

PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

www.pendarren.org

No. 20 August 2015

NEWS

Hope you all had a great summer holiday!

Open Day

On July 4th Pendarren House celebrated 40 years since it's official opening. Visitors came from far and wide and it was nice to see some faces associated with Pendarren from many years ago. A selection of activities were on offer plus a raffle with prizes donated by a variety of local traders.

Raffle prizes for the Open Day were donated by:

M.T. Cashells and Sons Ltd, Crickhowell Number 18, Crickhowell The Trading Post, Abergavenny Dragons Head, Llangenny Jehu's Stores, Crickhowell Grenfells and Sons, Crickhowell Nancy's Cakes (Year 9 student from Crickhowell)





Minibuses

Logos have been installed on the Pendarren minibuses to help promote the Centre whilst we are out and about.

Bookings

There are only a few weeks in 2015-16 that have no school bookings. If you are considering making a late booking please contact Pendarren as soon as possible.

DofE

The Open Gold expedition course that ran in the summer holiday was successful so we are considering repeating this for next summer holiday. Plans are to run a Gold training and practice expedition, a qualifying expedition, and a residential. If you would be interested in any of these courses, please get in touch.





Alternative Holiday courses

Pendarren is open during the holidays – if you have a school group you would like to bring to do something a bit different, please contact us. Options include a canoe expedition down the River Wye; a week in Pembroke; a course specialising in climbing, caving or canoeing or walking a long distance footpath such as the Beacons Way.

Activity Option choices

Primary: Pendarren is changing some of the activity option choices, details will be on the website. The intention is to keep the existing ones but to bring in alternatives that reflect changes in the curriculum.

Secondary: usually secondary schools are happy for Pendarren to design a programme, contact us if you have a specific programme or activities in mind.

The Firs

Work in The Firs continues. All the double glazed windows units that had condensation have been replaced and the halogen ceiling lights are in the process of being replaced with low energy LED lights to help reduce our electricity bill. The domestic staff have been painting inside this week and at the end of September the fascia boards are to be repaired and repainted.





Annexe

Pendarren staff have also repainted the Annexe dormitories. A smartboard is now installed in the Annexe common room.

House

And yet more painting was undertaken in the House!

NQT Course

Pendarren will be offering a weekend course for NQTs in 2016. This is a chance to visit Pendarren, meet fellow NQTs and participate in some activities. There is usually a course running during the weekend to give participants something to add to their CV. In the past we have offered the Outdoor Learning Cards course.



Thanks to:



Abergavenny Town Football Club for donating outdoor matting. This heavy outdoor matting is to be used to go under the outdoor table tennis table, the low ropes course, and to protect the liner on the pond.

The Tottenham Grammar School Foundation for assistance with repairs to the pond. Pendarren staff are preparing the site so that we can lay a new pipe to feed the pond and install a butyl liner to retain the water. The works should be completed this autumn term when the pond can be used for ecology and minibeast studies.

Cycling - Velothon Wales

15 000 cyclists took part in this event, and 20 000 have already registered interest for 2016 even though no date has yet been set!! Roads were closed for the day for this event. There were three sportives, all starting in Cardiff – 50, 140 and 192 km which took riders out on a loop including The Tumble hill climb by Abergavenny.

FRIENDS

The Friends supported the Open Day which included providing a coach to bring visitors from London.

Having not lost any cameras for many months we managed to lose one in the canal and one, we think, at Raglan Castle. Storyteller: The Friends continue to subsidise Daniel Morden. Daniel will be unavailable until the New Year; apologies to those who had booked him and thank you for the messages wishing him a speedy recovery.



OUR VISITORS

Rhodes Avenue Primary School visited us in early May 2015 and their feedback was included in the last newsletter. Since then they have sent us some fantastic thank you letters - some of the pictures from these letters have been used to illustrate this newsletter.

Gladesmore School 8-10 May 2015 Year 9

Gladesmore students attended a weekend of challenge, adventure and education at Pendarren House early in May. There had been quite a bit of rain in the week before, which made for a great gorge walk with deep pools and waterfalls to explore. After dinner they showed they still had plenty of energy and a competitive spirit in tackling the orienteering course despite the failing light and damp conditions.

