



PENDARREN HOUSE NEWSLETTER

www.pendarren.org

No. 21

November 2015

Thanks to The **Tottenham Grammar School Foundation** for helping schools with the cost of transport to and from Pendarren and for work on our pond.

For a grant towards the cost of transport, schools need to submit a request for financial assistance to the Tottenham Grammar School Foundation. Information is available on their website: gc-solutions.org.uk

The leaking Pendarren pond is being renovated. It has been landscaped, lined with Astroturf (see below) and old carpet (thanks to **Abergavenny Flooring Centre**); the butyl liner is in place ready to be rolled out and the protective liner will be placed on top. In addition to the liners, Tottenham Grammar School Foundation has also funded a pipe to bring water from the old water collection tank to the pond. Once complete, the pond will be ready for the introduction of plants and for a variety of creatures to discover and make it their new home - then the students will be able to learn more about the world around them.



The pond



The Low Ropes Course

Our thanks also go to **Abergavenny Town Football Club** for the donation of a large quantity of Astroturf. This has been used under the outdoor table tennis table, the low ropes course and to line the pond.

NEWS

Salmon No one is sure when the salmon and trout ran the river Grwyne (below Pendarren) this year; the water was low in September and October so they may have been delayed this year. They will have had no problem swimming up in the last few weeks!

Camera Found! Last summer a Pendarren camera was lost on a Year 6 visit from St. Mary's Priory, along with the photographs from that group. The camera has now been discovered and St. Mary's Priory have the photos. The camera in the canal is still there though! If it is returned to us the pictures are usually recoverable even if the camera is not, so we live in hope.

The Firs has received repairs to its fascia boards, and the boards and window sills have been repainted.



Bushcraft

A couple of trees had some remedial work to make them safe and this has left plenty of material for those doing bushcraft.

Pictures

We are often asked what the names of the dormitories mean; now each dormitory, in both the Main House and the Annexe, has a display to tell you everything there is to know!

Canoe trolleys We now have some canoe trolleys so secondary teams will find it easier to get their boats to and from the river, and those who use the canal will find it easier if they have to negotiate locks. You still have to work as a team and push them though!

Heads of the Valleys upgrade The upgrade to the road between Pendarren and the coast continues. One section has just been opened, the difficult section through Clydach gorge is well underway and the final section nearer Swansea should be finished by 2020. It will then be dual carriageway with no roundabouts and take a significant amount of time off the journey. In the meantime various deviations and closed junctions cause a lot of head scratching whilst we work out which is the quickest route.

Pendarren's lodgers The Pendarren hedgehog will soon be looking for somewhere to hibernate unless it stays very warm. Last year it was in a ball of grass in the sensory garden, now it has a house and we are waiting to see if it will use it. Britain has lost 95% of its hedgehogs since the 1950's and now only one in five people have ever seen one in their garden.

The white rabbit who lives in a hole somewhere around the back garden appears from time to time to graze on the lawn.



Around our grounds we have piles of sticks – messy to some but a requirement for some wildlife. Britain's biggest insect, the stag beetle, has a larvae that spends 3 years in dead wood that is under the soil before becoming an adult beetle. If all those piles of dead wood are burnt, shredded or tidied away it has no where to live. The stag beetle is found in the south east of Britain and may be found in Haringey.

The sheep are still in the field but will be taken off soon to return in Spring.

FRIENDS NEWS

The Friends of Pendarren continue to support the work at the Centre by purchasing cameras for use by visiting groups. The photos are saved to DVDs which the students can buy - taking home hundreds of photos each as a reminder of their Pendarren Experience.

Thanks to everybody who has sent best wishes to Daniel Morden whilst he has been undergoing treatment - he has been enormously grateful for the support. If you are wondering what **evening activities** your groups can do in his absence, check out our website for what is on offer. There are too many activities to choose from now!

VISITORS

Rokesly Junior School
7-11 September 2015



Above is Pendarren's acer tree in it's autumn glory.

