



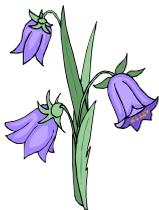
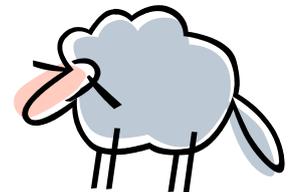
# PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

[www.pendarren.org](http://www.pendarren.org)

**No. 5 June 2012**

Despite the fact that we have had our wettest April since records began in 1910 the countryside around Pendarren is looking beautiful. The combination of rain and warmer temperatures has encouraged everything to grow and there are lush greens everywhere you look. It brings to mind that famous book by Richard Llewellyn – “How Green Was My Valley”.

If evidence is needed that summer is arriving, our house martins have returned and are rebuilding their nests in preparation for laying their eggs. There are also sheep back in the field, with new hair cuts! They have started making inroads on the long grass. One decided that the grass on the football pitch looked much better than the grass in the field and managed to sneak through our defences and chomp around the garden – leaving little presents behind!



Bluebells in Bluebell Wood (Cefn Coed) were a sight to behold as students from several secondary schools ran around the woods looking for orienteering markers hidden near the paths. It was a spectacular sight, seeing the woodland carpeted in a beautiful swaying mass of blue.

We had a surprise visit from relatives of Colonel Rees who owned Pendarren House for the period between the First and Second World Wars. The family came to look at the house that their ancestor had owned and which some remembered visiting in their youth. We had hoped to get some interesting memories of Pendarren but unfortunately they could only stay for a very short while.

The Queen and Prince Philip visited Crickhowell during a two day tour of Wales to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee. The Legge-Bourke family held a garden party at Glanusk Estate for over 10,000 local visitors, including pupils and teachers from local schools. Unfortunately, their walkabout had to be rescheduled due to the heavy rain. The Royal couple toured the Park in a Land Rover but still found time to meet school children in one of the large marquees erected for the day.



Beacon fires were lit on mountains all around the Centre for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. There were beacons lit on Sugar Loaf, Bloreng, Skirrid, Pen y Fan and many more. The photo shows a beacon lit by local scouts on Skirrid.

The Olympic torch relay came through Abergavenny on Friday 25 May and went up to Big Pit before carrying on to Cardiff. The pupils of St Martin of Porres Primary School, who were visiting Pendarren, had to meet the coach in Gilwern as the torch relay was passing through Abergavenny and many roads were closed. They were able to wave to it as they drove past!



## **St Pauls and All Hallows Junior School 16 – 20 April 2012**

I am writing on behalf of the students who visited Pendarren from St Paul's and All Hallows School. We had a wonderful time and the children have written about their experiences.

My week at Pendarren was amazing. It was my first time I have actually been away from my family. It was a great experience. It builds my confidence. We also went to the sensory garden and saw a small patch that our school sponsors.  
Christopher I

I also got the opportunity to talk to other children in my year group whom I have not really spoken to as I am not such a very social person. I have gained in independence, as this was my first time away from my family. At first I thought it would be a very difficult thing. By the end of my stay at Pendarren, I learnt that everyone is their own person, everyone has different lifestyles and no lifestyle can be exactly the same but that is what makes us who we are. It is okay to be different. If I were given a chance to go to Pendarren again I would be the first one to sign on. It has been the best experience of my life! I will never forget it and all the fun memories will be in my heart. Thank you, Pendarren for this exceptional experience.  
Andrea

We also learnt to be independent and clean up after ourselves. Now we are at home our mums/dads are very proud and thankful. I have learnt that it is sometimes good to make mistakes because you will gain experience from your mistake, you will know how to fix it, and hopefully learn from it.

