



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Incident Report for Period 1st January 2004 - 31st December 2004

	Cave Rescue Organisation ⁽⁴⁾	Cornwall Mines Rescue	Cumbria Ore Mines RU	Derbyshire CRO	Devon CRO	Gloucestershire CRG	Gwent Cave Rescue Team	Irish CRO	Mendip RO	Midlands CRO	North Wales CRO	Scottish CRO	South East CRO	Swaledale MRT ⁽⁶⁾	Upper Wharfedale FRA	West Brecon Cave Rescue Team	Mountain Rescue Teams	TOTALS
Caving Incidents	6	-	1	8	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	-	22
Assisting Authorities ⁽³⁾	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	8
Persons Assisted	10	-	1	10	0	1	-	-	2	-	3	-	-	1	2	8		38
Fatalities	1	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	0		1
Persons Injured ⁽¹⁾	1	-	-	4	0	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	0	0		9
Helicopter assistance ⁽²⁾	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1(1)	-	-		4(1)
Animal Incidents	9	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2		17
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1		1
Totals Underground Incidents	17	2	1	9	1	1	1	0	2	-	2	0	-	2	2	5	2	47

'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 usually recorded in the Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) Incident Report for 2004.

Surface Incidents	29	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	19	18	1		70
Persons Assisted	59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	17	16	-		93
Fatalities	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-		4
Persons Injured	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	9	-		43
Surface Animal Incidents	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-		6
Assistance to other teams	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		2
Totals Surface Incidents	32	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	21	21	1		78

Notes:

1. Injuries include those assisted for a medical condition, but exclude cavers assisted through exhaustion.
2. Row records use of helicopter to evacuate casualty. The figure in brackets (if any) is the number of calls to the RAF included in the total.
3. This row records incidents where assistance is requested by the authorities for non-caver incidents. These are identified on page 2 of this report.
4. The Cave Rescue Organisation is based in Clapham, North Yorkshire. The surface totals exclude those incidents where SARDA dogs and handlers were called to teams operating in other areas.
5. During the year, the Swaledale team changed its name from the Swaledale Fell Rescue Organisation to the **Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team**.

Copies of this report are available from the BCRC Website – www.caverescue.org.uk

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@btinternet.com



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Summary of Incident Report, 2004

- There was 1 underground caving fatality in 2004:
 - a caver fell some 18 metres in Notts Pot – incident 24
- Rescue teams undertook 8 incidents assisting the authorities (police, ambulance) in the execution of their duty – incidents 6, 7, 10, 15, 21 and 23. Incidents 20 and 25 were undertaken by Mountain Rescue Teams and involved underground activity. Incidents 23 and 25 are known to have involved a fatality found on the surface.
- 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

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
assist police	2	3	8	6	8	27
exposure/exhausted	4	1	1	2		8
fall	4	3	6	6	6	25
flooding	3	2	1	1	1	8
hung up					1	1
light failure	1					1
lost or overdue	8	2	5	6	7	28
injury/medical emergency	2	2	2		2	8
missing person	2			2		4
other		2	1		2	5
physically stuck	5	1		2	1	9
rock fall	2	1		1	1	5
self marooning		1				1
unable to climb	1		3	1	1	6
	34	18	27	27	30	136

Table 2: Injuries Incurred

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
arm lower/wrist	2					2
arm/humerous shoulder		1	2	1	2	6
Chest Injuries	2	2	1			5
Drowned	1	2	1			4
Exhaustion/hypothermia	5	3	2	2	2	14
femur - pelvic injuries		1		3	1	5
Head Injuries	1				1	2
Knee Injuries	1				1	2
leg - lower/ankle	3	1		1	2	7
Medical condition	1	1	2	1		5
Spine/back injuries	2		3	1	2	8
Other					1	1
	18	11	11	9	12	61

- Caving activity during 2001 was greatly disrupted throughout the UK and the Republic of Ireland by an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. This caused the closure of most caving areas for over six months of the year.
- The underground animal incidents included 1 calf, 4 sheep, 7 lambs, 3 dogs and 1 cat.
- Attendance of rescue personnel at incidents has been recorded below; not all incidents are fully reported.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Number of Incidents	30	33	17	25	25	29
Average number of people on incident	12	15	16	15	19	19
Average effort in "man" hours	48.5	88.25	168	82	180	112

These figures are approximate and do not include equipment maintenance and re-equipping of rescue vehicles. In this report, incidents are recorded normally where personnel have been deployed to the site or other operational actions are taken; other problems or alerts are not included.

