



PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

www.pendarren.org

No. 16 August 2014

News

Hope you are all enjoying the lovely weather we have experienced over the last couple of months.



During May half term the **Hay on Wye book festival** was live on the BBC, including the 500 word short story competition. If you visited you may have seen David Lammy MP, one of the speakers.

Abergavenny Cycling Festival was bigger than ever this year and lasted all week. Some roads were closed all day and others had a rolling road closure as the cyclists raced around Monmouthshire. The races finished in the middle of Abergavenny and the locals had the chance to see some of the world's top cyclists (and some local heroes) on their home streets.

Our **new kayaks** have been put to good use by the secondary schools this summer. Last year we purchased a second fleet of canoes and this extra capacity has enabled us to offer canoeing to everyone this summer. Some groups rafted canoes to enable them to sail across the open water, surrounded by mountains of the Brecon Beacons.



Friends of Pendarren have been busy planning some new resources for the students for the coming year. The outdoor table tennis table has had a lot of use with the fine summer weather. We also have a couple of **disco lights** to help with those dance moves!



The National Citizenship Scheme requested **camping** for their students and, making the most of November discounts on camping equipment, we built up enough equipment to enable 180 students plus staff to camp over the three August weeks. If you would like your students to experience camping as part of their Pendarren Experience, even in the grounds, then please get in touch.

Refurbishment

The heating and plumbing work is nearly complete but we will continue to be refurbishing Pendarren House over the coming months as funds allow. Your feedback helps us to target which areas are important for you.

Bookings for 2014-15 are now being taken, many weeks are allocated but if you have not yet booked check the availability on the website.

Coach pick up problems in Haringey appear to have eased, thank you to those schools that have made other arrangements to help the coach company.

4th July 2015 Celebrating 40 years of the Pendarren Experience

2015 is the 40th anniversary of the official opening of Pendarren House. In celebration we will be holding an Open Day on Saturday 4th July 2015. More details will be in future newsletters and on our new website.

OUR VISITORS

Belmont Primary School 22 -25 April 2014

Belmont arrived immediately after the Easter break because of the Easter Bank Holiday. They had a great week with typical April weather; luckily most of the showers came when the pupils were inside or underground! They spent time every evening revising for their SATs.

My experience was amazingly fun. I enjoyed myself a lot and my favourite part was the High Ropes and Caving. The most scary part of my experience was caving because we had to go through a hole called the worm-hole which was very small but after a little while I finally got through it, but I really enjoyed it. We had River Study which was very exciting because we got to learn about the rivers and mountains. I had loads of fun. – Rochelle

Pendarren is unique. There is nothing quite so invigorating and fun. You can do anything from caving to canoeing on a peaceful canal. There is a ginormous climbing wall and indoor swimming pool. Yes there's definitely nothing like Pendarren and never will be, but the question is how will you like it? It's most likely you'll LOVE IT! – Rory



Northumberland Park Community School 25 – 27 April 2014

A successful weekend was had by the students and staff from Northumberland Park. The pupils participated in a variety of activities that were challenging and engaging. These included caving, canoeing and climbing as well as a mass ascent of Sugar Loaf developing their teamwork. The students were a credit to themselves and their school.



St Ignatius RC Primary School 28 April - 2 May 2014

Another great time was had by all with the return of St Ignatius. After a good look around the local area and what Pendarren has to offer, the pupils took part in many exciting activities such as bushcraft, high ropes, adventure journey, canoeing and even had a trip to Big Pit Mining Museum. They spent a morning looking at all the interesting buildings on offer on the Abergavenny town trail.



The Brook Special Primary School 29 April – 1 May 2014

We are a co-educational school and the only school of its type in Haringey. Many of the pupils have additional disabilities such as:

- cerebral palsy
- epilepsy
- sensory impairment
- and complex medical needs

A number have behavioral difficulties and some are diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum.

The Brook visited bringing with them some wonderful weather, and a truly dedicated staff team. This allowed the students to experience a wonderful couple of days. Here are the comments from the Year 6 students;

“I didn't think it was going to be this good!”