I have learnt to try things before I judge them. This will help in year 6 because it will help me get ready for secondary school - Ezel

I really enjoyed Pendarren I overcame my fears I learnt I can trust my friends and I think it will help me in year 6 because I will be more confident. Also I made lots of new friends and this will help me to work with different people at school and trust more people. - Oscar

I really enjoyed waking up in the morning and seeing my friends, and waking up to all sorts of adventures such as canoeing river study and caving. - Gracie



I have realised that although some people are in a different class they can still have a lot of things in common with me. Also, it will help me to try new challenges in the future and I think year 6 might be a bit challenging but if I have a go I can get through it. - Hana-Sky

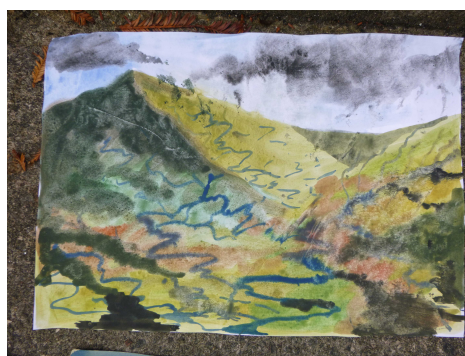
I liked the fact we could do some things that we don't normally do. - Joy

They should do things a bit more around animals (horses). But I loved the experience and I loved the high ropes and the beach best. I wish it would last forever and ever and ever... Sureyya



It helped me to be more independent. [I loved the] Disco 'cos you get to dance. Lorenzo

This year in Pendarren, the things I did will help in year 6, because I will persevere more in class and I will try not to give up when things get tricky! Evie!



Weston Park Primary School
14-18 September 2015

The Weston Park pupils took a few moments out of their busy schedule to put pen to paper in order to capture their thoughts on the Pendarren Experience:

I have really enjoyed Pendarren; all the activities have been extraordinary, and the food has also been great. On the first day (after we get here) we had a go at orienteering, in pairs, which was great. The next day the really fun things started we did climbing; high ropes; abseiling and canoeing they were all fantastic. Pendarren is all about facing your fears and I think everyone managed that and more. The day after that we swapped

round so that everyone did something else. I loved the canoeing best. After supper, we had a football match against Ferry Lane. And tomorrow we are all doing caving. And then we are mountain walking. Everything is great Anon

My favourite activity was canoeing because we got to do loads of fun games like who could spin the fastest; we also got to build dens at lunch time. Ruby

I've had a great experience at Pendarren. I learnt lots of new things. I've overcome my fears and challenged myself. My favourite activity was abseiling and being on the High Ropes. Overall I had a lot of fun..... Anon

I feel like the teachers at Pendarren are really supportive, same with the Weston Park teachers and they helped me learn that I can do things I thought I can't do..... Nicholas

I learnt that I could do stuff that I never imagined myself doing and I learned to push myself more and it was fantastic I would love to come again!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Ella

I didn't try a few things, it's ok, because I have learnt that I can control myself and that I can look after myself more than I knew I could look after myself. I was told I phrase by my pe teacher 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger' it has made me change in the best way :) ~ Doodle bug (know you know my nickname!) X Daisy

I learnt that all fears you can over come if you push yourself to the limits..... Lola

Pendarren is so much things. I did things that I never thought I could do. If I could I would come back again..... Abbey

I would recommend coming here because there is so many fun activities that I'd never imagine myself doing! Bella

Thank you to Weston Park for all the letters sent to us after their trip.



Ferry Lane Primary School 14-18 September 2015

It seems luck was on our side regarding the weather. The forecast at the beginning of the week threatened two storms but we didn't see a drop of rain all week!! Conquering fears and encouraging others, we made the most of the fine weather and walked on coastal paths, climbed to great heights and canoed until we could canoe no more.

This Pendarren experience has been absolutely amazing! I done things I never thought I could do and it's a wonderful place to express yourself and have fun as well as learning. Aurelia

It was fun. I learnt a lot about myself and other people. I also found out that I can do lots of stuff like caving, canoeing and abseiling. Khalil

When I went abseiling I was afraid to do it, but I conquered my fear of heights. Also pushed myself to the limit. Now I know that there is no reason to be afraid. Zariya



Thank you for an amazing week. It was by far the best week of my life. We did so many wonderful activities! The rooms were incredible, the food was delicious and the garden massive!! There was absolutely nothing I could fault! Maddy

You gave me so many unforgettable memories to share with my friends and family, cooked us restaurant standard food. Noah B

This was a completely outstanding trip and a great opportunity to take a step on the wild side of life. Noah L

Thank you for one of the best weeks of my life! I had a brilliant birthday...The food was excellent and the staff so encouraging and patient helping me through every challenge. Archie

