

KIKRBY STEPHEN MOUNTAIN RESCUE NEWSLETTER



CONGRATULATIONS TO ARTHUR LITTLEFAIR - FIFTY YEARS IN MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Looking back over fifty years of his active membership of KSMRT, Arthur Littlefair is much happier talking about the team than he is talking about himself. But Arthur's story is also, in many ways, the history of the team.

Peter Day taught Arthur in his final year at Primary School. As the first leader of KSMRT it was Peter who recruited Arthur a few years later in 1970 with the immortal words 'I've added you to the call-out list'. The team Arthur joined relied on members using their own equipment and vehicles.

By the time Arthur was taking on the leadership of the team, plans were being developed for the new purpose built base. This was to be the first purpose-built MRT base in Cumbria, with garaging for two Land Rovers – and room enough for both vehicles to have their doors open for loading and unloading. Arthur sketched out the layout, including a kitchen and toilet based on the one at Littlefair's Builders Merchants.

As he came to the end of his time as leader of the team Arthur was awarded the MBE for his services to mountain rescue and community service. He had succeeded Peter Day as leader after he, like Peter, had served as leader for 23 years. He regards the smooth transition to Adrian Cottrell, our current leader, as a great piece of succession planning.

'Being part of this team is a tremendous feeling' says Arthur. 'People are the greatest asset of any enterprise, each generation standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before'

For Arthur this was exemplified in one memorable call-out in the Helvellyn area. Members of several teams working together, with a common purpose and a shared goal. 'Seeing all those team members working together like that still gives me goosebumps'

We are very proud that Arthur Littlefair, MBE and a deputy lieutenant of Cumbria, is the chairman of Kirkby Stephen MRT.



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Team Call outs

Date: 28/05/20 **Time:** 1410
Members: 8 **Hours:** 2

Incident: Tebay. Male with heart problems. NWS assist

Date: 12/06/20 **Time:** 1330
Members: 11 **Hours:** 2

Incident: Tebay. Female with lower leg injury. NWS assist

Date: 24/06/20 **Time:** 2140
Members: 21 **Hours:** 17

Incident: Uldale. Male walker reported overdue. Assisted by Lakes Search Dogs, Kendal & Penrith MRT's

Date: 11/07/20 **Time:** 1920
Members: 13 **Hours:** 3

Incident: Wandale. Female with back injuries after falling off quad bike. NWS assist

Date: 11/07/20 **Time:** 2330
Members: 16 **Hours:** 4.5

Incident: High Pike. Male with chest pains.

On the 11th July the team had two call-outs in quick succession, both serious enough to call for help from Coastguard Search and Rescue helicopters.

In the first incident the team responded to a request by NWS to help with the evacuation of a woman who had fallen off a quad bike near Adamthwaite. A helicopter was called from Caernarfon, the team loaded her on a stretcher and she was winched to the helicopter. She was taken to Preston Hospital.

Immediately after the this call-out the team responded to a man with a suspected heart attack on High Pike. After assessing his condition a Coastguard helicopter was called, this time from Humberside. The helicopter was able to land nearby and the patient was transferred and taken to James Cook Hospital.

Many thanks to Penrith MRT and Kendal MRT who brought 'Autopulse' emergency resuscitation equipment to the second incident, and of course to Coastguard SAR.

Scout visit at Base

by Cathy Hooper

Back at the end of February, just a few weeks before the world paused for the start of lockdown, we were treated to an excellent evening in the company of the Cubs and Beavers from the 1st Kirkby Scout Group.

Our visitors moved around 3 different stations where they learnt about the different aspects of mountain rescue and how the team is responsible for more than just the obvious task of rescuing people from the fells!

As a new team member, having joined last September, it has been great to learn about the different specialisms of team members. There are various sub groups within Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Team including the Crag Team (who specialise in the technical aspects of rescues involving crags/steep ground) and the Swiftwater Rescue Team (SRT) whose specialism is water based rescue.

Our visitors were keen to hear recollections from experienced team members featuring rescues in floods and snowstorms as well as rescues involving animals.

The Cubs and Beavers moved around different stations focusing on the themes of What to do in an Emergency/ Giving First Aid, Ropework/Construction of pulley systems, and Vehicles/Stretchers, in turn. This gave the youngsters a rounded picture of how the team operates, who needs our help and how we go about responding to emergency situations.

