

Mintcake



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Reg. Charity No. 259539

March 2005

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Don't forget...

Hamish's presentation about his visit to Thailand in the aftermath of the tsunami. 7.30pm at base on Friday 11 March.

Editor's Comment

Do you wince when someone makes a forced link on TV or the radio or even, dare I say it, in print editorials? Well, sometimes, a common thread just jumps out at you. One such has occurred this month. Spread the load! We function pretty well as a team. It could be even better, though. There is a tendency to let certain people do a lot of the work, especially the less "glamorous" tasks. There are a number of calls for volunteers and assistance in this issue: street collections, emptying collecting boxes, cleaning base, equipment in drying room, tree planting. Please read carefully and see how you can help. None is a hugely onerous task, unless you're the one doing all the work because others haven't come forward to spread the load. An hour or two to help with a street collection, an occasional turn on the cleaning rota, emptying a few collecting boxes maybe three times a year – all these are surely within everyone's reach. A number of team members, of course, hold specific positions within the team which already take up a significant amount of time. Active team membership requires commitment, however, and the tasks outlined above certainly provide opportunities to demonstrate this, especially for those, for example newer and provisional team members, who do not yet have a particular role in the team. Here endeth the lesson.

Les

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Tsunami Update

The Sri Lanka Radio Society is still very keen to have the radio equipment and vehicle. As yet, however, no member organisation of the Disasters Emergency Committee could be persuaded to request the equipment officially to enable it to be transported to Sri Lanka. Without such an official request, no transport is possible. We'll keep you updated.

Exercise Reports

Wednesday 9 February – Avalanche awareness

The red shovel talk – obvious, really! – was about, among other things, operating a snow shovel. Andy Dell gave a presentation on snow conditions and avalanches (see also p.7). Some years this seems almost irrelevant nowadays in the Lake District. This year, however, there has been rather a lot of snow, especially recently, which has remained on the fells for much longer than is often the case. With winter training in Scotland coming up, too, it was particularly relevant.

The other element of this evening's exercise was a demonstration of the automatic resuscitation device currently being trialled by Cumbria Ambulance Service. Strapped around a casualty's chest, it automatically applies 15 compressions then beeps at the first-aider to remind him/her that it's time to inflate the casualty's lungs with two breaths. At a cost of £7000 and heavy to boot, it's unlikely to be added to the team's equipment portfolio in the near future, but we are grateful to paramedic Andy from Kendal Ambulance station for demonstrating it!



Sunday 27 February – Winter skills

Snow. There was none of any substance around Kentmere or Helvellyn, but Andy Dell had found enough to bury an ice axe on Great Dun Fell over in the Pennines. A reasonable turn-out filled two vehicles, and we set off towards Appleby, taking great care not to fall foul of the unofficial speed trap in Grayrigg on the way through.

We hit the snow halfway up the tarmac track to the repeater station on Great Dun Fell. Small drifts spilled across the lane, deep enough to stop Mobile One. We all piled out with our (red) snow shovels, eager for the chance to use them in anger for the first time this year. We wanted to get the vehicles as close as possible to the exercise area to speed up our response time in the event of a callout back in our patch. As it was, driving to the top of Kentmere would take well over an hour.

We parked up in a sharp gully under a dolerite spur called Green Castle. Split into two groups, Andy Dell took the beginners up one side of the gully while Pete Munford looked after the juveniles - sorry, more experienced team members - up the other. Ice axe braking (or should that be breaking) came first. On your back, on your front, feet first, head first, over the cornice (you guessed, Hamish and Jonathan), through the cornice (Terence, eventually, after a lot of spadework from underneath). After butties we fitted crampons just to remind ourselves how they worked, plodded about a bit, and took them off again. By now the cloud had cleared to leave a sunny, soporific afternoon. The chairman announced he was going to wander off for a nap – a bit like Capt. Oates without the sacrifice.