Thank you so much for challenging me with my biggest fear – heights. It started at the age of 2 when I went on my first flight, but you helped me overcome my biggest fear. Thanks so much and I want to come again. Seth

And just to make sure that we at Pendarren House also challenge ourselves:

I hope that my group were challenging for you - Lulu

St. Aidan's Primary School
21-25 September 2015

Pendarren was a dream, I was on crutches but still, with the staffs help, I could enjoy Pendarren as much as I could. ...Arrive a child, leave a more civilised, more mature person. Pendarren was just as good as I expected if not better! Tristan



View of Pendarren grounds by Tristan

Pendarren was an amazing experience. I did things I have never done before. I wish I could come here on the weekends. Though it would be better if we had longer time to do the activities. At the end of your activity you felt like there was nothing in the world that you couldn't conquer. Misha

I learnt to sleep while others were snoring and noticed helping and holding on to your friends helps them do it back. I liked setting the table for others - then they were good at it back. I hope my brother gets to go here. He'd love it. Just like I did. Jolanda

Sleeping in a dormitory with my friends made a funny and happy 4 nights like a giant sleepover. The activities were inspiring because I could do things, like caving, that I have never done before and could never do in London. I was really proud of myself for doing 14 crates on the crate challenge and not freaking out in the caving. At Pendarren I learned that I can do things on my own and that I can work as a team. Freya

The visit I had there was inspiring and I learnt many new things for instance on the last day, coastal visit, I learnt that a blenny is a fish that can walk and can stay out of water for 6 hours (until the next tide). Not only did I learn interesting facts about wildlife and whales I also learnt about my friends and other people who were not necessarily my friends but I am closer to now. Eloise

Some people never get out of London, I would love it if my brother could go and try new things and may discover a new talent. Frankie

I got over so many fears and I want others to. If you feel home sick you don't because even people you don't really get on with support you. This means you get close to people you don't really like very much. Ailsa

When you get off the coach and in to the house the excitement begins and doesn't stop until you get off the coach in London. I feel like I grew closer to everyone in the class. I really enjoyed Pendarren!!! Ava

In Pendarren I think the main part is overcoming your fears whether they are heights, small spaces, being without your parents or even making your own bed! Marianne



Pendarren was really fun and exciting. I learnt how to canoe, being brave, rock climbing, knowing more people in my class, caving and had lots of fun! I will always remember my time in Pendarren and can't wait to share the news about my adventures and time I had. I don't want to leave it was so amazing. Pendarren was really special to me as it was the first time out of London. I now feel really confident about school I know so much more about my class mates... If you asked me to go again it's 100% yes! Mya

In Pendarren I managed to over come my fear of heights. The high ropes were not as scary as I thought. The jumping off was the best bit! I also learnt in Pendarren it's better to work in a team than yourself. Izzy

I just loved all the fun activities that we done. My fav was the high ropes, they were amazing but scary at the same time. Crystal F

Pendarren is so fun!! I would definitely like to come here again. The staff are super friendly and they teach you how to do stuff you've never done before. All the pupils in my class loved it and so did the teachers!!! Erza!!!

One of my favourite things about Pendarren was getting to do things I will probably never get to do again in my life!
Eleanor

I am most proud of myself for doing the high ropes because they were so high. I learnt that no one would be able to live with no friend family or any people in the world. Pendarren helped me work better with my peers.
Anon



Stamford Hill Primary School
28 September - 2 October 2015

NEWS REPORTED!
There was a horse named Jewel from one of the best horse stable who the kindest horse. (Her) one witness, Dennis

Said that, "She is a very beautiful horse we all adore her though we do not want to upset the rest of the horses, she is 9 yrs old and 15.1 hds and slow bold."

Children from London Go TO PENDARREN!

On Monday 28th September 2015 22 children from Stamford Hill have arrived in Pendarren.



They were all "wowed" from their site and were entertained by Anne.

Best Shop in Wales -
In Pendarren there's a secret shop in the basement. Children from Stamford Hill are shocked by a mysterious shop that is hidden! Was the shop here in olden times?

St Mary's Priory RC School
28 September - 2 October 2015

Enjoying the Indian summer, a trip to the beach was certainly a good choice. We looked at the habitats of the various creatures, their impact on each other and where they fit into the food chain. We found giant crabs, dogwhelks, sea snails and even a starfish! (not often found at Caswell). We even took the opportunity for a swim.



