

South Ribble Fell Search & Rescue Team 1962 - 1980

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Note £ figures in brackets are the approximate relative value in 2020

Introduction

On 25th March 1962 in the fells north of Chipping 3 siblings set out on a day's walk which was to end in tragedy with the two brothers losing their lives despite their sister raising the alarm. Mountain Rescue in England was in its formative years, there was no team for miles and no routines or protocols for calling one in to help.

I believe this incident provided the final push for two teams to be formed in the county. Jim McVeigh and Peter Williams gathered together a number of people to form South Ribble Fell Search and Rescue Team, based at Cop Lane in Penwortham, Preston. The team remained at this location for most of their existence. In contrast, Ross Drysdale believed there was a need for a wider co-ordinating role, an umbrella agency, with contacts and units across Lancashire, Yorkshire and beyond, able to call upon others with specific skills; Raynet with radio communications, North West Fell and Mountaineering First Aid Unit etc, and deploy them as each incident dictates. The name of this new group reflected his aspiration, Northern Rescue Organisation (NRO) with Ross as its organiser.

Attempts were made as early as 1973 to form closer ties between the two teams but these did not develop. Finally, in 1978, the time was right and a new initiative grew into an amicable plan, including a joint 12-month training programme. This culminated in the amalgamation of SRMRT and NRO into Bowland Pennine MRT on 8th October 1980. Pete Taylor (exSR) being the first Team Leader and Paul Hughes (exNRO) its first Chair.

BPMRT has now been formed for over 40 years. It has grown, developed and owns two substantial properties, one in Garstang and another in Dunsop Bridge. It has 4x4 vehicles, a state of the art equipped control vehicle, minibus, GPS personal radios, computerise logging systems and much more. All this is light years from those early beginnings, but certain requirements do not change: dedication, commitment, and the enthusiasm of the members. Ross Drysdale, Jim McVeigh, Peter Williams, Ross Drysdale and all the former members of South Ribble and NRO should be justifiably proud of their legacy.



Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team

My aim for this document is to record as best I can the history of South Ribble. These retrospective accounts are never finished, there's always new material out there waiting to be found, so for the moment this is it. My thanks to many who have made this possible, notably Pete Taylor, Paul Durham, Ken Hampton, Jim Gardner, Gwyn McFadyen, Phil O'Brien and Andrew Greenwood. Special thanks to Tim Cox who either by design or accident gave me the challenge to put it together.

1. The Beginning

The following extract is taken from the 1994 edition of 'The History of South Ribble Orienteering Club'. This club is generally regarded as the inaugural English Orienteering club who held its first meeting on the 4th December 1964 in Cop Lane, Penwortham, Preston, the headquarters of The South Ribble Fell Search and Rescue Team.

To trace the true origins of South Ribble Orienteering Club we must begin on the wild slopes of the Bleasdale Fells. On Saddle Fell in a wintry setting during the weekend of the 24th to 25th of March 1962, tragedy overtook three members of the Smith family from Lostock Hall near Preston.

On a routine fellwalking expedition they had intended to walk from Chipping, across Parlick Fell and traverse down to Langden Castle, returning to Chipping later in the day to catch the bus home. Unfortunately, the weather took an awesome turn for the worst. They crossed Parlick Fell in a blizzard and although they eventually reached Langden Castle and set out on the return leg, the cold, wet and blizzard conditions had sapped their strength.

Eleven year old William collapsed near Bleasdale Water and eighteen year old Melvyn and fifteen year old Sheila tried to seek help. They were almost exhausted and were benighted on the bleak moorland, taking some shelter in a shallow cleft. At first light they struggled on and crossing Saddle Fell they tried to follow the fence down to Saddle End Farm near Chipping.

Melvyn finally collapsed with exhaustion and exposure, leaving Sheila to battle on alone until she finally reached the farm by mid-morning. She gave all the help she could to rescuers before being taken to hospital, but very sadly Melvyn was found dying high above the farm and the body of William was found at Bleasdale Water in the afternoon.



Team Badge post name change



Lancashire Evening Post March 26th 1962

The search by about eighty police, farmers, shepherds and other volunteers was led diligently from Saddle End Farm, but it prompted two local mountaineers to form a search and rescue team which could be mobilised quickly to assist in the event of any future local fellwalking accident.

The Team was formed on April 4th 1962 and based in the Victorian stable block of St. Mary's church vicarage on Cop Lane, Penwortham.

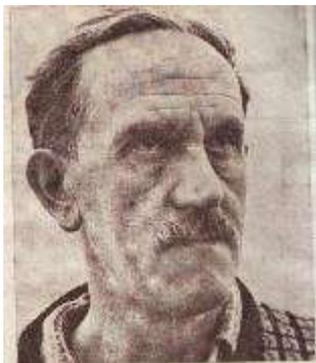
2. Team Leaders

The two men behind the formation of the team were Peter Williams, a young rock-climber and mountaineer of Lostock Hall and Jim McVeigh, well known in local scouting circles and an experienced mountaineer and potholer." Jim was a blacksmith at Leyland Motors.



Lancashire Evening Post

17th May 1962



Jim McVeigh



Peter Williams

Gwyn recalls "Jim and Peter were joint team leaders when South Ribble was formed, then Jim on his own when Peter got promoted at work and moved away. Jim was replaced by 3 team leaders - Les Seed, Ken Turner and possibly Tom Sykes (not 100% certain on Tom). Later on, it was Jack Grant, then Roger Bland before Pete Taylor."



Les Seed



Ken Turner



Jack Grant



Roger Bland



Pete Taylor

Pete Taylor was the last team leader of South Ribble and went on to serve as TL of the newly formed Bowland Pennine MRT in 1980 for 10 years.

South Ribble and the NRO created the first mountain rescue service in the Mid-Pennine area. The early call-outs were not very frequent but were often large-scale protracted affairs, quite some distance from Preston.



The South Ribble Team undertaking a stretcher carry exercise in the late 1960's near Whitewell with Tom Buck, Roy Brown, Peter Wallis, Eric Watkinson, Bill Whittle and Jim McVeigh at the very back.



3. Teams Callouts by Year

1962

14th November - The Teams first callout to search for 4 school girls from Penwortham undertaking their Bronze D of E expedition who were found at about 01:00 hrs sheltering in Langden Castle in the Tough of Bowland, after a 14 hour search.

Lancashire Evening Post
15th Nov 1962

The accounts for the year showed a total expenditure of £261 (£4,638) with the largest being £52 (£1,116) for a stretcher. A second stretcher was purchased in 1964 from Hamish MacInnes, Team Leader of Glencoe MRT and returned to Lancashire with it strapped to the roof of a mini driven by Jean Williams, Team Secretary, with Gwyn McFadyen as the passenger.

1964

16th March – Joint search with the RAF on North Derbyshire Moors for scouts missing in a blizzard taking part in the 50 mile, Four Inns Walk. Tragically there were three fatalities. The group of 130 scouts included the brothers Dudley and David Knowles who later joined the Team.



Lancashire Evening Post
16th March 1964

27nd September – Massive week long search of caves near Maeshafn in Denbighshire by over 1000 volunteers for two missing boys, David Oldfield and Laurence Miles who left Liverpool to go caving. They were later found safe and well in a café in Weston-Super-Mare and charged with various offences.



Lancashire Evening Post
24th Sept 1964

1965

March - Major search for two teenagers missing on the Snake Pass in the Peak District. They were later found asleep in a barn. Also, a search in the Yorkshire Dales found a missing walker on Park Fell and he was stretchered to the Hill Inn by members of the Team.