By now Andy Dell was demonstrating to his group the art of avalanche testing by carefully digging metre-wide blocks, and judging the snow in categories from 5 (danger!) to 1 (play!). The juveniles, who'd been watching curiously from a short distance, suddenly started attacking the snow with ice axes. "Look at mine, Boss." "I've got one here, Boss, you can try". Pathetic attempts to impress the leadership. Official findings proved a marked variability in the snow. Henry's pit tested to destruction; Pete's, only fifty yards away, sheared off at its base. We rated the slope about Category 1 overall, so continued to play.

The last part of the day was spent testing various types of belay. While Andy's group progressed rapidly to removable ice axe belays, the juveniles saw this merely as an excuse to fall about in the snow, as they played tug-of-war with inadequate snow bollards, rolling the detritus down the slope in a vain attempt at reaching the road. And they want two points for this?

It wasn't until we were back in Kendal that Larissa mentioned her (lack of) membership card with a delicate enquiry aimed at my kidneys. I managed to mask my initial panic with.... secondary panic. As long as her mentor doesn't find out. So to all of you still without membership cards who have not supplied a passport style photo, please do so a.s.a.p. To those of you who have, just nudge me quietly.

Ian Johnson, KMSRT

Fundraising

It was a cold day on 19 February. The residents of Kendal were a bit thin on the ground in town that day; I blame the weather, not the one-way system. But the hardy souls of Kendal MRT were out with the buckets. Yes, Liz Parkes had managed to get us another collecting day on the streets of Kendal. (I don't know how she does it, most charities only get one every 2 or 3 years, but they are almost an annual event for us.) The returning collectors happily exchanged their jingling buckets for hot scones and drinks when they got back to base after their hour or two out on the streets. There was a bit of a competitive edge when Pete Munford realised that John Everett had raised 37p more than he had, so Pete went out for a second stint! The venturing out into the cold was worth it – the 31 people involved raised £1165.50 (and one more shop has agreed to take a collecting box as well). The replacement for Mobile 2 should be ordered soon, this money is an important contribution to the £40,000 or so it will cost.

There is a very straightforward relationship between the number of people out collecting and the amount of money raised – more of one equals more of the other. An excellent effort by those who attended, but where was everyone else? Okay, a few people were working, a couple on holiday and the odd one or two ill. But if you consider that whilst more than half of the team's supporters were out on the streets and over 40% of the operational support members were out as well, it was disappointing that only about 35% of the hill-going membership could manage to pick up a bucket (and even worse – only 25% of the provisionals!). If you were not out on the 19th, then I would ask that you make a positive decision to help out on at least one fund-raising event in the next 3 months (and if Liz manages to get a Kendal street collection in 2006, commit yourself to attending that as well).

There is always a list of forthcoming fund-raising days in Mintcake [see What's On on p.4]. Don't wait for Liz to phone you to ask you to help (with over 70 people to potentially contact this takes many hours of her time) – contact her NOW (by phone on Kendal 729323, or by e-mail on lizp@bowstonla8.fsnet.co.uk) and offer your services.

Thank you very much to those who helped on the 19th.

Keith Pittman

Much of the team's income is obtained from collecting boxes in a variety of locations around the team's operating area. These require emptying from time to time. Kath Kirby is responsible for co-ordinating the collecting boxes, not for emptying them all. For that she needs (y)our assistance. It need not take up much of your time, but your assistance will make a valuable contribution to the team's finances. Contact Kath for more details at kathkirby@hotmail.com, 01539 741942 or by leaving a note for her in base.

Mobile 2 Replacement

John Everett reported to the last main committee meeting on the recommendations for a replacement for Mobile 2. A great deal of work has gone into drawing up a specification subject to certain constraints (e.g. height of garage, cost) and then examining the vehicles available to meet this specification as closely as possible. The proposal, approved unanimously by the committee, is to opt for a 2-wheel-drive, 11-seater Renault Trafic with an equipment cage which can still carry 8 seated occupants even with a casualty on a stretcher in the vehicle. The committee expressed its thanks to John and all the other team members for all their input in what has been a very lengthy process.

