf and Integro is building invaluable expertise and special knowledge around the needs of rescue teams.

The ongoing project to upgrade our communications to a digital system (see right), has proved a useful route for the national organisation to support the operational teams. With the completion

of Phase 1, there will be a continued emphasis on raising money to ensure comprehensive coverage and sufficient radio sets for everyone involved.

An important source of national funds has been the LIBOR funding scheme established by the government (from fines on banks and financial institutions) to support the armed forces and emergency service charities. As a charity involved in search and rescue, MREW has been able to access this and LIBOR monies have been used to cover key areas of the national training programme.

Looking forward

MREW is dedicated to increasing focus and resources for fundraising in 2018. With increasing call-outs across a number of regions (most notably in North Wales and the Lake District), it is imperative that national fundraising further relieves the pressure on teams so they can focus on what they do best: search and rescue.

Consequently, the coming year will see the continuation of fundraising for digital radios with the aim of providing one for every team member — a substantial undertaking with more than 3,500 team members across England and Wales. Additionally, there will be a focus on raising funds for vital life-saving equipment and training.

'At every level, from local coffee mornings to legacies and trust donations, we will continue our work to secure national deals to further reduce team costs,' says MREW Chairman, Mike France. 'Our thanks go to everyone who has supported us in any way in 2017. We have a challenging but exciting year ahead!'

With increasing call-outs across a number of regions (most notably in North Wales and the Lake District), it is imperative that national fundraising further relieves the pressure on teams, so they can focus on what they do best: search and rescue.

KEY FACTS

Only 9 days in 2017 without a mountain rescue call-out in England and Wales.

In 2016, this figure was 14.

SIMOCO KEY TO UPGRADE OF OUR DIGITAL MOBILE RADIO NETWORK: SEPTEMBER

Working with communications specialist Simoco Wireless Solutions, MREW has begun the process of upgrading mountain rescue teams across England and Wales to the Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) network.

The project has involved the roll-out of 1000 digital radio devices and base stations which will deliver greater clarity and reliability, with better coverage. And features such as GPS mapping will enable the team leaders and incident controllers, back at base running the call-out, to precisely locate and track their colleagues on the hill.

'The system is fully interoperable with our existing analogue systems,' says Mark Lewis, MREW ICT officer, 'so teams at different stages of digital migration can swap between the analogue and digital networks.'

'It was also important to maintain effective communication with the other emergency services, such as the coastguard and police helicopters, and air ambulances, and we're happy we've achieved that.'



NORTH DARTMOOR TEAM OPENS NEW RESCUE CENTRE: NOVEMBER

Dartmoor team members looked forward eight years to celebrate the official opening of their new, tailor-made centre in Okehampton and the moment finally arrived in November, with long-serving team member Les Agar cutting the ribbon. A keen fundraiser, Les alone had raised over £6,000 in the last year towards the project. Over a hundred people popped in to wish them well, including invited sponsors and donors, past members, families, friends and members from other teams.

'It's been a long journey,' said team leader David Stoneman, 'and it's already making a real difference to our operation. Our response times to call-outs are much faster because the vehicles are already loaded, ready to go, and we can also access the main roads much faster. We're better able to clean and dry equipment and have it packed up ready for the next emergency and the spacious and bright training room is a great asset. We train every week and, whilst we are often on the moors, we do need indoor facilities for the more traditional teaching sessions and some of the casualty care exams.'

'It's been a huge project, a bit daunting at times, and it's only been possible because of the time and efforts of many volunteers, both team members and others, and the support and generosity of our donors and sponsors, to whom I'd like to say a big thank you from all the team.'

Above: Team members gather to celebrate their new rescue centre © North Dartmoor MRT.



PRINCE CHARLES OPENS NEW EMERGENCY SERVICES 'QUAD STATION' AT BARNARD CASTLE: FEBRUARY

HRH The Prince of Wales officially opened the new emergency services station in Barnard Castle, County Durham. Known as the 'quad station', it is home to fire and rescue, police, ambulance and mountain rescue, the first of its kind in the country.

Teesdale & Weardale SMRT keeps one of its two Land Rovers there, along with their water rescue trailer and the building also houses an office, a briefing room and other shared facilities. Prince Charles met with members of all the emergency services and was introduced to several members of the team, including the search dogs, before making a short speech and unveiling a plaque commemorating his visit and official opening.

Left: Team leader Steve Owers introducing Prince Charles to Des Toward and partner Karen Fisher with search dogs Wisp and Sam.



FIRST SOD CUT FOR NEW WASDALE TEAM BASE: MAY

Wasdale team members have taken their first steps towards a new, purpose-designed base near Gosforth in Copeland, generously enabled by £218,043 from the Copeland Community Fund, £12,000 from LDSAMRA, and an interest in land granted by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. The new base will be modern and fit-for-purpose with enhanced training and welfare facilities, communications and accessibility to the A595.

The project began in earnest in 2014, thanks to Adam Nolan and his dog Jasper, which went missing in the team's patch. Jasper was found by a member of the public and then rescued by the team but the story triggered a viral social media campaign raising over £51,000 plus Gift Aid.

'This is the culmination of a lot of hard work and donations by many people,' says team chairman John Bamforth.

Top left: Adam Nolan with Jasper.

Left: Team members witness the first sod cut © Wasdale MRT.



KENDAL 'NEW WHEELS APPEAL' OFF TO FLYING START

Thanks to Don Shore and the Kendal based BOOTboys walking group – and a fundraising walk to celebrate Don's 70th birthday – the Kendal team got off to a £2,710 flying start with their New Wheels Appeal.

Fortunately, Don and his friends have never needed to call for mountain rescue and hope they never will, but it's been a comfort to know they are there, just in case, says Don.

'The money raised by Don and the BOOTboys will be used to replace our ageing control vehicle,' says team chairman Dave Hughes. 'New technology like satellite broadband and digital radios is changing how we can coordinate our response to call-outs and our existing vehicle was designed to be used differently. We're hoping to raise £40,000 to customise a new vehicle and Don's efforts are very welcome!'

Above: The BOOTboys and BOOTgirls © Don Shore.

We can't do any of it without your help...

Mountain and cave rescue, whether it's at team or regional level or nationally, simply couldn't continue as the voluntary service it is, without the generosity of the public and our various sponsors, and the continued support of key manufacturers and suppliers.

Each of our team members gives many hours of their time to help their communities and those in need. They do it without question and voluntarily. When the pager calls, they're off, often regardless of what they're doing or who they're doing it with — children's birthdays, anniversary suppers, Christmas dinners, copy deadlines, business meetings... abandoned in an instant.

