

THE OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION



37th ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2001

Published by the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation
Bryn Poeth, Capel Curig, Betws-y-Coed, Conwy LL24 0EU

Edited by Dave and Jo Worrall

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Please note that the articles contained in the Annual Report express the views of the individuals and are not necessarily the views of the Team.

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Other photographs by Clive Hughes and Dave Worrall

Chairman's Foreword

Welcome to the Annual report of the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation. This report has been produced to tell you about the team, who we are, what we do and where we do it. Its aim is to inform you a little bit more about our activities, it has been said that OVMRO has been one of the best kept secrets in North Wales. Well, hopefully the secret is out now and you can learn more about our activities.

The vast majority of Mountain Rescue teams in this country are entirely voluntary, which means none of us gets paid for what we do. The RAF runs a number of teams for their own purpose but when you hear the words Mountain Rescue on the TV, radio or in the papers, then they are referring to entirely voluntary groups. To quote from our own constitution the purpose of the team is to "To search for and rescue people in difficulties in inhospitable terrain.....". To achieve that aim is a complex and costly business and by buying this report you are helping us to achieve that aim. I hope you will also learn enough about us to consider joining our support organisation 333 and that this report will be interesting and informative.

In the following pages you will find in detail information on the History of the Team, First Aid, Incident reports, Training plus a whole host of other information. Let me give you a brief background to the team, OVMRO.

There are nearly 50 members of the organisation, all of whom have committed themselves, and that may be a good word, to assisting people in difficulties. There is the obvious question about work and whether we are allowed to just leave when we want but it doesn't work like that. For all of the team members it is a delicate balance between the demands of work and also our home life. We may be called upon to attend a rescue during the day, when we have to balance the reaction of our employers to a sudden departure and at weekends and evenings we have to consider the disruption to our family life when we disappear on a callout.

We also have to commit to ongoing training in all aspects of mountaineering, rope craft, navigation and first aid, and a whole host of other skills. In many ways it is like trying to hold down two jobs at once, because when you call us out you expect us to provide a fully

professional service. You do, don't you? Well, that is what we want to achieve but it takes effort and determination on our behalf. We do it because we love the mountains and the environment, and we don't try to judge, we are there to help and we are willing to provide the commitment but it does require your support.

Please read the report and enjoy it , the choice is then yours as to what you do next, you have already contributed and we send our thanks for that. If you want to take it further then look at the page for joining 333, you won't regret it. If you love the mountains then it will provide another avenue to increase your interest in them. Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation is only one of the teams serving the walkers and climbers who go into the hills, think about what we do and next time you have a great day on the hill give a little thought to those who make sure that a great day out stays that way. We are there for you when you need us, we won't question you're need, we will just respond and do so with our love and care.

Dave Worrall
Hon Chairman



THE HISTORY

People have been scrambling over the hills for pleasure for centuries. The first recorded ascent of Snowdon was in 1639. In 1778 Thomas Pennant was bagging summits. In 1854 George Borrow was exploring "Wild Wales". However, it was during the Victorian era that a greater interest was taken in the mountains. Many mountaineering clubs were formed with regular "meets" at key locations such as huts, guesthouses and hotels. The Gorphwysfa Hotel (now Pen y Pass Youth Hostel), the Pen y Gwryd Hotel and Ogwen Cottage are but a few examples.

In the nineteenth century should an accident occur on the mountains, fellow mountaineers from these key locations would assist in the rescue, though they would have no specialist kit or training. The earliest record of an organised search and recovery is in 1832 when a man was missing on Moel Siabod.

After the Scafell Disaster of 1903 in which four climbers died, the Climbers Club decided that basic rescue equipment should be held at some of these key locations. By 1905 stretchers were added to the caches. Between the World Wars, the mountaineering clubs set up a "Stretcher Committee". One of their members was an engineer called Eustace Thomas. He and his company developed the first purpose made mountain rescue stretcher – The Thomas Stretcher. The lack of analgesics was of great concern. In 1934 Dr Wilson Hey of the Rucsack Club applied for a license to stock morphine at these Rescue Posts. He was refused so he continued to flout the law. He was finally taken to Court in 1949 where he made an issue of the case. Shortly afterwards, the law was changed to grant a license to the newly formed Mountain Rescue Committee. Limited stocks of morphine could now be stocked at these Mountain Rescue Posts with additional stocks at the more busy Posts such as Ogwen Cottage.

Chris Briggs moved into the Pen y Gwryd Hotel in 1947 and soon became the focal character for mountain rescue. The Kings Hotel in Capel Curig was converted into a centre for excellence for outdoor pursuits in 1954. Here, the trained staff of Plas y Brenin as well as their students would assist in rescues. In 1959, Ron James, Trevor Jones and Tony Mason-Hornby bought Ogwen Cottage from Mrs. Williams. They started a dedicated mountain training school. Mrs Williams' parting words of advice on rescue were " Fire a red flare from the car park – get

the climbers together and put the one with the cleanest boots in charge". Soon the instructors found themselves on regular rescues and along with a few friends, The Ogwen Cottage Mountain Rescue Team was formed.

Ron James was a great innovator and brought back from the Alps many ideas on techniques, training and specific rescue equipment. Some of this kit attracted the interest of HM Customs when being brought into the UK ("It's for what?"). On more than one occasion Ron successfully released climbers with jammed knees in cracks in the rock face. His technique might not have been out of the textbook but it worked. The casualty's rucksack was emptied of sandwiches and the butter used to lubricate the limb. Rigging up a pulley, connecting one end to the casualty and the other to Ron, he would launch himself into fresh air. Either the shock or the thrust would release the casualty.

Early in 1964 Ogwen Cottage was sold to Birmingham Education Authority. Ron James remained as Chief Instructor for another five years. Now the staff had the pleasure of school holidays. It was during the Summer holidays of 1964 when one of the instructors, John Glews, fell off a new route on Clogwyn Du. During his rescue by a hastily formed party, he soon realized that there was a need for a dedicated mountain rescue team. Thus OVMRO was conceived in the Autumn of that year. It was made up of the Ogwen Cottage Staff, Mountaineering Club of North Wales, Bangor University Mountaineering Club and a few other regulars. The Inaugural Meeting was held in March 1965.

Both OVMRO and Ogwen Cottage Outdoor Pursuits Centre began to grow. Gradually, the staff were no longer the mainstay of the rescue team and Birmingham EA needed more space. The two organisations separated in 1975 with OVMRO leaving its home in the Ogwen Cottage generator shed to a temporary store in Idwal Cottage. Meanwhile, representations were being made to the National Trust to lease part of the old water bailiff's cottage at Bryn Poeth. The cottage had been used as a one man mountaineering school run by Dudley Stevens in the 1960's and now the National Trust were using it for their footpath building volunteers.

During 1976, OVMRO moved into one small front room and a lean-to shed for the equipment store. After ten years of cramped conditions in a building, which was deteriorating, the Committee proposed to the

National Trust that OVMRO would extend and refurbish the building. After a couple of years fund raising, the Team moved into a Police Bedford RL signals wagon parked adjacent to Bryn Poeth and the builders moved on site just after Easter of 1988. The Team moved back at Christmas. The new Bryn Poeth was twice the size and could now boast flush toilets, hot showers, two bunk rooms, a fully equipped kitchen and central heating. The building was set out so that it could be shared with the National Trust volunteers who stay for working holidays.

By 1994, after a rescue when members shared the back of a farmer's Land Rover with his sheep, it was realised that there was a need for a Team vehicle. Fund raising was organised and in February 1995 the 110 Land Rover was delivered. Having a vehicle meant we needed a garage at Bryn Poeth, so fund raising started again and in the autumn of 1996 work started. Whilst building the garage, the first floor of Bryn Poeth was converted into a training/ lecture room. This was all completed in April 1997.

In 1999 the Team became involved in a very successful promotion of Welsh Mountain Lamb through Bennetts and Safeways. This promotion resulted in the new purpose built 130 Land Rover being presented to OVMRO in February 2001.

OVMRO has continually tried to improve mountain rescue with innovation, new equipment and training. Dr. Iuean Jones, the Casualty Officer at the C&A Hospital in Bangor and Team member set up First Aid Training specifically for mountain rescue in the late 1960's. His course was soon recognised by civilian and RAF mountain rescue teams throughout the UK. In 1967 a RAF helicopter was used for mountain rescue for the first time. In the late 1980's Members of the team designed and built The Ogwen Stretcher. They also devised the "autolocks", a system of controlling the lowering of the stretcher by the jockeys on the cliff face. In 1994 a scheme was set up to appoint Team Leaders on merit measured against specific abilities and qualities. This avoided the popular vote. In 1998 the Team held an external audit carried out by members of other MRT's. This "no holds barred" meant that we could get a true measure of the Organisation as seen by other MRT's.

Throughout the history of the Organisation, there have been some memorable incidents. The Team has been involved in some large

mountain searches, which have resulted in national publicity. Sometimes these multi-day searches have resulted in the recovery of a body but in 1973, four Duke of Edinburgh boys were found after four days of searching by 500 people. In 1988 members of the Team assisted the Police in a very large search for a little girl who had been abducted on the Welsh Borders. Later that year the Team was called to rescue three canoeists from the raging torrents of the Conwy Falls. This was captured on film and broadcast to the nation. A decade later this rescue was re-enacted for the BBC 999 programme. 1988 closed with members assisting at the Lockerbie disaster. In 1996 OVMRO was assisted by neighboring MRT's in a four casualty Winter rescue. This required over fifty people to carry the stretchers down the icy slopes of the Carneddau Mountains.

OVMRO has been involved with films and TV since soon after its conception. Recently, it appeared in a full-length fly on the wall documentary for the BBC and in Songs of Praise. It has also appeared in Hearts of Gold and Dr. Tony Jones was the star of "This is your Life".

The Organisation has attracted the attentions of Prince Charles who visited the original Bryn Poeth in 1976 and the Secretary of State for Wales, William Hague in 1997.

In 1995, Dr. Tony Jones who had been Chairman for over twenty years and who had influenced mountain rescue in the UK for many years was awarded the MBE for his dedication.

OVMRO continues to be one of the busiest Mountain Rescue Teams in the country assisting the Police and Ambulance authorities with rough terrain search and rescue in Northern Snowdonia. Its fifty members are on stand-by 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year; giving their time for free to assist fellow users of the great outdoors who have come to grief.

Chris Lloyd
Archivist

The Operational Area of OVMRO

The operational area of any Mountain Rescue team has never been set, they have evolved. For Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation the area we cover has expanded over the years as our capabilities and skills have grown to adapt to new demands. As a team we started covering the area reflected in our name. To a large extent this is still true today in that the vast majority of call outs occur in the Ogwen Valley.

In the early days when climbers and walkers were in trouble they descended to the nearest valley to seek help. Irrespective of which mountain they had been on, where they came down to raise the alarm defined which team was called out. In our case it is possible that someone on the Glyders could descend into Ogwen Valley or could go down to Llanberis. So where you came down to, defined which team was called out. The same is probably true today when teams have adjoining territories. However for all the teams in the country our operational areas are now pretty well defined, and if doubt exists then the teams co-operate for the sake of the casualty.

Ogwen's patch extends from the Bangor area up the back bones of the Glyders range along to Capel Curig. Then across onto Moel Siabod before heading off down the Conwy Valley to Conwy then back along the coast to Bangor. I would not pretend to claim this was the definitive limit in which we operate because we have been called out to locations outside this area. It is however the area in which the vast majority of our call outs take place. In terms of geographical area, taking in as it does the whole of the Carneddau, it is bigger than virtually all UK teams except for the Scottish teams who have huge areas to deal with.

The mountains in our area are famous, any hill walker worth their salt will know of Glyder Fawr and Glyder Fach, Y Garn, Tryfan, Pen yr Ole Wen, Carnedd Dafydd and Carnedd Llewelyn. If we add Yr Elen, Foel Fras, Foel Grach and Elidir Fawr to the list then we have 11 peaks all topping the magic 3000ft mark. True Munro's and all south of the border. But it's the nature of the terrain that makes this area one of the most demanding south of the Scottish Highlands. Much of the rock is volcanic in nature with the rest dating back to the Ordovician and Silurian geological periods. Interestingly both these geological periods take their names from Welsh Tribes. The rock is hard and along with the carving processes from the Ice Age has given the area an unique look. It has

huge cliffs and rocky ridges, knife-edge arêtes and impressive cwms. It is in my opinion one of the finest mountain ranges within the country.

But Snowdonia offers so much more. There are those whose interest lies lower down the mountain slopes. Many come to paddle the rivers, especially the Conwy, whilst for some the walking in the forests around Betws y Coed will be challenging enough. The area around Betws y Coed is now of major importance to mountain bikers. All these people travel to this marvelous area in search of excitement and interest. I understand the areas attraction. As a team we are fortunate to enjoy and work in this part of Snowdonia.

Dave Worrall

Mountain Weather

Capel Curig regularly receives the dubious honour on the BBC weather reports of being the wettest place in the UK. Oggi base is sited only 5 miles to the west yet it receives less rain than Capel Curig – why is this? Often we experience only rain with a moderate breeze in the bottom of the valley yet weather conditions on the top of the mountains can be life threatening.

The UK is an island and is affected by various air masses, these bring different sorts of weather to our shores, Figure 1 shows the main air masses and directions they come from.