It is hoped that purchase and conversion will be complete such as to allow the new vehicle to be operational by September 2005. Fundraising continues!

Callouts



Only one callout to report in February:

13 February

One of those callouts which illustrate that a simple slip can happen anywhere but with different consequences. Outside Boots and you're in hospital in a few minutes; high on the Kentmere Horseshoe and it might be several hours; but even on the Helm, as in this case, it can still be quite some time before reaching hospital as the ambulance crew requires our assistance with the carry-off in such circumstances. Here a young lady slipped while walking the dog on a cold Sunday morning with snow showers and broke her ankle.

Base & Vehicles

As agreed at the last committee meeting and in line with Government guidelines i.e. the Freedom of information Act, here is a brief résumé of items discussed at the last B&V meeting.

Base bits

- “Dehumidifier is not working.” Oh yes it is. Pierre & Steve have checked it out and all's well. The dehumidifier has a limit as to how much moisture it can handle. Filling the drying room with wet equipment and wet team clothing at the same time is asking too much of it, so we need to prioritise. Although team clothing needs to be dried, equipment must take priority.
- Multimedia (bedside) cabinet is now complete with a permanent set of leads attached. A second set of leads for awayday presentations is available.
- Pigeonholes: please spring clean - out with the old, in with the new.
- Parking: some concern has been shown that due to roadside parking restrictions, some team members are finding it difficult to park in the base car park during weekday callouts. It was suggested that we should write to the local constabulary and the Highways Authority to formalise what can best be described as a very old gentleman's agreement. Team members should not use base for all-day parking if leaving Kendal, as this could restrict parking during callouts. If spending time locally and they can still respond, then this is acceptable. Parking is also possible on the police station car park if used prudently and a current team membership card is left clearly visible in vehicle.

Vehicle bits

- Radio hand set mics in M1 & M3 to be reposition to eliminate accidental operation by those long-legged members.
- Tsunami Appeal. If and when required (see elsewhere!), Mobile 2 to be prepared for onward transport, i.e. radio/siren/stretchers brackets will be removed, a spares kit will be obtained, and DVLA will be notified that the vehicle is being exported.
- All drivers are reminded to refuel if fuel gauge shows $\frac{3}{4}$ or less. Exterior cleaning of all vehicles has shown a marked improvement of late. Can we all please show as much care with the interiors.
- Dates of next meetings: Tuesday 5 April, Tuesday 31 May @ 19.30h

Post-Callout Reminders

Two points to note if wet kit has to be placed in the drying room after a callout:

- It is essential to use the whiteboard between the equipment room and drying room to record what equipment is temporarily not in which vehicle. This will prevent us from driving a vehicle to a callout without vital equipment such as ropes, a cas bag or even a stretcher.
- Once dry, the equipment has to be returned to the appropriate vehicle. This does not happen by magic. It usually involves either Eddie or Dagmar making a special trip to base. This load now needs to be shared. Accordingly, at the end of a callout either the leader on the day needs to nominate someone to deal with the equipment the next day or a volunteer must come forward.

What's On

Friday 11 March

Tsunami presentation by Hamish Wilson:
19.30h (see p.1)

