



PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

www.pendarren.org

No. 6 July 2012

News

Wildlife at Pendarren

Some renovation work will be taking place on the Main House this summer. The House was built in 1876 and needs a bit of TLC to keep the weather out. Just before the scaffolding was due to be erected we found a Pipistrelle bat in the downstairs corridor. After a bit of food and drink it recovered and flew off. A search of the loft space showed evidence of bats so, with help from Woodside High School work experience students Sevdar and Rezvan, we did a survey to see which species we might have. We found a few Common Pipistrelles hiding high on the roof under the soffit boards, one was even hiding in the chimney; and then a visit from the Countryside Council for Wales revealed that we could also have Brown Long-eared bats and also a larger bat – species unknown!! The latter has the potential to be a rare bat and so we are eagerly awaiting their diagnosis. Bats have had a difficult year as the rain and wind have reduced the numbers of insects flying and the bats have therefore struggled to get enough food. Staff and residents at Pendarren would never know the bats were there as the bats sleep all day and then fly off at dusk to find some food, and may sleep the next night in another roost.



Busy bees

The last half of the summer term is always the busiest at Pendarren. As well as the residential visits by Haringey primary and secondary schools, we have had visits by schools from other London boroughs. We have also had adult special needs groups and youth groups from within Haringey. We are able to take small groups or large groups of up to 80 people (using all three of our accommodation blocks), so if you would like to bring a group, please contact us. See our website for availability.



The Firs self catering bungalow is particularly busy with groups of friends and family coming for weekend or weekly breaks. We have welcomed a walking group and a select band of flautists for their annual flute course (see the reports later in the newsletter). If you know of anyone who may be interested in booking The Firs, please direct them to our website where they can find information on The Firs plus details of when it is available.



Splish splash it's summer!

With all the rain we have had, the countryside surrounding Pendarren is looking beautiful with the vibrant greenery, and the salmon, trout and other fish are having a fantastic summer! The rain has not stopped our visitors enjoying themselves and schools have been able to take part in all the usual activities – perhaps with more waterproof clothing than is normally worn in July.

Festival time

At the beginning of June a member of Pendarren staff visited the Hay on Wye Literary Festival, held annually in the summer half term holiday, to recharge his cultural batteries. Hay on Wye is on the border of Wales and England and is within easy travelling distance of Pendarren House. Our member of staff attended various talks and lectures by certain literary, scientific and community names, and soaked up the atmosphere! Mr David Lammy, MP for Tottenham, was speaking at the Hay Festival and our member of staff managed to have a quick chat, mentioning Pendarren House. Mr Lammy was pleased to hear of Pendarren's continuing service to the people of Haringey.

If you are a keen Literary Festival goer, Pendarren House would be a convenient base from which to visit the Hay Festival next year. Look at our website for availability of The Firs.

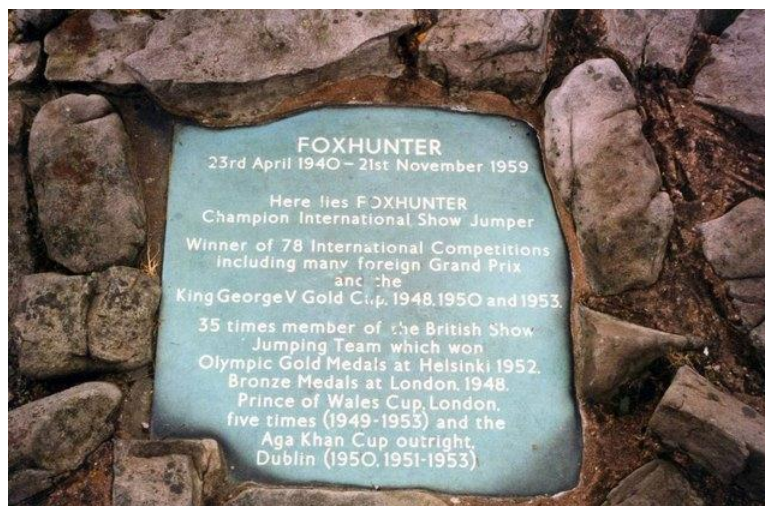
In August of each year, Powys also plays host to the Green Man Festival, a folk and music event held over three days. It is based in Glanusk Park, near Crickhowell, a place visited by the Queen and Prince Philip during their recent Diamond Jubilee tour of Wales. Again, Pendarren is ideally situated for easy access to this festival.



