



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Incident Report for Period 1st January 2010 - 31st December 2010

	Cave Rescue Organisation ⁽⁴⁾	Cornwall Search & rescue	Cumbria Ore Mines RU	Derbyshire CRO	Devon CRO	Gloucestershire CRG	Irish CRO	Mendip Cave Rescue	Midlands CRO	North Wales CRO	Scottish CRO	South East CRO	South & Mid Wales CRT ⁽⁵⁾	Swaledale Mountain Rescue	Upper Wharfedale FRA	TOTALS
Caving Incidents	13	-	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	22
Assisting Authorities ⁽³⁾	0	-	-	2	-	-	0	1	-	1	1	-	0	-	0	5
Persons Assisted	31	-	-	6	-	-	3	1	-	0	0	-	1	-	1	43
Fatalities	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0	0
Persons Injured ⁽¹⁾	0	-	-	2	-	-	1	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0	3
Helicopter assistance ⁽²⁾	1	-	-	0	-	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0	-
Animal Incidents	5	-	1	0	-	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	1	2	2	11
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Totals Underground Incidents	18	-	1	5	-	-	1	2	-	1	1	-	4	2	3	38
<p>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.</p> <p>These incidents are usually recorded in the Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) Incident Report for 2010.</p>																
Surface Incidents	49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	13	40	104
Persons Assisted	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	14	30	102
Fatalities	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	5	13
Persons Injured	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	6	13	47
Surface Animal Incidents	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Totals Surface Incidents	52	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	13	40	107

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. In this period, the West Brecon Cave Rescue Team was renamed the South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team to reflect the area they cover.
6. On Sunday, 3rd October, a French cave diver was reported overdue on a long (>1 km.) technically difficult exploratory dive involving frequent deep descents and ascents. The assistance of two British cave divers with the right experience and equipment to tackle the sump was requested and sent over with a support diver/interpreter. They were on site for some 10 days. A third diver and equipment was sent over a week later.

After a number of extreme dives, two British divers were able to pass a blockage that had prevented the return of the missing diver and locate his **body** in the sump beyond. A full and detailed report of this incident can be found in the January 2011 edition of Mountain Rescue magazine.



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Summary of Incident Report, 2010

- There were no underground caving fatalities in 2010. Incident 2 involved the recovery of the body of a cave diver who went missing in 1971. Major developments in diving techniques now allowed the safe recovery of his body.
- There were 5 incidents where teams assisted the authorities in the execution of their duty – incidents 1, 6, 9, 14 and 19.
- 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

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
assist police	2	1	4	5	5	17
cave diving	1					1
exposure/exhausted	1	4	2		2	9
fall	4	4	3	2	2	15
flooding	4	1	8	4	2	19
hung up	1	3	1	1	1	7
lost or overdue	10	9	14	11	9	53
marooned			1	1		2
medical emergency	1		4	2		7
missing person	1			1	1	3
other	2	4	1	1	1	9
physically stuck	3	2	1	3	3	12
rock fall	1			1	1	3
unable to climb			1			1
Total	31	28	40	32	27	158

Table 2: Injuries Incurred

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Abdominal Injuries					1	1
arm/humerus shoulder			1	2		3
Chest Injuries			1			1
Drowned	1	2				3
Exhaustion/hypothermia	3	5	2	4	7	21
femur - pelvic injuries	3		1			4
Head Injuries		1		1	1	3
Knee Injuries		2	3			5
leg - lower/ankle		2	1			3
Medical condition	1		1	2	1	5
Multiple Serious	1					1
Other		1			1	2
Spine/back injuries	1			1		2
Total	10	13	10	10	11	54

Note that the free diving incident recorded in 2007 involved cavers free diving a sump without sub-aqua equipment. This has been included in the 'other' category.

- The underground animal incidents included 3 sheep, 7 lambs and 2 dogs.

