

Mintcake



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Reg. Charity No. 259539

January 2005

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Editor's Comment

Any news inevitably pales into relative insignificance after the Indian Ocean tsunami. Many team members, supporters and Mintcake readers will undoubtedly already have made a monetary donation. What else can be done? See below for details of what the team is hoping to do.

Les

Tsunami

In the days following the tsunami, we were repeatedly told on news broadcasts and by aid organisations that donations of money were what was really needed. Rightly so, of course, because these people are the experts. As the days passed, and the true scale of the disaster began to become apparent, governments around the world started to set aside increasingly large sums of money for the relief effort, and the public rushed to donate on an unprecedented scale. The sum donated by the public in the UK soon headed towards £100mn. Brilliant, but people can't eat or money and a literal injection of money won't do you any good if disease takes hold. Food, water and medicines have to be delivered to those in need. All this requires co-ordination. Without communications on the ground because landline and mobile phone services have been destroyed, such co-ordination is next to impossible. Yet Lake District mountain rescue teams have just taken some 200 radio handsets and the associated base and vehicle sets out of service after the move to high band. Kendal team leader Andy Dell, together with a number of other team members, decided that there must be a way to make use of this equipment. Following discussions with other team leaders, Kendal took on the task of drawing together as much equipment as possible and offering it to the Department for International Development. After an initial rejection because such equipment was not specifically requested by the countries concerned, publicity with the aid of Kendal's MP and local TV, radio and print media meant that we were contacted by the International Committee of the Red Cross for further information.

The team's Mobile 2 – a 4-wheel drive VW minibus – is scheduled for replacement within the next year or so and fundraising to this end has been in progress for a while. Realistically, however, it could still provide a vital service in the areas affected by the tsunami for a considerable time. The team is therefore prepared to offer this vehicle to assist with relief work, if required. Finally, offers of help by those with specific skills (radios, logistics, medical) to travel to the devastated regions have been made by members of our own team and various other MR teams.

The current position is that all these offers remain open, discussions have been held with various bodies, and it is hoped that the radios can be transported to the region as soon as possible. Whether they will be accompanied by the vehicle and MR personnel prepared to operate and maintain them and train local people in their use remains undecided at this stage. We'll report again in due course.

Exercise Reports

Wednesday 8 December

A two part exercise to blow away the winter blues and sharpen up the mind Keith-Pittman-style! OK, Part 1: nothing too difficult, no pressure, just 96 questions to answer all about the workings of base in 30 minutes in teams of two – ready – GO. Keith, in his usual fair-minded and meticulous way, designed the exercise using a complex mathematical model that told him if he mixed an experienced team member with a newer member/provisional then there was an equal probability that both would get the answers wrong! We were reliably informed that since base had been designed in line with state-of-the-art HSE policy then it would happily cope with 30 headless chickens running from room to room without causing injury to self or others. He was right.

What Keith's model hadn't bargained for was a seasonal amount of initiative (aka cheating) and more than the odd dose of sarcasm from the likes of Chris Marsden, myself and others, believing that our razor-sharp wit would disguise our ignorance [They were wrong. Ed.] of certain matters, for example;

Q How does the drying system in the drying room work?

A (Marsden) By drying things!

Q Where can you park on a callout if no space left at base

A (Team) Police car park **A** (Dodd) I'd like to see you try!

On a more serious note, we all agreed on debrief that we had learned more, in some cases a lot more, about base than when we started the exercise, thanks to Keith's ingenuity.

THE take home message for all who use base: if you find anything wrong with base you should take action in the following order: try to fix it yourself if you know how; contact the Base Officer Pierre; or, if unable to do either, contact Steve Kelly. The key point is **don't just do nothing** and leave it for someone else.

Part 2 of the exercise was an open forum discussion on what personal kit to carry as a team member throughout different times of the year and to different types of callout. The individual suggestions are too numerous to remember or even recite, however, the key concept is flexibility of both mind and kit. Certain MR teams are prescriptive in terms of what and what not to carry, but, by comparison, given the diversity of our callouts, we must be open-minded when deciding if even a bum-bag should be used in favour of a sack before even getting to the content.

At this time of year emphasis must be placed on the potential need for crampons and ice-axes, Andy Dell clearly made the point that crampons have previously been essential on frozen ground in the absence of the white stuff and are, therefore, no use whatsoever if left at home! What you carry is your choice and will largely be born out of experience but I am reminded of advice given to me a number of years ago that applies to many situations: fail to plan – plan to fail. The consequences could be grave given our climate and this time of year and, lest we forget, we all have a duty of care to ourselves. Our thanks to Keith for a thoroughly thought-provoking exercise.

