

Keswick Mountain Rescue Team

1977

(Report for year 1976)

30th Year



Keswick Mountain Rescue Team (formed 1947)

Affiliated to the Mountain Rescue Committee

Officials and other Team Members

Hon. President:

Lt. Col. H. Westmorland, O.B.E.
Retired Army Officer

Hon. Secretary:

J. A. Wood, Chartered Accountant

Assistant Quartermaster:

D. A. Weeks, Shop Assistant

Chairman:

K. M. Brannan, Company Director

Hon. Treasurer:

D. Hume, Schoolmaster

Radio Officer:

G. E. Gate, Schoolmaster

Team Leader:

G. B. Fisher, Mountain Equipment
Specialist

Quartermaster:

M. J. F. Nixon, Shop Assistant

Hon. Medical Officers:

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Dr. M. R. Turnbull

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D. V. Angus, National Park Warden
C. E. Arnison, Solicitor
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M. Hendry, Waiter
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J. Sherran, Shop Manager
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Instructor
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J. G. Stoddart, Engineer
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F. Vallance, Police Constable
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Apart from basic medical supplies the Team depend on voluntary support to finance the purchase and maintenance of the wide and sophisticated range of equipment used in modern rescue techniques. A call-out service is provided 24 hours per day throughout the year and all members give their services free. Proficiency in mountaineering and first aid are conditions of membership.

Cover photographs: Team practice on Cat Bells. Photos: David Langford

The Price of Safety

On New Year's Day 1976 two teenagers died of exposure, huddled together in the lee of the great cairn on the summit of Scafell Pike. This tragic ending to a well-prepared trip, caused by the onset of atrocious weather conditions, came about so insidiously that they succumbed even before donning their spare clothing. Exonerating the boys and their parents from all possible blame, the coroner observed that in his opinion nothing could have saved them. Yet they were not far from where they were last seen; they were in a well-frequented spot, in a holiday period; and they were as competent and well-equipped as might reasonably be expected of anyone in similar circumstances. Inevitably we must ask ourselves what went wrong and whether we should consider adopting stringent mountain safety procedures similar to those in force in other countries.

Mountain safety standards in the United Kingdom are high. Guidance and facilities are freely available for all to use, but there is no enforcement. This is not the case in other wilderness areas, such as the national parks of Canada, Australia and the United States, where it is invariably necessary to register with the park wardens, who will approve your equipment and programme before letting you proceed. In the authoritarian countries the system becomes extremely strict: for instance each Russian mountaineer is graded according to ability. Only Masters of Sport may attempt the hardest routes, while in the lower grades massed parties of several hundred climbers annually assault the easier peaks. Possibly the best example of control in a mountain area is the Polish Tatra Mountains National Park.

The Polish Tatras cover an area some thirty miles by ten (smaller than the Lake District) and the eastern sector distinctly resembles the Cuillin of Skye, albeit a good deal higher. According to details published by the Polish authorities a few years ago, although around four million holiday makers find their way into these mountains each year, there are only 10-15 fatal accidents annually. The safety regulations are strictly enforced. Only members of recognized mountaineering organizations are free to wander at large. Others are obliged to keep to a network of well-marked paths

(some of which cover quite difficult terrain), while it is obligatory for tourist groups to engage guides for certain mountain walks.

The comparison of the Lake District with the greater mountains of the world may seem unrealistic but history says otherwise. It is best summed up in the climbers' adage that whereas the Alps are difficult, and the Himalaya dangerous, British hills are both difficult and dangerous. Clearly the question is whether safety is compatible with individual freedom, which leads us into the realms of moral philosophy; freedom of choice and how far people should be protected from the consequences of their own actions. We may think of this as a modern dilemma but as long ago as 1882 Queen Victoria was moved to enquire of Gladstone whether she could say anything to mark her disapproval of 'the dangerous Alpine excursions which this year have occasioned so much loss of life'. In reply Gladstone commented that, upon the whole, a better case could be made for mountaineering than for some other recreational pursuits. In short, nothing should be done. In recent times, and in complete contrast, we find Maurice Herzog, conqueror of Annapurna and former French Minister of Sport, supporting a demand for some sort of mountain code which would penalize carelessness.

Is loss of freedom the price of safety in the mountains? The Russians and Poles would dispute this presumably but we, with our different philosophy of life, may see only a progressive devitalization of the recreational use of mountains, leading ultimately to complete elimination of danger. Such a situation would seem to abort reality — the reality of the mountains; the reality of man's needs; and even the reality of Life itself. It is natural to resent the loss of life, especially in apparently needless circumstances. But how shall we judge what is needless; how distinguish the tragic from the terrible? Surely Charles Gos echoed the thoughts of many when he wrote 'if relentless fate should seize a man upon the summits and free him of his life so close to that perfection which he loves and which fascinates him, is it then so great an evil?'

Round-up 1976

Medical Equipment During the year we purchased a new piece of equipment, which has been designed to treat casualties suffering from exposure. This apparatus, called the REVIVA, facilitates the currently recognized treatment for exposure, which is to raise the temperature of the body core by administering heated air via the lungs. The casualty breathes in air, which has been chemically heated by the interaction of soda-lime and carbon dioxide. By arrangement with the Lake District Mountain Accidents Association the purchase of this equipment was financed principally by the donations received in memory of the two lads who died from exposure on Scafell Pike. (See illustration below.)