Sunday 13 March

Tree planting, Goat Scar, Longsleddale

Sunday 20 March

Training: Rescue / Evacuation 09.00h

Wednesday 23 March

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

Tuesday 5 April

Base & Vehicles Working Group 19.30h

Wednesday 6 April

Ops & Membership sub-committee meeting 19.30h

Wednesday 27 April

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

Wednesday 4 May

Main committee meeting 19.30h

Wednesday 18 May

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

Saturday 21 May

Collection, Tebay Services

Tuesday 31 May

Base & Vehicles Working Group 19.30h

Wednesday 1 June

Ops & Membership sub-committee meeting 19.30h

Saturday 4 June

Collection, Westmorland Centre

Wednesday 22 June

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

Saturday 25 June

Collection, Asda

Wednesday 6 July

Main committee meeting 19.30h

Saturday 9 July

Collection, Killington Lake Services

Saturday 30 July

Collection, Asda

Wednesday 3 August

Ops & Membership sub-committee meeting 19.30h

Saturday 27 August

Collection, Asda

Rescue 2000 – A Review

Back in 1991, there was the potential for mountain rescue in England to get a lot of government money via the Sports Council. As with all such money it was likely that there would need to be reams of business cases and justifications to be produced before we would get even a whiff of the cash. So whilst the national Mountain Rescue Council of England & Wales (MRC) were discussing if it should go for the money, how it should set about it and should there be a national review, the Lake District decided to set the pace. LDSAMRA (Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association) decided to have a review carried out on itself to see if it (and by implication, its member teams) were operating in an efficient and effective way.

The then 15 teams that made up LDSAMRA embarked on a regional review, specifically focused on what others thought of Lake District MR. The review was carried out by an independent person, and his report was intended to become a working document against which teams and LDSAMRA could measure progress in subsequent years. The report (published in July 1993) came up with a positive picture of Lake District MR, but also had a number of recommendations:

1. Common entrance requirements
2. Teams should review the number of active members
3. Common training syllabus
4. Standardisation of helicopter practice
5. Reduce the number of teams
6. Establish a rescue co-ordinator
7. LDSAMRA acquire the services of a helicopter
8. Strengthen the role of LDSAMRA

Consequently the issues were discussed, some items were accepted, some not. Of those that were accepted some progressed, some did not. For example:

- Kendal had a 'clear out' of its membership list – a slightly painful experience at the time, but with clear benefit.
- Common entry and training did not get far. Nevertheless, the move to a common first aid syllabus was very important in the subsequent introduction of the current MRC Casualty Care syllabus.
- Standardisation of helicopter practice was sorted out with the RAF.
- Two Outward Bound teams combined with their local teams fairly quickly. The joining of Millom and Furness teams was a longer exercise that involved some pain, but seems to have resulted in a success. (These were the only amalgamations that Rescue 2000 suggested.)

However, all of this was a long time ago. Earlier this year LDSAMRA decided a 'review of the review' would be worthwhile. This has recently been done; I represented Kendal at the discussions. (It was interesting to note that there was acceptance that the outcome of a review does not mean things have to change, they may be alright as they are!) After much discussion, it was generally felt that Rescue 2000 had been of significance in the development of MR in the Lake District to its current position. In addition, having an external person lead the Rescue 2000 review gave it credibility. Nevertheless, the document had now reached the end of its useful life. However, a few things do now need looking at:

1. Review the role of LDSAMRA, particularly:
 - a. Review the roles and responsibilities of LDSAMRA
 - b. What are people's perceptions of LDSAMRA?
 - c. What do teams want out of LDSAMRA?
 - d. How proactive should LDSAMRA be to meet team's needs?
2. Helicopters - an ongoing issue with protocol disagreements. (As the recent introduction of 2 air ambulances who [in my view anyway] don't want to talk to each other on how they operate with MR has almost resulted in one of the original problems returning.)
3. Review size and number of the teams.

The main committee of LDSAMRA will now consider these items, with the outcomes eventually being discussed at our team's main committee.

But what could this mean for Kendal team? Well that should really be up to you! I personally believe that Kendal's main committee should not decide on these issues without getting your thoughts and opinions – there are potentially significant changes to the existence, structure and operation of Kendal team.

How is this gathering of your input best done? Through correspondence in Mintcake? A chat with a committee member down the pub? A structured 'navel gazing' evening at base?