Olympics

As the 2012 Olympic events take off, we have our own special reminder of the Olympics close to Pendarren. Bloreng Mountain can be seen clearly from the south of Pendarren House and there is a dormitory in the Main House named after it. On Bloreng Mountain there is a pile of stones and a memorial to a horse who lies buried there: Foxhunter. Foxhunter won Britain's only Gold medal in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics and, with his rider Harry Llewellyn, won a total of 78 international competitions. Sir Harry Llewellyn lived close to Pendarren in the market town of Abergavenny and died there in 1999 at the great age of 88.

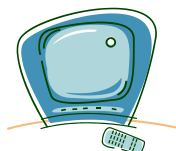
Any visiting groups who choose to do a mountain walk may well find themselves in the Foxhunter car park on top of Bloreng Mountain where they can see the memorial.



2-8 June 2012

Firs Family Group

A family group led by Barbara (of West Green Primary) stayed in the Firs and spent many hours enjoying the space and fresh air, as well as sliding and abseiling down waterfalls and canoeing through the Monmouthshire countryside. They donated a new digibox for The Firs and helped out in the Nicky Harrison Sensory Garden which is adjacent to The Firs. Thank you to all the family for their help and support.



4 - 8 June 2012

The Willow Primary School

The Willows had a rather WET week at Pendarren this time round, however the constant rain did not put a dampener on things. Everyone was keen to give everything a go. One group even managed to get some blindfolded climbing done on a dry day while the other group had a great walk up Sugar Loaf Mountain. Some small changes were made to the challenging program to accommodate severe wet weather on one particularly bad day when one group climbed indoors whilst the other went on a forest walk.

Mr Alexis, who has accompanied pupils from The Willow Primary on many occasions, is leaving to work in a school outside Haringey, so we wish him all the best in his new job. Hopefully we will see him soon with a group from his new school.



11 - 14 June 2012

The Devonshire Hill Primary School

Four and a half hours from London to Wales seemed tiring but with the first glimpse of the imposing structure of Pendarren House surrounded by lush greenery and sheep frolicking in the pasture, the long drive in the mini coach was worthwhile. We were greeted by the smiling faces of the Instructors.

On Tuesday we challenged the High Ropes. Many of us were afraid but faced our fears. It took a lot of communication and teamwork.

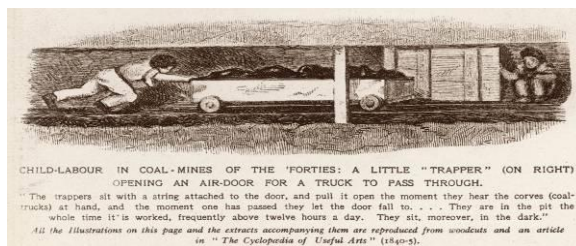
Canoeing was one of the most challenging experiences. Our instructor explained all and, after a quick training session, we were able to control the canoe. We had lots of fun.

We studied Afon Mellte, beginning with its source way up high on the peak of the mountain. As we followed the river we looked at how it changes and we saw the types of rock. These were: gritstone, limestone, and old red sandstone. The most sensational part was caving where we got to explore some of what the cave has to offer.

Thursday morning began brilliantly fine and we embarked on our mountain trek up the Blorenge Mountain. The view from the top was spectacular. Abergavenny could be seen. We visited the burial site of the famous horse 'Foxhunter' who won many championship races.

On Thursday we visited Big Pit Museum which was very educational. It was scary but exciting travelling through the mine. We were shocked and dismayed to learn that children as young as 4 had to work 12 hours a day in complete darkness.

