



News from the Lakes Region – September 2007

75th Anniversary Celebrations in the Lake District Who did win the It's a Knockout?

5th July 2008 will be remembered by many as the day that Ambleside became the new "wettest place in England", Patterdale MRT became the It's a Knockout champions amongst the Lake District MRTs, and we struggled to drink our way through donated barrels of beer – Great Gable brewery's Trail Ale, Keswick Brewery's Thirst Rescue Bitter, Hawkshead brewery and Ulverston brewery best ales.

This major attraction was organised by the region to celebrate the 75 years of mountain and cave rescue and also to bring together all the Lake District teams at one event and where grass root team members could meet up with others who they might only catch sight of during a long all night search on some wet and windy summit or pass. It was also an opportunity for the general public to be invited, to learn more about our voluntary service and be encouraged to make a donation (entry to the field and events was deliberately free). A number of Cumbrian businesses contributed to cover both the cost of the event (significant) and to donate nearly £1,000 worth of raffle prizes. Public donations on the day exceeded £1,500 and were kept separate.

Held on the Ambleside rugby ground, the venue was centrally located within the LDSAMRA patch and close to the Langdale and Ambleside Base. LAMRT base remained open to the public and was the venue for communication demonstrations, medical and equipment displays. There were river rescue demonstrations by Kendal MRT / simulated crag rescues down a scaffolding tower by Duddon & Furness MRT and search dog displays by SARDA lakes. In addition we had a navigation clinic on the field and a children's treasure hunt around the Ambleside shops. The RAF Sea King unfortunately could not get across but Great North Air Ambulance managed to base their operations from the field and 'Pride of Cumbria' joined the teams in the photo opportunity by hovering literally a couple of feet above the heads of the gathered vehicles and team members.

The event was officially opened by Mr. Craig Mackey, Cumbria's Chief Constable who focussed his speech on the county's gratitude to team members and their wives, husbands, partners, families and friends who give up so much to help those injured and need of rescue on Cumbria's fells and surrounding areas. Mr. Tim Farron MP for South Lakeland area also came along to offer his support on the day, meeting with team members and their families and friends.

A group of five 16 to 19 years old from the Centrepoint charity were invited across from the north east to join in the celebration activities on the Saturday and were taken for a walk up Aira Force waterfalls on the Sunday. HRH Prince William of Wales as royal patron to both Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) and Centrepoint actively encourages sharing of experience amongst

his chosen charities. He was therefore delighted to learn that Centrepoint were included in the weekend's celebration.

The main event was of course the 'It's a Knockout' – organised by Sarah Young of the Keswick based Active Events Company Ltd. and ably compere'd by Rik Jones, our imported expert MC for the day from London. Most of the LDSAMRA teams entered the knockout and we had additional competition (very strong competitionbut not strong enough) from the two non-lakes mountain rescue teams, RAF Leeming MRT and Cumbria Constabulary recruits. Coniston MRT took the wooden spoon prize and were delighted, RAF Leeming MRT took the best agency and came very close to beating third place Penrith MRT, with Duddon & Furness MRT in second and of course Patterdale MRT coming tops.

And did the weather stay fine?no it did not..... see the Youtube video on the event for evidence.

And did we have any callouts?.....yesWasdale MRT got called away to an injured walker on Scafell Pike and missed the competition completely, Duddon & Furness MRT went off to rescue an injured lady on a trials bike, but fortunately the call came after they had finished the Knockout competition.

And will we do it again?yesbut only if someone else organises it.

Olympic Flag Handover 24th August – Scafell Pike

Cumbria flagged up high hopes for 2012 Olympics when Cumbria County Council supported by LDSAMRA arranged for three local sporting figureheads to set the sights high when Britain took on the Olympic mantle from China on Sunday August 24th. During the Olympic closing ceremony, one of the traditions is that the host of the games hands over the Olympic flag to the next city to stage the event. As London will host the 2012 Olympics, communities across the UK were encouraged to celebrate the handover moment by flying the London 2012 flag in prominent locations.

Cumbria wanted to ensure that the middle part of the Olympic motto "faster, higher, stronger" lived up to its name by planting a flag at the highest point in England, the 978m-summit of Scafell Pike. Mountaineer Sir Chris Bonington was joined by Wasdale's 72-year-old fell running supremo Joss Naylor and 16-year-old budding Cumbrian distance runner Laura Park in an ascent to the summit. The three of them unfurled the London 2012 flag at 2.30pm which coincided with the closing ceremony in Beijing. Wasdale MRT had a planned helicopter training day with RAF Boulmer and the intention was to film the flag hoisting event from the air using the Sea King's on board video camera however, as can be seen from the photograph, the cloud was down so they could not make the 2.30 p.m. deadline. In addition to the three celebrities, 20 other representatives including officials from the County Council, the Lake District National Park Authority and a few friends made the

trek to the summit. In addition to keeping a watchful eye on the group and making a flagpole out of three walking poles and some baler twine in true Blue Peter fashion, Lakes mountain rescue unexpectedly received a cheque for £500 from the County Council after the event. Importantly for mountain rescue the day was an opportunity to lobby senior officials about problems that challenge events (specifically Three Peaks) are creating for the area with damage to the footpaths, rubbish left on the summit and general noise/congestion and community disturbancealso that 1 in 5 of all rescues for Wasdale MRT are directly attributable to the challenge events in what continues to be an increasing trend of the ill prepared and ill equipped compromising those less avoidable incidents in the central lakes

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)
9th September 2008