



# British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

## Incident Report for Period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017

	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	1	1	6	-	1	-	7	-	-	-	-	5	-	2	32
<b>Assisting Authorities<sup>(1)</sup></b>	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Persons Assisted</b>	12	1	1	17	-	1	-	23	-	-	-	-	19	-	-	74
<b>Fatalities</b>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Persons Injured<sup>(2)</sup></b>	6	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
<b>Helicopter assistance<sup>(3)</sup></b>	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
<b>Animal Incidents</b>	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	1	1	11
<b>Reported Standbys</b>	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	8	-	-	1	-	2	-	1	15
<b>Assistance to other teams</b>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
<b>Totals Underground Incidents</b>	9	3	2	8	0	1	0	7	0	2	0	0	8	1	3	44
<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 2016.</p>																
<b>Surface Incidents</b>	67	21	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	40	129
<b>Persons Assisted</b>	88	23	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	51	163
<b>Fatalities</b>	3	41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	3	7
<b>Persons Injured</b>	38	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	30	72
<b>Surface Animal Incidents</b>	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	-	5
<b>Reported Standbys</b>	8	9	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	?	7	28
<b>Assistance to other teams</b>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	-	1
<b>Totals Surface Incidents</b>	72	21	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	?	40	205

### Notes:

1. This row records incidents where assistance is requested by the authorities for non-caver incidents. These are identified on page 2 of the report.
2. Injuries include those assisted for a medical condition, but exclude cavers assisted through exhaustion.
3. This row records use of helicopter to evacuate a caving casualty.
4. The Cave Rescue Organisation is based in Clapham, North Yorkshire.
5. '?' 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, 2017

1. There was one underground fatality in 2017
  - A caver was found deceased – incident 33
2. There were one incident where a team assisted the authorities in the execution of their duties – incident 15.
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

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Assist authorities	6	6	2	2	-	16
Exposure/exhausted	1	-	-	-	-	1
Fall	4	5	5	5	6	25
Flooding	-	1	-	-	-	1
Hung up	1	-	-	-	-	1
Lost/overdue	5	8	15	3	15	46
Marooned	-	-	-	1	-	1
Medical emergency	-	1	4	-	3	8
Missing person	-	-	-	-	3	3
Other	2	1	2	1	-	6
Physically stuck	3	2	-	3	5	13
Rock fall	1	1	1	1	-	4
Self marooning	-	2	1	-	-	3
Unable to climb	-	-	1	2	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>133</b>

Table 2: Injuries incurred

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Arm/shoulder	-	2	1	2	1	6
Chest injuries	-	-	2	-	-	2
Exhaustion/hypothermia	2	-	1	2	1	6
Femur/pelvis	-	1	1	-	2	4
Head injuries	-	-	1	1	1	3
Knee injuries	-	-	1	1	-	2
Lower leg/ankle	3	1	-	3	1	8
Lower arm/hand	1	-	-	-	-	1
Medical condition	1	1	2	-	2	6
Multiple	-	-	1	-	1	2
Other	-	1	-	-	-	1
Spine/back	-	-	2	-	-	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>43</b>

4. The underground animal incidents included 1 sheep, 2 cows and 8 dogs.
5. In 2017, there was a total of 1436 hours spent on callouts by teams, with an average of 12 team members and 44 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 2017

- Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January at 23:15 by SMWCRT: 12t, 2h**  
*Daren Cilau (Llangattock), overdue*  
A group of 5 cavers (4m, f) set a callout with a parent, who panicked in the late evening and called the police. The party exited the cave well within their callout time, unaware rescue had been called. False alarm
- Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January at 21:06 by SMWCRT: 25t, 2hr 45 mins**  
*Ogof Ffynnon Ddu (Penwylt), lost/overdue*  
A part of novices and one leader (4f, m) undertook a through trip from OFD 1 to Top Entrance. The novices became very tired and made slow progress, along with suffering light issues. The group did not know how to exit via Cwm Dwr, and became lost in Salubrious passage. They were found at the Judge and Trident, and after feeding and rewarming, were assisted out.
- Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 15:54 by CRO: 13t, 50mins**  
*White Scar Cave (Ingleborough), slip/trip*  
A tourist (f79) tripped while on a show cave tour, sustaining facial injuries. CRO attended along with paramedics, and after treatment the casualty walked out unaided.
- Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April at 15:59 by CRO: 4t, 1 hour**  
*Long Kin East, lost/overdue*  
A party of 5 cavers (m36, 30, 30, 26, f29) were reported overdue. A small team made initial inquiries at the cave and the party was reported safe before a wider callout had been initiated.
- Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April at 18:27 by DCRO: 8hrs 30, 20t**  
*Jug Holes (Matlock), lost/overdue*  
Party of three (m70, 66, f26) including one novice. After exploring the Upper Series, two waited while the third went to look further. He did not return, and as the other two did not know the way out they remained where they were. After the alarm was raised that the party were overdue a team attended and rapidly found the party of two, escorting them out to the surface. Two searches of the cave and subsequent searches on the surface failed to find the third person. He was eventually found, uninjured, during a third search and escorted out. Assistance provided by SARDA dog team.
- Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April at 21:42 by UWFR: 22t, 9hrs 18mins**  
*Swan Dike Pot (Penyghent Gill), physically stuck*  
A caver (m) passed through a tight restriction on the way in, but was unable to return. The restriction was widened and after several hours the caver was released. Assistance provided by CRO and SMRT.
- Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April at 23:32 by DCRO: 4t, 10mins**  
*Peak Cavern (Castleton), lost/overdue*  
A party of ten descended James Hall Over Engine Mine on a through trip to Peak Cavern via the White River Series. The party was reported overdue at 22.21. DCRO was mobilized but were informed that party had surfaced safely a few minutes later, and rapidly stood down.
- Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April at 12:01 by DCRO: 29t, 5hrs**  
*Peak Cavern (Castleton), medical emergency*  
A novice caver (m28) suffered a recurrent dislocation of his shoulder whilst negotiating a short squeeze under a boulder about 50 metres downstream of Surprise View. After attempts to relocate the dislocation underground had failed, the casualty was splinted and assisted back to the surface.
- Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May at 14:13 by GCRG: 2t, 1hr 30mins**  
*Cowhill Cave (Hewelsfield), overdue*  
Police noted that a van belonging to a known caver (m50) had been parked in a layby, near Cowhill Cave, for an extended period. They raised the alarm concerned he may be overdue. Two GCRG members attended and found him merrily digging away! False alarm with good intent
- Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May at 13:02 by CRO: 13t, 2hrs**  
*Long Churn Cave (Selside), fall*  
A caver (m47) slipped, and while trying to break his fall suffered a probable dislocation of his shoulder. He was given pain relief by CRO, and assisted out of the cave to a waiting ambulance.
- Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 16:57 by CRO: 15t, 3 hrs**  
*Simpson's Pot (West Kingsdale), self-marooning*  
A caver (m59) on a pull through trip from Simpson's Cave to Valley Entrance was physically unable to pass the constriction at Slit Pot. A small team re-rigged the pitch and assisted the cold but otherwise unhurt casualty through, from where he was able to make his own way out.
- Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May at 12:03 by CRO: 32t, 3 hrs**  
*Gaping Gill (Ingleborough), fall*  
A young person (m11) slipped while exploring Sand Cavern during the winch meet. He sustained injuries to his hip and lower chest. With the assistance of several BPC members he was stretchered to the Main Chamber. He was able to exit via the winch, before being handed over to the Yorkshire Air Ambulance for ongoing care.
- Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May at 15:00 by CRO: 14t, 2hrs**  
*Gaping Gill (Ingleborough), medical emergency*  
During the previous incident (no 11), a caver (m60) developed chest pain while in Gaping Gill Main chamber. After assessment, he was able to ascend on the winch where he was reviewed by a paramedic from the previous incident. He was then evacuated via the Air Ambulance.
- Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June at 12:43 by DCRO: 10t, 2hrs 18mins**  
*Masson Cavern, Heights of Abraham (Matlock), slip*  
A pregnant tourist (f30s) on a show cave trip tripped/fell and injured her ankle. She was attended to by ambulance paramedics and then a joint DCRO/EMAS HART team operation brought her out of the cave to the surface.
- Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June at 13:52 by Cornwall SAR: 4t, 4 hours**  
*Mineshafts near Cheeswring Quarry (Bodmin Moor), missing person*  
Cornwall SAR were called out to search for a missing person (f). As well as an extensive above ground search including SARDA dogs, the Mines Rescue section searched 2 large shafts. Fortunately, she was located unharmed on the surface.
- Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July at 22:00 by MCR: 4t, 1hr**  
*Box Mines (Wiltshire), marooned*  
A party of 5 entered via Back Door entrance to undertake a through trip to Jacks Workings. A grill had recently been placed over the exit by the landowners, preventing their exit. A small team rapidly located the group and escorted them out via Lady Hamilton's entrance.
- Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July at 03:00 by MCR: 4t, 1hr 30mins**  
*Box Mines (Wiltshire), marooned*  
A party of 6 entered via Back door entrance and encountered the same problem with the new grill at Jacks Workings. They were escorted out via Lady Hamilton's entrance.



