



Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team

Mountain and Cave Rescue in Swaledale and Wensleydale

LATEST NEWS – FEBRUARY 2008

SMRT's Top Medics Feel Refreshed

NESRA Advanced Casualty Care Training Weekend, Blackton Grange, Teesdale. 7th to 9th December 2007

The annual refresher weekend saw a good proportion of the course attendees coming from SMRT. Instruction was lead by Dr Mike as a warm up for his new role as Course Director for the Easter course to be held at Carlton in Cleveland. Current team Advanced Casualty Carers Graham and Roger attended along with potential candidates Tim C and Helen. Invaluable assistance was provided by 'bodies' Sandra and Claire.



The weekend serves to continue and development the skills and knowledge for those with current certification. Maintenance of the Advanced Cascare certificate requires an annual commitment of 32 hours of additional training in the pre-hospital environment; this refreshes those skills which can only be practised in a controlled setting, introduces new developments in mountain and cave rescue medicine, and also allows an assessment of the potential candidates' suitability for the eight day course.

Subjects covered were: major incident management including triage and treatment; changes in methods of giving pain relief; entrapment; prolonged care; suspension induced shock to name a few.

Good luck to Tim and Helen this Easter.

By Roger

No More Pain in the...Arm for Casualties

From 1st February 2008 the SMRT will cease to use intramuscular morphine as first line treatment for moderate to severe pain.

The new Home Office license permits use of a much wider range of medication. As a result of this and following on from a symposium held at Plas y Brenin in December 2007, Swaledale MRT will now be using Fentanyl lozenges for first line treatment.



All casualty carers have received training in the use of the lozenges. Fentanyl is classified as a controlled drug so the usual security and legislative procedures apply as they did for morphine.

The fentanyl lozenge is faster acting than IM morphine, well tolerated in the pre-hospital care setting and does not involve any injection hazard. In short, it provides fast, safe pain relief and does not require any complicated training. SMRT is one of the first teams in the UK to make this change.

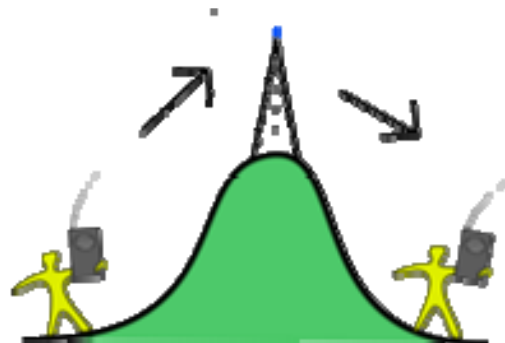
By Dr Mike

Am I Repeating Myself?

New VHF repeater for Richmond

In 2005 SMRT lost the use of the Bilsdale Commercial VHF repeater. 'Bilsdale' had provided reliable radio communications from as far a field as Washington in the North and Ferrybridge in the south. Since then we have been seeking a replacement system.

Essentially a repeater receives a radio signal then retransmits it; this can effectively double the distance over which radio messages can be sent. Using an antenna on a high point allows communications even over a hill.





Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team

Mountain and Cave Rescue in Swaledale and Wensleydale

LATEST NEWS – FEBRUARY 2008

Following negotiations with NYP we have been given authority by the MCA to install a replacement repeater system on the communication masts at Beacon Hill above Richmond. Computer predictions estimate that we will have system coverage similar to that of Bilsdale.

Terry has done a fantastic job in assembling all the necessary hardware and along with help of Paul D and Dave R the system will be fully operational during March 2008.

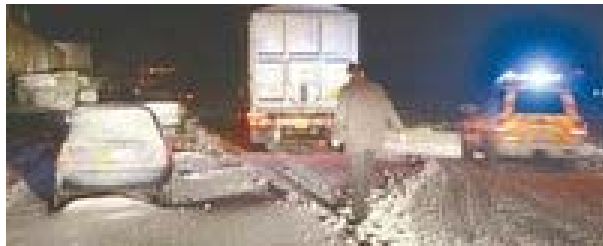
This repeater will become the mainstay of team VHF communications whilst enroute to incidents allowing all team members to be informed of evolving rendezvous and incident status.

Recently we have also been given license and permission to install a similar system on the ambulance station at Bainbridge. This will provide communication along Wensleydale. Work here is hoped to be completed during 2008.

It's Only a bit'o Snow!

Friday 1st February 2008 snow closed A66

About 1615, still in the tropics of Darlington, a text comes through to say that a 4x4 is stuck in snow on Bowes incline and Teesdale MRT require assistance. First thought, as a dedicated Nissan Micra driver, 'what can I do about that?' Answer – nothing at the time, still got some parents to meet. Then another message with a change of RV. Now thinking: 'OK, must be serious, get sorted and go'.



