



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Incident Report for Period 1st January 2005 - 31st December 2005

	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	Upper Wharfedale FRA	West Brecon Cave Rescue Team	TOTALS
Caving Incidents	8	-(6)	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	3	5	21
Assisting Authorities ⁽³⁾	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	7
Persons Assisted	11	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	17
Fatalities	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Persons Injured ⁽¹⁾	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4
Helicopter assistance ⁽²⁾	1 ⁽¹⁾	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Animal Incidents	4	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	3	15
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals Underground Incidents	12	-	1	2	4	-	1	1	3	-	-	2	-	3	6	8	43
<small>'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 2005.</small>																	
Surface Incidents	29	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	20	-	65
Persons Assisted	47	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	22	-	84
Fatalities	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	6
Persons Injured	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	12	-	42
Surface Animal Incidents	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	9
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Totals Surface Incidents	34	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	24	-	74

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. **COMRU** were called to assist at the Carlisle floods on 8th and 9th January 2005, providing assistance with the evacuation and communications logistics.
6. **Cornwall Mines Rescue** volunteered their assistance during the London bombings of the 7th July 2005 and was asked to remain on standby. In the event their services were not required.

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



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Summary of Incident Report, 2005

- There were 2 underground caving fatalities in 2005:
 - a caver diver incident – incident 7
 - a member of a party from an organised trip – incident 24
- Rescue teams undertook 7 incidents assisting the authorities (police, ambulance) in the execution of their duty – incidents 9, 15, 16, 17, 25, 26 and 27.
Incidents 17 involved a fatality found by other agencies.
Incidents 15 and 26 are believed by the Police concerned to involve a fatality although at the time of publishing this report, no body has been found.
- 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

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
assist police	3	8	6	8	7	32
exposure/exhausted	1	1	2		2	6
fall	3	6	6	6	3	24
flooding	2	1	1	1		5
hung up				1		1
lost or overdue	2	5	6	7	9	29
medical emergency	2	2		2		6
missing person			2			2
other	2	1		2	3	8
physically stuck	1		2	1	2	6
rock fall	1		1	1	1	4
self marooning	1					1
unable to climb		3	1	1		5
cave diving					1	1
Total	18	27	27	30	28	130

Table 2: Injuries Incurred

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
arm/humerous shoulder	1	2	1	2		6
Chest Injuries	2	1				3
Drowned	2	1			2	5
Exhaustion/hypothermia	3	2	2	2	2	11
femur - pelvic injuries	1		3	1		5
Head Injuries				1		1
Knee Injuries				1	1	2
leg - lower/ankle	1		1	2	2	6
Medical condition	1	2	1			4
Spine/back injuries		3	1	2	1	7
Other				1		1
Total	11	11	9	12	8	51

- 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 5 dogs, 4 sheep and 5 lambs.
- Attendance of rescue personnel at incidents has been recorded below; not all incidents are fully reported.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of Incidents	30	33	17	25	25	29	27
Average number of people on incident	12	15	16	15	19	19	22
Average effort in "man" hours	48.5	88.25	168	82	180	112	214

These figures are very approximate and do not include equipment maintenance and re-equipping of rescue vehicles. The effort contribution of the Cwm Dwr/OFD rescue (incident 13 below) has been carefully estimated to avoid skewing the figures disproportionately.

