

# Northern Rescue Organisation 1962 - 1980

## Introductions

- 1 1962-80 Notable Events
- 2 Headquarters
- 3 Training Programme
- 4 Panel Exercises
- 5 Weekends
- 6 Callouts
- 7 Lakelander Hike
- 8 Bowlander
- 9 Fellsman Hike
- 10 Equipment
- 11 Vehicles
- 12 Fund Raising
- 13 Whitewell Pot
- 14 Northern House
- 15 Smelt Mill
- 16 Medical
- 17 Team Visits
- 18 Lt Cmdr. L M Dougherty
- 19 Amalgamation NRO – SRMRT
- 20 NRO Members Reunion



Note

£ figures in brackets, is the approximate relative value in 2020

## Introduction

On 25<sup>th</sup> 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 gathered together a number of people to form South Ribble Fell Search and Rescue Team (SR) based at Cop Lane in Penwortham, Preston. They 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 the new group reflected his aspiration, Northern Rescue Organisation (NRO) with Ross as its organiser.



Lancashire Evening Post

26th March 1962

NRO established a unit in Rossendale in the mid 60's which in time gained its own autonomy in 1967, another knock-on effect was the formation of Bolton MRT in 1968. As for the umbrella organisation that did not materialise. In time it became clear that Preston could not support two mountain rescue teams, it was not the best use of limited resources. This is not to criticize the people involved at the time, but the situation had to change.

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 SR and NRO into Bowland Pennine MRT on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1980. Pete Taylor (SR) being the first Team Leader and Paul Hughes (NRO) 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 and all the former members of NRO and SR should be justifiably proud of their legacy.



Bowland Pennine  
Mountain Rescue Team

NRO was in existence for just less than 18 years and during this time it had; 8 HQ's all based in the Preston area, numerous vehicles of all shapes and sizes, weird and wonderful selection of kit and 5 Team Leaders. It had to deal with hardship, little money, the wet, the cold, late nights and on occasions fatalities but there was always the fantastic camaraderie and humour to push the team forward.

My aim for this document is to record as best I can the history of NRO through a blend of, my memories, pictures, team documents, newspaper articles and members personal statements. Some are respectful, others irreverent, but they all combine to paint a picture of the early days of Mountain Rescue.

In the main it is written from my perspective, I joined NRO in early 1972. However, there are many inputs from other members and their name and narrative appear in italics where appropriate. I wish to thank the many contributors for the huge number of documents and images they have sent me without which I could not have compiled this record. Special thanks to Crispin Myerscough who proof read the document.

## 1. 1962-1980 Notable Events

The following are short extracts and bullet points taken from minutes, newsletters and other records to provide a flavour of the workings of NRO from its formation to its dissolution and metamorphosis into Bowland Pennine MRT.

### 1962

I don't believe the incident on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 1962 was the starting gun, more the final push to get a team established in the Preston area. The fact that two rescue groups were formed was just a matter of circumstances. Ross Drysdale and Jim McVeigh perhaps did not have a common view as to the provision of mountain rescue. Ross was heading in a slightly different direction. Ross was a man of ideas, why think small when you can think big, would probably have been his motto.

Ross ran an outdoor shop, "Camp n Climb" in Chapel Yard Preston, which was demolished to make way for the St Georges Shopping Centre in 1965. A group of young people belonging to the North West Rambling Club would meet in there on a Saturday deciding where they would walk on the Sunday. Ross recruited many of these people into the NRO. The earliest document I have located is a draft constitution dated Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 1962, the day after the boys were found. Known as the Organisation at this time, its aims were clear, to support the police in mountain rescue work within Lancashire and neighbouring regions.

### 1963

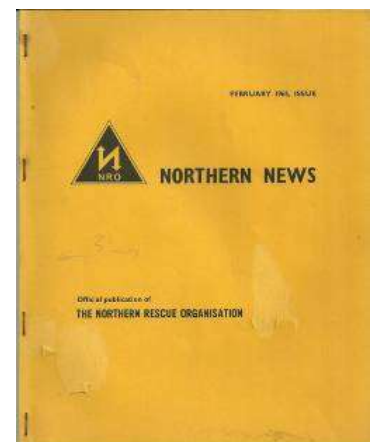
Unfortunately, I have no records for this year.

### 1964

Extracts from NRO's newsletter, "Northern News"

May 1964

- Subs 2/6 Probationers and 5/- Full Members (equivalent of £2.65 and £5.10 in 2020)
- NRO will provide expenses and refreshments on callout.
- Pens available for sale.
- 20 members on Chipping mock ex Bob Grieve organised.
- Weekend patrols for Lakes, York Dales and Derbyshire.



- New Pye radios due.
- Thanks to Mick McGill for truck maintenance
- Digging at Whitewell Pot has found a 20ft pitch

Northern News  
magazine bearing the  
NRO Triangular Badge

July 1964

- Thomas Stretcher just arrived.
- New Call-Out method to be implemented.
- “Wireless” section new radios being prepared.
- Mock ex held at White Coppice; good inquest held the following Monday.
- Still accepting new members but will be a little more choosy in future!
- Investigating a fundraising “Sports Pool” 100 Club
- Recent discussion with County Police agreed they would call out rescue teams.

**Grane Road Exercise.** Tony Harrison, an early Team member, recalls the exercise.

*September 3rd 1964 an exercise had been planned with the fledgling Rossendale Fell Rescue Team. Location, the hills south of the Grane Road between Darwen and Haslingden. Story line a “casualty” called Brian ‘Dai’ James required locating. All went well at first but after a thorough search line nobody could find the casualty. It*



Note the fancy soft top police sports car

*was by now very late in the evening and repeated calls failed to locate him – there were no radios then – so eventually we asked for assistance from the police in Haslingden who arrived with loudspeaker equipment and called for the casualty to come in.*

*Sometime later Dai James came tramping onto the road and explained that we*

*were expected to find him and not for him to tell us where he was. It turned out that a search line had passed within yards of him with no sighting and he had kept quiet.*

### North West Fell and Mountain First Aid Unit

An article appeared in the Lancashire Evening Post 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec. 1964. Ross Drysdale was promoting the North West Fell and Mountaineering First Aid Unit (NWFMAU) as potentially being of great value to MR teams. With MR Teams doing the searching, and when a casualty is found, calling in this unit to provide the expert First Aid. The group was led by Bob Grieve who was to play a leading role in the development of NRO.



LEP Recruiting Article for NWFMAU

However, if you joined this group you were not part of NRO, it was a distinct separate unit.

Dec 1964

- Exercise at Langden Castle was good!
- Wireless section tested from Jeffery Hill to Harden.
- Articles on Exposure, Map reading.
- President Stewart Ward off to Himalayas.

**1965**

Jan 1965

- Meeting of the Rossendale Unit to discuss their operation.
- Dickie Seeds cartoon's may be made into postcards for fund raising.
- Meeting in Dec decided how to operate the NWFMAU, Pin Point (pick-up) Rescues and Searches.



CHECK YOUR BELAYS

Feb 1965

- The need to re-locate HQ from Chapel Yard Preston, by April 1965
- Rossendale Unit established at Regent Street, Haslingden.
- First team to operate on MR VHF Frequency 86.325 KHz
- Young ladies required for typing!
- Council (later to be called committee) meeting at HQ Friday all welcome.
- NWFMAU exercise report, little dig at poor support from local teams.
- Appeal for people to join NWFMAU who are self ruling.
- Appeal for working parties for Northern House

April 1965

- 8<sup>th</sup> May Fellsman Hike confirmed
- **Tony Harrison and Paul Hughes attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Mountain Safety and Survival Course at Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore. Ross Drysdale persuaded Preston Borough Council to pay the course fees.**
- Must vacate Chapel Yard by 29<sup>th</sup> April
- Large article on the wireless.

Initially, Northern Rescue Organisation, as its grand name suggests, had aspirations to run and organise mountain rescue services over a wide area involving many functions. To drive through this idea would require dedicated planning and organisational skills which perhaps were not Ross's forte or maybe such an organisation was simply not required.

By the end of 1965, NRO as an umbrella organisation had contracted into a more realistic entity, a mountain rescue *team*, where all the functions, search, communications, technical and medical were integrated. The name NRO however, was retained.

### **Lancashire Mountain Accident Panel**

From the practical callout viewpoint, the Police were unhappy with two teams, which one do they call? The answer to this was the formation, in late 1965, of the Lancashire Mountain Accident Panel; this provided the Police with a point contact for MR in Preston.

NRO member Cliff Price was its first secretary and he had the full confidence of Ross and Jim McVeigh. Its aims were to promote co-operation between teams, police, raise

awareness, standardise equipment and organise exercises. The LMAP is still in operation today under a different name - Mid Pennine Search and Rescue Organisation.

## 1967

<b>1967 Callouts</b>			
Area	No Missing	Outcome	Description
Gt Harwood	1	Fatal	Youth missing from home
Whitewell	1	Search only	Girl missing from home
Fellsman	1	Successful	Competitor overdue
Ingleborough	5	Successful	Cadets - Exposure
Ireby	2	Successful	Youths trapped in pot
Mosssdale	6	Fatal	Trapped in pot
Grasmere	1	Fatal	Adult male walker overdue

## 1968

Loans requested from members in multiples of £25 (£436) to be repaid within max 2 years.

25<sup>th</sup> Feb Steel door has now been fitted to Whitewell Pot. Duchy is now happy to allow the Agreement to continue. £5 yearly rent now due. (£87)

LandRover Ambulance KTB 171C wishes to be reclaimed by Ross Drysdale.

28<sup>th</sup> Feb EGM Resolves to hand back KTB171C to Ross Drysdale after NRO Chairman Lt Cmdr. LM Dougherty (LMD) had consulted a barrister. All authorities are informed of this decision. Vote of thanks given to Ross Drysdale for his assistance in the past with NRO at the AGM.

Was decided to invite Huddersfield Scout Mountain Rescue Team to assist with this year's Fellsman Hike. South Ribble is currently without a leader so their position is unclear.

Team training will be every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday evenings.

Dinner Dance tickets available at 28/- (£24) Secretary to write to South Ribble requesting if they require any.

Dr Bob Grieve TL, reported at the AGM that the J1 Bedford Ambulance ONF 363 had been adequately equipped for intensive care use at the road head on incidents.

South Ribble MRT requested garage space for their LandRover at NRO garage Kimberley barracks.

This council wishes to place on record the fact that no records whatsoever appear to have been kept prior to 5<sup>th</sup> March 1967 about any items except 14 Oldham's and 1 Frame tent.

6<sup>th</sup> Aug received grant from Lancashire County Council £150 (£2,618)

Team has £269 (£4,696) and resolved that £175 (£3,055) could be repaid to persons who had loaned money to the team. Mr Hughes and Martland requested priority and this was agreed.

Film Show to be arranged for first week in Nov. Proposed films,  
Cave Rescue – Upper Wharfedale and Rescued – BBC  
Charge 3/- (£6.28) and 2/- (£4.19)

11<sup>th</sup> Dec Letter of thanks received from Lancashire Constabulary re valuable assistance  
22<sup>nd</sup> Sept for three girls missing at Whitworth.

### **1969**

Mountain Rescue First Aid Course from Oct to Feb Organiser Dr Bob Grieve. Cost 25/- (£21.82) detailed programme available.

Annual subscription is now due 30/- (£25) Bob Simpson Treasurer.

Sponsored Canoe Rally, Lancaster Canal, arranged for Oct 25<sup>th</sup>

NRO terminates its lease for the garage at Higher Bank Road Fulwood and moves to a large garage at Kimberley Barracks, Deepdale Preston.

The NRO Council resolves to contact Rochdale Civil Aid Unit and Rossendale Fell Rescue Team regarding assistance on this year's Fellsman Hike. Also, Blackpool Service Unit be contacted to see if they could help providing catering.

After correspondence, Blackpool Service Unit requested too much money to do the event, so they didn't attend.

Calder Valley MRT to provide 10 members.

