



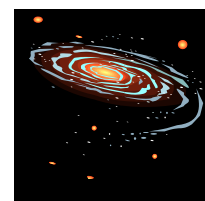
PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

www.pendarren.org

No. 15 April 2014

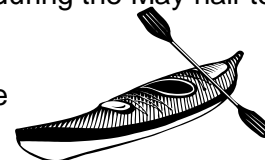
News

We have introduced Stargazing as an evening activity at Pendarren – opportunities to see the stars are very good as we are located in the Brecon Beacons Dark Sky Reserve. One night our group were out looking at the stars from the lawn at the back of the Main House whilst, unbeknown to them, the Northern Lights were making a rare appearance ... but at the front of the house!



The last year has been very busy for Pendarren and we are currently replacing and upgrading fixtures and fittings around the buildings. Some of the carpets get a lot of wear and so we will be laying down new carpets on the stairs in the Main House, as well as in Pen y Fan dormitory. The drying room struggles at times so we have invested in some new dehumidifiers to dry the equipment in the kit stores and improve the efficiency of the drying room. Improvements to the heating system are progressing but as they try to work around our groups it is slow process. Extractor fans should be fitted in the Annexe during the May half term break.

Kayaks – we have purchased a fleet of kayaks which are more manoeuvrable than our existing fleet and so we can cater for a wider size and age range.



This winter was mild but very windy, reaching 92mph on the Mumbles at Swansea. Some of our trees could not cope with high winds and waterlogged soil, so we now have lots of wood for bushcraft.

We also lost a few tiles from the roofs but, all in all, we got away more lightly than many people.

Tree tubes – the protection tubes that came with the trees were fine for rabbits but the sheep are eyeing up the green shoots that will soon be poking out the top of the short protection tubes. To combat this we are going to replace them with taller tubes.



Bookings

All schools who have requested bookings for 2014-15 should have received offers of dates. If you would like to book a course please contact Pendarren. The availability for 2014-15 is now on the website.



Coach parking

Our coach company has had difficulties picking up and dropping off students at some Haringey schools without contravening parking regulations due to the lack of parking facilities. If you know this will be a problem when collecting or dropping off your pupils for a visit, please contact Pendarren.

OUR VISITORS

Devonshire Hill Primary School 27 to 31 January 2014

The most enjoyable thing about Pendarren was the high ropes, as I loved walking through the wobbly, big gapped bridge, as you had to navigate your way to the other side. However I did feel frightened in the middle of the wooden bridge, as I thought I would die! But the fun never ended because when I fell backwards I felt truly amazing because I never thought that I could do it. I think I had perseverance by overcoming my fears.

To sum up things up for Pendarren just always try something new, maybe you might actually do an amazing job! Also you must have optimism, zest and perseverance. ALSO, DON'T SAY I CAN'T! – by Sameya

My Pendarren experience RULED! It was an epic, with all the activities. I have accomplished the activities that I couldn't do before! - by Melih

I would recommend Pendarren to all reading this. It's great fun and you'll learn and try new things. – by Saliyah



Tiverton Primary School 3 to 7 February 2014

It was certainly a windy week at Pendarren. A coastal visit, adventure journey and a trip to Big Pit offered a wide variety of experiences for the children to learn about the environments and history of Wales.

"The week at Pendarren made me feel marvellous and splendid. Every activity was making me get stronger. The best thing at Pendarren was the food and the funny, kind instructors. The air was fresh so I could breathe with my whole lungs. As I stepped over the threshold of Pendarren my happiness rose up by one hundred percent". - Daria

St Pauls RC Primary School 10 to 14 February 2014

A great week was had by the students and staff from St Paul's, especially as they saw the River Mellte in full flood on the river study activity, an awesome sight.

The students tried to write a report in 50 words or less, here are a couple of them.

