



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Incident Report for Period 1st January 2006 - 31st December 2006

	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	11 ⁽⁵⁾	-	1	6 ⁽⁵⁾	2	-	2	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	2	4	32
Assisting Authorities⁽³⁾	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Persons Assisted	25	-	1	13	2	-	1	-	3	-	4	-	-	-	2	14	65
Fatalities	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	3
Persons Injured⁽¹⁾	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
Helicopter assistance⁽²⁾	3(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Animal Incidents	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	13
Assistance to other teams	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-
Totals Underground Incidents	22	-	1	6	2	-	3	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	3	6	48
<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 2006.</small>																	
Surface Incidents	27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	19	-	64
Persons Assisted	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	9	-	80
Fatalities	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	1	-	10
Persons Injured	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	11	-	32
Surface Animal Incidents	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	5
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Totals Surface Incidents	27	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	18	21	1	69

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. There were 14 such incidents last year.
5. On 16th August 2006, a diver was reported missing in the Plura Resurgence north of Mo I Rana, in northern Norway. He was last seen some 1300 metres from base at a depth of 80 metres. The Norwegian Cave Rescue sought advice from members of the British Cave Diving Group. Two CDG members agreed to travel to Norway and assist in the recovery of the diver's **body**. BCRC arranged official letters of introduction and ensured insurance was in place. CRO provided communications equipment in the form of HEYPhones; DerbyCRO provided CRO with replacement units for the duration. On the 24th a formal request from Norway was made through Interpol, and the British divers travelled out. The body was recovered from a depth of 68 metres on the 28 August.

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 Incident Report, 2006

- There were 3 underground caving fatalities in 2006:
 - A caver was crushed by a falling boulder – incident 11
 - A caver collapsed with a suspected heart attack – incident 16
 - A diver suffered a heart attack – incident 21
- There were 3 incidents where teams assisted the authorities in the execution of their duty – incidents 2, 18, and 31.
- 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

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
assist police	8	6	8	7	3	32
exposure/exhausted	1	2		2	1	6
fall	6	6	6	3	4	25
flooding	1	1	1		4	7
hung up			1		1	2
lost or overdue	5	6	7	9	11	38
medical emergency	2		2		1	5
missing person		2			2	4
other	1		2	3	2	8
physically stuck		2	1	2	3	8
rock fall		1	1	1	1	4
self marooning					1	1
unable to climb	3	1	1			5
cave diving				1	1	2
	27	27	30	28	35	147

Table 2: Injuries Incurred

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
arm/humerus shoulder	2	1	2			5
Chest Injuries	1					1
Drowned	1			2	1	4
Exhaustion/hypothermia	2	2	2	2	3	11
femur - pelvic injuries		3	1		3	7
Head Injuries			1			1
Knee Injuries			1	1		2
leg - lower/ankle		1	2	2		5
Medical condition	2	1			1	4
Spine/back injuries	3	1	2	1	1	8
Other			1			1
Multiple Serious					1	1
	11	9	12	8	10	50

- The underground animal incidents included 6 sheep, 7 lambs and 1 dog. Further surface incident involved 5 cows, 1 calf and 3 sheep.
- Attendance of rescue personnel at incidents has been recorded below; not all incidents are fully reported.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of Incidents	30	33	17	25	25	29	27	31
Average number of people on incident	12	15	16	15	19	19	22	18
Average effort in "man" hours	48.5	88.25	168	82	180	112	214	89

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
MCRO	Midland Cave Rescue Organisation

Team Abbreviation	Full Name
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

CDG Cave Diving Group



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Summary of Incidents for 2006

1. Wednesday 4 January by CRO at 23:38 (for 3¼ hours) (24 rescue team members)

Simpson's Pot, Kingsdale, self marooning

Cavers (m59, f33) went the wrong way down "The Pit" and pulled abseil rope down thus becoming marooned. Located by the first search party into Simpson's and assisted up the pitch and out to the surface. Both casualties were very cold.

2. Tuesday 17 January by MRO

Swildon's Hole, assist police

MRO were requested to attend an incident at Swildon's Hole by Taunton Police. This followed the local MP receiving an e-mail from a person wishing to protest regarding certain matters. The protestor had indicated that they would enter Swildon's Hole with a minimum of food and protective clothing.

Wardens met with local police on Priddy Green and adjourned the initial MRO response. A private meeting with the police was requested. MRO explained that under these circumstances that they would not be prepared to be involved in any forced extraction of the person from the cave.