Incident Summary During the year we were involved in several arduous searches and rescues. In some ways it was a typical year for us — a couple of tumbles at Shepherds Crag, several broken ankles, an abortive search. It was however a year overshadowed by death. Both ends of the year showed yet again the treacherous conditions which can prevail over the Christmas-New Year period. We



The REVIVA hot air apparatus is easily carried on a standard pack frame but it cannot be used while the stretcher party is moving. Photo: D. Langford.

also have to record a hang gliding accident for the third year running. Details of the thirty-eight incidents attended by team members in 1976 are set out on pages 8-9 of this report.

Team Finances When annual income is greater than annual expenditure, according to Mr. Micawber, the result is happiness.

Thanks to handsome support, the Team continue to be in this fortunate position for in 1976 we received £3,000 but spent only £2,800. Most of this went on overheads but included expenditure on a supply of new climbing ropes and the REVIVA medical equipment (see opposite). A cautionary note however: before too long we shall have to replace a Landrover, cost around £2,000.

It is very heartening, in these hard times, that people should give so generously. Over the past six years annual donations have increased fourfold and the proceeds of the collection boxes have doubled to a 1976 total of £1,000. This continuing generosity has enabled us to equip ourselves well for the work we undertake. And so, to all who have helped and continue to help — our patrons and donors; those who look after the collection boxes and those who fill them (and Keswick School for making some new ones); the Lucky Dip sponsors; the schools and groups who send their charity collections to us; all who support our exhibitions and lectures; the lady who continues to knit gloves for the benefit of Team funds; those kind families who ask for donations to our funds in lieu of flowers; our bankers and our auditors — Thank you most sincerely!

New Books Among the mountain books published in 1976 are *Medical care for mountain climbers* by Peter Steele; and *Mountain-eering: a manual for teachers and instructors* by D. T. Roscoe.

As the introduction suggests, Peter Steele's book is of doubtful use to 'a teacher taking a party of school children on Dartmoor'. There are other books more suitable for fellwalkers, for example the St. John Ambulance *First aid manual*, or *Modern first aid* by H. Playfair. Advanced first aiders too will find much of the medical information of academic interest only. The emphasis of Peter Steele's book is on the 'medical' for he is a doctor with considerable expedition experience. Much of the information given is over

Continued on page 6

HOW SAFE ARE YOU?
Check the Survival ABC overleaf



APRIL
BLIZZARD
ON
HELVELLYN

A Survival ABC

It is emphasized that the following notes are designed for use as a means of reference to, and not as a substitute for, the safety precautions and procedures to which they allude. They envisage the mountain conditions commonly prevailing in England and Wales and should be regarded as minimum requirements. They do not deal with extreme conditions, e.g. Scotland in winter, or special problems, e.g. rock-climbing accidents.

Accidents and illness. A casualty can jeopardize the safety of the entire group. Render first aid: then send for help. Follow bivouac procedures (see next paragraph) while waiting for assistance. Watch for any deterioration in other members of the party.

Bivouacs. An emergency bivouac can arise because you are waiting for help, or cannot safely continue your journey. The immediate essentials are shelter, insulation from wet and cold, and warmth. The diagram below illustrates the basic bivouac position. Guard against the onset of frostbite and cold by keeping awake and exercising the arms and legs. Keep clothing loose.



Typical bivouac position. Boots are loosened or removed and the climber sits on his rope, with his legs in his rucksack. Arms should be withdrawn from anorak sleeves and held close to the body.

Clothing. Clothing should be warm and thoroughly weatherproof. Boots, hat, gloves and a spare sweater are essential. In winter a down jacket and polar suit should be carried for additional protection in the event of a bivouac.

Distress signals. The international mountain distress call is six long whistle blasts, torch flashes, or other signals in succession, repeated after a minute's interval. (The reply is three blasts etc. in similar fashion).

Equipment. The rucksack in which your basic equipment is carried is also an important piece of bivouac equipment; when empty it should be large enough to accommodate your feet and, as far as possible, legs. Basic equipment comprises — map, compass, watch, whistle, torch, first aid, survival sack, ice-axe.

Food. Always carry emergency rations in addition to your normal daily requirements. Include appetizing, energy giving foods such as nuts, raisins, dates, chocolate and mint cake. In winter hot drinks should be carried. Avoid stodgy foods.

General advice. Leave word of your route; don't go on the hills alone; keep the party together at all times; conserve energy; if in doubt, turn back (or don't go at all); don't panic!

Hill-craft. Hill-craft, or the knowledge and art of hill walking, encompasses — route planning, map reading, weatherlore, mountain hazards, movement on rock, snow and ice, party leadership, knowledge of the locale (especially escape routes, current ground conditions and rescue posts).

Information. Two useful and cheap publications, which are regularly revised are *Safety on Mountains*, published by The Central Council of Physical Recreation (includes reading list); and *Mountain Rescue and Cave Rescue*, published by The Mountain Rescue Committee (includes details of most British rescue facilities).

Other publications are:

A. Greenbank, *A book of survival* (Wolfe, 1967).
Wilfrid Noyce, *They survived: a study of the will to live* (Heinemann, 1962).
C. C. Troebst, *Art of survival* translated by Oliver Co-burn (W. H. Allen, 1965).



