



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 22, MAY 2026

Cave rescue since 1965, covering the Forest of Dean,
Lower Wye Valley, The Cotswolds and Thames Valley.

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Registered Charity No.
900316

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Editorial

9th May 2026

A big thankyou to Paul Taylor, Tiff Cooksley-Czajka and Joel Corrigan for taking the time to write some excellent articles. Thanks also to Falkland Anderson, Simon Betts and Paul Taylor for some excellent photos to help illustrate the articles.

In this edition we have an excellent writeup by Tiff for her view on what its like to be rescued from a difficult cave like Redhouse. More writeups like this from other team members really helps to share ideas/views on how the training is going from differing viewpoints

Thanks

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SARCALL & HOW TO USE IT

SARCALL is the primary tool used by GCRG when initiating a call out. Not only is it the way we notify members of the details of the call out, it is also how you, the members, let the Wardens know if you are available. It is **EXPECTED THAT ALL MEMBERS WILL RESPOND TO ALL SARCALL ALERTS** - the team need to know both who is and is not available.

SARCALL alert messages are sent by SMS to mobile phones, automatic voice message to land lines and email.

Mobiles

The callout SMS text alert will give brief details of the incident and contact details for the originating Warden.

When replying to these texts YOU MUST use the phone on which the callout text was received. This phone number is recorded on the SARCALL system as belonging to a particular individual, sending texts from other phones will result in them being ignored.

SARCALL Information for Team Members

When you receive a SARCALL SMS alert sent by a GCRG warden reply to it to indicate your availability.

If you are unable to reply by SMS text message try using the GCRG specific SARCALL response web page.

Alternatively call the originating warden or the depot where a message may be left on the answerphone.

The SMS text message **MUST** take one of the 3 formats below:

SAR ▲ Axx ▲ message if you are available

SAR ▲ Lxx ▲ message if you have limited availability

SAR ▲ N ▲ message if you are unavailable

Where

▲ = a space

xxx = time in minutes until you will arrive at RV point

message = relevant additional information, free text.

Changes to your details? Email info@gcrg.org.uk

Once home from a callout or after a training exercise , please respond to SARCALL with SAR H to indicate you have got home safely.

TRAINING/EXERCISE EVENTS since May 2025

Since the last newsletter, GCRG

personnel have been involved in the following events.

Reports for some/all of these can be found further on within this newsletter.

22 June 2025 Windrush Stone Mine

13 September 2025 Redhouse/Clearwell Caves

14 December 2025 GCRG Depot & 'Round-Robin' sessions

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

11 & 28 May 2026	CRIMS training	English Bicknor Village Hall (EBVH)
21 June 2026	GCRG training	Redhouse & EBVH
13 September 2026	GCRG Training	TBD
26-27 Sept 2026	Hidden Earth	Llangollen
26-30 Sept/1-4 Oct 2026	Euro Cave Rescue Assn	Slovenia
17-24 Oct 2026	Int'l Training Course (Team Member/Leader) Cave Rescue 2026	Lozere, France
13 December 2026	GCRG Training	The Depot
?? March 2027	GCRG Training	TBD
4-6 June 2027	RESCON 2027	To be joint hosted by GCRG and SECRO near Godstone, Surrey.

CAVE RESCUE CALLOUTS since May 2025

9th March 2026

Cave

Coleford (Forest of Dean)

Assisting SARA to search for a missing person, GCRG requested to search a cave in the area.

22nd March 2026

Cave

Wookey Hole (Mendip)

Trapped caver, GCRG put on standby to assist Mendip Cave Rescue. Caver extracted by MCR.

2 x GCRG members called out, 39 on standby.

Cave

Swildons (Mendip)

Caver with lower leg injury, GCRG put on standby to assist Mendip Cave Rescue. Caver extracted by MCR.

41 x GCRG members on standby.

REPORTS OF LANDSEARCH CALLOUTS since May 2025

11th May 2025

Robinswood Hill (Gloucester)

Missing person search

2 x GCRG members

5th July 2025

Nailsworth

LANDSEARCH CALLOUTS since May 2025 [cont'd]

12th August 2025

Coleford (Forest of Dean)

Missing person search

2 x GCRG members

11th September 2025

Coleford (Forest of Dean)

Missing person search

1 x GCRG member

8th December 2025

Churchdown (Gloucester)

Missing person search

1 x GCRG member

9th March 2026

Coleford (Forest of Dean)

Missing person search in Milkwall Quarry cave

GCRG members involved & nothing found

29th March 2026

Coleford (Forest of Dean)

Missing person search

GCRG members involved

It is worth noting that the land searches supported by GCRG is done by a small number of group members who willingly volunteer to take on the extra training and commitment in addition to their 'normal' cave rescue activities/commitments.

The nature and scope of these landsearches inevitably involves a higher risk of callout and usually at any time, day or night unlike caving when (usually) only specific times when people generally go caving (evenings and at the w/e).



PETE TURIER**GCRG SECRETARY , 2000-2020**

Sadly on 25th of March 2026 Pete Turier passed away and the group lost a good friend.



In the next (Autumn) edition of the newsletter there will be a comprehensive writeup of Pete and his work as a valued member of GCRG.

TRAINING/EXERCISE EVENTS since May 2025

TRAINING/EXERCISE: WINDRUSH STONE MINE

22nd June 2025

Since the last time GCRG had a practice here (Dec 2010) the mine has been subject to a lot of new discoveries (Dec 2011 onwards) and the size of the place extended considerably. So it made sense for GCRG to return for another training exercise but this time in the newly found sections of the mine. Compared to the Forest caves, the Cotswold stone mines are no-where near as technically difficult nor harder but nonetheless GCRG needs to have a knowledge of these sites and an understanding of the techniques required if/when a callout arises.

On the day, excellent weather was thankfully available —it was June afterall—and with a turnout of approx. 25-30 members.

The day's activities would consist of 2 parts. Part 1 would be a search of parts of the mine in order to have more GCRG members with knowledge of new extensions & Part 2 would then be a stretcher carry from part of the mine back to the surface. For the search, those members going underground were divided up into a number of teams, equipped with maps and told to go off and look for the six 'casualties' (laminated cards each with a word on them). Once found, the word on each card would then be relayed to surface control to be acknowledged that that part of the mine had been thoroughly checked.

After a lunch stop at 1200 and a pleasant time on the surface it was then back underground to take a live casualty out to the surface and using solid rigid stretcher. This stretcher—other than for the coal mines rescue team—had not been used underground before and so the exercise today would be an excellent chance to see it used in another mine environment and whether it was indeed suitable. At suitable point underground the casualty was loaded into the stretcher and the carrying began. Given the nature of some of the archaeology in-situ everyone had to ensure that no damage was done and care needed to be taken. Due to the nature of the passageways and the often boulder-scrambling required, having a rigid stretcher worked very well and often the stretcher could just be balanced on a rock for resting/people moving past and with no discomfort to the casualty. By approx 1500 everyone was back on the surface and back at control.

While most of those underground were involved in the search/carry exercise, a small number undertook a separate testing of the 'meshtastic' comms system and found it to work very well. In due course there will be a separate writeup on this new system and the various underground locations where it has been tested.

Another excellent and well-worth training event and a bit of a change from the Forest of Dean.



PHOTOS BY FALKLAND ANDERSON

EXERCISE: REDHOUSE

13th September 2025

This was to be the first training exercise to held in Redhouse since the recent major discoveries and the start by GCRG to prepare for what would now be a serious incident should an accident occur in the future.

