



# British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

## Incident Report for Period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016

	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>	6	0	0	3	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	4	0	1	19
<b>Assisting Authorities<sup>(3)</sup></b>	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Persons Assisted</b>	10	0	0	7	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	8	0	0	30
<b>Fatalities</b>	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Persons Injured<sup>(1)**</sup></b>	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
<b>Helicopter assistance<sup>(2)</sup></b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Animal Incidents</b>	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	7
<b>Reported Standbys</b>	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	4	1	0	3	1	2	16
<b>Assistance to other teams</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals Underground Incidents</b>	7	0	0	5	0	1	0	4	0	1	1	0	4	4	1	28
<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>	85	32	?	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	40	40	199
<b>Persons Assisted</b>	110	28	?	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	85	30	268
<b>Fatalities</b>	2	5	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	12
<b>Persons Injured</b>	57	8	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	19	111
<b>Surface Animal Incidents</b>	4	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Reported Standbys</b>	10	7	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	28
<b>Assistance to other teams</b>	1	1	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Totals Surface Incidents</b>	90	33	?	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	40	40	205

### 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, 2016

1. There was no underground caving fatalities in 2016
2. There were 2 incidents where teams assisted the authorities in the execution of their duties – incidents 6 and 8. Both involved fatalities.
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

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Assist authorities	4	6	6	2	2	20
Exposure/exhausted		1				1
Fall	5	4	5	5	5	24
Flooding	2		1			3
Hung up		1				1
Lost/overdue	9	5	8	15	3	40
Marooned					1	1
Medical emergency	1		1	4		6
Other	2	2	1	2	1	8
Physically stuck	2	3	2		3	10
Rock fall	1	1	1	1	1	5
Self marooning	1		2	1		4
Unable to climb	1			1	2	4
Total	28	23	27	31	19	128

Table 2: Injuries incurred

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Arm/shoulder			2	1	2	5
Chest injuries	1			2		3
Exhaustion/hypothermia	1	2		1	2	6
Femur/pelvis			1	1		2
Head injuries				1	1	2
Knee injuries				1	1	2
Lower leg/ankle	4	3	1		3	11
Lower arm/hand		1				1
Medical condition	1	1	1	2		5
Multiple				1		1
Other			1			1
Spine/back	2			2		4
Total	9	7	6	12	9	43

4. The Cave Rescue Organisation is based in Clapham, North Yorkshire.
5. The underground animal incidents included 2 lambs, 2 sheep, 1 cow and 2 dogs.
6. In 2016, there was a total of 1772 hours spent on callouts by teams, with an average of 16 team members and 84 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 2016