(Top) These notice-boards, like this one at Wythburn, display summaries of mountain weather conditions. Weather forecasts can be heard on B.B.C. Radio Carlisle, or obtained by telephoning Windermere 5151. (Bottom) Natural shelter is often easily found or improved upon in emergency; walls of stone or snow can be built quite quickly. Members of a party should huddle together for added warmth. Photos: D. Langford.



Round-up 1976 (continued from page 2)

the heads of many of us, but as a handbook for prospective expedition members it is excellent. The book is published by Heinemann, price £3.50.

Don Roscoe's book too is written for the would-be expert, whether school teacher or mountaineering instructor. It aims to provide information for those working in isolation, perhaps trying to establish mountaineering in a school, and for those working in mountain centres who intend to gain the Mountaineering Instructor's Certificate. Detail is concentrated on aspects in which there is a particular lack of relevant, up-to-date teaching information. There is a detailed chapter on the theory and practice of mountain rescue, information which is not always readily available in amateur circles. This again is definitely not for the tyro. For every day purposes a thorough working knowledge of the equipment and procedures set out in the Mountain Rescue Committee publication, *Mountain rescue and cave rescue*, will normally suffice. Published by Faber & Faber, price £5.95, Roscoe's book is a far cry from the short manual of mountaineering training published by the Mountaineering Association over twenty years ago at 2/6d.

Exhibitions & Lectures The permanent exhibition of mountain rescue history, technique and equipment in our headquarters continues to attract considerable numbers of visitors, including numerous groups of school children, scouts and cadets. During the year we also staged our customary mountain safety window displays (courtesy Britannia

and Skipton building societies) while some members have organized illustrated lectures, and adventure training for scouts, in aid of Team funds. (See inside back cover of this report for further details).

Helicopter Signals A small but neglected aspect of hillcraft concerns signalling to R.A.F. helicopters, which regularly assist mountain rescue teams in searches and evacuation of casualties. Anyone making obvious and continued attempts to attract attention may be considered to be in some sort of distress but this is not very satisfactory. Owing to the uncertainty of aircrew seeing pyrotechnic and other visual signals made from the ground and the likelihood of misunderstanding, international ground to air visual signals have been devised (see examples). Full lists are given in the *R.A.F. Mountain rescue training handbook* (H.M.S.O.).



Examples of international ground to air hand signals. There are also square panel signals and strip panel codes.

Mountain Rescue Committee

W. R. Neate

The Mountain Rescue Committee ('M.R.C.') is the only mountain rescue organization at national level in England and Wales. It underpins the work of the local rescue teams, many of which are affiliated to it, but which remain entirely autonomous. Its objects include encouraging the formation of rescue groups and the publication of research. The M.R.C. is not government controlled. It has its origins in the 1930s.

The M.R.C. stems from the initiative in 1933 of two of the established climbing clubs, which collaborated with the principal object of designing a stretcher for

use in mountain terrain. In 1935 The Joint Stretcher Committee, as it was called, published recommendations on the type of stretcher and other essential equipment (including medical supplies) required in mountain and moorland areas. The housing, maintenance and financing of this equipment became the responsibility of various climbing clubs operating in the principal areas. The development of this service was so rapid that within eighteen months a more permanent co-ordinating body was needed. It came into being as The First Aid Committee of British



Mountaineering Clubs and consisted of representatives of the principal clubs.

Several men gave much valuable and devoted service in the formative years. The Thomas Stretcher (see illustration) which is still standard equipment after forty years' use, is named after Eustace Thomas, a member of the original committee, whose engineering skill and resources contributed largely to its design and manufacture. Wilson Hey, F.R.C.S., another member and subsequently President (1939-56) fought hard to legalize the handling of morphia other than by doctors and it is due to his efforts (for which he was eventually prosecuted) that rescue workers may now administer pain-killing injections. Completing the history, the M.R.C. took its present name in 1946; the Ministry of Health accepted responsibility in 1949 for the cost of supplying basic medical supplies and equipment, e.g. stretchers; and finally in 1950 the M.R.C. was formed into a Charitable trust.

The M.R.C. continues to be a voluntary body of representatives of climbing clubs and other interested parties, and it is assisted by numerous individuals and organizations. Many of its rescue posts are situated in hotels, youth hostels and farmhouses and are voluntarily supervised by private individuals. Stretcher boxes have been air-lifted to high level bases by R.A.F. helicopters, for example the box on Sty Head (see illustration) The M.R.C. regularly publishes a handbook, *Mountain Rescue and Cave Rescue*, which gives details, among other things, of mountain first aid and most British rescue facilities.

(Above) The Thomas Stretcher weighs 40 lbs but is easily carried in its split form.

(Left) These high level rescue posts are unmanned and contain only a Thomas Stretcher and basic first aid equipment. This one on Sty Head was air-lifted to its position by R.A.F. helicopter in 1967.



Photo: D. Langford.