In the morning we got woken up at 7.30am and after we ate a delicious breakfast. After we got to go on activities. I loved it when we had a challenge to complete. The mud was so deep that when we got out we didn't have our wellies on our feet. It was wonderful and I wish I wouldn't have to go home. – Jash

Pendarren was a very exhilarating time with all the climbing up mountains and exploring mines. It was freezing cold and raining but when we reached the top of Sugar Loaf mountain, it felt amazing. It was a beautiful view and we could see everything. The experience was absolutely amazing and FUN!

– Kimberley



Harris Primary Academy - Coleraine Park 10 to 14 February 2014

Year 6 pupils had an exciting time at Pendarren undertaking a busy programme of adventure and education:

"I had the best week ever! My favourite part was searching for creatures in the rock pools. The hardest part was exploring the cave – but I was brave! "by Ozan

"I have had the most wonderful experience in Wales even though I have spent five days away from my family. My most frightening thing was going in the cave and crawling in small holes! The hardest part was exploring the cave but I was brave." ...by Allia

"I had the best week away from my family!! I felt so happy to go inside a cave which I had

never been inside. The hardest was climbing mountains. The second hardest was leaving my family but apart from that I loved Pendarren." ...by Mya



Charlton Athletic Community Trust 15 to 18 February 2014

Charlton Athletic Community Trust, who visited during July and August 2013, returned in February half term with a group of young people participating in the National Citizenship Scheme. They undertook a variety of activities including a night walk up Bloreng Mountain and night orienteering. The organisers were keen for all the participants to cave as they felt that this activity was fantastic for bringing the group members together as they work to help each other around the unfamiliar terrain.



St Gilda's RC Junior School 24 to 28 February 2014

Pupils from St Gilda's RC Primary School had a fantastic time at Pendarren in February. On returning to London they composed thank you letters to staff at Pendarren and also sent comments for the newsletter.

"In Pendarren my favourite activity was the high ropes because that required a lot of teamwork. I liked the high ropes because I had a lot of fun. I and my partner stood on fourteen crates - we came first! My biggest achievement in Pendarren was the caving because I was a bit scared but at the end I

achieved well. The skills I have learnt at Pendarren are the fact I went in the cave and not moaning when I fell in the canoe - it was really cold! Pendarren has changed me because I feel more confident in different ways, I really enjoyed Pendarren. Children should go to Pendarren because they will have a fun time and they will probably believe in themselves a bit more. Pendarren is a great and fun experience you will learn about Wales and will get to know about your class mates. "....Isabella

"When I went to Pendarren I had the most 'hair-raising' experience ever. At Pendarren my favourite activity was the canoeing because Ben, Mr. Squillario and I pretended like we're Oxford at the Commonwealth games beating Cambridge. My biggest achievement was the fact that I'm afraid of heights and I still am - at first I didn't know what was going to happen but then I realized when I saw other people doing it then I realised it wasn't that hard to climb the high ropes."Treyvon



Heartlands High School 3 to 7 March 2014

Heartlands School had a great week in the March sunshine with frogs spawning all around and the spring flowers emerging. Here are some comments from the students.

I learnt to trust in people I never knew existed at school and opened my eyes to more adventure opportunities. – Kelise

I've learnt that I can reach higher achievements that I might think. Pendarren has let me pass my fears of enclosed areas and heights. Namely the cave and Jacob's Ladder. It was amazing. – Marwen

Pendarren has made me braver, more experienced and has taught me a lot. I've also had lots of fun. – Kader

I've learnt to trust my peers and to take responsibility for myself. – Zoë



St Francis de Sales Junior School 3 to 7 March 2014

"Pendarren has been one of the best things that has happened to me. I got to go canoeing, caving and also pony trekking. It's been the best 5 days of my life. Out of everything I've done in Pendarren, the best thing I've enjoyed is canoeing because I fell in and it was an epic adventure."

Francis

"Pendarren is actually a very good place. It's food is lovely and tasty. It's also very exciting. The people there are kind and helpful. There are a variety of outings. This is the best trip I've been too."

Doreen

"Pendarren is really fun and all the activities are great. I enjoyed pony trekking but there are tons of activities your teacher can choose from. Pendarren is great."

