



# British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

## Incident Report for Period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

	Cave Rescue Organisation <sup>(4)</sup>	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	Swaledale Mountain Rescue	Upper Wharfedale FRA	TOTALS	
<b>Caving Incidents</b>	9	0	0	4	0	1	1	6	0	0	1	0	5	0	2	29	
<b>Assisting Authorities<sup>(3)</sup></b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<b>Persons Assisted</b>	20	0	0	4	0	2	2	21	0	0	4	0	16	0	3	72	
<b>Fatalities</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<b>Persons Injured<sup>(1)**</sup></b>	5	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	
<b>Helicopter assistance<sup>(2)</sup></b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<b>Animal Incidents</b>	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	
<b>Reported Standbys</b>	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	6	
<b>Assistance to other teams</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	
<b>Totals Underground Incidents</b>	12	0	0	5	0	1	2	6	0	2	1	0	5	0	2	36	
<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 &amp; Wales) Incident Report for 2015.</p>																	
<b>Surface Incidents</b>	59	33	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	55	147
<b>Persons Assisted</b>	72	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	44	122
<b>Fatalities</b>	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	1	5
<b>Persons Injured</b>	41	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	35	78
<b>Surface Animal Incidents</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	1	1
<b>Reported Standbys</b>	8	15	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	2	27
<b>Assistance to other teams</b>	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	6	11
<b>Totals Surface Incidents</b>	64	33	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	62	161

### 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.
3. This row records incidents where assistance is requested by the authorities for non-caver incidents. These are identified on page 2 of the report.
4. '?' indicates that no report was received from the team.

Further details relating to this incident report or about the BCRC and its membership can be obtained from the Hon Secretary, Emma Porter via [secretary@caverescue.org.uk](mailto:secretary@caverescue.org.uk)



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## Summary of Incident Report, 2015

1. There was one underground caving fatality in 2015
  - A caver was killed in a rockfall, see incident 5
2. Of the 36 underground incidents, teams undertook 2 incidents assisting the police in the execution of their duty – incidents 1 and 3.
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

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Assist authorities	9	4	6	6	2	27
Cave diving	3					3
Exposure/exhausted	2		1			3
Fall	9	5	4	5	5	28
Flooding	2	2		1		5
Hung up			1			1
Lost/overdue	7	9	5	8	15	44
Medical emergency	4	1		1	4	10
Missing person	1					1
Other	1	2	2	1	2	8
Physically stuck	4	2	3	2		11
Rock fall	1	1	1	1	1	5
Self marooning		1		2	1	4
Unable to climb	1	1			1	3
Total	44	28	23	27	31	153

Table 2: Injuries incurred

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Arm/shoulder	2			2	1	5
Chest injuries	1	1			2	4
Drowned	2					2
Exhaustion/hypothermia	2	1	2		1	6
Femur/pelvis	1			1	1	3
Head injuries					1	1
Knee injuries	3				1	4
Lower leg/ankle	5	4	3	1		13
Lower arm/hand			1			1
Medical condition	3	1	1	1	2	8
Multiple					1	1
Other				1		1
Spine/back	1	2			2	5
Total	20	9	7	6	12	54

4. The Cave Rescue Organisation is based in Clapham, North Yorkshire.
5. The underground animal incidents included 1 lamb, 2 sheep, 1 cow and 1 dog.
6. In 2015, there was a total of 2109 hours spent on callouts by teams, with an average of 16 team members and 68 man-hours per incident. 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.



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## Summary of Incidents for 2015