Incident Report 1976

Date and Time	Persons Involved	Cause of Accident/Incident	Location of Search or Rescue	Action Taken	Nature of Injuries
3 Jan 08.30 hrs	Two youths aged 15 & 19	Caught in blizzard	Scafell Pike	Full scale search; ten teams, dogs, R.A.F. helicopter. Recovered bodies. (25:8 hrs*)	Exposure, fatal
14 Jan 18.00 hrs	Boy, age 13	Boy and dog cragfast	Walla Crag	Hauled up crag to safety (14:2 hrs)	None
21 Jan 17.50 hrs	School party	Overdue on fell walk	Blencathra	Turned up as search initiated (4:30 mins)	None
29 Feb 15.30 hrs	Man, age 38	Missing in blizzard	Dale Head	Initial search initiated but turned up safely soon after (6:1 hr 30)	None
6 Mar 16.15 hrs	Woman, age 51	Blown over by wind	Broad Crag, Scafell Pike	Carried down and taken to Keswick Hospital, later transferred Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle (19:4 hrs 45)	Fractured ankle
9 Mar 16.25 hrs	Boy in party	Slipped, spinal injury suspected	Barrow Falls	Taken to Keswick Hospital (8:25 mins)	Contusions
21 Mar 18.00 hrs	Man, age 60	Family walking in blizzard conditions: man collapsed	Langstrath	Recovered body (13:2 hrs 30)	Exposure, fatal
3 Apr 13.45 hrs	Woman, age 49	Slipped on wet rock and fell 100'	Taylor Gill Force, Stockley Bridge	Carried down and taken to Keswick Hospital. Detained overnight (18:1 hr 45)	Contusions
16 Apr 15.45 hrs	Man, aged 19	Slipped 70', landing on foot	'Crescendo', Shepherds Crag	Carried down and taken to Keswick Hospital (10:30 mins)	Fractured tibia/fibula
20 Apr 17.40 hrs	Man, age 19: Woman, age 29	Man fell 50', landing on woman watching below	'Chamonix', Shepherds Crag	Lowered from crag, carried down to ambulance. Both detained at Carlisle. (13:50 mins)	Fractured jaw, facial lacerations, and abdominal injuries
23 Apr 15.30 hrs	2 boys, age 10	Tree fell on boys, trapping them	Latrigg	Carried down and taken to Keswick Hospital. Discharged after X-rays (9:50 mins)	Contusions
24 Apr 17.00 hrs	Man, age 70	Collapsed on walk	Low Hows Wood, Castle Crag	Recovered body (11:1 hr)	Fatal heart attack
15 May 13.50 hrs	Man, age 28	Climber dislodged several tons of rock and fell 50'	'Fools Paradise', Gowder Crag	Carried down and taken to Keswick Hospital. Detained overnight (17:1 hr 40)	Contusions
10 Jun 19.20 hrs	Man, age 23	Climber dislodged rocks, fell 10' and bounced 30' on scree	'Empire', Raven Crag, Thirlmere	Carried to ambulance: direct to Carlisle (20:1 hr 10)	Severe scalp and facial lacerations
19 Jun 14.30 hrs	Boy, age 14 in party	Fell 15' to ground	'Brown Slabs', Shepherds Crag	Carried down and taken to Keswick Hospital: transferred to Carlisle	Fractured tibia
26 Jun 15.00 hrs	Man, age 23	Slipped on dry, loose stones	Esk Hause	Carried down to ambulance: direct to Carlisle (8:3 hrs 50)	Fractured ankle
27 Jun midnight	Girl, age 16	Missing, separated from companion	Helvellyn	Night search. Recovered body (17:5 hrs 30)	Fatal heart attack
2 Jul 17.15 hrs	Man, age 48	Fell on footpath	Cat Bells	Carried down to ambulance: direct to Carlisle (15:1 hr 30)	Fractured tibia/fibula
4 Jul 15.00 hrs	5 Men	Exceptional heat affected fell-runners during race	Skiddaw	Rendered first aid and removed to Keswick Hospital. Two detained overnight (13:3 hrs)	Acute heat exhaustion
20 Jul 21.30 hrs	Man, age 19	Fellwalker slipped in gully	Fairy Glen, Langstrath	Taken to Keswick Hospital. Detained overnight (20:1 hr 15)	Fractured wrist