Next message: 'A66 closed at Scotch Corner, police allowing access if you show Team ID card.' Next thought: 'Wish I'd got the photo sorted for an ID card!' Anyway, snuck round roadblock by joining A66 from Melsonby.

Barely a covering of snow at this point so probably the fastest trip ever down the A66 with no other cars in sight! Approaching Bowes saw the first signs of the apparent earlier blizzard. Ignoring all the matrix signs to turn round eventually came across Swale Alpha (SMRT's Landrover Ambulance) and eight other Team Members.

We were assigned to search side roads off the A66 up around Stainmore. Next problem: how to get there. Solution: two very nice men from the Highways Agency in 4x4s. It was quite a slow journey up so our driver regaled us with stories of wagon drivers clogging up the road, car drivers abandoning their vehicles and how he was in charge of the County Durham side and had eleven crews

working, but Cumbria only had two crews and there was only one vehicle capable of towing the wagons out of the way so his ploughs could get back to work.....

Eventually we got kicked out of the warmth of the vehicle into the freezing temperatures, soon got warmed up plodding through the snowdrifts though. At one stage Fletch ended up, up to his waist, we all of course offered assistance. Reading from a map in Richard W mind (we were now deep into Cumbria) we made our way back round to the A66 for retasking. This came in the form of Paul and Bravo (who'd apparently been for chips in Kirkby Stephen!) turning up to ferry us back to our RV.

At this stage the Police decided that they were happy all stranded members of the public had been taken to safety. The ensuing mini snowball fight was just a way of showing relief now that a stressful situation was at an end...

Thanks to Durham Constabulary for the 'tea and cakes' back at Barnard Castle. (Actually, it was much appreciated fish and chips!)

Report by Jill G

East Cumbria Search Panel Exercise Sun 10th February

The exercise actually started on Saturday for the Team Leaders and Controllers but for us foot soldiers we didn't get involved until we met at High Force at 0830 on Sunday.

Our newly refurbished and resplendent incident control trailer, call sign Swale Charlie (more on that in the next issue) was moved further up the Tees Valley to establish Swaledale's team Control. Being a bit short on numbers due to the swiftwater rescue course earlier in the week we split into two search groups with two support vehicles.



Initially, we were tasked to carry out a track search for five missing Mountain Leaders around the Great Dun Fell/Cross fell area. Beginning from Troutbeck Foot our search would take us about 5 km up to Great Dun Fell. We arrived there at about the same time as Alpha who had



Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team

Mountain and Cave Rescue in Swaledale and Wensleydale

LATEST NEWS – FEBRUARY 2008

dropped us off earlier and then taken the same hour and a half to drive round the roads!!

By now two of the missing had been found by SARDA dogs. We were retasked to search a large triangle of moorland back towards Troutbeck Foot; it was decided that it would actually be quicker to walk back than travel all the way round the roads, so we did. On the way another SARDA dog had found the remaining group but they were in need of medical assistance so we headed for their location. With still some distance to go we were stood down as the end of the exercise was declared.

Thanks to East Cumbria Search Panel for organising the exercise. It was particularly useful for the Controllers and allowed teething troubles with Swale Charlie to be sorted before a real incident. Roger enjoyed walking in the snow before his trip to the Scottish Munros, Tony 'discovered' a great hush he didn't know about and we all had a pleasurable, and purposeful, walk in the winter sun. We also reconfirmed that dogs are much more efficient than humans when it comes to searching!!

By Jill G

A Tale of Three Peaks

Three men, three countries and three mountains

Most people undergoing the challenge of reaching the summits of Scafell Pike, Snowdon and Ben Nevis tend to choose June because of the daylight hours but not Dave Newberry, Jim Fleming and Daz Bryan: they set off on 8th December!

They did not know each other before the venture but working for the MOD in Wales, Scotland and England respectively had decided to join up for the challenge each raising money for their local Mountain Rescue Team or Air Ambulance.



They began with the Pyg track up Snowdon with horizontal rain and wind gusting at up to 80mph but still made it back down in 2hrs and 16mins. Unfortunately Dave managed to pick up an injury so was not able to continue. The next stage was Scafell Pike in the dark; but,

despite the driving rain and snow Daz and Jim were soon heading for Scotland.

The sun was rising as they began the toughest test of all but the spectacular views were soon to fade in the snow and mist. The last kilometre to the top, avoiding potentially fatal cornices, was to take an hour.

Testament to their remarkable fitness and determination, the two were back down Ben Nevis 22 hours and 52 minutes after they left Pen y Pass in North Wales. As a result of this tremendous feat Daz Bryan presented Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team with a cheque for £761.

Congratulations, Daz, we can't thank you enough!