And they also put in hundreds more hours, tending to rescue kit and team vehicles, making sure the bills are paid and fulfilling paperwork, maintaining readiness for the next shout.

Yet, despite all this, they still need to put in thousands of hours just to raise sufficient funds to keep their teams in operation — collection boxes, raffles, events, personal challenges... even more time away from work and home.

All this is free of charge to the casualty. And our team members' time is given freely too — and long may that be so. So we'd like to say 'thank you' to all our supporters, sponsors and fundraisers — we couldn't do it without you! Stay safe, and thank you.

How you can support mountain rescue

There are a number of ways you can support all 48 mountain rescue teams through Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW).

Give online through mountain.rescue.org.uk/giving/online-donations or **via our appeal page** — justgiving.com/mountainrescuefilm15.

Text RESQ41 and the amount you wish to donate to **70070**.

Join Basecamp — the simplest way to support all the teams. You can even add a donation. Go to mountain.rescue.org.uk/how-you-can-help-us/basecamp/join-basecamp.

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

Buy our merchandise — via mountain.rescue.org.uk/shop.

Organise an event in aid of MREW or join an existing one and raise sponsorship. You'll be providing funds and raising awareness.

To support your local team...

Find your nearest team by checking out the list on the back page then via our website: on mountain.rescue.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/teams. They'll be happy to hear your fundraising ideas!



Putting the MREW Discovery to the test

In November 2017, Mountain Rescue England and Wales took delivery of a shiny new Land Rover Discovery 5, in the company of our patron, the Duke of Cambridge, and the Duchess of Cambridge. Since then, the vehicle has been spending time with teams across the country, with team members putting it through its paces in a diversity of terrain and weather conditions.



The exciting opportunity to try out this new, state-of-the-art vehicle, grew from a conversation, at a polo match in 2016, between the Duke of Cambridge and a director of Jaguar Land Rover.

The first six months have seen teams from the Lake District, North East and Mid Pennine regions having fun and putting it to the test on rock and road, snow and ice, mud and moorland, and water too. It's been deployed on call-outs, attended training sessions, carried team members, vital kit and casualties and featured at team fundraising events.

The #MREWDDiscovery is the latest vehicle to be donated by Jaguar Land Rover to emergency and disaster preparedness partnerships, helping to save lives and support communities around the world. The liveried Discovery was initially handed over to nine team members — from around England and Wales — who also took the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the vehicle's all-terrain technology and get some expert off-road tuition on the purpose built Land Rover Experience Adventure Zone off-road track.

Mark Cameron, Land Rover Experiential Marketing Director said, 'Land Rover has a long and rich heritage of supporting

projects in the most challenging and remote environments around the world. So we are delighted that this group of volunteers will be supported by Land Rover to continue their incredible work'.

...it's proved its worth, on and off-road

Simon Thresher, MREW vehicle officer is delighted with the initiative, and happy that teams are fully engaging with the chance to try out the vehicle.

'Land Rover is a great partner for us and every rescue team has at least one in their fleet. The plan was for the Discovery to travel from team to team, the length and breadth of England and Wales, so as many team members as possible have the opportunity to test out its capabilities and, so far, it's proved its worth, on and off road. We're tracking its progress as it goes so we know what its been up to and where. It's even been up to Scotland for some winter training — and, of course, we've experienced challenging winter conditions closer to home too.'

Over the last six months of its tour, the Discovery is set to travel south west to Cornwall and Dartmoor, doubling back north to the Yorkshire Dales and the edge of the Pennines, before zigzagging down through the Peak District and back to the south west, ending its incredible 'mountain rescue' journey in November, in Yorkshire. Quite a trip!

'We owe a huge thank you to Jaguar Land Rover and the Duke of Cambridge,' says Simon, 'and especially to Lorraine Rogers (Director, Royal and Diplomatic Affairs), without whose help none of this would have happened.'

Opposite page, top: Out and about in the Lakes with Coniston team... © Jago Miller. **Below:** ...and north east with Scarborough & Ryedale MRT © SRMRT. **Inset:** HRH The Duke of Cambridge, takes a turn behind the wheel © Jaguar Land Rover.

Above, centre: Handover day. Left to right: Al Pewsey (Ashburton), Adrian Payne (PenMaCra), Ray Griffiths (MREW President), Andrew Luscombe (PenMaCra), Howard Taylor (PDMRO), Paul Smethurst (NEWSAR), Chris Jones (LDSAMRA), Simon Thresher (MREW Vehicles Officer) Julian Earnshaw (MPSRO) © Ro Furby.

Top: Trip to Blackpool Tower with Bowland Pennine MRT © BPMRT.



Looking out for our rescue teammates

The work of mountain and cave rescue can be extremely challenging. The difficulties of unforgiving terrain, filthy weather and the need to find a casualty, deliver medical treatment and recover them to hospital in timely fashion come with the territory, but dealing with severe trauma can take a hidden toll on team members.

It's not enough, following a particularly harrowing call-out, to simply 'chat things through over a pint'. And besides, how many times, as volunteers, do team members have that opportunity?

Far more likely that, cold, wet, tired and hungry, they'll jump in the car and head back to work or their families.

Collaborating with mental health charity Mind and enabling the delivery of TRiM (Trauma Risk Management) training, are two of the ways MREW is taking positive steps to help improve the wellbeing of team members.

In 2015, research by Mind into mental health in the wider search and rescue community, identified trauma as a trigger for poor mental health — more than any other factor. Their Mind Blue Light Programme now works with search and rescue staff and volunteers



across England and Wales, to challenge the stigma of mental health and improve the approach to wellbeing. Key to this has been the realisation that volunteer team members can be as vulnerable to the effect of a traumatic incident as their colleagues in the paid emergency services, perhaps more so.

The Blue Light Programme encourages team members to recognise when colleagues are feeling isolated, not 'being themselves', and to not bottle it up when things get too much.

Greater awareness also underpins the

TRiM training which was initially adopted by the Lake District teams in 2011, funded by LDSAMRA, the regional body. In 2016, thanks to the LIBOR funding scheme, MREW was able to begin rolling out TRiM training to teams within the North and South Wales, Mid Pennine and PenMacra regions.

Paula Holbrook, of Dartmoor SRT (Ashburton), was involved in coordinating the national programme of training and trained by Devon and Cornwall Police so she could implement the TRiM approach in rescue teams in the south west of England.

'TRiM is a support-system based on watchful waiting,' explains Paula, 'helping affected people understand that there may be symptoms after a traumatic event and that these are normal reactions to abnormal experiences. Following a critical incident, welfare briefings are given and trained practitioners conduct one-to-one meetings to talk about life before, during and after the particular traumatic event.'

