



Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team

Mountain and Cave Rescue in Swaledale and Wensleydale

LATEST NEWS – MAY 2008

The Yanks Arrive in Swaledale

The Hummer is on loan from GM in support of the 75th Anniversary of mountain and cave rescue in England and Wales.

On the 9th May Barry and Chris collected the subtle and inconspicuous vehicle from CRO and took it for a trip around the Dales.



The Hummer is on loan to the team for the next few weeks for use in fundraising and other activities although is unlikely to be the first choice to replace Bravo!

Forty Years of Rescue, Now and Then

A review of incidents

The 6th July 2008 sees the fortieth anniversary of the first organised mountain rescue by Swaledale Fell Rescue Organisation (SFRO) when the newly formed team were called to assist an injured girl in East Ghyll near Keld.

A review of the incident records from the team's early history makes interesting reading. The first forty call outs were spread over a ten year period from 1968 to 1978, whereas the latter forty have been packed into two years (2006 to 2008) showing a noticeable increase in the workload of the team and its volunteer members.

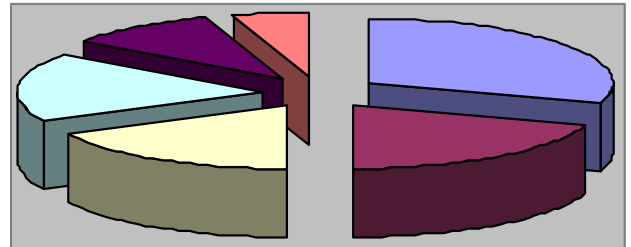
Caving or underground incidents have reduced in number over recent years reflecting a reduced interest in the sport as many university clubs have been disbanded; our colleagues in CRO have noted a similar shift. The number of animal rescues has also fallen.

The assistance provided to other teams has increased and moved towards the north of the area which reflects the team's association with the North East Search & Rescue Association (NESRA) and increased involvement with the East Cumbria Search Panel.

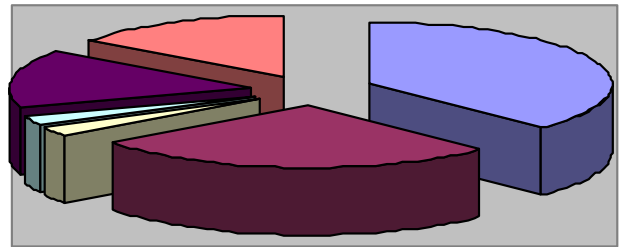
Whilst searches and rescues near or in the rivers of the area have always been a feature, SMRT's has recently gained a greater awareness of the issues associated with swift water incidents and consequently we see the recent increase in river related incidents.

The two pie charts below give an idea of the spread of incidents from the first and last forty incidents of SMRT.

First 40 Callouts 1968 to 1978



- Search (surface)
- Surface (rescue)
- Underground
- Animals
- Help to other teams
- Swiftwater (incl searches)



Last 40 Callouts 2006 to 2008

Note – "Help to other teams" does not distinguish between incident types, and "Swiftwater" includes all river related.

By Roger

HELP!! Fundraising Dates!

If you, your family or friends could help at any of the forthcoming events they would be really welcome.

For further details or to register your interest contact Jill at AJGMAX@aol.com.

Monday 26th May West Burton Fair

Saturday 21st June Garrison Open Day

The Open Day Sunday 6th July

Saturday 12th July Richmond

Sunday 3rd August Hawes

Wednesday 27th August Reeth Show

Wednesday 3rd September Muker Show

Weekend 13th and 14th September Boots'n'Beer Hawes

Sunday 2nd November Catterick Market

Saturday 20th December Leyburn



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Search Management

NESRA Search Management Course

Fletch, Tony H, Alan, Barry and Danny attended a two day search management course at Wooler in Northumberland over the weekend 1st and 2nd March 2008.

The course consisted of a series of lectures and map based exercises cover the six principles of search management and gave team members the opportunity to test search management theories in a warm, comfortable environment.



