



## PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

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

No. 18

January 2015

### News

The weather has been good this January, fairly dry, some lovely sunny days and **snow!!** on the mountains. It won't be long before students are out on the lawn in the evenings.



Winter is a great time for looking at the **night sky** as the visibility can be excellent. This month we can see Jupiter, Venus, Mars and craters on the moon through our high powered binoculars (purchased by the Friends of Pendarren).

During a quieter January week Pendarren staff took the opportunity to carry out lots of **refurbishing** tasks. We have cleared out store rooms and undertaken jobs such as repainting the dining room and House common room, and refurbishing to help ensure Pendarren still has the 'wow' factor when students walk in the door. It was a busy week and we had to get everything back in place before Earlham Primary School arrived.

Some water problems have been remedied - the intermittent problem with the Annexe showers and lack of pressure in a couple of the Firs bedrooms are now sorted. The upgrade to the heating systems means that the buildings are warmer yet we use less heating oil, good news all round.

We will be replacing some curtains to smarten up the dormitories, and carrying out some work on the Annexe staff bedroom windows to eliminate any draughts.



One of the smartboards donated by Lancasterian Primary School has been put up in the Annexe common room so this can be used for teaching Annexe groups as well as evening activities. In the House, the old bar in the lounge has been removed to create more space. When we have finished removing the woodwork we will install a smartboard here too. Down in the cellar we have a room we call the vault with a huge steel door (probably where the butler used to keep his wine when it was a country residence), this now has racking to store our new camping kit. The Tuckshop has also been modified to accommodate our new range of souvenirs. Work will be completed in February half term.

**Food!!** We are trying out new menus at the moment to ensure our visitors have the best food.

### Did you know?

- Pendarren is available to out-of-borough schools when not required by Haringey schools. If you know anyone who may be interested, please let them know.
- All the newsletters are available on the website.

## Website News



The website is continually up-dated, let us know if anything does not work or if you think of some useful additions.

- *Primary activity options* – links to the curriculum are now set out below each activity.
- *Group leaders* – there is a page with links to various websites and documents providing evidence of how learning outdoors impacts on the development of young people. One of the documents sets out the reasons why you can use the *Pupil Premium* to support a residential outdoor experience.

## DofE Open Gold Practice Expedition

At the start of the summer holiday (July 27 – August 1) we will be running an expedition course for Gold Award candidates. The course covers training and the practise expedition and is suitable for those who have worked their way through the scheme as well as direct entrants to the Gold Award. Full details and booking forms will be on the website soon.



**First Aid courses** are run from Pendarren throughout the year. Some of these are supported by the British Mountaineering Council and members of the BMC receive a reduced rate. They are typically REC 2 day/16 hour courses which have a bias towards first aid in the outdoors.

## Friends of Pendarren - Open Day 4<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Pendarren House will be having a 40<sup>th</sup> birthday party on  
4<sup>th</sup> July 2015  
to celebrate 40 years since the official opening.



## Our visitors:

### **Mulberry Primary School 10 – 14 November 2014**

#### Phenomenal Pendarren

Oh! What an amazing trip! I found Pendarren incredible! Despite the wet and soggy activities; it was amazing! The activities taught me a lot of different skills that I didn't know I had. Pendarren gave me the chance to enhance new skills, such as: patience, responsibility, crawling, climbing and also to be determined. The food was really appetising; the fish and chips was extremely delicious. It's not like anything you would get from a normal week, it was unique!

*Yaqib*



#### Pendarren Rocks!

Oh! What an amazing week it was! They gave us delicious food with a tasty dessert. Although I was looking forward to the High Ropes, my bravery deserted me. Canoeing was tolerable - my friend decided to jump into the freezing water! We went through a loop cave, which had oozing mud. Bonfire night was especially enjoyable because we had squishy marshmallows, with sweet hot chocolate - plus we had bright sparklers and shiny glow sticks. We felt ever so comfortable!

*Damla*



#### Glorious Pendarren

Oh! What a week! Pendarren is one the best places to learn about the environment and to just enjoy yourself. I am usually a scaredy cat, but Pendarren's activities weren't that scary. The food was extremely mouth watering, especially the pizza. My personal favourite activity was bush craft, because it was very warm and I didn't get dirty. We had a special bonfire night, with some hot chocolate. The fire was very beautiful and we got sparklers and glow sticks. One of my friends found fifteen crabs when we went to the coast. That was one of the best days at Pendarren, because we got to find all different kinds of crabs and fish. Pendarren is a really great experience.