Prepared by Jennifer Gradwell

Date and Time	Persons Involved	Cause of Accident/Incident	Location of Search or Rescue	Action Taken	Nature of Injuries
25 Jul 13.20 hrs	Man, age 55	Slipped on dry ground	Gowder Crag	Carried down and taken to Keswick Hospital (9:1 hr 50)	Fractured ankle
28/29 Jul 22.00 hrs	Youth, age 17	Separated from companions. Failed to report safe return	Gillercombe	Initial night search. Found in Keswick as main Team were assembling (15:7 hrs 20)	None
8/9 Aug 23.00 hrs	Woman, age 74	Missing from home	Thornthwaite Forest	Night search, intensified in morning. Turned up safely (17:16 hrs)	None
10/11 Aug 23.50 hrs	Youth, age 17 in party	Separated from party, believed unwell	Helvellyn to Watendlath	Night search, intensified in morning. Traced to Kendal Hospital, having been taken ill at Wythburn (15:16 hrs)	None (taken ill)
22 Aug 13.15 hrs	Man, age 48	Hang glider lost control in high wind	Souther Fell	Carried to ambulance: direct to Carlisle (11:2 hrs 15)	Fractured both legs
23 Aug 15.00 hrs	Man, age 68	Body found when lake level dropped during drought	Hause How Island, Thirlmere	Recovered body (2:2 hrs)	Cause of death unknown
15 Sep 10.30 hrs	Man, age 53	Collapsed on fell walk	Grisedale Pike	Recovered sufficiently to walk down before arrival of main party. Taken to Keswick Hospital (2:30 mins)	None
6 Oct 17.15 hrs	Woman, age 31	Blown over by gust of wind	Sty Head	Carried down and taken to Keswick Hospital, later to Carlisle (14:1 hr 45)	Fractured tibia/fibula
7 Oct 12.00 hrs	Man	Fell on footpath	Cat Bells	Carried down to waiting ambulance (4:30 mins)	Fractured tibia/fibula
22 Oct 11.45 hrs	Woman, age 53	Slipped on rock	High Scawdel	Carried down to waiting ambulance (4:1 hr)	Fractured ankle
30 Oct 13.40 hrs	Man, age 51	Boys reported father missing on short walk	Fisher Gill, Helvellyn	Found under waterfall after striking head in 50' fall. Recovered body (9:1 hr 10)	Drowned
30 Oct 17.15 hrs	Woman, age 34	Slipped on wet rock and fell 20'	Friars Crag	Taken to Keswick Hospital. (6:45 mins)	Contusions
28 Nov 07.45 hrs	3 Youths in party	Missing overnight	Langstrath and Grains Gill	Search at first light. Turned up safely in Eskdale (19:3 hrs 30)	None
6 Dec 08.30 hrs	Man, age 19	Missing overnight, in blizzard, having left party	Murton Fells, Pennines	Intensive search by many teams. Turned up safely having bivouaced in snowhole (11:8 hrs)	None
19 Dec 22.30 hrs	Man, age 40: Woman, age 29	Failed to return from day's walk	Skiddaw Forest	Found benighted at Skiddaw House (6:5 hrs)	None
24 Dec 13.20 hrs	Man, age 27	Left party, slipped on snow and fell 500'	Eel Crag	Carried down to ambulance: direct to Carlisle (12:2 hrs 10)	Multiple injuries
29/30 Dec 15.00 hrs	Woman and Man, both age 36	Descending steep snow and ice ridge in bad weather conditions: fell 500'	Middle Tongue, Blencathra	Body found and recovered (25:7 hrs 30)	Woman sustained fatal injuries: Man had fractured skull
31 Dec 14.30 hrs	4 Men, ages 20-29	Walker broke through summit cornice, avalanching gully and carrying away party of climbers	Central Gully, Great End	Casualties air-lifted by R.A.F. helicopter to Hensingham Hospital, Whitehaven. Remainder escorted to safety (18:4 hrs)	Multiple injuries: Fractured leg: Lacerations

* Details in parentheses are:

- (i) number of members attending call-out.
- (ii) time taken from call-out to return to base.

Total - 38 incidents (33 in 1975), including 8 fatalities (5 in 1975)



Team members practising mine rescue techniques at the disused plumbago mines, Seathwaite, Borrowdale. Inset is a view down the 'Grand Pipe', the main shaft which descends several hundred feet. Like most Lake District mines this one has plenty of dangers for the uninitiated. Photos: D. Langford.

Some Unforgettable Incidents

Mike Nixon and Dave Weeks

In the course of nearly thirty years the team have dealt with hundreds of calls for assistance and experienced an apparently inexhaustible permutation of mountain accidents. Most team members will have a personal store of memories but some incidents stand out in the minds of all who were involved in them. Some of the more dramatic incidents of past years would be alleviated now by the great improvements in equipment which have taken place, making rescue work easier and safer: some could happen again.

Great End gullies

On Christmas Day over twenty years ago two members of a party failed to return from climbing in Central Gully on Great End. When the team went out at midnight it was freezing hard and there were several inches of snow. On the scree below the crag the team found the two frozen bodies, the rope beside them but not attached to them. Probably they had tried to escape from the snow and ice gully by roping down. One was wearing low shoes.

In those days we had no radio sets so that two members had to return to Seathwaite to telephone for extra help and the police. The rest stood guard over the bodies all night, starting down at first light. There were no team vehicles then and the bodies were loaded into the back of an open truck. Fortunately they were covered over with a tarpaulin for, as luck would have it, the truck arrived in Keswick just as the Boxing Day hunt was leaving the Market Square.

The gullies of Great End have been the scene of a good many accidents, the most spectacular being two major avalanches which occurred in Central Gully. Both were caused by a sudden change in temperature, from cold to mild, producing wet snow avalanche.

The first, in 1961, swept ten climbers out of the gully, burying some, but miraculously killing none, although several were injured. As one observer remarked, 'there were bodies sticking up everywhere'. Two rescue teams and many helpers evacuated the injured to Seathwaite and Wasdale.

The following year another avalanche swept three climbers down the same gully, burying two who were dug out by the third. Unfortunately one was dead; the others were seriously injured. Team members, several of whom had donated blood that morning, ascended Grains Gill with a stretcher, on to which we put the most critically injured survivor. To save time, because of the severity of the weather, the other

casualty was brought down pick-a-back, while some team members remained behind to bring down the body of the dead climber on the Sty Head stretcher.

