



## TEESDALE AND WEARDALE SEARCH AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

### NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2015



Search for:

**Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team**

#### Burnhope exercise 15 March

*(Anne Allen)*

As the sun finally broke through the freezing fog as we walked back from this exercise one of the other team members asked me why I thought there weren't more women in the team. I said perhaps it was because they'd be expected to be at home with the family on Mother's Day. I guess I'm lucky, my kids made me breakfast and then happily waved me off on another Mountain Rescue adventure. They think it is pretty cool.

It was certainly cold and low visibility as we headed off in our search groups to scour lead mining features on the hills near Alston, looking for two missing geologists. Our group (Rich, James and myself) were lucky enough to make the find. After about three hours, footsteps in the snow and a response to our whistling led us down the Gill to old mine workings. There I tended an open fractured right tibia while James looked after the second mildly hypothermic casualty.

It gets your adrenalin going and feels real despite being an exercise. Fake blood and a projecting bone helped the simulation. The leg had to be extended and splinted to hold the fracture, stop the bleeding and restore the pulse in the casualty's foot. We administered morphine for the pain, buccastem to stop sickness and midazolam. All of this was recorded on a casualty card and an incident history taken.

Radio communications proved tricky but we managed to call in a stretcher team. Hard work for them, they had to go back to the vehicles to get kit and then over the top of Scaud Hill. We took a gentler but longer route back. It was a long carry out but good practice, especially for the newer team members.

Overall a great day. There's always more to learn and improve but the search strategy worked, the casualties were safely recovered and everyone played a role. We came back tired but satisfied at a job well done.

#### Street Collections

**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.**

A big thank you to associate members David Thompson, David Ramsden and Jeff Foster who helped out at the Stanhope street collection in May. Your help is very much appreciated.

