

# British Cave Rescue Council

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR CAVE RESCUE IN THE BRITISH ISLES

## Incident Report for Period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1999 - 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999

	Cave Rescue Organisation	Cornwall Mineshaft RU	Cumbria Ore Mines RU	Derbyshire CRO	Devon CRO	Gloucestershire CRG	Irish CRO	Mendip RO	Midlands CRO	North Wales CRO	Scottish CRO	South East CRO	South Wales CRO	Swaledale FRO	Upper Wharfedale FRA	West Cornwall Mines RG	Others <sup>(1)</sup>	TOTALS
Caving Incidents	12		1	9	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	1	-	36
Persons Assisted	13		-	11	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	19	-	-	-	-	47
Fatalities	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Persons Injured <sup>(2)</sup>	4		-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	6
Helicopter assistance <sup>(3)</sup>	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Animal Incidents	4		1	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	2	-	14
Assistance to other teams	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
<b>Totals Underground Incidents</b>	<b>16</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50</b>
Surface Incidents	24	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	-	x	44
Persons Assisted	25	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	-	x	48
Fatalities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	x	1
Persons Injured	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	x	24
Surface Animal Incidents	5	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x	6
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x	0
<b>Totals Surface Incidents</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50</b>

### Notes:

- (1) The "others" column reflects underground rescues carried out by member teams of the MRC and whose incident reports have been submitted to the BCRC.
- (2) Injuries include those assisted for a medical condition, but exclude cavers assisted through exhaustion.
- (3) Row records use of helicopter to evacuate casualty, figure in brackets is the number of calls to the RAF included in the total.

Further details relating to this incident report or about the BCRC and its membership can be obtained from the Hon Secretary, Pete Allwright, Pearl Hill, Dent, Sedbergh, Cumbria LA10 5TG; telephone 015396 25412 EMail PeteAllwright@compuserve.com

# British Cave Rescue Council

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR CAVE RESCUE IN THE BRITISH ISLES

## Summary of Incident Report, 1999

1. There were no caving underground fatalities in 1999.
2. Of the 36 underground incidents, teams assisted in 7 incidents assisting the police in the execution of their duty – incidents 14, 19, 20, 22, 23, 29 and 33. Of these, 3 involved fatalities – incidents 19, 23 and 33. A further 2 incidents involved assisting non-cavers, incidents 25 and 28.
3. The main causes and injuries sustained over recent years are recorded here. The *Injuries Incurred* table includes fatalities and exposure/hypothermia incidents.

**Table 1 : Incident Causes**

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
assist police	2	2	3		7	14
cave diving				1		1
equipment failure			1			1
exposure/exhausted		3	3	6	2	14
fall	9	11	4	5	4	33
flooding	1	1	4	4	2	12
hung up	1	1		2		4
light failure		1				1
lost or overdue	13	8	9	15	11	56
medical emergency	3	2	2	4	2	13
missing person	3	2		1	1	7
other	2	4	2	1	1	10
physically stuck	4	2	3		1	10
rock fall	4	2	2	1	3	12
self marooning			3	1	1	5
unable to climb	3				1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>197</b>

**Table 2: Injuries Incurred**

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
arm lower/wrist	3			1		4
arm/humerous shoulder	4	2			1	7
Chest Injuries	1	1		2		4
Drowned	3			1		4
Exhaustion/hypothermia	3	1	2	9	1	16
femur - pelvic injuries	1	1	1		1	4
Head Injuries	1	2	1	1		5
knee injury				2	2	4
leg - lower/ankle	1	3	1	2	1	8
Medical condition	2	1	1	2	1	7
Multiple Serious	2	1	2			5
Spine/back injuries		1	2	1		4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>72</b>

