



# BULLETIN

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR SUPPORTERS OF OLDHAM MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

OK, finally, I will admit it. This is me in the foreground of the picture, at the head end of the Thomas Stretcher.

The picture was taken around about 1970/71, the others in the foreground of the picture are Ken Luke on top of the Land Rover, with Ben Roberts by the door and Phil Senior near the back.

I was 3 years old at the time, OK I was a bit young and some say I was tall for my age, 5'9" to be precise, but that's of no consequence.

Issued in November 1968 with 2 karabiners, 10' of rope to wrap three times around my waist and tie in a granny knot, an 8' rope sling to complete my harness, a cotton anorak, an old rucksack with a metal frame that nearly broke my spine and a big woolly balaclava made from raggy-arse wool that made your face sweat that much you never actually pulled it down over your face. This was my introduction to Mountain Rescue!

It was also around the time that the picture was taken that I attended a rescue with my Team (1855 Royton Squadron A.T.C.) led by Squadron Leader Bob Kenworthy and Oldham Rovers Mountain Rescue Team (OMRT). We were called to standby at Crowden, (by the side of the old rifle range), as cover for the Five Inns Hike.

We, (myself, Keith Bell, Alan Harding, Roger Hadfield and some other foolish, childish and very silly people) were merrily playing Poo Sticks by the stream. We were trying to get away from the lunch that Alan Luke and his brother Ken were trying to make, by throwing some petrol at an old R.A.F. issue pump-up Bunsen burner. I think the petrol actually landed in the tureen that contained the beans, well it tasted like it!

After lunch the call went up for a hiker who had failed to reach a checkpoint on Bleaklow, (sorry, can't remember who won the Poo Sticks, probably Keith, he used to cheat). The two Teams arrived at Reaps Farm just after Bob had ripped the exhaust off his 4.2 litre Jaguar, to ascend onto Bleaklow. (Bleaklow is a Neanderthal



word for a black and unforgiving peat bog, with groughs deep enough to give you neck ache when you look up).

I can't remember how long it took to find the casualty (casualty is another Neanderthal word for lost, injured, stupid or dead person, fluent gibberish!) but it didn't seem that long.

Anyway, casualty found, the carry and subsequent sledge down was time consuming and tiring but together we got him down safe and sound. Hypothermic and no doubt tired we placed him in the back of the OMRT Landrover. As this ran down the track from Reaps Farm to the main road the casualty plus stretcher fell out of the back of the vehicle (I know what you're thinking, not good!). Bloody funny though! No, I mean really serious. The guy broke his leg I think; anyway, wasn't my Team at the time. It is now though and has been for the last 23 years. Thankfully things are a lot more professional now and vehicles are big enough to take a stretcher!

Anybody who is thinking of joining Mountain Rescue, beware; it is not just a hobby, it's a way of life. Although it's a superb and unquestionably needed service, it has ruined a few meals, lives and marriages. It gets in your blood and under your skin but you make a lot of good friends and a lot of bad ones. People to whom you can trust your life, literally.

You need a sense of humour, be ugly, have a beard, (optional for females), have a level of fitness better than a three toed sloth, be able to carry anything the Section Leader asks you to and be able to drink small amounts of beer, all at once. If that's for you, do it.

I do it, but not very well as I'm still learning!

**Anonymous Team Member**  
(Phil Beard)



# The Journey Continues...

Medex Expedition over, everyone and everything safely returned home I now found myself on my own with three weeks remaining in Nepal. After the exhilaration of the last six weeks I needed to find a new base and a new adventure. Boarding a bus for the village of Dhulikhel the two and a half hour drive east was an adventure into the unknown. The smog of Kathmandu was soon replaced by clean air; the foothills of the Himalayas visible in the distance confirmed this. My new home was the Nawaranga Guesthouse. Purna Man made me very welcome. Basic, clean, hot shower – luxury! During breakfast on the first morning I was visited by one of the village elders and the Headteacher of the local Sanjiwani School. Before lunchtime I was teaching maths and was dutifully employed for the week. It was hard work and I was kept very busy. The pupils, thankfully, spoke very good English. The school was unbelievably basic with no resources. Pupils pay for their own books, pencils and paper. All lessons are taught ‘parrot fashion’ in English apart from Nepali. Each day the timetable was the same. To break the monotony I showed them expedition and mountain rescue photos on my laptop which gave all the pupils an opportunity to practice their speaking and listening skills.

