

Annual Report

2026 reporting on 2025 incidents



Call-out 82

72nd Annual Report

Team Officials Team Members

Honorary Members

President: Jim Coyle BEM	Abi Adams (Senior Nurse)	Chris Abbot
Vice-Presidents: Dr Edward Holloway Val Jones Mike Thompson	Scott Ashworth (Teacher) Nida Batchelder (Teacher) John Brooks (Mountaineering instructor) John Bulman (Engineer, Health & Safety Advisor, retired)	Maurice Anderson Dave Blenden Steve Brailey Neale Connolly Jim Coyle BEM Pete Dawson
Chairman: Martin Pickavance	Russell Butler (Teacher)	Jo Grove
Team Leader: Andrew McNeil	Laura Connolly (Physiotherapist)	Mike Hadwin
Treasurer: Jeff Haslam	Chris Cookson (IT Developer)	Jeff Haslam
Secretary: Gwyn Lewis	Ian Cousins (Data & Development Manager)	Steve Jones
Deputy Team Leaders: Ian Cousins Richard Greenwood Martin Pickavance	Edward Crossland (Software Engineer, retired) Tom Durcan (Project Manager)	Richard Hellen Gwyn Lewis Bob Liddell
Lead Quartermaster: Ian Cousins	Tom Gallagher (General Practitioner)	Rod Moore MBE Derek Tunstall MBE
Training Officer: Scott Stanley	Phil Gerrard (Chartered Project Professional)	Paul Twyford Steve Whitehurst George Williams
Edward Crossland	Richard Greenwood (Chartered Engineer, retired)	
Major Incident Officer: Phil Gerrard	Mike Gullen (Site Shift Manager)	
Medical Officers: Dr Tom Gallagher Dr Peter Winterbottom	Simon Hunter (Environmental Manager)	
Equipment Officer: John Brooks	Hugh Jordan (Rostering coordinator)	
Radio Officer: Richard Greenwood	Alan Littlefair (Project Manager)	
Auditor: Armstrong Watson	Nick Lumb (Outdoor Instructor)	
	Andrew McNeil (Building Surveyor)	
	Carolyn Otley MBE (Community Development Worker)	
	John Palmer (Nuclear adviser, retired Digital Asset Manager)	
	Mike Park MBE (Land Surveyor)	
	Daniel Parsons (Forester)	
	Martin Pickavance (Emergency Response Support Coordinator)	
	Dan Pocock (Process Engineer)	
	Jerome Poppe (General Practitioner)	
	Dan Roach (Drone Surveyor)	
	Dan Slome (Product Owner)	
	Scott Stanley (Environmental Manager)	
	Mark Steel (General Practitioner, retired)	
	Rob Stein (Engineer)	
	Matt Waller (Advanced Clinical Practitioner – Paramedic)	
	Peter Winterbottom (General Practitioner)	
	Simon Woodbury (Technical Manager)	
	Karolina Woloszczyk (Hospitality Management)	
	Tom Woolley (Outdoor Instructor)	
	Mario Yeomans (Tech Support)	



Founded in 1953,
a CIO (Charitable
Incorporated
Organisation).
No 1161672.

The Team
responsible for
rescuing people and
animals from the
**Lorton, Loweswater,
Buttermere and
Ennerdale areas**

Probationary Team members:
Ben Breeze (Sales Assistant)
Juliet Fullwood (Radiological Environmental
Professional)
Gavin Pattinson (Retired Royal Air Force Officer)

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Before summarising the activities of the Team over the past 12 months I'd like to start by paying tribute to our former Chair and Vice President **John Dempster MBE**. Sadly, **John passed away in October last year**.

He had been involved with Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team for almost 70 years and was responsible for helping to mould the Team into the professional organisation it is today. John was an inspiring character, and a great friend to many Team members. He will be sadly missed by all those who had the pleasure of knowing him. An article about John and the story of his life in the Team can be found (see pages 16-18) in this report.

Chair's Report Martin Pickavance



Last year Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team were called out to a total of 91 incidents making it our second busiest year on record.

Thirty-four of these call-outs were for individuals who had sustained some kind of injury and, of these, 19 were isolated ankle or lower leg injuries.

Medical emergencies such as; heart attacks, seizures, exhaustion, migraines and panic attacks accounted for nine of last year's callouts.

In most of these cases the individuals involved were treated at the scene by members of the Team, prior to being carried off the hill on a stretcher and handed over to members of the North

West Ambulance Service for transportation on to hospital. In situations where the casualty was more seriously ill or injured, support was provided by the HM Coastguard Helicopter and Air Ambulance crews. On behalf of the whole Team, I would like to thank the individuals that work in these organisations for their ongoing support.

In March last year 29 Team members successfully qualified as Mountain Rescue – Remote Medical Technicians. This qualification has replaced the Casualty Care Certificate previously held by MR members. Although fundamentally very similar, the Remote Medical Technician qualification has been introduced so that the NHS and other blue light services have a better understanding of our capabilities and the types of interventions that we are able to perform. An enormous amount of work goes into training and preparing for this. On behalf of the whole Team, I would like to thank our Team doctors and other medical professionals, as well as our many enthusiastic first aid gurus. During the run-up to the exams this Team worked tirelessly to deliver realistic and comprehensive training, providing Team members with the skills >>>



>>> they need to pass the exam, but more importantly, with the confidence to be able to treat seriously injured and unwell casualties on call-outs.

Thirty call-outs last year were for people who were lost, missing or had been reported overdue. Thankfully the vast majority of these people turned up within an hour or so of the alarm being raised, or they could be quickly located via SARLOC and, either physically escorted or talked down off the hill using their phone. However, a small number of these call-outs resulted in more protracted searches involving other Lake District Mountain Rescue Teams as well as search assets like Search Dogs, Drone Teams and SAR Helicopters.

Walkers or climbers who get themselves into areas of steep ground and then become stuck, unable to climb any further, and unable to retrace their steps, are referred to in Mountain Rescue as 'cragfast'. Heading off into the hills without a torch and then being unable to find your way down safely is referred to as being 'benighted'. Last year the Team were called out eight times to rescue individuals and groups who had become cragfast, benighted or both!

Wild camping involves heading into remote areas with lightweight camping equipment to enjoy the solitude and majesty of the great outdoors. Unfortunately, the Team were called out four times last year to locate wild-

campers and assist them off the hill. In three of these cases, the campers had to be rescued because they hadn't checked the weather forecast before heading out into the fells, in one case attempting to pitch a tent on the side of Red Pike during a named storm. The fourth pair of campers had chosen ideal conditions.

Unfortunately, after pitching their tent in Ennerdale they then decided to go off for an explore, only to get disorientated and find themselves unable to relocate their campsite.

In addition to the rescues involving lost, injured and unwell walkers, the Team also attended; two callouts for paddle boarders, one callout to a 92-year-old crashed paraglider, one to an injured mountain biker, two for lost dogs (both of which turned up), two false alarms and one for a sheep stuck in a bog.

Sadly, on a couple of occasions last year, the Team were called out to rescues that ultimately resulted in the casualty losing their life. Call-outs involving fatalities are particularly challenging for all those involved. I am always very proud of the way that the Team pulls together during these tragedies, providing support to the friends and family members of the deceased, as well as looking out for one

"Of 91 call-outs, 34 were for injuries, 30 for people lost or missing ..."

another during the call-out and in the days and weeks afterwards.

The rest of this report contains more details about all last year's call-outs along with some spectacular photographs taken by our members on call-outs and during training sessions. It also contains some entertaining articles submitted by Team members about life in the Team and other adventures.

Once again, I would like to give a massive thank you to Denise and Andy for producing this year's report. I'm reliably informed that this is the 18th report they have produced for us. We are very lucky to have such talented people willing to donate their time and skill to produce, what is, in my humble opinion, the best MR annual report in the country.

Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team is entirely funded by donations made by individuals, local business and other organisations. It currently costs around £100,000 a year to run the Team. Unlike other charities, where executives draw a salary, or personnel are paid for the work they do, every penny donated to the Team is spent on ensuring that rescuers have the necessary equipment and training to be able to head into the mountains in all weathers, and at any time of day or night, to rescue people who are lost, injured or have become unwell.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our operational and honorary Team members for the enormous amount of hard work they put in, and the local businesses, community groups and individuals who continue to support us.

On behalf of the whole Team, I would also like to acknowledge the fantastic support we continue to receive from Cumbria Police, the Fire and Rescue Service, Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW), and the other 11 teams that make up the Lake District

Search & Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA).

Lastly, as always, I would like to give a special thank you to our Team members' partners, families, friends and colleagues. It's only with their ongoing support that our Team members can drop everything at short notice and head out into the hills to rescue people and save lives. We really couldn't do what we do without your support.



Every year we are called out to a few rescues where members of the public have unwittingly put themselves in danger by failing to be prepared for changes in the weather, not wearing appropriate clothing or just not having the necessary skills to be out in the mountains. Disturbingly, the statistics for our region indicate that avoidable rescues like these now account for a significant number of mountain rescue call-outs.

In response to this the AdventureSmart website has been developed to help people prepare properly for their trips into the mountains and, in turn, hopefully reduce the volume of unnecessary call-outs.

AdventureSmart aims to inform visitors to our

area how they may stay safe by prompting them to ask these questions:

Do I have the right GEAR?

Do I know what the WEATHER will be like?

Am I confident I have the KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS for the day?

The website is easy to use and provides lots of really useful information about how to stay safe and what to do if you are unlucky enough to have an accident or become hopelessly lost in the mountains. So, if you're planning a trip into the fells soon, please take a look at the website first; www.adventuresmart.uk.



Team Leader's Report

Andrew McNeil

Firstly, as Martin has already said, 2025 was a sad year for the Team as we lost our former Chairman and Vice President John Dempster MBE. John was a huge part of the Team and also of Mountain Rescue across Cumbria, in his role of Chairman of LDSAMRA for 15 years. He was a great help to me, and I always valued his opinion and friendship. He will be greatly missed.

2025 was yet another busy year for us with 91 call-outs.

Most of the call-outs we attend are initiated with a 999 telephone call to the police. Details can be passed to the call handler and we generally get a reasonably clear picture of what has happened and where. Obviously, this is not always the case, for example lost walkers in bad weather may have little idea of their location. Technology like SARLOC and PHONEFIND have made a huge difference – whereby the Team can send the missing person a link to their mobile, which when 'clicked', automatically sends their location back to the Team's mapping software.

A technology that we have seen more this year, is the use of Emergency Beacons. These can either be stand-alone units solely for

emergency use or can be integrated into mobile devices such as the iPhone. They are intended for use in remote areas and let the user send a text message in case of emergency using a satellite network. This means they can contact emergency services, via a call centre, even without any mobile phone signal. This has brought about a number of potential problems. The call centre may be very remote to the Lake District – sometimes in another country, with little or no knowledge of the area, and difficult for us to communicate with directly. The information provided by the text is often very limited and may or may not contain useful location information. Depending on the system, it may not be possible to send information back to the casualty. Perhaps not quite yet the 'get out of jail free' card.

However, we had one call-out in December where such a beacon may very well have saved a life. A camper's tent collapsed on the summit of Red Pike, in gale force winds and heavy rain. He packed up as best as he could and tried to walk from the mountain in the dark, back to his car in Buttermere village. After a number of hours, he collapsed in a bog in Warnscale – lost, exhausted, and unable to continue.

Miraculously, his iPhone was still working and despite having no signal, he managed to send an emergency alert, giving his approximate position. The Team attended, along with Cumbria Fire and Rescue. He was found sodden, wrapped up in his tent, lying in the water. Without the beacon, and with no other way of alerting anyone to his location, he was at very high risk of not being found and perishing from hypothermia.

We had three separate and serious call-outs, all to octogenarians, within the space of four days back in June. The first was to an 80-year-old lone walker from New Zealand doing the coast to coast for the third time, who had not arrived at his accommodation in Borrowdale. The Team searched through the night and, very sadly, at 2.30am the walker was located, deceased, by a Team member on Moses Trod.

A day later we were called to assist another lone walker, an 89-year-old who had slipped and fallen whilst walking on Haystacks sustaining a serious scalp wound. The Team dressed his wound and carried him to a waiting Coastguard Helicopter.

Then the following day an 80-year-old female stumbled and took an eight metre free-fall from a crag, while descending Haystacks towards Scarth Gap, with her son. She suffered significant chest, back and head injuries which were treated by Team members and paramedics from Coastguard Rescue 199, and she was flown to Newcastle RVI.

Many of our call-outs this year were in that same general area of Haystacks, Dubs Hut and the Honister Plateau.