- 1. Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> January at 17:40 by NWCRO: 2t, 3 hrs 20mins**  
*Twysfynydd, assist police*  
NWCRO called by police to examine collapsed tunnel in grounds of premises with concern regarding the whereabouts of the occupier. Subsequent information from NWP suggested occupier was elsewhere. NWCRO attended and provided advice, with no other action required.
- 2. Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January at 00:21 by CRO: 15t, 7 hrs 45mins**  
*OBJ Hole (Gaping Ghyll), self-marooned*  
Three cavers (m59, 52, 32) were reported overdue on a trip down OBJ Hole into Gaping Gill. CRO search parties found the cave only partially rigged, with no indication of the cavers' whereabouts. Further searches of Bar Pot eventually established contact with the overdue cavers who had self marooned at the Flood Entrance Pot side of the Horrocks-Steam crawl, having pulled their ropes down and then failed to negotiate the connecting crawl, preventing their intended exit via Stile Pot. The three were escorted out to the surface via Wades Entrance and brought down to Clapham.
- 3. Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January at 10:00 by CRO: 5t, 2 hrs**  
*Greta Woods (Burton in Lonsdale), assist authorities*  
CRO were asked by Burton in Lonsdale Parish Council to investigate an apparent mineshaft which had appeared in Greta Woods, Burton in Lonsdale. A small team from CRO went to investigate and check for foul air. A gas detector revealed that there were no harmful vapours present and an assessment of the hole showed that it was probably a collapsed buried kiln, measuring 8m deep.
- 4. Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January at 14:47 by CRO: 19t, 2 hrs 30mins**  
*Lower Long Churn Cave (Alum Pot), medical emergency*  
A novice caver (f14) suffered a very painful locked hip joint while exiting Lower Long Churn Cave in a school group. After the call had been made to the Police, other cavers moved her to the cave entrance. Having administered pain relief, CRO members gave her shelter and then carried her to an air ambulance for the flight to hospital.
- 5. Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February at 18:35 by CRO: 38t, 8 hrs**  
*Bull Pot (West Kingsdale), rockfall*  
Experienced caver (m50) suffered multiple severe injuries near the top of the fifth pitch in Bull Pot as a result of a large rock fall. During an eight hour operation CRO teams employed a variety of rock removal techniques to extract him before bringing his body up to the surface. **Fatal.**
- 6. Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February at 21:03 by Derbyshire CRO: 29t, 2 hrs 30 mins**  
*Giants Hole (Castleton), unable to climb*  
A novice caver (f19) was unable to climb Garlands Pot due to exhaustion and cold. Once up the pitch she was warmed up in dry clothes and a shelter. She was then able to make her own way to the surface with help.
- 7. Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March at 21:20 by SMWCRT: 8t, 2 hrs 15 mins**  
*Cwm Dwr (Ogof Ffynnon Ddu), overdue*  
Party (2f, ages unknown) reported overdue. Found at the Cwm Dwr boulder choke and escorted out. Trip had taken longer than expected due to tiredness.
- 8. Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March at 00:08 by SMWCRT: 3t, 1 hr**  
*Ogof Draenan (Llangattock), overdue*  
Party of cavers (3m, 1f, ages unknown) reported overdue. They exited the cave before team members arrived on scene, and the team was stood down. Route finding problems had resulted in the trip taking much longer than expected.
- 9. Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April at 18:00 by CRO: 40t, 5 hrs 30mins**  
*King Pot (East Kingsdale), other*  
Two cavers (m50, f28) were reported in difficulties in King Pot. The rescue team entered the pot and managed to assist the cavers concerned, who had encountered problems at T piece passage. The cavers were then escorted to the surface, and made their way off the hill under their own steam, before being given a lift back to their car. Assisted by UWFRA.
- 10. Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 19:00 by GCRG: 15t, 3 hrs 30mins**  
*Old Ham Mine (Clearwell), lost*  
Family party (m45, 12) became lost during a trip. The party were located safe, although cold and tired. After some food, they were escorted to the surface.
- 11. Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 21:03 by Derbyshire CRO: 42t, 3 hrs**  
*Giant's Hole (Castleton), fall*  
Caver (m20s) suffered an uncontrolled descent of Garlands Pot, landing on his back. After hauling up the pitch and being examined by team doctors he was able to make his own way to the surface with help. 2 broken ribs were diagnosed at hospital. The incident was possibly caused by using an 8mm rope in a Stop with which he had little experience.
- 12. Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May at 14:32 by CRO: 17t, 1 hr 20mins**  
*White Scar Caves (Ingleborough), fall*  
Tourist (f62) stumbled and hit her head on the show cave roof, suffering neck pain and headaches. She was assessed by the team doctor, and after pain relief, assisted out.
- 13. Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May at 13:55 by Derbyshire CRO: 3t, 1hr 25mins**  
*Mouldridge Mine (Pikehall), overdue*  
A caver (m58) was reported overdue after failing to contact home by agreed time. Team members dispatched to investigate but stood down after caver rang home. Poor mobile reception had delayed his call. False alarm with good intent.
- 14. Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June at 12:00 by SMWCRT: 15t, 5 hrs 30 mins**  
*Ogof Daren Cilau (Llangattock), overdue*  
Party of cavers (m27, 26) reported overdue due to confusion about the callout time. With a search ongoing, the cavers exited via Prices Dig. They were unsure if they had specified 12am or 12pm as the callout.
- 15. Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June at 19:40 by SCRO: 3t, 1hr**  
*Bowden Hill Mine (Torpichen), overdue*  
Family party (27, 21, 15, 10) went underground at 17:30, leaving others on surface. After 90 minutes they became concerned and called the emergency services. Fire Officers at the mine entrance encountered the four exiting the mine. All four explorers were fine and very surprised at attention.
- 16. Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June at 11:57 by CRO: 16t, 1 hr 30mins**  
*White Scar Caves (Ingleborough), medical emergency*  
A tourist (m70) collapsed near the Battlefield at the far end of the show cave. He was treated by paramedics before being stretchered out to a waiting ambulance.
- 17. Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June at 22:00 by MCR: 2t, 2hrs**  
*Box Mine (Wiltshire), lost*  
Group (4m, 1f, ages unknown) had got lost on their way out of the mine but had been able to make contact with a person on the surface via an open shaft. They called Wiltshire Fire Service for assistance, who subsequently contacted MCR. Whilst awaiting



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the rescue team one of the party who was diabetic felt unwell. Assistance was provided from the surface by lowering sugar products, as requested by the person. On arrival at the scene the MCR members assisted with the guidance of the group out of the mine.