*Sobia*



### **Lancasterian Primary School 10 – 14 November 2014**

"The best thing I've done this week is high ropes because at Pendarren you have to try things and be positive. I didn't know if I was going to fall down, I had to trust my friends holding the ropes. My mum said, "Enjoy yourself and have fun," and I did! When I have kids I will make sure they come."

#### Advert For Pendarren:

"Do you want to experience the best week ever?

Feel like you don't want to stick to the normal routine?

Well... If so, Pendarren is certainly for you! Within five days you will be able to do some extraordinary activities that include; cool canoeing; mighty high-ropes and much more!

You will also learn tons of new things.

Not only to swim or canoe, but you will discover your strengths or weaknesses.



You will leave Pendarren fulfilled and changed  
- for the better, of course.  
I'm sure you will love it!"



**Hereford Sixth Form College  
Duke of Edinburgh Training  
14 – 16 November 2014**

Hereford Sixth Form College brought their students along for a weekend of teambuilding and training for their Gold Duke of Edinburgh expedition (DofE). The weekend was a mix of cooking, navigation training and tent pitching, as well as risk assessments and first aid, all with a good dose of fun and getting to know each other better.

Here is a quote from one of their staff about how the DofE has influenced his life:

*'I'm a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps, have done my mountain leader qualification and been able to go on several great expeditions due to this, plus I've also got massively into fell running too - all of these I really don't think I would have done if my interest hadn't been sparked by DofE all those years ago!'*



**Chichester Canoe Club – The Firs  
14 to 16 November 2014**

The south coast canoe club visited us again, staying in the Firs and using local rivers to extend their kayaking skills and leadership techniques. The water was high after the rain in the week, and on the night they arrived, allowing them to paddle some local smaller rivers including the River Grwyne (same name as the dormitory in the Annexe).

A great time was had putting themselves up against the might of the South Wales water.



**Earlsmead Primary School  
17 - 21 November 2014**

Pendarren today was awesome as normal, we went to the Big Pit. We learnt how thousands of people risked their lives to make people of the future have electricity. Also we rock climbed and it was scary but each time I went higher and higher. I got used to it. Bradley



My favourite part of the day today was when we had to climb down the mountain and floated in the water, and then we climbed the mountain again. Shauna



**St Aidan's Primary School**  
**24 – 28 November 2014**

Arriving at Pendarren in the coach, my whole body was shaking with excitement and my nerves were bubbling up inside me as I took my very first steps out of the coach into the countryside of Wales. The first person to greet and meet us was Mr Jolliffe, the kindest and funniest instructor I have ever met. The first thing that Mr Jolliffe did was take us to the common room (the place we will always meet to talk). He talked to us about the rota and what happens everyday and then he gave us a tour around the house. Later on we looked in our dorms and then took our suitcases upstairs.

*Dina*



I was in a dorm with lots of people I like but with some people I didn't really know that well. When you're in a group with people you are not friends with, you start to get to know them more and become friends with them.

*Mimi*

By far the highlight of the week was Wednesday, with the whole day activity 'River Study'. First off, we followed a small stream with many tributaries (other streams going into it), which would later become a large river called the Afon Mellte (pronounced A-von-meh-khh-teh), which is Welsh for 'the river of lightning'. Next we followed the river underground! (But not before having sandwiches). We crawled around the cave getting very wet and muddy. A few moments come to mind, such as going through the letter box. The letterbox was a very small opening in the rock. We had to turn our heads to the side, lie down and get pushed through by our legs. Another memory is going through

a tight space and calling back to people to mind their heads and straight away bashing my head on the roof. Thank God for helmets. But that wasn't the end. We then went on to the waterfall where we did sausage rolls in the river. We came back wet, cold and happy.

*Finn*



**Belmont Junior School**  
**24 – 28 November 2014**

"We arrived at Pendarren on November 24<sup>th</sup>. We were all shaking in excitement to find out what new experiences we would be faced with during the week. We were given a short tour, then led to the annexe to get some kit. After that we had lunch then headed out for the first activity. The instructors were really patient with us as we started our first activity; orienteering. It was really cold but we had lots of fun, we needed lots of layers to keep warm. The sleeping arrangement was really warm and we both got a good night's sleep. The next day we went on a coast walk, we had lunch on the beach and then went looking for little creatures on the rocks. Today we went canoeing and did the high ropes course. For the canoeing, we had to paddle and steer really hard and the high ropes course was tricky but the rest of the group was really supportive and we've had heaps of fun so far."

