



MINE RESCUE

See Inside

Keswick Mountain Rescue Team

**1974 Report
28th 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.

Team Leader:

*G. B. Fisher, Mountain Equipment Specialist.

Hon. Secretary:

*J. A. Wood, Chartered Accountant.

Hon. Treasurer:

*K. M. Brannan, Company Director.

*A. Alcock, Boatman

*D. V. Angus, National Park Warden

C. E. Arnison, Solicitor

*C. Bacon, Mining Engineer

F. O. Barnes, Gardener

*Miss A. Batty, School Meals Supervisor

*A. Bennett, Jeweller

*J. R. Brooks, Outdoor Activities
Instructor

*J. A. Bulman, National Park Warden

*P. Denny, Schoolmaster

*P. Dickinson

S. Edmondson, Farmer

*R. V. Fisher, Fine Arts Dealer

*D. Ferguson, Printer

*A. Ferguson, Company Director

*Miss T. J. Gradwell, Schoolmistress

*G. Graham, Butcher

D. Harper, GPO Technician

*M. Hendry, Waiter

*M. Hodgson, Student

*D. Hume, Schoolmaster

*R. Humphreys, Works Cashier

*D. Langford, Hotel Proprietor

*M. R. Miller, Schoolmaster

*F. Mills, Decorator

† *W. R. Neate, Chartered Accountant
Mrs. V. Nixon

*J. D. Oliver, National Park Warden

*M. Phillips, Local Government Officer

*N. Pritt, Shop Assistant

*D. Reay, Police Constable

*G. E. Reid, Police Constable

*R. Rutland, Student

Quartermaster:

*M. Nixon, Shop Assistant.

Assistant Quartermaster:

*D. A. Weeks, Shop Assistant.

Radio Officer:

*G. E. Gate, Schoolmaster.

Hon. Medical Officers:

*Dr. J. D. Mitchell; Dr. M. R. Turnbull.

*R. Scott, Schoolmaster

*J. Sherran, Shop Manager

*I. M. Smeaton, Mountain School
Instructor

*B. Spencer, Schoolmaster

*J. G. Stoddart, Engineer

*P. Thorburn, Civil Engineer

*F. Vallance, Police Constable

*I. A. Wallace, Dentist

*H. E. Watkins

Mrs. J. Weeks

*B. Wright, Mountain School
Instructor

**Denotes member on call-out list
†Editor, Annual Report*

Hon. Auditors

Messrs. Ward & Pridmore
Keswick

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(Keswick 72718).

Apart from basic medical supplies the Team is dependent on voluntary support to finance its 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 photograph and other illustrations by M. R. Miller and W. R. Neate

Tragedy has many faces

Although the incident rate in 1974 reverted to a more acceptable level the year was marred by some tragic incidents. Once again the pattern was both predictable and bizarre. In Greenup Gill a lad collapsed and died in hospital a few days later. Near Great End, on one of the wettest summer nights in living memory an unknown man died from exposure beside his own tent. On Gillercombe Butress a rock-climber fell to his death. Such accidents and heart attacks and the like are things we can comprehend and have learned to expect from time to time. But why, on an easy walk, does a little boy trip and fall — and die. This is what happened on Blencathra, which claimed another young life in 1971. In fact there is no obvious connection between these two tragedies, except to show that accidents can happen when and where they are least expected. **It cannot be said often enough, or clearly enough, that anyone who goes on a mountain, for whatever purpose, however well prepared, is AT RISK.** We have

said this many times and we shall go on saying it just so long as there is evidence that it needs to be said. Throughout the history of mountaineering the moral is clear: make a mistake and pay the penalty. Everyone has an Achilles heel. The foolish and inexperienced who get themselves into situations which would endanger experts may be expected to come to grief but there are risks attached to every level of competence on the hills. Faulty judgement, over-confidence, inexperience, premature relaxation — all these are potential killers. Remember the disastrous ending to the first ascent of the Matterhorn! Many well-known mountaineers have died as the result of an elementary mistake. To be fair, we must admit that there are also near-miraculous escapes. So remember, next time you go on the hills, that in effect you are playing with a form of Russian roulette. A mistake may involve only a few bruises: or it may cost you your life.

Round-up

This year we have increased the print order for our annual report by 500 copies to 2500 copies, as supplies of the previous one ran out before the end of the holiday season. It would be interesting to know the average number of readers of each copy and what their reactions were. Basically the aims of the report are:

- (i) to account for our stewardship of the funds donated to the team
- (ii) to promote mountain safety
- (iii) to stimulate interest in the mountain rescue movement and thereby raise more funds.

Like most things in life, it is only the tip of the iceberg which tends to be seen. So here is a round-up of news and views and 'behind the scenes' activity.

Rusty Retires. At the 1975 Annual General Meeting Lieut.-Col. 'Rusty' Westmorland retired as executive

head of the Team after twenty-seven years' service. Although he was already over the age of sixty at the time, it was Rusty's initiative and experience which created and built up the Team way back in the late 1940's. In 1960 when the Search Panel of the Lake District Mountain Accidents Association was formed he was appointed Chairman, a post he held continuously until last year. In 1965 he was awarded the OBE for services to mountain rescue and he has been honoured by the Mountain Rescue Committee and the Alpine Club of Canada. We are glad to know that he will not be weakening his ties with us, for he will continue as our Honorary President and intends to maintain his keen interest in all Team affairs.

1973 Report The last annual report and covering news releases achieved quite satisfactory publicity, being reported at various lengths in the local, northern, national and mountaineering press, and also

on BBC Radio Carlisle.

Window Displays At the invitation of local businessmen, several window displays were staged in Keswick over the summer bank holiday periods to promote mountain safety and the team's activities, attracting considerable attention. Similar material was also displayed in Keswick Library.

Shepherds Crag Those hoary villains 'Ardus' and 'Shepherds Chimney' each claimed a victim again, fortunately without serious injury. It would seem that either these climbs are undergraded or some warning bell should be sounded. Guide-book editors please note!

Car Parks The new local authority, Allerdale District Council, have generously agreed to allow team members free parking in Keswick during rescue call-outs and practices. Partly with this in mind 'Mountain Rescue' flashes for car windscreens have been provided for members' use.