Huddersfield Scout Mountain Rescue Team promised 15 members.

South Ribble FSRT promised 25 members

NRO with 24.

Letters received from Pye Telecommunications inviting NRO to demonstrations of radio equipment at Preston and Manchester Airport.

£5 (£83) Donation received from Mr & Mrs Lloyd of Chipping for ours services in the Foot and Mouth outbreak.

Lancashire Mountain Accident Panel (LMAP) changes its name on the 23th April 1969 to Mid Pennine Mountain Accident Panel (MPMAP) The following teams are members Bolton, Calder Valley, Holme Valley, NRO, Oldham, South Ribble and Rossendale.

Bob Simpson Treasurer reported £88-17-10 (£1,471) at the bank with £4-2-2 (£70) cash.

It was resolved that the editor of the NRO newsletter be allowed to sit in on council meetings in order to better report on news.

£50 (£828) Donation received from the Fellsman Hike. To which we passed on £10 (£165) to South Ribble, £5 (£82) to Huddersfield, £4 (£66) to Calder and £2/2s (£27) to Rochdale

Transport Officer instructed to make good the tyres on the LandRover and Ambulance plus renew the half shafts. Cost not to exceed £30 (£497)  
He spent £36 (£596) so had to explain himself at the next council meeting!

AGM held 9<sup>th</sup> Feb in the Sharoe Green Hospital Canteen

Dinner Dance at the Bowling Green Inn, Charnock Richard 17<sup>th</sup> Jan tickets 27/6d (£30)

Members were invited to send donations to Cockermouth MRT Accident Fund regarding their recent fatal accident. NRO target was £20 (£331)

*The accident happened about 12.30pm on 15th June 1969 when the team was practising a new technique in horizontal lowering of a stretcher.*

*One successful lower was completed but during a second attempt a huge rock, which was holding the main belay, broke away and triggered a large rockfall, engulfing the stretcher and several team members.*

*Team leader John 'Jock' Thomson, a teacher at a Cockermouth school, was struck by the boulder and killed instantly. Michael Stephenson, who was acting as a belayer, was catapulted out on the scree below and died in West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven the following day.*

## 1970

Letter from the Mountain Rescue Committee, creating Kimberley Barracks as Rescue Post 70 and did we want the MRC issue kettle, spoon and jug?

Fellsman NRO base camp will be near Fleet Moss.

TL Dr Bob Grieve dies suddenly 27<sup>th</sup> May. Also, a young boy George Elliot who had been out on a few exercises with NRO dies saving a school friend in the lakes. Both families request donations be sent to NRO in lieu of flowers. Team buys slide projector and screen with the monies.

Paul Hughes becomes Team Leader.

Table tennis marathon raised £75 (£1,167)

Yellow team cloth badges are available from Bob Simpson at 6/- (£4.67)

Social w/e 2<sup>nd</sup>- 4<sup>th</sup> Oct at Wharfeside House, Kettlewell.

Team provided safety cover for the Scouts Ord cup based in Littledale

During this year Lancashire County Council were planning on creating a country park on Beacon Fell, Paul Hughes on behalf of NRO had attended and number of meetings. NRO was keen to provide weekend wardens.



Dr Bob Grieve TL 1965-70



**1971**

Panel Exercise 16<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> Jan, camping at Pack Horse in the Widdop area, soft shoes required for the pub!

Outdoor First Aid course organised for the newly formed Beacon Fell Rangers

LandRover sold for £175 (£2,489). Budget agreed of £850 (£12,093) for a new LandRover, EGM called to confirm decision.

Fellsman is 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> May. Wharfeside House is booked at Kettlewell for the comfort of off-duty members.

Sponsored Canoe Rally, Lancaster Canal, organised by Bob Simpson.

Dinner dance will be at the Pines Hotel, Whittle-le-Woods 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Accounts

**Income £ (in 2020)**

493 (7,014)	Vehicle Fund
45 (640)	Subs
138 (1,963)	Canoe Rally
89 (1,266)	Services Given
12 (170)	Donations

**Expenditure £**

26 (370)	Insurances
23 (327)	Radio Licence!
35 (498)	Equipment
11 (156)	Vehicle Repairs
6 (85)	Petrol, Oils etc

Money Balance at Year End £915 (£13,018)  
Excess of Income over Expenditure £259 (£3,685)

**1972**

Dinner dance will be at the Pines Hotel, Whittle-le-Woods, 28<sup>th</sup> Jan cost £1.80 (£24)

3rd Panel Exercise 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> Jan, we are "On Show" to neighbouring teams, Police and Press.  
L/R Betsey purchase in Feb for £725 (£9,629)  
Ian White becomes Transport Officer.

Lakelander 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> March based at Limefitt Park and the Fellsman Hike is 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May

Mountain Rescue Course will be run at Frenchwood School Preston in conjunction with Preston Education Committee primarily for Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and Venture Scouts Queens award but all team members are urged to attend since it is being integrated with the team training programme.



FEM 901F "Betsey" with Mick Doherty

Accounts

**Income £ (in 2020)**

30 (398)	Subs
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**Expenditure £**

35 (464)	Vehicle Repairs
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23 (305)	Services Given	21 (279)	Petrol, Oils etc
31 (411)	Donations		
Money Balance at Year End £762 (£10,120)			
Excess of Income over Expenditure £334 (£4,436)			

### 1973

Associate members 16+ subscription will be 50p (£6)  
 Bob Simpson steps down as DTL. Callout to North Wales in Nov.

Accounts

Income £ (in 2020)		Expenditure £	
42 (511)	Subs	46 (560)	Vehicle Repairs
75 (913)	Services Given	45 (548)	Petrol, Oils etc
89 (1,093)	Donations		

Money Balance at Year End £589 (£7,170)  
 Excess of Income over Expenditure £186 (£2,246)

Due to an outbreak of sheep scab the Panel Exercise in the Forest of Bowland, organised by NRO had to be cancelled. Calder Valley stepped in at short notice to organise the event in their area.

First Aid exam course starts in Jan, £1(12) per to cover costs.  
 AGM 11<sup>th</sup> Feb at Kimberley Barracks

### 1974

MR course being run at St Augustine's YC commencing 21<sup>st</sup> Jan, primarily for DofE but recommended for new team members.

3<sup>rd</sup> Feb AGM. Full minutes available. Subs increased £1 to £2 (£21)

8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Feb Joint Ex with Rossendale MRT, Coppermines, Coniston, fuel crisis permitting.

22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> Feb Lakelander radio trials, based at Northern House, Greenside, Glenridding.

28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> June MR course assessment weekend at Longsleddale OPC (Outdoor Pursuits Centre)

Accounts

Income £ (in 2020)		Expenditure £ (in 2020)	
68 (713)	Subs	7 (73)	Vehicle Repairs
150 (1,573)	Services Given	29 (304)	Petrol, Oils etc
100 (1,049)	Basket Ball Marathon		
43 (451)	Donations		

Money Balance at Year End £297 (£3,115)  
 Excess of Income over Expenditure £159 (£1,668)

### 1975

2<sup>nd</sup> Feb AGM. Full minutes available.  
 NRO Need to vacate from Kimberley by 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 1975.  
 Members continue to pay to go on exercises and Fellsman etc!

Meetings held in a Garage belonging to Fulwood District Council in Watling Street Road after April.

28<sup>th</sup> Sept Sponsored Canoe Rally, Lancaster Canal, organised by Mick Doherty.

25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> Oct Panel Exercise.

30<sup>th</sup> Nov Joint Ex with South Ribble MRT

Mrs Felton very kindly offered her double garage in Watling Street Road as a HQ from late 1975.

### **1976**

3<sup>rd</sup> Jan Call-out to assist Langdale Ambleside in search for two missing teenagers, sadly found dead on the summit of Scafell, Hypothermia.

24<sup>th</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> Jan Panel Exercise.

29<sup>th</sup> Feb Joint Ex with South Ribble MRT.

Two brand new LandRovers arrive via the Harold Bridges Foundation.

May 30<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> Two day display on Moor Park, new trainee stuck up the display tower!

10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Sept Wales Weekend.

30<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> Oct Panel Exercise. South Ribble MRT organising.

### **1977**

29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> Jan Panel Exercise.

### **1978**

Determined and successful effort began to amalgamate the two Preston teams.

### **1979**

Both teams agreed a joint training programme as part of a plan towards one team. We continued to have separate committees and finances but one team for meetings, training and callouts. South Ribble move out of their HQ Cop Lane into NRO's HQ West Leigh, due to the St Mary Health Centre development at the Cop Lane site. This certainly helped with the transition to one team.

July 28<sup>th</sup> – Nicky Nook near Garstang with SR, Man missing while in depressed state found suffering from severe sunburn after lying unconscious for two days. Treated by the Team and evacuated.

September 29<sup>th</sup> – Search of Beacon Fell with SR for a local man from Blackpool, sadly found deceased by the Team.

Image right of the carry off.



### 1980

As a joint fund raising event it was decided to run the Pennine Way

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, Martin Hunt, Jim Gardner, Dick Merton, Bob Durham.



The Relay Runners

Jim Gardner (SR) 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 the NRO

Ken King, Gill Slater, 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

## 2. Headquarters

2.1 Camp 'n' Climb outdoor shop 18/19 Chapel Yard Preston. (late 1962 to April 1965).

NRO to move due to the St George's shopping centre development. In the shop on Saturdays an informal group called "Norwest" used to meet and decide where to walk on Sunday. This group provided many early NRO members.



Camp 'n' Climb Chapel Yard Red Circle

2.2 Union St. Behind Preston Sports Department. (PSD) Short stay in 1965.

Ross Drysdale's father owned property in Union Street, team had meeting room/s here. Vehicles kept at various locations Grafton Street, Deepdale Road and off Queens Street.

2.3 Garage/Meeting Room. Higher Bank Road, Fulwood. (1965 to 1968)

Cost was 10 shillings a week to hire (£9.75)

Image right, shows a group meeting or milling in Victoria Rd which ran parallel with Higher Bank Rd. The reason they are milling in here is that Higher Bank Rd is very narrow.

The arrow shows a ginnel (passageway) which linked the two roads.



Higher Bank Rd today 2020, the the ginnel is still there but the garage / meeting rooms are not. Still very narrow!



#### 2.4 Garage Kimberley Barracks Deepdale Road. (1968 to April 1975).

A large garage, dark and dismal with one long wheel base LandRover that Ian White seemed to be permanently working on. Seating was two pull out benches, quite primitive. Good parking and a large grass area handy in summer. Given notice by the MOD to leave by April 1975, I think the MOD wanted civilians off site due to increased IRA activity. However, 7 years rent free, mustn't grumble!



Above the entrance to Kimberley Barracks, short drive then we had a large garage circled in red.



2.5 Garage Fulwood District Council, Watling Street Road/Garstang Road. (April 1975 to 1980)

Only used as a meeting venue for a short time but kept as a vehicle garage until 1980 Getting vehicles in and out was difficult due to its proximity to a major crossroad and traffic lights. Demolished to become a solicitor's car park, and now a restaurant. Drinks in the Withy Trees pub after meetings.



2.6 Garage – Private house in Watling Street Road. (1976 to 1977) Mrs Felton, very generously gave us use of her garage, light and airy. Remember turning up for a panel ex one January and John Atherton was telling us all that we are actually going on a real call-out (rare in those days) none of us would believe him, until he blew this top, an unusual event. Callout was to Littleborough, light aircraft, I think.



Garage at the Bottom of the Drive



Packing the Trailer, Simon Harris sporting the NRO jumper far right



Ian White and Mick Turner sorting gear inside. Ivy growing through the wall!

2.7 Redundant Laundry – Deepdale Isolation Hospital. (1977 to 1978)

Now a Sainsbury's supermarket. Meeting and Equipment only. Tony Bond in his element here, old laundry area had lots of shelving for equipment and everything had a label! If you stood still too long, you'd get one. Future BPMRT Chairman, Crispin Myerscough, managed to send our climbing blocks essential for the climbing tower to the tip via the dustbin men when they came around one Saturday morning. Drinks after meetings in the health service club just around the back.



