

British Cave Rescue Council

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR CAVE RESCUE IN THE BRITISH ISLES

Incident Report for Period 1st January 1995 - 31st December 1995

	Cave Rescue Organisation	Cumbria Ore Mines RU	Derbyshire CRO	Devon CRO	Gloucestershire CRG	Irish CRO	Mendip RO	Midlands CRO	North Wales CRO	Scottish CRO	South East CRO	South Wales CRO	Swaledale FRO	Upper Wharfedale FRA	West Cornwall Mines RG	Others ⁽¹⁾	TOTALS
Caving Incidents	10	3	4	-	1	1	11	-	-	-	-	8	-	5	-	2	45
Persons Assisted	16	2 ⁽²⁾	6	-	1	3	39	-	-	-	-	21	-	19	-	2	109
Fatalities	2	0	0	-	0	3	0	-	-	-	-	0	-	0	-	0	5
Persons Injured ⁽⁴⁾	3	0	1	-	0	0	4	-	-	-	-	4	-	0	-	1	13
Animal Incidents	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	-	5	15
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Totals Underground Incidents	14	3	4	-	1	1	11	-	-	-	-	9	-	10	-	7	60
Surface Incidents	27	-	-	-	1	0		-	1	-	-	-	10	11	-	x	50
Persons Assisted	60	-	-	-	1	0		-	2	-	-	-	22	6	-	x	91
Fatalities	2	-	-	-	-	0		-	0	-	-	-	13 ⁽³⁾	1	-	x	16
Persons Injured	39	-	-	-	1	0		-	0	-	-	-	7	5	-	x	52
Surface Animal Incidents	5	-	-	-	-	1		-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	x	7
Assistance to other teams	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	x	
Totals Surface Incidents	32	-	-	-	1	1		-	1	-	-	-	11	11	-	x	57

Notes:

- (1) The "others" column reflects underground rescues carried out by member teams of the MRC and whose incident reports have been submitted to the BCRC. These are shown in the incident list (26 and 43)
- (2) COMRU were called to two similar incidents involving the same casualty, who was in receipt of treatment for depression.
- (3) On 24th May 1995, Swaledale FRO were called to the aeroplane crash at Dunkeswick between Leeds and Harrogate, which involved some 12 fatalities.
- (4) Persons injured includes those casualties needing assistance for a medical condition.

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.

British Cave Rescue Council

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR CAVE RESCUE IN THE BRITISH ISLES

Summary of Incident Report, 1995

1. There were 5 underground fatalities in 1995:

- three cavers who were **drowned** after being swept away in heavy flooding in Lower Cradle Hole, Co. Fermanagh (see incident 1).
- a member of a Management Training Course who suffered a **heart attack** whilst on a through trip from Calf Holes to Browgill Cave, in the Yorkshire Dales (see incident 18).
- a member of a Scout walking group who ventured into Jib Tunnel, a cave adjacent to and leading into the Main Shaft of Gaping Ghyll. He fell some 340ft down the Main Shaft suffering **multiple serious injuries** leading to his death (see incident 30).

Of the 45 underground incidents, some 9 involved non-caving activity - refer to incidents 8, 10, 17, 23, 26, 30, 31, 34 and 43.

2. Non-fatal injuries and medical emergencies occurred underground were:

Dislocated shoulders	3	Fractured ribs	1
Lower arm/wrist/hand injuries	3	Fractured skull	1
Multiple serious injuries	1	Suspected Asthma	1
Foot injuries	1	Medical condition	1
Fractured pelvis	1		

3. The main causes of incidents recorded in 1995 were:

Falls of various causes	9	Hung up on SRT rope	1
Overdue	8	Refusal to free dive	1
Lost	5	Investigation	1
Physically stuck	4	Assist police -	
Rock falls	4Missing person search	4
Unable to climb out	3other	1
Medical emergencies	3		
Flooding	1	Total	45

4. The Cave Rescue Organisation is based in Clapham, North Yorkshire.

5. The underground animal incidents involved 8 sheep, 4 lambs, 3 dogs, 1 cow, 1 goat and 1 duck.

6. 'Surface Incidents' include fell/moorland rescues and searches. Teams, chiefly in the north, carry out these duties as part of their normal workload. These incidents are also recorded in the Mountain Rescue Council Incident Report for 1995.

7. Alerts and standbys not involving a team callout are not recorded. Also those incidents dealt with by local knowledge over the telephone and not involving a team callout are not recorded.