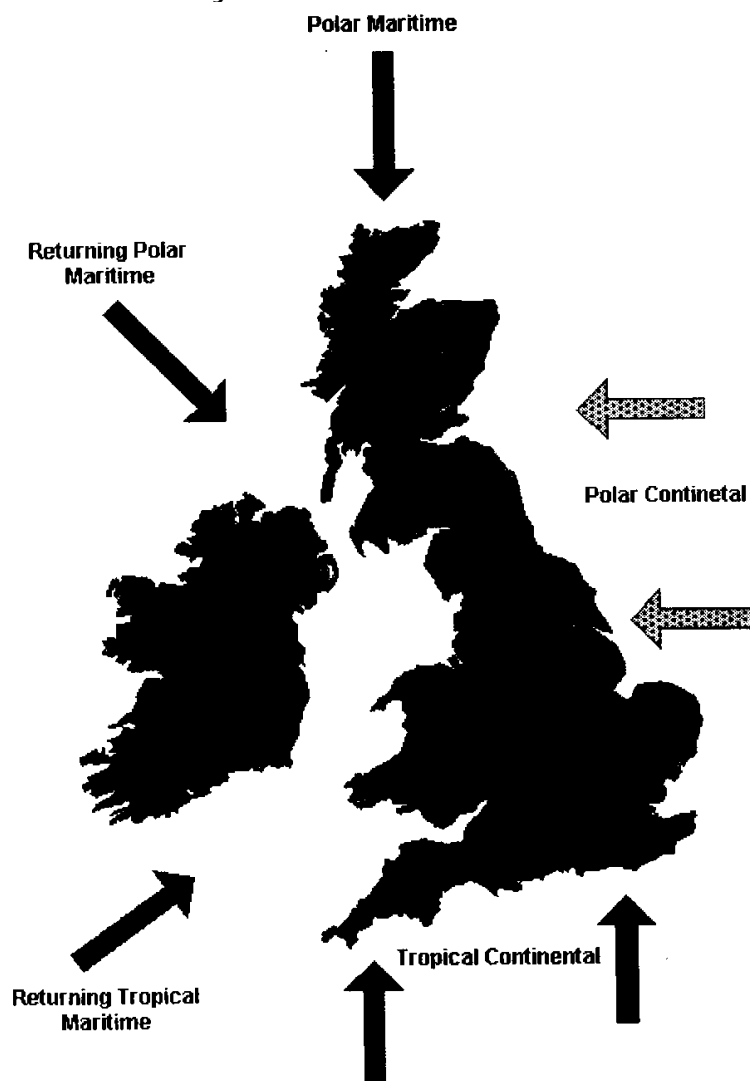


Figure 1 Air masses affecting the UK

Each air mass has particular characteristics and this directly influences the weather that we experience. The main weather associated with these air masses is shown in the table below;

Air Mass	Summer	Winter
Returning Tropical Maritime	Warm and wet, brings rain and drizzle with frequent hill fog	Mild with rain and drizzle.
Returning polar maritime	Cool with bright and showery, clear air	Cold with showers, often wintry on the hills, good visibility outside of the showers.
Polar Maritime	Rarely experienced	Very cold with frequent snow showers falling to low levels
Polar Continental	Rarely experienced	Very cold with occasional snow showers, a typical bitter easterly.
Tropical Continental	Dry and hot, may bring dust. Thunderstorms pushed north from France usually at the end of hot spell.	Rarely experienced.

Mountain Effects

These air masses bring the weather to the UK but local effects then modify the general characteristics. In Snowdonia the significant factor that affects the weather are the mountains. 1000 meters of mountain cause air to flow around and over them. Wind speeds are usually higher at altitude because of the reduced friction effect caused by the earth's surface but wind speeds also increase across mountain tops and through valleys due to the acceleration of the wind across ridges and through gaps (venturi effect). A pleasant breeze in the valley bottom can be gale force in strength on the mountain tops.

Temperatures usually decrease with height, typically at a rate of 2 to 3 degrees C per 300m. In moist air (usually identified by significant amounts of layered cloud that hug the mountains, and usually associated with a tropical maritime air mass) the temperature will be about 6 degrees C cooler on the mountain tops than that at sea level. In

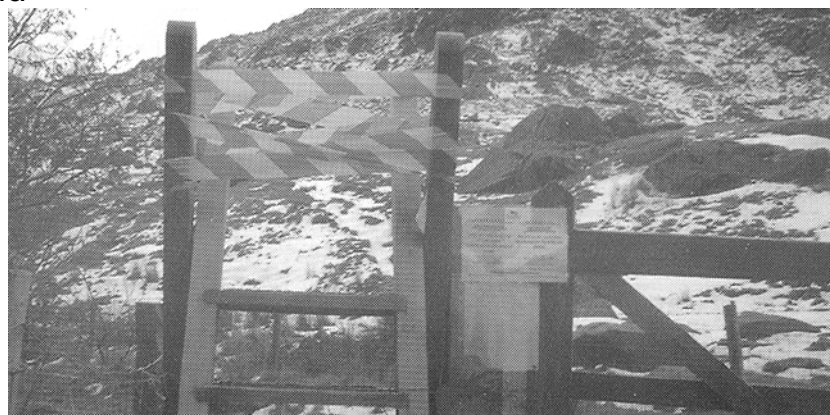
a cool and drier air stream (typical of a returning polar maritime airflow) then the mountain tops will be about 9 degrees C cooler. A pleasant temperature on the coast of 8 degrees C will be close to or below freezing on the mountain tops.

Cloud is formed when the air is unable to carry any more moisture and cloud droplets form, if this process continues for long enough rain and drizzle will be produced, as microscopic droplets join or coalesce. If the temperature of the air is 0 degrees C or below then snow will be formed or ice particles deposited in the form of hoar frost. The colder the air becomes the less moisture it can hold so more water is released which means that it falls as rain. This is one of the reasons why it is wetter in Capel Curig than on Anglesey. However, Capel Curig is the meeting point of 3 valleys and in a southwesterly airflow the Ogwen Valley and the Gwynant Valley bring two valley airflows together. These meet and cause air to lift and mix, generating yet more rain. This is partly why Capel Curig is wetter than Oggi Base.

These variations in weather conditions conspire to make our lives much more difficult on the tops of the mountain generally. Cooler temperature and increased winds mean that we are subject to heat loss. Rain, drizzle and snow make us wet and we lose heat much more quickly than we would in dry air.

The team has recently installed an automatic weather station and it will record data over the future months. This will allow us to examine just how different weather conditions are in Ogwen.

Alistair Read



Incident Report 2001

A strange year for the Team with three and a half months idle due to Foot & Mouth. Sadly, it was also one of the better years for winter conditions and we could only sit and look from afar. So in some ways the comparison with other years will not be a true reflection on the activity of the team.

A busy start with four jobs in January was quickly brought to a halt for sixteen weeks due to the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease, and then it was onto the hills again. The team were half expecting a rush of incidents as we anticipated a lowering of fitness with the enforced layoff. It did not come, and we only dealt with only two incidents in May. The next five months were busy with six or more incidents per month and then it tailed off but with an increase in standbys in the last quarter.

The spread of ages of those assisted was fairly even with the Over 40's age group taking the lead but the 21 – 25 age group cutting in with a bid to top the chart, (Of these over 40's those under 50 numbered 6 and those over 50 numbered 9). Unfortunately, the unrecorded ages was high with many of these being airlifted direct to Ysbyty Gwynedd.

Does this mean that we are now seeing more older people on the hill? Are they not so careful? Or are the numbers of youth groups dwindling due to the Education priorities changing to exam results?

Incidents in which the Major Injury was:

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Dead	2	7	4	5	1
Head Injuries	4	8	4	5	8
Trunk Injuries	4	3	1	2	5
Arm Injuries	4	2	3	4	2
Leg Injuries	13	12	17	12	13
Exhaustion/Exposure	0	0	0	1	0
Heart Attack (Survived)	0	1	0	1	1
Sickness	3	0	1	1	1
Lost, stolen or strayed	18	18	28	25	11
Stand-bys, flares etc.	20	3	10	6	9
Total	68	54	68	62	51
Actual Incidents	48	52	59	55	33

The age distribution of those assisted was as follows:

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	%	%	%	%	%
Under 16	13.9	14.8	8.0	14.3	6.5
16 - 20	15.2	25.0	10.0	14.3	12.9
21 - 25	12.7	6.8	11.0	21.9	16.1
26 - 30	8.9	9.1	8.0	11.4	9.6
31 - 35	6.3	4.5	9.0	8.6	4.8
36 - 40	10.1	6.8	7.0	6.7	13.0
Over 40	26.6	21.6	21.0	13.3	24.1
Not Recorded	6.3	11.4	26.0	9.5	13.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Possibly the Foot and Mouth affected the number of incidents in which we worked with other Teams as the following figures show:

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
C Flight, 22 Sqn	32	18	21	38	29
RAF MR Service	6	7	3	4	3
SARDA (W)	3	7	7	5	2
Llanberis MRT	0	7	3	7	4
National Park Wardens	3	7	3	3	5
Police Helicopter	0	2	1	5	2
Kinder MRT	1	0	0	0	1

The year ended with two job creations with well-intentioned call outs for people who walked down without help. Both doing so in time to avoid a full call out of members. Members responded 532 times during the year so on average 12.6 members attended each job. This is in addition to the manning of base at weekends and bank holidays by a Base Operator and First Aider.

As ever, we are grateful for the continued co-operation and support of C Flight, 22 Squadron Search and Rescue Helicopters based at RAF Valley. We are also grateful to all those other agencies, who on occasion assisted us with incidents. It is always encouraging to be able to work with other Teams who can bring different perspectives to our work.

Neil Adam

Incident Narrative

January

10th 13.15hrs 4 hrs Col Gully, Castell y Gwynt. 4 injured
(1 Skull fracture, 2 leg injuries & 1 Cuts & bruises) 4 males 29 – 36 yrs & 3 uninjured.

The party of seven with no ice axes decided to descend the gully. There was a series of slips and falls. The team were airlifted in and the casualties airlifted out after treatment and moving to suitable location.

14 Team members.

13th 17.30hrs 1.5 hrs Moel Siobod No one found.

A party reported a couple descending from the summit very slowly and with poor equipment. Road search and using night vision goggles. No one found, no one reported overdue.

5 Team members.

14th 14.45hrs 1.25 hrs Moel Siobod Fractured lower leg.

1 Female 52 yrs. Slipped on ice near the summit. Reported by mobile phone. Team arrived at same time as 22 Sqn. Evacuated after treatment. Companion escorted down.

19 Team members .

19th 11.55hrs 1 hr. Milestone Buttress Dislocated Shoulder.

1 Male 24 yrs. Climbing the chimney pitch on Direct Route when he slipped and fell approx. 25 ft. on wet rock or ice.

4 Team members, 1 Nat Park Warden.

May

12th 1215 hrs 1hr Grooved Arete, Tryfan Dislocated kneecap.

1 Female bridging up the groove, twisted, causing the 'sublux patella'. A reoccurrence of a previous injury.

7 Team members involved plus 22 Sqn.

28th 1508 hrs 3 hrs Summit of Tryfan Dislocated shoulder.

A windy day with gusts of up to 50 knots at the summit. 1 male (23) tried to jump from Adam to Eve and failed. He caught his arm as he fell between the rocks and was lucky to only have a dislocated shoulder.

18 Team members involved plus 22 Sqn. (It was near the operational limits of the aircraft).

June

3rd 1232 hrs 1.25 hrs North Tower Area Tryfan Ankle and Hand injury.

Male (38) slipped while approaching the summit of the tower and injured himself. Assisted by the team then airlifted by 22 Sqn.

19 Team members involved.

3rd 1627 hrs. 0.3 hrs Gwern Gof Uchaf Possible back injuries

1 Male 19 yrs. University student had a good day on the hills on the Saturday, on Sunday went onto Little Tryfan and was then walking down to the farm when he had severe pain in his back and tingling in his feet. 6 members of the Rossendale SRT found him beside the path and called for a stretcher. Thought to be the reoccurrence of a previous injury from playing squash. 7 Team members plus the 6 Rossendale team members.

10th 1230 hrs 2.2 hours South Ridge Tryfan. Injury to right foot.
Male (56 yrs). Descending the South Ridge having come up the North Ridge. Jumped down a rock step of about 0.5 m and felt a snap in his foot. Tried to walk down with sticks but too painful. Raised the alarm with a mobile phone. Assisted for some distance down and then evacuated by 22 Sqn.
14 Team members involved plus RAF St Athen and 22 Sqn.

16th 1600 hrs Standby Nr Summit of Tryfan.
Police received a call from a mobile. The caller and his mate were lost near the summit and the mate was getting hysterical. Some of the team who were in the area were diverted towards them but they were shepherded down by a passing group.
8 Team members involved.

18th 1201 hrs 2 hrs North Ridge Tryfan Heart Attack (Survived)
Male (58 yrs.). Ascending the North ridge when he experienced severe chest pains. Team alerted by mobile phone by a passing group who stayed with him until help arrived.
12 Team members, 1 Llanberis MRT, 22 Sqn.

23rd 1315 hrs 1 hr Holly Tree Wall, Cwm Idwal Ankle injury.
Female (no age recorded). Fell approx 4 ft. and damaged ankle.
15 Team members plus 22 Sqn.