The main object of today was to see how difficult it would be just to get a casualty out through part of the entrance series. Due to the overall numbers involved, it was decided that there would also be a concurrent Exercise taking place also at Old Ham. The idea of this being that it would also test GCRG's ability to have to deal with two rescues at the same time—as happened to Mendip Cave Rescue in March 2026— something which could happen whether we like it or not. As usual & prior to going underground teams were established [rigging, comms, medics, u/g controller, stretcher teams] volunteers called for and roles assigned. One of the main tasks for today was to see how the new Petzl stretcher would cope with the entrance series. Tiff Cooksley bravely volunteered to take on the role of casualty and was strapped in at a suitable point in the entrance series in the new Petzl stretcher. By the end of the exercise it was proved that trying to extract a casualty in the Petzl who was any larger than Tiff through the constrictions at the bottom of the pitches would be very difficult indeed and that for an actual rescue the Slix stretcher would need to be used instead.

While the practice was going ahead the heavens opened and torrential rain made life for surface control at Redhouse 'interesting' but much worse at Clearwell/Old Ham where the generator there was literally flooded out! This practice showed clearly that even an extraction from just a short way into the cave would be a lengthy, difficult and serious undertaking.

Later the same day the GCRG 60th anniversary celebrations were held over at Clearwell Caves at the same location for previous GCRG events. Food and drink was supplied to all who attended and a rolling display of photos relating to GCRG's last 60 years was on show. In addition, many members also brought along items for sale with the proceeds going towards GCRG funding.

Its only by reflecting upon how/when the group started, and with what, that its possible to appreciate just how far the group has come in 60 years. In particular this must be down to the purchase of the depot and how it has been totally transformed (due to a lot of hard work my many people) into the fantastic resource that it is.

Its not often we get a good account of just what its like to be a casualty in a cave rescue situation, especially from a cave as potentially serious as Redhouse. Tiff's excellent account of what its like to be a casualty is reproduced here [Ed].

The view from the stretcher

Being midway through training towards qualification as a Remote Rescue Medical Technician (RRMT AKA Caz Carer) for the first time, I felt I was due my time in the stretcher. It's one thing to learn the theory of looking after a casualty underground, another to put yourself in their 'boots' for a few hours.

After the usual faffing, we finally got underground, making our way down the many ladders and sections of scaffolding, moving bags of rigging gear and the stretcher whilst avoiding the pre-laid phone cables. Conditions were dry, with almost no water coming down the entrance series. A separate stretcher team had gone ahead earlier to practice hauling a stretcher through the wet and low sections further into the entrance series. The plan for our team was to attempt to get a stretcher from the bottom of the entrance series climbs, from just before the 'Toilet Seat', all the way to the surface. It was felt to be less awkward to get me into the stretcher in the chamber before the final climb down into the cave.

Unfortunately for me, by the time I was strapped in, such was the success of the first team, they had finished their exercise and were wanting to exit. With space at a premium, I was tucked into the side of the chamber with Marta then attempting to shield my head from the parade of tackle sacks, knees, and elbows that squeezed past.

Eventually, I could be lowered down the climb to begin the exercise. Once lowered to the bottom, time had marched on and it was decided to just haul me straight from the bottom rather than dragging the stretcher further along the tight passage beyond. For reasons unknown to me, the change over from lowering to hauling seemed to take an age and I was left for quite some time propped up vertically at the bottom of the climb, in a drip, with the rock wall less than 5cm from my face. Finally, they were ready to haul, and I was soon up and back into the chamber, with this pitch being fairly straight forward.

The team had split into two, with Joel Corrigan leading a team of experienced riggers from the top, and then 3 left at the bottom to handle the stretcher. Of the 3, one was my wife, Marta, who had done a handful of underground stretcher exercises, one a chap who had attended one training session before, and another chap for whom this was his first ever Cave Rescue Exercise. There was no designated Underground Controller.

I was slid easily through the chamber towards the next obstacle. We had gained a spare person from the comms team so the stretcher team asked him to go ahead through the tight low section which led to the bottom of the next pitch and guide the head of the stretcher. Although it opened up a little bit beyond the low section, there wasn't enough space for the full length of the stretcher to enter the bottom of the pitch before moving to the vertical position.

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As the rigging team hauled, and the 3 behind attempted to guide the stretcher. The riggers shouted down that the stretcher was stuck. The person who was supposed to be guiding the head of the stretcher had disappeared by this point. With no one at the head of the stretcher, the riggers out of line of sight, and the rest of the team stuck behind, it took some time to realise that the bottom section of the Petzl Nest had gotten wedged into the sides of the narrow passage and would not budge. No amount of upwards and backwards pulling was helping. Marta could see where the stretcher was wedged and asked if there was something she could use to pry it out.

I suggested that there may be a spanner within one of the rigging kits left behind at the previous pitch. Marta returned, spanner in hand, and managed to extract the sides of the stretcher and free me. Alas, the ordeal wasn't over yet, the angle of the stretcher was such that as the riggers hauled, I was being pulled up rather than forwards and was getting wedged in a slot in the roof of the passage. With no one anywhere near the head of the stretcher, I was being pulled and wedged painfully further and further into the slot, with the lightweight nature of the Nest giving little protection to my limbs as the stretcher was pivoted on my upper left arm on the corner of the passage wall. I shouted 'stop' and explained that the current method was not going to work and they needed to somehow get the stretcher further into the chamber at the bottom of the pitch. An anchor point has now been placed which will make this much easier in the future. Eventually, I was finally out of the slot and moving freely up the pitch.

Next, it was the scaffold section, which went more smoothly, but, having essentially had to lead my own 'rescue' up until this point, my humour was wearing thin and I was not enjoying the experience of rusty scaffold clips and bars scraping by my face.

At the bottom of the final shaft now, I could almost taste freedom. The plan was for a seamless transition from the rigging within the cave, to the Larkin Frame on the surface which would take me from the lower section of scaffolded floor, all the way to the surface. I don't think this quite went to plan as the stretcher suddenly dropped by a metre or so almost to the rock floor. After some comms confusion with the surface team I finally started moving upwards towards freedom. Comms was a consistent issue throughout the exercise, with there not having been any briefing to agree hauling terms before going underground, causing much confusion.

Extraction from this point should have been straight forward, but as I approached the final scaffolding platform it became clear that the gap between the bars would be tight. Indeed, I only just fit and it was obvious that any casualty bigger than me (!) would not fit. Finally, I popped out from the top of the shaft and was lowered to the ground. From first getting into the stretcher, it took more than 2 hours to be extracted from a section of cave which we typically blast through in less than 5 minutes.

My main takeaway from the day is to never, ever, need to be rescued!"

Tiff Cooksley-Czajka

TRAINING: GCRG DEPOT

14th December 2025

Once again the last training session of the year was held at the depot and was a series of 4 training sessions—aka a “Round Robin” - with people joining or being assigned to, one of four teams.

The sessions were designed to cover a range of specific subjects and were:

Session 1

- stretcher hauling using the new Petzl bag/stretcher.

Session 2

- going through the process of setting up the awning/gazebo from the side of the trailer.

Session 3

- discussion and demonstration of equipment/techniques for casualty/rescuer warming.

Session 4

- safe use of wire ladders & associated rope-handling/life-lining.

As for previous December training sessions, there were bacon & egg rolls supplied which as ever went down well.

A very well attended day and once again, a big thankyou to everyone who gave up their time to make it a success.

EXERCISE: BIXHEAD STONE MINE

8th March 2026

A full & detailed report will follow in the next newsletter (probably Autumn 2026), in the mean time these are some of the photos from the event.



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SURFACE CONTROL TRAINING

Over a period of 3 monday evenings during March 2026, GCRG ran a series of training sessions/ exercises held at the English Bicknor Village Hall (EVH). The idea was to give those attending (all volunteers responding to a notice sent out by Ian Healey to the group's members) an idea of how a successful surface control could be established at the EVH in the event of a Redhouse callout.

At our normal GCRG training sessions there is always an element of Surface Control put into place but this is not always the best way for people to learn what **"SURFACE CONTROL"** is really about.

