



PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

www.pendarren.org

No. 3 February 2012

Welcome to our third newsletter and thank you to everyone who has contributed to this, and previous, issues. If there is anything that you would like to see included in the newsletter, please contact us.

Christmas and the New Year passed very quickly and we now find ourselves at the February half term – very busy, as pupils from St Gilda’s Junior School are visiting. Wales has escaped the worst of the snow, which has visited the east of the UK instead, and St Gilda’s pupils have only to cope with the cold.

The instructing staff at Pendarren attended a white water safety and rescue course held at Cardiff’s International White Water Centre on the coldest weekend of the year – all to ensure your safety! Meanwhile, staff and pupils from Campsbourne School also spotted some brave kayakers on the River Grwyne in the week immediately after New Year!



A very special thank you to the pupils of Belmont Junior School, Devonshire Hill Primary School, St Francis de Sales School, and St John Vianney Primary School who all helped with art work and written work for a display about Pendarren which is going to be put up in the PDC. We hope that their beautiful work will encourage more people to find out about, and maybe even visit, Pendarren.

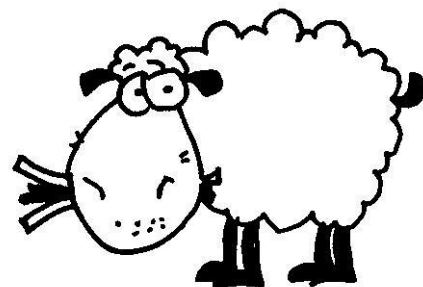
Annual Bookings

We are currently in the process of allocating bookings to all the schools who have requested visits to Pendarren in the 2012-2013 school year. This year we brought the process forward by two months to allow extra time for staff to organise visits. We have also dealt with all the correspondence by email – which has worked very well. Schools should be notified by 2 March of their date(s) for next year. If you haven’t applied for a booking but would like to come, please contact us and we will see what we can offer.

Conundrum Cymraeg

And here’s a teaser for those of you who have learnt some Welsh whilst visiting Pendarren! Can anyone translate the following?

Mae’r defaid wedi bwyta fy brechdanau!



Clue: Look at the picture on the right. The answer is at the end of the newsletter.

LAST VISIT BEFORE CHRISTMAS:

Bounds Green School 12-16 December 2011

Wintery weather didn't stop Bounds Green enjoying themselves at Pendarren – oh no! On arrival the Pendarren grounds were explored thoroughly. There was a campfire in the tipi to warm up, squashing into a bivi was all good fun. Fantastic shelters were made for bushcraft (a very popular activity) and survival fire lighting techniques were learnt using Swedish flint and steel. Dough sticks were cooked to perfection on the tipi fire – yummm! Canoeing was great, some people got splashed big time, and we learnt about the Canadian canoe. In the high ropes challenge people faced their fears and climbed higher and higher. On river study day there was snow on the mountains, a spectacular sight. The waterfalls were amazing to see. On adventure journey we explored mountain streams, wriggled through holes in trees and had a power-shower in a waterfall (temperature setting...freezing!). There was a surprise on Thursday evening – Christmas Dinner with Father Christmas and we had a brilliant disco. Some of the dancing was amazing. A river walk on the Friday morning before we got on the coach was very pretty. A brilliant week.



VISITORS THIS HALF TERM:

Campsbourne School 3 – 6 January 2012

We had a fantastic week in Pendarren! The windy weather definitely woke us up after the Christmas break. We had such a good time with our instructors we went canoeing, caving, climbing and did the high ropes setting the 2012 record of 16 crates!

We really enjoyed Daniel Morden the story-teller, his spooky stories were perfect for a winters evening! The children were enthusiastic about all activities and a bit of wind and rain certainly didn't stop the Campsbourne children making the best of every day!

We all look forward to our next trip (staff included!) there have certainly been a few arguments in the staff room as to who is going next year!

Thank you Pendarren for making the first week of 2012 so memorable!