24th 1632 hrs 1.75 hrs Top of Bristly Ridge Cuts to head and hands.
Male (38 yrs) stumbled while on the ridge. A discussion on the mobile confirmed minor injuries and he had recovered enough to start walking down with assistance from his group while a First Aider was sent up to check him over. Later confirmed that he had epilepsy. He went to Ysbyty Gwynedd for a check up.
9 Team members involved.

30th 1220 hrs 1.3 hrs North Ridge Tryfan Scalp lacerations.
Male (40 yrs) slipped while scrambling.
5 Team members , 1 Nat Park Warden, 22 Sqn.

July

10th 2100 hrs 4 hrs. Dolgarrog Gorge, Conwy Valley Crag Fast
4 males (all 16 yrs) lost in woodland due to navigational error.
8 Team members involved.

14th 1220 hrs 2.5 hrs East Face Tryfan Chest and Rib injuries.

Male (35 yrs.). Slipped while climbing and fell about 8 m, airlifted by 22 Sqn.
14 Team members involved.

14th 1514 hrs 4 hrs Dolgarrog Gorge, Conwy Valley Dislocated knee
Male (28 yrs) Slipped while climbing a waterfall and dislocated his knee.
13 Team members involved.

28th 1105 hrs 4 hrs Amphitheatre Buttress, Craig yr Isfa.
2 males. Fell of rock route. Alarm raised by mobile phone. While the team
approached from the Conwy Valley 22 Sqn went direct to the scene and then
airlifted members to assist with the evacuation.
20 Team members, 22 Sqn.

28th 1803 hrs 0.9 hrs North Ridge Tryfan Crag fast.
2 males (42 & 43 yrs). Phoned in to say they became cragfast while descending.
No injuries.
21 Team members, 1 Llanberis.

29th 1441 hrs 1 hr East Face, Tryfan
2 males (21 & 23) Cragfast after loosing way on Arête Climb. Members extracted
them from the cliff and they were then winched by 22 Sqn and deposited at Base.
16 Team members involved.

30th 1215 hrs 2.6 hrs East Face Tryfan Head and neck injuries.
Male (35 yrs). Slipped while scrambling, fell about 10 m. Members were winched
onto the ledge to load the stretcher and escort the rest of the party off the hill.
8 Team members, 1 SARDA, 22 Sqn.

August.

5th 1537 hrs 4.25 hrs Cwm Bochlwyd Twisted knee.
Female (36 yrs). Slipped while walking. Carried off the hill and conveyed to
hospital in the team ambulance.
18 Team members involved.

5th 2310 hrs 2.3 hrs Cwm Gwern Gof. Flares reported.
Nothing found. False alarm with good intentions.

11th 1230 hrs 5.5 hrs Llyn Geirionydd. Lacerations to head , left
hand and bruising to leg.
Male (14 yrs.) Group were sheltering in disused mines when 3 went exploring
without torches and one fell about 8 m. down a shaft. Ambulance Service called
then called the team for assistance to extract the casualty.
17 Team members and 4 ambulance.

12th 1311 hrs 0.5 hrs Conwy Mountain Head injury.
Male (25 yrs). Mountain Biker went over the handlebars. Assistance requested by
the Ambulance service to carry him to the road.
11 Team members involved.

22nd 1700 hrs 2 hrs North end of Heather Terrace
1 Female 16 yrs. One of a party of 12 descending Heather Terrace. One of the girls turned to talk to a friend, slipped and fell approximately 10 feet. She had a pain in her neck and cuts and bruises. Transported to Hospital by 22 Sqn.
13 Team members involved.

27th 1504 hrs 1.3 hrs North Ridge Tryfan Fractured Ankle.
Male (56 yrs). Stumbled and his foot went down a hole. His building site boots may have contributed to the accident.
12 Team members and 22 Sqn.

29th 1802 hrs 6.5 hrs West Face Tryfan Cragfast No injuries.
5 Males (21,21,27, 20 & 23 yrs) 3 Females (20 17 & 21 yrs.) A party with minimal mountaineering experience asked advise from another party and then got cragfast. Inadequate information on the mobile lost time but they were evacuated on to the North Ridge then down.
11 Team members involved.

September

3rd 1842 hrs 1.25 hrs Moel Wynion Shoulder and chest injuries.
Male (53 yrs). Parapente Crash landing, seen by another parapente who raised the alarm. Evacuated by 22 Sqn with assistance to load by the team who then recovered the equipment.
15 Team members involved.

8th 1328 hrs 4 hrs Idwal Slabs, Cwm Idwal Multiple injuries (Fatal)
Solo climbing on Lazarus on Continuation Wall, fell to bottom of Idwal Slabs, Approx. 170 m. Wearing walking boots. No helmet, rope or climbing equipment found.
15 Team members, 1 Kinder MRT, 1 Park Warden.

9th 1420 hrs 2 hrs Gallt yr Ogof Injury to Knee
1 Male (59 yrs) Slipped and twisted his knee while descending.
13 Team members, 22 Sqn.

29th 1245 hrs 1 hr West Face Tryfan
Crag Fast. 1 male 60 yrs. 1 male 33 yrs. Got onto the badlands of the west Face. Located by team and winched off by 22 Sqn.
10 Team members.

29th 18.20 hrs 5 hr 40 m East Face Tryfan.
Crag Fast. 1 Male 34 yrs., 1 Female 26 yrs. Male slipped and fell approx 4 metres and lost confidence to climb up or down.
16 Team members and 22 Sqn.

30th 11.25 hrs 3 hrs North end of the East Face of Tryfan. Bruising.

1 male 26 yrs. A party of four rock scrambling a slip and fall of about 9 metres a doctor on scene examined him and he walked off with assistance.
16 Team members involved.

October

7th 13.29 hrs 3.5 hrs Pen Llithrig y Wrach. Ankle injury.
Female 61 yrs. Casualty slipped with a foot between boulders in very heavy rain. A pick up by 22 Sqn in horrible weather saved a carry off.

20 Team members.

16th 15.18 hrs 1 hr 25 m North Tower Tryfan Chest Injury.
1 Female. A college party ascending when the female slipped. 22 Sqn flew straight in and evacuated the casualty. No further information given to OVMRO by 22 Sqn or the college.

15 Team members and 9 RAF Stafford team involved.

25th 13.10 hrs 7 hrs North of summit of Carnedd Llewelyn Fractured left patella.

1 male 15 yrs. Casualty with his father were on the second day of a three day trek across the Carneddau. The morning was fine but turned into a foul day with strong to gale force winds and heavy rain. The casualty was blown over in rocks damaging his knee. With weather conditions like this a long carryout was expected after a hard approach. A lull in the conditions allowed 22 Sqn. to meet the stretcher party and finish the evacuation.

22 Team members involved.

27th 1215 hrs 3.5 hrs Eastern side of Bristly Ridge

1 male 19 yrs. A party of 2 camping in Cwm Idwal walked over Y Garn and the Glyders with camping kit. On descent of Bristly Ridge one lost balance and fell about 200ft. Members were airlifted to assist with the evacuation and to help companions and other walkers who had gone onto the cliff to try and assist. Too many people with mobile phones called 999 with a result that there was some confusion to start with as to how many incidents there were.

27th 1545 hrs 3 hrs Walk off for Idwal Slabs

1 Male (53). Fracture of arm and lower leg, bruising to head (helmet saved further injury) and severe internal injuries. The party were on the walk off having completed a climb on Idwal slabs when he slipped and fell towards the top of the cliff. His arm caught in a crack and stopped the fall after about 60ft. Team members descending from the previous incident were diverted and others were sent from base. 22 Squadron dropped the winchman and a surgeon from the Bangor Hospital area. After some difficulty he was winched and taken to Bangor Hospital. Note: the casualty was operated on at Bangor and then flown to Liverpool for further treatment. His wife who was walking with friends was found and taken to Bangor. 24 members involved. On Christmas Day 2 team members met the casualty with his wife and daughters who were pushing him up the road to Marchlyn Mawr resevoir. It was his first time in the area since the accident.

28th 1635 hrs Stand by Moel Siabod.

1 Male A 999 call that he was lost in woods (Mobile Phone) A clear day advised to walk down path. Police reported that he was down at his car at 17.10 hrs.

28th 1640 hrs 3 hrs Little Gully, West Face Tryfan No injuries. Crag Fast.

3 Male adults, 1 Female adult, 2 male children. The party went up the North Ridge but on the way down were diverted onto the west face only to end up in Little Gully and stuck with no equipment or experience. Were seen from the road and reported. They were extracted.

12 Team members involved.

28th 19.15 hrs Old Roman Road nr Bethesda.

1 male reported by father to have been dropped off at the road to walk to or up Snowdon. Called off by Police.

November

3rd 12.15 hrs 45 min North Ridge, Tryfan Illness.

1 Female 12 yrs. Reported by mobile phone that she was suffering from appendicitis. Evacuated to hospital by 22 Sqn.

19 Team members involved.

9th 15.20 hrs 1.5 hrs Tryfan No Injuries.

2 Males 42yrs and 49 yrs. Out for a walk with the father in law and the dog. First they lost the father in law (who got down on his own). Then they go lost themselves. They blamed the dog!! When they got stuck they used the mobile to dial 999. They were found and then winched by 22 Squadron and brought to base.

10th 14.15 hrs Stand by Heather Terrace area of Tryfan No Injury.

A walker reported two loud bangs from below Heather Terrace. One of the team in the same area also heard them but thought they were not loud enough to be flares. After discussion between team members, Police and the informant it was decided that they were probably fireworks.

10th 19.42 hrs 1 hr Tryfan No injuries.

4 Males early 20's. Called out for a party overdue by 2 hours. As the first team party was going out, lights were seen at the lip of Cwm Tryfan. It was them, unhurt but with a better understanding of the difficulties of navigating in the hills in darkness.

11 Team members.

11th 15.00 hrs Glyder Fawr area No injuries

Lost. 1 male, 1 Female. Used mobile phone to say that they were lost. Last known position summit, now in a valley with streams flowing SSW. As the mist cleared they saw field walls in a valley to the south of them. At 16.30 phoned to say that they were 300-400 feet above the road and river. Handed it over to Llanberis as we had now put them in their area. 6 Team members involved.

15th 16.50 hrs Carneddau No injuries.

1 male. It had been good weather all day with cloud above the summits. The 'missing' person and the informant had set off at 0830 hrs in the morning up Pen yr Ole Wen and separated at the first false summit. The informant waited for half an hour then descended to the car to spend a worrying day waiting for his friend. At 16.40 hrs he informed the police that he was worried they informed the team. The duty team leader went to Idwal to get details to find that the wanderer had just come in having been to Llewelyn and back 'trying to catch up with his friend'.

December

12th 1315 hrs 1.25 hrs Cwm Tryfan

1 male. The incident was reported by Mobile phone. He was found and taken to hospital by 22 Squadron. No further information was given to the team.

4 Team members involved.

26th 1718 hrs 1 hr Stand by

A report of lights on Pen yr Ole Wen involved team members in meeting the Police at Idwal Cottage. A man had just come off Pen and was met at the road. No other lights were seen so no further action was taken. 3 Team members involved.

28th 1715 hrs Stand by

A clear night with a full moon. Someone reported two males with a dog in the area of Carnedd Dafydd, one of the males with a possible ankle injury. An advance party were arriving at base when they walked down with no injury. Someone trying "job creation"? 3 team members involved.

Equipment Officer's Report

Well, another year has flown by, it only seems like yesterday that I took on the impossible job of the dreaded Equipment Officer. It's true what they say in the Forces - Never volunteer for anything. How right they were! To be honest, taking over the job was made very easy for me by The Great Kevin DeSilva. Kevin was so organised and all the equipment was in order. What we decided to do was that I would shadow Kevin in the role for twelve months before taking over.

There were two major purchases last year in addition to the usual items that needed to be replaced for wear and tear. The first of these purchases was more river rescue kit. We are called to many incidents involving water - gorge or river rescues for canoeists - and safety at the sites is paramount. The kit purchased included 10 life jackets, helmets, throwlines and rubber bags to keep them in. The second major purchase involved up rating the oxygen equipment used by the Team. The new cylinders are a lot lighter than the old but hold 30% more oxygen and the regulator is permanently attached. We also have some smaller cylinders for use by the Advanced First Aiders (see the report on Casualty Care). A big thanks goes to the team members for doing their bit in washing kit and replacing it in the stores when it is dry - give yourselves a pat on the back!

During this last year, a deal was negotiated with Mammut via DMM. Team members had the opportunity to have a top notch set of waterproofs subsidised by the Team but with a contribution from those Team members that wanted to take part in the offer. My thanks go to Ian and Lou at Mammut for all their assistance.

Robbie G. - The Equipment Officer

Treasurers Report for the year ended 31st December 2001

Financially this has been an interesting year for the team. The middle of February saw the arrival of the new Land Rover, and a cheque from Safeway for the bulk of the Land Rover's cost, following the very successful Welsh Mountain Lamb sale promotion in 2000.

The original plan was to sell the old Land Rover, but the lack of real interest from other Rescue teams has meant that the old 110 is still in our possession, and on a number of occasions, the flexibility of having two vehicles has been a much welcomed benefit, despite the additional running costs.