In May, a number of Team members attended a week-long trip to Glencoe at the invitation of Keswick MRT. It's the second year that the Keswick team have run this training, with

members from numerous Lakes teams attending, and feedback again was excellent with days spent in small groups in the mountains. Sadly, whilst climbing Tower Ridge, in unseasonably snowy conditions, CMRT Team members did get involved in a rescue, after witnessing the fatal fall of a climber from the ridge. They assisted the man's climbing partner off the ridge and from the mountain.

The Team's thoughts are, as always, with the friends and families of this climber and of all those who have lost their lives in and around the Lake District fells this year.

April saw the Team take on three new probationers, following a recruitment drive and a number of selection evenings during March.

Gavin is ex-RAF. He worked in Air Traffic Control, so should come in handy when the coastguard and the air ambulance both turn up at once.

Following her valiant and quite spectacularly catastrophic attempt, Juliette's name, and photograph, will forever now be synonymous with the Rings Challenge at Badaguish.

Apart from his moustache, and his ability to randomly appear and disappear without warning, Ben seems relatively normal so far, but we have made that prior assumption before....

Strangely, and I'm fairly sure this was not part of the

entry requirements, all this year's probationers have a penchant for life drawing – although none of them are quite yet in Karolina's league.

Following over 18 months of testing various options, we have finally decided on a new casualty packaging system. Manufactured by PAX, it is an integrated vacuum mattress and casualty bag. It has a battery-operated heat blanket which is far superior to the chemically activated ones the Team has previously used. The whole system is much lighter and works well with both our McInness and Titan stretchers. Feedback from Team members acting as casualties has been excellent with the new system providing both warmth and security during stretcher-carries from the fell. The Team is also working closely with a local company, Atom Packs in Braithwaite, to develop purpose-made carrying rucksacks for the new equipment.

This is one example of the work the Team Quartermasters do, with help from many other Team members behind the scenes to keep the Team functioning: Rescue equipment, medical equipment, Team vehicles, the base and grounds, members' personal issue kit, computers, radios, and swift-water rescue equipment. I'd like to thank the Quartermasters for the hours they put in making sure the Team is ready >>>



>>> to go when the call-out comes in.

Jeff Haslam and Gwyn Lewis have now respectively held the posts of Treasurer and Secretary to the Team for over 20 years each. They have seen TLs (Team Leaders) and Chairs come and go, and both currently serve as Team Trustees alongside Martin and myself. Between them they carry out the lion's share of the Team's business dealings, be it banking, finances, donations, investments,

insurances, communications, record keeping, compliance, liaising with the Charities Commission, the list goes on. Jeff and Gwyn were operational Team Members for 34 and 20 years respectively and, since stepping down from the call-out list, have remained totally dedicated to the Team fulfilling these absolutely vital and at times thankless roles. I'd like to recognise their outstanding service to CMRT.

In November 2025 John Bulman completed 60 years as an operational member of Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team. That is an incredible achievement and one that puts John in an elite group of three across LDSAMRA. The Team celebrated with John at a surprise party at Jennings Brewery. It was a

fantastic night and great to have so many of John's family and friends from across Mountain Rescue, past and present, there to celebrate with him. With the elusive milestone tucked firmly under his belt, John finally stepped down from the call-out list at our December Team Meeting. I have no doubt he will continue to give advice and bestow his experience onto our younger Team members for many years to come, as an honorary Team member.

Liz Gleave stood down from the Team this year after joining as a probationer in 2019. She was a solid and

capable Team member and we are very sorry to see her go. We wish her all the best for the future.

The Team's links with the town remain very important to us. This year I'd like to thank Sainsbury's for again giving us the Christmas Eve fundraising slot; The Tithe Tap and Fermento's for again supporting our Christmas Party; Jennings Brewery for hosting John Bulman's 60th celebrations; and all the other businesses and townspeople who have supported the Team throughout the year.

A special mention this year to Chris Higgins ('Chiggs') who, after 14 years has stepped down as Team Leader at Keswick MRT. Working with Chris has been a pleasure and his advice and assistance over the last ten years has been very much appreciated. Chris is staying on as a Keswick team member and we hope to see him out on many more rescues, hopefully carrying something heavy for a change, and wish him all the very best for the future.

And finally, as usual, thanks to: our neighbouring Teams, Keswick and Wasdale, who we've worked with this year on numerous jobs; to the Air Ambulance services and the Coastguard Rescue Helicopters from Prestwick, Caernarfon and Humberstone; to Martin, Ian and Richard as usual for their support both on and off the hill, and finally to all our families and friends who continue to make it possible for us to do what we do.



Medical Officer's Report

Dr Jerome Poppe

Delivering medical care to casualties relies not only on the medical equipment described below but more importantly the highly trained individuals that deliver that care.

This year saw the entire Team undertake the Remote Rescue Medical Technician exams – a specialised certification enabling volunteers to provide advanced medical care in remote environments. The Cockermouth MR Team takes a distinctive approach in encouraging all members to undertake this certification meaning any individual in the Team is able to assess and manage medical and trauma emergencies should they be required to do so. I am pleased to say that the Team's

pass rate was 100 per cent, exemplifying the hard work and dedication of our volunteer members as well as the outgoing medical officers who supported this process.



Medical Quartermaster

Matt Waller

Following a very busy year with regards to medical equipment, 2025 was very much about consolidation and refining the changes we made the preceding year.

The new medical sacks have been in circulation for a while now with a slightly modified layout which Team members are adjusting to

There have also been small updates to the drug formulary with the Team expanding the medications they carry allowing them to better deal with seizures as well as complex fractures.

The Team will continue to train to maintain their medical skills over the coming year as well as support new members in their development.

well. Many of the drugs we introduced, including Pentrox, have already been used in anger on several occasions and have helped us deliver quality medical care to our casualties.

After a year (felt like five!) of exploring and trialling different vacuum mattress/casualty bag combinations we concluded that the PAX >>>

Call-out 22

Call-out 32

>>> system offered us the best packaging option. An integrated system that includes a waterproof, protective outer; a lightweight but durable vacuum mattress that slides seamlessly into the base of the outer bag; and an electric heat blanket with a built-in thermostat for optimum temperature control.

We liaised with PAX after our initial trial and provided feedback on some possible adjustments to help refine it for our use here in the UK (The system was originally designed for helicopter retrieval in the Alps). PAX were incredibly receptive and open to ideas, and as such, we received our new packaging system with some modifications including new

wind baffles and a thicker thermal insulation layer to cater for more prolonged carry outs.

The system has performed fantastically well



so far with overly positive feedback from both casualties and team members. It has a range of features that sets it apart from anything we've used previously, and we're incredibly pleased with what it provides for our casualties.

As we see in 2026, this year will continue to be a year of refinement and minor adjustments rather than major overhaul. With so many changes in recent years, the hope is to now become familiar and proficient with our new equipment. We are as a team though, incredibly proactive and innovative. So, we'll continue in the background to identify any areas where we can improve the care to our casualties.

over eight years ago we have drowned two in the River Cocker and lost two whilst working on steep craggy ground. Given the harsh conditions we use these radios in this an extremely low loss rate and is testament to how well Team members take care of the kit issued to them.

Looking forward to the next year I am hopeful we can complete some planned upgrades to our Sprinter to enable it to work better as a control vehicle for searches and major incidents. Although the vehicle has a 4G router installed there are many areas in our patch which do not have mobile phone coverage and installing a permanent Starlink system as part of the upgrade would give us much more operational capability and flexibility.



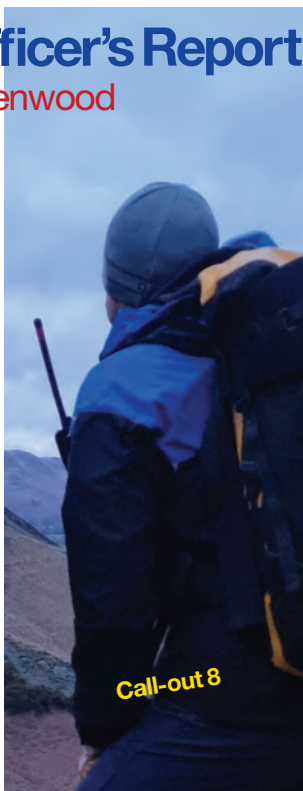
Radio Officer's Report

Richard Greenwood

The Team's radio systems have provided good reliable service over the past year with no equipment failures.

We suffered a day's outage at the Gatesgarth base station in the autumn when several trees were blown down onto the telephone line. Fortunately, we were able to move our Starlink dish up to Gatesgarth to get internet connectivity restored. Having access to this sort of technology is a game changer for enabling reliable communications in the remote areas in which we operate.

Of the original 50 digital radio handsets we bought



Major Incident Officer's Report

Phil Gerrard

The Major Incident Officer's role within CMRT is to develop and maintain the Team's capability for the management of, and operation within, a Major Incident.

The past 12 months was another record-breaking year for responses across the region, albeit 2025's increase to 838 regional call-outs is only a marginal increase on 2024. This large number of call-outs, some of which drive large scale multi-day searches, repeatedly requires the mountain rescue teams to mutually support each other and to co-ordinate not only themselves, but partner agencies too.

As I write, at the end of January 2026, there have already been two significant multi-day searches this year, which have required support from Cockermouth MRT, with boots on the ground, search capability from our dogs and drone pilots and co-ordination support from our major incident team.

As an individual Team and as part of our region we continue to influence and help drive the development of increased capability for effective inter-team working. In 2025 this included significant input into the upgrade of 'MRMap', one of our primary planning tools, which is now even better at search planning, and the design of a new applied

search management course, which will give practical application in contrast to the theory-heavy traditional search management courses.

This continued evolution is probably well expressed by the near flood event seen in Cockermouth just before Christmas 2025. There had been weather warnings in place, with storm Bram expected to drop significant rainfall on saturated ground. Learning from previous events in November 2009



"The ability to scale up our response continues to stand us in good stead."

and December 2015 means that as a community, Cockermouth has "been to victim school" and is now pretty well-drilled. The Cockermouth Community Response Group (CERG) monitored rivers and were posting routinely on social media as the water levels rose, and vulnerable people were identified and helped to prepare in advance of any potential flood event.

As it was, the flood defences did their job and the only house that came close to flooding was my own! As a Team, we didn't have to do anything apart from mental preparation for a co-ordination role within our base and of course, providing swiftwater rescue capability should it have been required. This "no drama", proportional response based on experience and continued community learning, means that should the worst have happened, rescues would have been much minimised or completely avoided.

The training that we do and the way that we work on a day-to-day basis starts with the idea that the event might grow. The ability to scale our response up from Cockermouth MRT's 40 volunteers to LDSAMRA's 400-plus volunteers and interact with the statutory responders (Police, Fire, Ambulance Services to name a few) and other volunteer services, continues to stand us in good stead. Not bad for a purely voluntary organisation, funded entirely by charitable donations.



Equipment Officer's Report

John Brooks

In 2025, Cockermouth MRT continued to improve the equipment we use on call-outs.

This year's work focused on better casualty care, making key systems simpler to use, and introducing updates that make a real difference during incidents.

One of the biggest changes has been the introduction of the PAX integrated casualty care system. This system combines two essential pieces of equipment used on most rescues: the vacuum mattress and the casualty bag. Using them together has made it quicker and easier to safely package casualties, while still providing good

immobilisation, injury support, and protection from the weather. The system also includes an integrated heated blanket, which helps reduce heat loss and improves a casualty's overall condition during packaging and evacuation. Many thanks go to Matt Waller, whose detailed research, testing, and hard work played a major role in bringing this system into use.

Another important update

“The Team provides full outdoor PPE to every member, ensuring complete protection in all weather conditions.”

this year was a change to Team clothing with the introduction of the Mountain Equipment Switch Pro mid-layer. This is the first new mid-layer issued in ten years, replacing a soft-shell jacket that had been in use for a long time and had seen better days. Feedback from Team members has been very positive, which is not always easy to achieve, especially regarding its warmth, breathability, and ease of movement in tough conditions.

Throughout the year, regular checking and testing of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) has continued. This work is essential to make sure all Team members are fully equipped and ready to respond at short notice. CMRT has, on average, over 400 carabiners in operation, so this is no small task.

The Team remains committed to providing full outdoor PPE to every member, ensuring complete protection in all weather conditions. Our strong partnerships with outdoor equipment suppliers continue to offer excellent support and save the Team significant costs. These savings allow us to invest in other important areas such as communications, medical equipment, and vehicle maintenance.