St Gilda's Junior School 9 -13 January 2012

Dear Pendarren,

As ever thank you for an inspiring visit which lived up to the billing of an 'experience' for all to develop from as individuals and part of a team. Below a letter written by the children of class 6Q expressing their appreciation and to hopefully include in the next Pendarren House Newsletter:

St.Gildas' Catholic Junior School
Oakington Way
Crouch End
London, N8 9EP

17th January 2012

Annwyll (Dear) Pendarren staff,

We are writing this letter to thank you for the AMAZING experience you provided while we were in Pendarren.

We all enjoyed the experience very much and found it really hard to leave. Thanks to Pendarren , we built not only stacks of crates for the high ropes, but new friendships from the common foundation of learning to rely on ourselves without parents or older siblings around.

For us, the highlights of the house were:

- Our dormitories: cosy, comfy and easy to clean.
- The Common Room, where we would meet our wider group of friends in the morning and get lined up for activities. The first room we visited in Pendarren, for us it

felt like the safest of places.

- The Classroom, where we would write our exciting points of the day in our diaries, ready to show our parents. We also received postcards from our families here, telling us of news that we missed. This is where we penned letters back, answering questions and sharing highlights. Here we relaxed, watched movies and munched sweets, the perfect chilling space at the end of a day's activities.
- The Annexe, the getting-ready room bursting with high energy excitement for the next bout of activities. We will always remember our initial rush of excitement when we were getting ready for our first activity, 'Croeso' ('Welcome' to Wales activity).

Our favourite four activities included:

Canoeing, Fantastic as prior skill wasn't needed to learn the technique and it required teamwork rather than solo performance to get the canoe moving. This tested both our strength and co-operation with fellow paddlers. We could have happily canoed all day, and enjoyed the friendly competition with the other boats when we raced. In the spirit of good sportsmanship, we won't say who won (US!).

High Ropes, We were very scared because we didn't know each other well enough to trust that we wouldn't drop each other! Most of us climbed up ten crates, before the crates fell away below us. Dangling in mid-air, 49% of our brains wanted to scream until hoarse, clinging onto that rope like life depended on it, but 51% felt like staying up there forever. But when it was over, we regretted not climbing higher. The greatest number of crates achieved was 14.

The **storytelling**, because, for once in this action-packed week, there was a time to just sit down and relax. On first impressions, the storyteller (Daniel Morden) appeared so imaginative, and as soon as he started telling the story, we knew that we were going to enjoy the session a lot. His range of

expressions was amazing, from the princess' posh voice, to Jack's lazy, careless voice.

Finally, **Croeso**, as the instructors got to know us and we got to know them *and* Pendarren House. We also explored the grounds, and got to meet the other staff at Pendarren.

We really enjoyed our time at Pendarren, and we hope that other schools will have as much fun as we did.

With warm memories & much appreciation to you, Miss Young and Mr. Jolliffe (for guiding us throughout our Pendarren journey), Mr. Lewington (world's loudest bell ringer and commander-in-chief), the kitchen staff for the delicious meals and the cleaners (for their patience with our improved tidy ways).

Thank you for developing our skills and tactics. We've been inspired by Pendarren, and can't wait to come back someday!

Yn gywir (Yours Sincerely)

Class 6Q

St. Gildas' Catholic Junior School



Belmont Junior School
9 – 13 January 2012

Well done to Belmont for a great week at Pendarren. Special thanks for the great work the students did on the fantastic flyers they made. We will be using them for our displays here at Pendarren and some are even heading to London for a display in the PDC.

The week has been surprisingly mild for the time of year, this was especially noticeable at the seaside. Well done on a great range of creatures found on this visit and thank you to the local man who gave us some huge crabs that he had caught!!

Thank you to all the pupils for the great letters you wrote after your visit - they were

all fantastic. We chose this one for the newsletter; sorry we couldn't include them all.

"Dear Mr. A,

Before I came I was wondering if I could conquer my fears here. The three main ones were height, canoeing and not having enough clothes for the whole week. When we went climbing and canoeing, I was completely petrified. After I gave it a go I realized it wasn't too scary. On the third day I realized I had more than half of my clothes left. At the end of the week I still had one pair of clothes left. It was a life time experience that I will never forget. Thank you a lot for the exciting opportunity."