On the Friday I was at school for 6am. Today was the annual school picnic to Dakshinkali Temple just outside Kathmandu organised entirely by the pupils. This Nepali temple is dedicated to the goddess Kali where her bloodlust is satisfied twice a week with the slaughter and ‘sacrifice’ of animals. These animals are then cooked and a picnic with music and dancing takes place. I wanted to experience Nepali life to the full and this was definitely it. Two full Nepali banquet meals later we returned to Dhulikhel late that evening. Health and safety was non-existent just like the ‘good old days’.

I had invites to pupil’s homes for meals, met with some intriguing locals and travellers, visited lots of temples, walked for many miles, experienced the bind of daily power cuts and visited a part of Nepal very different from the mountains. I taught for a day at the Baylor International School and was asked if I wanted to become the Headteacher. I also returned to Kathmandu a couple of times to buy supplies and visited the old city of Baktapaur. I met up with Tenji Sherpa who ran Sherpa Brothers Trekking Company, our expedition trekking agents, he invited me to his home for a meal and I met up with his family.



On 28<sup>th</sup> November I left Nepal via Delhi – definitely an airport to miss – and headed for Sri Lanka. The main purpose of my trip to Sri Lanka was to visit and teach at Midigama School. The Team had raised a substantial sum of money for the school destroyed during the tsunami of 2004. Keela, the outdoor clothing company, based in Scotland is owned by Sri Lankan Rube Fernando. He along with his brother Chandra Fernando, Sri Lanka’s Chief of Police and advisor to the President, had instigated, coordinated and financially supported the entire school rebuild project. I was met at the airport and driven to my hotel at 2am. At 26°C this was going to be the ‘hot phase’ of my travels! Sam, Rube’s daughter, who had organised my school schedule and accommodation, took me to lunch at the Cinnamon

Grand Hotel. Pure luxury after the past two months! Later that day the ‘Keela driver’ drove me to Weligama, my base for the next three weeks. The Bay Beach Hotel must have been fantastic in its hey day before the Tsunami. I was the only resident some nights in this forty plus room hotel but I was very well looked after and I was on special rates. “Mr Jim the school teacher from England” was staying there. School started at 7.30am and finished at 1pm with no breaks. I taught ICT and English for the three weeks I was there and helped sort out the ICT facilities so that all seven computers were working and running the same software.

During my time there I believe I made a useful contribution to the children’s learning and worked with children who had a real desire to learn and better themselves. The children work very hard. It was hot and hard work. Each day I returned to my hotel for a shower, something to eat and prepared for my next day of teaching. The children spoke very little English and their IT skills were very limited. Kumara, a teacher who spoke very good English was my guardian during my time at the school, he invited me to his home – very basic. Teachers earn very little in Sri Lanka. After only a few lessons many children were making real progress. Another twelve months and I would have been Headteacher at Midigama School!!!

We sent over to the school lots of pens, pencils, books and educational CD Rom software. The ‘Oldham Mountain Rescue Team Room’ although basic was a hive of activity. Children were happy, learning and moving on from the scars of the Tsunami and I know our money was well spent. The children say a big “thank you”. I presented the school with a framed embroidered

Team Badge as a memento of my visit and wished them continued success.



Janet joined me for the last three weeks of my stay in Sri Lanka. She visited 'our' school and helped me with some of the lessons. One of the locals, Chaminda, took us snorkelling, took us to a snake farm and turtle sanctuary and showed us some of the local restaurants. The people either hassle you or are really friendly like Chaminda.

We spent Christmas a few miles up the coast from Weligama at the Galle Fort Hotel in the town of Galle. Probably the most fantastic hotel I have ever stayed at. A week of pure luxury with great sunsets, great food and very special company. Christmas Day was spent handing out gifts to local children, swimming in the pool with an inflatable Santa and dining with the Canadian Secretary of Defence and his family. There was only one thing I would have wished for at that time but having my children there with me was too much to ask for. One day may-be!

On 3<sup>rd</sup> January, ninety seven days after leaving home, I returned to the UK. The following day I was back at work.

As a reward and thank you for my contribution at Midigama school our names were put forward for Janet and I to meet the Queen at the Queen's garden party in Edinburgh in July. It's out there folks, just go and do it!