Saturday morning: we headed towards the Brecon Beacons to study the effects of glaciation on the local landscape. Craig Cerrig Gleisiad was our destination encircling an obvious cwm. Evidence of the abrasive power of long passed glaciers was observed: moraine debris, u-shaped valleys, arêtes and erratic boulders. Some students found the walk quite challenging, the path being quite steep but the view from the top of the cwm's headwall was breathtaking! After lunch we headed for Ystradfellte and the limestone caves of South Wales. A campfire in the evening was a nice way to end a busy day - chillax!

Before returning to London on the Sunday there was time for students and teachers to challenge themselves on the high ropes course and climbing wall.

The Pendarren Instructors all said that it had been a great weekend. The students showed tenacity and determination in taking on the challenges set by the variety of activities attempted. The obvious dedication and commitment of the Gladesmore teachers absolutely underscored the success of the course.



St Johns RC School, Chigwell 11-15 May 2015

Our pupils (and staff!) once again had a fantastic time and still talk about the visit daily! The students have just completed an ASDAN Adventure and Residential award, all based on activities they did during their stay. The photos have really enhanced their portfolios.

Mountain walking by Tommy

On Monday we went mountain walking. The name of the mountain was called Sugar Loaf mountain. I enjoyed climbing up the rocks. When we got to the top we had a big tent, which Steve put over us. It was very cold and windy. It was hard walking down.

Adventure Walk by Amal

My group and I did an adventure walk and we had to slide down the rocks and we all got wet and we all wet each other. It was dangerous and I got my hair wet!

Caving by Aaron

On Thursday we went to do a river study of the River Mellte. We followed the river into the cave. In the cave we all had to crawl through the letter box through water. We got wet. We went on the stepping stones to try and get across to the other side. I was not scared.

Bushcraft by Asvath

On Friday we did bushcraft. We had to build a shelter to protect us from rain. Then we had to make a fire. We used a flint, a piece of metal and some cotton wool. I ate toasted marshmallows. We heated hot chocolate.

Climbing wall by Morgon

Pendarren has an outside climbing wall and it is very high up. On the climbing wall I went more than half way up and Asvath and Aaron and Amal and Terrence and Kyle went right to the top of the climbing wall. To get down we had to abseil. The others held the ropes and fixed the carabiners. It was so difficult to climb and to know where to put my feet and hands and I shouted for some instructions to Ms Janis and to my friends from Group 1. I wasn't too scared on the climbing wall but I felt really nervous.

Bat Detecting by Kyle

There were some bats in the Pendarren House loft. The only way we were going to find out how many was to use bat detectors. The best time was the evening and night time when the bats start to come out.

The noise started to come out of the bat detectors and the sounds we could hear were the bats. It is a strange noise. We think we were hearing long eared bats and pipistrelle bats.



Long eared bat



Greater horseshoe bat



Pipistrelle bat

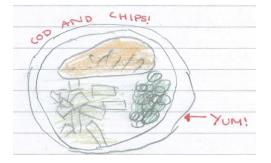
Holy Trinity CE Primary School 18-22 May 2015

I really liked the activities and the food. We had so much fun but also learned life skills with Mrs Claudia and Alex. Thank you Pendarren.

Thanks for all of the staff that helped me overcome my fears on the high rope. *Jameil*

Thank you for my time at Pendarren and I really enjoyed myself. Ermias

Pendarren is amazing and the activities are challenging. *Dejuan*



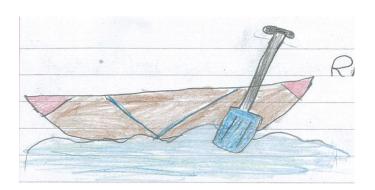
North Harringay Primary School 18-22 May 2015

Year 6 had an outstanding experience of neverending fun activities. I had not spoken much to some people in Year 6 for a while but it all changed the day I arrived. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to have an entertaining school trip. My favourite activity was canoeing because it was extremely fun and we worked as a team. I hope in secondary school I could visit Pendarren again..... Aldo

On behalf of Y6 students at Pendarren I say its extremely fun. We went to the beach and went on a walk, very exhausting, we looked at creatures and me and my partner David found a couple of crabs and a massive prawn, but we gave it to my friend Ruben. My favourite part was when we rode horses. My horse Jaffa was bay colour and was 16 years old. We rode across the countryside on the horses but my horse basically rode itself!

I think Pendarren is a brilliant experience for younger kids to get out and away from home. Although you could get tired or wet its one of the most fun, life-changing trips to do.