Adventure Training After commenting last year on the continuance of incidents involving young people we were berated as kill-joys and scare-mongers, who are trying to take the fun and adventure out of mountaineering. We remain quite unrepentant. It is our experience that kids derive as much adventure from the hills as they can cope with (and therefore plenty of fun) without crossing the threshold of hazard into danger. After all, the mountains are supposed to be a playground, not an assault course.

Poster Competition By invitation the team nominated a member to serve on the publicity section of the Lake District Mountain Accidents Association. During the year they sponsored a 'Mountain Safety' poster competition for Cumbria schools. The best entries from local children formed part of one of the team's window displays. (See illustration.)

Night Exercise During the night of Saturday 16 February team members manned a number of high-level control posts on Helvellyn to safeguard participants in a proficiency test organised by the Search & Rescue Dog Association. Several routes were used, all involving traversing the Helvellyn edges and a bivouac on the summit. Snow conditions were not difficult but several hundred feet of fixed rope were provided on the most dangerous section. Radio-communication between checkpoints was generally very good and gave valuable practice. (See article on page 6.)

Courses and Conferences This year the biennial Mountain Rescue Committee weekend conference was held at Outward Bound Mountain School, Ullswater. Later in the year a team member attended one of the advanced courses in mountain rescue at Glenmore Lodge, the SCPR centre in the Cairngorms. Reports appear on pages 5 & 10.

Special Donations Once again local artist Monica Barry most generously donated to the team part of the proceeds of her annual exhibition. We would also

like to acknowledge, with most sincere thanks, the tireless efforts of Miss Hill. Over the years she has knitted countless pairs of gloves, to be sold for the benefit of the team, and in this way must have contributed at least £300 to team funds.

Youth Groups Most years at least one or two visiting groups have a trip round our headquarters. If the weather is too bad to get out on the fells, why not come along for an hour or so to see our wide range of equipment and to find out more about mountain rescue in the Lake District. Contact F. Mills: Telephone Keswick 73187.

Search Panel Apart from its regular meetings, the Search Panel of the LDMAA (which comprises representatives of all branches of the rescue organisation in the Lake District, including the police) went into action in July when a full-scale search was mounted in the Buttermere area. An article on mountain searches appears on page 11.

Incident Statistics This year there is some new information in our Incident Report, i.e. the number of members taking part in each incident and the time taken from the call-out to return to base. The average turns out to be 13 members out for 2 hours and the approximate number of man-hours expended in actual search and rescue activities totals 678. Apart from that, July with 8 incidents in 29 days was marginally less hectic than last year when there were 8 incidents in 21 days in April. In 1974 there were 2 incidents in one day on two occasions. The Incident Report is on pages 8 & 9.



Operations Room As foreshadowed in our last report we have been able to obtain the additional premises adjoining our garage in the town centre for use as our Operations Room. This took longer to instal and equip than we anticipated and was not ready for the 1974 season. We shall include a full-length feature on it in next year's report.



Mine Rescue

Ian Smeaton

Once or twice a year one or other of the Lake District mountain rescue teams is called to extricate a person (or an animal or a body) from an old mine working. The area for which Keswick Mountain Rescue Team is responsible is honeycombed in parts with shafts and tunnels, many of them 400 years old, and very irregular in size and shape. Most mountain rescue equipment can be used equally well underground, although space restrictions necessitate the use of special stretchers. The principal problem, however, has always been to devise an efficient means of suspending men and equipment above a vertical shaft, for the purpose of descending to a casualty and subsequently hoisting him to the surface.

The principal minerals mined in the area over the years have been lead, copper and (at Seathwaite) graphite*, plus a little gold and silver. Copper mining started in earnest in 1564 when Elizabeth I granted rights to the Company of Mines Royal in return for ten per cent of all the gold and silver raised. This was the period of the influx of many German miners and turned Keswick into a 'boom' town for thirty years. Mining activity continued from Elizabethan times, becoming most intensive in the nineteenth century due to the increased use of explosives. In addition to all this activity, slate has been quarried in considerable quantities in parts of the Lake District.

Lake District mines consist of adits (horizontal tunnels or 'levels'), for removing excess water, and vertical shafts, which were used to raise the ore and to supply fresh air to the workings. Prior to the introduction of blasting explosives the method used to 'drive in a level' was slow and arduous, so that the average size of these old levels was rarely more than 20" wide and 5'-6' high. The diameter of the shafts varied from about 5'-15'. Shafts may be open to the outside world or may be entered only from underground levels. Entrances to shafts may be overhung with trees or bushes, or half-concealed with heather, or be surrounded by a dangerous basin of slippery gravel. Entrances to levels usually appear either as clean-cut tunnel openings in firm rock, sometimes overhung with vegetation, or silted-up openings. Most of the entrances to these 'Old Men's Stages', as they are sometimes called, have collapsed through natural erosion and the only remaining sign left on the fellside is a flat-topped spoil heap. In order to inspect these older workings more closely it is usually necessary to enter the mine by a more modern level and to seek them out from inside. Genuine exploration accounts for some of the visits to these old workings but mostly people go in out of sheer curiosity and it is often these inexperienced people who get into difficulties. The most lethal

variety of opening is the one which looks like a tunnel but which has in reality a concealed shaft immediately inside. Obviously the situations in which we have to operate are quite outwith the scope of traditional lifting gear (e.g. as used in coal-mines, pot-holing or by firemen), which would be too heavy and bulky, even if it were readily available.

As mentioned above, the main problem has always been bridging shafts and our solution in the past has been to use a builder's plank measuring about 9" x 3" x 15' long. Its simplicity is about the only factor in its favour. Eventually we approached High Duty Alloys of Distinguon, who very kindly designed, made, and presented to us the hoisting frame here illustrated. We have not yet subjected it to exhaustive field tests but basically it fulfills all our requirements:

- (i) it is easily transportable to the site and simple to erect
- (ii) the horizontal beam is of variable length and the legs (and feet) can be varied to suit the configuration of the shaft and/or level
- (iii) it is extremely strong (maximum load ½ ton) for its weight
- (iv) it has suspension points for ropes and pulleys
- (v) loads can be pulled up well clear of the lip of the shaft and swung to the side
- (vi) it minimises the risk of damage to ropes running over edges and of dislodging stones
- (vii) it assists hoists by minimising friction
- (viii) it does not rely on conventional anchoring systems (e.g. driving in pitons or bolts) which are useless in rotten rock.