With the growth of the Redhouse cave system and to be honest it should not really have taken this as we already have a number of significant cave and mine complexes in our area that would very easily have the potential of developing into a major incident should an accident occur within the farther or extreme extents of them. However, Redhouse seemed to be the "Nail in the Coffin" so to speak for us and as you know as a group we have embraced this and run not only a Redhouse Rescue Evaluation weekend but also as a result of that implemented changes within the cave to make the transit of a stretcher and casualty a lot more viable. Also, last September we ran an underground training exercise within the entrance series to help us prove that these changes have made things possible [see the writeup elsewhere in this N/L, Ed]. They were pretty much on the money although there is still further work to be undertaken this year once water levels have dropped to further enhance the situation. What was apparent however was that we did need to up our game on specific "Surface Control Training" when dealing with a major Incident.

It's a long time since we had to do this for real and actually long may that situation continue. However, that is not an excuse for complacency and Ian Healey our GCRG Training Officer said that he would like to run a series of evening sessions primarily dealing with an incident at Redhouse Lane cave but that could easily be applied to any of the other locations as it's principles and procedures that are being practiced and although other things may come into play for example at Otter Hole we have the tides to think about. Overall, the same general rules apply.

We are very much aware that almost any incident in Redhouse is going to be serious and the further into the system that an accident takes place this very much ups the anti many times over. For many of our smaller mines and caves, running the rescue from the GCRG trailer would be the route we would go down. However, for a major incident where we could easily look at many 10's of hours or even days to implement the return of a casualty to the surface, the trailer would not cope or be suitable where a lot of people would be required to run the surface control.

To this end we have in the past used offsite venues for this purpose. Ideally for Redhouse or Slaughter Stream Cave either English Bicknor Village Hall [EBVH] or Berry Hill Rugby Club have been identified as locations that would be a very good base.

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SURFACE CONTROL TRAINING

For Otter Hole Ian has been in touch with the Chepstow racecourse and for some sites we would of course use the GCRG depot. It was suggested therefore that if EBVH was available it would be good to use it for these sessions as it would provide not only a more workable situation but also realistic experience of working in the venue that we would for a real incident. Paul and Ian visited the site to check things out and then made the booking for three consecutive Monday evenings in March. 9th, 16th & 23rd.

In an evening it would not be possible to go through the whole time that an incident would take so it was decided to go for a section of the incident when it had been running for around 12 hrs and the team would have a 6-hr period to cover for their session. Ian ended up with a total of 22 people who were down to attend. There were others who wanted to come but could not fit in the dates so we will be running some more.

The plan was to set things up as much as possible as to how it would be for a real incident inside the EBVH with radios, cave links, computers, cave survey, Starlink and VOIP and also to try and simulate as much as possible the different roles that people would be required to take on during an incident.

With access available to all parts of the building it was possible to split it into two sections. One in the bar area would be the Surface Control and the main hall would be the briefing area. The GCRG trailer was also brought over for the first session to act as the comms point for the simulated surface Cave Link and entrance radio control with someone inside the building acting as the underground Cave Link. For subsequent sessions we decided that having the trailer although realistic did add a lot of additional work for the organising team and it was not taken but the role it played was simulated. Ian had prepared scripts for all of roles for people so that the messages and the replies all made sense and related to the overall running of the exercise.

As people arrived at the venue they signed in on the normal GCRG signing-in sheets. Again, this adds realism to the exercise and once everyone was on site Ian ran a session to explain to all what the evening was all about and how on paper it would work. For each of the sessions there were approximately 18 people involved and they were split into two groups of Surface Control and Admin & Briefing.

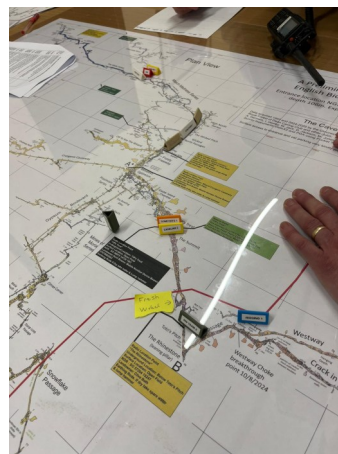
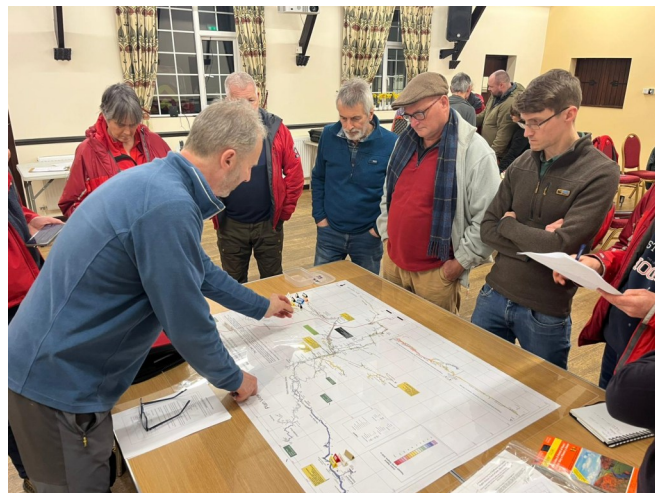
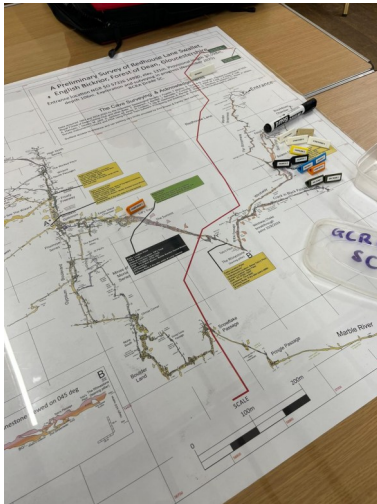
Within each of these groups they were then allocated specific roles from the Incident Controller down to someone operating the radio and someone on CRIMS. For the other team they would have to be: a Police Chief Inspector (who would require information about the rescue); Press Reporter; Enquiring Wife/Brother-in-Law (need info about the casualty) plus, both underground and surface team leaders.

All of this was designed to give everyone a good opportunity of interacting with the rest of the team as well as being challenging. Each half of the group would attend for two sessions so that the set of people who took on the Surface Control role first time on their second visit took on the Admin & Briefing.

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Drift Incident Log up to this Point in Time:

Time:	Action/Event:
Sum	Time of accident. M61 (Tom Lomax) 79Kgs. Broken left femur and possibly other injuries falling 5m at Mudnificent Desolation, nr Galt of Crow.
11:00	Party of 5. 2 have stayed with casualty. 2 exited cave Call out raised by 2 companions & Warden notified by GFRS
14:00	SARCALL message sent out
15:15	First response team (x6 incl advanced first aider, Cavelink) in. Taking first aid kit. Picking up some rescue dump equipment from Tiff's Treat on way in. Neighbouring team contacted for additional resource
15:25	LR & Trailer arrive at Field and set up advance base
15:30	BCRC Silver Group notified of incident and additional resources
15:30	English Bicknor Village Hall opened up and set up as Surface Control (HQ)
16:05	Stretcher team x14 (Incl Dr, UC & rigger) in...
16:30	Police asked to close road to non-rescue traffic
17:00	Drilling team x4 sent in with drill, plugs feathers etc. to widen Howling Hole and Consolation Climb (CC) and rig CC
17:30	Request to SARA to take over Entrance Management
18:30	CAVELINK message that 1st response team with casualty
19:30	SARA established at Entrance and managing entry with radio operational back to HQ
20:00	CAVELINK MESSAGE Stretcher team with casualty
20:10	CAVELINK MESSAGE Need ...
20:20	CAVELINK MESSAGE - casualty in stretcher
20:30	2 nd Stretcher Team x15 (Incl Dr, UC & rigger) sent in
21:20	CAVELINK MESSAGE - casualty at La Gloriosa Pitch traverse
21:30	First media crew contact GCRG. News of rescue is out
21:55	CAVELINK MESSAGE - casualty at Howling hole



Photos taken by Simon Betts

CAVE LINK & RADIO TESTING AT REDHOUSE CAVE

Right from the very beginning of GCRG having Cave Link which was around 2014 - following a very generous donation to GCRG from Paul and Rose Taylor of £5000 - the equipment has been made use of at a large number cave and mine locations within the GCRG area. One of these being Redhouse Lane cave where very good results were obtained within what is now referred to as the Old Cave. The original 1600m discovery and with both underground and surface testing undertaken from a couple of surface locations it was possible to cover the whole of the cave. Similar work has been undertaken at Miss Graces Lane cave and Slaughter Stream Cave. Both providing excellent results.

