

# Mintcake



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## Editor's Comments

March was a month with a great deal of training, with a sizeable group making the journey to the Cairngorms for three days of winter training. The weather ranged, as so often, from mild and sunny to white-out conditions. The avalanche in Coire an Lochan on Sunday while a group of us were in the next corrie can be seen in a photo taken by George Robertson a week later and was a reminder, if any were needed, that winter skills are about more than theory. Contact George to see the photo.

These few days are always an excellent opportunity to practise our winter skills, especially as we can't guarantee any snow coverage for our training in the Lakes.

Perhaps just as important, however, is the chance to socialise together and get to know each other better, especially with a fairly regular influx of new provisional members. Working together as a team is so much easier when people know each other well. Don't miss it next year!

As usual, we were all indebted to Andy Beavon for his work in arranging the course.#

Les

## What's On

### Wednesday 14 April

Training: Search management theory & table-top exercises  
19.00 hrs

### Sunday 25 April

Crag work and area familiarisation 09.00 hrs

### Wednesday 28 April

Equipment Working Group 19.30 hrs

### Wednesday 5 May

Main committee meeting, 19.30 hrs

### Saturday 15 May

Collection: Tebay services, both sides

### Saturday 22 May

Collection: Westmorland shopping centre

### Wednesday 26 May

Equipment Working Group 19.30 hrs

### Wednesday 23 June

Equipment Working Group 19.30 hrs

### Saturday 26 June

Collection: Asda

### Tuesday 6 July

Base clean – HELP NEEDED

### Saturday 31 July

Collection: Asda

### Saturday 28 August

Collection: Asda

### Saturday 4 December

Collection: Morrisons



## Ops & Membership

Bob Gold is already known to many in the Team as a pre-provisional member, but he was recently confirmed as a provisional member by the Ops & Membership Committee.

## Exercise Reports

### Winter Training in Scotland, 5-7 March

#### Day 1 – Friday

At last, a chance to practise some winter skills in the white stuff! After trekking up to Point 1141 we split into three groups with instructions to head for the Shelter Stone by a route of our choice, checking on snow conditions etc. en route. Funny then that once one group had reached the Shelter Stone and waited for a while, the other two groups decided there was no need after all to lose all that height and then have to re-ascend. Undeterred, the select A-team headed back up via a couple of icy scrambles and rejoined the shirkers. A small ice climb just below the Cairngorm plateau proved popular before we practised pacing and navigating in a white-out as we returned to Point 1141. Over to Ray who saved his energy for the Saturday...

#### Day 2 – Saturday

It's the smallest of things that stay in my memory. This year's winter training is a collage of small but brilliant-bright moments that together form a beautiful picture of what is special about 'our Team'.

Editor-Les spawned this chameleon-like frog of literary brilliance by asking if I would write an article for Mintcake. But he threatened "Editor's red pen" if it contained certain material pertaining to him. I let loose a long diatribe about "censorship...the need for truth and openness...if you want secrecy, join the Masons" etc. Les just smiled. But let's just see how much he lets by!

Arriving on Friday and straight to a good session in the pub-restaurant near Aviemore. Well, good for most of us 18 or so Team members, though some felt the food expensive, small-portioned and tasteless. I had soup, being used to small things. Stan was so worried by the waiter's mannerisms that he stayed firmly seated when the waiter passed behind him. We had a short conversation about "celebrating diversity", but some celebrations were a limp wave of the hand too far for Stan. I pointed out that as the other waiter had the same mannerisms, perhaps it was the "house style" drummed in by managers. Stan reckoned it didn't matter as this other waiter was "delectably female", or words to that effect.

Saturday saw us walking the two hours in to Creag Meaghaidh to play in the snow. We climbed steeply up the green-turf-covered stone chute at the base of Easy Gully to the snow. Abby kept me moving upwards in mind and body by reciting her poems. I found them moving, but my full expression of appreciation was hampered by breathing difficulties. I did manage, memory and lungs gasping, to recite one of my "odd odes" in return. It got me up the steep bit.