Jolene

Many habitats are in the great outdoors and as Pendarren gives us a chance to experience the great outdoors we can fathom the relationship between living organisms. We can spy different animal's homes and try to see relationships between these animals. I was able to think about the way in which all plants and animals on earth are dependent on each other because of my Pendarren experience. At Pendarren I also was able to develop my social skills because a lot of teamwork was needed and I needed to compromise with everyone

else I had to work with. I got to know my classmates and the other year6 pupils better because I shared a room with ten of them. I learned to respect their opinions and if they are not capable of something that I am able to do.

Mekseb

From the first day we set ourselves some goals and I think that at the end of the week I achieved them all. It was a good thing to set the goals because we had something to think about when we were reflecting on our activities.

Christopher D

The activities were superb; some of them were wet, muddy and cold but very exciting.

Tyler Leigh

Every activity we did lifted up my spirits especially high ropes. My spirits actually jumped out my mouth and run back to London. It was that thrilling! At first I said to myself that I can't do it, but in the end I achieved all five aims, if the Pendarren staff didn't try to encourage me to do all the activities, I wouldn't have achieved all five aims. Thank you for a journey-of-a-lifetime. ☺  
Savannah



## **Fortismere D of E Gold Training 16 – 20 April 2012**

Well done to those who completed their Gold Expedition training this week. The group performed exceptionally well and gained a great deal of experience in the different terrains, campsites and weather conditions that South Wales has to offer. Special thanks to Mr Jackson who stepped in at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to support the group, his support and encouragement for the group was appreciated by them all.

We are confident the group will go on to complete their final expedition with great success.



THE DUKE OF  
EDINBURGH'S AWARD

**Rhodes Avenue Primary School**  
**20 - 22 April 2012**

All of Rhodes Avenue's 58 year 5 pupils visited Pendarren for another weekend of fun and learning. The students all spent a day studying the River Mellte as a way of bringing their classroom learning to life by immersing themselves (literally) in the river's environment, geology and ecology. The rest of the weekend was spent climbing high and slipping about on an adventure journey. Here is a copy of what they wrote for the school newsletter:

As Year 5 set off on their school trip to Pendarren to a clap of thunder and in torrential rain, I must admit that we all felt slightly apprehensive. I was concerned that they might be cold, wet and miserable during the weekend. Not a bit of it! I am delighted to say that the weather proved to be kinder than expected and they had a wonderful time.

Noraiyah said 'The best part for me was the Adventure Walk. We walked through a small stream which gradually became wider. We had to go through a small hole in a tree which gave us good luck and we had to go under a waterfall because we were all muddy and we also went down a slide and you fell into a really deep pit of water. It was all very exciting.'

Damian said 'I think the best part for me was going under the waterfall because it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I also liked the caving because you could crawl through small spaces such as 'the letterbox'. In the cave you could see spiral fossils and on the ceiling there were stalactites'.



**St Francis de Sales Junior School**  
**23 - 27 April 2012**

All the pupils wrote a short letter to their Pendarren teacher on the last evening of their visit. The following were randomly selected:

Dear Mr Burrell - I am writing to you to tell you how much I have enjoyed the wonderful week in Pendarren. I especially enjoyed horse-riding because my horse was very well trained and she listened to whatever I said. Despite the fact that we are leaving I will always cherish coming to Pendarren for the rest of my life. From Joel.

Dear Mr Jolliffe - I really appreciated all the things you have done for us. I'm also thanking you for giving me a really incredible week. My favourite activity was pony trekking because I was petrified of going on the pony even touching it! I had a splendid time. I would also like to see Pendarren in the future.  
Yours sincerely, Chelsea

Dear Miss Young - I am writing to you to tell you how much I enjoyed the week because I really, really enjoyed it. My favourite things that I liked were down the mountain and also I liked splashing in the puddles with Kansthi and Rhyse (we got really wet). Overall this week at Pendarren has been one of the best weeks in my life. So I would recommend Pendarren to anyone. From Bien-Aime



**Heartlands High School**  
**23 - 27 April 2012**

Thank you to Heartlands High School for a great week, it was fair to say the weather was variable to say the least! Our mountain walk saw glorious sunshine, mist and snow all in one day! Despite the weather (and a chocolate bar related injury) all students showed great determination in making the most of the day in the mountains, bagging the highest point in the Brecon Beacons, Pen y Fan (882m) before a stroll down the 2000year old Roman road back to the bus.