With the discovery of a major extensions to Redhouse in 2024 & 2025 it was essential from a rescue perspective that the knowledge of where to deploy Cave Link (CL) was expanded. For the first test in the new part of the cave two locations were identified.

The 'Rhinestone Chamber' and 'Mindless Optimism' were relatively easy to get to underground and only approximately 400m apart. If things did not work out, those taking the kit underground were not having to carry the kit a vast distance through the cave. There were a few minor issues on the day with fortunately the underground party being made up with two members of the ICRO who knew about CL and were able to give instructions to the third member of the group about how it worked. The surface locations had been identified and permission gained from the landowners and the teams deployed.

While setting up at the location on the surface above the Rhinestone and on opening up the CL menu - to send a message to the underground team - it was found that for some reason the address for the underground unit was missing from the list. Panic set in as the arrangement had been if you don't get a message from the surface presume that its failed and don't bother taking the kit to the second location. With the deadline for transmission fast approaching there was some hectic work on the surface to get the second surface unit brought down the field passed over and rushed down to the first location set up and a message sent asap. Fortunately, for all concerned a reply was received from underground. It was subsequently established that the team had taken a bit longer getting through the cave than planned which had saved the day. A good result and the teams were able to move onto the second location. Underground to Mindless Optimism and on the surface back up to the top of the hill.

What was going to be very interesting at this location was that there were extensive coal measures and workings in this area so the big question was "would cave link work"? The equipment was set up and the normal procedure of placing a message in the outbox was undertaken and the team sat in the sunshine and waited with a degree of trepidation. It would take the underground team around 30 minutes to pack up at the Rhinestone location and transit to Mindless Optimism and set the equipment up again, remembering of course that having not done this before in the cave, a suitable location had to be found.

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It is worth noting that when setting up CL the plates at the ends of the antenna cables really do like to be in good contact with the base surface of the passage. So, mud or cracks in the rock etc. What they don't like is to be sitting on piles of rocks and this section of the cave is very much the latter. Fortunately, however at this point the Cryogenic Causeway goes off to the left and is blessed with a good covering of mud on the floor. So, this was where the team were able to set up and obtain a pretty good antenna Check and it was with a degree of surprise but also much relief that the surface team saw their outbox empty. The instant knowledge that the unit underground was switched on and had received the message and it was not long before a message came back from underground. Two extremely successful results and this made all the time and effort well worthwhile. The expected issues with the Coal had not been experienced. Both of these were located in open farmland so actually easy to set up.

The final location that was tested was to be at the far end of the Cryogenic Causeway which again for the underground team was going to be a good location with lots of clay. However, for the surface team it was going to be in the middle of the forested area but fortunately very close to a junction between two tracks so actually quite easy to get to. At the time, plenty of water lay in pools and the ground was damp so a perfect set up. Soon after, putting the message in the outbox it was gone and another message received. So, three very successful results and a considerable amount of knowledge gained.

The next stage was to set up a second test for the Redhouse Rescue Evaluation Day that we held in 2025 and a team was sent into the cave with a CL to be set up at the Mindless Optimism location along with a surface set up and establish a connection. This was done and then the underground set was moved to the junction where "Off to see the Wizard" passage goes off. On the surface it was estimated that the location would be near to Holly Barn so the CL was set up there along the side of the road. It was pretty dry so a liberal amount of water was applied to both of the locations for the earthing rods (where these are used they are much easier to place than the flat plates) this improved the results from the antenna check. As in previous tests, a message was placed in the outbox and it was not long before this too was gone so it was known that the underground station was set up and ready for incoming messages. Shortly afterwards a message was received back. There were now four tests completed and all had proved to be successful and the area of the cave that was being covered was increasing each time.

Soon after this test another significant discovery in the cave resulted in the "Call of the Crow" series and as this was now pushing the top end of the cave further towards the cliffs and caves at Symonds Yat and very close to Symonds Yat Swallet. It was felt that it would be good to run a radio location test in that area and at the same time deploy CL too to "kill two birds with one stone". With a trip to this part of the cave having a journey time of four hours there was no rush for the surface team to get set up too early but it was decided to do an equipment check at Mindless Optimism on the way. This was during the very dry period so the ground on the surface was rock hard so it was necessary to use water to soften the ground up so that the rods could be got a good distance into the ground.

NEWSLETTER

Craig Cameron was in charge of the surface side of the radio location and when informed that the transmitter was on he set off on his wanderings to work out where the underground location was. For nearly 1 hour he wandered all over the area around SYS but to no avail. This was extremely frustrating as CL was indicating it should be right alongside. However, when the surface CL received a message to say "Is it alright if we turn the transmitter off and rebuild everything" the answer was yes of course. But on the surface the question was why when it's been on for an hour. As if by magic it was not long before Craig shouted "I can hear it now" and was soon working out a location. It was as had been expected, right by SYS. However, having wasted a considerable amount of time and with the underground team facing a minimum of four hours caving to get them back to the surface, transmission was restricted to 20 minutes and a full triangulation was not possible but a satisfactory result had been achieved and Cave Link had saved the day.

Subsequently, it transpired that in fact the transmitter had not actually been on for the first 1-hour session and it was only when it was so say turned off and then on, that the team underground realised that the redlight should have been on all of the time. Operator error or lack of training who knows? but a result.

That was the end of the testing for 2025 and we now move forward to the testing carried out on April 3rd 2026. For this test there would not be any CL deployed underground they would all be on the surface. This you might think is strange. However, if we go back to the first testing from the Rhinestone Chamber. Paul Taylor was the operator on the surface as has distinct memories that he was able to send a message to the second surface unit and get one back before all of the trouble with the first surface set not having the address of the underground set. So, that side of things got forgotten.

Another development that came out of the recent Surface Control training sessions was the thoughts of establishing a "Rescue Comforts location" in the area around Tiff's Treat which is where the rescue dump had been moved to as it provided an improved location to the previous site in the Rhinestone Chamber. It was also felt that it would be good to have comms back to the surface at this point as well. If this was to be the case then It's location being approximately mid-way between the Rhinestone and Mindless locations previously established, the question being would it be possible to one location on the surface that could communicate with multiple locations underground? This has many advantages in reducing the number of CL that are required on the surface but also the numbers of people who need to operate them. Only having one team deployed on the surface is a lot less logistically to have to maintain. The testing would also provide an opportunity for a series of radio comms tests to also be carried out.



NEWSLETTER

The plan would be to deploy Four CL units. Three of these would be to the locations already established for the Rhinestone, Mindless Optimism & Off to see the Wizard and one additional one positioned approximately above Tiff's Treat. Once in position, a radio check between each station would confirm everything was ready and then a series of messages would be sent from each set to the other sets and the results recorded. To achieve all of this required a good-sized team of operators plus people back at English Bicknor Village Hall (EBVH) in the GCRG landrover to not only operate the base radio but to also record the radio messages. Craig Cameron was also despatched to SYS equipped with a radio and antenna mast to see if comms from there could be achieved back to EBVH either directly or via the SARA Incident Control Unit (ICU) equipped with a repeater that was to be positioned near to Holly Barn.