- 1. Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February at 13:52 by MCR: 4t, 1hr**  
*Swildons Hole (Priddy), fall*  
A caver (m27) fell and sustained an injury to his arm. A small team attended, and the casualty was assisted to the surface as walking wounded.
- 2. Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February at 18:27 by CRO: 25t, 5 hrs**  
*It's A Cracker! (Leck Fell), marooned*  
Three cavers (m22, 20, f22) were reported overdue after a Boxhead Pot to It's a Cracker! exchange trip. They had missed their way underground and been overtaken by the derigging group, leaving them marooned. The rest of their party assumed they were out, so a fell search was started. A CRO team was also sent underground where they located the missing cavers, cold but unharmed. A Search and Rescue helicopter was also dispatched from Caernarfon to assist with the surface search, but stood down once the team was located.
- 3. Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March at 15:43 by MCR: 2t, 20 minutes**  
*GB (Charterhouse), unable to climb*  
A novice (m) was unable to get up a climb, and a callout initiated. As the first team members arrived at the entrance, the student emerged, having been assisted by other cavers in the system.
- 4. Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 14:53 by CRO: 16t, 2hr 30 mins**  
*Long Kin East (The Allotment), hung up on rope*  
CRO were alerted because a caver (m58) was "strung up" and unable to pass a rebelay. When CRO arrived at the entrance the casualty had been able to free himself and was out of the cave.
- 5. Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March at 02:11 by SMWCRT: 39t, 13hrs 30 mins**  
*Agen Allwedd (Llangattock), lost and overdue*  
A party of cavers (m27,27,23,21) were reported overdue on an anticlockwise Grand Circle trip, having gone underground at 12pm the previous day. The group had reached Synchronicity, but failed to find the way into Southern Stream Passage. 2 members attempted to make their way out but were unable to find the way through the second boulder choke, where they were found at 08:35. The other party members made slower progress back along Main Stream Passage, where they were met by the rescue party, tired but unharmed.
- 6. Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March at 12:25 by DCRO: 18t, 6hrs 5 mins**  
*Youlgrave area, assist authorities*  
DCRO was asked to join a large scale search for an elderly person (m83) who was missing from home. There are a number of open mine shafts and accessible workings in the area and DCRO were asked to search them. This was done but nothing was found. Late in the day the body of the missing man was found by a member of the public in a stream in Bradford Dale close to the village. Peak District Mountain Rescue teams and the Coastguard were also involved in the search. **FATAL**
- 7. Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April at 13:46 by CRO: 24t, 2 hrs**  
*Runscar Cave (Ribblehead), physically stuck*  
A member of an outdoors education group (f12) became physically stuck in the lower exit of Runscar Cave. When CRO arrived the casualty had been able to extract herself. She was examined by the team doctor before returning unharmed to her outdoor centre.
- 8. Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 18:01 by GCRG: 5t, 1 hour**  
*Tetbury (Gloucester) assist authorities*  
The team were called to assist with the recovery of a woman (f58) who had fallen into a 15m deep well and drowned. GCRG attended and provided advice, while the fire service retrieved her body. **FATAL**
- 9. Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July at 11:58 by MCR: 1t, 30mins**  
*Goughs Cave (Cheddar), fall*  
A tourist (f) fell in the showcave, sustaining minor injuries. One warden attended, to find that the Fire and Rescue service had already evacuated the casualty to a waiting ambulance.
- 10. Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August at 23:03 by DCRO: 13t, 3hrs 47mins**  
*James Hall Over Engine Mine (Castleton), overdue*  
A party of four experienced cavers (2m, 2f) were reported overdue on a trip via JH into Peak Cavern. The team was alerted and the first members to JH entrance were able to make contact with a member of the missing party who had just reached the foot of the entrance shaft. The party were clearly very tired so some team members remained on site to assist until all were safely on the surface.
- 11. Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August at 14:45 by SMWCRT: 5t, 1hr 45mins**  
*Dan-yr-Ogof (Abercraf), fall*  
SMWCRT were asked to assist a tourist (f67) who had fallen in the show cave, sustaining head and lower leg injuries. The local HART team attended and provided medical care, while SMWCRT assisted with the evacuation from the cave.
- 12. Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August at 20:58 by UWFRA: 7t, 1hr 30 mins**  
*Dowkerbottom (Hawkswick), other*  
Police requested an investigation of a wellington boot stuck upside down in the cave. The team attended, to find the boot was covering up a pipe end used to drain the sump.
- 13. Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> August at 01:18 by CRO: 23t, 7 hrs**  
*Lancaster Hole (Easegill), lost/overdue*  
Three cavers (m24,24,24) were reported overdue on a through trip from Top Sink to Lancaster Hole. They had made slow progress and had become lost. Teams searched the system via Wretched Rabbit and Lancaster Hole. The missing party was located at 04:20 at Stop Pot. They were assisted out via Lancaster hole, with one party member requiring a haul.
- 14. Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> August at 14:30 by SMWCRT: 14t, 1 hr**  
*Bridge Cave (Ystradfellte), slip*  
A boy (m12) slipped off a rock, trapping his foot between boulders. By the time the team arrived, he had released himself and exited the cave.
- 15. Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August at 19:05 by DCRO: 24t, 1 hr 20 mins**  
*Giant's Hole (Castleton), unable to climb*  
Casualty (f33) was one of a party of two returning to the surface after a Round Trip. They were using ladder and line on Garlands Pot (6 metre wet pitch). Casualty was too exhausted and cold to climb even with a strong lifeline. She was hauled up, and after some rewarming she was able to walk out with assistance.
- 16. Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September at 13:00 by SCRO: 30t, 1 hr 15mins**  
*Uamh an Claonaite (Assynt), slip*  
During a SCRO exercise in Claonaite, a team member (m60) fell when ascending from Bottomless Pillar Pool, falling 1.5 meters and putting his full weight onto his shoulder. He climbed to the top and mentioned that his shoulder felt a bit stiff. On examination by the team doctor, there was an obvious shoulder dislocation. It was immediately reduced, and the casualty assisted out.



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**17. Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September at 15:24 by CRO: 18t, 7 hrs**

*Peterson Pot (Easegill), unable to climb*

A caver (m21) was unable to return to the surface via Rolly-Polly passage. Two companions exited the cave to raise the alarm. One team of "thin" cavers entered Peterson Pot while another group went in via Mistral. The casualty was escorted out via Mistral, exhausted but unharmed. Special thanks should be given to the 6 cavers who were co-opted on scene after their own extensive caving trip.

**18. Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at 16:19 by DCRO: 52t, 8 hrs 17mins**

*James Hall Over Engine Mine (Castleton), rockfall*

An experienced caver (m49) was hit by a falling rock close to the top of Leviathan pitch (80 metres), suffering head and possible neck/clavicle injuries. He managed to complete the climb, and waited in the Workshop for help to arrive. He was packaged into a stretcher, before being lowered back down Leviathan and taken through boulder choke into Speedwell Cavern. He was then carried through the Speedwell streamway and show cave to the surface. Where the water was deep enough he was put in his stretcher onto a flotation raft. The team were assisted by the East Midland Ambulance HART team.

**19. Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at 19:24 by CRO: 6t, 2 hrs**

*Wretched Rabbit (Easegill), lost/overdue*

An experienced caver (m78) was reported 2 hours overdue from his callout time. RRCPC initially attended with emergency grab bag. The CRO landrover was despatched, but stood down en-route as the caver was discovered walking across the fell towards Bull Pot Farm. He stated that he had found the return more difficult than expected and had "Run out of puff".

**20. Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October at 15:06 by SMWCRT: 3t, 2 hrs**

*Porth yr Ogof (Ystradfellte), fall*

A member of an outdoor activity group (m16) fell and dislocated his kneecap. He successfully relocated it, but had significant pain, and SMWCRT assisted him to an ambulance for ongoing treatment.

**21. Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November at 18:37 by MCR: 7t, 3 hrs**

*Swildon's Hole (Priddy), fall*

A caver (m) fell on the 20 pitch in Swildon's Hole, sustaining an ankle injury. He was hauled up the pitch before being assisted out. At hospital it was found he had suffered a number of foot fractures.