**Jim Duffy**  
Team Member

## Team Member Profile - MATT NEILD

**PLACE OF BIRTH:** OLDHAM

**JOB:** LOGISTICS PLANNER

**WHEN DID YOU JOIN MR:** JANUARY 2008

**DO YOU REMEMBER 1ST CALL OUT:** SEARCH FOR A ELDERLY MAN IN THE DENSHAW AREA

**HOBBIES:** LATICS, SWIMMING, (MR now)

**FAVOURITE WALK/CLIMB/RUN:** 3 PEAKS (UK)

**HOW DO YOU RELAX:** I DON'T

**IDEAL HOLIDAY:** BEER, BBQ'S & CARS (RACING)

**YOUR WORST CHARACTERISTIC:** I'M NEVER WRONG!

**WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE IN OTHERS:** POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

**WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET:** MY DAD

**FANTASY DATE:** THIS GIRL AT WORK - BUT I CAN'T SAY HER NAME

**WHO IS YOUR HERO:** NO-ONE, I'M FAR TOO CYNICAL

**FAVOURITE FOOD:** ALL

**FAVOURITE DRINK:** VIMTO / CARLSBERG

**FAVOURITE BOOKS:** BEN ELTON

**FAVOURITE TV PROGRAM:** TOP GEAR, DR WHO (Strictly Come Dancing really but I wouldn't tell the Team)

**FAVOURITE FILM:** STAR WARS

**FAVOURITE NEWSPAPER:** NONE

**FIRST RECORD BOUGHT:**

**LAST RECORD BOUGHT:** PROBABLY YMCA

**WHAT WERE YOU LIKE AT SCHOOL:** IDLE

**FOUR WORDS TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF:** BALDING, OVERWEIGHT, UNFIT & OBSESSIVE



## OLDHAM MOBILE 3



The Team took another big step last month. After much discussion and debate, the Team decided to get a 3<sup>rd</sup> vehicle to use mainly as a control unit but also to carry extra personnel and kit.

With the large influx of new members and the increased number of calls this year it was felt the time was right to make the addition, but rather than splashing out on a brand new vehicle we decided to try one out first.

Timing was just right as Woodhead MRT were in the process of swapping their old one. We took delivery at the end of August and with luck it should be fully operational by the end of September.

We would like to thank The Signbox in Oldham for the free signage of the vehicle.

# INCIDENTS (JUNE - AUGUST)

**29<sup>th</sup> May 09: Involved 12 Personnel. Duration 1hr 30 mins.**  
**Location Haughton Green**

Request from North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) to assist with the rescue of a male who had fallen 20ft down an embankment whilst gardening. He was treated for spinal injuries whilst a rope system was set up to help recover him to the top.

**29<sup>th</sup> May 09: Involved 16 Personnel. Duration 2hrs.**  
**Location Park Bridge**

Request from NWAS to assist with the location and recovery of a male with a possible broken ankle in a river. Team assisted NWAS Rapid Response Vehicle and fire crew to evacuate him and then transport him to hospital in the Team Ambulance.

**30<sup>th</sup> May 09: Involved 23 Personnel. Duration 1hr 30 mins.**  
**Location Dovestones**

Request from NWAS for male with possible lower leg injury somewhere on Indians Head. Casualty was located by Team in Rams Clough and was treated before being carried off to an NHS Ambulance at the road-head.

**1<sup>st</sup> June 09: Involved 9 Personnel. Duration 1hr.**  
**Location Grotton**

Request for assistance from NWAS. They had located a female on a country path but were unable to carry her the distance back to the road-head. Team attended with stretcher.

**1<sup>st</sup> June 09: Involved 15 Personnel. Duration 2hrs.**  
**Location Dovestones Reservoir**

Request from NWAS to assist with the recovery of a male who had jumped 35ft from a crag in to the reservoir. He was dragged to the bank by a passer-by. Team treated his injuries before he was flown out by Air Ambulance Helimed 98.

**2<sup>nd</sup> June 09: Involved 1 Person. Duration 5hrs.**  
**Location Gee Cross**

Request from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to help search for a missing from home (MFH). Team passed it to the Peak District Duty Controller who deployed Glossop and Kinder MRTs. Oldham MRT went on standby with the intention of attending in the evening. Team stood down at 1700hrs. There was no find. GMRT & WMRT were tasked with another area 2 weeks later in which they located a body thought to be the missing.