Dominic

"Pendarren was actually fun. I slept in the Pen Y Fan room, the biggest room for girls. There are lots of nice people and their food is amazingly good !! The house is exquisite and humongous and I'll look forward to visiting again. My best part was canoeing."

Olivia



Stamford Hill Primary School 10 to 14 March 2014

The weather at Pendarren finally broke and the first signs of spring were apparent. The sun shone, the air was warm and the daffodils were bursting with colour. The children and staff from Stamford Hill Primary School enjoyed the fine weather and the fantastic scenery and left us with a brilliant acrostic poem.

Partaking in adrenaline fuelled adventures!

Eating delicious food everyday

Near the Sugarloaf and Table Mountain
munching hay

Daring activities, we needed to be brave

Absailing, climbing into the sky with our hearts
in our mouths

Riding horses, Dizzy, Ali, Beau, Rosie and
Murphy

Rowing canoes, no time to snooze

Everyone laughing, joking and having fun in
the sun

Now our time has sadly come to an end but
we'll have memories forever with our
friends.



St Pauls and All Hallows School 17 to 21 March 2014

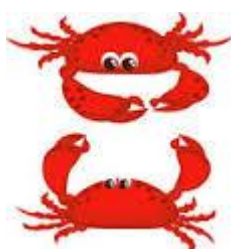
Jessica wrote a report about her experience at Pendarren House:

"As I arrived at Pendarren, in the distance I saw a massive mansion and it was Pendarren House! I finally reached Pendarren, I dashed inside straight into the Common Room and I wanted to know my room quickly. So we sat down and Mr J told us who we were with, I was in Table Mountain room. Our first activity was Stream Survey, we went down the road, and I was kind of tired going down. When we got to the river, Nana and I found countless shells. Jelani found a small fish, that was astounding.

On Tuesday our activity for the day was River Study and caving and I loved it because I found heaps of different rocks I didn't know of, and it

was my first time in a real life cave. Then we went to the waterfall and that was incredible because that was my first time in front of a waterfall. On the way back we were walking with sheep and I felt a bit scared because I believed that they might hurt me. On Wednesday our activity was that all of the groups went to the beach. When we got there Onyebuchi and I sprinted straight to find as many creatures as we could and we found two crabs and one eel.

On Thursday our activity was that we did high ropes and canoeing I was scared because this was the first time doing high things and we only got to six crates. I was kind of upset but our second activity was canoeing, it was good because it was my first time canoeing.” ... Jessica



Highgate Wood School 17 to 21 March 2014

As always, all Highgate Wood students and staff had an incredible time at Pendarren House. They took part in a variety of activities, including an Adventure River Walk to Blaen y Glyn; a blustery walk to the top of Pen y Fan Mountain; coastering at Caswell Bay; caving in Porth yr Ogof and orienteering in Coed Cefn woods.

“My main highlight of Pendarren was coastering because I enjoyed scrambling through the tight spaces and climbing up the tall rocks. The memory that I will look back on Pendarren with is getting close to people. Because of Pendarren, I’ve made friends with people that I didn’t know before I came.” - Briar

“I really enjoyed caving, as it was my first experience of it. I loved hanging with people in the common room after activities and I was proud of myself when I completed the river walk, doing all of the challenges. Overall, I loved Pendarren!” - Finn

NQT Weekend 21 to 23 March 2014

I just wanted to thank you all for an absolutely fantastic weekend. Not only was it informative, it was fun and engaging! The facilities and food were to a high standard (much more than I expected)! The activities were challenging but rewarding and due to Neil's patience with a bunch of newbies we achieved goals that I think we did not think were possible.

I thoroughly recommend that staff take up this opportunity and I very much hope that I will be back with a group of students to be able to share the experience and give them skills to equip them for life.



Risley Avenue Primary School 24 to 28 March 2014

A great week was had by the students from Risley Avenue Primary School. We had a day rock pooling by the beach eating ice creams. We climbed walls, canoed along canals and caved under the mountains. We cemented our friendships and made new ones, listened to Daniel the storyteller and put up with the instructors' awful jokes (sorry)! We learnt to face our fears and to try new things and FOOD!
We are going home tired and happy.

