

Eglwys Faen, Llangattock, Brecs.

N.G.R. 32/192156

Eglwys Faen (Welsh for Stone Church, referring to the lofty main chamber) is a cave with about 440 yds. of passages. It is situated in the limestone escarpment facing Crickhowell, about 1,100 ft. above sea level. The limestone outcrop here runs approx. East-West and is very narrow since the slope of the ground to the North is steep, and near the cave the whole width of the outcrop shows on the scree slopes. The surface of the moor is of millstone grit, limestone appearing at its upper limit near the summit of the cliffs. Not far below the caves (depth questionable) the limestone shales start, and a narrow band of limestone beneath this, occurring about half way down the steep slope below the cave. These details were copied from the manuscript 6" Geological maps in the Geological Museum library, South Kensington. The cliffs a mile west of the cave have at their base considerable overhangs where the shales have worn away. This can be seen on approaching the cave. On Friday Feb. 16th 1951 about 3,000 tons of this cliff came down in a huge landslide, where there had been an overhang of about 20' at the base of a sheer cliff.

By car or cycle the best approach is via Brynmawr and the tramroad which is a continuation of Intermediate Road, followed without turning for a level $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Cyclists or cars from Llangattock fork left over the canal, then keep right, up a fiendish hill. Either way brings one to the Travellers' Rest, formerly a pub. but now a smallholding. The Monmouth School H.Q. is just where the tracks meet, a detached building on a grassy bank. Leave car or cycle there and follow the tramroad West. The walker from Llangattock keeps straight ahead after crossing the canal, leading to an old grass tramroad and a ferocious incline to the same upper tramroad, where one turns right. In parts the tramroad degenerates into an irregular path then it turns left round the mountain and the 2-mile concave escarpment comes into view. Eglwys Faen is just above the tramroad in the angle on the left, the most southerly corner. Near the cave is a cliff, the corner of which abuts right on the tramroad, reducing its width to two yards. This is unmistakable, and at this point the main entrance is up a zigzag path on one's right, the second entrance an obvious hole on one's left, while the crawl entrance is a few yards right at the base of the cliff. Drinking water can be obtained from a 'drip' reached by climbing up a slope about 30 yds. East. In the small bog between this and the cave grows Butterwort (*Pinguicula*) and on the slopes behind the bog the vertical aven of the cave is concealed under a thorn bush.

It would seem that the cave was opened when the quarries were in use. No dates appear inside before 1850. The main chamber is lofty and is possibly unsafe to stay in as the roof is said to shed occasionally. Halfway in the main chamber an archaeologist has dug a sample pit. As usual in the district the S. end is choked, the clay floor meeting the ceiling.

The West Series involves some elementary acrobatics. The very low part was apparently dug out years ago and was further enlarged in 1946. The lower East Series is curious in that the long main chamber resembles a well-used farmyard. The most distant small chamber resonates to a certain pitch, and the round circuit of these chambers can only be performed by the thinnest. The pothole which gives access to the lower series is easily climbed both ways, and at one time apparently had some fine formations. The 30' aven is also moderately easy to climb both ways.

Only a few yards inside the second entrance is a sporting tunnel near the roof, involving a 'sardine turn' and a descent down a crevice.

Eglwys Faen may be termed an easy cave. No tackle required, no special precautions.

There is a convenient Youth Hostel in Crickhowell. A plan in the Common Room (1950) does not differ from the plan on page 1 in any important respect.

Several matters in connection with the cave may be found of interest. Rumour has it that the cave 'goes to Beaufort' (!) or alternatively 'to Merthyr' (!!!). There is a local legend of a dog who was lost in the cave and came out at Beaufort with all his hair rubbed off and hysterical. This is curiously like a South Pembrokeshire legend, the dog in this case entering at Hoylesmouth (nrl Tenby) and emerging at Wogan Cave, Pembroke Castle; in this case however the dog was accompanied by a man who was never seen again. Near the second entrance, just by the tramroad is the oblong foundation of a small hut which was probably connected with the quarry.

There is an active swallet above the cave. Follow the path upwards from the main entrance, up the dry valley, forking left where the dry valley divides, and the swallet is soon seen. It is choked with grit blocks, but according to the 6" Geological map is right on the boundary with limestone. There seems hope of an inner system. The established connection between Ogof Gam (formerly thought to be a silted-up cave) and Agen Allwedd, where only a two-foot seal remains to be broken, makes one more optimistic about the possibility of a dig extending Eglwys Faen in a southerly direction. The obvious place for this is the end of the main chamber.

The plan on p. 1 is C.R.G. Grade 3

(Copyright - South Wales Caving Club)

EGLWYS FAIR
LLANGATTOCH
BRECONSHIRE

PROPERTY OF
SOUTH WALES
CAVING CLUB.

Plan made 1944-46 by
6th Ebbw Vale Scouts
and pupils of Brynmawr
County Grammar School.

1

Eastern Series

This 10' shaft is the
only means of access to
the Eastern Series

Floor meets roof

N magnetic

This portion
dug out at
different
periods

Western Series

30'
aven
up to
cliff

small bog

Impassable

2nd
ent.

T
r
a
m
r
o
a
d

crawl
ent.

main
ent.

Main
Chamber

concealed
wriggle
upwards

Scale 1 : 720

0 20 yds.

Ogof Pwll Swnd, Foel Fraith, Carmarthenshire

N.G.R. 22/761184 (approx.)

