



## TEESDALE AND WEARDALE SEARCH AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

### NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 17

#### New Control Vehicle

#### **Mountain Rescue Team thanks their community**

It's normally members of the public and the other emergency services who thank the Teesdale & Weardale Search & Mountain Rescue Team for their help, but on this occasion, it's the team who wish to express their gratitude as they take delivery of a new state of the art incident control vehicle.

From collection tins in local shops & pubs, to group donations and fundraising events, every penny of its purchase price has come from you, the people and visitors of Co. Durham and surrounding areas. All team members are volunteers and so all money collected goes to running the team and funding equipment.

The new vehicle will be used as a mobile base to control searches and run communications. It can carry people & equipment and also doubles as an ambulance, carrying a full size mountain rescue stretcher. Inside it is fitted with patient monitoring equipment and defibrillator along with up to date computer and communication systems so it can be used as an information-sharing platform between all the other emergency services and rescue teams.

The new vehicle is a long wheelbase 5000kg gross weight Iveco which is fitted with a 9 metre extendable mast which can be operated by one person in virtually all weather conditions and takes literally one minute to set up, whereas the old one could take 4 people up to 20 minutes, so the new vehicle can be operational much quicker.

This modern vehicle has been a long time in planning, taken many years of fundraising and has a final, fully fitted out cost of £73,636. This is a huge investment for us and has had a major effect on the team's finances, but this purchase means that the team will be able to meet the needs of the people of the North East well into the future.

This, along with the team's two new purpose built bases, provided by Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue, one within the emergency services station in Barnard Castle which also houses Police, Ambulance & Fire & Rescue, itself a national first, and the other at the new fire station near Durham, makes the Teesdale & Weardale Search & Mountain Rescue Team one of the most well equipped in the country, something we can all be proud of!

On behalf of the team, may I thank everyone that has supported us in the past and hope for your continued support in the future.

Scott Bisset, Press & PR Officer

#### Old Control Vehicle

The team has donated the old control vehicle which has become surplus to requirements to another mountain rescue team.

The coach built vehicle was purchased through charitable donations in 2003 and was used as a central control and communication station during searches and also doubled as an ambulance. During its time with the team it covered over 50,000 miles and attended over 400 call-outs and events! After much discussion and consultation it was decided to offer it free to other mountain or cave rescue teams who may be able to utilise it.



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Aberglaslyn mountain rescue team who are based in Porthmadog, North East Wales expressed an interest in having the vehicle to use as part of their water rescue unit, and so this week, two members of Aberglaslyn MRT drove from Wales to Durham to collect the vehicle. After a long drive, Dave Evans & Paul Jones from AMRT were very happy to accept the keys from TWSMRT member Pete Morrison. By now the vehicle should be in its new home in North Wales where we hope it will give many more years of valuable service



Pictured: The Team's new control vehicle.



Pictured: Pete Morrison hands keys to vehicle to Dave Evans with team mate Paul Jones.



## TEESDALE AND WEARDALE SEARCH AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

### C List to A List – Two team members tell us their story.

#### **Andrew Blackett**

It's a very wet Sunday afternoon rain is coming in from the side along with a strong persistent wind as it has been all day. On my back is my rucksack and on top of this is a casualty care bag. Its big and cumbersome to carry but thankfully not too heavy but I have around one kilometre to go through thick peat mud up hill to the casualty location. Every muscle is screaming stop take a breath but the thought in my mind is, I must keep going the casualty needs me, I can rest when I get there.

This is one of the monthly training exercises in the North Pennines and true to North Pennine weather it is throwing everything it has at us. Along for the journey are four members of staff from JD sports to witness who and what Mountain Rescue is.

What is Mountain Rescue, to me it is a dream I have been holding for four years and finally after applying to join the Teesdale and Weardale team I was selected to join. It started with a testing day in December 2016. It helps to be a committed outdoors person and skill along with experience all add to the package. The testing day was a briefing on the service Mountain Rescue provides, an interview and a navigation exercise on the fells which all passed off with no dramas. This year three of us were selected to join the C list, Mark, Chris and myself Andrew.

