

Tributes to a gentle giant who lived for his eight children



» RACHEL WEARMOUTH

DAD-OF-EIGHT Phil Buffham was in the middle of a health kick when he was struck down with a fatal heart attack.

The 36-year-old shed around four stone before falling ill at his home in Cowgate, Newcastle.

The devoted father, who was a mechanic by trade, thought catching his rib while fixing a relative's car explained the chest pains which were the first signs.

His brother, Hughie, 38, led tributes.

He said: "He enjoyed life and he lived for his kids and his family.

"He was a gentle giant. He looks tough, but really he is soft-hearted."

Phil, of Heathfield Crescent, leaves behind Amy, 16, Melissa, 15, Josh, 14, Leon, 11, Corey, 10, Tyler, eight, twins Casey and Jamie, four, and stepson Anthony 21, and their mum Michelle.

Hughie visited his brother every day and said he is devastated by the loss of his best friend.

"Everyone is dealing with it in different ways," he said.

"I don't really sleep that much and I think about him all the time. I get up very early on a morning.

"I don't think it has really sunk in. He was an excellent brother, always there for you if you needed him. He would do anything for anyone."

Phil, who was around 20 stone at his heaviest, had embarked on a health and fitness drive in the months before his death.

Hughie said: "He had lost a lot of weight before he died.

"I think he lost about four or five stone and over the months I noticed. He was going cycling."

Medics have since told the family that Phil was suffering from heart disease and had been living on



FAMILY MAN Phil Buffham, also top, with seven of his eight children

borrowed time. He had been helping one of our relations fix their car and he clipped his side," said Hughie.

"He thought that he had bruised his ribs." He added: "I don't think the kids are taking it very well.

"Josh and Melissa have taken it the worst as the younger ones might not really understand.

"He was a loving brother and he will be very, very sadly missed. He will always be in our hearts and we are always thinking about him."

Tracy Kean, 28, Phil's niece, also spoke on behalf of the family. She said: "He loved his kids and his family. He was a big part of the community round here and did a lot for other people.

"He will be a big miss."

Phil died on March 20.

Widow's memorial for crash husband

A WIDOW who lost her husband in a motorcycle accident is holding a memorial ride.

Dad-of-five Rob Mills was hit by a car on the B6318 Military Road in Corbridge, Northumberland, in June 2010.

Rob's wife, Teresa, 48, set up Dying to Ride, a motorcycle awareness group to save lives on the road, and has organised a memorial ride in his memory.

The ride will start from the Mills family home, in Fenham, Newcastle, and make its first stop at the Robin Hood Inn, on the Military Road, to lay a memorial stone and have a moment of silence for lost riders.

The procession will then head south to the Squires Cafe Bar and Campground in Leeds, where there will be a motorcycle awareness presentation and memorial for fallen riders, followed by live entertainment by the band Night Train.

Riders can register at <http://dyingtoride.org/2012run.htm> or at the start of the ride at 10am on June 9, at 9 Aster Place, Fenham, Newcastle. Entry costs £10. Bikes, cars, vans and buses are welcome.

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