A lot of kids always lay around at home on their P53 or Xbox but this is a good fun way to get your kids out of the house. You can go canoeing in lakes and do adventure journeys in streams and rocks. Also there is a tuck-shop (the best bit) where you could get souvenirs or maybe the ordinary sweet. It also has a swimming pool, going to the beach and much more and I had lot of fun, especially all the sweets!



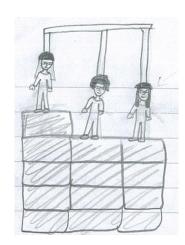
St Martin of Porres RC Primary School 25 -29 May 2015

On Monday 25th May we arrived at Pendarren house at around 12 'o' clock and afterwards we were told our activity groups. Then we went off to do an activity. Group 1 went off to the high ropes behind the House and group 2 went and did canoeing in a local canal. At around 5.15pm we returned. Just from that activity, some people overcame their fear of heights and abseiling. The next four days continued like that, people not wanting to do something and ending up wishing they could do it again. The weather has held out until today (Friday 29th May), now it is tipping it down. My highlight of the week was on Tuesday when we did the River Study project. We did a series of things, caving, standing under a waterfall, and going down a natural water-slide. Out of all that I enjoyed going through the "letterbox". The "letterbox" is when you squeeze through a small gap on your stomach. You get pushed through by your classmates, and it feels like going through the gap in the red letterbox. From my experiences I would definitely do the whole thing again.

Thank you for our lovely stay, We've all had an awesome time, But as we are going away today, We wanted to say thank you in a rhyme.

Because you've kept us really jolly, And helped us not to be alone, We've all felt so truly happy, And made Pendarren feel like home. Thank you so much

From : Table Mountain Hana, Shailei, Ellen, Lauren, Zuza



'The Crate Stack'

Campsborne School 1-5 June 2015

I thought it was great that we shared dormitories with some people that we didn't know that well because we got to know them better and become closer with them.

MyMy

I really liked how the adults who work here understand me and help me achieve things that I never knew that i could actually do such as the white line and the bunny hole!!! I also liked how the adults at school helped me with the activities. As well as that I got to know my teachers more! :D:D:D! Katelyn C

Pendarren is an amazing place for children-especially in Year 6, because they learn how to cope in secondary. I would recommend it to all the schools in Haringey!

Gabriel

I Loved it here and I had so much fun doing all the activities! Zozo

Was great but got a bit wet, I really liked the food and staff.

Arisara



West Green Primary School 1-5 June 2015

My best time is when we was riding a pony because I love animals. I am really happy because I conquered fear on the high ropes. Rojda

This week was the best week of my life - done things I never done before. Chanice

I liked the bit where I conquered my fear in the high ropes and I was so proud of myself. At first I never knew I could do it but with the help of my lovely teachers they encouraged me.

Dijle

We didn't have enough time here. Michael

Willow Primary School 8-12 June 2015

Thank you for the once of a life time opportunity to be in Pendarren House and thank you for planning all the activities such as canoeing. The food was AMAZING! Well done dinner ladies. My favourite activity was canoeing because Prince, Dervris and I were the best at canoeing! I have learnt it isn't over until it's over!

I enjoyed Pendarren so much. The activity that I liked was the Jacobs Ladder challenge on the high ropes. It was so much fun. The skills that I learnt were to help each other and when a person cannot do it, do not laugh at them. Pendarren staff thank you. Dilan

To the staff in Pendarren House, thank you for taking good care of us during the week. I really enjoyed the activities that you planned for us but my favourite activity was caving. Even though I was nearly crying in high ropes you supported me and told me I could do it. The food was amazing, I almost felt like I was in a restaurant. Pendarren House has helped me be independent. Thank you for everything!

Sudenaz



St Francis de Sales RC Junior School 8-12 June 2015

I learnt about myself that I can do things I never ever thought I would do. I enjoyed my time here and got more confident and learnt that when you think about it not everything is hard as you think it is. I'm impressed that with the help of the staff I grew more and more confident doing things. - Somoto

I'm impressed that I could keep the team together and keep on trying even throughout the hard times. - *Sinmi*

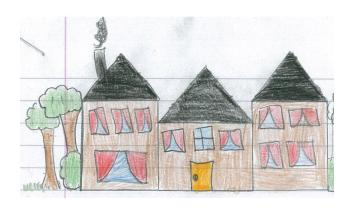
Sometimes it was very difficult to communicate with people in my group but after time I seemed to get along the other people. - *Emman*

I learned to have faith in myself and be a team I also enjoyed my friends protecting me especially Mr Low, 100 %.