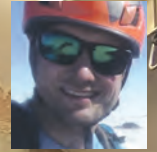
As always, Cockermouth MRT relies on the support of the wider community. We would like to thank our suppliers, partners, donors, and supporters for helping ensure the Team remains well equipped, flexible, and ready to respond whenever needed.



Training at Gillerthwaite.

Training Officer's Report

Scott Stanley



It's been another busy year keeping our skills, knowledge and qualifications up-to-date at Cockermouth MRT.

We have recorded in excess of 400 days collectively undergoing training. That figure is certainly a gross underestimation and does not include time spent working and training with other teams and agencies, dog training and Swiftwater Rescue, to give a few examples. Not to mention the time we all spend on the hill and crag keeping personal skills sharp. This is a huge undertaking by a small team of volunteers alongside all of life's other commitments and is absolutely fundamental to maintaining our capability to provide the best possible

service to our casualties.

A core principle of CMRT is that all team members are encouraged and expected to attain expert levels of competence in their medical, rigging and driving skills. This avoids having an overly tiered structure within the Team, reduces operational complexity, and encourages individuals to take personal responsibility for their development, at the same time as providing a large peer group from which to learn.

With the Remote Rescue Medical Technician exams looming in March, the early part of this year was heavily focussed on medical skills. The RRMT is the highest medical qualification available to us and ensures that we are well prepared to

deal with any medical and trauma issues that could be encountered on the hill.

This includes training in advanced interventions and forms the basis of our controlled drugs licence. A colossal team effort in the months leading up to the exam included team healthcare professionals running sessions, Nick and Neale running weekly 'cas care clubs' and Dr Tom organising the day itself. Each team member undertook a medical and a trauma assessed practical scenario and a written exam. Once again, we came through with flying colours – 31 of 31 candidates passed. A huge thank you to everyone involved – the quality of our medical skills has a direct impact on >>>

“We have recorded over 400 days collectively undergoing training (certainly a gross underestimation).”

>>> the outcome for our casualties.

Spring saw us take on three new probationers. There is so much to learn: the various rope systems, medical skills, packaging, heaps of bits of kit and equipment to figure out. The probationers seemed to have taken this in their stride and made excellent initial progress. Gillertwhaite weekend is a highlight of the Team training and social calendar. An excellent weekend of training was painstakingly coordinated by Edward however, this was swiftly derailed by the probationers, with one derailing his car into a ditch on the Ennerdale forest road, immediately followed by another being unable to keep up with her dog, leading to an impromptu search ‘practice’ on Blake Fell. Fortunately, after a wild night on the fells, probationer and dog were reunited and the weekend resumed. On Saturday we completed a familiarisation

exercise of Ennerdale, visiting key hotspots and landmarks, refreshing the best access and egress routes. This was followed by a fantastic stretcher handling exercise around the drumlins which was not a competition, but we all know who won!

Physical prowess alone is no longer sufficient to secure a place on Cockerthorpe Mountain Rescue Team. Crucial assessment of the probationers intellectual and artistic talents took place that evening and produced some disturbing results. Unfortunately, not suitable for publication here. The Sunday practice involved a complex rigging scenario, recovering counterbalanced fallen climbers on Raven Crag, Ennerdale. This was a novel and testing, but realistic, scenario, and the Team applied technical principles to improvise a safe and efficient solution – an excellent example of why we avoid prescriptive training and rote learning.

This year we had the pleasure of hosting some colleagues from the Peak District (Thanks to Paul Edisbury of Edale MRT for

reaching out) for a weekend of technical rope rescue training. A fantastic opportunity to share good practice, experiment with different kit and systems and show off our newly refurbished training facility. We provided a back to basics run through of our rigging philosophy, systems, technique and kit. Then we held workshops in the controlled environment of the base training room before heading up to Great Round How to put it all into practice. Plenty of shared learning went on, and we are looking forward to continuing this relationship with a visit to the Peak in May 2026

In January, the Team, along with Patterdale and Keswick MRTs, went North for winter training, to Badaguish in Scotland. For the first time in a few years, we were welcomed by snow clad mountains and calm, cold weather. Team members made the most of this on the first day, honing their personal skills winter climbing, mountaineering and skiing, enjoying the fantastic conditions. The jubilation was however, short lived. Conditions on the rings were excellent, no verglass and an uniced pond. Surely this was the year that Rob Stein’s historic

traverse would finally be repeated. Alas, no. The two Cockerthorpe challengers plunged into the dark cold water, one through lack of momentum, and the other through a reckless excess of the same. All that was left was to graciously applaud as the Patterdale probationer powered across safely to dry land and secured the second successful traverse. Next year’s training programme has been updated accordingly and we will return. The second day’s training saw the Team out *en-masse*, navigating around the Cairngorm plateaux, practicing axe and crampon skills and generally looking after each other in the harsh winter environment. The third day was workshops on steep ground, snow anchors, personal avalanche skills and packaging and stretcher handling, with it all being brought together in a callout scenario on the final day. All in all, an extremely productive trip, both from a training perspective, social team building perspective, and in maintaining good relationships with our neighbouring teams. Looking forward to next year already.

These training trips, the equipment we use and courses we send team members on all come at significant financial cost. We are extremely fortunate to be able to train in the way we

do, and the quality of our training correlates directly with the quality of care we are able to provide to our casualties. None of this would be possible without the generous donations we receive from members of the public – so on behalf of the Team and our casualties I would like to give a huge thanks to everyone who has donated to us this year.

The final paragraph of this report must as always be dedicated to our long-suffering friends and families who support us to go off and do the training we need to do, in order to provide the best help possible to those who need it – Thank you.

For more photos from training see pages 60-61.

A mountain rescuer, a friend and an inspiration



Celebrating the life of John Dempster MBE, by Martin Pickavance

In October 2025 we received the very sad news that our former Chair and Vice President John Dempster had passed away.

John's long involvement with Mountain Rescue started when he was just a boy. Having been introduced to hill walking and scrambling through the Scouts, he went on to join Workington Ramblers and would regularly catch the bus through to Keswick to go hiking and scrambling in the fells around Derwent Water and beyond.

On its way to Keswick, the bus would pass through the town of Cockermouth and often picked up groups of rock climbers from the local mountaineering club. It wasn't long before John received an invite from one of these climbers to join the group for a day at Yew Crag Knotts, and it was here that he received his first introduction to rock

climbing and mountaineering. In 1956 John joined Cockermouth Mountaineering Club. The mountain rescue team was still in its infancy, having only been established three years earlier in the February of 1953. However, in these early days, the rescue team recruited almost exclusively from the ranks of the Mountaineering Club, so it wouldn't have been long before John's climbing talent and leadership potential was

spotted by his peers, and he was approached about joining "The Team".

Thankfully, John took up the challenge and volunteered to join Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team in 1958. He was still only 17 years old, but in the days before radios young team members like John were recruited to act as runners, relaying messages between the casualty site and the police, or providing updates



John (second from right) aged 15.



John (third from left) celebrates reaching the target for the new base.

to base via the phone in the kitchen at Gatesgarth Farm in Buttermere.

In addition to spending many years as an active hill going Team member, John eventually became the Chair of Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team, a position that he held for 36 years. During this time John was responsible for driving numerous improvements that the team continues to benefit from to this day. Undoubtedly, the greatest of these, was the establishment of the Team's new Head Quarters building. This colossal achievement was the culmination of five years of tireless work by John, who led efforts to secure the necessary funding, and then oversaw the planning and construction of the build, which was eventually completed in 2003.

Alongside his undeniable commitment to his own team, John will also be remembered for the wonderful work he did as Chair of the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA). Over the course of 15 years John provided invaluable support to the 12 Lake District

teams, worked closely with Cumbria Police to setup a ground-breaking insurance policy for volunteers, and spearheaded numerous other initiatives that ultimately made the lives of rescuers safer and improved outcomes for our casualties. After stepping down as Chair he was awarded the position President of LDSAMRA allowing him stay closely

involved with the organisation to continue much of the good work that he had started.

John served as an active Team member of Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team for 55 years, receiving an MBE in 2005 for services to Mountain Rescue. He stepped down from Cockermouth Team's active call-out list at the age of 75, but remained actively involved with the Team right until the end, attending his last Team meeting just days before his passing.

The members of Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team extended our deepest condolences to John's family and loved ones during that very difficult time. His memory will live on in the rescue work that we are able to continue to do because of the wonderful work that he committed so much of his life to.





Memories of John

by Jim Coyle BEM,
President CMRT

I sit beside the fireside's glow,
and think of friends of long ago.
We live a life with happy times,
But hush, I hear the church bells chime.
It's New Year's Eve, and memories come,
Calling, calling, haunting me.
I see a scene of long days past,
So come, let's listen while it lasts.

It's early morning in Gatesgarth's barn.

We huddle round the Primus glow
and talk of routes and where to go.
'Let's go to pillar!', someone said,
'But first get Demmy out of bed!'
He struggles up and we give a cheer,
He blames his headache on last night's beer.
So, what will cure this malady?
I give him aspirin with a cup of tea!

Then with rucksacks packed
we all make haste,
for friends are waiting at the old fell gate.
Then up the path with steps to light,
we climb up Pillar's frowning height.
The mountain breeze is pure as gold,
As we rest a while beside the fold.

The air so clear and sky so blue,
With four good friends so brave and true.
We climb all day on sun kissed rock,
'til finally we call a stop.
And homeward bound we make our way
To live and climb another day.

Soon Gatesgarth's lights are all aglow,
As ever onwards, down we go.
For Maureen's made us nice fresh scones
with home baked bread and roasted ham.
Then with much laughter and a cheer,
Demmy said, 'I'd like a beer!'
If only we could turn back time,
to live again those wondrous times,
to live in peace and harmony,
among those fells where we felt so free.

But now the fire is burned down cold,
I hear again the church bells toll,
ever softly they do chime,
for it's New Year's Eve and *Auld Lang Syne*
And so, we live life's endless tide
with hope and trust and friends beside
to live in peace with few regrets
but John, we never will forget.



Left: Jim and John take a break!

Right: Steve Brailey, Mike Park, Jack Jackson, Jim Coyle and John Dempster.



A big thank you!



We are very grateful to everyone who supports us.

There are several individuals who make regular annual donations, including the Gordon Gray Family Trust, as well as the Slater Trust. Local groups and societies also selected us as their 'charity of the year' for 2025, made donations, or arranged fundraising events for the Team, including: Cumberland Athletic Club, Cockermouth Cricket Club, The Carnegie Singers, Border Caravan Club, Cockermouth & Workington Hound Trails Association, Whitehaven Ramblers, Cockermouth Sports Centre, and Brigham Social Club. These all contribute towards our running costs and allow us to continue our work, for which we are very appreciative – thank you.

We would also like to thank: the Kirkstile Inn who donate their proceeds from their annual locals' night; Goodfellows and Fultons for helping us to keep our vehicles in good working order; and JB Banks for their continued support....

ramble
worldwide
outdoor trust



Above left: Cumberland AC presented CMRT with a 'cheque' and enjoyed a tour of the base. Right: Team members welcomed representatives of the Cockermouth Cricket Club to thank them for their donation.

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Inspiring the next generation



While mountain rescue call-outs and rigorous training form the backbone of our work, the Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team has long maintained a proud tradition of community engagement with local primary schools and youth groups.

Throughout 2025, Team members have continued to bring mountain safety education to life for children across the Lake District, delivering presentations and hands-on activities to schools, Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, Guides and other community organisations.

In June, three Team members visited Fairfield Primary School for what proved to be a memorable session. The presentation covered the fundamentals of mountain rescue operations, showcased essential equipment, and included footage of a live rescue. The children's questions ranged widely – some venturing into the more dramatic aspects of rescue work – but the Team members handled every query with clarity and sensitivity. The school's feedback spoke volumes: "The session

"Understanding mountain safety equips young people to explore the fells and mountains responsibly."

delivered by volunteers was fantastic. The way the information was presented was clear and engaging, relevant and age appropriate. The children were engaged throughout, asking lots of questions, which was a positive reflection on the presenters." Perhaps most rewarding for Team members is when children rush home from school, excitedly telling parents that "Mum or Dad's Mountain Rescue Team came to school today."

