

Mintcake



December 2002

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Registered Charity No 259539

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Editor's Comments

A Happy New Year to all our readers

(For email recipients :-)

As you are now reading this, you must all have Adobe Acrobat Reader (version 5.5 is preferable). The newsletter will print out just as before but now, we don't have so many problems with servers rejecting attachments created in MSWord. In common with most .pdf files, there is an index column on the left of the page. This can be converted to a thumb-nail page view if preferred. The file is also quite a lot smaller than it's MSWord equivalent.

Email addresses should now be secure and cannot be read by other recipients. Anyone who would like their email address added to the list and so save the Team some money, please pass it on to the editor. Mark it 'confidential' if you prefer it that way and then only I will see it.

Hopefully, this year, Kes will pass her SARDA assessment and become a fully fledged Search Dog. This will take some of the pressure off Les Telford and he will be taking over from me as newsletter editor. Exactly when this will happen, will depend on Kes.

Very many thanks to all those Team members and others, who have supported this newsletter with articles throughout the past year. My hope would have to be that, during the next year, all Team members contribute something towards the entertainment and information of all of us.

I wish you all a very happy New Year!

Rob

Exercise Report

The December Training Bash

A Magical Mystery Tour through Whitbarrow scar

A merry, and somewhat disheveled band of revelers managed to surface in that murky nether-world hidden between Christmas and New Years to make an appearance for the Sunday mission.

It's a dark place where all time seems to disappear and without warning you are thrown back to a world where the sky is deathly grey and icy rains pour ceaselessly from the distant heavens... it's as though Tolkien is having a laugh at our expense, cackling in his grave...oh, hang on a minute... this ain't Black September in Melbourne of '65! It's the South Lakes on a glorious winters morning! Profuse apologies and I'll get on with it...

Despite being the Lord's day of rest, and an officially sanctioned "social nav day" Mr Astle had been champing at the bit for months, squirrelling out a route devious enough to test even the most seasoned trail salts of the team. Sure enough it was "The Twelve Grid References of Christmas" in a cheap political stunt to coerce folks to forget the thigh deep mud and myriad trails not appearing on the map.

By all accounts what followed was a remarkably unremarkable training... we quickly settled into formation, and most of us hadn't even glanced at the map until well into the venture, at which point those that had realised we weren't quite where we planned to be, but cunningly didn't inform those that hadn't, now trudging blindly on, leaving some who had, behind, scratching their heads and wondering whether or not to call out the nearest mountain rescue team. Yes – a critical moment all round.

Despite a couple of shady characters slyly studying a GPS, most of us had a fine time wandering about in the drizzle (now with maps in hand) dancing to the merry tune of Paul and Abbey who were both mocking our desperate pleas for hints, tips and answers... (apparently it was "Six Swans a'swimming" for number 6). By far, the biggest disappointment of the day for all concerned was the terrible muddying of my very fancy new boots, purchased only the day before for dramatic adventures far beyond Whitbarrow Scar

Nevertheless, prompted by the insistence that the publican wouldn't show any sympathy to any late arrival shenanigans, we blitzed the remainder of the route with gorgeous views of the river valley for a Christmas lunch at the Gilpin Bridge. International relations plummeted in a replay of the Ashes

conducted on the green felt when a spectacular miscue from the break almost took Kevin's eyeball out in a remarkably Phil Tuffnell-esq effort in the slips cordon. Apologies from the Australian team.

I hasten to add that several lessons were learned along the way; the human herd instinct to blindly follow someone (anyone!) with a map and a shred of credibility can be a dangerous temptation; and beware the environmental heathens who choose to cut switchbacks! Finally – many thanks to Paul and Abbey in their gallant efforts the previous day to prepare the adventure and arrange a spot of lunch for the team.



A rare Lakeland sighting at the critical moment as the team realises we weren't where we should have been.

Hamish Wilson
Provisional Team Member

Dates For The Diary

Wednesday January 15th

Defib Training

Sunday January 26th

Training - Winter Skills or 1st Aid R. Robin

Wednesday January 29th

Equipment and Medical

The evening starts at 19.30hrs

For those who've been there and done it - It still is a chance to handle the kit you otherwise might not see all that often!

For the provisionals and newly qualified hill going members - this is your opportunity to get to know the kit we carry.

Tuesday 18th February

Talk By Doug Scott at Kendal Town Hall 7.30 p.m. Tickets £6.50

A new talk by Doug Scott entitled Himalaya Alpine Style Proceeds to be divided between Kendal Mountain Search and Rescue Team and Doug Scott's charity Community Action Nepal.