This will really help me learn how to cope with new people, never to give up and to trust other people around me. This will be a trip that will help me cope in secondary school, this trip was amazing, it will be a trip I will never forget. - Alisha

I liked the breakfast, lunch and dinner - Jamaine

I learnt that I could do anything I want to and I can trust some people....... also I was proud that whenever I didn't want to do any activity because I was scared but ended up doing it. - Zakiya



The Brook School 8-10 and 10-12 June 2015

The Brook visited with two different groups of students, the first came Monday to Wednesday and the second Wednesday afternoon to Friday.

A mix of activities was enjoyed by the students allowing them to gain new experiences and to work together in a new environment.

The visit was enjoyed by all the students and staff.

Trinity Primary Academy 15 -19 June 2015

Pendarren got me prepared for secondary school by giving me independence. - Jenai

I learned that if I want to do something I can do it no matter what and if I want to complete a challenge I can do it if I set my mind to it.

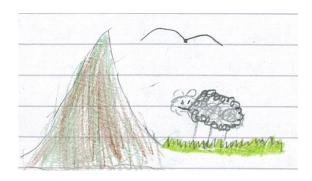
Pendarren will help me in secondary school as I look at nature in an another way and I learnt to respect other personalities. - Zuzanna

This will really help me learn how to cope with new people, never to give up and to trust other people around me. This will be a trip that will help me cope in secondary school, this trip was amazing, it will be a trip I will never forget.

- Alisha

At first I thought this was going to be the most dangerous week of my life but after a week at the house it changed. Everything that I went through it made me confident and it made strong it made me feel like the best boy in the world! - Ali

When I go to secondary school I will never give up and always have faith in myself. Also it will help face my nerves and to help friends - *Sid*



St Pauls and All Hallows CE School 15-19 June 2015 Year 5

The weather was bright and sunny all week. The activities started with an exploration of Pendarren Park and the local area. On returning to Pendarren House there was an amazing Falconry display. Pupils were given a talk by the keeper and children could feel the softness of the birds feathers. There were owls and hawks. The Eagle Owl was amazing. Then the keeper got the hawks

to fly and land on the outstretched hands of volunteer pupils. You absolutely HAD to wear gloves. They have sharp talons. Small pieces of meat were used to entice the hawks to fly to demonstrate their grace and agility. One of the hawks flew to the ground and chased Miss McNicholas feet !! Then about fifteen pupils lay on the grass and one of the hawks flew low over them – they felt its wings brushing their tummies and faces as it swoop past. They had to stay really still. Have you seen the photos?

Another bird encounter awaited at the Big Pit mining museum. Canaries were used to indicate bad air in the mine. They still have some there but they are not needed underground anymore. The pupils learnt about Welsh miners and the job of coal mining. They also used ponies underground.

There was also a day trip to the seaside (coastal walk - although a bit misty, rock-pooling), river study (including exploring caves, waterfalls, waterslides), canoeing and a local walk on the last morning. It was a very busy week!!



The Vale School 15-19 June 2015

Well it's fair to say we had luck with the weather this week. Sunshine all round and a lovely warm feeling of summer. We explored and scrambled our way up the mountain through the streams at Blaen y Glyn. We took to the water in a cheerful flotilla of canoes on the Brecon and Monmouth canal and after all that excitement a trip to the beach for ice-cream was well deserved. See you all again soon!!

Lordship Lane Primary School 22-26 June 2015

I think Pendarren is a thrill seeking opportunity of trying new things such as caving, rock climbing and canoeing. When I go to secondary school I would use the things that I have learnt to my advantage such as when I learnt river study. Thank you Pendarren for a great week!!! - Tyreice

I really enjoyed the activities here in Pendarren. The most terrifying moment was when we went caving! I thank every staff in Pendarren for helping me and I overcame every one of my fears. I hope I can come again. - Aleyna

It has been a once in a lifetime opportunity. I have conquered all of my fears and you will too. You will always see the countryside while you're here. You will have a great time. If I had another chance I would come here and so should you. - Varshana



Highgate Wood School 22-26 June 2015

I had a nice time at Pendarren, it was great! The activities we did really made me more confident and I will go back home and use the skills that I have learnt. I wish I could stay for a week again!