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
CRO	Cave Rescue Organisation
CSRT	Cornwall Search & Rescue Team
DerbyCRO	Derbyshire Cave Rescue Organisation
DevonCRO	Devon Cave Rescue Organisation
GCRG	Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group
ICRO	Irish Cave Rescue Organisation
MCRO	Midland Cave Rescue Organisation
MCR	Mendip Cave Rescue (formerly Mendip Rescue Organization)
NWCRO	North Wales Cave Rescue Organisation

Team Abbreviation	Full Name
ScottishCRO	Scottish Cave Rescue Organisation
SECRO	South East Cave Rescue Organisation
SMWCRT	South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team
SwaledaleMRT	Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team
UWFRA	Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association
WBCRT	West Brecon Cave Rescue Team now South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team
CDG	Cave Diving Group

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 secretary@caverescue.org.uk



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Summary of Incidents for 2010

- 1. Sunday 4 April 2010 by NWCRO at 07:30
(for 6 hours) (7 Team Members)**
Horseshoe Pass Quarries, Llangollen, Denbighshire, assist police
Police identified abandoned car adjacent to quarries linked to a potential suicide threat by an individual; surface search initiated by North East Wales Search & Rescue, who requested NWCRO assistance; underground slate quarry workings searched by NWCRO; person not found (later found by Police in Cheshire).
- 2. Thursday 22 April 2010 by SMCWRT at 19:00
(for 8 hours) (5 Team Members)**
Porth Yr Ogof, other
Recovery of body of cave diver following a cave diving fatality in 1971.
- 3. Saturday 24 April 2010 by DerbyCRO at 20:50
(for 55 minutes) (9 Team Members)**
Wood Mine, Alderley Edge, Cheshire, fall
Two climbers with no caving experience entered the mine by a normally locked entrance that they "found to be open". One fell in the shaft and was injured. The other managed to climb out and raise the alarm. DCRO were not initially called and only began arriving on site at about the time the fire service managed to get the injured man up the shaft and on to the surface.
- 4. Tuesday 27 April 2010 by DerbyCRO at 13:45
(for 25 minutes) (2 Team Members)**
Higger Tor, Hathersage, physically stuck
Man stuck whilst squeezing between gritstone blocks in a fissure at Higger Tor. Edale MRT attended and requested DCRO help. Edale MRT members (one also a DCRO team member) managed to release the man just as second DCRO team member arrived on site.
- 5. Tuesday 27 April 2010 by CRO at 21:40 (for 2 hours)
(12 Team Members)**
Ease Gill Caverns, lost or overdue
Two cavers (m, 51, 49) were reported overdue on trip from Lancaster Hole to Wretched Rabbit. A car at Bull Pot Farm was confirmed as theirs and a small CRO team investigated. The cavers were located returning across the moor, having taken longer than anticipated to complete the trip.
- 6. Saturday 29 May 2010 by MCR at 10:00 (for 2 hours)
(4 Team Members)**
Hullavington, Wiltshire., assist police
Wilts Police requested assistance in searching a small cave near Hullavington, Wiltshire to look for a possible missing person. This was carried out and no one was found.
- 7. Saturday 12 June 2010 by CRO at 16:05
(for 3 hours 50 minutes) (22 Team Members)**
Bar Pot, exposure/exhausted
Party of three cavers descended Bar Pot using climbing equipment (dynamic rope, climbing harnesses and climbing hardware). On return one (m, 20) was unable to ascend the second pitch and quickly became exhausted. One (m, 19) - on his first caving trip - came out to raise the alarm whilst the other (m, 20) remained with the exhausted caver. Due to their inadequate equipment both were hauled to the surface once the pitches had been re-rigged. None of the party were adequately clothed for a deep cave, including one wearing shorts.
- 8. Sunday 13 June 2010 by CRO at 23:27
(for 6 hours 50 minutes) (25 Team Members)**
Ease Gill Cavern, lost or overdue
A party of four cavers (m, 38, 33, 30, 18) were reported overdue on a trip from Lancaster Hole to Wretched Rabbit. They were located on the High Level Route slowly making their way back to Lancaster Hole having failed to find the connection to Wretched Rabbit at Stop Pot. One member of the party was hauled up the entrance pitch due to exhaustion.
- 9. Monday 12 July 2010 by DerbyCRO at 13:47
(for 1 hour 32 minutes) (12 Team Members)**
Blue John Mine, Castleton, assist police
Diabetic elderly man collapsed whilst on a tourist trip into the cave. EMAS paramedics attended and requested DCRO assistance to evacuate the man to the surface. This was accomplished using a Short Slix stretcher.
- 10. Sunday 18 July 2010 by CRO at 16:15
(for 2 hours 50 minutes) (17 Team Members)**
Rift Pot, Marble Steps, flooding
Two groups of cavers were reported trapped by flooding in Rift Pot following a prolonged period of persistent rainfall during the afternoon. CRO met one group (m, 31, 25, 24) making their way back over the moor, and then located the second group (m, 44; f, 51, 42) negotiating the entrance crawl below the first pitch. They were escorted to the surface.
- 11. Sunday 18 July 2010 by CRO at 16:20
(for 20 hours) (27 Team Members)**
Swinsto Hole, flooding
Two cavers (m, 61, 27) were reported trapped by severe flooding on a trip down Swinsto Hole. CRO teams searched parts of the cave system into the night but had to withdraw due to dangerously high water levels. Further searches were conducted in the morning as water levels fell and the two cavers were successfully located sheltering from the flooding near the top of the final Swinsto pitch. Both were escorted out via KMC Valley Entrance, reaching the surface at 11.30hrs on Monday July 19. CRO had to abandon ropes and equipment in the cave system due to the water levels encountered during the search; they were eventually retrieved on Thursday July 22 when the weather improved.
- 12. Thursday 5 August 2010 by MCR at 12:25
(for 3 hours) (3 Team Members)**
Swildons Hole, lost or overdue
The police were called by the overdue persons wife after she had not heard from him past his call out time. Some difficulty with the callout, but search was initiated. Caver located close to the entrance. It transpired that the person had exited the cave earlier and left a revised call out time on his mother's answer phone but this message had not been picked up and forwarded to his wife.
- 13. Sunday 8 August 2010 by CRO at 12:23
(for 1 hour 50 minutes) (15 Team Members)**
Valley Entrance, Kingsdale Master Cave, exposure/exhausted
A caver (m, 39) in a party of three became too exhausted to climb their ladder up into the Roof Tunnel from the KMC streamway. A small CRO team quickly hauled him to the top of the pitch and escorted him out to the surface.
- 14. Saturday 14 August 2010 by ScotCRO at 08:00
(for 25 hours) (5 Team Members)**
Glen Croe area, Argyll, assist police
Missing person (f,38) last seen May 4th 2010 in central Edinburgh. Assumed murdered with evidence pointing to body being hidden in the forests of Glen Croe. Five SCRO members joined a search of parts of