“I climbed on a tree stump and it was excellent.”

“The boat was fantastic.”

“First I climbed half way, and then I got to the top, and it felt like flying. It was magnificent.”

“Pendarren was good, I liked the climbing and I didn't fall down.”

“I liked the boat, and the rowing.”

“Inside the house, I liked hoovering, and outside I liked the boat.”

“I loved trying different foods, and throwing the dandelions.”



Hornsey School for Girls
Year 11 English, Maths and Science GCSE
2 - 4 May 2014

Wow, what an amazing weekend! It's hard to pick out exactly what the highlights were as it was all beyond our hopes and aspirations!

We came to stay from the 2nd-4th May 2014 with 40 Year 11's. The aim ... revision, intervention, more revision and more intervention! We focused on English, Maths and Science and, wow, did we see the benefit and impact! It was tiring, hard work and packed full of mock exams, question papers, and revision and it was worth it. At the time of writing, and Natasha having marked the mock English papers sat this weekend, all but 3 secured a 'C'. Maths is in progress ... we await the results! It wasn't all classroom based ... we had a little time set aside for climbing, problem solving and team games. A good mixture of activities, an excellent range of games and we saw them work in ways we had never experienced before. It was quite moving.

I think if I could pick out what the girls have most gained from the weekend it would be having an opportunity to ask questions, delve deeper and understand concepts which normally would be addressed to the whole class without the opportunity to individualise. Students have developed their sense of responsibility, camaraderie, trust and belief in themselves. Yes, we are tired, and so are they, but this has been worth it; every minute of this was worth it and their evaluations reflect that. Staff have been called inspirational, amazing - and that makes the difference.

Their behaviour has been impeccable and I am so proud. Proud to be a part of them and part of our school.

Thank you for everything. This really is why we 'do what we do'. We have a saying at school, 'whatever it takes...' And this really goes to show that if they are willing and we are able, we really will do 'whatever it takes' to ensure that they have the best opportunities in life to fulfil their potential and succeed.

Victoria Barulis
Hornsey School for Girls.



Rhodes Avenue Primary School
7-9 May 2014

Rhodes Avenue brought the whole of their Year 5 pupils for a 3 day course concentrating on their use of the River Study day to enhance their geography provision at school. The group were a real delight and a credit to the school (and their teachers) as they learnt about the Afon Mellte as well as completing many different personal challenges.



Fortismere School
12-16 May 2014

The weather was glorious and a good breeze on the canoeing day meant the canoe sailing was very exiting. The sunshine made for a great few days climbing and walking in the mountains. The longer nights are noticeable as it's light until after 9pm!

"Pendarren was a new experience, I would definitely recommend it. Of course there were ups and downs but it is really a once in a lifetime experience. I loved watching my teachers get wet and saying funny things to the instructors. You are too busy to get homesick, honestly." – Sophia

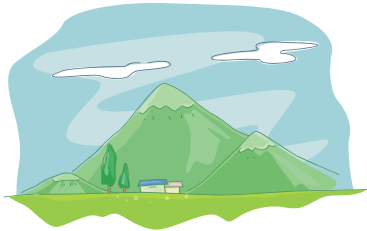
"I started to trust people more than I did before, I also overcome some of my fears and pushed myself to do my best in all the activities (even walking). The food instructors are really nice and the food was AMAZING (especially the cakes)" – Sonia

"Being at Pendarren taught me how to work as a team and learn in the outdoors. It challenged me in many different aspects and taught me how to deal with a variety of circumstances" – Roshi



South Harringay Junior School
19 -23 May 2014

South Harringay had a great week with sunshine and fun enjoyed by all. They became a great team setting themselves challenges and gaining in confidence as a great way to prepare for their SATs. As the week progressed they experienced the natural wonders of the world at sea level, up high in the mountains and deep underground.



