



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Incident Report for Period 1st January 2014 - 31st December 2014

	Cave Rescue Organisation ⁽⁵⁾	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	International assistance	Total for UK incidents
Caving Incidents	5	?	2	7	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	2	21
Assisting Authorities⁽¹⁾	1	?	1	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	6
Persons Assisted	9	?	6	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	3	-	-	44
Fatalities	-	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
Persons Injured⁽²⁾	1	?	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4
Helicopter assistance⁽³⁾	-	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Animal Incidents	3	?	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	11
Reported Standbys⁽⁴⁾	3	?	-	2	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	10
Assistance to other teams	2	?	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	7
Total Underground Incidents	9	?	3	10	3	1	1	2	0	3	1	0	1	2	2	2	38 ⁽⁷⁾
<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 2014.</p>																	
Surface Incidents	62	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	49	-	147
Persons Assisted	74	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45	12	-	131
Fatalities	9	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	11
Persons Injured	29	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	21	-	96
Surface Animal Incidents	-	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Assistance to other teams	-	?	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Totals Surface Incidents	62	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	49	0	147

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 report.
4. Standbys are where a team is alerted to a possible incident but no operational activity is taken
5. The Cave Rescue Organisation is based in Clapham, North Yorkshire
6. '?' indicates that no report was received from the team.
7. The total number of underground incidents is the sum of the caving incidents, assisting authorities, and animal incidents, excluding standbys and (to avoid double counting) assistance to other teams.

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



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Summary of Incident Report, 2014

1. There was one UK underground caving fatality in 2014
 - A cave diver was killed by bad air (incident 20)
2. Rescue teams assisted the authorities in the execution of their duties on six occasions – incidents 3, 13, 18, 27, 28 and 29. In addition, incident 26 involved an overseas search.
3. International assistance was provided twice
 - One incident related to two cave diving fatalities not involving UK cavers (incident 2)
 - One incident was a search ending with a presumed death (incident 26)
4. The main causes and injuries sustained over recent years are recorded here. The *Injuries Incurred* table includes fatalities and exposure/hypothermia incidents. The tables exclude incidents involving international assistance.

Table 1: Incident causes

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Assist authorities	5	9	4	6	6	30
Cave diving	-	3	-	-	-	3
Exposure/exhausted	2	2	-	1	-	5
Fall	2	9	5	4	5	25
Flooding	2	2	2	-	1	7
Hung up	1	-	-	1	-	2
Lost/overdue	9	7	9	5	8	38
Medical emergency	-	4	1	-	1	6
Missing person	1	1	-	-	-	2
Other	1	1	2	2	1	7
Physically stuck	3	4	2	3	2	14
Rock fall	1	1	1	1	1	5
Self marooning	-	-	1	-	2	3
Unable to climb	-	1	1	-	-	2
Total	27	44	28	23	27	149

Table 2: Injuries incurred

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Abdominal	1	-	-	-	-	1
Arm/shoulder	-	2	-	-	2	4
Chest injuries	-	1	1	-	-	2
Drowned	-	2	-	-	-	2
Exhaustion/hypothermia	7	2	1	2	-	12
Femur/pelvis	-	1	-	-	1	2
Head injuries	1	-	-	-	-	1
Knee injuries	-	3	-	-	-	3
Lower leg/ankle	-	5	4	3	1	13
Lower arm/hand	-	-	-	1	-	1
Medical condition	1	3	1	1	1	7
Other	1	-	-	-	1	2
Spine/back	-	1	2	-	-	3
Total	11	20	9	7	6	53

5. In 2014, there was a total of 2446 hours spent on callouts by teams, with an average of 15 team members and 90 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 2014