At the time, the Beavers and Cubs were working towards their First Aider badge so spent their time on that station practising with their peers on how to check for response and how to move casualties into the recovery position. Some very impressive knowledge and a great evening overall –

Thank you to the 1st Kirkby Stephen Cubs and Beavers for coming to visit us – we look forward to a visit from the Scouts in the future.

TOP AWARD FOR CUMBRIAN RESCUE TEAMS



Part of the legacy from the Queen's Golden Jubilee was the creation of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. Equivalent to the MBE, it is the highest award possible for volunteer groups. The winners of the award are announced on June 2nd each year – the anniversary of the Queen's coronation.

The twelve mountain rescue teams that form the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association were amongst the recipients this summer, including our own Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Team.

In his letter to team members Arthur Littlefair, chairman of the team said 'we can be justifiably proud of what the collective efforts of, and cooperation between, the twelve teams has achieved over the years and the award recognises the contribution of current and past members alike.' Arthur went on to explain that the team had also been nominated in its own right – a significant honour in itself – but that we couldn't receive the same honour twice.

Team leader Adrian Cottrell added 'I'm privileged to be Team Leader at the this time. The current Team only exists as it does due

to the dozens of members that have tirelessly devoted their time to running it and attending rescues over several decades. Clearly receiving the award is a great honour for all our members, past and present, and being nominated independently makes this an even more special period in the Teams' history.

Representatives of the Lake District's teams will receive the award from Mrs. Claire Hensman, Lord Lieutenant of Cumbria, later this summer. Two volunteers from the group will attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

The Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA) comprises the twelve teams across Cumbria and the Lake District: Cockermouth, Coniston, Duddon & Furness, Kendal, Keswick, Kirkby Stephen, Langdale Ambleside, Patterdale, Penrith and Wasdale plus COMRU and the Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs.

Team members can easily be recognised around Kirkby Stephen when they are wearing the distinctive red jackets, but will also now be entitled to wear The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service badge.

Meet a member



Adrian Fox
Swift Water Rescue Technician

How long have you been in the team?

Two years in August.

What is your day job?

While on Furlough, general dogs body, gardener, painter, plumber builder etc etc!

Otherwise, I work for the National Trust, delivering projects and managing the National Trusts delivery team on their £35m renewable energy investment programme, delivering renewable energy projects of all scales and technologies. My role also supports technically, the National Trusts strategic approach to renewable energy deployment and carbon reduction activities, its asset managers, internal clients and wider project delivery throughout the organisation. Or in a nut shell, Technical lead for renewable energy.

What is your most memorable moment in the team?

So many in such a short space of time but probably one of my first call outs where it all went wrong and a simple rescue of the first injured party turned into the slightly more protracted and challenging recovery of the second injured party, mobile 2!

Most importantly, what is your favourite food to take on the hill?

Got to be jelly babies, but I always have an energy bar or two tucked away somewhere in my pack.

Want to become a member?

If you have an interest in becoming a team member contact Adrian Cottrell, for more details.

Email: teamleader@ksmrt.org.uk



Welcome back to the fells... help us to help you stay safe!

by John Murray

As we are increasingly freed from the COVID-19 lockdown, and tourism returns to its key role in our local economy, people will naturally want to get back to the wonderful fells, valleys and long-distance routes. This will mean more call-outs for the Mountain Rescue Team. It's not anyone's fault if there is an accident, or if someone is taken ill while out walking but there some things you can do to help us help you.

Always let someone know where you are going. Even if they aren't familiar with the area, they can at least let us know if they are worried about you. If you change your mind because another route looks more attractive on the day, then send them a text.

Take your mobile phone, and make sure it is charged. As well as being able to call or text there are also some really useful apps that can help enormously. OS Locate is free and uses GPS to give an accurate six figure grid reference (as close as a 100m square). What3words is also free and gives you a unique three word code that gives your location as close as a three metre square.

The signal might be weak or non-existent. Calls using the 'emergency' button on your phone will seek out even the weakest signal, and texts can be transmitted when there is a very low signal. It is possible to text '999' as well. To register, text 'register' to 999. You will get a reply – then follow the instructions you are sent.

