



CLEARWELL CAVES

School, visits, Pre-Visit Information for Clearwell Caves-Ancient Iron Mines.

Introduction:

Clearwell Caves is a mining museum established by Ray Wright in 1968. There are nine caverns open to visitors and different activities are offered to groups, such as guided tours and caving activities. The museum is now operated by Clearwell Mine Management Ltd, managed by Ray's son Jonathan Wright.

The Caves attract a wide range of visitors; the majority are families and school groups. The Caves are self financing and as well as small scale mining, there are a wide range of events held through the year, such as the Christmas Fantasy, Halloween Party; Underground Theatre, story telling events and workshops. Clearwell Caves has been used frequently as a film location for several well known television series including Dalziel and Pascoe, Merlin, Dr Who and DaVinci Demons.

How to find Clearwell Caves:

Ordnance Survey grid reference: SO 576082

Post code: GL16 8JR

The Caves are clearly marked as you approach Coleford, there are brown tourism sign posts for the Caves around approaches to Coleford town centre.

The Caves are 1.5 miles South of Coleford town centre. From the town centre, follow the B4228 road in the direction of St Briavels and Chepstow. After approximately one mile turn right for Clearwell village (junction immediately past the Lambsquay Hotel): the sign post for Clearwell Caves car and coach park is seen after a few hundred metres.

The following details include information arising from our full risk assessment for visits by the public:

Pre-visits:

Teachers are welcome to make a free preliminary visit to the Caves and can then discuss a proposed group visit with the mine manager, or make bookings.

Before Arrival:

Show mine visits (Upper Level) are suitable for any age: an adult is required to accompany children under 16 years old, we allow one free adult per ten children; one free adult per 5 up to 6 years old, to help groups ensure adequate adult supervision.

Visitors need to be aware that pathways are uneven and steep in places and occasionally wet; it is recommended that all visitors arrive wearing strong, flat soled footwear with good grip. Good fitting shoes with good grip, 'trainers', wellies or walking boots are examples of appropriate footwear. Handrails are provided, please point them out to the group members as required.

The temperature underground is a constant 10 degrees centigrade so appears cool in summer and pleasantly warm during colder weather. Underground the Caves are not affected by weather outside. Make sure the group arrive wearing warm clothing even on a hot summer's day; by wearing jumpers or other warm clothing the group will be comfortable throughout their visit.

On arrival:

Ample car and coach parking provided. Remind the group that other vehicles use the car park. Walk down the surfaced footpath to the Cave entrance. The group may wish to use loos before beginning their underground tour, which normally lasts between 1 - 1.5hrs. WC's are located in the Café and just inside the entrance to the Caves.

Bags can be left with our shop staff, to save carrying bulky or heavy items during the tour. Valuable items can be locked away, please ask.

Book in at the entrance and your guide will be with you to begin the visit.

Children must be supervised by a responsible adult, throughout their visit. Whilst underground visitors need to act sensibly, including staying on pathways. Visitors should not climb onto rocks or walls, throw stones, jump or run.

After the tour:

Groups are advised to wash their hands if they have handled artefacts, rocks and minerals, especially before they eat. There are hand wash basins in the WC's in the Café and near the Cave entrance.

The Cave Shop stocks a wide variety of souvenirs, gifts and minerals, many of them at pocket money prices. Please supervise the group during their visit. You may wish to take large groups straight through the shop when you exit the Caves and re-enter the shop in smaller groups.

Our tearoom provides a wide selection of snacks and refreshments. Packed lunches or a range of food can be pre-booked for groups if required, please contact the catering manager to discuss (01594 832535). Packed lunches can be eaten in the café at quiet times or on picnic tables outside. If it is raining we can provide an undercover area.

Emergency procedures:

The Caves have a comprehensive emergency plan and hold occasional joint service exercises. Staff induction includes emergency procedures.

Throughout a pre-booked tour a guide accompanies each group - except at Christmas where tours are unguided but staff are underground to marshal visitors: guides are First Aid trained and staff have easy access to a First Aider and First Aid facilities. In the unlikely event of an emergency, speak to a member of our staff who will be able to assist and contact emergency services if required. The Caves have a defibrillator and trained staff available at all times. There are underground emergency telephones available through the Caves.

The enforcing authority for Clearwell Caves is HM Mines Inspectorate, who visit on a regular basis. We hold Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) certification

and the Adventure Mark. Since the introduction of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996, the Caves have been inspected and licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) current Licence No. L12105/R0009.

Lost children:

If a child is lost; contact any member of our staff and they will be familiar with the surface layout and help instigate a search. Underground, your guide will instigate a search.

Lost Property:

Any items of lost property including articles of clothing are handed into the mine office. Owners are contacted if they can be identified otherwise items are kept for three months, after which they are disposed of. Valuable items are taken to Coleford Police station. They can be contacted by dialling 101

If you require any further information do not hesitate to contact us:

The Mine Manager is: Jonathan Wright

**Clearwell Mine Management Ltd, Clearwell Caves, Near Coleford, Royal
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