



THE DUDDON AND FURNESS MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

Affiliated to The Lake District Search & Mountain Rescue Association and Mountain Rescue, England and Wales

Registered Charity 1173246

President: Peter Jackson MBE

Vice President: Doug Scott CBE

Supporters' Newsletter – 2019



Dave Allen as Chair of Trustees makes a Presentation to Mike Margeson on Handover as Team Leader

2018 In Summary. Call-outs returned to a traditional level, approaching 40, after a spike of 64 in 2017. There was a change of team leader from Mike Margeson to Dave Binks, the elevation of John Wealthall to Deputy Team Leader (joining Will Scott and Paul O'Mahoney) and the handover of chairmanship from Andy Woods to Nigel Lister. A new digital radio system was introduced and plans for the new base at last turned into action. On a sad note Dr Mick Leverton, the team doctor for 30 years, died suddenly at the age of 81. Team members were pall bearers at his funeral.

Call-outs. Again it has been a year marked by assistance to others. Five calls were to assist the NW Ambulance Service, 10 to assist Wasdale MRT, 3 to Coniston, 2 to Langdale and 1 to each of Kendal, Keswick and Kirkby Stephen MRTs. We assisted Braemar MRT during our winter training (illustrated) with 3 large search parties looking for a walker on Lochnagar. Regrettably he had fallen into an ice gully and his body was found 48 hours later. There was a multi-team search for a fell runner training for the 'Bob Graham Round' who could have been in several teams' areas. The search started in the evening with us joining at first light. He was found above Honister Pass at 7.30am with severe



hypothermia but regrettably didn't survive. This was an example of an operation under the 'Silver' umbrella, whereby a team not directly involved in the search takes on the management of

the operation – coordinating resources from across the region or, with a serious flooding incident, possibly nationally.

The Kirkby Stephen call-out was during 'the Beast from the East' when we assisted covering the Pennine roads. The Wasdale calls included 2 long searches for missing walkers. On the first occasion the walker was found reasonably well after 48 hours. The second was a search for 3 walkers, one of whom had become separated and was found on the second day with severe hypothermia and who regrettably didn't survive the evacuation. This was a rare occasion when the search had to be stopped during the night because of concerns for the safety of the rescuers due to severe weather conditions, with streams in spate and the notoriously dangerous Piers Gill, where he was eventually found, inaccessible. Another call was to search for a walker relying on his phone for both a map and subsequently a torch, neither of which worked when the battery went flat. He was luckily found by a search dog and walked off by a party of ours.

We were also tasked to rescue a sheep off Wallowbarrow Craggs (illustrated), completed successfully (see Facebook), and a cow which had fallen into a deep ravine near Ulpha. After 24 hours' deliberation it became clear that rescuers would be put at risk trying to raise a half-ton animal from 3 feet of water up a vertical bank and the animal sadly had to be put down. In addition to the usual lower leg injuries, the year started and finished once again with calls to rescue drivers taking the short cut over an icy Corney Fell.



New Base. After 4 years of land and access issues the project to build a new base is moving forward. We are the only team of the 10 Lake District teams not to own our own base, and our 2 small and unheated rental units are unsuitable for our evolving tasks, in particular the storage of water rescue equipment and multi-agency/team operations. We have inadequate space for briefing (illustrated), training, storing and drying equipment, and the welfare of team members and the public. We have agreed the purchase of an adjacent plot and have architectural plans for a suitable

base at an estimated price of £600,000. By careful management and fundraising over 10 years we have £230,000 set aside for the project. Our aim is to increase this to £300,000 in 2019, including a prospective grant from the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association, which would bring us to 50% of the total. We will then seek matched grants from larger charities. Fundraising is based on monthly team initiatives and donations from many supporters. No one should feel that their contribution will be too small to be of use. Donations may be paid online via our website or by cheque to DFMRT sent to me.



Radios. The new digital radios have meant a big leap forward operationally. Although the full system is still being rolled out it allows for handset to handset communications throughout the Lake District via a system of masts, either rebroadcasting through more powerful sets or linking via the internet to masts in other teams' areas. There have been teething problems but we are getting there. Dave Binks has been the leading light in the roll-out throughout the Lakes.

Fundraising. Please consider joining more than 60 supporters signed up to raise money at no cost to themselves through:

Online shopping. First register as a supporter of Duddon and Furness MRT by logging onto the 'Give as You Live' (GAYL) website. Save it as a favourite. When you wish to shop online return to the GAYL website and enter the store you wish to shop at. You will be flicked straight to the store website and shop as usual but with typically 1.5% of your bill being donated to DFMRT.

In-store shopping. Go to the GAYL website and register for a store card (probably for your main super-market) either by printing off the card details for a single shop or by getting a card sent to you for regular shopping. You put money on the card through GAYL, with typically 3% going to DFMRT. When shopping use the card like a credit card.



Realistic Medical Training (with dummy)

Team Numbers. The acceptance of new members twice a year is working well and has brought in a steady flow of younger members, with 5 moving up to full membership in 2018. Five senior members have moved to level-2 membership, allowing relief from the more extreme physical tasks but enabling us to continue to benefit from their experience. The result is full manning (40) with more potential members being interviewed in January 2019.



Swift Water Rescue Training

Commitment. The commitment of members is tremendous and not to be underestimated by those aspiring to join us. As well as call-outs and regular training there are courses, some online, fundraising, maintenance and committees, as well as external commitments at regional and national level, where we continue to be well represented. Enhanced medical training (illustrated) has added a new challenge with externally validated written and practical exams every 3 years.

Top Tips. Before setting out on the fells always check the weather forecast and remember how quickly our weather can change. Always take a map, compass and torch and never rely on a smartphone or assume you will finish in daylight.

Thanks. As usual many thanks to all those who support us, either on a one-off basis or over many years. Thank you especially to those who changed their standing order to the new account following our change to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and in particular to those who increased their donation.