The planned canoe trip on the river Wye had to be relocated due to the wettest April on record but it didn't dampen anyone's spirit. We took the opportunity to use one of the local reservoirs and, after battling the elements in an epic open water crossing, we rigged some sails from our kit bag and made a crossing back to the shore that Christopher Columbus would have been proud of.



## **Highgate Wood School Work Experience 23 – 27 April 2012**

We had two work experience students from Highgate Wood School. They worked with the pupils and staff from St Francis de Sales Primary learning how to work with the young people, organising equipment and themselves. They worked extremely hard and had a very rewarding week

## **Lordship Lane Primary School 30 April – 4 May 2012**

The Lordship Lane staff would like to give a huge thank you to all the Pendarren staff. It has been a wonderful week, with very helpful, fun instructors and fantastic food provided. The whole experience for children and teachers has been fun, enjoyable and memorable. Thank you.

Michael - I enjoyed running through the mud puddles and falling in it.

Joe - I enjoyed going up the climbing wall as I don't like heights.

Danielle - I loved it when we were walking on the mountains and we kept on going up till we reached the clouds.

Tyler - I enjoyed sleeping in my new bed for the week.



## **St Ignatius Primary School 30 April - 4 May 2012**

It was very early in the morning that we set out from school bound for Wales and a special adventure that everybody had been looking forward to.

The skyline gave way to fields as the sun tried to peep through to lighten up the lush green countryside.

"Are we in Wales yet?" was the call that

went up so many times as we sped along the motorway.

Coming towards the village of Llangenny we looked out to the speeding river swollen with so much water from days before. At 12.45 the coach drove into the grounds of Pendarren House, our home for the rest of the week.

After settling in and meeting some of the instructors, who showed us around, we were whisked off to visit Blorenge Mountain. It was not long before we were at the top and able to see right across the countryside and neighbouring mountains in the distance. Whilst we were at Pendarren we were given the opportunity to say what we enjoyed the most about our week.

"When I first met the staff they were really kind and they explained everything about Pendarren to us. I liked all the activities but my favourite was caving and the river study. I especially liked going through the Letterbox in the caves" Ashley

"I really enjoyed the high ropes because we were in a team with our friends and I could achieve something like getting to the top of the ropes." Ciaran

"I enjoyed Big Pit because we learned about mining in the past and that the ship Titanic used Welsh coal!" Joy

"It is great fun at Pendarren and I enjoyed canoeing because I could never do that in Haringey." Kamila

"I liked working with friends and meeting new people but I truly enjoyed becoming more independent." Catalina

"At the caves I liked it when the water went into our wellies." Max

"I was amazed when we went into the caves because I never thought I could do such a crazy thing like sliding underground." Kevin

"It was great fun at Pendarren and it made me think I could stay forever. All the staff were kind and helpful." Alexis



## Fortismere School - Year 7 8 – 11 May 2012

A short week for Fortismere this week as the bank holiday claimed a day. The remaining time was used to its full potential with such activities as Top Team, Caving, Adventure Journey, Bushcraft, Climbing and High ropes. The weather was variable this week but that never dampens spirits here at Pendarren. The groups especially enjoyed the Bushcraft session, making nettle tea and aborigine bread on an open fire.

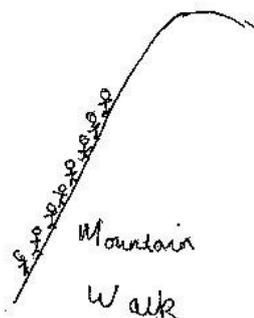
Before leaving the group were asked to note down a few things from the week, what they enjoyed and what initially made them nervous; something they learned and someone who impressed them. Well done to all the students for a wide range of learning on this course. It was great to hear the stories about the support and encouragement you have for each other and the memories you will share of your time here.