'Within PenMacRA (Peninsula Mountain and Cave Rescue Association), a welfare group with representation from each team meets regularly. The group comprises mental health professionals, a chaplain and team members with a general interest in welfare.'

'The key to success in the region is our partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police,' adds Paula. 'They use TRiM widely and it is an accepted part of day-to-day management. I can quickly make a phone call and arrange further support when I think we need it.'

'It is important to understand that TRiM is not treatment or therapy, but it will help identify when a referral would be supportive. By working with the police, the Rescue Benevolent Fund and the person's GP, we have been able to get treatment without a long wait for NHS services. In the main, further support is not needed and we have been able to provide reassurance about levels of resilience.'

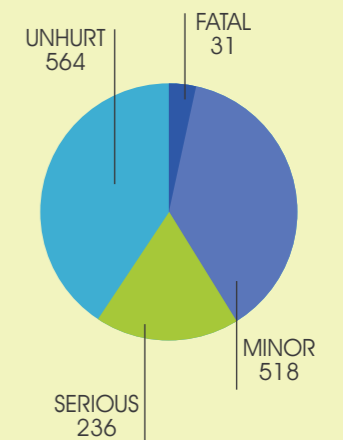
The Rescue Benevolent Fund was set

KEY FACTS

Mountain rescue volunteers devoted approximately **59,915 hours to mountain incidents**

defined as activities that are 'mountain or wilderness-related'.

Breakdown in severity in mountain incidents



up as a separate charity, to look after mountain and cave rescue team members and their families who suffer as a result of a rescue incident. Judy Whiteside is a trustee.

'When we set up the fund, five years ago, we envisaged that the majority of applications would be for physical rehab or financial hardship. But, more and more, we are being approached for mental health support. This might be a team member who has experienced a traumatic call-out or it could equally be something connected to their previous life which is triggered by a mountain rescue activity.'

'We can't always help directly but what we can do is signpost so we've been looking into ways we can do this, with the help and support of Mind, TRiM practitioners such as Paula and local counsellors where appropriate.'

'There is still work — and a great deal of talking — to be done but at least we've opened the conversation now.'

Main photo: Winter skills training in Scotland with Northumberland National Park MRT © Neil Irwin. **Inset:** Training at the water's edge with Central Beacons © Daryl Collins.



#beadventuresmart

Stemming the rising tide in call-outs

Main photo: Crib Coch in Snowdonia © William Barton | Dreamstime.com **Top left:** Adventure Smart Wales logo.

The Adventure Smart Wales campaign launched in late-March 2018 across Wales, its aim to promote the safe enjoyment of the country's natural outdoor resources through clear safety messages, live information and education opportunities for the thousands of people who enjoy the coastline, woodlands, lakes and, of course, the mountains of Wales.

Adventure Smart Wales (Mentor'n Gall Cymru) includes videos and posters, live information updates and educational apps, a strong web presence and a cluster of hashtags. It is a two-year project, part-funded by the Welsh Government with additional contributions from Snowdonia National Park Authority, British Mountaineering Council, Welsh Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Welsh Sports Association. The Welsh regions of MREW are also involved as partners, alongside outdoors organisations such as National Trust Cymru, Welsh Cycling, Canoe Wales, the Royal Yachting Association and the RNLI.

The campaign's message is simple: come and enjoy the iconic and beautiful Welsh countryside and coast but take a little time to plan your day.

'We all share the same aims of educating the public about the simple things they can do to make their good day better whilst keeping themselves safe and having fun,' says Phil Benbow, Llanberis MR team member and chairman of the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association (NWMRA).

'We're not criticising and we're not dictating but working together to reach as many visitors as we can, to give them the sort of advice that will make them more self-reliant and better prepared for the outdoors.'

By and large, mountain rescue teams have always preferred to take the non-judgemental approach and the unwritten policy has always been not to publicly criticise. No team would wish to discourage someone in genuine difficulties from raising the alarm as soon as possible, but tolerance levels have been sorely tested in recent months, with the seemingly never-ending rise in 'avoidable' rescues, particularly in the Lake District and Snowdonia.

Teams in these major tourism regions have seen a rapid rise in call-outs over the last two years. From 2016 to 2017, North Wales saw a 23% rise from 470 to 580. In 2017, Lakes teams dealt with 543 incidents — a 25% increase on 2016 (436).

The MREW executive and the regional chairs are now considering how best to

catalyse a similar partnership approach that extends the Adventure Smart brand beyond Wales and into the hot spots and mountain tourism destinations of England.

'We need to learn quickly from what's working in Wales and then see how we can adapt and implement the campaign to make a difference in other regions as soon as possible,' says Mike France, MREW chairman. 'But it takes a bit of time to gather together the different national and regional partners that will give a broader campaign the resources, expertise and reach that it needs to be effective.'

Meanwhile, just a few weeks after launch, Phil and his colleagues realise it is going to be a long haul to affect avoidable call-outs.

'From a mountain rescue point of view, we will always go out and rescue injured climbers and walkers and there are some incidents we are never going to influence,' says Phil. 'There will always be medical emergencies and accidents can happen to even the most skilled of mountaineers. But what we can hope to influence is the avoidable incidents, where there's a lack of understanding and preparation for the adventure ahead.'

'We're certainly not saying don't go out there and have an adventure. We're saying go out and have that adventure but know how to keep yourself safe. You'll enjoy that day so much more.'

KEY FACTS

From 2016 to 2017
North Wales
**call-outs rose
by 23%**

In 2017, Lakes teams
dealt with 543
incidents —
a 25% rise on 2016



Photo © Glossop MRT.

CORRIE CHRISTMAS SPECIAL HEADS OUT TO GLOSSOP TEAM'S PATCH

Glossop team members strayed into Soapland on Christmas Day 2017, as Peter Barlow played out his mad, misguided revenge plot against Billy Mayhew, for the death of twin sister, Susan in 2001 (a storyline which didn't end well for Billy, as regular soap-watchers will know). Filming took place at Eldon Hill Quarry, at the back of Mam Tor in the Peak District.

...mountain rescuers are unpaid volunteers, on call 24/7/365, having family and work commitments and the current rate of call-outs is unsustainable

Wasdale MRT, like many teams, has accident black spots and Piers Gill is no exception. The gully with 60-metre side walls, lurks in the mist to trap the ill-prepared and unwary and, following one particular fatal incident, late last year, a meeting was convened high on the flanks of Scafell Pike, between mountain rescue, the Lake District National Park, National Trust and Cumbria Police. The idea was to see what could be done to prevent the many avoidable rescues caused by walkers deviating from the paths in poor weather. The gathering was filmed by ITV – which added a strong degree of focus to take action – and a number of commitments were made for the agencies to work more closely together to increase awareness, and to improve paths and signage at strategic points.