July brought another annual highlight when several Team members accompanied Eaglesfield Paddle's Year 6 pupils on their epic bike ride from Paddle School to the Ennerdale Scout Camp at Bleach Green (see picture). After helping staff keep the young cyclists safe over challenging terrain, more volunteers arrived that evening to run interactive rescue scenarios. Children learned casualty care by

"packaging" injured classmates or teachers into stretchers and carrying them across distances. They built rope runways between trees, hauling stretchers across imaginary

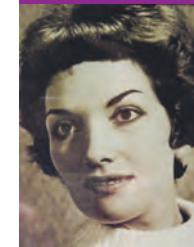
gorges – an activity that thrilled both the children pulling and the volunteers riding in the stretcher. With the Team's increasing drone capabilities, the children also enjoyed orienteering with a twist: navigating through woods and across fells whilst attempting to evade aerial detection. After such a demanding day's cycling, the children's sustained engagement and genuine enjoyment throughout three hours of scenarios demonstrated the power of hands-on learning.

Year after year, schools request our return – testament to the value these events provide. For Team members, the satisfaction runs deep. We're not simply entertaining children; we're embedding vital mountain safety knowledge in young people who live and play in the Lake District. Just as learning to swim enables them to safely enjoy the lakes, understanding mountain safety equips them to explore the fells and mountains responsibly. And perhaps, in years to come, some of these enthusiastic young participants will themselves answer the call to become mountain rescuers.

Special People of Distinction Society (SPODS)

In memory of Frank and Doreen Sippetts, Brenda Treharne, John Pumfrey and Frank Chilvers. Greatly missed by SPODS.

Family Severs



in memory of Miriam (nee Elwin), a lover of the fells who in the 1950s and

1960s was a member of the Team and Secretary to the Cockermouth Mountaineering Club. Died September 1986, aged 48.

Gavin Pattinson on

A first year...



in mountain rescue

It was a dark and stormy night. I was alone, a sharp rock digging into my side as I lay in the mud waiting to be found. I watched the slow spread of red creep across my white top, wondering how I ever got here...

In 2025, CMRT welcomed three new Team members, and this is the story of our first year.

Firstly, who are we? We have diverse backgrounds: sprightly Ben in his mid-twenties; me, who sometimes has unexplained aches and pains in my late-ish forties, and Juliet, whose age is quite rightly undisclosed but is almost exactly in the middle of these extremes! What we have in common is a love for the outdoors and a desire to help our local community and those in need in the Lake District.

We are probationary members, and must demonstrate that we can meet the operational requirements of the Team before being considered for full membership – a process that will take at least a year.

Selection began with an open evening and an application form but quickly ramped up. We were soon plunged into assessments: mountaineering, navigating, and heavy

load-bearing, all requiring strong legs and a robust sense of humour – a theme we have discovered is essential in mountain rescue! By the end, it was clear that I had made the right choice in applying to join the Team. After a nail-biting wait, we were selected as probationary members.

Our training started in May with a 10-week programme to bring us to a common standard in essential first aid, familiarisation with MRT kit and vehicles, and ‘rigging’ – rope rescue, building anchors, who does what and when, lowering a stretcher and rescuer off a crag, and how to handle a stretcher when you are attached to it! We all have climbing and mountaineering experience, but there was much to learn in this short time, and of course we were helped by the dedication of Team members. As you would expect, weather does not stop training, and this was suitably

demonstrated during rigging training on Upper Shepherds Crag in Borrowdale. A pleasant blue-sky evening ended very rudely when a massive, apocalyptically grey cloud decided to empty the Atlantic Ocean onto us. If it isn't raining, it isn't training! Throughout our training, one thing became clear: trust in your colleagues is essential in mountain rescue, and this is what being a probationer is all about.

As probationers, we attend all training; this consists of a Friday evening and a Sunday each month. Training varies from workshops at the base or on local fells covering specific areas, for example management of

a hypothermic casualty, or a full call-out practice for a challenging scenario. Understanding the casualty's perspective is a vital part of our training, as we must appreciate what they see and feel. Consequently, we often act as casualties during practices, as there's no substitute for actually doing it. And that's how I found myself covered in fake blood in the dark and cold Setmurthy woods, wishing I'd chosen a more comfortable patch of ground, pretending to be an injured mountain biker and trying to remember all my symptoms. Ben's Oscar-worthy dramatic flair deserves special mention! Another memorable day was

being lowered off High Crag, as a simulated heavily injured climber, which certainly helped me understand the casualty's perspective!

The Gillerthwaite weekend in September is a highlight of the training year, and a great opportunity for us to get to know the Team. This year, we were asked to organise some events, which included: night orienteering, a two-team stretcher-carrying exercise, which was definitely not a race (but one group did complete it faster than the other), and a missing person search exercise across the Ennerdale Valley for a special pre-dinner prize. It was a valuable weekend with all the essential elements for effective training: heavy rain and sleep deprivation from snoring in the bunk rooms!

Involvement in live call-outs started in October, with us attending in a 'control room only' capacity. This gives an insight into the mechanics of a call-out, from the Team

leaving base, to liaising with the police and ambulance services, to sorting out all the equipment at the conclusion. The reality of mountain rescue became very evident to me when speaking by phone to a casualty stuck on Red Pike in heavy rain and strong wind in the dark. The distress in the casualty's voice brought home why mountain rescue teams exist – they were unable to get themselves down from Red Pike in those conditions, we can help, so we do. The only downside to 'control room only' is the very unwelcome requirement to sit in the warm, drinking endless cups of tea, while the rest of the Team are on a cold, wet, and dark fell somewhere. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it!

So what will 2026 bring for the three of us? Well, we've just returned from winter training in the Cairngorms, covering avalanche rescue and all the inevitable challenges of doing anything technical in winter conditions. For the rest of the year, there will be much more training. Then we might just squeeze in a bit more training, because it never stops in mountain rescue. When we're ready, we'll be out on the fells and away from the kettle and the control room. We can't wait!



On probation: Gavin, Juliet and Ben

Incidents 2025

Call-out 1

2nd January

Type: Lower leg injury

Location: Rannerdale Knotts

Weather: Cold, clear and icy

Duration: 3 hrs 30

Number of members on call-out: 22

A walker fell and injured their ankle in the valley above High Rannerdale. The Team was despatched but progress was slow due to icy roads. At the scene, the casualty was splinted and stretchered to the Team Sprinter, which transported them to their vehicle near Lanthwaite Green allowing them to make their own way to hospital.



Call-out 2

2nd January

Type: Police assist

Location: Waterloo Plantation

Weather: Cold, clear and icy

Duration: 1 hr

Number of members on call-out: 24

CMRT were asked to assist the Police with an incident off the main road at Waterloo Plantation, but were stood down on arrival.

Call-out 3

3rd January

Lost walkers

Ennerdale

Cold, clear, icy

2 hrs 30

16 members

Two wild-campers became disorientated and couldn't relocate their tent after a walk in the dark. Team leaders contacted them by phone, confirmed they were on the Anglers' Crag side of Ennerdale, and eventually found them on the north side. They were then assisted back to their vehicle.

Call-out 6

8th February

Overdue fell runner

Great Borne

Clear

30 mins

1 member

A caller reported their spouse had not returned from a run on Great Borne. The Team was stood down shortly afterwards as the runner turned up.

Call-out 7

27th February

Overdue walkers

Scarth Gap,

Buttermere

Dark, cold, clear

3 hrs 30

9 members

A party of four walkers became lost on Haystacks, above Black Sail Hut. Benighted, the two were found safe and well (if cold) by the Team. The other two had continued to Fleetwith Pike and were talked back down by Team members and tracked remotely, from the CMRT base, to ensure they made safe progress.

Call-out 4

5th January

Missing walkers

Dubs Hut, Fleetwith

Cold, snowy

1 hr

4 members

Team leaders took a call from a party staying at Dubs Hut, Fleetwith, reporting that others in their party were overdue. Later, the walkers made contact and the Team was stood down.

Call-out 5

5th January

Stuck vehicle

Red Dial

Dark, heavy snow

45 mins

3 members

A car was reported stuck in ice on the A595 near Red Dial. After assessing the situation it was possible for the occupants to turn round and return to Carlisle.

Training at Pillar Rock



Call-out 8

4th March

Type: Search (Keswick assist)

Location: Castlerigg Fell area

Weather: Overcast

Duration: 2 hrs

Number of members on call-out: 9

Keswick MRT asked CMRT, late on the 3rd March, the night before, to be ready to assist with an ongoing search early the following day. However, the search concluded before CMRT were deployed and the Team stood down.

A walker slipped and sustained a deep and substantial laceration. CMRT made their way up Mosedale valley in Team vehicles, continuing up Mellbreak on foot. The wound was dressed and protected before the casualty was stretched and lowered down to Crummock lakeshore. Helimed H08 landed at Low Ling Crag and took the casualty to Furness General Hospital for further treatment.

Call-out 9

4th March

Slip on steep ground

Mellbreak

Overcast, windy

18 members



Call-out 10

21st March

Lost dog

Rannerdale

Fine

1 hr 30

2 members

A dog walker reported they had lost their dog after it had run off in the Rannerdale Knotts area. They were advised to return to where the dog was last seen and to get in touch if they still couldn't locate it. They reported later to say they were back at their car with the dog.

Call-out 11

23rd March

Ankle injury

Honister mine track

Fine

1 hr 25

8 members

A walker reported they had rolled their ankle on the Honister Slate Mine track. As the Team were on training, a small group of members responded. On arrival at the mine's car park, mine staff reported they had located the casualty and brought them back down to the car park.

Call-out 13
4th April
Type: Lost walker
Location: Pillar
Weather: Fair
Duration: 30 min
Number of members
on call-out: 2 members

Two walkers became separated near Pillar summit, one of whom returned to the vehicle to find the other had not yet returned. As Team Leaders were deploying the Team, the other member turned up safe and well and the Team was stood down.



Call-out 14
7th April
Stuck sheep
Loweswater
Fair
15 mins
2 members

A member of the public found a sheep that was stuck in mud. The Team Leader liaised with the local farmer, who needed no further assistance.

Call-out 15
9th April.
Medical episode
Buttermere
Fine
1 hr 45
22 members

A walker was reported as exhausted and shivering on a path from Buttermere lake to Red Pike. A Team member already in the area located and assessed the casualty and, as they were quickly deteriorating, an ambulance was called. Within 30 minutes, a paramedic met the Team, further assessed the casualty and transferred them to West Cumberland Infirmary for urgent treatment.

Call-out 16
11th April
Missing person
(Keswick assist)
Whinlatter
Fine
3 hrs
13 members

CMRT were asked to assist Keswick MRT with an ongoing search for a missing person. In the late afternoon a search dog found the woman who was taken to hospital by land ambulance for further checks.



Call-out 12
27th March
Lost walker
High Stile
Low cloud, cold & windy
5 hrs 30
13 members

The Team was called out by an individual to report that their partner was lost on the High Stile ridge. Due to deteriorating conditions and the risk of hypothermia a limited call-out was initiated. The Team approached from Buttermere, working their way up Red Pike and along the ridge to High Stile. The casualty was located and escorted off the fell to Buttermere.

Call-out 17

13th April

Type: Paddle boarder in distress

Location: Crummock Water

Weather: Sunny & windy

Duration: 1 hr 15

Number of members on call-out:

15 members

A young paddle boarder reported that they were stuck in the middle of Crummock Water, with their parent struggling to get out of the water. A Fire Service boat was sent and CMRT were asked to support with Swiftwater Rescue Technicians. A boat returned them to the shore for assessment.

Call-out 19

23rd April

Overdue walker

Red Pike, Wasdale

Fair

30 mins

5 members

A walker was reported overdue, with their last known location as Red Pike. After further investigation, it transpired that the Red Pike in question was on Wasdale's patch and the incident was transferred to WMRT.

Call-out 20

24th April

Stuck walkers

Red Pike

Cloud at height

1 hr 15

1 member

Walkers reported themselves lost and unable to continue on difficult, steep ground near the summit of Red Pike. The Team Leader was able to guide them, over the phone, from their position to easier ground, after which they managed to safely descend back to their vehicle.

Call-out 18

18th April

Injured walker

(Keswick assist)

Great End

Rainy

2 hrs 15

16 members

Keswick MRT requested CMRT's assistance with a long stretcher carry. After mobilisation, police advised that the casualty party were making their own way off the hill, and the Team stood down and returned to base.

Call-out 21

3rd May

Missing person

Aspatia area

Fine

1 hr 10

13 members

The Team were called to assist with a search for a missing person in Aspatia. As they arrived, the missing person was found and the Team stood down.

Call-out 22

7th May

Lower limb injury

Looking Stead

Warm, sunny, clear

5 hrs

27 members

A walker had broken their ankle. The Team made its way down Ennerdale valley to Black Sail and HM Coastguard Helicopter Rescue 912 arrived on the scene as the first Team vehicle pulled up. They lowered their paramedic to the casualty then uplifted a couple of Team members while the rest of the Team made their way up on foot. The injury was splinted and the casualty given pain relief before being winched aboard for onward transfer to Cumberland Infirmary.