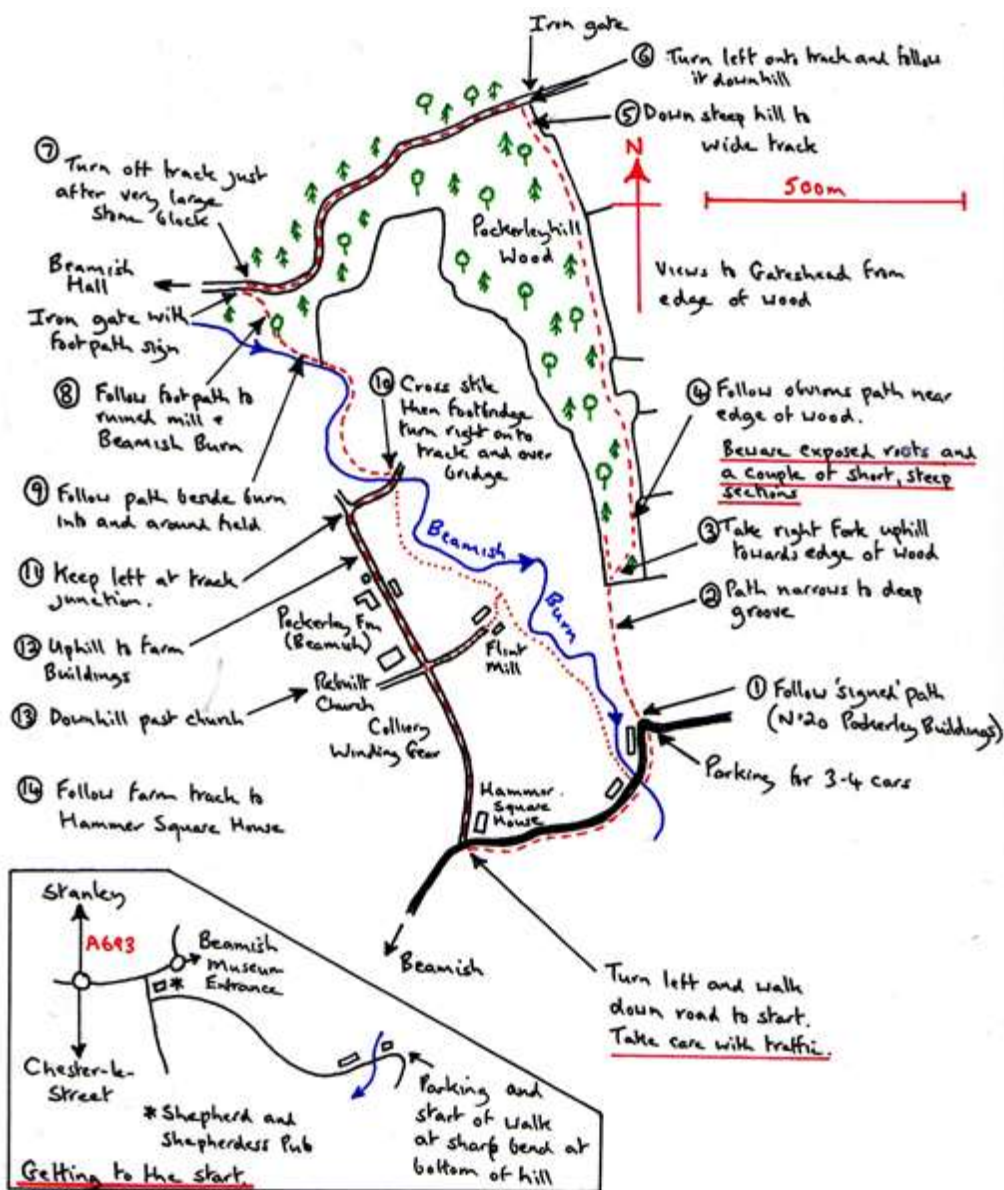


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### My Favourite Walk – Pockerley near Beamish.

(Eric Gilhooley)

The area around Stanley has a high density of footpaths which give access to some beautiful countryside. A couple of national guides to walking publicise paths around Causey and are well worth looking at. However, my favourite local walk is illustrated below. It is only about two miles long with two very short, steep sections. If you follow it you will see examples of our industrial heritage and possibly catch a glimpse of the wealth the industrial revolution brought to the area. There is also the chance to see a wide variety of plant and animal life if you walk quietly and carefully.



If you do the walk and enjoy it then why not get an Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map of the local area and return and plan your own route? There are about 5 public houses and two tea shops in the area which could provide an incentive for further exploration! Durham County Council also has a programme of guided walks some of which cover this area of County Durham (see the council web-site for further details).



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### Dave Church and Rock Antics Fundraising

*(Pete Bell)*

It has been confirmed that a man who died while climbing a frozen waterfall in the Lake District was Dave Church a 54-year-old man from Shildon, County Durham.

Dave plummeted 80-feet from a frozen Dales waterfall on Boxing Day 2010.

Dave was on frozen Cautley Spout in the Howgills – England's highest above ground waterfall – when he fell.

Dave, a driving instructor, from Shildon, County Durham, was climbing in the eastern Howgills, between Sedbergh and Kirkby Stephen, when the accident happened at around 10.30am on Boxing Day.

Two members of TWSMRT were in the area on that day intending to climb, and gave casualty care, and called the local MR teams and helicopters for assistance, all unfortunately to no avail, as Dave was pronounced dead at the scene. The reasons for his fall have never been established.

I knew Dave from Rock Antics, an indoor climbing wall complex at Newton Aycliffe leisure centre, from my days as an instructor there.

I also climbed many rock routes in the Lakes and other areas including Majorca with Dave.

Dave was a steady, no frills climber and was very safe, to the point of being pedantic.

So it was a big shock to hear of his fatal fall on Cautley Spout.

Rock Antics though one of their instructors Paul Willis and with the concurrence of John Crooks, owner of the Rock Antics, decided to have a fundraising day in memory of Dave, Because one of Dave's jobs at the climbing wall was involved with the junior club, they decided to ask the juniors to do a sponsored climb, with every ascent of the wall counting, additionally Rock Antics donated the entrance fee for each participant.

The team also sent a couple of team members to provide an education session on safety on the hill, to all participants.

This initial idea from Rock Antics has been done three times annually, and to date the sum of £3000 has been raised for the team, for the purchase of medical equipment.

From the team a big thank you to Rock Antics and every success with the move to your custom built new premises and wall at Newton Aycliffe.



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### Durham Police Dogwise Event

On Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May, two of the Team's search dogs Wisp & Sam, and their handlers Des Toward & Karen Fisher, attended the Dogwise Event where they put on a demonstration to show how they work as a partnership and the capabilities of the dogs.

Des Toward recently received a commendation by the Chief Constable of Durham Police in recognition of his service to Mountain Rescue.



*Photograph credits to Tony Griffiths of Durham Photographic Society*

### Teesside University Awards

The Team accepted an award from Teesside University Volun-tees in May. The “Outstanding Organisation Award” was given for the ongoing support and training the Team gives its volunteers, as well as the wide range of tasks they perform within the local community. Team Leader Pete Bell accepted the award on behalf of the Team, and in recognition of all MR teams throughout the UK.

One of our Team members (a student at Teesside University) also received a gold award for over 200 hours volunteering with the Team over the last 12 months. This was accepted in recognition of the work done by all volunteers in Mountain Rescue, many of whom contribute hours far in excess of this each year.