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18. **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July at 13:30 by SMWCRT: 29t, 5hr 30mins**  
*Ogof Ffynnon Ddu (Penwylt), physically stuck*  
A group of 3 cavers were heading through a tight rift towards the Prokofiev series in OFD 2. The first passed the constriction, but the second (f28) became trapped by her knee, blocking the exit. The remaining caver exited to raise the alarm, and a team of small cavers mobilised. She was eventually freed, and exited under her own steam.
19. **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July at 20:18 by MCR: 4t, 2hrs**  
*Box Mines (Wiltshire), lost*  
A party of 9 were attempting a through trip from Back Door to Jacks Workings when two members (m,f) became separated. A small team quickly located them, and after some food and rearming they were escorted out.
20. **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August at 16:40 by MCR: 9t, 3hrs 10**  
*Goatchurch Cavern (Burrington), physically stuck*  
A member of an instructed party (m16) became stuck in the Superman squeeze. Plugs and feathers were used to enlarge the squeeze and he was hauled out, before being escorted out.
21. **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August at 15:37 by DCRO: 4t, 5hrs**  
*Castleton area, missing person*  
DCRO was asked to support a surface search for a missing, potentially suicidal man from Sheffield whose car had been found in the Castleton area. A number of entrances and small caves/mines were investigated before the search was stood down.
22. **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August at 23:20 by MCR: 4t, 1hr**  
*Box Mines (Wiltshire), lost*  
In a recurring theme, a party of 2 cavers found themselves trapped by the new grill at Lady Hamilton's entrance. A small team rapidly located them and escorted them out.
23. **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> August at 11:38 by CRO: 8t, 2hrs 7mins**  
*Gaping Gill (Inglebrough), fall*  
A caver (m) fell approximately 6m in the Main Chamber, sustaining multiple injuries including wrist, lower leg and rib fractures, as well as significant facial injuries. CRO were called, but by their arrival he had been winched to the surface by members of the Craven, including a doctor. CRO members assisted with his transfer to the Air Ambulance.
24. **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August at 19:45 by MCR: 3t, 1hr**  
*Brown's Folly Mine (Wiltshire), lost*  
A caver (f22) became separated from her party. On surfacing, her colleagues realised she was still underground. She was quickly located sitting in a side passage, and escorted out unharmed.
25. **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September at 20:00 by DCRO: 19t, 3hrs 10 mins**  
*Knotlow Cavern (Monyash), unable to climb*  
A caver (f20) had reached the Waterfall Chamber in Knotlow and got into difficulties trying to prusik up the 9 metre Waterfall Pitch. She was hanging under a waterfall for some time before being able to get back down to the chamber. She was too cold and exhausted to attempt the climb again. The 65m Waterfall Shaft was rigged by DCRO, and after being checked over by the team doctor, she was hauled to the surface.
26. **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September at 00:40 by MCR: 4t, 2hrs 25mins**  
*Brown's Folly Mine (Wiltshire), overdue*  
A party of 6 cavers were reported overdue from an evening trip. A small team performed a sweep search and rapidly located the missing party. They were escorted to the surface unharmed.
27. **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September at 19:18 by COMRU: 10t, 4hrs**  
*The Attic Cave (Doves Nest Crag), physically stuck*  
A climber (f20s) slipped leading to her entrapment in natural 'cave rift' slot. This is an unusual climb as the crag face has detached in very large sections, creating an 'underground' pitch in the route. COMRU personnel and equipment were airlifted to the site to provide technical equipment and skills. The casualty was extracted with a technical rope haul, having suffered bruising and minor lacerations to her leg where she had been trapped. She was walked off with assistance. Combined rescue with KMRT.
28. **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September at 11:32 by CRO: 8t, 2 hrs**  
*White Scar Cave, medical emergency*  
A tourist (m65) collapsed with chest pains halfway along the show cave. After assessment and treatment by paramedics, he was evacuated by stretcher to a road ambulance for ongoing treatment.
29. **Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 15:30 by SMWCRT: 23t, 1hr 30mins**  
*Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, lost/overdue*  
Two cavers (m) were reported overdue from a round trip in OFD 1. Water levels were higher than expected, requiring a return via the Dry Way, which took longer than expected. The party exited while search parties were being organised.
30. **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September at 13:04 by Cornwall SAR: 12t, 5 hours**  
*Unnamed mine, Cot Valley (St Just), fall*  
A walker (m50) fell 15 metres down a mineshaft after the cover gave way, suffering significant injuries including a broken pelvis. A paramedic was lowered to the casualty, before a technical haul out, complicated by a constriction in the shaft. The casualty was then flown to hospital by Coastguard helicopter.
31. **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October at 20:05 by SMWCRT: 15t, 1hr 35 mins**  
*Ogof Ffynnon Ddu (Penwylt), lost/overdue*  
A party of 5 novices with a leader (m26, 18; f25, 23, 22, 19) attempted a round trip in OFD 2 with an incomplete survey. One party member had a panic attack over traverses and took time to be persuaded back over them when it was discovered this was the wrong way. They then became lost in Salubrious passage. They were given hot drinks and food before making their own way back down the hill.
32. **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October by UWFRA: 2t, 1hr 30mins**  
*Dowbergill Passage (Kettlewell), overdue*  
UWFRA were called out for a party of four cavers overdue on a through trip. Two team members made initial investigations, and found some of the party already out of the cave. The remaining cavers were quickly met at Dowbergill Junction, at which point the main team was stood down.
33. **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 17:18 by CRO: 24t, 4hrs 45mins**  
*Ewes Top Moss Pot, missing person*  
CRO were asked to assist North Yorkshire Police in a missing person search. Information from the police suggested Ewe Top Moss Pot as a possible area of interest. Unfortunately, the body of the missing caver (m68) was soon discovered. Removal of his body was complicated due to severe decomposition, and he is thought to have died up to 4 months prior to discovery. **FATAL**