Lea Valley Primary School
19-23 May 2014

Lea Valley Primary pupils turned up, as always, with great enthusiasm and energy to undertake the week's challenges. Their experiences in three words (to borrow Simon Mayo's Drivetime practice):

"best experience ever" – Michael

"wet soggy boots" – Isabel

"phenomenal food memories" – Morgan

"challenging but breathtaking" – Ismeel



The Willow Primary School
2 -6 June 2014

'How Pendarren will help me prepare for next year: it helped me to get ready for other challenges. I could meet new people, making friends. I have my own responsibility.' Connie

'I personally think that Pendarren was the most best experience. The reason for this is because we went caving, that made me get more confident being in water. In addition abseiling helped me get over my fear of heights (a lot!).' Amira

'I have learnt how to be independent and how to make new friends.' Omer

'My BEST Pendarren experience was rock climbing. When I first did it, I was scared for my life! But my friends guided me. I even climbed to the top BLINDFOLDED with the help of Rita and my friends. This was truly an experience of a lifetime!' Delina

'I like the caving and the waterfalls and the mountain walk. I played with people that I don't play with usually.' Ibrahim



Holy Trinity Primary School
2-6 June 2014

Pupils from Holy Trinity Primary School had a brilliant time at Pendarren when they visited in June. An exciting schedule of adventurous and challenging activities was organised. Exploring Pendarren grounds, a campfire in the tipi, exploring the local countryside, canoeing and the high-ropes challenge. Climbing and abseiling was a question of dodging the raindrops!

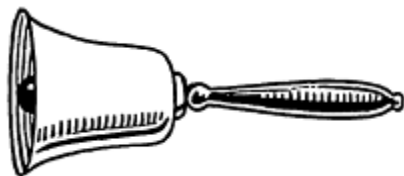
On River Study day no-one could dodge the raindrops, the driest place was in the cave and the waterfall was like the world's biggest power-shower! They also had time to explore mountain valleys, splashing and sliding in and out of pools – this time in the sun! On the Friday, to finish the week, they had a walk on Bloreng Mountain, exploring the rocks and kite-flying – it was a bit windy.



St Martin of Porres RC Primary School
9-13 June 2014

My Trip to Pendarren House.

When we first arrived I was so scared, I didn't even know what it would be like. We were welcomed in and then showed around, lunch was great each day and that's what we had first. Pendarren house is so beautiful and so were the staff. We did an activity and then came back to the house. We had showers and then got ready for dinner. Every morning a bell rings at 7.30 am and we would have to meet in the Common Room before breakfast. Some activities were a morning and then a different one in the afternoon. Some were a full day. Honestly it was one of the best trips ever and I loved it. Sinead



Park View - Years 7, 8 & 9
9-13 June 2014

Great challenges were conquered by all this week in an action packed week. We went over, under and between the mountains in a hike to the top of Pen y Fan, a cave trip to Porth Yr Ogof and a canoe trip down the River Wye from Glasbury to Hay. We even found time for a climbing session at Morlais quarries and an adventure journey at Blaen y Glyn.



St Anne's and St Michaels Primary Schools
16-20 June 2014

St Anne's and St Michael's Church of England primary schools are two separate schools with one executive head. The year six pupils come to Pendarren as one group and mix the two schools up to promote independence and making new friends in preparation for their new challenges at Secondary school in September. This was helped with visits to the coast, canoeing, climbing and abseiling along with studying the geography of the River Mellte.

The Vale Primary Resource Base
16-20 June 2014

A small but select group of year 6 pupils stayed in the Firs accommodation and enjoyed a variety of outdoor experiences. These included visiting the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagan's, Cardiff and a day out at Caswell Bay on the Gower.



Earlham Primary School
23-27 June 2014

It was a busy week here at Pendarren as we were full to the brim with pupils eager to tackle the challenges that Pendarren has to offer. The pupils learned to cook on a campfire and build shelters in bushcraft, paddle a canoe on the Brecon and Monmouth canal and explored the mountain streams and caves on the river study day. To relax in the evenings there was fun in the gardens and even a visit from Daniel Morden our local friendly teller of tales.