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 2005

- 1. Saturday 29 January by CRO at 19:50 (for 2¼ hours)**
(19 rescue team members)
Dolly Tubs, Alum Pot, exposure/exhausted
Caver (m58) unable to climb the 15 metre Dolly Tubs Pitch in Lower Long Churn. The pitch was re-rigged and he was hauled up the pitch and assisted out of the cave.
- 2. Sunday 6 February by UWFRA at 23:30 (for 1 hour)**
(6 rescue team members)
Birks Fell, lost or overdue
Solo caver (m) entered the cave sometime in the afternoon and was reported overdue. He was found changing by the roadside by the lead rescue team.
- 3. Sunday 20 February by CRO at 11:45 (for 1 hour)**
(3 rescue team members)
Lancaster Hole, lost or overdue
Party reported some 20 hours overdue. Investigations by police and CRO revealed that Saturday's date had been put on the trip board at Bull Pot Farm instead of Sunday's.
- 4. Sunday 27 February by CRO at 18:04 (for 3½ hours)**
(18 rescue team members)
Lancaster Hole - Wretched Rabbit, lost or overdue
Two cavers (m23, f24) reported overdue on through trip. They were last seen at the Minarets. They were found at Stake Pot and escorted out of the cave. Having been unable to find their way out from Fall Pot to the Lancaster entrance, they had returned to Stake Pot.
- 5. Thursday 3 March by MRO at 13:45 (for 45 minutes)**
(5 rescue team members)
Goatchurch Cavern, physically stuck
Caver (m) wedged by leg in one of the smaller passages at the bottom of the Coal Chute. It seems the initial callout was imprecise and MRO arrived to find five fire engines and two ambulances at the scene and blocking the road. The caver was freed and assisted to the surface.
- 6. Saturday 12 March by CRO at 13:50 (for 9 hours)**
(38 rescue team members)
Roaring Hole, Chapel-le-Dale, rock fall
Caver (m36) sustained a fractured leg after a belay failed causing a 2 metre fall and the boulder then landed on his leg. Restricted passages and difficult boulder chokes meant stretcher could not be used effectively. Pain relief was administered and the leg splinted. Casualty was then hauled up the pitches and assisted along passages. Due to his efforts, the surface was made at 21:30 and he was evacuated by RAF Sea King Helicopter; but for efforts of casualty rescue would otherwise have been considerably longer.
- 7. Sunday 13 March by CRO at 16:00 (for 13 hours)**
(29 rescue team members)
Low Birkwith Cave, Ribblesdale, cave diving
Caver diver (m,29) was reported overdue. Search by cave divers from the CDG in poor visibility located his **body** in the second sump, some 75 metres from the entrance. Hillside Pot (above the start of the second sump) was opened and he was recovered by this route. Assisted by North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue and members of the CDG.
- 8. Saturday 19 March by GwentCRT at 22:20 (for 25 minutes)(1 rescue team members)**
Ogof Draenen, lost or overdue
Party of 5 (4m, f) reported overdue. Party emerged from cave before rescue got underway.
- 9. Thursday 24 March by COMRU at 20:00 (for 6 hours)**
(10 rescue team members)
Underground & quarry sites, Great Langdale, Cumbria, assist police
Asked to search for a missing male in underground and quarry locations in area. Nothing found during search. He was located 3 days later in a campsite in Langdale.
- 10. Sunday 27 March by CRO at 17:09 (for 2¼ hours)**
(26 rescue team members)
Diccan Pot, Ribblesdale, lost or overdue
Caver (m,47) reported overdue after staying to derig the cave from the third pitch out and failing to surface. He was located ascending the first pitch and was assisted to the surface.
- 11. Saturday 14 May by MRO at 13:30 (for 6 hours)**
(40 rescue team members)
Priddy Green Sink/Swildons Hole, fall
Caver (m19) abseiling through Priddy Green Sink into Swildons suffered a 20ft (6 metres) fall which ended with a pendulum into the pitch wall, shattering a kneecap. Members of his party lowered the caver down the next pitch making him accessible to the rescue team from the Swildons 4 streamway. This avoided the team having to enter through Priddy Green Sink and thus saved considerable time.

The first team members splinted the injury and lowered the casualty down Cowsh Aven into the Swildons 4 streamway proper. Here a stark decision needed to be made - whether to evacuate through the twisting, tight Blue Pencil passage and back through Paradise Regained, or a trip through the sumps III, II and I to the main Swildons cave. The casualty was not a cave diver, but had some open water experience, thus the through the sumps option was selected. A crash-course in cave diving followed and with the close attention of 4 cave divers he was safely on the upstream side of sump 1 at 18:45.