If you are lost, STOP! One of the first reactions if you are lost is to get anxious or even to panic. Stop, find a bit of shelter if the weather is against you, have a drink from your flask and think about what to do next. The weather is so changeable here, you may well find that the clouds lift. If that doesn't happen then call '999', ask for police mountain rescue and explain what has happened. But please don't get even more lost than you were to begin with.

So you've packed some sandwiches and a flask and you're heading out for a day in

the hills. What else should you have in your rucksack? There is plenty of advice available online at www.AdventureSmart.uk – looking at planning your route, taking the right equipment and checking the weather forecast. But to get an idea, let's take a look in a typical backpack;

Clothing – layers that can be quickly added or removed; waterproofs; hat, gloves and a buff

Map and compass – the best way to avoid getting lost is to know where you are and where you are going.

A torch – a head torch is best as it leaves your hands free.

A simple shelter – these lightweight life-savers are available at outdoor shops and have replaced survival bags.

First Aid kit – I have two! A mini kit with plasters, paracetamol and blister treatment in the top of the bag and one with more serious bandages at the bottom. I've never needed the serious one.

Emergency rations – my favourite is jelly babies. As well as providing an energy boost, they always make me smile. If you have finished everything at lunch time and get held up in the afternoon you will need enough to keep you going.

Water – this should be at the top of the list.

In the summer months sun screen is vital, and these days make sure you also have hand sanitiser, gloves and a face-mask in case you can't always maintain social distance.



Searches...

more than boots on the ground

As our area covers a large part of the Howgill Fells, as well as the Pennine's, both of which have huge areas of open fell with few footpaths, we often need to search for missing people, either because they have reported themselves as lost, or because they are overdue after a day's walk.

We also have two major National routes crossing our area, the Pennine Way, and the Coast to Coast route, and both can be quite challenging to navigate in poor weather or at night.

The initial stages of a search are all about gathering information. The saying 'needle in a haystack' is very apt, and even with modern technology such as mobile phones, it's not always possible to establish where someone is. It's a common misconception that we can locate someone by using mobile phone signal alone, as the sparse nature of masts in rural locations make this an extremely unreliable method compared to an urban setting.

The more information we can gather about the intended route the person/people were taking, the equipment they are carrying, their ability, medical conditions, weather etc., all help determine the urgency level, and the most likely location the search should be centred on.

In the end, it's often a case of getting boots on the ground, as well as paws of course! Search dogs can be invaluable when trying to locate someone in a wide area, as they can cover the same ground as 10 humans in far less time. Their ability to smell even the faintest scent from hundreds of meters away is uncanny, and has to be seen to be fully appreciated. On this point, it's very important that we carefully manage how areas are searched, as having searchers in the wrong place can flood the area with human scent, making the dogs' job far more difficult or even impossible.

The techniques used to search are quite complex and take specialist training, as it's not just a case of walking the fells shouting the missing person's name. A methodical approach is required, with careful coordination from a central planning point. The search develops dynamically, as information starts to come in from search parties detailing which areas have been covered, and the level of confidence that parties have of how well an area has been covered. Searching at night for example can only be as effective as the visibility you have, so we'll often go back over the same ground during daylight.

Social media can be a help and hindrance. In some ways, appeals to the general public for information can be useful, especially from the outdoor community, as sightings can help with narrowing down potential locations and route choices. On the down side,

information can be out of date quite quickly, and we'd always ask people to contact the Team directly if they have any information or would like to help in any way. The outdoor community can often be very keen to help 'one of their own', but this needs to be done in a coordinated way, and the Team are best placed to do this.

Another factor that we need to consider when members of the public are keen to help is their own welfare. Searches often take place in the most difficult conditions; at night, or in poor weather, and last thing we need is to increase the number of people needing our assistance.

Our normal searches are for people who are spending their leisure time on the fells, but occasionally we're required to search for more 'vulnerable' people, who may seek to self-harm. These searches need to be handled with particular care and sensitivity.

