



Teesdale & Weardale Search & Mountain Rescue Team

Newsletter - Summer 2024

Welcome to the Summer 2024 edition of the newsletter. Hoping you have all had a good year so far, and that you have enjoyed our good old British summer.

Chris Roberts

Team Leader's message

Steve Owers (Team Leader)

This will be my last Team Leader article for our newsletter. After 8 years as Team Leader, 10 years as Deputy Team Leader, in two spells, and 4 years as Treasurer I am standing down at the November AGM. I have also done 20 years as Press Officer. I am not leaving the Team, I intend to stay on as a hill team member, search manager etc. but hand over some of the responsibilities of running the Team to a younger generation.

I have overseen many projects in my time in the Team; 2 new bases at Durham and Barnard Castle, the purchase of 3 team vehicles, the introduction of Standard Operating Procedures, and a minimum training requirement to keep our Team members as safe as possible, to name but a few.

Probably my most challenging time was during COVID. Initially we had no information available to keep our Team members safe. As time went on, we became overwhelmed with conflicting information all of which had to be analysed and put in a format which was practical for us as a Mountain Rescue Team. I am pleased to say that we carried on responding to incidents throughout the pandemic and I am not aware of any Team members contacting COVID either from a casualty or another Team member.

When I think what was the biggest difference to the Team while I have been Team Leader, it's not the big things like new bases or new vehicles. It's something as simple as a bicycle wheel. For years we had carried casualties on a stretcher, which is hard work. It took a team, ideally 14-16 of us, to carry even a medium weight person off the fell. There had been wheel attachments for stretchers available but they were very expensive and not particularly practical. As COVID started we needed to keep our stretcher carriers as far apart as possible, remember the 2m rule? We ordered a new wheel system made by a local firm Lyon Equipment without actually trying it. It proved to be a great success, taking much of the weight of the stretcher and allowing the stretcher to be carried by 4 team members at times. In fact we now have two.



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I have greatly enjoyed holding all of these positions in the Team, while sometimes it has been challenging, I have learned a great deal about managing people, which is the primary role of a Team Leader. I could not have done any of this without the help of all our Team members over the years, and there run into the hundreds. I would like to thank you all.

And finally the biggest thank you is to all of my family for the support and patience they have shown over the 29 years I have been in the Team.

Team Callouts so far this year (27 to date)

Date	Description
17.49 22/08/2024	The team were called out this evening to a report of a lady with an ankle injury on a bridleway near White Kirkley farm Frosterley. 10 team members and 2 of our vehicles attended. The casualty was carried by stretcher to an ambulance near the farm.
12.42 18/08/2024	The team was called out this afternoon to assist NEAS with a walker with a possible lower leg injury in Hamsterley Forest. We coordinated an RV at The Grove with the NEAS Ambulance, ourselves and a friend of the casualty. He was able to lead us to the casualty about 15 mins walk from The Grove. The NEAS crew assessed the casualty while team members set up a rope system to lower the stretcher to the road and then carried the casualty to the waiting ambulance.
13.30 16/08/2024	The Team to asked to assist NEAS with a patient suffering chest pains in Hamsterley Forest. 17 team member and two team vehicles were mobilised. Thankfully the patient was well enough to walk to the waiting ambulance with the NEAS crew, so our Team were stood down as the first of our volunteers arrived at the incident.