Andy split us into groups, but not before I got my axe pick entangled in the rear of Abby's harness, or was it Ali's? Paul suspects I have a posterior fetish [*Anyone remember*

*Ray's "assistance" to the jodhpur-clad rider on a callout a couple of years ago? – Ed.] I pleaded innocence. We spent a very pleasant couple of hours under Andy's relaxed and, as ever, expert tutorage. We cut bucket seats and tested them. I discovered that as long as I had a deep lip to the front of mine I had no need for additional anchors. Nothing and no one could heave the large cheeks of my posterior out of the seat; bumb-proof! We did stomper belays, buried-axe belays and snow-bollard belays, and laughed, relaxed and had a very good time.*

The group split to climb Raeburn's and Easy Gullies and the gully up to the Window. In the magnificent setting of Easy Gully and high above the iced-up Lochan a'Choire we moved in separate but supportive groups. Snow shelters were built, and Les told folks, concerned at seeing his dog curl up snow-covered beside the shelter, that "Kess is a dog...I keep telling people, she's a dog", exasperation in his voice. Now, I know I'm in Kendal Mountain Rescue team and so am occasionally a large piece of cheese short of a sandwich, but I *can* recognise a bloody dog! Perhaps Les thought we were hallucinating and would mistake her for a Swedish au pair, with disastrous and hypothermic results.

The weather on the summit was profoundly different from that experienced in the shelter of the enclosing gully. Wind buffeted us with spindrift, and the late sun broke through the swirling clouds, creating an ethereal and pulsating world of grey and blue, white and yellow-gold as we came down off the mountain. It was majestically awesome, and I remember Stan being moved by the beauty of it all and the pleasure of having the chance to experience it with the Team. Jonathan kept smiling into the icy wind, or it could have been frost nip. He did enjoy himself. Dave kindly kept with me in my descent in the gloaming.

Saturday night for R&R [*Have to ask your grandparents what that means – Ed.*], and we shot off to Aviemore for pasta and pizza. The place was called the "Pizza Restaurant". I vaguely remembered that "restaurant" is French; but Les knew *exactly* that it should have been "ristorante". As this was Aviemore, we were grateful it wasn't called the "Eyeties' Bites", but it served real Budweiser, and we wished Ian and Dagmar could have shared the moment and the beer. George negotiated "deals" the whole time, including a reduced price for his meal. We were impressed, especially the impecunious ones.

To continue the "bright-small moments" then, Les decided in the ristorante to celebrate diversity by subtly and gently "coming out". He symbolised this by sporting a pink triangle [*How dare you! Pink? It was a subtle shade of maroon.*] over his nether region as we left the "restaurant". We all – George, Stan, Kev and I – were honoured that Les had chosen us to share this huge step, but felt Aviemore might not be so respectful, so we suggested he took off his pink "coming-out" pinny.

We ended the night in the very swish "Ossian" hotel for pints and "amber nectar" and were "vetted" at the door; staggeringly, they let us in, and we wondered what criteria we had met, what test we had passed.

A good ending to the day. I missed the other days but understand they were also very good [read on...]. Thanks to all, especially to Andy Beavon for his capable organisation, and from all for the "good crack" offered and, I believe, enjoyed by everyone

**Ray Green, KMSRT**

### **Day 3 – Sunday**

And they're off! The response to Andy Bev's dictate that we should drive to the Coire Cas car park in convoy resulted in a Grand Prix-style charge up the road to Caingorm, George taking the role of Schumacher, Dave following close in the Williams, and Les and I doing our best to keep up in the Minardi (VW Camper) from the rear of the grid. And I'm here to tell you that we nearly had the pair of them thanks to the efforts of a privately entered VW Camper proving to be a very useful mobile chicane!

Having swapped driving helmets for climbing helmets we set off for Coire an t-Sneachda. After playing follow my leader for a while Andy asked the inevitable. 'So, where do we think we are then?' Easy, despite the limited visibility the stream junction gave our position away. Wrong. Lesson 1: note the time when you set off, and the time travelled will give you a big clue as to which particular stream junction you are *actually* at.

Compass bearings and pacing took us safely into the corrie and we decided to climb toward the Fiacail Ridge looking at the snow conditions along the way. Lesson 2: an avalanche forecast is exactly that, a forecast. Warnings of South / South Easterly slopes being prone to avalanche after new overnight snow, moved around significantly by the wind, proved incorrect. The local conditions proved ideal in terms of bonding old to new. Take notice – dig a pit and check the conditions for yourself.

Once on the ridge, Andy advised on a number of routes up the ridge to the plateau that would require employing varying amounts of, and I quote, 'clumsy climbing' and 'thrutching'. Having won the 'wobbly ice climber award' this would be right up my street!