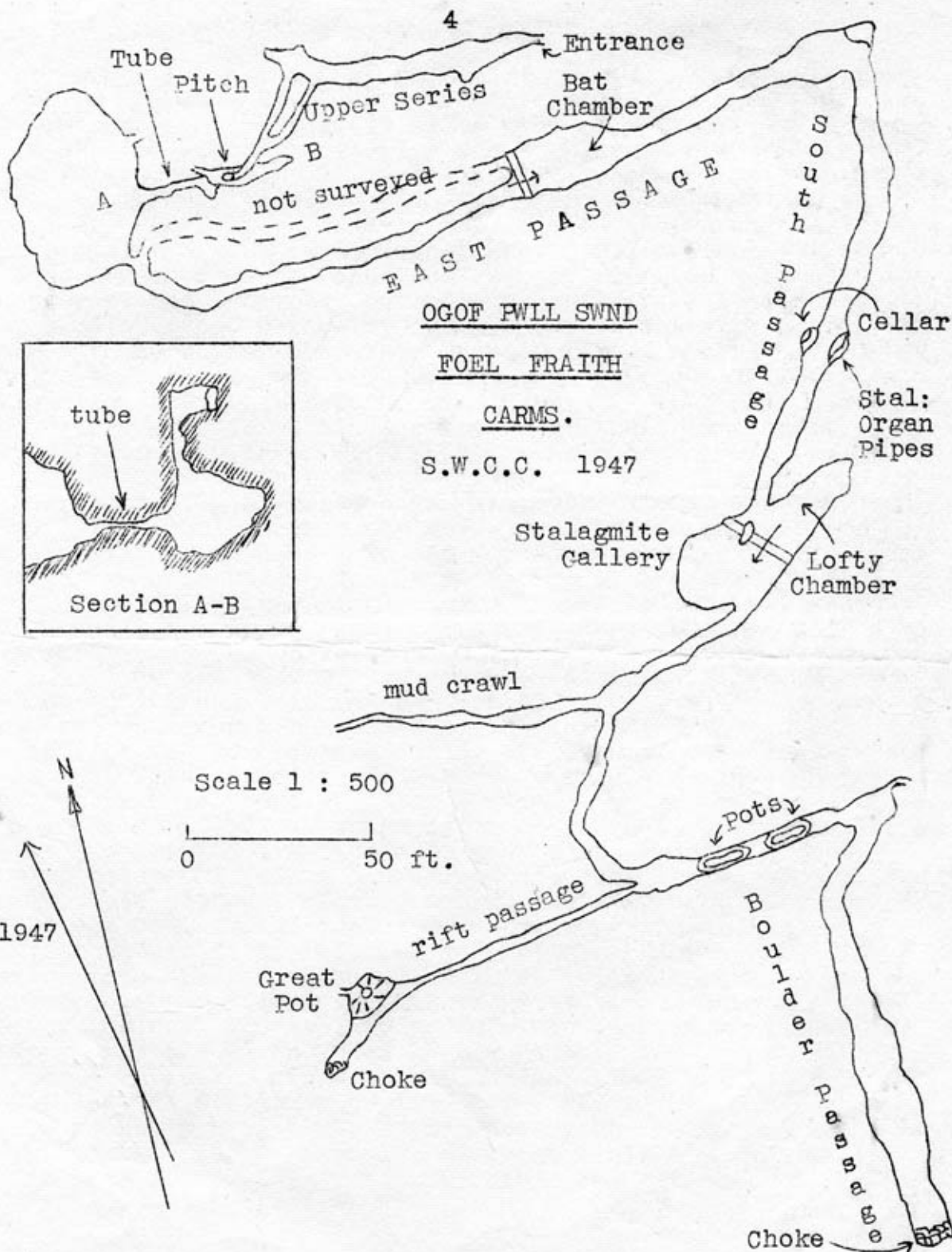
The cave is situated in the barren upland country enclosed by the Brynamman - Llangadock mountain road to the west and the Swansea Valley to the east. The easiest approach is from the west if transport is available. Cars should be left at the quarry on the east side, and at the summit, of the Brynamman - Llangadock road, when a 2-mile cross-country walk is involved. From Glyntawe, Swansea Valley, there are 6 miles of hard walking. A better alternative route is by bus or car via Ystradgynlais and Upper Cwmtwrch to Ystrad Owen, when the walking distance is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

The existence of the cave was learned from a shepherd encountered during an excursion to Ffrydiu Twrch. Early in the following year, 1939, the shepherd with great difficulty located the entrance on the north-east slopes of Foel Fraith. Preliminary examination led to the discovery of a hole in the floor at the end of the main passage. Exploration was renewed at Easter of the same year with the determination to pass through the hole, which was exceedingly narrow. Ladders were put down and, at a depth of 38 ft., the lower series was reached.

Difficulties and disappointments have accompanied numerous parties which have set out to explore Pwll Swnd. At various times rain, mist and snow have combined to prevent parties from locating the cave which is very difficult to find even in good weather. When visibility is good the best aid to location is that the cave entrance is in line with the western tip of Fan Gihirych and Blaen Llynfell Pond, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of the pond and well up the slope towards the highest point of Foel Fraith (1982 ft.) In the vicinity are numerous trench-like depressions and the cave is at the end of one of these. The entrance, almost level with the trench floor, and obscured by moss, fern and grass, is almost invisible.

Difficulties do not end when the cave has been found. Those of more than average build are liable to find the squeeze at the head of the ladder pitch requires an impossible amount of compression. Due regard should be paid to the fact that it is more difficult to ascend than descend through the hole.

Looking upwards from the chamber at the foot of the ladder pitch it is observed that the floor of the upper passage is false. A low crawl, ending with an awkward righthand downward turn, leads upward to the first sizeable chamber of the lower series. After a little more crawling at the beginning of the First Passage there is no lack of passage height, and in places



Bridge Cave, Neath Valley, Brecs.

N.G.R. 22/913139

This cave is approx. $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles west of Ystradfellte and may be reached on foot by following the turning to the west from Ystradfellte Church. This lane finally becomes a footpath which joins the roadway to Blaen-Nedd-isaf Farm quite close to the cave. For motorists there is a well surfaced road to the immediate vicinity of the cave. Turn right $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Ystradfellte on the main road to Pont-Nedd-Fechan. There is a gate at the junction of the two roads and others en route. A little less than half a mile beyond Berth-lwyd Farm there is a badly surfaced sharp left turn from the Blaen-Nedd-isaf road which leads immediately to Pont Cwm-pwll-y-rhyd. The cave entrance is found in a dry swallet away to the left.

Bridge Cave is within easy reach of the 3 caves of the Pwll y-rhyd group and, taken with these, make a good day's caving.(a)

The Little Neath rises $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the north of Bridge Cave in the upland region between Fan Cihirych (2381') and Fan Nedd (2176'). In normal weather the river deserts its surface bed between Blaen-Nedd-isaf Farm and Pont-Cwm-pwll-y-rhyd. The last point of engulfment is usually a fissure at the base of the limestone cliff just a little north of the bridge.(b). Under these conditions it is possible to walk down the dry surface bed to beyond White Lady Cave - well over $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

Until August 1947 Bridge Cave consisted of a single dry passage 150' long. This passage was blocked by well cemented boulders, but beyond the sound of running water could be heard. Examination of the blockage during the 1947 visit showed this to be in a loose condition and a way was cleared into an impressive cavern which continued for 400-500'.