Quick Summary	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Underground Caving Incidents	44	28	50	48	44	47	73	57	39	46	53	47	45
No. persons	109	63	125	104	109	123	184	153	87	104	129	111	109
No. of fatalities	1	3	3	4	0	4	1	3	2	2	2	5	5
No. injured	18	3	18	11	19	14	19	14	10	12	16	20	13
Divers assisted incidents			3	1				2		2	1		1
and add:													
Cave diving incidents			1		1	1	3	1		1		1	
No persons			1		1	1	3	1		1		1	
Diving fatalities			1		0	1	0	0		1		1	

British Cave Rescue Council

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR CAVE RESCUE IN THE BRITISH ISLES

Summary of Incidents for 1995

- 1. Sunday, 15th January 1995 at 13:30 by ICRO (29 hours)**
Lower Cradle Hole, Co Fermanagh, flooding, affiliated club
A party of 10 entered cave at 1.00pm, but two in the party were swept away by fast flowing water in the ducks leading from Lower Cradle to the Grand Gallery of Marble Arch Caves. First ICRO at scene performed an unsuccessful preliminary search of downstream duck. Cave divers then search the ducks from the downstream end in hope of finding the cavers in an airbell, but on the second and third dives, the **bodies of two cavers** (m,m) were found and were retrieved. This was at 16:10 on the 15th. It had meanwhile been reported a third caver was missing. Diving continued from the Lower Cradle end of the ducks and all the known airbells were searched to no avail. A large underground search was undertaken by ICRO and a surface search by the RUC Mountain Rescue team, assisted by troops and RAF helicopter; this failed to find the caver. In deteriorating weather conditions, the search was stood down at midnight for a period. By 13:00 the next day, overnight flooding had subsided and the search was resumed. The **body of the third caver** (m) was then found some 30 metres downstream of the ducks, having been moved there overnight by the flooding.
- 2. Sunday, 22nd January 1995 at 14:52 by CRO (3 hours)**
Sunset Hole, Fall on pitch, Individuals
Caver (m35) slipped near bottom of 55ft pitch and fell about 10ft. Wrist injuries and exhausted. Hauled up pitch and escorted out.
- 3. Friday, 27th January 1995 at 20:00 by MRO**
Burrington Combe Area, investigation
Report of large party (20, including several children) visiting caves in Burrington area in abnormally high water conditions. Local cavers were deployed and located vehicle and party on surface. They had visited Lionel's Hole and were in no danger.
- 4. Saturday, 11th February at 00:01 by MRO (1½ hours)**
Eastwater Cavern, overdue
Following report of party in difficulty, farmer made a callout at midnight Saturday. Cavers quickly found and escorted to surface.
- 5. Saturday, 11th February at 14:22 by MRO (4 ½ hours)**
Swildons Hole, physically stuck, affiliated club
Caver (m) jammed knee in crack at start of Upper Oxbow. Casualty freed after hammering and chiselling, and use of battery drill and plugs/feathers. Assisted to surface unharmed.
- 6. Saturday, 18th February 1995 at 23:00 by CRO (4¾ hours)**
Rowten Pot, Unable to climb, affiliated club
Caver (m,30) was unable to pass knot when climbing and returned to bottom exhausted. Was hauled to surface from bottom of Big Pitch in a harness.
- 7. Wednesday, 22nd February 1995 at 14:00 by MRO (5 hours)**
Swildons Hole, fall while caving
Caver (m) slipped in Barnes Loop and suffered dislocated shoulder. Fellow caver had suffered similar injuries, but had made way out of cave and called help. MRO treated casualty, who was assisted to surface.
- 8. Friday, 3rd March 1995 at 07:00 by COMRU (1 hour)**
Calbeck Fell, missing person, Individual
After overnight search for missing person (m late 30s) by Cockermouth MRT mines team called in to check mine sites. Found as team deployed.
- 9. Monday, 20th March 1995 at 17:30 by MRO (3 hours)**
Swildons Hole, fall while caving
Caver (m) slipped in Barnes Loop and dislocated shoulder after a slight fall. Was assisted to the surface and onto hospital.
- 10. Wednesday, 22nd March 1995 at 06:30 by COMRU (1 hour)**
Repeat of search of the 3rd March.
Missing person was suffering from depression and was cautioned by police.
- 11. Thursday, 23rd March 1995 at 23:55 by MRO (½ hour)**
Eastwater Cavern, overdue
Report of party overdue. Surfaced safely before underground team deployed.
- 12. Tuesday, 4th April 1995 at 17:20 by DerbyCRO (25 mins)**
Hunger Hill Swallet, Physically Stuck, affiliated club
Caver (m21) attempted squeeze head first and became jammed by his SRT equipment with the head and shoulders through the squeeze. Companion returned to casualty with suggestions to free casualty whilst callout proceeded. He was able to do this just before first team members arrived at scene.
- 13. Saturday, 15th April 1995 at 16:50 by MRO (1 hour)**
Swildons Hole, party reported overdue
Message on a club hut notice board indicated a party underground was overdue. After checking around, small party deployed to search to Barnes Loop amongst holiday caver traffic. Was eventually established the party had left the cave sometime earlier.
- 14. Saturday, 15th April 1995 at 21:30 by UWFRA (5½ hours)**
Dow/Providence Pot, Lost, not known
Party (f20, m29, m23) overdue due to losing way on through trip.
- 15. Sunday, 16th April 1995 at 21:00 by UWFRA (1.5 hours)**
Mongo Ghyll/Stump Cross Cavern, Lost, affiliated club
4 cavers (3m, f) lost way and became overdue.
- 16. Sunday, 16th April 1995 at 23:45 by UWFRA (4½ hours)**
Dow/Providence Pot, Lost, affiliated club
7 cavers (f, 6m, late teens) overdue after becoming tired and lost.
- 17. Saturday, 22nd April 1995 at 09:00 by SWCRO (½ hour)**
Cwm Yststwyth Mine, Fall, Individual non-caver
Police alerted warden of male fallen down mine entrance. Incident resolved without team visiting site.
- 18. Friday, 12th May 1995 at 11:37 by CRO (3 hours)**
Calf Holes/Browgill Cave, Medical, Management Training Course
Participant (m55) collapsed in tight section between caves known as Hainsworth's Passage. Suffered **fatal** heart attack. Body evacuated to surface via Browgill Cave.
- 19. Saturday, 13th May 1995 at 21:00 by CRO (1 hour)**
Pool Sink (Lancaster/Easegill), lost, affiliated club
Cavers (m, m, f) lost their way; found during an initial search by RRCPC members and escorted to surface.
- 20. Saturday, 13th May 1995 at 23:45 by UWFRA (4½ hours)**
Dow Cave/Providence Pot, Lost, affiliated club
Whilst travelling the Dowbergill Passage caver (f, 3m) became tired and lost way.
- 21. Sunday, 14th May 1995 at 11:10 by DerbyCRO (1½ hours)**
Merlins Mine, Physically Stuck, Individuals
Caver (m24) became stuck in tight rift above Shag's Sump after battery box jammed. After cutting battery belt with scalpel, caver was able to free himself and was able to return to surface under own steam.
- 22. Sunday, 21st May 1995 at 11:52 by DerbyCRO (5 hours)**
Mandale Mine, Rock fall, Individuals
Party were exploring roofed level beyond shaft when caver hit head on roof and some 6ft of level collapsed, trapping two cavers (m24, m24) and injuring hand of one caver. Some desperate digging, with a strong threat of further rock falls, allowed the cavers to be freed and evacuated to surface.
- 23. Tuesday, 23rd May 1995 at 12:00 by GCRG (5½ hours)**
Symmonds Yat area, assist police, scout
Called by police to assist in search for depressed missing person (m) after car was found in car park. The cave entrances in the area were examined with negative results. Person was found safe and well elsewhere.