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18.08 05/08/2024	Team called to assist ambulance service with evacuation of female from riverside area near Cotherstone. 15 Team members responded and the patient was transported into the Team Landrover and then onto the NEAS ambulance.
12.33 23/07/2024	Team called by the police to help search for vulnerable 32 year old male missing for about 12 hours. Five team members deployed to search a small area of woodland but were stood down when the missing male was located outside the area.
17.30 18/07/2024	Team continued search of Pelaw Wood for missing male covering some very steep and unstable ground, and some very over grown areas. Nothing found and search stood down to await further developments.
20.06 17/07/2024	NEAS Assist, whilst the Team where undertaking a Search in Pelaw Wood (see previous search) the team received an immediate call for assistance from North East Ambulance Service for a person who had an ankle injury in Weardale, the Team stood down from the Pelaw case and responded to the Weardale case. Once on scene the Team assisted the ambulance service in transporting the casualty, our thanks to the farmer for use of his transportation.
17.30 17/07/2024	Team called to re-search Pelaw Woods on the out outskirts of Durham City. 18 team members worked through very steep ground and thick undergrowth with the canoe team searching the river and another team working through a beck. Unfortunately the Team didn't find any sign of the missing male. whilst on this search the team received an immediate call for assistance from North East Ambulance Service for a person who had an ankle injury in Weardale, the Team stood down from the Pelaw case and responded to the Weardale case.
16.00 16/07/2024	Team called to search Pelaw Woods on the out outskirts of Durham City. Two dogs and a dozen Team members worked through very steep ground and thick undergrowth but didn't find any sign of the missing male. The Team stood down after clearing the immediate area of interest to await the results of further investigations.
17.30 15/07/2024	Team called to Evenwood area to help search for a missing male. The team deployed 12 personnel and three search dogs in support of the search.
21.00 14/07/2024	On Sunday night 4 Team member attended Hamsterley Forest at the request of the Police to try and locate a family, with a young child and baby, who had used an emergency telephone in the forest to say that they could not locate their car. Over a 2 hour period all the car parks and roads were checked but there was no sign of a car or a family. We believe the family located their car soon after making the 999 call but did not inform the police
15.00 29/06/2024	The Team supported a female walker who was unable to continue with the Durham Dales Walk due to mild heat exhaustion and blistered feet. The female was identified by the sweep team who were following the event and the Team were able to access her location in the Team vehicle. She was checked over before being handed over to relatives.
00.40 17/06/2024	The Team was called shortly before 1am to assist with locating a male who had called 999 saying he was walking the Pennine Way and was cold, wet and stuck before the call dropped and could not be reconnected. The Team took the available information and indentified a small number of locations to initially search. The male was located and brought down to a safe location.
17.30 03/06/2024	The team were called to assist Kirby Stephen team for an open leg fracture. The original call came via NWS. A helicopter was sent from Blackpool. The helicopter initially couldn't find the casualty. However, once located airlifted the casualty to their car at Cow Green.
. 18/05/2024	Whilst on a weekend training trip in the lake district, the team were asked to attend to an injured 13 year old at the head of Piers Gill, on the corridor route up Scafell Pike. The team provided medical care whilst team members from Wasdale MRT ascended the fell



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	to bring a stretcher and essential kit. The casualty was stretchered down to Wasdale head and transferred to the care of a road ambulance crew. We wish the casualty a speedy recovery and thank Wasdale MRT for their help and hospitality.
14.30 04/05/2024	Team called by the police to assist with the search for a vulnerable male last seen entering an area of woodland near Tow Law. 10 team members and two team dogs searched for a number of hours. The search was suspended when the missing male contacted his mother. The missing male was later found safe in a property nearby.
15.00 03/05/2024	Team called by the police to assist with a search near West Cornforth for a male who had been missing for 48 hours following an assault. The man was found by the police as the team assembled.
18.40 16/04/2024	The team were called by the Police, Fire and Ambulance services to alert us to a child who had fallen in the water at Middleham Quarry. The Team was put on standby to await an update from the other emergency services who were already on scene. The Team was stood down a few minutes later when it became clear our assistance would not be required.
16.23 06/04/2024	Team called by NEAS to a lady with an injured ankle in the vicinity of Abbey Bridge over the Tees near Barnard Castle. The Team packaged the casualty and transported her to the road side for transfer to a NEAS ambulance.
16.00 31/03/2024	NEAS requested the team's assistance to help extract a lady who had fallen by a river near St John's Chapel and hurt her back. The Team helped with packaging the casualty and transporting the casualty. In all 11 team members were involved in the rescue.
15.15 24/03/2024	The team were asked to assist NEAS with the extraction of a casualty who had fallen from a quad bike in woods near South Hetton. The casualty was packaged on our stretcher and taken to the waiting ambulance.
12.45 22/03/2024	Team called to assist the police with a search for a vulnerable male in the area of Woodham Golf Course. The male was found by the police as the Team assembled.
09.30 10/03/2024	Team called by Durham Police to search an area of woodland on the outskirts of Murton for a vulnerable male. The team were stood down shortly after deployment when the missing male was found by the police outside the immediate search area.
09.00 29/02/2024	The Team was called to a potential missing person below Newton Cap viaduct. While establishing the facts of the case it quickly transpired the incident related to a person working on the bridge and there was no missing person and the Team stood down.
08.42 31/01/2024	Team called by NEAS to assist with the evacuation of a male found by a dog walker next to the river Derwent near Allensford. Team assisted with stretcher carry to NEAS ambulance with the assistance of the Great North Air Ambulance team.
13.48 30/01/2024	Team called by NEAS to a patient with an injured knee located to the south of the river Tees near High Force. Seven Team members responded and wheeled the casualty back a little over mile to the ambulance.
12.45 29/01/2024	At 1245 this afternoon, we were contacted by CDDFRS about a possibility that someone had jumped from Newton Cap Viaduct into the River Wear. We placed the hill and canoe team on standby while we gathered more information. Our team leader went to the site and was informed that it was a false alarm. The fire service then asked for us to stand down at 1315.