Peter Dodd



Sunday 19 December – Radio familiarisation

The new radio system has been operational for some time now, but this was the first real opportunity to hold a theoretical and practical training exercise. It is one which we will endeavour to repeat as soon as possible since the turnout was fairly low including by those with little experience of using any radios at all and because the practical session was interrupted by a callout (see p.3).

Kevin Knowles gave a detailed presentation of our new handsets, the two base sets available in the control room and the proposed repeater system for when communications between base and team members in particular locations are poor. Confused? All Greek to you? Who is Roger? How do you copy things with a radio handset? Why might people snigger if you say "Over and out"? Make sure you don't miss the next session!

We were then dispatched to Underbarrow with the brief to walk back in two groups to a location to be announced by radio. The idea was for the base controller to give the groups a series of grid references and for members of the groups to familiarise themselves with the new radios by calling in as each GR was reached and ask for the next one. A throwaway comment about the plans in place "in the event of a callout" was almost ignored. And when a leader group pager went off, we thought it was all part of the wind-up. As it turned out, it was a genuine callout to Scout Scar and the opportunity to use the radios for real. End of exercise, diversion via Scout Scar and Westmorland General Hospital, and then on to the final destination, SD 51625 92120, for refreshment.

Les

Callouts



Kevin Knowles was the man with the finger on the pulse who correctly predicted our total number of callouts – 52 - for 2004. Admittedly the sweepstake was only launched in December. Any predictions made at the start of the year would inevitably have been wildly inaccurate, given that we usually attend around 30-35 callouts. Kevin's prize, incidentally, is akin to a golfer achieving a hole-in-one, i.e. he will be allowed to buy the rest of the team a drink

2 December

A walker reported hearing shouts for help in the region of Cautley Spout. 23 team members responded to the callout on a very clear, cold evening, assisted by Kirby Stephen team, including one of their search dogs. It was concluded after an hour or so of searching that this was a false alarm with good intent, as a local farmer had been reported searching with friends for a missing sheepdog.

5 December

As mentioned in last month's issue, there was a well-attended callout to Gummings How as the last team members had just completed their first aid exam to assist a lady with a lower leg injury from slipping on wet grass at the top of the hill. The Great North Air Ambulance also attended and evacuated the casualty to hospital.

12 December

To Dixon Heights, Lindale for another suspected ankle fracture caused by slipping on wet grass. 16 team members assisted in the casualty's evacuation. A nomination for the next POTY award was quickly submitted for the team member (who shall remain anonymous for the moment) who found himself locked in the ambulance station in the course of the callout.

13 December

50th callout of the year. Langdale/Ambleside MRT requested assistance to search for a casualty on Wansfell who turned out not to be in the location reported. Our team was stood down as we were assembling when LAMRT members found the casualty on the other side of the fell from that originally reported.

19 December

On a beautiful winter's day we were called away from a regular team training exercise to nearby Scout Scar where a lady had slipped on icy ground and broken her ankle (bit of a pattern emerging this month!). 13 team members were involved in evacuating the casualty to a team vehicle and then delivering her to hospital in Kendal.

30 December

Five lucky team members were selected to help recover 6 adults and 2 children whose 3 4x4 vehicles had got stuck in appalling weather on a green lane in Deepdale. Overall, the callout lasted 8 hours as our team VW people carrier was used to transport the occupants back to their homes in the Greater Manchester area in the early hours of the morning.



12 December

Les and Kess were involved in the all-night search for and evacuation of two brothers and their terrier who ended up being drawn into Piers Gill while descending from Scafell Pike in mist. They became stuck at 3pm but the alarm was not raised for several hours. After they were eventually located, it took until about 6am before the second casualty was recovered from the deep ravine. One of the brothers was able to walk back down to Wasdale Head, while the other had a leg injury which required stretcher evacuation.



What's On

Wednesday 19 January

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

Sunday 30 January

Training: Winter Skills/Navigation 09.00h

Wednesday 2 February

Ops & Membership Committee 19.30h

Wednesday 9 February

Training: Avalanche Awareness / Winter Kit 19.00h

Wednesday 16 February

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

Sunday 27 February

Training: Winter Navigation/Skills 09.00h

4-6 March

Scotland Winter Training

Wednesday 9 March

Training: Downed Aircraft / Orienteering 19.00h

Sunday 20 March

Training: Rescue / Evacuation 09.00h

Wednesday 23 March

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

Wednesday 27 April

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

Wednesday 18 May

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

Wednesday 22 June

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

Pagers

A couple of reminders about use of the pagers:

- General messages should, if possible, be sent out between 5pm and 7pm if at all possible to avoid unnecessary disruption at work, in the cinema etc. wherever possible.
- The pager system should not be used for frivolous or joke messages, e.g. attending a callout in a pub...