- 18. Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July at 13:00 by MCR: 1t, 1hr**  
*Goatchurch Cavern (Burrington Combe), medical emergency*  
Male caver (age unknown) suffered a knee injury. He had self-extricated by the arrival of the rescue warden, and care was continued by the ambulance service.
- 19. Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July at 18:19 by CRO: 19t, 30 mins**  
*Runscar Cave (Ribblehead), fall*  
A caver (age unknown) suffered fall and brief loss of consciousness. The callout was initially made to Yorkshire Ambulance Service, with CRO called 20 minutes later. Team attendance was delayed by significant local surface flooding affecting Chapel le Dale, although not Ribblehead itself. Meanwhile, the casualty had recovered sufficiently to walk out accompanied by his companions, and he was met by the ambulance service.
- 20. Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August at 20:15 by MCR: 24t, 5hrs**  
*Templeton Dig (Priddy), fall*  
An experienced male caver (age unknown) fell almost 15 metres down Echo Pot, a recently found shaft at the bottom of Templeton, sustaining several serious injuries including fractured ribs, a punctured lung and spinal injuries. A protracted rescue ensued due to the number of injuries and the difficulties of the cave passage involved, including hauling out of the approx. 70mtr entrance shaft which comprises various levels of platforms and steel bracing in place. The team were assisted by the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue service, South Western Ambulance service and Wiltshire Air Ambulance.
- 21. Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August at 21:30 by UWFRA: 29t, 7 hrs**  
*Dowbergill Passage (Great Whernside), lost*  
Two cavers (m64, 54) were reported overdue on a through trip to Providence Pot, having entered Dow Cave at 11:00. A full callout was initiated with teams sent into both entrances. The cavers had completed the traverse of Dowbergill but had been unable to find the exit point despite searching for 5 hours. They were located by the Providence Pot team, cold and somewhat embarrassed, but otherwise well after 14 hours underground.
- 22. Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August at 14:00 by ICRO: 35t, 6 hrs**  
*Poulnagollum (Co Clare), lost*  
Family party (m60s, m20s) got lost and could not find their way out at the main junction despite searching all night. They decided to sit it out and await rescue. The men were successfully located, cold and tired but otherwise well.
- 23. Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August at 13:05 by UWFRA: 19t, 2 hrs 30mins**  
*Manchester Hole (Nidderdale), fall*  
A caver (f26) fell just inside the entrance, suffering a lower back injury. After treatment by paramedics she was stretched out by the team
- 24. Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September at 18:00 by MCR: 4t, 1 hr**  
*Swildon's Hole (Priddy), overdue*  
Party of cavers (4m, ages unknown) reported overdue as they were 30 minutes past their call out time. On arrival of the rescue wardens at Priddy Green the missing party had just arrived back at their cars having taken longer than expected.
- 25. Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October at 00:50 by CRO: 26t, 8 hrs 30mins**  
*Lancaster Hole (Easegill), lost*  
Party of cavers (m32, m32, m31, f26) became lost on through trip. They were located by one of three search teams and escorted to Lancaster Hole entrance where they were hauled to the surface (due to fatigue). Assisted by UWFRA
- 26. Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November at 14:30 by Derbyshire CRO: 12t, 45 mins**  
*Blue John Cavern (Castleton), medical emergency*  
A tourist (m77) had got into difficulty on the steps. DCRO was called to assist. The team was mobilised but on arrival with mountain rescue found that the ambulance crew had already got the casualty to the surface. He had apparently only been halfway down the first steps.
- 27. Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 22:45 by SMWCRT: 9t, 2 hrs 30mins**  
*Ogof Daren Cilau (Llangattock), overdue*  
Party of cavers (m40, 24, f25, 23) were reported overdue. They were quickly located and escorted to the surface. Route finding difficulties contributed to a slower than expected trip.
- 28. Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December at 01:20 by SMWCRT: 14t, 1 hr 30mins**  
*Ogof Daren Cilau (Llangattock), overdue*  
Immediately after the previous rescue had concluded, another party (m23, 22, 21, f19) were reported overdue. The party was located moving slowly due to tiredness, and escorted to the surface.
- 29. Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December at 20:00 by MCR: 8t, 1 hr**  
*Eastwater Cavern (Priddy), overdue*  
Party of cavers (6m, ages unknown) reported overdue. On arrival of the rescue team at the cave entrance they encountered the overdue party who had taken longer than expected.
- 30. Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December at 16:30 by MCR: 1t, 30 mins**  
*Eastwater Cavern (Priddy), overdue*  
Party of cavers (3m, 1f, ages unknown) reported overdue. A warden was near the cave at the time and checked the entrance and found the overdue party just exiting the cave.
- 31. Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> December at 20:30 by CRO: 23t, 5 hrs 20mins**  
*Pool Sink (Easegill), medical emergency*  
Caver (f26) aggravated a previous injury and dislocated her shoulder while prussiking up pitch. She was attended by the team doctor and the shoulder relocated and splinted. Despite the injury she was able to aid in her evacuation with some assistance. Once on the surface, she was stretchered to a team vehicle for transfer to Bull Pot farm and a waiting ambulance.