Heartlands High School
23-27 June 2014

The Pendarren trip is really fun. The best bit was canoeing. I liked the other activities too. The food is really nice. My favourite meal was sweet and sour chicken. I thought that the mountain walk and canoeing were the most tiring. The most challenging activity was the high ropes. – Jake L

Apart from the snoring, Pendarren was awesome. There was just so much to do; canoeing, high ropes course, the beach,

mountain climbing and team activities just to name a few! The meals were also yummy – Fay

At Pendarren so far we have done canoeing, high-ropes challenge, mountain walk and swimming. My favourite was the challenge and the canoeing because it built up our team work and communication skills. The mountain walk was also fun because my friends helped me overcome my fears of heights and they were all really supportive. The instructors are really nice and supportive all the way and made all the activities fun and interesting. Overall the trip has been really interesting and fascinating and I hope the instructors have enjoyed us staying here in Pendarren and enjoyed themselves as well. – Kalysta

So far we have done canoeing, mountain walking, high ropes and it is very enjoyable. – Kairo.



Haringey 6th Form Centre **23-27 June 2014**

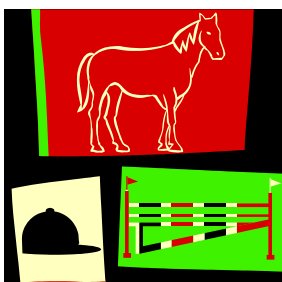
I liked horse riding the best - Zeineb

Thank you for taking us to the beach - Diryang

I liked our trip to the beach and I liked picking up the crabs - Lamar

We learnt about crabs and I got to hold a big one. It was the best day of my life!!!! - Rosemary

I have had such a good time – Onur



St Mary's Priory School **30 June – 4 July 2014**

The children of St. Mary's Priory school impressed the passers-by as they sang their Song "we are the children of St Mary Priory School".

Pendarren
Environment
New
Dance
Area
Rope
Race
Excitement
Nice and Fun - Karolivua

Pendarren it's really an experience - Mathew

I found Pendarren really fun. The canoeing, abseiling and river study were all amazing, as I did it all for the first time. The experience will stay with me forever. Also the view from the window was wonderful - Weronika

Pendarren is a place that anyone will enjoy. This week was one of my favourite weeks ever. I loved it. I recommend this to everyone because I faced my fears and made new friends. But most of all the experience will stay with me right though my adulthood. The staff were caring and kind and helpful – Kacper



Highgate Wood School Year 7 **30 June – 4 July 2014**

Pendarren helped me make more friends, as when I came here I had no friends and now I have lots. Pendarren made me love new things that I didn't know about before. Pendarren helped me face my fears and I know that I'm not afraid anymore. Pendarren has changed my LIFE!

Pendarren taught me to face my fears and showed me that the countryside, in some aspects, can be more exciting than the city. And you don't need WIFI to have fun!



The Vale Secondary Resource Base 30 June – 4 July 2014

Tony, Stephanie and Richard arrived at Pendarren with a very enthusiastic group of students from the Vale Secondary Resource Base. This year's visitors were Kevon, Leonardo, Raymond, Miriam, Lauren and Vanique. They had a very busy week starting with a local walk to the village of Llangenny. On the Tuesday they tackled various challenges on the climbing tower at Pendarren and had an adventurous walk in the valleys near Tal-y-Bont on Usk. Wednesday arrived and a grand tour of the best of the Gower was on the programme. Fantastic sea views from the headland at Rhosilli, lunch on the beach (and rock-pooling) at Port Eynon and a stroll along the prom at the Mumbles followed by ice cream! What's not to like? Leonardo's trike coped with it all. Thursday was a bit more relaxing with canoeing in the morning (Vanique's wellies were full of water), and in the afternoon Richard sorted out a few plants in Pendarren's sensory garden. A busy week!



