

OGOF TARDDIAD

Ogof Tarddiad is one of a number of small cave entrances in the Pwll Du area that was seen as a digging prospect as far back as the 1950s. Some work was done in the 1980s to open a passage for about 20m up to a small choke which was then partially scaffolded. Another small passage beyond it led to another choke. This and further chokes were passed in 2023 giving access to Ogof Draenen's Waterfall Series and thus into the whole system.

All exploration of Ogof Tarddiad in recent years was agreed with its landowners before anything was started. They are now fully supportive of responsible caving activities via their land which will be overseen by Caving Wales (CW). The entrance has not been gated as the entrance is not obvious and the underground route is challenging enough to appeal only to experienced and well-equipped cavers.

ACCESS CONDITIONS

Access is available to all Active-Caver members of the British Caving Association through Caving Wales. Please use the logbook on the right just inside the entrance to record your visit. Report any problems to access@caving.wales



GETTING TO OGOF TARDDIAD

Take the minor road leading from Keepers Pond towards the Gilwern Hill masts where it ends at a locked gate. Park considerably in this area, grid ref SO 243119. Walk along the tram road parallel to and slightly lower down than the mast road (purple line on map) reaching a wooden finger post after several hundred metres. Turn right there and head straight downhill across the open common, following the line of the stone wall now on your right. The ground steepens after passing two sink holes that take water in wet weather and you come to a new stile over a wire fence. Cross this stile and follow the path below in the gully to where the first limestone outcrops appear. Traverse right here on to a path going through the woodland.

Follow this obvious path trending gently downwards and to the right for about 200m to the cave entrance at SO 247118 which is marked "Cave" on modern 1:25000 OS maps.

The entrance you want is the lower one of two and a small stream resurges about 30m below it. The higher shorter cave in the cliff above you trends upwards towards the surface and is worth a look in passing.

When exiting Ogof Tarddiad please reverse the access route described here and do not make use of any neighbouring land that is in different ownership.



To leave Ogof Tarddiad on a through trip, climb up the rift into the Waterfall Series from the Draenen main stream near Flies' Cemetery. After the second fixed ladder keep right at the junction of two streams. If you find a third ladder (i.e. you went left at the junction) then you are below Outcast Series which is the wrong way. Do not climb the third ladder and instead return to the confluence and go upstream.

OGOF TARDDIAD DESCRIPTION

Just inside the entrance is the sound of a stream which feeds the small resurgence about 50m below the cave entrance. Underground access to this stream is blocked with rocks which could be removed. This stream is largely a flat-out crawl blocked at both ends and wearing a wetsuit is recommended for the incurably curious.

Going straight ahead is largely a hands-and-knees crawl up to the 1980s scaffolding (now strengthened) and then into similar passage going around a sharp corner and becoming more of a rift before passing under a low roof for a couple of metres. All water that you see after the first scaffolding goes into Ogof Draenen.



The far side of the low roof is another rift going left and right. The left branch is now filled with rubble but it was trending up towards the surface. The right branch is a dug-out crawl with boards on the floor, passing a substantial boulder choke

which connects with Ogor Draenen. The choke pours with water in wet weather, now to some extent deflected away. Then follow the obvious stream down dip.

After 50m a larger stream enters from the right. This is the way to Outcast Series, Bolder Land and Yes Passage (KUMB). The 3m awkward climb near the start of this route now has a fixed ladder, photo below left, instead of the old rope loops.

Continuing downstream for 30m you come to a fixed rigid ladder (photo below centre) to descend a 4m pitch with a substantial waterfall running past your side during wet weather. Leave the chamber below and follow the water to a 4m pitch, also with a rigid ladder (photo below right). Some chambers develop in the rift. Continue down and join large passages at the top end of the Draenen streamway.



Top ladder



Middle ladder



Lower ladder

To your left at the very bottom is a narrow rift passage leading to the well-decorated Flies' Cemetery. This is a dead end with a quite pretty calcite boulder choke that has run in from the woodland you walk through to reach the Ogor Tarddiad entrance. To your right is the Ogor Draenen stream soon reaching very large passages. You will pass under the Big Bang pitch and arrive in a few minutes later at Cairn Junction where you meet with the route to the gated entrance.