Saddleback and Carrock Fell

These snowy winters in the early 1960s, before the team had radios and most of the other aids we now take for granted, found the team involved in a hazardous night search on Saddleback. One Saturday morning a young man went out early to join the Blencathra Hunt and did not return. There was both old and fresh snow on the ground and it had been misty all day. The team left Keswick at 7.30 p.m. and, joined by a R.A.F. Mountain Rescue Team, set up a search base in Threlkeld.

The conditions had now worsened, with thick mist and driving snow cutting down visibility to a few feet, and making the ground very slippery. Because of this the more precipitous side above Sharp Edge was judged too dangerous to search in darkness.

We split up into small groups and made our way up the ridges and gullies on the south side of the mountain to the summit plateau. The going was so hard that it became an effort to reach the top at all, let alone search properly. Tracks in the snow were filled in as soon as they were made. By midnight there was still no trace of the missing lad.

The search was resumed next morning with all available extra help including the huntsmen and a foxhound. In daylight the hazards of the night became more apparent, for the whole summit rim was corniced by a two to five feet overhang of snow. In the middle of the morning the foxhound sensed or heard the terrier which had accompanied the lad, on the north side of Sharp Edge. He must have lost his footing and fallen over one hundred feet, sustaining fatal head injuries.

The high moorland 'back o' Skidda' is very bleak and in September 1970 gale-force winds had a party of Army cadets in trouble on Carrock Fell, to the north of Saddleback. One of them had a fractured collar bone and another was suffering from exposure. We ascended the fell on the lee side and as we neared the summit ridge we could hear the wind roaring over the top like an express train. One team member, with a stretcher on his back, stood up and was immediately somersaulted backwards by the force of the wind. We ended up crawling over the exposed ridge dragging the stretcher behind us. The wind that day was gusting up to 100 m.p.h.

Force Crag Mine

One of the potentially most dangerous rescues the team have ever tackled involved different hazards. A few years back a miner was exploring a disused mine working when rotten timbers gave way under him as he crossed an old shaft. Luckily for him he was not alone. When we arrived his companion indicated the level his friend had gone in. Several team members with lights and ropes entered the tunnel and after 100 feet came to a roof fall. They crawled over the debris, through a narrow hole, and shortly came to the hole in the floor through which the casualty had fallen. He was sitting on a ledge about thirty feet down with another drop below him to the next level. Overhead was a rotten wooden hopper full of tons of boulders: a loud noise or even a hearty sneeze could have brought the lot down.

The shaft was bridged with a plank we had brought, one of the team being lowered from its centre to avoid the crumbling walls. After receiving first aid for a nasty arm injury the man was raised by means of a rope taken back out to the open fell, a bunch of team members hauling away 'tug of war' fashion.

We still have to face the dangers of loose rocks in mine workings but it was this experience which prompted us to investigate the possibility of getting a suitable hoisting apparatus for use in similar cases. In 1974 a Cumbrian firm designed, made and presented to us a hoisting frame which combines the necessary strength, portability and versatility.

Night out in Piers Gill

About ten years ago we had one of the most arduous call-outs the team have ever experienced. As a result of the miseries of that night several equipment ideas were implemented and have been in force ever since.

Two men were climbing a route called Pilgrims Progress, which starts in Piers Gill and then runs straight up the north face of Lingmell; 2,000 feet of climbing and scrambling. The leader fell and disappeared into Piers Gill. He did not answer to calls from his companion, who being unable to reach the fallen man, went down to Wasdale Head for some help. In the fading light they could not find any trace so (there being no Wasdale team then) they called for us.

It was quite dark when we arrived at Sty Head. We had just acquired radios and a listening post was set up in a stretcher box. The rest of us set off in two parties, one on the high level Corridor Route, and ourselves on the lower guides route. We searched the gill in the now heavy wind and rain but found nothing. The weather deteriorated further and the high level party turned back for base: we decided to sit it out until first light.

It seems odd now but at that time we just did not have adequate clothing and equipment to sit out such conditions, so that half way through the night one of our own party was deteriorating fast and had to be escorted down to Wasdale. Dawn revealed the becks as roaring torrents and Piers Gill a foaming mass of white water. Further search still failed to locate the missing man.

The atrocious weather conditions had succeeded in putting our new radio sets out of action so that back at base they were beginning to worry about us, and a party set out from Wasdale first thing in the morning. By this time the becks had begun to subside a little and quite soon they came across the body lying in a pool about 1,500 feet lower than the scene of the accident and over a mile downstream.

As a direct result of this night out, individual survival kits were prepared (carried in skiers' kidney bags strapped around the waist) and these are kept in our landrovers at all times. They include a polythene survival sack, facilities for a hot drink and energy food. More recently each member has been issued with severe weather clothing. Even with such aids as these bivouacing in really bad conditions is still a serious business.

The case of the duplicate accident

We end on a lighter note although even this story has its points. It was the first call-out in 1974, February 13 to be exact, at tea time. The message we received was that a member of a party had fallen near the top of Helvellyn. One of the National Park wardens was there and would try to start down with him. What we did not know was that a lad in another party, out of sight of the first, had had a similar accident at almost the same time!