Contact Liz to book tickets.

Will let you have more details later but have just confirmed the booking with Doug Scott and Town Hall. Will have some flyers and tickets by the New Year.

Wednesday 19th February

Training - Round Robin

Friday 28th February 2003

Team Winter Training - Scotland



This year, in the Ben Nevis area, based at the Alte Cruinichidh bunk house at Roy Bridge.

Accommodation has been arranged from Thursday evening (27th Feb) until Saturday evening (1st March)

Those wanting to come along, add your names to the list in base.

(No complaints please, if the bunk-house spelling is wrong. I couldn't even begin to check it. I suggest that Team members traveling up, get a grid from Andy Bev, then you don't need to ask the locals and thus look a complete Sassenach pillock. Ed)

Wednesday February 26th

Equipment and Medical

Wednesday March 19th

Training - Search Skills

Wednesday March 26th

Equipment and Medical

Sunday March 29th/30th

Training - Overnight Mosdale Cottage

Wednesday ? April

Training - Downed Aircraft RAF

Sunday 27th April

Training - 1st Aid Scenarios

Wednesday April 30th

Equipment and Medical

Wednesday May 21st

Training - Rope Skills Refresher

Sunday May 25th

Training - Humphrey Head with Coast Guard

Wednesday May 28th

Equipment and Medical

Wednesday June 18th

Training - BaseOps / Cas site control

Wednesday June 25th

Equipment and Medical

Sunday June 29th

Training - Buckbarrow LWR

Wednesday July 16th

Training - Base Ops / Cas control

Sunday July 30th

Training - Cautley

Wednesday July 30th

Equipment and Medical

Callouts



Although there have been no callouts this month (which is how it should be), we did have a near miss when a gentleman disorientated in the Howgills, rang the police for assistance. They contacted us via the leader group pagers and the call was answered by Chris Marsden who was on his way back from an Ice-hockey do. As he was on a coach. it was an easy matter to ring the provided mobile phone number. It even proved possible for Chris to recognise the area in which the chap had come adrift and he was able to talk him down over Winder and into Sedbergh.

General Team News & Comment



The above photo was sent in by Mark Eccles of the Lake District National Park Authority. Certainly it is an old photo but exactly how old, I don't yet know. If anyone has any detailed info, pass it on to the editor and we'll publish it in the next issue.

Registration is OJM 550?

Flares

Most, if not all, of you have, by now, set off a smoke flare either in training or on a job. This particular skill is oft over-looked as it isn't required too many times a year and tends to be a job that's given to a Team member known to be able to handle it. As a result, you can go your entire MR life without ever having to do it for real. However, we all should know how it's done because you never know when you might be the only one spare to do it.

There are a number of simple guidelines attached to this particular task that are mostly health & safety common sense. The actual firing of the flare isn't technically difficult but the teachings of a million parents that you should never hold a firework in your hand, still holds sway for all of us I hope and flares are, after all, just big fireworks. Problem is, they are meant to be held in your hand. You could throw it onto the ground but it won't then do it's job properly.

The basic guidelines for whacking off a smoke flare are as follows;

1.. **Never** point a flare at another person whether it's primed to fire or not.

2.. The Pains Wessex ® orange smoke that we use are completely water-proof, and should stand getting wet.

3.. There are a number of reasons why we might need to fire off a smoke flare. These reasons should not normally include 'Distress' as it's not us that should be in distress! Hence, they are not called 'Distress' flares.

The primary reason we carry smoke flares is to enable us to give accurate indication of local wind conditions to an approaching helicopter, both military and civilian. Helicopters don't like rapidly varying winds and the pilot will need to know from which direction they are blowing and how strong they appear. Smoke handles both of these tasks simultaneously and efficiently. Especially when the cas-site is in a gully, where winds can do strange things.

The second common reason for using smoke is to indicate the position of a stationary party (casualty site etc) to others. Again, this could be to the helicopter. This only needs to be done when the pilot is having difficulty in finding you or, more importantly, when there is a need for more than the usual speed in getting the helicopter to your location. The crew will be looking out for your party at all times and modern clothing is very easy to spot from the air, however, if 'Fit-family' are all out for a fell walk on that day, chances are that they will all be dressed alike. Chances are also that they will give the pilot a cheery wave so looking very much like a rescue team trying to attract his attention. In fact, the pilots have a greater difficulty in locating us on a clear sunny day when dozens of small groups are dotted around the landscape, than they do at night when we're usually the only ones up there and glow like fire-flies in the night vision goggles (NVG). It's also worth reminding all, that our smoke flares produce hot smoke and this too, is visible, for miles, to a helicopter equipped with NVG. Smoke flares can be fired at night.