From the Training Officer

Logbooks

For those of you who have handed these in, they will be signed off and available for collection from now in your pigeonhole. Team members who have still not handed in their logbooks need to do so ASAP (before being named and shamed in February's newsletter).

Scottish Training Weekend 2005

For those who have signed up, a £15 deposit is required by 31 January. Either make a cheque payable to "Kendal Mountain Search and Rescue Team" or place cash in an envelope labelled "Scottish Winter Trip" and marked with your name and then leave it in the "Training" pigeonhole.

Can You Help?

- Simon Thorn would like to spend more time with his family. No, he's not a government minister being forced to resign, he's the team's Social Secretary and has been for the past three years. But, as the father of the youngest member of the team (see December 2004 issue) and in the throes of developing his own business, he would like to hand over the reins to someone else because of the pressures of time. For further information speak to Simon or any other member of the committee. Here's a chance to make a positive contribution to an important side of what we do – i.e. the social events that help to make us a team.
- Pierre Bétoin would still welcome a new cleaner or two to take some of the load off our other dedicated cleaning team.
- Kath Kirby also requires more people to empty collection boxes, especially if you have a car and can help out in the Stavely and Windermere areas.

If you're not sure how to contact any of the above, feel free to contact the editor (see details at the end of Mintcake) and I'll pass on any offers of assistance. Please don't just leave the work to someone else!

Shorts

- Andy Dell led a select group of team members in mid-December who assisted the Lake District National Park Authority with the experimental planting of juniper, by now an endangered species nationally, at the end of Longsleddale. The lead was to avoid the environmental impact of fencing, and therefore the juniper needed to be planted on crags where sheep would be unable to eat the plants, hence the team's involvement. A rather murky photo in the Westmorland Gazette illustrated the horrible weather conditions endured on the day!
- Back in 1991 the team rescued a lady who has sent a Christmas card and a cheque for £50 every year since. This year's card and donation duly arrived in time for Christmas. Thank you on behalf of the team if you read Mintcake!
- Over a glass of beer or two local outdoor equipment supplier Mountain Works have extended an offer to the Kendal Team to purchase Marmot clothing and equipment at heavily discounted prices. A team order with a total value exceeding £300 is required to obtain the lowest pricing. Anyone interested in ordering should contact George Robertson who will coordinate the order. Price lists etc will be available shortly.
- A discount evening is being offered to mountain rescue team members in Keswick on Tuesday 18 January. Please see details in base.
- A reminder that committee meetings are open to any members of the team. Only committee members may vote, but other team members are welcome to contribute to the meetings. The minutes of meetings will be pinned up on the upstairs noticeboard in base.

Fundraising

- The Wheels Appeal – to raise money for a replacement vehicle for Mobile 2 – currently stands at almost £6000. Should our current Mobile 2 actually go to help out in the tsunami-devastated region, we will, of course, have to redouble our fundraising efforts for a replacement. Any suggestions/donations: please contact Liz
- A collection at Morrisons in early December raised just over £400.
- In conjunction with the Kendal Mountain Film Festival, the new owners of the 1657 Chocolate House held a competition to guess the weight of a chocolate K2 (50th anniversary of 1st ascent). Participants were invited to make a donation to the team. The collecting box is now a fixture in the shop.

Contacts

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or

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or

Editor's pigeon hole in base

or by post to:-

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Copy deadline for next issue: 4 February 2005

Training Programme for January to June 2005

	Date	Training	Organiser
January	Wed 12 th	Round Robin	CM
	Sun 30 th	Winter Skills / Winter Navigation	AD / AB
February	Wed 9 th	Avalanche Awareness / Winter Kit	AB
	Sun 27 th	Winter Navigation / Winter Skills	AD / AB
March	Wed 9 th	Downed Aircraft or Orienteering	CM DS
	Sun 20 th	Rescue / Evacuation	PA
April	Wed 13 th	Downed Aircraft or Orienteering	CM DS
	Sun 24 th	Personal Crag Skills	AD / HC
May	Wed 11 th	Water Safety	HC
	Sun 29 th	Steep Ground / Security	PA / PM / DS
June	Wed 8 th	Ghyll Crawl	SK
	Sun 26 th	Water Safety	HC

Scotland Winter Training Dates: 4-6 March 2005

Note:

Due to the unpredictability of Lakes winter, Winter Skills Training will take place one weekend day from December onwards. If the conditions are right a pager message will be put out a few days beforehand.

If you would like to take a vehicle off tarmac, contact Chris Marsden or Steve Kelley.