Once a missing person is found, assuming they're physically OK, we would usually warm them up and get them to safety or back onto their intended route. If they're injured however we have protocols that need to be adhered to, especially where serious injuries have occurred as we work on behalf of the Police and may have to treat a location as a crime scene if there's a likelihood of an investigation being required.

by Adrian Cottrell, Team Leader





‘Per Mare, Per Terram’

by Martin Budget

Before taking early retirement and moving to this area in April 2019 I had been living in Norfolk. Whilst Head of the local secondary school, I served as a helmsman on the Sea Palling Lifeboat, an independent/non-RNLI lifeboat. Having been brought up on The Solent joining a lifeboat crew had been a long-held ambition. Similarly, since qualifying as a Mountain Leader some 20 years ago, so had becoming a Mountain Rescue Team member.

Since becoming a trainee with KSMRT, I have been asked by several people how life as a lifeboat crew member compares. The greatest element the two have in common is the people. We often described the lifeboat crew and shore team, as a very disparate group of people, who may or may not be inclined to socialise with each other, but who had a common and unbreakable passion and commitment to helping others, no matter what the weather, or time of day or night.

As is increasingly the case in RNLI and Independent crews, people do not necessarily come from a sea-based background. They trained twice weekly, and developed the necessary level of trust in each other that meant that the crew developed a strong reputation for professionalism and efficiency amongst the Maritine and Coastguard Agency. The same is clearly the case for KSMRT, as has been demonstrated and remarked upon by other emergency service professionals. Operationally there are some distinct differences; namely in speed of deployment and the management of an operation. A lifeboat is tasked by the Coastguard, when the pagers were activated, there was expectation that one of our boats would launch within 15 minutes. Given that most crew lived up to 4 miles from the station, this would lead to very rapid departures from home and equally rapid drives to the station. The speed of this part led to some amusing attire being worn to sea including pyjamas, dinner suits and suit and tie on the occasion I arrived direct from seeing the school buses off. Donning dry suits, helmets and lifejackets was a well-practiced routine, that took approximately one and half minutes, the Coxswain would quickly select the most appropriate crew for the boat, and someone to drive the launch vehicle. That done, the boat would launch, and we would be away.

On my final ‘shout’ just three of us were available and were at sea within 12 minutes of the pager sounding (all of us living 3 miles from the station)! Once at sea, contact was made with Humber Coastguard who then provided further direction of the task, and, if a search, direct the area and pattern that the boat should follow. Immediate

operational decision making would be the responsibility of the helm of the boat, but all decisions overseen by Humber Coastguard – particularly important for a multi-agency operation.

As Team members will know, the above is a contrast to the far more measured, and carefully considered process for deploying a Mountain Rescue Team, from initial tasking by the Police, to task decision-making by the KSMRT Leadership Group, through to the local management of a call-out, by forward Control and Fell Party Leaders. An activated MR Team knows far more about the task they are going to, than a lifeboat crew, at the point of being called out. This clearly helps individuals to prepare themselves for what lies ahead, particularly in terms of attire and equipment. However, there is evidently a much greater responsibility for the operation, and its success, placed upon leaders within the Team, the SARCALL system providing other agencies with the required overview of proceedings. The level of medical training required of an MRT is higher, especially for the qualified Casualty Carers. This reflects the differing operational remits and timeframes in which each organisation functions. An inshore lifeboat, operating up to 7 miles offshore, is required to locate a casualty, return them to paramedics as rapidly as possible, providing standard First Aid care, including oxygen administration, on the way. However, MRT can need to stabilise a casualty and care for them over a much longer period of time before handing them to a paramedics/Doctor, either on a helicopter or land ambulance. This clearly adds to the pressures on the Cas Carers, and team in general.

Two final reflections on similarities between the organisations would be that annual running costs for both are identical at approximately £35,000 and team members both relish the challenges the weather can provide. It is almost as if the worse the weather, the more satisfying the call out! It is both humbling, and remarkable, how such high levels of professionalism, camaraderie and commitment can be achieved in both organisations, and feel privileged to be a trainee with KSMRT for my Per Terram phase.

Team Training

Along with the rest of the UK the team ceased meeting when lockdown was declared, this meant team members were not getting the regular training needed to keep skill sets sharp. To address this we held a number of virtual training events (covering PPE, medical kit, changes to casualty care) along with some quizzes to make the best of the situation. It was good just to see team mates on screen during this time apart, committee meetings took less time too!

Time moved on and the guidelines for everyday life altered, so at the start of June we resumed training. This was vastly different to what we were accustomed to, with new protocols for every area of operating as a mountain rescuer, from opening up base, to cleaning down equipment, wearing of PPE (donning and doffing), the treatment of casualties and social distancing, the list seemed endless. On the 28th May, a very hot and sunny day, we got to follow it all for real on a call out, working as a team ensuring the protocols were adhered to.

