

# Mountain rescue saves a life and sparks friendship

**Off-duty NHS Lothian physiotherapist Courtney Ferguson (27), leapt into action to save a fellow hillwalker's life whilst scaling Ben Nevis.**

Like many others during the Covid pandemic, Courtney, who works at the Bonnyrigg Health Centre, decided to climb Munros in her downtime.

On a hot and sunny day in August 2020, Courtney and her sister Brogan set off on their biggest challenge yet, to climb Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in the UK at 4,413 feet. Little did they know it would be challenging in more ways than one.

Trevor Botwood (63) was also walking up Ben Nevis for the first time with his sister, Irene, in memory of his nephew. Trevor was scaling the heights to place his nephew's photo at the top so that he could be "one step closer to heaven." Unfortunately, on this occasion, it wasn't to be.



Courtney and Trevor

Courtney said: "The mountain was busy with tourists, everyone was encouraging one another to keep on going. I saw a man around the halfway point leaning into his walking poles, I

stopped to offer some encouragement when he tumbled forwards hitting his head off the rocks.”

Courtney was unable to find Trevor’s pulse and knew urgent treatment was required. Unbeknown at the time, Trevor had suffered a cardiac arrest.

“All my previous training just kicked in and I went into autopilot”, Courtney explained, “I managed to get another passer-by to help hold Trevor’s head to aid his airway, while I started doing chest compressions. My sister, Brogan called 999 and alerted Trevor’s sister who was further down the mountain.”

Whilst on the phone Brogan had to download the [what3words app](#) which gives a unique three-word combination for every three-metre square on Earth. These combinations enable friends or emergency services to locate your exact position.

The swift reactions and expertise shown by Courtney were critical in keeping Trevor alive.

She added: “When Trevor finally regained consciousness, I was able to use what I had learned during my time in ICU throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and knelt behind him holding him until the helicopter got there as he was quite distressed”.

“It felt like it had only been around ten minutes, but actually I carried out chest compressions for nearly 20 minutes.”

Trevor was flown to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Glasgow for treatment and later was transferred to a hospital in his hometown of Leeds where he made a full recovery

Since the incident, Trevor and Courtney have kept in touch and become good friends, with both making the journey across the border to spend time in each other’s hometowns.

Trevor said: "I owe my life to Courtney, she's a beautiful person inside and out. I was nervous about seeing her again for the first time after the accident. My wife and I travelled to Edinburgh to meet Courtney and Brogan and we just instantly hit it off. She is now part of our extended family."



During this summer the pair decided to hike up Ben Nevis together along with their friends and family to raise money for the Mountain Rescue service.

Trevor added, "I decided that in order to move on and put the incident to bed I had to try and climb Ben Nevis again. I am usually a fit and healthy person and go on many walks – it just so happened that on that day in 2020 something went wrong.

"Heading back up Ben Nevis with Courtney two years after she saved my life felt really special. If it wasn't for her and her swift actions, I wouldn't be here today. It was brilliant to finally reach the top, it was like a big weight had been lifted off my shoulders.

"We'll be planning our next trip to meet Courtney and her family again soon."

Scottish Mountain Rescue is the community of 25 member Mountain Rescue Teams. The teams deliver a world class Search and Rescue (SAR) Service and respond to requests from Police Scotland. 850 volunteers respond in a moment's notice, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to provide assistance to people in the outdoors. Learn more about what the team do here: [Any Hour, Any Day, Any Weather – Scottish Mountain Rescue](#)