Soon afterwards, BBC North West also ran a feature, which led to a weekend's filming for The One Show in late December (aired in early 2018). The theme was the urgent need for walkers to take greater heed of the advice available for hill goers, thereby avoiding those unnecessary and totally avoidable call-outs.

The message taken away by the presenter and film crew was very clear: Be more prepared, check the weather forecast, take the right gear (map, compass, torch) and learn how to navigate yourself out of a difficult but not life-threatening situation. And be more responsible in the knowledge that all mountain rescuers are unpaid volunteers, on call 24/7/365, having family and work commitments and that the current rate of call-outs, sometime four at a time for a team, is unsustainable.



KATE HUMBLE AND BBC WALES FILM WITH OGWEN TEAM AND SARDA WALES



Filming with Kate Humble, and her Welsh Collie called Teg, was for a series about life along the Dragon's Back, a route from North to South Wales along the highest points and they also wanted to look at mountain rescue, especially the work of the search dogs.

Team members and a couple of dog handlers met the film crew at Oggi base on a blustery, cold and very wet day with only the odd break in the driving rain. As a dog handler herself, Kate particularly wished to meet Sally Armond and her search dog Spin, a small, smooth haired Border Collie with many years' experience as a search dog and several finds under her collar. During filming, Sally wanted to emphasise that it's the relationship between dog and handler, functioning together as a team, that leads to them being a successful search unit. OVMRO team member Jed Stone, also joined in the fun playing 'hide-and-seek' with Spin for the cameras and, all in all, the day was a great success, despite the weather.



Above and left: With liquid sunshine outside, Jed Stone signs Kate's autograph book with Sally centre. Images © John Pailthorpe.



New roles, new faces

Two new trustees and a new president were elected at the AGM in June 2017 and all three are already very much involved in the work of MREW.

Ray Griffiths, the longest serving member of Patterdale MRT and a familiar face in MREW, was elected president. He first got involved in MR in 1976 when he moved to Cumbria. Ray has served in a number of roles with Patterdale, including deputy leader for many years, as well as doing work for the Lake District region and for MREW, often related to operational activities and equipment.

'My priority is to visit as many teams and regions as I can while I am president,' says Ray, 'to talk to people at all levels of our rescue community. And, by community, I mean far beyond those wearing the team jackets – the partners and families behind us all, our fundraisers and supporters and even work colleagues who tolerate us vanishing at a moment's notice. The first few months have been busy but fascinating – and I've had a brilliant welcome across England and Wales.'

MREW has also appointed two new trustees, David Coleman and Jake Bharier. David has been president of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation for ten years. An ex-Derbyshire Chief Constable, he is a keen hillwalker and very involved in his new role, working with fellow trustee Steven Wood in a review of the national organisation.

Jake Bharier is also a keen hillwalker but, although he has been aware of MR for many years, he has not been directly involved. However, he brings more than 20 years of experience in the voluntary sector to his new role. His focus is very much on governance structures and accountability, vital areas for MREW and its management as it moves to CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) status. One of the first roles Jake took on was to rewriting the framework document of the CIO to meet the needs of the Charity Commission.

Left to right: David Coleman, Ray Griffiths, Peter Dymond (current chair of trustees), and Jake Bharier.



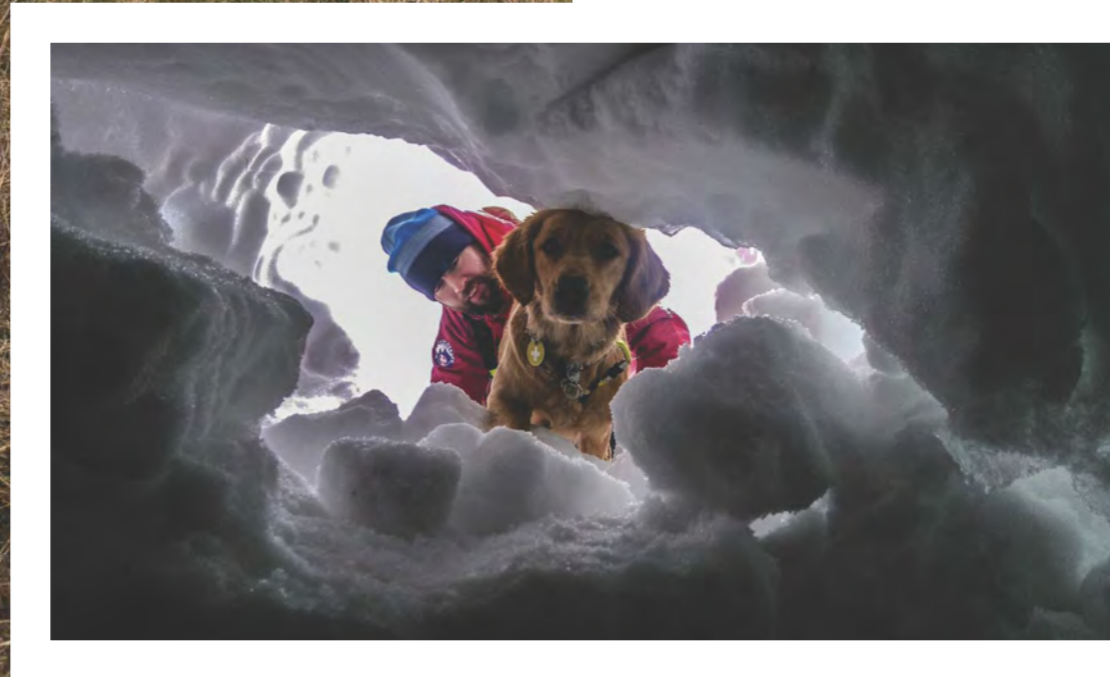
BBC'S 'ONE SHOW' HIGHLIGHTS DRAMATIC INCREASE IN 'AVOIDABLE' CALL-OUTS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT: DECEMBER

Photo © Chris Cripps/Wasdale MRT.



BMG FOUNDATION POLO CUP 2017 HELPS MOUNTAIN RESCUE: JULY

Thanks once again to our Royal patron, HRH The Duke of Cambridge, Mountain Rescue England and Wales was represented at this charitable polo match. Mike France, MREW chairman (pictured, on the right), was there to watch the game and receive a substantial donation on behalf of mountain rescue.