‘Full team’ training recommenced with PPE procedures and stretcher handling at base (trickier than anticipated in full PPE), followed at the start of July with a return to the fells at Stenerskeugh Clouds for an exercise scenario. During this time we have all been learning to cope with the new normal and how it affects what we do as a rescue team and as yet have only been training with half the team at any one time to limit contact, however during this period you will have seen we’ve had 5 call outs so we are getting more used to operating under Covid 19 protocols, it’s not easy, but it is necessary to limit the risks to ourselves and our casualties. It’s good to be back training, although we now need to identify team mates by silhouette and eye colour as that’s about all you can see under the PPE!





THE BASE RESILIENCE PROJECT

Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue benefits from having an excellent base from which to operate. Built 25 years ago it provides good training and control facilities and garaging for three vehicles. Our Resilience Project launched at our AGM in March 2019 intends to enhance that provision, to ensure it can respond effectively at any time and in any circumstances to 'callouts', both on the hills and in the community.

Recent weather events have demonstrated the important role Mountain Rescue plays in helping to protect communities, particularly at times when strain is put on emergency and council services. The Team's area was significantly impacted by these events causing multiple problems with motorists and issues for nurses, doctors and the ambulance service in reaching patients in need of care or medicine. During such incidents the Team had the base manned, Members and vehicles operational 24hrs a day.

MR bases are also integral to the planned response to major incidents in other areas. For instance our base might be used as a strategic control base for managing MR resources responding to flooding in Cockermouth or Carlisle. In such instances we need to be sure that the base can house all the people needed, with their welfare looked after and that the IT and communications systems remain up and running.

What needs to change?

Team Welfare:

- Installation of gas fired central heating system which will provide 'heat on demand' now complete, and helping to reduce our heating bills.
- Extension and refit of kitchen within the existing building envelope to support the Team and other community and emergency service users of the base. Kitchen delivered work to start.

Uninterruptable Power Supply:

- Purchase and installation of a diesel Electric Generator capable of keeping the base running as normal during an electrical power failure but also with enough spare capacity to support other community based essential power users.
- Installation of battery backup to keep IT systems running for the short period between the interruption of mains electricity and the generator automatically 'kicking in'
- Additional Briefing and Control Facilities
- Improvements to one room to give multi use additional briefing room options, and control room capacity for major incidents, with the provision of more power sockets, charging points and IT network connections.
- Additionally the provision of a new large display screen

When will the Project be complete?

Some work is complete the central heating system installed, the generator specification finalised and supplier identified, the ordered will be placed very soon. The Kitchen work about to start and the fittings in stock locally.

To install the generator and backup power supply requires changes to the base electrical wiring the exact specification of which can only be agreed when the generator order is placed.

The Covid Pandemic has delayed some of the work, but with a fair wind the project will be complete by Autumn 2020 and operational for whatever the winter of 2020/21 delivers

How Much?

- The total cost of the entire project is around £40,000 with single most expensive part of the Project is the purchase and installation of the Electrical Generator.

How's it funded

Since we launched the appeal for funds at our 50th AGM in March 2019 by Christmas the scheme was fully funded through generous community support:

Contributors include:

- Catlin Estates
 - Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association - LDSAMRA
 - Cumbria Community Foundation
 - Hadfield Charitable Foundation
 - Garfield Weston Foundation
 - Coop Community Foundation - Kirkby Stephen
 - Johnstone's Garage Kirkby Stephen
 - Bev & Peter Brummitt in place of wedding gifts
- KSMRT are humbled and encouraged by the generous support we have received.

Support us

Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue team is the search and rescue organisation for a large area of east Cumbria, including the Howgills and part of the Pennines. The team is composed entirely of volunteers, willing to go out any time of day, 365 days a year.

Mountain Rescue teams are funded entirely by donations and bequests from members of the public. Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Team needs to raise around £30,000 a year just to cover running costs (things such as medicine, vehicle maintenance, training, electricity and heating). Replacing a Land Rover is even more expensive. We really do value your support.

To donate visit www.ksmrt.org.uk or use the QR Code to the right.