The old 150' dry passage is an easy crawl. At the beginning of the new section are blocks of rock which require a very careful treatment. Those hanging in the roof are particularly massive but, although of very unstable appearance, they need not be touched. Immediately the underground stream is seen on the left and is first followed in a winding high narrow rift leading into the main chamber. This is quite impressive in its dimensions. Under flood conditions water breaks into the cave through the West Passage the end of which (again very unstable) is very near the surface bed of the Neath.

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- (a) The other caves are - 22/912135 (sometimes called "Town Drain") 22/910136 White Lady Cave; 22/912137 Pwll-y-rhyd.
(b) Dr. North's book "The River Scenery at the Head of the Vale of Neath" is an essential piece of equipment when caving in this area. It is obtainable from the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff (Price 3/-)

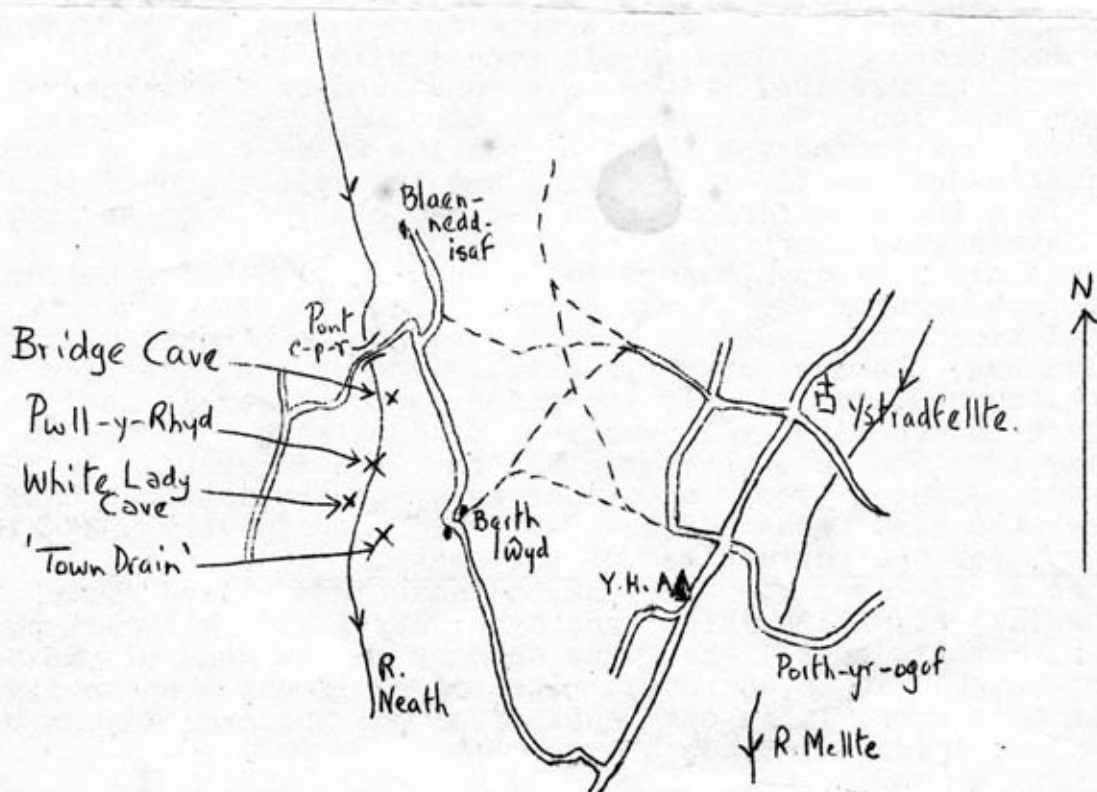
The Main Chamber narrows towards a natural rock bridge spanning ledges on either side of the passage. Both ledges are climbable, that on the west side leading to a pretty grotto which has not been explored in order to avoid breakage of the formations therein. There is the appearance of a passage at high level leading onwards from the east ledge but this is, in fact, a gallery above the river passage which quickly loses height below the bridge.

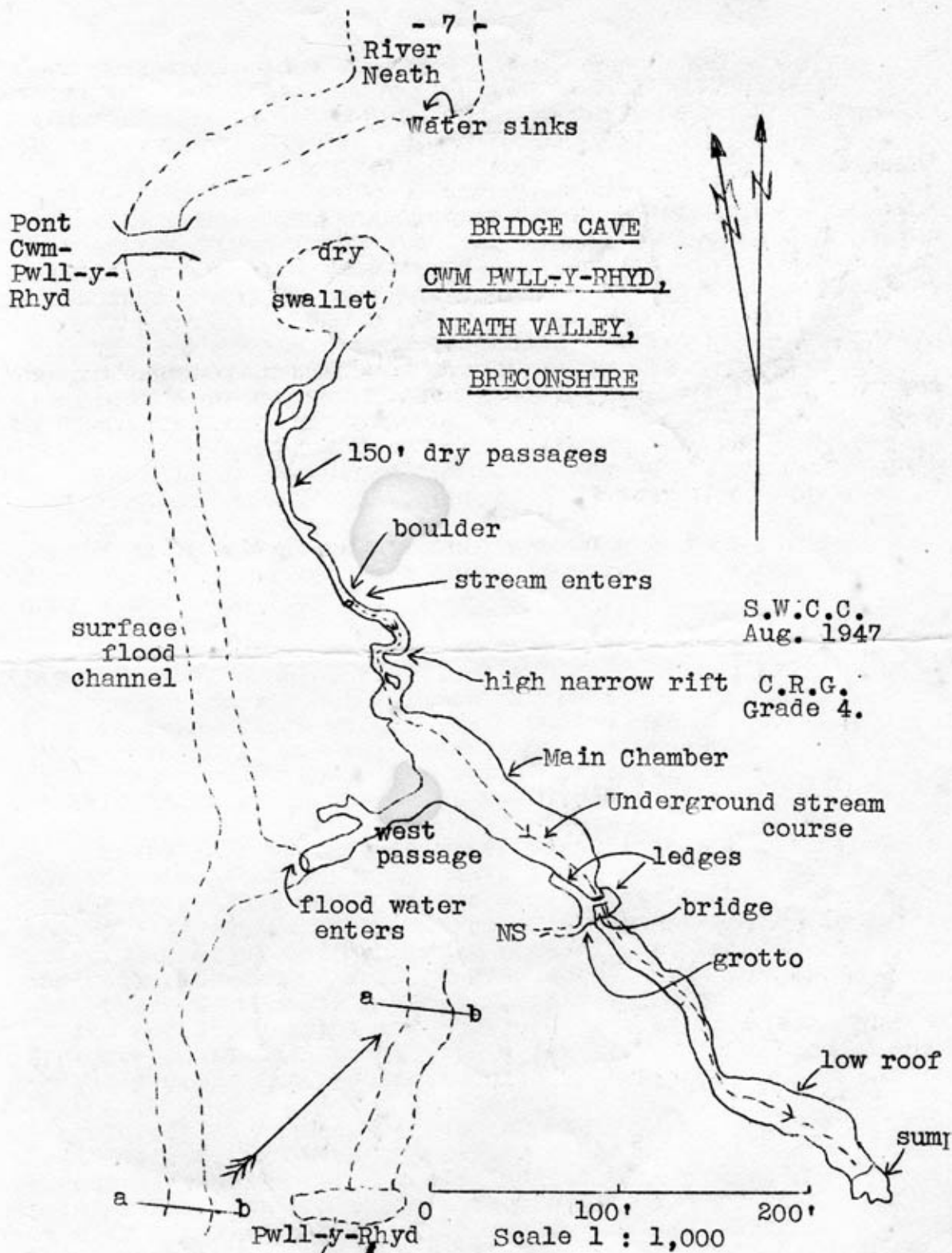
The last section to the sump becomes increasingly uncomfortable the roof being now so low as to necessitate crawling in the water. The sump is 4 - 5 ft. deep and rather muddy. No definite water exit has been traced.