**4<sup>th</sup> June 09: Involved 17 Personnel. Duration 8hrs.**  
**Location Debdale Park**

Request from GMP to help search for a 77year old male MFH. Whilst setting up a 10year old boy was also reported missing in the same location. The boy turned up safe and well; the 77year old was located in Stepping Hill Hospital. Also in attendance were Bolton MRT 17 personnel, R&PMRT 14 and SARDA 4.

**4<sup>th</sup> June 09: Involved 14 Personnel. Duration 1hr 10mins.**  
**Location Oldham**

Request from Greater Manchester Fire Service (GMFS) to assist with an industrial rope rescue. Male had suffered head injury whilst in a window cleaning basket when it failed. Fire service could not reach him. Team attended and carried out a strop rescue.

**6<sup>th</sup> June 09: Involved 17 Personnel. Duration 2hrs.**  
**Location Chadderton**

Request from NWAS to assist with the location and evacuation of a 12 year old girl who had fallen whilst playing on farmland. She was treated by NWAS and the Team before being carried to the ambulance.

**16<sup>th</sup> June 09: Involved 13 Personnel. Duration 1hr.**  
**Location Smallshaw**

Request from NWAS to assist our specialist equipment and personnel to help move a large lady from her home to the ambulance.

**27<sup>th</sup> June 09: Involved 1 Person. Duration 1hr.**  
**Location Mottrom**

Request to assist in the search for a MFH. This was passed to Glossop MRT.

**30<sup>th</sup> June 09: Involved 13 Personnel. Duration 1hr.**  
**Location Moston**

Request from NWAS to assist with heavy work load.

**30<sup>th</sup> June 09: Involved 13 Personnel. Duration 1hr.**  
**Location Blackley**

Request from NWAS to assist with heavy work load.

**5<sup>th</sup> July 09: Involved 1 Person. Duration 12mins.**  
**Location Tandle Hill Park**

Request from NWAS to assist with the location and recovery of a 12yr old girl with a leg injury. Team stood down whilst responding.

**12<sup>th</sup> July 09: Involved 1 Person. Duration 1hr.**  
**Location Newton**

Request from NWAS to help recover an elderly male who had fallen down a 30ft embankment.

**13<sup>th</sup> July 09: Involved 1 Person. Duration 3hrs.**  
**Location Chew Valley**

Request from NWAS to assist with the location and recovery of a male found collapsed by 2 mountain bikers. Team assisted the paramedic with CPR but casualty was pronounced dead at scene.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Aug 09: Involved 10 Personnel. Duration 1hr 30mins.**  
**Location Delph**

Request from NWAS to assist with a female who had fallen in to the River Tame and was unable to get out. She was helped out by a passer-by who hurt her shoulder during the rescue. Team transported her to hospital and NWAS transported the first casualty.

**4<sup>th</sup> Aug 09: Involved 7 Personnel. Duration 1hr.**  
**Location Dovestones Reservoir**

Request from NWAS to assist with the location and rescue of a male who had taken an overdose and was threatening to jump off a cliff. He was located by police and walked down to the waiting ambulance.

**8<sup>th</sup> Aug 09: Involved 4 Personnel. Duration 30mins.**  
**Location Brun Clough Reservoir**

Request from NWAS to assist with a collapsed female at Brun Clough Reservoir. On Team's arrival she was found to be at the roadside having tripped on the footpath and did not require MR assistance. She was made comfortable until NWAS arrived.

**12<sup>th</sup> Aug 09: Involved 7 Personnel. Duration 1hr 30mins.**  
**Location High Crompton**

Request from NWAS to assist with the location and evacuation of a youth who had fallen 20ft from a rope swing. He was treated by NWAS & Helimed 099 before Team evacuated him to the waiting helicopter.

**12<sup>th</sup> Aug 09: Involved 7 Personnel. Duration 1hr.**  
**Location Mellor**

Request from NWAS to assist with the location and evacuation of a female who had been thrown from her horse. The Team were responding when the exact location was found to be in another MRT area. Team Land Rover continued whilst Kinder MRT were called. Team Land Rover arrived just in time to assist with the carry to Helimed 099.

*Congratulations to*

*Paul Smith & Vikki Fisher*

*on their engagement, we look*

*forward to their wedding next year.*