



News from the Lakes Region – March 2009

Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team - 40th Anniversary Dinner

52 team members, wives, husbands, partners and special guests attended the private dinner at the Wasdale Head Inn on the 9th January 2009. The dinner is a regular annual event but this year it was combined as a celebration of the team's 40th year. David Allan, Chairman of Mountain Rescue (England and Wales) was invited, along with his wife Sheila, to present long service awards to team members past and present. In addition to the framed award, each person was presented with a glass tankard on a wooden base with plaque showing his or her name and years of service.

The Wasdale Team was founded in October 1968 from the Wyndham Search Team, which ran for around three years prior to becoming WMRT. Before this, Cockermouth MRT and Eskdale Outward Bound covered the Wasdale valley and mountains. Members of the Wyndham Search Team (formerly the Wyndham Mountaineering Club) included Don Greenop /John Kennedy/ Mike Skinsley / Ian Angel / Brian Eales (first Chairman WMRT) / Alan Dunn (first WMRT Team Leader) / Roy Sumerling / Maurice Pringle / Pat Pownall / Brian Clark / David Killick / Arthur Baldock / Charles Devlin / David Martin / Bill Ritchie / Robert Rudd / John Warbrick

The Wyndham Mountaineering Club then became West Cumbria Climbing Club

In 1968 the team had 8 rescues to deal with (compared to 96 in 2008) and round 60 team members (compared to 38 in 2008). The team operated out of a small room at Wasdale Head next to the Barn Door Shop. Now the team has a purpose built base in Gosforth



Just some of the team members who received an award that night from David Allan, Chairman MR(E&W)

The WMRT members who received awards on the evening were:

25 years Long Service Award (retired from the team)

Dave Barras (26 years service)
Allan Dunn (35 Years) - first Team Leader (for 10 years)
Bill Pattison MBE (26 years) - second Team Leader (for 18 years)
Maurice Pringle (25 years) - past Secretary and second Chairman

25 years Long Service Award (Active Members)

Pete Baines (28 years)
Martin Bentley (27 years)
Juliann Carradice (29 years) - third and current Team Leader (for past 10 years)
Dave Fryer (36 years) - past secretary and third Chairman
Peter Holburt (34 years)
Penny Kirkby (25 years)
John Noake (37 years)
Susan Noake (36 years)
Dave Willey (25 years)

40 years Long Service Award

Joe Moody (40 years) - recently retired from team
Martin Willey (40 years) – fully active member

The wrapper may save a life

It has been a source of nourishment and sustenance for fellwalkers for generations, and now our humble confectionery bar could be a lifesaver. Kendal Mint Cake, carried by Sir Edmund Hillary on his successful 1953 Everest expedition, will play a vital part in helping those in distress on the Lakeland mountains in a unique tie-up with the Lake District's mountain rescue teams.



Wilson's, one of three companies making mint cake in Kendal, has produced 20,000 bars of the sugary energy snack to raise funds for the 12 mountain rescue teams in the area. 20p from each bar sold will go to the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association for distribution throughout the teams.

As well as raising money for the teams, each of the special bars carries essential safety information about preparing for journeys on to the fells and what to do if you are unfortunate enough to need our mountain rescue services.

The advice from to those who are buying them is "Don't throw away the wrapper unless you are going to buy another bar; the safety messages are on the wrapper and need to be kept. The wrapper may in fact save your life"

The Kendal Mint Cake bars, which provide 323kCal of much needed energy when walking on the mountains, are made with sugar, glucose syrup, peppermint oil and salt. The confection was first produced in the former Westmorland town in 1869. The mixture is stirred constantly during production to stop it turning clear.

Wilson's has been making mint cake since 1913 and is run by managing director Andrew Wilson, grandson of the founder of the business. The bars will be sold through all their existing retailers throughout the county, including tourist shops, and should be widely available by Easter. The bars usually sell for about £1.

