



Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team

Mountain and Cave Rescue in Swaledale and Wensleydale

LATEST NEWS – DECEMBER 2007

SMRT Dips Its Toe In The Water (Again)

**Advanced Swiftwater Rescue Technician Course
The National Whitewater Centre, Bala
October 2007**

In 2003 five team members endured the chilly waters of a variety of Scottish rivers to qualify as Swiftwater Rescue Technicians and form SMRT's Swiftwater Rescue Unit. The unit has seen a considerable (perhaps surprising) amount of action since then with a variety of river searches and rescues. Our qualifications were coming up for renewal, so the options of refreshing at the same level or moving on to become advanced technicians were looked into. It was decided that the advanced course would offer some useful additional skills, so four of the original group (Tim Cain, Graham Brown, Pete Roe and Paul Brooks) plus Paul Renwick of TWSMRT headed into darkest Wales on the evening of 10th October.

The course was certainly different from the previous SRT 1 course in Scotland. There was a much greater emphasis on staying out of the water. We didn't get wet until the evening of the 2nd day. Topics covered include

- pre-planning and incident management
- size up
- equipment
- boat on high line
- weir rescues
- night in-water operations
- search management
- casualty packaging
- rope rescue techniques

The greatest surprise for me was the emphasis on rope rescue techniques. Whereas SRT1 concentrated on personal in-water skills and simple quick rescues, the advanced course focussed on using technical ropework to enable access and recovery. With a small team, we needed to rig efficient systems using mechanical advantage. The latest thinking in rope rescue techniques were used and we were all convinced of several advantages over SMRT's long-established systems. Many of the techniques are equally applicable to other rope rescue situations and have led to some re-thinking within the team.

The limited time we did spend in the water certainly tested our comfort levels. The night exercise had us swimming rapids and rescuing each other in the dark. We also did a weir exercise, which amply demonstrated the hidden dangers, but also the application of simple and complex techniques to overcome them safely.

The course was adjusted to focus on our own requirements within the general framework by our instructor Paul O'Sullivan, who runs the National Whitewater Centre. It greatly expanded our knowledge and skills and provided us with plenty of food for thought. The only down-side was our company at the Bala Backpackers Hostel – a group of Ukrainians who were working at the local bakery and made an unbelievable amount of noise very early in the morning.

Many thanks to Tim Cain for organising everything.

Following a kind donation by the North Yorkshire Police Charitable Fund six more team members will attend the SRT1 course in Bala during February 2008. The donation will also be used to equip all ten SRT's with the high level of PPE required and allow for the purchase of specialist river rescue equipment including floating ropes and other hardware.

By Paul Brooks



Knots and Tangles

Rigging for Rescue (R4R)

Much has changed in the world of rope rescue in the last ten years. A number of teams have adopted techniques that encompass those changes whilst others have opted to continue with their traditional methods. As a result there is little standardisation of techniques across the teams and an even greater variation in levels of rope rescue capability. Questions such as: "Which system should we use; should we go up, go down or go across and what is the best equipment for the job?" are all questions that we should be asking ourselves, including



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“Are our current methods and capability ‘suitable and sufficient?’”

In 2006 (16months ago) Teesdale & Weardale SMRT decided that it was time to seek some answers and some understanding into what rope rescue was about and more importantly what was required for their team. They invited Mike Margeson MRC technical and equipment advisor to carry out a technical review and as a result several areas requiring attention were identified and the TWSMRT began to carryout a full review.

Over the past 16 months the TWSMRT has been working on several different systems for going up, going down and going across. They have developed a knowledge base that will allow the principles of technical rescue to be applied to any rope rescue situation. In November this year they invited Mike back for a second review; Bill Batson (MIC and former Chief Instructor to the RAF Mountain Rescue Service) also attended. The review went very well and the feed back was very positive. Mike encouraged them to share the learning they had just gone through.

In early January 2008 two team members from SMRT along with delegates from other NESRA teams will attend a three day training course lead by Bill Batson in Teesdale. The aim of the course is to cover all aspects of technical rope rescue situations including:

- Rope rescue theory
- Anchor systems for rescue
- Technical equipment review
- Options for rescue
- Mechanical Advantage/pulley systems
- Knot passing
- Guiding line rescues
- High line rescues
- Pick off rescues
- Low angle rescues
- High angle rescues
- Long multi stage lowers
- Command and Control

SMRT intend to use this course and the knowledge gained by the SRT's in Bala to re-design and modernise the vertical and steep ground techniques currently employed.

Not another Search Dog!

1st December 2007

Well done to Grant and Penny who this weekend successfully passed two days of pre-assessment in extremely wet and cold weather in the Patterdale area. Grant has worked hard over nearly three years to pass each stage of the gruelling training and assessment process.

The prospective search dog team will now go to the SARDA England annual assessment course based at Derwent Water in mid January 2008. During the three day assessment they will be expected to search six tough mountainous areas displaying the high standards that the Association requires.



