



### Pulsating fun at Hamsterley

MORE than 650 primary school children from 31 schools in Teesdale and Weardale, took part in the third annual Hamsterley Forest Rural Rangers initiative.

It consisted of a series of multi-agency workshops designed to teach children safety in a rural environment.

They included water safety, health and fitness, farm safety, and even how to deal with bullying in school - which was organised by Jigsaw, from Barnard

Castle. Teesdale schools taking part included Startforth, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Forest, Cockfield, Evenwood and Staindrop. Course co-ordinator, Sgt Mick Hutchinson, Wear and Tees community safety officer, told the Mercury: "The workshops are invaluable in showing children in rural areas how to deal with difficult situations." COCKFIELD children checking their pulses before having a series of exercises, pictured left.

### Lodge's long walk for local scouts

AS part of their efforts for Freemasonry in the Community week, members and friends of the Strathmore Lodge in Barnard Castle completed the 100 mile Teesdale Way from Dufton to the South Gare. They have raised over £2,000 in sponsorship towards the costs for six members of the 1st Barnard Castle Scout Group travelling to the 20th World Jamboree in Kuala Lumpur, Thailand on December 28 this year. The photograph is of the six



local scouts who will be participating. They are Jack White, Peter Williams, Ashley Moore, Martin Kneller, Alan Crawley and Steven Bainbridge.

### Gallows jibe a kick in the teeth

A 'KICK in the teeth' was how Gainford parish council described a petition to remove the 'Gainford Gallows' from the village green.

Twenty-two households had signed the petition to remove the jubilee burner from the green.

The petition said that not many people had turned up to the lighting of the burner, the gas had been expensive, and the only purpose it served was as an advert for British Gas. People on the bus had also been heard joking, "when was the next hanging at Gainford gallows?"

"After all the hard work, to receive something like this is a bit of a kick in the teeth," said chairman, Wendy Withers.

The council acknowledged that children had begun to play on the burner which could present a safety hazard.

However, the burner had now been removed, the council heard. One of the reasons for the delay was that it took a lot of work to dismantle it.

"Wouldn't it be nice if they said thank-you for all the hard work," said Coun Ken Hodgson. Residents around the green had complained in the past about the scorch marks from the bonfire. However, the grass had now grown back, and the delay had been because of the weather, said Coun Jack Diamond.

"Some people round the green think it's their private garden," he said.

Coun Newman Smith pointed out that one of the names on the petition was only eight years-old. "It's rent-a-crowd!" he said.

### Gymnasts shine at Teesdale assembly



PICTURED: Teesdale School's talented gymnasts, who gave a display during the achievement assembly.

TALENTED Teesdale School gymnasts went through their paces at the achievement assembly, which the school held to mark special achievement by its pupils.

Gabrielle Bright-Mattinson, Victoria Bainbridge, Amy Bracegirdle, Emma Docherty and Ashleigh Storey took part in the opening display, being a group of beginners who have made

rapid progress over the last few months.

Year 10 beginner, Becy Hughes, and Eleanor Smith, an intermediate Year 9, also performed two individual routines.

The assembly finished with a pairs routine by Nicola Bainbridge and Sarah Smith, who perform at county acrobatics level.

### 'I'm here to help' pledges Gainford's new beat officer

GAINFORD parish council welcomed their new beat officer at their latest meeting.

PC Angie Moran was introduced to the council by Robin Trounson, Chief Superintendent of the Wear and Tees Division.

He told the council that he was there to support PC Moran and would be spending time walking around the village with her to learn about the policing needs of Gainford.

PC Moran said that she had taken over as the beat officer at the end of April. From April to July there had been 33 incidents reported to the police, of which 11 were crimes.

The crimes included thefts of a bumper and rear window from cars. A car which was parked near Barford Hall while its owner went fishing, had its windows smashed. Some flowers and flower-pots had also been stolen.

There had been a theft from the building site near Walton Country Stores, which resulted in two arrests and all the property was recovered.

There were a few building sites in the village, and PC Moran had visited them all to give them some crime prevention advice.

One of the main problems in the village had been with youths causing disturbances.



PC Moran.

These included riding motorbikes, congregating in the foyer of St Mary's church, playing football near the Lord Nelson and two girls playing chicken on the road.

PC Moran said that she was taking steps to sort out the problems and had already spoken to one of the youngsters who had been playing on the motorbike and would look into the other problems.

"The question is what is there for youngsters to do?" said PC Moran. "I'm quite happy to help out with anything to relieve the boredom."

Chairman, Coun Wendy Withers, said that as a parent of teenage children she was

concerned about street drugs. "What would you advise to prevent this?" she asked.

PC Moran said that she was hoping to organise a workshop where parents could learn about the dangers of drugs. She was hoping people would be interested in this and said she hoped about 30 people would attend.

Members of the council said that there had been problems with drugs in Gainford in the past. However, PC Moran stressed that while she had been walking around the village and talking to young people she had seen no evidence of drug abuse.

"Please don't hesitate to come and speak to me," said PC Moran. "I don't have a problem with people coming up to me, I really don't mind. If I'm not around, people can contact me at the police station."

The council agreed that since PC Moran's arrival most of them had seen her walking around the village.

"We've all noticed her presence," said Coun Brian Biddiscombe. "We've had police in the past but not really noticed them."

"The police authority should be congratulated on this initiative. It has been asked for for years, and now it seems to be happening."

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