British Cave Rescue Council

THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR CAVE RESCUE IN THE BRITISH ISLES

24. Saturday, 27th May 1995 at 13:44 by SWCROWB (1½ hours)
Pwll Dwfn, Rock fall, affiliated club
Caver (m) was hit by boulder whilst waiting at bottom of pitch sustaining fracture of skull. Group was able to assist casualty to surface as rescue team arrived.

25. Saturday, 3rd June 1995 by CRO (1½ hours)
Upper Long Churn, Hung Up
Caver (m) became hung-up on rope on waterfall chute at Dr Bannisters Handbasin. His friends were unable to release him for 45 minutes. Mild hypothermia.

26. Sunday, 25th June 1995 at 12:25 by Buxton MRT (35 minutes)
Blue John Show Caverns, Castleton, medical collapse
OAP collapsed on a guided trip. Team called to assist Ambulance service in evacuation.

27. Wednesday, 28th June 1995 at 23:57 by MRO (4½ hours)
Swildons Holes, refused to free dive
Caver (f) on first caving trip refused to return through short, free divisible sump. Water conditions were low and there was airspace. On arrival at scene, doctor was able to persuade casualty to return of her own accord. She then made her own way out of cave with assistance.

28. Saturday, 1st July 1995 at 19:40 by SWCROWB (5½ hours)
Cwm Dwr to OFD II, Overdue, affiliated club
Two groups (7m, 1f) moving slowly in the cave joined together. They were very tired and unable to climb Maypole Inlet. Found and assisted to surface.

29. Sunday, 9th July 1995 at 01:00 by CRO (½ hour)
Blea Gill Cave, Dentdale, Overdue, affiliated club
2 cavers (m, m) reported overdue; found in Dent during preliminary search for their vehicles.