Deepdale Isolation Hospital

2.8 Old Ambulance Station and Stables-Westleigh. (1978 to 1981)

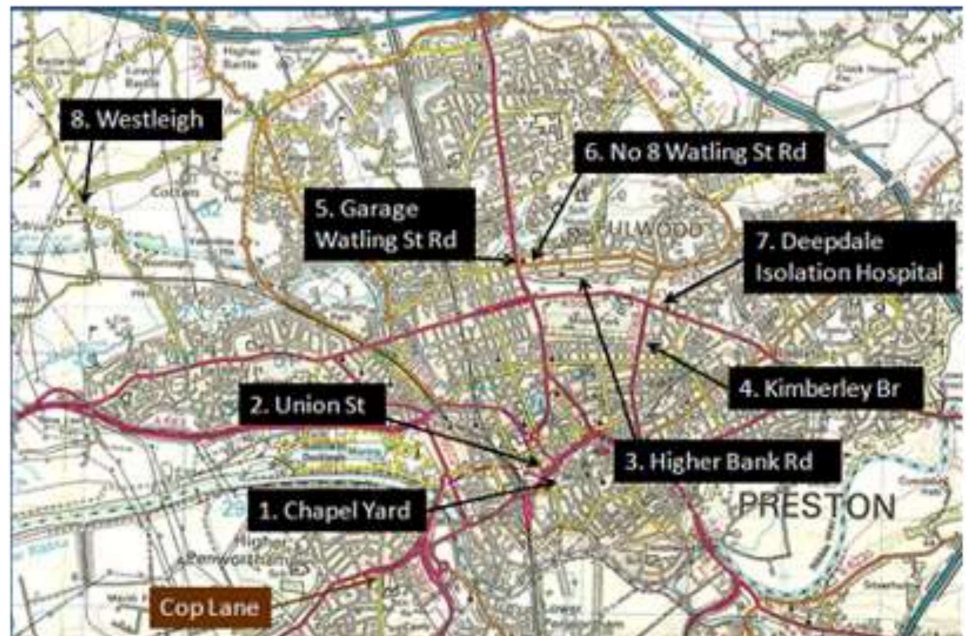
NRO and SR operated from here before and after amalgamation. A short passageway led to a courtyard with a series of large rooms.

Drinks in the Saddle after meetings. It's now a private house.



All eight locations of the NRO, dotted around Preston.

Cop Lane in brown, the home of South Ribble for all of their time, except during construction of the Health Centre.



### 3. Training Programme

Wednesday's meetings were a mixture of lectures, checking kit and outdoor exercises. Quite a few Wednesdays seemed to be devoted to the Lakelander before and after the event, the same was true for the Fellsman. There were also Sunday exercises about once a month, in the Trough or at local quarries. There was one quarry exercise where John Atherton had us practicing breaking a climber's fall. I would be at top of the quarry, taking my stance holding the rope, behind me John had the other end of the rope attached to an old car tyre. Without notice he would push the tyre over the edge and the rest was down to me!

One late night exercise found us sheltering in Langden Castle, we'd been out some time and were all tired, wet and cheesed off. John Atherton thought he'd lift morale and suggested we name car types/manufacturers one by one. So, we started, Saab, Austin, Ford, Rolls Royce, Bentley etc. Second or third time around it came to Martin Crossthwaite who meant to say Volvo but it sounded like Vulva! Well, that set John off laughing and we all followed suit, whether it was funny or just plain delirium we chuckled for weeks on that one.



Keith Barnes and Ian White  
Denham Quarry

As new members you were expected to pick knowledge up as you went along. Keith Gillies and I were lucky in that we knew the TL, Paul Hughes, and Bob Simpson from the St Augustine's Youth Club and John Atherton from First Aid, but a number of the members would just dismiss us as young kids who should only speak when spoken to! However, very soon we were assimilated into the pack and as more faces joined from the Youth Club, it was like home from home.

Members paying to go on exercises!

It seems crazy now but, at the end of each training session, if the vehicle had been used, the members on that session paid for the fuel. As we approached amalgamation, I recall discussing this point with some SR members (who did not individually pay, rather team funds paid). Ian Ordish was quite forceful "there's no f\*\*\*ing way I'm paying on each exercise" and I thought 'well you'd better be good at fund raising'.....and he was! BPMRT adopted the SR protocol on vehicle fuel.

*Paul Hughes recalls: -*

*Most of our training was in the Lakes, using Dunmail Raise and latterly Northern House. I think I'd been in the team 2 years before I even set foot in the Trough of Bowland.*

*Gill Slater*

*I remember John Atherton officially declared me one of the lads, on an exercise, at the top of somewhere?? I was extremely chuffed with this.*

## 4. Panel Exercises

These were joint exercises for the teams in the Mid-Pennine Mountain Accident Panel, NRO, SR, Bolton, Calder Valley, Holme Valley, Rossendale and RAF Stafford. Each team would take it in turn to supply a few members to organise the event. The date was either October or the last weekend in January.

Paul Hughes used to say to the younger members if you can't come on this ex don't bother coming afterwards. This was the event when I felt we were on show as NRO, for King and Country we had to do our duty!

It was on a panel ex that I was first exposed to the South Ribble "bomb. This was their 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. If the heat wasn't bad enough, 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.

Some years later the RAF had a bomb working in their cook tent but there was some mix up in fuel, diesel instead of petrol or vice versa and it was kicking out clouds of soot, everyone coming out of the tent was cover in a black film.



*South Ribble's Dave Selby aka Seamus and the Bomb*

On a South Ribble organised panel ex in the Kentmere valley, Keith Gillies and I entered the cook tent. Keith must have been looking down in the dumps, Jack Grant duty cook clocked him and said, "bloody hell lad, if you feel that bad crawl in the slop bucket." He then gave us some tomato soup; it was fantastic and tasty.

NRO catering was more traditional; gas bottles, rings, pans and BAC Warton's Flat 2 chef Mick Turner. On one Panel ex, due to lack of finances, we appeared to have rationalised our resources and dispensed with the cook tent all together and combined it with the doss or sleeping tent. 160lb green tent with a ridge pole. I said I would help Mick in the morning with cooking breakfast. I use the words cooking and breakfast advisedly.

The dreaded time to get up arrived; I didn't get much sleep, tent door flapping most of the night. Picture the scene - pitch black, very cold and damp, noisy with snoring, plus other bodily functions and the smell. Ten or twelve bodies lying at one side and the catering gear at the other. No tent lighting to speak of, just team hand held battery lamps and personal head torches, mine was a PIFCO. So, Mick and I lit a couple of rings, got some water on the go for drinks and started opening the Spam. The *menu* was cereal with long life milk, fried spam with baked beans and tea or coffee.

Obviously, we are making some noise preparing, a few of our team mates questioned none too politely whether Mick or myself knew our fathers. I replied in a similar fashion that indeed we did and thanked them for their enquiry.

My best story of John Atherton which sums his character and charm was on a panel exercise, date unknown. We arrived late and had to push the trailer onto the camp site because the LandRover was sick, again. We were getting some serious stick from other teams already set-up as we were last to arrive.

One guy in particular was giving us plenty; he shouted sarcastically across the site so that everyone could hear, "do you want any help?" We were fair game but I felt sick as a parrot and a little embarrassed, but not for long, John replied as quick as a flash, "No thanks, but if we do, we can always put it (the trailer) in your mouth." Everyone pushing that trailer grew six inches, the campsite fell about laughing and the big guy shut up. John was great with the one liner. That weekend we'd have walked bare foot over hot coals for him, fantastic, great memory, great leader.

## **5. Weekends**

### **North Wales**

Each year there would be a winter training weekend under canvas in North Wales based around Betws-e-Coed. It always seemed to be very cold, not too surprising due to the time of year. On one occasion I was sharing a Vango tent with Mick Turner and it was personal catering. To save time getting out of ours pits (sleeping bags) in the morning I filled the little kettle the previous night. OK we were lazy. The temp dropped well below freezing, in the morning the tent sides were stiff with frost and we were amazed to see a frozen spout of ice shooting out of the little kettle 15cm and landing on a tin plate.

We had a call-out one year, in the Devil's Kitchen area. Some guy had gone over on his ankle and it was very sore and he was unable to walk, so we queried a fracture. The rest of the team were in various groups around the area doing their own thing, Simon Harris got on the radio and pulled us all together for the carry off. The casualties name was Dick Murton, and oh by the way, he was an NRO team member!

Dick was an Indiana Jones type of character, blonde hair, rugged, swashbuckling, up and at 'em sort of guy. Nothing too high or long or difficult for Dick. However, he was certainly quiet that afternoon, whether it was the pain from the ankle or the fear of being carried off by his team mates I'm not sure. He finished up in plaster but fully re-covered some weeks later.

On another adventure to the principality, we found ourselves in the Cobdens Arms on the A5 at Capel Curig, a famous watering hole renowned for raucous evenings, as I was about to find out. The evening started quietly enough, as they always do. The local MR team Ogwen were in giving one of their members a send off as he was leaving to work in Antarctica on some study project. Damian Finlay, Keith Gillies and I were invited into the back room with them, lambs to the slaughter. Some kangaroo court had been set up and I was the accused, but can't remember the charge, probable being English was good enough.

Damien was my defence counsel for what good it did me, he might as well have been the chief prosecutor. He was useless; anyone would think he'd been drinking. As the evening progressed beer was everywhere, in the air and on the floor. Eventually, well past midnight we found ourselves outside the pub having consumed plenty of Newcastle Brown Ale. The rest of the team had long since departed back to the camp site. Keith negotiated a lift back

from some RAF guys so the three of us piled into the back of a short wheelbase LandRover and sped off down the road at a hell of a speed.

In the morning Damian and I were feeling a little rough but surprisingly well enough to consume breakfast. Keith was going in the other direction getting progressively worse. Time came to set off back to Kimberley Barracks in Preston. The three of us got into the back of the LandRover, along with John Monkiewicz. Any notion that we were able to travel in the front was dismissed out of hand, our place was in the back, end of debate.

John saw it as a challenge to get Keith to be sick by describing various culinary concoctions but Keith stoically held on to the contents of his stomach. About 30 minutes from Preston, John had another attempt - "Keith what are you having for tea?" No reply from Keith. "Why don't you try meat and potato pie and custard." John hit the jackpot, Keith lunged forward towards the rear door, we managed to open it in time, but it was restricted by the trailer hitch. Not to worry most of the ingredients landed on the road and disappeared as we were still travelling along but some did settle on the towing hitch and had to be swilled off at Kimberly. There ended another Welsh adventure.