Nightingale Primary School 16 – 20 January 2012

The school arrived in bright but chilly weather. Students showed great teamwork on that first day tackling various challenges, it really was a bit chilly so a camp fire in the tipi was very welcome and cold toes and fingers warmed up. Other exciting challenges were undertaken such as climbing, and balancing up high on the crates for high ropes. Rivers, caves and waterfalls were explored and students discovered old red sandstone, limestone and gritstone. Orienteering required good map skills and team work. There was also time to try the indoor climbing wall where some pupils had fun with 'musical climbing', whilst others studied creatures and their habitats. Canoeing was good fun. The children learnt about the Canadian Indians skilful use of birch bark to build their canoes. We played canoe polo and learnt special canoe paddle strokes. Some people got a bit wet! We saw a very bright rainbow.

A very busy week indeed.



Coleraine Park Primary School 16 – 20 January 2012

The students of Coleraine Park Primary ventured down to the beach in January, brrrrrr! Crabs, fish and prawns were caught, looked at and released. The students were so busy that if you sat still you were buried in sand - as a member of staff found out.

Not only were the students brave but the staff were too; holding a large spider on the first day.



St. Francis de Sales School 23 – 27 January 2012

After the long drive up from Haringey it was straight out for a stretch of the legs on Sugarloaf Mountain, a good opportunity to blow away the cobwebs and get some fresh air. Tuesday saw one group off to Big Pit and the other group went to Blaen y Glyn for an adventure journey, instead of the planned canoe activity (due to the absence of any water in the canal - I think the fish must have drunk it all!)

With a river study day, high ropes, horse riding and a walk along our local river the week was packed with activity. The group departed in perfect time to miss the bad weather that rolled in over the weekend after they left.



Devonshire Hill Primary School **30 January – 3 February 2012**

The coach arrived and eager faces greeted Pendarren House teachers. After settling into their rooms, and lunch with hot soup, everyone wrapped up well and ventured outside to learn about Pendarren House and its fields, woods and gardens. Devonshire Hill's plot in the Sensory Garden needed a bit of weeding and tidying up. (Mrs Simmons organised the work party and pupils proved to be able gardeners). Nearby, snow could be seen on Table Mountain.

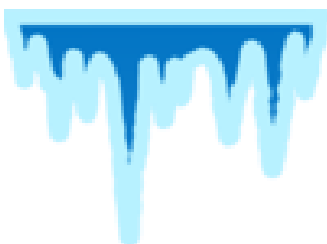
The seaside visit proved great fun. A headland walk, lunch, and beach games kept everyone busy. (Pupils were very skilful at the French game of boules). Upon exploring the rock pools various sea creatures were found. You had to be sneaky and quick to catch them. The Pendarren teachers were experts and soon there were crabs, shrimps, fish, and shells in everyone's pots to study.

Pupils built very sturdy shelters in bushcraft, showing off their survival skills. They lit camp fires to make hot chocolate and toast marshmallows on sticks.

Everyone enjoyed canoeing and the high ropes challenges and also had time to use Pendarren's indoor climbing wall.

Spectacular views were enjoyed on the mountain walk with blues skies, sparkling snow crystals, frozen mountain ponds, and icicles. Group 2 had to give their minibus a strong push out of the snow.

Abergavenny town was explored on the last day and points of interest were discussed and comparisons were made with home. Some tasty bread was bought in the indoor market.



Noel Park Primary School **6 - 10 February 2012**

Once again thank you so much for Pendarren's support and expertise over the past week. The kids (and teachers) had a brilliant time and it was a wonderful experience in so many ways.

The kids learnt so much about themselves, their feelings, being part of a group, independence, responsibility; and how to embrace different challenges. Many of the children found a resilience that I am sure they never knew they had. Learning these skills is essential for all young people and the program and staff at Pendarren make it fun and manageable.