In the interim period a caving party undertaking a trip in Swildon's Hole made contact with the protestor and informed them that both the police and the MRO were involved. On hearing this, the protestor exited the cave and said that she had made it clear there should be no inconvenience caused to any rescue team by their action. The police officer in charge decided to take no further action and abdicated care to the MRO medical warden.

3. Wednesday 18 January by DerbyCRO at 15:00 (for 6 hours) (25 rescue team members)

Odin Mine and others in area, Castleton, missing person

Search for missing man (59) whose car was found near Odin Mine. Most caves and mines in area were searched to first obstacle that would have stopped all but a determined non-caver. Nothing found on day of search. Man returned to his car some two days later and collapsed nearby. He was taken to hospital for treatment. Member teams of PDMRO carried out a surface search.

4. Sunday 29 January by DerbyCRO at 19:53 (for ¾ hour) (5 rescue team members)

Peak Cavern, Derbyshire, lost or overdue

Party of 3 cavers (m50s, m20s, f20s) overdue on a trip to the White River Series. Surfaced before search team went underground.

5. Saturday 18 February by CRO at 18:25 (for 2½ hours) (22 rescue team members)

Alum Pot, exposure/exhausted

Group of four cavers were practising abeiling, prusiking and ladder climbing on the Dolly Tubs pitch. One (m19) became exhausted and was unable to climb back up. Assisted up the pitch and to the surface.

6. Saturday 25 February by DerbyCRO at 20:00 (for ¾ hour) (8 rescue team members)

Titan to JH, Castleton, lost or overdue

Party of 5 cavers (3m20s, 2f20s) reported overdue on a trip through Titan to JH. Surfaced before search team went underground.

7. Sunday 26 February by CRO at 21:30 (for 4½ hours) (22 rescue team members)

Bar Pot, Gaping Ghyll, hung up

Caver (f20) became hung up on SRT rope in constriction at the top of the entrance pitch. She was cut free and lowered to the bottom of pitch by companions in her party. Reported to be asthmatic and found to be suffering acute leg pains and a period of unconsciousness, she was hauled up the pitch in a

stretcher and evacuated by RAF helicopter to hospital. Assisted by RAF SeaKing from Boulmer.

8. Monday 20 March by GwentCRT at 19:00

Daren Cilau, physically stuck

Caver (f20) got foot stuck in crevice in entrance series. Conditions offered severe risk of exposure. Foot was released and she was escorted to surface suffering mild hypothermia. Treated at hospital.

9. Friday 24 March by COMRU at 17:30 (for 7 hours) (7 rescue team members)

mines near Hilton, Cumbria, missing person

Search for missing man (74). He was a fell walker and was overdue from his daily walk. Local area searched by mountain rescue teams - COMRU were asked to investigate possible underground sites. Nothing found.

10. Friday 24 March by WBCRT at 23:45 (for 5 hours) (8 rescue team members)

Cwm Dwr, Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, lost or overdue

Cavers (4m, f) in a trip from Top Entrance to Cwm Dwr became lost at the Smithy. Two were able to make their way out and raise the alarm. Others found in Big Shacks and escorted out. Girl commented on reaching the Cwm Dwr choke that they had tried this route but were "too knackered to recognize the way on".

11. Saturday 25 March by DerbyCRO at 11:20 (for 7 hours 20 min) (19 rescue team members)

Aston Hill Swallet, Pikehall, rock fall

Man (37) was pinned by a large rock falling a couple of feet onto him from the roof of a low chamber where he was digging into new cave, suffering fatal crush injuries. Location was some 6 metres (about 20 feet) horizontally from a 4 metre (12 feet) deep entrance shaft. Chamber was very unstable and body was blocking safe access. Body was recovered by surveying location and digging down from the surface using both JCB and hand tools. Police, Fire Service and Ambulance in attendance.

12. Sunday 2 April by MRO at 19:26

Hunters Hole, Priddy, lost or overdue

Report of cavers (2m) overdue. Caver's car was located at the Hunters Inn and landlord confirmed he had seen the cavers making their way to the cave. On checking at the cave, the two were found exiting. Rescue stood down.

13. Wednesday 19 April by CRO at 19:16 (for 1¼ hours) (22 rescue team members)

Yordas Cave, flooding

Family group (m, f43, m12, m9) unable to safely descend the Chapter House pitch in high water. Male partner succeeded in rigging traverse and abseiled down pitch and raised the alarm. CRO laddered the Middle Entrance and hauled the remaining 3 out, cold but otherwise OK.