All of the testing took quite a while to execute but to keep things simple was as follows:

- all of the CL were in contact by radio and each was able to make contact with all of the others.
- comms back to EBVH was ok.
- comms from the ICU to both SYS and EBVH was confirmed.
- comms from SYS direct to EBVH via the repeater was confirmed along with comms without, even to the point of a hand-held radio at EBVH to SYS was achieved.
- comms from the Redhouse Cave entrance area to EBVH was confirmed.

Starlink was also tested with the new VOIP phone and worked perfectly. This equipment was run from a lithium battery pack running an inverter that was also being charged via a solar cell array. Even on what was a dull day at times it was meeting half the consumption of the equipment and when the sun came out it was actually meeting the consumption and charging the battery back. Something for GCRG to look into.

All in all, an extremely productive day and thanks to everyone from both GCRG & SARA who made it all happen. So, what's next?

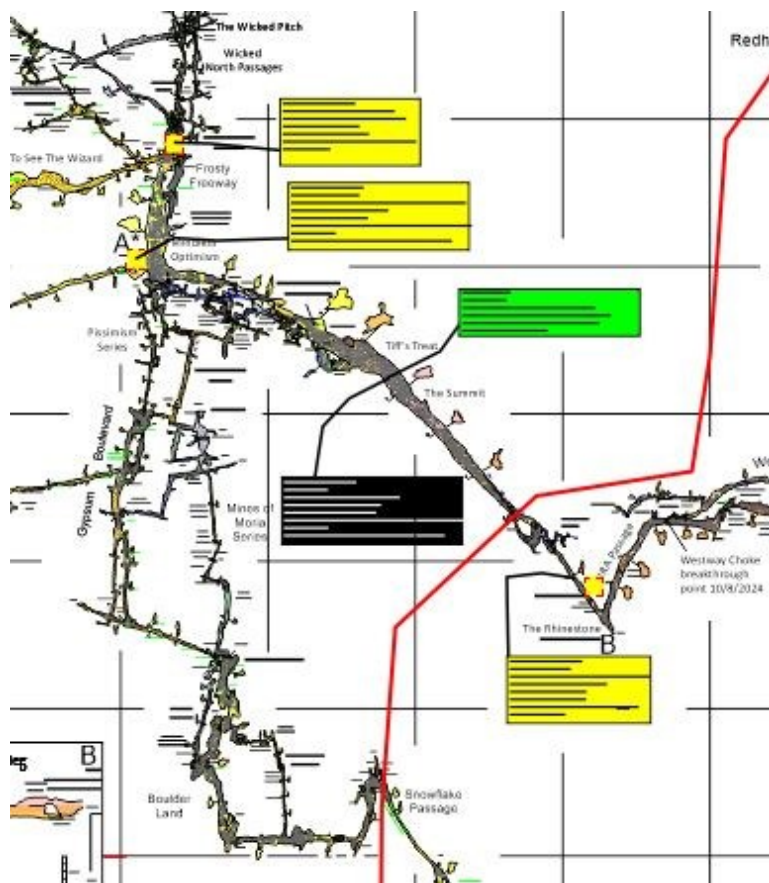
Four additional CL will be required for the next stage of the testing so that each of the four underground locations: Rhinestone, Tiff's Treat, Mindless Optimism & Off to see the Wizard Junction can all be set up underground and each have a CL unit on the surface. Each of the pairs then makes contact with each other so that all links are established.

NEWSLETTER

Then, assuming that the one at Tiff's Treat is confirmed, the surface set then sends a message to each of the other three underground units. This then replicates what was achieved from the surface only sets and if this works each of the underground units sends a message back to the surface unit. Fingers crossed that this is all successful. If yes, then once this has been completed each of the other surface units in turn attempts to make contact with the other three underground units. You may ask why bother if the first unit has made contact and established a working link?

We know from our tests so far that some of the surface locations are in quite exposed locations in regard to the weather and wind so we may be able to choose a more protected site from the results of the tests. The results so far have been excellent and I think we could say that wherever it is possible to set up CL underground then if that point is accessible on the surface, then we can be pretty confident that a connection with the surface would be achieved.

Based around the fine survey drawn up by Mark Tringham I have added the OS grid lines. I am not saying they are perfectly positioned but they are pretty good for the time being and can be improved as we go forward. This makes a massive difference when you wish to identify a surface location that you wish to send a team to with a CL. In addition to that as we have been identifying surface cave link locations, I have been adding this information to the cave survey held by GCRG.



As you can see from the cave survey, which shows the section of cave from the Rhinestone to the Wicked Pitch the three already confirmed locations are marked in Yellow and in the accompanying yellow boxes there is information relating to the underground location plus, the NGR for the surface location.

NEWSLETTER

The yellow boxes can be populated with the relevant info of:

- *Who the landowner is and their contact details. Along with suggestions like if it's very warm and dry to take additional water for the rods or plates.*
- *Orientation of the antennas.*
- *The black box contains the same information for Tiff's Treat but as its unconfirmed its currently in a different colour.*

If the testing we have planned works out then the information regarding the surface locations will be updated. The green box contains basic information regarding the contents of the Rescue Dump at Tiffs Treat.

It was mentioned earlier that CL does not like being placed in an area where there are lots of rocks and the earthing plates are not directly in contact with the base rock. Tiff's Treat is going to be one of those locations as the whole passage is strewn with rocks and boulders. So, far from ideal in that respect. It's been suggested that something to try out would be to drill two holes in the passage walls say 30m apart. They would be drilled at an angle downwards and be of sufficient size that a short Earth Rod could be inserted. The holes could be filled with water to give good contact with the rock. This is currently untested but certainly well worth trying out. Further testing will see what results are obtained.

The knowledge and information that we now have regarding the deployment of CL within the Redhouse system has come on leaps and bounds and we would be able to deploy units both underground and on the surface with a high degree confidence that they would do their job in the event of a rescue incident within the cave. However, although our CL are still currently fully operational the ongoing development of CL to provide something for the future does not currently look good which is a little disappointing to say the least. Components and spares for the current units are few and far apart and getting a unit repaired if a major fault occurred would be a significant issue. There has been talk for some time of CL 4 but nothing has so far been forthcoming which is not good. Despite a lot of interest from the teams in the UK that have CL and like GCRG, have been very pleased with the performance. We will have to wait and see what happens.

Paul Taylor (GCRG Chairman)

SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK

GCRG has its own presence on FB

<https://www.facebook.com/Gloucestershire-Cave-Rescue-Group-1828966887343731/>



See GCRG's own channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbb3v4lcSbxSLyUF5FqlqWA>

An Overview of European Cave Rescue

2014: I was working as a Safety Mountaineer for the seismic oil industry and had just arrived at our fortified camp in Kurdistan after many days travel. I was due to be based in Northern Iraq for the next four months and on the first day my phone started ringing. It was a German number and there was no way I wanted to pay for that call, so I ignored it. This went on for the next day or two and it was only when I saw the news on the TV that I understood what was happening. A friend of mine had been injured at almost 1000m depth in Riesending - the deepest cave in Germany - and the calls had been from other expedition members who were trying to mobilise rescuers as the local team wasn't up to the enormity of the task. I knew these explorers well as we'd teamed up multiple times in the Dachstein (Austria) and likewise I'd been part of the Riesending explorations as well, meaning that I was familiar with parts of the cave. As much as I wanted, I was unable to abandon the job so the best I could do was to contact some of the British Dachstein veterans and put them on standby. As it happened, the Europeans rose to the challenge and teams from all over arrived in the vicinity of the Eagle's Nest and our guys weren't needed. Probably for the best, as none of us had a clue about how the wider cave rescue community operated so we'd have just ended up being porters.

