



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Incident Report for Period 1st January 2022 - 31st December 2022

	Cave Rescue Organisation ⁽⁴⁾	Cumbria Ore Mines RU	Derbyshire CRO	Devon CRO	East Cornwall SRT	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	West Cornwall SRT	TOTALS
Caving Incidents	7	1	3	-	-	-	1	2	-	1	-	-	4	2	1	-	22
Assisting Authorities ⁽¹⁾	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Persons Assisted	7	-	3	-	-	-	1	2	-	9	-	-	7	1	-	-	30
Fatalities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Persons Injured ⁽²⁾	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	5
Helicopter assistance ⁽³⁾	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Animal Incidents	4	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	3	-	-	14
Reported Standbys	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Totals Underground Incidents	11	1	4	1	0	0	1	2	1	3	1	0	8	5	1	0	39
<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 2022.</p>																	
Surface Incidents	75	-	1	-	14	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	58	19	205
Persons Assisted	76	-	1	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	54	18	185
Fatalities	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	9
Persons Injured	59	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	45	1	129
Surface Animal Incidents	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	8
Reported Standbys	8	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	3
Totals Surface Incidents	80	0	1	0	14	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	60	19	213

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.

Further details relating to this incident report or about the BCRC and its membership can be obtained from the BCRC Secretary, Emma Porter via secretary@caverescue.org.uk



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Summary of Incident Report, 2022

1. There were 0 underground fatalities in 2022
2. There were 3 incidents where teams assisted the authorities in the execution of their duties – incidents 10, 19 and 24
3. The main causes and injuries sustained over recent years are recorded here. The *Injuries Incurred* table includes fatalities and exhaustion/hypothermia incidents.

Table 1: Incident causes

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Assist authorities	4	9	9	8	3	33
Cave diving	-	-	1	-	-	1
Exposure/exhausted	1	1	1	1	1	5
Fall	3	4	3	2	2	14
Flooding	-	1	2	1	-	4
Hung up	-	1	1	1	-	3
Lost/overdue	8	7	8	4	13	40
Marooned	-	-	2	-	1	3
Medical emergency	-	2	3	-	1	6
Other	1	1	-	-	-	2
Physically stuck	2	3	-	-	1	6
Rock fall	-	-	-	3	1	4
Self marooning	2	-	-	-	-	2
Slip/trip	-	2	2	2	1	7
Unable to climb	2	2	-	1	1	6
Total	23	33	32	23	25	136

Table 2: Injuries incurred

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Arm/shoulder	1	2	2	1	1	7
Drowning	-	-	1	-	-	1
Exhaustion/hypothermia	2	4	3	3	1	13
Femur/pelvis	-	1	1	-	1	3
Head injuries	-	-	1	-	-	1
Knee injuries	1	-	1	-	-	2
Lower leg/ankle	1	2	1	3	-	7
Medical condition	-	2	3	-	1	6
Multiple	-	-	-	2	1	3
Other	1	1	-	3	-	5
Spine/back	-	1	-	-	-	1
Total	6	13	13	12	5	49

4. The underground animal incidents included 8 dogs and 6 lambs.
5. In 2022, there was a total of 2683 hours spent on callouts by teams, with an average of 13 team members and 67 person-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 2022