October – Four army cadets taking part in a map reading exercise were stretchered off Ingleborough suffering from exhaustion.

1st December – Week long search including NRO in deep snow drifts for a reservoir keeper, Robert Akrigg, 55, on Gorple Moors near Hebden Bridge. His body was discovered the following spring some 65 days later by a man walking his dog. This incident led to the formation of the Calder Valley Search & Rescue Team in early 1966. Gwen recalls – "Remember it well, I was part of the search

party with others from South Ribble and if I remember correctly Gwen Moffat author of the book "Space Beneath My Feet" and other titles was there as well and bought me a coffee. Happy days".

Also, a search for three members of the Ribble Valley Cycle Club lost on Bleasdale Fells who turned up safe and well at Bleasdale Post Office after spending the night at Langden Castle.

1966

27th July – SR and NRO called out via Cliff Price, secretary Lancashire Mountain Accident Panel (LMAP). Huge search with all the Lake District teams for missing walker, Dr John Leslie Millard, between Wasdale Head and Scafell Pike. His body was found 17 days later on Hard Knott Pass.



Lancashire Evening Post
28th July 1966

1967

23rd March – Search for a missing farm hand from Great Harwood, ended in tragedy when his body was recovered from Dean Reservoir the following day.

21st May – Six army cadets on a map reading exercise with 80 participants, stretchered off Ingleborough in a violent storm after they collapsed with exhaustion. They were walking the Three Peaks.

NRO also involved as they were in the area on Fellsman Hike duty. Next page, there's a detailed report by Cliff Price NRO member and secretary of the Lancs Mountain Accident Panel.



Lancashire Evening Post
22nd May 1967

LANCASHIRE MOUNTAIN INCIDENT.

21st MAY, 1967.

LANCASHIRE MOUNTAIN ACCIDENT PANEL.

Report prepared by C. Price Sec. L.M.A.P. with assistance of all concerned.

INTRODUCTION.

A part of 80 cadets from all over Lancashire were on a map-reading course, with the West Lancashire Army Cadet Corps. Escorting them were members of the South Ribblesdale Mountain Rescue Team. The route was to take them over Wharncide, Pacy-y-ghast and Ingleborough.

All went well at the outset, the cadets picking their way over the first two peaks, Wharncide and Pacy-y-ghast, and after passing through the South Ribblesdale safety check at Hill Inn, the cadets were to proceed over Ingleborough. Weather was fine until 14.30 hours wind V.S.V. 30-35 m.p.h. at 2,000 ft: temp. in valley 50°F.

Because of this change in the weather conditions, it was decided that five members of the South Ribblesdale team should accompany the cadets over Ingleborough. They had with them three radios, S.R.1., S.R.2., S.R.3.

Showers of rain began at 15.30, and later became continuous. On Ingleborough heavy rain and hail was falling.

15.50 A radio message was received by South Ribblesdale Base at Hill Inn, from S.R.3., that one of the cadets was suffering from exhaustion and was being escorted off the mountain. A part of 4 members of the South Ribblesdale left base with a stretcher to meet the party coming down.

16.00 A second radio message to base that there were two more cadets suffering from exhaustion, and were unable to walk down. Another party left base with a stretcher to assist.

16.05 A radio message from S.R.3. informing base that the first cadet, ~~was~~ they were escorting off the mountain, had collapsed at G.R. 743 755 and a stretcher was requested, and also that two more cadets were being escorted back to base.

16.10 I. McVeigh, leader of the South Ribblesdale team, realising that there were three cadets to be carried off the mountain, requested the assistance of the Northern Rescue Organisation, who were in the area. Immediately a party set off - 14 personnel with a stretcher to bring down the cadet from G.R. 743. 755.

Facilities for the treatment of the casualties were provided at the Hill Inn (M.O. report of treatment of the casualties is attached.)

16.15 A request was made to Settle Police for assistance from the Cave Rescue Organisation (Settle and Ingleton teams) and also the Upper Wharfedale team. The Kendal team was put on standby.

17.20 The two cadets who were assisted off the mountain arrived at Hill Inn, and were immediately treated by the M.O.

17.30 First stretcher came arrived at Hill Inn and was transported to New Inn, Glaxton by the C.R.O. for treatment.

17.50 The second stretcher came to arrive at Hill Inn was treated by M.O.

18.10 Third stretcher came brought off mountain, also treated at Hill Inn.

18.50 After a full call of the cadets, and all had arrived at Hill Inn, the search was called off.

End of Report: Any enquiries or comments on this report should be addressed to:-

Mr. C. Price,
Sec. Lancashire Mountain Accident Panel,
321, Cromwell Road,
Fulwood, Preston, Lancs.

Any errors or omissions in this report are my responsibility alone. I apologise for any that may have occurred, and will correct any serious errors by subsequent amendments.

(Signed.)

24th June – Search for a missing girl from Whitewell, later found safe and well in a wood near the Craven Heifer at Chaighley.

Also 6 potholers died in Mossdale Cavern on the Yorkshire Moors when it rapidly flooded. South Ribble assisted CRO for 19 hours trying to reach the men. The cave was later sealed as a permanent memorial to those who died.

10th August - a 3 day search in thunder, lightning and torrential rain for a man from St. Anne's missing in the Grasmere area. His body was found later by fell walkers beneath Sergeant's Crag with multiple injuries.

1968

September – Search for two 14 year old girls on moorland around Hayfield in Derbyshire, found the following day near Edale alive and well.

Also, a search for a part-time Park Warden on Bleaklow Moor near the Snake Pass, Derbyshire. He was found alive and well after his companion staggered to safety the following day and pinpointed his location on the map.

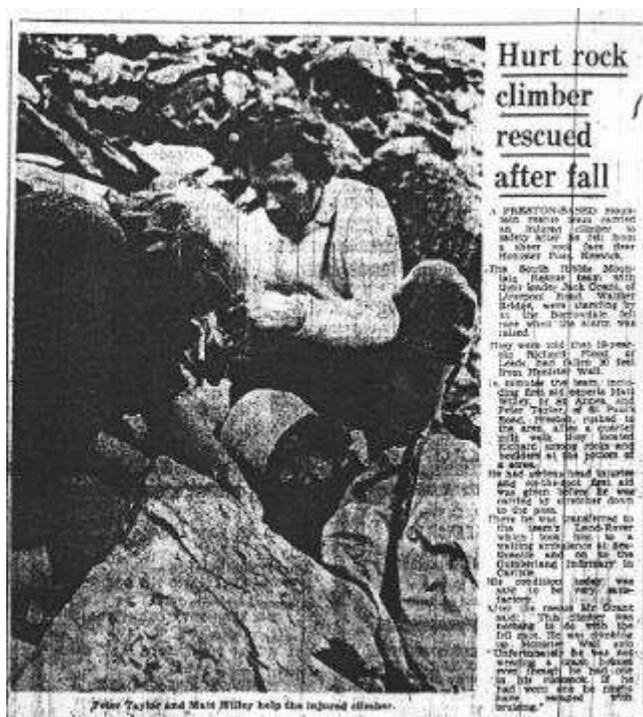
23rd September – Search for three teenage girls with ponies on the moors near Whitworth.

1974

15th April – Male, aged 30, from Nottingham, whilst preparing to climb, was hit by a loose rock from above, dislodged by another climber on Middle Fell Buttress, Langdale. He received head, neck and shoulder injuries. Langdale Team conveyed him down the fell assisted by the South Ribble Team where he was then taken to the County Hospital, Kendal.