All team members successfully completed the course and look forward to planning the next missing persons search.

Is There Anybody Out There?

It's Thursday 8th May 0515 when the text comes through. No, sorry, can't help. Too much to do later. But then Sandra calls and how can anyone say no to her??? So it's off to the dizzy mountainous region of Newton Aycliffe to search for an elderly lady seen wandering at 3am.

Rich and Molly are already there when Claire, Fletch, Geoff and I arrive. Swaledale have been called in because Teesdale are now on their 3rd callout within 18 hours so are struggling for manpower; in fact Swaledale outnumber Teesdale for a couple of hours.

So we search various areas of undergrowth, woodland and bog discovering the areas used by the shoplifters for hiding stolen goods and the local young people for boozing but no elderly lady. Thoughts of 'was the eyewitness just dreaming when he saw the lady in the street' are not far from our minds as the thickets get thicker!

The police eventually arrive with breakfast, probably the first ever MacMuffin for everyone. A bit more searching ensued but then at about 1030, with no further sightings, all search teams were stood down.

The good things to come from all this? Molly had a great time. The sun was shining so we didn't get wet, and it was light!!!

Another issue has to be the idea of hoaxes. As the daughter of a fireman I fully appreciate the potential dangers of hoax calls but for the volunteers of MR Teams it raises the issue of missing work. Four out of the five of us were late for work or had to take holiday.

However, proving again how small this world is (so why can we never find people?!) on a totally unrelated teaching course at the weekend I met a Community Support Officer from Newton Aycliffe who told me that the lady had existed and was not the figment of someone's imagination or dream. It is thought that she had got safely home but was too embarrassed to admit what had happened to her.

Still looking forward to being involved with a search when Swaledale MRT actually makes the find!

By Jill G

West Burton Fair

Mon 26th May

A slightly better day than last year in terms of weather, even got a suntan – well, wind burn actually. Barry got to drive the Hummer and it did prove an attraction especially from people who had heard about its existence. We also introduced a Duck Rescue which proved quite popular with our younger supporters.

Congratulations to Ella, on holiday with her family, who successfully found the sheep.

Next fundraising events are Catterick Garrison Show on Sat 21st June and the Depot Open Day on Sun 6th July.

End of an Era

After ten years of loyalty and commitment Mac stands down as Team Secretary; his final report to the 2008 AGM...

From a secretarial perspective the last year has continued to involve what in most organisations would be relatively dull administrative tasks, but which in SMRT are a real pleasure. The post often brings generous donations from unexpected sources as well as a regular flow of letters expressing thanks to the Team for its sometimes lifesaving work.

The change to the pattern of Committee meetings has placed greater responsibility on the Secretary to direct incoming e-mails and letters to the appropriate members between meetings, but in general the calendar of meetings in May, July, September, November, January and March seems to have worked reasonably well. Another development in the last year has been closer working between the Secretary and the Rescue Controller to gain maximum positive publicity for the Team whilst incidents are occurring or very soon afterwards. This has led to some good coverage and a continuing sense that the Team is very well regarded by the local community.



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The limited use of HQ by other organisations continues to be a challenge but we are hoping that the agreement with the Ambulance Service will be concluded very soon and that this will lead to a regular donation from them of £5,000 per year.

I would like to thank Helen for the excellent way in which she has dealt with membership matters and Roger for covering the occasional committee meetings that I have been unable to attend.

You will probably be aware that I am stepping down as your Secretary at this meeting after serving for ten years that capacity. It has been a great pleasure to be associated with an organisation that does so much for other people on a voluntary basis. The huge commitment and dedication of Team members to training and the provision of a professional search and rescue service never ceases to amaze me.

On a personal level I was delighted to put together with Joe the successful bid for National Lottery funding for our splendid HQ. Despite the initial knock back we stuck with it, gained written support from ten other local organisations and eventually obtained 100% funding for the project. This level of support was very unusual then and would almost certainly be impossible under the current regime.