Call-out 23

14th May

Type: Lost walker

Location: Red Pike

Weather: Clear, warm & dark

Duration: 3 hrs 30

Number of members on call-out: 7

CMRT was called out by a well-equipped walker who had become benighted and disorientated near the summit of Red Pike. Using PhoneFind the individual was located on the Ennerdale-facing slopes. A limited call-out was initiated. The Team quickly made their way to Red Pike summit, located the individual and escorted them safely back down to Buttermere village.



Call-out 24

15th May

Stuck Walker

Black Beck

Clear

1 hr 57

5 members

A walker reported their partner in difficulty, fearing a fall. Photos indicated they were in the ghyll from Black Beck Tarn, Haystacks. Team members located the walker and escorted them safely off the fell.

Call-out 25

17th May

Distress alert

Gasgale Gill

Clear

20 mins

4 members

A member of the public reported they had seen a green flare go up between Whiteside and Gasgale Gill. A couple of Team members drove out and, after further enquiries, the Team Leader concluded no further action was needed.

Call-out 27

23rd May

Dislocated knee (Keswick Assist)

Littledale Edge

Cloudy & windy

2 hrs

9 members

Keswick MRT requested assistance with a long stretcher carry for a walker with a dislocated knee between Robinson and Hindscarth. A Coastguard helicopter landed nearby and airlifted the casualty to Newlands Hause, where the Team assisted them to their vehicle for onward transport to hospital.

Call-out 28

30th May

Medical

Haystacks

Breezy, cloudy & cool

3 hrs 30

16 members

An individual became unwell near the summit of Haystacks and was unable to continue their walk. The Team assessed the casualty and due to the nature of the illness requested the assistance of helicopter Helimed 75. The casualty was packaged and airlifted to Furness General Hospital for further treatment.



Call-out 26

22nd May

Stuck wheelchair user

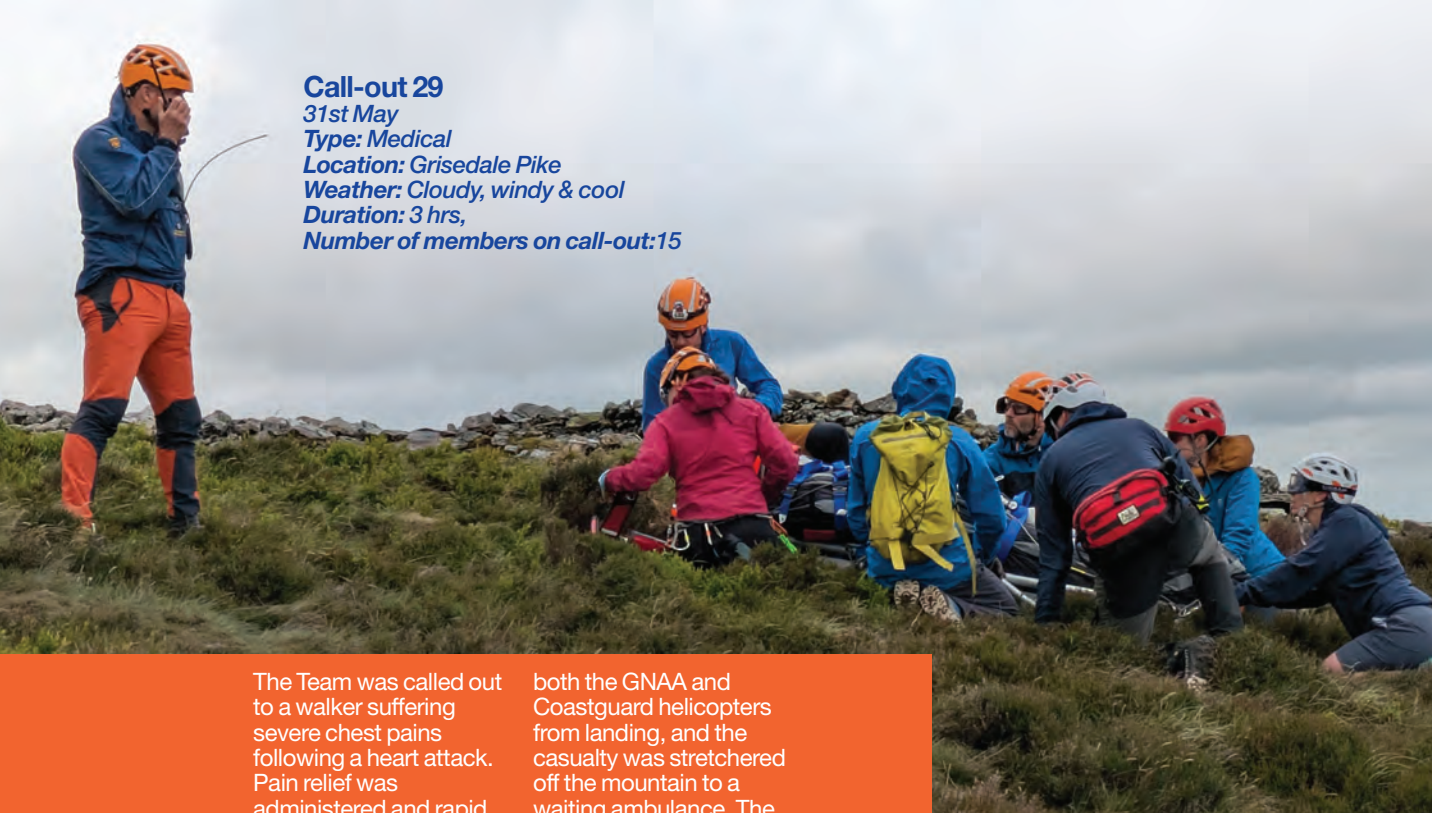
Longlands Lake, Cleator

Sunny

1 hr 36

17 members

North West Ambulance Service asked CMRT for assistance extracting a wheelchair user from eight feet down in a ditch. On arrival, NWAS paramedics had been able to help them out of the ditch and had started treatment. The Team were no longer required and returned to base.



Call-out 29
 31st May
 Type: Medical
 Location: Grisedale Pike
 Weather: Cloudy, windy & cool
 Duration: 3 hrs,
 Number of members on call-out:15

The Team was called out to a walker suffering severe chest pains following a heart attack. Pain relief was administered and rapid extraction prioritised. Poor weather prevented

both the GNAA and Coastguard helicopters from landing, and the casualty was stretchered off the mountain to a waiting ambulance. The casualty later made a good recovery.

Call-out 32
 11th June
 Head injury
 Haystacks
 Sunny & warm
 2 hrs 30
 17 members

The Team was called to an individual with a head injury on Haystacks. With scarce details and the potential consequences of head trauma, an HM Coastguard helicopter was requested. On assessment, it was clear the casualty had a severe scalp wound requiring hospital care. The casualty was treated and packaged before being stretchered to the waiting Rescue 936 helicopter at Innominate Tarn.



Call-out 30
 1st June
 Lost, injured walker
 Buttermere valley area
 Dark
 1 hr
 17 members

The North West Ambulance Service asked CMRT to assist with a walker who had injured their ankle but could not give their location. The Team was called out to begin a search of Buttermere valley. Another call shortly after confirmed the casualty had been helped by a member of the public and returned safely to their vehicle.

Call-out 31
 9th June
 Missing walker
 Moses Trod
 Dark, windy & very wet
 7 hrs 30
 14 members



CMRT was called after a coast-to-coast walker failed to reach their Borrowdale accommodation initiating a ground search between Ennerdale and Honister Pass. The weather was atrocious and at points the Team was unable to cross normally benign streams due to the high volumes of fast moving water. The missing person was found deceased on Moses Trod and was taken to Honister Slate Mine with assistance from Keswick MRT.

Call-out 33
 11th June
 Ankle injury
 River Derwent
 Clear
 20 mins
 3 members

As the Team made its way along the Buttermere valley to call-out 32 on Haystacks, another call came in about a walker with an injured ankle. Three Team members were diverted to deal with this, though within 20 minutes they were stood down as the casualty had made their way to their car with assistance from members of the public.

Call-out 34

12th June

Type: Ankle injury

Location: Scale Beck, Crummock

Weather: Sunny & warm

Duration: 3 hrs

Number of members on call-out: 16

CMRT was called out for the fourth time in a week when a walker with an ankle injury was reported near Scale Force above Crummock Water. Two Team members in the vicinity were already on the scene and had assessed the casualty, identifying an isolated ankle injury. The walker's ankle was splinted, then they were carried to a waiting NWA ambulance at Buttermere.



Call-out 36

19th June

Ankle injury

Gatesgarth, Buttermere

Sunny

1 hr 24

6 members

A walker injured their ankle near Gatesgarth Farm, Buttermere. The Team splinted the casualty's ankle and assisted them to their vehicle to travel to hospital.

Call-out 37

19th June

Head injury

Crummock

Sunny

1 hr 7

14 members

A walker fell on the Crummock Water lakeshore path, sustaining a significant laceration to the head. On the Team's arrival, they had recovered sufficiently to make their way back to their vehicle.

Call-out 38

19th June

Head injury

Buttermere

lakeshore

Sunny

3 hrs 36

18 members



Before returning from call-out 37, the Team helped a walker near Buttermere who had fallen 10 feet from the lakeshore path. The casualty had sustained a head injury with lacerations. The Team provided medical care, took them to the path, and stretchered them to helicopter Helimed 58 for further hospital treatment.

Call-out 35

13th June

Tumbling fall

Scarth Gap

Clear

2 hrs 50

23 members

A member of the public reported they heard shouts for help above Scarth Gap, Haystacks. A walker was reported to have taken a significant fall. An HM Coastguard helicopter was requested while the Team approached from Gatesgarth Farm. The casualty, who had significant chest and back injuries along with superficial head wounds, was stabilised and transferred directly to Rescue 199 at the top of Scarth Gap.



What they thought of us... 2025



“Thanks to all those involved and the professional and kind care”

“What a fantastic team”

“Very grateful to all for their swift arrival and getting me down”

“So reassuring in a frightening situation for me”

“Organised and efficient, thanks for the kindness and skill you showed”

“I've no idea how I would have got off the hill without your help”

Call-out 39

19th June

Type: Missing person

Location: Ennerdale lake

Weather: Sunny

Duration: 23 mins

Number of members on call-out: 8

The police requested assistance with an ongoing search for a missing person on Ennerdale lakeshore. As the Team were preparing to deploy, the missing person was located and the Team stood down.

Call-out 40

19th June

Request for help

Torpenhow area

Dark

1 hr

4 members

A call was made to the police asking for mountain rescue, before the call was cut off. No further call was made and, after exhausting all lines of enquiry, the police were unable to establish any further information and the Team stood down.

Call-out 41

26th June

Head injury

Buttermere Lakeshore

Clear

1 hr 10

16 members

A call was received about a walker who had fallen on rocks in the water, injuring their forehead. The Team made its way down the valley but was phoned shortly before arrival to say the walker had been helped to safety by members of the public and taken to hospital.

Call-out 43

29th June

Deceased walker

Kirkfell Tarn

Warm & sunny

4 hrs 20

19 members

A group of walkers found an unresponsive person on the summit of Kirk Fell. The Team was called out, making its way down Ennerdale Valley before ascending Kirk Fell via Baysoar Slack. The individual was confirmed deceased. The Team ensured the walkers who had found the person were OK, then packaged the casualty on a stretcher and transported them to the vehicles at Black Sail.

Call-out 42

27th June

Stuck camper

Bleaberry Tarn,

Red Pike

Heavy rain

4 hrs 22

3 members

A camper had overnighted at Bleaberry Tarn and woke to high winds and persistent heavy rain. They felt unable to descend the long, slippery, rocky path to Buttermere and called CMRT, who sent a couple of Team members to assist.

Call-out 44

3rd July

Panic Attack

Anglers' Crag

Ennerdale

Light cloud

3 hrs

11 members

A walker began experiencing a panic attack as they traversed the rocky outcrop of Anglers' Crag in Ennerdale. As the Team approached, it was reported that a member of the public had helped the walker and they had made their own way along the path without further assistance being necessary.





Call-out 45
 8th July
 Type: Lower leg injury
 Location: Warnscale Bothy
 Weather: Warm & sunny
 Duration: 3 hrs
 Number of members on call-out: 17

A walker fell near Warnscale Bothy, feeling a snap in their lower leg. It was clear that the leg was broken, analgesia was administered and the limb splinted. The casualty was packaged on a stretcher and evacuated to Honister Slate Mine car park, where they were handed over to a NWS ambulance for further treatment

Call-out 48
 12th July
 Lost walkers
 Ennerdale
 Sunny
 14 mins
 3 members

A group of Duke of Edinburgh walkers reported that they were lost. While negotiating patchy phone signal, the group were redirected by another walking group allowing the Team to stand down.