No test has been made to establish where the underground stream re-appears but this may prove to be at Pwll Du approximately one mile south of the cave entrance at the east bank of the surface stream. The cave is partially explorable under flood conditions but care is required.

No tackle required.

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Will's Hole, Pont-Neath Vaughan.

N.G.R. 22/914080

Will's Hole or King Arthur's Cave is situated on the right bank of the River Sychryd at the lowest series of waterfalls, and is about a mile east of the village of Pont-Neath Vaughan. Latitude $51^{\circ} 45' 41''$ N. Longitude $3^{\circ} 34' 20''$ W. approx..

It lies on the narrow Carboniferous Limestone belt which occurs between the Old Red Sandstone to the north forming the Black Mountain and Brecon Beacons, and the Millstone Grit of the coalfield to the south.

As will be seen from the plan, the cave is an elongated Y and forms an underground connection between the Sychryd and the Neath. The present course of the water is at the moment something of a mystery, because although a good sized stream flows through the terminal sump, it makes its appearance only a few feet from it.

Passage B is normally dry, but the presence of a thick layer of coal dust on the floor and part of the walls washed in from the coal washing plant higher up the Sychryd, indicates that it takes flood water. The flooding, we should imagine, would have to be severe, because in the space of a few hours, after heavy rain, the river rose 3 ft., but there was no sign of this increase in the cave.

There is a trickle of water visible in the main passage A but the clue to the supply seems to be given at a point in this passage just South of the word 'PLAN' on the plan. Here, the wall is coated with a layer of stalactite, and above the noise of a heavy drip emerging about 10 ft. up, is the unmistakable roar of fast running water. This led us to think that there is another passage roughly parallel to A and North of it, and discharging its contents just above the sump. Exploration at this point with a few sticks of gelignite would probably yield interesting results.

The inlet on the Sychryd and the exit in the Neath have been located, and with the aid of a 25" map, it was hoped to produce a section which would indicate the difference in level between the sump and the resurgence into the Neath, and thereby give some indication of the usefulness of diving the sump. Unfortunately the 25" map does not give sufficient data and several hours of levelling will be necessary, besides locating the exact position of the cave.

Stalactite formation is negligible.

The general angle of dip is one of only a few degrees S., but because of intense local folding, the dip in the cave is 60° N. The faults among which it has been formed can clearly be seen in the roof.

There are no technical difficulties in the exploration of the cave, with the exception of the Pot. This can be descended with the aid of a rope, but matters are made more pleasant by the use of 35 ft. of ladder.

January 1940.

L. W. Greenwood
A. M. G. Trower

Ogof Clogwyn, Blackrock, Brecs.

N. G. R. 32/212123

Ogof Clogwyn has been known locally for many years, but it is not widely known, being rather hidden in situation. It is almost directly under Gelli Felen Halt on the Brynmawr-Abergavenny railway, and rail visitors can easily get off there and descend the steep valley side directly downwards, finding the path which runs obliquely down the lower cliffs to the cave. Road approach is from Blackrock on the Brynmawr-Gilwern main road. Go to the Hafod Inn (also Bus Stop), down the short road to the tramroad below. Park cars here. Proceed down tramroad to the Prince Albert Inn, a few yards away on right, then down footpath which is on right just past the Inn, taking one to Devil's Bridge. Ascend the steep path on the other side until half way up a cottage with garden gate is reached on left. A few yards above this level, a footpath branches right which skirts the steep slopes, descending gradually until a primitive sheep dip in the bed of a brook is reached. Ford the brook (easy) follow the path round. It rises again, then veers left around the top of the cliffs at the base of a beech wood. Keep right, without descending anything really steep, until a well-defined track is reached descending obliquely westwards, when the cave will be reached.

In dry weather when the Clydach river can be forded easily it is easier to walk up the tramroad from the Prince Albert until a large steel pylon is reached on the left. Descend path to left of pylon, veer right down steep path to river, ford river, then ~~fl~~ follow cliffs eastward until cave is reached. This path from pylon across river to Gelli Felen used to be a well-defined footpath to the station many years ago, but the stepping stones have disappeared.

The cave is near the base of a cliff, an oval hole with stream issuing and an overhanging lip which makes entry peculiarly difficult unless a bough is placed against the lip. This is entrance No. 1 on the plan. Almost vertically above this entrance is a recess near the top of the cliff, reached by a moderately difficult climb, labelled No. 4 on plan, from which one can see explorers inside the upper series, though access is at present impossible, there being only an inclined narrow gap about 3" wide, and that blocked by stalactites. This is shaded on plan. In addition, there are at 2 and 3 pipe entrances which are possible, No. 2 opening some way up the cliff, and No. 3 a crack at the top of a pile of leaves.