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Team member news

Team members who had been with the Team for over 5 years were presented with the Kings Coronation Medal by the Vice Lord Lieutenant Michael Poole. Thirty one Team members were awarded the medal. The Vice Lord Lieutenant said "It was great to meet you all and get a greater understanding of the magnificent role you play within our communities. You are an exceptional team, and it was a very humbling experience for me to present some of the Awards. To do what you do running it by yourselves as volunteers and being self-funded is truly remarkable."





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Sadly a much-valued member of our Team, Marc Tomlinson, died suddenly on a wild camping trip in Scotland in September 2022. As a tribute to Marc the Team have decided to name one of the vehicles Marc used to drive as 'Marc's Mobile'. We were delighted that his wife Louise, his children and members of his family were able to unveil Marc's Mobile at our recent Kings Coronation medal ceremony.



Fundraising

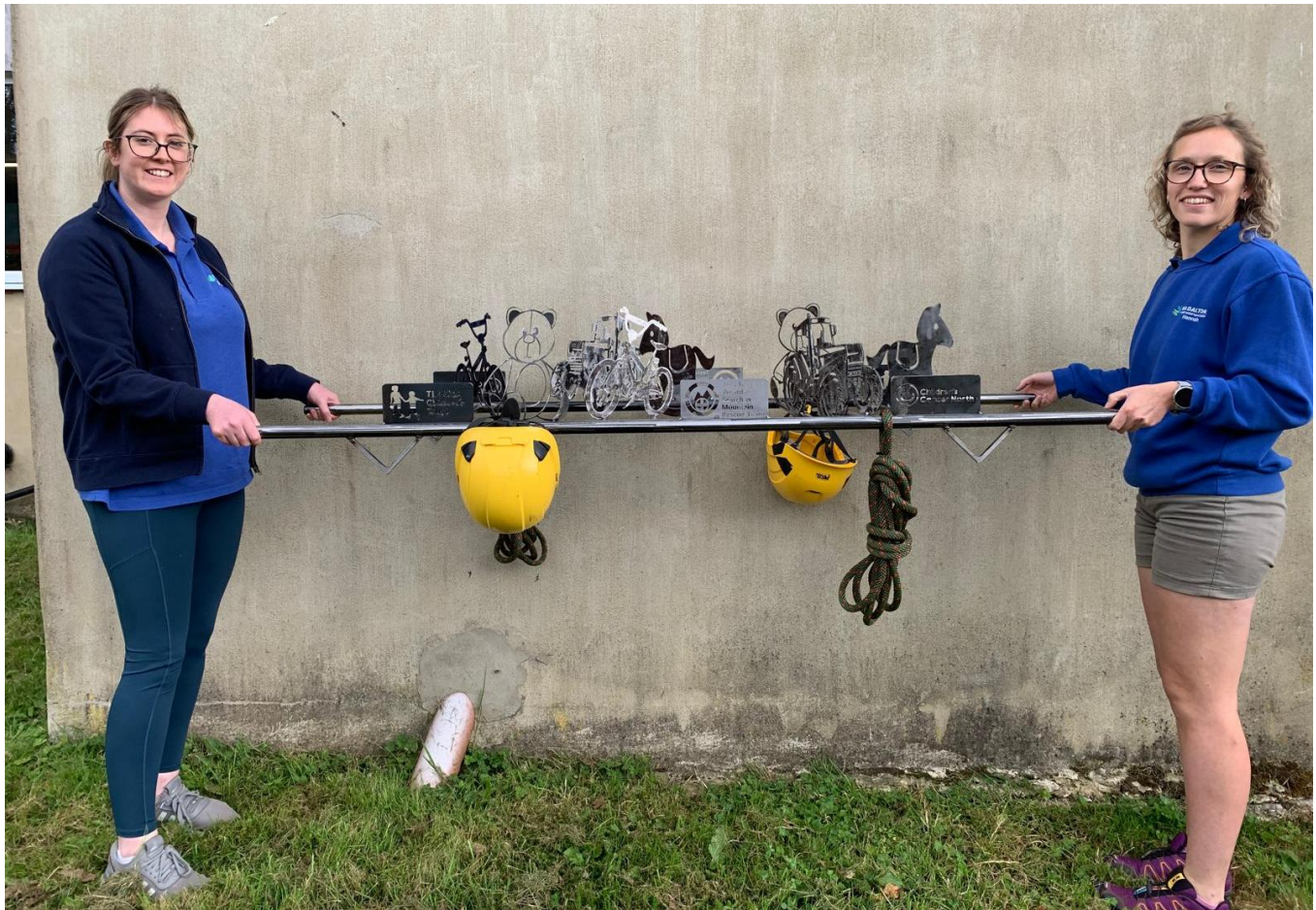
Sarah Hall (Fundraising Officer)

21 Miles to celebrate 21 Years of RA Dalton Waste Water Specialists and to raise money for three outstanding local charities

RA Dalton recently hiked 21 miles, from Allenhead to Wolsingham, to commemorate 21 years of RA Dalton's presence in the dale. To make it even more difficult, they carried a metal stretcher bearing the names of the three charities they were supporting.