3rd August - whilst providing safety cover for the first Borrowdale Fell race a climber fell 30 feet whilst soloing "Honister Wall on Buckstone How sustaining severe head injuries and was attended by Pete Taylor and Matt Wiley. The Team then carried and transported the casualty in a Team LandRover to the awaiting ambulance at Seathwaite.

SRFSRT became a sub-unit of RAF Mountain Rescue Stafford and shortened their name to South Ribble Mountain Rescue Team, thankfully!



Hurt rock climber rescued after fall

A BRISTOL-born climber who was rescued after falling 30 feet from Honister Wall, Langdale, was taken to hospital.

The South Ribble Mountain Rescue Team, with help from Jack Clegg, of Lancaster, and Matt Wiley, of St. Anne's, were alerted by the Honister Fell race when the climber was injured.

They were told that the climber, who is named as Mr. [Name obscured], was 30 feet from Honister Wall.

In addition the team, including Eric and Gordon [Name obscured] Wiley, of St. Anne's, and Peter Taylor, of the South Ribble, helped to get the climber down the rock face.

He had serious head injuries and was taken to hospital. It was feared that he was unable to breathe down to his feet.

There he was transferred to the team's Land Rover which took him to a waiting ambulance at Seathwaite and on to the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle.

His condition today was said to be very satisfactory.

Mr. [Name obscured] was 30 years old and was a member of the Honister Fell race. He was also a member of the South Ribble Mountain Rescue Team.

Pete Taylor and Matt Wiley help the injured climber.

Lancashire Evening Post
12th August 1974

1975

22nd June – Whilst covering the Lakes 3000 RA Marathon walking event the previous day Team members climbing at Shepherd’s Crag in Borrowdale responded to a climber who had fallen. He was evacuated a short distance by stretcher to an awaiting land ambulance.



Images of the Incident 22nd June 1975

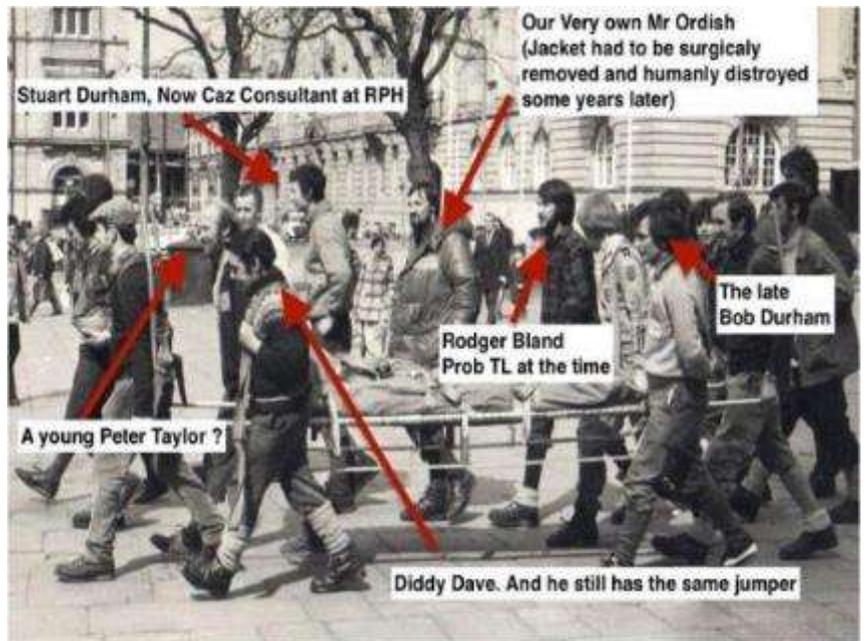
August – Former Team member Dave Knowles was killed on The Eiger whilst filming for the Clint Eastwood epic The Eiger Sanction. Dave, from Penwortham, had moved to Scotland and joined the Glencoe MRT from where he was recruited for the film.

Sponsored stretcher carry from Parlick Pike to Preston 1974.

Jack Foley, John Jones, Ian Ordish, Paul Durham, also carrying was Paul’s father, Ronnie, in front of Stuart Durham. The exercise casualty was Tony Brindle as he was one of the lightest Team members.

“Diddy Dave” Simpson says that, contrary to popular belief, he doesn’t have the same jumper today!

Jim Gardner recalls :-
I was on that stretcher carry and on the way into Preston we were thirsty, so we propped the stretcher up on the wall outside a pub (with Tony still on it) and went in for a pint!



Group crossing the Flag Market in Preston

1976

Team Leader Roger Bland graded his 18 month old German shepherd Tara with SARDA over the winter assessment. Roger with Tara right.

1977

April 24th Whilst on Three Peaks Fell Race, Pen-y-Ghent, Male walker slipped and fractured his leg.

July 5th call to assist Lakeland Teams searching for a missing 67 year old man, Dufton area Appleby Fells, Northern Pennines. Team stood down en route to incident as sadly a body had been located.

September 25th Whernside – competitor in 3 Peaks Cyclo-cross crashed – scalp & facial injuries, evacuated by the Team. Also – Austwick – Team called to assist local CRO with incident at Lizard Pot. Team stood down on arrival at Incident Control.

October 9th Farrington Moss, Leyland - Team requested to assist Police in search of open country for elderly man – found deceased.

October 18th - 20th Pennine Moorland between M62 & Sowerby Bridge – Elderly male walker missing, later found deceased on different moorland outside of the search area. Joint search with Calder Valley, Bolton, Holme Valley, NRO, RAF Stafford, RAF Leeming & SARDA.

October 28th/29th Scout Moor, Rossendale – Light aircraft carrying 2 people, missing on flight from Leeds to Manchester. Night and following morning search of Pennines and all East Lancs Moors. Burnt out wreckage found on southwest side of Scout Moor - both occupants deceased.

1978

March 11/12th - River Wyre estuary, search for a pillion passenger from a motorcycle that crashed into a bridge and thrown into the river. His body was located a few weeks later in the estuary.

April 30th – Ingleborough Three Peaks Fell Race. Two competitors and a female walker all with exposure treated by the Team.

May 1th – Ingleborough – Fell runner missing after 3 Peaks Race – found deceased.

Paul Durham recalls: -

May 1978 saw the death of fell runner Ted Pepper of Blackheath & Bromley Harriers, during the Yorkshire Dales three peaks running race. Team marshalled the event for many years. I was on Ingleborough checkpoint that year; therefore, I must have checked him through. The visibility was down to metres and heavy rain. He was found the following day, Monday, after an all-night search by us, CRO and heaven knows who else. Death was from hypothermia. He seemed to have continued running in a straight line instead of bearing left towards the finish line in Horton. Maybe not knowing the event or lack of navigation but he must have lost sight of those in front of him. It was his first attempt on the race and had travelled up from his home on the south coast. Conditions were so bad we evacuated 9 runners off the hill taking them all back to the Hill Inn all in various stages of hypothermia.

May 13th/14th – Search of Anglezarke Moor near Chorley for a missing 84 year old man. Later found deceased outside of the search area.



September 16th – Martcrag Moor. Lake District. Assistance given to Langdale Ambleside MRT to evacuate two 18 year old youths from Kingston upon Thames and Enfield collapsed with exposure/exhaustion.

September 24th – Pen-y-Ghent. Team assisted participant in the Tree Peaks Cyclo Cross who had exposure.

October 15th - Crinkle Crag – Man on a sponsored walk who had suffered a heart attack.

November 19th – Fells north of Slaidburn, two sheep crag fast in disused quarry on the Salter Fell Track, recovered by the Team.

1979

April 8th – White Moss Bowland Fells, Youth on DofE Scheme suffering from exhaustion/exposure, walked off by the Team.