## Hornsey School for Girls – Year 8 14 – 18 May 2012

The experience has changed me because I know how to take responsibility of myself. We had to do duties, serve the tables and take charge of our equipment. We were encouraged to try everything, though some of the activities were challenging.

At first we had to fight the fears over heights – which we accomplished when we climbed Pen-y-Fan and abseiled 11 metres down a cliff.



The week was exciting, fun and challenging.



## St Martin of Porres Primary School Year 6 21 – 25 May 2012

The Pendarren experience has made me realise that if you all work together and help, you're able to get things done quicker and made easier for everyone. I've also learnt that you don't need a special prize to feel good about something you've achieved. Just knowing about it can make you feel proud. My favourite activity was caving. I didn't know that places which we can't see, under the ground, could be so amazing. Pendarren has also shown me that you shouldn't be afraid to take a leap of faith - sometimes you have to make the most of it! By Sarah

My favourite part in Pendarren was when we went caving and crawled through a variety of exciting tunnels. I think I have become more independent because in Pendarren you have to clear up after yourself and get to everywhere at a certain time without your parents nagging you to do so. By Jake

The Pendarren experience has made me realise I am braver, kinder and tidier than I thought I was as I found out doing canoeing, high ropes and preparing for room inspection. I learnt that others around me are all different and have different ideas - for example when we went to the beach some of us wanted to dig, some make sandcastles and some talk! Wales itself was beautiful! It was so peaceful and pretty! I have never been anywhere where there weren't loads of cars and buildings so it was very special! The food was better than I expected! I think the river study was my favourite activity but I loved them all! By Zara

The Pendarren experience has given me the chance to do things that I usually wouldn't get to enjoy. It has made me more co-operative, independent and made me realize that I'm better at things than I thought I was. I really enjoyed the Pendarren experience and one of my favourite parts was when I went caving and went through the Polo, Letter Box and the Wetter Box! I thought the local village, Llangenny, was lovely and the views surrounding, stunning! By Jessie Cait

The Pendarren experience has helped me to see my limits and fears; it has also helped me to overcome most of them. When you didn't want to do something the instructors would not force you to do it, they would encourage you. By Breandan

The Pendarren experience has helped me to be responsible with my things. It helped me to use team work. Also, it has helped me to respect other people and other people's things. I have learnt that I need to keep things tidy or it gets messy. I needed to develop team work skills because in everything I do I need cooperation and teamwork. The scenery was totally different to London. The Pendarren experience changed me by overcoming my fears and showing me what would happen later on when I go on holiday. I also learned to respect other people more and they will respect you back. By Lauris

The Pendarren experience has changed me by showing me I can be more adventurous and not be the girl who always stays on the safe side. My favourite parts were canoeing because we were in partners and you had to use team work to get straight. In caving you had to encourage everyone to fit through the smallest of holes and gaps. I learnt that even if you think you can't do it, you can. It has affected my independence by the duties I had to do the morning. I developed the skills of canoeing, caving and rock-pooling. By Romyne



### **Earlham Primary School 28 May – 1 June 2012**

Earlham Primary had an excellent week and are writing their own thoughts for the newsletter over half term. A selection will be in the next newsletter.



### **Park View 28 May – 1 June 2012**

The week at Pendarren has completely changed the way I think of doing things. For example, rock climbing, there were many different ways of getting up and many activities look at encouragement from team mates, getting from the start to the end. The thing I would do again is abseiling down the 60 foot cliff. For me Mr Walker was the person that was encouraging people to do things that I wouldn't even think of getting through. Thanks for helping me. - Jeffers

Here is a copy of the last twitter feed to the school:

"Park View students are making their way home from Wales. We have had such an amazing time!"



### **THE FIRS – SELF CATERING AT PENDARREN HOUSE**

Bookings for The Firs always increase over the summer months. Here are some of the groups that have stayed in The Firs in the last few weeks.