Call-out 49
 14th July
 Missing person
 Beaumont village, Carlisle
 Sunny
 2 hrs 20
 4 members

A member of the public was reported missing, having not made contact with their family as planned. On further investigation, the CMRT Team Leader passed the incident back to the police for resolution.

Call-out 46
 11th July
 Facial injury
 Burtness Wood, Buttermere
 Sunny
 3 hrs
 11 members

A walker tripped along Buttermere lakeshore, sustaining a deep cut to her nose. Members of the public assisted the casualty to Buttermere, where the Team controlled the bleeding and dressed the wound. With no ambulances available, the Team transported the casualty to hospital for further treatment.



Call-out 50
 16th July
 Lower leg injury
 Nr Scale Island, Crummock lakeshore
 Sunny
 3 hrs 20
 18 members

A walker slipped with a suspected ankle fracture. Pain relief was given and the casualty's leg was splinted. The casualty was stretchered to Buttermere where the ankle was reset and stabilised before onward ambulance transportation to hospital.

Call-out 51
 16th July
 Lost walkers
 Scale Knott, Crummock
 Sunny
 13 mins
 3 members

A second call was received for some lost walkers less than a kilometre away from the location for call-out 50. A Team member was dispatched and found the lost walkers with another group of hikers who had got them back on track.

A walker fell and hurt their wrist. The Team administered pain relief and splinted the injury. The casualty was then escorted on foot back to a waiting NWS ambulance.

Call-out 47
 11th July
 Wrist injury
 Ennerdale lakeshore
 Sunny
 3 hrs
 19 members



Call-out 52

17th July
 Type: Broken wrists
 Location: Beneath Anglers' Crag,
 Ennerdale lakeshore
 Weather: Sunny
 Duration: 2 hrs 30
 Number of members
 on call-out: 14

A woman tripped on uneven, rocky ground on the lakeshore path sustaining fractures to both wrists. The Team treated the casualty and stretchered her to Bleach Green for onward transport to hospital.

Call-out 53

20th July
 Overdue walkers
 Haystacks
 Fair
 2 hrs 45
 3 members

Two walkers were reported missing, having been well overdue from their walk, with particular concern due to known medical conditions. After further investigation, a call was received to confirm they had both turned up safe and well.

Call-out 54

29th July
 Missing walkers
 Scale Force, Buttermere
 Fair
 1 hr 43
 3 members

A walker was reported missing, with their last known location by Scale Force. A drone and search party were organised, but the missing walker turned up as the search party was deployed and the Team stood down.



Call-out 56

29th July
 Knee injury
 Warnscale Bothy,
 Buttermere
 Cloudy
 2 hrs 30
 12 members

After hearing shouts and whistle blasts, a member of the public reported a fallen walker in a precarious position. Having dislocated their knee, the casualty was secured and moved to safer ground before relocation and splinting. They were then evacuated to an ambulance at Honister Mine.

Call-out 57

2nd August
 Ankle injury
 Under Crag Fell,
 Ennerdale lakeshore
 Sunny
 15 mins
 3 members

A walker tripped on the rocky path, sustaining an ankle injury. The casualty managed to hobble back to their vehicle at Bleach Green to get a lift to hospital and the Team stood down.

Call-out 55

26th July
 Head injury
 Great Gable
 Cloudy
 4 hrs 10
 18 members

The Team were called by Wasdale MRT to support a woman who had sustained facial injuries and leg lacerations following a tumbling fall on the descent to Beck Head. Her injuries were treated on the scene before an assisted evacuation off the steep ground to Honister Mine for hospital treatment.

Call-out 58

7th August

Type: Lost walkers

Location: Seat summit,
Buttermere

Weather: Dark & stormy

Duration: 8 hrs

Number of members on call-out: 2

After pitching camp in benign conditions, two campers' tent collapsed around 2 am after the weather deteriorated. Following discussion with the Team Leader, they chose to remain in place as the weather was improving, with agreed updates if their situation worsened. All was well by morning and the Team stood down.

Call-out 59

14th August

Cardiac arrest

Little Man summit
Skiddaw

Fair

3 hrs

11 members

CMRT assisted Keswick MRT with a 54-year-old man who had suffered a cardiac arrest. CPR was already underway by passing walkers as the Teams arrived and continued the resuscitation effort. Sadly, and despite the efforts of all involved, the person could not be saved.



Call-out 60

15th August

Benighted walkers

Red Pike

Dark

3 hrs 30

4 members

Two walkers became benighted. They had the very technical descent from the summit to negotiate in the dark. The Team made their way to the casualties before escorting them back to Buttermere.

Call-out 61

16th August

Benighted

walkers

High Stile

Dark

3 hrs 30

7 members

CMRT was called to two walkers who had lost the path and become benighted. A limited call-out located the pair, who were escorted off the mountain to their vehicle at Gatesgarth.

Call-out 65

23rd August

Crashed cyclist

Honister Pass

Clear

1 hr 40

4 members

A mountain biker sustained a head injury after crashing into a wall at Honister Pass. The Team arrived on scene but were stood down, as the North West Ambulance Service were already in attendance.

Call-out 63

21st August

Overdue paddleboarders

Buttermere

Clear

25 mins

4 members

Two paddleboarders were reported missing, having not returned to their accommodation well after they were expected. Soon after the call was made, however, they both returned safe and well.

Call-out 64

23rd August

Concern for missing walker

Grasmoor summit

Clear

30 mins

3 members

A walker arrived on Grasmoor to find a full hiking backpack, but with no-one in sight over a wide view. They were concerned that something had happened to the owner. After further investigation, the Team stood down.

Call-out 62

17th August

Ankle injury

Bleaberry Tarn,

Buttermere

Sunny

2 hrs

16 members

A charity walker turned their ankle and was unable to continue. With limited numbers and a difficult, protracted stretcher evacuation, a helicopter was called. Once the casualty's ankle was stabilised, they were packaged in a stretcher and transferred to the helicopter for further treatment.

Call-out 66

24th August

Type: Missing person

Location: Mosedale

Weather: Clear

Duration: 20 mins

Number of members on call-out: 2

A walker was reported missing, having not returned from a walk. As further information was sought and a plan formulated, the walker turned up safe and well.

Call-out 68

23rd September

Missing walkers

High Stile, Haystacks

Dark

1 hr

2 members

Two walkers were reported missing, likely to be somewhere between the High Stile ridge and Haystacks. As the Team were preparing to deploy, the missing walkers made contact and the Team was able to stand down.

Call-out 69

24th September

Lower leg injury

Low Fell

Cloudy

3 hrs 10

19 members

A walker turned their ankle on the steep descent from the Low Fell saddle. Unable to continue, the Team treated the casualty before stretching them to the CMRT vehicles for onward transport to their accommodation.

Call-out 67

21st September

Collapsed walker

Congra Moss,

Lampugh

Sunny

2 hrs 10

17 members

A walker was reported to have lost consciousness after walking up a steep path. The Team doctor assessed the casualty, who had regained consciousness. The casualty was driven to an awaiting ambulance and transported to hospital for further treatment.

Call-out 70

25th September

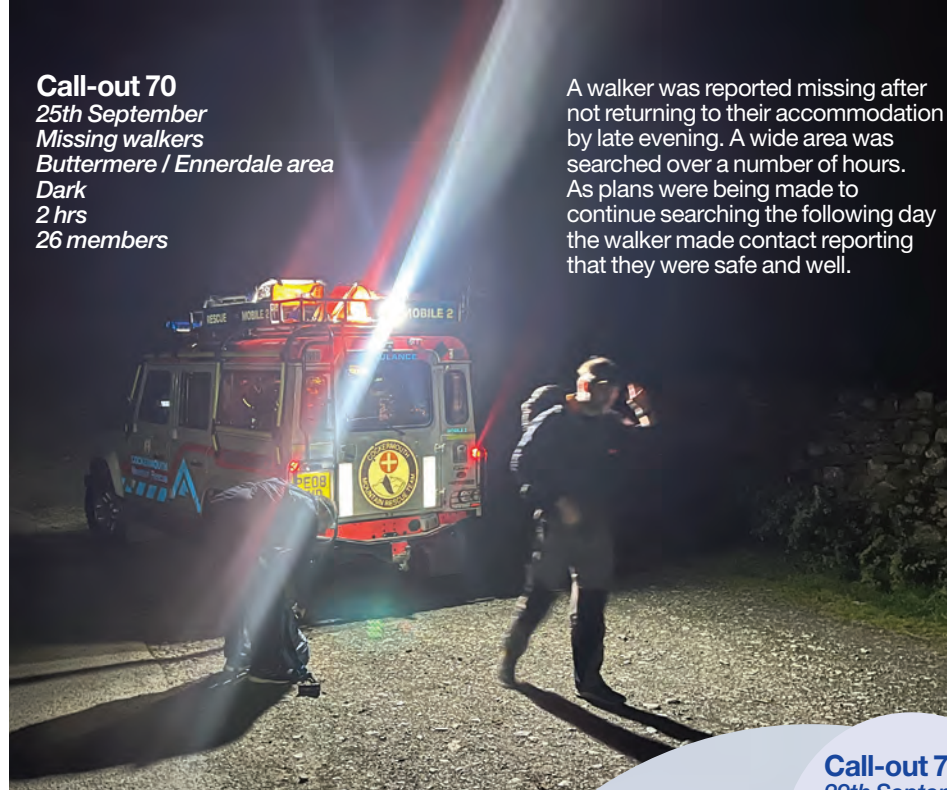
Missing walkers

Buttermere / Ennerdale area

Dark

2 hrs

26 members



A walker was reported missing after not returning to their accommodation by late evening. A wide area was searched over a number of hours. As plans were being made to continue searching the following day the walker made contact reporting that they were safe and well.

Call-out 71

29th September

Crashed paraglider

Beneath Binsey

Cloudy

2 hrs

18 members



CMRT were called to a paraglider who had sustained a leg injury during a heavy landing. The Team administered pain relief and immobilised the casualty in a vacuum mattress to prevent further injury. The casualty was then stretchered to an ambulance for hospital treatment.



Call-out 72

29th September

Type: Fallen walker

Location: Nr Hassness, Buttermere

Weather: Cloud

Duration: 2 hrs 30

Number of members on call-out: 18
+ KMRT members

A second call was received for a man who had fallen three metres from the lakeshore path, requiring Keswick MRT to lead. With multiple significant injuries and prolonged water immersion, the casualty was treated and hauled back up to the path and evacuated to an ambulance.



A walker reported an ankle injury on the Crummock lakeshore path. Luckily, the casualty was able to walk with Team assistance to the village.

Call-out 76

4th October

Ankle injury

Beneath Scales,

Crummock

Rain

2 hrs 12

21 members

Call-out 73

30th September

Dislocated ankle

Aaron Slack, Seathwaite

Rain

2 hrs 30

6 members

CMRT assisted Keswick MRT with a woman who had slipped and dislocated her ankle. The Team provided additional personnel for the long stretcher carry back to Seathwaite.

Call-out 77

10th October

Cragfast

Scale Force,

Buttermere

Clear

10 mins,

4 members

A group exploring Scale Force, reported that one member had become cragfast, whilst another was stuck in the water. During mobilisation, the Team were notified that the group had managed to extract themselves from the waterfall and were no longer in danger.

Call-out 75

2nd October

Lower leg injury

Dodd, under Red Pike

Storm

1 hr 40

28 members

Two walkers reported that one had hurt their knee in late evening. The Team was mobilised for a potentially difficult and protracted stretcher evacuation, with challenging weather preventing helicopter assistance. However, with some pain relief and Team assistance, the walkers were able to slowly walk off the mountain.



Call-out 78
12th October
Type: Cragfast
Location: Pillar Rock
Weather: Dark
Duration: 2 hrs 30
Number of members on call-out: 24

Two walkers descending Pillar became stuck in the complex and precipitous west side. In darkness on the most dangerous ground in our area, the Team began preparing for a difficult rescue. Whilst en-route, a passing helicopter winched both casualties aboard, returning them to their vehicle in Buttermere.

Call-out 79
21st October
Overdue walkers
Warnscale, Buttermere
Dark, cloudy
1 hr 30
4 members

Two friends were searching for Warnscale Bothy. As darkness fell, one returned to their car while the other continued searching. The returned walker later phoned for assistance. During mobilisation, a nearby Team member located both walkers reunited and uninjured, and the Team stood down.