### **Wasdale Training Weekend** Tony Harrison, recalls: -

*A training weekend in Wasdale was one well-remembered event by all who survived, when about 20 members camped in the fields just past Burnthwaite Farm. After travelling up on the Friday evening, we had stretcher-lowering exercises just above the campsite on the Saturday when we got soaked three or four times during the day. Geoff Barry (training officer ex-RAF) was in charge and he would not let us shelter from the rain.*

*In the evening we were all in the bar at the Wasdale Hotel when the landlord, Pharoah Wilson was his name I think, called us out on a rescue. We all dashed out into the darkness to collect our equipment and were assembling when he told us it was a false alarm saying he wanted to see if we could get out in good time.*

*On the Sunday it had been decided to place a "casualty" in the Langdale valley above the small clump of trees about 1/3 mile west of Stool End Farm. We set off for Langdale with the very heavy and cumbersome Thomas stretcher, which in those days, would not fold in half. We carried our own kit, less tents etc, which would go by road in the NRO truck to Langdale. Up the grind below Gable to Styhead Tarn, on over to Sprinkling Tarn then over to Angle Tarn before descending the rough track down Rossett Gill.*

*Somewhere near one of the tarns we met two guys walking who seeing us carrying a stretcher asked if they could assist. Geoff Barry said "Yes", but did not tell them that it was just an exercise so the two strangers worked hard with the rest of us to get down into Langdale and along to the position of the "casualty" which if my memory serves me right was Albert Riding. When the two helpers found out that this was only an exercise, they "blew their tops" threatening to report us to the Police, the Lakes Mountain Rescue authorities and anybody else who would listen. Geoff Barry of course tried to convince them they had done the right thing by volunteering in a "rescue" but it did not go down well the two guys. Happy times!*

## **Bleasdale Training Exercise Feb 1965 Tony Harrison, again.**

*Following are extracts from my written notes.....*

*A longer than usual exercise was undertaken by the NRO this weekend.*

*Starting on the Saturday evening with a pin-point and then spreading to a full scale sweep and search on the following day, three of the 'casualties' were located before dawn, the other two finally walked off ahead of the sweep in the early afternoon.*

*I was called out at 20:00hrs and proceeded to Preston then to Langden Valley where Base had been set up.*

*Leaving at 02:30hrs with seven other members we swept back along the intended route of the 'lost men'. Then splitting into two parties we then walked the valley on either side.*

*The night itself was cold but not freezing. Snow kept trying to settle on the high plateau as the two parties went their way. As we descended from the upper Langden Beck the day slowly awakened and daylight flooded the sky as we arrived at the Base Camp where food and rest were taken.*

*Meanwhile, the main search party were assembling on the south side of Bleasdale and eventually arrived at Langden Castle without site of casualties. Another sweep was commenced but was finally ended when the 'casualties', tired of waiting, walked off the fells. A successful exercise in which a lot was learnt."*

*We were trying out the small coloured flares which came in a pack of five colours and a police representative came to observe and Ross Drysdale persuaded a reporter from the LEP (Lancashire Evening Post) to come as well. One group of us ended near Langdon Castle at about 07:30hrs and we had already washed ourselves when the LEP photographer arrived just in time to see us drying ourselves so he asked if we would repeat the scene. So, we had two washes in the river that morning. The headline was something silly like "Rescue tough guys in the hills"*



Lancashire Evening Post  
13<sup>th</sup> Feb 1965

## **6. Callouts - Not a definitive list, just a flavour**

### **Haslingden Nov 1965**

Week long search for a reservoir keeper, Robert Akrigg 55, on Gorpel Moor near Hebden Bridge in severe winter/blizzard conditions. Both NRO and SR on this callout, unfortunately without success. His body was discovered the following Spring by a man walking his dog. As a result of this incident Calder Valley MRT were formed in early 1966. Tony Harrison, recalls the incident.



Tony Harrison, Jim Danby,  
Gordon Fox at Haslingden

*We were called out one cold winter's day near Haslingden where a water board worker had gone missing. NRO and other teams plus the police were in attendance. NRO had about 25 or 30 members out on this shout and we formed search lines usually with an NRO member in each with his bantam radio.*

*I think we attended on two days but there was fresh snow during the night and also during the day I do remember. It was damn cold!*

*NRO had a kitchen open for almost everybody who required drinks and food and it was possibly Ross that financed this.*

**Wasdale 28<sup>th</sup> July 1966**

NRO and SR called out via Cliff Price sec Lancashire Mountain Accident Panel. (LMAP) Some NRO members were at Northern House. Missing person was Dr John Leslie Millard. His body was found in the Hard Knott pass area 17 days later. The Coroner later indicated that he should have lived for up to 36 hours.

**Ingleborough 21<sup>st</sup> May 1967**

Incident involving 3 Army Cadets from a party of 80 who were walking the 3 Peaks.

SR and Cave Rescue Organisation were assisting the event and called NRO in as the weather deteriorated. NRO were in the area having completed the Fellsman Hike cover over the Sat/Sun.

Two very detailed accounts of this incident exist, the first, below, compiled by Cliff Price NRO member and Secretary of the Lancashire Mountain Accident Panel.

# WEATHER HITS FELLS SEARCH

## No trace of Lancs doctor

IN ONE OF THE biggest searches ever organised in the Lake District, more than 100 people were out combing the Scafell range today for a missing Lancashire doctor.

Rescue teams from the Fylde were called into the massive operation this morning to join the other groups scouring the bleak fells for signs of Dr John Leslie Millard of Blackpool.

He has not been seen since setting out on a fell walk on Tuesday morning.



## U.S CALL TO STOP NUCLEAR SPREAD

THE UNITED STATES said the 11-nation disarmament conference in Geneva today that by 1968 the world would be producing enough plutonium to make use of nuclear weapons every day. Mr. Arthur S. Finkle, U.S. disarmament head, gave the warning when giving a copy of an advisory nuclear-panels system to help prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

INGLEBOROUGH INCIDENT.  
21st MAY, 1967.

LANCASHIRE MOUNTAIN ACCIDENT PANEL.  
Report prepared by G. Price Sec. L.M.A.P. with assistance of all concerned.

INCIDENTATION.  
A party 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 Ribbleside Mountain Rescue Team. The route was to take them over Wharfedale, Peary-g-ghost and Ingleborough.

All went well at the outset, the cadets picking their way over the first two peaks, Wharfedale and Peary-g-ghost, and after passing through the South Ribbleside safety check at Hill Inn, the cadets were to proceed over Ingleborough. Weather was fine until 14.30 hours wind N.W., 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 Ribbleside 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 Ribbleside 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 Ribbleside 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 J. McVeigh, leader of the South Ribbleside 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.

17.30 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 case arrived at Hill Inn and was transported to New Inn, Clapham by the C.R.O. for treatment.

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

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

18.50 After a roll 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,  
121, Crosswell 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.)



The second account feature in the Liverpool University Medical Students magazine “The Sphincter” author Bob Grieve NRO Team Leader.



**Grasmere 10<sup>th</sup> August 1967**

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.

*Tony Harrison, recalls the search.*

*This was quite a large operation with various Lakes Teams in attendance and helicopters also in use. This was the first time that we had been on a rescue when helicopters had been in use. NRO took about 30 personnel and we camped overnight in the fields just on the edge of Grasmere.*

*We searched with two lines through the chest high bracken on the south side of Easdale valley. It was very hard work and at time one could not see more than about 2 people on either side.*

*David Johnstone remembers that when the helicopter took off from Grasmere it blew all the tents down.*



Grasmere Callout

**North Wales Nov 1973**

During my time “callouts” were limited. I remember a period of over 18 months without one; no urban searches or ambulance assists as today. This was my first “shout” at 16 years old. I knew someone was in trouble but nevertheless I was so excited. Living at home with mum and dad, we were not on the phone so I was called via the police knocking at the door. The plan was to travel early evening, get the tents up, get some sleep, ready for a first light

search. I was in the back of Dave Hesketh's short wheelbase LandRover; Martin Crosswaite was the front passenger and Damian Finlay in the back with me. We were short of diesel and pulled into a few garages only to find them closed. I noticed that the pump we kept pulling up alongside was titled DERV, for years afterwards I thought that DERV was Welsh for diesel.

As we drove through the winding roads of North Wales, Dave and Martin were having a heated debate in the front regarding the guidelines for placing black and white chevrons on the roadside. Was it: a) Severity of the bend or b) Volume of traffic?

Recall lying on the ground with Ian White observing the crystal clear Milky Way due to the cloudless black sky. Hell, it was cold. The things I remember!

*Paul Hughes, Team Leader of NRO recalls various callouts and searches.*

*Callouts were via a telephone cascade system, very long winded and not always reliable. I remember one Mid Pennine joint exercise when we found an actual body. That caused a bit of confusion.*

*One callout we were searching for an armed man who had gone missing on the moors after just stabbing his wife. No Health and Safety or Risk Assessment in those days.*

*One major multi team incident in the Lakes led us into being a major player in the organisation and control of large radio nets. I believe our Fellsman experience stood us in good stead here.*

*Another major search in the Lakes went on for 3 days, a bit confused because we were called out and then stood down 3 times. I'd had about 2 hours sleep over the 3 days. I remember on the 3<sup>rd</sup> call out being told by one parent that 'little Johnny couldn't come out' because he was tired.*

*Quite a few of our early call outs were in Yorkshire or Lakes involving CRO and the Lakes Teams. I think these teams were more geared up to spot pick-ups or crag rescue, whereas our skills lay more in Fell Searches.*

*Mick Doherty, another early team member recalls: -*

*I remember my first call out as if it were yesterday, to Wales on a very very cold winter's night. Ian White was definitely there with John Atherton. I was working at Norman Grayson's Insurance brokers and he gave me leave to go. I paid him back by babysitting for him on my return.*

*That night was the coldest I ever got in my life to that date (been colder since though). I had every stitch of clothing on and even though we were in communal tent warmth was not a commodity.*

*We were involved in a lowland search the following morning which was short lived and we were stood down fairly early much to our disappointment.*

*On the way back we were re-directed to a further call out into the hills around Haslingden to search for a man who was missing. He was last seen when a Farmer's wife alerted the police after he tried to get into the farmhouse in a distressed state. He was probably in the early stages of hypothermia with slurred speech and lack of muscle control. If my memory serves me right the woman hit his hand with a pan or something to stop him getting into the house.*

*The following morning, he was found dead near a pond. I recall I was desperate to see the body so that I could deal with this better in the future as an experienced mountain rescuer. Little did I know that sadly it would be my bread and butter in the future!*

*I also recall being in convoy to the rear of the LandRover with Tony Bond. I, having just passed my test, was driving to test conditions which annoyed Tony to hell "you don't have to signal if there's no one behind you!" he exclaimed. I was trying to claim the moral high ground when just then a Police Car pulled us over for driving too close to the LandRover. I was gutted as Tony tried hard (not too hard) to avoid laughing his woollen socks off!!*

## **7. Lakelander Hike**

This was a two day Mountain Backpacking event, in the Lake District for West Lancashire Explorer Scouts. NRO used to run the safety check and provide hill top checkpoints. For many years, the event was based at Limefitt Park, Troutbeck, with the date always before Easter, where we had the run of the main building, before the site opened for business. The first two checkpoints, Heron Pike and Hart Crag, were usually an overnight camp for the checkers and very often there would still be snow on the ground. John Atherton camped out on a few occasions with Ian White, I think.



Base for the event, Limefitt Park

## **8. Bowlander**

*Paul Hughes, later Team Leader of NRO recalls the search.*

*The Bowlander, when I first came across it, was organised by Bob Grieve for West Lancashire scouts. It was an outdoor hike & camp event but interspersed with what I called 'silly stunts' - incidents that the competitors had to deal with during the event. e.g., First Aid on the hill, rope rescue off a crag, drowning from a canoe capsizing on the river, helpless woman at the roadside with a car tyre puncture etc. We usually used a Scout or Guide camp as an overnight camp. I remember one event at Waddecarr where Tom Dean was involved. He provided a live rabbit to each team which they were supposed to kill, skin and cook. I don't think anyone had rabbit for dinner that night. The areas covered the West Pennine Moors as well as Bowland.*

*When I was organiser, I think we carried on with this scenario, but gradually it became more of a hiking competition than 'incidents'. Since it was for scouts (14-16 then) it gradually became a junior Lakelander (which was for Venture scouts), roughly equivalent to a D of E Bronze.*

*This was all in 1960s & 70s. NRO involvement was initially because of the scout influence within NRO, but then they took over the organisation, and provided Check Points and Safety Cover. There was another scout event known as the Ord Cup, which I believe is still in existence. I'm not sure what happened but I think a new District Commissioner either stopped Bowlander or else merged it with the Ord Cup, and NRO were no longer involved.*

*Bob Grieve was very much involved in scouting and many of the team members were from the scout movement. Hence NRO involvement with several scouting activities, namely the Bowlander Hike, a 2 day mountain competition in the local fells for Scouts. Also, the*

*Lakelander, a tough 2 day mountain competition in the Lake District, now known as the MAC (Mountain Activity Challenge), for Venture Scouts. Bob Grieve, myself, Bob Simpson and John Monkiewicz have all been hike organisers for the Lakelander, and indeed John holds the record for doing it the longest, as he is still Hike Organiser to this day.*