Having reached the plateau, Andy asked his favourite question, but this time we were ready for him. Lessons learnt, not even an errant skier heading in exactly the opposite direction to his destination could prevent us arriving at the top of the Goat Track. Lesson 3: see lesson 2. On the main route down, Andy proved yet again that local conditions can and do override forecast conditions. This time less snow on a 'safe' northerly slope proved unstable due to the slabby nature of the underlying rocks.

Back at the car park, Les and I left the others to tea and biscuits to get a head start back home. Just south of Hamilton on the A74 the phone rang. It was Schumacher. Would we mind pulling over and allowing George & Stan a safe and swift passage south? This despite George going shopping in Aviemore and stopping for fish & chips at Bridge of Allan. If the team needs a new Swift Response Driver, Les and I have a suggestion.....

**Kevin Knowles, KMSRT**



### **Wednesday 10 March: Legal aspects of dealing with fatalities**

PC Neil Barrow, a coroner's officer and also a member of Patterdale MRT, talked on the above subject and then answered questions. His main points in brief:

- Treat as a crime scene (especially a climbing accident)
- It's unlikely that a police officer will come to the scene on the fell unless a crime is suspected, but do not move a body until police permission has been received.
- Record: location, casualty's equipment, weather, signs of fall, conditions underfoot, list of who has been at scene of death (members of party, other witnesses, team members)
- Take photos of body *in situ* and of surrounding area if possible (film may be better than digital to avoid question of manipulation)



### **Sunday 28 March: Searching with dogs and humans...theory and practice**

The exercise was held first at base where Keith and Les took us through the subtle theories of searching with humans and dogs respectively.

Keith, with the help of an impressive PowerPoint presentation, developed the difference between a line search, a corridor search and my old favourite, the purposeful wandering search. With some interesting statistical data from the States and here we looked at the importance of getting an accurate picture (age, frame of mind...) of the missing person when planning the search. Then in a perfectly rehearsed double act, Les (and Kess) introduced us to the do's and don'ts of helping a dog handler in a search situation.

By mid-morning, our poor brains full of theories, we moved up to Kentmere to put it all into practice. We were divided in two groups.

The first group went to look at how Kess would go about finding a casualty missing in the landscape. Les showed us the importance of wind direction, ground configuration... in order to get the maximum out of the dog. But in the end Kess showed us that she was no fool; why should she be looking for somebody who had been stroking her all morning and had wandered off a few minutes early?

In the meantime the rest of the team, divided into groups of 3 and 4, went looking for a missing walker (how careless of you, Keith, to lose your daughter in such a place!) and any relevant clues. Purposefully wandering, we searched a large boulder field and the steep grassy slopes nearby finding here a glove, there a bivibag and further away a rucksack, a lunch box, a map... Apart from the search itself an interesting point was to compare how effective we thought our search had been and what we actually had found. In most groups the two figures were fairly similar.

After lunch we carried out a very elaborate line search involving the whole team. It was a slow and painstaking

exercise with a result that wasn't so much better than the informal search organised earlier (except for Eddie who managed to recover his long lost billy can).

All in all a most instructive day, thanks to Keith and Les.

**Pierre Bétoin, KMSRT**

## Callouts



### 6 March

Seven members who were not in Scotland responded to a call from L&A who were dealing with another incident. Kendal Team members treated and evacuated a walker with a suspected broken ankle in Langdale.

### 17 March

A number of SARDA handlers joined Wasdale and L&A teams in looking for a missing lone walker en route from Wasdale to Langdale. The missing person was crag-fast above Angle Tarn but spotted our torches shortly before dawn and shouted to attract our attention. He was evacuated by a combined SARDA and L&A group.



### 25 March

Penrith MRT requested SARDA assistance to search for a missing elderly lady. She was located by Penrith team members on the outskirts of the town.

### 28 March

A walking couple called to report themselves benighted in the Great End/Scafell Pike/Ill Crag area. Keswick MRT requested assistance from SARDA. The people were found safe and well shortly after Kess and I left Seathwaite en route for Great End



## From Our Own Correspondent

*The following article reached the editor by runner recently.*  
Hi folks! As your roving foreign correspondent, I thought I'd drop a quick line from the land of warm beer, vast deserts and mysterious fungal growth. I can only imagine life is generally pretty blissful in the little smurf village of Kendal. Ironically the president of Namibia, the good Doctor Sam looks very much like an African Papa smurf. Thought you'd be interested in a little political coverage. Oh yes, and on the weather front, somewhat surprisingly, life is hot here, bloody hot, but you'll be pleased to know I'm rapidly buying up the entire stock of cheap and dodgy Namibian shirts to keep me looking pucker in the heat - one does what one has to, you know...