Lakes mountain rescue teams have been urging walkers and climbers to go properly prepared on to the fells, following the significant increases in incidents. The advice on the bars includes checking weather forecasts, taking the right equipment (especially map, compass and torch), proper preparation and wearing the right kind of clothing.

If successful, the firm could produce other confectionery in the mountain rescue range, to help the teams both raise funds and get across the safety message.



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Mountain Rescue Facts

All English peaks over 3,000ft are in Cumbria, so its no surprise that the Cumbria & Lake District Mountain Rescue Teams are the busiest in the country with:

- 700+ rescues annually throughout England & Wales - 400+ are in Cumbria
- 15% increase in people rescued to 557 in 2007
- 450 voluntary team members across 12 teams, 365 days a year
- Between £25,000- £75,000 per team needed each year in fundraising / donations

LDSAMRA has also produced 15,000 safety cards, which are being handed out to visitors to the district. These have similar hints on how to keep safe on the mountains and how to call out rescue teams. These have been funded by Adventure Capital, which promotes outdoor and adventure tourism in Cumbria.

Thanks to Bob Smith, Editor of the website for his contribution to this article and continuing support to mountain rescue through his own articles on the website

Distinguished Service to mountain rescue Dave Binks and Rob Brookes

Dave Binks, Duddon and Furness MRT and Rob Brookes, Langdale and Ambleside MRT have been given the LDSAMRA Distinguished Service Award in recognition of their outstanding contribution to mountain rescue by the development of MrMap and GPS tracking. Mike Nixon, MBE at the January LDSAMRA meeting, presented them with their awards.



From the left, Dave Binks, Mike Nixon MBE, Rob Brookes

Rob's involvement has been largely in hardware development. Rob was first involved in the project about 1998 while a member of Kendal MRT, initially working with Paul Horder from Keswick MRT. Initial work involved vehicle tracking but was put on hold due to lack of portable technology, but demonstrated that it was theoretically possible and worthwhile pursuing. The project was breathed new life when a link with Simoco was established and the availability of the GPS microphone. Rob has spent many hours doctoring stock equipment to accommodate GPS chips, doctoring computers to accommodate multiple radio inputs, balancing needs of radio versus data, tweaking vehicle and base radios to meet the many demands of rescue work, and running tests to check reliability and effectiveness.

Dave joined the project more recently, bringing in considerable technical programming skills to make a useable interface for teams to benefit from the technology. Initially Dave was involved with development of re-broadcasters and repeaters, but soon put his programming skills to good use with the creation of MrMap. Ongoing work to make MrMap useable by teams using other equipment continues, and has involved work with a number of overseas organisations. The work carried out by both Rob and Dave raised the profile of both our region and MR(E&W) with interest in the project now coming from Eire and Scotland.

Both Dave and Rob consulted end-users constantly to develop a product that is easy to use and stable and in many cases, bespoke. MrMap is now used across the country, by many teams, and is a leap forward on a par with the introduction of morphine to mountain rescue. Explaining to new team members that there was a time before MrMap will be like trying to convince a teenager that there was a time before mobile phones.

One major step was the negotiations with equipment manufacturers to make commercially valuable software available to mountain rescue, free of charge. MrMap has considerably enhanced team member's safety and helped considerably in the efficiency of searches, and ironically, greatly reduced the need for voice communication. To reinforce the point about team members safety and the effectiveness of searching, in this edition of the MR magazine, Keswick MRT have written a detailed account of a very recent rescue "The Skiddaw Job", where the GPS tracking system earned its keep during full white-out conditions on a search and rescue incident lasting 18 hours, involved 71 rescuers and saving 5 lives.

Many personal sacrifices have been made by Rob and Dave to make the system work. Their continued intention is to make MrMap a product that is free to use for all mountain rescue, with no financial benefit for either person. The recognition of distinguished service also acknowledges the sacrifice made by family members while Rob and Dave were, and still are involved in the project.

If you have any questions or comments on this article or indeed any of the Lake District articles or statements made then please contact me and I will ensure that you receive a response.

Richard Warren
Regional Chairman / Secretary (LDSAMRA)
5th march 2009