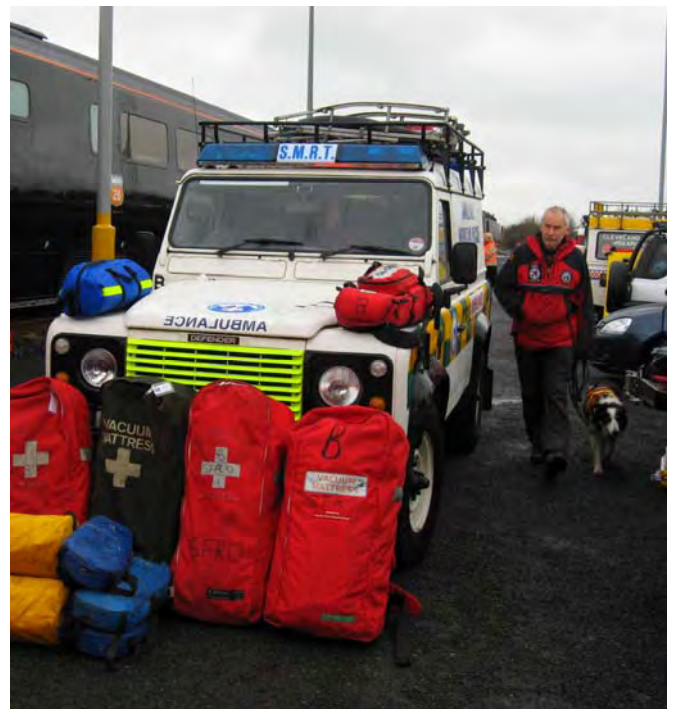
Good luck!

Don't forget that search dogs and their handlers are always looking for willing volunteers to act as 'dogsbodies'. Local SARDA teams train in the Richmond area each week on Thursday evenings and near Cray in Bishopdale most Sundays.

Train Evacuation Exercise

18th November 2007 - Heaton Depot, Newcastle

The Grand Central Railway Co invited NESRA teams to assist in a day long exercise to practice evacuation of trains in the event of a crash or breakdown.





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During 2006 Lake District teams provided invaluable assistance following the Greyrigg derailment where they provided equipment, search and medical personnel.

It has been recognised that the East Coast Mine Line travels through many remote sections of NESRA's area and as modern electric trains have no back-up heating system in the event of a power failure rapid evacuation would be required.

Several team members attended the day and it proved a useful introduction to what we may be asked to do for real and a good PR exercise.

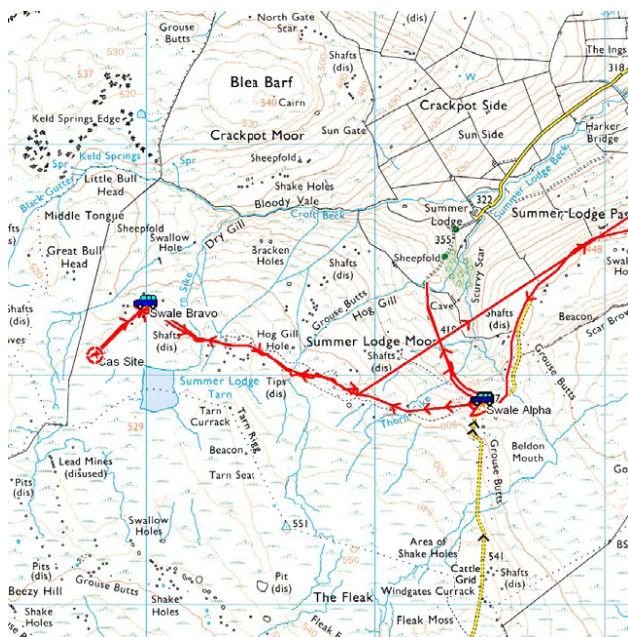
How Did They Get There?

Incident 16th December 2007

The team were contacted by North Yorkshire Police at approximately 1500hrs on Sunday afternoon. Five people in two 4x4 vehicles had become bogged down on the southern side of Swaledale. Unfortunately, this was just about all they knew about their position and one of the people in the vehicle was a wheel chair user.

As the light started to fade and the temperature plummeted local team members began to drive the numerous tracks (many of which are not marked on any map) in an attempt to locate the stricken motorists. The team leader Paul Denning managed to contact the group by mobile phone and established that they could see a small lake. This narrowed the search down to close to either Whitaside Tran or Summer Lodge Tarn.

At around 1600 team member Pete Rowe located the vehicles close to Summer Lodge Tarn, bogged down and at least 300m from the nearest track!



In now darkness and freezing temperatures team members and vehicles were very quickly on scene and recovered the wheel chair user by stretcher to our awaiting Land Rover ambulance whilst the remaining members of the group were lead to safety.

SMRT's involvement was completed by 1800hrs although the groups vehicles might be there for some time to come.

The map above shows the route taken by team members who sensibly walked to the casualty site and the location of the stuck vehicles.

Other News

Well done to Tim and Helen Cain who successfully passed the Advanced Casualty Care selection course and will now attend the training week in April 2008.

Richard White and Graham Brown have nearly completed the refit of the teams control trailer. The guys have worked very hard to produce a first class unit that will provide a vital resource in the future management of searches and long duration rescues. More details in the next addition.

Search dog team Richard and Molly have travelled far and wide to assist in recent searches in Cheshire and the Lake District.

Octobers Scott Trial passed this year with little involvement from the team. The unusually dry weather conditions before the event meant that the usual casualties caused by falls didn't materialise. There was a pretty sunset though at the end of the day.

Funding for the new vehicle project is going well and a sub-committee will start the process of designing and procuring the replacement for Swale Alpha in the New Year.