A word or two now about the other specialised equipment which we use in mine rescue work. The illustration (see also back cover) shows two types of stretcher. One is rigid, with sledge runners and end-handles, and for the obvious reason is known as a 'coffin lid'. The other is the Neil Robertson stretcher,

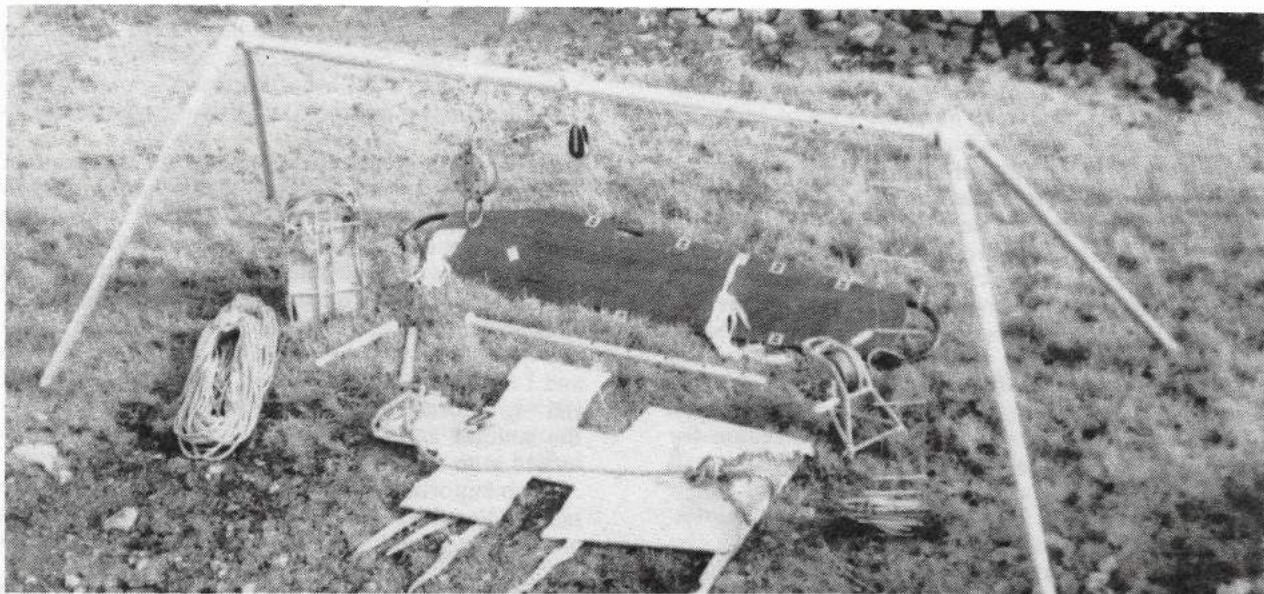


which is strapped around a casualty and immobilises all but his head and feet. It is useful when (as is often the case) the casualty has to be hoisted up a shaft. In the case of suspected spinal injuries the fully rigid 'coffin lid' would be better. Among the other items shown is a 600' wire cable on a drum. This is a heavy item to carry about and will probably be superseded shortly by 600' ropes.

For hoisting there is shown the small Austrian hand rescue winch which has been purchased by the Team. Whilst its action is rather slow (14' per minute) it can be operated by two persons once (and this is the big snag) it is firmly anchored. If the hoist is being made direct to the surface it is much quicker to have one or two 'tug-of-war' teams throwing their weight on the ropes, especially if they can run downhill at the same time. Because of the considerable effort required to raise the weight of the casualty, equipment and rescuers, it is normal to send down the minimum possible number of personnel. Taken all round, mine rescue can be quite an exhausting business as more equipment than usual may have to be taken to the scene of the accident, considerable effort may be involved in recovering the casualty and finally he must be carried down to the roadside.

Finally, a word of warning. Mine accidents often result in serious injuries. If you know what you're doing, exploring mines can be as justifiable as pot-holing or mountaineering. But if you are inexperienced (and you feel you must explore) you will be well advised to go with someone with a fair knowledge of these 'holes in the hill', for there are places where a good hearty sneeze might be sufficient to bring the roof down about your ears.

**Also known as wad, black-lead, or plumbago.*



Glenmore Lodge Rescue Course

Ian Wallace

Glenmore Lodge is an Outdoor Pursuits centre, near Aviemore, run and sponsored by the Scottish Sports Council. The course I attended was a ten-day session covering all aspects of mountain rescue and first aid. It was divided into three groups – basic, intermediate and advanced – and I was placed in the advanced group. Grouping is assessed on rock-climbing ability but somehow one should try to get into the higher groups because the basic course is too basic to be of use to a member of an active rescue team.

Practical work was carried out in the grounds and on nearby crags in the daytime and there were lectures and films in the evenings. The practical work involved self-rescue techniques, tragsitz (harness) lowering, vertical and horizontal stretcher lowers, two-stage lowers and diagonal aerial ropeways. The lectures were on such things as the role of the RAF and the Police in mountain rescue, search dogs, use of flares and discussion of our outdoor work. The films were quite often of climbing and expedition experiences, all thoroughly enjoyable and informative. We had one night exercise, in Corrie Cas, involving a two-stage horizontal lower of some 200', in a Force 10 gale and with verglas (ice-film) on the rock. That then, briefly, is what the course entails.

Now for a few personal observations.

The course is definitely worth going on, one of its most valuable aspects being the fact that there are about 50 participants and 10 instructors and everyone is learning from everyone else. The instructors really instruct and no question is given a politician's answer. You can use all the different types of equipment and methods to find out what is likely to be best for your own mountain area, for example:

- aerial ropeways are superb for vertical cliffs with level ground below, but are they applicable to the crags in Borrowdale; or
- most people agree that a horizontal lower is medically better for a badly injured or shocked casualty but is there any real advantage compared with the ease and safety of vertical lowering coupled with the short time that our lowers usually take.

