



TEESDALE AND WEARDALE SEARCH AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2015



Search for:
Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team

The Team have just hosted a large helicopter training exercise for all of the Mountain Rescue Teams in the North East.

During 2015/16 all helicopter Search and Rescue (SAR-H) operations currently undertaken by the RAF and Navy will be taken over by Bristow Helicopters. The Seaking helicopters currently flown by the RAF and Navy will be replaced with new Sikorsky helicopters and the distinctive yellow colour will disappear to be replaced with the red and white livery of the Maritime and Coastguard agency. Steve Owers, deputy team leader said "As mountain rescue team often use SAR-H helicopters to rescue casualties and transport team members to remote locations we need to train with them. We hosted a training event in Bishop Auckland at the weekend on land owned by Auckland Castle Trust. Sixty team members from 5 teams spent the day with the Bristows crew who are based at Humberside airport looking at safety aspects of the aircraft as well as practising winching and the use of highlines. This was a great opportunity for us to train with the new aircraft before it becomes operational in April."



Photograph courtesy of Andrew Heptinstall Photography.

The team leader on behalf of the team received a Certificate of Commendation from Mr. Michael Barton, Durham Constabulary Chief Constable. The certificate was awarded for the search and rescue of a missing lady in the Stanley area, last August. The lady was found unconscious by one of our search dogs, she was treated and transported by stretcher to a point where she was handed over to the ambulance service.

This event demonstrated all that is good in mountain rescue, from search management, finding the lady, treating her, equipment portage and transporting her, all skills we train for. We met the lady at the ceremony, she was extremely grateful to the team, and we were pleased to see her fit and well. It is extremely unusual for the team to receive feedback from one of our casualties and she was adamant that the story told was that of the Team's and not her's.



Photograph courtesy of the Northern Echo.



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In February two Team members admirably spent 3hrs at a temperature of -22°C in their shorts and t-shirts. If you add wind chill to that, they were withstanding a temperature of -32°C. They were taking part in a hypothermia study at Teesside University's Physiology Labs. Well done guys!



TWSMRT base update

We are moving forward with our new bases. Sniperley fire station which is a new greenfield CDDFRS facility, near the Sniperley park and ride, will replace the old Framwellgate fire station.

This fire station will be opened officially in March 2015, as an operational fire station.

We will share the many station facilities, such as conferencing, mess rooms, toilets, showers, canteen etc., in addition to our base which is designed as a 250 square metre single storey extension, to the fire station, comprising garaging for two vehicles, equipment room, drying room, toilet facility, control room/office and a training room. There will also be outside canopied garaging for two trailers.

Plans for the above have been approved by the County Durham planners, and these are going out for competitive tender.

15 team members and two members from other local North East teams spent a snowy weekend in the Cairngorms learning and practising winter mountain skills. Instruction was provided by two MICs from Cairngorm Mountain Guides. Saturday was a perfect winter's day with snow, sunshine and views. Sunday brought a more typical Cairngorm winter day with strengthening winds, blizzards and minimal visibility, a perfect opportunity to practice navigation! As well as lots being learnt and practiced, the weekend was also a great social occasion with food, drink and tall tales shared in the evenings. Thanks must also go to Abernethy Bunkhouse who did us proud with their accommodation.



On Wednesday, 4th February, Meteorological Office Weather Observer Ken Cook gave a talk to the team.

Ken has lived at Copley for many years and during that time he has made daily weather observations for the Met Office. The talk was a fascinating and absorbing story of the weather and weather forecasting. Team members found it very interesting and informative.

Ken produces the weather forecast for the Teesdale Mercury and he has his own weather focused web-site which is packed with useful information and well worth a regular visit.



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In January, Samantha and Moira our two 'Bell' stretchers were taken to Tebay where a company called Lyon carried out a five yearly service and load test. They came back with a clean bill of health and with new webbing and attachments. They look like new. Each stretcher was away for two weeks and they were sent one at a time so we still had one (as well as other stretchers) for use on any call-out.



Photographs courtesy of Lyon

Street Collections

9 May Stanhope
4 July Bishop Auckland
1 Aug Barnard Castle
5 Dec Darlington
12 Dec Durham

As always we would be very appreciative if you could spare an hour or two to help out at a collection.

The team has been given a grant by a charity called Clique which is based in Barnard Castle. The contribution has been used to purchase two sets of vacuum splints and ancillary equipment.

The splints are used to immobilise fractured arm and leg bones. They are basically flattened bags made from heavy duty plastic and filled with expanded polystyrene granules. The bags are wrapped around the injured area and the air is removed from them using a vacuum pump. As the air is removed the polystyrene makes the splint become rigid like a plaster cast. The patient can then be moved relatively painlessly and without causing further damage to the injury.

On arrival at hospital, X-rays can be taken with the splint still in place as it is transparent to X-rays.





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TEAM CALL OUTS JAN - MAR 2015



15.30 25/03/2015	A request for assistance from NEAS to a report of a casualty with a head injury near Winch Bridge. On arrival at the scene it transpired that the NEAS Paramedic had treated a women with a cut to her nose and was walking her from Salmon Leap waterfall to Winch Bridge and then to the road. A few team members helped with the walkout and the rest of the team were stood down.
22.20 13/03/2015	Missing from home 16yr old high risk female. Found by police helicopter in woods to south west of Lanchester as the callout went out. Stood down almost immediately.
15.00 28/01/15	Team briefly placed on Standby in relation to a missing male in the Chilton area. Team stood down before deployment as a result of information coming from the ongoing police investigation.
18.00 20/01/15	The Team were called to search for a missing male with potential despondency triggers in the South Church are. The Team were stood down after about 15 minutes when the missing person returned to his family of his own accord.
09.00 18/01/15	Search continued for the missing student in Durham City. Today's searching included the remainder of the river banks, a detailed search of the river in Durham City and extended search by the Canoe Team down to Finchale Abbey. Nothing found.
09.00 16/01/15	The Team were again heavily involved in the continuing search for missing student. They covered in detail the steep river banks around Durham City working closely alongside the Fire Service to allow us to clear as much ground as possible. Nothing found.
14.40 15/01/105	The Team were called to carry out a bankside and river search for a student last seen leaving a night club at approximately midnight the evening before. The Canoe Group covered the river from Durham to Finchale while bankside searches were completed of the river banks in Durham. The river was in spate and the weather conditions horrendous making searching tricky. Nothing was found and the search was postponed.
03.00 11/01/15	Team called to look for a vulnerable male in the Chester-le-Street area. The man was found by the police while the Team were assembling.