The day of the Official hand over of the Land Rover also, unfortunately heralded the start of the Foot and Mouth crisis. The affect this has had on tourism, farming and other associated businesses has been extensively documented elsewhere, but little has been made of the impact on organisations such as ourselves. One affect to us was a fall in income from collection boxes from £2568 in 2000, to only £1134 in 2001 - as without the walkers, climbers and other tourists there was no one to fill the boxes, despite the efforts of Sue from the Conway Falls Café.

March saw the Team receive a very substantial donation via Gift aid (and its subsequent tax element) in memory of the donor's brother (who was rescued by the Team in 1972). This is only one of the many donations the Team have received this year in memory of friends and relatives who had an interest in the Outdoors.

During the year the Team purchased 10 new radio sets, on the current frequency to replace those supplied by North Wales Police (which are now rapidly becoming unrepairable). This as an interim measure, as we still await a decisions as to the frequency to be used in the future and the date of its implementation.

333 is continuing to grow although there was a huge period with no new members (foot and mouth crisis again!!!). Recently however the numbers have increased quite considerably, and we continue to welcome new members and especially those from the corporate sector.

The end of the year has arrived with the Team in possibly the best financial position ever and the task for 2002 will be to limit unnecessary expenditure and to use our funds wisely in enabling us to give the best possible service to those unfortunate enough to require our help.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has donated time and money to the team over the past year. Thanks must also go to Dave, Tim and the Committee for their help and support during the year.

Mike Thomas Honorary Treasurer

In Memoriam

Donations have been received during the year in memory of the following:

Peter Apted	Mrs Marion Brewer	Jamie Chambers	Brian Tattersall
Ian Christie	Alison Evans	Neil Francis	Owen Taylor
David Hedley	Mrs Jones	Melfyn Roberts	

Summarised Management Accounts for the year ended 31st Dec. 2001

	2001	2000
Income		
General donations	54,762.10	13,175.65
333 Group	3,632.84	5,108.15
Rescue donations	643.86	2,557.07
Collection boxes	1,133.75	2,567.69
Annual reports, stamps and interest	4,634.38	1,579.98
Sponsored walk	0.00	11,495.86
	64,806.93	36,484.40
Expenses		
Base running costs	6,059.63	8,598.87
Land Rover	4,343.68	1,852.14
Equipment, First Aid & Training	10,092.02	4,256.60
Social (Dinner, BBQ etc)	391.63	152.00
Team kit	4,032.79	2,964.69
Printing, Postage & Stationery	1,480.26	1,200.47
Other costs	1,255.31	785.75
Telephone & Pagers	2,896.52	2,723.73
	30,551.84	22,534.25
Surplus for year	34,255.09	13,950.15
Appeal Fund	Nil	9,172.62

Casualty Care Report

The care of a casualty in a Mountain Rescue environment is unique in pre-hospital care in the UK. In no other 'field' would a casualty undergo such a prolonged period of care in the most inhospitable land terrain. Often in adverse weather conditions, whilst being carried manually on a stretcher to a road side or aircraft pick-up point. It is not uncommon for the casualty to be in the care of the rescue team for 5 hours or more before transfer to the medical services. Unkind weather conditions can increase this time scale significantly. Whilst the road side in our particular area of responsibility may be within a radius of 4 miles, evacuations by stretcher exceeding 9 hours have and will be necessary. A diversity of techniques, specialist equipment and skilled personnel are therefore essential to afford a satisfactory outcome.

All equipment must have the basic criteria of robustness, ease of use (even with gloves) and be lightweight. On occasions it would have been advantageous if they also floated! All equipment will need to be carried therefore the size or compactness is also critical. Team members will deploy to an incident site with their own personal mountaineering/climbing kit plus the equipment necessary for treatment and evacuation.

Let us consider some of the main items of equipment.

- Injuries to the lower leg are approximately 60% of our trauma incidents. The present optimum splint for this section of limb is the vacuum splint, this affords ease of handling, excellent support and good insulating properties. Unlike the majority of splints it remains flexible, until 'vacuumed'. This splint is also appropriate for the arm. Other splints available are the SAM, Kramer and Inflatable, each appropriate for a particular purpose.

- HARE Traction splint. As a fracture of the femur may prove life threatening, in particular if associated with other cause/s of haemorrhage, it is imperative that the optimum suitable splinting is applied. This alloy unit allows prompt application with appropriate traction and support.
- KED Board & Cervical Spine Collars. The former is an extrication device applied to the head and spine to reduce their movement. This is useful for the removal of a casualty from a difficult location where spinal injury is suspected. Unless the evacuation to definitive care is immediate, for example by aircraft, the casualty will be transferred onto a specialist mattress to prevent secondary 'pressure' injuries.
- The 'specialist' mattress is a vacuum mattress of similar principle to the vacuum splint. This is placed onto the stretcher and conforms to the casualty's natural body contours giving a comfortable 'wrap-around' and insulating 'bed'.
- All trauma patients will benefit from oxygen. This gas, in one or two litre lightweight cylinders, will be carried by the advanced party to allow administration at the earliest opportunity.
- 'Drugs' – a variety of drugs to provide pain relief analgesia are carried. They can be given orally, by intramuscular or intravenous injection. 'Entenox' is carried in 2 litre size cylinders, and is particularly useful during treatment and stretcher loading. Further drugs to assist with the treatment of the more common medical emergencies are also available.
- Stretcher loading and casualty packaging are an intrinsic part of the treatment of a casualty. The appropriate stretcher and casualty bag usage will provide comfort; security; temperature control; accessibility; support and protection.

The stretchers presently used are:

 - The 'Oggi' stretcher, designed and built by members of the team. It divides into three components small enough to strap onto separate rucksacks allowing ease of carry and manoeuvrability over rough, steep terrain and in narrow gullies. The 'bed' is translucent so x-ray equipment may be used prior to removal of the casualty from the stretcher, useful in cases of suspected spinal injuries.
 - The 'Bell' stretcher, used widely by various teams in the UK. It splits into two sections and is carried in a rucksack strap fashion.
 - The 'Neil Robertson' is a wrap around type of stretcher, useful for confined spaces and affords good support as treatment for suspected pelvic fractures.

All stretchers are appropriate for winching by aircraft.

- The casualty is placed in a 'casualty bag', this will provide warmth and protection from wind and rain in the most extreme conditions.

An AED (Automated External Defibrillator) was supplied to us by the British Heart Foundation. Regular training in its use is provided by the resuscitation-Training Officer of the Countess of Chester Hospital.

No matter how good the equipment it is of no use in the hands of the untrained. Significant emphasis is placed on our casualty care training, which is available to all team members. The training pathway is structured to allow natural progression from the basics to the advanced level.

Let's consider the key-points in our present levels of training.



Basic level Consists of:- incident scene safety; familiarity of all casualty care equipment; basic anatomy and physiology; 'basic life support' including Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation; haemorrhage control; limb splinting without fracture reduction; medical emergencies including hypo and hyperthermia; casualty packaging; stretcher loading and evacuation; responder support role; information transfer. Whilst this broad knowledge base may appear rather excessive for a 'basic' level, the components such as scene safety, stretcher loading and evacuation will soon become second nature to the active team member during other practice activities and operations.

Intermediate level, incorporates all the aspects of the basic level plus: - further study of the anatomy and physiology, increased emphasis on primary and secondary survey techniques; further airway management skills; fracture reduction; knowledge and use of all available drugs; improved knowledge of medical emergencies; triage.

Extended level, incorporates all the aspects of the intermediate level plus: - incident site management; increased diagnostic knowledge and assessment skills; increased airway management skills; dislocation reduction; suturing; intra-venous access; laryngeal mask airway insertion; needle thoracosentesis.

All training is based on the ATLS (Advanced Trauma Life Support) format of teaching with formal assessments by doctors and or medical consultants trained and experienced in pre-hospital care. Laryngeal mask airway insertion requires formal and periodical 'theatre' training and we are indebted to the Glan Clwyd and Countess of Chester hospitals anaesthetic departments for this training.

Each team member is issued with a basic response kit consisting of dressings, slings, malleable splint and personal protection. A comprehensive response module to supplement the kit is available from the team base and they are also carried in our two vehicles. The extended trained members are issued with additional equipment including airway adjuncts and suction, analgesia and splints.

Callouts

The team responds to approximately 30 incidents annually involving a variety of trauma and medical cases. It is imperative that we remain able to respond and deal appropriately with any incident, consistently and to the highest standard. It is therefore essential that we not only ensure continuous training but also obtain frequent patient contact to enhance diagnostic skills. To this latter end we are extremely fortunate that the extended trained members are able to attend at the accident and emergency department of the Countess of Chester Hospital to 'familiarise' best casualty care and treatment. The guidance and training provided by their A & E Consultant, who just so happens to be our operational team doctor, remains invaluable.

We have already recognised the protracted period that a casualty may remain on the hillside. It wouldn't therefore be in their best interest to extend this period unnecessary, as may occur if the advanced party was to wait for an extended trained member to arrive prior to deployment. To counter such a possibility the extended trained members provide a rotunda during the busiest periods such as weekend and bank holidays where they will remain at or within 15 minutes of our base, ready to

assist in the de-brief of an informant, arrange the optimum equipment for treatment, and provide rapid deployment.

This Trauma Care Team, presently consisting of nine members, abide to a strict retention criteria and accept responsibility for:- Consistent completion of a Continuation Training Log : Personal Fitness level : Availability to the Casualty Care Rota : Successful attendance of the ECMR Advanced Level Course and appropriate retention of its level of training with re-certification every 2 years, or a course of equivalent standard : 'Live' LMA insertion training : Provide support and training to team members : Attendance at a Accident and Emergency department. As well as the maintenance of casualty care equipment.

Notwithstanding the availability of such trauma team members, other members trained to different levels will be able to deal appropriately and successfully with very many incidents, depending of course upon the nature of injuries / illness.

Skill decay is a concern to any voluntary rescue agency where patient contact may be particularly inconsistent; we therefore remain firm that every skill practised must not only be attainable, but readily retainable by good instruction and reasonable training.

All team members are expected to attain the Basic level of training. Those wishing to progress to further levels need to demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to continual casualty care training.

The terrain and environmental conditions will often prevail to create a wide gap between what is the gold standard of casualty care treatment and what is actually possible. For example the casualty on the steep loose scree slope, the injured climber suspended on his rope and/or on a narrow ledge, or the partially submerged canoeist in white water. In such circumstances it will be the continual training, and skill, of the provider that will hopefully allow judicious casualty management.

We are indebted to many agencies for the support provided to us in training and during operations, in particular the various departments at the Countess of Chester Hospital, the A & E department at Ysbyty Gwynedd and the crews of 22 Sqdn. RAF Valley.

Clive Hughes

PETER AND SUE

AT

THE CONWY FALLS CAFE AND RESTAURANT

ARE PROUD TO SUPPORT THE

**OGWEN VALLEY MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ORGANISATION**

AND WISH IT TO BE KNOWN THAT WE WILL
CONTINUE UNASHAMEDLY TO COERCE, CAJOLE AND
GENTLY "PERSUADE" ANY HIKERS, BIKERS, CLIMBERS,
RAMBLERS, PADDLERS AND LOST LOOKING MEMBERS
OF THE PUBLIC TO "VOLUNTARILY" DROP MONEY
INTO OUR **O.V.M.R.O.** MONEY BOXES

**P.S. WE ALSO DO RIGHT GOOD FOOD AND
BREWS**

Transport Officers Annual Report

It was two years ago this February when the team was first contacted by Mr Dennis Hobbs of H.M.Bennetts Ltd, as they were looking to promote a possible sponsorship involving a mountain rescue team. The sponsors being H.M.Bennetts, Welsh Mountain Lamb, Lamb and Beef Promotions and Safeways. A meeting was arranged at Oggie Base involving some members of the team and H.M.Bennetts. The meeting

covered some of the team history and work the team carries out in the mountains.

At this time the team was considering replacing its 110 Land Rover Ambulance, as the new Bell stretcher was too long for the vehicle. It was at this meeting that this was mentioned, resulting in H.M.Bennetts approaching Safeways to sponsor the new vehicle. This involved team representatives going to the Royal Welsh Show and meeting representatives from Safeways and the other sponsors. At the show Safeways gave the green light for the replacement Ambulance and would under write the project.

With that good news a search was on for a suitable vehicle. After looking at other teams transport it was decided that a custom built 130 Land Rover would be the most suitable option. Frogs Island 4 X 4 where visited to discuss the project and were nominated as the contractor. Frogs Island 4 X 4 delivered the vehicle in February 2001 with the formal hand over at Oggie Base on the 23rd of February with all the sponsors present. This was a grand occasion for the team, marred by the news of the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease.

After three months of inactivity the area was opened up under limited access, which resulted in calls for assistance from the team. With a very busy summer and no let up in the autumn there were no takers from other teams to purchase the old 110 Land Rover Ambulance. It was decided to keep it, which has proved worthwhile in giving us maximum flexibility on call outs and in training.

Last year was particularly notable in the number of incidents on the Eastside of the Carneddau that involved both vehicles in moving team members, setting up advanced radio communications and casualty handling. The team has come a long way in the 37 years or more from a motorbike and sidecar and antediluvian Land Rovers. I wish to thank H.M.Bennetts, Safeways and the other sponsors for supporting the team on this project.