- 1. Saturday 1st January at 23:40 by NWCRO: 11t, 7h 25m**
Croesor/Rhosydd slate mines (Beddgelert), lost/overdue
The team were called after a party of 12, including several novices, were reported overdue from a Croesor-Rhosydd through trip. Aberglaslyn MRT met 3 members on the surface, who had taken 10 hours to make the through trip. They reported the remainder of the group were very fatigued and making extremely slow progress. NWCRO members entered via the Rhosydd adit, found the rest of the party, who were lost, and escorted them out, surfacing 16 hours after they went underground.
- 2. Saturday 8th January at 08:39 by SMWCRT: 31t, 9h**
Daren Cilau (Llangattock), lost/overdue
Two inexperienced cavers (m19, 30) visiting Daren Cilau attempted a through trip from the main entrance to Ogof Cnwc but failed to find their way in the area of Busman's Holiday. They returned to the main Daren entrance but became tired and cold and were moving very slowly. They were found in the entrance series, uninjured but exhausted. They were escorted to the surface. One was mildly hypothermic and took some time to rewarm on return to Whitewalls. Their clothing was not suitable for the trip undertaken.
- 3. Saturday 9th January at 12:46 by SMWCRT: 7t, 4h 30m**
Ogof Clogwyn (Clydach Gorge), slips and trips
A caver (m54) dislocated his hip whilst climbing up into the entrance of Ogof Clogwyn. As he was only just inside the entrance, he was attended by SMWCRT as well as a WAST Paramedic, before Longtown MRT carried the casualty to a waiting ambulance.
- 4. Wednesday 26th January at 21:24 by MCR: 14t, 5h 34m**
Reads Cavern (Burrington Combe), physically stuck
MCR were called to a caver (m67) who had become physically stuck in Reads Cavern. A party of 7 had entered the cave, and one caver had attempted an awkward squeeze in Zed Alley. He was unable to pass a rock constriction, and became jammed, unable to move forwards, or back out of the squeeze. MCR members attempted to move the casualty, but quickly found that the area around the casualty needed enlarging before he could be moved. The casualty was freed by using drills and 'plug and feathers' to remove some rock from around his torso which enabled him to be slowly extricated from the squeeze. He was then able to make his way to the surface unaided.
- 5. Sunday 30th January at 20:30 by CRO: 30t, 4h 50m**
Mistral Hole (Easegill), lost/overdue
A party of cavers (m21,22, f21) were reported overdue from a Peterson Pot to Pippikin Pot through trip. After an initial surface search of the surface route from Bull Pot farm to Mistral/County Pot, small teams of cavers were sent to Pippikin Pot and Peterson Pot to check the entrances. A team sent into Mistral found the missing cavers just after midnight at the Hall of the Ten. They had been unable to find the route out of Mistral but were able to exit independently. Assisted by UWFRA
- 6. Saturday 5th February at 18:00 by DCRO: 31t, 3h**
Peak Cavern (Castleton), lost/overdue
Two cave divers descended Titan planning on a through trip to Peak Cavern via Far Sump and Buxton Water Sump. The first diver (m21), who didn't know the system well, entered Far Sump, but his partner had technical issues with his dive kit and aborted. He then exited via Titan taking the other diver's SRT kit with him. On exiting, he discovered the first diver had not exited via Peak and so raised the alarm. Teams were sent in both Titan and Peak Cavern for what may have been a complex search, with DCRO divers preparing to dive both sumps. Fortunately he was found sat on the near side of Buxton Water Sump. He had navigated his way almost to the show cave, but being unfamiliar with the system missed the last turn and decided to wait for rescue. He was escorted out, uninjured and in good spirits.
- 7. Wednesday 2nd March at 13:26 by MCR: 6t, 3h 45m**
Swildons Hole (Priddy), unable to climb
One caver (m59) from a party of two had been unable to climb the '20 foot' ladder pitch in the upper streamway, due to fatigue. His caving partner had exited the cave to initiate the rescue and, with the casualty left alone in the cave, two cave rescue members were quickly despatched to provide immediate assistance, whilst a further team of three cave rescue members followed with hauling equipment. The casualty was soon assisted up the ladder and out of the cave.
- 8. Sunday 3rd April at 15:56 by CRO: 10t, 1h**
Simpson's Pot (West Kingsdale), lost/overdue
A group of two adults and six teenagers was reported overdue on a 'pull-through' trip from Simpson's Pot to Valley Entrance in West Kingsdale. As team members were responding, news was received that they had just emerged, so the team were stood down.
- 9. Saturday 21st May at 21:14 by SMWCRT: 21t, 4h 30m**
Ogof Ffynnon Ddu (Penwylt), lost/overdue
Two cavers (m23, f24) entered OFD1, intending on a through trip to Top Entrance. They were unable to find the climb up out of the Maypole Inlet canyon, so retreated to exit out of Cwm Dwr. However, they were unable to find the route out of the boulder chokes, so correctly chose to sit at Piccadilly. They were found by a Southampton Uni trip doing a through trip from Top Entrance to OFD1, and escorted out of Cwm Dwr, just as the SMWCRT search teams were going underground.
- 10. Sunday 26th June at 12:00 by SCRO: 1t, 1h 30m**
Elephant Cave (Durness), assist authorities
SCRO were requested to assist in a multi-agency search for a missing person. Some of his belongings were found 200m from Elephant Cave, a sea cave in cliffs. The cave



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was searched on a few occasions at the request of the police and the missing man's relatives, but nothing was found. The assumption is that he entered the water and was washed away.