I would like to end this report with my thanks to you all for the friendship and assistance you have given me. I wish whoever takes over from me and SMRT as a whole every success in the future. It has been an honour to support your fantastic work and to serve as your Secretary.

Recent Incidents

SMRT has had a very busy start to 2008 attending ten full team call outs with our SARDA dog team independently being called to assist in a similar number of search incidents

08/03/2008 (6) Provided assistance to canoeist who has capsized and safety reached the river bank suffering from mild hypothermia and exhaustion. The canoeist was treated at the scene by the team before being walked from the river to an awaiting vehicle. Once recovered he was returned to join his group at the end of their trip.

10/03/2008 (7) 0933hrs: Team called after group on Duke of Edinburgh's Award Expedition had left overnight campsite in Swaledale during poor weather conditions and their supervisor was unable to locate them. A local team member was dispatched to Keld to interview person reporting, but within the party were located shortly afterwards without further SMRT assistance. Team stood down.

23/03/2008 (8) 0350hrs: Team called by Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) to Ivlet, Swaledale to recover a late night sledger who had sustained lower leg injuries. Weather and road conditions were very poor with heavy snow. The YAS ambulance was unable to progress beyond Gunnerside Village. The team stabilised the

casualty before evacuating him by stretcher from the remote farm location to the road before onward transport in our Landrover ambulance. Incident stood-down at 0600 just in time for the Easter Bunny.

26/03/2008 (A) 1540hrs: Four team members who were taking part in an advanced casualty care course in Carlton assisted Cleveland SRT with the rescue of a walker who had fallen and broken her wrist on Carlton Bank; the lady also had an additional medical condition that required a rapid evacuation via RAF Sea King helicopter.

29/03/2008 (v D) 1800hrs: Team search dog and handler placed on standby to assist Cleveland SRT in search for four lost walkers on a challenge event in Bilsdale. The group were found safe and well but very tired by CSRT members without the assistance of search dogs.

07/04/2008 (vi D) 2108hrs: Team search dog and handler placed on standby to assist NNPMRT with the search for three missing hill walkers in the Wooler area. Missing group located and evacuated by RAF SeaKing from Boulmer without the deployment of ground based searchers.

08/04/2008 (vii D) 1705hrs: Team search dog and handler called by Cleveland SRT following a walking party reporting calls for help on Farndale Moor. On dog teams arrival an RAF SeaKing had been tasked to search the area. Dog team provided advice and liaison to other dog teams enroute. At 1900 following no reports of missing persons and completion of the helicopter search, dog teams were stood-down. Taken as innocent call out with good intent; likely to be sheep calls.

12/04/2008 (9) 0905hrs: Team called along with four SARDA dog teams to search for a missing 47 year old male around the village of Middleton Tyas. After extensive searches of farm and woodland nothing was found. Teams stood-down to recommence as a NESRA search on 13/04/2008.

13/04/2008 (9 continued) Search from 12/04/2008 recommenced at 0900hrs with assistance from Cleveland SRT and Teesdale & Weardale SMRT. Large area of agricultural land and woodland to the north of Middleton Tyas was searched. At around 1600hrs search was stood down following discovery of a body by a member of the public outside the search area. Yorkshire Post article.

17/04/2008 (viii D) 1040hrs: Team search dog and handler called by Cleveland SRT to assist in the search for a missing 50 year old man in the Bilsdale area of the North Yorkshire Moors after the mans vehicle had been discovered abandoned at Spout House. Teams searched woodland, farmland and open moorland. Search was carried out with futher assistance of Scarborough & Rydale MRT (SRMRT) and an RAF Rescue helicopter from RAF Leconfield. The man was located by a SRMRT search group safe and well at around 1500hrs.

17/04/2008 (ix D) 1725hrs: Team search dog and handler requested to assist South Yorkshire Police with search in the Rotherham area. Unfortunately, unable to assist due to extensive use of search dog earlier in the day on incident (viii D).