Finally, one idea we might very happily adopt. Although 500' ropes weigh about 28 lbs, which is quite a lot to carry around, they are definitely worthwhile. Being lowered 400' down Creag Dubh is a lot more pleasant when you know there isn't any knot in the rope to stick or get sliced through while you're still 200' off the deck.

Night Exercise on Helvellyn

Ron Rutland

The mist swirled and the rain lashed our faces as we ascended the waterlogged path from Thirlspot towards the summit of Helvellyn. Pathetic ribbons of dirty snow flecked the Brown Cove slopes; winter was on the wane. As I trudged up, legs working automatically, I wondered why I had volunteered to man a check-point through a winter's night, probably in foul conditions; I couldn't think of any sane reason. As we neared the familiar trig point * the rain eased, leaving us a strong breeze for company.

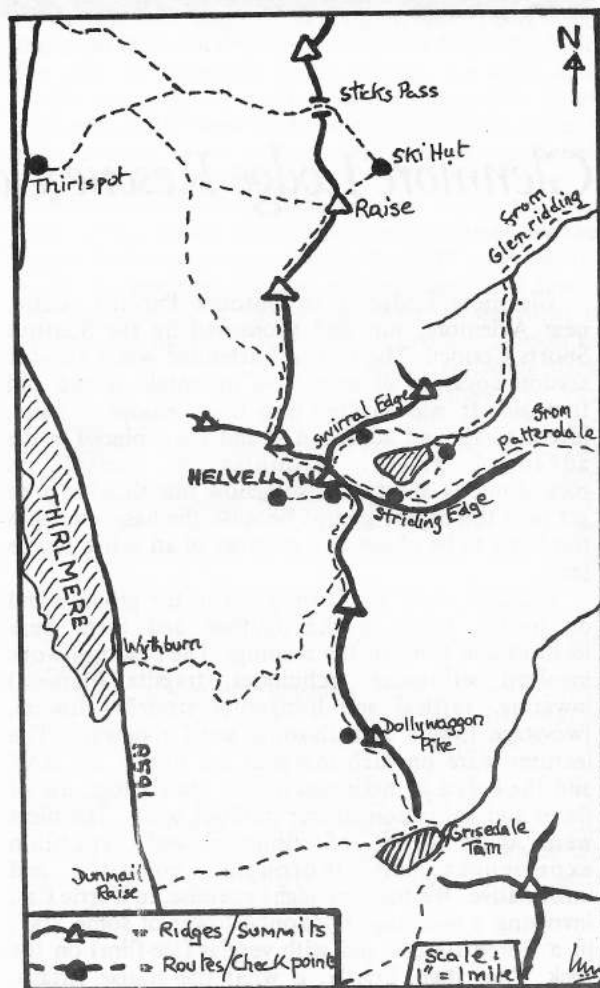
Leaving aside my reasons, the Team's reason for spending the night out was to help the Search and Rescue Dog Association in a test of their dog-handlers' (and dogs') mountaineering abilities. Our duty was to safeguard all participants by controlling their progress along various routes and by mustering sufficient personnel and equipment at strategic points to ensure speedy assistance and evacuation in emergency. Most of the team members helping had to be on the mountain from dusk to dawn, which in the middle of February is over twelve hours. In addition to negotiating his route in darkness, and whatever snow, mist, wind or rain Nature chose to lay on, each handler had to bivouac for four hours near the summit. S&RDA assessors and observers would also be going the rounds: it was obviously going to be a busy night. The spin-offs for the Team were radio practice and bivouac and night-climbing experience under difficult conditions.

My wife Linda took the Ultimate Box† from her pack (Well, women are supposed to be stronger than men, aren't they!) and we set about erecting it. Two frayed tempers and an hour later we had it up, after a fashion. This was to be Summit Control, in charge of all other units on Helvellyn and responsible to the Exercise Controller. He was to spend the night in a landrover high up in the woods on the far side of Thirlmere. Chilly work but essential if we were to maintain a good radio link. I left Linda in the Box with the big radio-transceiver and set off down Striding Edge, which was now quite free from snow.

My job was to man a checkpoint on the knifelike, rocky Edge. There would be two of us — myself and Neil Pritt, another Team member. In a little gap about 600' from the top I erected with some difficulty (it blew away three times) a small hoop tent. This meant digging out of the mud a platform on which to perch the tent, a point textbooks tend to overlook! By now it was pitch black and although the rain ceased the wind rose and the temperature fell. Conditions were testing but not unrealistic considering that the handlers and their dogs often have to operate in very bad weather. Rejoining Linda,

I listened snugly to the nylon walls of the Box flapping and wondered how much punishment it could take and whether we had erected it properly. Soon the others arrived and it was time to return to the hostile world outside. The mist reflected the beams of our powerful hand-lamps, rendering them virtually useless and limiting our horizons to about five yards. The wind plucked at us in vicious gusts and I hoped the hoop tent was still on its perch. Neil and I descended, established radio contact with the summit and, donning our down-filled clothing, settled in to await our first visitor.

Two important features of this kind of exercise are radio discipline and tight control of people's movements. On this occasion checkpoints were only



allowed to talk to (or through) Summit Control. The Exercise Controller communicated only with Base (Thirlspot) and Summit Control. We could hear most of the messages and throughout the night there was a steady stream of reports, instructions, acknowledgments, queries and decisions as the state of play was constantly updated with computer-like efficiency.

In our little eyrie we waited for the handlers. Once or twice the mists parted to reveal either a red light, seemingly suspended in space but in reality our opposite number on Swirral Edge, or perhaps the will-o'-the-wisp flickers of men and dogs moving through the night. More often, in the mist, the approach of a handler was heralded by the spectral halation of his dog caught in the torchlight – quite the little Hound of the Baskervilles! Several passed

through in good spirits and all seemed to be going well. We had just returned to the warmth of the tent when a shrill whistle sounded high in the crags. Were we about to earn our keep? We leapt out just in time to hear another blast, while bright shafts of light probed the darkness. The whistling continued so I set off to investigate. Fifteen minutes later I came across a handler whistling for his lost dog. False alarm, thank goodness. Eventually all the traffic ceases and we snatch a couple of hours' sleep. Then dawn and we evacuate a sodden, muddy and by now very messy ledge.