Roger Jones, Transport Officer

Training Officers Report 2001

Training team members, so that they can be effective in whatever role they take on within the team, is a challenge at the best of times. However, when foot and mouth denies access to the hills then it adds an additional burden that has to be worked around. Creating a training program that would maintain people's skills so that when we regained access to the mountains we would be in a state to deal with any incidents was the task that Adam Charlton had to deal with when he took over from Chris Onions as the Training Officer.

First Aid training was an obvious choice and Clive Hughes, Dr Marian Waters and Anne Baker ran several sessions that allowed members to refresh skills. Intermediate and Advanced First Aid courses were also attended by team members and the secondments at the Countess of Chester Hospital Accident and Emergency Department, allowed members of the Advanced Casualty Group to maintain patient contact skills. These skills were further augmented with attendance at Glan Clwyd and Countess of Chester Hospitals to practice cannulation and airway skills.

By late May we regained access to hills so that practical hill training could recommence. Team members ran various practices, and the first Sunday of the month became the major training session, with the additional mid-week training, organised by Dave Williams, also being well attended. Helicopter training took place at RAF Valley, and as always was popular'

Events

In February the team ran an Induction Weekend for our own newer team members and new team members from Dublin and Wicklow MRT joined us. The induction course aims to provide a broad introduction into the role of team and what new team members can expect. It provides a foundation of search and rescue skills to build on and all who participated found it a valuable experience.

The annual winter trip to Scotland was also a success. It was based in the Joint Services Mountain Training Centre at Tulloch and several 333 members joined in with the training. This is despite the fact that the exercises being conducted over the weekend took place in relatively poor weather conditions. Several team members stayed on for the rest

of the week and experienced the greater delights of the Lochar area such as Tower Ridge.

A successful White Water training course was run in August at the National White Water Centre on the River Tryweryn. This course covers skills that are needed by team members if they are working next to swift water or if they end up in fast moving water. It provides valuable practice in conditions we don't often encounter.

Other team members have also attended various NWMRA courses. Outreach, based at Llanllechid, ran a 4-day technical rope rescue course over two weekends, which proved to be challenging for the team members that attended. In early December a North Wales Mountain Rescue Association (NWMRA) search skills weekend course was attended by several team members. This culminated with a search exercise that provide a challenge for search managers as well those in the field.

Four of the five team leaders attended a one day team leader seminar organised by the MRC of England and Wales. Other courses and events attended by team members include a Coastguard seminar and a Post Traumatic Stress Seminar.

Future thoughts....

Training new team members remains an important role of the organisation but equally important, the team must also train suitable members to take on the more senior operational roles. A lively debate on training for future team leaders/party leaders has focused attention on the skills required to lead operations – I am sure it will continue.

The team issues a training logbook to its probationary members but once they have become full team members the requirement to complete it goes away. Revising the logbook may allow us to extend its applicability to full team members as a means of recording their personal MR experience and training. NWMRA's training committee is also examining the role of logbooks for mountain rescue team members.

Al Read
Training Officer

The Call Out

When should you call a team out?

Perhaps a strange question to ask but what are we there for? Our constitution says the following: "To search for and rescue people in difficulties in inhospitable terrain.....". That is our purpose and that is what we hope to achieve, but when you are on the hill at what point should you consider calling in the mountain rescue?

You should consider calling out a team when the circumstances you find yourself in go beyond what you can deal with. You may also feel that one or more of your party may be at risk from the circumstances you find yourself in. We have all been in a situation when a series of events have escalated beyond expectations and we begin to feel we are no longer in control. This is beyond merely being lost on the hill or a little tired, there may be individuals who are at risk and you have to take a decision. At this point you need to be clear about what sort of help you need. So you want to call out a team, how should you do it.

If you can phone 999 and ask for Mountain Rescue, it is likely you will be directed through to the Police. If a phone is not available, make your way to the nearest available phone with all the details you think will be needed. Your 999 call will go through to Police who will call out the Mountain Rescue team in the relevant area.

It is important to understand what happens next, this information relates to Ogwen Valley MRO and may be different for other teams. The Police will contact a Team Leader within our organisation. The Team Leaders are our managers and are responsible for organising and running rescues. They will be given information about the nature of the callout and they will take decisions on the information provided. This is why it is important to be precise and careful about the information you provide. If a Team Leader is told that lights have been seen high on a mountain at night, he may not consider that to be an immediate concern. If he is told that a person has fallen and is injured, they will have a different reaction. Depending on their assessment of the situation they will decide what is an appropriate response to the reported incident.

It is likely that by now they will be at Oggie Base and will be considering the options available to them. A call out of the team will involve setting off the pagers and waiting for team members to respond. When the pagers go off we may be at work, at home, shopping or whatever. At this point we will contact Oggie base and advise them of our availability. If we are at work we may not be able to respond immediately, and even if we are it may take 30-40 minutes to get to base. When we arrive at Oggie base, we will then need to collect kit, get ourselves ready and then be sent out onto the rescue as instructed by the team leaders. The distance to the site of the call out may mean that we are walking for an hour or longer depending on the conditions.

Through out all this we will be trying to get to you as soon as possible but you must by now realise that a call out takes time and you must do what you can to look after yourselves and those around you. There is one other important thing to remember, all those involved in Mountain Rescue are volunteers and do not receive any financial reward for what they do.

We are a registered charity run by volunteers and funded entirely by donations from the public. Soon we will be with you at the site of the incident, take some time to reflect on everything that has gone on to call us out, in the end it will reduce your anxiety as you wait for the team and it will help you deal with the incident.

Dave Worrall

Newsletter

The Team has always produced a Newsletter - it has been in various formats over the years.

More recently it has become the main method of passing information through to not only Team members but to 333 members. It includes articles on adventures of both Team and 333 members, Cobweb Corner, Incident Report and details of forthcoming events.

The Newsletter is only as good as the members make it - so keep those articles coming! Our thanks to those that have sent articles in and enable to keep us publishing the 'Big Issue' each quarter. Thank you!

Pete Gadd and Jo Worrall

Mobile Phones and Mountain Rescue

For many of us, a mobile phone is now a standard part of the kit we take to the hills. It has become a safety feature for those “just in” case situations. They are lightweight, easy to use and offer immediate communication, sounds great doesn't it! However for Mountain Rescue Teams this innocent gadget is proving to be a nightmare.

As we are all aware, there are significantly fewer masts for mobile phones in mountainous areas and there is nothing worse than needing to phone for help and finding that reception is either non-existent or marginal. So hopefully the following tips will help make your mobile phone a useful safety tool.

First of all, make sure it's fully charged before you set off for the hills. It also helps to know what coverage there is in the area you are going to. The phone suppliers can tell you this and it's worth finding out who has the best coverage in particular areas if you have a choice over the network you can use. Make sure you tell them exactly why you want to know as the claims for coverage can become somewhat exaggerated. Finally, remove the answer service function from your phone when in the hills. If you leave it on, it will invariably switch to answer service just as you dig it out of some obscure pocket in your rucksack.

On a recent rescue, we spent frustrating phone calls trying to reach a casualty who was in a marginal area and whose phone decided it was better to take messages than allow us to speak direct. You may need to get the manual out and work out how to do it but your phone may be next to useless if you don't do it.

So what if you do need to make that phone call? The initial call should be 999 to the Police and ask for Mountain Rescue. Immediately give them your mobile telephone number (have it written down somewhere as memory isn't reliable in hazardous circumstances) and name and ask them to phone you back. It won't do anybody any good at all if your “pay as you talk” phone runs out of credit at a critical point. It will also indicate whether you can be contacted in your location, just because you can phone out doesn't mean that people can phone you back. If you don't receive a reply in 10 minutes you will probably need to phone them back, but before you do prepare the information you are going to give. The rescue team will need to know your exact location given as a

six-figure grid reference, the nature of the emergency and the number of people in the party.

All that is now left is to wait, remember that it will take some time to get to your location. How long did it take you to walk to your location and add on at least an hour for the team to assemble? However nobody will mind if you need to phone for reassurance in the intervening period but give us a chance to get to you.

Sometimes if you are lost you may not be able to give us a grid reference and in these circumstances information is crucial. Your last known position, how long ago you were there and which direction you travelled in from there, are the first details we will need. After that wind is the most reliable indicator of direction you will have, so stand with you back to it (its more comfortable that way) and give us the following information:

- Does the ground in front of you slope downhill uphill or level. Give a direction to the slope, if you have a compass this would be best, otherwise give it as degrees to either side of directly ahead, i.e. 45 degrees L.
- Also give the slope itself an angle, the difference between a 10-degree slope or a 30-degree slope will show up on the map and will give vital clues as to your location.
- Next describe any physical features of the landscape you can see and again give where they are in relation to standing with your back to the wind.
- Finally, tell us whether you are in cloud or below cloud level. That may be as much as is needed but be prepared to give more information if necessary.

•
Other useful details may be streams and their direction, the position of the sun or moon if you can see them etc.

All of the above may seem obvious, but when you're anxious, obvious sometimes flies out of the window. Try to remember the above and you will help us enormously, carrying a mobile phone with you isn't a guarantee of safety its just a tool which needs to be used properly. It is for emergencies though!

Dave Worrall Hon Chairman OVMRO

Why Produce the 'Dealing With Traumatic Incidents' Leaflet?

The inception and production of this leaflet was an interesting, complex and highly coincidental process.

The idea for producing a leaflet about dealing with traumatic incidents came originally from a conversation I had with Mel Gadd while sitting outside Oggy Base a few months after the fatality on Tryfan Bach. We were discussing the incident, and specifically, the role that Mel's mother Pat (and Mel herself) had had in talking to, supporting and looking after the witnesses and group members. The conclusion of this conversation was that we agreed that it was actually far harder *emotionally* to support witnesses of serious incidents, than it was to be involved in serious incidents from an operational perspective. Mel then told me that Pat and her had often thought about producing a leaflet that could be given to witnesses but they were always too busy to actually put one together. I promptly volunteered my husband John Gladston (a Llanberis team member) to produce one.

When I told John that I had volunteered him to produce a leaflet designed for people involved in serious mountain rescue incidents he told me that the idea of raising awareness about traumatic incidents had also been bandied around SARDA and the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team for many years. He was, as I knew he would be, more than keen to put a leaflet together. He was also keen to look at the bigger picture when it came to dealing with traumatic incidents and immediately pulled in the help and expertise of Phil Benbow a LLMRT and SARDA (W) member. Phil had been involved with the Lockerbie disaster as part of his association with SARDA. His experiences with this incident had motivated him to study for a postgraduate research degree in 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder' (PTSD) and, specifically, it's effects on rescue personnel.

While John and Phil started putting together the bones of the leaflet, I went around sounding out opinions and asking questions. What really surprised me was that there was a very high level of interest and expertise in the various teams, but a reluctance to share this. I was also surprised at the number of years that Phil Benbow had been trying to raise awareness about PTSD among rescue personnel with relatively little success. PTSD was definitely still a touchy subject. This was despite the fact that most of the team members that both John and I

spoke to were really enthusiastic and almost everyone acknowledged that some incidents leave psychological injuries with the casualties, the witnesses and sometimes even the rescuers.

It was at about this time that a close friend of mine contacted me to ask for information concerning an incident that had happened many years before in North Wales. She contacted me because a friend of hers was a witness of this incident and was still having real difficulties in dealing with the whole experience. I started sounding out opinions and asking questions of the climbers, instructors and 'survivors' that I knew in the area. Again, what surprised me were the high levels of individual expertise and experience and the low levels of willingness to share these. What also came across, without exception, was that it was the emotional effects of incidents that took the time to heal and that caused the most pain! And; going back to my original conversation with Mel Gadd outside Oggy Base, it was the emotional pain in the witnesses, casualties or families that was often more difficult for the rescue personnel to deal with than the physical injuries of casualties.

Again, by some mad quirk of coincidence, I was asked at this time to do some personnel development and management training with a charity that trained and provided counsellors for bereavement and trauma sufferers. This charity was Cruse Bereavement UK who provided the counsellors for the families of the British victims of the September 11th tragedy. Cruse was the first external organisation to proof read and comment on the leaflet. Thankfully they were very impressed and offered to put all their support and expertise at the disposal of any MR Teams in the area.

On it's journey to completion, the leaflet has become only part of a more comprehensive approach to looking at, and dealing with, PTSD. The leaflet has been championed and funded at a North Wales level and so has gone to all the teams in North Wales Mountain Rescue Association. It has also been taken up by interested departments within the Gwynedd Health Authority who have translated it into Welsh for them (and us) to use. Cruse Bereavement UK have given it a big thumbs up and have offered training and supervisory support to any personnel involved with the care of witnesses and family members. Cruse is also available to provide expert and confidential support for any team members or other rescue personnel on an individual basis. Phil Benbow,

meanwhile, has run a course for NWMRA about Critical Incident Debriefing for rescue personnel.

The leaflet itself is still primarily for giving out to the general public and will hopefully reduce the long term suffering of victims and witnesses of serious mountain incidents. It is, however, just as relevant to rescue personnel especially as stress from trauma is incremental and through professional organisations like Cruse UK, training and support will be available for our team members who deal with witnesses. By being in existence, the leaflet shows the level of awareness in North Wales MR as well as the commitment and time that both John and Phil have put into ensuring it's publication.

The leaflet is a NWMRA publication that has been written by OVMRO, LLMRT and SARDA personnel. I know that I am very biased, but I would recommend that anyone involved in outdoor pursuits for pleasure or pay, their families and all rescue team personnel, should read this leaflet.