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the area with members of over 8 other volunteer rescue teams and the police. Tasked with checking watercourses and culverts under forest tracks in dense forest on steep mountainsides. Areas had already checked by line search and dogs. Two full days of slow detailed searching found nothing.

15. Saturday 21 August 2010 by SMWCRT at 14:10 (for 2 hours) (14 Team Members)

Chartists Cave, lost or overdue

A walker (m,32) had entered Chartist Cave at about 11.30 for a 'quick look' and not having returned by 12.30 his mother walked back to the Llangynider - Ebbw Vale road, stopped a motorist and called the police. Found 60 metres into entrance.

16. Tuesday 7 September 2010 by CRO at 13:41 (for 1 hour) (16 Team Members)

Thistle Cave, Ribbleshead, physically stuck

A girl (10) got her knee jammed in a floor crack whilst negotiating a crawl within Thistle Main Cave. CRO was called but members of her party managed to free her prior to the team's arrival at Ribbleshead.

17. Saturday 11 September 2010 by CRO at 15:13 (for 3 hours) (21 Team Members)

Diccan Pot, hung up

Caver (m, 39) abseiling down first pitch of Diccan Pot in high water conditions became hung up in loop of rope under waterfall. Novice companions raised the alarm but didn't know his location and thought they had been in Long Churn Cave. CRO members searched both systems before he was found half way down the Diccan Pot pitch, suffering from hypothermia. CRO descended to him before hauling him up the pitch and out to the surface where he was treated by team doctor before being airlifted to hospital by air ambulance.