#### **Haringey Sixth Form Centre The Firs 23 – 27 April 2012**

The Sixth Form Centre stayed for a week in the Firs with a group of students with additional learning needs. They had an active week focussing on living skills.

#### **Park View The Firs 27 - 29 April 2012**

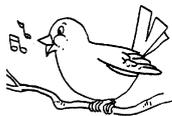
A group of geography students and teachers from Park View visited for a weekend to put some of their geography teaching into a real life context.

## Ms Shaw

### The Firs 3 - 6 May 2012

Ms Shaw, with family and friends, stayed in The Firs over the May bank holiday. The following was written by the children of the group:

"It was lovely waking up to bird song instead of traffic, seeing mountains instead of buildings and being free every morning. We would be eager to go off and enjoy the fresh air rather than sleep in." Tabitha, Ivo, Billy, Eliza, Reuben, Beatrice and Sylvia.



### Nic Hunt Football Team 25 - 27 May 2012

Nic Hunt (Headteacher at Weston Park Primary School) brought his under 12 football team for a weekend at Pendarren, staying in the Firs. They had a day out in the mountains canoeing and gorge walking using all their team skills from the football pitch, and a lot more, in order to overcome the challenges set for them.

An email from Nic after the weekend said it all:

The boys didn't stop talking about it on the way home and lots of texts received from parents. Thank you – Nic

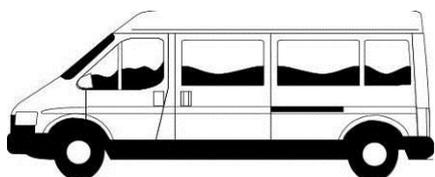
## Developments

### The Greig Annexe

Work continues in the Annexe – alterations to the bunk beds in Grwyne are nearly finished creating more space for students.

### Centre Vehicles

A new minibus arrived this term replacing one of our older lease buses.



## Availability

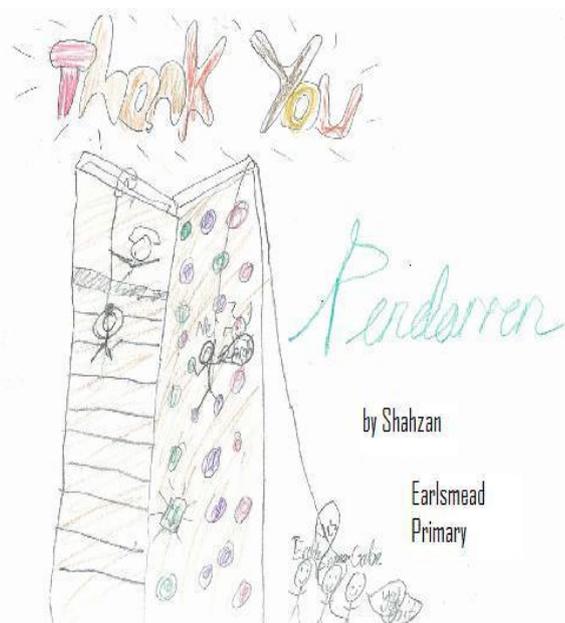
Weeks that are available for booking by schools for 2012/2013 are published on our website at [www.pendarren.org](http://www.pendarren.org).

## Wild about Wildflowers

Close to 2,000 community gardening groups including Britain in Bloom, It's Your Neighbourhood, RHS Campaign for School Gardening and Affiliated Societies have joined forces to plant up the equivalent of 50 acres (200,000 square metres) of land. Seeds provided by the RHS include Corn Poppy, Corn Marigold, Corn Chamomile, Corn Cockle and Cornflower. Each group has been given enough seeds to cover 10 square metres. When visiting Pendarren, Fortismere students planted some wildflower seeds between the climbing tower and high ropes course. Hopefully this project will expand and grow allowing us to have a wildflower bank around the climbing areas in the future.



**And finally, some artwork from one of our visiting pupils:**



If there is anything you would like to see included in the newsletter, please let us know.

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