We set off from Swirls car park at a fast pace and by the time we reached Brown Cove it was practically dark. We were delighted however to see a stretcher party coming towards us. We duly joined in and got back to the roadside without much being said. To our chagrin the man who had called us out took one look at the casualty and told us we had got the wrong person.

There was nothing for it then but to start all the way up again from Wythburn and by the time we hit the snowline at about 2,000 feet there was a 'white-out', which is a merging of snow and mist causing loss of balance and judgement. Because of the heavy going after our previous exertion the team began to flag and it took a great effort to push to the top, where our casualty was waiting.

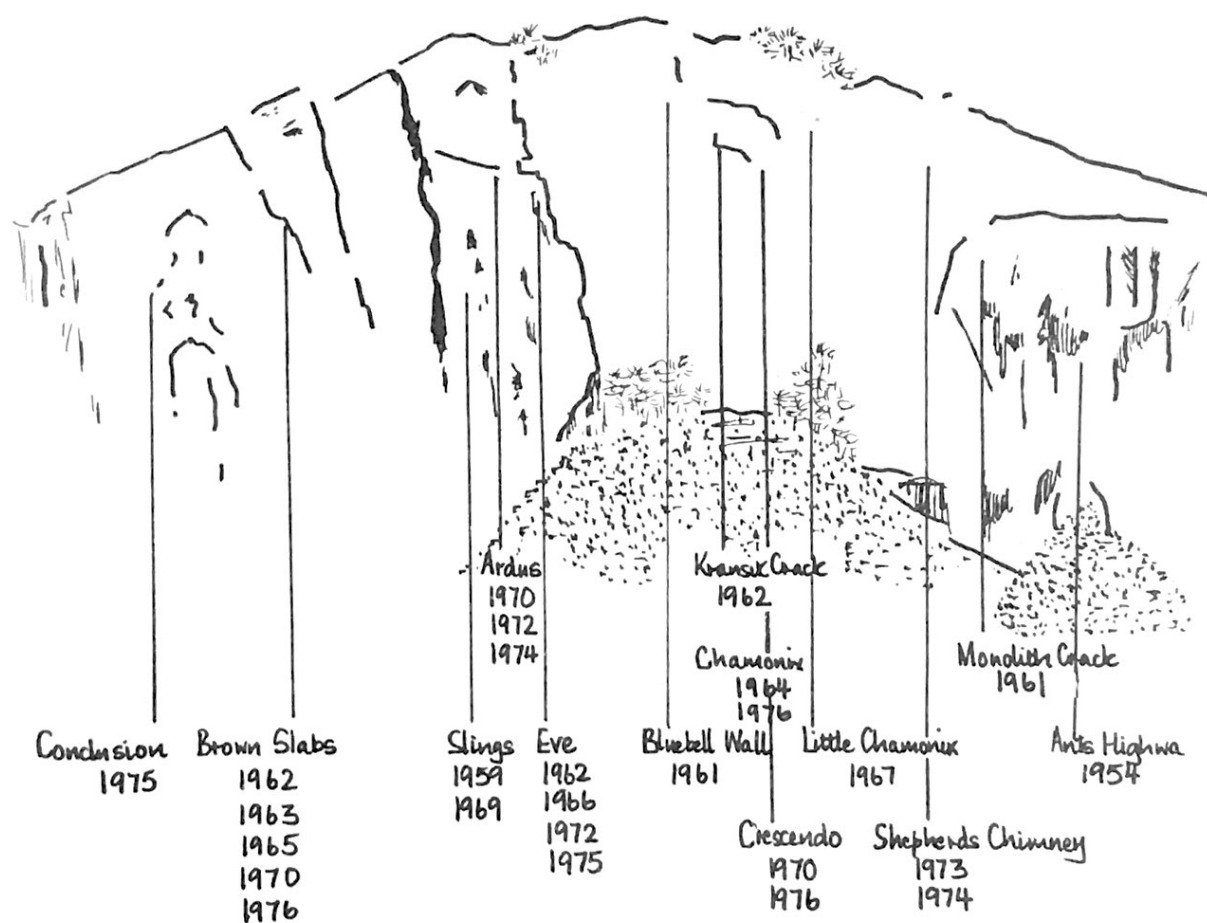
We all got down without further incident but it was an object lesson in two ways. Firstly, it showed how vital it is for everyone involved in an accident to

be quite clear about every detail. Secondly, it was a warning to us against trying to go too fast. On rescues (i.e. with a given destination; not an open ended search) team members travel at the fastest pace they know from experience they can maintain. This means in practice, on average, about twice as fast as the ordinary

holiday walking speed. The effect of doing a double journey (equal to about four times the normal exertion) is hard going!

Footnote: Since this article was written history has almost repeated itself twice. See incidents on 29-31 December (on page 9).

Accident Black Spot - Shepherds Crag



Shepherds Crag, Borrowdale. One of the most accessible crags in the Lake District, with a range of justifiably popular climbs. Many would-be mountaineers have broken their fingernails first on Brown Slabs, then gone on to Little Chamonix, Ards and Eve; all routes in the tradition of classic British rock-climbs. Not surprisingly, Shepherds has its quota of accidents; at least two a year, though few are serious. The most common climbs to fall from in recent years have proved to be Ards and Shepherds Chimney, which claimed three victims in 1973 alone. Drawn and researched by Jennifer Gradwell.