This week was educational and exciting. We met many challenges but with the support, encouragement and guidance of the Pendarren staff we successfully completed each task. These experiences will last us a lifetime. Thank you Pendarren Staff for an unforgettable week.



15 - 17 June 2012

Firs Family Group

A family group with pupils at St Gilda's Junior School and Highgate Wood School came to stay for a weekend in the Firs and had a great time underground at Dan yr Ogof show caves and orienteering and canoeing on the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal. Two of the guests have volunteered to help with marketing and promotional material to promote the opportunities available at Pendarren House.



18 - 22 June 2012
Heartlands High School

Well done to Heartlands for an unfaltering enthusiasm during their stay at Pendarren. Some great quotes this week:

Mountain Walking

"It was a challenge but well worth it for the view."

"One small step for man and one big climb up a mountain for man kind!"

"Exhausting but so much fun."

"I don't know the secret to your cakes but they are the tastiest I have ever tried."

I'm sure the group will take many great memories from their time here and some are already thinking of a way to come back! Hope we see you all again soon.



18 - 22 June 2012
St Michael's CE Primary School N22

All students of St Michael's participated in a poetry competition. The top 4 poems were written by Ella, Rennay, Ishand (Ice), and Stacey. Unfortunately there is not enough space to print all 4 poems. Below is one of the four picked at random:

*My Pendarren
Expiriance*

The ~~Greater~~ Wetter, the better!
Pendarren is an amazing, unforgettable,
un-re liveble expiriance!
You get to be with your friends and
teachers, but the best part is... getting WET!
If you don't come pendarren, your
missing out on a really good expiriance;
(just don't get on the wrong side of the
instructors.) The rain was annoying
but still so fun, we had Turkey & Tuna
Sandwiches in a bun, we ran and fell
and would never tell; the best time of
your childhood.

18 - 22 June 2012
Haringey Day Opportunities

Reasonable weather accompanied the group from Haringey Day Opportunities on their visit this year.

A great range of activities and visits were booked. The group visit Pendarren every year and everybody thoroughly enjoys their stay here. Climbing, horse riding, a train ride on the mountain railway, a day out to Cardiff with a boat trip, BBQ...it was a very busy week. We look forward to seeing them again next year.

25 - 29 June 2012
Lancasterian Primary School

Lancasterian pupils and staff had a great time at Pendarren House and briefly put pen to paper to recount their experiences. Here is just one of the many written contributions.

'Our time in Pendarren by Eray, Harris, Brooklyn and Abdullahi:

7.30 in the morning..... Whoa!!! And an early start to the day with our ears bursting as the loud ancient bell erupted into our dreams. Some people popped out of bed ready for the day, whilst others were still snoring. Finally we dragged ourselves into the dining room for a huge mouth watering meal. DELICIOUS! (No time to include the description, sorry). This is how every day of our Pendarren trip started. What followed was always loads of fun. We took part in the river Afon Mellte study (with caving as part of it, which for most of us was the best part of the whole Pendarren experience), canoeing, abseiling and rock climbing. Also, we visited the Welsh seaside and wandered through the local woods. During free time, there wasn't much of it, though, we played football, volleyball and a card game that we invented and called Pendarren.

On the last evening we had a bonfire. It was amazing, with marshmallows and apples all roasted on sticks. They were smokingly delicious!

We all wanted to say a big thank you to all the incredible Pendarren staff and our wonderful teachers, who gave us the opportunity to come to this truly mind blowing place.'



25 - 29 June 2012
St Pauls RC Primary School

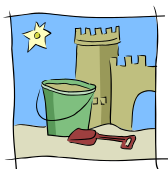
Wonderful Wales
Awesome adrenalin
A great place
To live for sure

Calm canals
Massive mountains
A bunch of birds
To catch your eye
Petrifying places
Quiet caves
This is what makes
PENDARREN!

by Pierce

25 - 29 June 2012
The Vale School

A welcome return for the Vale Primary School. The week started with a trip to the beach; a serious amount of attention was paid to swimming in the sea and building sand castles. Some intrepid explorers even ventured in to a cave!! During the week we took to the water in canoes, climbed to dizzy heights on the climbing wall and ventured into the mountains in pursuit of a wet adventure. Later in the week we were joined by a film crew for our trip to Raglan Castle. The theme of the film shot there was based around asking for help. Well done to Josh who climbed the huge spiral staircase to the top of the tower - the true 'King of the Castle'. We hope to see you all again soon.