Team Abbreviation	Full Name
COMRU	Cumbria Ore Mines Rescue Unit
CornwallMRO	Cornwall Mines Rescue Organisation
CRO	Cave Rescue Organisation
DerbyCRO	Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation
DevonCRO	Devon Cave Rescue Organisation
GCRG	Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group
GwentCRT	Gwent Cave Rescue Team
ICRO	Irish Cave Rescue Organisation

Team Abbreviation	Full Name
MCRO	Midland Cave Rescue Organisation
MRO	Mendip Rescue Organization
NWCRO	North Wales Cave Rescue Organisation
ScottishCRO	Scottish Cave Rescue Organisation
SECRO	South East Cave Rescue Organisation
SwaledaleMRT	Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team
UWFRA	Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association
WBCRT	West Brecon Cave Rescue Team



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Summary of Incidents for 2004

- 1. Sunday 18 January by DerbyCRO at 15:03
(for 3 hours 10 mins)(16 rescue team members)**
Titan, hung up
Caver (m35) reported hung up on Titan Pitch just below the Event Horizon, some 52 metres from the floor of a 85 metre pitch. When the team arrived, the caver had succeeded in freeing himself. He was assisted to the surface.
- 2. Thursday 22 January by COMRU at 21:15 (for 3½ hours)(10 rescue team members)**
Carrock Mine, Caldbeck, Cumbria, unable to climb
Male (71) decided to explore abandoned mine level, but left no information regarding route or expected return time. Alarm raised and police located car at valley head. Keswick MR Team called to search fell, and they called for COMRU to assist. COMRU found the man some 13 metres (40 feet) down the first pitch. He had downclimbed a single rope hand-over-hand and was too exhausted to return, so awaited rescue. Escorted to surface.
- 3. Sunday 25 January by CRO at 16:25 (for 8 hours)
(31 rescue team members)**
Sylvester Pot, injury sustained/medical emergency
Caver (m48) suffered a dislocated shoulder while climbing on rocks that gave way, resulting in a fall of about 3 metres. Pain relief administered by rescue team on arrival. The casualty was evacuated via Dismal Junction and through County Pot as Sylvester Pot itself had previously collapsed. This route is very restricted in places. The casualty was a hard, fit caver and was able to make his own way out of the much of the cave with assistance, but it was necessary to deploy a drag stretcher in some passages. RAF Sea King was called to evacuate casualty but had mechanical failure. In the event, he recovered sufficiently to make his own way back across the fell.
- 4. Wednesday 25 February by WBCRT at 11:55
(for 1½ hours)(7 rescue team members)**
Pant Mawr Pot, lost or overdue
Party of five cavers (m27, 22, 21, 19, f19) reported overdue. They became lost on the moor in the dark but eventually made their way to a farmhouse. WBCRT contacted by police on way to the pot and asked to collect the group.
- 5. Saturday 28 February by MRO at 19:00
(for 2 hours)(10 rescue team members)**
Swildons Hole, medical emergency
Caving party reported they had passed a female casualty with a knee injury below the 20 ft ladder pitch. Spearhead team reported meeting the casualty in the Water Chamber and making her own way out of the cave. Steady progress to the surface was maintained and the incident was over at 21:00.
- 6. Sunday 29 February by NWCRO at 15:00
(for 4 hours)(5 rescue team members)**
caves near Prestatyn, assist police
On 29th Feb 2004 at approximately 3pm we received a call from SARDA asking for assistance with a search for two missing girls in the Rhuddlan area. One of the girls had previously camped in a cave, and it was thought possible that they may have been underground. Two members of the team went to Rhuddlan Police Station to help locate possible caves or mines where the girls may have been. Soon after we were asked to conduct a search in 3 possible sites. A team was assembled and began a search of Fish Cave near Prestatyn. The girls were found, alive and well in a graveyard shortly after the team had begun its search.
- 7. Monday 1 March by NWCRO at 22:00
(for 1¾ hours)(7 rescue team members)**
mines near Mold, assist police
NWCRO were asked to help NEWSAR with a search for a missing lady near Mold. A small team was quickly assembled and proceeded to locate and check some shafts near the area the lady was last seen. The lady was found before the team went underground.
- 8. Sunday 14 March by DerbyCRO at 20:55
(for 4½ hours)(29 rescue team members)**
Peak/Speedwell Cavern, Castleton, lost or overdue
Two cavers (m20, 20) overdue on trip into the Speedwell System. Found after search as they were leaving by the James Hall Entrance to the system. Initial search of the main routes in the Peak/Speedwell system was in progress when the missing cavers were found.
- 9. Thursday 18 March by SwaledaleMRT
*Gunnorside, Swaledale, rock fall***
Party of mine explorers were returning to the surface when one brushed against some arching which then fell on his right leg, sustaining a fractured lower leg. After administering analgesia he was carried out of the muddy passages and up the 6½m (20 ft) entrance pitch. Evacuated to hospital by RAF helicopter.
- 10. Thursday 25 March by DevonCRO at 10:45 (for 22 hours)(11 rescue team members)**
Mines and Caves near Ilfracombe, Devon, assist police
Also on 26th March and 4th April.
Called by police to search various mines and caves for a missing female (16) missing for some 4 weeks. Nothing found by DevonCRO.
- 11. Saturday 27 March by CRO at 23:55
(for 3 hours)(11 rescue team members)**
Pippikin Pot/Mistral, lost or overdue
Caver (m20) reported missing for 8 hours, having separated from main party at Dusty Junction to make own way out of Mistral Hole. He had taken a wrong turning and became lost in the Far Streamway. CRO Controller ask three of his companions to initiate search whilst CRO mobilised. The missing person was found by them in Far Streamway and they met the spearhead CRO team whilst making their way out of the cave. Assisted out the rest of way and back to Bull Pot Farm.
- 12. Saturday 3 April by DerbyCRO at 15:12
(for 2 hours)(13 rescue team members)**
Dragons Cave, Shining Cliff, Ambergate, physically stuck
Boy (11) had become jammed in 9 inch rift. Was freed with help of a tension rope and talking out.
- 13. Monday 12 April by DerbyCRO at 13:00
(for 3 hours)(22 rescue team members)**
Giant's Hole, Castleton, fall
Caver (m48) suffered a suspected spinal fracture when he fell while abseiling on Garland's Pot, some 350 metres from the entrance. Casualty required careful handling due to suspected injuries. Evacuated to surface and buy air ambulance to hospital. Paramedic in attendance.
- 14. Sunday 2 May by DerbyCRO at 11:15
(for 4 hours)(30 rescue team members)**
Giant's Hole, Castleton, fall
Caver (m39) suffered lower back injuries and mild hypothermia when he fell while abseiling on Garland's Pot and again casualty required careful handling due to suspected injuries. Evacuated to surface and by air ambulance to hospital. East Midlands Ambulance Service cave rescue support unit in attendance.
- 15. Monday 31 May by CRO at 15:04 (for 1¾ hours)
(4 rescue team members)**
Cuddy Gill Pot No. 2, assist police
Asked by police to investigate drums of 'corrosive chemicals' reported to be at bottom of 10 metre entrance pitch. Found to be empty or with lids off and containing water. A lamb found at the bottom of the pitch was found alive and was returned to the surface.



