



Official Opening of the Refurbished and Extended Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association Hut



BCRC Officers Brendan Sloan and Peter Dennis were delighted to attend the formal opening of the recently extended and refurbished Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association (UWFRA) Rescue Centre (The Hut) on Saturday afternoon, 2 February 2019. The formal opening was conducted in bright, winter sunshine by Sir Gary Verity, Chief Executive of 'Welcome to Yorkshire' after he had been guided around the Hut facilities, vehicles and rescue equipment. Team members were keen to unveil the new facility to local dignitaries, representatives of other Emergency Services, Search and Rescue Organisations and the local community of Grassington. The impressive new facilities include a new kit washing and drying room, and upstairs access to a balcony with belay bars to enable indoor rigging and stretcher haul practices. Generous storage areas are designated to accommodate separate fell, cave and swift water rescue equipment.



Plate 1: Sir Gary Verity about to unveil the plaque which recorded the opening, introduced by Peter Huff.



Plate 2: A great turnout of team members, representatives of other SAR organisations and friends from the local community in Grassington.

Upstairs, a new meeting room of generous proportions will accommodate team meetings and those of other local organisations. Around the table, displays of photographs and reports were arranged to recount the development of the Hut and the rescue team over 70 years of service. From humble beginnings based in a railway postal wagon, upgraded to an upcycled signal box and later the purpose built construction, now refitted and extended and fit for purpose for a good few years ahead! Press reports and photographs also recounted a few of the higher profile rescues in recent years, such as the Sleets Gill rescue in 1992.



Plate 3: The integrated wet room with drying racks for kit washing and drying.

We were very grateful to our UWFRA hosts who guided us around the cave rescue facilities and equipment, distributed between storage racks and a designated cave rescue equipment trailer. We learnt about the equipment catalogue and management database and system for gear checking and tagging tackle sacks. All very informative and appreciated but our enthusiasm quickly used up time for this part of the day and we had to hastily relocate to the Gamekeeper's Inn in Threshfield to enjoy evening hospitality of savoury bites and cakes. We pay tribute to all those team members and supporters who have been involved in the many hours of hard work from planning and fund raising, to construction and the fitting out and decoration.



Right, Plate 4: The balcony with provision of belay anchorage to practice rope rigging and stretcher haulage.