

KIKRBY STEPHEN MOUNTAIN RESCUE NEWSLETTER



KIRKBY STEPHEN

TEAM MEMBERS FACE THE MIGHTY SPINE® CHALLENGER

The MONTANE®Spine® Race is widely regarded as one of the world's toughest endurance races. A truly epic challenge that will test your physical resilience and mental fortitude. Find out more on page 3.



Image courtesy of www.racingsnakes.com

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Welcome to the first Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Newsletter

'When this is over' the hills will still be there, and understandably people will want to get out and up. In our part of Cumbria we have great paths, moors and fells, but without the crowds you find in the Lake District itself. So it's good to know that our own Mountain Rescue Team is ready and willing to be on hand should friends, neighbours and, when they return, visitors get stuck, injured or fall ill in our wonderful countryside.

This newsletter is here to let you know more about the Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Team, about staying safe on the fells and how you can get involved as a team member or a friend of KSMRT.

If you need Mountain Rescue...

If you need Mountain Rescue call 999 and ask for the Police, then Mountain Rescue. Be ready to give your location as accurately as possible, the nature of the incident, the number of people in your group and any mobile phone numbers you have.



Stay safe: Be #AdventureSmart!

Once the Covid-19 restrictions are over you will be itching to get out into the great outdoors. There are many, many ways to enjoy the mountains. Whether you're walking, climbing, running, cycling or skiing, they can be as treacherous as they are inspiring.

3 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU SET OFF

AdventureSmart.uk has been developed in partnership by the many organisations who want people to enjoy the great British outdoors safely.



From a new member...

On holiday with my dad in the early 1970s we saw a fell rescue team in action in the Lakes. To this day I have no idea whether we were watching an exercise or a live rescue. What I do remember was my dad telling me that 'if I lived here I'd join the mountain rescue'.

So when we had the opportunity to move to Kirkby Stephen, one of my first questions was 'how do I join?'

Applicants to join the team are usually interviewed in July, with a view to starting the six month induction in September. Completing induction then allows you to become a trainee member of the team before reaching full membership.

Eight of us started this process in September 2019, and are now trainee members. As well as taking part in training and regular exercises, this now also means we attend call-outs. While you would never want anyone to get into trouble on the fells, there is also a real sense of excitement and pride in what we do.

Members do need to maintain a reasonable level of 'fell fitness' and be available for call-outs. We also have to have an outdoor First Aid certificate, good navigational skills and commit to the ongoing training. Most important we need to be team players!



Team Training

The team has regular training every first Friday and second Wednesday of every month.

If you score 3/3 on these questions, off you go, have a fantastic day! If not, read on to find the answers you need to be kitted up and in the know to be safe!

Do I have the right gear?

If that has prompted you to ask 'what is the right gear?' then you need help! Kit doesn't need to be expensive but does need to keep you warm and dry and, in the case of boots, need to fit well. There is nothing like a blister to ruin a good day's walking! If your adventure involves heading out on the water then a well fitted and well-maintained buoyancy aid is essential.

Do I know what the weather will be like?

As we are all used to in the UK, the weather has the potential to make or spoil your day. This doesn't have to mean that a spot of drizzle or even a howling gale has to stop us in our tracks. Like a good Scout, being prepared and adapting your plans is key to being in control of your day. Check the weather forecast – the Met Office is a good place to start. Remember that a cloudless sky can also cause problems (take care to avoid sun burn or even heat stroke.)

Am I confident I have the knowledge & skills for the day?

Adventure allows us to step outside our immediate comfort zone and is a great way to repeatedly rediscover a zest for life. Being AdventureSmart simply means that you are thinking about your own experience and skills. Choosing an adventure that you know is within your skillset is part of the fun – and if you want to do something that pushes beyond this, there are many ways to find a guide or instructor to help you.

If you want to go outside and have an adventure, be AdventureSmart to make your outing as safe as you can and... have fun! If you need any more of advice or information visit adventuresmart.co.uk for advice, videos and much more.



Visit www.adventuresmart.uk to find out more

Become a friend of the team

The Friends of Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Team play a vital role in the functioning and financial well-being of the team.

Friends are often people who would like to support the team in some significant way but are unable to be full team members.