Well - where are we now? Day 12 and I'm in the thick of things - I've been bitten by a spider, have a weird rash on my neck, had a run-in with a very nasty black scorpion, very nearly rolled the Land Rover in a desert river bed and have severe flatulence from the maize meal [*all that practice with tins of cold baked beans on team exercises was obviously inadequate preparation - Ed.*]. Not disastrous yet, but I lie awake waiting to be carried away by a giant mosquito or devoured by a 30-foot zebra snake. Yep - it's dangerous here.

There are some rewards, however. We are off to a cultural soirée tomorrow night, a genuine Namibian wine bar followed by some hardcore Afrikaans line dancing. It surely won't be pretty. And then, to complete the evening, we are crashing over at Sally's place - that would, of course, be the Deputy High Commissioner's residence, no less. As I said, it's not all bad.

Pretty soon the job will start for real - a prospect I'm approaching with a fair degree of trepidation - managing 40 staff and 120 venturers as they hurl themselves headlong into 9 community and environmental projects across the country. It would be a doddle if it weren't for the warm beer.

That's all from me - Please send all care packages and cold beer to [hamishwilson1000@yahoo.com](mailto:hamishwilson1000@yahoo.com). See you all in the summer!

**Hamish Wilson**

## Working Groups

### Equipment & Medical / Communications

#### MRC 1st Aid Course 2004

Current full operational Team members are invited to attend the course. Participants will need to attend as a **minimum** either six Wednesday nights and the Saturday, or seven Wednesday nights.

Unfortunately, due to high demand on places and hence the need to limit numbers it is not possible to include current provisional members.

A list is on the notice board in the meeting room at Base and anyone wishing to attend the course must have placed their name on this list **prior to 28 May 2004**.

The course/exam dates are:

**Wednesday nights starting at 7.30pm at KMSRT's Base:**

**22, 29 Sep**

**13, 20, 27 Oct**

**10, 17, 24 Nov**

**Saturday 4 Dec: 9am to 1pm at KMSRT's Base**

Any subject requested / Scenarios / Quiz

**Sunday 5 Dec: meet at KMSRT's Base for 9am start**

MRC 1st Aid exam

A draft copy of the timetable is on display at Base. Please note that some adjustment to the timetable may be needed but we will keep you informed.

John Hall



### Base & Vehicles

#### A comment, observation or a full-blown moan ?

Some days after last month's Sunday exercise I had reason to call at base to carry out some checks on all vehicles. Much to my surprise, I was disappointed to find that the interior of one vehicle had been left in a less-than-satisfactory state. Chocolate bar wrappers, a team flask full of cold coffee, other rubbish and debris littered the floor. Small items of equipment kept within the cab were not in their rightful place which, as we all know, can, at the very least, be very annoying when looking for them in the dark.

May I take this opportunity to remind all drivers, new and old, that it is their responsibility on returning to base after call outs or training to clean both inside and out. We all want to get home after long days/nights out, but if all tasks are shared then it should not take too long.

Sorry if this sounds like a moan, but I would like to think of it as a comment on an observation.

**John Everett, Vehicle Officer**

### Base-cleaning rota

In a statement of the bleedin' obvious, the Base is only clean and tidy because a group of dedicated individuals turn up regularly to clean and tidy it. Now there's a chance for you or a partner/friend/relative join this elite group. The more people on the rota, the shorter the time commitment for each. Anyone wishing to contribute to the Team in this way (newer members in particular?) can contact either Paul Astle or Pierre Bétoin.

In addition to the regular cleaning schedule, there is to be a summer clean on 6 July. Pencil it in now – more details to follow.

## Fund Raising

The Town Centre Collection on Saturday 13 March 2004 raised £1324.61 for the team funds. Thank you to all who helped on the day. It really helps to have a four-legged friend assist with the collections, so very many thanks to Kess and Jack.

The Kendal Medieval Market group have asked the Team to organise the raffle for this year's event which takes place on Bank Holiday Monday, 31 May 2004. The money raised from this will go towards the 'Wheels Appeal'. We need lots of raffle prizes. Anyone who can obtain a prize, please contact Liz. We will have books of tickets to sell and I hope all team members will take one book each to sell to friends and families. We are trying to find a two-wheel wooden cart to be used as our 'Medieval Team Vehicle'. If anyone can help, please contact Liz.

**Liz Parkes, Fund-Raising Officer**

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