

John Volanthen

World Record-Holding British Cave Diver Who Played A Key Role In The 2018 Tham Luang Thailand Cave Rescue

John Volanthen is a world record-holding British caver and cave diver who has been involved in cave exploration over the last two decades. John began caving with the scouts at the age of 14 and has been at the forefront of cave exploration since combining caving and diving. In 2018, John played a key role in the Tham Luang Thailand cave rescue and was named one of *TIME* magazine's "Heroes of the Year."

John has been involved in exploring and mapping caves throughout the world, including the UK, Europe, and Malaysia, often with dive partner Richard (Rick) Stanton. John attended the Tham Luang incident in Thailand, along with his cave dive partner, Rick Stanton. The duo were able to successfully locate the missing children—something not even special forces were able to do—and then participated in their extraction and successful rescue, leading the team two-and-a-half miles through a flooded dungeon of a cave buried deep inside a mountain. A video of Volanthen and Stanton making initial contact with the team has since gone viral globally.

In 2004, Volanthen and Stanton set a world record for greatest depth achieved in a British cave, cave diving 76 m (249 ft) at Wookey Hole in Somerset. Additionally, in 2010, John Volanthen, Rick Stanton, Jason Mallinson, and René Houben set a world record for longest cave penetration dive, obtaining 8,800 m (28,900 ft) in the Pozo Azul cave system in the Rudrón Valley in Spain, involving a multi-day operation, camping beyond 6 km of sumps.

John has built and modified rebreather systems for 15 years, adapting units commercially available, and building other units to meet the unique requirements of individual caves. John also built a sump mapping device to survey long and deep sumps where traditional compass and note pad techniques are not feasible.

John has been involved in a number of search, rescue, and recovery incidents including the recovery of Paul Esser, the Gliesion Colliary flooding, and the search for Eric Estable in the Ardeche for which John was awarded the Royal Humane Society Bronze medal.