Lidia

I found out a lot about myself and I honestly loved the experience. I have to be honest, I was scared at first but as the instructors were so kind I started to enjoy myself. I overcame most of my fears eg heights and water. My favourite activity

was canoeing as we all jumped in the river afterwards. So I loved this whole trip.

Zaineb

I learnt that the more you convince yourself about doing something, it becomes a lot easier to pass obstacles.

Alland

Having new experiences can give you courage and help you get over your fears. It was nice to be less exposed to city pollution and discover new places.

Klodian

I found out a lot about myself. I learnt that I can do a lot more things than I thought. My going to Pendarren has raised my confidence. And made me try things I wouldn't normally do. *Eliya*

I really enjoyed the rock climbing and the ladder climbing. It was difficult at first but I tried hard and succeeded in most of the climbs. The trip helped me to work with others and I learnt how to work as part of a team.

Blendi

At first I didn't really know what to expect but once I had a go and did all the activities I felt fine. But I had to admit I had a pretty good time. Saraiah

I had a nice time at Pendarren House. I was scared a bit, but most of the time I pushed through. I had fun at canoeing but at first I was scared. I overcame my fear of heights. And was a bit homesick but overcame that as well. Willow

I loved caving because you could crawl into lots of little holes and it was just very fun altogether.

Moresha



St Mary's RC Primary School 29 June -3 July 2015

My favourite thing was our rooms. I'm in Blorenge, it's bear live! Mark

I enjoy Pendarren very much, this was my first time away from my mum and dad. I loved it when we went climbing, it was so FUN! I did not like the mountain walk, it was so tiring! Honnela

My favourite part of Pendarren was going swimming in the sea at Caswell beach. Emky

St Mary's RC were split into three activity groups, two groups did bushcraft on Monday and one group did bushcraft on Friday. The group who did bushcraft on Friday left their shelters up with 'For Sale' signs for visitors to look at the following day on the Pendarren Open Day:

FOR SALE "Hawaiian Inn" £1.2 million
Made out of environmentally friendly and strong
materials. 2-4 people can sleep in here, however
4-6 could sit down inside on our comfortable
logs. It has a soft pretty path, handy fire place,
a sturdy table and a stand. It also has pegs for
your belongings and is nicely decorated with
flowers that make you feel happy, at home and
like you are in Hawaii. It is suitable for adults,
children and pets and is perfect place for
evening story telling. It sure is a perfect place
to stay.

Julia S, Iris N



The Vale School 29 June - 3 July 2015

Hi. My name is Neesha. I am 16 years old. I am from The Vale School. I like it in Pendarren because we went on lots of

things. I liked the river walk, it was fun. I will miss it so much. Love from Neesha.

My name is *Halle*. I am 13 years old. I am from The Vale School. Rockclimbing – I was really good at it because I liked it.

I liked the beach because I it was fun and I went to the shops to buy marshmallows. I liked the river walk. I like to get wet with my friends.

Zeina

I like to do the wall climbing because my friend watching me and helping me. I didn't like the river walk because it was a bit scary. *Nermin*



Holy Trinity and St Silas Primary School 6 July - 10 July 2015

This is a new school to visit Pendarren from over the border in Camden; their Headteacher was previously at St Paul's RC Primary School in Haringey. The students had a great week and the staff loved the activities and ethos here at Pendarren.

Pendarren has been so much fun I learnt to work as a team and have a good time with my friends - Max

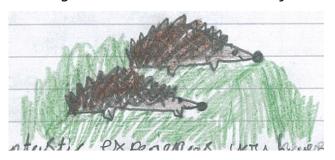
Coming to Pendarren has helped me become more confident in me and others. It has also helped me to be more brave. These things will help me in secondary school, I will have more belief in my answers at secondary school and be more brave when making friendships - Che Kian

It was great I had a lot of fun but it was a bit scary but I managed. I learnt how to organise my clothes. I feel more confident at doing stuff I've never done before. – Myrtle

THE TIME HERE HAS BEEN REALLY FUN - PJ

I learned that heights aren't high compared to REAL ones at Pendarren - Gabe

Pendarren was really fun and I learned to do things I'd never done before - Mirjala



Blanche Neville School 6 July - 10 July 2015

I really enjoyed staying here, I have done many activities like Climbing, Adventure Walk and High Ropes. My parents told me to have fun and enjoy and I did! One day, I will make sure that my kids will come to Pendarren.