It's a dogsbody's life

If you've ever wondered how our dog handlers train their four-legged friends in the art of search and rescue, the answer is simple: they couldn't do it without the dedication of their dogsbodies. But why would anyone choose to spend their summer evenings, up to their ears in bracken, plagued by unfriendly midges – or their winter days buried in a snowhole – just for fun?

Usually, they are keen outdoors people themselves, used to the vagaries of our British climate — summer and winter. For Peter Sapsford, now a regular 'body' with the Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs Association, it was hearing the experiences of a long-established body that inspired him.

'It's so fulfilling to be with such clever dogs. Being out on the mountain is

enjoyable anyway and these training sessions add a valuable purpose to a nice day out.'

The first task for any dogsbody, is to get to the location the assessor requires. 'See that pointy-shaped patch of heather with a small crag to the side, up there near the green/brown grass? Find somewhere suitable in there...'

'As you might expect,' says Peter, 'by the time you've trekked up to the area it looks nothing like the verbal description issued below!'

Local wind direction and speed can be relayed to the assessor to help plan the shape of the search area and the search routes. The handler might be expecting one thing, but then the wind changes, and that affects how the dog searches and how far away from the body the dog first picks up the scent.

'The dogs aren't following a trail for a specific person but seeking the scent of someone in the search area. They cover the area by mixing free hunting and roaming with direction and control from the handler. And it's down to us to keep the area around us free of any scraps of food and dog toys that would be a distraction.'

Once the dog finds the body (lying as still as is humanly possible), she learns to 'indicate' her success by barking at the body, before returning to the handler, still barking, then running back and forth between body and handler until her two-legged friend arrives, panting, at the scene.

'That's when the excitement starts,' says Peter. 'After a significant bark, the body is expected to erupt into frenzied action. Suddenly, this resurrected human being is the most entertaining option in the area — assisted, of course, by the mandatory squeaky toy, the dog's reward for all its hard and professional work!'

And the job doesn't stop there. Once everything has calmed down, the assessors and handlers can benefit from a body's detailed descriptions of what happened from the first contact and how long it took for the dog to respond and tailor the training to suit.

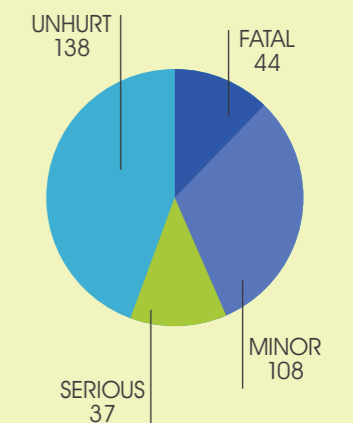
'The dog's response will depend on its age, experience and ability and the younger dogs can get a over-excited. Luckily, I haven't been over-licked or walked on by either dog or handler.'

Not all bodies are as fortunate. Tales of tuna sandwiches being snaffled and overly-slobbery dogs are legion! But it's not just the dogs themselves who inform the anecdotes.

KEY FACTS

Mountain rescue volunteers devoted approximately **37,293 hours to non-mountain incidents** defined as activities that are 'lowland, urban or roadside'.

Breakdown in severity in non-mountain incidents



'One evening last year, I was asked to go deep into Whinlatter forest and hide as an 'upright' body behind a tree. Alongside a narrow track, and in pitch darkness, I was surprised to see a head torch approaching, earlier than I'd expected. It turned out to be a mountain biker making his way up a track.'

'I was leaning against a tree and he'd be passing within touching distance. What should I do? Warn him I was there? Creep away deeper into the forest and risk being seen acting suspiciously? Or do nothing, be spotted at the last moment and frighten him off his bike?'

'I chose to do nothing and luckily, he was concentrating on his torch beam lighting the track, not noticing me right by his shoulder. If he had been a dog he would have known of my presence a minute or so earlier.'

Main photo: Search dog Rona with Keswick team members and the Air Ambulance © Rob Grange Photography. **Inset:** Search Dog Maya breaks into a snowhole © SARDA England.



Working together with our rescue colleagues

In February 2018, representatives of the voluntary sector of mountain rescue – from across England, Wales and Scotland – joined their colleagues in the paid emergency services for the first UKSAR Conference to celebrate the work of the wider search and rescue family. MREW patron HRH The Duke of Cambridge was also there to show his support and meet delegates.



The two-day event, organised by Her Majesty's Coastguard and Bristow Helicopters Limited, brought together 252 members of the UK SAR family to review the service we all provide and identify opportunities for closer collaboration and working relationships.

With fellow volunteers from the RAF Mountain Rescue Service, the British Cave Rescue Council, Lowland Rescue, the RNLI and a number of smaller rescue charities, mountain rescue stood shoulder to shoulder with the MCA, Bristow Helicopters, representatives from the emergency services and government.

The aim was to promote cooperation and an understanding of the diversity of search and rescue work across the UK – on land and sea. The event was also an opportunity for the aircraft manufacturers such as Sikorsky and Bristow, and a handful of kit suppliers to showcase their latest products and technologies.

With four workshops running concurrently at any one time, there was a lot going on but mental health and wellbeing was perhaps the most topical thread, with a number of workshops

running across the two days and a surprise visitor on the Friday with the arrival of the Duke of Cambridge, himself a fervent advocate of greater mental health awareness.

It was heartening to discover that all the organisations have similar successes and problems – paid or voluntary, we share so much in common. Without doubt, it was a great networking opportunity for all concerned and it is the development of informal relationships such as these which will encourage future joint operations with a higher level of confidence.

The plan is to repeat the UKSAR Conference format in two years' time. Roll on 2020!

Main photo: Lakes team members training with the Coastguard helicopter © Rob Grange Photography. **Above, left to right:** The UKSAR Conference podium; HRH The Duke of Cambridge; Simon Thresher (MREW vehicles officer) and Mark Lewis (MREW ICT officer) take in one of the plenary sessions © Vivienne Bailey Photography.

Right: Lake District search dog handler Andy Peacock with his dog, Corrie © Michael Lishman.

ICAR WAS FOUNDED IN 1948 AND HAS ITS BASE IN SWITZERLAND IN THE HEART OF THE ALPS. It has 103 member organisations in 37 different countries, three of them now from the UK. Its annual congress is a combination of practical workshops, specialist gatherings, knowledge sharing among experts from across the world and an AGM. The 2018 congress takes place in Chamonix in France and will focus on the impact and influence of climate change on mountain rescue operations.