- 1. Thursday 9th January at 01:15 by Derbyshire CRO: 21t, 3hrs**
Gautries Hole (Castleton), flooding
Three cavers (m29, 30, 40) were cut off when 15m of passage close to the entrance sumped after heavy rain. A rescue diver entered the flooded passage and made contact with the trapped cavers, who were cold but unharmed. There was little sign of the water levels dropping so the cavers were provided with diving equipment, and, after instruction, they were dived out under supervision.
- 2. Friday 7th February at 08:20; international assistance coordinated by Derbyshire CRO: 4t, 17 days**
Plura River Cave (Rana, North Norway), cave diving
The UK was asked to send divers with experience of deep diving to attempt to recover two Finnish cave divers who became trapped and drowned while undertaking a through-dive from the Plura resurgence to Steinugleflåget. The dive is technically very difficult, long (about 2km) and deep (-130m). The bodies were in a very constricted section at a depth of over 110m. The British divers reached one of the deceased (the other was beyond the first body) but were unable to free him and the Norwegian authorities called off the recovery effort on safety grounds.
- 3. Tuesday 11th February at 11:30 by Devon CRO: 7t, 7hrs**
Swinbridge (Barnstaple), assist authorities
The police requested assistance with a search for a missing person (m55), by descending and checking a mine shaft and undertaking a surface search.
- 4. Wednesday 12th March at 13:53 by CRO: 21t, 2hrs 15mins**
Lower Long Churn Cave (Alum Pot), fall
A caver (f16) slipped down The Slot, sustaining an injury to her shoulder. Once treated by a CRO doctor, the casualty was hauled up into the main passage and assisted to the surface.
- 5. Saturday 12th April at 18:46 by CRO: 15t, 4hrs**
Simpson Pot (West Kingsdale), self-marooning
Two cavers (m27, 27) were reported overdue on a pull-through trip. CRO teams entered from both the top and Valley Entrance, and the cavers were found at the bottom of Storm Pot (they had dropped their rope into a deep pool). Both were escorted to the surface.
- 6. Sunday 13th April at 14:00 by SMRT: 20t, 4hrs**
Windegg Mine Caverns (Arkenarthdale), fall
A caver (m) slipped and became trapped, sustaining bruising.
- 7. Tuesday 22nd April at 23:30 by SMWCRT: 22t, 18hrs**
Agen Allwedd (Llangattock), overdue
A party of nine (m18, 19, 21, 23; f19, 19, 20, 23, 27) had problems finding the route and became lost and then overdue. Two of the party exited to raise the alarm and a callout ensued. After the remaining seven cavers were warmed and fed, they were escorted out by the team.
- 8. Saturday 26th April at 17:11 by CRO: 39t, 12hrs**
King Pot (East Kingsdale), physically stuck
Three cavers were reported to be trapped after one (f22) slipped and became physically stuck in a tight fissure at the far end of the T-shaped passage, preventing the other two from exiting. After the fissure was enlarged, the casualty was assisted to the surface, with the other two cavers exiting without assistance.
- 9. Thursday 1st May at 19:00 by Derbyshire CRO: 29t, 5hrs 5mins**
Devonshire Cavern (Matlock), fall
A novice caver (f30s) under instruction fell 7m while climbing in a rift some way into the mine, sustaining a broken ankle. The casualty was treated by a HART paramedic, who had entered the cave before the team arrived, guided by the instructor who had raised the alarm. The casualty was hauled out of the rift and then made her way to the surface assisted by team members.
- 10. Saturday 3rd May at 14:30 by Derbyshire CRO: 26t, 4hrs 30mins**
P8 (Castleton), fall
An experienced caver (m57) slipped and fell over in the lower streamway, dislocating his shoulder. Once trapped up, the casualty was placed in a harness, then helped and hauled to the surface.
- 11. Sunday 4th May at 17:20 by Derbyshire CRO: 16t, 2hrs 5 mins**
Rowter Hole (Castleton), overdue
A solo caver (f40) became hung up on a pitch. A party of diggers heard her shouting and freed her. She made her own way out, but had been reported overdue; she was met at the surface shaft top.
- 12. Monday 5th May at GCRG: 1t, 1hr**
Otter Hole (Chepstow), overdue
One GCRG warden attended the cave entrance as the party of two (1m, 1f) exited, safe but overdue.
- 13. Tuesday 6th May at 09:00 by MCR: 7t, 4hrs**
Old iron mine (Simonsbath, Exmoor), assist authorities
MCR was asked to assist authorities by searching an old iron mine where a walker had found shoes and socks left outside. As the entrance to the mine was partially flooded the police could not enter. The mine proved to be more of an adit and was quickly searched: nothing was found (other than a geo-caching site).
- 14. Saturday 10th May at 16:00 by Derbyshire CRO: 25t, 8hrs 10 mins**
Gentlewoman's Shaft (Masson Hill, Matlock), self-marooning
A party of four cavers (m30s) abseiled a 40m shaft at the start of a through-trip to Youd's Level. They were unable to find their way through and returned to the shaft foot, where they were marooned as they did not have the equipment or skill to prusik out. As the shaft would be a difficult and potentially dangerous haul and the party wished to complete the trip, four team members agreed to guide them through. However, it rapidly became evident that some of the party were too tired and inexperienced to safely complete the trip, so all returned to the shaft foot and were hauled out.
- 15. Saturday 7th June at 22:45 by Derbyshire CRO: 6t, 2hr**
Titan (Castleton), overdue
A party of three (m19, 25, 26) became overdue on a trip out of Titan and a recce party located them in the lower part of the shaft. They were very tired and were given food, then needed help to exit safely.
- 16. Thursday 26th June at 03:03 by Derbyshire CRO: 4t, 35mins**
Rowter Hole (Castleton), overdue
Three cavers (m29, ?, ?) were reported overdue in error. The person raising the alarm had misunderstood the intended callout time. The cavers surfaced and phoned home while DCRO was only partly mobilised.