4. The Cave Rescue Organisation is based in Clapham, North Yorkshire.
5. The underground animal incidents included 2 calves, 1 goat, 2 sheep, 3 lambs and 5 dogs.
6. 'Surface Incidents' include fell/moorland rescues and searches. Teams, chiefly although not exclusively in the north, carry out these duties as part of their normal workload. These incidents are also recorded in the Mountain Rescue Council Incident Report for 1999.
7. Attendance of rescue personnel was recorded in 30 (32) of the incidents. These involved an average of some 48½ (170) man-hours of effort and 12 (21) personnel at an incident. (Figures in brackets are for 1998.) These figures do not include resulting equipment maintenance and re-equipping of rescue vehicles. In this report, incidents are recorded where personnel have been deployed to the site; other problems or alerts are not included.
8. The following table provides the age profile of the casualties involved *where they have been reported*:

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
5-9				1										1	2
10-14	2			2	3	1	2	2	2	1	2	1			18
15-19	5	9	5	7	11	8	9	12	5	2	4	6	4	3	90
20-24	12	13	13	15	11	15	4	14	10	5	3	2	14	9	140
25-29	11	9	4	6	7	4	5	11	10	2	7	5	6	3	90
30-34		2	5	6	3	9	7	6	3	2	4	4	5	5	61
35-39	2	2	3		5	1	2	1	3	2	3	3		4	31
40-44	3	1	1	4	2		1	3	2	1		7	1	4	30
45-49			1	2			2	2	1		2	1	4	6	21
50-54	2	1			2			1	1	1	1		1	2	12
55-59									2	1		1			4
60-64						1						1		2	4
70-74													1	2	3
75+											1				1

---

---

# British Cave Rescue Council

• THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR CAVE RESCUE IN THE BRITISH ISLES •