Marianne Davies (OVMRO)

This leaflet is available by writing to OVMRO at Bryn Poeth, see cover for details. A simplified version is also included later in this newsletter.



COPING WITH TRAUMA

Taken from notes supplied by Phil Benbow and John Gladston during the day training at Plas Y Nant in April.

These notes have been written as a guide for people who have been involved either directly or indirectly with a traumatic incident.

By their nature, mountain accidents can be very distressing and may affect people in different ways.

The following notes are designed to help you understand what might be a normal reaction and when to seek further advice.

FOR YOURSELF

After being involved with or dealing with the aftermath of an accident, it is generally normal to experience some of the following reactions:

- Sadness
- Anger
- Fear
- Guilt
- Dreams about the event
- Fatigue
- Loss of enthusiasm
- Emotional withdrawal
- Restlessness
- Poor sleep patterns
- Not wanting to be reminded of the event
- Repeated intrusive recollection of the event e.g. flash backs which can be triggered by everyday events

The most important thing is to avoid bottling up thoughts and feelings

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Trying some of the following may help alleviate the emotional strain.

- Talk it through with some one
- Keep active
- Eat, sleep and rest well
- Establish the facts
- Keep busy

In order to make the experience "normal", you may find it helpful to know what actually happened, and talking through the experience with others involved.

FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Providing support

If a friend, colleague or family member has witnessed or been involved in a traumatic event the most valuable thing that you can do is allow them to talk through their experience without giving advice or making judgements.

They may feel angry about what has happened. Some people also feel fearful or even guilty. Usually the person will settle and come to terms with the vent within six weeks. During this time, you need to be tolerant and aware of any changes in their moods and general character.

Symptoms to look for include:

- Mood swings
- Behavioural changes
- Loss of enthusiasm
- Sadness or depression
- Irrational behaviour
- Irritability
- Poor sleep patterns
- Excessive use of drugs / alcohol

As a close friend or family member, you are most likely to be aware of long term effects of a traumatic event on your loved one.

It is therefore *you* who is likely to be in the dilemma of whether to seek further advice.

The team (via Phil Benbow and John Gladston) are currently in the process of formalising a leaflet summarising some of the points made here and additional information, which will be made freely available to team members, and even members of the public who have been involved in traumatic incidents or witnessed close friends falling.

This will contain suggested contact numbers: - for example CRUISE Bereavement Agency, Samaritans, and for our own team members contact numbers of trained counsellors either within the team or closely related that have the understanding of what we deal with.

The most important training that we can do to help cope with trauma, is to be aware that to have a reaction IS NORMAL, to be aware of symptoms you are likely to experience and to talk through the experience.

YOU DON'T NEED TO REACT TO BE NORMAL

BUT IT IS NORMAL TO REACT

Nikki Wallace
Llanberis MRT

Just a Team Member!

I have been asked to write an article about what it is like being a (minority) female member of the team. It is not that easy to explain. When I first thought about it, I thought it didn't make much difference, but if that were wholly true I wouldn't be on a permanent recruitment drive to get more women on the team. Out of almost sixty team members, there are only six other women. I know there is an air of military-macho-ness about the team, but it is just an air.

When I mentioned the article to other team members, they told me that they didn't consider or treat me as a woman; I was 'just a team member'. A few even told me that the only time they noticed that I was female was at the Annual Dinner when I turned up in a dress (I'm still trying to work out whether I should be offended by this or not!).

What is interesting, is that I am aware of being a minority female while I am also aware of not being treated any differently because of it. I seem to notice it, but the blokes don't. I have come to the conclusion that it is the social aspect of team life that is affected more than the operational side. As much as I like the guys on the team they're not, well, women. I like the company of other women, I prefer the closeness of the relationships that I have with other women and I *definitely* prefer climbing with other women. My social involvement in the team, while relatively high, is limited by the fact that I spend most of my social time with other women (and thus, not with the team).

Female members of SARDA Wales are not in a minority at all any more and the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team also has many female team members. I am still on my recruitment drive and I hope to see the numbers of (highly competent) women in the Oggy team rise as well. Both recruiting and retaining women in the team seems to be difficult for a number of reasons. This is a great pity because women have a great deal to offer the team (and mountain rescue in general) and I can vouch for the fact that being an active team member is highly rewarding and as level a playing field as your individual perception allows it to be. As one team leader said to me, "You're just a team member, aren't you? It is competence, team work and the ability to be proactive that matters".

Marianne Davies (OVMRO).

PRINCES ARMS COUNTRY HOTEL

Trefriw (nr Betws-y-Coed) - North Wales LL27 0JP

Telephone 01492 640592 Fax 01492 640559

Email: enquieies@princes-arms.co.uk

Website: <http://princes-arms.co.uk>

Quiet National Park location central to Snowdonia's mountains and coast. Superb en-suite bedrooms with bath and shower, satellite TV, telephone, tea/coffee, hairdryer, laundry. Spectacular views across the River Conwy. Our elegant AA rosette awarded restaurant has an enviable reputation for its cuisine, or alternatively dine in our less formal but stylish King's Brasserie. Whether you picnic at Lake Crafnant, stroll along forest tracks or browse around Bodnant Gardens the Princes Arms Hotel is really a rather nice place to find.

ROPE RESCUE TRAINING

As the reader will be aware from the accident statistics presented in this annual report, the team is often responsible for the safe extrication of unfortunate people who have become stuck somewhere they would prefer not to be. This may be high on a mountain ledge, in a river gorge, or they may simply have lost their way on steep ground and developed the wobbly leg syndrome and be unable to move up or down. It can happen to all of us! To ensure the safety of team members and to conduct the rescue of the casualty, the operation will very often require the use of ropes and a safe system of working. Ropes will be used to prevent the casualty from falling any further, and then depending on the situation, methods may be employed to lower, raise or even move the casualty horizontally to safety.

Sometimes these systems can be very complex involving a pulley system to create mechanical advantage or long lengths of rope may be used to lower over considerable distances. These operations always require the careful management, of rope to avoid the inevitable 'rope spaghetti', and efficient communications so that the team members can effectively operate the system.

These operations are probably the most hazardous of our activities and are often performed in the dark and with time constraints. To reduce the likelihood of anything going wrong, we rely on a system we call fresh eyes whereby a designated person, who has not been part of the rigging process is asked to cast an objective eye over the entire system before it is loaded. The Team Leaders are especially important here as they view the rescue from a larger perspective and are in a strong position to judge the effectiveness and safety of the rope system.

The most important preparation we undertake is training with realistic scenarios but without the pressure of having to successfully extricate a real casualty. To date, most of this training has been provided in house, but recently the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association (NWMRA) has provided funds for members of local teams to attend a commercial course in rope rescue. The Outreach Organisation, responsible for delivering the training has not only introduced some new ideas but also enabled Ogwen members to meet and work with members from other teams.

Considering all of the mountain rescue teams, teaching organisations and professionals based in North Wales we are confident of the skill base from which we can draw. However we must not become complacent and assume that we have all the answers. For this reason, Kevin deSilva and I were glad to attend a two-day course in the English Lake District delivered by the Canadian Kirk Mauthner of Rigging for Rescue.

Rigging for Rescue is a company based in Invermere, near the Rocky Mountains in British Columbia, and conducts realistic destructive testing on rescue systems and equipment, the findings of which underpin the content of their rope rescue courses. Kirk had been in the UK delivering his five day course to the Royal Airforce Mountain Rescue Service and been borrowed by the Mountain Rescue Council (MRC) to spread the word to representatives from civilian teams. The course is always based on realistic rescue applications, where the casualty and up to two attendants, plus kit, dangle from the system. Kirk has designed and built a test rig on his premises to judge the effectiveness of different systems, the results of which are demonstrated via video footage. He is also able to present performance data for commercially available equipment when subjected to the kind of forces involved in rescue work. One of the most important items of equipment in a system is the one that catches the rope in the event of system failure, or if all of the team members let go of the rope at once. It was gratifying to note that of the large range of commercial specialist devices designed to fulfill this requirement, the most effective tested, was two lengths of 8mm cord when tied as twin slip knots known as "Prussiks".

Attending the short course increased our resolve to attend the full five-day instructor level course in Canada and we are grateful to the members of the Ogwen committee for agreeing to support our attendance in October 2002. While there is no doubt that Kevin and I will benefit from going to Canada, the real benefits will come when we introduce the findings of the course to North Wales. We look forward to being able to report on our attendance this time next year.

Chris Onions
Team Member



The Support Group of the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation

Before I go any further, let me answer the question that I am asked most of all, "Where does the name 333 come from?" The simple answer is that it was the telephone number of the OVMRO base – Capel Curig 333. Now that is out of the way, let's answer the other questions, who are we? where did we come from? and what do we do?

A number of years ago, the suggestion was made that Mountain Rescue should learn some lessons from the Royal National Lifeboat Institute and generate funds by sponsorship etc. Eyebrows were raised, to put it mildly, and the matter was tactfully ignored. As time passed, the cost of running a mountain rescue team increased dramatically, and at the same time, the diversity of tasks undertaken also widened; no more just mountain rescue, but with the acceptance by police forces of the professionalism of the teams, they became involved with searches for missing children, Alzheimer victims etc. and even major disaster and crime scenarios.

By 1996 the cost of running the OVMRO was £25,000 pounds per annum, and it was obvious that there was no way could this figure be sustained without drastic action by the team. A working party was set up and its first meeting was held in April 1997. The Marquis of Anglesey and the then Chief Constable of the North Wales Police, Michael Argent, Q.P.M., LL.B., M.Ed., kindly agreed to be patrons. The terms of reference were, in essence, to raise funds for the OVMRO by forming a support group, which will be known as 333 The Support Group of the OVMRO. So, 333 was born. Since then it has gone from strength to strength by virtue of its members, not just from their annual contributions, but also by their work throughout the year in raising money by collections, sponsorship, etc.

There is little doubt of the success of the group, as other teams emulate OVMRO and set up their own support groups. The social side of the

group has also increased as closer ties with the team are made. As you browse through this report and our Newsletters, you will find many examples of joint ventures by 333 and full team members. So if you are already a member, contact a committee member and find out about the potential ways you could help and also increase your enjoyment at being a member of this worthwhile organisation. If you are not a member, please join and help us help those, not just in difficulty in the mountains, but who are lost, despondent or otherwise in need of the teams expertise. Perhaps you are no longer fit enough to be out there on the sharp end, or live too far away to be able to respond, we still need you, in fact we cannot do without your support, so let's hear from you.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all members of 333 for their dedication and enthusiasm; may the team, with your help, go from strength to strength and maintain its place, as I believe it, in the vanguard of mountain rescue in the UK.

Clive Swombow
Honorary Chairman



Collection Boxes

Firstly, I'd like to thank all the shops, guest houses, climbing walls and pubs who have been kind enough to support the team by giving a small area of their premises to allow us to put a collection box there.

Unfortunately, due to the Foot and Mouth, the collection box total for this year wasn't as much as last. However, my thanks go to a great team of volunteers including Alan Ince and Mike Hodges from 'Treble Three' and my usual subjects, Wayne Roberts, Chris Lloyd, Stuart Woodward, Mick Parsons, Jed Stone, Mike Thomas, Bob Lewis and Diane Fisher for their assistance in helping to empty and allocate the boxes. With over 55 boxes spread out over the country, this is far too much for just one man to contend with and I thank you all for your assistance.

I'd like to just spend a moment or two telling you about a special couple that badger, pound and beat (only kidding!) funds from people. Both Sue and Peter Armstrong from the Conwy Falls Café have been successfully assisting the team with raising funds for the past couple of years. Over half the money raised has come from the regular emptying of the collection boxes on their premises and a special THANK YOU must go to them for all their hard work.

Once again, may I thank all persons and premises for their assistance and as a final note, if you would like a collection box on your premises, please give me a ring at base or drop me an e-mail on collectionboxes@treblethree.org.uk

Full details of all collection boxes and their locations can be found by logging onto the World Wide Web and visiting the Treble Three site at <http://www.treblethree.org.uk>

John Carrie

Treble Three Standing Order Authority

Please enrol me in treble Three, the Supporters Group of the OVMRO

Type of membership:	Individual	£15.00
	Senior citizen/Student	£10.00
	Family	£25.00
	Corporate	£100.00

Title..... First name.....

Surname

Address

Post Code

Telephone

Please Initiate the following standing order payments

Amount (in words)£ :

Beneficiary *Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation*

Bank *Midland Bank Bethesda*

Branch *High Street, Bethesda, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 3AP*

Sort Code *40.09.03 21107321*

Your Bank and Branch

Branch Address in full

Sort Code Account No

Date of first payment *Immediately*

Frequency *Annually until further notice*

SignedDate

Please return the completed form to

333, Bryn Poeth, Capel Curig, Betws y Coed, N Wales, LL24 0EU

'Treble Three' Webmaster Report

<http://www.treblethree.org.uk>

Well it's been a very busy year for the web-development team. A new look website and its own unique domain name has allowed the group to expand its presence on the web dramatically.

Our thanks must go to Ffion and all at World Span International PLC, who have kindly given us a free web-hosting account. Without this we would simply not have a site.