- 11. Saturday 2nd July 2022 at 18:40 by SMRT: 8t, 15m**
Sir Francis Level Lead Mine (Gunnerville Gill), lost/overdue
A party was reported overdue from a trip into St Francis Mine. SMRT members were mobilised, but before any search teams were deployed underground the group were spotted approaching the village and the team were stood down.
- 12. Friday 22nd July at 19:12 by CRO: 5t, 1h**
Shuttleworth Pot (Leck Fell) lost/overdue
A caver at a pothole club hostel reported that eight overseas cavers were three hours overdue on a trip into Shuttleworth Pot. As a precaution, the parking areas on Leck Fell Lane and at Bull Pot Farm were checked, with no unexplained cars discovered. The entrance to the Pot was also checked, without result, so team members who had been asked to stand by at home, were stood down. Later in the evening, the 'missing' cavers returned safely to their hostel, presumably unaware of the implications of chalking up times on the board there. They telephoned the duty controller and were suitably apologetic.
- 13. Saturday 30th July at 21:28 by CRO: 16t, 4h**
County Pot (Easegill), exposure/exhausted
A caver (f73) became exhausted in Manchester bypass while on a through trip from Lancaster Hole to County Pot. While some members of her team stayed with her, others went to Bull Pot Farm to call for help, before returning to her with extra supplies. When CRO members reached the entrance she had made good progress, and only needed a pull up the pitch to be able to exit County Pot.
- 14. Saturday 6th August at 14:00 by UWFRA: 4t, 30m**
Goyden Pot (Nidderdale), lost/overdue
The team were alerted that a diver had been reported overdue in Goyden Pot. As the Controllers were working to call in specialist divers, news was received that she had returned safely so the team stood down.
- 15. Wednesday 14th September at 22:08 by DCRO: 8t, 2h 30m**
Oxlow Cavern (Castleton), lost/overdue
3 minimally experienced cavers (m19,19,19) descended Oxlow Cavern at 11am with the aim of visiting West Chamber. They were equipped with climbing harnesses, outdoor clothing, and minimal SRT equipment (using a GriGri to ascend) which they were sharing. On exiting, their lack of experience and equipment meant progress was extremely slow. One of the party surfaced, but by 22:00 the others were still not out so he called DCRO. A small team attended, and rapidly found the missing cavers at the bottom of the 2nd pitch, tired, but well. They were swiftly hauled to the surface, and given some advice about finding a club to get some more training before any further vertical adventures.
- 16. Saturday 17th September at 18:29 by SMWCRT: 12t, 3h**
Cwm Dwr 2 (Penwylt), rock fall
While passing through a restricted space, a rock fell from the ceiling and two cavers (m31, 34) were trapped on the wrong side of the rock, unable to pass it. The rock was reduced in size using plugs and feathers and the cavers were released unharmed.
- 17. Sunday 18th September at 02:15 by ICRO: 40t, 14h**
Sea cave, Downpatrick Head (Co Mayo), marooned
ICRO were asked to assist in a complex multi-agency rescue. A caver (m40) had entered the cave on the previous day but had become stranded on a ledge 40m inside the entrance due to the tide and sea conditions. Lifeboat teams were unable to safely gain access due to the dangerous swell within the cave. ICRO rigging teams from Fermanagh and Clare completed a 12 hour bolting exercise down the cliff face and along a sporting traverse inside the cave to reach him. After an initial assessment, he was guided out along the rope traverse and up to the cliff top. He was then flown by Coastguard helicopter to hospital for ongoing treatment.
- 18. Sunday 25th September at 16:20 by CRO: 13t, 2h 20m**
White Scar Cave (Ingleborough), medical emergency
A tourist (m77) visiting White Scar had chest pains in The Battlefield, the furthest part of the show cave. He was known to have a heart condition, but his symptoms persisted despite his own treatment. CRO assisted paramedics in evacuating him by stretcher to an ambulance waiting at the entrance.
- 19. Monday 17th October at 17:00 by MCRO: 6t, 1h 50m**
Telford, assist authorities
MCRO were requested to assist West Mercia Police by searching an underground location in Telford Town Park for a missing person (missing since 2nd October 2022). An entrance to the Stirchley Furnaces, that had been grilled, was now partly open, exposing a staircase. One team member descended the steps, backed up by an abseil rope but soon came across a bricked-up entrance and no sign of the missing person. The site was derigged and the metal grille reinstated as best as possible.
- 20. Wednesday 26th October at 23:39 by COMRU: 12t, 30m**
Nenthead mines (Nenthead), lost/overdue
The team was contacted by Cumbria Police after a report of two mines explorers being overdue. Local team members were already aware and had made contact with the informant to gain details of the planned route. As the team were starting to head to Nenthead, the overdue pair returned to the surface safe and well, with the route taking longer than anticipated.
- 21. Saturday 19th November at 22:50 by SMRT: 12t, 3h**
Wet Grooves Lead Mine (Carperby-cum-Thoresby), lost/overdue
A mineral hunter (m44) was reported overdue from a trip down mines in near Carperby. They had set off early in the morning and had failed to call or return home. Police were soon able to locate their car and it was clear that