The Friends of the team undertake a number of important tasks, which include:

- Administrative and backup support
- Being 'casualties' on team exercises
- Help with collections and fundraising
- Specialist training

Being a Friend of the team also has a pleasurable side. We try to have at least a few social events throughout the year, when the team and the Friends can get together when not fundraising or getting wet on a hill.

If you would like to become involved as a Friend of the team please contact David Stewart - pr@ksmrt.org.uk



Alun & Paul Take on the Spine®

Meet a member



Adrian Cottrell
Team Leader

How long have you been in the team?
14 years (unbelievably 6 as Team Leader!)

What is your day job? I run a small electric heating device manufacturing company, in Brough. We manufacture all sorts of products for many applications ranging from Home Beer and Wine making fermenters through to Medical IV fluid warmers.

What is your most memorable moment in the team? Wow, loads of them, many dark and maybe not very good for a light hearted interview, but saving someone's life has to be right up there as a positive one. Although not on a Team callout (during a D of E expedition that the Team have organised for the Grammar School for many years), it was only my training as an MR member that allowed me to save the life of a cyclist we witnessed crashing descending Honister. If that's not suitable, then I'd say any one of the many severe weather callouts. Being out in those conditions and seeing what nature can do is certainly very memorable.

Most importantly, what is your favourite food to take on the hill? Chocolate brownie, but more likely to be a squashed out of date chocolate bar of indeterminate origin!

Want to become a member?

If you have an interest in becoming a team member contact Adrian Cottrell, for more details.

Email: teamleader@ksmrt.org.uk



A determined, yet tired Alun pushing through the fatigue at the Spine®

Team members Alun Lewis and Paul Davison took on the The Spine® Challenger, the shorter of the two Spine® events covering the first 108 miles of the Pennine Way from Edale to Hawes. To recognise the contribution of various Mountain Rescue teams in supporting the Spine® events the sponsor, Montane, established the MRT Spine® Challenger in 2016 offering subsidised entry to MRT members. This is the event Paul and Alun took part in over the weekend of the 11 January. Alun gives us his view on the event.

An ultra marathon is hard enough at any time of year but in January you face added elements including dark, cold, wet and extra kit.

Over 100 runners started the Challenger with 28 MRT runners following on an hour later. Conditions over the first 16 miles to Torside were dry but windy with gusts of over 50mph making things interesting around Kinder Scout - awesome sight of water at Kinder Downfall being blown back up the waterfall and high into the sky.

As darkness fell on the first night heavy rain and strong winds set in for the next 12 hours. Reduced visibility to around ten metres with paved footpaths becoming channels of running water. The Scout Centre at Hebden at 1.30am on Sunday morning was a welcome sight and an opportunity to retrieve a drop-bag with provisions and refocus on the remaining 60 miles.

Daylight at around 7.30am Sunday morning brought energy sapping underfoot conditions over the middle section linking the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales. Hot chocolate at the Gargrave Co-op set things up for the second night pushing onto Malham Cove and Malham Tarn before getting to Pen-y-Gent at around 3.00am Monday morning, with the weather deteriorating again.

Falling asleep whilst running is always an interesting sensation but a 10 minute power-nap at Horton-in-Ribblesdale village hall recharged the batteries.

Teamed up with 3 other runners for the final 15 mile push to Hawes. Unfortunately one of the group fell and pulled some back muscles so the last couple of hours were spent moving slowly supporting this individual who was determined to finish - we crossed the line together in just over 48 hours. Other than for a couple of badly bruised big toe nails and some chaffing, I finished uninjured and in good spirits!





LIFE AS A DOGSBODY...



A dogsbody, by definition a person who has to do all the boring, menial or unpleasant jobs, unless that is, you are a dogsbody for the Lake District Mountain Rescue Search Dogs (to give them their full title), in which case the previous description really doesn't fit. Let me explain, I am a dogsbody, quite literally a person who gives up some of their spare time (and comforts!) to lie out on a fell, in a bivi bag, in all weathers to provide human scent for the search dogs to find while they train, (and no, I don't 'smell' any more than anyone else would to a search dog before you ask!).

