

Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation

Saves lives in wild and remote places

Registered charity No 506681

Press Release

THE PEAK DISTRICT MOUNTAIN RESCUE ORGANISATION CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF LIFE SAVING WORK.

For Immediate release

10th February 2004

The Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation was formed in 1964 following the deaths during the bad winter of 1963 of two climbers in an avalanche in Wilderness Gully, Chew Valley in the north of the Peak District National Park, and three scouts in a multiple fatal accident during the 1964 Four Inns walk. Two were from Wells in Somerset and Lowestoft, Norfolk and both these lads were linked with Birmingham Rover scouts. The other scout was from Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.

Today the Organisation provides an essential service, not only to walkers and climbers, but also to the local community. Our primary function is to provide a Search and Rescue service in upland mountainous areas, although increasingly over recent years we are called upon by Police to search for vulnerable missing persons in lowland rural areas.

The experience of many rescues over the years has enabled us to develop a unique knowledge of conditions and terrain, to effect any search and rescue for distressed people.

Team members are local mountaineers, dedicated volunteers who effectively carry out their task where others would fail, in any emergency they are happily called out from home or work to carry out the task. Although it takes longer to assemble a team than it does to deploy an ambulance or fire engine, team members can and do get where other personnel cannot.

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Pictures can be supplied on request.

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Editors Notes

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It is fair to say that Mountain Rescue has been around within Derbyshire forever, there have always been people prepared to give time in helping others in distress.

A incident on January 4th 1925 for James Evans who went missing on Kinder showed how a call out was done. An appeal was put out in the then Manchester Guardian for experienced ramblers to attend meeting points in Glossop, Hayfield and Edale. The president of the Rucksack Club would take charge from the Edale side of Kinder, the Police and Manchester Rambling club would run operations from Hayfield.

The report goes on to say searchers would be allowed cheap bookings by train between Manchester London Road and Glossop or Hayfield.

The newspapers special correspondent in Hayfield reported, "there is a need for a co-ordinated rescue scheme supervised by the Police".

Mr Evans was found dead on January 10th, the coroner later confirmed death from exposure.

The Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation was formed in 1964 following the death during the bad winter of 1963 of two climbers in an avalanche in Wilderness Gully, Chew Valley, and a multiple fatal accident during the 1964 Four Inns Walk. Previously, the few mountain rescue teams in the Peak District were uncoordinated and inadequately equipped.

The two tragedies demonstrated the need for the co-ordination of the few mountain rescue teams that existed at that time, to improve their equipment and to establish other teams. The PDMRO was formed to co-ordinate the activities of all the Mountain Rescue Teams in the Peak District and assist the Police with mountain rescue incidents.

The prime objectives of the P.D.M.R.O. are to save life and alleviate distress, primarily in Upland and Mountain areas.

The PDMRO is affiliated to the Mountain Rescue Council, the national body for Mountain Rescue in England and Wales and consists of seven civilian teams: Buxton, Derby, Edale, Glossop, Kinder, Oldham, Woodhead and RAF Stafford. The Search and Rescue Dogs Association of England and Wales (SARDA), is also represented.

- Buxton MRT was formed in 1964, although an earlier R.A.F. team was based at Harpur Hill during the war years. The team is a division of the St John Ambulance.
- Derby MRT was formed in 1964 as a direct result of the Four Inns Walk. Initially the team consisted of members of the 51st. Derby (St. Luke's) Rover Scout Crew who were the organisers of the Four Inns event. The team still retains its links with the Scout Association
- Edale MRT traces its roots back to the formation of the Peak District National Park Warden Service In the early 1950s. For many years its members were recruited exclusively from the ranks of the professional and volunteer wardens (later Rangers). Although in the early 1980s this entry route was widened to include those outside the Ranger service.
- Glossop MRT owes its origins to a team of rover scouts formed in 1959, which merged with the Glossop Moorland rescue team in 1965 to form the present team.
- Kinder MRT came into being in the late 1960s as a result of the amalgamation of the Sett Valley and the Goyt Valley teams.