---

---

## Summary of Incidents for 1999

- 1. Wednesday 13 January by CRO at 20:25 (for 1½ hours)**  
*Kingsdale Master Cave, unable to climb, individuals,*  
Caver (m38) unable to climb ladder out of the main streamway. He was hauled up the pitch and assisted to the surface.
- 2. Sunday 24 January by ICRO at 20:00 (for 8.00 hours)**  
*Prods Pot, flooding*  
Very heavy rain (not forecast) caused two cavers (both m) to be trapped in cave. Rescue team unable to get past pitches on initial call. After two hours and by diverting underground stream, the missing party was found at the bottom of the pitches from where they were able to make their own way out.
- 3. Sunday 7 February by CRO at 01:30 (for 5½ hours)**  
*Bar Pot, lost or overdue, club (affil'd)*  
Caver (m20), one of a group of 7 cavers doing the Dihedral Shaft of Gaping Ghyll became lost making his way to the surface through Bar Pot. Found totally lost near Mud Pot beyond the Sand Caverns and escorted out.
- 4. Saturday 20 February by SWCRO/WB at 18:15 (for 1 hours 10)**  
*OFD I/II, lost or overdue, club (affil'd)*  
Party of 4 (3m, f) encountered route finding difficulties on a through trip. They met the rescue team on the way out of the cave.
- 5. Sunday 21 February by MRO at 17:00 (for 1½ hours)**  
*Rods Pot, lost or overdue*  
The police contacted MRO and reported an overdue party. The informant told the MRO Warden that a party of 3 had been in the cave for 2-3 hours and that he was concerned as they had not been down the cave before. The cave was searched and nothing was found. It transpired the missing party had surfaced and must have missed the search party by returning to the car park via East Twin valley.
- 6. Wednesday 24 February by CRO at 12:15 (for 1 hour)**  
*Yordas Pot, fall, individuals*  
Caver (m,43) fell 4 metres down Middle Entrance pitch when krab became unclipped. Knee and shoulder injuries. Made own way to surface with assistance from rest of his party.
- 7. Saturday 13 March by CRO at 20:37 (for 4 hours 50)**  
*Rift Pot, self marooning, club (affil'd)*  
Two cavers on through trip from Large Pot became stranded due to a confusion over the deployment of tackle, which had been removed from Rift Pot. They were unwilling to return through the sump back to Large Pot. They were found at the bottom of the big pitch in Rift Pot and escorted to the surface.
- 8. Sunday 14 March by CRO at 14:33 (for 2 hours)**  
*Alum Pot, exposure/exhausted, individuals,*  
Two cavers ill equipped for trip were unable to return to surface. They were found cold and exhausted at the bottom of the open shaft and hauled to the surface.
- 9. Sunday 14 March by DerbyCRO at 19:45 (for 1 hours 45)**  
*P8 Jack Pot, physically stuck, club (affil'd)*  
Caver (m22) became wedged whilst traversing rift above first pitch - he was trying to descend in the wrong place. Companion was unable to free him, so made way to surface and called for help. Caver meanwhile had freed himself and made some of the way back to the surface before awaiting assistance. Escorted out with no problems. They had taken a lot of equipment on the trip which took some retrieving.
- 10. Saturday 27 March by SWCRO/WB at 18:00 (for 1 hours 20)**  
*OFD II, lost or overdue, club (affil'd)*  
Elderly caver (m,70) overdue from trip to the Top Waterfall in OFD 2 when he had not surfaced after the scheduled time. He was able to make his way out slowly and was ferried back to cover in the team ambulance, tired and cold.
- 11. Saturday 27 March by SWCRO/WB at 18:04**  
*OFD I, fall, club (affil'd),*  
Caver (f,38) slipped in streamway and turned ankle. Was able to make her own way to the surface, where assistance was rendered.
- 12. Tuesday 6 April by SWCRO/WB at 22:00 (for 1½ hours)**  
*Cwm Dwr-OFD II, lost or overdue, club (affil'd)*  
Two parties from same club (3m, f plus 5m, early 20s) made slow progress through the cave and suffered some route finding problems. Consequently they became overdue. Quickly escorted out of cave.
- 13. Saturday 10 April by CRO at 16:45 (for 2 hours)**  
*Magnetometer Pot, medical emergency, club (affil'd)*  
Caver (m38) dislocated shoulder during return trip to surface. He was assisted by the rest of his party and was met by the CRO party at the top of the first underground pitch. His shoulder was strapped up and entonox administered. His was then assisted along the crawl and hauled up the entrance pitch.
- 14. Thursday 29 April by DevonCRO at 23:30 (for 2 hours)**  
*area around Goodmeavy Railway Tunnel, assist police*  
Devon CRO was called out by the police to assist Dartmoor Rescue Group in search for missing female. Tasked with searching the disused mine adits near the southern approach to the railway tunnel, this and other adits in the area were found to be clear.
- 15. Tuesday 18 May by SWCRO/WB at 23:00 (for ½ hour)**  
*OFD I, lost or overdue*  
Party and film crew on extended trip to Dip Sump took longer than expected to come out of cave due to hauling large amount of equipment.
- 16. Sunday 23 May by DerbyCRO at 22:35 (for 1 hour 5)**  
*James Hall Mine, lost or overdue, club (affil'd)*  
Party (m35, m20), 2 of a party of 15, became overdue after dropping some tackle. Remainder of party too tired to return and investigate. DCRO arrived in time to assist in hauling gear and administering coffee as party surfaced.
- 17. Monday 31 May by DerbyCRO at 19:05 (for 5 hours 15)**  
*Bagshawe Cavern, rock fall, club (affil'd)*  
Two men went into Dungeon Series to push passage at top of Montague Aven. One stayed under cover at bottom while one climbed up about 50 ft. Then a large unstable area of wall below the climber collapsed, nearly filling the aven for a 20 ft section starting about 16 ft from the floor. Nobody was injured but the caver up the aven was well and truly trapped. Use of explosives considered to blow chockstone of blockage out, but decided against because of inadequate ventilation. After way out of aven protected with dry stonewalling, one man belayed to side of blockage and started to bar it free. After several spectacular rumbles, and an hours work, it was possible for the trapped man to abseil out. He was able to make his own way out to the surface.
- 18. Monday 31 May by SWCRO/WB at 22:40 (for 40 minutes)**  
*Dan-y-Ogof, lost or overdue, club (other)*  
Party overdue on trip to Pinnacle Chamber. Found by lead team on the surface. There was some confusion regarding the expected time out of the cave.
- 19. Wednesday 2 June by WCMRG at 18:25 (for 3 hours)**  
*around St Day, Cornwall, assist police*  
Called out by police, who had been searching for a missing person (m,34). They had found his coat and an empty pill bottle at the top of a shaft. The shaft was descended by two group members but nothing was found. The group then searched the woods and the body was found nearby.