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

16. Saturday 12 June by GCRG at 15:00

(for 12 hours)(35 rescue team members)

Slaughter Stream Cave (Wet Sink), Coleford, fall

Caver (m48) fell about 4 metres on a waterfall climb when his hand-hold came away. He sustained a broken femur and 2 broken ribs. Traction splint flown in by police from West Brecon Cave Rescue. Although not far from the entrance, this rescue involved narrow stream sections, crawls and 4 vertical pitches hauls, making evacuation slow. Casualty brought to surface at 03:00 following day. WBCRT undertook all of the medical provision, much of the underground control and rigging and supplied around half the rescuers. Also assisted by Gloucestershire Fire Service.

17. Monday 14 June by CRO at 23:30 (for 3 hours)

(5 rescue team members)

Ireby Fell Cavern, lost or overdue

Two cavers (m23, f20) reported missing after they were last seen de-rigging Well Pitch deep in the cave, but had not made the surface. The two had failed to find the way close by Pussy Pitch so had returned to await rescue at Well Pitch. They were found by members of their party who went back to search the cave, and surfaced as the spearhead CRO were about to descend the cave.

18. Wednesday 23 June by CRO at 16:35

(for 1¼ hours)(12 rescue team members)

Kingsdale Master Cave, flooding

Two cavers (m49, 31) trapped by floods. Found on ledge in Master Cave streamway and escorted out as the water levels fell.

19. Tuesday 10 August by DerbyCRO at 18:15

(for 1¼ hours)(14 rescue team members)

Carlswark Caverns, Eyam, lost or overdue

Two cavers (m21, 18) on management training course became lost. They were located near the Big Dig and were escorted to the surface.