April 29th - Three Peaks Fell Race – 8 competitors – exhaustion/exposure assisted.

July 28th – Nicky Nook near Garstang with NRO, Man missing while in depressed state found suffering from severe sunburn after lying unconscious for two days. Treated by the Team and evacuated. From mid-year onwards SR and NRO would attend callouts as one team.

September 29th – Search of Beacon Fell with NRO for a local man from Blackpool, sadly found deceased by the Team.

New HQ in 1979

South Ribble had to temporarily evacuate their Headquarters at Cop Lane in Penwortham due to the redevelopment of the site. The old vicarage was demolished to make way for a new St. Mary's Health Centre. This gave an excellent opportunity for further integration with NRO ahead of amalgamation. SR moved in with NRO at their HQ in Westleigh in Preston. Both teams kept their own leadership, committees, monies but we operated as one team both training and attending callouts.

Cop Lane was not re-occupied by the team (BP) until Jan 1983.



Westleigh - South Ribble and NRO shared Headquarters from mid 1979 to Jan 1983

1980

23rd/24th January – Scafell Area, extensive search involving many other MR Teams to find a male fell walker with severe exposure on Great End. Two men were missing after a walk to Scafell Pike. Bad weather had forced them to stay on the summit plateau. By morning only one man was able to proceed and raised the alarm on the 21st January. The six-day search, mainly in bad weather, ended when the missing person's body was located under 4ft. of snow off Ill Crag by one of the SARDA search dogs.

29th March – Fairsnape Fell, Bowland. A scout from Kirkham aged 15 or 16 had walked approx. 9 miles with a heavy rucksack but he had eaten very little. He was adequately equipped but suffering from exhaustion and mild exposure.

11th May – Tarnbrook near Abbeystead, Bowland. SRMRT & NRO assisted with tackling moorland fires. This was the final call out before the official amalgamation of the two teams.

Photo of the runners who completed the Pennine Way as a relay in just under 43 hours over the 28/29th June 1980 as a team fund raiser, picture taken at the finish in Edale.

Back row: - Stuart Durham, Paul Tuson, Jack Foley, John Jones, Dr Chris Mayo, Martin Manley, Paul Durham, & Brian Middleton

Front row: - Rod Taylor, ??, Jim Gardner, Dick Merton, Bob Durham.



The Relay Runners

Jim Gardner recalls :-

The team were badly in need of funds and we were wondering how to get some cash in. At the time sponsored fun runs seemed to be the in thing and chatting about organising a fun run in the Hill Inn we decided the team could/should do a sponsored run. As a certain amount of alcoholic liquid had been consumed yours truly stupidly said as we were a mountain rescue team it should be something like the Pennine Way. The idea took hold and to my disgust I was told to organise it. We planned to run it as a relay run and in pairs each pair dropped off at the start of the section and picked up at the end to be taken to the next section.

I was teamed up with John Jones who had previously run the Three Peaks, whilst I was a member of Kendal Athletic Club, fell running. We had the first section to run which was over the Cheviot to a track on the ridge where we would be picked by land rover. John had overestimated his fitness because he struggled and ended up shattered.

Our next section was along Hadrian's Wall which as everyone knows had some seriously steep up and downs. John at this point could not keep up with the pace so he dropped down on to the road whilst I carried on along the Wall. This set the tone for the rest of the run. We set off with 6 teams of 2 runners and gradually along the way a few runners weren't unable to continue.

As a refreshment stop and to get some sleep, a camp was set up at the Tan Hill Inn. Here we were fed by the guys below. We got about 2/3 hours sleep. Eventually we arrived in Edale, the end, in just under 43 hours.

Along the way one of the runners (Bob and Paul Durham I believe) met a walker who was doing the Pennine Way and they asked him when he had set out which was about a week before he couldn't believe we had only started at midnight!



Catering crew all from NRO

Ken King, Gill Manley, Pete Williams, Ian Jenkins.

We had quite a few vehicles involved and thanks to Bob Scoltock who must have spent hours working on a schedule for vehicle movements. Unfortunately, the schedules seem to break down the further south we got but it wasn't Bob fault the runners were getting shattered.

In all a good weekend and when I got home and worked out my sections I calculated I had covered about 75 miles of the Pennine Way which taught me to keep my mouth shut in future (but it didn't because we did the big Three Peaks later!)



Norman Pomfret, Bob Scoltock, ?, Pete Taylor, Ian Ordish, Barry Simm, Dave Simpson,
Gwyn McFadyen, Joe Shaw, Keith Middleton, Tony Wilson
Transport and Logistics Crew

4. Amalgamation

After flying solo for just short of 18 years South Ribble and the Northern Rescue Organisation amalgamated on the 8th October 1980 at the Westleigh near Preston.

Members of both teams met with the chair of the Mid-Pennine Mountain Accident Panel (MPMAP) Peter Lee and in turn dissolved their respective teams and passed their assets pro-temp to Peter.

The group then voted on a new constitution and elected various officers of the new team; Pete Taylor as Team Leader, Tom Bradley as Deputy Team Leader and Paul Hughes as the Chair. Peter formally passed back the assets to the new team and Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team was up and running. All done and dusted in 50mins.

The first committee lined up as follows: -

Team Leader -	Peter Taylor SR
Deputy Team Leader -	Tom Bradley NRO
Training Officer -	Mick Turner NRO
Chair -	Paul Hughes NRO
Secretary-	Rhoderic Taylor SR and Gill Manley NRO
Equipment -	Tony Bond NRO
Treasurer -	Unclear who fulfilled this role
Medical Officer -	Dr Chris Mayo SR
Transport Officer -	Tony Wilson NRO and John Houghton SR
Team Representative -	John Hitchin SR

Who had what role had been decided prior to the meeting. It was to ensure that one team didn't get an advance over the other. All highly irregular by today's standards, maybe even then. It was done with the best intentions and it worked for us. Maybe it wasn't necessary because I can say quite clearly, having experienced it all first hand, that not once has there been any discord between the two old teams. We all pulled together to ensure Bowland Pennine grew and developed into the team it is today. Well done to all concerned.

OFFICIAL DISSOLUTION MEETING OF S.R.M.R.T. AND N.R.O. TO FORM THE BOWLAND-
PENNINE MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM.

8th OCTOBER, 1980.

Meeting Commenced 8.05p.m.

1. Mr P. Lee, chairman of the M.P.M.A.P. took the chair for the meeting.
2. He called upon the chairmen of the respective teams to ask for formal dissolution.
3. Mr N. Thompson S.R.M.R.T. expressed a vote of thanks to all team members and also explained the rules appertaining to dissolution. He formally proposed that S.R.M.R.T. be dissolved.
A vote was taken and there was a unanimous vote.
4. Mr P. Hughes N.R.O. put the proposal for dissolution to the members and a vote was taken:- 22 members voted in favour.
2 " " against.
Carried by a majority.
5. Mr P. Lee explained that officially no team now existed.
6. He asked of acceptance of the new Bowland-Pennine Constitution. Constitution was accepted by a unanimous vote.
7. He asked of acceptance of the steering committee.
Voting:- Majority in favour.
One against.
8. He proposed acceptance of the 'Bridging Document' the contents of which were read out. Voting:- Majority in favour.
One against.
9. FINANCIAL STATEMENT:-
S.R.M.R.T. as at 8/10/80 £300 overdrawn. The overdraft facility could be continued for the new team.
N.R.O. £702 in credit.
Special Investment account would be closed as at 3/11/80 to be made over to the new team.
Building Society money would be used for the Cottage and New Land Rover tyres.
The 100 Club was explained and members asked to contribute.
A question was asked regarding Building Society Interest and Tax exemption, it was explained that we were now tax exempt and the situation would be looked into.
The Financial statement was approved with one abstention.
10. EQUIPMENT/TRANSPORT
Equipment would be pooled and assessed with a view to standardisation.