Two climbers descending Pillar Rock became stranded after their ropes jammed. They self-rescued to Low Man but, with light fading and weather deteriorating, secured themselves and requested assistance. The Team rigged a fixed line up the Old West route, allowing the climbers to down-climb with assistance, before being escorted safely off the mountain.

Call-out 82
28th October
Cragfast climbers
Low Man, Pillar
Dark
5 hrs 30
5 members

Call-out 80
22nd October
Lost walkers
Rannerdale Knotts
Calm
50 mins
4 members

Two walkers became unable to descend Rannerdale Knotts. With reassurance and advice over the phone, they were guided safely down to the road.



Call-out 81
25th October.
Broken hip
Buttermere.
Cold & clear
1 hr 45
7 members

A walker slipped beside Buttermere Court Hotel, sustaining a suspected neck of femur fracture. Although tasked to NWAS, delays were expected due to high demand. A passing Team member assessed the casualty and the incident was subsequently escalated. The casualty was kept warm until the ambulance arrived.

Call-out 83
13th November
Migraine
Dubs Hut, above
Buttermere
Dawn
3 hrs 10
14 members

An early-morning walker reported severe migraine and nausea and was unable to continue. With limited information, the Team searched the area. No casualty was located and the Team stood down. Shortly afterwards, the walker made contact to confirm they had returned to their vehicle safely.



Call-out 84

16th November

Type: Seizures

Location: Dubs Hut, above Buttermere

Weather: Dark

Duration: 2 hr 45

Number of members on call-out: 13

A camper at Dubs Hut reported experiencing multiple seizures overnight. The Team assessed the casualty, then transported them to an ambulance at Honister Pass. Following further assessment, the casualty was taken to their vehicle in Buttermere, and driven home by friends.

Call-out 85

19th November

Lost dog

Whiteoak Moss, Gavel

Cold & windy

1 hr 10

2 members

A walker reported their dog had run off and they were requesting helicopter assistance. The Team managed to contact and locate the walker, confirming they were safe and making their way off the fell. Happily, the dog was found by a member of the public.

Call-out 86

20th November

Stuck car

Newlands Hause

Cold

2 hrs

2 members

A couple driving up Newlands Pass in icy conditions became unable to proceed, blocking the road. With recovery and emergency services unable to access the location, the Team used snow chains on a Land Rover to bring the stuck pair to safety. The road was closed and the vehicle left in-situ until conditions allowed recovery.

Call-out 87

21st November

Broken ankle

Whiteless Pike

Cold & dark

2 hrs

20 members

A walker sustained an ankle fracture while descending in snowy conditions. Helimed 08 arrived on the scene as Team members started up the hill, airlifting the casualty to hospital. The Team escorted the remaining walker off the hill in darkness.

Call-out 88

30th November

Ankle injury

Swinside

Cold

1 hr 15

19 members

A walker reported an ankle injury near Hope Beck. The Team treated the casualty before they were stretchered to an ambulance for hospital treatment. The casualty's dog was looked after overnight by an enthusiastic Team member!

Call-out 89

1st December

Stuck walker

Warnscale

Dark & heavy rain

1 hr 30


10 members

The Team responded to a walker stuck in boggy ground near Warnscale Beck. The casualty was extracted and transported back to their vehicle.



Call-out 90
14th December
Leg injury
Lingmell Col
Dark & stormy
6 hrs
9 members

CMRT assisted Wasdale MRT, alongside Duddon and Furness MRT, with a walker who had sustained a leg injury in challenging conditions. The teams stretched the casualty to Brackenclose, while their companions were assisted down via the Corridor Route, reuniting in the car park.

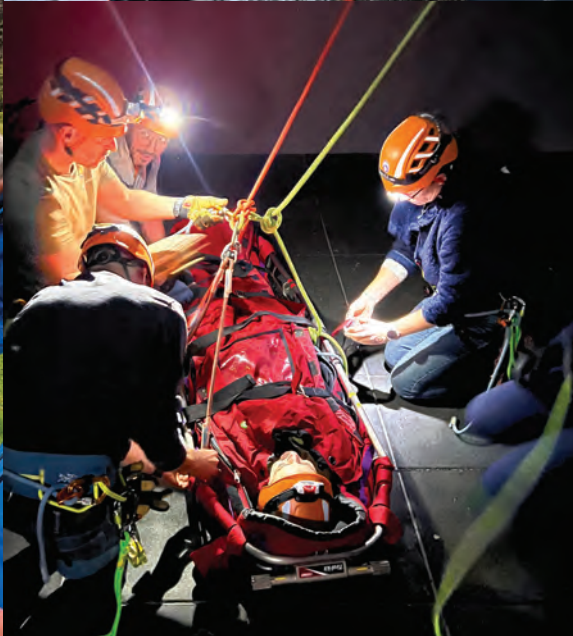


Call-out 91
26th December
Broken wrist
Loweswater Fell
Cold
2 hrs
19 members

A walker slipped on steep ground. The Team administered pain relief and splinted their wrist. The casualty was then assisted off the fell on foot, before further treatment at hospital.



TRAINING



Cockermouth Mountain Rescue has always enjoyed a strong relationship with Honister Slate Mine, and in recent years we've got to know Piers and Prentice Weir, who run the mine, even better.

Their pub, *The Yew Tree*, has become a favourite debrief spot after rescues in that part of the Lakes. We regularly use the mine and via ferrata for training, and the access roads up to the quarry provide invaluable vehicle

access to the plateau behind Fleetwith Pike during callouts.

Whenever we can, we look for ways to support the mine. One such opportunity comes every June, when Honister hosts a fell race with a twist.

'The Bowels of Fleetwith' is a unique 6km race that embraces every quirk of the landscape. Runners start behind the Honister Youth Hostel, charge up the mine track, grab a helmet, and plunge into the depths of the mine. Some time later they reappear high on the

mountain before completing a circuit of Fleetwith Pike and Grey Knotts, then blasting back down to the Honister buildings.

Ten Team members, accompanied by two dedicated dogs, volunteered to marshal the 2025 race, only slightly enticed by the promise of free refreshments in *The Yew Tree* afterwards. One of our more enthusiastic (and successful) fell runners, Karolina, immediately entered the race. About five minutes later she began pestering me to join her. I declined.

When race day arrived, Cumbrian weather delivered its finest: low cloud, heavy rain and strong winds. Ideal fell running conditions. By this point, my resolve had been steadily eroded by Karolina's persistence, and at the eleventh hour I caved and grabbed a late entry.

The Team marshals headed out to their

checkpoints, swaddled in waterproofs, ready for two hours stationary in the glorious weather. Meanwhile Karolina and I pinned on our numbers and tried to ignore the rising pre race nerves.

The race unfolded in three parts: a sprint to the mine entrance to avoid congestion, a lung busting ascent of the mine incline (where overtaking is impossible), and then roughly five kilometres of rough fell running. As we lined up at the start, it was clear everyone knew the opening sprint would be flat out. The tension was palpable.

Karolina and I wished each other luck and edged towards the front. The starting pistol cracked through the wind and the pack surged forward. As always, the first hundred metres felt easy, then the oxygen debt kicked in. To add some excitement, one of the mine buses chose that

moment to trundle down the track, but it was swiftly overtaken.

I reached the mine entrance with the lead group, shoved on a helmet, and awkwardly continued running along the level before the incline loomed ahead. Then came the relentless climb, hands and feet working together, lungs burning, and absolutely no room for anyone to pass without risking a serious fall.

After what felt like an eternity, we emerged into the main working area of the mine and, two hundred metres later, burst out onto the fell about half a mile below the summit of Fleetwith. Helmets were ditched and we pressed on, instantly saturated by the rain and wind. Marshals appeared out of the mist in *Cockermouth Blue* jackets, pointing the way and giving

both Karolina and me a huge boost as our Team-mates cheered us on.

The fell section passed in a blur until Grey Knotts, where the trick was to find the Bob Graham descent line and hammer it as fast as possible back to the car park. By this point I suspected I was in the lead, but I was very aware someone could be closing in, so it was full steam ahead to the finish.

Shortly after crossing the line, and attempting to regain my breath, I spotted Karolina flying down the fell with grim determination.

Between us, we managed to finish first male and first female, a fantastic result for both of us and for Cockermouth Mountain Rescue. It certainly made that first pint in *The Yew Tree* taste even better.

Huge thanks to Piers, Prentice and the whole Honister team for a brilliant event, excellent trophies, and even better refreshments. We're already looking forward to defending our titles in 2026.

Into 'The Bowels of Fleetwith'

by Tom Durcan



Karolina and Tom with their winners' awards.



With stomachs twisted into tight knots, they walked towards the room where the exam was to be held.

Cold sweat coated palms and foreheads despite the dry morning air. Their hearts hammered so loudly it was a wonder others could not hear. Each step felt heavy and uncertain; legs weak, as if they might give way at any moment. Mouths were dry, despite repeated swallowing as they fought down the urge to be sick. Meanwhile, thoughts raced in frantic loops –



Testing times

Mark Steel on the Triennial Remote Rescue Medical Technician (RRMT) Exam

mnemonics half-remembered, DRCABCDE, ATMIST, normal values and contraindications slipping away, worst-case failures replaying again and again. By the time they reached the door, breaths were coming shallow and fast, and papers held in hands, trembled as much as they did.

And this was just the examiners!

2025 was one of those dreaded years in which CMRT sat the RRMT exam. For historical reasons, our Team

sits the exam *en masse* every three years. It is possible to be a Team member and not sit the exam, but most choose to do so. The exam now consists of a Single Best Answer written paper, a practical exam consisting of medical and trauma scenarios, supported by a comprehensive syllabus and online resources. Before sitting the exam, candidates must complete a logbook showing proficiency in 34 RRMT clinical skills, including Basic Life Support and use of a defibrillator, so the build-up to exam day takes several months and requires many hours of hard work.

In 2025 we examined 33 candidates (two of whom were from other teams) and had nine examiners. Candidates

“Before the exam, candidates must complete a logbook showing proficiency in 34 clinical skills.”

and examiners are all volunteers, and we are incredibly grateful to Drs Caroline Bateman, James Wardrope, Ahmed Abbas and Ali Atkinson, and Suzanne Wilson RGN, for assisting the Team doctors and paramedic/ACP in the exam, which took the best part of a day! I am pleased to say all candidates passed!

As a Team Doctor, I have been involved in at least nine Team exams and also helped examine several other Lake District teams' candidates during this time, and it is always a tense experience. There is a certain amount of pride and awe in seeing a candidate do really well in the exam, and equally one feels awful for candidates who do not pass, particularly when it is down to nerves. Even members who are very capable “on the hill” can go to pieces in exam scenarios.

In 2024 it was my turn to suffer when I took the RRMT exam myself. I had retired from clinical practice as a GP and needed to pass the exam to continue providing care and to use the drugs available on the mountain rescue formulary. The written paper I found easy, but my relief on passing the scenarios was huge – they are indeed very intense! Failure was not an option, if only for the sake of my pride. I can confirm that being an examiner is far better than being a candidate! Many thanks to Wasdale Team for allowing me to join their RRMT course and exam as a candidate in 2024. It was an honour to return the favour, as an examiner for their RRMT exam in 2025.

Roll on 2027-8!



‘Captain Bul’

Out in the storm-tossed North Sea, a lonely boat did sail,
From the ice capped peaks of Norway – blonde maidens and good ale.

A course was set for England, so with stars all shining bright,
They left behind the fjords and the famous Northern Lights.

When a storm it came from nowhere, the wind began to blow,
The crew did pray for rescue while huddled down below.

But one man there he stood alone, his back against the mast,
As he held onto the rudder and faced the icy blast.

No call was sent for rescue, a lifeboat he'd disdained
For he'd spent his youth on trawlers, salt water in his veins.

The crew did weep but to no avail for they had to start and bale,
While up above the captain roared, ‘I think I've seen a whale!’.

The Thunder rolled, the lightning flashed, the crew were all seasick,
While up above, again a shout, ‘I've just seen Moby Dick!’

But soon the storm was over, and they reached a friendly shore,
To find at last haven, for they'd been shaken to the core.

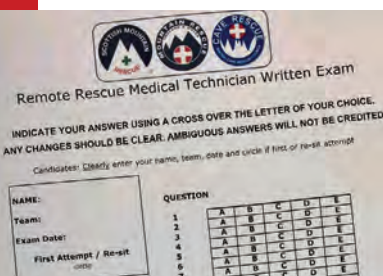
So, who was the gallant hero who saved his boat and crew?
Who stood alone and faced the gale and dangers all anew.