Carolina

What I like about Pendarren you can do lots of activities outside and its fun. William

I loved playing football, meeting new friends.

Mekhi

When I went to Pendarren I felt excited. It was my first time in Wales and Pendarren House. I liked the grass and the beautiful area.

Brady

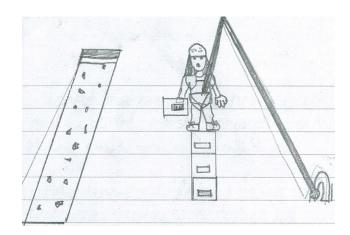


Gladesmore School 10-12 July 2015

A group of Year 8 students came at the end of term for a weekend to develop relationships, build resilience and improve self confidence. They were thrown in at the deep end - LITERALLY - at the start of the course and the challenges just kept on coming. They packed an enormous number of activities into a short time. There was no time to sit still as the students were kept busy all the time. The adventurous activities included:

- Gorge walk (or should I say sliding, slipping and jumping in the water)
 great for high octane team bonding and personal challenge!
- Orienteering into the dark on Friday night
- Mountain walk, caving and indoor climbing on Saturday
- High rope team challenges.

All this before getting on the coach to head back to London. People were pushed to their limits with the activities and everyone rose to the challenge. Well done to all.



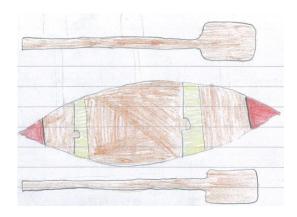
Fortismere School 13-17 July 2015

Year 7's enjoyed a week celebrating their first year in secondary school.

Overall I had a lot of fun and met many new people. I also got very wet and enjoyed it all a lot. Because I tried many new activities also our groups and rooms were chosen for us by our teachers we met new people and made new friends. – *Sophie*

When I came to Pendarren I met new people and made new friends. I also did things I'd never done before and achieved things I didn't think I could. I also overcame some fears like getting stuck in the cave and being encouraged by my team when they're not feeling confident. – *Che*

I enjoyed the independence at Pendarren we were given. My favourite activity was canoeing because it was fun swimming in a river and I learnt new techniques. I also made new friends. - *Kate*



DofE Open Gold - Training and Practice Expedition 27 July - 1 August 2015

An Open Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award Expedition training and practice course was held at the beginning of the summer holidays. This was open to anyone on the DofE over the age of 16. There were 8 participants who worked in two groups and who spent 2 days training then 4 days on a practice expedition.

Our journey started off with incredible food and accommodation at Pendarren House. Everyone was welcoming and the staff helped us feel a lot more confident in the environment we would be walking in. The expedition itself was hard, to say the least, but both the physical and mental challenges were worth it when we reached the summit of the highest peak in southern Britain, Pen y Fan. As if the stunning views and satisfaction of climbing multiple peaks wasn't enough motivation to come to Pendarren then the cake at the end would seal the deal. - Emma

OTHER VISITORS

The Firs bungalow is steadily growing in popularity as a self catering venue. Many of the visitors are teachers who wish to return with family and friends for a weekend or during the holidays. We find many people that stay rebook for the following year. We also have clubs – football, canoeing, cycling, walking and martial arts to name a few.

The Llangenny Flute Course ran again this year between 20 and 25 July. Local flautist, Sarah Newbold, and accompanist Zoe Smith, host a course annually with performances at the beginning and end of the course in the local village hall.

Barbara Powell, recently retired from a Haringey primary school, has visited annually with her family for the last six years. One of the now adult members of her family wrote:

For me, a boy from Tottenham, this was my first and best holiday as a child. This place should go on for ever, children in Haringey should come here and see another side of life. Pendarren is a magical place and lets you experience a whole different way of life.

Alan Ward of Bigfoot ran a first aid course for the British Mountaineering Council.

Through August, four other bookings were made by family groups, three of which were repeat bookings. The other family included a student who will be visiting us again with his school.

We look forward to seeing you all again soon!

Best wishes from the Pendarren Team.

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

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