BALANCE SHEET at at 30 November 1976

1975		£	£	1975		£	£
	ACCUMULATED FUND				STRETCHER EQUIPMENT		
	As at 30 November 1975 ...	6549			As at 30 November 1975 ...	288	
	Add: Balance from Income & Expenditure Account ...	92		288	Less: Depreciation ...	28	
6549			6641				260
					RADIO EQUIPMENT		
					As at 30 November 1975 ...	1300	
				1300	Less: Depreciation ...	260	
							1040
					GENERAL EQUIPMENT		
					As at 30 November 1975 ...	869	
					Add: Expenditure this Year...	659	
						1528	
				869	Less: Depreciation ...	178	
							1350
					MOTOR VEHICLES		
					As at 30 November 1975 ...	1284	
				1284	Less: Depreciation ...	284	
							1000
					CONSUMABLE STORES		
				80	As per Valuation ...		80
					BALANCE AT BANKERS		
				273	Deposit Account ...	299	
				615	Current Account ...	647	
							946
				1800	BUILDING SOCIETY INVESTMENTS		1889
				40	INCOME TAX REPAYMENTS DUE (Covenants)		76
£6549			£6641	£6549			£6641

We have compared the Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure Account with the relative Books and Vouchers and find the same to be in agreement.

WARD & PRIDMORE,
Chartered Accountants.
Kewick
19 January 1977

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for year ended 30 November 1976

1975		£	£	1975		£	£
	Motor Vehicle Expenses				Patrons Subscriptions ...	264	
20	Insurance ...	140		996	Donations & Grants ...	1341	
90	Petrol, Oil etc ...	109		318	Proceeds from Exhibition ...	183	
132	Repairs & Maintenance ...	448		753	Collecting Boxes ...	1009	
10	Road Fund Tax ...		697	87	Bank Deposit Interest ...	27	
				40	Income Tax Recoverable on Donations ...	36	
				--	Building Society Interest ...	89	
	Garage & Team H.Q. Expenses						
197	Rent and Rates ...	177					
88	Telephone & Electricity ...	143					
355	Repairs & Alterations ...	13					
32	Insurance ...	35					
			373				
55	Consumable Stores ...		59				
13	Maintenance of Radio Equipment		100				
15	Radio Licence ...		24				
258	Printing & Stationery ...		308				
90	Personnel Insurance ...		90				
18	Postage & Sundry Expenses ...		78				
--	Maintenance of General Equipment		57				
	Excess of Income Over Expenditure for the Year Carried Down ...		1163				
1016							
£2389			£2949	£2389			£2949
776	Depreciation of Vehicles & Equipment	750		1016	Balance Brought Down ...		1163
--	Personnel Equipment ...	321					
50	Donation (Search & Rescue Dog Assocn.)						
190	Balance Carried to Accumulated Fund	92					
£1016			£1163	£1016			£1163

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to all Patrons and Donors, to all who have looked after our collection boxes throughout the year, and to our Hon. Auditors for their continued assistance.

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Borrowdale Gates Hotel	Hawse End Centre	Scafell Hotel
Borrowdale Hotel	Hazeldene Hotel	Scott's Garage
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Grange Cafe'	Rathbone's Clothing	Mrs. Woolston (Blengarth)
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Benefit to the Team. The Team is able to recover tax deducted at source from annual payments under a seven-year deed of covenant. For example, with a standard rate of income tax at 35 per cent. a net subscription of £3 per annum under deed would be increased to £4.61 by the recovery of £1.61 tax.

Bankers' orders. The Team welcomes the payment by standing order of subscriptions under deed; a banker's order form is provided and it is recommended that this be completed and sent to the Hon. Treasurer with the duly executed deed, for registration and forwarding to the bank concerned.

Certificate of deduction of tax (R.185). In the absence of a record of payment by banker's order, an annual reminder is sent to the subscriber, accompanied by a form R. 185 for completion and return with the subscription. Where the subscription is known to be paid by banker's order, the form R.185 is sent subsequent to the credit to the Team's bank account.

Payment in advance. Tax cannot be recovered in respect of a payment made prior to the date of execution of the deed. Therefore the date of the first payment on the banker's order must be after the date of the covenant.

Cessation of liability. The scheme applies to subscribers who pay income tax at the full standard rate on the gross amount of the subscription and the covenant automatically terminates on the death of the subscriber, leaving no liability on the executors.

Persons not subject to tax. Subscription under deed is inappropriate to a person who has no income subject to U.K. income tax.

Please write for the necessary forms to D. Hume, Greengarth, Ash Tree Avenue, Keswick, Cumbria.

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**Permanent Exhibition in Team Headquarters
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**Open weekends and public holidays
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**or
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Illustrated lectures available on:

**'Mountain Rescue'
and
'Mountain Safety'**

**Also occasionally special exhibition
stands and window displays may be
arranged given adequate notice**

**All exhibitions and lectures are organized
in aid of Team funds and in the interests
of all mountain users**

**Arrangements for exhibitions, window
displays and lectures may be made through
the Exhibition Staff**

**Telephone: Keswick 72819
(or: 73150/73187/73328)**

HOMeward BOUND!