# British Cave Rescue Council

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR CAVE RESCUE IN THE BRITISH ISLES

- 20. Monday 21 June by DerbyCRO at 09:44 (for 1 hour 26)**  
*Henmar Brook/River Dove, Ashbourne, assist police*  
Police asked for culvert under Ashbourne to be searched, and for canoeists to search rivers banks for boy missing from home. Whilst team were on route message was received that he had turned up -in bed at home!
- 21. Wednesday 30 June by DerbyCRO at 19:30 (for 3 hours)**  
*Carlswarke Cavern, lost or overdue, individuals*  
Two novice cavers (m50, m16) could not find their way back out of the new series of Carlswarke. After doing the Big Loop 4 times they baulked at a 5th trip through the canal and settled down to await rescue. After being found, they were fed and re-warmed, then escorted out, the younger suffering mild hypothermia.
- 22. Saturday 3 July by DerbyCRO at 15:00 (for 2 hours)**  
*Lyme Park, Cheshire, assist police*  
Called to support PDMRO and search mine shafts and culverts for missing man (46). All turned out to be blocked and securely fenced. Man reappeared of his own accord at 17:00.
- 23. Monday 12 July by DerbyCRO at 13:10 (for 2 hour 5)**  
*via Gellia, Matlock, assist police*  
Small team activated to search mineshaft for missing man (40s) in support of mountain rescue efforts. He was found **dead** before DCRO commenced search.
- 24. Sunday 18 July by CRO at 16:25 (for 4 hours 50)**  
*Swinsto Hole, Kingsdale, fall, club (affil'd),*  
Caver (m,49) suffered fracture of ankle and both kneecaps, head lacerations and a black eye when he abseiled down the 'wrong' side of a double rope, resulting in a rapid descent of some 17 metres down first section of the Split Pitch. His leg was splinted and he was able to progress through much of the cave with great assistance. He was stretched in the latter stages in the Roof Tunnel of the Master Cave.
- 25. Sunday 25 July by CRO at 15:20 (for 25 minutes)**  
*Long Kin East, lost or overdue, non-caver,*  
Two walkers (m46, m62) of a group ventured into the cave and, when they failed to return after a period, the alarm was raised. The walkers surfaced after the CRO callout was underway.
- 26. Tuesday 27 July by MRO at 21:00 (for 1 hour 45)**  
*Stocks House Shaft, rock fall*  
A digger was reported trapped by a rock fall. Equipment was gathered and rock drilling equipment collected. On arrival it was found the digger had freed himself, but was on the wrong side of the fall. With assistance, he was able to dig his way out, walling up the choke as he progressed, and was able to escape without injury at 22:45.
- 27. Sunday 15 August by COMRU at 23:00 (for 3 hours)**  
*Garigill Area, North Pennines, missing person*  
Called to assist mountain rescue teams in search for missing Duke of Edinburgh group; COMRU were called to the area to give advice on openings and access to abandoned mine workings in the area. Party found by MR safe and uninjured before search of workings necessary.
- 28. Monday 23 August by DerbyCRO at 13:20 (for 1 hour 15)**  
*Blue John Cavern, medical emergency, non-caver*