New ropes had been purchased by S.R.M.R.T.

Transport:- 3 vehicles in good condition. The older vehicle in need of minor repair. All vehicles required new tyres.

These reports were accepted unanimously.

11. The equipment and finance was formally handed over from M.P.M.A.P. to the Bowland-Pennine MRT.

A.O.B.

a) R.A.F. would require formal notification for registering as a sub-unit.

b) The call sign 'TROUGH' will be used for the present.

Vehicle call signs would be re-allocated.

Doctors call sign would be 'TROUGH DOCTOR'.

c) T. Jones suggested a joint area map be placed on display.

d) Situation was explained regarding insurances.

The date for the next committee meeting would be 29th October 1980.

Mr P. Lee formally closed the meeting at 8.50 p.m.

Ex members of South Ribble who are Honorary members of Bowland Pennine MRT: -

David Simpson 1962

Gwyn McFadyen 1964

Pete Taylor 1972

Bob Scoltock 1973

Ian Ordish 1974

Paul Durham 1974

John Houghton 1974

Jack Foley 1975

5. Cop Lane

A Victorian stable block next to St. Mary's church vicarage on Cop Lane, Penwortham. It had been used by the local scout troop so it seems likely that Jim McVeigh secured the use of the building for the Team through his role in scouting. The stable block originally consisted of two rooms downstairs and two upstairs.

Image right, Bill Brown coming through the tight door to access upstairs. What would Health and Safety make of this today! Can you imagine, fire down below and 15 members trying to pile out through this door!

The original configuration of the building was awkward and cramped. A side door was half way down one wall allowing for only 1 vehicle by the front doors. Upstairs was split level with the rear floor lower than the front and was used as an equipment store.

In the mid 70's a group decided to carried out some fundamental modifications. The side door was blocked up and the stairs taken out and turned into their current location. This gave "normal" height access to upstairs. The middle wall was taken out and a supporting beam installed to support the upper floors and roof. This provided the space for vehicles and trailer. The floor levels were made the same height. The group consisted of Pete Taylor, John Houghton, Ken Hampton, Ian Ordish, Paul Durham, John Cottingham, Norman Pomfret and no doubt a few others.



Downstairs, where the staircase used to be pre mods. Bob Scoltock, Stuart Durham and Paul Durham

Image right show the large heavy wooden sliding doors. Which from time to time would jump out of their channels in the ground. Only Pete Taylor seemed to be able to get them back in again! Or we just let him.

There was always the issue with Ivy growing wild on the roof.

The newly formed Bowland Pennine Team used the Cop Lane building as their vehicle and training centre until the move to Ray Lane near Garstang in 2006. Cop Lane is still used as a garage for one of its front-line LandRovers providing a quick response to call-outs south of the Ribble.



6. Vehicles

My knowledge of the vehicles owned by South Ribble is limited, listed below are the images I have along with details. Any additional information is welcome. I think it fair to say that in the earlier year's vehicles were privately owned, but used by the team on exercises and callouts.

Somebody's personal car, just stick the sign on the front and strap a stretcher on the roof, easy!



984 CUG LandRover

Unmistakable location of Ribblehead with the flat railway embankment in the background along with the Station Inn.



SWY 916

LandRover
LWB Petrol
Soft top
First reg in
1957

Dave Selby
(aka
Seamus)
stood up in
the vehicle
footwell
SWY 916?



Commer (walk thru) Van

Jack Grant and Norman Pomfret alongside the Control vehicle. Norman is sporting a fine pair of beeches. Essential for any person involved in MR or the outdoors of the period. Same applies to the wearing of Duvets. Pipes (smoking) were also popular.

Pete Taylor recalls: -

Phil, yes it was a Commer walkthrough, Pete Hartley and myself went to look at it in Bilsborrow. It was in a bit of a state but Pete was a good mechanic and myself, Pete and a few volunteers converted it into a control vehicle on Sally's drive.

Jim Gardner recalls: -

The control vehicle was on its last legs (or wheels) and was slow on the hills. I believe heading to the Borrowdale one year Pete Taylor driving Ian Ordish as passenger. On the way up Dunmail Ian was caught short Pete didn't dare stop so the door was slid back and relief was granted!! Pete and Ian will probably remember.



STF 496H

LandRover
LWB Petrol Safari

First reg in 1970

This was the 4th and oldest vehicle in the Bowland Pennine fleet at the amalgamation in 1980. Sold to Dr Chris Mayo in 1982.



PTE 375L (LHS)

LandRover
SWB 2.2 ltr Petrol Hardtop
Owned by Ken Hampton

LandRover (RHS)

SWB Safari
Owned by John Houghton



YFR 647R

LandRover
LWB 2.3 ltr Petrol Safari

This vehicle was bought new in 1976 by the team as part of their donation from the Harold Bridges Foundation. £10K (£72,435) to each Preston based team. SR spent £5K (£36,226) on this vehicle and £5K on new equipment.



PFV 406T
LandRover
LWB 2.5 ltr Diesel Hardtop
Manuf 1969

Ex Australian import



PFV 406T and YFR 647R at a Fairground?

Pete Taylor recalls: -

I think it was one of the first village or school field day fund raising events we used to do. Where we used the "wheel of fortune" for the first time. It was possibly round the Hawick Cross or Penwortham area and the first time we raised over £100. (est 1975 £844)

111 XTC

SWB? Hardtop

Owned by Roger Bland



7. Film “Callout Callout”

Thanks to Ken Hampton and Andrew Greenwood, this silent 8mm cine film was re-discovered in Oct 2018 and converted into a digital format. Shot by Denis Jones, an amateur film maker, his wife Ann is in the story. It took quite a long time to create, 1 -2 years, hence the irregular continuity. Supporting information, who and where etc, is thanks to Dave Simpson who stars in the film.

It portrays a typical “callout” scenario, of the era, two people missing, Mum and Dad raise the alarm, police callout the team, SR carry out initial planning, crammed inside Cop Lane, they deploy, search, find, treat and evacuate. All ends well.

Whilst we may, have a little giggly at some of the scenes in the film, it is a wonderful piece of archive material. A little grainy and shaky in places but that all adds to the character of the film. Without their endeavours and enthusiasm, Bowland Pennine would not exist today. Many aspects of Mountain Rescue have change over the years, but some elements endure, the love of the outdoors, the realisation that things go wrong and willingness to help. Just the same as today!

The following are stills from the film.



Mum and Dad worried...



Ken Turner coming down the stairs to answer the phone



Lo Clarke answering the phone at home



Jim McVeigh alerted by the local bobby.



Pete Williams upstairs at Cop Lane.



Jim McVeigh entering the upstairs at Cop Lane via the torturous route! No wonder mods were made to the building.



Jim gets the map out to start planning. Window behind is still there today behind a pair of wooden shutters.



More members make there through the tight door into Cop Lane. All in their orange cags, centre with the map is Tom Buck with Dave Simpson to his left/front.



Vehicles on their way, Dave thinks this is Longsleddale



This is like a scene from the "Keystone Cop's" members piling out of the LandRover by every available opening.



Team briefing, as today, all listening intently!



Bill Brown on comms



Sweep searching



1st Casualty found



Loading onto the Thomas stretcher



Carry off



2nd Cas located in some crags



Lowering through the crags



Vertical lower



Dave Simpson on the radio



Cas loading into the LandRover

The plan is to make this cine film available via the Bowland Pennine website.