- Oldham MRT was started by the Scout organisation and was called the Oldham Rover Scout Mountain Rescue Team. During the 70s the team became independent and was made into a charitable trust.
- Woodhead MRT was formed in the early '70s by the amalgamation of the Huddersfield Scout MRT, Stocksbridge Barugh Rovers and Sheffield Scout MRT. These three teams were formed as a direct result of the Four Inns fatalities in 1964.

Each civilian team is a self-contained unit with its own equipment, supplies, vehicles and communications. All members are trained in all aspects of first aid, casualty care and can effect rescue from remote moorland, cliffs or crashed aircraft. Every team member wears and/or carries personal survival equipment and can remain operational, unsupported for more than 12 hours.

Around 1970, as more and more people were exploring the hills, the accident potential increased and the need for trained rescue personnel became apparent.

A comprehensive rescue service could only be relied upon if the teams were properly trained and equipped.

Today the Organisation provides an essential service, not only to walkers and climbers, but also to the local community. Our primary function is to provide a Search and Rescue service in upland mountainous areas, although increasingly over recent years we are called upon by Police to search for vulnerable missing persons in lowland rural areas.

The regional controlling authority for all mountain rescue incidents is the Derbyshire Police. When they receive an indication that there is a mountain rescue incident the Derbyshire Police Operations Room, contact the duty P.D.M.R.O. "Incident Controller" and agree the necessary actions, after which the mountain rescue teams, search dogs and helicopters are mobilised as required. The Incident Controller then manages the incident in conjunction with the Team Leader(s) of the mobilised teams.

Teams can be called to assist any police authority within the UK although the majority of incidents have been in Derbyshire, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, South and West Yorkshire. In the past teams have been called to incidents as far away as Dartmoor, the Scottish Borders and North Wales.

The Organisation and the member teams are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Teams are mobilised by Pagers and Mobile phones and are on their way to an incident within a few minutes of receiving a call from the Police.

Members of the P.D.M.R.O. and affiliated teams are all volunteers who not only give their time freely but also provide the majority of their own personal specialised equipment at a typical cost of around £1000.

The typical operating costs of each team is about £8000 to £10000 per year covering the running costs of vehicles; repairs and replacements to radios, medical and specialised equipment; insurance and the upkeep of buildings.

All teams have access to helicopters if deemed appropriate and requested by the Incident Controller. The appropriate Police Force or the local Air Ambulance Service or the RAF Search & Rescue Organisation supply these and the choice depends upon the specific needs of the incident.

The P.D.M.R.O. and the associated teams receive no official funding and rely on donations from the public and other sources for all their needs.

The first year we started recording the number of incidents attended was in 1974, that year we dealt with 48 incidents. Today people have more and more leisure time and this shows in the figures. The organisation and the affiliated teams were called upon 205 times in 2003 and the rate seems to be rising.

Over this period we have assisted thousands of people aged between 5 and 80 years.

The experience of many rescues over the years has enabled us to develop a unique knowledge of conditions and terrain, to effect any search and rescue for distressed people.

Team members are local mountaineers, dedicated volunteers who effectively carry out their roles in severe environments where other 999 services would be inappropriate, in any emergency they are happily called out from home or work to carry out the task. Although it takes longer to assemble a team than it does to deploy an ambulance or fire engine, team members can and do get where other personnel cannot.

Do You Know?

- ◆ Mountain Rescue is a free service in the U.K.
- ◆ Mountain Rescue is an emergency service contacted by dialling **999** and asking for the Police.
- ◆ Mountain rescue teams also undertake searches in lowland rural areas for missing persons.
- ◆ All team members are unpaid volunteers who are on call 24 hrs/day & 365 days/year.
- ◆ Team members are highly trained in casualty care, search techniques, navigation and other specialist mountain rescue skills.
- ◆ Each team has between 30 and 40 members.
- ◆ P.D.M.R.O. teams respond to some 200 incidents a year.
- ◆ The majority of incidents are in Derbyshire, South Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire, and Nottinghamshire.
- ◆ Any funds come from voluntary donations as Mountain Rescue Teams receive no official funding.

Mountain Rescue the true 4th emergency service for mainland Britain.

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