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RA Dalton commented “As a family business, we believe in giving back to the communities that have supported us throughout our journey. That’s why we’ve chosen to dedicate this hike to supporting three incredible local charities that hold a special place in our hearts.

Firstly, we’re proud to be supporting The Sick Children’s Trust, an organisation that has provided vital accommodation and support to one of our very own with seriously ill children receiving treatment at hospital. No family should have to face the difficult journey alone, and The Sick Children’s Trust ensures they have a comforting place to stay close to their child’s bedside.

Additionally, we’re rallying behind Children’s Cancer North, an organisation dedicated to funding research and providing essential support services to children and families affected by childhood cancer.

Last but not least, we’re extending our support to the Teesdale & Weardale Search & Mountain Rescue Team, a group of dedicated volunteers who risk their lives to rescue those in the remote and rugged landscapes of our dales.”



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RA Dalton raised £3,737 for the team, which was presented to 4 of our team members in August.





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May training weekend in Lakes

Jane Ascroft (Training Lead)

In May 2024 the Team went to the Lakes for a training weekend. The reasons for this were twofold – firstly to introduce some of the newer members of the Team to operating in a mountain environment and secondly to provide a weekend of mountain training in a year when we don't have a winter training weekend in Scotland.

We stayed at Borrowdale Youth Hostel and were fortunate enough to have good weather all weekend. On Saturday morning, we drove to Seathwaite and set off up Scafell Pike via Styhead Tarn and the Corridor Route. We walked in smaller groups with newer Team members taking it in turns to “lead” the group while the more experienced Team members made life difficult for the leaders by acting - walking too fast, too slow, twisting their ankles and suffering from heat exhaustion.

We reached the top of Scafell Pike and after a lunch break, we started our descent towards Broad Crag. We had not gone far when we received a call from Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team saying that they had a call out for a casualty with a lower leg injury on the corridor route near the top of Piers Gill, and could we assist. We certainly could assist, and we reached the incident site in about 10 minutes. Our medics assessed the casualty and made her comfortable and then we waited for Wasdale team members to arrive with a stretcher and other equipment. Fortunately, the weather stayed good.



The top of Piers Gill



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We started carrying the casualty down to Wasdale at about 18.00.





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Our team members worked well with the Wasdale team members and between us all we arrived at the National Trust car park in Wasdale shortly before 21.00. The casualty was transferred over to an ambulance and our Team started their long journey back to Borrowdale.

When we received the initial call for help, we sent two Team members back to Borrowdale to collect the vehicles and drive round to Wasdale to meet us. This they did and we drove back to Borrowdale via a welcome stop at Wasdale's Team Base for pizzas.

Sunday was an easier day. The morning was spent doing a navigation exercise on High Doat Fell near the hostel. After lunch we moved onto a steep ground exercise in Johnny Wood, again not far from the Hostel. Here we practiced the single line rope work that we had been focusing on in evening training sessions.



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Finally, later on Sunday afternoon, we drove to Keswick MRT base and were given a guided tour of the new base by two of Keswick's Team members.

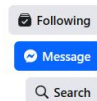
Overall a superb weekend of training, assisting on a callout in a high mountain environment and spending time with two of the Lakes Teams.

Follow the Team on Facebook



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and Mountain Rescue Team**

6.1K likes · 6.6K followers





Teesdale & Weardale Search & Mountain Rescue Team

For your diaries

Next street collections:

Saturday 21st September - Barnard Castle

Saturday 12th October - Darlington

Saturday 7th December - Durham.

Contact Sarah Hall if you would like to assist : fundraising@twsmrt.org.uk

And finally. You will remember that in the New Year edition we announced that Associate Membership was no longer available. You are receiving this Newsletter because all Associates have been transferred to 'Friends' of the Team. As long as you are happy with this you need do nothing. You will continue to receive any newsletters and will be informed of any events. Should you wish to make any donations please contact treasurer@TWSMRT.org.uk, or secretary@TWSMRT.org.uk

Many thanks for your continued support

Chris Roberts (Support member lead - supportmembers@TWSMRT.org.uk)