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- 17. Friday 27th June at 22:03 by Devon CRO: 3t, 1hr 50mins**
East Crinnis Mine (Par, Cornwall), overdue
A party of three (m) became overdue because of a high tide at the adit entrance, but were able to make a safe exit before the team members left their HQ.
- 18. Thursday 17th July at 21:00 by SCRO: 3t, 2hrs**
Scotland Street Tunnel (Edinburgh), assist authorities
After an unofficial entry into a tunnel below Edinburgh by a party of 30 to 40 'urban explorers', SCRO was asked to assist authorities to ensure that all persons had exited before access was secured.
- 19. Sunday 24th August at 17:00 by COMRU: 20t, 15mins**
Hilton Mines (Scordale), overdue
The team was stood down when a party of two (m66, 67) that had been reported overdue returned along the surface track, safe and well.
- 20. Monday 25th August at 14:50 by NWCRO: 19t, 19hrs (national response)**
Aber Las/Cambrian Slate Mine (Llangollen), other
A diver (m40) was fatally overcome by gas or fould air beyond the sump.
- 21. Saturday 30th August at 13:30 by COMRU: 1t, 4hrs 30mins**
Rampgill Mine (Nenthead), rockfall
A party of three trapped by a collapse, one being trapped twice, were dug out by a COMRU team member and his companions who happened to be in the mine.
- 22. Saturday 6th September at 19:38 by CRO: 12t, 5hrs 30mins**
Ease Gill Cavers (Casterton Fell), overdue
Two cavers (m50+, 60+) were reported overdue on a trip into Ease Gill Caverns via Wretched Rabbit. CRO members, along with members of Red Rose CPC staying at Bull Pot Farm, carried out an initial search, with further CRO support at the entrance. The two cavers were found near Holbeck Junction, having lost their way; one was exhausted. They were assisted to the surface and across the moor to the farm.
- 23. Friday 12th September at 18:37 by CRO: 28t, 2hrs 30mins**
Newby Moss Pot (Ingleborough), physically stuck
A caver (m44) was trapped after becoming physically stuck in the final climb to daylight in Newby Moss Pot. After he had spent ninety minutes struggling to get out, his companion raised the alarm. CRO members arrived and enlarged the constriction, allowing the caver to exit.
- 24. Saturday 13th September at 15:00 by MCR: 1t, 2hrs**
Goatchurch Cavern (Burrington Combe), medical emergency
A male suffered a medical emergency (a collapsed lung) while caving. He was assisted out by the party, and MCR was stood down en route.
- 25. Wednesday 1st October at 20:00 by UWFRA: 28t, 3hrs 30mins**
Goyden Pot (Nidderdale), fall
A caver (m50) who had slipped on rocks and fallen had a suspected broken femur. Fortunately, the incident occurred in the stream passage near the entrance. After treatment the casualty was carried to the surface and on to a road ambulance.
- 26. Friday 24th October by GCRG: 2t, 2 days**
Ethiopia, assist authorities
Two Gloucestershire CRG members caving in the area were asked to undertake a search of a cave for a missing person. Very low oxygen levels prevented a full search, and the casualty, who was not found, was presumed dead.
- 27. Friday 31st October at 11:21 by CRO: 5t, 2hrs 30mins**
Dunald Mill Hole (Morecambe Bay), assist authorities
A human skull was discovered by cavers and assistance was provided to police to retrieve it. The skull was subsequently found to be approximately 2,000 years old.
- 28. Thursday 27th November at 20:30 by Devon CRO: 21t, 5hrs 45mins**
Owllacombe Mine (Ashburton), assist authorities
A male (25) was reported missing. Police intelligence indicated that the missing person knew the area well. Devon CRO conducted a surface search and an inspection of numerous open mineshafts.
- 29. Wednesday 17th December at 18:00 by COMRU: 1t, 3hrs**
Long Meg Mine (Little Salkeld), assist authorities
COMRU was asked to give advice and then search a number of mines for a missing male.