Partly for this reason, we don't, as a Team, use red light flares. Red is the colour to which the NVG equipment is most sensitive and the massive light output from a point-light flare completely over-whelms the system so blinding the crew. Not good if he's heading your way. However, Langdale do use this type of flare and we might be asked to fire them by L & A Team members, hence I include them in our training from time to time. These flares are very difficult to extinguish and even shoving them into the ground doesn't do much to reduce the light output as seen by the crew. A better signal in both day-light and at night, is to stand in the formal 'I'm here' position which looks like the old cowboy-film 'Hand's up.' It signifies the letter 'Y' or 'Yes' and is instantly recognised by the crew, no movement is required.

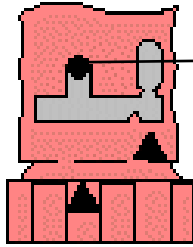
4.. If you are in a gully or other position with high rock around you, there's a good chance that it's not the best spot, on a windy day, to be inviting a pilot to ask for it, fire smoke as soon as the helicopter is heading, even roughly, in your direction. Be prepared for the pilot to ask for more smoke if they suspect conditions are not good.



5.. To make this easier for all, the Team member operating the helicopter radio should not be the one also firing the flares. One job requires you to stand still and the other could have you running for more flares or information updates etc. The radio operator is the only person who has instantaneous communications with the approaching aircraft and, for safety, that person should never take their eyes off the job.

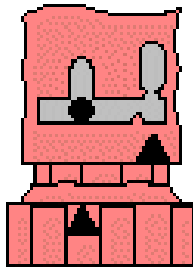
6.. Firing the flare

This is the bit most have now done for real but as we don't have any good pictures of this and reading it from the side of the flare with a helicopter approaching, might be seen as a bit late in the day.....



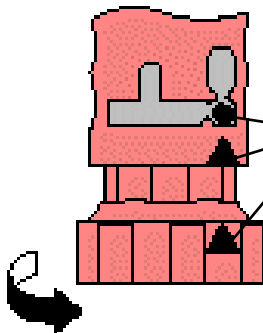
1.. SAFE

The locking pin is in the left-hand slot and the flare is safe to handle. If armed and then not fired, it should be returned to this position before returning to storage.



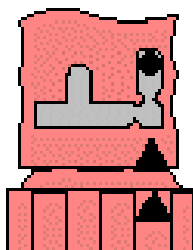
2.. PREPARE TO ARM

Pull the base of the handle downwards so that the locking pin clears its retaining slot. The flare cannot be fired from this position and is still safe to handle.



3.. ARM THE FLARE

Twist the base of the handle clockwise until the arrows align and the locking pin is positioned below the right-hand slot. The flare is now armed and ready to fire.



4.. FIRE THE FLARE

Hold the flare at arms length with the wind coming from behind you. Strike the base of the handle with the flat of your hand. An internal percussion cap will ignite the smoke compound. The flare will burn for approximately one minute. Smoke issues from the end furthest away from you !! This smoke will stain fabric and skin if it comes into contact.



It's not toxic but try not to breath it in.

7.. Once the flare has been fired, it must be disposed of safely. It will be hot for some time, cool it off by immersion in water if possible. Bring discharged flares back to base for disposal, don't chuck them on the fell-side.

8.. If the flare mis-fires, the manufacturer states that it will be safe to handle once ten minutes have elapsed after you hit the base. If possible, return the striking handle to it's safe position (Diagram 1.. SAFE). Transport the flare back to base and bring it to the attention of the Equipment WG.

Never take a mis-fired flare on board a helicopter.

If everyone is to board the aircraft, bury the flare in a recognisable place and recover it later. Strictly speaking, if you are carrying unused pyrotechnics of any kind when you board a helicopter, you should bring this to the attention of the crew. If you carry them, it's your job to ensure they are safe. Remember there are two flares in the MediSacs so if you're the poor unfortunate who's task it is to carry this sack, you also have flares to worry about.

9.. It's worth bearing in mind that although this is normally the only type of flare carried by Kendal MRT, other Teams, and certainly the RAF MRT's usually have different types. These might well include scene-illumination and parachute flares. If the RAF are nearby and you think you might need this type of equipment, get in touch with the RAF Team Leader, they are always happy to help civilian MRT's.