Rokesly Junior School 7-11 July 2014

Pendarren taught me to live life to the full. –
Laura

The activities were AMAZING, so much fun and adventurous, but also incredibly educational! –
Alex

Usually I'm not someone to go in mud or climb anything, but when I came to Pendarren I did both those things and much more! – Zara

I like the fact that we have to do things for ourselves and not have people do it for us. When you are scared to do something they always encourage us to do the activities. The food is amazing and they make us do some work like taking in the plates. – Lulu

I learnt how to make a camping tent, find food and also found out that all animals are not dangerous and set fire to keep us nice and warm. – Calvin

They made us feel so grown up because our parents were not here yet they looked after us. I loved it all! - Class 11

I liked the staff because they encouraged me to do the things I would never do - Class 12

I liked the canoeing because you can see all the nature around you – Class 10

Thankyou to Ms Carter of Rokesly for the lovely hand painted card of the River Study:



North Harringay Primary School 14-18 July 2014

At Caerleon Roman Museum the children had the opportunity to try on Roman armour, helmets and, if there were strong enough, hold up a Roman shield. The children were interested in the amphitheatre where the gladiators would fight and even more so with the toilet facilities.

When the children visited Skenfrith castle they worked as detectives to unfold the history of the castle and what the various rooms were for. The stream study on Friday kept being interrupted by two nousey horses, this didn't stop the children from collecting a variety of mini beasts.

I really enjoyed my time at Pendarren even though it passes by very quickly. The best part of the trip was visiting the Roman Legion Museum. I found out lots of information about the ancient land and how people lived in those times. I also enjoyed swimming, the pool was cold but refreshing at the same time. I will miss Pendarren but hope to visit it again some day - Lauryn

My time at Pendarren was extremely exciting. My favourite part of Pendarren was when conquered my fear of heights. YIPPEE! I was super proud of myself, I'm no longer afraid of heights. Now I wish that Pendarren was my home, sweet home - Hannah

My Pendarren week was really adventurous, today I explored Skenfrith Castle and found out loads of information, like the castle is about 850 years old. The High Ropes was frightening and scary because I had to walk across a super thin wire. I really don't want to leave but unfortunately I have to. The time has been amazing – Raeyah



Fortismere School Year 8 14-18 July 2014

Reflections:

The wispy clouds,
Like the cream on my chocolate cake,
But more wispy,
Like the reflections in the lake.

The Welsh hills devour me,
Incarcerate me in beauty,
I sigh with contentment,
As I drift back to London slowly.



Fortismere Gold DofE 14-18 July 2014

Students in their final year at Fortismere undertook their Qualifying Gold Expedition for their Gold DofE Award. The students had visited the previous year for some training in expedition skills and to complete their Practice Expedition. They did this in The Brecon Beacons and so they were able to return to Pendarren to undertake this Qualifying expedition in the Black Mountains. They successfully completed their aims and had some low cloud and rain on their longest day which tested their navigation and resilience. They managed to get up really early on the last day in order to get back in time for a shower. Their expedition aim was to produce an expedition 'diary' and so they collected video footage on the journey to help with their presentation back at Fortismere. We all hope Mr Kay enjoyed it!



Octagon PRU 14-18 July 2014

The Octagon visited with a small group for the first time and all enjoyed themselves.

'My favourite activity at Pendarren was high ropes and going to the cave' Sharday