8. Team Kit

The last scene in the cine film shows the team kit at the time.



In no particular order I can spot,

Stretcher, cas bag, helmet, waterproofs, gloves, torches with red tops, white slings, more ropes.

Karabiners, gas bottle, stoves, pressure cooker, a large tin of beans!



Reviva

Device to assist recover from hypothermia. Ambient air is drawn in by the cas, through soda lime crystals, CO² reacts with the crystals and heat is generated, the warm air enters the lungs. CO² cylinders were carried to assist with the process. However, the device went out of fashion when research showed it to have little positive effect.



Left to right Bob Durham (aka Aunty) Paul Durham and unknown, location bottom of the Wythburn Valley at Steel End. Checkpoint duty on the RA 3000 event. 160 lb canvas tent behind for the use of, dosing, cooking or control etc.



Base set radio on the table with external speaker on top. Small petrol generator which is powering a large lead acid battery which in-turn is the power source for the radio.

Unit on the right was certainly a generator not sure about the unit on the left, a compressor?



Radios

Images here of the typical MR hill set radio of the 70's, a Pye Bantam (black) and a Westminster base set. Both with rubberised aerials.

There were also steel whip aerials, as the names suggest there would whip around, so mind your eyes! Generally, the radios were on the delicate side, you had to treat them carefully.

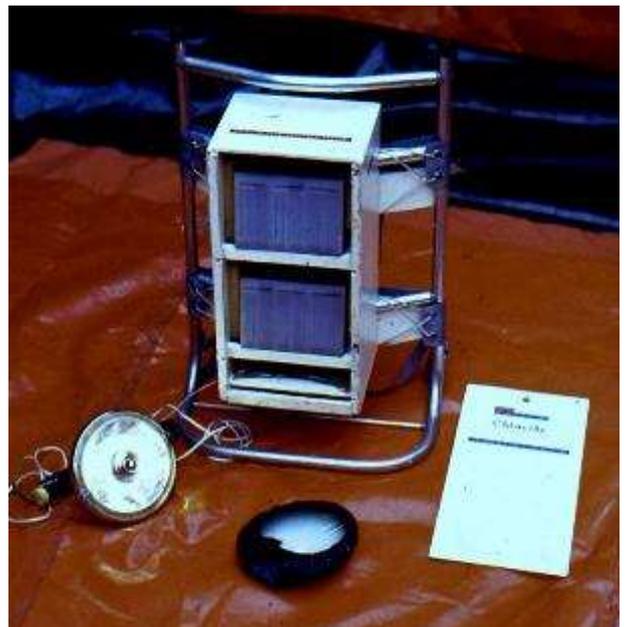
Very few channels, 2 at the most for many years. It also took a while to master the Squelch button, bantams only. This had to be turned until the interference just stops, the problem was that always seem to need adjusting!



Left, a whip aerial bent over via a plastic clip as a safety precaution. Didn't seem to effect performance!



Searchlight unit, two lead acid batteries in a box, fixed to a pack frame with a handheld lamp.



Fixed Thomas stretcher, there were also split versions i.e., two halves to ease transport to the casualty site.

Quick release strapping.

Casualty headguard.

Casualty bag.

Paul Durham recalls: -

The quick release straps on the Thomas stretcher were fitted by BAe (BAC) from an aircraft ejector seat.



First Aid Pack with various items,

Bandages, all shapes and sizes

Inflatable splints, always had issues with air leaking out.

Cramer Wire flexible splint consisting of two parallel wires with connecting smaller wires. Used to mould around the fracture and support.

Padding



Entonox and Mask.

Well established pain relieving gas. It consists of two gases, 50% nitrous oxide and 50% oxygen.

Self-administered by the casualty to control pain



Portogen and Bag.

Miniature Oxygen cylinder



Various Items of Crag Kit

Ascenders, descenders

Chocs

Straps, Tapes

Harnesses

Pulleys

Krabs



Packman Sack
An idea from Langdale
Ambleside, a First Aid + sack

Portogen, Bag and Mask
Emergency shelter
Head torch

Paul
Durham as
model!



Jim Gardner adds: -

As far as I can remember the pack consisted of "basic keep the cas alive" equipment.

Small oxygen set, splints, trauma kit for major bleeding, space blanket/bivi bag, flares plus room for radio and your own kit. It was kept fairly basic and lightweight because the packman was sent out before the team and expected to get to the casualty quick. Usually, Bob Durham or myself were the packmen as (at the time we were the fittest and therefore the fastest across the fells) we had no navigator or radio operator we went as a single unit.

Rope and Bag



What was the name of the splint?

It reads "Tyne? Spinal Splint"



9. The Bomb

It was on a panel exercise that I was first exposed to the "Bomb" This was South Ribble's means of generating heat for cooking. It comprised of an ex-RAF pressurised container spewing out a single flame half a metre long into a metal channel with cut-outs to facilitate pans. Temperature control directly related to where within the channel you placed the pan and ranged from, incineration to bloody hot.

Not only did it provide heat for cooking, it warmed up the cook tent and the surrounding area outside the tent. The noise was deafening and reminded me of those Second World War films of V1's just before they cut-out and started their decent to cause havoc.

Paul Durham recalls: -

The bomb, was temperamental at best. The reassuring roar of the flame would suddenly disappear followed by a gentle hiss as the flame died but the pressurized fuel would still be emitting from the burner. People in the tent would dive for cover or throw themselves over the nearest dry-stone wall. Usually, a trainee would be instructed to re-enter the tent and reignite the burner with a match or lighter. When the flame burst back into life the tent sides would usually lift as the unburnt fuel ignited and the trainee re-emerged, minus eyebrows. Previous conversations would recommence as if they'd never been interrupted. We lost a lot of trainees thanks to the bomb. Good times.