Ahead lay 12 month of training Sundays spent on the fells on exercise with the warmer summer months dedicated to crag and medical training in and around Middleton in Teesdale. Every other Wednesday evening was given over to training at the new centre in Durham and on some occasions further afield into the Pennines. The training has taken commitment and dedication working in poor weather and travelling many miles to attend training in the areas where we work.

Later in the summer around half way through our training we started to receive callouts to attend searches for missing persons, this was the first time to see for real what will be the bread and butter work of the team but our key focus had to remain the training. The summer proved a busy period for the team for callouts and with the autumn approaching it was time to start the fell training again but also begin to close out our navigation training in preparation for assessment.

As the dark nights approached and the night exercise so did night navigation training. Training above Hamsterley forest under the skilful training of Des and Jim we were able to master the skills of finding the proverbial needle in a haystack, imagine navigating across open moorland in the dark to find a small pile of rocks or a small bridge over a stream no bigger than 4 metres long.

All of this training came in useful for the night exercise, at 6pm the team assembled at Bollihope to the South of Stanhope. Our task was to search for a missing fell runner who was last heard from around 2pm that day. In our groups the search moved across the moor taking almost three hours to cover 3km. The temperature was falling so greatly frost was building on the ground and when the casualty was found ice had formed on their shelter. The casualty was located around 1am and with the time taken to transport the stretcher and equipment to the location it took a further 30 minutes to carry the casualty in a team of eight on the stretcher off the moor. At 4am I arrived in a tired and dirty state home ready for a well earned sleep.

The final hurdle, the assessment that would possibly see us move from C list trainee to A list team member. A day of practical assessment on team equipment and search methods and strategies followed by night navigation. An 8 hour day completed with four hours on the fells above the Tees Wear watershed,



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navigating to pools of water, grouse butts and more. We were helped slightly by a full moon but many of the legs involved travel over 600 metres across open fell with few features to reference.

In total across 12 months of training including 22 Wednesday evenings, 8 Sunday exercises plus 3 full weekends training and additional C list training we have undergone over 200 hours of training. It concluded with a final assessment seeing all three of us successfully complete training and move to the A list.

For Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team it is the end of the 12 months training and assessment for the C list members but the beginning for the five new C list members joining the team in January, we would like to thank all of the team for their dedication to our training and for the warm welcome we have received. Good luck to our new C list members.

### **Mark Colledge**

In December 2016 I was invited to attend a hill assessment and interview with Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team. I have always been interested in the outdoors and always wanted to join a mountain rescue team. I successfully passed my assessment and interview and was invited to join the team. We started our C-List training in January 2017 covering all aspects of search and rescue from water, crag and search techniques.

We would train every fortnight and we had an exercise each month. Each exercise would be different and allowed me to put all the training we have received to practice. It was great having the feeling that your going to be able to help people in the community and potentially save peoples lives. As the year progressed I got more and more interested and keen to be involved with the team.

Around 7 months into training I received my first call out text. I was excited, that my training would be put into practice in a real life situation. By this point the 3 C list members had bonded quite well with the team and we all felt accepted as a key member. Everyone got along great and worked well with each other.

During the year we all gave up valuable time with family and friends to support the team with various fundraising events across the county. I know it's important for the team to receive donations to enable us to continue working and helping others.

As the year was coming to the end we received an email saying that our assessment was approaching. Once we have been training it is compulsory that we have an assessment to prove we have been proficiently trained and are capable of looking after ourselves on the hills. In the up coming weeks to the assessment we went though an intense navigation package with would train us to a high standard. This was great, it installed confidence when navigating and made other members of the group confident that they were in safe hands and knew their location at all times.