## 9. Fellsman Hike

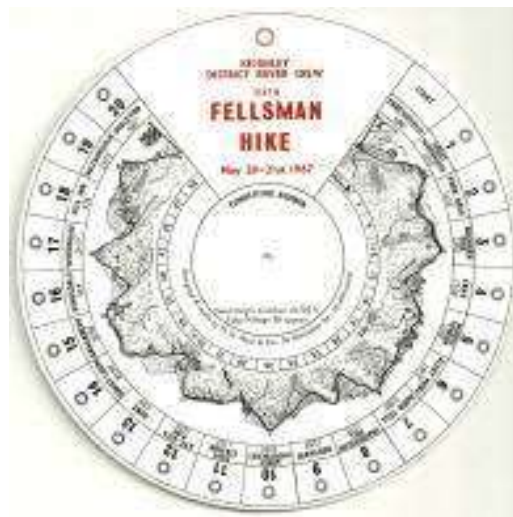
The Fellsman is a 60 mile, high level route over rugged moorland. The event climbs over 11,000 feet on its path from Ingleton to Threshfield in the Yorkshire Dales. Competitors either run or walk and the event continues throughout the night from Saturday 09:00 to Sunday 14:00, in the middle of May. The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

NRO (and BPMRT) along with Bolton MRT provided the safety cover and hilltop checkpoints. I believe NRO's first Fellsman was in 1965, in those days the Hike start was in Threshfield and travelled anti-clockwise around to Ingleton. In 1968, it switched to a clockwise route. I believe this was as a result of incident with a number of cadets on Inglebrough in 1967, while the cadets were NOT competing on the Fellsman, it prompted a switch on safety/reduced risk grounds. A reverse route would remove the high peaks of Whernside and Inglebrough from the end of the hike (tired and fatigued competitors) and put them at the beginning.

While the event never provided much business (incidents) for the team, it was a great training event, testing the team in many aspects: logistics, radio communications, endurance, catering and stretched the team's organisational abilities. Bolton's last Fellsman was 1993, they stood down due to other commitments. BPMRT continued for a further two years, however increased workload on the Fellsman and in general, forced the team to stand down from the event in 1996.

In the mid '70s the race started from Ingleton at 12:00. After a kit check the first hill was Inglebrough, where our team of checkers were located. This checkpoint was opened and closed very quickly due to its proximity to the start. Subsequently the checkpoints would remain open longer and longer until the last MR checkpoint Capplegate seemed to be open an eternity.

NRO staffed the checkpoints until Gt Knoutberry then Bolton took over. Our Base for the event was initially on common ground at Ribblehead. The team would travel up on Friday night, get the tents up asap then sample the local juice in the Hill Inn or the Station Inn just across the road from Base. Bolton MR would arrive a little later and join us for refreshments. Checkpoint teams would be dispatched from there and return after they were closed down. A few would stay on checkpoint over night namely Blea Moor and Gt Knoutberry.



*Competitors Tally Disc pre-1968*

On my first Fellsman the team's executive control and that of the radio net was located on the summit of Pen-y-Ghent. This was an ideal location for the radio transmissions, being at the approx. centre of the hike; as it wheeled around in a clockwise direction and gained from a huge height advantage. However, being very isolated it was probably not the best position for executive control and some years later that function was move off the mountain to Base. Pen-y-Ghent remained as the vital radio link, helping to connect all stations.



*Ribblehead Fellsman Hike NRO Base*

The worst task at Base was to be a Sherpa taking kit up Pen-y-Ghent, the big batteries being the nastiest because they had a habit of leaking and you would only realise the problem a few days later when holes started appearing in your clothing.

Evening entertainment (not allowed to go to the pub) was listening for radio procedural errors from the hilltop checkpoints, as fatigue kicked in, the errors would begin. Open mics were a rich source of merriment. Yes, we were desperate for laughs.

I recall doing a Link one year with Crispin Myerscough on Pen-y-Ghent, second in weight to the radio batteries was the wet curry that we took up to have a slap-up evening meal, once all the day hikers had left the top. The communications in those days were fantastic, so high up, North Wales, Scotland and taxis in Newcastle could be heard!



Me descending Blea Moor alongside railway tunnel air shaft

After our evening meal I was admiring the view into two valleys, one was sunny and the other was dark and thunderous, the latter was heading our way. We both retired to the shelter of our trusted orange Vango tent. The Pye base Westminster radio set was connected via co-axial cable to a 4 metre steel aerial. The thunder and lightning began, and I was getting a little concerned about the lightening and our connection to the steel aerial at an elevation of some 2,300ft. Crispin (physics teacher) calmly reassured me that we were perfectly safe; he said, "if you count the seconds between the lightening and the thunder, each second equates to 1 kilometre". So, we counted 10secs, 8secs, 5secs, 3secs, 2secs I'd never seen Crispin moves so fast, he scrambled out of the tent shouting, "get that bloody aerial down!" The aerial was dropped and the weather passed through, still a noisy night with the radio and curry.



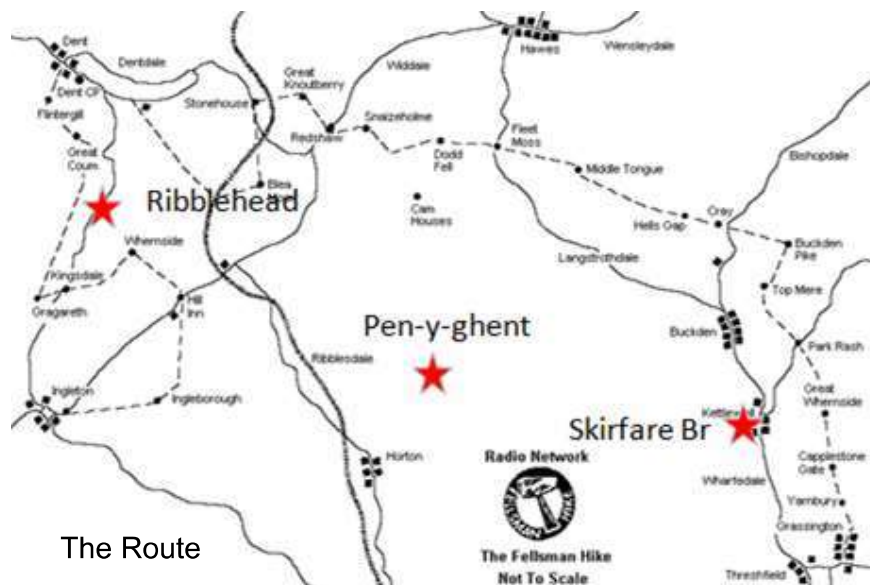
The Crux, on the Sunday morning drive.

Mid morning on the Sunday, Base would move towards the end of the hike at Skirfare Bridge via Halton Gill. LandRovers, trailers and all the paraphernalia would move off in procession. This was a beautiful run through great scenery but to use a climbing term the crux of the trip was how the LandRover driver was going to negotiate

the awkward hump backed bridge, at Halton Gill, with the immediate very tight right-hand bend, whilst towing the trailer and everyone watching waiting to pounce!

Once at Skirfare Bridge, the tents would be re-pitched and a waiting game would begin, waiting for the end of the Hike. Bolton's last checkpoint I think was Yarnbury, Geoff Seddon always seemed to be on it. People would either try and get some sleep or start playing silly games or engage in general horse play. Never recall bad weather on the event. Misty nights, that's about it.

As a 15/16 year old I loved it, in the outdoors, LandRovers, climbing, walking, if you were really lucky you'd be given a radio to operate. I remember almost wetting myself with excitement going on my first Fellsman, being up all night, catching a bit of sleep where you could. Then reality kicks in; I spent the night sat up inside a plastic orange bivi bag in the back of the LandRover, with three others plus two in the front. Didn't get a wink of sleep, the radio crackling all night, occasionally bursting into life with competitor retirements from Stonehouse or Redshaw. Dispatch riders on motor bikes passing all night taking details from roadside checkpoints back to Race Control at Threshfield. Numbers, numbers and more numbers being transmitted on the radio.



I remember being at a Fellsman planning meeting, in a pub with the NRO Chairman, Lt Cmdr. L M Dougherty or LMD. A character is an overused phrase these days, but applies to LMD perfectly. Someone got the drinks in, but horror of horrors they had put ice in LMD's gin. I'd never seen him move so fast, I thought 'where the hell is, he going?', he dived across the table plunging all his chubby hairy fingers into the small glass to remove the ice, displacing most of the gin in the process. Wonderful.

*Paul Hughes safety officer for the Fellsman Hike*

*I'm not sure how we became involved with the Fellsman, but Len Dougherty, Lieutenant Commander RNR (LMD) was the link so NRO was brought in. I think our first involvement was in 1965, which was my first Fellsman. We had 4 radios and leapfrogged them around all the mountain checkpoints.*

*John Monkiewicz and I are still involved with the Fellsman after 45 years, forming part of what is now a much larger safety check function. The standard of equipment and competitors has gone up so much that incidents are very rare. Last one about 6 years ago. Also, the Keighley Scout organisation is pretty slick. Safety cover is provided by CRO (Cave Rescue Organisation) and UWFRA (Upper Wharfedale Fell and Rescue Association) after BPMRT and Bolton stood down.*

*Mick Turner a former Deputy Team leader of NRO recalls the Fellsman.*

*On John Atherton's first Fellsman his role was purely driving the control vehicle. There was some incident, all hell broke loose, and John drove off, forgetting to un-couple the radio cable connecting the vehicle radio to the mast aerial, which bent in half before the error was pointed out to him.*

*Tony Harrison,*

*I took part in 3 Fellsman Hikes that I can remember. These were in 1966, 1967 and 1968. On the first two I was situated on top of Whernside with a radio set and received calls from the other mountain checkpoints and then relayed them down to Ingleton where the control room was located.*

*I know it was 1966 because I have always remembered that it was Cup Final Day and Everton were playing Sheffield Wednesday. Being at that time an avid soccer fan I quoted the score over the radio at each goal until a voice requested me to clear the air as they were on a rescue. This was a team in NORTH WALES. Fantastic reception for a radio that supposedly only had about a 30 mile radius reception.*

*1967 was the year of the call out on Simon Fell on the Sunday afternoon. I had just returned to the Ingleton from Whernside, hoping for a rest and some better food, when I was instructed to take a party to assist with some Air Cadets who were in trouble and being assisted down by the South Ribble Team. The casualties were taken to the Hill Inn and given hot baths.*

*1968 I was on other duties and spent time at the Fleet Moss checkpoint and then spent some time on the roadside near Widdale Head where the walkers crossed from Snaizholme Fell to Great Knoutberry. I think we were sweeping up the last stragglers.*

## **10. Equipment**

As well as one long wheel base 4-cylinder diesel Land Rover and ex-Army open trailer in green, we had various stretchers and other handed down or homemade equipment. A rigid Thomas stretcher stored on the roof of the Landie. Kept in channels and locked in place by 4 locking pins, which on removal were always placed on the driver's seat.

Complete with ski's and two adapted ex parachute snap in buckles to secure the casualty. Deemed to be the most suitable stretcher for MR back in 1932 by the Joint Stretcher Committee (Rucksack Club and the Fell and Rock Climbing Club) was the Neil Robertson Stretcher developed in the early 1900's by John Neil Robertson for lifting casualties mainly in the vertical plane. This style of stretcher was specifically designed for



use on ships, where casualties might have to be lifted from engine-room spaces, holds and other compartments with access hatches too small for ordinary stretchers. We adapted ours and fixed a helmet on the head by means of an aluminium fabrication

Single and double Thomas splints. Both look like exhibits from Madam Tussauds Chamber of Horrors. Introduced by Hugh Owen Thomas a Welsh surgeon c1916. Prior to this, mortality from femur fractures ran as high as 80%. Use of the splint reduced the death rate to less than 8%.