The upper series passages are shown on the plan in perspective with the lower series ones, though no link is known. The stream issuing from entrance No. 1 flows from the sump following the arrows, and nearly all the way it flows the width of the passage and about a foot deep, though in one or two places it is deeper, and care must be taken to keep it out of gumboots! All the passages are well developed along joints, and the most westerly passage running S-N is especially interesting as the stream here flows gradually from one strata to the next lowest, giving a series of small rapids. The whole wet series is fantastically ribbed along the walls, due to differential phreatic solution, and this development is so consistent along the cave that it is a remarkable specimen of this particular phenomenon. In places, separate phreatic channels in the same joint may be observed over one another, which gradually merge farther along the joint. Although the survey was not accurate enough to decide definitely, it seems likely that the passages of the far upper series lie in the same joints as those of the lower series just inside the entrance. On the back of the plan is a sketch section showing the extent of the horizontal ribbing. The fallen blocks both appear to have dropped from a position in the centre of the passage, they too being ribbed at the sides. The side loop on the right not far inside entrance 1, and the tunnels leading to 2 and 3 are all much higher than water level, and show the same ribbed structure. The passage D is at present impossible to enter as it is high, and a pair of ribs leave only enough room for one's head.

In relation to the geology of the Clydach Gorge, the cave reveals the considerable phreatic development which must now exist below stream level. The gorge just outside and higher up the Clydach shows signs of having been a cavern; there are large blocks in the bed which are obviously chunks of roof. Opposite, and immediately under the pylon, at the base of an overhanging cliff is a miserable little tunnel with water issuing which may yield to courageous cavers who like getting wet. 50 yds. above Devil's Bridge is a pool in the river which is known locally as the Whirlpool, in which many people have been drowned. All attempts to fill it have failed, and it may communicate with a phreatic passage leading to the gorge below the bridge. It does not look dangerous.

Gumboots and an overmac are all that is required for the stream passage, but for the upper series overalls needed. The volume of water issuing does not vary much, and has not been observed to be large despite heavy rain. It is not a sporting cave, but it is well worth a visit on account of its structure.