29 June – 1 July 2012
Firs Walking Group

The weather was a bit of a mixture for the annual walking group visit but this didn't stop them putting their walking boots on and getting out into the hills. This group of experienced walkers use Pendarren each year to walk the extensive tracks and paths that the Black Mountains and the Brecon Beacons ranges have to offer. They hail from all over the UK and bring stories of walking and backpacking adventures from all over the world and yet return to Pendarren each year, making the Firs their base for the weekend. Group member and organiser, Dave, was not able to attend this year....he was on a walking holiday in the north of England!



29 - 30 June 2012
1st Crickhowell & Llangattock Beaver Colony

Pendarren hosted a fun jamboree weekend for local Beaver Cub groups. 18 Beaver Cubs from the Crickhowell colony stayed overnight on the Friday enjoying the fine hospitality Pendarren House has to offer. They were joined on the Saturday morning by a further 60 Beaver Cubs all keen and excited in anticipation of a day of fun and activity. They looked very smart in their uniforms, with a fine selection of badges on display. Pendarren staff were very busy and so were the visiting Beaver Cub leaders and helpers!

A schedule of exciting activities were organised including mini-Olympics, shelter building, arts and crafts and the high ropes challenge to name a few. The Beavers travelled from Brecon, Llangorse, Talybont on Usk, Llangynidr, Ystradgynlais and Crickhowell and had such a good time they are going to tell all their older friends in the Cubs and Scouts to come to Pendarren too!



2 - 6 July 2012
St Marys Priory RC Junior School

"Pendarren is amazing. You get an opportunity to do so many things in only 5 days. You learn to become independent whilst having fun at the same time and even becoming closer to people you didn't know much about at first."
.....Tara

"An amazing opportunity to explore the outdoors, free from the countless factories and vehicles of the capital city. From canoeing to abseiling, it can all be experienced here at its best.".....Stefan

"Here at Pendarren it is an unimaginable experience because the food is good, the activities, and going to explore the countryside.".....Jesse

"Pendarren was amazing. We do lots of amazing activities and the food is great. The landscape is beautiful but you don't get to choose them. If I were you I would save up and go.".....Micah

2 - 6 July 2012 Highgate Wood

Highgate Wood School Year 8s had a superb week learning how to survive the Welsh climate of extremes. From raging rivers to sunny beaches, the group of students and staff were immersed in the environment of the Brecon Beacons National Park testing their stamina and team work. A whole range of personal, social and group skills were developed and extended. In all a fun, challenging and educational week was had by all.



9 - 13 July 2012 North Harringay Primary School

In a very busy week a grand variety of educational and adventurous activities were undertaken. During the Bushcraft session some excellent shelters were constructed. So good were they, that the pupils were keen to promote the relative merits of their shelters in the style of an Estate Agent. Here is one example:

LiveCosy.com

This colourful but natural shelter is improved by a satellite and added fluffy carpet. The price is set at £39.99 only for this year. This shelter is provided with curtains, doors, mini table (not too mini) and windows to see the magnificent views. If any storm, strong wind or heavy rain approaches, you will be safe. LiveCosy.com's shelters are constructed using the strongest and finest oak wood, fresh leaves and the comfiest skins as bedding. As well as this, if you do not like it you can receive a 75% refund. You can also purchase an extension box for just 99p. 50% of all profits go to charities in the UK. We will be very grateful if you choose your preferred model at our January exhibition. Check out our website.



9 - 13 July 2012 Park View

River conditions on Monday afternoon made the adventure journey a fantastic trip. Everyone put in 100% effort and the students were impressed by Mr Wilson as he took on the giant water slide with great enthusiasm.

The week provided more challenges with a trip under the mountain through the caves, a trip over the mountain on a hike and a trip between the mountains in our improvised sailing canoes. Well done to all.