Excellent facilities for children and staff make it a very comfortable stay and thoughtful touches like tea on the table for the kids during breakfast make a big difference.

I would recommend this experience to all Haringey schools. It's an opportunity to engage with different experiences and it may be the beginning of a lifelong love of adventure, learning and exploration. Isn't that what education is all about?

Many thanks again to the staff that make Pendarren such a success. I do hope to see you again soon. With or without the school kids!



Pendarren Work Placements 6 – 10 February 2012

We have really enjoyed Pendarren for work experience. Being a part of staff has been a very different side to what we are used to but has been enjoyable at the same time. We both got to see how it is helping young children in a different environment. All of the staff treated us well, from catering ladies to instructors. It was better seeing how everything works up close.

We have learnt how to be a member of staff but still be approachable to the children.

Even though we had to look after and encourage the kids we still got to join in the activities whilst proving to them that they can achieve what they want and nothing is stopping them except for themselves.

By Mina and Grace



St Thomas More Catholic School

If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in a work experience placement at Pendarren, contact your school work placement co-ordinator.

"You can't create experience. You must undergo it." Albert Camus

The Firs, Self Catering at Pendarren House

The Firs Bungalow stands in the Pendarren grounds and has been fully adapted for disabled use. It has five en-suite bedrooms (two twin rooms and three rooms sleeping four people), a comfortable lounge and a large fully equipped kitchen dining room. When not in use by visiting school groups, The Firs is let out on a self catering basis.

If you had a wonderful time at Pendarren, why not persuade your parents or wider family to visit too? For prices and availability of The Firs, please visit our website – www.pendarren.org



DEVELOPMENTS

Feedback from visiting staff has led to lot of work being planned in the **Annexe** in order to improve the residential experience. Work has already started to open up the first floor landing. This will continue over the coming months so that by September the Annexe will be more welcoming. With a limited budget, the skills of the Pendarren staff will be tested!

The **displays** in the Main Hall of the House are being up-dated. We hope to provide more information about Pendarren and the surrounding areas as well as details of courses that we will be running.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Pendarren House is now an approved provider for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. We can offer open Bronze, Silver and Gold training, practice and qualifying expeditions as well as Open Gold residential. Places are available during the first week of the Easter holiday and the first week of the summer holiday. If you have a group and would like a different date, please contact the centre. We are able to offer walking expeditions in the Brecon Beacons National Park, and canoeing expeditions down 100 miles of the beautiful River Wye.

Pendarren House will be running open award events for those participants who are unable to attend courses offered by their local groups, and for those who are not involved with an organisation but wish to participate independently. Participants can be collected from Abergavenny train or bus station by arrangement.

Easter Availability

Bronze training	£110	Tuesday 3 rd – Thursday 5 th April 2012
Bronze assessment	£ 90	Tuesday 3 rd – Thursday 5 th April 2012
Silver training	£180	Sunday 1 st – Thursday 5 th April 2012
Silver assessment	£110	Monday 2 nd – Thursday 5 th April 2012
Gold training	£220	Saturday 31 st March – Thursday 5 th April 2012
Gold assessment	£180	Sunday 1 st – Thursday 5 th April 2012

Summer Availability

Fast-track Bronze	£195	Saturday 22 nd – Thursday 27 th July 2012 Saturday 29 th July – Thursday 3 rd August 2012
Silver training	£180	Sunday 23 rd – Thursday 27 th July 2012 Sunday 30 th July – Thursday 3 rd August 2012
Silver assessment	£110	Monday 24 th – Thursday 27 th July 2012 Tuesday 31 st July – Thursday 3 rd August 2012
Gold training	£220	Saturday 22 nd – Thursday 27 th July 2012 Saturday 29 th July – Thursday 3 rd August 2012
Gold assessment	£180	Sunday 23 rd – Thursday 27 th July 2012 Sunday 30 th July – Thursday 3 rd August 2012

Accommodation for non camping nights, food for training courses and refresher days and campsite fees are included. Some equipment is available to borrow from the centre by arrangement at no extra cost.

Please contact the centre for further details.