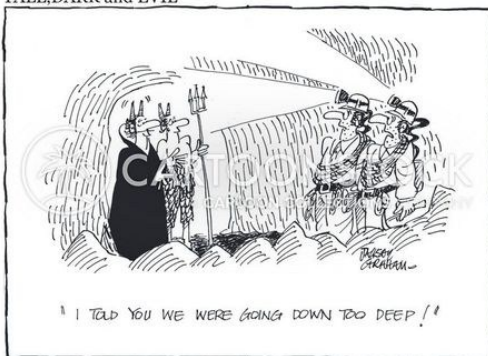
The multinational teams finally got Johan to the surface after a Herculean twelve-day effort, and it was this event that finally convinced me to go to the Vercors to join the French International course later that year. I'd known about these for a long time, but as the SSF (Spéléo Secours Français) only ran them every couple of years I'd always missed out, but in the light of recent events I felt that I had no choice. Tony Seddon (Starless River retailer) and I were the first people from the UK to attend their Team Leader training, and it was a real eye-opener. By this point I'd spent about fifteen years (summer and winter) religiously pushing deep caves in the Austrian Alps and further afield and had been in the rope access game for more than two decades, but this was at a new level of technical ropework. I must grudgingly admit that the French (and the Italians) are probably the key players in terms of developing these techniques for remote extraction and every day was a school day.

In Britain, we tend to get away with throwing large numbers of rescuers at a problem, but in other countries they often have very deep caves and a much smaller caving population, so their training is by necessity of a much higher standard. That mentality starts right at the beginning, as many nations have formal instruction and assessments before you're even allowed to become a novice caver. The same is true for rescue teams, as most demand that you pass stringent exams to get involved. We'd have a mutiny if we tried to instigate that over here, but it's the norm for many others.

Casting my memory back, the French course consisted of very long days starting at about 6am and finishing at 11pm. Three of us (Tony, a Canadian caver and I) were the only native English-speakers, as the majority were Spanish, Brazilian, French or Eastern European. The lectures went something along these lines: fifteen minutes in Spanish, fifteen minutes in French, and a grudging two minutes in English, so we knew without a doubt that we were missing something vital during the translation!!

TALL, DARK and EVIL

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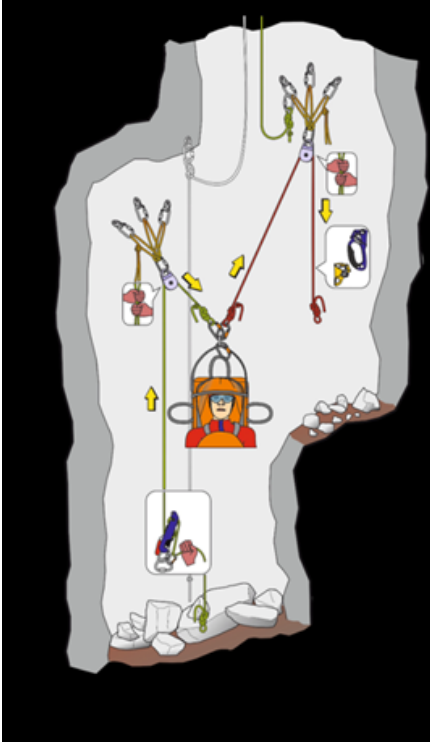


For the first few days it was all about the concept: we'd be up on huge overhanging cliffs learning the skills, and for the next five days we were constantly underground dealing with increasingly challenging scenarios.

The basic idea is as follows: in deep, remote caves with hundreds of pitches, traverses, and Tyroleans you cannot use double rope systems on each obstacle. It's partly due to the weight/bulk of the kit, because you need more people to install and operate it, and there are many situations where a stretcher will spin and double ropes will wrap around each other leading to damage from rope-on-rope action and a full-stop to the haul when everything locks up. It goes without

saying that this can be lethal. Yes, there are situations where they'd use two, but 95% of the time it's a single rope. Coming from both rope access and UK rescue backgrounds, the most difficult aspect for me was to accept this as being the new norm.

French rescue concept



Principle

- Basic casualty assessment, first aid;
- Medical assessment, establish bivouac;
- Establish communications between bivouac and surface (phone line);
- Rescue teams are instructed to work on sections/parts to be ready for evacuation of casualty;
- When everything is ready, transport or evacuation of the casualty can begin.

Advantage

- The casualty is exposed to transport in a shorter time and is less at risk;
- It is possible to climb not only with progression ropes, but also with fixed rescue ropes.

Disadvantages

- Equipment and ropes must be prepared according to the evacuation plan for each segment;
- Much more equipment and ropes;
- More rescuers;
- All bivouacs for resting must be established in advance (improvisation is possible).

Basic concept of French techniques

The gist of all the European systems (see image above):

- A shaft in a cave could consist of a simple/single pitch or a vertical obstacle course with dozens of separate re-belay stations in a huge void with waterfalls, loose walls, overhangs, and all manner of hanging death to contend with.
- The stretcher needs to go up this pitch;
- At the top (or at what would be the first re-belay upon ascent) is an anchor-cluster (generally three bolts) with a self-equalising master point and a pulley;
- The pitch Controller attaches to this anchor via a cowstail and will remain in that location for the next phase. He is not the overall controller, just the person in command of this single vertical element.
- He feeds one end of the rescue rope through the pulley, lowers the end down which is then attached to the stretcher (becoming the weighted side of the rope);
- The other end of this rope drops down the opposite side of the pulley (not necessarily all the way to the bottom).
- The second rescuer (called the Counter-Weight or Balance, depending on the situation) attaches to this unweighted side of the rope and under the instruction of the Controller will disconnect from the anchors and lower himself down, thereby lifting the stretcher thru the pulley due to his weight opposing the stretcher.
- When the stretcher approaches the anchor-cluster, the Controller will attach the rope from the next pair above (or across) who will take the tension, and our initial pair can lower the stretcher out until their rope is redundant so that the Controller can disconnect, allowing the second team to raise the casualty to the next anchors.

NEWSLETTER

There's a bit more to the process but this can be an incredibly slick and efficient way of lifting the casualty, and with multiple concurrent pitches/pairs of rescuers the metres just fly by. As an example, for many years I'd run this training for the core Dachstein regulars and we'd bring a stretcher from the bottom of Pwll Dwfn (one of the few proper potholes in Wales) in less than two hours with a team of six people. The traditional approach would probably require three times as much kit, three or four times the personnel, and most of the day.


The final exercise of the seven-day course saw us joining the main Vercors team for a deep extraction from a newly-explored cave. It was an impressive and slick affair with many well-trained rescuers involved. The most surprising thing was that the Frenchies were very friendly and welcoming, although I think we were just getting special attention!

I returned to the UK buzzing with my new skills and enthusiasm, only to drop to Earth with a bump when I realised that nobody had any interest whatsoever in adopting any of these procedures. It wasn't for lack of trying as I did my best to sell it to the Welshies, Mendipians, and some of the Northerners but it fell on deaf ears.

As mentioned previously, I took my experiences back to the Dachstein and trained up the core team as we'd had to deal with some real nasties over the years, but as with everything the skill-fade was all-too-rapid.


The years passed and my motivation and fitness levels declined, but in 2023 a small number of us in the UK were put on standby for a serious event going on in Turkey. An American caver had become very ill at over 1km depth and there was no effective rescue team in the country. The BCRC had been asked to put an ad-hoc crew together from across the UK and although I was nervous about going as my fitness would let me down, at the same time I was probably the only one with any familiarity of what was expected of us. There is no way that our traditional British techniques would have any place out there, and it was likely to be a rude awakening for our guys. As it happened, we got stood down and I breathed a semi-disappointed sigh of relief.