14. Saturday 22 April by GwentCRT at 02:00 (for ¾ hour) (3 rescue team members)

Ogof Draenen, lost or overdue

Party of 4 cavers reported 2 hours overdue. Police confirmed car was still in car park. Stood down en route when contact received telephone call that the cavers had returned to the surface.

15. Sunday 30 April by MRO at 17:23 (for 3 hours) (6 rescue team members)

Box Mines, Corsham, Wiltshire, lost or overdue

Two females plus three dogs reported lost in Quarry Hill Box Mine. Their children, who had been left on the surface, had contacted their father to raise the alarm. After discussing with the father, it became clear the two had no knowledge of the mines. Fire Service and Police had laid a line along one main passage and found one lit tea-light and a few unlit. After a short time the missing party were located



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- at Black Horse Junction by MRO personnel and were escorted out of the mine. They had taken a pack of 10 tea-lights with the intention of marking their return route, but these had extinguished.
- 16. Sunday 30 April by MRO at 19:00 (for 4¼ hours) (17 rescue team members)**
Upper Flood Swallet, medical emergency
Whilst MRO was dealing with the previous incident, a second call was received to Upper Flood Swallet. Reports suggested a caver (m72) had collapsed. On arrival at the site, it was confirmed the casualty has died and permission to move the body was sought and granted. The body of the casualty was then carried to the surface. Fire Service in attendance but stood down when the nature of the incident was realised.
 - 17. Sunday 28 May by UWFRA at 18:15 (for 6 hours) (51 rescue team members)**
Dowbergill Passage, other
Well built caver (m30) unable to pass a restricted section of passage or to climb the narrow alternative as he was too tired. This was about 1/3 mile and some 1.5 hours normal caving time from the surface. Assisted out. Assisted by CRO.
 - 18. Friday 2 June by CRO at 12:15 (for 1¼ hours) (8 rescue team members)**
White Scar Cave, assist authorities
Tourist (f35) on guided trip into Show Cave collapsed. She recovered and was walked out with assistance from WYMAS paramedics and CRO members.
 - 19. Thursday 15 June by CRO at 13:25 (for 2½ hours) (13 rescue team members)**
Lower Long Churn, fall
Caver (m60) fell some 2 metres when his foot slipped off sloping foothold while climbing away from the Dolly Tubs up to St. Pauls, suffering a fractured neck of femur. The casualty managed to make his own way out via the Diccan Pot exit, where he was met by CRO personnel. Treated and stretchered to awaiting Yorkshire Air Ambulance.
 - 20. Tuesday 20 June by DevonCRO at 12:30 (for 3½ hours) (32 rescue team members)**
Pridhamsleigh Cavern, fall
Assistant leader of caving party (f19) fell some 1 1/2 metres to floor, suffering suspected spinal injuries and non-epileptic fits. Treated at scene by paramedic cave rescue personnel and stretchered to surface. Air Amulance evacuated the caver to hospital.
 - 21. Thursday 10 August by CRO at 18:30 (for 9 hours) (17 rescue team members)**
Meregill Skit, Chapel-le-Dale, cave diving
Cave diver (m63) suffered fatal heart attack. Alarm was raised after car reported in same position for two days. Located in sump at a depth of some 17 metres by cave rescue divers and brought to surface. Further investigations were undertaken on the **11th August** to recover equipment etc. CDG in attendance. Assisted by UWFRA, who supplied diving bottles and a vehicle.
 - 22. Wednesday 23 August by NWCRO at 19:15 (for 1 hour 25 min) (11 rescue team members)**
Glan Alyn Mine, near Mold, lost or overdue
Four cavers reported overdue by partner of one member. Party surfaced before rescue team deployed underground. Aberglaslyn and South Snowdonia SARTs on standby in case caving members needed.
 - 23. Saturday 2 September by UWFRA at 15:50 (for 2½ hours) (33 rescue team members)**
Hagg Gill Pot, flooding
Called out to assist cavers (m58, m25, m20, f62) trapped by flood waters. On arrival the cavers had made their own way out of the cave, having sat out the worst of the flooding.
 - 24. Saturday 2 September by CRO at 19:57 (for 2 hours) (11 rescue team members)**
Lower Long Churn, flooding
Party of cavers (m59, m55, m50, f48) entered cave in late morning despite forecast heavy rain. They visited Dolly Tubs pitch but became trapped at Dam Pool on return. Located and escorted to surface.
 - 25. Sunday 10 September by DerbyCRO at 14:15 (for 2 hours) (8 rescue team members)**
Fissure in Higger Tor near Hathersage, Derbyshire, physically stuck
Man (m26) undertaking a "weaseling" exploration between vertical fissures in the gritstone edge outcrop became jammed. Mountain Rescue teams and Fire Service first called in; they in turn called for assistance from Derbyshire Cave Rescue. Rock was chiselled from around the trapped man until he could be lowered into a chamber below the rift. This was connected to the surface a few metres away.
 - 26. Saturday 7 October by WBCRT at 20:00 (for ¼ hour)**
Ogof Ffynnon Ddu, lost or overdue
Party of cavers (m46, m28, f28) overdue. They had no watch and lost track of time. Surfaced as rescue party assembled.
 - 27. Sunday 8 October by CRO at 20:27 (for 2½ hours) (26 rescue team members)**
Pool Sink, Easegill, other
After a misunderstanding, caver (f60) was left stranded after cave was de-ripped and she was unable to climb out of cave. Found by cavers in another party at Stop Pot and escorted out of Wretched Rabbit as CRO personnel arrived at entrance.
 - 28. Wednesday 11 October by DevonCRO at 15:40 (for 2 hours) (22 rescue team members)**
Pridhamsleigh Cavern, fall
Member of guided caving party (f16) slipped between boulders in a wet area of the cave. Suspected fractured femur and hypothermia evident. Stretchered to the surface and handed to waiting Air Ambulance.
 - 29. Wednesday 18 October by DerbyCRO at 17:05 (for ½ hour) (5 rescue team members)**
Peak Cavern, Castleton, lost or overdue
Party of cavers (m30, f49) reported overdue on a trip to Calcite Aven - surfaced before search team went underground.
 - 30. Saturday 4 November by WBCRT at 16:02 (for 6 hours) (16 rescue team members)**
Llethrid Swallet, physically stuck
Caver (m48) unable to pass obstruction in vertical slot to bypass sumped passage. Members of group were able to widen slot whilst waiting for the rescue team to arrive. Caver was then able to pass through with some assistance.
 - 31. Tuesday 7 November by GwentCRT at 11:00 (for 2 hours) (2 rescue team members)**
Blaen Onneu Quarry Pot, assist police
Caving party reported to the authorities a suspicious object at bottom of entrance pitch to cave. The police required a photograph to send to the Bomb Squad so two Gwent team members abseiled into the cave the following day, took the photographs and passed these on.