National Governing Body Awards

Pendarren also runs National Governing Body courses at different times of year. These are nationally recognised courses for people who wish to lead groups walking, climbing and caving in Britain. Examples are Mountain Leader, Walking Group Leader, Single Pitch Award and Climbing Wall Award. Forthcoming courses include:

Local Cave Leader Award Level 1		
Training	10-11 November 2012	£130
Local Cave Leader Award Level 2		
Training	13-14 October 2012	£190

Local Cave Leader Revalidation Workshop Level 1 and 2

Book via BCA website, not Pendarren

2 February 2013

Mountain Leader Award

Training (expedition north Wales)

31 March- 5 April 2012

£420

28 July-2 August 2012

£420

27 October-1 November 2012

£420

Walking Group Leader Award

Training

5-7 May 2012

£195

7-9 September 2012

£195

Climbing Wall Award

Training

TBA

NQT and Haringey employee weekend – 24 – 26 February 2012

This course was advertised for only a short while and was completely full within a few days! Aimed at people who would be interested in organising a residential visit to Pendarren (for any kind of group), both NQTs and Council staff signed up quickly. We hope to bring feedback on the course to the next newsletter.



Reflections of *The Storyteller*

By Daniel Morden

Wales is famous for its landscape and its stories. During a week in Pendarren, Haringey children can experience both. The children have a rare opportunity to hear stories the way they should be heard - at night, with no distractions, told not by a machine, the telly or the computer, but by another person. Pendarren is the perfect environment in which to tell them. There are no interruptions, no background sound. We are in an old house in the countryside. Outside, on a clear night, you can see stars that will never be visible in London. What better place? Before each session, when I talk with the teachers in the dining room, the children glance at me curiously. Is that the storyteller? What is he going to do? Read to us? What kind of stories? At 7.30 they troop in to the lounge. We begin the session as strangers. We end it as friends.

*Over the years, wonderful things have happened as a result of Pendarren visits. I was sent a DVD of an opera a class composed based on a story they had heard from me. Last term I went to Haringey, to tell tales at Mulberry School. More and more Haringey schools use my books before and after their visits. I can no longer start my sessions with riddles, because often the children have heard them already: the riddles have been passed on in the playground by older children. Just last night Miss Edwards of Campsbourne asked me not to tell **The Squirrel and the Fox**, because she had told - not read, told - the story already to the class.*

For once, I am not telling you a story when I say I always enjoy my visits to Pendarren.

Friends of Pendarren

Daniel Morden is supported by the **Friends of Pendarren**, a registered charity. The aim of the Friends of Pendarren is to raise money for the purchase of goods and services which will enhance the Pendarren Experience for all the visiting groups. To date, the Friends have purchased the tipi in the grounds, bird boxes around the site and plants and materials for the Nicky Harrison Sensory Garden. They have also purchased digital cameras to be used to record the students' experiences plus CDs and wallets so that, for a small fee, the students can take home their photographs.

If you would like to support the work of The Friends of Pendarren by making a donation, please send cheques (made payable to "The Friends of Pendarren") to Pendarren House at:

Pendarren House Outdoor Education Centre
Llangenny
Crickhowell
Powys
NP8 1HE

Trees, Yes Please!

The Woodland Trust is currently offering free trees to schools and youth groups in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Pendarren House has applied for its free pack to plant around the grounds. If your school either has grounds and would like to apply for a pack, or does not have grounds but would like to apply and have the trees planted at Pendarren, you can apply through the Woodland Trust website. On the "Jubilee Woods" page, find the "Schools" drop down menu from where you can find a link "free tree packs for schools". (<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/jubilee-woods/what-you-can-do/schools/free-schools-packs/Pages/school-tree-packs.aspx>). The form takes only two minutes to complete. Please remember that if you want your trees to be planted at Pendarren, you need to put us as the delivery address (see above). If you want any help choosing your pack we are happy to help - just call and ask for Rob.

Happy planting!



Answer to the Conundrum Cymraeg

What was the Welsh phrase?

"A sheep has eaten my sandwiches!"