'My favourite activity is rock climbing' Amaree

'My favourite activity is rock climbing' Alfredo



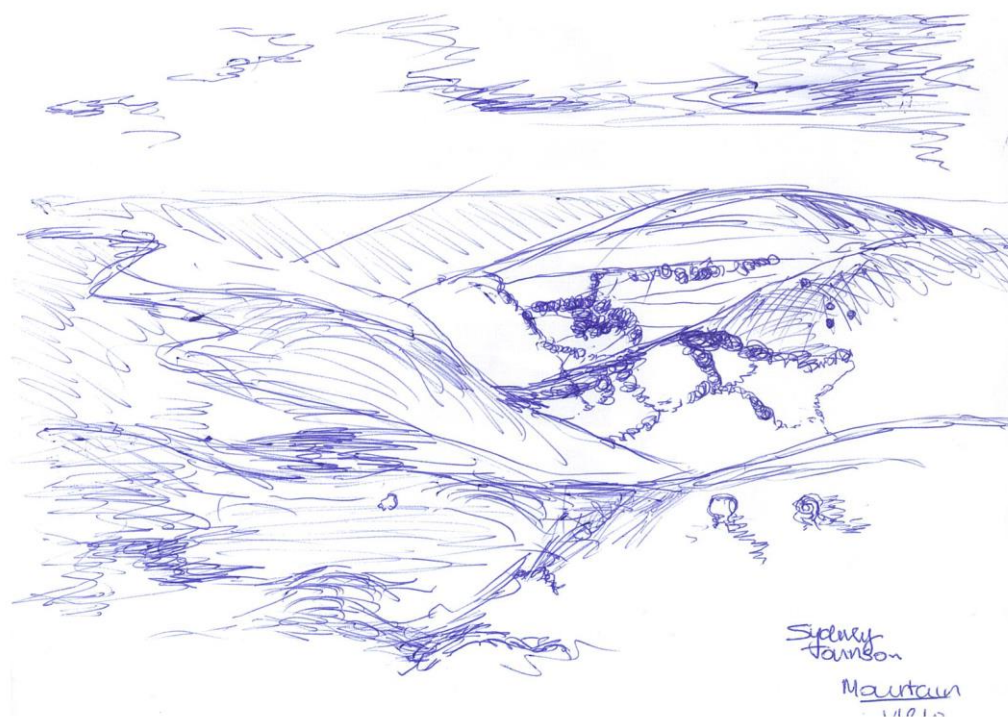
National Citizenship Scheme (NCS) with The Challenge 21 July, 28 July, 4 August 2014

NCS believes that if young people are given the chance they can make a huge contribution to their communities. To help make this happen NCS offers 15 to 17 year olds the opportunity to get together to try new things. Then, with the support of a team, they build and deliver a project that makes a real difference to where they live.

NCS brings young people together from all different backgrounds in a common purpose and by offering new experiences, gives them the chance to learn new skills and meet new people. This helps young people discover their talents and realise their potential.

The Challenge brought three weeks or waves of 60 young people at a time. They were all from the West Midlands or South London. The young people did not know each other before meeting on the Monday morning to travel to Pendarren. Below are some comments from the young people involved from their week at Pendarren undertaking the personal challenge section of the NCS.

During our stay at Pendarren House, we have experienced things we'd never thought we'd experience. We've engaged ourselves in activities that were thoroughly enjoyable. Whilst participating in these activities, we have learnt to work more efficiently as a team by encouraging each other and supporting each other when needed, whilst developing a love for the outdoors. This has been a truly great experience and we now know there is no fear that is too great to overcome. Thank you.