By Jill G

Spaghetti in Teesdale?

Over three days in early January Paul B and Tony M attended a rescue rigging course hosted by Teesdale MRT in the upper Tees Valley along with delegates from other NESRA teams.

TWSMRT spent much of 2007 validating and rebuilding their vertical and steep ground rescue and rigging procedures in order to bring them in line with the most up-to-date thinking in the field.

The course was instructed by Bill Batson (former Chief Instructor for the RAF MRS) and Paul Renwick (TWSMRT's crag rescue leader) and aimed to pass on the lessons learned and techniques that had been developed by Paul and his group.

Swaledale MRT is stepping out on a similar journey and it was thought important to take advantage of the lessons already learnt and develop a system for SMRT.





Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team

Mountain and Cave Rescue in Swaledale and Wensleydale

LATEST NEWS – FEBRUARY 2008

Essentially, the course looked at anchors, belays and mechanic advantage and how systems could be built to deal with moving casualties up, down and across in challenging access environments.

Paul B's review is now complete and recommendations for new equipment and training have been proposed to the Operation Group for further development.

Wet and Wild in North Wales

Six newly qualified Swiftwater Rescue Technicians for SMRT

On the 3rd February six more (plus Tim C) intrepid team members rolled into North Wales to brave the freezing temperatures of the River Tryweryn and the Swiftwater Rescue Technician course.

Monday morning dawned to temperatures well below freezing, snow covered hills and occasional blustery snow showers; just the sort of weather to be splashing about in a river. Fortunately the weather improved during the following four days and was remarkably mild....for February.



The course is intensive with an element of distance learning that has to be completed before attendance. In the classroom topics such as rescue philosophy, river hydrology, flooding, incident management and vehicle rescue are all covered in detail.

However, the course is very hands on with much of the time is spent in and around the water perfecting defensive and aggressive swimming techniques, river crossing, lives contact rescues, rope rigging systems and the use of paddle boats.

Some of the in water sections were fairly challenging not least swimming in a weir shortly after a lecture on how dangerous these river features are and how they should be avoided at all cost!

In the end all six newcomers successfully completed the course with only Tim H sporting a nicely bruised buttock.

All members are now fully kitted with all the necessary personal protective equipment and the complete unit of ten personnel have procured new specialist rope rigging

equipment to facilitate search and rescue access to casualties.

Recent Incidents

17/01/2008 (1) 1300hrs: Rescue of game keeper's terrier from cave near Askrigg. The dog was found live and well at the foot of an 80' hole 27 hours after disappearing.

19/01/2008 (2) 1530hrs: Team search dog and handler called to assist Teesdale & Weardale MRT with search for missing 9 year old girl. All NESRA SARDA dog teams were training in the Lake District and were making ready to depart when girl was found and search stood-down.

25/01/2008 (3) 1020hrs: Team search dog and handler placed on standby to assist Teesdale & Weardale MRT with possible search in the Darlington area. Following consultation with police dog teams were not deployed.

29/01/2008 (4) 0910hrs: Team search dog and handler called to assist Keswick MRT with ongoing search for a 52 year old female in the River Greta area close to Keswick. Stood-down enroute when body of missing person was located by RAF Helicopter.

30/01/2008 (5) 2245hrs: Team search dog and handler placed on standby by Teesdale & Weardale MRT to commence search at first light. Game Keeper made possible sighting of missing person from Incident (3) in the Hamsterley Forest area of County Durham. Local SARDA dogs searched until 0300hrs. SMRT dog team not deployed following further investigation.

01/02/2008 (6) 1614hrs: Team called along with TWSMRT and Kirkby Stephen SMRT to assist with the evacuation of motorists from the snow-bound A66 in County Durham and Cumbria. Following initial assistance on the A66 search groups and team vehicles checked local roads for further stranded motorists. By 2000hrs all motorists either confirmed as safe or evacuated by Mountain Rescue Teams.

03/02/2008 (7) 1800hrs 01/02/2008: Called to assist TWSMRT with planned search for missing male from Darlington in the Wolsingham / Hamsterley area of County Durham. Continuation of incident (5).

17/02/2008 (8) 0905hrs: Team along with SARDA dogs and handlers called by North Yorkshire Police to search for a missing male who had left the Crown Public House in Askrigg late on Saturday night to walk home to Hawes. Stood down almost immediately when the man arrived home (obviously with some explaining to do).

22/02/2008 (9) 1610hrs: Team along with four SARDA dogs and handlers called to Arkengarthdale Moor above Swaledale by walking party who had become separated from two members of their group whilst trying to cross a flooded gill. Search manager on scene within 30 minutes; as searchers were about to deploy the two walkers navigated their own way to the Tan Hill Pub and were reunited with the group.