*Serene and Sarah*



## Rokesly Junior School

1- 5 December 2014

Rokesly brought one the largest group that we have ever had at Pendarren House - 73 pupils and 6 staff! They almost filled the whole of the centre as we have 85 beds! The group was almost all of the school's Year 6 pupils.

The week was a hectic one, with the pupils enjoying a variety of day activities ranging from geographical studies on the mountains, rivers and caves of the Brecon Beacons to biological habitats and adaptation studies in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that is the Gower peninsular.

They also bonded as teams, challenging themselves on the high ropes and in the canoes.

Both the centre staff and the school learnt a lot about managing such a large group on a residential trip and we look forward to the school coming next year.



## St John Vianney Catholic Primary School

8 - 12 December 2014

### ***Advice from Class 6 at St John Vianney School to children going to Pendarren...***

Philosophical advice...

- ☺ Try to do everything, enjoy everything and try to behave well.
- ☺ Don't complain when you get dirty - you are definitely going to get dirty!
- ☺ Don't be afraid, try your best.
- ☺ Have fun but think about safety.

- ☺ Try to do everything - you only get to go once!
- ☺ Have a good time, face your fears and just have fun.
- ☺ Push yourself, and don't get into fights or arguments.
- ☺ If you want to do an activity, do it and don't let anyone stop you.

Practical tips...

- ☺ When you do River Study, change quickly at the caves otherwise you will get cold.
- ☺ Sleep a lot and be friends with the people in your dormitory.
- ☺ Choose what you really like for lunch.
- ☺ Bring plenty of knee-high socks.
- ☺ Stay in the middle of the canoe.
- ☺ Bring a packing list to Pendarren so you can check you have everything when you leave.



## Bancrofts School

12 – 14 December 2014

Bancroft's School visited us again for their annual Welsh rugby tour. Their junior team played against a local Welsh school on the Friday afternoon and then went to see an International rugby match at Newport before arriving at Pendarren. Saturday was a day of adventurous activities at Pendarren followed by the school quiz, testing their general knowledge but also knowledge of their school's history. On the Sunday they played against another Welsh school before heading back to London.



## Bounds Green School

15 – 19 December 2014

In Pendarren we did lots of tough activities and all in all it was totally amazing! Three of the most challenging and exciting things were river study,



adventure journey and climbing. When we were climbing we all worked really well together and it seemed we had a lot more turns than at other centres. Personally, my favorite activity was the river study as we got to go caving and I conquered my fear of tight spaces. There were a few amazing moments and everyone loved it. It was a great day!

*Phoebe*

Pendarren has been an amazing experience! The food is freshly cooked in the house kitchen and is served to all the children together in the huge dining room. Lunch is often spent outdoors which is fun because it is like a picnic during our activities. The house is huge and has room for over 60 children. We went during December, but we were always warm and cosy at the end of the day.

*Myfanwy*



### **Earlham Primary School 19-23 January 2015**

What I liked the most about Pendarren was high ropes and rock climbing. This is because I realised that everything that I thought I was good at, I can't do by myself. I really couldn't – I need friends to push me onwards and make sure I was amazing at everything! The thing I was most scared about is when I had to pull the ropes for my friends, as their lives were in my hands!

*Ishrat*

I liked caving whilst leading the group and keeping everyone's spirits high. It was really nice taking charge and lots of responsibilities.

*Zuweyada*

What I really liked about Pendarren was when we served food to everyone.

*Kubra*

I especially liked when we explored the castles because we had so much fun and we did this sort of quiz that you had to find areas and write their numbers on a map.

*Helin*

I like Pendarren because we had lots of challenges and I was able to face my fears. I am able to find out more about myself and I am able to help my friends and work as a team.

*Noor*



### **St Paul's and All Hallows School 26-30 January 2015**

I have uncovered things that I thought I could never do, such as climbing and high ropes. This is a special memory that has affected me as a person. This showed me that I could do anything.

*Marlina*

Pendarren gives children an opportunity to socialise more with other people. Also, it gives children a chance to explore a different part of the world.

*Rico*

My favourite activity was going caving. I strongly believe that caving is the best activity of all due to the fascinating stones and rocks, and the cool dark holes.