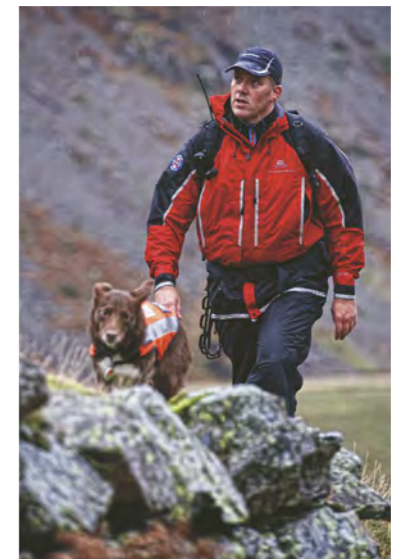
UK REPRESENTED AT INTERNATIONAL RESCUE LEVEL:

Dr John Ellerton, recognised as an expert in mountain medicine and a team doctor with Patterdale MRT, has been involved with ICAR (the International Commission for Alpine Rescue) for fifteen years and he was unanimously elected as president of its Medical Commission at the annual congress in Andorra in October 2017.

'It's a great honour,' says John. 'The Medical Commission is a vibrant group of about 70 health care professionals and their collective experience is immense. Some work in the most regulated rescue systems, others are volunteers in teams with few resources beyond a stretcher. We're bound together by a passion for mountains and remote places, and a wish to help people who get into difficulty. ICAR encompasses six continents and our aim is to provide and encourage the free exchange of the best mountain rescue knowledge.'

The Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dog Association has been attending ICAR for a number of years. Also in October, their training officer, Andy Peacock, gave a presentation to delegates as part of the association's successful formal membership application. They join the two established UK members, Mountain Rescue England and Wales and Scottish Mountain Rescue.

'ICAR has recognised the incredible work of the search dogs,' says Andy. 'It's a great privilege to be able to exchange ideas and information on an international stage with handlers from all over the world.'



One team's journey from disaster to recovery...



To say that the South Wales-based Central Beacons MRT (CBMRT) had an interesting 2017 is to put it mildly. A year that began with team members featuring on BBC1 most evenings in one of the new idents, finished with a major fire at the team's Merthyr Tydfil base that destroyed vehicles and equipment and severely damaged the building itself.

'We'd had a busy year on call-outs and also quite a lot of PR and media interest but the November fire was a huge set back,' says team leader, Penny Brockman.

'Within a day or so of the fire, we'd launched a JustGiving page with a target of £250,000 and we had sub-groups working hard to find the best ways of getting us back operational as soon as we possibly could. Everyone rallied round, including local businesses, other MR teams and our local community and it was humbling how much support we had in those weeks up to Christmas and then into 2018.'

Almost immediately, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service offered the team a temporary home in the fire station at Merthyr Tydfil and a Toyota Hilux — complete with MR livery and insurance — was on its way from Rossendale and Pendle MRT on loan. Further donations of vehicles came from Longtown MRT and a local business, Sabrehire, in Cardiff.

Burnham Area Rescue Boat (BARB) Search and Rescue gave the team water rescue kit in January and the fundraising efforts across the whole area have been amazing.

'We knew from the outset that our insurance was not going to cover all the costs of getting us back to full strength,' says Gayle Sheppard, the team's fundraising officer, who is leading the fundraising group as well as being an active member of the team.

'All sorts of organisations and individuals have been raising money for us — from

£3000 from South Wales Police to nearly £800 from a supermarket collection and lots of other quiz nights, sponsored walks and just very kind donations. We've even had team members doing crazy things like ultra-marathons and 40 mile runs.' In all, the total of money raised and donated (at the time of going to print), stands at just over £110,000 and the team is working with several companies and partners to see how best to use donations in kind.

'It's been brilliant to see the support from our community for the work we do,' says Penny, 'and also to see how the team has responded to a huge amount of pressure. The aspect that makes me most proud is that we've been able to carry on delivering our service, 24/7 almost since the day after the fire, as well as running our Fire Recovery Project and that's a huge credit to everyone involved.'

...it was humbling how much support we had in those weeks up to Christmas and then into 2018...

Opposite page: The aftermath of the devastating fire at Central Beacon team base in November © CBMRT. Opposite, top right: Team members and search dog with one of their vehicles, featuring in the BBC idents © courtesy of the BBC.

Right: Dave Cross, Central Beacons deputy team leader, takes delivery of the vehicle on loan from Lancashire-based Rossendale & Pendle from Andy Bradshaw © RPMRT.



KEY FACTS

Slips, trips, stumbles, falls and tumbles still account for the majority of mountain incidents.



PEER REVIEW CONTINUES TO DEVELOP

Two years into the process, twelve teams have now engaged with the peer review process put in place by Mountain Rescue England and Wales in 2015, with a further five already signed up and it is hoped the process will continue into the foreseeable future.

Led by Tim Cain, the process provides a vehicle for teams to gain greater self-awareness and identity and share good practice, and feedback to date has been universally positive and constructive. And the ultimate benefactors, of course, are the casualties, as teams continue to scrutinise and hone both their operational procedures and their administrative processes.

With the peer review team drawn from a pool of willing colleagues from across England and Wales, a perhaps initially unexpected outcome has been the forging of closer relationships between the teams, across England and Wales — invaluable, given that team members are increasingly called upon to work together in multi-agency incidents, often outside their operational areas.

'Looking ahead,' says Tim, 'we hope the peer review process will become an organic part of mountain rescue culture, helping us all to learn from each other and maintain our high standards'.

Above: Brecon team members undertake their peer review in January © Tim Cain.



DARTMOOR TAVISTOCK CELEBRATE FIFTY YEARS IN JANUARY...

Over 250 people joined the team at the first event to celebrate their fiftieth anniversary, a service of celebration and thanksgiving at Tavistock's Parish Church, including members of their three sister teams from across the Dartmoor Rescue Group. Whilst the organisation started 50 years ago in Tavistock, it has since grown to include Okehampton, Ashburton and Plymouth.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Devon, David Fursdon, spoke on behalf of the community, offering thanks on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen for the many agencies across Devon who the team works alongside.

Dartmoor's four teams together cover its tors, forests and reservoirs, as well as the surrounding rural and urban areas.

Photo © Robert Parkin/Nigel Singleton.



BEAST FROM THE EAST THEN STORM EMMA WREAK HAVOC IN MARCH

Mountain rescue teams across the country were involved in over 40 hours of continuous activity, assisting the statutory emergency services, helping homeowners and motorists stranded in their homes and on some of England's highest and most remote roads.

Left: Woodhead team member inspects an abandoned vehicle © Woodhead MRT.

