

# Ogof Craig a Ffynnon – North West Inlet

**Location – NGR:** SO 22011 12873 - **what3words:** ///hinted.commit.risking

Ogof Craig a Ffynnon is just a short drive from Whitewalls. The best way to get there is drive along the tramroad (Hafod Road) to the end, then at the roundabout opposite the new Gateway Bridge take the first exit along the Old Abergavenny Road. Continue along this road until you reach a layby overlooking the A465 where there should be space to park (**NGR:** SO 21745 12709 - **what3words:** ///mercy.fizzle.worlds).

From the layby walk a short distance further down the road to the 'Clydach' sign next to an old limekiln, where you'll see the track to the cave heading off to the left. Follow the rough path weaving through the scrub into the quarry for some distance, the cave entrance is easy to spot being an obvious large open alcove in the quarry walls on the left above a boulder slope. The gated entrance is located at the rear of the rock alcove, and great care should be taken not to loiter here longer than necessary as numerous rock falls have occurred in the area. The gate should be locked after entering and the key is also required to exit the cave.

The cave entrance to the left of Ogof Craig a Ffynnon with a rope to the entrance is Pope's Hole, an abandoned dig of 10m length which does not connect with the main cave.

**Warning:** *Craig a Ffynnon is liable to flood in heavy rain. The stream passage near the entrance can fill to the roof in wet weather and the first 90m of North-West Inlet is also flood prone.*

**Access:** See CSS website for information on how to arrange a key for this trip. CSS members can access the cave at any time using the club keys held at Whitewalls.

**Description –** Due to the risk of rockfall, it is best not to loiter at the entrance longer than necessary. Once inside the safety of the cave it is only a short distance to the first chamber where the logbook is situated, this should be filled in with the names of those on your team. Beyond this Straw Chamber is soon reached, which has a flowstone and gour pool floor and a large array of straws on the ceiling, however this is nowhere near as impressive as what is yet to come further into the cave. Continue following the streamway to First Choke which has two short metal ladders then a scaffolded climb to emerge in a much larger passage above. Ignore the taped route heading upslope on your right as this doesn't continue far before closing down, and instead continue to follow the streamway which lowers to a wet crawl at Gasoline Alley. This section of the cave sumps in very wet weather, so if air space is minimal and rain is forecast it would be wise to abort your trip!

Next you'll reach a junction, with a low and very wet tube heading off on the left, this is North West Inlet; the beginning of a much wetter and colder adventure. If you are planning to also visit the further reaches of the cave, it is wise to do that first before committing to the chest-deep immersion in freezing water that lies ahead. This is walking height throughout, but the first gm has the least airspace above the water and usually the added pleasure of a cold wind howling through it. After this the stream passage gains height, though the deep water continues for a further 90m before emerging into the surprisingly large and dry Things to Come Passage. This continues for over 500m in an almost straight line exactly below Travertine Passage and the route to Hall of the Mountain King. The passage is quite well-decorated and pleasant, if a little muddy, the most impressive feature however is The Dragon.

Beyond this formations continue, becoming more impressive as the passage goes before reaching an end as suddenly as it started. A ramp heading up to almost roof height reached the start of 70m of railway line installed to remove digging spoil in an epic endeavour to dig through the mud and boulders to the possible continuation beyond. It is possible to continue a little further to reach a slot with the sound of water below and some voids within the boulder choke, but great care should be taken to avoid dislodging loose rocks.

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 - March 2023)