*Kayla*

The Letterbox was amazing! To wiggle like a worm made it so cool!

*Onica*

What I have learnt and enjoyed about Pendarren is that not all learning is in a classroom. Knowledge is hidden everywhere, you just have to dig till you have reached the gold mine.

*Tyra A*

Pendarren is about kids' childhood memories; the excitement and spending quality time with your friends. I also forgot to mention, you experience things you don't do at home. I had so much fun with my teachers, friends and staff.

*Tehya B*



### **St Gilda's Catholic Junior School 2-6 February 2015**

I think Pendarren should be available to all children because they are normally wrapped up in technology and don't have a clean environment. They can have a break from phones and computers and have a fresh breath of air.

*Renee*

Pendarren brings children away from screens and lets them experience the beauty of the countryside and see things they have never seen before. This is an amazing opportunity for all young people. It has succeeded in the past and present and we need it for the future!

*Catherine*

Pendarren is lots of fun; challenging; it calms you down when you're having a bad day.

*Juan Carlos*

My favourite activity so far is river study day which included exploring mountains, caving and looking at the waterfall. Pendarren has helped to make people conquer their fears and become a stronger individual. It helps children's brains grow. Before, both classes never used to mix together but now I have made so many new friends.

*Pia- Laxmi*

The best part of the Pendarren Experience is how children can have the opportunity to play around and learn in nature's environment. Also the fun and achievement that we can reach is virtually limitless because the experienced instructors

stretch us to our absolute best. It has made me grow as a person because I can freely and comfortably reach my potential and achieve goals that I never thought were possible.

*Nenah*

Pendarren has made me good as a person because now I know how much my Mum does for me.

*Nathan*

There is nothing to be improved. It is perfect.

*Jonathan*

Pendarren should be available to all children because people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century don't have enough confidence to do the things they can't have an opportunity to do in life.

*Gabriel*

I have learnt how to make more friends and be a more disciplined person by listening and showing what I think and being a more responsible person and give out my ideas.

*Louis*

I have learnt to share rooms and help people that need help.

*Alex*

Before I went to Pendarren, I was very scared of small spaces. After I did the caving I overcame that fear.

*Oliver*

This place made us grow up as a person by getting away from our family and try to be more mature by doing nearly everything adults do.

*Federico*

I feel more independent and grown up as I'm away from my family at home. I feel like I'm trusted because I have a lot of responsibilities from all the teachers and all the other adults.

*Annie*

Pendarren has made me realise that I can do much more than I thought. I can go caving, I can walk up mountains and I can even tell the difference between rocks!

*Nessie*

The "Letterbox" was very small, so going through was hard, fun and wonderful; wonderful when everyone and I completed it. I have also learnt the joys of star watching, which has made me a more open person to new things – they could be a great wonder.

*Rose*



This experience has helped my confidence, adventure and self-belief. Also I have seen others grow and self confidence rise.

Amy

Pendarren is really good to get away from all the cities and find out all about nature. It also makes you more independent. This is good for secondary school. George

Pendarren gives children opportunities to explore and find out new things about nature. This particular point is important because most kids these days are inside playing electrical games.

I have made new friends and played and shared with old ones but I think Year 6 has become closer because of Pendarren.

Nancy

I have learnt that you cannot depend on one person to make your bed or clean your room. You have to be your own person and not just follow the crowd. I have learnt that I say my opinion a lot more in Pendarren.

Emma

Well, I have learnt that I am way more independent than I thought I would be because I didn't get homesick at all.

Lucas



The best parts of our newsletter are the comments from students, even when they are not what we expected.....

*I've enjoyed the food because it is home-made and it is not just cooked for cooking's sake, I can tell it is made with love.*

*There were three people on my boat. We were either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> best. I worked with two girls. But still we did really well and they did too.*

*I have learnt how to cope with some of the really really REALLY annoying boys in my class.*

*What I've learnt is friendship is the key to a lot of things even if you're working with inappropriate people .....*

*I think the experience should be improved for the amount of time we spend there. I think we should increase the time by staying the rest of Friday. And all of Saturday and half of Sunday.*

*I liked waking up because it's funny when everyone is running around everywhere and I'm just waking up.*

*Pendarren is a legend - people are literally making songs about how good Pendarren is!!!*

(If anyone has heard this song, please let us know)!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter, sorry we could not fit all the comments in.

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

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