30. Tuesday, 25th July 1995 at 15:00 by CRO (3½ hours)
Jib Tunnel, Gaping Ghyll, Fall, Scout Group
Walker (m11) ventured into Jib Tunnel and fell 340ft down shaft into Gaping Ghyll Main Chamber. **Fatal.**

31. Sunday, 30th July 1995 at 09:30 by COMRU (8 hours)
Conniston Copper Mine, Assist Police
Police were contacted regarding unusual object in level under Levers Water Reservoir. Team called in to guide and retrieve object, and to assist in clearance of area.

32. Sunday, 30th July 1995 at 19:40 by SWCROWB (2 hours)
OFD II, Rock fall, affiliated club
Falling boulder caused 3 severed tendons in hand requiring hospital treatment to caver (f,26). Met by rescue team making their way out and assisted to the surface.

33. Wednesday, 9th August 1995 by DerbyCRO
Ladyside Pot, Manifold Valley, unable to climb out, Venture Scout
Caver (m,17) got into trouble on the very tight entrance pitch. Was helped out by Staffordshire Fire Brigade personnel soon after DCRO arrived on scene.

34. Thursday, 24th August 1995 by MRO
Redcliffe Caves, Bristol, missing person
MRO were contacted by Bristol Police to assist in missing person search. He was in Redcliffe Caves after his companion had become frightened and left him. He was not well equipped - only had candles for lighting. He was not found after a search of obvious areas. Further search later in day led to a more systematic search again with negative results. There was evidence he had left cave earlier in the day.

35. Thursday, 24th August 1995 at 15:00 by SWCRO/GW (2 hours)
Ogof Clogwyn, Slipped while caving, Adventure Holiday Centre
Member of instructed group (m,15) slipped and dislocated shoulder. Assisted out.

36. Monday, 28th August 1995 at 20:50 by CRO (½ hour)
Gaping Ghyll, Overdue
Party of 4 cavers reported overdue. Had been delayed in Main Chamber by long queue for winch.

37. Tuesday, 12th September 1995 at 21:53 by SWCROWB (6 hours)
Cwm Dwr to OFD II, Overdue, affiliated club
Party of 3 (2m, f) reported overdue. Found lost in Cairn Chamber and assisted to surface.

38. Saturday, 16th September 1995 at 14:35 by MRO (1 hour)
St Cuthberts Swallet, rock fall, affiliated club
Caver (m,50s) sustained foot injuries when struck by a falling boulder. Caver was able to make most of way out unassisted. Injuries were splinted and he was escorted to surface.

39. Sunday, 17th September 1995 at 14:00 by UWFRA (1½ hours)
Kirk Gill Pot - Upper Wharfedale, Physically stuck, Outdoor Pursuits Centre
Whilst traversing a narrow rift, the casualty (f31) slipped and became stuck. Released using stemple, pulleys and manpower.

40. Sunday, 17th September 1995 at 14:15 by MRO (1 hour)
Swildons Hole, medical emergency
MRO was advised of caver (f) 'partially unconscious' at bottom of entrance climb - possibly an asthma attack. Casualty located in Showerbath Chamber and found to be mildly hypothermic. She was quickly carried to doctor on the surface.

41. Wednesday, 20th September 1995 at 12:51 by CRO (4 hours)
Slit Pot, Simpson's Pot, Fall, Individuals
Caver (f38) slipped and fell about 90ft from climb over Slit Pot whilst preparing for abseil. Multiple injuries. Evacuated by RAF Helicopter.

42. Sunday, 8th October 1995 by SWCRO/GW
Camo Adit, Fall, affiliated club
Caver (m) fell in Camophobia suffering cracked ribs and bruising. Party made their way to the surface as rescue team arrived.

43. Sunday, 22nd October 1995 at 20:45 by Cornwall Mineshaft Rescue Unit (2 hours)
Old Shaft at Phoenix Dry, Liskeard, unable to climb out
Man attempting a rescue of a cow was unable to climb rope back to surface. Winch deployed and both man and cow were successfully returned to the surface.

44. Sunday, 19th November 1995 at 23:45 by SWCRO/GW (4 hours)
Ogof Draenan, Overdue, affiliated club
Party (f, 4m) overdue and found by rescue team quite near the entrance, where they could not find their way out.

45. Thursday, 14th December 1995 at 23:51 by CRO (4½ hours)
Alum Pot - Dolly Tubs, Fall/SRT, affiliated club
Caver (m) lost control whilst abseiling down second half of pitch. Fractured pelvis and ankle.

(affiliated clubs based on NCA Members List dated 27-11-95)