Thank you!



**St John's School, Woodford Bridge
24 – 28 March 2014**

Table Mountain – by Shahed

On Monday we went for walk up Table Mountain. It was hard. I kept falling over. When we got to the top we met the other group. I was very proud of myself when we got to the top. It was a lot easier getting down although I did do some on my bottom.

Crate stacking by Morgon

My trip to Wales was the best so far. We went to the crate stack, canoeing and on a mountain walk. My favourite was the crate stacking. For safety I used a helmet and a harness, I stacked up six crates and tried hard to stand on top. It was scary but fun. I was successful at standing for a while. I would like to go to Pendarren again when I can.



**Lordship Lane Primary School
31 March to 4 April 2014**

I really enjoyed caving because I got wet and dirty, it was really fun! Rock climbing was fun too, I was challenged when I went onto the purple blocks. Everyone else tried their best on rock climbing and they went up to the top of many of the blocks. I think that Pendarren House is a great place to be and I would recommend it to everybody no matter how old you are. There was a 92 year old here! How about that! I've had fun and if you come you would probably have fun too. Marleigh

I very much enjoyed rock climbing because it has helped me conquer my terrible fear of vast heights. I think the climbing experience in Pendarren made me learn a couple of things eg I learnt that when you give up you are only failing yourself. In conclusion to that I would

like to thank Pendarren for helping me.
Derrick

I enjoyed everything in Pendarren, but if I had to choose my favourite it would have to be the River Study. River Study was the best activity in my opinion because I got to go caving and see a huge waterfall. My second best was going rock climbing. I loved going rock climbing. It was my second favourite activity because I faced my fears. Jaime



**Fortismere School
31 to 4 April March 2014**

Adventure journey -
Challenging, freezing, amazing!
Wet, wild, wicked!

Rock Climbing -
Challenging, exhilarating, achievement!
Determined, gripping, breathtaking!

Mountain walk -
Windy, lovely, cold!
Hardcore effort tiring.

Kayaking -
Wet, cool, fun.
Awesome, rewarding, wet.

Rolling waterfalls, ridiculously high rock climbing, amazing abseiling, so peng. U got 2 go! The foods brill, best week of my life!

#Awesome. Pendarren is beast!!! Nice food, fantastic activities and nice people. Get to stay with friends. Pendarren rules.



Secondary Students

In the past the secondary programme has been set by Pendarren but, having increased our stock of equipment, we are now in a position to offer secondary schools a choice of activities. Further details will be on the new website.

Duke of Edinburgh

DofE Open Gold Training and Practise Walking Expedition

8 to 14 August 2014. See the website for further details.



Camping

We now have enough camping equipment to make camping an option if you would like your group to have an opportunity to spend a night in a tent. This can be in the grounds so catering would be in the House as usual.

Friends of Pendarren

The Friends continue to provide funds to purchase resources for the students:

- ▶ Cameras – these are continually replaced as they lead a hard life.
- ▶ The outdoor table tennis table is now in use.
- ▶ Visualiser – to help with map work and mini beasts.



Coming soon

Staff are working on new activity options to link with the new primary curriculum.

Activity options for secondary schools are now available.

Website – the content is currently being uploaded onto the new site and it will go live later this term. It will include a section for parents and students and opportunities for students to send us feedback.

A celebration of 40 years of Pendarren House will take place in summer 2015. A date is to be announced soon.



Abergavenny Cycling Festival 23-29 June 2014. There are a number of events taking place including hillclimbs, cyclocross, national time trials, sportifs, national road races and Para GP. Now that Olympic Gold medallist Laura Trott has announced that she is competing it is likely that the event will attract some more of the stars of the British cycling scene.

And finally, thanks to

- The Coe family for donating a number of saplings which have been planted around the grounds.
- Ottimo Digital for donating some large wall calendars to help Jan keep track of the bookings.
- A to Z expeditions for the donation of tents.