**Common name for the Ordnance Survey triangulation pillars erected on the principal mountain summits in Great Britain.*

†Box-shaped tent, measuring approximately 4' x 6' x 3' high.

Hang Gliding

Dave Weeks

If you look through the incident report for 1974 you will see an interesting entry for April 14. It is interesting for two reasons, firstly it is the first recorded rescue of a person who fell onto a mountain, as opposed to 'off' or 'down'. Secondly it is the first accident in this area concerning the new and fast growing sport of Hang Gliding. I shall remember this entry for two reasons also. It was my birthday and it was I who broke my thigh. As you are likely to see more and more people taking part in this sport in the Lake District, a few words of explanation may be of interest.

The sport of Hang Gliding (the term refers to any form of aircraft where the pilot is suspended below the supporting wing and controls the flight by weight distribution) is a serious undertaking, but if properly conducted should be as safe as, say, rock-climbing. These are proper flying machines and one must learn to fly them.

There are all sorts of designs but the simplest and most popular are based on the American Rogallo design. This consists of three 18' alloy tubes joined together at one end and held out at an angle of about 80° by a crossbar, forming a large A, with a centre tube down the middle. This frame is covered with light nylon slightly bigger than the frame, so that it forms two half cones side by side when filled by the wind.

Suspended underneath at the centre of gravity is a large triangular frame, guyed out to the nose, tail and sides. The pilot sits on a swing seat so that the bottom bar of the triangle is at waist height. By

pulling on this bar the centre of gravity goes forward, so that the nose comes down and the craft dives. Push the bar forward, the weight goes back and the nose comes up. Corresponding movements produce right and left turns.

The flying speed is between 15-30 mph. To take off one needs a wind of about 10 mph., so that all you have to do is to take a few steps into the wind and you're airborne. To land one reduces speed when near the ground by pushing the bar forward (and hence the nose up) until the speed drops off and you land. This all sounds very simple, and it is, but practice and caution are essential and tuition advisable. But at last man has the opportunity to fly like the birds for less than £200 and of course there are no running expenses or expensive launchings.

So next time you see a coloured delta wing gliding through the air it is not some crank but a serious flyer enjoying the hills a new way. Flights have been made off Snowdon, Ben Nevis, Skiddaw and many other summits. Soaring flights of over 8 hours have been recorded and heights of 6,000' attained in this country.

If you do stop to watch flyers, please do not cross farm land or block country lanes with your car. There are areas in Britain where flying has been banned, not for abuse by the flyers themselves, but because of the inconvenience caused by spectators. This is a new sport, fast and exhilarating, but it produces no noise or pollution and little or no nuisance to other hill users. Long may it continue.

Incident Report 1974

Date and Time	Persons Involved	Cause of Accident/Incident	Location of Search or Rescue	Action Taken	Nature of Injuries
13 Feb 5 pm	Two youths in school group	Boy's crampon slipped causing him to fall and knock companion. Both fell 100'.	Helvellyn	Taken to Keswick Hospital: discharged after treatment (19:5 hrs*)	Lacerations
13 Feb 6 pm	Youth from OBMS	Crampon slipped causing him to fall.	Helvellyn	Assisted OBMS instructor with evacuation. (19:4 hrs)	Lacerations
24 Feb 3.50 pm	Man aged 35	Block gave way and climber fell 70' to ground.	'Ardus', Shepherds Crag	Taken to Keswick Hospital, later transferred Cumberland Infirmary (8:40 mins)	Maxillo-facial injuries, severe bruising right leg
10 Mar 2.15 pm	Man aged 20	Student group walking from Grasmere to Patterdale in poor weather, wind gusting 60 mph, snow showers.	Helvellyn	Taken to Keswick Hospital, but not detained. (18:1 hr 45)	Exhaustion/mild exposure
14 Apr 2 pm	Man aged 34	Hang-gliding when cross-wind forced machine into fell-side.	White Pike, Clough Head	Taken to Keswick Hospital, later transferred Cumberland Infirmary (7:2 hrs)	Fractured femur
14 Apr 3.45 pm	Girl aged 15	Slipped on path to Lodore Falls	Lodore	Taken to Keswick Hospital, later transferred Cumberland Infirmary (7:45 mins)	Fractured ankle
1 May 12.45 pm	Youth in school party	Tripped and fell, wearing low shoes	Cat Bells	Taken to Keswick Hospital, later transferred Cumberland Infirmary (9:45 mins)	Fractured humerus
19 May 11.20 am	Boy aged 2	Strayed from home at Seldom Seen, Thornthwaite	Thornthwaite Forest	Joined Police search. Found by youth three miles away. (12:1 hr 55)	None
25 May Midday	Woman aged 53	Slipped on loose stone	Johnny's Wood, Rosthwaite	Taken to Keswick Hospital. (12:1 hr 30)	Fractured tibia/fibula
8 Jun 6 pm	Youth	Fell, injuring leg	Brown Cove Crag, Helvellyn	Taken to Keswick Hospital and discharged after X-ray (14:2 hr)	Damaged tendons in leg
16 Jun 2.45 pm	Man aged 44	Walking with family, suffered fatal coronary thrombosis	Cat Bells	Recovered body (10:2 hrs)	Coronary attack, fatal
2 Jul 7 pm	Two boys, 10, 11 years	Failed to meet parents at Watendlath	Harrop Tarn	Located in Langdale, having hitch-hiked (9:1 hr 30)	None
10 Jul 12.30 pm	Girl in school party	Collapsed with suspected appendicitis	Stockley Bridge	Taken to Keswick Hospital, detained overnight (8:1 hr)	Abdominal condition
11 Jul 7.30 pm	Youth in school party	Fell and knocked head on rock	Styhead Tarn	Had recovered when the team arrived and did not require first-aid (15:2 hrs)	Head abrasion