OGOF CLOGWYN

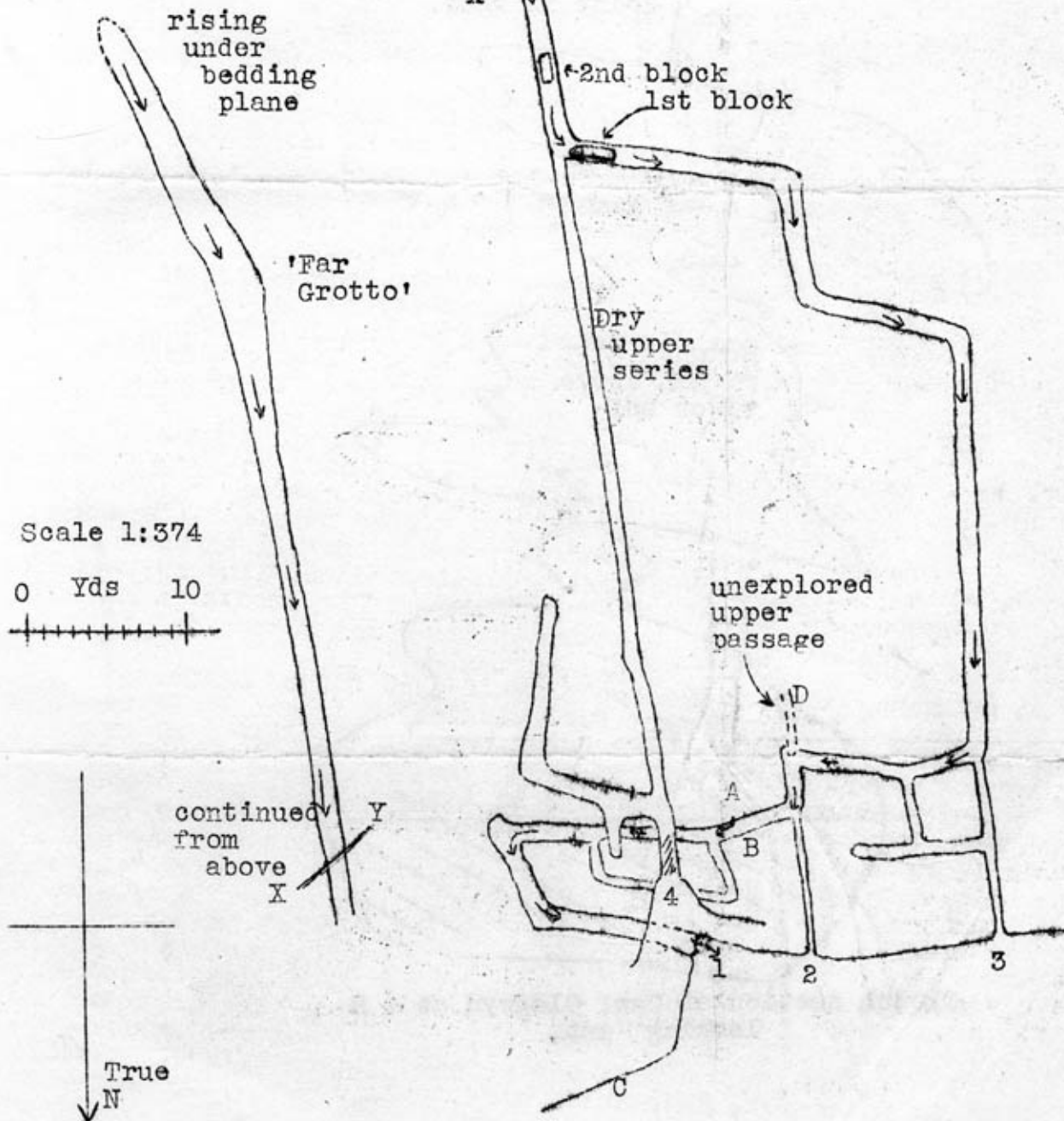
BLACKROCK

BRECONSHIRE

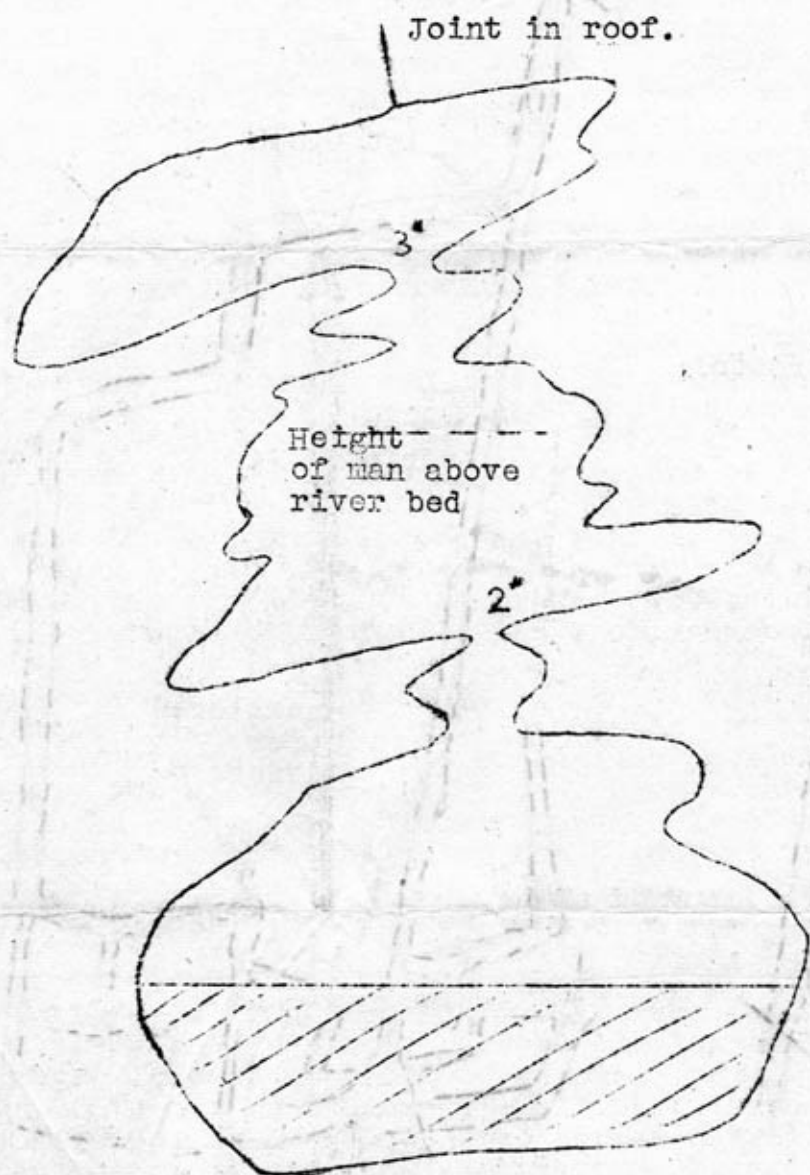
PROPERTY OF
SOUTH WALES
CAVING CLUB.

-13-

Plan made by 1st Brynmawr
Scout Troop Autumn 1951;
C.R.G. Grade 3, but most
bearings Grade 4.



Joint in roof.



Sketch section of Ogof Clogwyn at A B
looking West.

Craig-y-Nos Quarry Cave, Brecon.

The entrance to the cave is situated on the steep slope on the left-hand side of the ruined engine house in the quarry opposite Craig-y-Nos Castle (Now the Adelina Patti Hospital)

From the entrance, which is about 2ft. square a phreatic passage is entered about 2ft. wide and 4 ft. high. The passage soon increases in height and it divides into two. A small trickle of water flowing in a channel in the floor is met here. Upstream, the high roof soon degenerates and one is reduced to crawling over boulders in a figure-of-8 passage. A small square bedding-plane chamber is quickly entered. Just out of sight around the far corner of the chamber a small trickle of water continues to make a 6ft. waterfall issuing from an impenetrable crack. The passage peters out into a bedding plane chamber with no way in.

Following the stream down, the first 80 ft. is in a fine meander passage some 8 ft. high. After this the passage is 4 ft. high with a boulder floor (a sandy branch passage on the left is passed) followed by a 3 ft. high waterfall with a water-course behind it. The floor soon becomes sandy and one is reduced to full length wriggling in a passage of 11 inches maximum headroom. After a hundred feet of this the passage becomes too narrow for further progress.

Returning to and wriggling through the sandy branch passage a bedding plane chamber with four passages leading into it is entered. A stream issues from a passage which is too tight for human progress. Directly opposite the passage by which the chamber is entered is a figure-of-8 passage which carries on for about 60' before a branch passage on the right is passed, the floor here consisting of boulders and mud. Some 20 ft. further on a boulder is met on the left-hand side. In between the tree roots choke are visible. There is a similar occurrence 20 ft. further on where the passage turns sharply right. The floor changes from mud to boulders along a passage some 5 ft. high. A little further on is an oval shaped aven on the right with a shower of water falling down amongst the tree roots. The passage proceeds for some 200 ft. when the floor of pebbles nearly reaches the roof and a wet squeeze leads to Syphon Chamber. It is at this point that the syphon can be heard.

Returning back along the main passage a branch passage with a stream issuing is met on the left. It starts with a very tight squeeze and it continues for about 280 ft. and is about 3 ft. high. A sandy-floored passage on the right connects with the boulder choke passage. Halfway along this passage a low, tight meander passage copiously watered, connects with the syphon passage. Carrying on along the original passage it soon becomes very tight. The passage divides after this squeeze, one branch leading to the 3 ft. waterfall and the other to a bedding plane chamber. There is an aven in the roof which contains some fine 'moon-milk' !

N. Dilly Nov. 1953.

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Further Information on Eglwys Taen, " Our Caves " No. 1.

Eglwys Taen is mentioned in the first edition of Theophilus Jones' "History of Breconshire" 1806.

In the main chamber, about 20 yds. from the far end is an aven in the ceiling which can be entered only with a 12' ladder. This was entered 16-6-51 and leads to a series of widened joints which seemed dangerous and have not been explored.