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they had not returned to it. There were several caves and mines in the area, so the team deployed to start searching underground. As the initial team members deployed to search the lower mine entrances and routes, the overdue person reappeared on the surface. Their light had failed, and they had become disorientated, but were able to exit when they saw lights from the search party. After 15 hours underground, they were assessed by a team doctor, given a hot drink and were soon on their way home.

formally log the incident with A&S Police on SARCALL. The caver was assisted out, with a harnessed haul for the final climb up to Tradesman's Entrance. They were then escorted down Burrington Coombe and handed over to paramedics.

22. Thursday 24th November at 13:19 by CRO: 24t, 5h 7m

Lancaster Hole (Easegill), fall

A caver (m54) on an exchange trip from Lancaster Hole to Cow Pot slipped from the traverse in Bridge Hall. He landed head-first, causing a minor head injury. A loose rock also fell onto his wrist, causing an obvious fracture. CRO members provided pain relief and splinted his wrist, and he was able to make his own way back to the Lancaster Hole entrance pitch with limited assistance. He was hauled up the pitch before making his own way to hospital for ongoing treatment.

23. Friday 25th November at 13:15 by DCRO: 4t, 30m

Giant's Hole (Castleton), lost/overdue

A party of 4 cavers was reported overdue from a trip down Giant's Hole. Shortly after the team was mobilised the party emerged, having taken a little longer than planned, and the team were stood down.

24. Monday 28th November at 17:32 by NWCRO: 1t, 4h 15m

Gwydyr Forest (Betws-y-coed), assist authorities

An adult and young person failed to return to their vehicle after leaving a supervised gorge walk in an area with many mine shafts. Ogwen Valley MRO requested the assistance of NWCRO to help with the search plans. The pair were located in an adjacent valley having missed the track they needed.

25. Thursday 1st December at 13:24 by CRO: 33t, 7h

Alum Pot (Selside), fall

Having descended through Lower Long Churn into Alum Pot, a caver (m39) fell 5m on the final pitch while abseiling, sustaining suspected injuries to his ankle, femur, lower back and chest.

CRO members assessed and treated his injuries, using a group shelter and the new BCRC warming jacket to keep him warm in the very exposed location. He was then put into a vacuum mattress and stretcher before being hauled up the Alum Pot main shaft, before a team vehicle transferred him to an ambulance at the roadhead. Assistance provided by North Yorkshire Fire Service and HART.

26. Saturday 3rd December at 11:04 by MCR: 26t, 38m

Goatchurch Cavern (Burrington Combe), slips and trips

During a planned MCR underground rescue practice at Goatchurch Cavern, MCR became aware of an injured caver (m35). While stumbling, they had pushed awkwardly on their arm, dislocating their left shoulder. MCR members and equipment were on-scene very quickly, as they were already in the same cave. Casualty care was provided and a message sent to the surface to