18. Monday 20 September 2010 by CRO at 23:05 (for 2 hours) (7 Team Members)

Small Mammal Pot, Gaping Ghyll, lost or overdue

Two cavers (m, 23; f, 22) were reported overdue on a Flood Entrance Pot exchange trip through the Gaping Gill system. They were located above Trow Gill, making their way off the hill having had difficulty finding their way through Small Mammal Pot to the exit.

19. Sunday 26 September 2010 by DerbyCRO at 10:30 (for 2 hours 10 minutes) (12 Team Members)

Stone Mine, Lineacre Wood, Chesterfield, assist police

Mine entrances encountered by police during a missing person search and DCRO asked to investigate. A number of blocked entrances were investigated and a small stone open mine was searched without finding anything. The search team used a gas detector as nothing was known about the mine. The man's body was found some days later by a farmer well outside the search area.

20. Sunday 10 October 2010 by CRO at 19:45 (for 4 hours 25 minutes) (10 Team Members)

Ease Gill Caverns, lost or overdue

Six cavers (m, 44, 44, 27; f, 24, 21, 20) were reported overdue on a trip down Lancaster Hole. Soon after CRO arrived at Bull Pot Farm one of the party surfaced to report that they had got lost at Stake Pot and that the remaining five were now very slowly making their way out. A CRO team descended and located them at Fall Pot. They were all escorted out, with two being hauled up the 34m entrance pitch due to exhaustion.

21. Saturday 23 October 2010 by DerbyCRO at 18:55 (for 21 minutes) (7 Team Members)

Giants Hole, Castleton, fall

Caver (m,41), with one year's experience, fell about 40 feet (12 metres) whilst trying to get through the Vice squeeze in the Crabwalk at a high level. He was clearly

injured and briefly unconscious and someone left for the surface to get help. In the meantime the injured man recovered enough to make his way out helped by his companions. Most DCRO members stood down en route but a controller and one other attended to confirm that all was O.K.

22. Sunday 17 October 2010 by CRO at 15:33 (for 1¼ hours) (4 Team Members)

Bull Pot, Kingsdale, lost or overdue

Two cavers (m, 40; f, 41) were reported overdue on a trip into Bull Pot. Their vehicle was located in Kingsdale and a small CRO team went up to the entrance to investigate. Both cavers were found on the surface packing up, having just derigged.

23. Wednesday 3 November 2010 by UWFRCA at 14:15 (for 7 hours) (47 Team Members)

Stump Cross Caverns, physically stuck

Caver became stuck in a very restricted passage whilst doing exploration. This made it difficult to reach him. Eventually slings were placed underneath him and with a rope attached to a pulley in the roof the patient was lifted clear of the restriction and then he was extricated after being stuck for 8 hrs. Passage widening took place with plugs and feathers.

24. Saturday 13 November 2010 by SMWCRT at 19:00 (for 1 hour 50 minutes)

OFD 2, lost or overdue

Party reported overdue. Rescue party sent to Maypole Inlet to look for overdue party but met them on the surface.

25. Monday 22 November 2010 by CRO at 19:28 (for 30 minutes) (4 Team Members)

Ireby Fell Cavern, lost or overdue

Two cavers 'lost' each other for a period whilst derigging and exiting the cave, resulting in one reporting the other as overdue. Shortly after CRO responded they both 'found' each other again and safely walked off the fell.

26. Sunday 12 December 2010 by ICRO at 16:30 (for 2½ hours) (6 Team Members)

Cascades Resurgence Cave, County Fermanagh, rock fall

ICRO were requested to attend an incident in Cascades Rising Cave (Cladagh Glen, County Fermanagh). As the first caver was exiting the constricted cave entrance a c.40kg boulder dislodged from the roof and rolled onto the cavers chest. The caver managed to move the boulder but as a result the route out of the cave for two cavers behind became blocked. Within three hours of the boulder fall, ICRO had cleared and stabilised the entrance allowing the remaining two cavers to be safely assisted from the cave.

27. Friday 31 December 2010 by CRO at 14:41 (for 1 hour 50 minutes) (18 Team Members)

Ibbeth Peril I, Dentdale, missing person

Caver (m, 43) reported missing after becoming separated from his companion in the Main Chamber. CRO responded but found both cavers safely on the surface on arrival in Dentdale.