B. D. P.

6ft.
waterfall

-16-
entrance

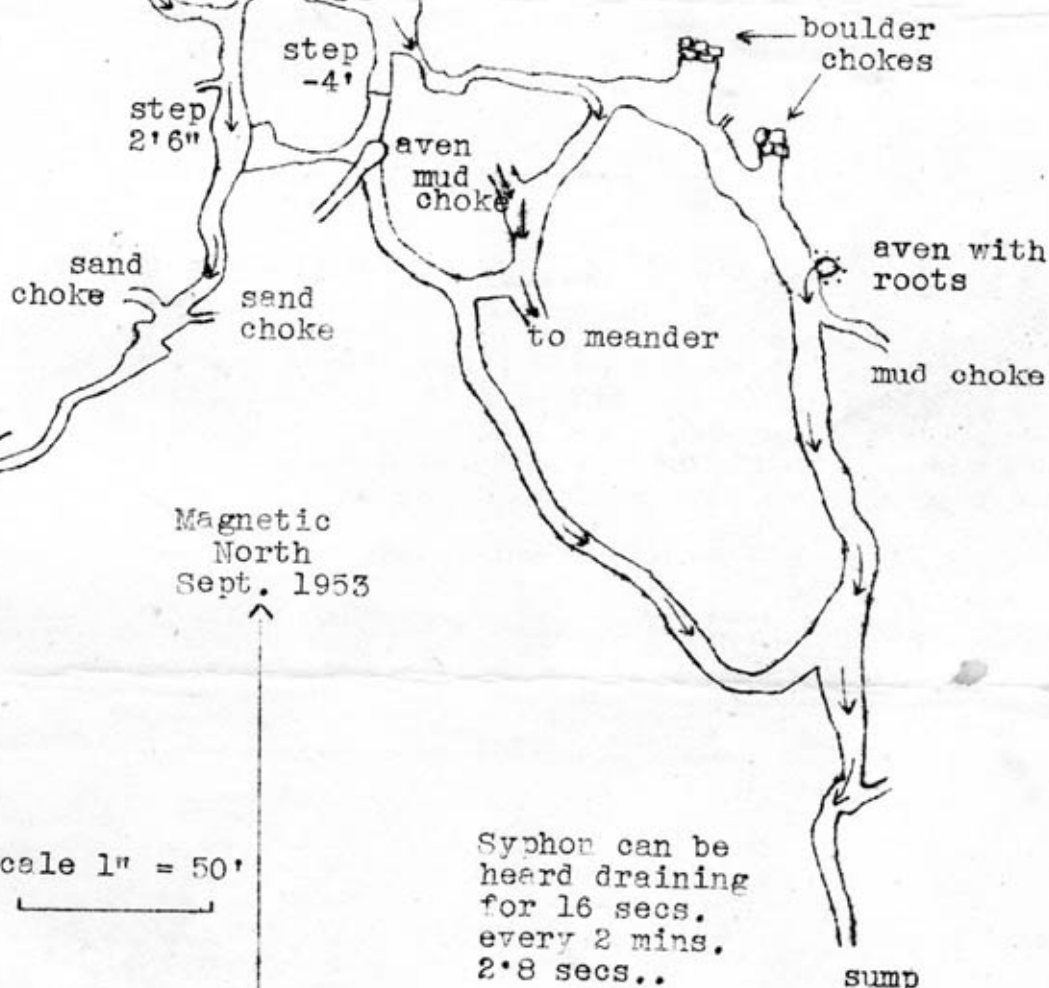
CRAIG-Y-NOS QUARRY

CAVE

Survey by W. Clark N. Dilly
D. Hunt W. Little
R. Smith

Drawn by N. Dilly

C.R.G. Grade IV



Syphon can be
heard draining
for 16 secs.
every 2 mins.
2.8 secs..

Agen Allwedd and Ogof Gam, Llangattock.

N.G.R. Agen Allwedd 32/187159

Ogof Gam the same.

This system is at present the largest known cave system in South Wales east of Pant Mawr and Fynnon Ddu. It lies behind the quarry face at Llangattock, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of Eglwys Faen (see "Our Caves" No. 1).

The best approach is past the entrance of Eglwys Faen. Continue west on the tramroad (grass track, stony in places) for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. The tramroad finally peters out in a small quarry which is immediately to the East of 'Big Gully' the only gully in the top cliffs which continues as a scree the whole height of the escarpment. In this quarry, at the base of the cliff among some large boulders is the entrance of Ogof Gam, a low tunnel circular in section. A few yards past this entrance the tramroad path rises to a ledge and then passes across the stony scree of Big Gully. Agen Allwedd is at the left end of the ledge, a crack shaped like a keyhole at the extreme corner of the cliff face. On the grassy ledge above Ogof Gam is another tunnel which is probably in the same system, but which needs digging a few yards inside.

The system consists of a series of passages, in most of which are small streams, originating in cascades down joints and uniting in a respectably sized stream in the main passage. Ogof Gam is really the main tributary, but a fall of boulders (see p. 20) has partially choked the passage and caused extensive silting backwards in the region of the first and second dips. The dry entrance passage is much smaller in section, and much more tedious than Ogof Gam.

History The entrances lie in the furthest worked quarry on the Cymro tramroad from Nantyglo and Beaufort ironworks. Probably these quarries were first worked because the limestone outcropped naturally there and could be seen, in the early nineteenth century, and it is possible that Ogof Gam was discovered first by the quarrymen. Dates inside are numerous, including some late nineteenth century ones.

1946 Spring A party from Brynmawr County School, including B. D. Price and R. G. Sandeman of Crickhowell tackled the entrance of Agen Allwedd, which was a cleft blocked below with boulders and above with a dripstone and boulder filling. They cleared the lower cleft, which became too narrow for human progress. They tackled the upper hole with a small crowbar, but failed to dislodge a large boulder some way inside. By shining a torch round one side of it, and looking the other side, with a coat held to exclude daylight, they could see a cavity beyond. Nothing further was done there.

On the same day, B.D.Price and R.Smith went to the end of Ogof Jam, where there was a very low hole at the end with a strong draught, dammed the trickle of water which flows inwards, and managed to dig out the mud floor sufficiently to allow them to pass through to the intermediate chamber. Here a further and much less promising seal stopped progress; they did not know that only two feet of seal separated them from Agen Allwedd. Their excavations formed the first dip.

24-12-1949 A party consisting of B. D. Price, H. Hickey and David Seagrave ("Sally") opened up the entrance of Agen Allwedd with a large crowbar after $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. work. Progress arrested by Sally's Alley, which had a death-trap fissure for a floor.

27-12-1949 Sally's Alley provided with a boulder floor. H. Hickey went as far as the large passage by the first boulder fall.

2 - 1 -1950 All three penetrated to the end of Agen Allwedd.

16-9-1950 "Speaking fissure" discovered (see p.20) and contact by tapping established between mud chamber and Ogof Jam. Green dye sent through in water trickle.

2-9-1951 Dug out second dip. Powerful draught when seal broken. Two Scouts, Victor Oliver and Graham Holly, made the round trip.

General Observations This cave has to be treated with respect, as it would be difficult or even impossible to get injured persons out. Three main precautions should be taken:

1. Alternative lighting which can stand up to powerful draughts is essential, as with changes of wind and temperature, draughts which can easily blow out an acetylene lamp are set up, particularly in Sally's Alley and the low arches by speaking fissure.
2. Food supply should be taken, in a separate bag because it is not possible to get through the entrance passages with anything in your pockets, to be eaten at the end of the cave if a full exploration is contemplated. The cave is rather exhausting, particularly the return through the entrance passages after a long time underground.
3. Particular care near the far end not to slip on the boulders which one has to climb. Even a twisted ankle could be serious.