The following year, my eye was caught by a post from the Croatian team who were running their own version of the course I'd been on in France a decade earlier. Due to a very unexpected burst of my long-lost mojo, I got in touch, recruited a couple more Brits, and the three of us crossed the sea.

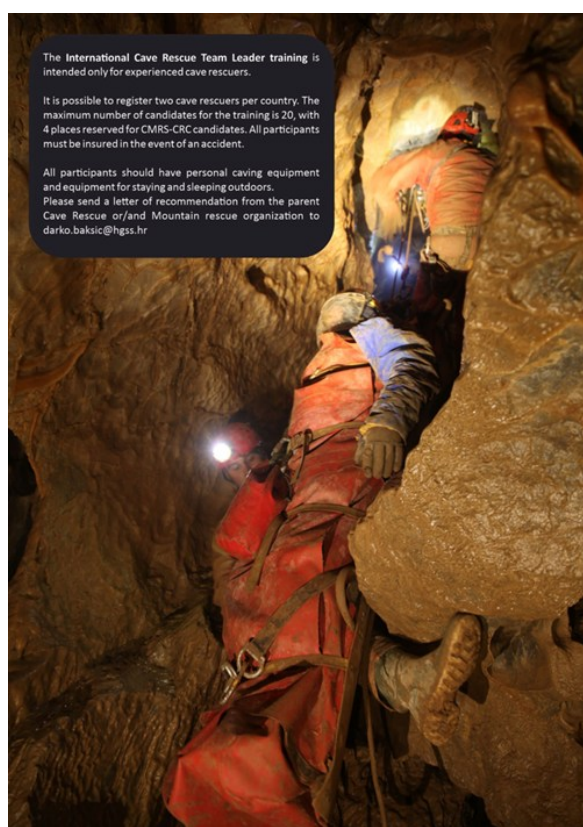


International Cave Rescue Team Leader Training

15th to 22nd Jun 2024, Zagreb and Starigrad Paklenica, CROATIA



Organizer	Croatian Mountain Rescue Service Cave Rescue Commission (CMRS - CRC)
Training course responsible persons	Darko BAKŠIĆ - Instructor of the CMRS - CRC mobile: +385 98 983 0039 mail: darko.baksic@hgss.hr JURE ŠARIĆ - head of the CMRS - CRC mobile: +385 95 398 1981 mail: jure.saric@hgss.hr
Dates	15 th to 22 nd June 2024
Place	CMRS Zagreb station 45°52'4.3" N; 15°58'39.1" E CMRS Training center „Dragan Špehar - Špeco“ - Starigrad Paklenica 44°17'05.1" N; 15°27'26.7" E
Language	English
Price	500 EUR per person - price including food, accomodation, training and collective gear
Registration	Till 15 th April 2024 on: ICRTL CROATIA 2024 link



TRAINING PROGRAMME



SUNDAY – CMRS Zg

Exercise in the CMRS training hall

Self-Rescue techniques

- Counterweigh using long cowstail
- Croll on foot loop
- Croll to Croll
- Rope-cutting method
- Climbing with victim
- Passing Rebalay and knot

Cave Rescue - Rescue with a spare rope

- Removing victim from a horizontal linetechniques
- Rescue anchors
- Different stretcher types
- Stretcher attachment

Theoretical presentations (3, 4, 11)

MONDAY – CMRS Zg

Exercise in the CMRS training hall

Cave Rescue techniques

- Hauling up (with single and multiple pulleys, changing direction, passing a knot, counterweight system, counterbalance, two counterweights on single pulley,...)
- Lowering (using stop and simple descender, italian hitch, passing a knot,...)
- Changovers (changing from lowering to hauling up and oposite)
- Deviations (pulleys, „human deviation“, different angle,...)
- Tyrolean traverses (anchors, aplying tension, different methods of passing stretchers)
- Carrying a stretcher (different Cave morphology)...

Theoretical presentations (5, 6)

TUESDAY - CMRS Paklenica

Exercise in the cave

- Briefing for the exercise
- Preparing equipment for cave rescue (without any information about the cave)
- Lowering the stretcher from the entrance to the bottom and raising it to the surface
- Debriefing

Theoretical presentations (7, 8)

SATURDAY - CMRS Zg

Theoretical presentations (1, 2)

Personal equipment check

WEDNESDAY

Exercise in the cave

- Briefing
- Medical care of the injured person
- Preparation of different types of bivouacs for injured person
- Communication in the cave
- Bivouacking for cave rescue teams
- Debriefing

Theoretical presentations (9, 10)

THURSDAY

Exercise in the cave (first day)

- Briefing
- Preparation of equipment for cave rescue (standard configuration)
- Instructors and trainees go deep into the cave to reach the „injured“ caver
- Putting communication line or Cawelink
- Medical care of the „injured“ caver
- Partially rigging the cave for cave rescue and transport the „injured“ caver in stretcher; prepare bivouac for him and de-rigg the cave...
- Bivouacking of the entire cave rescue team and the „injured“ caver

FRIDAY

Exercise in the cave (second day)

- Partially rigging the cave for cave rescue and transport the „injured“ caver in stretcher; prepare bivouac for him and de-rigg the cave...
- Repeat this procedure till the entrance of the cave
- The team should be self-sufficient throughout the exercise, only relaying information about their position to the surface headquarters. If necessary, the entire team can bivouac again

SATURDAY

Exercise in the cave (third day)

- The transport of the „injured“ caver ends with the transport to the surface
- The exit of all rescuers from the cave, to the surface and de-rigging the cave

Debriefing and rest.

SUNDAY

Return to home

Theoretical presentations:

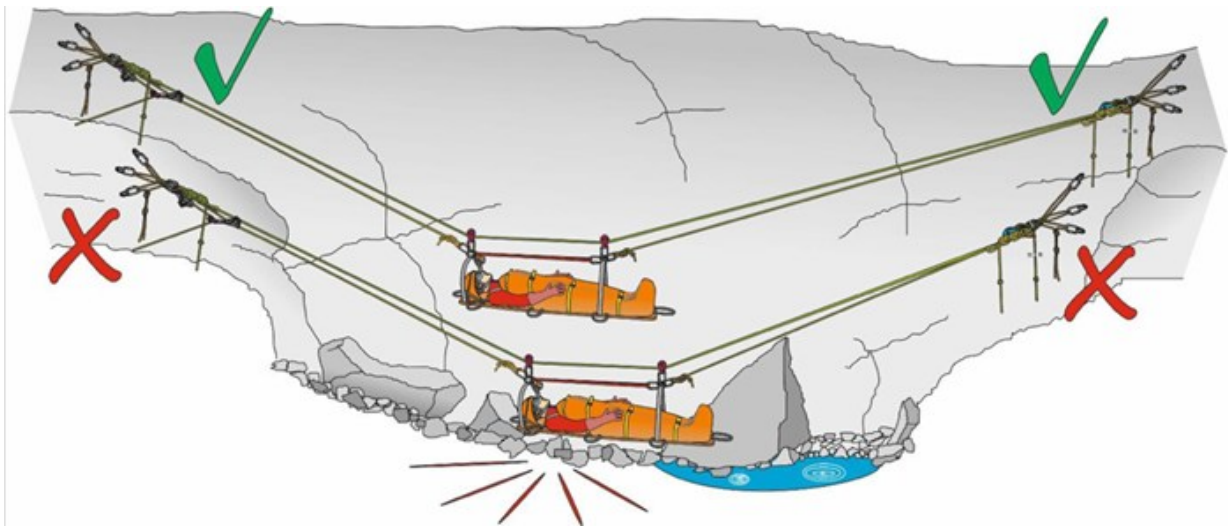
1. International Cave Rescue Team Leader Training - introduction
2. Cave accidents and rescue operations
3. Anchors - types, creation, forces
4. How to equip the cave for cave rescue operation
5. Comparison of different concepts of cave rescue
6. An overview of some cave rescue maneuvers testing
7. Access to and care of the injured caver
8. Communication in cave rescue operations
9. Cave rescue cadaster
10. Cave Rescue Management & Development of a Cave Rescue plan
11. Presentation of experiences from major cave rescue operations

Croatian Team Leader Course 2024

This again was a multinational crew, and although similar in some ways to the French there were some significant differences. For starters, the attendees were all very familiar with the procedures, and the Croatians had learned some hard lessons in Riesending which led to them modifying their techniques to something that was a hybrid between the French and the Italian systems.