prepared by Jennifer Gradwell

Date and Time	Persons Involved	Cause of Accident/Incident	Location of Search or Rescue	Action Taken	Nature of Injuries
18 Jul 5.45 pm	Man and woman, each aged 24	Man fell and woman believed herself to be cragfast	Anderson Band Crag, Grange Fell	Assisted to roadside (14:1 hr)	None
20 Jul 6.40 pm	Man aged 20	Slipped on loose stones	Sprinkling Tarn	Taken to Keswick Hospital, transferred Cumberland Infirmary (16:3 hrs 20)	Fractured fibula
24 Jul 11.45 am	Youth in school party	Collapsed	Greenup Gill	Taken to Keswick Hospital, transferred Cumberland Infirmary. Died three days later. (11:1 hr 45)	Cerebral anoxia, fatal
27 Jul 6 pm	Man aged 37	Leading rock-climb, slipped on wet rock and fell 80'	Gillercombe Buttress route	Recovered body (13:4 hrs 30)	Head injuries, fatal
30 Jul 10 am	Youth aged 16	Missing, believed to be on the fells	Bleaberry Tarn, Buttermere	Assisted local teams with search. Located at Windermere Railway Station. (11:4 hrs)	None
19 Aug 6.45 pm	Woman aged 37	Diabetic, collapsed	Stockley Bridge	Treated with glucose: able to walk down (19:45 mins)	Hypoglycaemia
27 Aug 5.50 pm	Boy aged 11	Fell on rocky ground	Blease Fell, Blencathra	Taken to Keswick Hospital to await helicopter transfer to Newcastle. Died two hours later. (12:2 hrs 10)	Multiple injuries, fatal
2 Sep 3.30 pm	Man aged 25	Leading rock-climb, fell about 10'	'Shepherds Chimney', Shepherds Crag	Taken to Keswick Hospital: discharged after treatment (13:1 hr)	Contusions
10 Sep 5.30 pm	Man aged 38	Walkers found body by collapsed tent	Seathwaite Fell	Recovered body (15:5 hrs)	Exposure, fatal
11 Sep 2.30 pm	Woman aged 47	Walking barefoot and slipped	Jenkin Hill, Skiddaw	Taken to Keswick Hospital: discharged after treatment (10:1 hr)	Sprained ankle
20 Sep 3.30 pm	Man aged 56	Suffered coronary attack	Scales Fell, Blencathra	Taken to Keswick Hospital and detained (15:1 hr)	Mild coronary thrombosis
2 Dec 7 am	2 men aged 25 & 27	Benighted in bad weather	Grasmoor	Called to assist Cockermouth Team. Missing men found returning safely (13:3 hrs)	None

Total - 26 incidents (1973 - 40), including 5 fatalities (1973-4).

*Details in parentheses are:

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

Mountain Rescue Conference

W. R. Neate

The 1974 Mountain Rescue Committee weekend conference was held at the end of August at Outward Bound Mountain School, Ullswater. Most of the rescue teams and associated organisations in England and Wales were represented, in all about 100 people. The programme was far-ranging and included talks, films and demonstrations on such matters as the present-day functions of the MRC, search dogs, sea-cliff rescue and RAF helicopter procedure. The conference would have been successful even without the two high-lights of the weekend, one of great importance, the other frivolous.

Most of us these days are aware to some degree of the hideousness of major air disasters. Hardly a week seems to pass without report of a passenger aircraft crashing and more than one has come to grief in the mountains. It was with almost too much realism that for three tense hours delegates wrestled with the problems of a brilliantly simulated aircraft search and rescue operation in the Lake District. The exercise was organised and presented by Cumbria Police, with the help of the LDMAA* search panel, and utilising a 2½ inch/mile scale relief model of the area made at OBMS, Ullswater.

Imagine the size of such an operation — probably the whole Lake District sealed off from all inessential traffic; all major medical centres in the region alerted; 500 local rescue personnel mobilised immediately and 500 more within hours; firefighting equipment, cutting and lifting gear; 20-30 RAF helicopters, fuel tankers; police divers; mobile operating theatres, fleets of ambulances; stretchers, blankets, food — the list is almost endless. But first the aircraft must be found, no easy task in itself, considering that the cause of the crash is probably bad weather. And



having located the area of the wreckage, the awful task of accounting for crew and passengers.

Two important points emerged from the mock deliberations of the search panel. Firstly, the great need for helicopters for airlifting equipment, personnel and injured, subject to weather conditions. Only in this way could the operation be carried out with a fair degree of speed. Secondly, for the rescue teams it is a new pattern. They are normally faced with a search, or a rescue, or a search followed by a rescue. In this case there would be a large search for the wreck, followed by simultaneous rescues and detailed searches until everyone on board had been accounted for.

Fortunately there is always a lighter side to life and on this occasion it was in true pantomime tradition. Part of the programme consisted of a radio exercise, simulating a search for a person missing on Helvellyn. No problem except that there really was someone missing on Helvellyn and Patterdale Team were looking for him. The inevitable happened, of course; it just had to. Someone forgot to prefix his message with 'Exercise', gave the emergency 'Found' call sign and the poor rescue team hared off to the wrong location. Such are the origins of those near-apocryphal after-dinner stories. However, such trivia are not without value, for through them more important matters may be remembered and vital lessons learned.



'Fellbound' motorised stretcher carrier designed by OBMS, Ullswater.

*Lake District Mountain Accidents Association, which is responsible among other things for organising major searches in the Lake District.

Mountain Searches

Brian Spencer

'Mountain rescue teams have been searching all day in very bad weather for a couple who failed to return yesterday after saying they were going for a walk on the hills. A police spokesman said tonight'. Too often such reports are made on the radio and television and in the newspapers. So often in fact that it tends to go in one ear and out the other. For many it has very little significance anyway. Very often the first time that people become aware of the existence of mountain rescue teams is when they, or people they know, are involved in an accident or a search. Searches are expensive affairs and unfortunately all too many are really unnecessary. Ideally everyone who goes into the mountains should understand how these things happen and what is involved, in order that they may be avoided as far as possible.

A search is initiated when friends, relatives, hotel-keepers or members of the public inform the police that someone has failed to return from the fells, or has gone missing and is believed to be out on the fells. One of the duties of the police is to trace missing persons and it has become standard practice to request the assistance of civilian and/or RAF or Naval rescue teams whenever mountain or upland terrain has to be searched. This man-power, experience and intimate knowledge of the area is invaluable. As much information as possible is assembled regarding the missing person. Proposed route, time and place last seen, competence as a mountaineer, clothing worn and equipment carried, general health and age — all these details are important, including of course an accurate description of the person's appearance. On occasions the police will prepare photographs which can be carried by the searchers and shown to walkers and climbers in the hope that someone will be able to supply more information.