On assessment day we covered, radio procedure, basic life support, loading stretchers into vehicles, assembling the stretchers for all occasions (vehicle, carry and helicopter), we then went though hill kit and scenarios. We found out after each section that we had passed which was a confident boost. Finally, to end the assessment was a night time navigation practice. We left base around 5pm and navigated individually around the fells. We were lucky the weather was good that night as the moon helped with visibility. Once the navigation was complete and we were heading back to the vehicles we were informed from Steve and James that we had all passed the C List assessment.

It was the best news we had all day. We had successfully completed the years training and we all proved that we were competent. We are all now full team members and a part of the A List. I look forward to many years with the team.



## TEESDALE AND WEARDALE SEARCH AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

### Team Wedding!

Congratulations from the whole Team to Izzy and David, two team members on their wedding in the summer.

Article from the Northern Echo:

A COUPLE who met while volunteering for their local mountain rescue team were so passionate about the charity that they included it in their wedding day 17 years later.

Izzy De Santis and David Bartles-Smith have nearly 40 years' service with the Teesdale and [Weardale](#) Search and Mountain Rescue Team between them and first met in training in 2000.

The couple, of Tow Law, became good friends and remained so for several years as they worked side-by-side to come to the rescue of those stranded in the often harsh climate of the Dales.

Love flourished when the pair finally moved in together three-and-a-half years ago.

While planning their wedding, the couple decided it was only right that their love of the team featured in their big day on September 8, with team leader Steve Owers driving Izzy to the ceremony at Durham Registry Office in the team's Land Rover.

Izzy, 43, and David, a 57-year-old social worker, also included the rescue vehicle in their wedding photographs.

The pair then shared their wedding breakfast with their guests at restaurant in the city before being transported in the Land Rover to the Moorcock Inn, in Eggleston, Teesdale, for a ceilidh.

Mrs De Santis, who also became stepmother to Mr Bartles-Smith's five sons, said the couple had a wonderful day.

The veterinary nurse, said: "We had a very strong friendship to start off with and we had a lovely [wedding day]."

"It was really good to have the vehicle there. It kind of felt appropriate because we met through the mountain rescue and just so right and nice because it was a little bit unusual."

She added: "It has been a big part of our lives."

The couple, who also lead expeditions with teenagers in their spare time, are on call 24 hours a day but hope to take some time out when they go on their honeymoon to the Himalayas.

The mountain rescue team's spokesman, Scott Bisset, said: "From the team's point of view we wish them well for the future."

"It is great that two long-serving team members have bonded and found love within the team."





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### A plea from the Team - Co-op Local Community Fund

The Co-op has accepted the Team as one of their charities for the next year. This means we will receive a proportion of the money they take on carrier bag sales. As well as this, Co-op members receive a refund on all of their transactions and part of this is reserved for a charity, the member can elect which charity. It would be greatly appreciated if any Co-op members amongst you, who feel able, would select us as their charity. It is easy to become a Co-op member if you are not already, you can pick up a leaflet in any of the Co-op's stores which contains a temporary card and a new one will be sent once you have registered (the leaflet explains how to do this). We may not automatically come up as one of the charities you can select, you will be given a choice of the three nearest to you, but you can ask for charities further afield and you should then be able to select us. The funding period runs until the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018. We would also appreciate it if you could pass this information to any friends or family who may be Co-op members. As always, thank you for your continued support.