I'd also like to thank all team members who have commented on the site in its earlier stage to give us the final product. If anyone else would like to make comment or suggestions please contact me on webmaster@treblethree.org.uk

It has been suggested that a database of all 'Treble Three' members with an active e-mail account be made for events or activities that may interest members. If you wish for your e-mail address to be catalogued, then please pop me a quick e-mail on the above address and we can take it from there.

As for the future, all that can be said is that the site will be slowly expanding and a catalogue of 'Treble Three' products will shortly be available.

John Carrie
Treble Three Webmaster

The Team also has a web site and this can be found at:

<Http://www.ogwen-rescue.org.uk>

Our thanks go to Russ Hore for maintaing the site.

Location of Collection Boxes

Abergwyngregyn
Aber Falls Hotel

Bangor
The Great Arete Bangor YHA

Bethesda
Victoria Douglas Arms GLSW Scout Hut
Idwal Youth Hostel One Stop Petrol Station The Bull

Betws Y Coed
Conwy Falls Cafe Pedyffryn Stores Ultimate Outdoors
Stewart Cunninghams Snowdon Ranger The Stables Bar
Pont Y Pair Chippy Pont Y Pair Hotel Miners Bridge Inn
Cotswold 'Royal Oak' Cotswold 'Rock Bottom' Rose Hill B&B

Chester
Soldier of Fortune The Walls Ellis Brigham
Great Outdoor Shop

Capel Curig
Pinnacles Joe Brown's Plas Y Brenin
Cobdens Hotel Tyn Y Coed Bryn Glo Cafe
Snowdonia Cafe Youth Hostel A5 Services

Conwy Valley
Conwy YHA Craft Centre Cymru, Conwy
Ty Gwyn, Rowen Princes Arms, Trefriw Cafe, Llyn Crafnant
Conwy Outdoor shop Dyffryn Conwy Leisure Centre, Llanrwst

Llanberis
Caernarfon Airport Gwynedd Hotel, Llanberis

Llandudno
Millets Llandudno Junction Leisure Centre

Rhyl
Marine Lake Motors

The following articles are taken from previous Newsletters - if you were a member of 333 you would receive the Newsletter each quarter!

The Ballad of Idwal Slabs

The lifestyle of the climbers in Snowdonia fifty or so years ago was very different to that of today. It was a style of hemp ropes and waistlines, tricouni nailed boots and Christmas 'meets' at Club huts. It was at Glan Dena, the Midland Association of Mountaineers hut next door to Oggi Base that Showell Styles composed the ballad for some after dinner entertainment. We are very grateful to Showell Styles for granting permission to publish his ballad in this Newsletter.

For those team members who wish to learn this ballad for recitals, I am told that it must be spoken dramatically and in costume complete with deerstalker hat, side-whiskers and alpenstock.

THE BALLAD OF IDWAL SLABS

I'll tell you the tale of a climber; a drama of love on the crags;
A story to pluck at your heart strings, and tear your emotions to rags.
He was tall, he was fair, he was handsome; John Christopher Brown was his name;
The Very Severes nearly bored him to tears – and he felt about girls much the same.

Till one day when climbing in Ogwen, he fell (just a figure of speech),
For the President's beautiful daughter, named Mary-Jane Smith – what a peach!
Her figure was as slim a Napes Needle, her lips as red as Red Wall;
A regular tiger, she's been up the Eiger North Wall with no pitons at all!

Now Mary had several suitors, but never a one she would take,
Though it seemed she favoured one fellow, a villain named Reginald Hake.
This Hake was a cad who used pitons and wore a long silken moustash,
Which he used so they say, as an extra belay – though perhaps we are being too harsh.

John took Mary climbing on Lliwedd, and proposed whilst on Mallory's Slab;
It took him three pitches to do it, for he hadn't much gift of the gab.
He said: "Just belay for a moment – there's a little spike close to your knee.
And tell me fair maid, when you're properly belayed, would you care to hitch up with me?"

Said Mary, "It's a toss-up between you and Reginald Hake,
And the man I am going to marry must perform some great deed for my sake.
I will marry whichever bold climber shall excel at the following feat-

To climb headfirst down Hope, with no rubbers or rope at the very next climbing club Meet."

Now when Mary told the Committee, she had little occasion to plead,
For she was as fair as a jug handle hold at the top of a hundred foot lead.

The Club ratified her proposal, and the President had to agree;
He was fond of his daughter, but felt that she oughter get married, between you
and me

There was quite a big crowd for the contest, lined up at the foot of the Slabs;
The Mobs came from Bangor in buses and the Nobs came from Capel in cabs.
There were Fell and Rock, Climbers', and Rucksack, and the Pinnacle Club (in new hats!)

And a sight to remember, an Alpine Club Member, in very large crampons and spats!

The weather was fine for a wonder; the rocks as dry as a bone.
Hake arrived with a crowd of his backers, but John strode up quite alone.
A rousing cheer greeted the rivals; a coin was produced and they tossed.
"Have I won cried?" cried John Brown, as the penny came down;
"No, you fool!" hissed his rival. "You've lost!"

So Hake had first go at the contest; he went up by Ordinary Route,
And the closet observer would have noticed a bulge in each boot.
Head first he came down the top pitches, applying his moustache as a brake;
He didn't relax till he'd passed the Twin Cracks, and the crowd shouted "Attaboy,
Hake!"

At the foot of the Slabs Hake stood sneering and draining a bottle of Scotch;
"You're time was ten seconds." The President said, consulting the Treasurer's watch.
"Now Brown, if you're to win, you must beat that." Our hero's sang froid was sublime.

He took one look at Mary, and as light as a fairy ran up to the top of the climb.

Now though Hake had made such good going, John wasn't discouraged a bit.
For that he was the speedier climber, even Hake would have to admit.
So, smiling as though for a snap shot, not a hair on his head out of place,
Our hero John Brown started wriggling down – but look! What a change on his face!

Prepare for a shock, gentle ladies. Gentlemen, check the blasphemous word;
For the villainy I am about to speak of, is such that you never have heard.
Reg. Hake had cut holes in the toes of his boots and filled up each boot with soft soap.

As he slid down the climb, he had covered with slime every handhold and foothold on Hope.

Conceive (if you can) the tense horror, that gripped the vast concourse below,
When they saw Mary's lover slip downwards like an arrow that's shot from a bow.

"He's done for!" Gasp'd twenty score voices. "Stand from under!" roared John from above.

As he shot down the slope, he was steering down Hope – still fighting for life and for love.

Like lightening he flew past the Traverse – in a flash he had reached the Twin Cracks.

The friction was something terrific. There was smoke coming out of his slacks. He bounced off the shelf at the top of Pitch Two and bounded clean over its edge! A shout "He's gone!" came from all except one; and that one of course was our Reg.

But it's not the expected that happens, in this sort of story at least;
And just as John thought he was finished, he found that his motion had ceased!
His braces (pre War and elastic) had caught on a small rocky knob
And so safe and sound, he came gently to ground 'mid the deafening cheers of the mob!

"Your time was five seconds!" the President cried. "She's yours, my boy. Take her. You win".

"My hero!" breathed Mary and kissed him, while Hake gulped a bottle of gin.
And tugged at his moustache as he whispered, "Aha! My advances you spurn!
Curse the chap that wins races by using his braces!" and he slunk away ne'er to return.

They were wed in the Church of Saint Gabbro, and the vicar got quite carried away,
Did a hand traverse into the pulpit and shouted out "Let us belay"
John put the ring on Mary's finger – a snap link, it was made of steel,
And they walked to the taxis 'neath an arch of ice axes, while all the bells started to peal.

The Morals we draw from this story are several, I'm happy to say
It's virtue that wins in the long run; long silken moustaches don't pay.
Keep your head uppermost when climbing; and if you must slither, be on a rope
Steer clear of places that sell you cheap braces and a fellow that uses soft soap!

Showell Styles circa 1947



THE LOCAL BUS TO SYABRU

Nepal – well Nepal was a fucking gas!!!! Nothing could have prepared me for it. I found something wonderful/terrible, wild/gentle, happy/sad, poor/poorer.

I arrived in Kathmandu to a very hot afternoon, and after a short wait for my visa, got out of the airport to a large crowd of hotel and taxi touts, luckily, one of the first things I saw was my name on a piece of card held by Pasang Kaji, my guide. He welcomed me with a Namaste! and a scarf, explained he had to wait for another flight and got me a taxi to my hotel. That was a wild ride, first on the ring road, which is a wide, dusty road – no white lines, no nothing, just traffic doing their own thing, and although the steering wheel was on the right side of the vehicle, I arrived at the hotel not quite knowing which side of the road they drove on. Once off the ring road and into Kathmandu, the roads were a mixture of very narrow, tarmac and earth, full of people, trickshaws, tuck-tucks, holy cows and mangy dogs. The driver's hand was constantly on the horn and miraculously, nothing was hit.

The Tibet Guest House was a good hotel, in the European style but without the cost. I had checked their home page on the internet and seen this artist's impression of the hotel with a large car park, just off a wide road, surrounded by green fields with majestic white mountains in the distance – the reality was somewhat different, a car park for about six vehicles tops, and right slap-bang in the middle of Thamel, in a warren of narrow streets of shops and the noise was awesome, and not a blade of grass to be seen. It did though have a nice roof-top 'garden' with concrete chairs and a view of the Kathmandu roof-line.

After a quick shower I went for a walk around the near-by streets, and immediately found it a friendly place. I learnt very quickly that orientation was going to be difficult and never bothered with worrying about where I was as a trickshaw was never more than 70 rupees back to the hotel. When I got back, there was a message from Kaji that he would meet me later and take me to the agent's office to relieve me of my money, this we did and the evening was my own.

I gave Kaji 1000 rupees to buy the tickets for myself, him and the porter for the journey to the mountains which was planned for the 1st of October; that left me with two days to explore Kathmandu and Patan. The only down-side of Kathmandu, apart from the dirt, noise, crazy air pollution and the screaming poverty, is that anywhere outside a building you just cannot sit down to enjoy a smoke, you are immediately surrounded by beggars, hawkers, sadhus, hashish dealers and kids wanting to practice their English on you – not much of a down-side I suppose; it did add to the attraction of the place. The roof garden on the other hand was a haven of peace to smoke and drink in peace.

I was picked up by taxi at 5.00am on the morning of the 1st, in it were Kaji and Domi the porter and we got to the bus park and located our bus. It was a local bus service, not a tourist bus, as the latter are very expensive. The theory is that every passenger has a seat, Nepal reality is very different. The bus was absolutely packed by 6.30am and I do mean absolutely packed – the aisle was full of people standing

and sitting on produce, at the very back, where I was sitting by a window was a very large barrel of diesel with some slopping around on the top, and the whole bus smelt of diesel and unwashed humanity. The bus eventually left just after 7, and within about 10 minutes it stopped by a large crowd which immediately climbed onto the roof with their bags and burlap sacks. The bus now had a very different ride quality as the suspension was much lower and harder, the centre of gravity was much higher and it rolled alarmingly. Now the next part, nothing could have prepared me for, the road was just over single width pot-holed tarmac with awesome drops right from the road edge, I was not happy – I was a long way from the door. I told Kaji that I had always wanted to ride on a bus roof; it was something we didn't do at home. Oh, no sir! he said – he always called me sir – even when I told him not to – the roof is for the natives, as if to say it was beneath my dignity as his client to be there, I demurred. I also wanted my early morning piss – rather badly. Three and a half hours later, with a very tight bladder, the bus stopped at Trisuli for fuel and a short stop. I noticed the conductor filling a couple of flimsy looking plastic containers with petrol.

Trisuli is where the tarmac stops and the rough track starts. The stop was only 15 minutes and I spent most of it pissing, and I managed to get my seat by the window again – figuring that for some of the time the drop would be on the other side and I could jump out should I need to. In the scrum to get into the bus, someone had likely stood on the plastic cans of petrol and the whole cabin was full of strong petrol fumes. Very soon the road climbed out of the valley we had descended into, in crazy unguarded switch-backs and the drops got bigger and bigger, the road got rougher and the rolling and pitching of the bus got worse. The bus stopped to let another inch pass, outside was a westerner with a bike, I called out to him, 'nice way to travel!' and 'this is exciting, init?', to which he answered 'just wait till you get further on' – oh dear!

Kaji had lost his seat and was standing in the aisle, I just caught his eye for a second and with very quick sign language I informed him that I was going on top. Just as the bus slowed to a crawl and the drop was on the other side I made my move out of the window, only to find the limitations of travelling with a combination of boxer shorts under shorts as my whole undercarriage fell out – not to worry, no-one knew me. Various hands helped me onto the roof and I found myself up-top sitting on a metal box that had been polished with countless Nepalese back-sides and nothing much to hold on to. I was happy, I was in the sun, I could jump off. I noticed I was the only westerner on top, as I was below too. There was one kid with a live chicken in a shoulder bag - that was all the livestock. On the other side of the mountain, I was less happy as the drop was now my side and I still didn't have much to hold on to – so I held the person next to me and he didn't object. Occasionally, we had to get off the top just before police check points, run with the bus and when out of sight, climb up again, this time I got a better position in the centre. At one point the bus went into a pothole and it lurched enough for me to hear people gasping inside the cabin, I could just hear it over the sound of blood pounding in my ears – jeez it was a scary moment.