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Articles written by trainee Team members in relation to their experiences on their journey so far.

### Michael Needham

On a wet, gloomy, miserable, December Saturday morning most people would be enjoying a lie-in or fry-up but for 6 hopeful volunteers it is the start of a selection process to join the Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team. Our first real taste of how much would be expected of us as C-List members prior to approval and successfully getting onto the A-List (Callout list) would consist of a presentation by the Team Leader and Deputy with input from 3 group leaders.

This proved a useful insight into the demands and strains that being a member of the team may put upon someone, immediately this showed how strong the bond between team members could be as each of the presenters explained about events that changed how their family life & routine could change at a moments notice.

We, the new recruits, head off in pairs with a group leader from the Chris Scott base to some remote fell in County Durham where the next 3 hours is spent completing a Navigational exercise and testing our map reading ability, or lack of.... Once completed we return to the base for a debrief where we are informed after a short interview that we have all been successful... and are now new members of the C-List (trainees).

Over the next few months we have had the opportunities to meet other team members on fund raising events and fortnightly training evenings, all of which underpins the monthly exercises. The first of which saw 3 of us head up to the Cairngorms for a weekend's winter training with a Mountain Guide. All of us were able to build and develop skills over the course of the weekend, mainly mountaineering but we also had the opportunity to meet members of the team on a social side too.

### Gabriel Damaszk

We have spent now a bit of time with the Team and can say that apart from gaining invaluable experience and skills that the Team generously offers, there is another striking feature to be mentioned that is also a serious asset – the Team's sense of togetherness and camaraderie that can be experienced especially during Team exercises and callouts. We are all there to help each other and it feels great to be there to make a difference. Being part of the Mountain Rescue team is a life changing experience.

### Tom Deakin

The technical weekends have been eye opening, from the experience of turning up to a water day expecting a day on the bank side perfecting search techniques, and instead realizing you are going to learn how to avoid hitting your backside on rocks whilst hurtling down the River Tees. Considering some of us had their last formal water training many years ago - perhaps even involving earning a 200m badge to sew on to your Speedos! It was



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certainly a pleasant surprise to learn and develop new techniques, and see the quality of the instruction there, plus the safety involved within the team. The core tenets of looking after yourself, then your own team members before anybody else were extremely clear, and feeling that growing competence afterwards in something that was "new" only eight hours ago was a great feeling.

For the technical rope weekend, a very good compliment of people turned up, Paul began his briefing, and the immediate sense was focus from the group. By an hour in, we were discussing the spring constant of the rope, and I felt I had stumbled back ten years in to a maths class; skimming over such climbing technicalities such as calculating the fall factor, elongation of the rope and net forces acting in any given lifting system. It certainly was a technical weekend! I'm sure many were glad they opted for their morning coffee!

At lunch time, with climbing and rope rescue knowledge firmly bolstered, we were off outside to practice handling ropes, the IEDs and the rather shiny looking harnesses. Beginning what would be a crash course in technical aspects of a lowering system, the operation of it and knowing how to abseil without landing on your head. Fresh from the tour, with all heads intact, it was time to head out to the great outdoors and test the theories and techniques out properly. At this point, we were first introduced to Hedgehogs ... and I am sure at the time I did not know the relationship would be such a prickly one. Carrying them around, and taking a good look at the medieval style ironwork, we knew we had met our match, and fifteen minutes later with muscles aching, and the final iron spike in place, we were resolute that it was in the Right Place and Would Not Be Moved.

Then began the real education of what to do with all these shiny devices and ropes, and how to think about forces, angles and people and how best to use everybody within the system. From barrow boy to operating the safety line, to operating as an 'edge man', everyone switching roles made the skill gain feel rapid, with all teams performing quickly and providing innovative yet noticeably different systems. Afterwards, knowing the next day was a follow-up technical day, everyone was eager to head back and use Sunday as the real test of those roles. Saturday evening came and went, and Sunday began at Middleton-in-Teesdale with a briefing on rope systems with a very welcome coffee, before those skills were put to the test as the 'exercise' aspect of the technical rescue kicked off - learning how to use natural features to produce a rope system, how to develop dynamic systems with an Italian Hitch (a knot) - before the weekend, this was a rather flamboyant way to get a lift), and how to best be aware of attack angles. This exercise then developed into a Proper Search, with people heading off to co-ordinate, radio in, and get the persons out who were stuck and seemingly injured and rather grumpy about it. The knots were tied, systems put in place for hauling, harnesses donned, and the teams rather proceeded as a well oiled machine. Organising an extraction on steep ground with a minute between them. The kit removed properly, and the debrief made it abundantly clear how deep a lot of the skills run within the team and just how motivated everyone had been to learn absolutely as much as they could. And just because I couldn't finish without a truly horrible joke, I'm sure everyone would agree it was a fantastic crag weekend out for the team, and now feel a lot bolder about putting all that knowledge into practice in the future.. Once again, superbly organised and instructed."