Initially the police will contact the leader of the rescue team who cover the area in which the missing person is thought to be. The team leader will make the first assessment of the situation, taking into consideration possible route deviations, weather conditions and changes, and time factors, as well as the information already collected. His decision can be quite tricky. He does not want to disturb too many people for what may quite likely turn out to be a wild goose chase. On the other hand every case must be looked at from the point of view that the missing person is in trouble, but whichever way the problem presents itself he will also be under pressure from relatives or friends. In most cases he will have to hedge his bets and order an advance party to stand

by. It is often worthwhile waiting until the pubs have closed for the night, when the miscreants may appear, quite oblivious of the disturbance they have caused.

A preliminary night search is often made nowadays by trained dogs and their handlers (from the Search & Rescue Dog Association) who are usually also members of the local teams. If dogs are used, it is important that they should be first on the scene, as fresh scents cause confusion once search teams move into the area. Alternatively, small groups of team members may walk the possible routes taken by the missing person, in the hope of finding him before the situation becomes serious. The advantage of using dogs for these preliminary night searches is that they can search a much broader strip of ground either side of the path than a man can. The remainder of the local team will probably be warned to turn out next morning at first light.

If the preliminary search is unfruitful, the search is intensified shortly after first light and it soon becomes necessary for the team leader to decide how much additional help is likely to be needed. In the Lake District, for example, he will call a meeting of the Search Panel, which consists of representatives of all the organisations involved. The build-up of man-power is swift and considerable: perhaps half-a-dozen during the night, then thirty at first light and within 24 hours as many as 500. If necessary over 1000 trained searchers could be mustered. Search Control headquarters will be set up at a convenient spot. Good road access and radio contact is vital and the facility to land a helicopter nearby useful. Medical facilities and field canteens may have to be organised. A police mobile unit may be provided, with a senior police officer present to assist with communications and publicity. A mobile base such as this is desirable as the concentration of the search is liable to change according to information received. Press representatives are normally invited, as publicity can lead the public to report further information about the missing person and his movements.

The co-ordination of a large-scale search is no light undertaking. The search controller will remain at base where he can liaise with the search panel (if there is one) and the police, meanwhile maintaining constant radio contact with the parties in the field. Radio discipline is extremely important when so many sets are in use, as one set may jam another's transmission, reception may be poor in some places and there is always the danger of messages becoming garbled unless tightly controlled. The search controller must at all times have a clear picture of where everyone is

and what areas have been covered. It is the duty of the searchers to adhere faithfully to their instructions and they should only alter their course if authorised to do so. In some mountain areas a grid system is used to divide the map of the area into numbered squares for the purpose of directing personnel. This can be very useful if searchers who are not familiar with the ground have to be drafted in.

Parties of four or so equipped with first aid, survival bags, radio and binoculars are efficient for searching designated small areas. Obviously speed is important, as exposure and hunger can add to whatever mishap may have already occurred to the missing person: thoroughness is even more important if the ground is to be properly examined. Hill parties must methodically search disused buildings and sheep pens, amongst rocks and boulder-fields, in gullies and ravines, through bracken, heather and bogs, behind walls and in streams and tarns – in fact anywhere a body could be hidden. If it is known or suspected that the person has drowned it may be necessary to send for a police diving team.

Why do people go missing on the fells? The answer to that question, nine times out of ten, is simple but unpalatable. The main reasons are ignorance, inexperience, bad judgement, thoughtlessness and sometimes downright stupidity. If the culprits knew of, and observed, the mountain safety code there would be very few searches indeed. There will always be some for even experienced mountaineers can find themselves in circumstances where they cannot get back in time. Injury, bad weather or no torch are the obvious causes for people failing to turn up. Solo walkers are very vulnerable because they have no one to run for help. 'Safety in numbers' is not foolproof either as more than one party has returned minus one of its members, who has mysteriously disappeared somewhere along the trail. It has been said that, whereas the Alps are difficult and the Himalaya dangerous, British hills are both difficult and dangerous. Alas, some people seem to be incapable of grasping this fact.

Before considering a few statistics, it may be noted that some searches are precipitated by well-meaning but ill-informed members of the public. From time to time there comes a spate of reports of flares sighted, whistles and calls for help and flashing lights. The rescue teams are obliged to follow up all these reports and are not very amused when it turns out to be Joe signalling to his friends in the campsite. Nevertheless rescue teams accept this philosophically; after all, there might be someone in trouble. However, there is no fate too terrible for the person who telephones a hoax call; this almost amounts to a criminal act and might jeopardise the life of a genuine case.

Examination of the records reveals that there have been 41 searches by Keswick team in the last five years (see table) – an average of 8 per year. Of these

about one quarter have involved the Search Panel and/or other teams. Peak periods seem to be April and July, both holiday periods, but otherwise there is a steady occurrence of searches during the year. There are nine other teams in the Lake District, each with similar incidents to report, which means there are probably around 50 searches each year in the Lake District for persons who go missing on the fells. Sad to say, all but 5 or 6 of those in the Keswick area should have been unnecessary. **If you get lost, or separated from your party, or are late getting down from the fells, you must telephone either the Police or your friends as soon as possible.**

A search is the most costly of all mountain rescue operations – hundreds of man-hours lost, heavy wear and tear of equipment, sustenance (often kindly provided by organisations such as WRVS), running of many vehicles, etc. etc. Yet it is worth all the expense and discomfort to the teams if just one person is brought down safely from the fells and the minds of his friends and relatives put at ease. The simple gratitude expressed is most humbling, almost embarrassing. All feelings of being soaking wet, cold, tired and hungry fly away when the cry of 'Found' goes up. Equally in these circumstances many team members would cheerfully commit murder when they learn that the object of the search has been found in a local pub in front of a blazing log fire, supping pints of ale. 'What? – Oh, I've been down for hours. I didn't think anyone was looking for me.' Grrrrrrr!