Many hours into the journey, we stopped behind a convoy of three stationary trucks that couldn't get over a really bad section. The road had been deteriorating markedly for a few kilometres, and this was looking bad – a couple of hundred meters further along and about 500 feet down the scree was a fresh looking truck wreck. Above it, on the track, just about where it would have fallen from, a truck was making heavy weather of driving a sharp and steep bend, the co-driver placing a rock behind the rear wheel with every few centimetres it gained – eventually, after much effort it got up. After some road building and pushing, all the trucks and our bus got over the bad bit. Just before I went back up-top, Kaji informed me the conductor had told him the truck had gone over the side in the last couple of days – too much information! As the trucks moved over the bad bits I could see the track edge sagging and springing under the weight, and as I was mightily relieved to find our bus made easy of the aforementioned mauvais pas.

The conductor seemed to have the same air of authority as an S.N.C.F. conducteur. Whilst in the cabin, I had seen the way he regularly checked passengers' pink slips, barked orders and did much pointing with a serious look on his face. He had a curious way of holding the fare money; the various denominations were filed between the fingers of his left hand. At the end of the journey, I was to discover why. At one point I was astounded to see him climb up onto the roof whilst the bus was moving, unconcerned by the drop, wearing flip-flops, and traverse the side looking for new passengers that hadn't paid their fare, the money still filed in his left hand!

As we got nearer our destination there were fewer people up-top, then it got dark about 6.30, then it rained and some got plastic sheets out of their loads and spread them over themselves, inviting me under too, it was magic – they laughed as I smoked my pipe. The descent to Syabru Benshi at the valley bottom was a nerve tingling, never-ending series of switch-backs on a wet muddy track and I was mightily relieved to arrive, damp and aching and hungry. It had taken over 12 hours, with no food at all, but it was a glorious experience.

Over a dal-bhat meal in the Ganesh View lodge, Kaji informed me that his wallet with all his and Domi's money and his guide's carnet had been stolen on the bus – we had a fiscal emergency already.

Yes, the walking and the mountains were great, the people were fantastic, but that's another story. The return bus ride was in the back of my mind all the time on the walk; it had grown into a nightmare that I had to overcome – I couldn't face the drive back in the cabin, and was determined to do the whole trip back on the roof. As we walked down-valley we made a detour on the last two days that took us back to the track at Dunche. That would take about 3 hours off the journey and avoid those never-ending switch-backs. We got to Dunche in the late afternoon after a long hot walk and found a tea house. It was the end of the Desain Festival and there had been talk on the trek that there had been no buses for the three days before we were to get to Dunche, so there was a danger of there being a back-log of people going to Kathmandu. Kaji secured a ticket for the three of us for 7am the following morning without problems. Morning came with the news that the bus

wasn't coming as the bad part of the road had gone completely and that we would have to walk the 12km to the bus waiting on the other side of the gap. The wreck I had seen on the way up had gone - probably all the way to the bottom, it is unlikely that it would have been pulled up. Only about 10 of us made that walk and arrived at the bus, still facing towards Dunche, to find only the driver and conductor. Nothing was happening, some time later still nothing was happening but by this time a whole bunch of people had arrived. Eventually, the driver made a many point turn over 15-20 minutes to turn the bus towards Kathmandu, and I got onto the roof - I stayed on the roof all the way - I was at last happy. This time there were another 4 westerners and they opted for the cabin. We were off. This time Kaji joined me on the roof; we had become good friends through some adversity on the trek.

After the first police check point I found myself with different neighbours - two girls, early 20's and nice looking. They both looked tired and sleepy (probably hung-over from the last night of Desain party that had been going on in Dunche the previous evening) and one put her head straight into Kaji's groin area, and went to sleep, the other put her head on my shoulder/chest (no eye contact) and went to sleep - Kaji had a wide grin. Much later this girl of mine, quickly sat up and leant over the side and vomited, came back and back to sleep, dribbling vomit and spit over my chest. Later-on the bus stopped with shouts and gasps from inside - someone had had the shits inside and some time was spent with jerry cans and sticks cleaning the mess - and it was a hot day. Strangely, the other westerners still opted to stay in the cabin. I counted between 35 and 40 people on the roof. Having passed Trisuli I calculated we would be in Kat. by 4pm and about an hour from Kathmandu the rain came - this time someone went into the big metal box I had sat on on the up journey and rolled out a large blue tarpaulin and covered us all - it was ragged with the waterproof bits is tatters, but it served to make the rain smaller and hide those drops and the tricky manoeuvres passing other trucks. I got back to Kathmandu, tanned, filthy and soaking with a weird hair style, that no comb would go through - the journey was over - it had been fantastic - now I had three night in Kathmandu before the flight home - it would have been better if I'd made the walk longer.

As a post-script - a bus went off the road on the 10th Oct, the day after I got back to Kat. It was some distance to the west of Kathmandu, and between 35 and 60 people were killed, number on board not known.

Richard Jones



A NIGHTMARE OF WHITE HORSES

I could die here.

This is what I thought as I watched the huge, grey wave gathering size and momentum. It was heading straight for me. Unstoppable. Inevitable.

Nowhere to run. I stood upon a sloping, seaweed-covered ledge, clutching desperately on to two flat holds and looking out to sea over my left shoulder.

The irony was not lost on me. It was my birthday. This would give good closure to the chaos that has been my life. Wrap it up in nice neat bow and file under "cock-up".

Gary. Born December 30, died December 30. Did a few things in between.

The day had started well enough. Peeling myself, hung over, from Alan's settee in time for the high speed, knuckle-whitening drive, in dangerously icy conditions, from Newbury to Swanage. We had arranged to meet Nick in the Streetwise café so we could indulge in the obligatory pre-climb fry-up. Hunger sated, hangover cured, we headed down to Guillemot Ledge.

The sun had come out with a vengeance and I was sweating by the time we reached the large, square-cut niche which is the usual gearing-up point for climbers wishing to try their luck at this, one of Swanage's finest cliffs. From here an impressive view is available of Guillemot's eastern end, and also of the western end of Cormorant Ledge – another good venue. Alan, who hadn't climbed outside for five months, having been cajoled by me was planning to lead a route called "Vampire" which, at VS 4c, was one of the few non-extremes at Guillemot that I hadn't already climbed. However, as usual, I had gone into lead-hogging mode, and changed the plans even as we geared up.

I wanted to lead first, but I did not want to stick my neck out on an extreme. Not with two relatively inexperienced partners. Besides, don't tell any one, but I'm chickenshit.

Solution. I found in the guidebook a two-pitch VS at the western end of Cormorant. Perfect. Not only could I lead both pitches but I could also massage my ego by tying lots of knots and generally adding to the myth that I know what I'm doing. I read aloud from the guidebook: "Since the collapse of the cleft buttress which bounded the western end of Cormorant, the cliff can be reached via the short entry abseil for Guillemot Ledge." I neglected to read out: "Calm seas or low tide required."

"So we'll just boulder-hop around that arête and the route should be in the next bay," I blustered. A wave broke against the cliff and sprayed high into the air. Alan looked dubious. Nick shrugged.

Standing at the Eastern end of Guillemot, beneath a climb called "Robud", I looked for a way around to Cormorant. In front of me was a large, wedge-shaped boulder, which offered some protection from the really quite sizeable waves. Beyond that, the arête. Beyond that, I couldn't see.

I needed to get up onto a small ledge on the arête in order to see what lay around the corner in the next bay. I scrambled down behind the wedge-shaped boulder. After waiting for a suitable gap between waves I launched myself at the short wall leading to the ledge on the arête. The rock was covered in a thin, greasy layer of seaweed. Scrabbling wildly, I managed to gain a standing position on the ledge without getting wet. I faced in, panting, a little panicky, and grabbed two flat holds in front of me.

Someone called, "Gary!" That was when I saw the wave.

Despairing, I evaluated my chances of getting back behind the wedge-shaped boulder where Nick was, which by now looked like home, before the wave hit. Zero. I would have to stay put. A white cap grew up on top of the wave. Any second now.

I looked at Nick. He appeared unhappy. Nick looked at me and I appeared unhappy.

When the wave actually hit, it was an anti-climax. I got soaked to the skin, but I wasn't plucked from the cliff-face and battered mercilessly between jagged boulders. I just stood there and waited for the wave's big brother, which was following closely behind, to soak me as well. After that the sea calmed down a little, but I didn't.

On trembling limbs I made my way back to the commodious ledge below "Vampire". No thought now for my ankle, injured in a ground fall two weeks previously, I jumped from the wedge-shaped boulder back to the main ledge. Only then did I feel somewhat happier. I suggested we take a belay. Quickly.

Alan, whose face had taken on the pallor and consistency of uncooked bacon rind, no longer seemed keen to lead. This was fine by me as, drenched and freezing cold, I just wanted to get to the top of the cliff.

As it is, we climbed "Vampire" that day, and I enjoyed the route as much as many I've enjoyed in Swanage. The sun on my back, I dried out quickly, with only the squelch of my rock boots and the cacophony of the waves below to remind me of the previous drama, I hauled myself, grace-free, up the steep crack and overhang, loving every precious minute of it.

We packed up as the sun went down, turning the cliffs a beautiful orange hue.

Gary Halliwell

IN SEARCH OF THE PARALLEL ROADS IN THE COMPANY OF A FERROUS STAG.

It seems quite ironic that recently 333 members took time to enjoy a walk in the company of a very unlikely duo, the large faithful hunting hound "Gelert" and that ever so popular, furry friend, "Rupert the Bear", only to find that our search for Glen Roy's Parallel roads was to be in the company of a ferrous stag.

I felt honoured as a 333 member to be invited to join OVMRO's Winter Training Weekend in Scotland, even though I wanted "to do my I own thing", it was good to share the accommodation.

As it was my first visit to the Creag Meagaidh area I felt a little swotting up was in order, so hot foot to the local book shop to search out what information they had. I was soon armed with sheet 34 in my hot sweaty mitt, and it was time to swot. My gaze kept returning to the Parallel roads, most predominant in the Glen Roy area. They looked just the business for a mountain biking foray if the weather was inclement.

During discussions with our "Cobweb Corner" columnist, Chris Lloyd, an Engineer of all things Civil, he took great delight in informing us that they weren't in fact roads at all, but the remains of beaches. Beaches at 300 meters? Strange, there's a big plug in the ocean somewhere!

You have guessed right, Sunday came with the usual Scottish horizontal rain, most snow having vanished into the rapidly descending cloud. Dave Worrall, Mike Thomas and myself decided to suss out these Parallel roads. Cheating slightly, we drove up into Glen Roy to park just in the lee below the view point, avoiding the now horizontal and freezing hose pipe.

We donned full hill kit, no sexy lycra gear this time and mounting our trusty steeds we cycled up to the view point. From here we were able to see the lines of that spectacular age old phenomena as far as the eye could see around the great Glens of Glen Roy and Glen Turret.

Down into Glen Roy we raced, getting closer to the Roy river. In the distance a herd of deer heard our calls and raced up the hillside, away from our headlong descent.

5 miles into our ride we passed through the estate yards of the impressive Brae Lodge, a hunting lodge of much renown. After the estate yards the road continued as a broad track, crossing over the river Turret close to the Turret Bothy. Here disaster strikes, with a crank hastily shimmed prior to the trip giving up the ghost. What a time for it to happen just as the local ramblers group stride past "Having problems sonny?" Te He! mountain bikers! Not to be out done, temporary repairs were soon carried out.

Then, just out of the corner of my eye, I saw it, the Monarch of Glen Roy standing watching us from the safety of the opposite bank. Strange, it looked somewhat thin and moth eaten, perhaps that's how they all look close to? I must check it on our return.



Crossing many of the torrents flowing down the flanks of Carn Dearg Beag to the river Roy, the track was now really glutinous, making it heavy going. We paused with the Ramblers to admire the tumbling falls of Roy, well swollen with the recent snow melt and rain. We had a quick chat with the ramblers, not a bad crowd really. By now my crank was definitely sounding less mechanical than it should be so I made the decision to return to the Turret Bothy to await Dave and Mike on their return. I think the comment was "Wimp". On they went towards the Bothies of Luib Chonnal and Shesgan, the latter being close to General Wades Military Road which stretches from Laggan to Fort Agustas crossing the Corrieyairch Pass.

Left to my own devices I was soon back at the Bothy and carrying out more major repairs under the ever watchful eye of the Monarch. Due to the deterioration of the track, and the weather, Dave and Mike were soon back at the bothy. After a quick bite to eat we decided to cross the river and ask the stag about the Parallel Roads.

Walking up to our new friend, we found this Monarch was made from ½" steel plate. Moth eaten? Not really, just peppered with what appeared to be a blast by armour piercing shells. It was in fact a target for those more affluent members of society who are able to afford to "Bag" these fantastic animals. And yes, you may well ask, it was a stag, some burning torch brandishing smith with a wicked sense of humour.

Through Brae Lodge estate we now cycled into a head wind. Past the view point and descending to our transport, we found a group of canoeists unloading their boats and about to try something that defied all logic and gravity from the 200 meter contour down into the River Roy, now far below.

I think someone just mentioned tea and stickies at Nevis Sport!



The Parallel Roads are in fact not roads at all but startlingly defined marks left on the hillside as a result of glaciation in the area forming shore lines, first at approximately the 350M contour and then as the glacier retreated, left a further two shore lines, one at 260M and the final at 211M. Or did we in fact have three separate ice ages in the same area?

Dave Salter