Who made them all their breakfasts and told them many tales?
Of roaring seas and fishing boats out hunting for the whale.

Let's stand and drink a toast lads, make sure your glass is full,
Here's to the famous mariner: the good old Captain Bul.

John Bulman, Bul, joined Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team in November 1965 – before most of our current Team members were born. In November 2025, we held a special evening at Jennings Brewery to celebrate John's incredible 60 years in the Team and his dedication to helping walkers and climbers on and around our fells. What you may not know is that ‘Bul’ is also a seasoned mariner of some repute! Team President, Jim Coyle BEM, penned this poem as a tribute to one of CMRT's longest serving and most renowned Team members.

From top left: John (centre) on an early call-out; John (on the right) in 1977; on a call-out in 2021; and John at the helm.



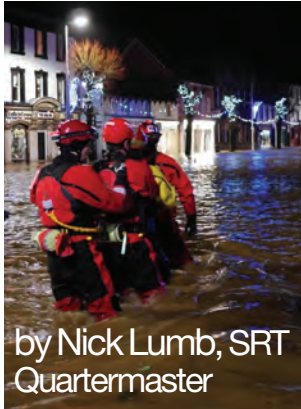
When the going gets wet

Life in the Swiftwater Rescue Team

Since the devastating floods of 2015 that affected Cockermouth and much of Cumbria, Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team, along with many teams in the Lake District, has extensively developed its flood and swift water rescue capability. This has enabled the Team to respond locally and regionally to emergencies involving water.

Whilst water rescue might seem like a far cry from traditional mountain rescue, many of the skills required for working in the flood and swift water environment are similar. With additional training and equipment, Cockermouth MRT has developed a well-qualified and experienced Water Team of specialist rescuers who are ready to put themselves in the water at a moment's notice.

Over the last 15 years, CMRT has invested much time and energy in training and qualifying many of its



by Nick Lumb, SRT Quatermaster

members. The Team has utilised the expertise of Rescue 3 Europe, a world-renowned water rescue provider who delivers internationally recognised training and accreditation for working in the high-risk environment of flood and swift water. The training and assessment process has involved learning many new skills and techniques. These skills include swift water swimming, understanding hydrology (the movement and

flow of water), working in the flood environment, and specialist rope rescue techniques. The courses and qualifications range in duration, are intensive and demanding (particularly if undertaken in wintertime!) and provide the necessary skills and knowledge for the Team to carry out its role.

The qualifications that Team members have gained all require regular renewal and a programme of continuous professional development to keep them up to date. The Team regularly utilises the lakes and rivers in and around Cockermouth for training and development and can be found venturing further afield should water levels be more suitable elsewhere. Water levels locally are sometimes unsuitable for training – Mother Nature doesn't always deliver! As a result, the Team regularly visits the white-water training facility at Pinkston, in Glasgow. The white-water course is a man-made river

where the water levels can be controlled by a series of giant pumps. This enables a tailored, specific training programme and has advanced the Team's capability no end. It's fantastic to have such a facility only a few hours drive away.

The Team currently has ten fully qualified, equipped, and experienced Flood and Swift Water Rescue Technicians (SRTs). Four technicians are advanced level, a qualification that requires additional training and experience. Two Team members are Flood and Swift Water Rescue Instructors, who have the ability to deliver certified courses, training and CPD in-house, regionally and nationally.

The equipment required for venturing into the water environment is a little different from that used in the mountains. Each Team member is equipped with state-of-the-art Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) designed to protect them from the harsh, potentially polluted, and often cold environment of flood and swift water. Dry suits, personal flotation devices (PFDs), water helmets, specialist boots, gloves, waterproof lighting

“Well-qualified and experienced rescuers who are ready to put themselves in the water at a moment's notice.”



and technical rigging ropes and equipment are just some of the items required for each Water Team member. The Water Team has two rescue craft; a full white-water-specification inflatable raft suitable for fast-flowing, high-volume, aerated water, and a smaller, nimbler, rescue sled that is well suited to carrying a stretcher and extracting a casualty from the water.

The investment in training and equipment has been put

to good use over the past 15 years. The Team has been involved in a wide variety of water-specific incidents, both locally, regionally and nationally. Since the extensive rescue effort of the 2009 floods, the Team has been deployed to assist with the flood response and recovery effort in the 2015 floods that affected Cumbria, and has been sent further afield to assist in the flood recovery effort in York. Team members have conducted numerous river searches for missing people in and around the region and have been called to rescue individuals trapped in cars in flood water and rivers, and sent to search for missing kayakers, boaters, paddle boarders, swimmers, and walkers. The Team has worked closely with the police, fire service, Coastguard, and Maryport Inshore Lifeboat in the search for missing people on the coast and in many of the rivers and lakes around Cumbria.

The Team's exposure to regular, intensive training and a vast array of call-outs has enabled it to build a wealth of experience, ensuring it is well prepared for the next call-out, wherever that may be.



Mike & Marty
Gullen on...

Search Dogs in Mountain Rescue

The Lake District has always been a place of beauty, challenge, and risk – a landscape that inspires adventure but demands respect.

Its rescue organisations were born from the determination of volunteers who refused to stand by when others were in danger. Among them are the Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs Association (LDMRSDA) and CMRT, two groups whose histories are rooted in innovation, community spirit, and an unwavering commitment to saving lives in the fells.

Organised search dog work in the UK began in the late 1960s with the formation of the Search and Rescue Dog Association (SARDA). Mountaineer Hamish MacInnes, having

witnessed avalanche dog training in Switzerland, recognised the extraordinary potential of dogs' scenting abilities for British mountain rescue. From those early days grew regional groups, including the LDMRSDA, dedicated to training, developing, and deploying search dogs across the

Cumbrian fells. Today, every LDMRSDA handler is an operational member of a Lake District rescue team, trained in first aid and mountain survival. Their dogs work year-round in some of the UK's most demanding terrain, often making the difference between life and death.

CMRT shares similarly deep roots, with a proud tradition of producing exceptional search dog handlers. Jim Coyle, now our Team President, set the standard with his dog Rock – a Glencoe pup descended from

Hamish's own line. Since then, the Team has seen a remarkable succession of handlers: Mike Hadwin, Dave Russell, Jeff Haslam, Andrew McNeil (Macca), Rick and Kirk Outhwaite, Laura Connolly, and more recently, Tom Woolley with Search Dog Bess and me with Search Dog Marty. Both Tom and I remain active handlers within the Team and across the wider Lakes. Our dogs – energetic, sharp, and endlessly enthusiastic Border Collies – work seamlessly together on joint operations.

Marty finds the 'casualty'.

With such a long and distinguished history, our search dogs are treated as full Team members. They're equipped with the same high-quality gear, attend all Team events and call-outs, and are welcomed wherever we go. Casualties, relatives, and friends alike are often comforted by a search dog cuddle and the occasional enthusiastic lick.

When someone goes missing in the fells or areas around Cumbria, it's not just

“Every search is carefully planned, and the dogs are the stars of the Team.”

a game of 'follow the dog'. Every search is carefully planned, and the dogs are the stars of the Team. They air-scent, picking up human traces carried on the wind, sometimes from hundreds of metres away. Handlers break the landscape into manageable sections, and the dog runs systematic lines across each zone, moving downwind so the scent drifts towards them. The handler reads the terrain and the dog's signals, ensuring no area is missed. A dog signals a find, by barking at the body/ missing person and then returning to the handler and barking again. This sequence continues until the handler is with the missing person. At this point, the dog is rewarded with their favourite treat or game – a clear and unmistakable sign to the dog that they have had a successful find. This allows a small team to cover steep ridges, open moorland, and dense woodland quickly and efficiently and not only tells us if we have found someone or something (article, hat, glove or jacket, etc), it also tells us that there is no one there and we can move to another area. Weather plays a huge role. On calm days, scent clings close to the ground, and the dogs work slower, with tighter, more methodical lines. Strong winds can carry scents further, but gusts also scatter them, forcing handlers to reposition or adjust their zones. The dog and handler move as a single unit throughout, even when the dog is ranging far from the handler, hunting. This >>>



Mike and Marty in the snow.



>>> combines tactical planning, mountain knowledge, extensive training, and extraordinary noses to turn an invisible trail into a life-saving find.

Technology has advanced rapidly, and drones have undoubtedly improved search operations. Yet search dogs remain irreplaceable – a vital part of the toolkit that continues to save lives. Each year, the dogs travel to Aviemore, Scotland, for avalanche rescue refresher training. Watching your dog locate a buried casualty – sometimes more than two metres deep – is extraordinary. And when they're not finding people, they're equally adept at locating misplaced Team rucksacks (credit to Search

Dog Bess for that particular skill).

Together, the LDMRSDA and CMRT embody the Lake District's long tradition of

Jim Coyle BEM with Mike and Marty.



“Search dogs remain irreplaceable – a vital part of the toolkit that continues to save lives.”

volunteer rescue work. Their histories show how community initiative, specialist training, and steadfast dedication have shaped two organisations that continue to protect those who venture into the fells.

Marty's story is woven into that tradition. Born on a farm near Aspatria, he was chosen with guidance from Mike Hadwin: “Not the one in the corner, not the one biting your feet or bouncing off the walls – pick the one who's taking everything in. Inquisitive, but not bolshy.” That advice led me to Marty, named by my son Joshua during his *Back to the Future* phase. Marty graded just before his second birthday, transforming from a bundle of black-and-white fluff into a fully operational search dog in just 18 months.

His final assessment took place in Mickleden, Langdale, in brutal conditions. After more than four and a half hours of relentless work – soaked, exhausted, and battered by the wind – we reached the valley bottom, where Jim met us and handed over our green tag. That moment is etched into me.

I've been part of Mountain Rescue for more than 20 years, but training a search dog and receiving that green tag from Jim remains the proudest moment of my time in the fells.

The members of our Team come from a range of backgrounds and have a diverse range of skills. It is this mix of vitality and experience that makes us who we are.

Over recent years, the Team has made a conscious effort to expand our skill set across a range of areas. These include technical rigging, swift water rescue, and medical care. However, an aspect of Team focus that has seen a considerable shift more recently is wellbeing and mental health. We have agreed that wellbeing has not necessarily been one of our priorities and that it requires our focus going forward.

Nationally, mental health and wellbeing are now seen, rightly, as areas of everyday life that have been overlooked for too long. In mountain rescue, wellbeing is something that has always been there but has not really been talked about much. Have we relied too much on a 'stiff upper lip' response in the past? As the Team's Wellbeing Officer, I have been part of the relatively new Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA) Wellbeing Group, which brings together the teams in the Lakes. Our aim is to draw on peer support and

experience, as well as research and training opportunities, to reach a gold standard in the support of mental health and wellbeing for casualties, casualty party members, team members, and their families. The events we are often involved in are ones that can be life-changing and very distressing for all involved.

In July 2025, a mental health awareness course was hosted by our colleagues at Kendal. It was a well-attended and intensive full-day course focusing on active listening. Through presentations and workshops, we all considered the methods by which we can best support casualties, their friends and relatives, and each other in the face of traumatic rescue situations. In addition, the move towards a more open and reflective culture of wellbeing was considered. Sometimes members are 'not alright', and we need to be more able to spot the signs and offer support and signposting. We therefore discussed the possible duty of care that Team members must offer both to casualties and to ourselves.

This course is now being regularly offered and is

becoming embedded within many of the teams in LDSAMRA. As a result of this training, I have considered how wellbeing is approached within our Team. We have conducted a thorough wellbeing survey and there was very open and positive engagement from members. It was clear that the Team offers high-quality wellbeing care for casualties and their friends and families. Recent call-outs exemplified the superb care and support Team members have offered during traumatic times.

We agreed that, in times of stress, Team members don't always talk to each other in ways that offer the best support. This is something we will review and work on as we move forward. As part of a move towards greater awareness and openness, I helped to run a training session for our new probationers, looking at what joining the Team entails in respect of looking after themselves and their families in light of what we do. Finally, a project we now need to work on is offering new members and their families a guide to what joining our Team involves from a wellbeing point of view.

Let's crack on...

by Russell Butler

Wellbeing and mental health – how are we doing?



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Cockermouth team members on Pillar Rock, 2022 © Nick Lumb



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Every legacy in every Will, however large or small, makes a difference. Want to help? **Please contact your solicitor.**

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Can you help the **Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team** by giving a regular amount each month or year to help continue our work? If so, please fill in the form overleaf...

Please complete and send to Secretary, CMRT, PO Box 73, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 3AE



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- | | |
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