<b>CRO</b>	<i>Cave Rescue Organisation</i>
<b>CMRU</b>	<i>Cornwall Mineshaft Rescue Unit</i>
<b>COMRU</b>	<i>Cumbria Ore Mines Rescue Unit</i>
<b>DerbyCRO</b>	<i>Derbyshire Cave Rescue Org</i>
<b>DevonCRO</b>	<i>Devon Cave Rescue Org</i>
<b>GCRG</b>	<i>Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Grp</i>
<b>ICRO</b>	<i>Irish Cave Rescue Organisation</i>
<b>MRO</b>	<i>Mendip Rescue Organization</i>

Elderly tourist in show cave (f,70s) suffered chest pains/respiratory problems. Emergency paramedics in attendance. DCRO assisted in the stretching of casualty to the surface from near the Crystallised Cavern.

- 29. Thursday 2 September by GCRG at 18:50 (for 1 hour)**  
*Parkend, Gloucestershire, assist police*  
Requested to assist disused mineshafts and pits around Parkend/Yorkley area for possible missing young person (f, 4). She had been reported walking alone in the area by a passer-by, but no report of a missing person had been received from her parents. Broadcasts were made on local radio for information. The girl was located safely with her parents, who had allowed her to walk along the road whilst they took a different route through the forest!
- 30. Saturday 11 September by CRO at 15:30 (for 1 hour)**  
*Roaring Hole, investigation*  
Investigated the report of a rucksack found by hikers at the entrance. The rucksack belonged to 4 cavers who surfaced as the CRO investigation party arrived. They were not in any difficulty.
- 31. Friday 8 October by CRO at 17:48 (for 4 hours 15)**  
*Sell Gill, fall, individuals*  
Caver (m31) lost control abseiling suffering a very rapid descent of some 15 metres at the bottom of Goblin Shaft. Suspected fractured pelvis and/or femur later proved to be very severe bruising. Extensive analgesia enabled casualty to be carried out of cave up several pitches to the surface.
- 32. Wednesday 27 October by CRO at 20:01 (for 2 hours)**  
*Cow Pot, Casterton Fell, exposure/exhausted, individuals*  
Caver (m33) exhausted and unable to climb sloping tube at bottom of entrance pitch. Quickly hauled out in rescue harness.
- 33. Saturday 30 October by DerbyCRO at 09:30 (for 17 hours)**  
*Bradwell Moor, assist police*  
Searched shafts at request of police for missing man (67). Eventually found **dead**, buried in own garden - murder suspected.
- 34. Thursday 25 November by SWCRO/GW at 02:30 (for 14 hours)**  
*Carno Adit, flooding, club (affil'd),*  
Two cavers (m40, m47) trapped by flood. Rescue dump beyond flooded area proved invaluable in sustaining the trapped cavers, so they were in good condition when the flood waters receded and were able to make own way out.
- 35. Saturday 27 November by CRO at 18:35 (for 1 hour)**  
*Wretched Rabbit, Easegill, lost or overdue, individuals*  
Two cavers separated at Stop Pot in Lancaster Hole. When second caver (m34) failed to surface alarm was raised. He had surfaced and met the CRO party at Bull Pot Farm soon after arrival.
- 36. Sunday 28 November by SWCRO/GW at 20:00 (for 3 hours)**  
*Carno Adit, rock fall, club (affil'd)*  
Boulder moved trapping cavers (m50, m48) in chamber. Space was engineered to allow team member to squeeze through. Trapped cavers were soon freed. Rapid response needed because of flooding risk.

<b>MCRO</b>	<i>Midlands Cave Rescue Org</i>
<b>NWCRO</b>	<i>North Wales Cave Rescue Org</i>
<b>ScotCRO</b>	<i>Scottish Cave Rescue Org</i>
<b>SECRO</b>	<i>South East Cave Rescue Org</i>
<b>SWCRO</b>	<i>South Wales Cave Rescue Org</i>
<b>SFRO</b>	<i>Swaledale Fell Rescue Org</i>
<b>UWFRA</b>	<i>Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Ass</i>
<b>WCRMG</b>	<i>West Cornwall Mines Rescue Grp</i>