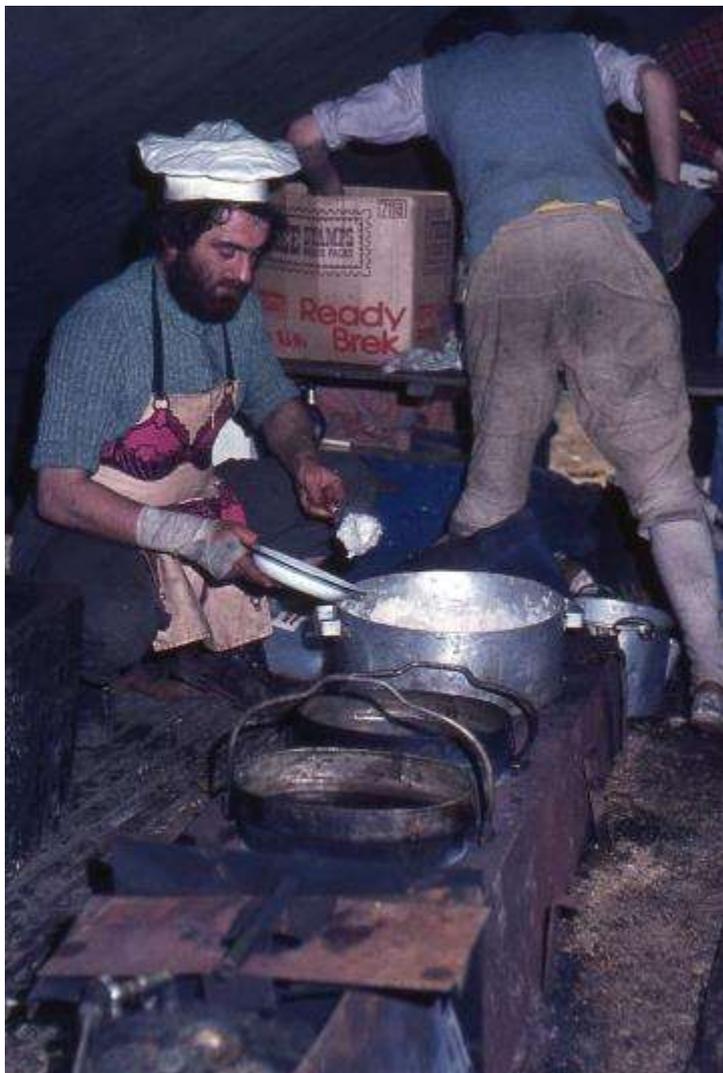
Jim Gardner adds: -

Another story about the bomb, we had difficulty with it and it needed technical treatment so I asked my father-in-law if he would look at it, which he did and made a reasonable job, however he wanted to test it before I brought it back to the team, he insisted on lighting it in his back yard and guess what, it also worked as a paint stripper of his yard door! Thinking back about the bomb it was on its last legs and during a weekend with the RAF we swapped bombs (with their agreement) they said, they would claim they had dropped it off a lorry!

Plus, Ian Ordish adds: -

I know we got the bomb from the RAF and for some time we ran it on Paraffin which created a cloud base of about 4 foot in the tent above that was fumes & smoke. South Ribble guys could easily be distinguished by their running red eyes.

Working on a job with the RAF somewhere we discovered that the bomb should be run on Petrol, that helped with the cloud base and the red eyes, but I suspect increased the bombs trainee count.



Dave Selby on chef duty, levels of cleanliness leave some room for improvement! Stuart Durham as his commis chef.

10 Fell Races

Fell races played a major role in training and developing the necessary skills for a competent MR team and a much needed funding source. They provided learning opportunities in logistics, radio communications, teamwork, first aid, navigation, control etc. They were a valued and vital element of the training programme.

The following races are listed in chronological order:

The Yorkshire Three Peaks

Team attendance 1975 to 2000

South Ribble and Bowland Pennine

The Three Peaks Fell Race, first run in 1954, is usually the last weekend in April, starting and finishing at Horton-in-Ribblesdale although the original start/finish was the Hill Inn in Chapel-le-Dale just east of Ingleton.

The course traverses the Yorkshire Dales Three Peaks namely Pen-y-Ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough, in that order. The present distance is about 23 miles (37 km). Alterations due to access issues led to a longer course 1975, 1983 and 1987

In the early 1970's the race organising committee were keen to get long term commitment from a MR team to manage the safety aspects of the race. SR offered that commitment and began their association in 1975.

Providing checkpoints on the hill tops, various other locations and a pick-up crew in liaison with the Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO) In addition to keeping the race organiser informed, of the race progress, via the radio net, back at the start/finish arena.



Runners on the top of Whernside

Sadly 1978 there was a fatality when Ted Pepper ran off route in very bad weather, as mentioned earlier, page 10.



Fellsman Hike

Team attendance 1969, 1979, 1980

The Fellsman Hike is a 60-mile-high level route over rugged moorland, it climbs over 11,000 feet on its path from Ingleton to Threshfield in the Yorkshire Dales. Competitors either run or walk and the event is continuous from Saturday 09:00 to Sunday 14:00, in the middle of May (nowadays April). The Keighley Scout organisation manages the event.

Northern Rescue Organisation (NRO) began their association with this event in 1965 providing safety cover and hilltop checkpoints. In those days the Hike started in Threshfield and travelled anti-clockwise to Ingleton. In 1968 it switched to a clockwise route; this was in response to a number of incidents in 1967 on Inglebrough. The clockwise course offers a relatively easier, less risky finish.



This illustrates perfectly why the route was changed in 1968 to go left to right rather than right to left

From NRO records South Ribble assisted on the hike at least once in 1969 with 25 members along with Calder Valley MRT who provide 10 members and Huddersfield Scout Mountain Rescue Team with 15.

Subsequently Bolton MRT assisted NRO from the early 70's

South Ribble would have also been involved in 1979 and 1980 pre-amalgamation.

Rambler's Association Lake District Four 3,000 Foot Peaks Marathon Walk

Team attendance 1970? to 2002

South Ribble and Bowland Pennine

First organised by the RA in 1965, it was not supposed to be a race which was a forlorn hope. Approximate distance was 46 miles and 11,000 ft of ascent, this included 16 miles of road surface the last stretch from Thirlspot to Keswick was a killer. The wearing of boots on the fell was also compulsory in the early years.



At Keswick Rugby Club June 1990 with our new Sprayway Jackets a few exSR members on show.

POB Nick Perkins

Stuart Davidson Stan Farington Keith Gillies

Tom Crook Keith Middleton Bob Durham Bob Scoltock

Rod Kelly Vera Taylor Gwen McFadyen Pete Taylor Pete Walker Ian Ordish John Houghton

Jim Gardner recalls a number of personal memories.....

Initially we camped at Steel End (or as it was christened Midge End). Everybody gathered round Norman Pomfret who smoked a foul-smelling pipe which we hoped would keep the midges away - it didn't.

At the beginning we operated the safety cover with Penrith MR team and I think Langdale Ambleside MR might have had some input but due to work load they soon pulled out as did Penrith. This enable us to move to Keswick Rugby Club were the team stayed.

Originally there were rules about participating, boots had to be worn and kit had to be carried hence kit and footwear check by the Rambler's Association at the beginning. Kit had to consist of waterproofs, map, compass, first aid kit and spare food but once the kit was checked everybody went to their cars and dumped it.

I believe the boot situation was solved by Norman Walsh who produced fell running boots to cover the regulations.

Routes between the check points were up to the individual but when you look at the route on the map very little variation is possible. Two possible alternatives are crossing from Scafell to Scafell Pike because you either have to negotiate Broad Strand or go the long way with more climbing via Foxes Tarn. Most people used to try Broad Stand and Paul Durham on occasions put a rope down to assist the walkers. Most people went up Scafell via the corridor route and the West Wall Traverse. The other variation was across to High Raise. A direct route takes you through an area of tussock grass not pleasant with the miles in your legs a slightly longer but avoiding the tussock was to go slightly south towards the Langdale Pikes and round the edge of the tussocks (adds about 1 mile).

After Penrith MR finished, we did it (the event) ourselves but if I remember rightly, we asked if checkers could be provided so we only provided safety and radio coverage.

One year we arrived in Keswick set up camp and Pete Taylor realised that we were short on manpower so yours truly suggested that if Bob Durham was in agreement me and him would cover the first and last hill top check point which meant we had to get down Skiddaw grab something to eat then run up (yes, I did mean run) Helvellyn hopefully to arrive before the first fast fell runner came through. We managed it and for quite a few years we used to do this.

Borrowdale Fell Race

Team attendance 1973 to present day.
South Ribble and Bowland Pennine

Start and finish at Rosthwaite, organised by the Borrowdale Fell Runners Club and sponsored by the Scafell Hotel this race was first run in 1973 and South Ribble were involved with safety cover and checking duties.

I asked Miles Jessop the proprietor of the Scafell how SR got involved.? His response is below.....

Hi Phil

It's nice to hear from you - Keswick Mountain Rescue Team were in the first place asked to cover the event, but they felt because of their duties to the locality at a busy time of year such as August, they could not offer their support.