## TEESDALE AND WEARDALE SEARCH AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

### TEAM CALL OUTS

**APR - JUL 2015**



|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 00.00<br>11/07/2015 | Team put on standby overnight to assist Swaledale MRT with a search near Leyburn in the morning. Team stood down at 3.30am  |
| 07.40<br>07/07/2015 | Team called to assist the Police in a search for an elderly man suffering from dementia last seen in Darlington Town Centre on Monday evening. As the Team were deploying he was found inside a building by staff as they arrived for work on Tuesday morning.  |
| 09.00<br>05/07/2015 | The Team assisted in a major search for a missing teenager alongside the police and fire service with further assistance from Swaledale MRT. The Team searched the river and river banks from Witton Park down to Bishop Auckland. The body of the missing teenager was recovered by the police divers very close to where he was last seen later that evening. |
| 14.30<br>04/07/2015 | Whilst carrying out medical cover for a running race in Hamsterley Forest team members were asked by the police to assist a mountain biker who had hit a tree at speed and injured himself. We treated the injured man in a vacuum mattress and on a stretcher and then carried him to a waiting ambulance.   |
| 23.15<br>01/07/2015 | We were called out in the early hours of Friday 2nd July to search for a missing elderly couple. Our search was centered around their car which had been parked on the A689 between Wolsingham, and Frosterley Unfortunately nothing was found.   |
| 20.20<br>27/06/2015 | The team were called to assist with a female who had fallen and sustained a deep laceration to her arm. One land rover responded while en-route back to base from the previous call out. Team members administered cas-care until hand over to NEAS ambulance   |
| 16.20<br>27/06/2015 | The Team were called to locate a walker who had reported himself lost while taking part in a long distance challenge walk. Two team land rovers were despatched and located the walker on ground above Pikeston Fell, disoriented but unhurt.   |
| 18.30<br>23/06/2015 | Team called by ambulance following a report of a mountain biker who had fallen in Hamsterley Forest suffering an open leg fracture. Team attended and carried casualty to helicopter.   |
| 05.00<br>20/06/2015 | Following the stand down in the search for the missing 6 year old child the Team were asked if they could also assist in the ongoing search for a missing despondent male. He   |



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|                     | was found alive by the police very shortly after the Teams help had been requested.  |
| 04.00<br>20/06/2015 | Team requested to assist in a search for missing six year old child who had last been seen the previous evening. Missing child found by police based on new information whilst the Team were being deployed.   |
| 15.00<br>19/06/2015 | Team requested to search for missing person believed to be near the river in Chester-Le-Street. Missing person found by police as the Team were assembling   |
| 22.00<br>16/06/2015 | Search for an elderly gentleman missing in the Consett area. Unfortunately the missing person had died and was found the following morning some miles from the search area.  |
| 09.00<br>14/06/2015 | Continuation of yesterday's search, with emphasis on his known walking routes.   |
| 12.30<br>13/06/2015 | Search for a 31 yr old, vulnerable male, missing from home in Ferryhill since Thursday.  |
| 16.00<br>28/05/2015 | A man who was swimming just below Low Force submerged in the river and was not seen again. TWSMRT assisted with a search of the River Tees from Low Force to Middleton in Teesdale. The body of the missing man was recovered by police divers the following day.  |
| 11.00<br>25/05/2015 | The team were called out to search for a missing lady at Brusselton Woods after information was received from Durham Police. Whilst the team were searching, Durham Police found the lady well outside of the search area.   |
| 03.00<br>20/05/2015 | The Team were called in the small hour of the morning to search for an elderly missing male with dementia. The man had last been seen at his home in Middleton St George (near Darlington) at 23.45 the previous evening. As the Team searched the surrounding area supported by Cleveland Team the missing male was found by a member of the public having walked across country in a North Easterly direction. |
| 12.00<br>19/05/2015 | Team requested to assist Ambulance service with a technical recovery of a body from a steep valley near Hamsterley Mill on the North of the County.  |
| 13.00<br>21/04/2015 | Team member came across and assisted a student with an ankle injury. Student taken to A&E by the police.   |
| 23.00<br>19/04/2015 | The Team were called to search for a vulnerable missing female whose phone had been traced to the Flass Vale area of Durham City. As the eight Team Members searched the area the missing female was located at Durham Station.  |
| 16.35<br>10/04/2015 | Stand by to assist NEAS with carry out of casualty with potential broken pelvis.   |