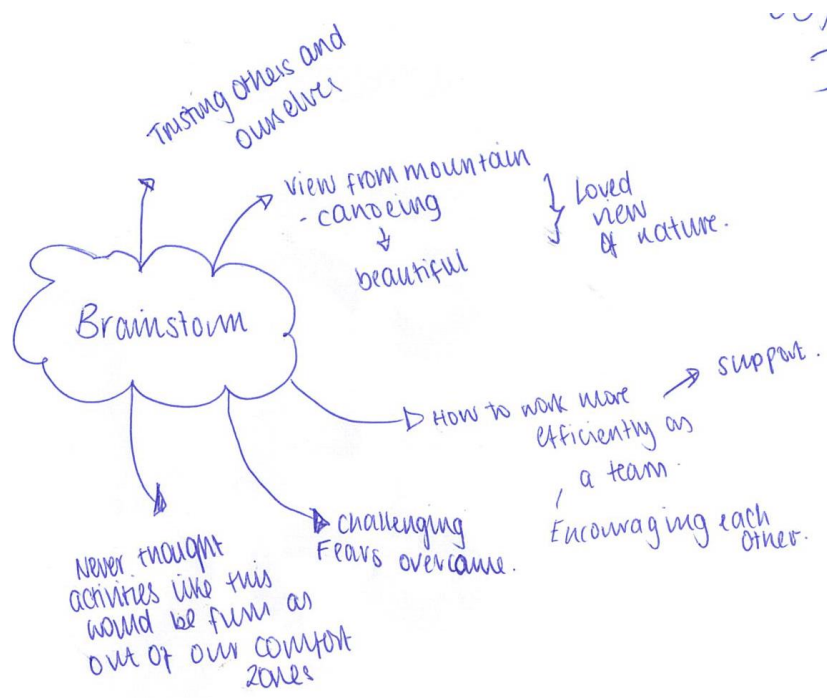


Don't judge something/one if you haven't tried it or spoken to them.' – Darnell

'I discovered that when you say you can, you can. The challenge taught me that when you put your mind to something you will do it.' – Saskia

'Being on this trip has taught me that you can meet amazing people and become friends in such a short space of time. Also working in a team has highlighted my strengths and weaknesses.' – Dessiree

'I felt like I understand peoples other views on life by talking to people I don't mix with.



**National Deaf Children Society
11-15 August 2014**

The National Deaf Children Society came to Pendarren House for a week long residential to give 29 deaf children from around Wales and the UK the opportunity to make new friends, challenge themselves, and have fun.

The week started with the older group caving in Porth yr Ogor whilst the young groups canoed on the ... canal and went abseiling on site. With children ranged from 9 - 15, the week long holiday provided the participants with a fantastic opportunity to meet other deaf children and try something they'd never experienced before.

Having visited Pendarren on a number of occasions before, NDCS said they were delighted with how the week had gone - a sentiment that was echoed by all 29 very happy and, at the end, tired out children.



And some extras from St Johns School, Chigwell:

Caving – by Molly

We went into some caves and we turned our lights out. It was really dark! We crawled through a little tunnel. It was fun because we got dirty. I enjoyed the day as it was good fun

Meal Times – by Harry

The food was pukka. My favourite was the Chicken Curry. There was a duty table who had to serve everyone their meals and then clear away the plates, cutlery and glasses and wipe the tables.

Pub Evening – By Genevieve

On the Thursday evening we went to The Dragons Head in Llangenny. I played the pub quiz with my friend Harry. There were some hard questions and some easy questions. I was good at the children's round. I had chips and bread at the pub. One of the people at the pub let me choose something from the raffle. I liked walking back in the dark.

Room Inspection by Daniel

When we stay at Pendarren you have a room inspection every day after breakfast. Steve checks that there is no mess on the floor, the beds are all made and all clothes are put away tidy. Each room gets points for how tidy they are.

Running the tuck shop at Pendarren by Thomas

On Wednesday night we went down to the cellar in Pendarren to get some snacks/souvenirs. Genevieve and I both worked in the shop. Genevieve was passing everyone what they wanted and I handled the money. When everyone was finished we bought stuff for ourselves then locked up. It was a fun experience and will definitely go on my CV.

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.

The Waterfall by Georgia

While we were at Pendarren we did a river study. As part of that study we climbed down to a waterfall and we stood in front of the waterfall. We pretended to wash ourselves and laid down kicking our legs in the air. It was very slippery and some people fell over! I really enjoyed it.

Climbing Activity by Evie

My group had to climb up crates. We had to see how many we could climb before they fell over. I managed 10 high! We had to wear harnesses and hats. I was scared but gave it a go! I enjoyed it in the end and was glad I tried it.

Canoeing by Charlie

My favourite part in Pendarren was the canoeing, because I sailed in a boat and tried to catch a football that was thrown in the water. It was fun and a bit scary. I would love to do it again one day in the near future.

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.



Don't forget...

4th July 2015

Open Day

40 years of the Pendarren Experience