KEY FACTS

Fractures, lower leg and foot injuries continue to account for the majority of injuries dealt with by mountain rescue teams.



Photo © Swaledale.

...AND, IN MARCH, IT WAS SWALEDALE'S TURN TO CELEBRATE

Celebrations took place at the Garden Rooms at Tennants in Leyburn in the company of over 150 people, including current and past members, and representatives of local businesses and the emergency services who work in partnership with the team.

Mountain rescue in a nutshell: Although equipment, training, techniques and communications have changed dramatically since 1968, at the core of mountain rescue are the wonderful people who give up their time freely to help others

Mac Bryant, Swaledale team president

above and below...



MOSSDALE CAVERNS TRAGEDY REMEMBERED...



Summer 2017 marked the 50th anniversary of a caving tragedy which still lingers in the memory of cave rescue. Several Upper Wharfedale team members who took part in the rescue attempt are still in the team, including Chris Baker, who had the enormous responsibility of being team leader at the tragedy.

In what remains the worst caving incident in British caving history, six young cavers drowned when the passages they were in became engulfed by flood water. The rescue effort lasted some four days and involved over 300 people – working alongside CRO and other adjacent rescue teams, caving club members, the emergency authorities and many locals.

Mossdale Caverns, high up on Grassington Moor in North Yorkshire are graded 'super severe' and prone to serious flooding, although on this fateful trip there were no indications of likely flooding, the quantity of water entering the cave was well below normal and the weather forecast was for bright periods with just a chance of thundery showers.

With the cave entrance under four feet of water, rescuers tried desperately to divert the water, building dams and trenches with their bare hands but it was twelve hours before they could get underground, often working through chest-high water.

Sadly, after many hours of frantic digging, the dreadful reality dawned that all six men had died. The coroner later decreed that their unrecovered bodies should remain in the cave and the entrance be sealed as a grave. No criticism was made of the young men's decision to venture deep into the system. Three years later, caving friends of the victims got into the cave and moved their remains to a higher level which was then named The Sanctuary. A plaque naming the victims marks the place where British caving's darkest day occurred.

Left: Archive photos supplied by UWFRA.

TWENTY-SIX HOUR RESCUE OF FIVE CAVERS FROM DOW CAVE

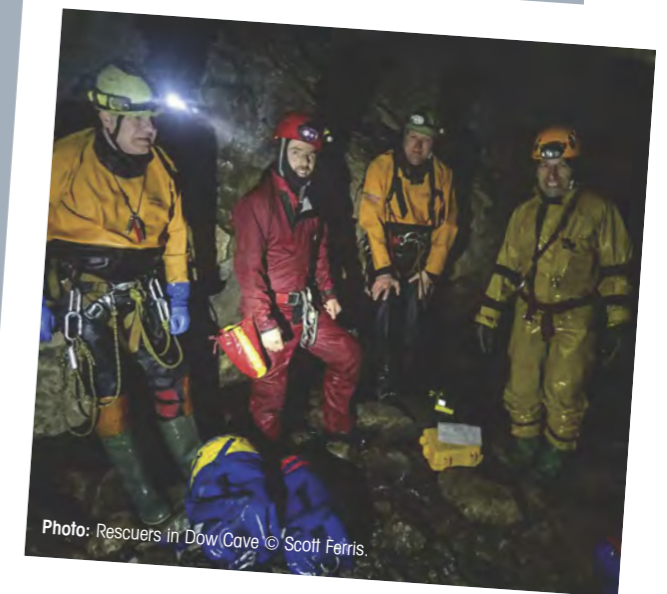


Photo: Rescuers in Dow Cave © Scott Ferris.

Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association is one of four mountain rescue teams in England and Wales – with Swaledale, Cornwall and the Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO) – who operate both under and over ground. Dramatic cave rescue are, thankfully, relatively rare but, fifty years on from the Mossdale Caverns tragedy, Upper Wharfedale team members found themselves embroiled in one of the most complex rescues performed by the team in some years – this time with a happier outcome.

The incident involved the rescue of five cavers from the Dow Cave-Providence Pot system. The men had entered the system during the morning, anticipating they would be leaving by evening. When they didn't emerge, the team was called out. A large volume of very cold snow melt water was entering the system and there were real concerns for the safety of the cavers in such cold conditions.

Rescuers entered the cave from both Providence Pot and Dow Cave, intending to search the whole system but the flooded Dow Cave was impenetrable. It was 6.00 am before the cavers were located by a group of four rescuers and, with water levels so high, the only way out was a return trip to Providence Pot.

Colleagues from CRO and Derbyshire CRO were asked to assist, along with other cavers staying nearby. Yorkshire Ambulance Service prepared to manage five patients with severe hypothermia but, testament to the resilience of the cavers involved, there was little need for medical attention and they were able to exit the cave the following afternoon, with assistance from their rescuers, after 26 hours underground in extremely hostile, challenging conditions. The cavers and their rescuers were given blankets, warm food and drink and driven to hospital, but they were not detained and were discharged later that day.

'Mother's Day was spoilt for a few,' said the team's Facebook page, 'but compensated for by the relief at such a good outcome, for the caver's families.'



Working together...

...across and under the North Pennines

Late September saw six of the eight mountain and cave rescue teams that operate across the North Pennines taking part in a search exercise, based at the Tan Hill Inn.

'We try to organise a joint training exercise each year,' says Pete Bell of Teesdale & Weardale SMRT. 'This year the aim was to test our communications, particularly our radio systems. There've been a lot of changes in recent years and there's more to come as MREW implements a national transfer to digital. We want to be sure, whatever system each team is using, we all know how to speak to each other.'

More than 60 volunteers spent almost five hours searching for casualties and evidence across a wide area of moorland, farmland, and underground. In a scenario organised by the Teesdale and Weardale team, a light aircraft had crashed and teams needed to find several passengers who had dispersed from the crash site and were wanted by the police for questioning.

'The teams had each brought along a cas care-trained casualty for the exercise,' says Pete, 'and we had one of them located underground as if they'd fallen into a pot hole. It all helped make the exercise work for the two cave rescue teams who took part — CRO and COMRU — as well as the mountain rescue teams from Kirkby Stephen, Penrith, Swaledale and Teesdale & Weardale.'

There were also 'orange cylinders' to be retrieved as evidence, each with a unique code. These turned out to be carrots with numbers painted on — clearly visible but completely edible or biodegradable in case any were missed and left on the fells!