Progress through the remainder of the cave was then quickly made partly due to the fortitude of the casualty and the hard work and efforts of the rescue team. The casualty made the surface at 20:40. Assisted by members of the Cave Diving Group.
- 12. Wednesday 18 May by UWFRA at 12:30 (for 3 hours)**
(10 rescue team members)
Goyden Pot, Nidderdale, other
Called to attend caver (m, 30ish) reported in distress in pothole. The man was brought to the surface and handed onto the police.
- 13. Saturday 28 May by WBCRT at 15:15 (for 2¼ hours)**
(170 rescue team members)
Cwm Dwr/OFD II, fall
Caver (f,19) suffered a fall of some 6 metres down one of the holes in the Smithy in Cwm Dwr at about 14:30. The first rescue party established the extent of the injuries precluded an evacuation through Cwm Dwr, meaning a full stretcher carry up the OFD II streamway was the only choice. It was clear a lengthy rescue would require further personnel and an extended callout was made.

The casualty was packaged in the stretcher, hauled up out of the hole and carried to the Confluence where the OFD streamway is gained. Here a WBCRT doctor joined the team.

The suspected injuries meant that the carry out of the cave would require great care and to reduce the threat of hypothermia required that the casualty be kept as dry as possible. Thus the carry up the streamway was very difficult and was not helped by the low water conditions which reduced the effectiveness of the floating stretcher. Further moving the bulky stretcher through the constricted sections of the cave was very difficult.

Problems with communications were inevitable on a rescue of this extent and difficulty. Reports at 00:45 indicated the rescue party had progressed further than expected. When comms was re-established the casualty was at the First River Chamber and was thus further from the entrance than anticipated. Further calls for manpower were made.



