

Aggy - The Music Room, Erse Passage and Aven Series

This is the most popular trip in Aggy, and an ideal introduction to the system. Relatively easy caving in a pleasant part of the cave. This route also includes Erse Passage and North Wing.

Location – NGR: SO 18768 15861 - **what3words:** ///exploring.leotard.phantom

Aggy is located along the tramroad footpath, and is roughly a 25 minute walk from Whitewalls. Leaving the cottage simply follow the gravel track until it becomes a footpath then stay on this as it contours around the cliff edges, ignoring the footpath sign heading downhill along the way. You'll pass a few other caves, the most obvious being Eglwys Faen with its multiple entrances just beyond the information board. Aggy is a gated entrance low on the cliff face at the far end of the track.

Entrance Series – The log book is situated just inside the entrance, please use this to indicate your intended destination and time out. The Entrance Series is a fun, sporting collection of wedged boulders to hop over, narrow rifts to squeeze through and short crawls and climbs, all of which is well trod so you can basically follow the caver-polished route. The key thing to remember when heading into Aggy is always take the left-hand route when you reach a junction. Following this golden rule you shouldn't go too far wrong but be aware that some of these are low down so can be easily missed. There are a few higher level passages heading off along the way, but these are bat roosting sites and should be avoided.

Beyond the initial rifty sections, at a point when the passage takes on a larger scale (just after you emerge from a slot behind a boulder), look for a climb over the rocks on the left. This provides the easiest route of continuation, while taking the more obvious straight ahead route ends at an awkward climb and squeeze to regain the way on. Continue on this high level until you reach the end and a taped off section and sign is visible ahead, then descend the smooth sided hole through boulders in the floor. Below, there are more holes in the floor, but continue to the end and descend into a passage heading off to the right. Then take the side passage almost immediately on your left, which is low down and easy to miss. A small streamway is met and from here on the route is straightforward, with a knobbly crawl over polished rocks ending at a climb up to gain the impressively sized Baron's Chamber, near a blue sign attached to a boulder. Take note of your location as you emerge from the climb as it's partially obscured and easily missed on the return.

Baron's Chamber to The Music Room – Take a moment to admire the scale of this magnificent part of the cave before continuing on down Main Passage. Upslope from the blue sign soon closes down at a boulder choke, so head down this mighty boulder-strewn passage until the next junction. At the lowest point an obvious climb down into a passage straight ahead leads to Main Stream Passage (with routes to The Grand Circle, Inner and Outer Circle, Sand Caverns and Midnight Passage), but our route is up the sandy slope on the left along the continuation of Main Passage which runs for about 1200m to end in North Wing. It has a smooth mud floor for much of its length and areas with selenite crystals growing from the mud banks.

A very worthy diversion along this stretch of passage is Erse Chamber, the entrance to which is up the first large passage heading off on the right. This won't take very long and is a really nice bit of cave. The large entrance very soon diminishes to a low belly-crawl, but don't let this put you off, beyond this is a lovely chamber with coloured bands in the roof. A further low crawl beyond reaches another similar chamber with more coloured banding, ending at a couple of fruitless digs.

Back at Main Passage, some minor side passages head off to the left and right, but the next major junction is further along on the right. This is a large obvious passage down-slope of Main Passage and is worth noting as the route to Northern Stream Passage, Sandstone Passage, Upper Southern Stream and Southern Stream Passage which is a primary route for the Grand Circle, Iles Inlet and Maytime. Continuing on from here, Main Passage starts to decrease in height until some crawling is required before reaching the Music Room. Around this point another large passage heads off on the right, this is Trident Passage and is definitely best avoided as what starts as pleasant walking sized sandy floored passage soon degenerates into almost 650m of extremely arduous flat out crawling to an abandoned dig. You'll know when you've reached the Music Room by the music stand in the middle of the chamber. Beyond this and to the left are the Cliffs of Dover, which have interesting mud and sediment bands. Crawling over the mud bank here leads you to North Wing and Aven Series where there are a number of different routes than can be followed, all are short but interesting and this area is more maze-like than the rest of the cave so far.

North Wing and Aven Series – Beyond the crawl above the Cliffs of Dover is North Wing and easy walking passage soon leads to an aven with a large cairn beneath. It's possible to climb this aven, but it's not easy and probably not really worth the effort! This would take you to 80m of passage heading back towards the Cliffs of Dover. Below this and to the right is the entrance to Aven Series, while North Wing itself continues past a short passage on the right before ending in a heavily silted choke.

Aven Series starts as a crawl, before a flat-out section and an awkward squeeze pops into a large passage with numerous mud sculptures to admire. This part of the cave is very pleasant and there are a number of small rifts, passages, tubes and crawls to explore if you're feeling enthusiastic, the furthest of which leads to an extension called Porky's Paradise.

From The Music Room, it's also possible to access the small streamway below the Cliffs of Dover, providing a wetter more sporting alternative route than the crawl.

Spotted an error in this route description or want to leave feedback?
Contact the Webmaster (see contacts page on CSS website <https://chelseaspelaeo.org>)

(Version 1 - Oct 2022)