'A day of testing like this is the best way of learning fast and then adapting how we work so things work even better for the real thing,' says Pete. 'Thanks go to everyone involved in the planning and running the day including the local police, the Coastguard helicopter crew and Louise Peace and her team at the Tan Hill Inn for their hospitality and for allowing us to use their facilities as a base.'

Opposite page: Top: Land Rovers at the ready.
Inset: COMRU team members with the Unimog.
Bottom: Team members await the helicopter.
Images courtesy of the teams involved.



Alan Hinkes takes on ambassador role for mountain rescue

Alan has long been a keen advocate for mountain rescue, happily sharing news from around the teams and regions and retweeting our safety and fundraising messages on social media. And, as the first Briton to climb the world's highest mountains — the fourteen 8000m peaks, in whose 'death zone' human survival is measured in hours — he certainly knows a thing or two about the mountains! Many have perished in pursuit of the same achievement. So, last spring, MREW decided to make it 'official' and approached him to become an ambassador.

An accomplished author, photographer and filmmaker, inspirational speaker, environmentalist and experienced Mountain Guide, you will regularly see Alan in the Lake District and Yorkshire, tramping the fells and moors, clinging to a rock face or climbing a frozen waterfall. Frequently either in front of, or behind, a camera! From his home in North Yorkshire, he continues to explore the world's mountains, near and far, simply enjoying being in the hills, rock climbing and fellwalking.

Alan's unique — and hard-earned — experience of mountaineering, his awareness of the value of carrying the right kit for the adventure at hand, of honing your skills and knowing how to stay safe, coupled with his passion for the mountain environment, make him an ideal ambassador. So, if you do see him out and about in the hills, why not stop and say hello and chat about mountain rescue?

Above: Alan Hinkes out and about in the mountains. Image courtesy Alan Hinkes.



Mountain rescue entertains charities

Since 2009, mountain rescue has entertained youngsters from charities under our Royal patron, with a day of outdoor fun and activity. Last year, that idea extended to the staff and some of the charities under the wing of our key sponsor, the JD Foundation.

Since that very first Charities Day, in 2009, when the Duke himself dropped into the event at Patterdale, the day has rotated through the regions, offering youngsters from Child Bereavement, WellChild, Place To Be and Centrepont the opportunity to enjoy activities they might not otherwise be exposed to.

Last year's event, in the South West, saw the young people from Centrepont exploring underground caves, led by members of Gloucester Cave Rescue Group, and 'Going Ape' on an aerial ropeway course, twenty feet in the air.

The younger children from Place to Be, WellChild and Child Bereavement had fun on the climbing towers, crawling through a tunnel of plastic drainage pipes and flying down a zipline.

A year later, the same 'charities day' model spanned an action-packed weekend for the JD Foundation (JDF) charities, with mountain rescue team members entertaining 84 children and young adults, along with their carers and families, and JDF staff. Based at the Holcombe Moor Army Cadet Training Camp in Lancashire, the visitors tried their hands with 4x4 off-road experience, search and first aid skills, carrying a stretcher and dog training activities.

The charities involved were Cardiac Response in the Young, Once Upon a Smile, Sport4Life, Salford Foundation, Papyrus, Smiling Families, the Factory Youth Zone and Kidscape and — once again — a good time was had by all.

'All the Royal charities are encouraged to work together for the greater good of those they help,' says MREW chairman Mike France, 'and mountain rescue can offer a truly unique experience to these children and young people, some of them facing huge challenges in life.'

'JD Foundation liked what we were doing and asked whether we could do the same for some of their charities. And I think it's safe to say the idea was a resounding success!'



JD Foundation enjoy staff day out with mountain rescue

When the relationship began, between sponsors JD Foundation and Mountain Rescue England and Wales, it was suggested that some of the group's staff might join a team for the day to see what we do. The Teesdale & Weardale team were only too happy to oblige and so four members of staff from across the country, including one from head office, joined team members for an exercise at Cow Green reservoir and Meldon hill — a not unsubstantial hill at over 2500 feet.

With low cloud rolling in and out making visibility very poor at times, and almost constant light to moderate rain, two volunteer 'casualties', along with a team doctor to oversee the treatment provided, were duly driven along a shooting track adjacent to the Pennine Way to a point only a mile from the point which would become the 'incident site', the remains of a small building known as Meldon Hall.

By late morning more information had been gleaned on the possible whereabouts of the incident and the four JD staff were taken by Land Rover to a point approximately 1.5 miles away so they could walk in and witness the find and subsequent treatment.

Once the casualties had been located by search dog Sam, the rescuers moved in! One of the volunteer casualties was found to be genuinely mildly hypothermic, so warmed up and walked off to the nearest Land Rover. The remaining casualty was treated for a mid-shaft femur fracture and given analgesia, wrapped in a cas bag, vac mat and loaded onto a Bell stretcher.

Back in the warm and dry, one of JD staff remarked, 'I thought I was fit, but you guys are like machines!' And there was excellent feedback from the two casualties who were very impressed with the level of care given.

Opposite page: Place 2 Be youngsters on the crates. Inset: Tia Sullivan on the climbing tower © Steve Woolven.

Top: JD Foundation staff at the raging Cauldron Snout © TWSMRT. Right & below: JDF Charities event. Images © MPSRO.





Find your local mountain rescue team

Lake District

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

North East

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

Yorkshire Dales

- Cave Rescue Organisation (Mountain + Cave capability)
- Upper Wharfedale FRA (Mountain + Cave capability)
- Scarborough & Ryedale MRT

Peak District

- Buxton MRT
- Derby MRT
- Edale MRT
- Glossop MRT
- Kinder MRT
- Oldham MRT
- Woodhead MRT

North Wales

- Aberdyfi MRT
- Aberglaslyn MRT
- Llanberis MRT
- North East Wales MRT
- Ogwen Valley MRO
- South Snowdonia SRT

South Wales

- Brecon MRT
- Central Beacons MRT
- Longtown MRT
- Western Beacons MRT

Peninsula

- PenMaCRA

South West England

- Avon & Somerset
- Severn Area Rescue Association

ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

Cave Rescue

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

Search Dogs

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

RAF

- RAF Leeming MRT
- RAF Valley MRT

**In case of accident or incident requiring mountain or cave rescue assistance
Dial 999. Ask for 'the Police', then 'Mountain Rescue'
or 'Cave Rescue'**

To find out more about mountain and cave rescue in England and Wales go to mountain.rescue.org.uk or caverescue.org.uk

Or find us on social media via

Facebook: @MountainRescueuk • Twitter: @mountrescueuk

youtu.be/srkbVDU5BQo (English version) or youtu.be/utoHlnrBF8E (Welsh version)