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

- The casualty arrived at the Stretcher Haul near the Maypole Inlet and a horizontal haul up the pitch required a change to vertical to transfer the casualty into the passage at the head of the pitch. This went smoothly. During the carry through to the Top Entrance, there was a deterioration in the casualties condition; medical intervention succeeded in stabilising her condition. On arrival at the surface at 18:00 29 May, she was airlifted to hospital by Air Ambulance. Assisted by GloucesterCRG, GwentCRT, MendipRO, MidlandsCRO, and individuals of local caving clubs.
- 14. Sunday 19 June by WBCRT at 18:00 (for 2½ hours) (15 rescue team members)**
OFD II, lost or overdue
Cavers (m20, m20, m25, f21, f22) overdue on through trip from Cwm Dwr. Found at Corkscrew and escorted out.
- 15. Saturday 9 July by Swaledale MRT at 10:00 (for 2½ hours) (6 rescue team members)**
Disused mines at and about NZ133004, assist police
Search for missing person (f,20) at request of police. Search of disused lead mines in the area defined by the police. This was followed by a surface search. Nothing was found.
- 16. Sunday 7 August by DerbyCRO at 11:45 (for ¾ hours) (7 rescue team members)**
Blue John Cavern, Castleton, assist authorities
Assisted paramedics to carry casualty (m,74) up show cave steps in their ambulance chair.
- 17. Saturday 20 August by ScotCRO at 11:25 (for 19 hours) (10 rescue team members)**
Livingston, West Lothian, assist police
Schoolboy (m,11) went missing after being dropped near his school on the Thursday morning. By the Friday evening a list of culverts, storm drains and the like had been compiled. SCRO were called in to search these and other mines and caves in the area. Nothing was found. Local children pointed out further holes.
Sunday 21st August. Further workings and underground locations searched. During this period a pair of jeans and a black T-shirt were located. A body was found by search dogs on the surface and the team was stood down at 16:45. The clothes mentioned above were documented and collected by the police.
- 18. Saturday 3 September by WBCRT at 16:45 (for 3½ hours) (7 rescue team members)**
OFD II - Cwm dwr, other
Caver (m,45) declined to exit cave through the very difficult route chosen by the leader of his party. Rescue team located and brought him out through an easier route.
- 19. Sunday 4 September by CRO at 02:15 (for 4½ hours) (24 rescue team members)**
Hammer Pot, Fountains Fell, physically stuck
Two cavers (m22, m21) reported stuck in Stemple Rift; third caver (m,33) reported marooned behind them. They were eventually 'persuaded' to climb out and were escorted to the surface.
- 20. Tuesday 11 October by WBCRT at 18:30 (for ½ hour) (10 rescue team members)**
Dan-y-Ogof, Swansea Valley, lost or overdue
Cavers (3m, 2f) overdue. Party were found leaving the cave as the rescue team arrived.
- 21. Sunday 16 October by MRO at 19:27**
Priddy Green Caves, lost or overdue
Contacted by Avon and Somerset Police who had received a report regarding an overdue caver. Priddy Green checked for cars with a negative result. Telephone calls to club huts located the group.
- 22. Thursday 27 October by CRO at 11:55 (for 1¼ hours) (3 rescue team members)**
Aygill Caverns, Casterton Fell, lost or overdue
- Entry on the trip board at Bull Pot Farm indicated caver was overdue from solo trip the previous evening. Telephone calls revealed the caver had been digging and had safely left the cave the previous evening and had failed to remove the entry.
- 23. Sunday 13 November by ScotCRO at 14:45 (for 4 hours) (8 rescue team members)**
Allt nan Uamh Stream Cave, Sutherland, fall
Caver (f,20) slipped while using knotted headline on climb out of Second Stream Chamber and fell about 1.5m injuring right ankle. While alarm being raised rest of group (3) helped her back to just inside the constricted entrance where it was warm and dry compared to the weather outside. Twenty members of SCRO (6) and Assynt MRT (14) were just finishing an advanced first aid course near the rescue post when the call came in and were at cave entrance in an hour. Ankle was splinted by a SCRO doctor and after Entonox and Little Dragon, she was fed into entrance constriction and helped herself along as she was dragged through. Once on surface, AMRT packaged her in their stretcher and carried her initially along the middle of the knee-deep stream, arriving at the road at 18:30. Ambulance took her to Raigmore Hospital where a fractured ankle was confirmed. Assisted by Assynt Mountain Rescue Team who carried out the surface part of the rescue.
- 24. Monday 14 November by UWFR at 16:12 (for 5½ hours) (39 rescue team members)**
Manchester Hole, Nidderdale, other
A party of 11 schoolchildren descended Manchester Hole under the instruction of instructors from an outdoor pursuits centre. The casualty became separated from the main party when the waters started to rise and the party made their way out of the cave. It was realised that he was missing and a call was made to the cave rescue team to attend. One member of the rescue team entered the cave and found the boy (14). Other team members entered the cave and brought the boy to the surface. He was later pronounced **dead** at hospital.
- 25. Wednesday 16 November by DevonCRO at 21:05 (for 1 hour) (6 rescue team members)**
Storm Drain, Barnstable, Devon, assist police
Following a sighting of an unknown number of young people entering a storm drain (which drains to the sea and is affected by the tide). Devon CRO were asked to make sure they were safe. No signs of anyone having been in the drain were found and the search was called off. Gas detectors borrowed from Environment Agency. Police, fire service and Environment Agency also in attendance.
- 26. Sunday 27 November by Swaledale MRT at 10:30 (for 1½ hours) (6 rescue team members)**
Disused mines at and about SE114985, assist police
At request of police, continued the search from 9th July at a different location. A search of a number of underground locations was made together with a surface search following new information received by the police.
- 27. Sunday 4 December by DevonCRO at 10:00 (for 6 hours) (6 rescue team members)**
Lopwell Dam near Milton Combe, Devon, assist police
Search of mine shafts and adits for missing person following an abduction of female (40). Nothing found.
- 28. Thursday 29 December by WBCRT at 17:30 (for 5 hours) (9 rescue team members)**
Pwll Dwfri, exposure/exhausted
Caver (f, 20) exhausted and unable to prusik out from second pitch. Fed and warmed up, then assisted to surface, where she was carried to the road head by West Brecon MR in driving snow and low temperatures.