As a 'body' I turn up at the training area with my kit; a green waterproof bivi bag, carry mat, plenty of clothes to keep warm and toys or treats to reward the dog. The

From my perspective this plays out as: lay out in bivi bag for an unspecified length of time (enjoying the blissful peace, listening to the drizzle of rain on the bivi bag, wondering if the people walking past on the path 6 metres away have actually seen me or not, or musing over things to do later) until the sound of approaching paws thundering over the ground alerts me to the fact I may have a doggy visitor shortly. Ensure I remain completely still within the bivi bag so as not to cue the dog to bark, grin to self when dog does bark, wonder how long it will remain barking, grin again at the silencing of barks as the dog dashes away to fetch their handler. Check that my dog toy or food is at hand ready for when the dog and handler both arrive at my location, and the handler confirms that I am to 'reward the dog' either with a tasty treat or more likely playing with the toy, but only when the dog is barking to reinforce that behaviour which we are training for, so that the dog equates body = bark = reward. It might just be a big game to them, but it's one that's a very valuable asset to the Mountain Rescue teams when searching larger areas and far more effective than a team of people, (sorry team!) It's also usually a great excuse to take some well needed 'down time' away from the hustle and bustle of normal life with fabulous mountain views.

trainers and assessors pick a location on the hillside for me to 'hide' and I set off and notify them via radio once I've found said location, although this can often involve lots of conversations on the radio of 'no, not that rock', 'the triangular rock?' and 'a little further uphill!'

Once settled into my bivi bag, and all the other bodies have hidden, the search dog (and handler) set off to find us by using the scent carried on the wind. The handler directing their dog across the area in a methodical pattern. However, as soon as the dog picks up a human scent they're off bounding across the hillside with purpose until they locate the source of the scent, a dogsbody! The dog then barks at the body to indicate they've found someone, then races back to their handler, (who is usually quite some distance behind!) and barks at them to reinforce the message that they've located a person and that the handler had better get a move on and follow them! This sequence continues until the handler has made it to the body (times may vary!).

Working with Mountain Rescue ... a paramedics point of view

As a Paramedic I have worked within the Northwest Ambulance Service NHS Trust (NWAS), for the past 16 years. Based amongst the rolling fells of East Cumbria my job brings me a wide variety of work that is both urban and rural. Each environment brings unique challenges but none more so than when dealing with patients suffering from medical or traumatic conditions out on the fellside.



Hill, Fell and Mountain walking brings with it an element of danger and risk that as an organisation we are not equipped to deal with, and consequently we rely heavily on our colleagues in the various Mountain Rescue Teams (MRT) within Cumbria.

Our closest team at Kirkby Stephen have been a source of much needed help on many occasions. Sometimes it isn't just for the more obvious or straight forward jobs such as ankle/wrist fractures that need assistance off the fells and being brought to one of our waiting crews. I clearly remember one instance with a farmer who accidentally rolled a quad bike down a fellside when gathering in sheep; a complicated rescue that required in-depth consideration for patient removal to the ambulance whilst taking into account spinal injuries and a number of limb fractures.

Being based around Fells has the added complication of dealing with interesting weather. Snow, although no longer as frequent as it used to be has a tendency to complicate matters and usually arrives

in large quantities. It doesn't matter how good I believe Mercedes Sprinters are, they are NOT going off road in that kind of weather; grudgingly I have to acknowledge MRT Land Rovers definitely have one up on us there. Speaking of Landrovers I clearly recall one gut wrenching nail biting job as we took a patient with an ankle fracture out of a field. I don't know what the incline or camber was but my nerves strongly protested and getting to the top was a testament to some seriously skilled driving from the Mountain Rescue team member driving!

There have also been times where I have been involved in MRT training sessions, and practice assessments. I'm a firm believer that this has helped improve the skills, experience and knowledge on both sides with the added benefit of building strong relationships between us. Without a doubt we would not be able to provide the high level of patient care that we do, without the support from our friends in MRT.

Support us

Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue team is the search and rescue organisation for a large area of east Cumbria, including the Howgills and part of the Pennines. The team is composed entirely of volunteers, willing to go out any time of day, 365 days a year.

Mountain Rescue teams are funded entirely by donations and bequests from members of the public. Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Team needs to raise around £30,000 a year just to cover running costs (things such as medicine, vehicle maintenance, training, electricity and heating). Replacing a Land Rover is even more expensive. We really do value your support.

To donate visit www.ksmrt.org.uk or use the QR Code to the right.

