



British Cave Rescue Council

The representative body for voluntary underground rescue in the British Isles

Registered charity: 1137252

MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE – 5 July 2018

Cave rescue operations in Tham Luang Nang Non Cave, Thailand

This is the fourth media briefing and addresses some of the ongoing efforts to follow up the heartening discovery of the twelve boys and their coach at their underground refuge, with a rescue plan. This additional media briefing follows those circulated by BCRC on 28 June 2018 and 2 July (BCRC website: <http://www.caverescue.org.uk/>).

Please note that it remains BCRC policy not to confirm the names of the British cave rescuers in media briefing documents, even though certain names have appeared frequently in the global media. We make a plea that the privacy of the British cave divers is respected, to allow them to rest properly in anticipation of long, hazardous dives during each day.

Update for teams and media compiled 02.15h BST, Thursday 5 July 2018

Firstly, apologies that it has been a while since our last press release. We are sure you will appreciate the fact that the British Cave Rescue Council is completely volunteer-run, as are all the cave rescue teams that BCRC supports across the UK and Ireland.

Yesterday, our officers concentrated their combined efforts to support our colleagues overseas. On around 07:00h BST (UK) time, Wednesday, a request was made from our team in Thailand and the Thai authorities, to send out additional personnel and equipment. That became our sole focus, therefore we apologise if our capacity to answer media requests has been significantly diminished in the last 24 hours.

It is fair to say that all of the global media that we have dealt with so far have been very patient and understanding and we trust this will continue.

Last night and later this morning, five key cave rescuers will travel from the UK to Thailand. Some are divers, others will perform a co-ordinating, surface control function. We are grateful for support received from several UK Search and Rescue (UK SAR) partners who assisted today with the logistical tasks to get people and specialist kit on flights. Police, Mountain Rescue and the Coastguard services have all played a part, as have local cave rescue teams and the Thai authorities, for which we are extremely grateful.

The UK has a long history in cave rescue with some of our teams being in existence for more than 70 years across the UK and Ireland. The BCRC supports 15 cave rescue teams, and those joining the rescue attempts are from a number of BCRC-supported teams, each with skills, knowledge and expertise to add to the current efforts.

At this time, we are not able to give any specific updates on matters underground in Thailand. We are aware of a new initiative to divert streams and rivers from any inlets identified above the cave (sinks and fissures) to reduce the underground water flow rate. This is established practice in cave rescue and has proven effective in cave rescue efforts associated with other river caves, not least for Ogof Ffynnon Ddu (OFD) main streamway in South Wales when cavers become trapped underground during flood. At Tham Luang Nang Non Cave, surface searches continue for alternative routes in to the cave.

We appreciate that the weather forecast has been widely reported with an expectation that more rain is forecast over the next few days, combined with the possibility of increased intensity.

Please be aware that the BCRC is reliant on donations to cover the operating costs of the organisation and is grateful to the donations the public have made through its website, the majority of these have come from Thailand or the UK. We have done our best to personally reply to every donor no matter how large or small that donation may be.

Points of contact:

For general information on cave rescue and the particular challenges of a cave rescue operation in active river caves under flood conditions:

Bill Whitehouse MBE, Vice Chairman, British Cave Rescue Council: vicechair@caverescue.org.uk; +44 (0)7836 593677.

Peter Dennis, Chairman, British Cave Rescue Council: chair@caverescue.org.uk; +44 (0)7840 763743.

Briefing prepared by Gary Mitchell – Assistant Chairman, edited by Emma Porter – Secretary and Peter Dennis – Chairman, all of BCRC, 5 July 2018.