Base & Vehicles

It would seem that it's back to the beginning with potential replacements for Mobile Two. John Everett, our new Base & Vehicles Officer is having a fresh look at the problem and wishes to get the matter discussed in some detail at the next Main Committee Meeting (Wednesday 8th). If you have a view you'd like to air or if something within the area you are responsible for, has ramifications for new vehicles, John invites you to come along and have your say. If he doesn't get any input into the problems he faces, it makes the job that much harder. As you know, John's in the motor trade and he knows his stuff, however, a vehicle used by a mountain rescue team has a whole host of things that are different to the one you take the family on holiday in.

Communications

Additional Hardware.....

If anyone who is organising a training session, requires anything above and beyond what communications are normally available to the Team, please speak to Equipment & Medical Working Group as we now have the ability to provide enhanced communications under some circumstances. If we don't have it, we can probably get hold of it given some reasonable notice. If any particular item of equipment proves generally useful, we'll endeavour to get hold of it on a permanent basis.

Vacancies.....

As this is my final year as Radio Officer, we need a willing volunteer to take over the job. Some back-ground in military or civilian communications would be a help but it's by no means essential. If you're interested, speak to Dagmar at one of the Equipment and Medical Working Group meetings.

Technology.....

In an attempt to keep us up to date in this ever changing technological world, Hamish, our tame Ozzie, has undertaken to have a look at the **incident logging software** that has been produced by Cockermonth MRT. He may well be canvassing Team member opinion as this project progresses.

The Communications Training Ex.....

On the 18th of December, proved a lot less of a chore than they usually are. As I was being kept in check by a clock-watching Andy Dell, I never managed to get up to full speed. However, I did get something in the way of revenge when those attending were dispatched into the minus-two night air, to play with the radios.

Dan Shiels and Andy Clifford demonstrated how experience in a MR team can pay off, when they sealed themselves into the locker-room and attempted to answer the questions from there. All credit to them that it took a little while for the controllers to spot that one. Possibly there's a place for future indoor comms training !? The new Tait radios performed well and the received audio quality proved to be considerably better than our aging PF85's. Most Team members, again with the exception of the time-served ones, found operating as Base a little stressful. Certainly it was noticeable how much easier most people found operating the handsets from the 'hill' as against acting as Base. Maybe we'll have a bit of sympathy for our base operators the next time we have difficulty getting the tea ordered.

Paul excelled by managing to avoid use of his favourite radio expression of 'Over and out' but we did get a new

variation from someone, of 'Out and, er, over'. As I for one, have, on occasion, been guilty of far worse, including one case of 'Roger, Roger', when speaking to Roger Pickup of Langdale Team, I'm not in a position to criticise. At some point in time everyone will make at least one mistake, there are no exceptions. Many thanks to all of those who braved the cold by turning up and participating. Anyone who couldn't make it and would like the paperwork accompanying this session, contact Rob or Andy D.

Pagers.....

I've been asked to remind all those who carry MRT pagers, to take them with you when you attend a callout. Both radios and mobile phones have their off days but the pager system has been going for many years and is good for the vast majority of our area (and beyond). There have been occasions, one recently, where the pagers have been the only way for base to recall Team members from the hill. Not a lot of use when it's in your change-of-clothes-bag in base.

Fund Raising

Seasonal Greetings from the Treasurer!

The start of a new year seems an appropriate time to thank all our supporters for their work in emptying and counting the coins in the Team collecting boxes. During the month of December this band has counted and banked **£804.71**. The Team has about 100 boxes scattered around our area and our new co-ordinator will be pleased to hear from any new volunteers to help with this work and any suggestions of new locations we could try. Any ideas to Phil Morgan please or Liz Parkes our fund raising officer.

December is also traditionally a time when we receive donations from various walking clubs, past casualties and patrons. This year has been no exception and I am pleased to list the larger donations received:

BAE walking group £60

Tuesday Walking group £75

Kentside Probus Walking Group £225

Mrs Pearson £100 (Rescued about ten years ago and supported us ever since!)

P. Harris & Vale of Lune Harriers £75

Chris Kenny £100 (Farleton Knott rescue #2)

BP Forties Charlie Platform Charity Fund £500

These, the collecting boxes and various other donations have brought December's total income to **£2208.48** which puts the Team in a good position at the start of the New Year.

My thanks on behalf of the Team to all those that have supported us during the past year and here's to a prosperous New Year for the Team in 2003!

Sue Brookes
Treasurer

For Sale

Pentium II / III Base units

Windows XP (Pro)

Works 2000 or Office 2000

128 MB RAM

CD ROM & Floppy Drive

Email Dudley for more spec details

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Next Issue : First week in February 2003