Apologises for the images here, above is the double splint, with the bicycle seat! On the right is the double splint hanging along with a single splint.



We had some horrible orange polypropylene ropes, intended to be non-stretch for stretcher lowering. Very thin and unknown breaking strain, probably a lot less than safe. Three drums of rope Orange, White and Blue mounted on a pack frame

Bondy, (Tony Bond), made a few hinged aluminium devices for protecting the rope as it when over the crag edge.

Harnesses (for stretcher jockeys) were borrowed from the GPO, (General Post Office) the guys climbing the telephone poles used them. They had a nasty habit of working loose when put under load!

Lots of assorted ex-army field dressings looked like they were left over from 1914-18

2 x 160lb ex-Army doss/catering tent.





Gas bottles with loose cast iron rings linked via orange rubber hoses. Rings placed on wooden trestle tables, some had square asbestos pads to protect the wood from igniting others didn't - beware! Various pots and pans.

Radios – Pye Bantam handsets, 0.25 watt output, powered via small AAA size batteries located in a small pull out tray. Updated by LMD to take a tube of D size batteries. However, these hand sets were very temperamental. Whip aerials, replaced telescopic, but you had to watch those eyes! More powerful base sets, were the Pye Westminster. Problems with the large batteries, especially lead acid which leaked out and damaged your kit. Steel mast aerials also made by LMD.



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!

Bantam Hand Set above. Control panel below with the Squelch button.

Canes for marking the boundaries of lines searches, coloured flares, stored in exMOD ammunition boxes.



Lead acid mining lamps, well past their sell by date, which usually let you down at the crucial moment. Plus, wooden charging frame.

Reviva portable-ish warm air device, using soda lime crystals and CO<sub>2</sub> to produce heat. Ambient air is drawn through the heat by the casualty and into their lungs.

Mobile Searchlight. Hand held spot light, car type 12cm diameter with a switch, black coiled wire from lamp to power source. Battery mounted on an aluminium frame.

Hand held battery lights and gas lights mounted on top of propane cylinders]



Personal Gear: Helly Hansen orange waterproofs, cagoule and trousers. Waterproof, but heavy and stiff and tended to freeze up in bad weather. The old heavy head torches (5 x U2 batteries), a bit different from the LEDs of today.

Me Inside Kimberley Barracks

PIFCO headlamps bloody heavy things, in fact come to think of it everything was heavy! We didn't have much equipment; I think we relied more on enthusiasm.

Massive difference today is that many personal items are provided by the team.

*Paul Hughes, again.*

*I believe NRO were one of the first teams to have radios courtesy of Pye. Great big heavy things about 5lbs. Complete with a telescopic aerial which were forever breaking. Also, a big Link radio on a back pack about 20lbs.*

*Mark Aldridge remembers :-*

*On the kit front I recall a heavy oxygen cylinder driven thing possibly called a 'minuteman' which had a compressed oxygen driven piston which strapped to the patient's chest and pushed the piston in and out to do cardiac compressions, it might have had a forced breathing system as well. There was also a radio, roughly the size and weight of a breeze block which came with a thirty foot collapsible aluminium aerial and a 12v car battery on a pack frame. The whole assembly took two persons to lift onto the back of the carrier and two to lug onto the fell and was laughingly called a 'Hill Portable Westminster'. Quite how 'portable' ever came into it is beyond me!! You could tell whoever had been carrying it as they had holes in their kit where the battery acid used to leak out and onto it. We also had a radio called a Pye Pocket phone which never seemed to have a range beyond about thirty feet!!*



Minuteman Oxygen Unit

*On the radio front I also recall one dark and stormy night crawling around the summit of Parlick with Tony Wilson (last heard of flogging bags as a market trader??) on our hands and knees in the mud trying to find the little tuning coil from out of the bottom of a Pye Bantam radio aerial after I'd snapped the aerial off the radio. We found it and lashed it back together and taped it up with two band aids. It worked brilliantly and we had the best comms I ever had with a radio of that type! Who says mud, water and sticking plasters are no use for radio comms?*



Inside Mrs Felton's Garage

## Major First Aid Pack

Tony Bond recalls :-

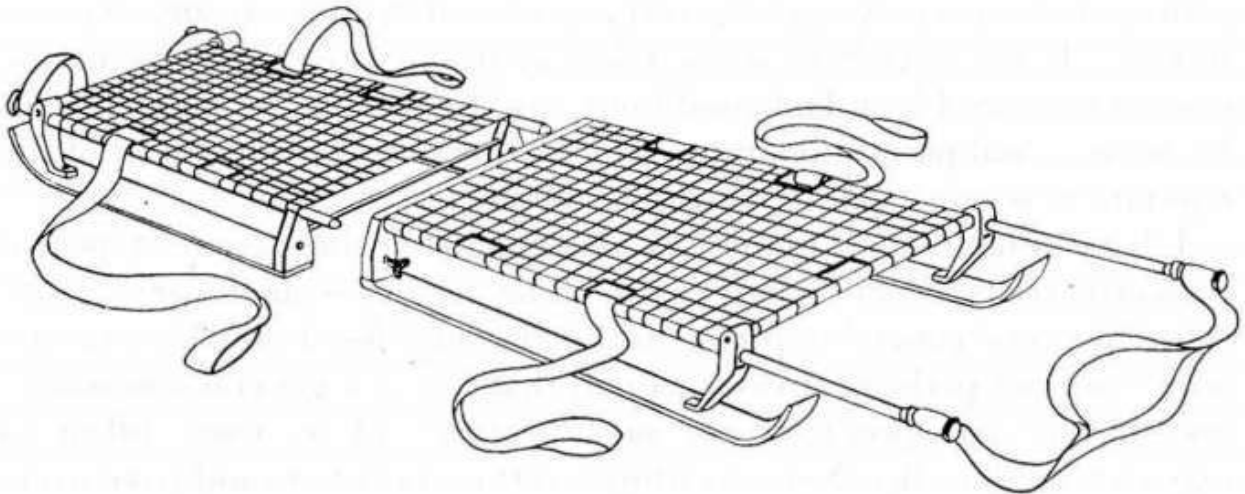
*The Major First Aid Kit took over from those military style gas mask bags we used for first aid kits. I think we had about four of them, and they had a white circle painted on with a red cross in the centre. They weren't very good, not waterproof, and the contents got mouldy.*

*The MFA Kit was one of the first designed 'packs' for carrying a lot of first aid gear. It had pockets inside for containing kit and was labelled up accordingly. I suppose it was a forerunner of the Packman sack which South Ribble used, and they had copied the idea from Langdale Ambleside.*

*Our MFA Kit though was quite comprehensive for those days with the usual bandages, dressings, airways, blow up splints, strange looking rigid splints, and an even stranger blow up bivvy bag, which didn't like sharp objects on the ground, hence they weren't around for long.*



We had two Thomas Stretcher's, one Fixed i.e., in one piece and a split Thomas see image below. This describes the unit exactly; large wing nuts secured the two halves. Quick release strapping was added to facilitate casualty security.



Tony continues :-

*Crude crag kit as well. Slings around trees and wobbly fence posts, but we survived. The Whillans harness wasn't available and so we obtained a GPO workers harness which we made work for us.*



Right, Bondy sporting the hands-free radio kit which helped comms on the crag. But in truth our crags were fairly small in height, so the kit was a little over the top, you could shout just as easily.

Looks like he is also wearing the GPO harness. As used by telephone pole workers!!!

No expense spared with NRO!



Left, Dial-a-Star, flares with a choice of a few colours.

White, to illuminate or return to base.

Red, to locate a find.

## 11. Vehicles

### **Morris LD Van Control Vehicle. PGK 361**

2.2 litre engine petrol. Acquired 1964-5?

John Atherton got some “cheap” paint from somewhere and set about painting the vehicle. He painted the gear knob black. But the paint never dried fully. You could always tell who had been driving the vehicle because they had a black left hand.!

The beacon lights on the roof flashed by being switch manually on and off.!

Died! on the return from a Callout in Lakes 28th July 1966



PGK 361

*More from Paul Hughes.*

*We had an old K9 ex-army truck painted yellow, and a small old Morris van. Both of which either never started, or if they did, broke down on any exercise or shout. We eventually had a yellow LandRover, a clapped out diesel, and a bigger Morris van which was used as a mobile control van, before getting a decent LWB LandRover via some Trust Fund.*

*Our K9 had a crash gearbox, so double de-clutching up and down. No power steering and I think rod brakes, no hydraulics. It did have an air pump on it for inflating the tyres, I think for desert warfare where you deflated tyres for better grip in the sand.*

### **Humber K9 5261 TD**

4x4 1ton payload 6cyl 4 litre petrol engine

*I got it bogged down over the top of the bonnet on the Salter Fell road. We'd successfully done it once before right through, but this time we were not so lucky. Needed a winch to pull it back out. Also, the speedo never worked so we had no idea what speed you were doing. It was so noisy it was probably less than it seemed. I remember getting a bollocking once because I'd driven it all the way from the Lakes in low ratio, and used a tank-full of petrol. How was I to know with no speedo?*



K9 Humber 5261 TD



I believe it's David Johnstone above, with the yellow monster!

No idea who's under the bonnet, right.

**J1 Bedford Ambulance. ONF 363**

Purchased for £15 from the City of Manchester in June 1966. Plan developed with Preston Hospital staff to equip this vehicle to provide early intensive care for mountain accident casualties.

The Bedford ambulance was purchased from Manchester Royal Infirmary by John Atherton, Bob Grieve and Ian White, in June 1966 for £15 (£281)

It's 1<sup>st</sup> Livery dark Maroon. The intention was to use the vehicle to provide early intensive care for mountain accident casualties at the road head. It had an improvised casualty hot air system installed via the engine! Repainted for a LEP article featuring Dr Bob Grieve 13<sup>th</sup> March 1967 with the black bonnet area was painted white late '69ish and a "Bell" added. The Bell is now installed in BPMRT HQ Ray Lane and works like a good 'un.



ONF 363 Fellsman Hike circa 1966

**Short Wheel Base LandRover. KTB 171C**

Belonged to the early team or did it.? In 1968 (source Committee minutes) Ross Drysdale wished to reclaim ownership of this vehicle, along with the K9 truck. Much discussion followed! Seems this was a surprise to the membership. However, Ross took his vehicles and LMD issued a note, from a certain date, any kit remaining in the team's HQ will be deemed to be NRO's property. If you think it's yours, move it!



**Long Wheel Base LandRover 719 NTB**  
2.2 ltr Diesel Manuf 1960  
Acquired 1968? Sold in 1971 for £170 (£2,418)

Below with trailer and loaded roof rack, on Fellsman duty at Ribblehead.



**Long Wheel Base LandRover. FEM 901F**  
Manuf 1968 Diesel, known affectionally as "Betsey"  
Purchased 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 1972 £725 (£9,629)



Above illustrates an issue which we had on occasions, that is, overloading the roof rack! Vehicle would become unstable on corners!

## 2 Long Wheel Base LandRovers XFR224R and XFV874R



XFR224R and XFV874R on Lakelander Duty 1977

In 1976, NRO received its biggest boost to vehicles in its history when the Harold Bridges Charitable Foundation donated £20k (144,904!) to Mountain Rescue split 50/50 between NRO and SR. With our 10K (£72,435) we purchased 2 long wheelbase petrol LandRovers. SR opted for one LandRover and £5k (£36,226) of equipment. John Atherton arranged for this picture to be framed for Mr Bridges, typical of John always thinking!

These two vehicles were taken into amalgamation by NRO



Same vehicles having been re-livered at BAC. With 4 members of BPMRT who worked there. Tony Wilson (of the woods) Tony Bond (Bondy) Paul Hughes (soft southerner) and finally Mick (joking apart) Turner.