Stroud Green Primary School
5-9 October 2015

Pendarren is the most breathtaking experience that I've ever had. You might be a little frightened at first but you will get used to it. The highlight is to build up friendships and get to know a lot more people. – Elysha



I was terrified by the high ropes when I first saw them and when I stepped onto the crates, I felt like a condemned man on the gallows! When the crates dropped under our group, we flew like bees and I suddenly forgot my fear of heights.

Pendarren is an admirable place that might prepare you for greater things in life. On our journey we have made more friendship circles by having groups and dorms. – Alana



Rokesly Junior School 5-9 October 2015

Pendarren was the best trip by far,
Canoeing, caving, and gazing at the stars,
Lots of fun,
And tons of activities,
Learning new outdoor skills,
Hanging out with friends,
I recommend you come..... Kenan

The only way to conquer your fears is to forget
about them, like rope climbing. Unforgettable
moments..... Idin

Four days is too few,
Pendarren I will miss you,
Teachers were good..... Nico

Pendarren is a wonderful place full of adventure,
It is a place that will help you say no less,
There is something for everyone,
Even for you..... Talia

I'm in a battle for the best day of the week, on
Tuesday, canoe and climbing , Wednesday River
Study and Thursday beach day. I don't know if its
more beach day OR river study, but then Tuesday
was also good Alex



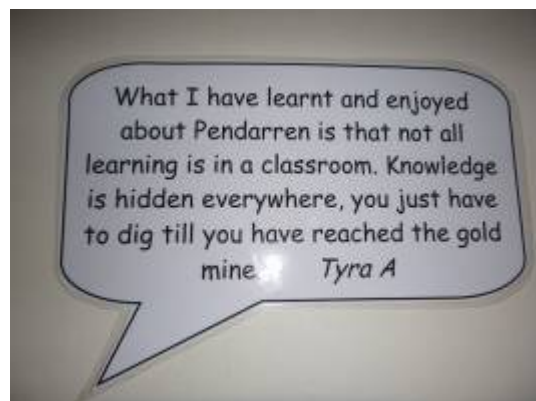
St Thomas More School 12 -16 October 2015

A group of 48 year 7 and 8 students visited us for a week on a general outdoor activities course.

The students were a credit to the school in their attitude and approach to the activities which challenged and stretched the students. Some students, who had visited Pendarren in year 6, felt that coming back in secondary school was better because they were given more responsibility and had to work harder. This allowed them to achieve more and push themselves further in order to complete challenges, which they were amazed that they could complete.

Other students felt that the help and support they received from their fellow students was amazing and was instrumental in their successes.

The students were brought by a dedicated team of staff from the school who were also impressed by the students' achievements.



St James CE Primary School 19-23 October 2015

This week we had the times of our lives!....
And found out that rivers are far too wet and cold for our liking.

On Monday we went on a hike up Bloreng mountain. After, on Tuesday, the two groups went canoeing which was FREEZING!!! But it was also hilariously fun as Group 2 had a HUGE water fight and Minori fell in the icy water! The high ropes were scary at first but fortunately most of us faced our fears.

Wednesday, well, that was a wet one! We went river studying and no-one (except for Mrs Moore or the instructors, that is!) stayed

dry! But we all learnt a lot by rolling down a sloped stream!

Today (Thursday) we went down Big Pit, the coal mine, and learnt lots and lots and lots! We also got to watch TV, in an exhibition, about coal, for the first and only time all week! YAY! Tonight we will be having our tuck shop and get a DISCO!!

So, all in all, we had an EPIC time!!!!
Everybody enjoyed themselves very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very much!

Thank you so much Pendarren. Lola



Welbourne Primary School 19-23 October 2015

A great time was had by all this week as we took to the woods for bushcraft, rode horses high on the mountain top and explored the deep depths of the mountain on the river study day. We took walks in the dark and climbed in our 'rock room' in the evening and the children even took the time to print some t-shirts one evening. I'm sure you will agree that the results are fantastic! See you again soon Welbourne...



National Citizenship Scheme 23-27 October 2015

'The Challenge' visited us to deliver the Personal Challenge module of the National Citizen Service (NCS) course, a voluntary personal and social development programme for 16 and 17-year olds. We accommodated 44 candidates accompanied by 6 staff during their 4 day stay with us. They undertook a variety of challenging activities including caving, rock-climbing, canoeing and mountain walking.