### Rock Climbing Team Bonding - Andy 'Muz' Murray

It was an uncharacteristic sunny spring day when myself, Helen, Pete M, Tom, Gabe and Max tipped up at Brimham Rocks for a team rock-climbing trip. Brimham Rocks is a large gritstone complex consisting of weathered buttresses nestled on the edge of Nidderdale, North Yorkshire. Myself and Max were the leaders of the day, allowing the rest of the team to follow us up some moderate but hugely enjoyable routes. First area of the day was 'Cubic Block', a 10 metre lump of gritstone. Despite being polished by thousands of footfalls we deftly clambered up and anchored ourselves to the top of the crag. Much fun was then had, with the rest of the guys completing climbs such as "Great Slab", Shorty's Dilemma" and Old Corner" to name a few. With a descent likened to Doug Scott's on the Ogre, myself and Max stripped the ropes out and headed out deeper into Brimham territory. Next was a little gem called "Cracked Corner" on Cracked Buttress, another well-travelled route that followed an open book groove into a small finger crack that opened out onto an open slab further up. With the sun beating down myself, Max and Pete M decided Brimham needed to see our collection of tattoos and stripped our tops off. After the laughter stopped Pete and I wrestled our way up an awkward 14 meter chimney route that left me panting at the top and half my skin attached to the gritstone lower down. Pete then followed me up making the whole thing look far easier! The climb of the day then went to Max who danced up "Birch Tree Wall". The climb was graded as very severe and had big fall potential with no protection on the upper half of the route. Max then honourably anchored himself up the top and allowed the rest of us mortals the pleasure of following him up. In between the climbing there was some coaching, rope work and skills, with Gabe rigging up top-rope systems.

All in all it was a fantastic day's team bonding, with great banter and warm weather. Roll on next year for more of the same!



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Registered Charity No. 508877



## TEESDALE AND WEARDALE SEARCH AND MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

### TEAM CALL OUTS

SEP 17 - DEC 17



15.00 05/12/2017	Team called to search for 15 year old child who had gone missing from a school trip in Hamsterly Forest. After about 7 hours searching through dense woodland the missing boy was located safe and well on a track in the woodland and reunited with his family.
13.00 28/11/2017	Team were called at about lunch time to search for 61 year old male missing since 7.20am that morning with limited mobility in the Billy Row area. The Team searched all the immediate areas around the village for the well known man. He was found following information from a member of the public just before night fall. Whilst out searching the team also found a second vulnerable person who was suitably treated before being passed onto the local constabulary.
14.00 05/11/2017	Team called to assist mountain biker who has sustained injuries while on down hill descent in Hamsterly Forest. Casualty treated and evacuated to NEAS ambulance.
09.00 03/11/2017	Team briefly on standby to assist with mountain biker in Hamsterly Forest with head and chest injuries. Team stood down when NEAS Ambulance crew arrived on scene to treat patient.
12.50 29/10/2017	Called by NE Ambulance service to assist with evacuation of mountain biker with head injury from Hamsterly Forest. Team stood down while assembling when casualty was in the NEAS Ambulance.
16.06 26/10/2017	Team called out at 4pm today to assist NEAS and HART crews recover a man from a steep sided riverbank. the male had been working with a film crew in Copley Woods nr Woodland when he slipped and injured his ankle. 8 Team members attended.



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01.00 12/10/2017	Team called by the police to attempt phone lock on vulnerable missing males phone in the Quarrington Hill area in the small hours of the morning. The missing person did not respond to the message from the Team. Agreed to await further information before escalating the search.
09.00 09/10/2017	Team dogs briefly on standby to assist in search for vulnerable male who's medication had been found near a wood. The missing male was found by the police during the initial investigations and the Team stood down.
11.15 07/10/2017	Team put on standby to assist with search for missing female in Shildon area. Team stood down once her presence outside our area was established.
19.00 28/09/2017	Team called to advise police on vulnerable male missing from his home in Consett. After discussion the team deployed to search the footpaths between the missing persons home and the caves at Hownsgill. Missing person found by team members, treated for injuries, handed over to NEAS for transportation to hospital.
09.00 25/09/2017	Multi-agency search for a high risk elderly gentleman with dementia. Serach centred around his home address and this last known position. He was spotted from the air by the Police helicopter, and recovered from his position, checked and taken to UHND as a precaution.
20.45 24/09/2017	Team called in the early hours by police to advise on missing male in Durham City area. Due to missing mans last known position being in urban area agreed to review in the morning once further evidence was gathered.