## 12. Fund Raising

### Sponsored Canoe Trip 1

*Bob Simpson, an NRO stalwart and Team treasurer.*

*Soon after joining the team I was asked to be treasurer and it fell upon that person to arrange fund raising activities.*

*One of these events was a sponsored canoe down the Lancaster Canal from Cabus to Preston, about 20 miles. John Atherton covered nearly double this distance as he desperately tried to go in a straight line.*

*At one stage John reverted to walking along the bank pulling his canoe. The best bit came later when we wondered why LMD and others had not joined us. We found out that they had started paddling the wrong way and headed towards Lancaster. After a while they realised their mistake and finished the events some hours later.*

### Sponsored Canoe Trip 2

I recall a canoe trip down the canal over the same section but must have been some years later because I don't remember LMD on the event. However, it was deceptively hard paddling against a wind all the way to Woodplumton Road in Preston.



### Sponsored Bike Ride

A ride through the Trough of Bowland, fine weather on the day. Note No helmets or high visibility jackets. Crispin Myerscough, Mick Turner, Me and Tony Wilson bringing up the rear can be seen setting off from our base at Deepdale Isolation Hospital, now Sainsbury's store and car park.

## Members Pockets!

As mentioned previously subscriptions and paying for vehicles on training was a major source of NRO income.

## Displays and Fetes

For a few years we seemed to be displaying at fetes every other weekend during the summer for relatively poor financial return. The routine was that a tower would be erected by some 3<sup>rd</sup> party, 7-8 metres high; we would turn up on the Saturday or Sunday and run through a short programme with John Atherton as Master of Ceremonies on the LandRover P.A. A role John was very comfortable with.

This was more than could be said for me, on one occasion. I was climbing up the front of the tower, belayed from the top by Loz Lomax. As I approached the top and when John said on the PA that "sometimes climbers fall", I, as arranged, fell off the wall. The plan was that Loz would hold me and I would continue climbing to the top, while John explained the safety aspects of ropes. Unfortunately, my fall wasn't arrested, and I slowly descended down the front of the tower. John carried on commentating without a pause, the true professional; he mentioned something about underpants and stains. When I hit the ground the silence was deafening. One little boy at the front said, "Mum..... was that supposed to happen?" I thought 'no it chuffing wasn't, wait till I get to the top of the tower to carry out my own debriefing!



Moor Park Preston  
circa 1966

We would also demonstrate horizontal stretcher lowers. I just wonder how safe those towers were with a stretcher, casualty, two jockeys on the front face, and three belayers stood on the top overlooking the front. All that uneven weight putting the tower at risk of toppling over!

We had a display on Moor Park over a bank holiday; the display tower was up for two days. A recent new member came along for this first taste of the display tower. He'd told us that he was a keen walker/climber, so up the tower he went first thing and the day's displays began. Come late afternoon I thought it was funny that he had spent all day up the tower, with no food or toilet break. At the end of the day the site is packing up for the night and we are all ready to go home and started drifting off. This guy is still up the tower, "Come on down we're all going home", his response was - "it's OK, I'll stay a little longer." Then the penny dropped that he could not / would not climb down. In the end we had to lower him down the tower, in other words, rescue our own team member from a display tower!

## 100 Club

Originally set up by Loz Lomax and raised just over £400 in its first year. I took over from Loz and some years later passed it on to Crispin Myerscough. It's still going strong today, in fact there is a second 100 Club within BPMRT.

## Fell Races

These formed a large part of the annual funding for NRO. However, we only seemed to get the money in the form of a donation some months after the event.

The 1974 balance sheet shows a £120 (£1,259) donation from the Fellsman Hike second only to £137.45 (£1,337) income from training. That was members paying to go training. (fuel)

Team members even paid £19.50 (£205) total to go on the Fellsman Hike and stay up all night!

Expense on the Fellsman in that year was £38 (£399) fuel and donation to Bolton MR.

**Loans from Members**

In early 1968 the team resorted to requesting loans from its own members in multiples of £25 (£436) to help with the purchase of a second hand LandRover. These would be paid back within a maximum of two years. On the right is a loan from Paul Hughes to the value of £25 dated the first of May 1968. Counter signed by Cliff Price secretary and Dr Bob Grieve Team Leader.



Paul Hughes's Receipt for £25 (£436)

**13. Potholing**

**Whitewell Pot**

There was always a keen interest in Caving and Potholing within NRO. We took on the lease for Whitewell Pot, Bowland from the Duchy of Lancaster in Feb 1965. I've never been down it, but in the early days a number of exercises were held down the pot. The terms of the lease required the team to maintain and secure the entrance to the pot, mainly from others potholers! In the end this up keep requirement proved to be too much and the lease was allowed to lapse.

From the Minutes of Council Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 1967  
A steel door has now been fitted to the entrance of Whitewell and the rent of £5 (£91) is now due.

**Ashnott Mine**

Not far away from Whitewell Pot is Ashnott a disused lead mine. NRO and later BPMRT used this venue on many occasions. Much bigger than Whitewell with various passages, levels and a main chamber. Being a mine it was man made so this involved the use of "Pit Props" to hold back spoil. This added an element of danger. It's simply a case of "when" they give way not "if"  
You came out of the mine caked in mud, the farmer used a small pit just inside the entrance as a tip! All manner of items were there. Machinery, washing m/c, dead sheep and an old gear box which was used as a belay point on occasions.



Preparing for Ashnott Mine  
16<sup>th</sup> March 1969  
LMD, John (smiler) Martland,  
Roger Corner, Geoff? Steve  
Barker

This was also the scene of the Bowland Pennine MRT famous "Cow in the Mine" callout 29<sup>th</sup> Sept 1986.

### **Yorkshire Dales**

Towards the end of NRO and early BPMRT many potholing trips into the Yorkshire Dales were organised. A number of the SR team were keen potholers. Camping on common land at Ribbleshead, drinking in Ingleton, The Hill Inn and Station Inn all featured as part and parcel of a caving trip. Mick Turner and Keith Middleton always at the fore-front.

*Gill Slater, NRO Team member and keen caver.*

*Quite vivid memory of me falling off an electron ladder down some pot hole.*

*Fell to bottom, upside down inches from the floor.*

Below are some images of various trips.

### **Heron Pot 1977-78?**

Large group down this cave, with a short ladder pitch, more memorable for what happened as we walked back to the cars.

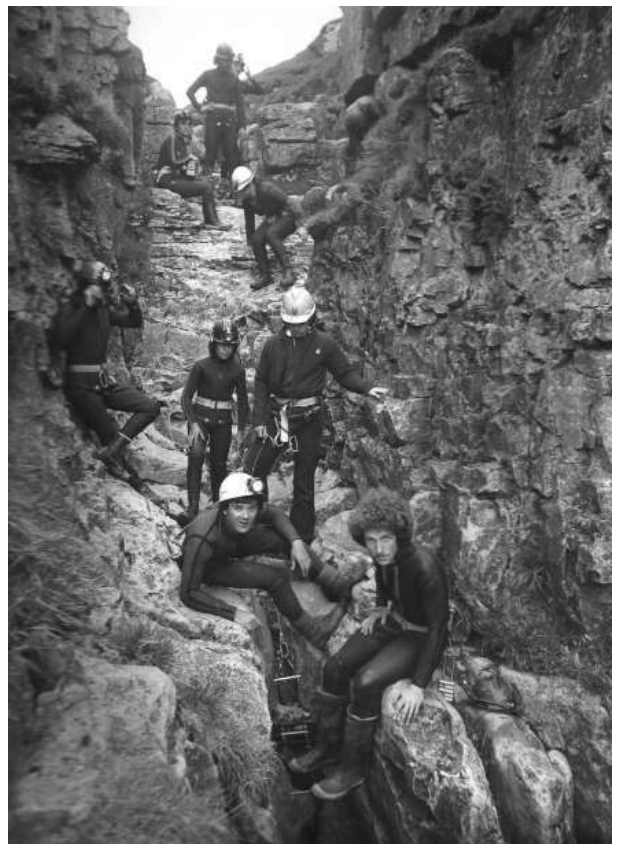


Dick Murton, Brian Middleton, Mick Turner, ?, Tony Wilson, Billy Hamer, Me, Tony Bond, Loz Lomax, Keith Middleton, Martin Manley, Graham Eccles, ?, Ian Greenwood, picture taken by Ian White

We all split into small groups as we walked back across this field which had a large bull in it. Martin Manley, always on the lookout for a practical joke, noticed that this Bull was occupying Mick Turners mind with some concern.

Mick was then distracted by someone and Martin seized the moment. He ran up behind Mick, bent over with his helmet on, his hands out representing horns and making a mooing sound, he head butted Mick's arse. Well, I've never seen Mick move so fast since that day, off he set running down the field like he was in the Olympic 100M final. They say timing is everything well that afternoon Martins timing was spot on. We laughed for months.

Right, a trip down Sell Gill Holes, late 70's  
Martin Manley and myself at the front looking very  
serious. Picture taken by Ian White, no bulls on this  
day!



Left, Mick Turner descending the first pitch on  
Electron ladders, a certain technique required  
to use these flexible wire ladders and they also  
make a very distinctive sound as they clatter  
against the limestone.

Right, Limestone pavement, Chapel-le-dale  
near Ingleton. A through trip in Gt Douk.

John Longson, Martin Manley, Steve McGinty,  
Gill Slater, Mick Turner, ?, Simon Harris in  
white!



## 14. Northern House

Northern House was situated at the top of the track in Glenridding and was privately leased by three members, LMD, Cliff Price and Jim Danby. See Paul's note below for more details.

I recall travelling up the steep track to Northern House from Glenridding, as usual in the back of the LandRover, when there was a loud crack. Whitey stopped driving and after some time he decided we had snapped a half shaft in the rear axle. He



Northern House

asked for a few guys to sit on the bonnet to increase traction to the front wheels as it was steep

and I think we were towing the trailer. Before he had finished the request, I was sat on the bonnet along with a couple of others. Not sure how Whitey could see through us and the spare wheel. We set off again, all the way up to the top, having no regard whatsoever for the consequences if we had fallen off and been squashed by the wheels. Whitey repaired the axle over the weekend complete with flat cap, white shirt and cravat!

*Paul Hughes recalls: -*

*Northern House was the old power house for the Greenside mine workings above Glenridding. We used it as a training base, and spent a lot of time on building work and interior decoration etc until it became habitable. I think the ultimate aim was to turn it into an outdoor centre, but it needed a lot more time, money, and professional skills than we could offer. The road up to it was very rough and gradually deteriorated until it became dangerously unstable. I think the Lake District Planning Board got involved and the NRO were no longer able to support it to the level it needed so LMD had to give it up. The building was then demolished.*

## 15. Smelt Mill

Towards the end of the '70's there was a desire within NRO to increase its presence in our area namely the Trough. We became aware of a property that was available which could suit our purposes just north of Dunsop Bridge. It was a 2 up 3 down end cottage with outside toilet, owned by the North West Water Board and the rent was £5 (£29) per week in 1978, which included rates. We decided to take it on and Keith Gillies was the first NRO member to view the inside which was very dilapidated and required considerable renovation.

Work started to knock it into shape and as soon as it was habitable the plan was to be in residence each weekend of the year. This was an ambitious target and after a short time was abandoned due to commitment issues. There was plenty of talk about developing the building as an outdoor education facility but little progress was made towards this goal. It required substantial funds and commitment to take these ideas to reality.

In fact, we had to wait until sometime after amalgamation when the government of the day forced Water Utilities nationally to divest themselves of assets not related to the supply of water. This meant that the whole of the Smelt Mill terrace was put up for sale on the open market.

So, began three separate and distinct development phases over 20 years as BPMRT purchased, renovated, modernised and extended the property. Funding was obtained via various avenues: trust funds, grants and the National Lottery. A number of members gave their time, commitment and energy to the venture, however, one individual stands out. Throughout all the difficult times, the knocks, setbacks, disappointments both technical and financial, he just kept on going and it was a pleasure to work with him - Ian Ordish. A venture started by NRO was cultivated and ripened under BPMRT.