Two team members returned on the **16th November 2006** with the Bomb Squad, who examined the object and confirmed it was an expended mortar smoke bomb (!) - they took it away for disposal.



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- 32. Sunday 12 November by WBCRT at 16:00
(for 2 hours)(13 rescue team members)**
OFD II, lost or overdue
Party of cavers (2m, 3f) became lost at the Corkscrew. Waited for assistance. Party found by search team and escorted out.
- 33. Sunday 17 December by CRO at 20:40 (for 2 hours) (24 rescue team members)**
Gavel Pot/Short Drop Cave, lost or overdue
Party of cavers (m32, m23, m21, f25) on an exchange trip from Gavel Pot to come out of Short Drop. Other group of cavers successfully found their way out through Gavel and derigged. When party were unable to find their way through to Short Drop, they returned to Gavel to await help. Assisted out.
- 34. Monday 25 December by CRO at 18:38 (for 13 hours) (71 rescue team members)**
Easegill Caverns, Casterton Fell, fall
Caver (m39) fell some 2 or 3 metres near the Bridge of Sighs upstream of Nagasaki Cavern, suffering a fractured pelvis. On arrival, CRO doctor was able to administer strong pain relief and, with much assistance, the caver made his own way out of the cave through County Pot. (A 12 hour+ stretcher carry had been estimated.) Evacuated by RAF Sea King. Assisted by UWFRA, COMRU and Kendal MRT.
- 35. Saturday 30 December by CRO at 17:56
(for 2½ hours) (24 rescue team members)**
Lower Long Churn, Ribblesdale, flooding
Party of cavers (m27, m26, m20, f27, f20) trapped by flooding. Managed to surface as CRO arrived at cave entrance.