20. Saturday 21 August by MRC Team at 15:30

(for 1½ hours)(5 rescue team members)

Levant Mine, Pendeen, Cornwall, assist police

Female had called '999' requesting 'cave rescue' and appeared in a very distressed state. Telephone call was terminated before full details could be obtained. Police, members of CRG and the Coastguard responded but as the informant could not be found and there had been no further calls, and nothing had been found during a search of adits and shafts, the police stood down the incident as a hoax.

21. Saturday 4 September by MRO at 16:30

(for ¼ hours)(8 rescue team members)

Wookey Hole, assist authorities

Called by the police to assist ambulance service in carrying a casualty suffering a suspected broken leg from the show cave. Initial treatment was carried out by the ambulance personnel but they were concerned over anticipated problems carrying a standard stretcher on the slippery metal steps. The patient was transferred to a Paraguard stretcher and rapidly evacuated to the surface.

22. Thursday 16 September by DerbyCRO at 11:45

(for ¾ hours)(2 rescue team members)

Astbury Limestone Mine, fall

Caver (m56) suffered fall on very muddy ground whilst taking photographs, suffering bruising to arm. Assisted to surface by two DerbyCRO members in the party.

23. Monday 20 September by CRO at 13:56 (for 3 hours 50 mins)

(17 rescue team members)

Sell Gill Holes, Ribblesdale, assist police

Also 23 Sept 2004.

The body of a female (aged between 20 and 40) was found in the beck some 20 metres above the wet entrance. It was believed the body had been washed downstream by overnight flooding. A search of Sell Gill for relevant

materials was made on the Monday. The police requested a further more thorough search on the Wednesday. Finds made on both searches were passed to the police.

24. Saturday 25 September by CRO at 15:35

(for 8 hours)(40 rescue team members)

Notts Pot, Leck Fell, fall

Caver (f34) unclipped from exposed traverse over the sixth pitch to retrieve a tape sling that had been dropped. She lost her footing and fell some 18 metres (60 feet) suffering fatal head injuries. Difficult multi-pitch recovery of body followed.

25. Sunday 3 October by MRC Team at 10:00

(for 5 hours)(16 rescue team members)

Mines near Carn Brea, Cornwall, assist police

Police requested assistance in locating a female believed to be in an underground location in the Carn Brea area. Conducted search of shafts, adits and tunnels. Surface search also conducted at other times. Missing person found deceased several days later outside of the search area and on the surface.

26. Saturday 9 October by WBCRT at 18:30

(for 2 hours 8 mins)(25 rescue team members)

Easter Cave, other

Member of caving party (m18) reported to be in some difficulty. On arrival it seemed he had lost confidence and was assisted to the surface. Significant problems with the callout when the operator was unaware how to initiate a cave rescue.

27. Saturday 16 October by WBCRT at 19:45

(for 35 minutes)(11 rescue team members)

Pwll Dwfyn, other

A report of a car left in car park; two cavers had been seen going up the hill at 13:00 and voices had been heard down Pwll Dyfn. A search was initiated but the cavers turned up during this period. They had left callout information requesting action at 22:00 so they had returned well within the set time.

28. Saturday 4 December by DerbyCRO at 13:17

(for 9 hours 26 mins)(60 rescue team members)

James Hall Mine, Castleton, fall

Caver (m48) suffered fractured scapula and ribs when he fell 5 meters whilst abseiling the second pitch 'Bitch Pitch' of some 30 metres. Due to suspected spinal injuries, the casualty was evacuated to the surface through the Speedwell Caverns show cave. This involved a further 80 metres of vertical pitches and 1000 metres of flooded mine level. An inflatable boat and tourist boat were used in the flooded level.

29. Friday 10 December by UWFRA at 23:03

(for 6 hours)(44 rescue team members)

Dow Cave/Providence Pot, lost or overdue

Party of cavers (m37, 32) entered cave at 3:30 pm and were reported overdue at 11:00 pm. The party were found on their way out of Providence Pot as rescue team entered cave. They had lost their way on route and had retraced their steps.

30. Thursday 30 December by CRO at 00:45

(for 6½ hours)(26 rescue team members)

Top Sink-Wretched Rabbit, Easegill, lost or overdue

Three cavers (m20, 18, f22) became overdue after being slowed by high water, the conditions causing one (m20) to suffer a strained back. Search started by members of 2 clubs already at Bull Pot Farm. The missing party were found at Holbeck Junction and were assisted to the surface via Wretched Rabbit.