Smelt Mill August 2006

## 16. Medical

Via the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, I joined NRO with a basic level of First Aid. Medical training was a prominent feature of the NRO training programme. I remember being taught The Holger-Nielsen resuscitation method by John Atherton. Mick Turner, Ian White and Martin Manley had all been drilled in first aid through their membership of St John Ambulance.

In the mid 60's Robert Grieve a young medical student and later Doctor joined the NRO, rising to be TL in 1967. I never met him but John Atherton would speak very highly of him, an all-round good egg, very keen on researching and developing Mountain Medicine.

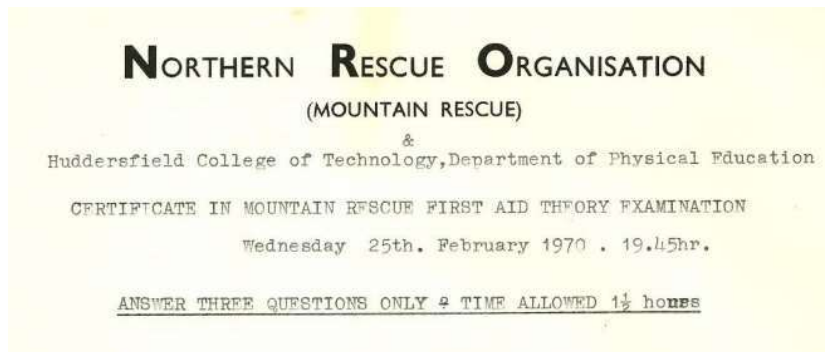
One of Bob's early medical initiatives was in 1967, modifying the NRO's ambulance, see chapter 11. This was to better care for casualties at the road head, pre hospital. In particular, with the condition known as "exposure" today we would recognise this as hypothermia.

Looking back to the 60's the prevalence of fatalities due to hypothermia was quite high. In March 1964 three young men had died on a Scout organised, Four Inns Walk in the Peak District. An investigation was launched into this incident focusing on clothes and their interaction with the weather. A report was published in the Lancet, one of the conclusions was that the clothing worn by the three was not waterproof and their trousers were not windproof.

Left shows an 1967 article in the Lancashire Evening Post, publishing the modifications to the vehicle and Bob doing a bit of tidying !



In late 1969 Bob, developed what he titled an "Experimental Mountain Rescue First Aid Course" comprising 17 Wednesday evening 2 hours sessions, with 5 Saturday sessions running from Oct 69 to the end of Feb 1970. An exam and certificate for the lucky ones at the end. The location for the Wed evenings was a clinic in Preston and the then Medical Officer of Health wrote to Bob, asking if some of his ambulance "men" could attend.



This was a serious initiative by Bob, to raise the bar of first aid skills in the voluntary setting. The beginnings of what is called today Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine.

The training syllabus covered,  
 Anatomy and Physiology  
 Wounds, Bleeding, Shock, Airways, Resuscitation,  
 Use of the Minuteman (an auto resuscitation apparatus machine driven by compressed oxygen)  
 Skeletal Injuries, Splinting, Exposure,  
 Rewarming, Medical Conditions, Use of pain relief,  
 Morphine, Pentazocine, Cas recording.



Plus, outdoor Crag and Stretcher work. Including avalanche training on local hills! Doubt that would be in a training programme today, an indication of the climate change! (NRO had one of these units)

Tragically Bob died suddenly in June 1970, at the age of 26.



*Bob Simpson recalls: -*

*Robert Grieve undertook some research into hypothermia which was becoming of more interest to outdoor activity organisations. One Saturday on a cold March evening in 1968 at a farm located on Longridge Fell, six team members acted as guinea pigs for an experiment to register the fall of body temperature between members wearing dry outdoor clothing and those wearing soaked clothing. I drew the short straw and got drenched with a cold hosepipe for five minutes and then told to lie down in a field.*

*Those who were lucky enough to have proper rectum thermometers just lay there and had their temperature recorded every ten minutes. I on the other hand, had to use a general purpose clinical thermometer which made life very uncomfortable and inconvenient. This lasted a number of hours until Bob considered that things had gone far enough and for our efforts, we all received a warm bath and a hot drink.*

*Paul Hughes also recalls: -*

*Bob Grieve became Team Leader I believe in the late '60's. He was instrumental in bringing the team forward, both in skills and equipment, organisation etc, but mainly in the medical world. He had recently graduated and was working as part of his training in the A&E at the old Preston Royal Infirmary. Unfortunately, he died very suddenly at a young age. I then became Team Leader in the early 70's.*

## **17. Team Visits**

From time to time included in the training programme would be visits to various organisations with either strong links to MR or none at all.

Manchester Airport Air traffic control. Amazed to see, from the control tower, four or five planes stacked in a line on their final approach.

Manchester Airport Fire station. Viewing the big fire appliances

Lion Brewery Blackburn. Huge open stainless steel settling baths of beer, CO<sub>2</sub> nearly knocked you out. Free drinks in the little bar afterwards.

Weather Centre near Barton. Place closed some years ago.

British Aircraft Corporation. Ejector seat department.

Police HQ Hutton

Fire Station Preston

Ogwen Cottage Rescue Post on a North Wales weekend

Langdale Ambleside Rescue Post, as one of our members moved up to the Lakes and joined them and he showed us round.

Lifeboat Station at Lytham

Nuclear Civil Defence bunker Langley Lane off Whittington Lane

Lancashire Mines Rescue at Boothstown, Worsley Manchester.



John Atherton NRO TL and the Blue Duvet

*Gill Slater recalls: -*

*The old LandRovers, I remember took some pushing to get started in the cold weather, and how good it was when we took delivery of the new ones.*

*Badly trapped thumb in back land rover door at Kirkstone Pass Inn, I think, again in freezing temperatures, had to have a number of rums, for pain and cold.*

*John's dirty blue duvet that was never off his back. Bless him.*

## 18. Lt Cmdr. L M Dougherty (LMD)

It would be possible to write about many characters related to the NRO. Many I knew personally others I've just heard the stories. However, I make no excuses for this one entry, on LMD.

I met him on my first Fellsman aged 15, in May 1972. All the other blokes in the team, I'd recently joined, looked normal-ish. LMD was extra-ordinary. The dress, the accent, the mannerisms, the formality. There's a saying "You've only one chance to make a first impression" well LMD made one with me.!

Born in 1918, he joined the Royal Navy in 1931 aged 13 and was the top cadet at Dartmouth Naval College. With 32 years of service and rising to Lt Cmdr. he was adjutant to Lord Louis Mountbatten, served throughout World War 2 and travelled the world on the high seas.

LMD left the Navy in 1963 and took up a teaching post at the Harris College in Preston travelling home to Halifax at weekends.



John Atherton and LMD

As previously mentioned, detail and organisation were not the greatest of Ross Drysdale's attributes, so when he met LMD he saw an opportunity. Ross realised the need to improve the administration of the organisation and LMD with his naval background and keen interest in the outdoors looked like the ideal candidate. He accepted Ross's invite to join the NRO to help particularly in the "office". LMD commented much later that this decision certainly "buggered up his weekends".

During his time as Chair he had a number of disagreements with members but as he recalled he wasn't there to be popular; his duty was to ensure proper governance in-line with the constitution. In some cases that meant protecting the team from the members!

The word character is over used these days, but in this case, he was and still is, a character. He always addressed team members by their surname, Mr Lund or Mr Hughes and was impeccably dressed on every occasion, whether that was indoors or out. We would address him as Mr Dougherty and wouldn't dream of using his first name to his face. However, recently I plucked up enough courage to tell him that we used to know him affectionately as "Lenny" thankfully he found that amusing. He used a phrase at the end of every official function, AGM or Dinner Dance speech which was "keep warm, dry, well fed and rested". As a young lad I used to wonder what that really meant, now later in life, I know exactly what it means, great advice.!

He stood down as Chair in the late 70's and Paul Hughes took over and led the NRO into the merger with South Ribble MRT to become Bowland Pennine MRT on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1980. LMD went on to become head of Physics at Huddersfield Polytechnic and retired from that post in 1983 aged 65.

*Tony Harrison*

*I have just recently been perusing an old copy of the 1970 Fellsman Hike Book in which Cmdr. Docherty has written a tribute to Mrs Shaw, his companion on many NRO exercises and events.*

*I remember one wet weekend while camping near Dent sometime in the sixties. I am not sure, what the event was but on the Sunday morning I was awakened by my tent zip being raised and a tray being placed inside my tent with a soft voice bidding me 'Good Morning Tony'. On the tray was a lovely crisp white serviette with china teapot, cup and saucer, milk, sugar and plates on which was fried egg and bacon.*

*Cmdr. Docherty and Mrs Shaw had decided that I perhaps needed sustenance or had thought that I deserved some small luxury on a wet weekend. Whatever the reason, I have always remembered that kind thought on a wet weekend in Dent.*



BPMRT Chair Tim Cox greets  
NRO Chair LMD 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2011 at  
Ray Lane BP HQ

During my research it was unclear if LMD was still alive, but thanks to great work by ex-NRO member Cliff Price, he was located and on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2011, I along with a few ex members, the current Team Leader Phil O'Brien and Chair of BRMRT gather at Ray Lane. I assisted LMD up the stairs into the meeting room to show him a few old pictures on the screen. He was a little out of breath and I had visions of him keeling over! Thankfully, he soon fully recovered and began firing questions to check that the current team was being run properly and effectively.

A flavour of the questions were,

Team membership, male/female split, financial state, Ray Lane ownership, insurances, source of legal advice, standard of kit, discipline, publicity, training, importance of team doctor etc. It was great, he was firing on all cylinders!

## 19. Amalgamation

After flying solo since the early 60's, NRO and South Ribble MRT amalgamated on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 1980 at the Westleigh near Preston. The dictionary definition of amalgamation is "the action, process, or result of combining or uniting", and that's exactly what it was. One team did not take over the other, we amicably merged into one unit.

The new team Bowland Pennine MRT has never looked back. Both teams were keen on this new venture and its thanks to the members of the day with their efforts and energy.

Members of both teams met with the chair of the Mid-Pennine Mountain Accident Panel, Peter Lee, 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 and others listed below. Peter formally passed back the assets to the new team up and running. All done and dusted in 50mins.

The first committee lined up as follows: -

Team Leader -	Peter Taylor SR
Training Officer -	Mick Turner NRO
Chair -	Paul Hughes NRO
Secretary-	Rhoderic Taylor SR and Gill Slater 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 of 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 from the start, to ensure Bowland Pennine grew and developed into the team it is today.

A credit to all concerned.

Minutes of Dissolution and Formation meeting follow,

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.

#### **NRO Team Leaders**

Ross Drysdale (organiser)  
Dr Bob Grieve  
Paul Hughes  
John Atherton

#### **Longest Serving NRO Member**

Paul Hughes 1965 to 1980

#### **Current (2020) Full Callout Members of Bowland Pennine who are exNRO**

Simon Harris  
Crispin Myerscough  
Tony Bond  
Keith Gillies  
Phil Lund

## 20. NRO Members Reunion

31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 at Ray Lane, Garstang, HQ Bowland Pennine MRT, I presented the history of NRO to past members. A good night was had all round. Presentation and buffet plus a chance for members to meet again and catch up.

A few images of the occasion.



Jim Danby, Cliff Price,  
Tony Harrison, David  
(Dickie) Seed

Ian (Whitey) White

Brenda Atherton





Tony Bondy, Loz Lomax, Paul Hughes, Mick Doherty, Mark Aldridge, Graham Eccles



Chatting in the garage space.  
In the background, Graham Eccles, Pete Taylor (SR) Tony Bond, Mick Turner, Brenda Atherton, Bob Simpson.

Foreground, Phil O'Brien (BP) Jim Danby, Tony Harrison, Keith Gillies, Cliff Price, David Seed





Loz Lomax, Martin Manley, Tony (Bondy) Bond, Ian White, Gill Dixon (Slater)

Phil Lund  
Sept 2013, revised Dec 2020

As Lenny would say, "Keep, Warm, Dry, Well Fed and Rested"