Tackle No special tackle is needed for an ordinary trip. There is a shovel placed near the first boulder fall, and a bucket in the mud chamber for baling.

Flooding No danger of flooding, except perhaps in the far reaches under exceptional conditions.

General Description of the Cave. The further in one goes, the larger the cross-section of the passages. The entrance is a very un-prepossessing hole at chest height.

Wriggling through the entrance tunnel brings one to a low, wide cavern with a tunnel leading off left with just enough room to progress comfortably lying flat. This leads to a low stony tunnel, which was littered with bones of badger, fox and rabbit when the cave was first entered. One passes a small blind tunnel on the left, then an earthy lair of an animal on the right. After various contortions of the passage, the chute is reached, a hole in the cave wall on the right which is a steeply rising tunnel. Enter this head first, on one's right side. At the top (the narrowest part of the cave for stout persons) is a horizontal tortuous passage "Sally's Alley" and at the end a drop of about 6' into a narrow joint passage. This continues in two clearly defined compass bearings, to the low arches where again one has to lie flat. Between the arches is the speaking fissure on the left, where it is possible to speak to persons at the end of Ogof Cam. Near the exit to the main passage is another animal's lair, on the right, which generally shows recent signs of habitation although it is about 100 yds in. One climbs down a few feet from a fissure, and enters the main passage. Here, the small stream runs to the right, inwards. Following it left up its course brings one to the boulder fall which choked the passage. A small opening enables one to reach the mud chamber. Here, if other cavers block the stream in Ogof Cam and bale out the first dip, one can bale out the second dip and pass through. Do not attempt this unless you are prepared to be saturated in mud. The continual flow of water and mud would make any permanent scheme of opening up this as an entrance difficult.

Following the stream inwards, there is a low duck under the projecting roof, then the passage becomes higher, with a "Bat Alley" - a high narrow passage, formed from a joint with projecting fins on the walls, so that one progresses sideways, walking on the fins. Roosting bats like hanging under the fins.

A little further a branch passage on the right leads to "toothpaste tube", a muddy tunnel getting progressively lower and ending in a waterfall from above, and 'purgatory', a very narrow uncomfortable pipe leading to a similar fissure.

The main passage turns left, under a rather low tunnel (it is possible to miss it if one keeps a fair pace) and to another T-junction. The passage right does not go far, the main passage following the stream inwards turns left.

The size of the passage increases gradually, until it is possible to walk upright all the time. An unsafe passage is passed on the right (roof consisting of earth and boulders) and some way along, the stream passage is reached on the right, adding another larger tributary to the stream. A little way up the stream passage is a high mudbank on the left, showing clearly that at one time the cave was filled with clay, which has been washed out again. From here to the far boulder choke mud from the former filling is frequently seen on ledges on the upper walls off the passages.

Shortly after the stream passage junction is another Bat Alley, and in places the roof is very high (estimated at 50') where it is possible to climb up and explore passages in the roof.

Shortly after this Bat Alley, on the right hand side Queer Street opens off, an upstream tributary consisting of deep narrow fissures in the base of wider banks of mud (exhibiting the same phenomenon of the remains of the mud filling). Near the end is a narrow place in the passage with a boulder hanging from the roof which must weigh 3 or 4 cwt. The boulder has been named the "Sword of Damocles" because it seems on the point of dropping.

From the junction of Queer St. to the far end, the main passage becomes a scramble in and out of large boulders, finally ending in a boulder choke, a slope of boulders and mud rising to the roof.

It is possible to descend among the boulders, about 25 yds from the choke, and to follow the stream under the boulders some way, and also to strike a further right-hand tributary which meets the main stream very near the boulder choke. Many attempts at penetrating the choke have failed. The choke is 560 yds from the entrance by the shortest route. The total extent of the cave, not counting Ogof Cam, is about 900 yds.

Geological Formation All the known caves in the area appear to lie in the same horizon of limestone.

Agen Allwedd follows roughly the local dip into the mountain, and the water must penetrate still further S. or S.W., to emerge in the coal mines around Beaufort (in which large springs of hard water are continually pumped to prevent the water going further South into the deep mines) or alternatively the water may penetrate more East, to feed the large springs at Fynnon, Caisfaen (on either side of R. Clydach above Blackrock) which are never known to vary much in rate.

Throughout the whole cave, there are evidences that the cave was originally phreatic and this phreatic tunnel was later deepened by vadose action, giving the typical keyhole-shaped cross-section which persists clearly in such widely-separated places as the entrance, Sally's Alley, near the Stream-passage junction (very well developed), in Queer Street, and near the far boulder choke. In many places, there are the remains of the mud falling on the phreatic shoulders showing that the cave must have been filled with mud and washed clean again.

The mud problem is the principal obstacle to fresh caving finds in the district. Eglwys Faen is choked with mud at the most promising places; many tunnels exist in the same horizon in the quarries which need days of hard mud-digging to yield progress. In rainy weather, an overflow stream from the peat bog on the moor above flows down the Big Gully, and as this gully is practically in line with the entrance of Agen Allwedd, it is possibly this stream at an earlier geological period that washed the mud out of the cave. The finding of the system raised hopes for further finds in the district considerably

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Boulder choke

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AGEN ALLWEDD

AND OGOF GAM

LLANGATTOCK

BRECONSHIRE

Outline Plan

Surveyed 1951-53 by
B. D. Price and
various Boy Scouts.

C.R.C. Grade 3.

main
passage

Queer
Street

stream
passage

Scale: 1:1620
45 yds = 1 inch

(unsafe)

purgatory

toothpaste
tube

x places where water
falls from above
down joints

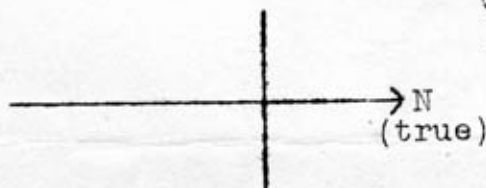
water dips

entrance passage
(dry)

Ogof
Gam

cliff

scree
contour



PLAN

C.R.C. Grade 3

boulder fall

Entrance passages.

mud chamber

seal & 2nd dip

intermediate chamber

first dip

dam

high passage

bat alley

low

speaking fissure

lair

low arches

fat man's misery

Sally's alley

the chute

Entrance to Ogof Gam.

S-bend

Scale 1:432

0 6 12 18

yds.

cliff of quarry face

lair

Entrance to Agen Allwedd

the jaws

contour of scree

True North