Writing this article has triggered a few thoughts in my mind about how the members of Kendal team see the role of both LDSAMRA and MRC (and possibly that of the main committee of Kendal team as well). Indeed what do you know about any of

their purposes and functions? How do you know what they are deciding and doing in your name? Do you want to know anything anyway?

Time for an unsatisfactory finish to this article – lots of questions raised but no clear way forward for you readers.....

Keith Pittman, KMSRT

PS: I would hope that any members (be they supporters, operations support, hill-going or provisionals) who are interested in the future of MR will find some way of raising their hands to make ensure their opinions are listened to and considered as your main committee directs Kendal team into the future.

PPS: The promise of Sports Council mega-bucks back in the 90's never come to much, and there never was a thorough national review.

Shorts

- Welcome to Kath Jackson and Henry Clifford who have been confirmed as new provisional members of the team.
- Following the juniper planting in Longsleddale reported last month, it is now planned to plant a number of trees in conjunction with the National Park Authority on Goat Scar in Longsleddale on Sunday 13 March – sign up on the list on the whiteboard in base.
- Pierre Bétoin will still be delighted to add more names to the rota of base cleaners. It's not a huge commitment, but we all welcome a clean, tidy base. Speak to Pierre for more details.
- The Great North Air Ambulance has been (temporarily) grounded, citing a fall-off in funding income since the tsunami and the Carlisle floods. This means that we are, once more, dependent solely on the North-West Air Ambulance if a Sea King is unavailable. The GNAA website has reported a very positive response from the public since the grounding announcement was made and hopes that the Appleby-based "Pride of Cumbria" will be operational again as soon as possible.
- I hope Howie Crook made it to Scotland for winter training. When last seen, he was trying the "doing-the-shopping-without-a-wallet" trick at Asda and embarrassingly having an entire basketful of goods scanned back into the basket.

Drivers

Two important items for callout drivers:

- On departing from base, sirens should not be used until reaching the T-junction facing County Hall to avoid deafening our police colleagues.
- Cumbria's first fixed speed cameras (or is that "safety cameras"?) have now been installed in Ings. "By the way, what's the situation with us and these cameras?" your editor asked Andy Dell as Mobile 3 headed towards Ings en route to a callout in Langdale, the first opportunity to put the cameras to the test. "I don't really know yet, but just remember that *you're* the driver..." he replied with a smile. I didn't bottle it, it's just that the queue of law-abiding drivers in front meant that we had no choice but to pass the camera at bang on 40 mph. Clarification will be sought! In the meantime, it is important for all callout drivers to remember that they have a responsibility to drive safely, for the sake of team members, casualties and other road users. It's better to arrive a couple of minutes later than not to arrive at all.

Don't Try This at Home

Man peed way out of avalanche

A Slovak man trapped in his car under an avalanche freed himself by drinking 60 bottles of beer and urinating on the snow to melt it.

Rescue teams found Richard Kral drunk and staggering along a mountain path four days after his Audi car was buried in the Slovak Tatra mountains. He told them that after the avalanche he had opened his car window and tried to dig his way out. But as he dug with his hands, he realised the snow would fill his car before he managed to break through.

He had 60 half-litre bottles of beer in his car as he was going on holiday and, after cracking one open to think about the problem, he realised he could urinate on the snow to melt it, local media reported.

He said: "I was scooping the snow from above me and packing it down below the window, and then I peed on it to melt it. It was hard and now my kidneys and liver hurt. But I'm glad the beer I took on holiday turned out to be useful and I managed to get out of there."

The Independent on 13.2.2005 says this is just a modern myth. How long would it take to drink 30 litres and then sober up? Never let the facts get in the way of a good story!

Contacts

E-mail

les.telford@dsl.pipex.com

or

on 01539 727051

or

Editor's pigeon hole in base

or by post to:-

**Newsletter Editor
Kendal Mountain Rescue
Busher Walk
Kendal
Cumbria
LA9 4RH**

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