NEWSLETTER

The French system aims to have every pitch fully rigged and manned-up before they start to move the stretcher from the bottom of the cave; if you have a pair for each pitch it's very fast once it begins, although the setup itself can take a while. Conversely, the Italian concept is to have a small but highly skilled team split up into pairs who leapfrog each other. In a vertical series you might have six or eight people who keep going until they're exhausted, and hopefully there will be another squad to take over when this inevitably happens. The Italian method is ideal for the further reaches where you won't get the numbers, but it relies on having some real rockstars in the team.

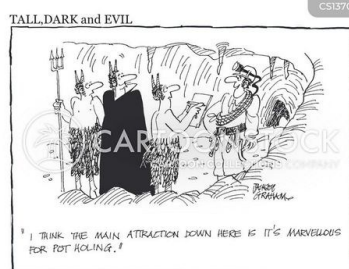


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The Croatians decided that the best approach was to have self-contained teams who could work in a similar way to the Italians and French, but with the option of bivouacking when they're too tired. In this scenario, one rescuer will be carrying the drill, rigging kit, ropes etc... and the other will be carrying the camping kit for both. It sounds obvious but nobody else has really done it this way and it means that a capable team can stay underground for long periods of time and still be effective.

It's a solid idea, and our final exercise in Croatia proved that. We spent three days/two nights underground, steadily bringing the casualty closer to the 250m entrance shaft. I'd never fully appreciated just how vital Tyrolean Traverses could be in cave rescue, but without them we'd have still been humping that stretcher over house-sized boulders between pitches.

Again, the skill-fade of all these things can be demoralising, and whilst many of their procedures are not necessarily appropriate for the UK (our cavers just don't have the skill set that the Europeans do), there are a lot of concepts and methods that we should be following as a matter of course.





Croatian options for casualty shelters

Occasionally we see these training courses being advertised (the next French one is from the 17th to 24th October 2026 in Lozère in the south) and I encourage anyone with solid vertical skills to join. It's certainly not as cheap as the Croatian one but you will get a discount as a member of a rescue team. These courses really are the equivalent of speleo-cocaine, and it will take your abilities to another level. True, you will have to tolerate the casual racism of the Napoleonesque organiser, but it's worth it in the end ;-)

On a related note, last year I finally made the effort to attend the ECRA congress which is something I'd been meaning to go to for a long time. The European Cave Rescue Association is a loose affiliation of almost all the European teams (plus many from further afield), although for reasons known only to themselves the French keep their distance and refuse to formally join! ECRA is the body that will contact us in the event of an international incident, and although it doesn't really have any political power as such (difficult across borders) it is the closest to a governing body that we have.



ECRA Passage enlargement workshop

NEWSLETTER

It was absurdly straightforward to get there: I flew to Prague, got collected by one of the ECRA volunteers, and was driven into Poland. The event moves to different countries each year, and although I have nothing to compare it to, I was very impressed. I'd missed the pre-congress caving trips but didn't mind as there was plenty going on. Accommodation for us mortals was in the form of heated tents laid on by the local firefighters, and I was with the Bulgarians whom I'd met on the Croatian course. Each day there were workshops and lectures, and it was a great way to meet rescuers from all over the world. The final exercise was an impressive scenario in a flooded quarry involving an underwater stretcher carry for the divers, a ropework bonanza for the monkeys, and a pleasant ramble for the lazy ones.



ECRA Final Exercise

The Poles put a huge effort into organising this and it showed. Disappointingly, there were probably only about three or four of us from the UK in total, and half of those were even less cave-fit than me which is saying something. I left with the full understanding that the Brits should be there in numbers as we are really missing out and we're getting left behind.

This year, ECRA is being hosted by the Slovenians from the **26-30th September** (the pre-meeting with field trips, caving, cave diving etc...) and the **1st to 4th October** for the actual congress. The organisers are a very friendly lot and they'll pull all the stops out to get one up on the Poles (this is the speleo-equivalent of It's a Knockout or the Eurovision song contest but with more kudos & fewer prizes). There will be sessions covering technical ropework, medical, passage-enlargement, communications and everything else that you'd expect, but with input from all over the world. Cost will be €80 to include registration, accommodation and all meals but the excursions/pre-event trips will be extra. I encourage rescuers from the UK to make the effort to join as you'll enjoy yourselves, will learn a lot of relevant skills to bring back to your own teams, and will likely make some very useful contacts. To put the last part into perspective, it's obvious to everyone that I hate caving these days and yet this speleo-phobe still got invites to join expeditions in Slovenia, Slovakia, Greece, Australia, Croatia, Bulgaria etc... so any keen young tigers will get their arms ripped off! Slovenia has some fantastic caves and if this lazy bugger can get off his backside anyone can. There are already a few who are up for it so if anyone else is interested I suggest we create a sub-group of the GCRG Whatsapp Community and get the ball rolling.

<https://caverescue.eu/news/19ecrm-first-circular/>



SPÉLÉO SECOURS FRANÇAIS



International Training Course Team Member / Team Leader Cave Rescue 2026



Organizer :	SPÉLÉO SECOURS FRANÇAIS
Training course responsible	Bernard TOURTE 25 rue Louis de Broglie - 31100 TOULOUSE - FRANCE Tel : +33.5.34.60.95.63 - Portable : +33.6.08.75.95.29. Email: btourte@wanadoo.fr
Dates	17th October (16 h) – 24th October 2026 (14 h).
Place	Saint Rome de Dolan - Lozère
Languages, translations	Spanish, English, French
Price	7 days x 230 € = 1610 € (negotiable following procedure) or number of cavers coming from the same country - Price including food, accomodation, training and collective gear.
Inscriptions	Before 15th April 2026.

CONTENTS OF THE COURSE

- ✓ Technical practices in caves with stretcher (4-5 days)
- ✓ Technical information about mechanical tests carried out by S.S.F.
- ✓ Information about specific evacuation techniques:
 - Diving stretcher.
 - Blasting works (theory).
 - Preparation of a victim (theory and practice)
- ✓ Different systems of underground communications (theory and practice)
 - SPL 05 / Phone
 - Radio
 - Pimprenelle (ground transmission system)
- ✓ Technical's information's about the French Cave Rescue Service, its direction, and the way cave rescues are organized in France.
- ✓ Participation at a large rescue exercise.

TO ASK INSCRIPTION FORMS: btourte@wanadoo.fr

I ask an inscription form for the international course in Saint Rome de Dolan in June/July 2026.

Name..... **Surname**.....

Email:.....

Address.....

Country:..... / **Phone:**.....

OFFICIAL AGREEMENT of the Cave Rescue responsible in the country's national federation:

Name..... **Surname**.....

Signature / Stamp:

SSF Team Leader Course Autumn 2026

Joel Corrigan, GCRG Equipment Officer

NEWSLETTER**Articles that will be included in the next (Autumn 2026) edition of this newsletter**

- ***Pete Turier & his life spent with GCRG***
- ***STARLINK & the use of VOIP equipment***
- ***BCRC equipment database & inspection records***
- ***Bixhead stone mine exercise (March 2026), the full report***