Keswick team searches 1970-74						
Month	'70	'71	'72	'73	'74	Total
January	—	—	1	3	—	4
February	1	1	—	2	—	4
March	—	—	1	—	—	1
April	2	1	3	2	—	8
May	1	—	—	—	1	2
June	—	1	1	—	—	2
July	3	1	1	1	2	8
August	2	—	—	—	—	2
September	—	—	1	1	—	2
October	—	1	—	1	—	2
November	—	1	—	2	—	3
December	—	—	1	1	1	3
TOTALS	9	6	9	13	4	41



How we compare

Fred Mills

Dr. Gerhard Flora, of Innsbruck, has provided some information about the Tyrol mountain rescue service, of which he is leader. At first sight the scale of operations there appears to dwarf ours in the Lake District but on analysis the differences are not really so great.

The main mountain chain in Tyrol follows the Austro-Italian border for about 120 miles, averaging over 10,000' and rising to its highest point (12,461') in the Gross Glockner. Innsbruck (rescue headquarters) lies some 20 miles to the north of the middle point of the range. Thus the distance to be covered to the site of an accident, as the crow flies, is between 20-70 miles. Not surprisingly therefore the majority of rescues are effected by helicopter. The helicopter and a 2-seater aeroplane are owned by the Austrian police, operating from Innsbruck's old airport, mountain rescue equipment being stored nearby.

The area of the Lake District National Park is 866 square miles, roughly one-sixth the area of Tyrol. Our mountain rescue teams are well placed and normally do not have to drive more than 10-15 miles to the starting point of a search or rescue. If we take area as a basis and divide the Tyrol statistics by six to

arrive at comparable figures for the Lake District, the following emerges:

	Tyrol (actual)	Lake District (proportion)	Lake District (est. actual)
Call-outs (year)	600	100	100+
Resources			
— Doctors	20	3-4	10+
— Team members	1300	200+	500+
— Search dogs	40	7	12

The number of our team members reflects largely the amount of leg-work which in Tyrol is done by helicopter. However, until there are machines capable of flying in cloud and dirty weather, helicopters won't be able to take much of the slog out of our rescue work, although basically we are as well served as Tyrol, for our depot (RAF Acklington) is under 80 miles from Keswick.

Dr. Flora stresses the importance of the annual conference of Alpine rescue team leaders. This is something we do not have in Britain — perhaps we should.

BALANCE SHEET as at 30 November 1974

1973 £		LIABILITIES		1973 £		ASSETS		£	£
			ACCUMULATED FUND:				STRETCHER EQUIPMENT		
			As at 30 November 1973	4,709			As at 30 November 1973	356	
			Add: Balance from Income & Expenditure				Less: Depreciation	36	
			Account	31		356		---	320
4,709				4,740					
							RADIO EQUIPMENT		
							As at 30 November 1973	1,148	
							Purchases this year	215	
								1,363	
						1,148	Less: Depreciation	273	1,090

							GENERAL EQUIPMENT		
							As at 30 November 1973	786	
							Purchases this year	238	
								1,024	
						786	Less: Depreciation	102	922

							LAND ROVER AMBULANCES		
							As at 30 November 1973	640	
						640	Less: Depreciation	128	512

							CONSUMABLE STORES		
						80	As per Valuation		80
						902	BALANCES AT BANKERS:		
						725	Deposit Account	986	
							Current Account	830	
								---	1,816
						4	PREPAYMENT		-
						68	INCOME TAX REPAYMENT DUE		-
£4,709				£4,740		£4,709			£4,740

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for year ended 30 November 1974

Year to 30.11.73			Year to 30.11.73		
£		£	£		£
	Motor Vehicle Expenses:				
46	Insurance	46	231	Patrons' Subscriptions	303
52	Petrol, Oil etc.	66	613	Donations & Grants	585
133	Repairs & Maintenance	20	759	Collecting Boxes	921
		---	52	Bank Deposit Interest	84
				Income Tax Recoverable on ..	
	Garage & Team HQ Expenses	132	34	Covenanted Donations	29
12	Rent and Rates	163			
-	Telephone	59			
-	Repairs and Alterations	244			

		466			
75	Consumable Stores	82			
12	Maintenance of Radio Equipment	52			
90	Personnel Insurance	90			
15	Radio Licence	15			
131	Printing & Stationery	231			
4	Postages & Sundry Expenses	17			
-	Legal Expenses	14			
	EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE				
1,119	FOR THE YEAR CARRIED DOWN	823			
---		---			
£1,689		£1,922	£1,689		£1,922
---		---	---		---
574	Depreciation of Equipment & Vehicles	539	1,119	Balance brought down	823
847	Personnel Equipment	203	302	Balance carried to Accumulated Fund	-
-	Donation (Search & Rescue Dog Assoc.)	50			
-	BALANCE CARRIED TO ACCUMULATED FUND	31			
---		---			
£1,421		£823	£1,421		£823
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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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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: K. M. Brannan, Corthill, Portinscale, Keswick, Cumbria.

Help us to help YOU!

Every year incidents occur through thoughtlessness or ignorance of basic safety precautions. We don't want this to happen to you. To help you enjoy the mountains in safety the Lake District Mountain Accidents Association publishes a leaflet entitled 'Fellwalkers read this . . .', Copies are available free from A. M. Dobson, Pout Howe, Kentmere, Kendal, Cumbria. Please get a copy and read it.

† † † †

Do you know that a weather forecast service is provided at weekends at the usual points of access to the main fells, together with comments about the snow and ice conditions when appropriate? These forecasts are provided by the nearest weather office, supplemented by the National Park Wardens' up-to-date knowledge of local conditions, and should be checked before starting off. During the week a summary of local weather conditions can be heard on BBC Radio Carlisle.

† † † †

If you are unlucky enough to be involved in an accident, you or another should go to the nearest telephone — dial 999 and ask for the Police. Tell them where you are telephoning from (and the number) and give them the details (place, position on crag, cause, nature of injuries, persons involved) as accurately as you can. It is important that someone who knows the details should stay by the telephone until help arrives. The Police may need to call back and it is essential that the rescue team should be able to speak to the informant before setting off to the scene of the accident.

Make sure YOU know what to do!

MINE RESCUE