'Would not trade this experience for the world ...'

I really enjoyed both the mountain walking and canoeing, especially the canoeing. The instructors took into consideration all the different needs of our group, challenged us but still made sure we were happy

'I really enjoyed my time here and I'm really grateful to have had this experience

'Loved the pizza, the rooms and the service in general. I loved every minute, keep it up



OTHER NEWS

Every summer Pendarren hosts the Llangenny Flute Summer School. Students come for a week to practice with their peers and learn from experts, and to push their skills and knowledge beyond grade 8.

Reflections on Pendarren from Llangenny Flute Summer School students

2011

I had a great time at Llangenny Flutes both times I attended. Pendarren House was such a lovely venue. It was really special making music in the countryside and being surrounded by amazing landscape. Being able to do team building exercises at the activity centre definitely helped

the group to gel in a unique way for a music course. I particularly remember the amazing food that was prepared for us!

2013

The Llangenny flute course was a fantastic experience, not only to meet and work with fellow flautists, but to experience the wonderful tranquil landscape surrounding Pendarren House.

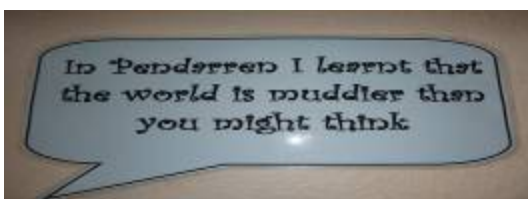
The Llangenny flute course has been responsible for some of the most important experiences I had when I was playing. It helped me grow as a player and as a person. The wonderful location and atmosphere of Pendarren House had every bit as much to do with that journey. I lost my flute last year when, through problems with my family, they took it upon themselves to sell my instrument and left me in a very fragile state. We are now completely estranged and I have spent the past year rebuilding my life. My goal for the future is not just to be able to play again, but to come back to that wonderful place and take part in the inspiration that is the Llangenny flute course at Pendarren House.

2014

For the two Llangenny Flute Summer Schools I have attended, Pendarren was an absolutely fantastic venue. It is a truly inspiring place to spend the week playing flute outdoors in such beautiful surroundings and have the sounds of so many flautists echoing around the valley! I loved the chance to take an afternoon off from flute playing to make the most of the outdoor climbing facilities Pendarren has to offer. The high ropes and climbing wall were not something I would ever have thought of or had the opportunity to try had it not been offered in such a safe and supportive environment. I have such amazing memories of the flute course there that I will treasure forever.

If you play flute to grade 8 and are interested in joining the course, see the following website for details:

<https://sites.google.com/site/llangennyflutes/>



And finally PARENTS!

My son has just come back from a fantastic week at the Centre and my daughter visited 3 years ago, having an equally amazing time. Both undertook activities that stretched their skills and confidence – in my view a critical step in preparing for secondary school.

Suzannah (parent)

I was expecting her (daughter) to be homesick this being the longest time she's been away from home, but she loved the whole experience. She adored the staff there and is full of stories of rock climbing, making dens, learning to light camp fires and swimming in the freezing Welsh sea! I really believe this has been a pivotal moment in her young life – she has come back full of confidence and is somehow far more excited about school than she has been before.

Lucy (parent)



My son, now in secondary school, is autistic and along with the various issues involved with that diagnosis, has claustrophobia and a fear of lifts. The staff at Pendarren supported him to such an extent that he felt able to use the tiny, rattly lift to go down into a local coal mine and enjoy a visit with the rest of his class. They also supported him to conquer his fears and go caving, even climbing through the "letterbox" - a rite of passage, every child who does it never forgets. He came home feeling incredibly proud of himself, a more confident and independent child. Also, because many of the staff going from his school knew Pendarren, having visited it for many years with other classes and local schools, they could prepare him (and other children with similar issues) in advance so there were no surprises.

My daughter visited Pendarren just last month, and came back having had the same brilliant time as her brother. It was wonderful not just to see her confidence built up by the experience, but also her brother sharing his experiences with her - a shared bond that they wouldn't have if the school had to find a different place to take the Year 6 class each time.

Stephany (parent)



*With very best wishes from all the
staff at Pendarren House
to all our readers for a peaceful
Christmas holiday time and a
happy New Year!*



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



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