10 - 13 July 2012 Oak Lodge School, Barnet

A school with special educational needs pupils visited us from over the border in Barnet. They had a great week canoeing, climbing and caving as well as a well earned swim in the pool at Pendarren. After a very busy time they left us, happy but tired, on Friday morning.



16-20 July 2012 South Harringay Junior School

South Harringay's Year Six pupils and staff arrived on Monday lunchtime bringing some welcome sun with them. They were in good spirits and excited about spending their last week of primary school at Pendarren House. They will be spending their week getting to know the Brecon Beacons National Park inside and out - from caving in it, to canoeing on it and spending a day at the beach! A superb end to their time at South Harringay Junior.

Here are some of the student's aims for the week:

This experience will teach us independence and about the environment. It will also help us in life to cooperate and communicate with others. Such as identifying many unusual plants you may not find in the city. As well as learning useful things, you learn with fun! - India, Cody, Tyler

We are hoping to learn how to cooperate and work as a team and share and care. For example Heather tripped in the forest and everyone helped her up, after India wrapped paper around Heather's hand. And that's what you call true team work. The outdoors nature in Pendarren is amazing and also seeing how animals such as sheep and rabbits live in their natural habitat is cool. Or what you can eat plants and they have special tastes! So come to Pendarren its loads of fun.



16 - 21 July 2012

The Firs Flute Course

Sixteen flautists from all over Great Britain are spending this week improving their flute skills whilst staying at the Firs. The students have all attained at least grade 8 and the three tutors are internationally acclaimed; you might have seen them playing with The Philharmonia and the London Symphony Orchestra. They will take a break during the week to hang around on our High Ropes course, which will no doubt inspire them to reach even greater heights with their music. This year one of the students is from Hackney, anyone from Haringey interested?



And to finish

Work Experience students

This term we have had work placement students from Woodside High School and Hornsey School for Girls. They assisted with the smooth running of the programme for the visiting schools.

'Coming to Pendarren was the best decision we made' 'Canoeing, shelter building, it has it all' ... 'the food is an extra bonus ... mouth-watering...'

Work placement students join in with all the activities, and help the instructors to deliver the outdoor education programme. Sounds fun, but it is not as easy as it sounds ...

Work experience at Pendarren House is a challenging placement because you are with people you don't know for 24 hours of the day and a long way from home. Work experience placements are organised through the Haringey Education Business Partnership (HEBP) – if you think you would like to come to Pendarren, ask your school work experience co-ordinator to contact them.

Nightline

Our new Nightline course is now ready. A rope trail is followed in the little wood at the back of Pendarren House. The challenge is to follow the rope, blindfolded, as it meanders through the trees, feeling your way and negotiating a few obstacles. Aspects of communication, teamwork and problem solving are highlighted in the activity. It is an ideal activity for the evening session (conditions permitting). Mr Russell, who used it with Year 7 Highgate Wood students, said "It was great."

If you think you would like to try the nightline, just ask the duty Pendarren Teacher.

Friends of Pendarren


Over the last few weeks, The Friends of Pendarren have supported the work of Pendarren by investing in new cameras for use by instructors and visiting staff. Pictures taken of the visiting groups are copied on to CDs for a small fee – saving the cost of lost or broken cameras for the pupils! The Friends have also bought a quantity of CDs and protective plastic pockets for the discs.


Storyteller Daniel Morden has been visiting Pendarren since 2005 and for all that time The Friends have subsidised the cost of his visits. They have agreed to fund his visits for a further term (at least) but there has had to be a slight increase in the fee paid by schools to see him. This will be £1.50 instead of £1.00 from September onwards.

For those of you who saw or purchased the Pendarren House 2012 calendar, you will be please to know that our talented photographer, Andy Lewington, will donate some of his images to compile another calendar for 2013. The funds raised from the sale of the calendar go directly to The Friends of Pendarren. The calendar will be available from October 2013 at a cost of £ 4.50.


If you would like to help then send an email to friends@pendarren.org

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

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