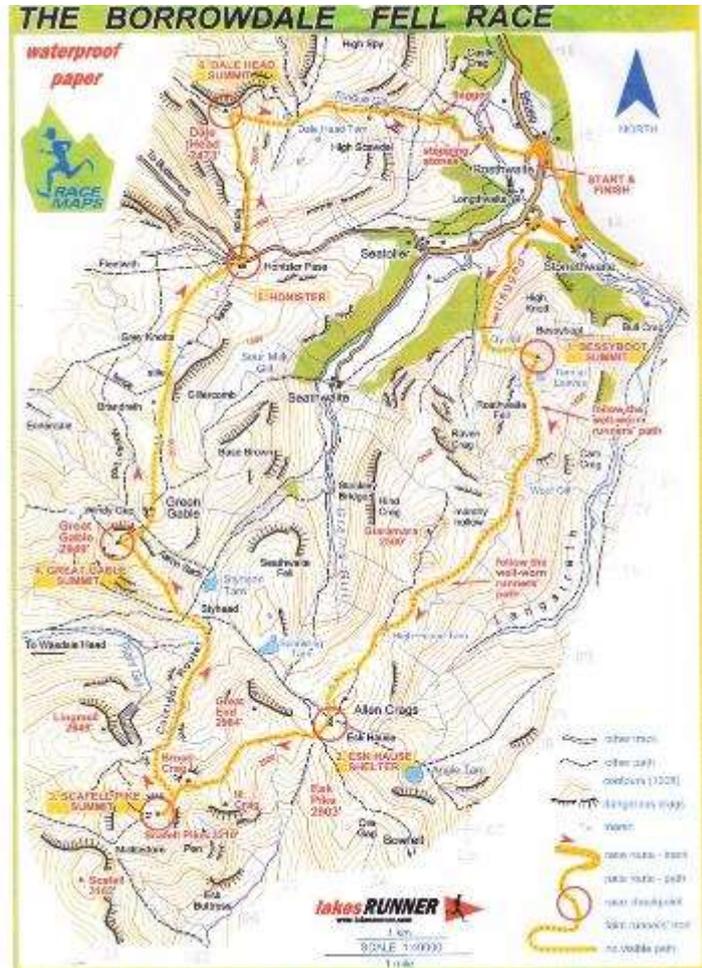
At this time, I also owned the New Dungeon Ghyll complex, and it was either there or at The Scafell, where I first made contact with South Ribble as it was at that time and from that meeting their support was offered.

The first race was in August 1973, and the rest well, it just went from strength to strength to establish it as one of the classic fell races in the UK.

If there are any other details which I can help you out on, please just get in touch.

My kind regards to you and all the team.

Miles



Always held on the first Saturday in August. In SR and early BP days, it was the family/team social highlight of the year.

The team would travel up Friday evening and setup camp at one end of the field opposite the Scafell Hotel, the other end would be a huge white marquee housing the refreshments, dance floor and a stage for the Saturday night Caribbean band.

Race day would start early with Breakfast then hill top checkpoints setting out for their respective locations. Stall holders would arrive and setup their pitches. The portaloos doing a brisk trade. Race start would vary over the years usually 11:00, number of competitors again would fluctuate 250-500 depending on the race classification for that year.

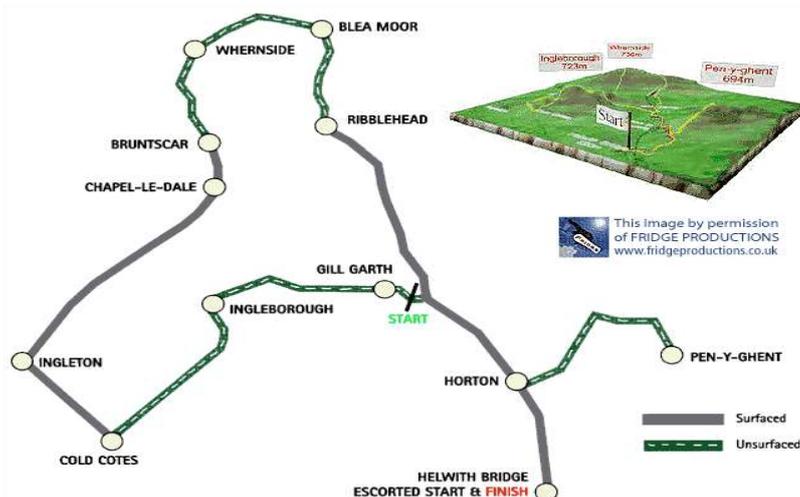
The route has varied slightly over the years to accommodate erosion issues or landowner's requests. A list of all the winners and their times is displayed on a fine wooden plaque in the public bar at the Hotel. The route summits the following peaks - Bessy Boot, Esk Hause Shelter, Scafell Pike, Sty Head, Great Gable, and Dale Head. 18ish miles and 6,000ft of ascent. On the field we organised a first aid tent to deal with cuts and grazes. The last hill top checkpoint usually returned to the field around 17:30 ready for the barbecue being lit. Drinks on the field, in the pub or in the marquee.

The Three Peaks Cyclo-Cross

Team attendance 1969 to present day.
South Ribble and Bowland Pennine

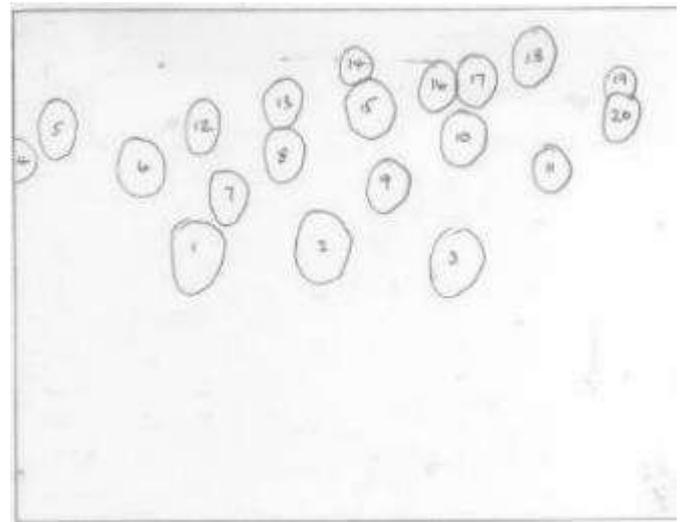
This is an annual cyclo-cross event, first run in 1961 over the Yorkshire Dales Three peaks of Ingleborough, Wharfedale and Pen-y-Ghent. Organised by the Bradford Racing Cycling Club on the last weekend of September, it's billed as the "hardest cyclo-cross race in the world". While other races may have greater distances and height gain, it is the combination of gradient, terrain and weather that gives the *Three Peaks Cyclo-cross* its reputation.

The original course was 40 km long, but was increased to 47 km in 1980. More course changes in 1982 and 1983 increased it further, to 50 km and then 57 km respectively. The most recent alteration, in 1994, extended the course to 61 km. The current course start/finish is at Helwith Bridge, 3 km south of Horton in Ribblesdale. Similar to the running race but we provide less of the checking function, we have members throughout the race route and a patch up – assessment service at the finish for the bikers.



11. South Ribble Reunion

24th November 2011 at Ray Lane Garstang, HQ Bowland Pennine MRT



1. Les Seed
2. Peter Williams
3. Pete Taylor
- 4.
5. Wilf Thompson
- 6.
7. Dave Simpson
8. Peter Wallis
9. Jean Gregson nee Williams
10. Norman Thompson
11. Gwyn McFadyen.
12. Brian Morgan
- 13.
14. Stuart Durham
15. Dudley Knowles
16. Jim Gardner
17. Steve
18. Paul Durham
19. Patrick Bracewell
20. John Houghton

Phil Lund

NRO and Bowland Pennine MRT

Dec 2020